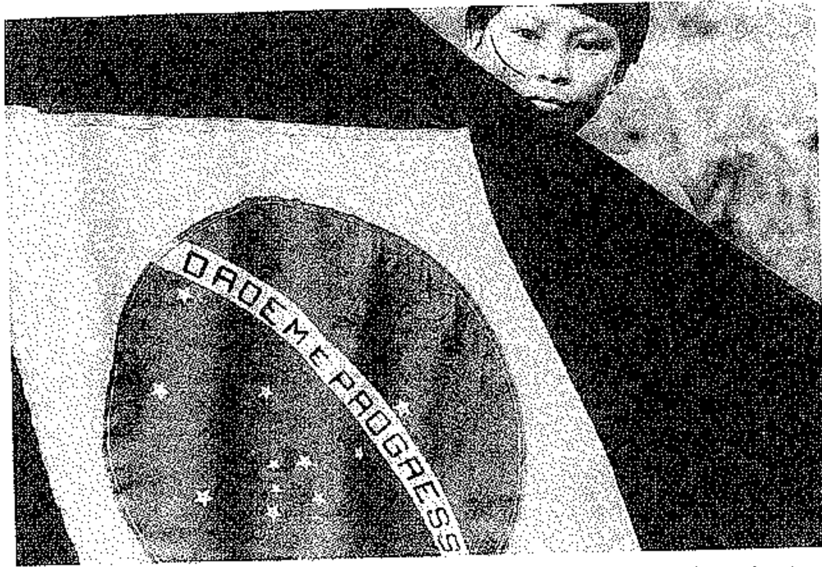
ETHNIC POLITICS IN BRAZIL

ALCIDA RITA RAMOS



A Yanomami girl holding the Brazilian flag. Photo courtesy of Claudia Andujar, Comissão Pró-Yanomami, São Paulo, Brazil.

Alcida Rita Ramos

Indigenism

Ethnic Politics in Brazil

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To the Indians of Brazil: my appreciation for their lessons on how to go on despite everything.

Indigenism

Introduction

Least but Not Last

The Fundamental Question

The question that prompted me to write this book is why Brazilian Indians, being so few, have such a prominent place in the national consciousness. Indeed, although they are a tiny minority—with the possible exception of Argentina's, the Brazilian Indians are the smallest indigenous population in the Americas—they have the power to burrow deeply into the country's imagination. The answer is not simple. I came close only after the long effort of writing this book, with all the thinking and analyzing it required. Like the hero's quest in a fairy tale, the pursuit of this answer has led me into unsuspected labyrinths of both individual and collective unfinished business regarding matters of identity. At the most visible level the discomfort that Indians provoke in the national population derives from their possession of well-defined cultures and territories of their own—too much land for so few Indians, it is often said—and their living apart from the national society and yet being part of the same country. But this pragmatic consideration is by no means the only or the strongest reason for the ambivalence that pervades interethnic relations in Brazil. Part of the Indians' conspicuous existence in the minds and lives of Brazilians is the result of the contradiction between a certain pride in the country's multiethnicity and the aspiration for national homogeneity. The late ethnologist, former indigenist, politician, and writer Darcy Ribeiro declared that the uniqueness of Brazil resides in its linguistic and cultural uniformity with no dialects or segments that claim autonomy (Ribeiro 1995, 20–23). Ribeiro thus sweeps under his poetic rug all Indian languages, all regional dialects, all the various immigrant influences, and some separatist movements.

Hard Facts

The estimates of the total indigenous population in Brazil vary from 236,000 to 300,000, constituting 206 different peoples speaking approximately 170 distinct languages (Montserrat 1992, 93). They represent no

more than 0.2 percent of the national population of more than 160 million people. Nearly half the indigenous societies living in Brazilian territory have 200 to 500 members; thirty-two have from 500 to 1,000; forty-four have 1,000 to 5,000; four—Potiguara, Sateré-Maué, Shavante, and Yanomami—have 5,000 to 10,000; three—Guajajara, Terena, and Makushi—have 10,000 to 20,000; and another three—Guarani, Kaingang, and Tikuna—have more than 20,000 people (B. Ricardo 1996a, xii). The total amount of Indian land is reckoned to be about 998,000 square kilometers, or 11.72 percent of Brazil's 8.5 million square kilometers (Fany Ricardo, personal communication) of which nearly 820,000 kilometers are officially designated as Indian land. Compare this with the United States's indigenous population of 1,959,234, representing 0.8 percent of a national population of nearly 250 million people, according to the 1990 census. The total amount of land held by indigenous peoples in the United States is about 45 million acres, or 160,000 square kilometers, a figure Native Americans have hoped to increase to 100 million acres (Kickingbird and Ducheneaux 1973, 1). In response to the argument that Brazilian Indian territories contain too much land for a small indigenous population, Áureo Faleiros, an administrator at the National Indian Foundation (FUNAI), replies by pointing out that the 307 largest landholdings in the country, owned by an infinitesimal portion of the national population, account for an area roughly equal to half the total amount of land occupied by indigenous peoples (Gondim 1996, 15).

Brazil seems to be unique in the Americas in that its Indians receive a great deal of national attention. In contrast, consider that

> To the great majority of the inhabitants of the Republic of Argentina, the Indians represent a mere remembrance from their school books that narrated the episodes of Conquest and national expansion. Many among this [national] population (over fifty percent of which is urban) are surprised when they hear that more than 150,000 Indians survive in Argentina, or when they read any brief news item about legal claims by some obscure Guarani "cacique," or territorial demands by a forgotten Araucanian leader. Not even sensationalist magazines are interested in the Indians, for their high degree of acculturation makes them much less "exotic" than Amazonian groups. (Bartolomé 1972, 341)

Nothing could be more different in Brazil where the Indians stand as a powerful symbol of nationality. It might not be altogether preposterous to say that, except for Argentina's, the smaller the indigenous population, the greater claim it has on the national consciousness.

1. A one thousand cruzeiro bill from the 1980s, no longer in circulation. On one side it shows a Karajá Indian couple, and on the other side, Marshall Rondon, the creator of the Indian Protection Service.

Defining Indigenism

The political field of relations between Brazilians and Indians—call it contact zone, middle ground, or colonial situation—acquires in Brazil a magnitude that is not explained by a single cause, such as competition for material and symbolic resources. Rather, this field that I call Indigenism is the result of many overlapping factors that history has compounded in an extraordinary case of collective overdetermination. Hence, the need for a broader definition of the concept of indigenism.

Before I continue I must clarify to non-Brazilian readers my use of the term *Indian*. Unlike other American countries (such as, for instance,

Ecuador and the United States) where Indian has become so offensive as to be carefully avoided (and replaced by terms such as *nativo* or *Native American*), in Brazil Indian has gone through phases of denigration and of regeneration. The indigenous movement of the 1970s and 1980s reappropriated the term and infused it with a substantial dose of political agency. Hence, to say Indian in Brazil is, among other things, to acknowledge the existence of social actors who are ethnically and culturally differentiated from the national population.

In my use of the term *Indigenism* I depart from authors who limit it to dominant official policies toward indigenous peoples (Gnerre and Bottasso 1986; Arze Quintanilla 1990; Favre 1996). My notion of it comes closer to that of Souza Lima, for whom Indigenism is "a set of ideas (and ideals) concerning the incorporation of Indian peoples into nation-states" (1991, 239). But I differ from him in that I expand the concept well beyond state incorporation of indigenous peoples to include the vast realm of both popular and learned imagery among the national population onto which are carved the many faces of the Indian. The force field generated in the interethnic realm creates a conceptual and practical reality that is perhaps uncommon outside Brazil. Indigenism is a political phenomenon in the broadest sense of the term. It is not limited to policy making by a state or private concern or to putting indigenist policies into practice. (Readers should be aware of the difference between *indigenous*—referring to the internal affairs of the Indians—and *indigenist*—pertaining to the realm of interethnicity.) What the media write and broadcast, novelists create, missionaries reveal, human rights activists defend, anthropologists analyze, and Indians deny or corroborate about *the* Indian contributes to an ideological edifice that takes the "Indian issue" as its building block. Lurking behind the images of *the* Indian composed of this kaleidoscopic assortment of viewpoints is always the likeness—or, more appropriately, unlikeness—of *the* Brazilian. Indian as mirror, most often inverted, is, as we shall see in the pages that follow, a recurrent metaphor in the interethnic field. In other words, Indigenism is to Brazil what Orientalism is to the West. The parallels between Indigenism and Orientalism are easy to draw: just as "the Orient is *Orientalized,*" so is the Indian *Indianized.* "To the Westerner . . . the Oriental was always *like* some aspect of the West" (Said 1979, 67), just as to the Brazilian the Indian has always been like some aspect of Brazil. One also hears echoes of Indigenism in Orientalism in such passages as "It is Europe that articulates the Orient; this articulation is the prerogative, not of a puppet master, but of a genuine creator, whose life-giving power represents, animates, constitutes the otherwise silent and dangerous space beyond familiar boundaries" (Said 1979, 57).

Indigenism diverges from Orientalism in at least one important way, namely, the participation of the Indians in the construction of Indigenism. In the case of Brazil, Indians and Brazilians are part of one nation in the sense that they live in temporal and spatial contiguity, the laws, attitudes, and actions that set them apart notwithstanding. For this reason, if for no other, the Indians are equally agents in the country's indigenist project, no matter how constrained their agency may be. Moreover, when Indians seize the notion of "culture," an artifact of Western thinking about the Other, to further their cause for ethnic recognition and self-determination, they contribute significantly to the design of Indigenism. This being so, we cannot say, as Said does for Orientalism, that Brazil (read: the West) is the actor and the Indian (read: the Orient) a passive reactor (Said 1979, 109). In short, in my conception Indigenism amounts to an elaborate ideological construct about otherness and sameness in the context of ethnicity and nationality. Within this vast symbolic and practical field one finds many ways in which Indigenism is manifested. It can take the shape of regional prejudice, urban commiseration, state control, anthropological curiosity, religious commitment, sensationalism in the media, or indigenous verbal, written, or gestural discourses. Every one of these manifestations is like a brick laid in the process of building an edifice of ideas and actions that lodges some of the most revealing aspects of Brazilian nationality. What follows is dedicated to opening a few doors to this edifice; I hope it will let itself be fully disclosed by the time we get to the conclusion.

Reading This Book

I have structured the book so that the chapters can stand alone, which gives readers access to them in any sequence. I translated and expanded some chapters from published versions in Portuguese (for Chapter 3 see Ramos 1990; for Chapter 6 see Ramos 1994); in fact, unless otherwise noted, I did all the translations of referenced works originally published in other languages. Chapter 2 is a blend of two articles published in England, whereas Chapter 10, also published in England, is reproduced here with few alterations. Chapters 4 and 5 appeared in the United States, the former in a collection of essays on history and myth (Hill 1988), the latter as part of collected working papers on otherness (Domínguez and Lewis 1995). I expanded on both for this book. The remaining chapters and the conclusion are new.

The two chapters in Part I—"Setting the Stage"—provide a conceptual and political background for the problems of Indians in general and Brazilian Indians in particular. The unequal number of chapters in Parts II and III—"Speaking to the Whiteman" and "Speaking through the Indians," respectively—reflects somewhat the realities of interethnic contact:

Brazilians usually do the speaking and usually not *to* the Indians but *through* them, whereas the Indians have fewer occasions to speak to and be heard by the rest of the population. In the conclusion the reader will find a commentary on the ambivalence that permeates relations between Brazilians and Indians, and my answer to the question posed at the beginning of this introduction.

I am aware of the problems the terms *Whiteman* and *whites* bring to the minds of a North American audience. But considering the ethnographic reality of the interethnic relations in Brazil, I cannot avoid it altogether without the risk of distorting this reality. I find myself in a position similar to that of Robert Berkhofer Jr., who titled his 1978 book *The White Man's Indian* and, more specifically, to Keith Basso's in his book *Portraits of "The Whiteman"* (1979), where he justifies the use of the term by the Apache:

> Conforming to no Whiteman in particular, "the Whiteman" is an abstraction, a complex of ideas and values, a little system of what Alfred Schutz called "taken-for-granted typifications and relevances" that Indian people use to confer order and intelligibility upon their experience with Anglo-Americans. (p. 4)

Basso defines the Whiteman as a social category and a cultural symbol, a multipurpose instrument for rendering Anglo-Americans meaningful. "More specifically, 'the Whiteman' may be viewed as an unformalized model: a model *of* Whitemen (in the sense of defining who Whitemen are, how they contrast with other forms of humanity, and what, given these contrasts, they stand for and represent) and a model *for dealing with* Whitemen" (p. 4).

In this sense Whiteman resembles the Portuguese term *branco.* But there are some differences. Whereas in the United States the indigenous use of Whitemen refers to Anglo-Americans, in Brazil brancos encompasses all non-Indians—Brazilians and foreigners, regardless of racial features. Moreover, branco is used by both Indians and non-Indians and thus constitutes a "native" category of Brazilian society in general. As a polar category to *Índio,* branco is as necessary an element in the Brazilian model of interethnic relations as Whiteman is to the Apache. Any ethnographic analysis devoted to the interpretation of this model must conform to it.

Writing This Book

The entire book is the result of my personal commitment in the realm of Indigenism. It is based on lived experience, and its flavor is definitely anthropological, even if the writing style departs from the familiar canon expected from a social scientist. I have drawn heavily on textual materials,

but the thrust of all the chapters springs directly from nearly thirty years of being exposed to the problems of Indian-white relations. Even my first prolonged field experience with the Yanomami in 1968–1970, geared toward basic ethnographic research, was pervaded by political concerns involving protection of land rights and critical appraisals of missionary action. During the 1980s I was intensely involved with the Indian cause, spending a great deal of time and effort on steering committees, in interminable meetings, drafting documents, and raising money. In early 1985 my living room became a makeshift office for Indians and their supporters who were preparing an indigenous policy proposal for the transition government from military to civilian regime. As host to a number of Indian leaders, I heard stories told in private about the personal suffering that goes on backstage in interethnic politics and witnessed some hair-raising incidents, such as the attempt of a demoralized Tikuna man to commit suicide by jumping from my sixth-floor window. My activism receded during the late 1980s when I and all other Yanomami ethnographers were denied access to the field by the National Indian Foundation while a massive gold rush was devastating both the environment and the lives of the Brazilian Yanomami. In the early 1990s I returned to the field on a medical team that tried desperately to brake raging malaria epidemics that were killing hundreds of Yanomami. During the two years that I worked as interpreter for doctors and nurses in the most harrowing situations I had ever experienced (Ramos 1995a, 1995b), I felt the need to withdraw from the forefront of indigenist activism. Although I had been writing about interethnic contact for about twenty years, I longed for the emotional and intellectual distance necessary for a more ambitious analysis. Thus I devoted the next two years to creating a mental retreat that might allow me to digest a rich and often overpowering experience in the field of Indigenism.

Now a few final words about writing anthropology and writing in a foreign language. I was well into the last chapters when I began to read Michael Herzfeld's 1997 book on cultural intimacy. I began to hear echoes of his reflections on the "poetics" of doing anthropology in my perception of it. A good example of this resonance appears in this passage from Herzfeld:

> For me the pleasures of writing have throughout sustained an absorbing tension between the essentialism entailed in giving shape to ideas and impressions, and the taunting vertigo of skeptical doubt without end. This has been the "militant middle ground" on which I have engaged with the conventions and assumptions of my profession. (1997, 36)

Would I be able to express my own thinking on the subject in a different or better way? I think not.

The strain of writing an entire book in a foreign language has been an exhausting eight-month enterprise that seemed to plunge me into an interminable expanse of mental moving sand. But it is a strain not devoid of its own pleasures. To track down the precise word, to force to the surface some dimly remembered idiom, to conquer unwieldy tantalizing figures of speech, to search for culturally apt metaphors, or to fight one's way through "unreasonable" spellings are toils that can provide gratification when finally mastered. Here too I hear a familiar echo (of Joseph Conrad in *Lord Jim*) through the sometimes ponderous landscapes of the English language: "I had to work like a coal miner in his pit quarrying all my English sentences out of a black night."

Now, on to Indigenism.

Part I

Setting the Stage

1
Keywords for Prejudice

Writers often cast certain words about in both professional and lay contexts without much thought for their connotations. One of the most interesting ways of elucidating underlying meanings is found in *Keywords* by Raymond Williams. He perceives the problem as one of vocabulary "in two senses: the available and developing meanings of known words . . . and the explicit but as often implicit connections which people were making, in what seemed . . . [to be] particular formations of meaning" (1985, 15). For more than two decades he collected words with these characteristics in order to analyze "some of the issues and problems that were there inside the vocabulary." These key words are "significant, indicative words in certain forms of thought" (p. 15). He then examined the historical trajectory of 131 words related to the field of culture and society.

Following Williams's lead, I shall focus on a set of words that, together or separately, have contributed to a specific "formation of meaning" in the field of Indigenism. But, unlike Williams, I do not intend to trace the etymological history of these words; rather, I seek to uncover hidden meanings behind notions that are often used uncritically. The set I have selected is small and can easily be expanded. Some words or word clusters are used more widely than others; some display a thicker veneer of neutrality than others, but none is devoid of value judgments.

One purpose of this exercise is to show how anthropology not only is not immune to semantic contamination but actually contributes to the canonization of particular notions about indigenous peoples through its indiscriminate use of received ideas disguised as scientific concepts. Allowing the common usages of words to enter the ranks of disciplinary concepts amounts to what Bourdieu describes as the smuggling of received ideas into sociological discourse in the clear view of unsuspecting social scientists. Much scientific subject matter, he says, is no more than "social problems that were smuggled into sociology" and that "vary according to the fluctuations of the moment's social consciousness. Here is one of the mediations by

means of which the social world constructs its own representation, making use of sociology and the sociologist." How, Bourdieu asks, can one escape from this "clandestine persuasion"? To this end he suggests one should pursue "the social history of the problems, the objects, and the instruments of thinking which construct social reality" (1989, 36). As an example he decodes *profession,* "a word from common language which entered scientific language as contraband" (p. 40). In the domain of Indigenism an equivalent word would be *nomadism,* a recurring attribute of the indigenous way of life decried by a wide range of outsiders, such as missionaries, administrators, businesspeople, and settlers. Transposed to anthropological discourse, nomadism was hoisted from plain stereotype to scientific truth. A critical look at idées reçues should be part and parcel of any analytical enterprise. In the field of music, for instance, Stravinsky (1996) exercises his fine critical power to demystify modernity, among other things. If this exercise is crucial to the arts, what do we say of social sciences whose task it is to take "reality" as an object of study and not as a model in itself? To analyze is to pull apart, to scrutinize what is behind the obvious, to catch dogmas in their contradictions, or to unveil covert meanings in statements and actions that are the opposite of their stated intentions. Without critically evaluating the concepts one uses in a field such as anthropology, one risks simply repeating reality. Actually, the risk is greater than that. The risk is that the repetition of a concept without critical evaluation of it lends the concept an aura of scientific legitimacy. Just as tropes surface insidiously in language, as Hayden White (1973) demonstrated for history, so received ideas tend to adhere to one's discourse on the Other with so much ease that it takes a great deal of effort to break their hypnotic pull. But once we manage to break free, we find a Pandora's box scattering fragments of unanticipated meanings around our field of critical vision. Although the risk is that the social scientist will be immobilized, rummaging through words and their explicit and implicit messages is worthwhile.

What follows is an exploration of the surreptitious meanings of notions attributed to Indians by non-Indians. The idea is to break the picture of *the Indian* of the interethnic imagination into as many of its components as possible. We will see the Indian as child, the Indian as heathen, the Indian as nomad, the Indian as primitive, and the Indian as savage. No doubt the reader will immediately think of myriad other terms also applied to Indians, such as *native, exotic, noble, natural,* and *pure,* not to mention the term *Indian* itself, which has indeed been amply reviewed as a dictionary entry (Reissner 1983). One must, however, be selective, lest the project grow into a full-sized dictionary, outweighing the present undertaking. The words chosen have great power to set the background for the realities of Indigenism in Brazil. They are all part of the explicit vocabulary used by the actors

of the Brazilian interethnic universe. Excluded are metaphoric terms that come to the surface by means of analysis, such as the Indian as woman in Chapter 5. I refer to a number of adjectives in my analysis, although I do not make them separate entries: *dirty, lazy, unreliable,* and other stereotypes such as *cannibals, warriors,* and *tribal.* Because these words are often associated with more inclusive images—heathen, child, nomad, primitive, and savage—I take them to be distinctive features of these images. As I said, my concern is not to search for the origin and development of the words as such but to track down the ideological underpinnings of their current usage. The alphabetical order is a mere convenience of presentation.

Child

The term *child* is commonly used in relation to Indians in spoken language but more rarely so in writing. Instead of explicitly using the word child, speakers refer to such traits as absence of malice, incompleteness, credulity, innocence, and candor in regard to Indians, which brings them close to the usual idea one has of Western children. These attributes fit the definition of *childlike.* According to *Webster's Encyclopedic Unabridged Dictionary of the English Language,* the adjective childlike is to be 'like a child, as in innocence, frankness, etc.; befitting a child; *childlike candor.* . . . **Syn.** young, ingenuous, simple, guileless, trusting, innocent. . . . **Ant.** sophisticated, adult'.

European thinking seems to have been inspired by Aristotle, who applied the notion of children to adults of other cultures. But Aristotle's children were not simply the epitome of a joyful phase of innocence in one's life cycle:

> Children . . . were regarded by Aristotle as little more than animals so long as their reason remained in a state of becoming. . . . "While the heir is a child," said Vitoria quoting Saint Paul, "he does not differ from a slave." So, too, with the Indian. Like the children of other races he will one day grow into a free and independent citizen of a true *polis.* Until that time arrives, however, he must, for his own benefit, remain in just tutelage under the king of Spain, his status now slave-like, but not slavish. (Pagden 1982, 104)

Aristotle, then, provided the intellectual justification for Europeans to regard "the American Indian as a 'natural man' incapable of rational and hence moral choice"; hence, it was Europeans' "Christian duty to care for peoples who were still in a condition of childlike imbecility" (p. 3).

Not surprisingly, the image of the Indian as child was duly carried to Brazil in 1500. Pero Vaz de Caminha, the scribe of Pedro Álvares Cabral, "discoverer" of Brazil, was enthralled by what he called the Indians' inno-

cence of both body and soul. The candid and handsome nakedness of sixteenth-century Tupinambá was visual evidence of the native peoples' ingenuous and virginal minds. Caminha saw a glorious panorama of future Christians just waiting for proper training. Like children, they needed to be initiated in the arts of true humanity. "They seem to me of such innocence that, if we understood their speech and they ours, they would soon be Christians . . . because these people are certainly good and of beautiful simplicity" (Caminha 1963, 60).[1] They were beautiful, simple, innocent children of a paradisiacal land capable of yielding anything one would care to sow. Just as the land was "so gracious that, if we want to use it, it will yield everything" (p. 67), so were the Indians gracious and pliable. But if Caminha gazed at the new land and its inhabitants with admiration, he also regarded both as so rudimentary as to incite the mastering impulse of the Europeans. The supposed simplicity of native customs was quickly translated as intellectual inferiority. The Portuguese were struck by the absence in Tupinambá language of the *f*, *l*, and *r* sounds. This linguistic feature helped the conquerors explain to themselves why the Indians had no faith (*fé*), no law (*lei*), and no king (*rei*). Lack of religion, laws, and government attested to the primitiveness of the Indians and thus became a major trope of conquest (Giucci 1993).

With the arrival of the Jesuits in the midsixteenth century, the Portuguese drew up special legislation for the Indians because of their "mental undevelopment" that made them unequal to the rest of the population. According to this legislation, the Indians were the immature children of the colonial powers. The authorities "must take the position of parents, charged with correcting and protecting their social offspring. After all, [Indians] were in the 'infancy of humanity,' in a 'new world,' and had proved . . . that they were not of the same age (= maturity) as the Christians" (Baêta Neves 1978, 121).

Thus, as decades and then centuries advanced, Caminha's seemingly lyrical vision gave way to concerns that were expressed more pragmatically. The job of taking possession of the new colony sent the Portuguese in pursuit of indigenous slave labor, first in the extractive industry of brazilwood, later on sugarcane plantations, in gold mining, and the like (Monteiro 1994). The Indians' indifference to commodities such as gold made them look puerile in the eyes of the conquerors. As McGrane explains,

> The Other is inferior to the European because he is not, as the European is, capable of having a responsible relationship with this gold that surrounds him, and hence the European appropriation of it is justified. This formulation we may term the Other-as-Child. . . . In reference to gold and spices the non-European Other is a child, but an adult child, a man-child, i.e., he is not equal to his own desires. (1989, 25–26)

1. Caminha's letter, written on the first of May 1500 and addressed to D. Manuel I, king of Portugal, has had a number of published versions. I am freely translating from the text edited by Leonardo Arroyo published in Brazil in 1963.

In the mideighteenth century the colonial Portuguese Law of Liberties converted Indian slaves into indentured servants. In the province of Grão-Pará, then a separate colony from the rest of Brazil, the government required Indians to remain for six years with their former masters or wherever they happened to be working. The idea was that, because indigenous ex-slaves had no experience other than total freedom and slavery, they needed time to become accustomed to the new order, according to which they were paid for their labor. Moreover, to prevent the now-free Indians from simply abandoning the work, the colonial government placed them under the Regulation of Orphans. This rule was to be applied to the " 'rustics,' the 'ignorant,' and the 'vagrants who do not want to do any sort of work' " (Farage and Carneiro da Cunha 1987, 108). It excluded Indians who earned their living as artisans and those who still lived in their traditional villages. Although the measure was pragmatically designed to ensure the continuity of the labor force after slavery was banned, not to declare Indians as debilitated children (p. 111), it is revealing, to say the least, that the rule associated the official termination of the master-slave relationship with orphanage, the rupture by death of the parent-child link. The orphanage metaphor was a potent forerunner of legislation that would declare all Indians, laborers or not, isolated or not, known and yet to be known, as relatively incapable and hence wards of the state.

Lest one form the idea that state orphanage is an exclusively Brazilian phenomenon, it is worth making a quick mention of another colonial country. Early twentieth-century Australia declared the offspring of European men and Aboriginal women (the possibility that Aboriginal men and European women would cohabitate simply was not entertained) to be orphans. Because of the "British blood" they carried in their veins, these "half-breeds" or "half-castes" were pulled away from their maternal home and influence as a way of rescuing them "from the degradation of the blacks' camp."

> Assuming the legal authority of the parent, without transmitting 'blood', the state turned its wards into orphans, cut off from their Aboriginal kin without acquiring European kin. Uncertain about what it was creating, and fearful of atavism, it often repeated the separation of parents and children in subsequent generations, while limiting the scope of relationships that were allowed to exist. Such practices seemed to envisage a population of perpetual orphans. (Beckett 1988b, 198)

Apparently keener to absorb "the 'mixed blood' population into the white majority" (p. 199) than Brazil was, Australia put a much greater emphasis on the notion of blood—European blood, that is—as a powerful solvent that could "whiten" Aborigines and thus make more palatable their sharing of the nation-European Australia was eagerly trying to build. As we will see in Chapter 2, for Brazilians blood—Indian blood this time—translates as a potent marker for an emerging Brazilianness that was distinct from the culture of the European colonizers.

As indigenous labor lost its importance for the national economy as a whole, the image of the Indian as childlike became sharper. Early in the twentieth century,

> indigenous societies appeared as infantile forms . . . which should be guided by means of guardianship toward the civilization of our society. Guardianship, which above all was to have been a state instrument to defend indigenous lands, was then discussed in terms . . . that took for granted the infantile character of Indians and their societies. . . . [The] protection conferred on the Indians [was] based on their alleged infantility at the expense of public guardianship of their goods and, particularly, their lands. (Farage and Carneiro da Cunha 1987, 114)

Always treated in Brazilian legislation as a residual category, Indians were inserted in the 1916 Civil Code as objects of guardianship to last until they became adapted to national society. They remained as orphans until 1928 when the Indian Protection Service, created in 1910, took over their guardianship from the judge of orphans. In the 1960s married women, who had been included in the category of the relatively incapable, were liberated from this humiliating condition, but the Indians continued as before. Article 6 of the Civil Code, still current, establishes who is relatively incapable to exercise certain acts:

> I—Minors between sixteen and twenty-one years of age.
> II—Prodigals.
> III—Indians (*silvícolas*).
> The Indians (silvícolas) are subjected to the guardianship regime, as established by special laws and regulations, which will cease as they become adapted to the civilization of the country. (Farage and Carneiro da Cunha 1987, 117)

The legal insistence on the Indians' status as relatively incapable derives from the notion that Indians need protection because they are ill equipped to live in modern society. Thus, although they are unqualified to exercise full citizenship, they have the right to the exclusive use of their lands. Thus protection of indigenous territories is a result of the Indians' infantile condition rather than a historical right for having occupied them before any

Brazilians (Carneiro da Cunha 1987, 28–32). If an Indian person or group chooses to become "emancipated" from the condition of relative incapability, the person or group can gain full citizenship, but this will be accompanied by the loss of the right to exclusive land use, for only as civil minors are Indians entitled to the possession of their territories. Once people are declared non-Indians, their lands lose their feature of inalienability. Perceiving this as a Catch-22, no Indian person or group has ever seriously requested emancipation. Indians would rather continue to bear the humiliation of being labeled as incompetent children than lose the right to their communal lands. All things considered, and given the resistance of the Brazilian judiciary to acknowledge communal property rights, guardianship seems to be the lesser of two evils.

Brazil's 1988 Constitution introduced a discordant note into the tradition of regarding Indianness as a preadult, temporary condition. According to the new constitution, the Indian is no longer a child to be promoted into ethnic adulthood. Article 231 specifies that Indians have the right to their own social organization, customs, languages, beliefs, and traditions, as well as usufruct of the lands they traditionally occupy; the union is obliged to demarcate and protect these lands and ensure that the indigenous ways of life are respected. This constitutional change was in large part the result of a strong pro-Indian lobby active during the Constitutional Assembly held in Brasília. Large numbers of Indians, nongovernmental organizations, and professional associations, such as the Brazilian Anthropological Association and the Association of Geologists, successfully influenced members of Congress to legally recognize indigenous ethnic differences and an attendant set of rights to natural resources, subsoil excluded.

But although the Constitution grants Indians the right to remain Indians, the Civil Code, in specifying their special status, declares that such status will eventually be suspended. The expectation is that the Indians will "adapt" to Brazilian civilization and hence stop being Indians. The assumption is that one cannot be "adapted" and continue to be an Indian. Adaptation would mean a change in ethnic identity. While Indians are not adapted, they will remain under the wardship of the state. The Constitution is mute about guardianship, so in practice the 1916 Civil Code and the 1973 Indian Statute, both of which are under revision, continue to regulate the legal status of indigenous peoples. For all the advances of the new constitution regarding indigenous rights, one has the nagging feeling that plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose. From orphans of slavery to wards of the state, Indians in Brazil continue to endure the stigma of being eternally immature in the name of a protection that often exacerbates that stigma.

In some quarters of the Brazilian state, most explicitly—but not exclusively—among the military, the Indian-as-child is in fact taken to be a

liability to the nation. Regarded as both ignorant and gullible, with no commitment to patriotism, the Indians who live in frontier areas, especially in the Amazon, are considered a potential hazard to national sovereignty because they can easily fall prey to the greed of foreign groups or individuals interested in Amazonian natural resources. Researchers and missionaries are the most common targets for accusations of manipulating indigenous innocence in order to take over the region. In a 1990 document the Superior School of War (Escola Superior de Guerra, ESG) proposed that "anthropological cysts" that grow among indigenous groups be crushed by warfare, for they operate as beachheads for the takeover of Amazonia. Army general Antenor Cruz Abreu later repeated this notion in an interview, which bore the headline "Amazonia May Become a Vietnam, Says a General. ESG's 1990 Document Admitted the Hypothesis of Warfare in Case of the Internationalization of the Region" (*Folha de São Paulo* 1991). The specter of the internationalization of the Amazon has become a major topos in the discourse of national security, persisting well beyond the military regime that lasted from 1964 to 1985.

Each renewal of this national anxiety invariably evokes two figures: the military and the Indians. The Indians, viewed as unconscious facilitators of alien encroachment, come under the surveillance of the military. Because Indians are not responsible for what they do, the military needs to watch them, lest the Indians cause harm to the nation's interests. To the military the Indians, who do not have full citizenship, are as suspect as foreigners. Convinced that only nationals can protect the country's borders, the military has attempted to remove all Indians from the frontier zone and to open to colonization indigenous areas located within a 150-kilometer-wide strip along the northern border. Imputing childish irresponsibility to the Indians who therefore endanger the nation's autonomy is but a strategy to expropriate their lands for occupation by Brazilians. "The world has changed, but for the military the 'enemies' of Amazonia continue to be the same as in the sixties, seventies, and eighties" (Nogueira and Figueiredo 1996). The syndrome—fear of loss of state sovereignty by internationalization—may be relatively recent, but the ultimate goal—appropriation of Indian lands—is as old as Brazil. We will see in Chapter 8 some military strategies to control the Indian issue in the Amazon.

But the supposed immaturity of the Indians arouses more than a basic telluric greed. It can also reflect the condition of the country as a whole. Hélio Jaguaribe, a well-known political scientist and former minister of science and technology, stated in 1994 that Brazil will have no more Indians by the twenty-first century. By sending all Indians to school, Brazil will turn the native peoples into Brazilian citizens. Infantile Indians would thus come of age by means of formal Western-style education. Schooling would thus

be the magic stroke that would reduce undesirable differences to a uniform sea of citizenship. Bringing Indians to "cultural maturity" would therefore end the "Indian problem," and Brazil could then claim to be a civilized country. Just as a belief in sympathetic magic assumes that equal attracts equal, the fear behind Jaguaribe's statement seems to be that childlike Indians might infantilize Brazil (more about Jaguaribe later and in Chapter 6).

The equation of adults and children can summon different responses. It can evoke arrogance or humility. So far we have explored the arrogant aspect of the Indian as child. Turning now to the use anthropology makes of the image of childlikeness, we can see how apparent humility may, although not necessarily, conceal arrogance. At the risk of digressing it is worth looking into the way anthropologists have dealt with the image of adult as child.

The respect generated by the intimate knowledge of native societies is an antidote to crude biases such as those just considered. Nevertheless, the image of the child is often present in ethnographic writings but in an inverted way. For now the children are the ethnographers themselves. Just to give a few examples, we find this in Evans-Pritchard: "That means you are their pupil, an infant to be taught and guided" (1976, 253). We find it in Seeger: "[The Suyá] treated me like a child—which I was, for I did not know how to speak or to see as they saw. . . . They treated me like a 12 year-old boy . . . for I knew how to paddle, to fish and hunt nearby as a 12 year-old does. . . . There is much to laugh about a couple of clumsy adults who act as children and the Suyá love to laugh" (1980, 34, 35). We find it in Ramos: "I burst with pride when they complimented me for my progress in language learning, comparing me to a five-year-old child" (1995a, 5). What is behind the seemingly natural simile of an awkward foreign adult and a native child in the context of interethnic differences? Does the ethnographer experience the same constraints that Indians do when they are called children? Or is it just a rhetorical artifice to put across the feeling of inadequacy when one plunges into someone else's culture? The metaphor of the child's coming of age by means of ethnographic knowledge is by now a cliché. Ethnographers have explored imagery drawn from ethnographic accounts of rites of passage to fashion the discipline's own fictions. Beyond the aptness of the simile, apparently so obvious as to not require commentary, one might find some interesting innuendoes that can help us understand that other fiction of the Indian as child. For embedded in the simile is the silent distance between promoting and demoting individuals or collectivities to childhood.

One question raised by this simile is the cross-cultural meaning of *child*. Do the Suyá laugh at their twelve-year-olds as they do at their ethnographers? Is a twelve-year-old Suyá, or a five-year-old Sanumá equivalent to a North American or Brazilian child of the same age? If I may refer to my experience as a member of a "Western" society, I would say that in the

West children are encouraged to be puerile for as long as possible. A vast and complex industry of infantility pours millions of gadgets, television programs, and magazines into the market designed to maximize the childishness of children, often infantilizing adults as well. The ultimate affront is to use the Indian as a plastic toy (*The Indian in the Cupboard*) to entertain Western children. The old North American tradition of "playing Indian" has now reached cyberspace (the *Pocahontas* debate; see Strong 1996). It is the Indian as child in more ways than one.

Although the West creates a whole world to be peopled by children, children are not allowed to enter large areas of adult society. The gulf between Western children and adults has, among other things, opened a huge field on the psychopathology of growing up and the malaise caused by the generation gap. At certain times and in certain places the matter is so serious that it becomes the object of public policy.

A Munduruku Indian has written a book for Brazilian children. In telling amusing anecdotes about his encounter with national ignorance regarding Indians, the author exposes much discrimination and prejudice among urban populations. His style is light and humorous, infused with the candor and sweetness with which one addresses the young. Charming as it may be, Daniel Munduruku's 1996 book does little to offset the strong tendency to infantilize the Indian. Its simplified language has the mimetic effect of simplifying the subject matter. One may well ask why the Indian is so rarely the theme of serious adult writing in contemporary Brazil.

Western children have a long and rather painful history. At least since classical Greece, their status has been rather dubious, 'little more than animals'. Do these children of the West resemble the children of indigenous peoples? The ethnographic record says no, and so does Lévi-Strauss: "Every fieldworker who has had concrete experience of primitive children will undoubtedly agree that . . . in many regards the primitive child appears far more mature and positive than a child in our own society, and is to be compared more with a civilized adult" (1969, 92). Significant differences in socialization result in significant differences in social product. Again drawing from my experience among the Sanumá, a Yanomami subgroup, a child is given the respect of a future adult. The basic difference between Sanumá children and grownups is that the children have not yet had time to accumulate as much knowledge. Sanumá children have access to every domain of sociability, all the way from shamanic sessions to sexual encounters. No cultural areas are prohibited to children. No industry prolongs their immaturity. Most of their toys are miniatures of objects they will use in their adult life. Infants are not addressed in baby talk but in normal speech, including vocabulary and intonation. In short, children are not infantilized beyond their natural capacities to speak and act.

The learning process, also known as childrearing, most commonly refers to the socialization of children, of reproducing the sociocultural apparatus in the new generations. Children are totally dependent on adults to pass on knowledge. This dependence means that children are literally at the mercy of grownups to acquire skills, including those necessary for survival; without them, children would not have a chance. This aspect of helpless dependence is what the dominant society appropriates in characterizing indigenous peoples. The latter's knowledge is irrelevant to Brazilians. Because Indians are thought to be unable to speak the national language, drive cars, or put money in the bank, they are inferior incomplete beings, just as children are in the national society. And when Indians show themselves capable of doing all these things, a certain widespread common understanding says they are no longer Indians. From this point of view Indians *as* Indians are by definition in a permanent state of ignorance, in need of learning from civilized teachers, forever caught in the Caliban-Prospero trap (Shakespeare [1611] 1987; Baêta Neves 1978; Retamar 1989; Mannoni 1990).

But when ethnographers go into the field to learn the local cultural code, their dependence is of a different sort. Their residence is a voluntary act, frequently for a short time, which results in manifest benefit to the ethnographers. Their survival is rarely dependent on the knowledge they are there to acquire. Moreover, the trade goods that most of us carry are efficient guarantees of fair treatment. In the same piece in which Evans-Pritchard declares himself a pupil of the Azande, an infant to be instructed and guided, he also says that his main Zande informants were his two "personal servants" (1976, 247). Our dependence is thus more symbolic than real, for if fieldwork aborts, we can simply pack up and leave, an option no longer open to indigenous peoples anywhere in the Americas. Perhaps in the effort to counterbalance the negative image of Indian as child, ethnographers put themselves in the same position—as if to show that anyone who has something to learn is bound to fall into the slot of childhood. However, the lighthearted childlikeness of the ethnographer is reduced to a witticism when compared to the predicament of Indians in the profoundly unequal world of interethnic relations. In posing as children to their hosts ethnographers are far from stepping into the Indians' interethnic shoes. In fact, I dare say that the ethnographer as child is the epitome of a perverse rhetoric that, whether consciously or not, has the effect of diluting the gravity of the stereotype of native as child. This clumsy relativism—"you say they are like children when among us, but look, we are too when among them"—misses the political point of interethnic inequality. The image of the infantile ethnographer is at most cute, whereas the image of the infantile Indian is a stigma at the service of the native person's subjugation. It is, in other words, a matter of differential power.

The native as childlike is therefore far from being an innocent image that emanates mere condescension. "Aside from the evolutionist figure of the savage there has been no conception more obviously implicated in political and cultural oppression than that of the childlike native" (Fabian 1983, 63).

Heathen

Again we can begin with what the dictionary says about *heathen:*

> *n.* 1. an irreligious or unenlightened person. 2. an unconverted individual of a people that do not acknowledge the God of the Bible; one who is neither a Jew, Christian, nor Muslim; pagan. 3. (formerly) any person neither Christian nor Jewish, esp. a member of the Islamic faith or of a polytheistic religion: *Many a knight joined the crusades to fight the heathens. –adj.* 4. irreligious or unenlightened. 5. pagan; of or pertaining to the heathen . . .—Syn. 5. heathenish, barbarous. HEATHEN, PAGAN are both applied to peoples who are not Christian, Jewish, or Muslim. HEATHEN is often distinctively applied to unenlightened or barbaric idolaters, esp. to primitive or ancient tribes: **heathen rites, idols.** PAGAN, though applied to any of the peoples not worshipping according to the three religions mentioned above, is most frequently used in speaking of the ancient Greeks and Romans: *a pagan poem; a pagan civilization.*

This is the province par excellence of organized religion in most of its Christian persuasions. The distinction between heathen and pagan, and the subsequent assimilation of both, opens an interesting field of discussion about the change of mood in the colonizers regarding the status of the indigenous soul, whether a blank page where Christianity could be easily written, or a tortured spirit peopled with demons. In his "discovery letter" Caminha insists on the tabula rasa aspect of the Tupinambá people, clearly a religious empty slate, "for they neither have nor understand any belief, judging from appearances" (1963, 60).

Soon, the first Jesuits on the Brazilian coast realized that the Indians were not devoid of beliefs and idols. From then on, the future of the demonized native was to be a long one.[2]

For the Jesuits one of the most unnerving features of Tupinambá religious behavior was the lack of fidelity. One moment the Tupinambá had the missionaries believing they gladly accepted the word of God, the next moment they would fall back to their barbarous drinking and cannibalistic feasts. The "inconstancy of the savage soul" drove the Jesuits to propose the use of force against the Indians:

> Thus he [converted leader Tibiriçá] manifested the deceit of his faith, which he had pretended to have, and he and all the other neophytes fell back without rein to their old customs. One cannot therefore expect or succeed to convert the heathens in all this land without the arrival of many Christians who . . . subject the Indians to the yoke of slavery and force them to accept the flag of Christ. (Anchieta, quoted in Viveiros de Castro 1992, 50)

A master move in the direction of total control was the Jesuits' change of strategy from visiting Indian villages to the "reduction" of indigenous populations into large concentrated settlements totally run by the missionaries. The "missions" or "reductions" had many advantages over the previous itinerant pattern of individual priests or small groups of priests that would go from village to village, dispensing various kinds of sacraments, the most important of which was baptism. No longer did the missionaries have to go to the Indians. The Indians came to the missionaries, albeit not spontaneously. Massive recruitment into missionary settlements was far from being an indigenous decision, and it was achieved with the help of the colonial powers (Marchant 1942, 115), particularly by means of the infamous *tropas de resgate* (*resgate* in Portuguese means both 'rescue' and 'ransom') and *descimentos* (forced removals) so recurrent in Brazilian colonial history; "even our heroic Nóbrega, uncompromising defender of indigenous freedom, came to propose just wars as a solution to the evangelization of rebellious Indians" (Montero 1996, 62).

