

SÉRIE ANTROPOLOGIA

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**A CONCISE DICTIONARY OF
RECEIVED PREJUDICE**

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Very often certain words are cast about both in professional and in lay contexts without much thought regarding 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." For over two decades he collected words with these characteristics in order to analyse "some of the issues and problems that were there inside the vocabulary." These keywords are "significant, indicative words in certain forms of thought" (1985:17). He then proceeded to follow the historical trajectory of 131 words related to the field of culture and society.

Taking Williams' lead, I shall focus on a set of words which, together or separately, have contributed to a specific "formation of meaning" in the field of indigenism. Unlike Williams, however, I do not intend to trace the etymological history of these words, but rather 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 of the words or word clusters are more widely employed than others; some display a thicker veneer of neutrality than others, but none is devoid of value judgements.

One of my purposes with this exercise is to show how anthropology not only is not immune to semantic contamination, but actually contributes to canonizing particular notions about indigenous peoples through its indiscriminating use of received ideas disguised as scientific concepts. Letting common sense words enter the ranks of disciplinary concepts amounts to what Bourdieu describes as the smuggling of received ideas into sociological discourse under the eyes of unsuspecting social scientists. Much scientific subject-matter, he says, is no more than "social problems that were smuggled into sociology" which "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 ..." (Bourdieu 1989:36). As an example he decodes profession, "a word from common language which entered scientific language as contraband" (1989:40). In the field of indigenism, an equivalent word would be nomadism, a recurring attribute of the

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indigenous way of life decried by a wide range of whites, such as missionaries, administrators, businessmen or settlers. Transposed to anthropological discourse, nomadism was hoisted from plain stereotype to scientific truth.

The need to cast 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 it is crucial to the arts, what to say of social sciences whose task it is to take "reality" as an object of study and not as a model in itself. To analyse 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 proposed intentions. Without the critical evaluation of the concepts one uses in a field such as anthropology one runs the risk of simply repeating "reality," which in fact is not just "simply" repeating, but providing an aura of scientific legitimacy. Like tropes that insidiously surface in one's language, as Hayden White (1973) demonstrated for history, received ideas tend to adhere to one's discourse on the Other (one possible dictionary entry) with so much ease that it takes a great deal of effort to shake oneself away from their hypnotic pull. But once the rupture is achieved, a Pandora's box suddenly bursts open scattering fragments of unanticipated meanings around the analyst's field of critical vision. Even at the risk of immobilizing the social scientist in a paroxysm of self-consciousness, it is worth making the experiment of rummaging through words and their explicit and implicit messages.

What follows is an exploration in the surreptitious meanings of notions attributed to Indians by non-Indians. The idea is to break up the picture of the Indian of the interethnic imagination into as many of its component parts 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 a myriad other terms which are equally applied to Indians, such as native, exotic, noble, natural, pure, not to mention the term Indian itself, as indeed it has been amply reviewed as a dictionary entry (Reissner 1983). One has, however, to be selective, lest a full-sized dictionary grows into a project of its own, outweighing the present undertaking. The words chosen have a high yielding power for helping 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 which come to the surface by means of analysis, such as the Indian as woman of chapter 5. Included in the analysis but not as entries are a number of adjectives such as dirty, lazy, unreliable, or some common attributes such as cannibals, warriors, or tribal. Since they are often associated with more inclusive images -- heathen, child, nomad, primitive or savage -- I take them to be distinctive features of the latter. 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

Indian as child. The term is used very commonly in spoken language, but more rarely applied in writing. Instead of explicit reference to the word, attributes such as

absence of malice, incompleteness, credulity, innocence, and candor are often assigned to Indians bringing them very close to the usual idea one has of Western children. By these attributes they fit the definition of childlike. According to Webster's Encyclopedic Unabridged Dictionary, 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 in Aristotle when it 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.

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 their "Christian duty to care for peoples who were still in a condition of childlike imbecility" (Pagden 1982:3).