A mission was a total institution (Goffman 1961) with a hierarchical distribution of power that closely resembled the state itself. The Jesuits were sovereign and grew so powerful that the colonial government became alarmed. As Baêta Neves points out, the missions were a first step the Jesuits took to distance themselves from colonial society. "The Villages [i.e., missions] seek to have maximum autonomy with regard to their internal affairs, and take on an autarchic character which makes them less vulnerable to the political game of the colony at large" (1978, 162).

For uprooted Indians the advent of the missions was also a turning point from autonomous village life to a regime of utter dependence on colonial society. Thousands of Indians were removed from their villages to live under complete Jesuit control in the most capillary Foucauldian fashion. Using a rigid and full daily schedule the missionaries administered the Indi-

2. Of the vast literature on the Jesuits in sixteenth-century Brazil I shall make special reference to Baêta Neves 1978; Mello e Souza 1993; Vainfas 1995; and Viveiros de Castro 1992. See also Bettencourt 1992; Gambini 1988; Hemming 1978; S. Leite 1993; Meliá and Nagel 1995; Monteiro 1992; Nascimento, in press; Raminelli 1996; Ribeiro 1993; Shapiro 1987; and Thomas 1982.

ans' lives all the way from hygienic habits to schoolwork, regimented work, and leisure. Latin leveled the language differences in school, Portuguese in social situations, and "Tupi" in "external use." The mission was thus "a vast total pedagogical project" by means of which indigenous life was literally reduced to the commandments of the reduction (Baêta Neves 1978, 162).

The mission system offered many advantages. Not the least important was that missionary autonomy amounted to a quasi-state within the colonial state, not only in terms of control over large indigenous populations but also in terms of land tenure and other material resources. Physical comfort replaced the long, hard, and often lonely walks through swamp and forest. The priests' newly fixed abode provided an easy lesson for the *brasis*, as the Indians were then called, on the merits of a sedentary life. The total control of indigenous activities resulted in a thorough resocialization of the young and with it the longed-for "conversions." The mission succeeded in breaking the back of Tupinambá culture: no more intertribal vengeance, warfare, shamanism, polygyny, or cannibalism or the tattooing associated with it. The Jesuits had finally harnessed the slippery souls of the Indians.

Although they had many "benefits," the reductions had two major drawbacks: the frequent epidemics that ravaged the indigenous population and the constant slave raids by colonists in search of free labor. Both profited immensely from the high population density of the missions. The astonishing mortality rate—in the late sixteenth century the 40,000 Indians in fourteen Bahia "churches" were reduced to 3,500 "souls" in three churches (Anchieta, quoted in Ribeiro and Moreira Neto 1993, 28)—demanded continuous replacements, and thus the missionaries conscripted more Indians, who were equally subjected to deculturation, contagious diseases, and/or slavery in an infernal spiral of pestilence and death. In about two centuries of mission life on the coast of Brazil the Jesuit "utopia" succeeded in first eliminating cannibalism—the quintessence of missionary abhorrence—then intertribal warfare—the quintessence of Tupinambá culture—and finally the Tupinambá themselves. By 1759, when the marquis of Pombal, Portugal's prime minister, expelled the Jesuits from Brazil, the Tupinambá were virtually extinct. So much for the first heathens of the land, a tragically real instance of throwing the baby out with the bathwater.

The Tupinambá vanished, the Jesuits came and went, and Franciscans, Capuchins, Carmelites, Salesians, and Benedictines—just to mention some Catholic orders—populated what were considered still vacant spiritual spaces throughout Brazil, but the vision of the heathen or pagan Indian was to remain as a symbolic commodity in the country's interethnic landscape.

Until quite recently, the Roman Catholic Church did not show itself to be very comprehending of cultural differences, apart from the dividing

line between "tame" Indians and "wild" Indians—the former regarded as legitimate ingredients of the nascent Brazilian nationality, the latter a threat to this same nationality. As late as the nineteenth century, Catholic missionaries applied physical punishment to force the Indians to comply with their regulations. They defended the procedure quite explicitly as the only way to subdue the natives, for, in a priest's words, "rigor is more useful than kindness; because they (the Indians) are more prone to fear than to respect, to the stick than to Rhetoric, to castigation than to disguise" (Galvão 1979, 141). Stereotypes that were current among colonists, administrators, and the like were also freely dispensed by missionaries. An example is the description of Uaupés Indians by Father Alcionílio Brüzzi Alves da Silva as late as 1962. In his "observations of the psychology of the Indian" he says:

> Since the Indian is physically sluggish in his movements, he is also slow to give us the most obvious answer. Lethargic to understand an order we give him, he finds it difficult to accompany our thinking. . . . Thus, one should not expect from the Indian great tenacity of will. One cannot count on him for regular, identical work. [Because the Indian] feels inferior to the white, [when he faces] the *civilizado* whose superiority he recognizes and feels, he always shows docility. . . . [The] Indian is neither a hero of fatigue, nor the prototype of laziness, although by temperament he is slow of movements. He will, however, produce reasonable work under two conditions: a fearful respect for the whites, and constant surveillance. (quoted in Ramos 1980b, 2)

Here the widespread theme of the lazy native (Alatas 1977) is given ontological status. Brüzzi shows himself totally oblivious to the historical irony of attributing indolence to the Indians simply because they—like anyone else—loathed forced labor. Brüzzi's Indians have filled their minds with illusions that distort their thinking and render them prone to silly superstitions. But, he adds, "one can easily understand that this is so for he [the Indian] lacks control of a more developed and educated intelligence; to the contrary, his mind is informed by childish tales and beliefs, incoherent and even absurd." But Brüzzi's Indians have their good qualities too. They are stoic, keen observers, pragmatic, and artistically sensitive; most noticeable is the Indians' "charming naïveté. They are a jolly race" (quoted in Ramos 1980b, 2).

For more than fifty years the Salesians constructed a solid dominion in the Upper Rio Negro region of Brazil's northwest Amazon. Somewhat similar to the sixteenth-century Jesuits, the Salesians based their control of the indigenous population on the educational system of boarding schools. Children were recruited into the mission and visited their families only during vacation. The traditional village layout and ornate constructions

were completely obliterated and redesigned in regional style. Also like the early Jesuits, the Salesians selected a local language, Tukano, as their lingua franca, at the expense of the fourteen or so other indigenous groups in the area under missionary influence (Oliveira 1983).

Only in the early 1970s did the more progressive wing of the Catholic Church begin to change its outlook regarding cultural diversity and the role of evangelization. A new concept was introduced into the missionary project, namely, "enculturation." This project was inspired by the anthropological concept of acculturation, but the church has nevertheless transformed it to its own purposes. "Enculturation inverts . . . the direction of contact: whereas 'acculturation' describes the movement from the native to civilization, enculturation attempts to move toward native culture, defined as a 'process according to which the Church inserts itself in a given culture' " (Montero 1996, 120). In actual practice this tactic is like a return to the peripatetic premission times, now with a strongly relativistic flavor. The branch of the Catholic Church that is active in indigenous rights, the Conselho Indigenista Missionário (CIMI), has exalted what has been referred to as "incarnation," the mimetic effort of missionaries to blend themselves with indigenous peoples in order to carry out an agenda of "presence and annunciation." Presence means the direct participation of the missionary in indigenous daily life. Again one finds echoes of anthropological inspiration, as this idea of presence brings to mind the ethnographic motto of participant observation. By sharing the Indians' problems as they are experienced, particularly regarding land issues, the missionaries are better equipped to propose solutions. But their presence must never be dissociated from "the *annunciation*—the properly religious and spiritual dimension of pastoral action where preaching the Gospel is central—of the Christian message" (Rufino 1996, 162–63; see also CIMI 1979).

Although the policy of enculturation has led to an atmosphere that is a far cry from that of the early Jesuit missions, it is not devoid of contradiction. Despite its urge to redeem the past of physical and spiritual violence, its ultimate goal is to transform the Indians into Christians, albeit "indigenous Christians." Enculturation is the " 'effort to have the Gospel penetrate a given cultural milieu by calling upon it to grow according to its own values, so long as they are compatible with the Gospel.' Embedded in this definition is the whole dilemma of 'enculturated evangelization.' It wants to preserve the universal and the particular at the same time" (Montero 1996, 120). No matter how politically correct, evangelization is always an endeavor to turn native cultures into Christian cultures.

Protestant missionaries, lacking the compunction of the progressive Catholics and much newer to the indigenist scene, have maintained a general policy of noninterference in the political issues of interethnic contact

while carrying out their persistent work of Christianizing the heathens.[3] The ubiquitous trade goods are their constant allies in convincing the Indians to abandon shamanism, polygyny, infanticide, drug taking, and all those features rated as offensive to Christendom. In the late 1970s a member of the Unevangelized Fields' Mission candidly reported to me that the missionaries withdrew a full load of trade goods, payment for indigenous labor for the mission, from Yanomami workers because they refused to comply with the missionaries' directive to stop shamanizing and having more than one wife. But let us hear a Yekuana (Maiongong) man from the Brazil-Venezuela border area tell his tale of Protestants:

> It was in Venezuela. He [the missionary] arrived speaking a different language that nobody understood. He didn't speak Spanish, anything. We figured he belonged to other people. Then [the missionaries] learned a little Maiongong. The Maiongong had many feasts and they [the missionaries] got very angry. They would go and break the record player. They spoke little Maiongong and didn't even speak Spanish. They would drink *cashiri* [manioc beer], get dizzy and said that was a thing of Satan, that Maiongong had Satan in them, and we would say that it was a Satan thing for them, not for us, that they could go away if they wanted. They would come saying that everybody was a brother, but we would tell them they were different, spoke different, not even Spanish did they speak. There was a Maiongong man who was ill and the Americans said: "be a believer and you'll recover." Then the man became a believer and recovered and everybody else wanted to be a believer too. But Americans are always angry with the Maiongong. At night they would put a book on a Maiongong's mouth and would say: "Look, it's your food, the history of God!" and they quarrelled. . . . In Venezuela there are many Americans. The Maiongong fought a lot with missionaries because they said that Maiongong history was wrong. After five years they spoke Maiongong well. The Maiongong in Venezuela are all believers. (Ramos 1980b, 79)

Disease has been the great ally of the missionary enterprise. The sixteenth-century Tupinambá came to consider baptism, the quintessence of sacra-

3. A characteristic feature of Protestant missionaries in Indian areas is to avoid any involvement with political actions in defense of indigenous peoples. Their tacit policy is not to rock the boat, not to antagonize national authorities so as not to jeopardize their residence among the heathens. On several occasions North American fundamentalist missionaries have been linked to expansionist projects of the United States, sometimes with the collaboration of the receiving country's authorities (Stoll 1982; González 1989; Colby and Bennett 1995). Some scholars question this judgment (Fernandes 1980; Gallois and Grupioni, in press), but it remains to be explained, for instance, why the fundamentalists were the only people working with the Yanomami who were not expelled from the Indian area in 1987 at the beginning of the gold rush. All others—Catholic missionaries, medical teams, and anthropologists—were banned from Yanomami territory for three years (Ramos 1995a).

mental practices, as the source of lethal epidemics, perhaps with good reason. "The Jesuits themselves frequently pointed out this particular horror the Indians felt for the Catholic sacrament, especially for the baptisms *in extremis,* common in the Missions during smallpox epidemics. The shamans then proclaimed that 'baptism killed' as they verified that the Indians died as soon as they received the 'sanctified oils'" (Vainfas 1995, 121). Epidemics, the "Secret Judgments of God" (Cook and Lovell 1991), have had as strong, if not stronger, an effect on the control of indigenous peoples as have warfare, persuasion, or any other tactics of conquest (Ramos 1995b).

The same Unevangelized Fields' Mission (known in Brazil as MEVA), operating among the Yanomami in the northern Brazilian state of Roraima, also covers Wai Wai territory in the border region between Brazil and Guyana (former British Guiana). Beginning in the late 1940s the Hawkins brothers worked hard to convert the shaman Ewká, the leader of the Wai Wai in Guyana, for if Ewká converted, the others would follow suit. It was a time of epidemics (flu, pneumonia, tuberculosis, measles), and the shamans were unable to cure the sick. "When they saw their power fail . . . the shamans committed suicide" (Queiroz, in press). Those who abandoned shamanism to try the new religion also died, so it became a general belief that conversion would mean death.

> The missionaries promised to "save" the Wai Wai with western medicines and with a new religion. The preachers said that "the world would end in a huge fire and that they could show the way to salvation and a better life." They proposed that leader Ewká abandon his beliefs and guaranteed that he would not die of it as his people's tradition sustained. If he died the missionaries would leave the village. Otherwise, Jesus' superiority over Wai Wai spirits would have been proven, and the Wai Wai should accept the new faith. (Queiroz, in press)

Ewká did not die and in fact became one of the first Wai Wai to embrace the career of indigenous itinerant preacher. "Ewká was sent on various expeditions with the purpose of bringing the Indians on the Brazilian side to the village created in Guyana, for the Mission considered the number of evangelized Indians still small" (p. 226). Since then the Wai Wai have turned into the most active indigenous evangelizers in the Amazon. They are often recruited by the National Indian Foundation (FUNAI) on pacification expeditions, which was the case with the Waimiri-Atroari in the 1970s. Paraphrasing Whitehead's concept of "ethnic soldiering" (1990), I would say that the Wai Wai are a clear case of "ethnic *bibling*." They serve as beachheads on the evangelical front, pushing their way, Bible in hand, through the uncivilized undergrowth of their heathen brethren to save souls. The big village of Mapuera in the state of Pará has a large temple with twelve

indigenous preachers. The village is inhabited by more than one thousand Indians of various ethnic origins attracted by the Wai Wai and all speaking Wai Wai as lingua franca (Queiroz, in press).

Competition between different Christian religions or sects for native souls can be profoundly damaging to the Indians. The tug-of-war between Catholics and Protestants among the Terena Indians of Mato Grosso do Sul in the 1950s is a case in point. There the missionaries' efforts, combined with the work of the Indian Protection Service (SPI), the state agency for Indian affairs, succeeded in dividing the community into Catholic Terena and Protestant Terena and thus created favorable conditions to rule them more effectively.

> The Protestant missionaries came to organize groups of Indians relatively convinced of the doctrine and practice of the Gospel through whom they proceeded to convert a considerable number of individuals in certain villages, to the point of generating some hostility between the Protestant converts and the non-Protestant or Catholic. . . . In those villages . . . a division into two groups occurred: the "Catholics" and the "Protestants." (Cardoso de Oliveira 1960, 104–105)

The split in the communities was aggravated by conflicts between SPI agents and Protestant missionaries. The SPI agents favored the Catholic mission, which had a much longer history in the area. But here we find another example of the "inconstancy of the savage soul," as the Terena played at being either Catholic or Protestant according to their interests of the moment. Quarrels between individuals or families could result in a split along the lines of missionary influence or dissatisfaction with SPI administrators might lead someone to join the Protestants. These were ephemeral allegiances, "for at the first opportunity they would change category again, crossing over from one group to the other with relative ease, depending on the moment's political conjuncture" (p. 106). Strict moral rules were also cause to leave the Protestant group, at least temporarily: "The express prohibition of the Protestants to drink alcohol created situations in which a Protestant convert . . . gave up [the faith] when he had the urge to drink; we thus have the curious fact of individuals who remained in one religious group (in this case Protestant) for a year, then a few months in the other while his craving for alcohol lasted!" (p. 106). Indigenous communities divided because of Catholic-Protestant competition are common in Brazilian ethnographic literature and often are much more serious than the Terena case (Wright 1996, in press; Pereira, in press; Andrello, in press).

One of the most tragic situations at least partly created by the interference of conflicting religious missions is that of the Kaiowá of Mato Grosso do Sul. Both the Brazilian and international press have frequently

reported the suicides of young people from this Guarani-speaking group. Since 1986, 191 suicides have been reported (Gomes and Atunes 1995). CIMI counted 85 suicides between 1991 and 1993, 40 percent by people younger than twenty (1994, 37). In 1995 alone FUNAI reported 55 cases of suicide. The reasons for this calamity seem to be several. Almeida cites "missionaries, fundamentalist sects, landowners, the proximity of towns, compulsory labor sometimes coming close to situations of slavery, forced removals from their traditional lands, impoverishment of their ecosystems, and other variables" (1996, 725). Indeed, nearly nine thousand Indians try to make a living in a cramped area of less than four thousand hectares (Neri 1996). But would a nine-year-old girl kill herself for that reason?

A few years ago I happened to see on television a session of exorcism in one of the cult houses on the Kaiowá reserve. A teenager was in contortions amid the nervous screaming of all present, including the missionary who shouted angrily at her and slapped her repeatedly to shake away the demons possessing her. Her eyes were closed, and the girl's face and her whole body were the living picture of fear and helplessness. The scene made me shudder, and those images remained in my mind for a long time, causing me perceptible mental discomfort. How does it feel to live with that on a permanent basis?

A Presbyterian mission has been among the Kaiowá since 1928. More recently, the Kaiowá have been invaded by other opposing sects, most of them rather obscure: "The Word of God to Brazil," "God Is Love," "Bethel," and "an infinitude of fundamentalist evangelical sects that intensely practice their proselytization" (Yafusso 1995; Almeida 1996, 726). The interference in indigenous lives is substantial:

> In the late 1970s, the missionary at the Ramada village committed the offense of snatching a *mbaraka,* a Guarani sacred instrument from the hands of a *pa'i* (Kaiowá priest), and, "in the name of God," tossed it in the fire in a gesture of repudiation of the Indians' religiosity. This caused outrage and the moving of the Guarani priest's family to another area, running away from the incendiary missionary and his fanaticism. (Almeida 1996, 726)

Guarani suicides are not a new phenomenon. They are known to have occurred during colonial times because of slavery and mission life (p. 727). Cultural loss, psychological confusion, and cosmological void are some of the disturbances one finds in the wake of the "sacred fury" (Ribeiro 1970, 32) that has propelled most missionary action since Caminha urged the king of Portugal to hurry up and Christianize the brasis.

Nomad

Let us again begin with a couple of entries from the dictionary:

> **nomad,** *n.* 1. a member of a race or tribe which has no fixed abode, but moves about from place to place according to the state of the pasturage or food supply. 2. any wanderer.
>
> **wandering,** *adj.* 1. moving from place to place without a fixed plan; roaming; rambling; *wandering tourists.* 2. having no permanent residence; nomadic: *a wandering tribe of Indians.* 3. meandering; winding: *a wandering river, a wandering path. n.* 4. an aimless roving about; leisurely traveling from place to place: *a period of delightful wandering through Italy.* 5. Usually, *wanderings.* a. aimless travels; meanderings: *His wanderings took him all over the world.* b. disordered thoughts or utterances; incoherencies: *mental wanderings; the wanderings of delirium.*

The association of *nomad* with *wanderer* is interesting if we consider that a dictionary is a collection of notions assembled to inform the public at large. The popular character of a dictionary's content is what makes it so revealing about received ideas.

What do the two words have in common? First, a negativity, an absence. Nomads and wanderers have *no* fixed abode, moving from place to place *without* a fixed plan. The most outstanding trait is the absence of fixity, of permanent residence. Second, both words embrace the idea of an open-ended, "destination unknown," type of movement; neither implies the return to the point of departure. Third, both entries refer explicitly to indigenous peoples: a nomad is the member of a "*race or tribe*"; a wanderer refers paradigmatically to "*a wandering tribe of Indians.*" Curiously enough, the plural noun wanderings evokes something verging on madness as "*disordered thoughts*" or "*incoherencies,*" as in the model phrases "*mental wanderings*" and "*wanderings of delirium.*" And last, but by no means least, the thread of thought that links both entries is a movement away from order into unpredictability. Contrasted with a sedentary life, a fixed abode, an established residence, a nomadic/wandering existence evokes an undisciplined loose way of life over which control is not easily exerted.

What is the general public going to make of the close association of aimless movements of body and mind with indigenous peoples? What other natural conclusion would one draw from these canonical descriptions but that indigenous tribes are always nomadic? That the uninformed public so deduces is neither surprising nor shocking, given the catalogue of information contained in dictionaries. Surprise and shock come when specialists in "indigenous" peoples use terms such as nomads and nomadism without a critical appraisal of the words and the pejorative load they have in common

language. Statements such as the following are bound to enter the repertoire of prejudiced language and imagery regarding indigenous peoples:

> Under this simple form of social and political organization, the Tasmanians lived the life of nomadic hunters. They were ignorant of agriculture and possessed no domesticated animals—save the vermin which throve on their bodies and were from time to time picked off and eaten! Even the dog, the almost universal companion of savage man, was unknown until introduced by the whites. The quest for food, in brief, was confined to collecting, fishing, and hunting. (Murdock 1934, 4)

Not the least of the overwrought features in this pathetic passage from *Our Primitive Contemporaries* is the exclamation mark capping the description of a vermin-based diet. One can almost envision the expression of disgust on the author's face as he comes to the end of that sentence and frees his reaction in a punctuation mark. Thus described as a negative example of humanity, the Tasmanians, before being wiped out by Europeans, showed themselves to be even lower than the average "savage man" because they lacked not only a fixed abode but "the dog." The same book calls attention to other examples of the primitive nomad/wanderer: the Semang of the Malay Peninsula "pursue a life of nomadic hunters and collectors. Rarely remaining in one place for more than three days, they wander restlessly about in search of game and the wild roots and jungle fruits which constitute the mainstay of their existence" (p. 88). The Polar Eskimos also have "a nomadic mode of life. A family rarely remains in one settlement for more than a single year" (p. 196). The Crow of the Western Plains "subsist mainly on the products of the chase and lead the life of nomadic hunters" (p. 267). And, of course, pastoralists such as the Kazak of central Asia, are pictured as a generic individual who "is primarily a nomadic herder. His whole existence centers about his domesticated animals" (p. 138). One wonders how many undergraduates in North America and perhaps elsewhere were fed this book in its heyday, how many dictionary makers used it as an expert reference to compose their entries.

According to *Webster's Encyclopedic Unabridged Dictionary*, nomad comes from the Greek *nomás*, meaning 'pasturing flocks'. But no pastoralists known to anthropology are so random in their spatial movement as to render them nomads in the sense of moving about from place to place as if with no defined destination. By all accounts, routes, sites, and purposes of herders are well demarcated and structured according to a refined knowledge of both herds and environment. Barth (1964) provides a superb example of the elaborate design in pastoralist mobility, exploiting different seasons and ecosystems for different animal flocks in southwest Asia. From his and innumerable other ethnographic reports, pastoralists

do not fit the notion of aimless wanderers haphazardly following the grazing urges of their animals. Barth, however, insists on the term *long-range nomadism*, as distinct from *transhumance*, because of the long distances involved, often more than a thousand miles. But sheer distance seems to me to be neither a sufficient nor a necessary condition for rendering such well-defined activities as nomadism. Pastoralism has been so fused with the idea of nomadism that reluctance to disengage the two sometimes results in ambiguous statements such as Forde's:

> Nomadism is justifiably associated with a pastoral life, but its extent and character are very variable. Eternal wandering in which no spot is deliberately sought a second time is never found. Everywhere a unit community, whether it be a kin group, a larger clan or a whole tribe, has a fairly well-defined territory which it oversteps at its own risk just as invaders transgress it at theirs. . . .
>
> Moreover, the range of the seasonal movement is extremely variable. While some of the central Asiatic pastoralists . . . cover several hundreds of miles regularly every year, they are not wedded to this wanderlust. (1949, 406)

If the matter requires so much qualification, it surely is a sign of mismatch between the two terms, in which case one might as well drop the idea of nomadism for characterizing the spatial mobility of pastoralists.

Old World "nomads" enjoy a certain reputation as aloof, proud, and independent peoples. Arabs, with their horses, camels, and sheep, and northern reindeer herders epitomize the image of freedom and autonomy romanticized in books and films. In contrast, when the term nomad is applied to Native Americans, it is laden with notions of savagery, primitivism, and cultural indigence. In crossing the Atlantic the word seems to have suffered a slippage of meaning from a technical concept related to a mode of livelihood—the pasturing of flocks—to a moral judgment—a wandering tribe of Indians. This semantic metamorphosis would not be particularly problematic if it had not been appropriated by the dominant society to despoil dominated Indians. Let us examine some cases in which the notion of nomadism was used against indigenous peoples.

The United States, 1854

Article 6 of the Omaha Treaty, designed to allot individual plots of land to Indians, rules that the Indians should be settled in permanent homes on tracts of land specified by the government:

> And if any such person or family shall at any time neglect or refuse to occupy and till a portion of the land assigned, and on which they have located, or shall rove from place to place, the President may, if the patent

> shall have been issued, revoke the same, or if not issued, cancel the assignment, and may also withhold from such person or family, their proportion of the annuities . . . or other moneys due them, until they shall have returned to such permanent home, and resumed the pursuits of industry; and in default of their return, the tract may be declared abandoned, and thereafter assigned to some other person or family of such confederated tribes, or disposed of as is provided for the disposal of the excess of said land. (quoted in Kickingbird and Ducheneaux 1973, 16–17)

As Kickingbird and Ducheneaux point out, the "true purpose of the section on allotment is of course revealed in the words 'rove from place to place,'" that is, those "wandering tribes of Indians" were, first, occupying too much land that could be profitably colonized, and, second, as they roved from place to place, controlling them was more difficult. Requiring that the Indians adopt a sedentary life on established portions of land and fixed residence killed two birds with one stone: it liberated land for whites and brought the "tribes" more easily under the authority of the federal government. The individual allotments left a "surplus" of land that was "then sold to the immigrant settlers brought west by the railroads or opened to homestead settlement" (p. 17).

Brazil, 1784

After three years of intense attacks by the Portuguese, the Mura Indians of the Madeira River, a southern tributary of the Amazon, surrendered and allowed themselves to be settled in permanent villages. In Marta Amoroso's fine 1992 description the Mura appear in Brazilian history, together with the Guaikuru horsemen of the Chaco, as the archetype of ferocious nomads. Their reputation as barbarians was built on the strength of their raids on riverboats, colonial settlements, and other Indians who had been forced into a sedentary way of life by the Jesuits. Considered the scourge of the region, the Mura were also hosts to runaway Christianized Indians—*ladinos*—who fled the poor conditions of life and work at the colonial settlements. In sheltering these refugees the Mura aggravated the hostility of the Portuguese, who officially declared them to be their enemies. With this justification the colonial authorities organized war parties against the Mura and, whenever possible, took them as slaves. The Mura were so bothersome to the government that it made an exception to the Law of Liberties, authorizing their persecution and enslavement (also launched against the equally recalcitrant Munduruku and Karajá).

But what really disturbed the whites was the Mura's supposed nomadism. "The 'uncertainty as to their place of residence,' added to their predatory action, convinces the whites, who do not know where the Mura live, that they are everywhere" (Amoroso 1992, 305). Being everywhere

amounts to being nowhere from the point of view of control. They represented an unruly force more akin to baffling nature itself.

> To the eyes of the colonizers, the Mura were attacking all those who moved away from the narrow circle of "police and civility" which represented the urban space drawn by the colonial administration. Agriculture did not prosper because the fertile soil, lying out of hamlet bounds, remained unproductive for being the territory of those Indians. The "pirate heathen" (*gentio de corso*), the barbarian who was not in villages or in hamlets, of whom no one knew the whereabouts, was part of untamed nature. (p. 303)

Fear of uncontrollable Indians, an eighteenth-century truism, spilled over to the next century, recast as contemptuous discourse about the defeated:

> The eighteenth-century images projected onto the nineteenth century comprise a radical ideology in the negative representation of the Mura: demilitarized as enemies, they survive as derogatory images of an incomplete, inept humanity. Thus, the Mura use of the *paricá* hallucinogen, their dances, and their "nomadism" are the features selected by these travelers as evidence of the depraved customs of a population with corrupted habits. (p. 300)

The Mura reached the late twentieth century still complaining of persecution by shopkeepers, landowners, and the police (ISA 1996a, 377).

Using the notion of nomadism against native peoples is by no means a weapon of centuries past. In 1992 a retired general of the Brazilian army, concerned with the prospect of the government's granting a large contiguous area to the Yanomami, told an interviewer for *Veja* magazine exactly what he thought:

> VEJA: Don't you think the Indians deserve a reservation?
> [THE RETIRED GENERAL]: Of course we have to protect the Indians. What is wrong is the way the beer-loving anthropologists (*antropólogos de chopinho*) want to do it. In the case of the Yanomami, there are studies by serious anthropologists who question whether they [the Yanomami] are really nomads. If this is true, why then would they [the Yanomami] need a 9.4 million–hectare area, and, to top it all, along the border with Venezuela? (Júnior 1992, 8)

Leaving aside his interesting system for classifying anthropologists, the general chooses to cloud the issue by associating the need for a large area with nomadism. No nomadism, no large area. The appeal to nomadism—or to lack of it—is part of a broader concern by a large segment of Brazilians who insist that there is too much land for so few Indians, a monotonous refrain intoned whenever the demarcation of Indian lands is at stake. "It is said that it is a waste to 'give' so much land to so few Indians who,

moreover, don't occupy all of it, don't know how to exploit its natural resources, are even responsible, albeit indirectly, for the misery of legions of deprived landless Brazilians, and end up opening a flank to foreign cravings" (Ramos 1996a, 18).

I do not know in what category I would fit (I am certainly not a beer lover), but I object to the epithet of nomad perhaps as much as the general does, although no doubt for different reasons. I object equally to application of the concept to the Yanomami or to any other indigenous group in South America. Nomadic (see, for instance, Holmberg 1960; Maybury-Lewis 1974) and seminomadic (see, for instance, T. Turner 1992) are inadequate terms for referring to the spatial mobility of indigenous peoples. *Trekking,* a concept explored in detail by Maybury-Lewis to describe Shavante seasonal movements, like *herding,* says a lot more about the activities in question than the prejudice-laden nomadism. The Shavante's extensive treks along hunting and gathering grounds were never random and open ended. The ethnographer uses the word nomads but recognizes its inappropriateness:

> They were nomads, but not in the sense that their home was wherever they happened to be at a given moment. They had their villages, which they thought of as semi-permanent settlements. Such settlements might be abandoned without too much difficulty and similar half-circles of huts erected on a new site; but they did not generally abandon them without good reason. . . .
>
> A trek starts from the base village and may last as little as six weeks or as much as three or four months. It is deliberately planned by the elders in the men's circle so that the community may move over certain country with a view to exploiting specific resources. (Maybury-Lewis 1974, 53)

Let us return to the Yanomami so that I may clarify in what way my rejection of the term nomadism does not coincide with that of the general. The Yanomami's spatial mobility is a response to the by-now generally acknowledged characteristics of that other part of Amazonia in which they live: extremely poor soils and widely scattered game. One can identify various types of mobility among the Yanomami: seasonal movement from village to summer camp, not very different from the Shavante trekking; the search for new grounds for gardening and hunting in a radius of about 2 kilometers every two or three years, during which previously worked areas lie fallow; and a move farther away, encompassing 10 to 30 kilometers approximately every generation, as the result of the accumulated drain on natural resources in a given area. Moreover, intervillage conflicts and, after contact with European diseases, the outburst of epidemics, are additional reasons for a community or cluster of communities to move away. Considering that nearly ten thousand Yanomami in Brazil are grouped in more than two hundred communities, these movements, some of which are actual migrations, amount to the effective occupation of a considerably large area. The 9.4 million hectares demarcated as Yanomami area in Brazil contemplate precisely this: the exploitation of natural resources, such as soil, game, forest products for food, construction materials, and the like *and* their rejuvenation. One does not need to be "nomad" in order to require an appropriate amount of land to carry on life as usual. Yanomami moves cannot be confused with nomadism, a notion that is too often evoked by dominant society in regard to the exotic primitive. It is against common sense to take any kind of indigenous mobility as a sign of nomadism; I cannot overemphasize that the Yanomami are *mobile,* not nomadic (Ramos 1996a, 18).

Neither the Shavante nor the Yanomami, to limit the examples to two indigenous societies, "rove from place to place" with "no fixed abode" and "without a fixed plan." To insist on the term nomadism to describe what these Indians do when they move in space is to smuggle a word from common parlance and launder it as scientific concept. To use nomadism is to give mobility a bad name, for the term has become associated with a stigma against peoples who simply do not comply with the Western ideal of sedentary life. Nomadism is anathema to the exercise of control. As Fisher properly remarks, "Indian mobility in the nineteenth century was derided because it made for an elusive labor force" (1995, 177). In addition,

> Accusations of nomadism were often tantamount to accusations of "paganism," since nomadism effectively curtailed organized Christian worship. There is no small irony that even indigenous peoples who cooperated with rural officials should be derided for their nomadic lifestyles in nineteenth-century accounts, since colonial administration increased the need for many indigenous peoples to be more mobile. (Fisher 1995, 177)

One presumes that Fisher chose his words carefully. His expression "accusations of nomadism" says volumes and highlights the point I have been trying to make. For one is not accused of something that is approved and legitimate; one is accused of an offense or of a crime. Being nomadic amounts to being vagrant, and police records are brimming with arrests of vagrants with no defined domicile. To accuse Indians of nomadism is tantamount to calling nomadism an offense or a crime and the Indians offenders or criminals. Offenses and crimes must be corrected, and that is what officialdom has been doing in Brazil since 1500.

There are, then, two major problems with the notion of nomadism. First, as a value judgment it opens the way for criminalization of indigenous peoples who somehow evade control, be they Mura, Kayapó, or any other group. Second, as a concept nomadism is far from covering what it is meant to cover, as the passages from Forde and Maybury-Lewis make clear.

If, as defined in dictionaries and in common usage, nomadism does

not exist among indigenous peoples, does it exist at all? What human populations would fit the description of wanderers with no point of reference, moving about from place to place at random in search of a means of subsistence? The Gypsies? No, as they also have a well-defined circuit of mobility, returning regularly to the same places (Yoors 1967; Sutherland 1975). Seasonal agriculture workers of the *bóia-fria* type in Brazil or strawberry pickers in the United States? Apparently not those groups either, for they too return to the same workplaces at harvest. Perhaps those who come closest to qualifying as true nomads with no defined trajectory and destination are the masses of unemployed from the European job markets who go from country to country in search, not of "pasturage or food supply" as such but of paid labor. It is ironic that an idea developed in Europe to separate Western civilization—the hub of civitas, the ultimate form of sedentary life—from barbarism—iconically cast in the image of nomadic barbarians or medieval outcasts roaming the countryside (Le Goff 1977)—turns onto itself and comes to characterize a phenomenon that is a direct result of an excessively sedentary life. The polis is no longer a guarantee against nomadism.

Primitive

The concept of *primitive* has supplied anthropology with one of its major narrative threads (Kuklick 1991). Although contemporary authors have insisted that primitive is "essentially a temporal concept, . . . a category, not an object, of western thought" (as critiqued by Fabian 1983, 18), that "'primitives' are made, not found," that "'primitive peoples' are not a fact, but an interpretation" (McGrane 1989, 99), the anthropological history of primitive reveals a long experiment in essentializing. Cultures that were labeled primitive did exist on the periphery of the civilized world, exhibiting primitive institutions, primitive ways of life, primitive modes of thought. The result of this experiment has entered common usage in a variety of interrelated meanings. *Webster's Encyclopedic Unabridged Dictionary* has a rather long entry for primitive:

> *adj.* 1. being the first or earliest of the kind or in existence, esp. in an early age of the world: *primitive forms of life.* 2. early in the history of the world or of mankind. 3. characteristic of early ages or of an early state of human development: *primitive art.* 4. *Anthropol.* of or pertaining to a race, group, etc., having cultural or physical similarities with their early ancestors. 5. unaffected or little affected by civilizing influences; uncivilized; savage: *primitive passions.* 6. being in its or the earliest period; early: *the primitive phase of the history of a town.* 7. old-fashioned: *primitive ideas and habits.* 8. simple; unsophisticated: *a primitive farm implement.* 9. crude; unpolished: *primitive living conditions.* 10. original or radical, as distinguished from derivative. 11. primary, as distinguished from secondary. 12. *Biol.* a. rudimentary; primordial. b. noting species, varieties, etc., only slightly evolved from early antecedent types. c. of early formation and temporary, as a part that subsequently disappears. *n.* 13. someone or something primitive . . . [< L *primitiv (us)* first of its kind . . .].

From the original Latin meaning of "first of its kind," in the sense of initiator, the term was transformed to mean, among other things, savage, crude, uncivilized. Of special interest is the explicit citation of anthropology as a field that correlates "a race, group, etc., having cultural or physical similarities with their early ancestors." In short, *Webster's* identifies the launching pad for the anthropological enterprise, namely, the tenancy of the "savage slot" in the European division of intellectual labor (Trouillot 1991). The search for a civilized identity led the Western mind to look for a mirror. Diamond traces it to Plato's *Republic*, the utopia that was everything that nonurban society was not: "In opposing the primitive, Plato helps us define both it and the state" (1981, 177). From then on, other "races or groups" were all negativity, they were noneverything: no state, no cities, no writing, no history, no money, no market economy, no differential distribution of power, no enlightenment, no . . . Like a sort of inverted prophecy, civilized thinkers looked at "our primitive contemporaries" as if they were looking back into the remote past and saying, "We've come a long way, we are you in the morrow." Or, as Fabian puts it, "What could be clearer evidence of temporal distancing than placing the Now of the primitive in the Then of the Western adult?" (1983, 63). And so anthropology began in earnest its search for the primitive. From the nineteenth-century inclination to slip into the connotations of primitive that *Webster's* provides for biologists' use of the word—"rudimentary; primordial," "of early formation and temporary, as a part that subsequently disappears"—anthropological research has consistently elaborated upon the primitive. A cursory glance at major works in the discipline finds *Primitive Culture* (Tylor), *Primitive Mentality* (Lévy-Bruhl), *Primitive Marriage* (McLennan), *Primitive Classification* (Durkheim and Mauss), *Primitive Art* (Boas), *Primitive Religion* (Lowie, Radin), *Primitive Society* (Lowie), *Primitive Man as Philosopher* (Radin), *Our Primitive Contemporaries* (Murdock), *Primitive Social Organization* (Service), *Primitive World and Its Transformations* (Redfield), *The Father in Primitive Psychology* (Malinowski). The term continues to permeate the field: "In all current standard narratives of contact along the Brazil shore, the Amerindians are presented as 'primitive', 'stone age', or 'naked nomads'" (Whitehead 1993, 198). Among the profusion of meanings anthropologists have appended to the word, the "most troublesome meaning of the term 'primitive' is that connected with various shades of inferiority" (Hsu 1964, 174).

With more or less editorial appeal, more or less embarrassment, more

or less critical posture, more or less theoretical sophistication, the primitive has been at the center of the anthropological "master narrative" for more than a century. Kuper traces the crystallization of the idea of primitive in anthropology to the 1860s and 1870s (1988,1), again as a Western specular necessity: "The anthropologists took this primitive society as their special subject, but in practice primitive society proved to be their own society (as they understood it) seen in a distorting mirror" (p. 5).

We reach the second half of the twentieth century still fumbling with the pros and cons of using the notion of primitive. Some consider it to be quite acceptable, together with *barbarian, pagan,* and *savage,* because nothing pejorative is found in their etymological origins:

> *Primitive, pagan* and *savage* are, then, three perfectly respectable words. But *primitive* is the most widely disseminated, in the most recognizable forms, in major languages and has, even today, the least pejorative associations, signifying merely a prior state of affairs, a relative sense of origins. Therefore, I see no reason for abandoning the word, as is periodically suggested, hedging it with quotes, prefacing it with the inexplicit irony of "so-called" or replacing it with limited and misleading expressions such as "pre-literate." The task is rather to define it further and so help to reach agreement on what *primitive* means. (Diamond 1981, 125)

Apart from the contradiction between the statement that primitive, pagan, and savage are perfectly respectable words and the admission that primitive has, even today in major languages, the least pejorative associations (how little pejorative can pejorative be?), the passage displays a rather disquieting feature of these "major languages," namely, the incapacity to denote otherness without connoting inferiority. How are we to refer to that part of humanity, sometimes dubbed the Rest of the West, without applying words laden with value judgments or becoming entangled in complicated circumlocutions that try in vain to skirt prejudice? The silence of these major languages regarding "perfectly respectable" expressions for legitimate otherness is more revealing than the effort to circumvent idées reçues. Diamond continues:

> What I mean to say is that the anthropological term *primitive* applies, or should apply, to the condition of man prior to the emergence of civilization and following those earliest periods of cultural growth culminating in the Upper Paleolithic. . . . *Primitive,* then, refers to widely distributed, well-organized institutions that had already existed just prior to the rise of ancient civilization. . . . [However] contemporary primitives can be roughly conceived as our contemporary, pre-civilized ancestors. (pp. 126, 127, 131)

He concludes with the rather cryptic remark that "we cannot abandon the primitive; we can only outgrow it by letting it grow within us" (p. 173).

Service, another twentieth-century defender of the primitive, seems to have fewer qualms about its implications. He disagrees with other anthropologists who object to the notion that contemporary primitives shed light on "our" past by retaining cultural traits long lost by civilization. He criticizes Herskovits for wishing that anthropologists had abandoned the habit of "calling such cultures 'primitive,' 'simple,' or 'preliterate' " and justifies his position with an ominous argument:

> What else can explain such a culture, then, but that there have been survivals into the present of ancient cultural forms which because of relative isolation have maintained a relatively stable adaptation. Many primitive societies have changed greatly in modern times and ultimately all will be changed, assimilated, or obliterated, but that only makes the point more clear. Where an Arunta-like way of life is not yet significantly altered by modern influences it is a culture that is primitive, ancient, and preliterate. And it has a very long history, too, for the Arunta culture is paleolithic in type, although the paleolithic *era* ended when and where higher stages arose—a long time ago. . . . In this sense anthropology possesses a time machine. (1962, 8–9)

"Modern influence" translates as the all-powerful Western demiurge capable of transforming the primitive into the civilized when, of course, the demiurge does not mismanage and cause the obliteration of his earthlings, "our contemporary ancestors" (Service 1962, 8). Anthropologists would then be engaged in a race against their own times to collect as much evidence of the cultural big bang as they could before the doom of the primitive. Surely, whoever possesses a time machine is, to all intents and purposes, a demiurge, as science fiction often demonstrates. Curiously, because of his "neo"-evolutionary emphasis, Service transposes to twentieth-century anthropology a feature that McGrane associates with the nineteenth century: "Nineteenth-century anthropology is in many respects precisely a time machine" in its search for the Western past in contemporary non-Western cultures (McGrane 1989, 103).

Service's effort to characterize "primitive society" is an exercise in essentialism. Primitive societies not only exist but can be tangibly described in their constitutive parts. A similar essentialist concern is easily perceived in Diamond's book *In Search of the Primitive.* What he says on page 212—"The idea of the primitive is, then, a construct"—does not revoke previous statements about the substantive ontology of the primitive: private property in primitive society consists of "breechclouts, back scratchers and similar 'extensions of the personality,' "; "primitive economies are natural econo-

mies"; "primitive societies abound in 'chiefs'"; in primitive societies "laws as we know them do not exist"; "society to the primitive is apprehended as a part of the natural order" (malgré Durkheim); primitive society "changes its essential form only under the impact of external circumstances or in response to drastic changes in the natural environment," and so on and so forth (Diamond 1981, ch. 4).