Not surprisingly, the image of the Indian as child was duly carried to Brazil in 1500. Caminha, the scribe of Pedro Álvares Cabral, "discoverer" of Brazil, was enthralled by what he called the Indians' innocence of both body and soul. The candid and handsome nakedness of sixteenth-century Tupinambá was visual evidence of their ingenuous and virginal minds. It unveiled to Caminha a glorious perspective 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). They were beautiful, simple, innocent children of a paradisiacal land capable of yielding anything you would care to sow. As the land was "so gracious that, if we want to use it, it will yield everything," so were the gracious and pliable Indians. But if Caminha regarded the new land and its inhabitants with admiration, he also saw both as so rudimentary as to incite the mastering energy of the Europeans. Alleged simplicity of customs was quickly translated as intellectual inferiority. The Portuguese were struck by the absence in Tupinambá language 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, of laws, and of 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 mid-sixteenth century, special legislation was drawn up for the Indians due to their "mental undevelopment" which made them unequal to whites. According to this legislation, the Indians were considered to be immature, the 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 more pragmatically expressed. 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 in sugar cane plantations, gold mining, etc. (Monteiro 1994). The fact that Indians were indifferent to commodities such as gold made them look definitively immature in the eyes of the conquerors.

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 (McGrane 1989:25-26).

In mid-eighteenth century, a Portuguese colonial "Law of Liberties" converted Indian slaves into indentured servants. In the province of Grão-Pará, at the time a separate colony from the rest of Brazil, the government bound Indians to remain for six years with their former masters or wherever they happened to be working. The idea was that, since Indians knew no middle term between total freedom and slavery, they needed time to get accustomed to the new order by means of which they were paid for their labor. Moreover, to prevent Indians, now free, from simply abandoning 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'" (Farge and Carneiro da Cunha 1987:108). It excluded Indians who earned their own 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 rather than to declare Indians as debilitated children (Farge and Carneiro da Cunha 1987:111), it is revealing, to say the least, that it associated the official termination of the master-slave relationship with the rupture by death of the parent-child link. The orphanage metaphor was a potent forerunner of future legislation that was to declare all Indians, laborers or not, isolated or not, known and yet to be known, as relatively incapable, hence, wards of the state.

Lest one forms the idea that state orphanage is an exclusively Brazilian phenomenon, it is worth mentioning a quick comparison with another colonial country. Early twentieth-century Australia declared the offspring of European men with Aboriginal women (the possibility of the Aboriginal men-European women counterpart did not exist) as orphans. On account of the "British blood" they carried in their veins, these "half-breeds" or "half-castes" were pulled away from 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 1988:198).

Apparently keener to absorb "the 'mixed blood' population into the white majority" (Beckett 1988:199) than was Brazil, 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 them more palatable to share the nation European Australia was eagerly trying to build. As we will see in chapter 2, the symbolic value of blood -- Indian blood this time -- for Brazilians translates as a potent marker of an emerging Brazilianness as distinct from 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 towards 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 infanthood at the expense of the 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 which would last until they became adapted to the national society. In that condition 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 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 normally in white society. Thus, while they show themselves unqualified to exercise full citizenship, they will have the right to the exclusive use of their lands. Protection of indigenous territories is, therefore, a result of their 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 relatively incapable, the gaining of full citizenship will be accompanied by the loss of right to exclusive land use, for it is only as civil minors that the Indians are entitled to the possession of their territories. Once declared non-Indians, their lands would lose their feature of inalienability. Perceiving this as a catch-22, no Indian person or group has ever requested emancipation. They would rather continue to bear the humiliation of being labeled as incompetent children than lose the right over their communal lands. All things considered, and given the resistance of the Brazilian judiciary system to acknowledge communal proprietary rights, guardianship seems to be the lesser of two evils.

The 1988 Constitution introduced a discordant note into the tradition of regarding Indianness as a pre-adult, temporary condition. According to the new Constitution, the Indian is no longer a child to be promoted into ethnic adulthood. Article 231 defines that Indians have the right to their own social organization, customs, languages, beliefs and traditions, as well as usufruct to 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 during the months when the Constitutional Assembly was held in Brasília. Large numbers of Indians, non-governmental organizations, and professional associations, such as the Brazilian Anthropological Association and the Association of Geologists, successfully influenced congressmen towards the legal recognition of indigenous ethnic differences and its attendant set of rights to natural resources, excluding the subsoil.

But while 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, for 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 still continue to be an Indian. Adaptation would mean a change in ethnic identity. While they are not adapted, they will remain under the wardship of the state. The Constitution being mute about guardianship, it is the 1916 Civil Code and the 1973 Indian Statute, both under revision, that in actual practice continue to regulate the legal status of indigenous peoples. For all the advances of the new Constitution regarding indigenous rights, it is still true to say that plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose. From orphans of slavery to wards of the state, Indians in Brazil go on enduring the stigma of being eternally immature in the name of a protection which oftentimes 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 seen as 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 as a necessary step 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 take over of Amazonia. The notion was later repeated in an interview with Army general Antenor Cruz Abreu: "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" is one of the numerous headlines addressing the topic (Folha de S. Paulo, 23 July 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.

At each recrudescence of this national anxiety, two figures are infallibly evoked, the military and the Indians. The latter, taken to be unconscious facilitators of alien encroachment, come under the surveillance of the former. Not being responsible for what they do, the Indians need to be watched lest they cause harm to the nation's interests. Regarded as not full citizens, in the eyes of the military the Indians are as suspect as foreigners. On this account, attempts have been made to remove all Indians from the frontier zone, or to open to colonization indigenous areas located within a 150 kilometer-wide strip along the northern border, the idea being that only nationals can protect the country's borders. Imputing childish irresponsibility to the Indians who hence endanger the nation's autonomy is but a strategy to expropriate their lands for white occupation. "The world has changed, but for the military the 'enemies' of Amazonia continue to be the same as in the sixties, seventies, and eighties" (Folha de S. Paulo, 27 October 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 of the military strategies to control the Indian issue in the Amazon.

But the alleged human 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 them all to school, the Indians will become 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, put an end to the "Indian problem" and Brazil could then claim to be a civilized country. Similar to a belief in sympathetic magic which assumes that equal attracts equal, the fear behind Jaguaribe's lashing seems to be that childlike Indians might infantilize Brazil (more about Jaguaribe below and in chapter 6).

The equation of adults with children can summon different responses. It can either evoke arrogance or humility. So far we have accompanied 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 digression, 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 considered here. Nevertheless, the image of the child is often present in ethnographic writings, but in an inverted way. For now the child is the ethnographer him/herself. 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" (Seeger 1980:34, 35. My translation). 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" (Ramos 1995a:5). What is there behind the seemingly natural analogy between 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 called children by whites? 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 coming of age by means of ethnographic knowledge is by now an old cliché. Ethnographers have explored imagery drawn from ethnographic accounts of rites of passage to fashion ethnography's own fictions. Beyond the aptness of the analogy, apparently so obvious as to dispense commentary, one might find some interesting innuendoes which can help us understand that other fiction of the Indian-as-child. For embedded in the analogy is the silent distance between promoting and demoting individuals or collectivities to childhood.

One question raised by this analogy is the cross-cultural meaning of child. Do the Suyá laugh at their 12 year-olds as they do at their white ethnographers? Is a 12 year-old Suyá, or a five-year old Sanumá equivalent to a North American or Brazilian child of the same age? If I am allowed to refer to my own 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 childlikeness of children, often infantilizing adults as well. The ultimate affront is to use the Indian as plastic toys (The Indian in the Cupboard) to entertain Western children. The old North American tradition of "playing Indian" has now reached cyberspace (The Pocahontas debate. Strong 1996). It is the Indian as child in more ways than one.

While in the West a whole world is virtually created to be peopled by children, there are large areas of adult society where they are not allowed to enter. 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 places the matter is so serious as to become the object of public policy.

In an analogous key to the Indian as toy created by whites for white children is the children's book written by a Munduruku Indian for Brazilian children. In telling amusing anecdotes about his encounter with white 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, Munduruku's book (1996) 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" (Lévi-Strauss 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. He/she differs

from grownups basically in that he/she has 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. There are no cultural areas prohibited to children. There is no industry to prolong 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 child rearing, most commonly refers to the mechanism of socialization of children, of reproducing the socio-cultural apparatus onto the new generations. When a child learns it is totally dependent on adults to pass on that 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. It is this aspect of helpless dependence which is appropriated by whites in characterizing indigenous peoples. The latter's own knowledge is irrelevant to whites. 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 as children are in the national society. And when they show themselves capable of doing all these things, a certain widespread common sense 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 1987; Baêta Neves 1978; Retamar 1989; Mannoni 1990).