Kuper's 1988 book, *The Invention of Primitive Society*, is an attempt to deessentialize the primitive:

> There is not even a sensible way in which one can specify what a "primitive society" is. . . . The history of the theory of primitive society is the history of an illusion. . . . The theory of primitive society is about something which does not and never has existed. One of my reasons for writing this book is to remove the constitution of primitive society from the agenda of anthropology and political theory once and for all. (pp. 7, 8, 18)

But, because old habits die hard, Kuper begins his book with an oddly paradoxical proposition: "The persistence of this prototype for well over a hundred years is the more remarkable since empirical investigation of tropical 'primitive' societies only began in a systematic way and on any scale in the last decade of the nineteenth century" (p. 1). This reminds me of the old Spanish joke about whether witches exist: "I don't believe in witches, but I'm sure they're around." No matter how many quotations marks are put around the word, the message remains that primitive societies do exist after all and they are in the tropics, to boot. Having guessed the existence of primitive society before it materialized in ethnographic writings, the founding fathers of anthropology only bestowed on the concept an aura of inexorability.

Kuper affirms that the anthropological vision of the primitive is either a thing of the past or of the discipline's academic fringes: "The orthodox modern view is that there never was such a thing as 'primitive society'" (1988, 7). Because Kuper does not tell us what anthropological orthodoxy consists of, or when "modern" began, we are at a loss to place Service and Diamond—would they be premodern or fringe academics?

All this is to make the point that anthropology is one inspiration that feeds the Western imagination about Indians. It is an obvious point but by no means trivial. Anthropological discourse is not sufficiently sheltered to be incomprehensible by average readers. It is serious enough that some statements, such as those quoted in this chapter, are issued by professionals for professionals or students. It is worse when anthropologists deliver radio lectures, give television interviews, write newspaper articles, and pop up in other popular media known to spread the anthropological word among the

public. The distance between the cultural complexities that churn in the back of the anthropologist's mind and the receiver's simplification process of cultural understanding is sufficiently large to produce a public reality that is often unrecognizable by the discipline's professional. The result is usually unfavorable to the people being discussed. For example, *Newsweek*, in a 1981 article titled "The Vanishing Tribals," quoted anthropologist Francis Huxley as saying that tribal peoples "will have to join the human race eventually" (p. 30). How else would the public interpret this but as implying that tribal peoples do not belong to the human race? Let us take the more complex and perhaps more damaging example of the Yanomami Indians of northern Brazil and southern Venezuela.

In 1976 *Time* had a piece titled "Beastly or Manly" that told readers:

> Implied in Chagnon's findings so far is a notion startling to traditional anthropology: the rather horrifying Yãnomamö culture makes some sense in terms of animal behavior. Chagnon argues that Yãnomamö structures closely parallel those of many primates in breeding patterns, competition for females and recognition of relatives. Like baboon troops, Yãnomamö villages tend to split into two after they reach a certain size. (p. 37)

In 1990 *O Estado de São Paulo*, a major Brazilian daily, published a remarkable article under the headline "Feminists Attack Yanomami" (Sotero 1990). It comments on the reaction of a teacher and students in a communications classroom at Menlo College in Menlo Park, California, to Yanomami male violence toward women. The teacher, Marilyn Faulkenburg, responded as follows to a newspaper report about the effect of the gold rush on Yanomami lives:

> According to distinguished anthropologist Marvin Harris, the Yanomami were nicknamed as fierce people because they practice wife battering and female infanticide. Our question is: does that society deserve to be protected against the twentieth century? Or, put it another way, would the [invading] gold miners be the real bandits in this story as suggested in the article? (Sotero 1990)

Sotero quoted the teacher as having said that preserving "so brutal and primitive" a culture would benefit only anthropologists. Her comments were originally published in the letters section of the *Wall Street Journal*. The crudeness of such a view reflects the most virulent form of misappropriation that can be made of anthropological materials. No anthropologist is immune to this kind of confiscation of ideas. The trade of translating cultural differences into the idiom of the Western world is fraught with peril. It displays the logic of "exotic" realities in a way that generates any-

thing from deep respect to insulted abhorrence. By and large, efforts such as Kuper's to put certain value-laden concepts under analytical scrutiny should be routine in anthropological practice.

Although anthropology may be a major source of ideas about the primitive, it should by no means be held responsible for the political use and abuse of the notion of Indians as primitive, as something of the past that should be eradicated. Laypeople often pontificate about the stage of development of indigenous cultures, but the matter becomes more serious when these laypeople hold positions of authority and therefore feel confident in displaying their value judgments. On April 19, 1989, the National Day of the Indian, the Brazilian army minister Leônidas Pires Gonçalves declared to the House of Representatives' Committee for Foreign Relations in Brasília that the Indians should not be protected because, after all, "Indian cultures are very lowly and therefore are not respectable" (quoted in M. Barbosa 1989, 1026). The barrage of criticism that followed in the media forced some countermessages from other military officers, but the army minister's crudeness rang throughout the country as an example of the obtuseness and arrogance of the powerful. "The Army minister's statements can only disturb us for the prejudice and arbitrariness they contain. We feel distressed for the sad figure of the minister himself, for the Country, for what this means in exposing us to discredit vis-à-vis the enlightened international community, for the Indians themselves" (M. Barbosa 1989, 1026).

Arrogance and obtuseness are by no means limited to the military. Civilian intellectuals such as the writer Osman Lins and political scientist Hélio Jaguaribe have tried their hands at spontaneous ethnography by also declaring that indigenous culture, in the singular, is "so little evolved" (Lins 1979, 27) and that through education the Indians should disappear by the onset of the third millenium. A former minister of science and technology, Jaguaribe shocked the public when he declared: "There will be no more Indians in the twenty-first century. The idea of congealing man in the primeval state of his evolution is, in fact, cruel and hypocritical" (Mössri 1994; see also Jaguaribe 1994). The occasion was his conference during a seminar, "Education Policy for the Army: The Year 2000," that took place at army headquarters in Brasília. A high-ranking army officer enthusiastically agreed with the speaker: "It is a sociological fatality." Jaguaribe's vulgar evolutionism is one of the explicit expressions of equating cultural diversity with underdevelopment. Like a contagious disease, the Indians' ignorance must be eradicated if Brazil is to grow into a fully developed nation.

Unfailingly, such statements are met with a volley of protests by nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and other concerned groups and individuals, driving state authorities into the uncomfortable position of having

to downplay or even refute their colleagues' damaging forays into futurology.

More often than not, the notion of primitiveness appears in Indigenism as an inverted mirror for the nation at large. For a country like Brazil with a short history, mentions of primeval-ness necessarily evoke a temporal proximity of Indians and Brazilians that verges on having the latter polluted by the former. Hence, primeval lifestyles are no cause for pride but, to the contrary, are reminders of the long road to civilized development. Having primitives within the national territory is like having embarrassing wilderness in one's backyard. If Brazil is to fulfill its self-ascribed prophecy of greatness, it first has to rid itself of all signs of primitiveness.

Savage

A ubiquitous stereotype, the Indian as savage has a history that is far longer than the notion of Indian itself. Well before Europeans ever saw an inhabitant of the Americas, the European mind had centuries of elaborating on the theme of the savage and savagery; "during the fifth century B.C. wild men already formed a well structured though complex stereotype that embraced centaurs, cyclops, satyrs, and giants" (Bartra 1994, 13). Associated with the term savage is the idea of wilderness, raw nature, absence of civilization. Let us see the various ways in which savage is conceived in the dictionary (*Webster's Encyclopedic Unabridged*):

> Savage. *adj.* 1. fierce, ferocious, or cruel; untamed: *savage beasts.* 2. untamed; barbarous: *savage tribes.* 3. enraged or furiously angry, as a person. 4. unpolished; rude: *savage manners.* 5. wild or rugged, as country or scenery: *savage wilderness.* 6. *Archaic.* uncultivated; growing wild. *n.* 7. an uncivilized human being. 8. a fierce, brutal, or cruel person. 9. a rude, boorish person [ME *savage, sauvage* < MF *sauvage, salvage* < ML *salvati(us),* r. L. *silvaticus,* equiv. to *silv(a)* woods + *-aticus* adj. suffix] . . .
> —Syn. 1. wild, feral, fell; bloodthirsty. See **cruel.** 2. wild. 3. infuriated. 5. rough, uncultivated. 9. churl, oaf.
> —Ant. 1. mild. 2,4. cultured. 5. cultivated.

Although savage has come to be associated with barbarian, the two terms have had different applications. Returning to *Webster's,* we can see both similarities and differences:

> Barbarian *n.* 1. a man in a savage, primitive state; uncivilized person. 2. a person without culture, refinement, or education; philistine. 3. (loosely) a foreigner. 4. (in ancient and medieval periods) a. a non-Greek. b. a person living outside, esp. north of, the Roman Empire. c. a person not

> living in a Christian country or within a Christian civilization. 5. (among Italians during the Renaissance) a person of non-Italian origin. *adj.* 6. uncivilized; crude; savage. 7. foreign; alien. [< L *barbari(a)* barbarous country + -AN].... Syn. 3. alien. 6. rude, primitive, wild, rough, coarse, ignorant, uncultivated. BARBARIAN, BARBARIC, BARBAROUS pertain to uncivilized people. BARBARIAN is the general word for anything uncivilized: *a barbarian tribe.* BARBARIC has both unfavorable and mildly favorable connotations, implying crudeness of taste or practice, or conveying an idea of rude magnificence and splendor: *barbaric noise.* BARBAROUS emphasizes the inhumanity and cruelty of barbarian life: *barbarous customs.* Ant. 6. cultivated, civilized.

On one level the terms are treated as synonyms; both connote lack of civilization (that is, Western culture), inhumanity, wildness, roughness, cruelty. But while savage is linked to nature's wilderness, barbarian is associated with foreigners, non-Christian lifestyles, but nevertheless humanly created. We might say that savage is to heathen as barbarian is to pagan, the main difference being that the former is devoid of customs, a tabula rasa, whereas the latter pertains to uncivilized but still human traditions.

The two figures—the barbarian and the wild man—were clearly separated in European thinking until the New World was discovered. Barbarians were originally the peoples from far-off lands who did not speak Greek. "For Aristotle, for instance, the barbarian did not have access to *logos*, or reason, because man can only acquire moral capacities in the city.... From a term originally denoting a foreign language, it came to mean non-Greek peoples, and, following the wars with the Medes, it acquired the meaning of cruel" (Bartra 1994, 9–10).

Europeans made war on barbarians but not on wild men, for wild men were not in the same category as full human beings. In contrast to barbarians, wild men existed in nature but in proximity to the civilized. They were in fact an invention of the civilized for the civilized. In his delightful biography of the European wild man Roger Bartra asserts: "History has shown that the explanation of monsters and myths is intrinsically linked to the definition and wisdom of oneself: the I and the Other are inseparable.... Renaissance Europe began to perceive the great utility of a game of mirrors based on the image of the wild man" (1994, 169, 174). Eventually, wild men became associated with peasants (the Greek *agrios*). "From the twelfth century, the term *wild man* (*homo sylvaticus, homo agrestis*) itself became a concrete image referring to an easily identifiable character in medieval iconography and mythology" (p. 63). The image of the wild man was ultimately attached to the socially and politically marginal segments of medieval society. The peasant, the poor, the *rusticus* of the European world represented danger to the integrity of the inhabitants of the polis. "Vicious, dangerous, illiterate, [the peasant] will remain closer to beast than to man. [Medieval] literature mostly excludes him or puts him in its teratological bestiary. Turned realist, literature will then furnish him with the figure which the very High Middle Ages would abstractly define as a medieval Caliban" (Le Goff 1980, 133). The wild man was, however, a necessary evil to the construction of a self-image of the civilized, as it provided an inverted mirror that favorably reflected Christian values. Thus fused with the rustic, the notion of the savage as untamed remote past persisted for centuries.

> In its initial explorations and investigations of the non-European, or rather, non-Enlightened world, the Enlightenment at first encountered mostly "the savage" the "barbarian," and the "idolatrous semicivil" of the East. Then in a complex, obscure and confusing modification, the *savage* as he was mixed with the *ancients* (pagans and Jews) became the *primitive*. (McGrane 1989, 68)

Eyewitness reports from the New World became primary data for a multitude of Old World analyses linking the dwellers of the Americas to the inhabitants of Europe's antiquity in an attempt to assimilate "exotic peoples into their own universe of discourse" (Ryan 1981, 521). As "the discovery of new worlds coincided with the Humanists' recovery of the ancient world," soon the ancients were being explained in terms of the newly discovered "Indians," and vice-versa, "because observers believed that a real, not simply a metaphorical, relationship inhered between the exotic and the antique" (pp. 526, 527).

On a more down-to-earth, pragmatic key, the wild man was good not only for reflecting the superiority of Europeans but also for serving them as, among other things, a beast of burden.

> Guibert of Nogent, the historian who left us with vivid descriptions of a sinister and violent world of wars, relates how the armies of the first Crusade were accompanied by a cannibal troop of professional beggars who went barefoot and weaponless. This troop of wild vagabonds . . . were led by a Norman noble who lost his horse and organized them as a parallel army, providing secondary but invaluable services as carriers of provisions and fodder in exchange for alms and tributes, or managing the heavy apparatus used for siege warfare. (Bartra 1994, 127)

Transposed to America, the wild-man-turned-Indian was also a convenient means of transportation as Taussig (1987) has so dramatically exposed. In what was to become the Brazilian state of São Paulo and the neighboring Spanish-speaking countries, people took produce for sale "on the backs of male and female Indians who carry it as if they were mules, even when they are raising children.... The beasts rest in the fields and the Christian

Indians, faithful to Your Majesty, carry the loads" (Buarque de Holanda 1986, 33, quoting the Spanish priest Antonio Ruiz de Montoya).

Historian Buarque de Holanda attributes to this human means of transportation "the main reason for the high prices in São Paulo, given the scarce capacity of the carriers" (1986, 33; also see Monteiro 1994, 122–26).

The mixture of idealization of the exotic with the pragmatic exploitation of the inferior, what Bartra describes as European "horror and fascination for wildness" (1994, 206), was and still is responsible for some of the most gruesome episodes in human history.

> Many centuries later, in the clamor of modern colonialism could be heard the ancient echoes of that Western distaste for peoples submerged in nature, and that fear of a political vacuum accompanied by an absence of statutes and regulations. The nineteenth-century hunt for what Armand de Quatrefages was also to call wild men . . . acquired a brutal and sanguinary character: the so-called Black War—the extermination of Tasmanians by English colonists, who considered the aborigines as little more than animals to be hunted. George Arthur, the governor of the island, attempted to "civilize" the hunt for wild men as a measure to prevent their extinction and offered a reward of five pounds sterling for each adult captured live and unhurt (two pounds for each child). . . . In 1876 Lalla Rookh the last Tasmanian wild woman died, and with her disappeared a people who for many ethnologists were considered to be the most primitive ethnic group known to modern Western man. [Here Bartra refers readers to Chapter 1 of Murdock's *Our Primitive Contemporaries*.] The fact is that the Tasmanians were treated in much the same way medieval man had treated *homo sylvaticus*. The myth materialized into history. (Bartra 1994, 111–12)

Elsewhere in Australia the Aborigines could expect a similar fate. "Behind [the pastoral frontier] they were once again *sauvages*, children of nature, doomed to disappear as the wilderness was brought to order, and meanwhile useful devices in poetic and graphic compositions" (Beckett 1988b, 196).

Back in the fifteenth century the discovery of the New World precipitated the blend of savage and barbarian. Contrary to European expectations, the antipodes were not the monsters that peopled the minds of the old continent. In fact, Amerindians were often praised for their physical attractiveness. They thus came to combine two features that had been kept separate in the European imagination: human appearance (like the barbarians) with natural wildness (like the savage wild men). Hence Caminha's perplexity as he faced the beautiful Tupinambá whose bodily tidiness could only be attributed to their "natural" state:

> I deduce they are bestial people and of little knowledge, that is why they are so shy. But despite everything they go about very becoming and clean. And for this I am even more convinced that they are like birds, or mountain beasts, to which the air makes better feathers and better hair than the tame, because their bodies are so clean and so full and so lovely as there can be no better! And this leads me to presume that they have no houses nor dwellings to which they retreat; and the air where they grow makes them so. (Caminha 1963, 50)

From then on the "naturalization" of the Brazilian Indian has been a constant topos in interethnic discourse (see, for instance, the astute analysis by Viveiros de Castro and Andrade 1988).

The Portuguese language makes the passage from wildness to Indian more direct than in English. *Selvagem* (savage) is the inhabitant of the *selva* (woods, jungle, forest) who is then called *selvícola* or *silvícola*. *Silvícola* is actually the official term for Indians in Brazil as it appears in the 1916 Civil Code, the 1967 Constitution, and in the 1973 Statute of the Indian: "Article 1. This Law regulates the judicial situation of the Indians or *silvícolas* and of the indigenous communities, with the purpose of preserving their culture and integrating them, progressively and harmoniously, into the national communion." The text of this law lets it be understood that Indian and *silvícola* are synonyms, but there is no discussion to make this explicit (Agostinho 1982, 61). In any case, the term *silvícola* is enticingly similar to the notion of "the *homo sylvaticus*, who lived in the woods and mountains of Europe" and whose outstanding features were dictated by nature rather than by culture—"nakedness, consumption of raw food, loss of memory, and life in the open" (Bartra 1994, 89, 133). Transposed to literature, these features resolved themselves into characters such as Shakespeare's Caliban, himself a composite of the European wild man and the American "cannibal."

Carried over to anthropology, cannibalistic savages and barbarians stood for the lowest stages of human development. One of the most influential nineteenth-century anthropologists, Lewis Henry Morgan, stated: "The diminution of cannibalism, that brutalizing scourge of savagery, was very marked in the Older Period of barbarism" ([1877] 1963, 541).

Whether stated explicitly or merely suggested, the notion of Indian as savage has been rather frequent in anthropological writings in general and in South American ethnography in particular. "All the South American tribes," said Morgan, "with the exception of the Andean, were when discovered either in the Lower Status of barbarism, or in the Status of savagery" (1963, 188). In the ingenuous prepolitically correct days ethnographers were more candid about their views of the natives, judging by

their descriptions of indigenous peoples, including fieldwork hosts. Let us see some examples from the ethnographic record on Amazonian Indians:

> It may well seem that Urubu life is basically ignoble, and the Indians are aptly described as savages. Indeed, though this is something of a rude word, it is no use denying that the Urubus are savage. They were well known for their cruelty and vindictiveness in war, in the days before they were pacified; their rites, among which was the killing and eating of an enemy prisoner, were savage with a vengeance; and their manners are often both crude and barbarous. . . . An Indian may well be savage, but this does not mean that he is unprincipled.
>
> Savages in fact have morals, and their world, irrational though it may be, is neither disorderly nor pointless. (Huxley 1956, 13)

> Except for a very poor development of the lower legs, the Siriono are well-constructed physical specimens. Ontogenetically, they seem to fall within the normal human race . . . most men and women possess well developed prehensile toes. (Holmberg 1960, 8)

> An old Caliban of a man, dressed in the remains of a sack, was issuing dishes of salt and cakes of brown sugar to the women and girls who crowded up to him. The [Sherente] men were perched like vultures along a pole which ran the length of the room and served as a sort of bench. They kept a sharp eye on those of their numbers who were sorting out the knives and the cloth, the fishing tackle and the bottles of cheap perfume. . . .
>
> [The author, his wife, and small child] had lived with some of the wildest Indians in Mato Grosso [the Shavante] and even come to like them after a fashion. (Maybury-Lewis 1965, 40, 265)

Nevertheless, anthropological sobriety stands out in comparison with the treatment the press has reserved for the savage, particularly when it aims at vilifying and even criminalizing the Indian. One of the most forceful examples of the Indian as savage ever drawn by the mass media involved a well-known Kayapó man, Paulinho Payakan. In early June 1992 the Brazilian version of *Time* magazine, the weekly *Veja,* had a cover story on him. The cover photograph showed him in full Kayapó regalia and was captioned "O *Selvagem,*" calling attention to the main story, which was headlined, "The Explosion of Savage Instinct" (Gomes and Silber 1992, 68). The long report focused on the scandal that involved Payakan as the alleged rapist of a young white woman from the town near his home village. Neither *Veja* nor the rest of the press seemed concerned about presenting the accusation for what it was: an accusation; they were condemning him in advance of a fair trial. Payakan and his Kayapó wife, Irekran, were accused of having "savagely" raped an eighteen-year-old virgin after a party at his ranch on the outskirts of the town of Redenção. Stories on the case

ran relentlessly for two months, with much emphasis on the brutality of the assault. "Payakan and Irekran join their hands and introduce them into the student's vagina. They drink the blood and spread it on their bodies," *Folha de São Paulo* told its readers (1992b). Sadistic sex (Webster's "primitive passions") and cannibalism were fused in a single emblematic act involving offending male and female Indians and a white female victim. At first Payakan admitted having had intercourse (not rape) with the young woman as a result of the festive mood of his barbecue-beer party but then denied it and blamed his wife for the physical aggression.

Whether the accusations were justified or not, the extraordinary repercussions of the case elevated it to a cause célèbre in the history of interethnic relations in Brazil. *Payakan* became a household word as his story transfixed the nation for many weeks. He was the source of erotic jokes. Rhetorically, he was associated with the political scandal of the day, which culminated in President Fernando Collor de Mello's impeachment.

By coincidence the case broke during the Rio Earth Summit, which lent it an extra dramatic quality. The executive secretary of the Brazilian NGOs Forum remarked: "It is curious that amidst the Conference one chooses a case that has not been proved, but is already judged by the press to serve as reportage" (*Folha de São Paulo* 1992a). Payakan was expected in Rio for the 1992 Global Forum when the news of the rape broke.

Paulinho Payakan's political visibility was catching up with him. In 1988 he had received a great deal of publicity for having been tried (with another Kayapó leader and North American anthropologist Darrell Posey) on charges of having denigrated the image of Brazil abroad after a series of meetings with World Bank officials. At one of those meetings he had pleaded against the Brazilian plans to build a series of dams in his Xingu homeland. He and the other Kayapó were ludicrously framed under the Law of Foreigners, the absurdity of which led to the shelving of the case. Two years later Payakan was awarded the United Nations' Global 500 prize and, together with Jimmy Carter, the prize from the Society for a Better World for his defense of the environment.

However, Payakan had also caught the attention of the media for the wealth he had accumulated by selling mahogany and from the levies collected from gold miners within the Kayapó indigenous area. This combination of Indian and wealth offended many a Brazilian. In the 1992 episode news reports constantly mentioned his cars, bank account, and an airplane donated by the *Body Shop,* the British cosmetic chain. For instance, the *Veja* article had a section on "Rich Indians" that expounded on how the Kayapó became the richest Indians in the country, "owners of a fortune in hardwood and gold which sprouts generously from the 3.2 million hectares of their reserve" (McCallum 1994, 3). Payakan's wealth was not lost

on the young woman's family. Her attorney declared that if Payakan was considered guilty by the judge, the family would sue for $1 billion in damages. "The leader possesses wealth and can pay the compensation" (*Folha de São Paulo* 1992d).

The publicity also exploited the ambiguity of Payakan's status as "relatively incapable," pointing out the contradiction between his capacity to manage wealth and his legal condition as nonresponsible Indian. One FUNAI lawyer insisted that only "an anthropological report showing that Payakan was an Indian integrated into civilization [could] make him accountable to a penal process" (Gondim 1992a). As for Payakan's wife, who, according to the police, was obviously "primitive," no one doubted that she was unimpugnable. The deputy in charge of the case declared her to be "a real Indian" who could not be punished (*Folha de São Paulo* 1992e). More than two years later, "during the trial, Irekran was not heard because she was considered an Indian with no understanding of the customs of non-Indians" (Gondim 1994). It is possible, although it was never made explicit, that Payakan and/or his lawyers took the course of placing the blame exclusively on Irekran, counting on the unanimous opinion that she was legally unaccountable and thus saving both from conviction.

The attacks on Payakan generated much concern about the risk of jeopardizing the Indian cause while Congress was processing important legislation. "One cannot transform his trial into the trial of the indigenous societies" (Carneiro da Cunha 1992). Feminists tried to disconnect the criminal issue of rape by an Indian from the political issue of indigenous rights. Humanist writers stressed the evil influence of civilization that spoils the innocence of the Indians. Editorials pointed out the change of national mood from tolerance for the Indian condition of silvícola to the discomfort engendered by Indians capable of amassing U.S.$60 million, living in cities, and participating in the world of finance (*Folha de São Paulo* 1992c). Much rhetoric both for and against Indians swept across pages and pages of newspapers, some focusing on the unfair treatment the Indians suffer from national society, others on the privileges they enjoy from the government, which gives them land and impunity. Again from *Veja:*

> The stereotype of savage purity will resound in many places in the world when news of the crime of Paulinho Payakan spreads. Payakan incarnated like nobody else the modern Hollywood Indian, that idealized savage, full of ancestral wisdom, virtuous in his primitive and perfect ecological universe. He is a new generation Indian, created in films like "Dances with Wolves." (quoted in McCallum 1994, 2)

Beneath the outrage against a wild man who dared assault a virgin white woman—as opposed to the much cherished figure of the Indian grandmother who was once lassoed by one's white grandfather to produce splendid offspring (Munduruku 1996, 35)—interethnic tension was on the verge of exploding into armed conflict. At Redenção the baffled non-Indian population staged a demonstration against the Kayapó, their rich indigenous neighbors, and carried placards that said *"Lugar de índio é na aldeia é de estuprador é na cadeia"* (Indian belongs in village, rapist belongs in jail; Gondim 1992b). Rumors had it that the Kayapó were preparing for a counterattack. When the judge in charge of the case—according to whom "Payakan is very dangerous and puts the public order at risk" (Gondim 1992a)—ordered Payakan's arrest, the military police of the state of Pará sent two hundred men to Redenção, "prepared for a war operation within the reserve" (Gondim 1992c).

As it turned out, Payakan was under house arrest in his home village for two years. In 1993 the white woman married a local man who ended up in jail for murder. In November 1994 Payakan was acquitted on the ground of insufficient evidence. He was then "congratulated" by the judge with the exhortation: "Go back to your people" (Gutkoski 1994). That judge interpreted the scratches found in the woman's vagina as having been made by Irekran's fingernails. But because Irekran was "primitive" and therefore could not be held accountable for what she did, the case was closed. Some said the verdict was a tactic to avert a major confrontation between the Kayapó and the non-Indians of the region that was likely had Payakan been found guilty. Predictably, the decision was openly criticized. One female attorney declared: "In Payakan's case, Justice was intimidated by Kayapó pressure" (Nunes 1994).

One of the most striking features of the Payakan affair is the total blend of his act with his ethnic identity. He was not simply a man accused of raping a woman. He was a savage Indian, an attribute that increased exponentially the virulence of the sexual crime with which he was charged. With rare exceptions—such as journalist Gilberto Dimenstein, who commented on how "the image of the rapist is muddled with that of Indian, the eternal victim of savagery" (1992)—there was no attempt to separate male violence from Indian identity. Payakan was the sexually unbridled wild man incarnate, *"o cacique tarado que estuprou uma garota"* (the sexually perverted Indian leader who raped a young girl), as a journalist described him six months before the trial (Machado 1994). The image is disquietingly evocative of the wild man of the Middle Ages, "a monstrous force that nature had unleashed to assail civilized men with a bestial humanity, and who enwrapped whoever he so desired within his colossal embrace" (Bartra 1994, 100).

Then there was the public's reaction to Irekran. *Veja* and *Folha de São Paulo* matter-of-factly informed their readers that in 1991 a surgeon from

Redenção had tied off Irekran's fallopian tubes during a delivery without her or Payakan's consent. This same doctor, who later made the medical report on the rape, was being sued by Payakan for the unethical operation. The press, unable to make sense of a woman who contributed to the unfaithfulness of her husband, attributed Irekran's aggression first to sheer jealousy and then to a quaint Kayapó custom: "The deputy . . . who handles the case, declares having heard from FUNAI employees that there is a legend in Kayapó culture according to which the woman goes back to being fertile only if her man has sex with a virgin. 'I'll look into this story,' says [the deputy]" (Gondim 1992d).

One may well ask why, amid the generalized sexual violence in Brazil and elsewhere, this Kayapó man was selected as the prototype of the rapist. Cecilia McCallum suggests an arresting answer:

> The *Veja* Payakan is a usurper, an Indian rancher, financier and businessman, a pilot and car driver, an international traveler. He is a pervert conqueror, an enemy of Brazil who has taken the place—and the land—that should belong to true Brazilians. Yet this is not his worst crime. This is that he has colonized not only the space and rank of the conqueror, but also the processes of conquest itself. If a surgeon in Redempção [sic] sought to emasculate him by sterilizing his wife, he struck back through the monstrous rape of a "white woman." . . . By so invading the trajectory of the processes of legitimate conquest, he turns the nation against its own history. The *Veja* Payakan and his "tribe" loom in the imagination, threatening to divert the course prescribed by modernism, and to relegate the nation forever to the murky depths of savagery. (McCallum 1994, 7–8)

Far from being relegated to the Middle Ages, the idea of the savage is alive and well in the minds and guts of civilized Brazilians.

I would like to make three final comments by way of summary. The first relates to the construction of the images represented here as entries in a dictionary of prejudice. What do the images of the Indian as child, heathen, nomad, primitive, and savage have in common? Bestard and Contreras attempt an answer: "The assimilation of the Other to a hierarchy in which, for one reason or another depending on the case, the other is always assigned a position of inferiority" (1987, 11). Administrators, missionaries, anthropologists, and journalists are the main producers and/or consumers of these images. State administrators attempt to control "Indianness" through the construction of the Indian as a dependent child; missionaries transform Indians into heathens to justify their mission; anthropologists construct a universe of differences based on concepts such as nomad and primitive in order to theorize about human diversity; and journalists

capture Indians at their most exotic as a stunt. All these agents, with their own agendas, have in common an underlying feature: they help build Indigenism up as a multilayered, multifaceted mosaic. Each of these images reflects the differential power that has marked Indian-white relations since the invasion of the Americas. Whether consciously or not, by accident or by design, with good or bad intentions, the net result of the projection of the Indian as child, heathen, and the like has been to foster the conquest of indigenous peoples.

My second comment has to do with the spirit of the age of discovery and its consequences for the future of interethnic contact in the New World. Brazilian Indians, like all other original inhabitants of the Americas, were made to fit molds of otherness cast in medieval Europe and earlier that were simply carried over to the New World in the acts of "discovery." As Bartra says, "In order to understand and value the strange inhabitants of the New World, sixteenth-century Europeans had to rummage in their own cultural memory to find archetypes that could catalogue them" (1995, 219). The Portuguese, like the Spaniards and the English, personified the trend that prevailed in Europe in the sixteenth century, that is, the conviction that the "exotic" Amerindians were simply echoes of the "antique" (Ryan 1981, 527). The European experience with Old World "barbarians" served as a template for interpreting all cultural differences. It was "as if *real* discovery were not the exoticism of the other but his ultimate similarity with peoples already assimilated into European consciousness" (p. 529). Thus "the Spaniards treated the Aztecs and the Incas according to their experience with Muslims in the Iberian Peninsula. The treatment given by the English to the Indians of the Massachusetts Bay colony seems to have been based on what they had previously done to the Irish" (Bestard and Contreras 1987, 21–22). Every idea and every image about Indians had already been concocted back in Europe. Rather than being overturned by the radical novelty found in the new environment, this imagery was simply adjusted to it. Transatlantic travel fused the European wild man with the inhabitant of the Americas, pagans with heathens, sabbat witches with cannibal Tupinambá women, destitute medieval peasants with "nomadic tribes." Even the name *Brazil* seems to derive from an amalgam of two separate notions—Irish and Portuguese—about the existence of a certain enchanted Isle of Brazil, which first appeared on maps in the fourteenth century (Weckmann 1993, 29–40). What European eyes saw as unexpected otherness (human beings with their own customs), European brains processed as expected exoticism (monsters, if not in the physical sense, certainly in terms of customs). Too much was at stake in terms of their own self-identity for Europeans to acknowledge the existence of a whole universe of differences that had not been conceived in Europe. With a certain dose of what was to be identified

as Latin American magical realism, Europeans then proceeded to update their vision of otherness as they faced "the very real presence . . . of human communities which seemed unlike anything known in Europe" (Pagden 1982, 4). But the changes were mere finishing touches that did not alter the basic mold of the old structure.

Transposed to the domain of anthropological discourse, this resilience in maintaining old habits in the face of radical differences manifests itself in the permissiveness with which anthropology has allowed terms such as nomad, primitive, and savage to enter its disciplinary vocabulary. This uncritical incorporation of received ideas, smuggled into the profession from the ideologically laden realm of common usage, is a constant reminder of the spirit of an era that anthropology was expected to counteract.

My third comment refers to the specular value of otherness. Several authors cited in this chapter point out the mirror effect of New World peoples on Western self-perception. Diamond affirms that the "idea of the primitive is, then, as old as civilization, because civilization creates it in the search for human [read: Western] identity" (1981, 211). On the primitive as the antithesis of the civilized, Kuper suggests that primitive society "therefore must have been nomadic, ordered by blood ties, sexually promiscuous and communist" (1988, 5). McGrane's analysis of nineteenth-century anthropology concludes that "regarding these savage and barbarous tribes, we're not trying to explain them; we're trying to explain ourselves" (1989, 95). Bartra remarks that "Caliban's lewd and sarcastic aggression profiles a monster who, as a creation of nature's delirium or God's tolerance, exists only to foil Prospero's humanizing and civilizing values" (1994, 194). Considering that "European" was and still is a diffuse identity indeed—a collection of whites of various shades and Christians of many persuasions—the quest for a mirror with the power to reflect a positive and unified image of the Westerner is not at all surprising. Although Christianity provided the thread that tied all western Europeans into an apparently uniform pattern, the split between Catholics and Protestants was wide enough to produce deep antagonisms and cultural differences. "The demographic history of most of Europe," says Hobsbawm, "was such that we *know* how multiform the origin of ethnic groups can be" (1991, 79). Virtually each European kingdom had its own identity and political agenda, which in turn were reflected in their respective styles of colonization in the New World (Seed 1995).

Nevertheless, European countries had at least one thing in common: the quest for world power. Their tactics and immediate aims might have differed, but they agreed on one fundamental thing, namely, that they should conquer the Americas and their native peoples. But Christianity being what it is, conquest needed to be duly justified, and the only justification possible was to elevate Christian values to universal commandments. The exotic native of the New World had to be proved humanly inferior lest the European conquistador incur the sin of doing unto others what he would not do unto himself. Hence the symbolic magnitude of mirrors. On the flat surface of the European-made looking-glass, the more degraded the image of the Other, the more elevated its creators would see themselves to be. Is it sheer coincidence that the appearance of Snow White's likeness in the magic mirror sets off the demise of the all-powerful stepmother? Like a Freudian slip, this fairy tale tells worlds about its authors, particularly the discomfort of the powerful vis-à-vis the powerless, or the anxiety of confronting the Other for fear of turning out less than becoming. Appropriately "European," Snow White, Little Red Riding Hood, Cinderella, and other children's stories have been important telltale clues to the workings of Western imagination regarding alterity. Consider, for instance, the hyperbolic pun depicted in the title and original dust jacket of a modern anthropological classic, *La Pensée Sauvage*. Could it be otherwise?

2
The Paradise That Never Was

If we were to pick a single word to characterize the attitude of the Portuguese toward the newfound land of Brazil and its inhabitants, that word would surely be *ambivalence*. We might begin with the name of the land—Brazil. Originally thought to be an island, the subcontinent received a Christian name from the first Portuguese "authority" to set foot on it, Admiral Pedro Álvares Cabral. Terra de Vera Cruz (Land of the True Cross) soon became Terra de Santa Cruz (Land of the Holy Cross), but neither caught on, and they soon were replaced by the profane designation of Brazil.

Brasil has been associated with brazilwood, the valuable dye that is as red as a hot ember (*brasa* in Portuguese). The new colony's exports of brazilwood helped maintain the crown's economy, so it was something of a consolation prize for the absence of the gold and silver that the Portuguese expected and in which the Spaniards delighted. But the name has a much more complex origin. As early as the fourteenth century the Isle Brasil was part of at least two distinct European traditions. One was the notion of "a moving island that existed somewhere west or south of Ireland; it was one of the many islands that medieval imagination had set on the periphery of the known world" (Weckmann 1993, 29). Thus the word brasil may be derived from the Celt "*Bres,* meaning 'noble' or 'fortunate' [not to be confused with the Fortunate Islands, later renamed Canary], and also 'happy' or 'charming' " (Weckmann 1993, 31).

In the fourteenth century other islands with the name Brasil appeared on European maps. One of these was near the Azores, which after 1500 became associated with the land discovered by Pedro Álvares Cabral. The red wood itself had been known in Europe since the thirteenth century as a product imported from the East primarily by the Italians who called it *verzino*. Brazilwood then "derives its name (*brasil, braxilis, bresdilsi,* etc.) from the Isle Brasil of medieval cartography, according to the belief that this dye

wood was its main product" (Weckmann 1993, 36). A blend of fable and fact regarding the word brasil circulated in Europe for nearly two centuries:

> Accumulating legends, moving them in space, re-fusing them, the European imaginary also encompassed the archipelago of the Isles Brasil, a possible transformation of the Isle of San Brendan. From 1351 to 1508, it was to know a multitude of variations: Brazi, Bracir, Brasil, Brasill, Brazil, Brazile, Brazille, Brazill, Bracil, Braçil, Braçill, Bersill, Braxil, Braxili, Braxill, Braxyilli, Bresilge. In 1367, Pizigano's letter mentioned three isles Bracir which, from then on, would be recorded in most maritime charts; their position would be unaltered: "the southernmost of the isles can be found marked in the Azores group, approximately on the latitude of Cape São Vicente; the second remains to the NW of Cape Finisterra, on Britain's latitude; the third to the W and not too far from the coast of Ireland." (Mello e Souza 1987, 27–28)

From the coast of Brazil, Pero Vaz de Caminha, Pedro Álvares Cabral's scribe, wrote the first report of the land: "The soil is very bountiful in yielding to them what they require" (1963, 67). Shortly afterward Amerigo Vespucci declared: "I fancied myself near the terrestrial paradise" (Vespucio 1951, 290). Reports such as these contributed to the creation of the legend of Brazil as an earthly Eden (Buarque de Holanda 1992). But Fray Vicente do Salvador, Brazil's first historian, had a different opinion. The new land was no paradise, and its diabolical character was epitomized by the choice of the name Brazil. He lamented that the original reference to a saintly wood—the "Holy Cross"—was superseded by a designation for the profane commerce of brazilwood (Laraia 1993, 41–42). He also attributed its immaturity to its being possessed by the devil; "He poured over the nascent colony the whole load of the European imaginary where the devil had an outstanding role since at least the eleventh century. . . . Brazil, a Portuguese colony, was thus born under the sign of the Devil and the projections of western man's imagination" (Mello e Souza 1987, 28).

Regarding the inhabitants of the Americas, the first sign of European ambivalence is, of course, the misnomer *Indian*. In his search for India Columbus found "Indians," an appellation that took on a colossally negative load for centuries to come. The Indian as Indian could easily fill many pages of a dictionary entry, as it in fact does. "From the beginning, the dictionary has contributed to the construction and later diffusion of a stereotyped image of the Indian" (Reissner 1983, 137).

When I mention European ambivalence toward Brazil's original inhabitants, I am referring to attitudes that oscillate between an Edenic admiration and an urge to civilize them. We see this ambivalence both today and in the earliest reports by the European discoverers. Consider the

first descriptions of indigenous peoples on coastal Brazil, such as the letter by Pero Vaz de Caminha and the letters written by Amerigo Vespucci, all about the Tupinambá. Although he praises their innocence, their cooperation in work and desire to trade, Caminha envisions them as fertile ground for Christianization. Just as the land "is so gracious that, if one wants to use it, it will yield anything because of the waters it contains," so the natives, so blameless and unfettered, present themselves as the ideal virgin soil for conversion: "One can easily imprint on them any mark we choose, for Our Lord has given them good bodies and good faces as befits good men" (1963, 67, 60). The Indians were good but not yet good enough: "Therefore, if anyone is to come here, let a clergyman come along to baptize them" (p. 65). In fact, as the days of that memorable week of April 1500 went by, Caminha's letter showed "a progressive degradation of the image of the Other" (Barreto 1983, 181).

Amerigo Vespucci was similarly impressed by the land. But unlike Caminha, who had a very confined and brief stay in Brazil and perceived no internal differences among the natives, Vespucci, who traveled widely along the coast, was exposed to various faces of the numerous Tupinambá, albeit reducing them to two types: the gentle and the brutes. With the gentle he traded, with the brutes he made war and took them home as slaves.

This double image of the good Indian and the bad Indian—"the 'noble savage' and the 'dirty dog'" (Marchant 1942, 22)—living in equally ambivalent surroundings—from blissful wilderness to Amazonian green hell—was to remain a constant theme in the history of Indian–non-Indian contact. But while in the early days of European conquest both images were blended into the same discourse, especially so in Caminha's case, in later years and centuries they separated, with different groups espousing either the Edenic discourse or the civilizing discourse. The former emphasizes the purity of Indians in communion with nature; the latter takes the Indians to be as much objects of domestication as the land itself. But, as Retamar points out, "both ways of considering the American, far from being in opposition, were perfectly reconcilable" (1989, 8). Indeed, they are opposed only in appearance, for while the Edenic discourse exalted the Indians as children of Paradise, its proponents did nothing to prevent real Indians from being annihilated by European diseases and unrelenting slave raids or beleaguered by Christianizers intent in eradicating their indigenous identities. For the Edenists flesh-and-blood Indians were an abstraction. The real thing was the idea of the noble savage, the avatar of Europe's lost innocence.

In an alluring essay on the influence of Brazilian Indians on the formulation of ideas that led to the French Revolution, Melo Franco traces the editorial trajectory of some travel writings, including Vespucci's 1503

Mundus Novus letter to Lorenzo di Medici, and the letters' enormous repercussions in propagating the image of the good savage. Melo Franco does a rather selective reading of Vespucci, omitting passages about cannibalism, for instance, where the navigator says: "We endeavored to the extent of our power to dissuade them and persuade them to desist from these depraved customs" (Vespucio 1951, 303). Nevertheless, Vespucci's and many other writings by eyewitnesses described alien customs and compared and contrasted them to the European status quo; thus the Indians' customs were interpreted as proof that humans, living in a natural state, are essentially good. As a result, European institutions were questioned, and the days of teratological fears that haunted the European imagination until the Middle Ages came to an end. "The notion of the cruel and monstrous savage was completely superseded by the idea of the good savage" (Melo Franco 1976, 30). Reports of the ways of life of the Tupinambá and other indigenous groups on the Brazilian coast would have been responsible for the formation of a new European attitude regarding good and evil in human nature. The outcome of all this was "an evolving movement of European public opinion toward the formation of a theory of natural goodness" (p. 30). The political consequences of such movement were truly momentous. "In the field of political ideas, the theory of the good savage was to set a definite course, or rather, give a more conscious theoretical meaning to the confused feelings of revolutionary individualism which presides over and guides the whole conception of Renaissance" (p. 17). The praise of the noble savage in sixteenth-century reports made a particular impression on such writers as Montaigne, "and also, nearly two centuries later, on the fiery work of Jean-Jacques Rousseau" (p. 27). Events such as the "Brazilian feast at Rouen," held in 1551 with a simulation of the quotidien life of a Tupinambá village in which real Tupinambá and French actors performed comme il faut, contributed to cement the notion of the noble savage (pp. 46–49). The remarkable illustration reproduced from a book by Ferdinand Denis is a sort of microcosmic rendering of the European vision of the inhabitants of the New World. Against a paradisiacal background of woods and sea a multitude of natives engages in various activities: couples lie romantically in hammocks, stroll leisurely among the trees holding hands, or otherwise court in the nude; men haul tree trunks to the shore; others paddle canoes, climb trees, or shoot birds with bow and arrow, enter huts surrounded with low suburban-style fences, dance in a circle, and fight each other while bodies lie on the ground. Interestingly enough, the illustration contains no sign of cannibalism, which often appears in sixteenth-century drawings. The minds of Renaissance Europeans were not troubled by their simultaneous fascination with the good natural

life of the Indians and abhorrence of cannibalism, but Denis's rendering of the Brazilian feast at Rouen duly expunged anthropophagy, perhaps in deference to the royalty for whom the event was organized.