But when an ethnographer goes into the field to learn the local cultural code, his/her dependence is of a different sort. It is a voluntary act, frequently for a short time, which results in manifest benefit to the ethnographer. His/her survival is rarely dependent on the knowledge he/she is there to acquire. Moreover, the trade goods which most of us carry around are efficient vouchers of fair treatment. In the same piece where 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, the ethnographer puts him/herself in the same position as if to show that anyone who has something to learn is bound to fall into the same slot. 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 a child to his/her hosts, the ethnographer is 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 which, 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 relations. The image of the infantile ethnographer is at the most cute, whereas the image of the infantile Indian is a stigma at the service of his subjugation. It is, in other words, a matter of differential power.

The native as childlike is, therefore, far from being an innocent image emanating mere condescendence. "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 Webster's 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 the Church in most of its Christian persuasions. The distinction between heathen and pagan, and their subsequent assimilation, 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 insisted 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" (Caminha 1963:60).

It would not be long before the first Jesuits on the Brazilian coast realized that the Indians were not devoid of their own beliefs and idols. From then on the future of the demonized native was to be a long one (Mello e Souza 1993; Vainfas 1995)².

For the Jesuits one of the most unnerving features of Tupinambá religious behavior was their lack of fidelity. One moment they had the missionaries believe they gladly accepted the word of God, the next moment they would fall back to their barbarous drinking and cannibalist feasts. The "inconstancy of the savage soul" (Viveiros de Castro 1992) drove the Jesuits to propose the use of force against the Indians:

Thus he [converted leader Tibiriçá] manifested the deceit of his faith,

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; Viveiros de Castro 1992. See also Bettencourt 1992; Gambini 1988; Hemming 1978; Leite 1993; Meliá and Nagel 1995; Monteiro 1992; Nascimento n.d.; Raminelli 1996; Ribeiro and Moreira Neto 1993; Shapiro 1987; Thomas 1982.

which he had pretended to have, and he and all the other neophytes fell back without reign 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 visitation of 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 or small groups of priests going from village to village dispensing various kinds of sacraments, most importantly baptism. No longer had the missionaries to go to the Indians. It was the Indians who came to the missionaries, albeit not spontaneously. Far from being an indigenous decision, massive recruitment into missionary settlements was achieved with the help of the powers-that-be (Marchant 1943:115), 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).

Within the bounds of a Mission a total institution was created with a hierarchical distribution of power which closely resembled the state itself. The Jesuits ruled sovereign and became so powerful as to alarm the colonial government. 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 the Indians the advent of the Missions was also a turning point from autonomous village life to a regime of utter dependence on the whites. Thousands of Indians were removed from their own villages, regardless of ethnic origin, to live under complete Jesuit control in the most capillary, Foucauldian fashion. With a rigid and full daily schedule, the missionaries administered the Indians' lives all the way from hygienic habits to a school routine, regimented work, and leisure. Language differences were levelled out by the use of Latin in school, Portuguese socially, and "Tupi" for "external use." The Mission was thus "a vast total pedagogical project" (Baêta Neves 1978:162) by means of which indigenous life was literally reduced to the commandments of the Reduction.

There were many advantages to the Mission system. Not the least important, 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 sedentarization. The total control of indigenous activities resulted in a thorough resocialization of the young and with it the longed after "conversions." The total institution which was the Mission succeeded in breaking the back of Tupinambá culture: no more intertribal vengeance, no more warfare,

no more shamanism, no more polygyny, no more cannibalism or the tattooing associated with it. The slippery souls of the Indians were finally harnessed.

Counteracting so many "benefits," the Reductions had two major drawbacks: the frequent epidemics which ravaged the indigenous population, and the constant slave raids by colonists in search of free labor. Both profitted immensely from the high population density of the Missions. The astonishing mortality rate -- in late sixteenth century, the 40,000 Indians in 14 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 more Indians were conscripted by the missionaries, only to be 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 1760, when Pombal, Portugal's prime minister, had expelled the Jesuits from Brazil, the Tupinambá were virtually extinct. So much for the first heathens of the land, a tragic concretization of throwing the baby out with the bathwater.