Meanwhile, the legion of civilizing agents in direct contact with the Indians proposed that they be turned into civilized persons, even as these Indians were being killed or shoved into the fringes of society. For the civilizing agents Indian was a passing condition with no future in the world of Europeans, and because Indians showed themselves to be inept at becoming civilized, they might as well die out. Although it may seem paradoxical, the civilizing rhetoric concludes that the Indian has no place in civilization.

Let me give a few examples to illustrate how the Edenic and the civilizing discourses have become part of Brazilian interethnic relations. These are brief sketches of the Indian of romantic literature, the Indian of regional society, the Indian of the missionaries, and the Indian of the state. Each image deserves a detailed and extensive discussion, but for introducing how the Indian has populated the national imagination, even before the Brazilian nation existed as such, I believe they give a basic idea of how various types of Brazilians have used the Indian and in so doing added another layer of meaning to the ideological edifice of Indigenism.

The Noble Savage in Three Acts

The nativist moment of the eighteenth century and the romantic moment of the nineteenth century are best depicted in paintings, music, and especially in literature. The difference between them is subtle and may even be somewhat artificial, but it is useful in attempting to identify the similarities and differences in the political and ethical approaches of those centuries to the Indian issue.

In a sense the nativist era reflects the shock waves of the Enlightenment as they reached Brazil: the fascination with the unspoiled native, the aesthetic value of nobility of character, the spiritual potential of the pristine purity of the New World. One of the most outstanding examples of this phase is the poem *Caramuru*, first published in Lisbon in 1781 by an Augustinian friar, José de Santa Rita Durão. The poem is an epic about a Portuguese man, Diogo Alvares Correia, who, so the story goes, survived a shipwreck in 1510 off the coast of Bahia, went native, and married Paraguassu, the daughter of an Indian leader. In the poem Diogo Alvares, one of the most famous squawmen in Brazilian history, is portrayed as a nobleman and Paraguassu as an Indian princess. Durão's writing enhances Alvares's nobility through his metamorphosis into the native Caramuru. He becomes the hero in Paradise (Barros 1968). In glorifying his hero the friar suppressed some embarrassing traits of Alvares's character, such as accepting the sexual favors of young Tupinambá girls and passing on to the Portuguese crown large plots of land he acquired through his marriage to Paraguassu (Candido 1967, 201–202).

The Diogo Alvares of historians seems to have been anything but a nobleman. Mendes de Almeida, for instance, points out his obscure origins, adding that "it is not certain whether he was the survivor of a shipwreck, a convict, or a deserter from Crown or private ships" (1876, 21). He attributes "this legend or pious fraud" to the efforts of Alvares's apparently numerous illegitimate offspring to erase the "irregularity of their origin" (p. 18). Caramuru, he says, "had no greater importance than that which resulted from his knowledge of the Indians' language; but like him there were others on the shores of Brazil" (p. 21). Other historians are equally critical of the "Caramuru myth" (Varnhagen 1848; Marchant 1942). Paraguassu in turn was described as the Brazilian equivalent of La Malinche, "an instrument to best dominate Bahia" (Rocha Pitta 1950, 53).

By a stroke of Durão's pen Paraguassu, when taken to the Court of Paris, brings along the innocence and purity of the Indian and adds to these virtues the indispensable qualities of wifely dedication and fidelity, all enhanced by a Christianized persona. "Like the most authentic heroine of European tradition," she is depicted as having white and rosy skin, rejecting the nudity of her companions, and displaying a pious concern for the spiritual fate of her relatives and neighbors. In changing her name to Catarina, a homonym for the queens of both France and Portugal, she completes her civilizing process "in an opposite and symmetrical movement" to that of her husband. They are together in "the same ideal situation of ambiguity" (Candido 1967, 208). Paraguassu represents the much cherished image of the Indian princess who marries into European society. One is only too aware of the remarkable similarities between Paraguassu's literary trajectory and that of the North American Pocahontas (Hulme 1986, 137–73; Stedman 1982).

Caramuru, then, is the story of a European man who went native and of an Indian woman who went European. The characters are allowed to cross the cultural boundaries only because the Indian is portrayed as holding those qualities treasured by Europeans—dignity, courage, monogamy, impeccable honesty, unspoiled by greed or any other sin. The couple represent the best of two worlds. But the fusion of these worlds is possible only because the Europeans—represented here by Friar Durão—projected their ideal virtues onto the Indians. The proclaimed nobility of Europeans was thus heightened by their social and sexual intercourse with the noble savage, so long as that savage was domesticated by Christianity. Only thus was it possible to create *Caramuru*, the European with the strength of character and psychological malleability required to colonize the new land. This

image of the easily adaptable Portuguese who populated the colonies of Africa and America, thanks to their lack of prejudice toward black and Indian women, was to remain one of the strongest ideological artifices of Portuguese colonization vastly praised by such authors as Brazilian sociologist Gilberto Freyre (1953, 1992; see Araújo 1994). To this day we find statements praising the fecundity of the Portuguese and their ability to merge with the natives. Ribeiro writes:

> The Portuguese was the Jesuit lime and the genetic oil which cemented the Indian sand and the black gravel in the edification of Brazil. He was the nerve of those fleshes and bones; from a small bunch of people, they multiplied in a prodigious way, lusitanizing the world, in a feat as unbelievable as grandiose, impossible to imagine if it had not been accomplished. (1993, 43)

Caramuru is the quintessence of the Edenic discourse at the service of exalting the feats of the colonizers to the benefit and appreciation of the colonized Indians. Europeans and Indians are thus inextricably intertwined in the same glorious destiny, that of an emerging nation. It is no mere coincidence that "the Portuguese dominion in Brazil was showing the first signs of declining, and the colonial system itself was beginning to run into contradictions with local realities" (Candido 1967, 202). In such a context the literary elite of the colony was encouraged to promote a "Brazilian historical tradition, in order to justify the political individuality of the country" (p. 203).

In the next century we find the "Indianist" moment also glorifying the Indian, again an abstract Indian whose real life was never directly observed by these artists. Two major writers, José de Alencar and Gonçalves Dias, are perhaps the main representatives of "Indianism," a literary movement that used indigenous imagery and whose thrust was to create a style of literature with a distinctly Brazilian flavor, free from European influence. They sought inspiration in what they regarded as authentically Brazilian—the Indian. These authors were engaged in a more or less conscious enterprise of making a culturally independent Brazil, following its political and administrative independence in 1822. Their endeavor was no longer to show the nobility of the Portuguese but the vitality of the Brazilian. Such vigor was not imported from Portugal but inherited from the natives of the land. From the Indians, or what they imagined the Indians to be, they extracted the ingredients necessary to compose a recipe for Brazilian nationalism: "Brazilian Indianism glorifies the Indian as the original inhabitant of Brazil and proclaims him the main source and origin of the new, superior race and civilization that has originated in Brazil, thanks to the miscegenation of two races and cultures: the Indian and the white, European" (Lemaire 1989, 59).

In making ample use of the exotic these writers aroused the reader's imagination not with ethnographic accuracy but with the equipment they knew how to handle best, which ironically was the European imagery of the Indian, heavily shaded with erotic innuendo, astonishing surroundings, or unbelievable displays of bravery. Gonçalves Dias excels at this formula, mixing female beauty, titillating women's attire, grandiose landscapes, and intrepid male courage. It is, in Candido's expression, a "cocktail of medievalism, idealism, and fantasied ethnography." Gonçalves Dias's poem, *I-Juca Pirama* (1851), about the lament of a brave Tupi prisoner facing death at the hands of his enemies, is, continues Candido, "one of these undisputed things which have been incorporated into the national pride, it is the very representation of the country together with the magnitude of the Amazon, the Ipiranga cry [of Independence by Emperor Pedro I], or the green and yellow national colors" (1993, p. 75). Candido praises Gonçalves Dias as a great poet, "in part for his capacity to find in poetry the natural medium for the feeling of fascination for the New World of which Chateaubriand's prose had been the main interpreter up until then" (pp. 73–74).

José de Alencar's *O Guarani* (1857) is about a Guarani Indian, Peri, whose dedication to his white masters rescues them from the rage of his enemies, the Aimoré, a society of warriors and, of course, cannibals. Peri falls in love with the young woman Ceci, but no sanctioned union is possible between them. Here we find again the asymmetry of miscegenation: white man + Indian woman = yes; white woman + Indian man = never. In Brazil as in the United States (Stedman 1982) or elsewhere interethnic romance is always a one-way affair, for "miscegenation, especially between white females and nonwhite males, must never occur" (Torgovnick 1990, 53). It seems to have been out of the question to conceive of white women who "lowered" themselves to the appeal of colored men, let alone who were responsible for generations of mestizos. At the end of the novel Peri heroically saves Ceci from death in a portentous storm that killed her family and destroyed their property, to end up platonically beside Ceci on the frond of an uprooted palm tree, placidly drifting down the torrent. Peri is almost as strong as the natural elements and the epitome of abnegation, altruism, and strength of character. A true noble savage who knew his place, that is, a social outcast, he was never allowed to enter white society as an equal.

The ambivalence of the nascent Brazilian society toward the Indians becomes very clear in these literary works. If, on the one hand, Indian blood is a necessary ingredient in the formation of nationality, on the other, the mixture of indigenous and Portuguese blood must not be effected at random. Brazilian ideology of miscegenation may at first seem to be a straightforward case of racial inequality. But it is best understood as a basically political and moral issue. Otherwise, why permit—if not actually

encourage—Indian females to cohabit with European males while strongly barring unions between Indian males and European females? Brazil is an example of gender speaking louder than race. Important as it may be, the racial factor is not sufficient to explain the way in which the Brazilian nation has handled the question of miscegenation.

Alencar dedicated two more books—*Iracema* (1865) and *Ubirajara* (1874)—to the theme of Indianism as his search for a truly Brazilian persona and distinct intellectual identity. Candido vividly points out the relevance of the fictional Indian to the self-perception of Brazilians:

> Just as Walter Scott fascinated Europe's imagination with his castles and knights, so did Alencar establish one of the most cherished models of Brazilian sensitivity, namely, that of the ideal Indian as developed by Gonçalves Dias, but projected by him onto daily life. The Iracemas, Jacis, Ubiratãs, Ubirajaras, Aracis, Peris—who every year for about a century have disseminated the "genteel bunch of lies" of Indianism through baptismal fonts and registry offices—translate the deep will of the Brazilian to perpetuate the convention that gives to a country of mestizos the alibi of a heroic race, and to a nation with a short history the depth of legendary times. (1993, 202)

In a form of domination the romantic figure of the noble savage, as promoted in literature, painting, and music, has been benign only in appearance. In order to sustain itself literature needs to keep the Indian in the bush and in purity of sentiment. A demoralized drunken Indian lying in some town gutter would be unthinkable to writers such as José de Alencar or to musicians such as Carlos Gomes, the author of the opera *O Guarani*. Equally unthinkable to these artists would be the image of a politically active, vociferous Indian accusing national authorities of murder, theft, and immorality, as the twentieth century was to witness.

The self-sacrificing Peri of Alencar's novel and Gomes's opera, along with other Indian heroes, is a useful ingredient for brewing the powerful fiction of the melting pot to which Ribeiro refers. Somehow, this fiction succeeds in the remarkable juggling act of keeping the noble savage both noble and isolated while mingling him with the rest of the population to beget this miracle that is the Brazilian nation. Again, Ribeiro: "Brazil is more than a mere ethnic unit, it is a national ethnic unit, a nation-people, settled in its own territory and framed within the same State. . . . Brazilians are integrated into one single national ethnic unit, thus constituting one single people incorporated into a unified nation, in a uni-ethnic State" (1995, 22). In an afterthought that tries to accommodate his blunder, Ribeiro concludes: "The only exception are the multiple tribal microethnic groups, so imponderable that their existence does not affect the national destiny" (p. 22).

Part of the mindset that reduced the Indian to a component of the great national makeup is a series of verbal and gestural statements, both popular and official. For instance, folkloric to a fault is the much repeated story (by all sorts of people, including São Paulo taxi drivers) of the Indian grandmother who was caught with a lasso. It is a little half-joke usually told in the most candid of moods and as if it were highly original to people who are perceived as having anything to do with Indians or even to Indians themselves (Munduruku 1996, 35). It goes without saying that the joke never involves an Indian grandfather or father (too humiliating for a man) or an Indian mother (too close for comfort) who was lassoed. To have a wild Indian grandmother is reason for pride; it is a valid passport to authentic Brazilianness.

A more recent rendering of the Indian as an ingredient of nationality is a television advertisement for army recruiting. A fully clad young soldier has his face slowly and subtly transformed from white to black to Indian, the three shapes and colors of which the Brazilian citizen is made. The Indian fades into a soldier's uniform as the old myth of national origin enters the electronic era.

Both the nativist and the Indianist modes use Indian imagery to construct non-Indian identities, be they of the indomitable colonizer or of the proud nationalist. We find a rather sardonic version of these trends during the modernist movement of the 1920s. The figure of the Indian Macunaíma, created by writer Mário de Andrade, who sought inspiration in a myth cycle of the Makushi Indians in the northern state of Roraima, represents the amoral hero (*herói sem caráter*) who uses his magic powers to play tricks of all kinds on both friends and foes. As a sort of comical trickster Macunaíma has become a symbol of the self-derision in which Brazilian nationalists often engage as a way to set themselves apart from European hegemony. In the movie version of the story of Macunaíma, the Indian hero metamorphoses into a wicked black man. The soldier of the army ad might as well be a latter-day Macunaíma without the original sense of humor.

Why does nationalism draw so much of its imagery from the Indians? Benedict Anderson argues that "this need to indigenize American nationalism seems only to have appeared as a conscious project well after political independence was achieved." Moreover, because "the ascendancy of creoles and mestizos" was based on the extermination, domination, and/or marginalization of indigenous populations, " 'indigenization' almost everywhere was necessarily constructed in bad faith and as a kind of political theater" (1988, 404). A robust, autonomous, indigenous population would perhaps keep the conqueror too busy with weaponry to give him imaginative leisure to invent ethnic metaphors.

Advocates of the romantic vision of the Indian are a resilient lot, not at

all confined to the past. They still exist, increasingly shocked by the spectacle of fast change—the pure Indian is steadily disappearing behind pants and shirts, transistor radios, pocket calculators, sun glasses, video cameras, and cynicism. For them a good Indian is still a naked Indian, unspoiled by the evils of civilization. Those Indians seen on television delivering fiery speeches in Congress (Chief Juruna in the early 1980s), threatening to throw the president of the National Indian Foundation (FUNAI) out of a window or occupying FUNAI's presidential office (Shavante men in the early 1980s and late 1990s), denouncing missionary excesses at the Fourth Russell Tribunal (Álvaro Tukano in 1980), or waving a machete in the face of top-level executives (Tuíra, the Kayapó woman, during the 1989 Altamira meeting; see C. Ricardo 1995, 47) are not really Indians and are no longer a redeeming race but subversives, a threat to civilization. Only in the condition of natural purity can Indians be raised to the honor of ancestors of today's Brazilians.

A modern version of the romantic mode of Indigenism is the attitude of some "friends of the Indians," among university people, journalists, lawyers, artists, anthropologists, and the like, who seem to demand from the Indians an unshakable integrity. Indians must defend to the death, if need be, the firmness of their convictions, be these fighting for land, resisting official or private development plans, refusing bribes, or rejecting dubious deals. These friendly professionals have shown themselves willing to lend their solidarity only to Indians who demonstrate ideological purity. In 1982 I witnessed an instance of intransigence to indigenous political autonomy. During the first national meeting of indigenous leaders held in Brasília, most of the dozen or so anthropologists in attendance rebelled against the Indians' decision to invite the president of the National Indian Foundation to deliver a speech. Because national opposition to the military, in power since 1964, was gathering momentum, the move by the Indians to pay tribute to a man such as Colonel Paulo Moreira Leal, head of FUNAI and a member of the National Security Council, the biggest symbol of military repression, was taken as an affront to the friends of the Indians at the meeting. For decades sympathetic Brazilians had directly or indirectly confronted the Indian policy carried out by the military. Moreover, these militants thought that because they had helped the Indians organize and run the event they had the right to tell the Indians who were the good guys and who were the bad guys. Some felt personally betrayed by the indigenous leaders who showed no consideration for the political commitment of Brazilian citizens struggling to put an end to the military dictatorship. The Indian cause at that time was a vehicle for dissatisfied Brazilians to vent their political grievances. The problem was that the Indians seemed to have a mind of their own—they were attuned to issues that did not quite coincide with those of their friends.

Virtuous principles, purity of ideology, and disposition to die heroically are, of course, Western fantasies, but it does not occur to these militant indigenists that in demanding such moral high standards from the Indians they are in fact looking for the ideal of the idealist who does not crumble under pressure. The contrast between the martyred Indian and the sold-out Indian becomes the contrast between honorable and corrupted Westerners. The one-way ideological mirror is typical. To expect the Indians to resist pressures and die in the name of unattainable principles is as intolerant an attitude as that which denies Indianness to Indians who wear Western clothes and speak Portuguese.

A more recent trend cuts across national boundaries and focuses on environmental preservation. The ecological movement shares two main features with the nativist and the romantic discourses—emphasis on the Indian-as-part-of-nature and affirmation of Indians' purity. Because Indians are closer to nature, the assumption is that they are purer, less affected by the evils of this world, and therefore should always demonstrate the integrity of the unspoiled. To fall from the purity of nature is to be lost to humanity and, as such, to be undeserving of protection. A latter-day Edenic discourse in search of a threatened Eden, the ecological movement in its most naive incarnation (although relatively recent, the movement already shows considerable internal differences) takes Indians as a monolithic figure, the companion-cum-keeper of beast and plant; as an integral part of nature they are also threatened and, like fauna and flora on the verge of extinction, need to be protected by the enlightened few of Western civilization. Thus the protector comes full circle in five hundred years: from invader to savior. Widely publicized international campaigns involving prominent political figures, show business stars, religious leaders, and news media experts cry out for the saving of Amazonia and, by extension, the Amerindians.

Comparing the romantic attitudes of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, we can detect an interesting difference underlying their common denominator, which is the image of the noble savage. Whereas nineteenth-century romantics used indigenous imagery to highlight the virtues of Western civilization—Alencar, among others, was searching for the foundations of a genuine Brazilian nationality—twentieth-century environmentalists, intent on the preservation of wilderness areas such as Amazonia, embrace the cause of the forest and the Indians as an instrument to criticize that same Western civilization. One century later the promises of industrial society have turned into polluted nightmares for critics of progress and

technological expansion. For them the Indian has maintained a pristine innocence and wisdom and is therefore a fitting symbol for the Paradise on earth that is about to be lost.

The reasoning seems to follow a straightforward exercise in Cartesian logic: unspoiled nature is pure; the Indian is part of nature; therefore the Indian is pure. Such purity then becomes associated with the wisdom that Westerners once had but have lost in the deluge of technological progress and its by-product, the destruction of the environment. Now the West badly needs to recover its lost wisdom in order to rebuild, no longer a single nation but the entire planet. The Indian enters this gloomy picture as the wholesome reservoir of wisdom, ready to be reappropriated by the dominant society. In this trajectory of the Edenic discourse, from Paradise Found to Paradise Lost, the figure of the immanent Indian has been a crucial instrument for the transcendental Westerner. For it is Westerners that "find" Paradise, transform it to the point of ruining it, and then, again through their volition, rescue the Earth from their rapacity by tapping indigenous resources that seem to exist for no other reason than to serve the needs of Westerners. As sovereign agents of the world, they have reduced the Indians to mere hostages of economic terrorism.

For all its apparently sympathetic and benign inclinations that the environmentalist rhetoric (and the less sophisticated side of ecological activism) displays toward the Indians, it conceals an element of paternalism and intolerance that can easily come to the surface whenever the Indians fail to meet its expectations. If a good Indian is a pure Indian—and here, as usual, the definition of purity is given by the dominant society—an Indian who falls prey to Western seduction by, for instance, selling lumber to foreign companies (such as the Kayapó leader Payakan), making pacts with the military (such as Álvaro Tukano), or striking deals with corporations (such as various factions of the Gaviões, Kayapó, and Tukano) is denigrated and doomed to fall lower than the wheeler-dealer. An Indian who has sold out is, in short, much less deserving of understanding or forgiveness than a Brazilian in the same situation. Assigned the absurd role of guardian of humanity's reserves of both natural resources and moral purity, Indians become charged with the "white man's burden" in reverse, whether they want it or not. In Chapter 1 we saw in Payakan's case an exemplar of the condemning disposition of the dominant society regarding alleged offenses by Indians. We shall see other examples in the chapters to come. It might be an instructive exercise to imagine the reverse situation—of Indians judging the purity or corruption of Brazilians. The Shavante Mário Juruna made a few incursions in that direction and, as will be apparent in Chapter 3, paid a high price for it.

The Civilizing Project and Its Contradictions

Running parallel to the eulogizing eloquence of the Edenic rhetoric is the civilizing discourse, which contains a series of images of the Indian with as long a history but which exploits features that are diametrically opposed to those of the children of Paradise. The idiom of conquest and control has as its basic premise the inferiority of the Indians. They are the creatures of barbarism, either renegades or ignorant brutes, much in the vein of Vespucci's image of the "bad" Tupinambá or of the Jesuit Manoel da Nóbrega's "filthy dogs" (Mello e Souza 1987, 64).

The civilizing discourse began with the first encounter between the Portuguese and Brazil's coastal Indians in 1500, when Caminha urged the king of Portugal to quickly send Catholic priests to convert the innocent people of the land. But it took a few more years before Europe was confident that the Indians were human and had souls to be conquered by the faith. The papal bull of 1537 signed by Paul III declared the natives of the Americas to be humans and therefore open to Christianity (Bestard and Contreras 1987, 11; Bosi 1989).

The job of taming the wilderness began just a few decades after the discovery of Brazil. Once the Portuguese got over their initial surprise at meeting mere people and not the monsters conceived by European imagination, the ordinary physicality of the Indians was countered by the monstrosity of their customs, namely, incest, cannibalism, and nudity (Baêta Neves 1978, 56). Hardly thirty years had gone by since Cabral's memorable landing on the coast of Bahia, and early traders and settlers were already waging wars against the Indians, enslaving them, looting their resources, and dislodging them from their lands. The new colony had an Aristotelian attitude, regarding the Indians as natural slaves; they might be human, but they certainly were the Europeans' inferiors and more suitable for hard work, if properly managed. Indigenous slavery began and was to last for more than two centuries (Schwartz 1995; Zavala 1964).

By means of "just wars" colonists and colonial authorities circumvented the crown's prohibition against enslaving indigenous peoples. Prohibition notwithstanding, "a just war was easy to provoke" (Ellis 1965, 50). A war was qualified as just when it was a matter of combating cannibalism and whenever the Indians resisted capture or attacked invaders. "Even after the Portuguese Crown prohibited indigenous slavery, in 1570, cannibalism continued to provide a 'just cause' to put them in slavery" (Schwartz 1995, 41). The practice of *resgate* (ransom, rescue), inspired by Roman custom, justified enslavement. It was the principle according to which the victor had the right "to spare the life of the vanquished, enslaving him as compensation" (Melo Franco 1976, 34).

Fray Vicente do Salvador, the seventeenth-century historian, describes the outcome of one such just war, waged against a group of Indian villages that occupied fertile lands in northeastern Pernambuco. Governor General Duarte Coelho "ordered them evacuated by war." Twenty thousand "tame" Indians were recruited for the raid.

> With all these people Duarte de Albuquerque Coelho left, marching to the first enemy fences where they had the first clashes, and there were some casualties among both parties, and as [the enemies] saw that it would be impossible to resist so many, they broke into a quick flight so as to have our people follow them with equal speed, thus missing the chance of destroying their houses and fences. . . . But Duarte Coelho, having guessed their thoughts, ordered some houses burnt down and left troops with the order to take all of their supplies, with which he forced them to make peace, which was conceded under the best conditions and he allotted the lands to people who immediately began to cultivate it and who, finding so much food planted, did no more than eat it and plant from the same shoots in the same holes.
>
> And thus they made their sugar plantations and sugar mills with which they became very rich, for the land was extremely fertile. (Salvador 1954, 186–87)

A second successful raid consolidated the power of the sugar planters:

> With the fame of these two victories, all heathens of this coast all the way to the São Francisco River were so frightened that they let themselves be tied to the whites as if they were sheep and ewes. And thus they went on boats along these rivers, loaded with Indians, selling them for two *cruzados*, or a thousand *réis* each, which is the price of a sheep. (p. 188)

Worse than slavery were the recurring epidemics that could kill as many as thirty thousand Indians in two or three months (Ribeiro 1993, 28). In the past as today indigenous communities assaulted by lethal epidemics suffer the extra penalty of lack of able hands to feed the sick (Ribeiro 1970, 272–307). Famine usually follows epidemics. Frequent reports describe how in total despair survivors of smallpox, measles, and other plagues offered themselves into slavery as a means of survival (Marchant 1942, 117–18; Ribeiro 1993, 28; Schwartz 1995, 52).

While Indians tried to escape starvation by giving themselves into slavery, Jesuits engaged in a most unseemly debate regarding the theological justification for such an extreme attitude. Far from condemning slavery as an institution, the priests were troubled by whether individuals had the right to sell themselves or their family into slavery. The theological quandary revolved around the following questions:

> I, whether a father may sell his child; and II, whether one may sell oneself. In case I, [Father Quiricio] Caxa decided in the affirmative, assuming extreme necessity, because of the aid from the child to which the father is entitled. In case II, the answer was also affirmative, provided the person was over twenty, because each is the master of his own liberty.
>
> Nobrega's response began with a strict interpretation of the law *de Patribus* in question, and pointed out that the law spoke only of great poverty and the need to eat, not of extreme necessity. . . . Thus, the powerful natural law of self-preservation . . . permitted the sale of the children and the loss of one's own liberty in order to maintain oneself alive.
>
> A series of corollaries followed from this point, not all of which were strictly pertinent. . . .
>
> Then, in a fifth corollary he appealed to historical instances familiar to the Portuguese of Bahia. The instance chosen was that of the Potiguares, who, during a famine in 1550, sold their children to get food. These children, [Nobrega] decided, were legitimate slaves, for they were sold to relieve the distress of the parents.
>
> On the other hand, in a sixth corollary, he found that the instances of the selling of children around Bahia between 1560 and 1567 were not comparable. Famine, he said, had not been sufficiently severe. The children were sold for reasons other than the approved one of relieving extreme need and therefore were not to be considered slaves. This part of the discussion he concluded with an injunction that all royal officials should most carefully examine cases of enslavement in the light of this reasoning in order to determine the legitimacy of the enslavement. . . .
>
> [H]e took up the enslaving of parish Indians during and following the Caaeté war. These parish natives could not be slaves because they had already begun to be civilized. . . . [T]hese Indians were now both converted and somewhat civilized, they were no longer in the lowest state of human existence, and, consequently, were not fit subjects for enslavement. (Marchant 1942, 141–3)

By contemporary standards this debate would verge on the immoral, but the mores of the day were not concerned with the morality of slavery itself. What strikes one as the epitome of injustice or callousness on the part of these Jesuits is the impassive tone of the debate, the casuistic argumentation to safeguard *their* Indians' "freedom," and the inane ruling that the more extreme the victim's necessity, the more legitimate his enslavement was. Thus adding insult to injury, the theological intelligentsia of colonial Brazil made a decisive contribution to the demise of many an indigenous people and to the flavor of indigenous policies yet to come.

In the next five hundred years one finds variations on the same theme: taming the Indians in the name of Western values, be these religious, political, economic, or social. The civilizing discourse took on new local colors,

both in terms of time and space, but the message has been strikingly uniform: Indianness is a temporary undesirable condition and must be eradicated from a country such as Brazil that is trying to make it into the community of civilized nations. The treatment of indigenous peoples as pests lingered well into the twentieth century and well beyond the limits of the Brazilian nation or of the South American continent. It has been routine for many regional settlers and represents the crudest manifestation of the dominant society's arrogance and impunity. We find a particularly striking example in 1967 in Colombia, where "settlers treacherously massacred fifteen Indians and were acquitted in a jury trial because it was considered customary to kill Indians. In his own defense one of the admitted killers stated, 'I didn't believe it was wrong since they were Indians'" (Bodley 1975, 28).

Of all the rhetorical styles uttered in the interethnic arena, perhaps the most blunt, frank, and sincere has been that of the regional population. For them the Indians are undesirable and should either be killed off or pushed back into the wilderness of the jungle where they belong, away from civilization. It is the most candid way of naturalizing the Indian. One can hear regional people comment on the incredible skills the Indians have in hunting, tree climbing, negotiating thick vegetation, in being part of the physical environment. These same regional people are unambiguously clear when they describe how awkward the Indians are when they come to town and try to be "civilized"; they do not know how to work, cannot handle the most trivial affairs, are hopeless, useless, and a constant irritation. Moreover, even if they wanted to become civilized they could not, for it is in their nature to be Indian, and Indians belong in the bush.

On the outskirts of Indian areas in Amazonia, for instance, one hears regional people advocating the extermination of the Indians in the name of past attacks on non-Indian settlers. Stories are told of atrocities committed by Indians on someone's grandparents, uncles, and aunts, but nowhere in these stories is there a hint of acknowledgment that the Indians were reacting to land invasions. They killed people simply because they are savages, animal-like. This is the backward Indian, the Indian of the regional population. Called by different names according to the regions—*caboclo* in Amazonia, *bugre* in the south—the backward Indian, whether living in the jungle or in towns, is inherently incapable of becoming an upstanding member of mainstream society. These Indians are also, by and large, the government's or, more specifically, FUNAI's Indians. Semiliterate FUNAI employees commonly boast of having taught the Indians how to work the land—how to plant manioc, of all things! It is a manifestation of the pecking-order syndrome, the convenience of always having someone below you to lift you a little above the rock bottom of society. But while FUNAI aims to bring Indians out of their backwardness by integrating them into the national

society, their regional neighbors keep them at arm's length. While official policy says "Integrate!" regional people say "Keep away!" This head-on collision between integration and segregation makes indigenous peoples a permanent target for prejudice, discrimination, and sheer persecution and is responsible for many conflicts that occur in areas where the indigenous population is large or especially visible. This situation is most acute in the case of uprooted Indians identified as caboclos. Although the term caboclo extends far beyond displaced indigenous peoples (Nugent 1993, 1997), I am referring specifically to them. Having lost their ethnic base along with their territory, these village-less Indians bear the brunt of their futile attempt to integrate into regional society. FUNAI's officials hardly respect them for trying to pass as *brancos* (non-Indians), and regional people despise them for the same reason. The Brazilians are civilized—the Indians should be wild. Anything in between is sheer pretense. These caboclos are Indians who play at being brancos but convince nobody. Perhaps even more than the wild Indians, the ex-Indian caboclos, because of their proximity and inevitable competition for jobs and services, are subjected to heavy doses of prejudice and discrimination (Figoli 1982). They are the "bad" Indians in another sense than Vespucci's. They epitomize the unhappy conscience of people who see themselves through the eyes of their detractors: no skills, no pride, no capacity to rise from their miserable condition of neither Indian nor branco. Having lost the marks of their ethnicity (language, dress, eating habits, etc.), they are looked upon as losers in both Indian and national society. The caboclo is the embodiment of the paradox contained in the civilizing project: the effort to wipe out Indianness while closing the doors to their full citizenship. What is left in the wake of such ambivalence seems to be no one's concern. Masses of displaced caboclos, illiterate, in poor health, and hardly capable of earning a living on the fringes of the precarious job market of poor towns is not exactly the conventional idea of a civilized population. And yet neither official policy nor the practice of daily life indicates any awareness of the failure of the civilizing project. No doubt it is an example of how old habits die hard, for the urge to transform Indians into Brazilians is as old as Brazil itself.

Papal bulls were powerful instruments in the West's civilizing project for Indians and for other "pagans" before them. In 1454 Nicolas V passed the Bula Romanus Pontifex, allowing the king of Portugal, D. Afonso Henriques, full power to invade, conquer, and subjugate any enemies of Christ, reducing them to slavery. In 1493 Pope Alexander VI signed the Bula Inter Cetera, including the kings of Spain in the deal that had been granted the king of Portugal. By this bull the Iberian powers were free to subjugate and "reduce to the Catholic Faith" the inhabitants of all the islands and firm lands already found and to be found, their European "owners"

having "full, free, and total power, authority, and jurisdiction" over them (Ribeiro 1993, 16–17). Since then church and state have shared the task of civilizing and integrating the Indians; their discourses may differ in tone, from religious to secular, but both have been decisive in the conquest and control of indigenous affairs.

An arm of civilization, the church is muscular and far reaching. Missionaries of all Christian creeds rejoice in the Indians' paganism as the epitome of virgin soil in which the seeds of Christianity can be sown. Missionaries by and large take for granted that the Indians are basically undeveloped. Some may actually become so familiar with Indians as to admire their culture, but that does not deflect the missionaries from the goal of winning Indian souls, transforming them into well-behaved, obedient serfs of the Lord and, by extension, of officialdom, including the missionaries themselves.

Much damage and abuse has been committed in the name of Christianity. From boarding schools run by Salesians that deprive indigenous children of a proper socialization to the cold wars between Catholics and Protestants that, as we saw in Chapter 1, divide entire indigenous societies, missionaries of various persuasions exercise one of the most efficient modes of control over indigenous lives. As assured as any Westerner, or even more so, of being unquestionably right and superior, missionaries have in Indian populations a fertile ground on which to practice their righteousness and superiority. The arrogance of the conversion enterprise is justified precisely by the conviction that the Indians are crude clay in search of a skilled sculptor of souls, a cultured and enlightened manipulator capable of molding raw nature into a divine creation (Baêta Neves 1978; Rafael 1988). In many parts of Brazil missionaries, either Catholic or Protestant, have been the first members of the dominant society to come into contact with indigenous peoples, and they have paved the way for the arrival of more pragmatically oriented intruders (Hvalkof and Aaby 1981; Stoll 1982; Colby with Dennett 1995).

Missionary action has sustained the notion that the Indians are helpless without assistance—their customs are so primitive that they endanger their spiritual salvation. Of these customs, cannibalism became the banner for the church's pious intervention. The civilizing discourse benefited immensely from deploring the man-eating habits of the Tupinambá. Cannibalism provided perhaps the most potent weapon for European control. It had the power to erect with a single stroke two of the handiest images for the colonizing of the New World: European martyrs and Indian heathens. While martyrdom justified the political domination of the "cannibals," paganism justified the right to subject the Indians to Christian indoctrination.

The arrival of the Jesuits in midsixteenth century (later than Caminha had wished in 1500), with the mission of Christianizing the natives, had a rather ambiguous result. By gathering large numbers of Indians in densely populated settlements, both to protect them and as a convenient strategy for conversion, the Jesuits provided settlers with a ready reserve of cheap or slave labor. Interested in building up the Indians' Christian spirituality (despite the "savage's inconstant soul"; see Viveiros de Castro 1992) rather than preserving their physical integrity, within a couple of decades the Jesuits had adopted the policy of force instead of the time-consuming techniques of persuasion. José de Anchieta and Manoel da Nóbrega made their mark on the history of Brazil with a reputation for extraordinary fervor and determination to spread the true religion among the natives. Both resorted to the expedient procedure of "placing the Indians under the yoke." To make Christians out of them, Nóbrega writes: "I also wish . . . to see the heathen subjugated and placed under the yoke of obedience to the Christians, so that we could imprint on them all that we desire. . . . Nothing can be done with them if they are left at liberty, for they are brutish people." Also Anchieta: "We now think that the gates are open for the conversion of the heathen in this capacity, if Our Lord God would arrange that they be placed under the yoke. For these people there is no better preaching than by the sword and iron rod. Here more than anywhere, it is necessary to adopt the policy of compelling them to come in" (both are quoted in Hemming 1978, 106). Catholic priests closely accompanied the westward expansion of Portuguese-Brazilian dominions. They followed the often devastating assaults on Indian lands and the capture of slaves by the *bandeirantes*, seventeenth-century adventurers, most of them *mamelucos* (the offspring of Portuguese men and Indian women) in search of wealth, and turned the Indian villages along the way into permanent sites of settler occupation. The Indians who did not flee were captured by the bandeirantes or concentrated in large settlements (*reduções*) run by the missionaries.

With regard to the Catholic Church, the last few decades have witnessed new trends in the style of interaction with the Indians. Under the influence of liberation theology some missionaries have become defenders of indigenous rights to land and to ethnic identity and have openly confronted economic groups and the government. This attitude, humane as it may be, is not, however, the result of humbleness in light of Indian wisdom. It is, rather, one more manifestation of the missionaries' certainty of being right, of knowing what is best for the Indians. Frequent complaints by some indigenous leaders about the control of Catholic missionaries over native actions provide plenty of examples of this brand of Christian paternalism. Like children, the Indians need to be guided, even to remain Indians.

As an active representative of the state, the military has had a long and

intensive participation in indigenous affairs. Beginning in the early seventeenth century the military founded forts in Amazonia that became the birthplaces of important towns such as Manaus.

In 1910 the first national agency for the protection of the Indians was created by an army officer, Cândido Mariano da Silva Rondon, a true believer in positivism as a humanist philosophy. Faithful to the Comtean version of evolution, he was convinced of the need to preserve the lives of indigenous peoples so that they could ultimately decide to abandon their primitive ways and embrace Western civilization. As a civilizing strategy, Rondon applied some army devices, such as furnishing titles and olive uniforms to Indian men who often had no local legitimacy. It was the modern period of the village "captains." Official indigenism was thus created, and the destiny of the Indians was sealed: slowly but surely, they were to relinquish their lifeways and integrate into national society. They received a special status: they were now considered "relatively incapable" by law—the 1916 Civil Code—along with married women and children, a triad disturbingly reminiscent of Aristotle's inferior categories: slaves, women, and children. Although legislation in the 1960s freed married women from this stigma, the Indians continue to be wards of the state. Their first "tutor" (guardian), the Indian Protection Service (SPI), replaced by FUNAI in 1967–1968, was assigned to the Ministry of Agriculture (Gagliardi 1989). Since then, protection of the Indians has made the rounds of several other ministries, such as labor, industry and commerce, back to agriculture, then to war (as the Army Ministry was then called), interior, and, more recently, justice. In none of these bureaucratic bodies did this duty feel right or comfortable; in none did it command enough respect and interest to be given sufficient attention and funding. Since the 1960s protection of the Indians has been steadily downgraded. Not even the humanism and humanitarian intentions of the early Rondonian days have survived the decline of this official institution for the guardianship of Indians.

In 1978 Rangel Reis, the minister of the interior under whom FUNAI was uneasily accommodated, declared that Indians should have the right to become important people, even to aspire to the country's presidency. But for that to happen they would have to be "emancipated." Emancipation, in this special and deceptive reading, meant the termination of the Indians' special status, created in the Rondon era as a legal device to protect their lands as a collective possession in a country that had no legal provisions for communal landownership (Comissão Pró-Índio 1979a). It became clear that to emancipate the Indians meant, and still means, to emancipate their inalienable lands and open them for sale. It happened in the United States after the 1887 Dawes General Allotment (Severalty) Act with well-known catastrophic consequences for Native Americans (see Chapter 9) and was

hinted at in Australia with more than a touch of cynicism by its minister of the interior in 1939: "The raising of their [the Aborigines] status so as to entitle them by right and by qualification to the ordinary rights of citizenship, and to enable them to help them to share with us the opportunities that are available in their native land" (quoted in Beckett 1988b, 200). Although "this became the national policy" in Australia after World War II, in Brazil the "emancipation decree" was shelved because of strong public response and resurrected a few years later in the form of "criteria of Indianness" devised by the military officials who ruled FUNAI at the time. According to these criteria, FUNAI was to decide who was eligible to be classified as Indian. The criteria included a long lists of items, among which were manners of clothing, food, language, and, ludicrous as it may seem, presence or absence of the Mongolian spot, a birthmark (see Chapter 9). Again, public protest against the absurdity of these criteria exposed FUNAI at one of its particularly acute moments of bureaucratic delirium (CEDI 1982a).

In the 1980s FUNAI fell to its lowest levels of competence and legitimacy. It became the headquarters of coercion and the favorite target of irate Indian leaders and indignant supporters who joined the Indian cause. FUNAI has long been drowning in red tape and suffering corrupt presidents who plunder indigenous resources with impunity, from the transfer of large plots of land to private hands to the sale of lumber, and medical doctors who sit around in town offices while entire Indian villages suffer from diseases transmitted by outsiders, such as tuberculosis, malaria, and measles. In short, either through outright criminal action or through omission the Indian foundation has been part of the problem more often than part of the solution.

In 1985 the military handed the federal government over to civilians during what was known as the "New Republic," a civic interlude when the Brazilian people's high hopes for better times were proportional only to their subsequent disappointment. The Indian issue was a sort of microcosm of the national climate: great expectations that one by one were dissolved into thin air by the surreptitious maneuvers of politicians and interest groups in the mining and lumbering business, for instance, for whom indigenous rights were a serious inconvenience (Comissão Pró-Índio 1981, 1985; CEDI/CONAGE 1988). Amazonia came to the fore once again as the last frontier; its abundant resources were now envisioned as the remedy to the cancerous growth of foreign debt. Backstage, the military planned grandiose projects, such as the Calha Norte (North Watershed), designed to bring development to the northern region while controlling international borders and enclosing the indigenous populations within small pockets of their original lands. From behind the scenes the military continued to run indigenous policy, which for the military is inextricably tied to the develop-

ment of Amazonia (Albert 1992; Ramos 1995a, 271–312; also see Chapter 8). From the recesses of their offices in the National Security Council army officials in particular directed the most important moves taken by the Indian foundation: bureaucratic decentralization, the appointment of top-level personnel, and even the prohibition of anthropological research in the northern Indian areas. Before 1985 FUNAI *was* military. Under the New Republic the Indian foundation became a mere puppet of the military. These same military officers had their army minister play the role of éminence grise in the José Sarney government. That powerful man in olive green, Leônidas Pires Gonçalves, was the author of the notorious statement that said that protecting indigenous peoples amounts to a waste of time, for their cultures, being so base, are undeserving of respect.

The first nationwide indigenous organization, the Union of Indian Nations (UNI), was created in 1980. At that time FUNAI, like many other government bodies, was run by the military. Neither the military nor a good many others in the country's central administration accepted the designation of "Indian Nations." Brazil, they repeated, could not afford to have nations within the nation (see Chapter 6). Besides, they insisted, the Indians are Brazilians and must define themselves as such. They are entitled to participate in the benefits of a developing country, so long as they don't attempt to create enclaves; they should cooperate in developing the Brazilian nation by having their natural resources properly exploited, preferably by non-Indians.

In the early eighties the Indian issue was at a peak of visibility. One Indian, the Shavante Mário Juruna, was elected in 1982 to the House of Representatives; another, Marcos Terena, was made chief of staff to the president of FUNAI; and another, the Kayapó Megaron, became the director of the Xingu National Park. At the time such concessions were impressive and were historical firsts. In the long run, however, they appear to have made no difference in the trajectory of the Indian movement, or perhaps they have, in the sense of smoothing sharp edges that might have cut a clearer figure of the Indian as an empowered political actor. Still, the official policy has not been changed from integration to self-determination, despite what the 1988 Constitution says about the right of the Indians to maintain their ethnic identity. The state policy for the Indians is still as covertly ethnocidal as ever, although it has been insidiously dressed up in a robe of liberalism.

The civilizing discourse does not appropriate the Indian as an image but rather as an essence. Indians belong to the Brazilian nation, and therefore those in power can do to Indians as they see fit, regardless of what Indians may want for themselves. Here the Indians are not only nature's creatures but also the nation's children. Their "special" status as relatively

incapable individuals and collectivities under the wardship of the state reveals in unequivocal terms the disparity of power manifested in the civilizing rhetoric. In metonymic fashion it wraps the relationship between the national state and its indigenous peoples in a cloak of established truths about the nature of the Indian as well as of the civilized. The Indians' alleged unpreparedness and the protective zeal of the state have become the most recurrent message of the way things are and should be. With a single stroke this message delivers two of the cardinal commandments of the dominant interethnic truth: Brazilians—that is, adults—know what is best for the infantile Indians, and for Indians to reach adulthood they must relinquish their Indianness. What sort of adulthood awaits emancipated Indians remains to be spelled out in more honest terms than the insidious hyperbole of government ministers. With such forceful semantic weapons in their hands the rulers of the country have controlled the Indians, giving them little recourse to other sorts of more literal weaponry, as happened in past centuries and other countries.

Neither the Edenic nor the civilizing discourse has any concern for what the Indians might be on their own or might say about projected images of themselves. The representation of Indians as nobles or villains requires that they remain mute about themselves and about Brazilians, passive figures to be molded by Euro-Brazilian ideologies, conflicting as these may be.

The voice of the Indian, if heard at all, is devoid of timbre or echo, is rendered a flat, vague, and incomprehensible murmur attached to no specific language, no recognizable tradition. The anonymity of indigenous utterances serves as background noise for the dominating voice of the national society. Even when speaking the national tongue, usually with a strong accent and incorrect grammar, the Indian's voice is not willingly heard. Cultural misunderstandings apart, much of the Brazilian interpretation of indigenous discourses is distorted by the undisputed certainty regarding the superiority of Western ways of thinking. Indian languages are not usually acknowledged as "real" languages with their own logic and lexical richness. In Brazilian Amazonia, for instance, regionals refer to Indian languages as *gíria*, slang, and seem utterly incredulous when told that those languages are as sophisticated as Portuguese. To learn an Indian language is to lose prestige among one's peers. Rather than risk a change of mind about indigenous inferiority were one to penetrate their worldview, people find it safer to perpetuate the comfortable assurance passed on from generation to generation that the Indian is culturally retarded.

As would be expected, this syndrome of elite status is derived from a spontaneous or cultivated ignorance of indigenous languages and customs and is not limited to Amazonia. "The problem [with bilingual interpreters] was that to know enough Algonquian to ensure accurate and reliable in-

terpretation they [Virginia colonists] had to be so steeped in Algonquian culture that their very identity as Englishmen, and therefore their political reliability, became suspect (Hulme 1986, 142).

As unintelligible, literally or ideologically, the Indian's voice is more easily disposed of for being a spurious human expression. It is thus possible to speak for Indians, to dictate what is best for them, and the best for them is to do as brancos say. Because the dominant society is not a monolith, the colonization of the Indian's worldview takes the shape of the specific colonizer, giving rise to the church Indian, the army Indian, the Indian service Indian, and, more recently, the nongovernmental organization Indian (see Chapter 10). Thus gagged, Indians are then judged to be naive or pure, ignorant or innocent, treacherous or defenseless, depending on one's inclination toward Edenism or civilizationism.

There are also those who, after contributing to the impoverishment of indigenous traditional cultures, proceed to lament the loss of authenticity, a phenomenon Rosaldo (1989) has aptly called "imperialist nostalgia." By authenticity they mean the naked Indian with bow and arrow in hand, living off what Mother Nature alone provides. Such a quest for the authentic Indian—here closely associated with the Indian as exotic—is never pitched against the civilizing quest. Why Indians are now covered with clothes, often rags, why they no longer hunt with bow and arrow, or with anything else for that matter, on their badly shrunk and depleted patch of land, are questions that the nostalgic invaders hardly ask, and when they do, they never link the condition of the Indians to the effects of missionizing, land usurpation, and consequent economic dependence. Rather, these questions are dismissed as the result of the Indian's inability to learn how to be civilized. Missionaries, military personnel, and regional shopowners usually provide abundant examples of this type of double standard, but residents of the country's largest city can supply magnificent stereotypes as depicted in the humorous passage that follows. For our purposes it does not matter whether the episode happened the way it is told or whether it was embroidered for effect.

> One time I took the subway to Praça da Sé. It was during my first days in São Paulo and I liked to go by subway and bus. I felt a special delight in displaying myself to feel people's reactions when they saw me go by. I wanted to be sure that people identified me as an Indian so that I could form my own self-image.
>
> On that occasion I heard the following dialogue between two ladies who stared at me up and down when I entered the subway:
>
> — See that young man? He looks Indian, said lady A.
> — Yes, he does. But I'm not so sure. Haven't you noticed he is wearing jeans? He can't be an Indian and wear Whiteman's clothes. I don't think he's a real Indian, contested lady B.

> — Yah, maybe. But can't you see his hair? Straight, straight hair. Only Indians have hair like that. Yes, I think he's an Indian, lady A said, defending me.
> — Gee, I don't know. Have you noticed he wears a watch? Indians see time by the weather. The Indian's watch is the sun, the moon, the stars. . . . He can't be an Indian, argued lady B.
> — But he has slit eyes, said lady A.
> — And he also wears shoes and shirt, said lady B ironically.
> — But his cheeks jut out. Only Indians have a face like that. No, he can't deny it. He can only be an Indian and a pure one, it seems.
> — I don't believe it. There are no pure Indians any more, affirmed lady B full of wisdom.—After all, how could an Indian be riding the subway? True Indians live in the forest, carry bow and arrow, hunt and fish and plant manioc. I don't think he is an Indian at all. . . .
> — Have you seen the necklace he's wearing? Looks like it's made of teeth. Could they be people's teeth?
> — I wouldn't be surprised. I've heard that there are still Indians who eat people, said lady B.
> — Haven't you just said you didn't think he was an Indian? And now it looks like you're scared?
> — Just in case . . .
> — How about talking to him?
> — What if he doesn't like it?
> — Tough luck. . . . At least we'll have more precise information, don't you think?
> — Yes, I do, but I must admit I don't have much courage to start a dialogue with him. Will you ask?, said lady B who by now showed herself somewhat uncomfortable.
> — I'll ask.
>
> I had my back to them as I listened to their conversation and couldn't help laughing from time to time. Suddenly I felt a light touch of fingers on my shoulder. I turned around. Unfortunately they took too long to call me. My stop was coming up. I looked at them, smiled and said
> — Yes! (Munduruku 1996, 34)

Brazilian Indians live in a social limbo between a paradise of purity and a hell of savagery. Whereas the Edenic discourse denies ethnic legitimacy to Indians who defy the image of purity, the civilizing discourse denies that there is purity or any other redeeming value in being Indian. Because they are Indians, they are incapable of performing properly and hence need to be perpetually tutored. The civilizing project is therefore analogous to *Mission Impossible:* it will never destroy itself because its goal will never be met. So long as the Indians are not allowed to reach full citizenship *as Indians,* the notion that they are relatively incapable, and thus must be subjected to state guardianship, will remain a self-fulfilling prophesy.

Part II
Speaking to the Whiteman

3
The Indian against the State

This chapter deals with three notions—ethnicity, citizenship, and universalism—and the role they play in the field of interethnic relations in Brazil. I do not seek to undertake an exegesis or deconstruction of these notions as academic concepts pertaining to disciplines such as political science, philosophy, and history. I simply intend to observe them "ethnographically," that is, how they behave in the context of interethnic affairs and how they add to the complexity of Indigenism. In turn, Indigenism, regarded as an ideological province of interethnicity, provides the "middle ground" where this triad of concepts meets. The meanings generated by ethnicity, citizenship, and universalism will depend on the specific context in which Indians, nationals, and foreigners pursue their interests. The concept of middle ground has been used to designate the social and political space of the broader phenomenon of Indigenism as I envisage it (Conklin and Graham 1995). It is a softer version of the dense concept of "colonial situation" as developed by Georges Balandier (1955) to account for the complexities of African colonialism. If we replace "colonial situation" with "internal colonialism" (Stavenhagen 1972, chap. 1; Cardoso de Oliveira 1978), Balandier's concept is by and large applicable to Indigenism, at least in its Brazilian manifestation.

To ease presentation I discuss these concepts in contrasting pairs. Arbitrary as this arrangement may be, it is, for better or worse, the unavoidable price of analysis. I focus on the interaction between universalism and citizenship and between citizenship and ethnicity and then all three in the context of the humanistic claims professed by the indigenist movement in Brazil. To demonstrate how the confluence of these various notions can empower Indian activists I shall bring up the case of the Fourth Russell Tribunal in which the Indians provoked a confrontation between the logic of universal human rights and that of the nation-state. But first I would like to make a few comments on the problematic of relativism regarding the issue of human rights.

Universalism and Relativism

This theme has had the attention of various social scientists, including Habermas (1989), Dumont (1985), and Geertz (1984). Renteln (1988) provides a long list of references on the subject. I approach it here specifically to highlight the way in which indigenous peoples have used the notions of relativism and universalism in their attempts to protect their rights to cultural diversity.

According to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, "all men are born free and equal in dignity and rights." This declaration institutes the great aporia faced by anthropologists and other defenders of cultural relativism. For if, on the one hand, it denies the principle according to which a vast number of indigenous peoples declare themselves the chosen people to the detriment of all other human beings, on the other hand this declaration, among others of the same statute, is the basis for the defense of Indian rights vis-à-vis the national societies to which indigenous peoples are subjected.

Europe, exercising the reason of the Enlightenment, endowed the world with perhaps the most finished product of humanism. This centuries-old stimulus for the Declaration of Human Rights had several versions. The first, the Declaration of Rights of Man and Citizen, appeared in 1789. Although its inspiration was the North American colonies' Declaration of Independence, the colonies were still an America of the Pilgrims and thus directly associated with Old World ideals (Dumont 1985, 109–14). The current Declaration of Human Rights was proclaimed in December 1948 after World War II opened to the world the macabre spectacle of racism by fascist governments, another European product. The universal rights of humankind emerged then "as the common ideal to be achieved by all peoples and all nations." The human, faceless and devoid of cultural specificity, exercises these rights as an individual rather than as a member of a group, society, or nation, that is, "without any kind of distinction, be it of race, color, sex, language, religion, political opinion or of any other nature, national or social origin, wealth, birth, or any other condition" (Article II, Paragraph 1). This means that, beyond cultural diversity, a single set of norms should apply to all societies and cultures.

Meanwhile, another European precept, with equal humanist impetus, sprang up in contradistinction to normative universalism. It was the notion of cultural relativism, according to which no absolute values exist in the absence of a specific cultural matrix, and therefore each culture is sovereign in dictating its norms, immune to value judgment by other cultures, and unbending to outside ethical or moral standards. To impose values that are purportedly universal is an act of ethnocentrism or, more specifically, Eurocentrism. To condemn infanticide as it occurs among some indigenous

peoples because it disrespects the third article of the Declaration of Human Rights ("All men have the right to life, freedom and personal security") would amount to judging others by Western standards.

What does the confrontation between these virtually contradictory positions tell us? First, that the West—and not only the West—is capable of generating such disparate propositions that, taken to their logical conclusion, would cancel each other out. The outcome would not be so serious if the West, in dominating other peoples, did not make them pawns of its contradictions. Second, that either position, taken to its ultimate consequences, would entail the danger that it aspires to abolish. On the one hand, by condemning all cultural practices that might affront its individualistic principles, extreme humanism would obliterate flesh-and-blood people. On the other hand, extreme relativism would defend the indefensible by supporting such policies as genocide. Obviously, absolute universalism would be as disastrous as absolute relativism. Third, to be politically feasible and ethically prudent both positions would need to be nuanced and perhaps transformed in what Todorov calls "*universalisme de parcours*" to which, by extension, one might add "*relativisme de parcours*." This would amount to changing the positions from constraining postulates into strategies, that is, into courses of action rather than established models to be rigidly observed. In short, they would refer "not to the fixed content of a theory of mankind, but to the need to postulate a common horizon to the interlocutors of a debate if this debate is worth anything" (Todorov 1989, 427–28). Universalism, continues Todorov, "is an analytical tool, a regulating principle which permits the fertile encounter of differences; its content cannot be fixed, it is always open to revision" (p. 428). Taking his lead, I would then say that relativism is an analytical tool, a regulating principle that permits a fertile comparison of similarities, save the differences, and its content cannot be diluted in order to pulverize social and political responsibility. It is always open to ethical scrutiny. Relativism would then be the politics of possible differences.

Thus regarded, universalism and relativism lose much of the contradictory character they take when perceived as absolute propositions. They acquire vigor as concepts and agility in practice. From radical ideological principles steering in opposite directions, they become pragmatic means for the resolution of concrete problems generated by the uncomfortable coexistence of postulates that are potentially if not actually antagonistic, such as citizenship or, rather, nationality, and ethnic specificity.

As a matter of fact, what seems to be a universal, because of its vast cross-cultural dissemination, is not the sameness of humans everywhere but ethnocentrism, of which patriotism is a specific manifestation. For Dumont, "in traditional holism humanity is co-terminous with the society

of the *we*, foreigners are devalued as, in the best of hypotheses, imperfect men—and, by the way, all patriotism, even modern, is more or less impregnated with this sentiment" (1985, 127). The sentiment is that our society is better than any other, if for no other reason than that of providing the mechanisms necessary for self-preservation that are inherent to any human group that is socially constituted. Anthropology is brimming with examples of peoples the world over who take their ethnonym as coterminous with human being; all other peoples, not being thus denominated, are left out of the category of humans. Nevertheless, this does not mean that the self-identification of such peoples presupposes the elimination of Others because of their differences—quite the opposite. What the ethnographic experience has shown is that the legitimacy of many peoples is assured and reinforced precisely because they are culturally and ethnically differentiated. We might call this phenomenon a sort of ethnicity-cum-relativism. In stark contrast with national societies such as those of the New World that insist on erasing ethnic plurality, indigenous peoples have exhibited an extraordinary will to pluralism and acceptance of cultural diversity, beyond whatever stereotypes, antagonisms, and conflicts they may nourish about Others. The Others may not be quite as human, but they certainly have the right to be what they are. They may be criticized, looked down upon, attacked, defeated, or even ingested, but no indigenous society, in Brazil or elsewhere, has been known to have a policy of eradicating the differences that alterity produces (Ramos 1980b).

Relativism, in the sense of a pragmatics of possible differences, would lean more comfortably toward ethnicity—the practical outcome of the option for human diversity—than toward the universality of rights. When universalism, citizenship, and ethnicity come together, relativism plays the role of moderator, attenuating generalizations, contextualizing specifics, and advocating the transit between different ethoses and ethics.

Let us now turn to the crossroads at which universalism, citizenship, and ethnicity act out their potency in the tangled field of interethnic relations.

Universalism and Citizenship

In the spirit of the illuminist principles that created them, universalism and citizenship should be components of a single voice. Nevertheless, in practice they often come apart and in some cases are put in opposite camps. As Todorov remarks, they may actually engender two distinct voices, that of the universal rights of mankind and that of the rights of the citizen as a legitimate member of a given nation-state. That both are Eurocentric does not make them univocal. Depending on the historical juncture, they may come together in a harmonious duet, or they may diverge in a strident cacophony. Charles Taylor makes this point: "Where the politics of universal dignity fought for forms of nondiscrimination that were quite 'blind' to the ways in which citizens differ, the politics of difference often redefines nondiscrimination as requiring that we make these distinctions the basis of differential treatment" (1994, 83). Taylor continues: "These two modes of politics, then, both based on the notion of equal respect, come into conflict" (p. 84).

Every state needs to distinguish itself from all others, for it "cannot afford failing to make a difference between its citizens and foreigners from the moment it assigns certain duties and grants certain rights to some but not to others" (Todorov 1989, 277). Todorov continues,

> Our philosophers ignore . . . the conflict between man and citizen and imagine that states will conduct a policy which will be of interest to the world—which is excluded by definition, as it were. . . . To belong to humanity is not the same thing as to belong to a nation. . . . Indeed, there is a covert conflict between the two which may become overt the day we are forced to choose between the values of one or the other. Man, in this sense of the word, is judged on the basis of ethical principles, whereas the behavior of the citizen is judged from a political perspective. (pp. 286, 422)

Furthermore, in totalitarian states where the means of force overtake the rights of citizenship, the discrepancy between citizenship and universalism becomes all the more acute.

If universalism leads to individualism, to the supremacy of humanity, and to the hegemony of the generic human—which, according to Dumont (1977), is a feature of Western individualism that grew out of the hegemony of the economic domain—citizenship, the sociological effect of the constitution of the nation-state, may produce the reverse. As Anderson affirms, "No nation imagines itself coterminous with mankind" (1991, 7). The elements that give substance to citizenship are always linked to shared experiences, be these language, history, territory, government, religion, material and nonmaterial symbols, or even a sport such as soccer or baseball. But if the nation-state brings with it citizenship (or is it the other way around?), the nation-state will not necessarily forge a cultural uniformity that will guarantee a homogeneous and tranquil course through history. In fact, this is rarely the case. For instance, Smith (1981) follows the track of ethnic persistence through the history of the formation of European nation-states to demonstrate that the match between ethnicity and state, strategic as it may be politically, is so imperfect as to be incapable of overcoming internal ethnic diversity within each nation. By dictating norms for citizenship, the state excludes whoever fails to share those common experiences.

If such obvious dissonances exist between citizenship and universal-

ism, both products of the same tradition, what to say of the contradictions generated from the encounter of ethnic groups bearing cultures of their own with the nation-state that has encompassed them? As ethnic groups are conquered by expanding national societies, the level of stridency can be so high that it arouses a third voice. Ethnicity, the third voice, is then compelled to join in the orchestration led by citizenship and universalism.

In the case of Brazil a fourth voice emerges from the encounter of these three voices—universal human rights, Brazilian citizenship, and the ethnicity of indigenous peoples. The fourth voice is Indigenism. At once an ideology and a praxis, Indigenism congregates both Indians and non-Indians in the battle over the recognition of human diversity. Indigenism's actors play their roles on a stage that has been erected on the ruins left by the internal conquest of the Indians. This stage is animated by the most discordant points of view and by divergent ethical, social, and political interests. At times in chorus, at other times in counterpoint, or even in utter disharmony, these four voices have been composing a historical score with a multitude of variations. In typical Rashomon fashion each rendition can be so different that it is unrecognizable by the others, and yet in addressing the same event they are interlocked in a plot they continue to weave. Such complexity simply reflects the intricate play of agents, postures, and interests bouncing off each other as the country's conjunctures change. The multivocality that resounds through the ideological province of Indigenism is the quintessence of interethnic contact writ large. It is where universalism, citizenship, and ethnicity appear as the master tropes that underscore the fate of indigenous peoples in twentieth-century Brazil.

Citizenship and Ethnicity

The novelty of double citizenship aside, Brazil offers three legal possibilities: to be Brazilian, foreigner, or Indian. The foreigner may become a citizen by a legal-bureaucratic act revealingly named *naturalization*. Indians cannot become naturalized, for they are already "naturals of the land." What they can do is be "emancipated," that is, relieved of their special status. The nation's defense against exotic bodies—the foreigners—is relatively simple; all it takes is an appeal to nationalist feelings or to the exclusive rights of its citizenship. But this special status of the Indians engenders a defense mechanism that is different from that aroused by foreigners (which is often identifiable as xenophobia); the conquest of indigenous peoples has created a more complex problem, for if the Indians are exotic it is not in the sense of being foreigners. Are they citizens? And, if deemed citizens, what kind of citizens would they be, given that they do not share the national language, history, symbols, and the like, except in the specific

context of interethnic relations? The special status given to the Indians as a result of their political conquest and cultural colonization contains a great deal of ambiguity manifested, for instance, in the lack of consensus about whether the Indians are Brazilian. For that matter, a still more drastic question is often asked: Is being Brazilian necessarily to be a citizen of Brazil? One answer is no, if we consider commentaries such as the following:

> This situation . . . of quasi-illegitimacy of the conflicts lived by indigenous peoples throughout this century is also shared by various other groups of dominated people in Brazilian society, although, obviously, in a different way, due to their different life situations. Despite all their differences, blacks, women, minors, the elderly, rural and urban workers with no defined occupation, peddlers . . . have in common the non-recognition of their legitimate existence as common and active collective identities, or, what amounts to the same thing, the non-recognition of their struggles as politically relevant amongst other national problems. (Paoli 1983, 25)

In this regard, leaving the ethnicity question aside, not all Brazilians are de facto citizens (Dallari 1983). If vast segments of non-Indians are excluded from full citizenship by the perverse effects of social inequality, the Indian case is even more complex. "The Indian as a Brazilian citizen . . . is a fiction," asserts attorney Carlos Frederico Marés, because Indians would have to surrender their Indian identity in order to become Brazilian citizens. Marés continues: "So long as the Indian keeps his cultural identity, he will belong to a nation that is different from the Brazilian nation. He will be Guarani, Nambiquara, Yanomami, Patasho, etc., because each one of these nations has its fundamental operation of norms that have been established for longer than the rules adopted by the Brazilian constitution" (Marés 1983, 50). Note that Marés insists in using the term *nation* to refer to ethnic groups, in clear defiance of the ban by Brazilian politicians and the military to applying this concept to Indian peoples.

One might suppose that being born in Brazilian territory automatically confers Brazilian citizenship, but the matter is not so simple when it involves Indians, for it goes well beyond the mere accident of birth. Living according to their own norms, which not only differ from those of the Brazilian state but can actually collide with them, indigenous peoples find themselves in the odd position of being internal outsiders. Denied the status of nations by the Brazilian government, their position is kept in a liminal ambiguity that is fertile ground for legal experiments and interpretations. The condition of the Indians as "relatively incapable" and the attribution of their wardship to the state are two such examples. In declaring the Indians as relatively incapable (or relatively capable, in a seemingly more positive reading) to practice certain civil acts (basically, involving property rights), the state took upon itself the role of "guardian" of the Indians until they

come civically of age and are "emancipated." What it means to be emancipated from an ethnic condition is something Brazilian legislation has never attempted to clarify.

Before the 1988 Constitution, being an Indian was a passing condition, like a child whose inexorable destiny, if it survives, is to grow into adulthood. The premise, unshaken for centuries, was that sooner or later the Indians would become Brazilians like the idealized rest of the national population. Generations of "indigenists" were guided by this premise, from the sixteenth-century pioneer Jesuit José de Anchieta to Marshall Cândido Mariano da Silva Rondon and the official Indian agencies in this century. As we shall see in Chapter 9, the new constitution has changed the definition of Indianness in this respect—to be an Indian now is to be an Indian forever—but written law and actual practice hardly ever meet. In the hearts and minds of many an employee of the National Indian Foundation (FUNAI) their job is still to train Indians to become Brazilians. Until then their wards remain in a civic limbo. For these managers of ethnicity it is just a matter of time and effort. The push toward integration

> should not be understood as an altruistic gesture on the part of the state in its quest for the integration of the "Brazilian people." It is rather a way of not recognizing the Indian nations and their territories and, as a consequence, of precluding their self-determination and their capacity to establish their own pace and means of development within their territories. It is, in fact, a way of not recognizing the Indian as a citizen, while considering his land as Brazilian territory and . . . denying the existence of Indian nations capable of attributing citizenship to their own nationals. (Marés 1983, 44, 46–47)[1]

One characteristic of citizenship is that it is temporalized and territorialized. "The concept of citizenship, as any juridical concept, has to be understood within a given society at a given time" (Marés 1983, 44). But this territorialization, demarcated according to the geographical boundaries of the nation-state, leaves in its interior a vast zone of indifferentiation and legal, as well as cultural, uncertainty. For indigenous peoples this conception of citizenship is potentially dangerous. In the first place, it affects their relationship to land. The Brazilian state denies the Indians the full property of their territory. Instead, they are allowed to *possess* the land, that is, they have the exclusive usufruct of all resources that exist on their land but—and this is crucial—not the subsoil. The Union is the proprietor, the Indians are the possessors (note that Brazilians apply the Portuguese term *posseiros* to non-Indian squatters). By law this should suffice to guarantee the Indians control of their territories, but in actual fact their lands

1. On the problematic of pluriethnicity, also see Maybury-Lewis 1984.

are taken to be public goods, and, as is notorious in the country, a public good is good for private appropriation. This being so, Indian lands are constantly invaded, reduced in size, and depleted of their resources.

Another danger, already put to the test on several occasions, is the social marginalization of the Indians because they are denied their cultural and ethnic specificity. Attempts by the government to "emancipate" them in the 1970s and 1980s were aborted only because of intense protests by both Indians and non-Indians, inside the country and abroad, but the nagging possibility always exists that in more propitious circumstances it will be done against the Indians' will.

If Brazil needed a looking-glass to contemplate the consequences of such emancipation, it would do well to borrow one from the United States, prodigal in legislation, old and new, designed to deprive indigenous rights of ethnic specificity and, most important, of land. "In 1854 a decision was made to begin a general policy of breaking down tribal societies through the deliberate use of individual allotments of tribal land. . . . The Government planners felt that if the tribes were restricted to certain land areas of limited scope in an orderly fashion, they could eventually merge the Indian communities into the developing rural society of the Middle West" (Kickingbird and Ducheneaux 1973, 16). The Dawes General Allotment (Severalty) Act of 1887 was passed in the same spirit. Massachusetts senator Henry Laurens "Dawes was convinced that within a very short period of time the magical qualities of individual property would transform the stolid warriors into happy churchgoing farmers" (p. 19). Traps such as these are also constantly placed in the path of Brazilian Indians. The question of citizenship is never separated from the question of rights to land, in Brazil and elsewhere.

If special status has its drawbacks, the Indians also need the legal protection of the state in order to maintain communal land rights and benefit from specific health and education programs. The proper social and political space for these rights to be claimed and observed is the field of interethnic relations. When Indians confront national society, they appreciate the advantages of being a citizen. Within their own societies, having an identification card, a voter's card, or any other sign of legal Brazilianness is perfectly irrelevant and dispensable. But it is not when they face the civic requirements of the nation.

What is missing in the Brazilian version of citizenship is the notion of rightful difference. Not only would it be thoroughly intelligible to the Indians, but it would also give them ethnic security by putting them on an equal footing with the majority population. Such equality, however, would not be based on similarity, for one cannot force an Indian to become a non-Indian, but on equivalence, that is, to have the right to full participation

without abdicating one's specific identity. In short, what is missing in state territorialization is a legitimate ethnic space that would only be suitable for a de facto multiethnic country. It would mean opening up a space so that the Indians could be Brazilian citizens in the interethnic context while remaining full members of their respective societies. Would this represent having the best of two worlds? No more or less than for foreign-born individuals who opt for double citizenship. What is permitted to foreigners is denied the Indians. The Brazilian minister of justice, Nelson Jobim, publicly acknowledged the granting of double citizenship to people who are born in Brazil to foreign parents (*jus soli*) or who are born abroad to Brazilian parents (*jus sanguinis*). "The passport is a right which results from citizenship—whether by 'jus soli' or by 'jus sanguinis'" (Jobim 1996). As we will see in the last part of this chapter, the symbolic power of a passport goes far beyond a mere bureaucratic expedient. Although double citizenship is granted to non-Indians, nothing in present-day Brazil points to a similar solution for indigenous peoples. It is true that, for the first time in Brazilian history, the 1988 Constitution ensures that indigenous identities are a legitimate permanent state and no longer a temporary condition. But it does not mean that it confers on them full citizenship, much less a double one. The Indians are still under the wardship of the state and are still legally relatively incapable, even when they show themselves to be utterly familiar with the country's civic codes and fully capable of steering through the meanderings of national life. For all the advances of the new constitution over previous ones, it still falls short of exorcising the specter of marginalization that is sometimes camouflaged under the euphemism of emancipation.

Indigenism: The Fourth Voice

The context of interethnic relations lays bare some fine points that deserve attention. One is the interesting inversion of citizenship by nationals and by Indians. Whereas for the nationals, according to national ideology, citizenship is a natural result of having been born and raised in the country, for Indians citizenship is a tactic of survival amid the national population. While Brazilians naturalize citizenship, the Indians instrumentalize it. What is natural to the Indians is their ethnic specificity: once a Shavante always a Shavante. This is the feature that until recently the Brazilian state insisted on formally treating as a temporary condition, and the attitude still persists unofficially.

Picking their way through the twists and turns of the nation's logic has trained some indigenous peoples in the art of exploiting symbolic and political resources that are not accessible to most Brazilians, represented by such institutions as legal agencies, mass media, the National Congress, nongovernmental organizations, and power groups of various sorts (church, military, industry). The Indian groups most successful in the politics of interethnic contact have been those who have best played the natural-versus-instrumental game by pragmatically manipulating these categories as strategic devices. Let us examine some recent scenarios in which the polyphony of ethnicity-citizenship-universalism has been orchestrated and in which Indigenism operates as the music master that brings together those three voices.

First, the media. The fascination the media have had for Indians has brought a great deal of visibility to the indigenous issue in Brazil, which is rather amazing, considering the minute number of Indians in the country—indeed, the smallest in the Americas, excluding Argentina. No other American country in which Indians are demographic minorities pays so much public attention to them. Perceiving the attraction they exert on the press, the Indians have learned to use it to their advantage as a sort of amplifier of their own voice, a voice the government is reluctant to hear and for which the channels are far from clear. The media have become a key factor in contemporary Indigenism, even when they are less than sympathetic to the Indian cause. The media rarely miss an opportunity to bring out some feature of exoticism in indigenous questions. But in exploiting the native as exotic, the press has perhaps inadvertently provided the Indians with yet another means of ethnic expression. In a phenomenon similar to what happened to the term *Indian*—which the Indians appropriated, purged it of much of its derogatory undertones, and turned it into a political tool—they have instrumentalized exoticism and turned it into a decoy to first attract national attention and then put across their own message. One often sees in the capital city of Brasília groups of Indians from the northeast, long despoiled of ethnic emblems, appearing before Congress in feathered outfits in a generic rendition of what the "original Indian" might have been. In the field of Indigenism even the exotic is politicized.

Politics and power can take on unexpected overtones. I am referring to a particularly spirited line of exoticism struck by the media and transformed into one of the most cherished symbols of what one might call "pulp Indigenism." It is the supernatural aura surrounding the use of certain indigenous objects by Brazilian public figures. Particularly in electoral campaigns (it was especially evident during the Constitutional Assembly), Indians—most commonly men but also women—often place a splendid feather headdress on the head of some politician. For reasons that remain implicit, this act of crowning personalities with indigenous attire has become associated with bad luck. In 1989 a Brasília newspaper (*Correio Braziliense*, September 26) printed headshots of famous people, such as union leader and presidential candidate José Inácio Lula da Silva; the honored

2. The late House Representative Ulysses Guimarães "crowned" with a Kayapó feather headdress. Photo by André Dusek, 1987.

great man in Congress, Ulysses Guimarães; and another presidential candidate, Fernando Collor, all sporting magnificent headdresses from various origins, especially Shavante and Kayapó. The headline read: "Collor and Lula Defy the Cursed Headdress." Lula lost the 1989 election, Collor won but was later impeached, and in 1992 Ulysses Guimarães disappeared at sea in a helicopter crash. By now a relatively long list of politicians and other public people (including the first lady) has passed through the feather headdress ritual. The press created the belief in the bad-luck headdress, and the Indians subtly encourage it by not disavowing it and by continuing to perform the rite; it gains them mileage in their quest for political visibility, even if it means resorting to folkloric cheap thrills or to a cliché catering to the power of the weak.

Indigenous discourses in the interethnic context, whether spoken with a strong accent or in impeccable Portuguese, display an exceptional sense of political syncretism. With remarkable shrewdness, as we shall see in the next chapter, the Indians assert their alterity while appropriating symbols and images that are dear to the majority population's feelings of nationality and humanism. Learned in a fairly short time—in many cases less than two decades—the rhetoric of indigenous contact blends in a single ideological crucible the ingredients of ethnicity, citizenship, and universalism. One

can still remember the inflamed speeches by Shavante leader Mário Juruna when, as a member of Congress in the early 1980s, he lumped together Indians and Brazilians who had in common the misfortune of enduring the same climate of oppression and poverty. Because of some of those speeches during the military regime, when he explicitly accused Brazilian politicians of being corrupt, Juruna nearly lost his office.

To Catch a White Thief

Alcida Rita Ramos

This was originally published in the weekly column of the Brazilian Anthropological Association in the *Jornal de Brasília*, November 8, 1983, p. 15, about the repercussions of Mário Juruna's speech. At the time he was a deputy in the House and accused members of the military government of stealing Indian lands, among other things. He made the speech at a time of great tension between the military-controlled executive and the civilian-controlled legislative branches.

To the nation's relief, the "Juruna case" was closed last Tuesday. Censure by the House of Representatives and Deputy Mário Juruna's "letter of retraction" halted a crisis that threatened to pit the executive branch against the legislative. Everybody seemed to be pleased, even those who had insisted on the immediate removal of Juruna from office. This general contentment leaves up in the air the question of why this particular speech created so much fuss—after all, it did not differ much from others Deputy Juruna had delivered and that had gone unnoticed. Because it has multiple meanings, this question lends itself to a variety of interpretations, and it is not my intention to go into them now. I would like to emphasize only two aspects of the "letter of retraction."

The first is the very need for such a retraction. In early October news coverage repeatedly mentioned that some of those implicated—the minister of transportation, for instance—would be satisfied if Deputy Juruna made a public apology to those who felt attacked by his speech. We can only take this as an attempt to "bend" this indigenous congressman who has stood out in the House for his integrity and commitment to defending the interests of the dispossessed—to "break" him, for Deputy Juruna puts his responsibility toward indigenous and Brazilian people above the interests of the current government.

With rhetoric that has swung from condescending paternalism (he is Indian, therefore he is not responsible for what he says) to overt authoritarianism (because he offended the government, he must be summarily punished, regardless of the House's internal rules), government representatives inflated the importance of Juruna's speech to, it seems clear, teach the legislature a lesson: if it could break Juruna, the government could break other

members of Congress. This was the strategy of a desperate government that sees the legislature voting against its decrees and the press revealing scandals involving the government's representatives (as pointed out, for example, by Senator Fernando Henrique Cardoso in his statement to *Jornal de Brasília* on October 1, page 2: "With these actions the government is trying to cover up and dodge the numerous accusations of dishonest deals and irregularities widely denounced by the press based on a vast amount of evidence").

The second aspect of Deputy Juruna's "letter of retraction" has to do with its content. Two points stand out: first, that he had not intended to personally offend any member of the government. Because Juruna had already expressed these sentiments, which were widely publicized, one presumes that the main reason for the retraction was something else. The other point, in my opinion, is crucial. The letter says that the speech Juruna delivered on September 26 "addresses the situation of the Brazilian Indian who sees his lands being invaded and unduly occupied."

What does this mean? Who has noticed the underlying implications that such a "retraction" is satisfactory not only to members of the government but to everybody else? Why is it that, the moment the emphasis on Juruna's speech turned from the mass of dispossessed Brazilians to the exploited indigenous populations, it stopped being so offensive and everything settled down? What this means is that whoever steals from Indians is not considered a thief, for this is the normal (and accepted) thing to do. What sort of "civilized" conscience feels redressed of an accusation of robbery so long as the victim is Indian?

Let us put ourselves in Deputy Juruna's place as he signed the letter. Can it really be a retraction? Any Indian who finds himself evicted from his land, as in the case of the Patashó in the state of Bahia, sees in this episode the full confirmation of what Deputy Juruna said in his September 26 address. Only non-Indians do not see it, because they for a long time took on the role of "thieves of indigenous lands." Robbing public coffers and robbing indigenous possessions are regarded by the so-called *civilizados* as totally distinct, incomparable things. The former is a crime. The latter is standard practice. Hence, the general relief conveyed by the "letter of retraction," for if robbing Indians is not a crime, Deputy Juruna's accusation against the government is rendered meaningless. Is it really?

In the late 1970s we entered the age of nongovernmental organizations. Most of the so-called NGOs play the role of switchboards between universalism and citizenship. When dedicated to the Indian cause, they imprint Indigenism with a distinctive style. When Indian voices were hardly heard on the national scene, particularly during the military regime, the Indian support groups spoke out in defense of indigenous rights. As they pleaded for the Indians, the NGOs forced open important spaces within the state machine where indigenous complaints could be aired. Increasing red tape transformed NGOs into professional agencies of private Indigenism as they amassed considerable amounts of funds, most of them earmarked to promote the opening of political channels. The NGOs created centers of Indian law, circulated documents through indigenous communities, organized meetings of Indian leaders, and launched campaigns within and outside the country to inform the public of the problems afflicting indigenous peoples. As one of the political goods available to them, the Indians relate to NGOs basically as they do to other support groups, such as the church, and to professional organizations, such as the Order of Brazilian Lawyers, the Brazilian Anthropological Association, and the Association of Geologists. There actually seems to be a certain social (or would it be ethnic?) division of labor in the Indians' instrumentalization of their allies. Some indigenous peoples are more inclined toward some support groups than others. This reflects in part the specialization of certain NGOs. For example, the Center for Indigenist Work (CTI), based in São Paulo, has concentrated on development projects for the Krahó Indians in the state of Goiás, for the Sateré-Maué of Amazonas, and for the Waiãpi of Amapá, among others. The Pro-Yanomami Commission (CCPY) is dedicated to defending the Yanomami exclusively. In turn, the Socio-Environmental Institute (ISA, formerly CEDI) has opted for a wide range of problems regarding both indigenous and environmental issues. Its work includes the publication of documents, books, journals, maps, and a rich collection of photographs and videos. It covers virtually the entire country but puts some emphasis on specific areas, such as the Upper Rio Negro region. Beyond this specialization, however, one notices a tendency toward different loyalties, particularly with regard to the Catholic Indigenist Missionary Council (CIMI). There was a moment, for instance, when "CIMI Indians" did not mix with Indians associated with certain NGOs and the Union of Indian Nations, a pan-Indian organization.

As translators of the language of universalism to the idiom of citizenship and ethnicity, the NGOs inject into Indigenism not simply material resources but also a libertarian rhetoric easily digestible by Indians who are involved in the country's pan-Indian movement. The humanist stimulus of NGOs awakened many a political vocation among Indians. The NGOs have introduced the distinct tonality of universalism to the chorus of Indigenism, even if they sometimes show little talent for modulations and, as we shall see in Chapter 10, a tangible bent toward moral purism.

Let us now examine a case in which ethnicity put the nation-state in the docket before a universalist court. It shows how the power of a state can be converted into an empowering strategy for the powerless. It involves all the actors discussed earlier, plus all three branches of the state machine and international human rights activists. I turn now to the political drama precipitated by the episode of the Fourth Russell Tribunal held in the Netherlands in 1980.

The Russell Tribunal: The Indian against the State

In November 1980 the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation Ltd. organized the Fourth Russell Tribunal in Rotterdam to consider crimes of genocide and/or ethnocide against indigenous peoples in the Americas. The foundation selected three cases from Brazil involving the breach of human rights of the Nambiquara, the Yanomami, and the Indians of the Upper Rio Negro region. In the first two cases the accusations were aimed at the Brazilian government, which was responsible for major economic projects involving road building. Both the Nambiquara and the Yanomami were being seriously affected by epidemics resulting from contact with road workers as well as invading lumberjacks and cattle ranchers (Nambiquara) and gold miners (Yanomami). The third was a case against Salesian missionaries who were accused of ethnocidal practices. The organizers invited both Indians and Brazilians to be part of the jury. Among the Indians was the Shavante leader Mário Juruna.

His invitation triggered one of the most remarkable episodes in the recent history of Brazil's interethnic relations. The Indian issue stuck out like a sore thumb in the country's self-consciousness regarding its image abroad. The incident involved a minister of state, twenty-four judges or ministers of justice, various members of Congress, and the many journalists eagerly flooding the mass media with a continuous stream of reports, opinions, jests, and ironic and sometimes distasteful remarks. In examining newspaper clippings of the event I am now much more aware of its extraordinary force than I was when it happened. Hindsight has the effect of intensifying the affair as a cause célèbre by placing the consequences of certain acts or speeches in the flow of history. Whatever is lost of the fervent flavor of day-to-day involvement is more than compensated by the composed exercise of intellectual understanding. Having the whole picture in front of me, as it were, I can now more easily tell the incidental from the recurrent than I could in the heat of the moment.

In 1980 the military held virtually all positions of power, including the control of the National Indian Foundation. Juruna was fast gaining renown for his frequent incursions in the corridors of power, always armed

3. As House Representative, Mário Juruna "crowns" House President Flávio Marcílio at the plenary room, 1987. Photo courtesy of the Archive Coordination, House of Representatives, National Congress, Brasília.

with a tape recorder to catch officials and politicians in the act of making false promises to his demands for better treatment of the Indians. He then played these recorded conversations with the powerful back to journalists. As an Indian he was somewhat protected by his special status as "relatively incapable," which ironically conferred on him greater freedom of speech than that then enjoyed by the full Brazilian citizen. Juruna's tape recorder—which literally became the title of a book about him (Juruna, Hohlfeldt, and Hoffmann 1982)—became a badge of his daring and an object of envy for many Brazilians muzzled by the repressive military regime.

The press had first announced the organization of the Fourth Russell Tribunal in July 1980, during the annual meeting of the Brazilian Society for the Advancement of Science. About three months later Juruna received an invitation from the foundation's secretary to be part of the jury scheduled to convene from November 24 to 30. It struck Brazilian authorities as an outright affront. When Juruna, a ward of the state, asked FUNAI to assist him in getting a passport, he, perhaps unwittingly, precipitated a crisis that was to assume unexpected proportions. Carrying his tape recorder, Juruna went to see Colonel João Carlos Nobre da Veiga, then the

president of FUNAI, who agreed to help Juruna with his passport. During the long conversation Nobre da Veiga repeatedly warned Juruna not to denigrate Brazil abroad. Here is a portion of the transcript, which appears in Juruna, Hohlfeldt, and Hoffmann (the speaker is Nobre da Veiga):

> I only hope you'll remember that you're Brazilian, you're a Brazilian Indian, you can't sell our Brazil abroad. . . . You must work for Brazil and not against Brazil. . . . You must defend Brazil, don't attack Brazil. . . . If you're not Brazilian, go to Bolivia, if you don't want to defend Brazil, go to Bolivia. If you don't like Brazilian people, go away. . . . If you bad-mouth the Brazilian people, when you come back no one here will like you, Mário, don't do such nonsense. . . . You're a man who doesn't know white things very well. . . . You're against a Government that is defending you, because if it weren't for FUNAI you know what would happen. You have no right as a Brazilian to go out there and attack the Brazilian Government, or the Brazilian people, especially the Brazilian people. You can't do this out there, or else you'll see what'll happen to you when you come back. . . . I'm warning you as your guardian, don't make any attack against the Brazilian people. (1982, 150–51)

Juruna's request for a passport went to FUNAI's Indigenist Council, which had among its members the famous Indian tamer Orlando Villas Bôas. At its meeting on October 21 the council denied permission for Juruna to participate in the tribunal, either as part of the jury or as a mere observer.