The Tupinambá vanished, the Jesuits came and went, and Franciscans, Capuchins, Carmelites, Salesians, Benedictines, just to mention some Catholic orders, populated what was considered as 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 Church had not shown itself very comprehending of cultural differences. As late as the nineteenth century, Catholic missionaries applied physical punishment to force the Indians to comply with their regulations. Quite explicitly they defended the procedure 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, etc., 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 1980:2).

Brüzzi's Indian has his mind filled with illusions which distort his thinking and renders him prone to silly superstitions. But, he adds, "one can easily understand that this is so for he

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 Indian has his qualities too. He is, stoic, a keen observer, pragmatic, and artistically sensitive; most noticeably is "his charming naivete. They are a jolly race" (Brüzzi 1962:138-169).

For over fifty years the Salesians have constructed a solid dominion in the Upper Rio Negro region of Brazil's Northwest Amazon. Somewhat similar to the sixteenth-century Jesuits, they based their control over the indigenous population on the educational system of boarding schools. Children were recruited into the mission and only visited their families 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 one of the local languages, Tukano, as their lingua franca, at the expense of the fourteen or so others in the area under missionary influence (Oliveira 1983).

It was only in the early 1970s that the more progressive wing of the Catholic Church began to change its outlook regarding cultural diversity and the role of evangelization. A new concept was introduced into the missionary project, namely "inculturation." Inspired in the anthropological concept of acculturation, the Church has nevertheless transformed it to its own purposes. "Inculturation inverts ... the direction of contact: whereas 'acculturation' describes the movement from the native to civilization, inculturation attempts to move toward native culture, as it is defined as a 'process according to which the Church inserts itself in a given culture'" (Montero 1996:120). In actual practice, this means a modern return to pre-Mission times, now with a strongly relativistic flavor. The activist branch of the Catholic Church for 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." By "presence" it is meant 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 possible 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; CIMI 1979).

A far cry from the early Jesuit Missions, the policy of inculturation is not, however, devoid of its own contradictions for, 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." Inculturation 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 'inculturated 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.

Without the compunction of the progressive Catholics, Protestant missionaries, much newer in the indigenist scene, have maintained a general policy of non-interference in the political issues of interethnic contact³, while carrying out their persistent work of

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

christianizing the heathens. Trade goods, 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 1970's, a member of the Unevangelized Fields' Mission candidly reported to me that a full load of trade goods, as due payment for indigenous labor for the mission, was withdrawn from Yanomami workers because they refused to comply with the missionaries' directive to stop shamanising and have more than one wife. But let us hear a Yekuana (Maiongong) man from north Brazil tell his tale of Protestants.

It was in Venezuela. He 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 got very angry. They would go there 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 1980:79).

Disease has been the great ally of the missionary enterprise. It is ironic that baptism, the quintessence of sacramental practices, came to be considered by the sixteenth-century Tupinambá as the source of lethal epidemics, perhaps with very 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 Judgements of God" (Cook and Lovell 1991), have had as strong, if

authorities so as not to jeopardize their permanence 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 with Bennett 1995). Some scholars question this judgment (Fernandes 1980; Gallois n.d.). 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 outset of the gold rush. All others -- Catholic missionaries, medical teams, and anthropologists -- were banned from Yanomami territory for three years (Ramos 1995).

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 on the border region between Brazil and Guiana. Since the late 1940s, the Hawkins brothers worked hard to convert the shaman Ewká, their leader in Guiana, for if he were converted, the others would follow suit. It was a time of epidemics (the flu, pneumonia, tuberculosis, measles) and the shamans were unable to cure the sick. "When they saw their failed power ... the shamans committed suicide" (Queiroz n.d.:225). 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 n.d.:221).

Ewká did not die and in fact became one of the first Wai Wai to embrace the career of indigenous peripatetic preacher. "Ewká was sent on various expeditions with the purpose of bringing the Indians on the Brazilian side to the village created in Guiana, for the Mission considered the number of evangelized Indians still small" (Queiroz, n.d.:226). Since then the Wai Wai have turned into the most active indigenous evangelizers in the Amazon. They are often recruited by FUNAI on pacification expeditions, as 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." Beachheads on the evangelical front, Bible in hand, they push their way through the uncivilized undergrowth of their heathen brethren as soul savers. In the large village of Mapuera in the state of Pará, there is a large temple with twelve indigenous preachers. The village is inhabited by over one thousand Indians of various ethnic origins attracted by the Wai Wai and all speaking Wai Wai as lingua franca (Queiroz n.d.:214).

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. Fractioning the villages into Catholic Terena and Protestant Terena, missionary action, combined with the state agency for Indian affairs (SPI), succeeded in dividing the communities 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 convert and the non-Protestant or Catholic. ... In those villages

... a division into two groups occurred: the "Catholics" and the "Protestants" (Cardoso de Oliveira 1960:104-5).

The split in the communities was aggravated by the "incompatibility between SPI agents and the evangelic missionaries" (:105) with the former favoring 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 the interests of the moment. Quarrels between individuals or families could result in a split along the lines of missionary influence; or dissatisfaction with the SPI administration might lead someone to join the Protestants.

But what must be emphasized is that this did not mean that these individuals necessarily continued with the newly adopted political-religious group, 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 (Cardoso de Oliveira 1960:106).

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! (Cardoso de Oliveira 1960:106).

Cases of divided indigenous communities due to Catholic-Protestant competition are very common in Brazilian ethnographic literature, often much more serious than the Terena case (Wright 1996, n.d.; Pereira n.d.; Andrello n.d.).

The most dramatic situation at least in part created by the interference of conflicting religious missions is that of the Kaiowá of Mato Grosso do Sul. Continuous suicides of young people from this Guarani-speaking group have been frequently reported in both the Brazilian and international press. Since 1986, 191 suicides have been reported (Folha de S.Paulo, 19 December 1995). Between 1991 and 1993 there were eighty-five (CIMI 1994:37), forty percent of which by people below twenty years of age. The reasons for such a calamity seem to be several: "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 ..." (Almeida 1996:725). Indeed, nearly nine thousand Indians try to make a living in a cramped area of less than four thousand hectares (Folha de S.Paulo, 12 May 1996). But would a nine-year old girl kill herself for that reason?

A few months ago I happened to see on television a session of exorcism in one of the cult houses in the Kaiowá reserve. A teenager was in contortions amidst the nervous screaming of all present, including the missionary who shouted angrily at her and

proceeded to slap her repeatedly so as to shake away the demons possessing her. Eyes closed, the girl's face and her whole body were the living picture of fear and helplessness. The impact of the scene made me shudder and those images remained in my mind for a long time causing a 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" (Folha de S.Paulo, 21 May 1995), and "an infinitude of fundamentalist evangelical sects that intensely practice their proselytization" (Almeida 1996:726).

To give an idea of the interference of these missionaries on Guarani religious practices, it is worth mentioning the fact that, 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," throw 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 in the colonial past due to slavery and Mission life (Almeida 1996:727). Cultural loss, psychological confusion, and cosmological void are some of the disturbances one finds in the wake of the "sacred fury" (Ribeiro 1970:32) which has driven most missionary action ever since Caminha urged the king of Portugal to hurry up and Christianize the brasis.

Nomad

Let us begin with a couple of entries in the Webster's Encyclopedic Unabridged 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 in itself an interesting feature if we consider that a dictionary is a collection of notions to inform the public at large. As it says about itself, it is "a book containing a selection of the words of a language, usually arranged alphabetically, giving information about their meanings, pronunciations, etymologies, inflected forms, etc., expressed in either the same or another language." It is precisely the popular character of a dictionary's content that makes it so revealing about received ideas.