The minutes of that meeting reveal some noteworthy details. The council's president, Nobre da Veiga, argued that "to agree with the participation of a representative would obviously mean to acknowledge the accusations and recommendations of those individuals of the jury in question, which is not to the interest of the Brazilian government." Father Angelo Venturelli, a Salesian missionary among the Shavante, was emphatic in declaring that "Brazil doesn't need any international meddling to solve its problems and those of its indigenous communities." Moreover, "Mário Juruna . . . is not a natural chief of his village let alone of his tribe or of the whole of the Brazilian Indian nations," and "he is an individual dishonestly integrated, for he possesses material goods and a bank account of dubious origin, according to information from the missionaries." Linguist Charlotte Emmerich argued against Juruna's participation because he was a Shavante speaker, and the cases in question involved indigenous peoples from other language groups; he would be merely a decorative figure whose participation might be diluted in the overall context of the tribunal. Therefore she suggested that members of the Russell Tribunal be invited to come to Brazil to see the national reality and its problems in loco.

Villas Bôas said, "An individual who has no knowledge of Brazilian problems could never participate in a jury." Counsellor Jayme de Albuquerque showed great concern for Juruna's special status: Juruna "may not be adequate to consciously represent [Brazil] as member of the jury, unless he requests his emancipation so that he can freely express himself without any legal impediment. . . . Juruna is still a ward of the state; therefore, his participation in that Tribunal could only be as a mere observer, giving his personal opinions, never positions in the name of the Brazilian government or of his guardian, so long as he goes with the assistance of a guardian's representative." A little later Albuquerque put the whole issue in a curious way: "Brazil has nothing to fear, unless it does."

About two weeks later the newspapers published a statement by Mário Andreazza, the minister of the interior to whom FUNAI reported, in which Andreazza barred Juruna from traveling to Holland on the ground that "the Brazilian government recognized neither the existence nor the competence of the Russell Tribunal to pass judgment on Brazil's indigenous policy" (*O Dia* 1980). Therefore, the minister insisted, there was no reason to send a representative. Besides, "chief Juruna, as a ward of the state, couldn't be such representative, anyway" (*O Globo* 1980). A lawyer affiliated with an indigenist NGO immediately filed a suit against the minister on Juruna's behalf in the Federal Court of Appeals. The court deliberated for nine hours over two days a week apart before deciding in Juruna's favor. It handed down its ruling on November 27, three days before the close of the tribunal.

While the judges debated the case, news from Rotterdam appeared daily in the press. The Salesians were under heavy attack, as were the Brazilian government and the World Bank because of the negative effect of road building on the Nambiquara Indians. On the second day of the tribunal, with Juruna still held in Brazil without a passport, its organizers exacerbated the situation by electing Juruna president of the jury. As Juruna said later, the pressure from the organizers was decisive in the court's positive ruling and the subsequent order to issue him a passport. "They Are Afraid of Me, Says Juruna" was one headline in *Correio Braziliense* (November 30, 1980).

It is worth examining the proceedings of the Federal Court of Appeals in Juruna's case, published in the *Revista do Tribunal Federal de Recursos* (83 TFR 248–301 [1982]), because it contains some of the most emblematic features of Brazilian Indigenism. Fifteen judges voted to grant Juruna a writ of habeas corpus, and nine voted against it. (During the debate two judges had changed their minds and ended up supporting Juruna.) Of the nine judges voting against Juruna, one had no declared justification, three justified their vote on strictly procedural grounds—they said habeas corpus was inappropriate for the case—and five declared Juruna ineligible for a passport because he was relatively incapable, a ward of the state; whether to grant him a passport was for FUNAI to decide.

Behind the highly stylized etiquette of legal professionals the session was a battle of opinions or, hermeneutically speaking, a conflict of interpretations (Ricoeur 1978). Both sides eloquently invoked John Stuart Mill, Shakespeare, the seventeenth-century Jesuit Antonio Vieira, Sultan Harum Al Rachid, and even poet Pereira da Silva (in a long passage about the doom of the vanquished). The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was brought up several times and of course the Brazilian Civil Code, according to which the Indians are considered minors, as well as the 1967 Constitution and the 1973 Indian Statute, which define the terms of Indian wardship. The controversy about the limits of the wardship was discussed at length, as it had been on many previous occasions (Dallari 1978; Agostinho 1982; Marés 1983). What purpose the wardship serves, what it means to be relatively incapable, how much power the guardian can exercise, and what protection the ward has against a bad guardian were central questions occupying the judges.

In the context of this chapter some statements made in the appellate court merit attention. Regarding the intersection of ethnicity, nationality, and universalism, one reads between the lines a reluctance to acknowledge full rights to ethnics when nationality is at stake. One sympathetic judge, Washington Bolívar de Brito, declared:

> No Nation has the right to prevent its children from freely leaving or returning, and this has already been said here, when the passage from the Declaration of the Rights of Mankind was evoked. Would there be any doubt that the Indian is a man? Evidently not. Since there is no such doubt, and since the Brazilian Nation co-signed the San Francisco Letter which spells out these rights, one cannot prevent a Brazilian man from leaving the country, be he an Indian or not. (83 TFR at 258)

Here internal affairs—where multiethnicity is acknowledged de facto but not de jure—are superseded by the concern that the nation is required to honor supranational commitments. The argument hinges on that impeccable Cartesian logic: Indians are men, Juruna is an Indian, therefore Juruna is a man. The quality of being human is what entitled Juruna to the benefit of universal human rights. His ethnicity is thus rendered irrelevant because it is eclipsed by nationality.

Judge Aldir G. Passarinho was confident of the power of nationality:

> I am absolutely certain that the Shavante chief's feeling of Brazilianness will speak louder abroad than any restrictions that might be made to indigenous policy. If he is apt to go abroad to discuss the Indians' problems it is because he equally understands the need to safeguard Brazil's name abroad, which is the first duty of any Brazilian. . . . I am sure he will perceive the importance of, in the Concert of Nations, respecting the dignified name of Brazil. This is also his duty, for he is perhaps more Brazilian than all of us, because he has no mixture of races in his blood. Being this confident, I grant him habeas corpus, for I am sure that when he returns we will have to admit that, really, there was no reason for any fears of whatever nature about his going abroad. (83 TFR at 261)

In his view, Juruna's Indianness is still visible but attenuated by the compelling notion of Brazilianness. This being so, how could Juruna possibly betray a country that aspires to a place in the sun among the "Concert of Nations"? This judge's reasoning, rather than appealing to supranational arguments, leans on the power of nationalist feelings that in turn are the natural result of racial purity. Because Juruna has no mixture in his blood, he is more Brazilian than anyone else. He is, in other words, entitled to the highest degree of Brazilianness. This being so, there would be no grounds to fear that Juruna might denigrate his mother country (*Pátria*). It is of no concern whether Indians have their own agendas that do not coincide with the national one. What matters is that Brazil cannot be slandered by its own children, pure or not so pure. Whereas in the speech by Bolívar de Brito to be an Indian is to be a human, here to be an Indian is to be Brazilian. To *be* an Indian simply as *Indian* seems to be an unthinkable proposition.

A third, not-so-sympathetic judge, Geraldo Andrade Fontelles, asked this question: "Admitting that, for some reason, this Indian who is relatively incapable, while abroad inflicts some harm on somebody, who would repair this harm?" (83 TFR at 261). The Indian as clumsy child, unaware of civic behavior, cannot be let loose in the world. The bad boy would be a source of embarrassment to the nation. Here the Indian is not cloaked as either a national or a generic human. He is regarded as a deficient being with his relative incapacity, his naïveté, his quaintness, and his disconcerting unpredictability. For this reason the nation cannot afford to expose its flaws—the Indians—to the judging eye of an international assembly.

Judge Jarbas Nobre presented an interesting twist:

> Mister President: Regarding the merit [of the case], it is my opinion that Chief Juruna, my Indian brother, has the right to what he requests, that is, to go to Rotterdam to meet with his equals of the Americas and say what he thinks and even denounce what may seem to him to be wrong in what has been done against the primitive and exclusive owners of the various countries they represent. Without being orthodox I say that to tutor is to protect, to uphold, to defend.[2] In this sense the institute of

2. The Portuguese verb is *tutelar*, translated in the Michaelis dictionary as "to tutor, protect, defend, patronize."

> wardship should not be used to discriminate, to separate, to differentiate. It seems that this is exactly what is being done, the attempt to separate the Indian from the white in detriment of the former. (83 TFR at 286)

This argument raises an interesting point that deserves a little more attention precisely because it was made by a sympathizer of the Indians. One can convey prejudice even when affirming otherwise. In the same breath his honor declares himself a brother of Juruna and then retreats from such close kinship by evoking Juruna's equality to other Indians of the continent. The patronizing tone of his speech comes to the fore when he adds that "to tutor is to protect, to uphold, to defend." He regrets the treatment Indians have had at the hands of the majority population but proposes that internal differences should be leveled out. The invocation of his brotherhood with Juruna is a rhetorical device to attest to the univocality of Brazilianness. The betraying bit of discourse regarding the brotherhood between Brazilian Indians and non-Indians is Judge Nobre's statement that Juruna should attend the Russell Tribunal "to meet with *his* [not my] equals of the Americas." If we presume, as is usually done, that *brother* means *equal*, once again Western logic will reveal the vacuity behind Nobre's posture of an apparent ethnic liberality. If Juruna is my brother, Juruna's equals should also be my equals. But because Juruna has equals who are *his*, not my, equals, brothers and equals do not necessarily coincide.

Indeed, native as brother has become a cliché in the rhetoric of equality in Brazil and elsewhere. The phrase is most often used for sheer emotional effect. In his weekly column in *Folha de São Paulo* on October 28, 1996, anthropologist-senator Darcy Ribeiro applauded a particular move by a Shavante group by saying: "One of the greatest joys I've had lately was to see on TV my Shavante brothers, painted in red and black, invade Funai." It is often heard in patronizing speeches of politicians who have some vested interest in indigenous resources. Roraima congressmen, for instance, profess to have Indian blood in their veins as an alibi to defend development schemes on Indian lands; their argument runs as follows: since I have Indian blood, I know what is good for the Indians. This sophism of brotherhood, with its benign veneer, is not limited to Brazil. Richard Price describes how a Suriname government official, under the heavy volley of questions from the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights about the massacre of Saramaka (Maroon) people, declared that "the president and his political party consider the Maroons as their brothers" (1995, 456).

In reading the proceedings of the Federal Court of Appeals in Juruna's case one can apply verbatim Aijaz Ahmad's words when he analyses Nehru's and other statesmen's speeches during the 1955 Bandung conference of the so-called nonaligned nations: "Language itself came to have a peculiarly overdetermined, archaic character, perfectly transparent to the initiated, always in need of decoding by the others, with words constantly exceeding their meanings, at once slippery and hermeticized" (1992, 297). Indeed, to cut through the highly ornate style of judicial parlance is to unwrap successive layers of meaning, which make sense only if one is aware of the subtleties of Indigenism in Brazil. Overt phrasing often disguises its antithetical covert meaning. It is curious that it was the judges sympathetic to Juruna who most often used convoluted oratory and imagery to defend his right to participate in the international forum. Perhaps this was their embroidered way of covering up the dilemma of supporting his plea in the name of freedom and democracy without having to acknowledge the reality of ethnic diversity within the Brazilian nation.

While all this was taking place, another Indian quietly got his passport and flew unnoticed to Holland to attend the Russell Tribunal. It was Álvaro Sampaio, later known as Álvaro Tukano, invited to participate in the event as a witness. Brazilian journalists and authorities were so startled—first by his unexpected presence at the tribunal and then by his denunciations of the Salesian missionaries—that some reactions were simply baffling. FUNAI refused to believe he was a real Indian because the Indian agency had no record of him. He "must be a mere Brazilian citizen who went to the Federal Police to request a passport" after presenting the usual documents: birth certificate, social security card, voter's card, and a draft card. Furthermore, his Portuguese surname was evidence of his non-Indianness, as "any Indian, according to FUNAI's technicians, has an indigenous surname, is registered at birth by FUNAI. For this reason he does not receive a conventional birth certificate" (*O Estado de São Paulo* 1980). Besides the blatant falsity of the information about FUNAI's ubiquitous issuing of indigenous birth certificates, the notion that to be an Indian is to have an Indian surname was only fitting for the agency's plans—as later transpired—to apply the infamous "criteria of Indianness" (see Chapter 9).

But it was *Veja* magazine that carried the most malignant tone in condemning Tukano's purported boldness. Under a headline of "Perfect Crime: Tukano Deceives Funai and Travels to Rotterdam," the magazine produced a report dripping with sarcasm:

> The prohibition of Shavante leader Mário Juruna from traveling to Holland will not, after all, prevent jungle[3] emissaries from doing damage to the image of Brazilian indigenist policy in the ears of foreign audiences. Last Wednesday, evading Funai's vigilance, an Indian of the Tukano tribe in the Upper Rio Negro, Amazonas, traveled to Rotterdam to star in

3. The Portuguese word used was *taba*, a demeaning way of referring to Indian houses.

> the Amazonian chapter of the spectacle produced by the "Russell Tribunal" with its debut scheduled for this week. To get his passport, the Tukano exhibited his white name—Álvaro Fernandes Sampaio—plus ID card, voter's card, draft card, and the declared profession of nursing technician. On Friday, Funai, startled with a trip it had not authorized, informed that it had decided to "officially ignore that Mr. Álvaro Fernandes Sampaio was an Indian." But he is, lives in a village and, like Juruna, cannot perform any act without the approval of his trustee, in this case, Funai itself. As a state ward, Sampaio's acts are juridically void, but he may be punished when he returns from Holland. It was, therefore, a perfect crime committed with the help of members of the Indigenist Missionary Council (CIMI), a section of the Catholic Church which actively militates against the government. . . . Fearing he could not fly to Rotterdam, the Tukano concealed his trip with elaborate caution. Invited by the "tribunal," Sampaio did not reveal his intention to travel even to the Salesians who assist the Tukano. Neither did he tell his friend Juruna, busy talking to the press and besieging courts. . . .
>
> In the end the "Russell Tribunal" will have no difficulty in hearing exactly what it wants to hear. (1980)

Veja, notorious for its anti-Indian stories (McCallum 1995), took this opportunity to first misinform the public about the actual status of the Indians, making them seem absolutely incapable, and then to attack the Catholic organization that in the early 1970s, inspired by liberation theology, planted the seed of the pan-Indian movement in Brazil (see Chapter 6).

Álvaro Sampaio, who was to become a major pan-Indian leader, was vehemently critical of the Salesians' policy and actions in his homeland, particularly regarding the culturally disastrous consequences of boarding schools and the sending of Tukano girls to serve as maids-turned-prostitutes in Manaus, a major Amazon town.

> Prostitution and hunger continue, as do diseases. Many Indians cannot be interned in hospitals because they do not have the documents required by the hospital in São Gabriel and FUNAI does not take care of them. I ask: how is it that we can transform the Indians into Brazilians if there is so much moral criminality against the Indians?
>
> For 66 years, we have suffered the pressures of certain priests and nuns to abandon our culture, but we have resisted. (Tukano, quoted in Ismaelillo and Wright 1982, 69)

Upon his return from Europe Sampaio refused to go back home and for some time lived in fear of retaliation both from the missionaries and from other Tukanoans who took the Salesians' side. As it happened, the Salesians refused to take the children of his family group into their boarding school and so harassed his people that his entire community had to move elsewhere in the Rio Negro region.

If Sampaio got his passport without any problem, why the fuss about Juruna's? This question raises some interesting points regarding the exercise of state power over the growing potential of certain indigenous figures. The issuing of passports to Indians has been used as an instrument to control their political influence. In 1979 FUNAI prohibited Daniel Matenho Cabixi, a prominent Pareci Indian, from attending a meeting in Puebla, Mexico, organized by the Catholic Church. The case was made public but its effect was minimized either because the degree of political repression was higher then or because Cabixi was less willing to pursue it to its final consequences. Most likely, it was a combination of both. A few months later, just before the Juruna affair, FUNAI took two "tame," cooperating Indians to a meeting in Mexico City, duly providing them with passports.

Sampaio's and Juruna's cases raise two issues. One is the false assumption that FUNAI can legitimately exercise exclusive power over such matters as providing the Indians with documents. The other issue is, given that, why was it necessary to take Juruna's case to an appellate court? Among the many answers possible is one I deem irrefutable, namely, the quest for political visibility on the part of the Indians, a crucial feature of Brazilian Indigenism. Juruna, already a well-known character on the Brazilian public scene, seized the opportunity prompted by his confrontation with FUNAI's president to publicize a case of repression in times of military dictatorship and to implicate top-level members of the Brazilian state, such as the minister of the interior and the twenty-four ministers of the Federal Court of Appeals. It was a move that was bound to attract the public's attention to the Indian cause, with the added touch of putting the military government on the spot. Although Sampaio exposed FUNAI's false pretenses as the absolute master of the Indians, Juruna showed that, in Darcy Ribeiro's words, "the only way to defend the Indians in Latin America is to appeal to national and international public opinion" (Juruna, Hohlfeldt, and Hoffmann 1982, 146). Indeed, the visibility of the Indian issue in Brazil and abroad has been one of the most effective tools in the defense of Indians' ethnic rights against the abuses of the nation-state.

The Russell Tribunal reverberated in the Brazilian press for months afterward. In December a politician from the state of Amazonas repudiated the tribunal's accusations and defended the Salesians who, he said, contribute to "protect the Indian from human evil" (*A Crítica* 1980), the Catholic Church spoke out in support of the Salesians, arguing that it was "a true violation of human rights to have a Tribunal accuse without giving the possibility of defense" (*O Globo* 1981a). (Months earlier the press reported

that the bishop of the Upper Rio Negro had been invited to participate in the Russell Tribunal and declined.) Juruna in turn complained that FUNAI was trying to defeat him by promoting a change of headmanship in his village. He declared that after his return from the Russell Tribunal his leadership among the Indians had been weakened (*Correio Braziliense* 1981).

In April 1981 FUNAI's president visited the Salesian mission in the Upper Rio Negro and was quoted as saying that the Salesians did "serious work such as I have never seen before. They educate, there is a spirit of Brazilianness in teaching, health, order, and discipline" (*O Estado de São Paulo* 1981). *O Globo* explicitly linked this visit to the denunciations made at the Russell Tribunal (1981b). Nobre da Veiga not only reacted to the charges against the Salesians in the Upper Rio Negro region but also took some ludicrously timid steps to respond to the accusations that the Brazilian government was violating the human rights of the Nambiquara in the state of Rondônia. He signed an agreement with the Anthropology Museum at the University of Goiás to provide "assistance in health and research to the indigenous communities who live near the BR-364 highway that links Cuiabá to Porto Velho" (*O Globo* 1981b).

Behind the government's anxiety about the international accusations was the fear that multilateral agencies such as the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank, themselves pressured by human rights activists, might stop financing Brazilian projects, such as the paving of the BR-364 highway. Haunted by the aftermath of the tribunal, fidgety Brazilian authorities made token attempts to mend their rather tattered image as bad custodians of the Indians, a charge that might jeopardize the flow of international funds. The country was feeling the effects of the potency that ethnicity can acquire under certain, albeit rare, auspicious circumstances. In the ranks of universalism the Brazilian nation did not pass muster.

Indian as Political Banner

The commotion generated by Juruna's case provided an opportunity to air grievances against the military by members of the opposition. Noteworthy is the statement made at the federal House of Representatives by Gilson de Barros of the Partido do Movimento Democrático Brasileiro opposition party:

> Overstepping its prerogative as trustee, the Government of the Brazilian military dictatorship, through FUNAI and, in the last few days, more specifically through the mouth of the Minister of the Interior himself, the also Colonel Mário Andreazza, publicly denies—and all Brazilian press recorded—authorization for Mário Juruna to travel to Holland. The arguments are the most base and mediocre. . . . I don't know if this makes me laugh or cry, in this Republic where there are no more tears for those who want to shed them. . . . Now FUNAI, an Executive agency at the service of the Brazilian military dictatorship which has much to hide—and doesn't want Juruna to go to Holland and tell of the misery his people are enduring, the persecutions he suffers together with his white brothers, the squatters, in my state of Mato Grosso—says Mário Juruna is not even a leader. . . . Neither the Shavante people nor the Mato Grosso people nor the Brazilian people have any tears left, having already shed so many for the wretchedness of this dictatorship which crushes the most legitimate demands of the Brazilian people, including the most legitimate of Brazilians which are the Indian people in the Country, in spite of being marginalized, betrayed and vilified by the agency supposed to be their guardian. (*Diário do Congresso Nacional* 1980a, 13905)

A few days later the same representative continued:

> The Nazi-fascist groups infiltrated in the Government or who count on its omission or consent begin to arm their sinister and nearly invisible tentacles in the explicit attempt to eliminate the courageous Shavante whose only crime, as far as we know, is to possess a perfect and multiform vision of his people's problems. . . . Indeed, it seems, Mr. President, that there is a plan astutely designed to discredit and dismantle the indigenous movement in Brazil. . . . Now there are statements by FUNAI employees saying that Juruna may be murdered by his own people. . . . In denouncing these facts to the Nation I intend to follow up with a series of accusations made weekly in this House to show the way in which the Brazilian Government, utterly illegitimate, intends to perpetuate itself in Power, while it eliminates leaders who most eloquently defend the interests of the suffering Brazilian people. (*Diário do Congresso Nacional* 1980b)

Representative Barros was a citizen against the state, or rather, against the improper use the military were making of the state. In launching his violent attack on the military government he raised the issue of legitimate ethnicity. In the hands of the dictatorship Brazilian citizens were as defenseless as indigenous peoples. But here the Indians, for all the specific rights to which they are entitled, are still put in the same slot as their Brazilian "brothers," squatters or otherwise.

The contours of indigenous peoples as political agents in their own right become sharper in the speech of Representative Modesto da Silveira, also from the opposition:

> If in fact FUNAI, through its president, and the Brazilian Government are worried and so zealous that a people or a nation should not intrude in the affairs of another people or nation, as FUNAI's attorney declared to me . . . why then doesn't the Brazilian Nation worry about respecting the rights of the Indian nations? And, if the concern is really about

> intervention, why do they intrude in the interests of the Indian nations or of any Indian? If the Brazilian Government is worried about this self-determination and non-intervention, it might be the case, for instance, . . . of the nations themselves and indigenous peoples issuing their own passports, since they constitute nations that are absolutely established and recognized. (*Diário do Congresso Nacional* 1980c)

At that political moment the military was in its final years in government since the 1964 coup. In 1985 official power returned to civilians, although the Indian question was to remain, directly or indirectly, in the hands of the military. In 1980 protests such as those heard in the National Congress were increasing. As had happened before during the worst years of dictatorship, the Indian cause continued to be used opportunistically as a platform from which to launch attacks concerning the breach of rights of the Brazilian citizenry at large. Although the military tried to conceal the embarrassment that Indians represented to the nation, the opposition took them as an emblem of suffering and as such Indians played a significant role in the definition of an antimilitary ideology.

One way or the other, indigenous peoples, minute as their numbers may be in Brazil, seem to represent an endless reservoir of images that serve the most disparate convictions. No other segment of the country's population possesses the double feature of both proximity and distance that makes the Indians so specially evocative in the construction of ideological imagery. Episodes such as the Russell Tribunal are bound to precipitate a confrontation between the state and its discontents, and that is why they take on the aspect of political dramas brimming with analytical promise.

Brazilian Indians have appealed to other international forums, such as the United Nations and the Organization of American States, charged with the protection of human rights when nation-states fail to observe these rights. As a strategy recourse to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights ignores the contradiction between the logic of cultural diversity—the right of the Indians to practice "crimes" or "offenses," such as infanticide, the execution of witches, or polygamy (Price 1995)—and the logic of the Eurocentric universal rights. Depending on the grievance and the context, cultural differences are either emphasized or underplayed by Indians who have learned enough about the contradictions of Brazilian laws and legislation to pit Brazilian against Brazilian to the Indians' advantage. Paraphrasing Todorov once more, we have here a case of *indigénisme de parcours*.

As for the Brazilian state, it defends itself abroad against accusations of the breach of human rights by evoking its legislation, which—enlightened as it may be—is routinely reduced to dead letter. In its domestic confines the state counterattacks with pressure and retaliation. The Catholic Church, NGOs, researchers, and Indian leaders have often paid a high

price for provoking a confrontation between Brazilian nationalism and international universalism. Curiously, state backlash violates citizenship rights, such as the freedom to move about (Indians are prohibited from traveling abroad) or to exercise one's profession (periodic bans on anthropologists from Indian areas). In the eyes of the state, especially in its military guise, the question becomes one of treason, to the benefit of foreign interests. The state is then caught in a spiral of transgressions suggestively akin to the schismogenesis effect as described by Bateson—"a process of differentiation in the norms of individual behaviour resulting from cumulative interaction between individuals" (1958, 175).

Lest we are left with the impression that state-as-bad-guardian is an exclusively Brazilian phenomenon, let me quote from two native North American authors: "It would be fair to say that if a private trustee were discovered acting in the same manner as the Interior Department does toward the Indians, he would immediately be indicted for gross violation of his trust" (Kickingbird and Ducheneaux 1973, xxvi). In this particular respect the difference between Brazil and the United States is that no amount of national or international protest against breaches of indigenous rights seems to make the U.S. government feel the scratches in its image, whereas Brazil's reputation abroad, regularly tainted by scandals at home involving massacres of homeless children, landless peasants, and Indians, is a constant government concern. The United States was also condemned by the Russell Tribunal but, to the best of my knowledge, domestic repercussions, if any, were not comparable to those in Brazil.

Defensive as the Brazilian state has been about what it takes to threaten national security—the military continues to handle the Indian question—it is nevertheless highly sensitive to international opinion and rather ambivalent toward foreign presence in the country. When challenged abroad, the nation's rulers brandish their indigenist legislation—of which they are proud—like an elegant storefront display, although their legislation is hollow in its application. Internally, these rulers, be they military or not, maintain an explicitly patriotic posture with recurring outbursts of repudiation of foreign coveting of national resources while inviting foreign investments and participation in the country's wealth.

It is at the crossroads of these contradictions that Indians find fertile ground to act out their strategic indigénisme de parcours. When Indians seize NGOs' humanistic guidelines and set in motion their own ethnic resources as political instruments, they are mixing levels and dimensions in a way that few Brazilians would imagine or dare do. By proceeding in this manner, the Indians steer anthropologists toward an exercise of distancing by means of which we learn to regard what seems fixed as moving, or, to put it another way, to avoid congealing what is actually fluid. Interethnic

Indians lead us to relativize concepts that, because they are ideologically laden, have come to be crystallized as unimpeachable precepts. This returns us to the initial discussion of the absolutism of universalism and relativism. Oblivious to the weight of such crystallization, the Indians are free to improvise, invent, or experiment with notions that for them are no more than tools to be used according to specific circumstances. If in their demands it is useful to evoke the distinctively ethnic, the nationally local, and the generically universal all at once, why not? They have no special allegiance to any ideological standpoint propounded by non-Indians.

One learns that in the political field of interethnic contact the Indians will have their right of access to state goods guaranteed only because of the universality of human rights. As a strategy, universalism is called upon as a mediator between the logic of ethnicity—the social product of cultural diversity—and the logic of citizenship—the social product of the nation-state. If we take citizenship as a social and political strategy rather than as a natural and monolithic ascription, we can maintain that it is on the strength of being *human beings* that the *Indians* must be acknowledged as having the right to also be *citizens*.

4 Indian Voices

In the 1950s Brazilian anthropologist Darcy Ribeiro prophesied that the Indians would become so deculturated by contact with Brazilians that they would lose their ethnic identity and be transformed into "generic Indians," stigmatized by the national society and left with none of their specific cultures or traditions (1970, 222). Ribeiro's pessimism was understandable, given the constant depopulation, loss of territory, exploitation of resources and labor, and armed persecution. For nearly five centuries people after people faced the same problems, which led many to extinction and others to precarious survival. But the image of the alienated generic Indian is a fiction. Ribeiro's prophecy has not come true.

What has happened since the 1950s is the birth and growth of a political pan-Indian movement in Brazil. The first regional Indian meetings took place in the early 1970s and initially were sponsored by the Catholic Indigenist Missionary Council (CIMI). At these meetings Indian leaders organized around the need to claim rights granted by the Constitution and by law but constantly threatened by both private and official actions. The União das Nações Indígenas (Union of Indian Nations, UNI), the first pan-Indian organization in Brazil, was created in 1980.

As a result of this pan-Indian movement, gatherings and speeches by Indians clearly demonstrated the persistence of Indian identities embedded in specific traditions. These peoples are not just Indians. They are Shavante, Terena, Kaingang, Makushi, Guarani of such and such a place, and so on. They often evoke the past, when their cultures were different from what they are now, before the effects of contact, but nowhere in their discourses is there a trace of the cultural void imagined by Ribeiro. The common cause forged in the political arena has unified the Indians and reinforced their ethnic distinctions.

They have transformed *Indian* from a derogatory term to a key concept in their politics of contact. The "generic Indian" is no longer the last stage of a defeatist, down-and-out, no-future-in-sight existence; rather, it

has become a mark of otherness vis-à-vis the nationals. The appropriation of Indian by the Indians has exorcised the heaviest spells of discrimination associated with the term. Of course, this does not mean that discrimination no longer occurs. What it means is that discrimination is now expressed in other ways, for example, *bugre* in the south, *caboclo* in the north. (Neither term has an equivalent in English.) But Indian is no longer a dirty word. In fact, it has gained legitimacy by the use to which it is put and the context in which it is used. The Indian is now a well-known political figure on the national scene.

For the purpose of discussing some ways in which the national society has affected indigenous traditions of symbolic expression, I shall present three speeches delivered by Brazilian Indians to Brazilian audiences at meetings organized by Brazilians in major cities of Brazil. These meetings took place during the military government when both Indians and nationals felt the weight of repression and censorship. For better or worse the indigenous question was one of the few political issues that could be discussed in relative safety without automatically incurring the risk of imprisonment. Many nationals took advantage of this to air their frustrations, whereas the Indians used the unexpected opportunity to vent centuries-old grievances. Sympathetic Brazilians crowded into formal convention halls or improvised auditoriums to hear and applaud Indian speeches, often delivered in garbled Portuguese but always potent, vivid, and aimed at the common enemy—those in power.

When carefully scrutinized, these speeches acquire an extra density as texts. If we focus on the rhetorical matter that makes up the individual styles, we can find a number of clues about the speakers' viewpoints, expectations, life trajectories, and political options in the realm of interethnic relations. We can better understand these speeches if we examine them in the context of the symbolism of contact. All this leads me to reflect on what anthropology has offered by way of theoretical guidelines on this subject and to question some deep-rooted assumptions, particularly about history and "peoples without history" (Wolf 1982).

What follows is a sequence of three indigenous speeches, transcribed and published by various organizations, and then my analysis, first, of what is implied in turning spoken word into written text and, second, of the political significance of both speeches and speakers for the politics of contact. Running through the three speeches are recurring themes, comparable moods, and similar images of the Whiteman (see the Introduction for discussion of this term). Of the hundreds of Indian speeches available in written form, those selected here are as telling as any. I do not intend to explore these speeches fully, for a symbolic interpretation as such is beyond the scope of this chapter. I collected no life histories, but my familiarity with the last two speakers has allowed me to go beyond the personal traces they left in their speeches.

Listen, White!

The first speech was delivered by Augusto Paulino, a Krenak Indian from the state of Minas Gerais, to an audience of forty-four Indian leaders, six anthropologists, three lawyers, and one Catholic bishop, under the sponsorship of thirty-seven support groups, professional associations, and university branches. The meeting, organized by the Pro-Indian Committee of São Paulo, was held from April 26 to 29, 1981, in the city of São Paulo.

> Dear brothers, I'm here to present this weak figure who has been suffering for many years. He has been suffering for twenty-two years. I'm going to tell you the little story of the Krenak, what has been happening for twenty-two years. Over there in our territory, since the time of the SPI [Indian Protection Service], the Post Chief began. . . . We had many head of cattle, we had 900 head of cattle, 600 sheep, 300 animals, it was well organized, we had everything. Then they began to sell away till there was nothing left; they took us away from there to Maxacalis. We didn't like it, went back, on foot, ninety-two days to go back. We arrived, camped on an island. There arrived Captain Pinheiro and said he was going to liberate our headquarters. Our liberation began again, he took us there and we began to work, making gardens and gathering cattle, we were starting again. He built a jail, opened up everything. We began to organize the land again. But then the *fazendeiros* [landowners] got suspicious that we would occupy the whole territory. They began to wander around, took us away again, now to Fazenda Guarani. Well, they took us to Fazenda Guarani way over at Crenaque. At that time they built a jail, everything, then they brought Indians from Amazonas, Indians from all over the place, were arrested, beaten up. That was in 1968, they took us away to Fazenda Guarani. The Indians didn't want to go, but they tied them up, put them in jail, left them there two, three days starving. They took us to Fazenda Guarani. We stayed there seven years. In seven years we began to discover the law, went back again. We were camping in our own territory again, we got there and they had destroyed everything. We went on camping and they wanted to remove us again. But then we began to know the law, going this place and that. They left us alone. We are camped there in thirteen *alqueires* [630,200 square meters]. We want to organize the territory, to get ahead. Then they came up, gathered together, came up and asked us how much land we wanted to organize as our territory, saying that our land up there is 1,950 alqueires. We are only eighty people, used to be 600, to get organized, to get the work done. People died out . . . the older ones were missing the place, wanted to come back but couldn't. Talked about it, they arrested, beat us up, and

people died. And there we are, eighty people in thirteen alqueires. Some people tried to get us 250 alqueires, which would be fine for us, but they didn't agree. Then, we went to the police chief in Valadares [the town of Governador Valadares] and he said, "But what do Indians want so much land for? Indians are lazy, don't work, this Krenak Indian who doesn't work, what does he want land for, he can eat fish and game." Well, in the old days the Indians had game to eat, had a lot of fish. Nowadays, how can the Indians live, eighty people within thirteen alqueires of land? What is there to eat? Then, I ask all of you, brothers here, to participate and we will be very grateful. And I ask you all not to weaken, face the battle, for the toad that stops is eaten by the snake. The toad always hops a little bit forward. We can never stop, for I've been suffering for twenty-two years, but now, with God's will, I'm getting ahead, even if I hop one meter today, two meters tomorrow and, with God's will, I'll get there. Even if it is to leave to my children, my nieces and nephews, my cousins, to my community, I want to leave something. Thank you very much, all of you. (Comissão Pró-Índio 1982, 26–27)

The second speech was delivered by Álvaro Sampaio, the Tukano Indian from the Uaupés region who a year earlier had attended the Fourth Russell Tribunal in Rotterdam (see Chapter 3). He spoke to an audience of Indians, lawyers, anthropologists, and other professionals who work on Indian issues. The panel was organized by the Brazilian Bar Association, Rio de Janeiro chapter, and took place in the city of Rio de Janeiro on November 18, 1981.

I'll stand up because I can't talk while I sit here. Usually at the Indian assemblies I have attended, the chief stands up when he speaks to give a better audience. I was born in mid-village in the state of Amazonas where there was no auditorium, no doctors and I had never imagined that I would speak to intellectual people like these present here. And why is this? My presence here has a meaning, precisely to give a message. It is a message that will serve many people well, but for others it will be an alert. The discrimination the Brazilian Indian has been suffering from the times when this country was discovered to these days means that our country knows in fact—and conceals—that which is called racism. In this sense the great mass of whites and the small number of Indians and the way of subordinating our fellow men is not in accord with the dictates of law and justice. FUNAI [the National Indian Foundation], lately using the Indian Statute just like in the first times the white civilization used, in front of them, its word, has disarmed us so that we lose our lands. And FUNAI continues to do this. It places the Indian under the Indian Statute in order to do a better control. No one likes to be subordinated to others, listen to words, or be alienated, since man's principle is freedom. To be unable to participate, or to speak to one's superiors as, for example, the Indian to FUNAI, right in the middle of a country like

4. Álvaro Tukano delivers a speech. Photo by Beto Ricardo/ISA, 1987.

Brazil, right in the times of democracy, this is not called democracy. To us it means imperialism and anti-democracy. The way of regarding the Indian, when the Indian begins to discover that his way and his destiny are not right, that's what makes us come to the big cities and give the public opinion a different knowledge from that it would never have. For, when we arrive here you're forced to listen and take this message to your families. Because the problem of the Brazilian Indian is not his alone, but of the Brazilian people. I'm speaking in this way because very often my word has been useful to many people. Emancipation and, lately, these criteria that FUNAI is throwing over the Indians, what does that all mean? Are we in full harmony? Myself and Marcos Terena, who is the president of the União das Nações Indígenas, are working, in the meantime, in the indigenous communities because many, as I have told you, are still asleep. And we are a proof of it. That the indigenous communities are exploited, omitted in every way and that they are innocent compared to people like us. For instance, I know what tricks FUNAI is playing over us; and nobody defends the other in this case. We are forced to speak like this, not because we want to, but because somebody forces us. It is the Indian Statute: the justice which is not done, and the law which these men ignore. And, unfortunately, gentlemen, lawyers, we have within FUNAI lawyers who study all day long to change the Indian Statute, and this

Statute can't be changed because what it contains has never been put into practice. Even a few days ago, on the 12th of this month, Marcos Terena, my cousin Carlos Fernandes Machado, and myself were having an interview with this new president. In accordance with our non-governmental organization, we wanted to have been received as members of the board of directors of the União das Nações Indígenas. Unfortunately, our organization is a pejorative being to the nation. And we don't understand why. We don't understand why. To be an Indian inside this nation means to be shameful for other nations. It means a regression to the progress of Brazil. But to steal the Indian's land, to commit injustice against him, that's what the people don't consider in fact. By people I mean men who are competent, who say they are competent, but to the Indian's eye they are not. Our conversation with the new president was like this. He found the word "Nations" can't be used. In fact, we also know this. He said to us: "you must have the spirit of Brazilianness [*brasilidade*], Brazil is great and must be still greater." I answered: "That's why we came here to talk. Because very often we, Indians, the leaders, have most responsibility, more than any president of FUNAI or perhaps even of the Republic. If Brazil is great, it must be equal for all, not just for some people." I wanted to say this to him because so far the Indian had not spoken up and been heard in his international and national demands. That's why the Indian has his problems with land. That's why we go on insisting until he listens to what we want to do. He also said, the president, that we are picking a fight within the nation. No one is picking no fight, when he's making a claim. A son, when he goes to his father to claim his rights, the father gives. Many of them were misunderstood. On the other hand, the Indian becomes that who existed in the old days. But, in reality, the Indian continues to suffer under our eyes; it is the Indian himself who is looking for a way to self-determination. Self-determination doesn't mean separating from Brazil and be in the government. It means a desire of the Indian to participate in what the Whiteman is participating, in the national communion, for we have the same ambitions as any Whiteman and the same rights, but we can't say that we'll turn into whites from one day to the next. Because that's not up to us. This is outside our principle. I can't change, transform the president of the Republic into a Tukano overnight, because that's impossible. There is no law for it. Many of those military men who are in high positions, at the top of FUNAI, want to use the Indian as military and we feel ashamed. What will other military men say about these people? They have a pejorative idea of the indigenous communities. We can't stand being exploited any longer. No one likes to be exploited. For these words I've just said I take responsibility. Anyway, I think the Brazilian Bar Association will also join the Indian struggle to put Order and Justice in our Brazilian society. (Ordem dos Advogados do Brasil 1981, 81–84)

The third speech was delivered by Marcos Terena from the state of Mato Grosso do Sul, on the same occasion as Sampaio's speech.

I'm very pleased to be here amid scientists from law, anthropology, and social fields. Having heard these remarks about the Indian issue in the country I feel a bit shy because we have just heard that, according to the criteria of Indianness, the Indian has to have the primitive mentality. Well, in front of a podium of wise people in the relevant subject matters, I have to declare myself an Indian and I proudly say this to you and say another thing; something that in my heart, in front of all this pile of papers which I know what it is, but many Indians don't even know exists. Well, what I have to say is that I feel highly honored with the opportunity you give me tonight; in this opportunity I can speak and I hope I will also be heard so that everything that has been debated here will be useful for our work, but that it can also be reverted as a concrete benefit for all Brazilian Indians who, who knows, would like to be here, but can't. The privilege given to me provides me with the chance to, in my name and in the name of my family, the Indian family, also thank all of you who are in this house, a house I consider to be of men dedicated to the law and to what is right.

For several centuries those men who were named Indians were able to live in peace, with their own customs, their own traditions, what is called culture. But one day into their homes, Indian homes, came men who at first showed themselves to be friendly, but later, deceitfully, betrayed the trust put in that relationship. Until very recently, only a few years ago, I think in the 70s, we heard—perhaps many of you have also heard—that right now, in the twentieth century, there were people proud of saying that they were Indian hunters, a fact I consider shameful for a nation that sees itself as potent as many others and which I consider the greatest in South America.

Although, since 1910, there has been a federal agency for the protection of these people who were the first inhabitants of this country called Brazil; although powerful instruments have been created which the Whiteman respects (and if he does not respect, at least he fears) which are called laws; although this kind of support exists, the Indian continues to be abused in his rights, respect for which very often depends less on the law, I think, than on solidarity and human respect. Today, looking around me as an Indian, as a Brazilian, knowing two societies, two civilizations, I have worried a lot about law, about justice, because many times I've heard that people who have killed a fellow human being have not been imprisoned. On the other hand, I have also heard of people who were in jail for a long time without having committed any fault or murder. In analyzing things of this kind I only think, not as an expert like you, gentlemen, but with the sensitivity of a human being who has always respected the most basic things, from a small twig falling off a tree, to the whole universe, I know that there is in the country a law called Constitution; I also know that there is a law called Human Rights; also another called Geneva Convention, and, particularly to deal with Indian affairs, there is a law number 6001 called the Indian Statute, not to speak of the various international agreements and recommendations to which

Brazil subscribed and took a position vis-à-vis other countries. In all this tangle of laws, decrees, recommendations, of endless legal paperwork, is the person of the Indian, an Indian who, even though massacred, cheated and forgotten, reappears as a myth, as a thing that doesn't exist. Very often, in the minds of Brazilians, what I call the majority society, there is that Indian who comes armed with arrows and clubs, painted in various colors, good to be photographed, to be made stories over, who makes pretty crafts and who is a source of funds both to FUNAI and to those who exploit that sort of thing. For some he is naive, savage, stubborn; for others he is an obstacle obstructing progress. Everybody talks, everybody debates the Indian issue, but no one has ever shown concern or, if he has, has not been heard, with what was really in the heart of the Indian, besides distrust or perhaps fear. FUNAI is here a guardian of the Indian. The laws are here to protect the Indian, and I ask you: where is the Indian? Today you're here, listening to my speech. My hope is that, by talking to you, I am contributing to alert you about things Indian. The Indian is also a Brazilian, although he has his own language, his own customs, his own world, a totally different world. I act and speak like an Indian because the Indian wants to speak and be heard; to respect but be respected too; and to participate, gradually and harmoniously, somehow, as a Brazilian; and more, as a native Brazilian. His culture, his customs, his traditions must be respected as sacred and valuable for each and every people. Why does the Whiteman use malice to cheat the Indian? Why doesn't the Whiteman respect the value the Indians put on land, according to their conception of it? Land is a fundamental element for the survival of Indian peoples. I believe the mere fact of your being gathered here, under the roof of the Brazilian Bar Association in Rio de Janeiro, is in itself an attempt to comply by exercising real Justice in the application of the laws in defense of these peoples called forest dwellers [*silvícolas*]. The demarcation of Indian land is essential for the definition of what Indian territory is, but I think it will have been useless to demarcate if there is no Indian to inhabit it. And a population will have a chance to grow and be strong if it has medical assistance and education. I also think that FUNAI's role is clear in the law. There is a specific law about it. It wasn't the Indian who invented it. It wasn't the Indian who asked for it. But it's there. I think the law exists and FUNAI exists. They're there. What is lacking then? I think that what is lacking is to find effective ways for FUNAI to defend its wards, to defend the Indians. When I see the Brazilian development programs I feel that Brazil is moving, at a fast pace, toward development, toward its interior, toward what is called progress. Will the law and goodwill alone be enough to give security and self-defense to peoples who only know how to make a living off the land? I hope that, within your possibilities, something concrete can be done, something that is really geared toward the Indian populations, which are few. As someone here said, demarcation should be easy, but it isn't. I would like you to think of those Indians who, right at this

moment, who knows, are sleeping with empty bellies. Perhaps it doesn't depend completely on FUNAI, but on all those who feel themselves to be Brazilian and who can say so with pride. What I can say to you is that I am proud of being able to speak as an Indian and transmit this message because, in the same way as you're listening to me, there are many people who call themselves Brazilians and don't like to raise the subject. I hope that you of the Bar Association, anthropologists, sociologists, all of you who can hear me tonight will make of the Indian movement or of the Indian cause not just an excuse to say "I'm defending the Indian," but think of means for you to help the Indian, the Indian who is in his village. I consider myself privileged because I've learned your language while you haven't learned mine. I consider myself privileged for going to the University, while many of you struggle for years to do the same and don't succeed. Thus, my message is that you must regard the Indian from the point of view of the law, based on the organizational structure such as FUNAI, the government agency, to find a way for you to collaborate toward the growth of the Indian side by side with you, and not as an isolated society, as someone has said. A different society, by all means, but with the same feelings as any Brazilian, who knows how to love, to feel, and who wants to find in you also the thought that it is possible to join efforts to make our country less small, less mean about the Indian issue. (Ordem dos Advogados do Brasil 1981, 76–80)

Frozen on the page, these speeches lose a whole gamut of communicative links with the audience—fleeting facial expressions, voice inflections, pitch, pause, speed, gestures, stutters, looks, innuendos of all sorts—to gain the permanence of the recorded message, untrimmed, unqualified, unaltered. In the written version there is no mediating gesture, no sympathetic glance, no emphatic silence. We who read them have to content ourselves with this impoverished rendering of the speakers' presentation of self and dialogic effort. But, although the gesture is unseen, the silence unheard, and the glance no longer caught, the speech turned into text acquires a force of its own. We who were not there to see and hear the speakers, although away from them in space and time, are able to appreciate their message, understand their plight, and interpret their posture.

The ephemeral moment of the spoken word is transformed into fixed discourse to which we can turn again and again to discover new, even surprising, meanings. The congealed text, a contribution from the Western world (Goody 1968), can then become an effective tool in the struggle of the Indians against the Westerners. An equivalent device, the tape recorder, was used effectively by Shavante leader Mário Juruna in his meetings with government authorities. For most Indians in Brazil and elsewhere speech is the privileged medium of communication. But they increasingly recognize that the written word is more powerful and appropriate in contexts such

as legal claims, political manifestos, or whenever the only way to be heard is through literacy.

The three speeches translated here can be displayed and commented upon, reaching a different, if not wider, audience simply because they were written down. In contrast to the speed of events surrounding the politics of contact, these speeches, in their textual tangibility, have gained a permanence in some ways equivalent to the memory of peoples without writing. The fixity of the written text fulfills a Western need that the Indians comply with in their attempt to hold Brazilians as their interlocutor. Writing is thus transformed into one more political tool.

For the English-speaking reader I have translated the speeches from Portuguese. This raises another set of considerations. Particularly in Álvaro Sampaio's speech, I had to face the problem of its incongruities, some grammatical, some lexical, some semantic, but on the whole much subtler than those in the first speech. These discrepancies give his speech a special flavor, but how does one convey special idiomatic flavors in a foreign language, such as English is to me? Given that translation is always an act of treason (captured in the shrewd Italian saying *traduttore, traditore*), I faced two alternatives: find equivalent incongruities in the English language, which I am ill equipped to do, or ignore them, translate the text in straight English, and point out that there are incongruities in the original. In the end I opted for a third alternative: a translation as literal as possible. The oddities thus produced are probably greater than the Portuguese text deserves, but my intention is simply to call the reader's attention to the disjointed yet catchy character of some of the utterances. Sampaio's speeches, which in a grammatical sense are usually slightly out of sync, have always seized his audiences in a more powerful way than, for instance, Terena's addresses in nearly flawless Portuguese.

Let us now examine each speech and try to capture some of the components of individual style in this political genre. Each reveals something about the speaker, his political trajectory and his position vis-à-vis Brazilians, the multifaceted contact situation, and the Indian movement.

The first speaker, a Krenak Indian from the state of Minas Gerais, presents a mode of expression quite common among Indians who are making their first appearances in the field of interethnic politics. The well-being of his people, kinship ties, parochial referents, repetitions, and the humble demeanor toward his audience betray his inexperience in handling the rhetoric of contact. Nothing in Paulino's discourse reflects a commitment to the indigenous movement at large; rather, he uses his audience as sympathetic shoulder on which he laments his people's sufferings. His speech has the same inflection as so many others uttered in similar circumstances: a long list of grievances against the non-Indians, responsible as they

are for the depletion of resources, the invasion of traditional territories, anxiety about the future, lack of communication, and disrespect for indigenous ways of life. This Krenak man is representative of those Indian leaders whose point of reference is their immediate community and who have not as yet grasped the sociopolitical meanderings of the national society.

The passage from the traditional politics of persuasion to the imposed politics of coercion, exercised by the Brazilian state, is vehemently portrayed by Paulino in terms of stark raw violence. Arrests, beatings, forceful removals, expropriation—these are some of its ugliest faces. The epitome of such violence was the establishment, referred to in his speech, of the Crenaque jail for Indians, which was in operation for several years. In just a few words Paulino summarizes the long history of that treatment, common to so many other indigenous groups and intensely lived by his people in a matter of two decades. The condensed language, the use of metaphor and parable—the toad and the snake—give his individual style a candor that is so often the strength of indigenous discourses when delivered in Portuguese. Rather than a simplified stereotyped opponent, Paulino's Brazilian is a complex multifaceted Other: the captain who helped relocate his people, the police chief who disdained the Indians' capacity for work, those anonymous friends who tried to get more land for his people. For more than twenty years this man has continually had to expand his horizon to accommodate all these figures and situations previously unknown to him. He reaches forward in search of a solution to his people's problems, hoping to achieve a satisfactory modus vivendi, good enough to be passed on to the coming generations, for the "good old days" are forever gone. Punctuating this tragic story of unrelenting disruption is the poignant theme of the longing that kills, the well-known tale of old people who miss home and, unable to adjust to a new environment, simply give up and die.

The other two speakers exhibit a much greater fluency in political discourse and a much greater familiarity with the ways of the national society. The second speaker, Álvaro Sampaio, a Tukano from the Uaupés region in the northwestern Amazon, was educated by Salesian missionaries. As a youth he went to Manaus, was in the army for a while, then tried to enter the university before becoming involved in the Indian movement. He made his debut in the national and international politics of contact in 1980 at the Fourth Russell Tribunal where he denounced Salesian activities as ethnocidal. This cost him much anxiety because of the campaign the missionaries launched against him and his family, leading to their exile to a distant location. Expelled from home, Sampaio spent several years moving around Brazilian and other South American cities where he closely interacted with other emerging Brazilian Indian leaders and learned about the experiences of the Peruvian and Ecuadorian Indian movements. Heavy drinking was

but a symptom of a deep sense of social malaise that resulted in Sampaio's cutting sarcasm and frequent aggressive moods. As a vehement spokesman for the defense of Indian rights against FUNAI, missionaries, and nationals at large, he had an important role in Brazil, having been elected as a director of UNI. Then, in the late 1980s, after years of struggling in vain for the demarcation of the Uaupés Indian area and removal of invading gold prospectors, he shocked both Indians and friends of the Indians with his pact with a powerful mining company and with the military officials who were launching the Calha Norte Project in the vast region of the Amazon watershed. He traded his "ethical integrity" for a less than satisfactory solution to both problems—demarcation and invasion—as well as promises of an adequate health program for his people (Buchillet 1990). As it turned out, none of these promises was fulfilled, and Sampaio lost his prestige as an Indian leader and the confidence of practically all his former political companions (C. Ricardo 1991, 101–103). I shall return to his case in Chapter 10.

But back in the early 1980s Sampaio's public appearances were always received with great enthusiasm and usually had plenty of media coverage. The assertive tone of his discourse, as transcribed here, reveals much of his life history. His sometimes vociferous speeches betray his personal drama as a young Indian: the conflict between his ideal of returning to his people and the urge to go on with his political involvement at the national and international levels.

Sampaio's discourse also shows his effort to involve the audience by using expressions and references that come from the political context of Brazilians themselves. The imagery is forthrightly political and full of "civilized" overtones. The military, self-determination, imperialism and democracy, the quest for equal opportunities—all were powerful symbols in political discourses by Brazilians who opposed the military government. The appeal to these symbols is particularly effective for an audience made especially sympathetic by the common experience of being ruled by a regime of force. Despite frequent semantic ramblings, Sampaio delivered a powerful message, and his anger was not lost on his listeners/readers. In this formal sense his discourse suggests a difference between sense and meaning. While at times the sense is fuzzy, the meaning of his point is quite clear.

Most important in his speech is the reference to "nations within a nation." Banning the designation União das Nações Indígenas, the military authorities—and, I must add, the civilian government that followed—have argued that such a proposition conflicts with national security in representing a potential danger to the country's sovereignty. They argue that to propose the establishment of nations within the Brazilian nation is to encourage internal cleavages, which is therefore unpatriotic, particularly in the case of the Indians as bearers of different traditions, speakers of different languages, and supposedly highly susceptible to foreign interests. Furthermore, to create Indian nations would go against the state's aspiration of integrating indigenous peoples definitively into the national society. The reference to brasilidade by the president of FUNAI is a condensed way of expressing this policy: from first occupants of the land the Indians have been turned into a threat to national security. The confrontational tone of Sampaio's speech is a reaction to such distortion. His discourse also reveals a most cherished notion that Indians should be equal to Brazilians while maintaining their cultural differences, a proposition that is entirely at odds with the interpretation of what integration should be, namely, the complete dilution of the Indian population into the undifferentiated mass of Brazilians.

As deeply involved in the Indian movement as the Tukano, the third speaker shows a completely different style. As a youth he too left his Terena village in Mato Grosso do Sul to study in the city—first Campo Grande, then Brasília. Marcos Terena joined the movement just before the creation of UNI, which he served as one of its first presidents. As a pilot he tried for a long time to work for FUNAI but was turned down repeatedly by the colonels who ran the Indian foundation in the 1970s and early 1980s. His tendency to salvage FUNAI as a legitimate agency for the defense of Indian rights is quite visible in his speech, although expressed in a critical manner. He keenly exposes the persistent use of official paperwork to disempower the Indians. Amid the tangle of endless laws authoritarianly created by nationals about Indians, the Indians remain helplessly at the mercy of Brazilians' good or bad intentions.

Although critical of the Brazilian government regarding indigenous policy and treatment, Terena has held onto his conviction that working from within the system is as valid as, and perhaps more productive than, confrontation from outside. For this he has paid the price of mistrust from companions and supportive non-Indians who have accused him of co-optation. His discourse has elements both of criticism and hope in the potential effectiveness of FUNAI to defend indigenous interests. It contains much of his political agenda of being part of the system in order to change it, without relinquishing his involvement in the movement. Terena tries to use the nationals' weapons—education, for instance—to resist them.

Like Sampaio, Terena stresses the theme of different but equal. Nationals must recognize that the Indians are Brazilians too, as capable, or more so, of handling aspects of the dominant society, such as a second language and a university education when they have a chance. The double sense of brasilidade is quite clear if we compare the meaning attributed to it by the president of FUNAI in Sampaio's speech and Terena's. Obviously, they are not speaking of the same thing. Whereas the president implies

the dissolution of Indianness, Terena affirms the opposite: Brazilian Indian yes, but still, and above all, Indian. Terena's apparent apology for the great Brazilian nation is a skillfully constructed trope. His declared patriotism fluidly melts into a severe criticism: Brazil will not measure up to its potential as a developed nation if its Indians continue to be treated as "a myth, as a thing that doesn't exist." Terena's Brazil and Deloria's United States display a striking resonance:

> A recognition of the major Indian contention—the sacredness of land—as reflected in a legal affirmation of the rights of Indian communities to hold their lands as national entities exempted from the arbitrary decisions of state and federal governments, will mark the maturing of America as a society. At present we are told that it is "greening." After nearly four centuries we would hope so.
>
> Having "greened," it is now time to mature. (Deloria 1973, xv)

Terena's 1984 appointment to the position of chief of staff for one of FUNAI's rare progressive—some would say grossly populist—presidents, a civilian in the military era, was received with ambivalence. But even those who were suspicious of Terena's authenticity granted that his and other Indians' appointments were historically important. For the first time Indians were working in the higher echelons of a public bureaucracy. For the first time Indians were in charge of the agency of which they are wards. However, this achievement can be viewed as a double-edged sword, for a new breed of "Indian" emerged, the *Índio funcionário,* the civil servant, bureaucratic Indian, a category of seemingly self-interested job-hungry young men who would rather oppose the Indian movement than risk their newly acquired positions. Once again the authorities succeeded in the practice of divide and conquer. Nevertheless, some of these well-placed Indians never succumbed to the lure of co-optation. Terena remained in his position as long as it was politically feasible. Since then he has moved through various government bodies such as the Ministry of Culture, was an important leader in the organization of the indigenous events during the 1992 Rio Earth Summit, and created a radio program dedicated to the Indian issue.

As the political face of the country and of FUNAI changed in the mid-1980s, Indian leaders made a short-lived attempt to enter the domain of party politics in order to have access to the real center of power, that is, the National Congress. A rash of Indian candidates ran for the House of Representatives on the eve of the drawing-up of the 1988 Constitution. Among these candidates were Álvaro Sampaio and Marcos Terena. No Indian was elected. However, eight years later thirty Indians were elected in the 1996 municipal elections, one as mayor of the northernmost Brazilian town of Oiapoque, another as vice mayor of São Gabriel da Cachoeira in Sampaio's homeland, and the others as representatives in various states of the country (Scharf 1996, 4).

The Symbolism of Contact

To say that indigenous societies are not static is to say the obvious. Even when viewed as peoples without history, it is widely recognized that the various mechanisms of their internal dynamics can and do result in considerable changes as generations come and go. Most observers now agree that when the West intruded, the Rest was already in motion. Nevertheless, it is impossible to minimize the impact of Europeans on indigenous peoples. The advent of the whites is an undeniable "founding event," to use an original phrase of Ricoeur's (1978, 40).

Interethnic contact has produced the figure of the Indian for nationals and that of the whites for Indians. The image and influence of whites have precipitated a whole range of symbolic elaborations among indigenous societies, from myths and millenarianism to political movements. Virtually no Indian society is left on the South American continent that is unaware of the Whiteman as an ethnic and political category. The image of the Whiteman, transformed into so many local versions, pervades the modes of thought and modes of being of most indigenous peoples. By penetrating Indian lives interethnic contact has contributed to the renewal of Indian traditions. And because tradition is constantly being reshaped—for a static tradition, as Gadamer (1975) says, is a dead tradition—the phenomenon of contact comes to feed into this process of ongoing transformation. Even amid the most malignant forms of domination, ranging from slavery, labor exploitation, punitive expeditions, and land usurpation to disease transmission, no Indian society has endured contact without exercising some sort of creative resistance. Absorption of the category of Whiteman is not limited to indigenous speech genres and modes of expression. In fact, it has the effect of creating states of mind and affect that predispose the Indians to interact with nationals in certain ways that in turn shape the character of contact. This pervasive presence is analogous to what Nandy (1983) referred to as the influence of the "intimate enemy."

At the root of the transformations triggered by interethnic contact is the passage from a political system characterized by the arts of persuasion to another defined by the use of coercion. Indians accustomed to conducting their lives on the basis of group consensus are apt to be shocked, if not altogether traumatized, by the imposition of the rule of force or threat of force brought to them by non-Indians, be they administrators, free-

enterprise invaders, or missionaries. The enforcement of this politics of coercion is what gives the "middle ground" of contact its particular quality of domination and inequality.

The political field on which the three speeches presented were delivered is one of several in which the figure of the Whiteman looms large. For argument's sake let us assume that the symbolic realm of contact can be divided into three modes: mythic, historical, and political. Each would generate its own cultural allegories, its own discourse, its own praxis. The politics of contact is the most recent of these modes and should be understood as part of a larger symbolic universe that also contains myths and historical narratives that make use of the Whiteman as an underlying topos. Although each mode would have a genre, much blurring between them would defeat any attempt at rigid classifications.

What distinguishes these genres is not so much the symbols themselves as the uses made of them and the audiences to which they are addressed. For instance, regarding temporality, time is suspended in myths, oriented to the past in the case of "old times" narratives—or oriented to the future in the case of millenarianism—and concerned with a progressive present in the political arena of interethnic contact. Whereas in the mythic genre events are neutralized by the use of metaphor and allegory, and in the historical genre events are controlled by hindsight, in the political genre events are confronted by actions that are specifically addressed to the majority society. Unlike myths and historical narratives that are produced for internal consumption to be recounted around the household hearth or in the village plaza, political speeches delivered in lecture halls, church basements, or the National Congress require the actual presence of nationals. Without such listeners these speeches lose their purpose. Nationals' participation in the performative act of speech delivery provides the impetus for the speaker's choice of words, intonation, and presentation of self. Political speeches unfold in the context of what Goffman (1959) called impression management. As the audience reacts to the speaker, so the speaker reacts to the audience by making the adjustments necessary to engage the listeners. A genre that until recently was foreign to Brazilian Indians, the speech of protest has become their main vehicle for visibility as legitimate social agents in the country.

Most Indian leaders in Brazil operate both in the larger society and in indigenous communities. On the one hand, they are exposed to the traditional expressions of their own society; on the other, they pass on to their people their experiences in the interethnic camp. To what extent the ingredients of contact politics feed into the mythic and historical genres of the communities is yet to attract the anthropological attention it deserves. It would be surprising if the former did not influence the latter. One would

expect events from the political field to be incorporated in an ongoing stream of interpretations that contribute to the dynamic character of specific indigenous traditions.

A well-studied case confirms these expectations. It is the case of the southern Yanomami in the Brazilian state of Roraima. According to the Yanomami's traditional theory of contact, metal tools brought into the Indian area caused the onset of lethal contagious diseases. Boxes full of trade goods, once opened up, released a scented smoke that seduced people while spreading its noxious miasma in the form of epidemics. The connection between epidemics, trade goods, and the Whiteman is unambiguous (Albert 1988). More recently, this theme of the deleterious effects of the metal tools has been validated by the heavy mortality rate the Yanomami have suffered from infectious diseases that followed the gold rush in the 1980s. The major author of the old myth's new version has been Davi Kopenawa, a young shaman who has traveled widely in Brazil, the United States, and Europe as a participant in the pan-Indian and environmentalist movements. Among other honors, he has been awarded the Global 500 prize. On his numerous trips Kopenawa has been exposed to a torrent of Western rhetoric on human rights and environmental concerns. The way he has processed this information, linking it with the "smoke of metal" myth to construct a "shamanic critique of the political economy of nature" (Albert 1993), is a good example of what the experience of an Indian leader in the world of interethnicity can do to transform traditional ideas. The dangerous metal previously associated with trade goods has come to typify mining activities. The fumes from machinery and the very notion of gold, an alluring metal that drives Westerners to insane acts, have gained an extraordinary destructive power because thousands of Yanomami are known to have died of malaria and other infectious diseases brought into the area by tens of thousands of placer miners. "After half a century of various transformations, this association [of metal with smoke] reappears in Davi's discourse as 'smoke of the gold' . . . 'smoke of mineral/metal' . . . and finally, 'disease of the mineral.' Its potency is so great that he sometimes uses the word *shawara* (epidemics) as a synonym for mineral (*booshikë*)" (p. 359). The immense craters dug by gold panners, the fumes of their machinery, the tampering with the dark depths of the earth, all cause noxious smoke to rise up to the sky and produce something remarkably similar to that which causes environmentalists to shudder—the hole in the ozone layer. These fumes, says Kopenawa, "this smoke-epidemic affects the 'whole world' [Kopenawa's rendering of the Yanomami expression *urihi pata*, great forest, universe]. . . . The wind carries it to the sky. When it gets there, its heat slowly burns up the sky and punctures it. The 'whole world' is then wounded as if in burning, like a plastic bag melting in the heat" (p. 360).

The Yanomami have slowly assimilated environmental rhetoric—"words of ecology," in Kopenawa's expression—which makes perfect sense in the face of health and ecological disasters brought about by the gold rush and in light of the traditional exegesis about non-Indians:

> Before we used to think: "we will protect the forest!" We thought that our shamanic spirits would protect us, that's all. These spirits were the first to possess "ecology." They chase away the evil spirits, prevent rain from falling endlessly, silence thunder . . . and, when the sky threatens to collapse, it is they who speak to "ecology." They protect the sky when it wants to change, when the world wants to darken. They are "ecology" and that is why they prevent these things from happening. We've always had these words, but you, whites, invented "ecology" and then these words were revealed and propagated all over. (p. 368)

Such a luminous example of what Bakhtin calls *assimilation!* "Our speech," he teaches us, "is filled with other's words, varying degrees of otherness or varying degrees of 'our-own-ness,' varying degrees of awareness and detachment" (1986, 89).

Parts or Whole?

Let us return to the issue of different modes in the symbolism of contact. If the division of a "totality" into portions is of considerable heuristic value for the purpose of describing, analyzing, and communicating our acquired knowledge to a readership, our language being what it is, especially in written form, carries a risk that such division might take on an aura of "reality," replacing the context that originated it. In fact, reification happens all the time. The hardening of our language of anthropology creates a reality of its own, follows its own path, and imposes its own rules and interpretations. If we say or write often enough that metal tools oozing lethal fumes is a myth and as such is a static exercise in bricolage, we end up fixing it in a rigid category, which is then quickly exhausted by analytical logic and sterilized by confining labels. Repetition "can give fictions or hypotheses the status of truth" (Torgovnick 1990, 96). Hence, once a myth, always a myth—and who would dare call it anything else, such as a manifestation of political or historical consciousness? Actually, in mythology as in other genres, there is already a universe of commentary about life, the world, time, space, stasis, and movement that transcends any attempt to slice up lived experience. In her analysis of Waiãpi oral tradition Gallois shows how myth can dissolve into "a discursive genre which is much closer to the 'historical' type" (1993a, 85). The rationale for separating spheres, be they myth, history, politics, geography, or whatever, is not in the indigenous

discourses themselves but in our need to organize ethnographic material into familiar categories in order to make sense of it on our own and our readers' terms. Ironically, in our effort to capture totality, we compartmentalize and tend to forget that categorizations are only "as if" propositions. The indigenous way of thinking, as revealed in what we, not they, call myths, narratives, and so on, challenges the habits of compartmentalization that anthropology has inherited along with the scientific premises of Western rationalism and empiricism. Our difficulty is to perceive and express a holistic, undifferentiated, semantically blended universe of cross-cutting messages. But while we cannot reproduce the original context in which this blending occurs, it is not impossible to reach an intelligent and intelligible rendering of it. I see the rhetoric of the indigenous political movement as a passage from holistic thinking to compartmentalized thinking, a device that is necessary if the Indians are to make themselves effectively understood or heard by the larger population. This does not mean that they necessarily replace one mode of thinking with the other. Well, if they have learned to use our mode of expression without abandoning their own, why can't we do the same? If we try to blend the genres, we may find that under a rhetorical mode we have called "mythic" there is a sense of history that of course encompasses the political sphere of contact. How can we be so sure that all those myths of the Whiteman—of the beginning of agriculture, the building of the universe, the creation of disease and death—are not manifestations of an indigenous historical consciousness that we do not recognize as such because it comes in a package that does not fit into our mental containers? Conversely, much of what comes to us as historical fact may, under closer scrutiny, turn out to be as fictitious as we conceive myths to be. Just to pick an example from South American history, one may take the official history of the "Paraguayan War," at least as it is taught in Brazilian schools, to be an elaborate fiction about an episode that can also be told in a drastically different way. Far from being regarded as the villain of our schoolbooks, Paraguay can be read as the most heavily punished experiment in economic independence on the subcontinent (Galeano 1981, 204–14).

It would certainly be wrong to take myth for history if we transferred to the Indians our premise that history requires objectivity and the assumption of a realistic unfolding of sequential events, as opposed to mythic bricolage. If, however, we accept that language is bricolage, how can history or politics, or even science, not be bricolage, since it is human and everything human happens in some manifestation of language (Derrida 1970, 256)? If history, like myth, is a concretization of bricolage, or fiction, as Certeau argues (1986, 199–221), the categorical opposition of these two genres becomes artificial indeed.

Some may object, saying that because the category of "history" is a

Western concept and invention, it is not fair to use it for something other than what it is intended. Here again, the risk is of letting words crystallize, thus cutting down the possibility of a fresh gaze at new possibilities of conceiving otherness—or sameness, for that matter. We are entitled to organize the universe into categories that we can understand so long as we do not reify them. Heuristic value should not be taken for empirical fact. It is important to keep this in mind in view of the ever-present tendency of Western thinking to give supremacy to the former over the latter. If we need to separate some things as myths, others as history, and yet others as politics, it should be clear that we do so at our own risk and for our own benefit. We must recognize this separation for what it is, namely, an operational device rather than an ontological reality. To divide primitive mythic societies from historical societies is to add to the intellectual apparatus of domination, to build a sort of indigenist orientalism.

For centuries the Whiteman has been the Indians' most imposing "significant other." Far from being "peoples without history" with "totemic" minds, the Indians are and have always been engaged in interpretations and reinterpretations of contact in a truly kerygmatic way (Ricoeur 1978), as the post-gold rush Yanomami demonstrate. Their historical consciousness does not follow the path of a Western-style historicity, and if we are to adequately capture the expressions of this consciousness, we must change our habits of categorizing the world. We could benefit from influences outside the field of traditional anthropology, not the least significant of which are the Indians themselves.

So far, anthropologists have played the role of translators of indigenous universes to national audiences. But more and more we will have to face the issue of communicating with the people from whom we learn. The time is coming when our articles and books will have to be written with Indian readerships in mind. Will we know how to do it? Will we be believed? Will we know how to respond to their questioning or challenging interpretations, which necessarily will be different from ours? Will we resist the temptation to compete with them for the public's attention? And, perhaps most difficult of all, will we be able to restructure our language and conceptual framework in a way that does justice to the amazing wealth of imagination and aesthetic resourcefulness we find in the field? For example, we may question whether a Portuguese version of this chapter would be readable and/or acceptable to the Indian leaders about whom I write. And even if it were understood by them as an intellectual exercise, what about the ethical problems it raises? Is it, in other words, possible to avoid the tendency to objectify our subjects of study in our pursuit of anthropological understanding? The interpretive plea for ethnographic dialogue (Marcus and Fischer 1986) has had a modest effect so far, although

some interesting attempts have been made in South American ethnography (Gallois and Carelli 1992; Rappaport 1994).

Most frequently, the "dialogue" of anthropologists with their native hosts has been less than harmonious because of the differential power that separates them, whether we want it or not. Briggs (1996) exposes some situations in which indigenous people resent having their voice muffled by the much more potent voice of the anthropologist. "What . . . [an] anthropologist writes about Hawaiians has more potential power than what Hawaiians write about themselves" (Trask, quoted in Briggs 1996, 437). Quite accurately, at least for much of South America, Briggs points out some limiting factors for this imbalance between native and anthropologist: "Both overt racism and limitations on access to higher education make it difficult in most cases for indigenous performers and scholars to compete with nonindigenous anthropologists and other professionals over the circulation of cultural forms" (p. 461). Indisputable as this analysis may be, it is, however, not sufficient to explain the ostracism that plagues those who inhabit the "periphery." The "center" tends to ignore the production of the periphery even when the latter's levels of education and professional quality are equal if not superior to the former's. There are then various degrees and contexts in which differential power in the dissemination of knowledge makes itself felt. Just as the voices of the periphery scholar are reduced to a virtually inaudible whisper, so are the voices of native peoples vis-à-vis their non-native counterparts.

Interethnic Indian: A Political Actor in Search of a Role

Brazilian Indians are increasingly using literacy as a weapon in their political actions. They recognize that orality has a limited efficacy in a world in which the hegemony of the West has been established via the extraordinary power of the written word. Indigenous peoples in the country are now matching their traditional ways of expression to such Western channels as writing (see, for instance, Pãrõkumu and Kẽhíri 1995; Diakuru and Kisibi 1996), video (T. Turner 1991a; Gallois and Carelli 1992; Carelli 1993), tape recording, radio, and television. But it seems that these new media are not displacing old modes of thought; rather, they are providing indigenous peoples with more effective means to conduct their struggle for recognition as legitimate Others.

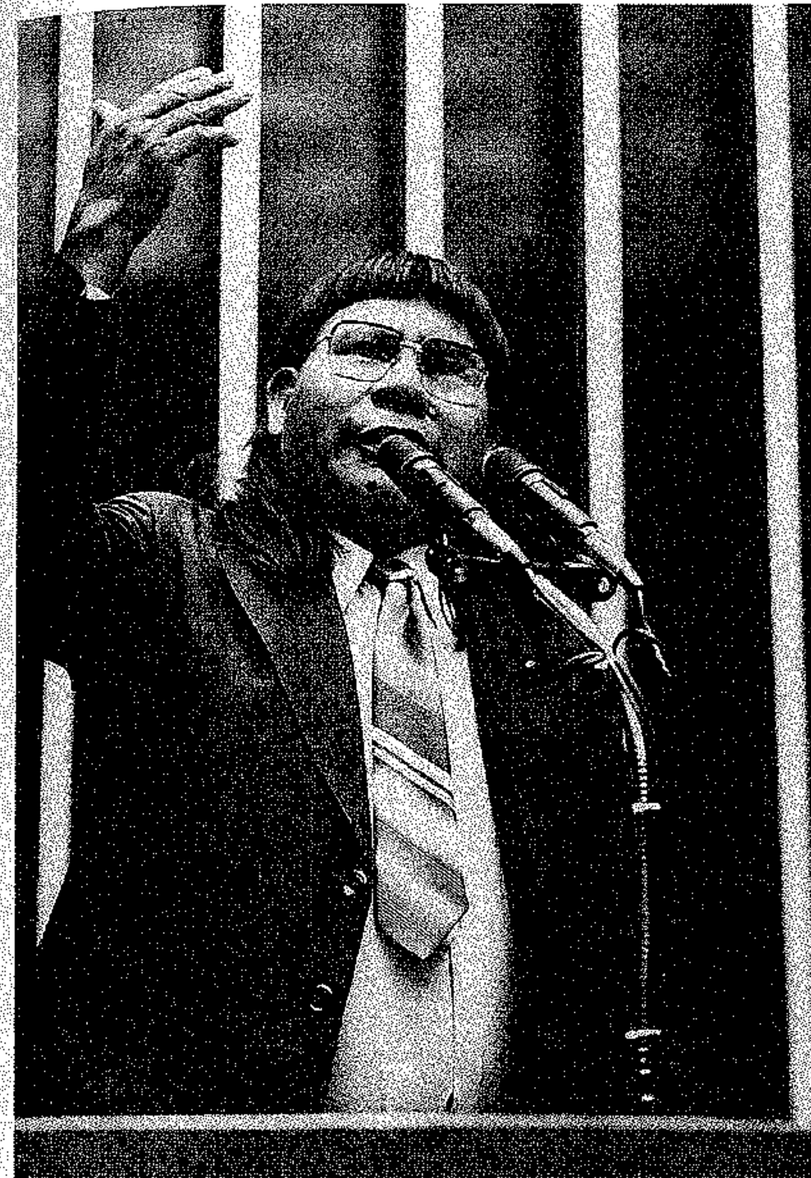
What do Brazilian Indians do with these new media? There are two trends: one seeks equality through similarity with Brazilians; the other tries to achieve equality through equivalence. The first emphasizes the need to occupy spaces that have always been taken by nationals—the "FUNAI Indians" and those who go into party politics. The second tries to show

that the Indian ways of being are as valid as those of nationals. The strength of the Indian ways derives precisely from their cultural differences, the Kayapó being the most outstanding example.

For instance, in contrast to the Shuar Indians, who have refused to enter directly into Ecuador's state machinery, some Indian leaders in Brazil have shown an inclination toward a career in national politics. Until recently, the degree of success was minimal and the results somewhat disastrous. Witness the career of the Shavante Mário Juruna. Elected by an urban constituency of Rio de Janeiro rather than his native Mato Grosso, Juruna was used by his party's leaders as a symbol of oppression under the military regime, the representative of a dubious Brazilianness emanating from the dispossessed, long-suffering, helpless Brazilian people, Indians included. When no national voices had the freedom to protest, Juruna, illiterate and uninformed about the complexity of national politics but protected by his Indianness—as ward of the state he is regarded as unimputable—was encouraged to bombard the government with caustic criticisms. When in 1983 he accused ministers of state of being thieves, he provoked a strong reaction that nearly led to his loss of office. As the country's political climate turned brighter, Juruna was no longer useful. Following his involvement in a senseless scandal involving accusations of bribery, he was gradually discarded from the political scene and failed to be reelected in 1986. Like a specter, for a long while he could still be seen wandering about the offices and hallways of the National Congress and of FUNAI headquarters in Brasília, until he fell into near oblivion (for more about his interethnic career see Juruna, Hohlfeldt, and Hoffmann 1982).

More realistic were UNI's first leaders, both at the national and regional levels; they opted for grassroots, unspectacular, long-term work at consciousness raising in the communities, emphasizing Indianness as a value to be preserved. Several of those leaders were pressured by the Catholic Church to avoid confrontation with the government, and as a result they were pushed into the background of the indigenous movement. As it turned out, UNI was a short-lived experience as a nationwide organization. Its command changed hands, its headquarters moved to the city of São Paulo, its ties with local communities were gradually severed, and by the late 1980s it ceased to exist. In turn, myriad local and regional indigenous organizations have cropped up, mostly in the 1990s and especially in the Amazon. For a total Indian population of about 280,000 in the whole country, more than one hundred indigenous organizations are legally registered, whereas non-Indian pro-Indian organizations operating in Brazil number thirty (C. Ricardo 1995, 1996a).

While regional leaders can combine militancy with community life, those who operate out of big cities are cut off from the daily routine of



5. House Representative Mário Juruna delivers a speech at the National Congress, Brasília, 1987. Photo courtesy of the Archive Coordination, House of Representatives, National Congress, Brasília.

6. Mário Juruna, the Brazilian flag, and his audience at the National Congress in Brasília. Photo by André Dusek, copyright 1984 André Dusek/AGIL.

the indigenous world. They travel regularly to the villages but, at least in some cases, are received as virtual outsiders, vague "kinsmen" who may be welcome for bringing news and perhaps some hope for solving local problems. Radio programs and television and newspaper interviews with these leaders are not infrequent, and their eloquence can move listeners, viewers, and readers, who, expecting to hear and read broken Portuguese, are often surprised by their articulateness.

In the ebb and flow of many failures and few successes the cost of political activism to Indian leaders can be extremely high. Alcoholism, marginalization at home and elsewhere, generalized distrust of the world, anguish, psychological confusion, and even assassinations are some of the burdens that make the life of most Indian leaders in Brazil a personal drama, sometimes tougher than they can take. Add to all this the ever-present possibility of manipulation and co-optation, instruments some nationals use to undermine indigenous integrity, and we may begin to grasp the extent of the predicament facing a critical Indian fighting against the current. Like actors in search of a role, Brazilian indigenous leaders keep struggling to gain a place in national society on equal terms, a place from which they can directly address the nation's authorities without the intermediacy and frequent misrepresentation of their guardian, the National Indian Foundation. Like actors on a gigantic stage, they strive to leave the shadow play of national irrelevance and be acknowledged by the public in their role as citizens of a double world—the Brazilian nation and their own societies.

Figures of Interethnic Speech

Returning to indigenous discourses about the Whiteman, the adage that "always the meaning of a text goes beyond its author" (Gadamer 1975, 264) could not be more appropriate. The peeling of layers of meaning contained in the three speeches presented here is an exercise in interpretation of the equivocality of symbols. The same symbol can be used for one purpose by one speaker and for the opposite purpose by another. The image of FUNAI and the notion of Brazilianness are examples of this equivocality. What emerges from the joint voices of the Indians is that their movement is a rebellion against political invisibility. In their collective cry to be seen and heard, and deemed deserving of respect and justice, the Indians summon the efficacy of certain symbols they know will strike home among Brazilians. But in so doing they are no different from government officials who, for instance, invoke the image of the flag, the sound of the national anthem, the idea of Union, or of brasilidade in an attempt to amass popular support and build legitimacy.

The multidimensional character of speeches such as those reproduced

here emerges in both genre and style. The context is interethnic, the genre is political, and the styles vary from individual to individual, revealing a bit of the life history of each speaker. In the performative act of delivering a speech, Indians are turned into actors engaged with a specific audience. Who are the potential audiences for an Indian speaker performing a political act in an interethnic scenario? Most of the time, besides other Indians, they have been non-Indian sympathizers, be they anthropologists, lawyers, journalists, students, or members of other minorities. On other occasions the audience is composed of bureaucrats or politicians. For each of these various modalities of listeners a different rhetorical effort is needed, putting to test the speakers' stylistic versatility.

Speeches transformed into texts are a valuable tool for understanding the trajectories of Indian leaders along the road of interethnic contact. Because they are permanently available, texts can speak to us in different ways at different times, displaying a variety of angles through which their messages are refracted. A perceptive look at textualized speeches can give us some insights, preliminary as they may be, into which recondite corners of the speaker's personality have been most affected by the violence of prejudice, discrimination, and social injustice. For example, the tone of the speeches—some delivered in a tortured language, some in open confrontational style, some in cautious restraint, most of them desperate pleas for justice—tells us a great deal about the speakers.

Texts such as these can be the starting point for ethnographic encounters sufficiently dense as to reveal the intricacies inherent in the process of forging an interethnic being. But in addition to opening a door to the understanding of a certain human type—the "interethnic Indian"—such texts can lend themselves to some theoretical explorations in anthropology, with the potential to uncover dimensions that, until recently, had been left unexplored. The complexities of Indian-national relations in South America show that incursions into fields of thought traditionally outside the immediate range of anthropology can be not only timely but perhaps necessary, if we are to pursue our quest for a deeper understanding of what it is to be an Indian in this turn of millennium on the South American continent.

Part III
Speaking through the Indians

5
Seduced and Abandoned

Marginal, subdued, quaint, they go through history passively enduring a fate not of their doing. Thus regarded, Indians, the privileged Others of Brazilian consciousness, in their supposed passivity supply the perfect contrast for a nation that portrays itself as the dynamic country of the future while singing a destiny modulated in the national anthem as "eternally lying in a splendid crib." I thus invite the reader to follow me through the thicket of political symbolism that surrounds the representation of first contacts in Brazilian Indigenism. In this representation Indians appear to be forever hiding from interlopers, passively defending themselves with occasional attacks on the intruders but never engaged in the organized insurgence that history records for earlier centuries (Ellis 1965; Schwartz 1995; Vainfas 1995). By mimetically dressing Indians in passivity, as they appear in the national script, I hope to help convey the mood in which national society proceeds to bring newly contacted Indians under state control. By national society I mean the wide range of human components from state officials to affluent entrepreneurs and destitute squatters.

A quote from two of the most conspicuous heroes of contemporary Brazil, the Villas Bôas brothers, is an apt beginning for my discussion of how the country treats indigenous otherness. This passage refers to the first contact with the Süyá Indians of central Brazil in 1960 after a long campaign by the brothers to gain their trust:

> The Jurunas having been attracted [pacified, in 1950] and peace settled between them and the Txukahamãe [pacified in 1953], we now needed to conquer the Suiá. . . . One morning two Juruna Indians came to tell us there were Suiá canoes nearby. We prepared our boat, fueled its motor, and left with the two Jurunas. As they heard the engine, the "visitors" went up the Suiá-Missu River. When we reached its mouth we could just see them disappear along a left-hand tributary. . . . We got [to the high bank where two canoes were anchored]. On the bank, an Indian with an unfriendly look held a bow in readiness, gesturing for us to stay where

> we were. We obeyed but behaved as indifferently as possible, turning our backs to him. More Indians came to the bank. They gestured violently for us to go away. We pretended not to understand and began to chat, as if ignoring their presence. With no choice, they lowered their bows and stood there staring at us. Very casually we pulled out a box full of gifts (mirrors, necklaces, knives, machetes, and axes) and placed it on the bank. We gestured to them to help themselves. Puzzled, they stood there, immobilized. One of them, bolder, came down the bank and walked to the box intent on picking it up. Before he did, we stepped forward and opened it. We gave him a knife, a machete and an axe. We called the others. They came down. We asked them to bring the women. . . . Shortly afterward they appeared on the river bank, each one bringing his woman, or rather dragging her along. We walked toward them and each one of us took hold of a woman, pulled her away from her husband's hands, and decorated her with a flashy necklace. Mirrors were a success among the women. Some screams and more women appeared. They looked suspicious, but curious about the mirrors and necklaces. Fraternizing was complete. (Villas Bôas and Villas Bôas 1994, 598–99)

Among the many layers of otherness that make Brazil a complex social entity, I focus on indigenous peoples who represent perhaps the most complex of the country's internal Others. As a national issue, the Indians act as a canvas on which Brazil paints its expressionist portrait with bold strokes that punctuate its unresolved perplexities. Its pathos as a nation—painstakingly trying to join the developed world while attempting to tuck its discriminatory skeletons in the democratic closet—is glaringly exposed by the spotlight within which officials perform the pantomime of Indian domestication. It is as if the Indian–non-Indian arena served as a convenient microcosm of the country—problems of citizenship, differential power, and use and abuse of authority appear as in a concentrated solution. Embedded in the imagery that accompanies the custom of taming wild Indians are questions of historical, political, and economic importance that have incited many a scholar to engage in endless attempts to understand or explain Brazil. The writers engaged in the herculean task of explicating why Brazil is what it is, a country that should develop and somehow never does, are too numerous to list here. A few references covering a wide range of fields, from social sciences to history, literature, and psychoanalysis, will have to suffice.[1]

Throughout the New World first colonial powers and then emerging nations dealt with native peoples in ways that differ in specifics (Seed 1992; 1995) but present a remarkable uniformity of result: the relentless subjugation of Indians to the new political order. What seems special about the Brazilian case is the double bind the state set for itself, that is, the coexistence of a humane ideology toward its indigenous minorities with a strong commitment to reach modernity via development, which is considered incompatible with indigenous ways of life. Janus faced, the Brazilian state opens its arms to the Indians and then stifles them in a choking embrace.

Most revealing of this choking embrace is the "pacification" venture carried out by the Brazilian state in its attempt to domesticate wayward Indians. I have chosen this type of event precisely because it reveals a great deal of what goes unsaid about the Brazilian nation. In the actions and gestures of the pacification agents one finds the marks of an ambivalent national ethos that considers the Indians obstacles to the much-desired development while projecting an image of humane concern for its indigenous peoples. In a nutshell, Brazil's pacification system contains some of the most pervasive historical, political, and economic issues that have haunted the country since its colonial days. What follows is an analysis of the imagery used in the process of submitting indigenous peoples to state control and what it reveals of this ambiguity. But a more detailed commentary on the place of the Indians in the national ethos will wait until the conclusion.

1. Azevedo 1996; L. Barbosa 1992; Birman, Novaes, and Crespo 1997; Bonfim 1993, 1996; Bosi 1992; Buarque de Holanda 1989; Candido 1967, 1993; J. Carvalho 1990, 1996; Da Matta 1979, 1985; Faoro 1991–93; Freyre 1992; Hess and DaMatta 1995; Leal 1993; D. Leite 1992; Martins 1994; Morse 1988; C. Prado 1942; Ribeiro 1995; Salles 1996; Schwartzman 1982; O. Souza 1994; Ventura 1991.

The Weapons of Seduction

The image of the benign state, protector of and provider for the Indians, is encapsulated in certain personalities elevated to the status of national heroes. The conquest of the hinterland, supposedly a fearful human void, was for a long time one of the greatest sources of heroism, supplying the required features of romance and daring. But behind feats of bravery and self-denial has always been a clear vision of the need to take possession of land and resources, not to mention people. This was true of the infamous seventeenth-century bandeirante conquerors (Morse 1965; Monteiro 1994) as well as of contemporary explorers:

> A truly unknown world . . . enveloped the central region of the Brazilian territory where the population was widely scattered. But it was not just the empty expanses gleaming with legend and mystery which fired the imagination and excited the enthusiasm of everyone as the Roncador-Xingu expedition got started. More realistically, one also saw in all that a profusion of truly formidable resources and conditions regarded as indispensable for the complete development of the country in the future. (Villas Bôas and Villas Bôas 1994, 41)

In taking possession of its immense territory, Brazil did not produce a Custer. Instead, it created icons of benevolent paternalism. The Villas Bôas

brothers are the most famous *sertanistas*—a word one might freely translate as 'Indian tamers' and that one finds associated with bandeirantes and Indian slave hunters (Ellis 1965, 50)—since the founder of modern Brazilian Indigenism, Marshall Cândido Mariano da Silva Rondon. The brothers began their indigenist life as members of the Roncador-Xingu expedition, which was part of the government's project to open up the hinterland for colonization, under the auspices of the Central Brazil Foundation, which was created during World War II in the administration of Getúlio Vargas. For decades the Villas Bôas brothers were engaged in a campaign to create a sort of sanctuary for the indigenous peoples who inhabited the upper Xingu region. In 1961 President of Jânio Quadros created the Xingu National Park, to which the government trotted foreign diplomats and royalty to gaze at the magnanimous treatment Brazil dispensed to its indigenous population. Protected by the absence of colonization and the authority of the indigenist brothers, the Xingu park was for decades the Villas Bôases' paradise in which the Indians, on permanent display, became "metaphors of themselves," in the words of anthropologist Viveiros de Castro (quoted in Bastos 1983, 46).

Turning Custer upside down, men like the Villas Bôases, officially charged with the benevolent conquest of Indians in Brazil, used seduction rather than weaponry to tame entire populations that had resisted contact with Euro-Brazilians. The system, officially inaugurated by the army officer Rondon at the turn of the century, was first called *pacification* (Souza Lima 1995) and then renamed *attraction,* but, apart from the innovation of aircraft flying low over terrified Indians as attested by aerial photographs of Krenakarore-Panará Indians in the late 1960s (Arnt, Pinto, and Pinto 1998), it has kept its main features: surreptitious approaches to campgrounds or villages in scouting sorties by groups of men suggestively called *penetration teams* (CEDI 1985a, 28); the hanging of trinkets on tree branches to lure the Indians during a phase known as *namoro,* or courting; the unrelenting pursuit in hide-and-seek fashion; and, finally, many trinkets later, the triumph over the stubborn will of the Indians to remain secluded. That magic moment was usually sealed with the proverbial embrace of conqueror and conquered, often frozen in pictures taken by professional photographers who went along to capture on film generations of enraptured sertanistas. Each attraction campaign followed the same adventurous yet monotonous script, sometimes rehearsed for years on end, in which non-Indians chased Indians, Indian men appeared and disappeared from view, and—most revealing of all—Indian women always fled into the bush at the approach of the strangers; in the grand finale ecstatic Brazilians at long last reached the climax of attraction by putting their hands on the females of the tribe. Surrender was then complete.

7. *Sernatista* and "pacifier" Sydney Possuelo distributes gifts among the Zo'é Indians of the state of Pará. Photo by André Dusek, 1989.

By the time the Indians grow accustomed to the seemingly inexhaustible supply of goods from the apparently infinite generosity of the interlopers, the flow of free steel tools, beads, cooking pots, and other trinkets stops. Gratify one moment, withdraw the next is a typical way to create the double-bind effect (Bateson 1972), a virtually infallible strategy for disempowering someone. The effect on the recipient is usually a large dose of frustration and disorientation. The all-too-common begging that follows pacification may well result from the withdrawal the Indians are bound to feel when no more gifts turn up. The shock of realizing the high price they have to pay for that initial generosity comes too late to most Indians, for a successful pacification is but the first step in forcing the contacted group into an irreversible condition of dependence on the national society and one from which it will never again escape. The pattern has been repeated so often, and so strong is the expectation that Indians cannot resist the temptations of Western goods, that in 1975, speaking of the Waimiri-Atroari's refusal to submit, Orlando Villas Bôas predicted, to the *Jornal de Brasília,* that sooner or later these Indians would come to the attraction teams because "they will miss the gifts from the whites" (1975).

Seducing Indians into submission with trade goods is not a recent invention. We find the first hints of it in Pero Vaz de Caminha's 1500 letter to the king of Portugal: "And Nicolau Coelho signaled to them to put down

their bows. And they did. . . . He only threw to them a red cap, a linen hood he wore on his head, and a black hat. And one of them threw back a feather headdress" (1963, 30). It is more explicit in Vespucci's 1504 letter to Soderini: "We returned thence to the ships, leaving ashore for them where they could see them many bells, mirrors, and other things. And when we were out at sea, they descended from the hill, and came for the things which we had left them, showing great surprise at them" (Vespucio 1951, 330). And let's not forget the Jesuits: "There was nothing original about Rondon's methods—the offering of presents, an attitude of nonaggression, and so on—since many of these date back to the Jesuits in the colonial period" (Souza Lima 1991, 253).

The humanitarian and careful attitude of the pioneer pacification teams decreased steadily as the Indian Protection Service (SPI) was replaced by the National Indian Foundation (FUNAI) and the early positivist thrust that animated Rondon and his followers (Ribeiro 1962) was gradually forgotten. In the late 1960s and 1970s members of attraction teams transmitted venereal diseases and other illnesses to recently contacted Indians. Some team leaders complained that men with tuberculosis were sent by FUNAI to work on the front line of isolated Indian groups. Accusations of initiating prostitution and homosexuality among newly contacted Indians were directed at members of these attraction teams. Only killings of Indians, although rumored, have not been established as fact in the history of pacification. One particular sertanista, Antonio Cotrim, aware of the implications of bringing Indians into permanent contact with the dominant society, resigned, saying that he "no longer wanted to play the role of undertaker for the Indians" (*Veja* 1972, 21). Behind this statement is the conviction that the protectionist agency, rather than defending the Indians from violations of their rights by nationals, has in fact done the opposite: protected the interests of the nationals against the Indians.

Why all the theatrical display at a high cost in money, time, and health (the Villas Bôas brothers said they each caught two hundred cases of malaria [1994, 18]) for a handful of Indians who could have been left to fend for themselves when farmers, lumberjacks, miners, cattle ranchers, or road builders came along? The fifteen hundred trails the Villas Bôas brothers opened in the jungle, the thousand kilometers of river they navigated, the forty-three towns they sowed in their wake, the nineteen landing strips they tore open (four of which have grown into military bases), and first contacts they made with five thousand Indians surely could have been achieved in a more direct and pragmatic way. What are the roots of their "adventure, unparalleled in the history of the country, with shades of fiction" (S. Souza 1994, 18)? By the way, the word *aventura*, 'adventure' in Portuguese, also has the connotation of a sexual affair, as in the prototypical title *As aventuras de Don Juan.*

Adventure accompanies virtually all occurrences of pacification-attraction in Brazil's hinterland. How to properly carry it out has been spelled out in a rather regimented and bureaucratic way by the Department of Isolated Indians created by FUNAI in the 1980s (which is ironic, because so few "isolated" Indians are left). In its guidelines (or the "operational manual," as it is called), known as the System of Protection of the Isolated Indian (SPII), FUNAI instructs future sertanistas on procedures—truly a "ritual of pacification" (Pechincha n.d.)—that cover a wide range of concerns, from the philosophy of attraction to the most minute practical details. For example, contact with isolated groups is justified by the inexorable advance of national society on their territories, forcing the Indians to "constant flights from roads, dams, ranches, and gold mining sites. If nothing is done, these groups will necessarily disappear." The attraction teams are thus charged with establishing first contact with these Indians and then preparing the way for the reorganization of their economy, providing them with "assistance in the process of acculturation, capable of protecting and orienting them through the difficult paths to civilization" (FUNAI 1987–88, 23). All this should be carried out by people with "emotional discipline, calm, and tranquility," qualities that must accompany "knowledge and commitment to the Indian cause" (p. 29). Team leaders are urged to "develop in the crew a sense of companionship, solidarity, and esprit de corps" (p. 39). FUNAI emphasizes the careful observance of a meticulous check list of the tools every team must take into the bush: "To find out in the middle of the jungle that one forgot to bring a sewing needle or a disposable hypodermic needle—when there is no longer the possibility of getting them—may produce a passing discomfort, or may cause a tragedy" (p. 54). Security measures against "the Indians' unpredictable behavior" include certain precautions, such as the erection of a panopticon, that is, a "surveilling tower, a scheme for night lighting against attacks, the use of fireworks" (pp. 53, 56). The list of personal equipment includes uniforms, bermudas, shorts, t-shirts, and long socks "for the expeditionaries . . . an opportunity to create symbols and identifications" (p. 55). One should not forget one's "tooth brush, soap, nail clip, bath towel" and beware of new shoes and inadequate clothes: "Watch out for brand new jeans, they usually cause a rash on the inner part of the upper thigh" (pp. 63, 56). The manual lists more than 230 items that the sertanistas should pack in pursuit of isolated Indians. Thus equipped, military-like, off they go to their jungle adventure. Symptomatically, the manual is almost silent about how these teams should or should not behave once they come face to face with the Indians. FUNAI provides instructions on how to record the "economic potential of the area being researched" (p. 35); the existence of ranches, gold sites, and the like; the "best time for penetration in the region" (p. 36); orders to protect the land, goods, and health of the Indians and to avoid providing trade goods in

excess and contaminating the Indians with contagious diseases. But all these regulations lack specific provisions that spell out how all this should be accomplished. The Indians are as hidden in the manual as they are in the bush.

With contact established and the namoro-courting phase a success, sertanistas still should not assume that the worst is over and the Indians are no longer dangerous. "Today's trade good exchanges, the arrival of women and children which is always regarded as a good sign, may mean a strategy of the Indians for tomorrow's attack" (pp. 68–69). In other words, the sertanistas—and presumably the Indians too—live in a permanent state of tension and anxiety until the process of indigenous dependence is fully established, which may take weeks, months, or even years. An anonymous statement on the last page of the manual chronicles the constant strain:

> "Nobody will ever imagine what moral strength a man needs to dominate the unbearable nervous irritation caused by his feeling himself incessantly besieged, watched and studied in his smallest acts by people he cannot see, of whom he doesn't even know the numbers, whom he doesn't want to harm or chase away, but rather please and attract, and yet who are just waiting for the right moment to assault and kill." (p. 71)

As one assumes this dramatic passage to have been written by a sertanista, one also wonders what an equivalent account by an Indian during first contact would be like.

Obviously, it takes a certain type of personality to do what Rondon, the Villas Bôas brothers, and many other sertanistas did and go on doing. But I'm not so much interested in adventurous characters as in the channels that stamp their deeds as a service to the nation. What these channels are and how they came about is what I will now try to describe.

Positivism, Brazilian Style

In the late nineteenth century the era of Comtean Positivism reached its peak in Brazil. The Positivist movement was prominent in the campaign to end slavery and responsible for the fall of the monarchy and rise of the republican regime (I. Lins 1967; J. Carvalho 1990; Viveiros 1958; Souza Lima 1991, 1995; Gagliardi 1989). An evolutionary humanism pervaded the members of the Positivist Apostolate in Brazil whose motto is to this day printed on the national flag—ORDER AND PROGRESS. What was left out of the flag was the word *love,* which, with the other two, made up the triad of key Positivist concepts. Love for humanity should be extended to the "fetishist hordes," as Positivists called indigenous societies. Their hopes were to catapult the Indians from their fetishist stage directly to the Positivist-scientific stage, skipping the intermediary, and undesirable, metaphysical phase, as proposed in Comte's doctrine. It would thus be necessary "to seduce the Indians into this evolution" (J. Leite 1989, 268).

Yet the same Positivist doctrine imported from France infused the Argentine spirit in its unrelenting wars to exterminate or forcefully integrate indigenous peoples. The humanism that characterized Brazilian-style Positivism was thus the result of more than the simple delivery of a foreign creed. Mixed with native ingredients, it produced a flavor that was perhaps unique to Brazil. I will try to identify some of these ingredients later.

The army was an important stronghold of Brazilian Positivism. In its ranks was a young officer who was destined to become the hero of the hinterlands and the champion of the Indians—Cândido Mariano da Silva Rondon. From 1890 to 1919 Rondon built his career and reputation as a hero and, according to some, a saint (Souza Lima 1990) during a number of expeditions to open up the backlands for control by the central government by means of a network of telegraph lines. These expeditions were reported in spectacular descriptions of wilderness, complete with menacing Indians and, particularly to Rondon, fascinating jaguars (Viveiros 1958). In his passage through savanna and jungle Rondon made first contact with many indigenous peoples. The most famous of Rondon's pacifications were those of the Bororo and the Nambiquara of Goiás and Mato Grosso. His famous adage—"Die if need be, but never kill"—became a canon for dozens of sertanistas long after Vespucci had inaugurated it—"Twenty three of us Christians, having held a council, resolved to go with them, in good array, and with firm intent, if necessary it should be, to die [like brave men]" (Vespucio 1951, 318). Rondon's intrepid incursions into wilderness, their resulting detailed reports on geography and ethnography, and their explicit quest for order and control are reminiscent of nineteenth-century naturalists' reports as the Europeans hiked over mountain, river, and jungle in the name of scientific advancement (Pratt 1992). The major difference was that Rondon's calling did not come from science but from political ideals. Embracing the conviction that the Brazilian nation, a "collective individual," needed to be put under the state's guardianship (Reis 1988, 194), Rondon, the engineer, assumed the military destiny of becoming an "'empirical builder' of the nation," thus putting into practice the teachings of his military education, which nourished "the idea of salvation through progress" (Souza Lima 1991, 240–47). The taming of wild Indians, first through economic dependence by means of pacification, and then through education, was part of Rondon's idea of state control through progress:

> In sum, the task of the Indian education was twofold: to forge out of Indians Brazilians who could populate the interior and guard the frontier, and to "Brazilianize" immigrants (the Indians) who would then

> no longer constitute a threat to the nation. The SPI [Indian Protection Service] would help to mediate this transition from "hostile Indian" to "national worker." (Souza Lima 1991, 254)

Rondon's, then, was a project of gently leveling out ethnic differences by patiently waiting for the Indians to come of age as full Brazilians. Curiously enough, although deeply involved in the republican project, he seemed to dissociate progress from modernity. Reacting against a proposal to exterminate the Kaingang Indians, he affirmed: "We can never agree with such atrocity, even if we die crushed by the whole mass of those interested in it, by the dissolving modernism of this century" (Magalhães 1942, 315).

Rondon was aware of being responsible for flinging open vast areas as yet unknown and exposing the lives of those peoples to the hazards of contact. But he was also convinced that his method of bringing the Indians into civilization was far more humane than the persecution and destruction promoted "not only by pioneers of extractive industries, but also by scientific explorers of railroad companies with the pretext that the Indians are irreducible to civilization" (quoted in Gagliardi 1989, 166). His Positivist doctrine dictated that the Indians be preserved so they could evolve in peace and reach the point of choosing "civilization" of their own free will. His influence in that phase of indigenist policy was so strong that generations of "indigenists" proceeded to contact isolated peoples with the same spirit of protecting the Indians for later assimilation.

In 1910 Rondon created SPI in the wake of a bitter polemic regarding whether the Indians should be protected or exterminated (Magalhães 1942). European colonization was moving quickly in the southern states, and conflicts with Indians were constant. But the political climate of the moment and Rondon's carefully built reputation (Souza Lima 1995) tipped the scales in favor of official protection. The Indians were then declared wards of the state, and their lands became the property of the Union but reserved for their exclusive use.

In the Positivists' proposal for the first republican constitution indigenous societies appeared as "Brazilian American States" and, although labeled fetishist hordes, they were treated as nations. But this proposal was defeated, and those in power since have systematically refused to consider Indian peoples as nations. Indeed, from the moment the Portuguese took possession of the land that was to become Brazil, the Indians, in addition to suffering great losses from epidemics, warfare, and slavery, were subjected to various forms of paternalism, whether in the guise of protection or of submission. First, they endured a soulless phase as Europeans puzzled over whether the natives were human; then, by the magical stroke of a 1537 papal bull the Indians gained souls and were thus available for religious

conversion. In the seventeenth century the Portuguese crown recognized Indian communities as "sovereign," but that seems to have been a political move to legalize "just wars" and their inescapable outcome, slavery (Carneiro da Cunha 1987, 58–63).

We reach the twentieth century and meet the 1916 Civil Code, which defined who in the country had full citizenship and who deserved the ambiguous status of relative incapacity. As we saw in Chapter 1, in this category of "relatively incapable" were grouped minors aged sixteen to twenty-one, married women, prodigal sons, and the Indians. In later decades the state emancipated married women and promoted sixteen-year-olds to relative adulthood with the right to vote but kept the Indians as legally incapable to take on the responsibility of full citizenship. After being made to appear like women—to be seduced into the glamor of civilization—the Indians were turned into hopeless children, lost in ignorance, living under the wing of the state, which had turned into a protective father figure who kept them in a sort of civil suspended animation and from time to time threatened to withdraw protection with attempts at false emancipation.

SPI lasted fifty-seven years, during which many a sertanista hero was begotten in the unrelenting search for recalcitrant wild Indians who needed to be tamed so that Brazilian society could expand in peace. But the original heroic tenor set by Rondon quickly softened, and the agency became riddled with dishonest bureaucrats. In 1967 the SPI was shut down amid a scandal of corruption and violations of indigenous rights. Serious accusations of crimes against people and property were never brought to legal conclusion in part because of a fire that conveniently destroyed the SPI files. SPI was replaced by the National Indian Foundation—FUNAI—which inherited from its predecessor its ideology, vices, and even some employees.

As frontier expansion steadily progressed, with Brazilians occupying virtually every corner of the country, the heroism of the sertanistas in search of isolated Indians rapidly declined and was replaced by a nationwide ineptitude in upholding indigenous rights to land, health, and education. What FUNAI has done to perfection, following in the footsteps of the late SPI, is to bring indigenous peoples into total dependence on either the state or religious missions. In fact, from the beginning of Rondon's incursions into the unexplored wild west, despite his good intentions, the Indians he sucked into contact experienced the dramatic change from being seduced with tons of trade goods to being abandoned in hopeless dependence on those same goods and Western medicines to cope with the most damaging aftermath of conquest, Western diseases. With their territories cut drastically, their numbers decreasing, and without the training necessary to face the surrounding national society, the Indians were reduced to pawns who provided the justification for a growing bureaucracy and the flow of pub-

lic funding. The pacification-attraction system was so obviously a conquest gambit that the figure of sertanista was regarded as a grave digger of Indians. Today, the System of Protection of the Isolated Indian (SPII), FUNAI's niche for "Isolated Indians," is a pathetic nook in the agency to which a former FUNAI president was relegated after he fell from political grace.

Until the 1988 Constitution, to be an Indian in Brazil was a temporary condition that would inevitably be extinguished with the "harmonious integration of the Indians into national communion," as the 1973 Indian Statute put it, echoing the Positivists. The abuses the Indians have suffered for decades for being in the insulting position of being designated the relatively incapable wards of the state, which means being at the mercy of often unscrupulous characters, deserve a book of their own. As sympathetic non-Indians have pointed out, the state has been an unfaithful guardian for the Indians. Instead of helping Indians in dealing with things Western, the state curtails many of their rights in the name of a wardship, which often is no more than a smoke screen for the exercise of power and corruption. For example, to be a ward of the state does not prevent Indians from traveling in Brazil or abroad, but at certain moments of diplomatic embarrassment for breach of human rights, Brazilian authorities, clearly abusing their power, have denied Indians like Mário Juruna their right to get a passport (see Chapter 3).

To liken dominated peoples to the weak segments of Western society, such as women and children, in a metonymic trope of patriarchal mastery, is not a Brazilian invention. The African continent, for instance, is prodigal in examples of this kind. If, say the Comaroffs, "romantic piety made the dark continent into a woman despoiled, it also infantilized it" (1991, 117). What makes the Brazilian case somewhat unusual is its style of conquest. To my knowledge no other New World country tried to resolve its "Indian problem" by luring Indians into dependence with lavish distributions of gifts. Also, a specific Brazilian accent exists in the interplay between state and private initiatives regarding indigenous policy and practice. Adding an extra layer of complexity, a newcomer has entered the interethnic stage and is gaining strength as a lead actor, namely, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) dedicated to the defense of indigenous rights. NGOs have acquired so much power that they have sometimes been dubbed "neogovernmental organizations." As private entities often supported by public—that is, government—money, the NGOs seem to be en route to becoming parallel states regarding resources, influence, and bargaining power, producing yet another version of indigenous otherness, as we will see in Chapter 10.

State against Society?

In one of his apologies for the Villas Bôas brothers Darcy Ribeiro comments on their courage, saying that they "risked their lives to attract various indigenous groups into civilization," and adding, "a sad thing for the Indians, but not so bad, for their pacification was carried out by the Villas Bôas who were intent on defending them, guaranteeing their survival in a better way than that of other peoples called into our society" (1994, 11). Ribeiro alludes to the counterpoint between state policy and private action regarding the Indians. What he fails to point out is that state and private roles may be played in different keys, their tunes may use separate scales, but they are essentially in harmony, if not unison, when it comes to controlling indigenous peoples and their natural resources. It is banal to say that the state protects the interests of its economically dominant society, but the division of ideological labor by society and state is subtle. It is the difference between the politics of rape and the politics of seduction.

In a world without NGOs the Indian agency long posed as defender of the Indians despite the poor track record as a guardian. New World countries such as the United States and Argentina had no qualms about acknowledging their official policies and setting their armies against Indian nations. The Argentine Conquest of the Desert, the military campaign to wipe out indigenous peoples on the southern plains (Walther 1980), for instance, was no exercise in humanism, not even as a rhetoric. But in Brazil one may criticize the state ad nauseam for not doing its constitutional job of properly defending the Indians' interests, but few would accuse it of official warfare against them. The country may not put much effort and money into protecting the Indians, but neither does it explicitly send troops to crush them. True, clear evidence exists that the army used force to subdue the Waimiri-Atroari in the 1970s, but this evidence is kept in semisecrecy and has never become public fact. In contrast, the worst atrocities have been publicized and attributed to private initiative. In their 1994 book the Villas Bôas brothers justify their yearslong chase after the Txicão Indians as a measure necessary to stop the latters' attacks on the passive Xingu villagers; once the brothers conquered the Txicão, the Villas Bôases removed the Txicão from their lands and relocated them in the Xingu park, supposedly to protect them from encroaching "violent and lawless" miners (Villas Bôas and Villas Bôas 1994, 592). It was a skillful move: subdue the Txicão, bring them under direct and immediate control, and free their lands for national occupancy, all in the name of Indian protection against evil invaders (see Ribeiro 1970, 185–86). Like the Txicão, other peoples such as the Txukahamãe, the Suyá, and the Panará (Krenakarore) were subdued and transferred to the park, often forced to live in proximity to former enemies, under state supervision. Only in October 1995 did the Panará manage to return to their homeland after years of unhappiness in the Xingu park (Cohen 1996; Arnt, Pinto, and Pinto 1998).

Another story in the Villas Bôas book echoes episodes reported by Rondon and his associates (Magalhães 1942, 321–22) and brings out more

clearly the contrast between the "loving care" of the state and the explicit cruelty of private individuals: "One time the owner of a famed rubber property . . . gave a party and invited the Jurunas who lived nearby. Disaster and treason: the manioc flour was laced with arsenic. Practically all those Jurunas at the party died. . . . Because of such cruelty, the Indians decided to abandon their villages and head upriver" (p. 596). The Juruna Indians lost their traditional lands and were moved into the seemingly inexhaustible Xingu park.

Turning to Darcy Ribeiro again, we find a moving description of the extermination of the Oti, a Shavante subgroup that used to live in the state of São Paulo. After they lost their territory to cattle ranchers and were on the verge of starvation, the Oti began to hunt cattle. In retaliation the ranchers hunted Indians as if they were cattle. In 1903 the Oti were reduced to eight people—four children, three women, and one man who was then shot to death. "Soon afterward the women approached a group of farm workers, grabbing their hands to indicate they wanted protection. One of the workers imagined it might be a maneuver from the feared Kaingang. Panic broke out and immediately one of the Indian women was shot dead. In 1908, the Oti were seen for the last time: they were only two women sitting by the roadside hiding their faces in their hands" (1970, 88).

The Indian Protection Service was created early in this century, but despite the benevolent gestures of some of its personnel who were charged with keeping the Indians alive, one of the lowest points in indigenous depopulation occurred between 1900 and 1957 when eighty-seven groups were estimated to have become extinct (Ribeiro 1970, 250). This figure is not surprising when one ponders the effects of forced contact of entire peoples totally vulnerable to contagious diseases and unprepared to cope with deprivation of land and other basic resources. If we consider that the native peoples encountered attraction teams that included Brazil-nut gatherers, rubber entrepreneurs, and even men carrying infectious diseases, what is surprising is how many Indian groups survived this fatal attraction and reached the end of the twentieth century. Yes, they submitted to the state, but they became increasingly aware not only of their predicament but also of their rights.

Nevertheless, the official discourse about Indians takes pains to separate benign state policy from rapacious private initiative, and on the surface they do look distinct. Legislation guarantees many rights to the Indians, both in their special status within the Brazilian nation and as full members of their societies. But even at the rhetorical level we are periodically startled by blatant statements of government representatives who forecast the end of indigenous peoples in the near future, leaving to interpretation whether their disappearance will be the result of assimilation or not. Two notable pronouncements, mentioned in Chapters 1 and 2, were made by a former minister of the army, General Leônidas Pires Gonçalves, who, on an Indian Day (April 19) in the 1980s declared to the press that the Indians should not be protected because their cultures are not respectable. Then, in the 1990s, political scientist and former minister of science and technology Hélio Jaguaribe stated that Brazil will have no more Indians by the end of the twenty-first century.

What appeared to be contradictory in the official indigenist rhetoric was so only in appearance. If, on the one hand, the state brought upon itself the duty to defend Indian lives and cultures against the greed and brutality of the dominant society, it also proposed the termination in due course of indigenous special status. By declaring Indianness to be a transitory condition, the government expected to convert Indians to Brazilianness and thus proceeded to push the Indians into integration. As full citizens, the native peoples would then lose the right to exclusive usufruct of their lands. The pseudo-contradiction resolved itself in the long-term project of eliminating Indianness. Attempts at forced emancipation during the military regime were aborted because of public protests against the obvious maneuver of state officials, pressured by the strong lobby of private economic interests, to turn indigenous territories into marketable commodities.

But with the 1988 Constitution that apparent contradiction became real, for now the major law of the country says the Indians have the right to be what they are forever. To be an Indian is now a legal state, not simply a passing condition. Discourses defending the end of the Indians can no longer find legal support in the centuries-old assimilationist policy that was superseded by the new constitution.

Yet economic pressure on Indian lands continues. How long the state can maintain the posture of defending Indian rights against the stream of development projects that inundates the whole country and overflows into indigenous territories is a matter of much concern to Indians and their allies. The new constitution also opened a channel for them to air their grievances, the indigenous division within the attorney general's office. As defenders of the Union's interests, which include the lands occupied by indigenous peoples, the office's actions are constantly colliding with both private and public operations involving Indian rights. We now have a full-fledged contradiction within the state machine itself. The dialectical spiral that results is sure to occupy future observers.

The Indians in a Benevolent State of Cordial Men

Possession by seduction—what more alluring image could one find to conquer one's inferiors? How could one devise an appeal that would be more

beguiling to win over a reluctant foe? Under the guise of unlimited generosity in the distribution of trade goods the conqueror lures the Indian into a trap of economic dependence from which there is no way out. Under the guise of protection from private assault the state corners the Indian in a political blind alley—the guarantee of exclusive use of territory in exchange for the surrender of full citizenship. The Brazilian state, in the self-ascribed role of protector-provider, thus ensures its rights to exercise total control over Indian persons and land.

While pondering the place of the Indian question in Brazil's awareness of itself and others, I was pulled, despite myself, toward a theme that has absorbed a number of scholars concerned with making sense of Brazil. I am referring to the problematic created around the image of the "cordial man." To make my point more clearly, even at the risk of a lengthy digression, I should say a little more about this cordial man, by no means an obvious or well-known phrase outside Brazil. I hope to thus establish its association with the undertaking of "taming" the Indians.

In 1936 historian Sérgio Buarque de Holanda revived the notion of the Brazilian as cordial man (are women left out, perhaps because they might be the objects of men's cordiality, just as Indians are the object of sertanista seduction?). The term had been used before, by writer Ribeiro Couto, to define Brazilian national character. Buarque de Holanda stresses that *cordial* derives from the Latin word for heart and does not simply mean good natured or gentle—he refers to an overemphasis on affect, causing the blurring of two domains that Western rationality keeps separate, family and state, with important consequences for the political and economic development of the nation (1989, 144–46). Following Weber's analysis of patrimonialism (1978, 1006–69), Buarque de Holanda (and later Faoro 1991–93 and Schwartzman 1982, among others) traces the roots of the cordial man to the patriarchal mode of rural life that persists:

> Smoothness of manners, hospitality, generosity, virtues that are so praised by visiting foreigners, in fact represent a defining feature of Brazilian character, at least in so far as it remains active and impregnates the ancestral influence of patterns of human conviviality as they occur in the patriarchal and rural milieu. (1989, 106–7)

This type of cordiality includes a strong dislike for formal aspects of civil life, such as the careful observance of social etiquette by the Japanese. Rules that create and safeguard citizenship would thus be disregarded in favor of individual privileges (Da Matta 1979). The mélange of private and public spheres carries over into the impersonal civil domain of certain highly personal habits developed in the hierarchical context of family life, such as "the prolonged reverence to a superior," "the desire to establish intimacy," or the need to befriend people engaged in business in order to ensure success in commercial transactions (Buarque de Holanda 1989, 108–109). It is the putting into practice of "representational patterns which make 'favors' and 'rights' interchangeable concepts" (Reis 1988, 201). In a São Paulo election campaign a politician from the most industrialized state in the country was the epitome of the cordial man when he said, "I'll be a friend, a brother, a father in government. When I'm unable to offer you something you'll have a friendly shoulder to cry your sorrows over" (*Folha de São Paulo* 1996c). A murky side of the cordial man syndrome is often exposed when family interests are associated with political power. In May 1997 Orleir Cameli, the governor of the state of Acre in Amazonia, was exposed in a scandalous case of multiple corruption involving the purchase of public goods (hospital equipment, schools, etc.) in illegal operations, including drug traffic, that favored his father, brothers, and sons. "Regarding Cameli it is as follows: one doesn't know where his family's business ends and the government's begins" (M. Carvalho 1997).

Those most skillful at the game of individual privileges enjoy all the advantages of citizenship and none of its duties. The result is a society so entangled in inequality as to be incompatible with the principles of the modern industrial world that stress the social value of the individual (Dumont 1985). A society of cordial men would, in other words, be the antithesis of Weber's bureaucratic rationality. "In principle, the modern organization of the civil service separates the bureau from the private domicile of the official, and, in general, bureaucracy segregates official activity as something distinct from the sphere of private life" (Gerth and Mills 1958, 197).

Buarque de Holanda inaugurated a widespread concern in the social sciences for this trait taken to be central to the Brazilian ethos. But the idea had been popular in nineteenth-century literature. The *favor* system was interpreted as a given in Brazil's formation (Schwarz 1992, 16). The question is why Brazilians needed to invent the cordial man. The idea behind this concern seems to be the following: in the natural course of things Brazil would join the concert of developed nations, but it has not. Its failure to do so is what needs explanation. Brazil's chronic underdevelopment persists despite all expectations. What, then, prevents full development? The attempts to answer this vexing question have been myriad and include external causes such as U.S. imperialism and the unequal exchange of the world system (Emmanuel 1972), but these do not seem to be sufficient or satisfactory. Thus I had to consider internal factors, such as how the cordial man came to be the main feature of the national ethos, the cornerstone for both collective assets and liabilities. While *cordiality* is an ambiguous attribute, taking economic development as a desired goal is in no way ambiguous. According to Buarque de Holanda, as the country reaches increas-

ingly higher levels of industrialization, or, in Weberian terms, gets closer to the ideal type of rationality, the cordial man will gradually be superseded by individualistic relationships. Authors like Martins (1994) argue that so long as private and public domains are kept blurred for the benefit of a rapacious elite, the country will continue to trudge along the trail of underdevelopment.

One might see in the figure of the cordial man aspects associated with the typical Latin American *caudillo,* a powerful and authoritarian father figure who presides uncontested over the entire country, as if it were his big family. Such a figure is also common in Brazilian history, but that does not exhaust the full meaning of the notion of the cordial man. As Brazilian intellectuals strive to identify what is responsible for the political, economic, and social distortions of the country, they venture well beyond the strict realm of politics and attempt to grasp essentials at the man-in-the-street, capillary level of personal relations.

The origin of the patrimonial character of the Brazilian nation is attributed to the Portuguese or Iberian tradition. Depending on the analyst's inclination, Portugal comes out as the villain that transferred to Brazil its backward sociopolitical system (Bonfim 1996; Faoro 1991–93, 1994) or as the magnanimous ancestor that passed on to its colony the virtues of miscegenation, racial tolerance, and social malleability (Freyre 1992, 1953; Morse 1988). From its origin as a rhetorical device—"cordiality will be the Brazilian contribution to civilization" (Buarque de Holanda 1989, 106)—the cordial man has grown into a pervasive ideological tool that finds a suitable training ground in the interethnic arena of Brazilian contact.

The image of the cordial man may be too simple a formula for portraying an entire and highly diversified nation such as Brazil, and Buarque de Holanda himself uses it with caution. It has a family resemblance to Louis Dumont's blanket characterization of societies according to their holistic or individualistic ideologies (1977, 1986). Yet, no matter how limited I find this portrayal of the Brazilian national character, I can't help evoking a Weberian patrimonialism as I write about the attitude of state officials toward indigenous people. "The problem with national stereotypes," says Mexican writer Carlos Fuentes, "is that they contain a grain of truth, even if constant repetition has driven this grain underground" (1992, 17). Contrast should help bring this out more clearly.

In other countries the Indian question is handled in the most impersonal and detached of ways (treaties, by-laws, decrees, warfare). But in Brazil the master metaphors for the subjugation of Indians are attraction, courting, embraces, gifts—in a word, seduction, displayed in images that verge on the libidinous. In other countries the predominant image is often that of a rational Western machine whose logic is incompatible with the

anachronistic irrationality of Indian thinking, in an expression of vulgar Levybruhlianism (which takes Lévy-Bruhl's prelogic primitive mentality too literally; Lévy-Bruhl [1910] 1985) that seems to resist the passage of time. But in Brazil sentimentality is the main trope: conqueror and conquered locked in a culminating embrace, the Indians calling the vague figure of the central government *Papai Grande*, Big Dad, and its indigenist delegates *Nosso Pai*, Our Father (as in the case of the Villas Bôas brothers in the Xingu park). What demonstration could be more revealing of the blurring of domestic and state genres? Whereas in other countries the Indians are considered inferior but autonomous in their inferiority, in Brazil they are nearly inert inferiors, "relatively incapable," dependent on the superior Brazilians who make decisions in their name and trace their destiny without consulting them. But none of this is free of ambiguity. The Indians may be seen as a nuisance (they occupy precious land, sit on precious resources, or cause enormous headaches to the state whenever charges of mistreatment reach the international press), but they also represent rich symbolic capital. They are good not only for internal consumption (the untiring cliché of the nation as a mixture of the three races, the noble and pure Indian among them) but also as an export commodity when Brazil wants to show the world how ethnically tolerant it is.

Although the notion of cordiality, an artifact of the fat times of rural hegemony, is hardly an apt chronotope for the country as a whole, in its "Indian slot" Brazil displays the cordial man with a vengeance. In this sense official indigenous policy seems to work as cue in a script that appears to be steadily falling into a dead file. If, as Buarque de Holanda says, the cordial man is doomed, bound to be killed by economic development, the Indian represents perhaps its last breath.

In the meantime the image of Brazil as a community of cordial men displaying their hyperbolic sexuality continues to be enacted in the interethnic pantomime performed behind the scenes of national society: the Whiteman, the seducer, meets Indian, the seduced. Whiteman leaves Indian consumed with diseases and a desire for commodities. Seduction turns into contempt, contempt turns into dependence, dependence turns into submission. Indians, women, and children come full circle as evidences of Whiteman's sexual and political prowess. Whereas married women were freed from legal shackles (at least in the letter of the law), and minors had their minority time span reduced, indigenous peoples, together with absentee children, continue to be the beguiled receptors of officialdom's dubious favors. In the farce of pacification—or, in more modern parlance, attraction—the Indians seem to represent the last chance for the guardians of the nation to exercise their undisputed power with cordiality before history definitively snatches the cordial man away. In the realm of Indigenism, as anywhere else in the

country, the hypocrisy behind the cultivation of the image of Brazilians as cordial men is but a way to mask sheer violence in the guise of humanism, a humanism inspired in European ideas of equality, fraternity, and liberty but that in fact turned them into "ideas out of place" (Schwarz 1992).

Gendered conquest—powerful intruding *men* winning over female-like Indians—is nothing new in the Americas. But while we find direct and literal references to Europeans' treating Indian men as effeminates in a strategy of domination, what we see in the submission of Brazilian Indians is that the feminization of the Indians never leaves the realm of metaphor. Unlike the Indian as child, commonly verbalized by nationals, the Indian as woman never occurs in explicit discourse. Quite the opposite—the most common stereotype has been of the Indian male as brave, wildly savage, or disgracefully dumb but never as a woman to be sexually used and abused. The sexual violence involved in the conquest of Brazilian Indians by the national state can only be read between the lines as a symbolic statement that is never made literal. The trinkets, the embraces, the hide-and-seek of the pacification-attraction activity are elements in a scenario of pretenses in which the implicit message is domination by nationals of Indians of either sex. Indian tamers use the old say-it-with-flowers technique perhaps because that is the most established way of convincing an adamantly disinterested object of desire to surrender to one's pursuit. It is a matter of analogy rather than of literalness: Indian is to nation-state as woman is to man. The sexual innuendo inherent in the Brazilian-style pacification is a suitable trope for political submission, but most likely its practitioners are not fully aware of its load of gendered implications. Nowhere in their written or oral statements do people like the Villas Bôas brothers associate Indian males with women, Western or otherwise. Nor do they acknowledge that there ever was homosexuality among indigenous peoples, a far cry from the numerous references to the northern berdache, the master image onto which Europeans forged the notion that Indian equals woman on the North American continent (Trexler 1995). Nevertheless, one cannot overemphasize the sexual connotations of conquest, for, as Torgovnick concludes in her analysis of the Tarzan fiction, "when the West confronts the primitive, power and sex—geo-politics and gender politics—almost immediately come into play" (1990, 57).

In this rather subliminal fashion, reminiscent of Proust's involuntary memories, the Indian question works as a magnifying glass under which the nation's fabric shows its knots, broken lines, and convoluted texture, the result of the uneven warp and weft of the historical process of trying to weave odd threads together in a single social design.

Compared to other situations of first contact with native peoples—where private adventurers did not hesitate to kill when their lives or economic interests were at risk (see, for instance, the situation of the New Guinea Highlands in the 1930s as reported in Connolly and Anderson 1988)—the Brazilian approach to uncontacted indigenous groups as an official enterprise seems to be much more responsible and benevolent. But this apparent benevolence has not been sufficient to counteract the immense damage that pacification has brought to all Indian groups. Contagious diseases are the most immediate effects of first contact, for rarely are pacification-penetration teams in perfectly good health when they "embrace" the Indians. In fact, they are often the first pathogenic agents to contaminate them. Furthermore, unthinkable as it may seem, they usually take no preventative measures against epidemics, such as vaccination campaigns. Loss of territory comes next, for a demographically reduced population attracts invasions, for now it looks like too much land for so few Indians. Then cultural demoralization follows the bombardment of prejudice and negative stereotypes launched upon Indian survivors by their invaders. In a number of cases the final outcome of pacification is the extinction of entire societies either because of physical death or uprootedness, two forms of social obliteration.

Rondon lived long enough—he died in 1958 at the age of ninety-three—to witness the outcome of the "rites of conquest" (Cleland 1992) he and others performed. He had to acknowledge that his guiding premise of attracting Indians to civilization had not turned out to be as humane as he had expected.

> He became convinced that we should no longer nationalize the Indians, for, he affirmed, it "creates serious problems and maladjustments." Rather [we should] preserve tribal cultures by taking their specific economic patterns as a basis for new productive activities which, without being revolutionary, might provide them with the necessary means for their integration into the economic life of the regions where they live. Not that the old General had abandoned his positivist principles and his evolutionist outlook on cultures, but he pondered that every culture, no matter what its basic values are, constitutes a legitimate way of actualizing and expressing human nature. Moreover, unlike what he had defended earlier, giving up a tribal culture and adopting civilization, rather than constituting "progress," represented a form of impoverishment, the sacrifice of a more genuine way of being human. (Schaden 1960, 455)

Rondon died a disillusioned man in regard to the fate of pacified Indians.