What is there in common between the features of the two words? Firstly, 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. Secondly, in both words there is the idea of an open-ended movement of the "destination unknown" type; neither of them implies the return to the point of departure. Thirdly, 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 adjectival form evokes something verging on madness as disordered thoughts or incoherencies, such as in the model phrases mental wanderings or wanderings of delirium. And last, but by no means least, the thread of thought which links both entries is a movement away from order into unpredictability. Contrasting with sedentarism, fixed abode, 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 necessarily nomadic? That the uninformed public so deduces is neither surprising nor shocking given the catalogue information contained in dictionaries. Surprise and shock comes when specialists in "indigenous" peoples use terms such as nomads and nomadism without a critical appraisal of the words and the semantic load they have in common language. Statements such as the following are bound to enter the repertory 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 thrived 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 untimely features in this pathetic passage of 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 lets his reaction freely transpire in a punctuation mark. All negativity, the Tasmanians succeeded, before being wiped out by Europeans, in showing 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 nomadic-wanderer primitive: 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" (:88). The Polar Eskimos also have "a nomadic mode of life. A family rarely remains in one settlement for more than a single year" (:196). The Crow of the Western Plains "subsist mainly on the products of the chase and lead the life of nomadic hunters" (:267). And, of course, pastoralists such as the Kazak of Central Asia, pictured as a generic individual who "is primarily a nomadic herder. His whole existence centers about his domesticated animals" (: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.

Nomad comes from the Greek nomás meaning "pasturing flocks" (Webster's). But no pastoralists known to anthropology are so random in their spacial 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 herdsmen are very well demarcated and structured according to a refined knowledge of both herds and environment. A superb example of the elaborate design in pastoralist mobility, exploiting different seasons and eco-systems for different animal flocks, is provided by Barth (1964) for Southwest Asia. From his and innumerable other ethnographic reports, pastoralists do not fit the notion of the aimless wanderer 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 over a thousand miles. But sheer distance seems to me to be neither a sufficient or a necessary condition to render such well-defined activities as nomadism. Pastoralism has been so fused with the idea of nomadism that reluctance to disengage them 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 (Forde 1949:406).

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

Old World "nomads" enjoy a certain reputation as aloof, proud, and independent peoples. Arabs with their horses, their camels, and their sheep, or Northern reindeer herders, epitomize the image of freedom and autonomy romanticized in books and films. In contrast, when the term "nomad" is applied to American Indians, 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 judgement -- a wandering tribe of Indians.

This semantic metamorphosis would not be particularly problematic if it were not appropriated by dominant whites to despoil dominated Indians. Let us examine some cases in which the notion of nomadism was used against indigenous peoples.

United States 1854. The Omaha Treaty, designed to allot individual land plots to Indians, in Article 6 rules that the Indians should be settled in permanent homes in 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 (Kickingbird and Ducheneaux 1973:16-17).

As the authors 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 which could be profitably colonized, and second, as they roved from place to place, controlling them was more difficult. Sedentarizing the Indians in established portions of land and fixed residence killed two birds with one stone: liberated land for whites, and brought the "tribes" more easily under the authority of the North American state. The individual allotments left a "surplus" of land which was "then sold to the immigrant settlers brought west by the railroads or opened to homestead settlement" (1973:17).

Brazil 1784. After three years of undergoing intense attacks by the Portuguese, the Mura Indians of the Madeira River, a south tributary of the Amazon, surrender and allow themselves to be settled in permanent villages. In Marta Amoroso's fine description (1992), 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 river boats, on white settlements, and on other Indians who had been sedentarized by the Jesuits. Considered the scourge of the region, the Mura were also the hosts to runaway Christianized Indians -- *ladinos* -- who fled the poor conditions of life and work at the white 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 an exception was opened to the "Law of the Liberties," authorizing their persecution and enslavement (also launched against the equally recalcitrant Munduruku and Karajá).

But what really disturbed the whites was the alleged Mura 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 Indian" (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 (Amoroso 1992:303).

Fear of uncontrollable Indians, an eighteenth-century truism, spilled over to the following 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 travellers as evidence of the depraved customs of a population with corrupted habits (Amoroso 1992:300).

The Mura reach the late twentieth century still complaining of persecutions by shopkeepers, landowners, and the police (ISA 1996:377).

The use of the notion of nomadism as an anti-Indian weapon is by no means relegated to centuries past. In 1992, a retired general of the Brazilian army, concerned with the prospect of the Collor government granting a large, continuous area to the Yanomami, stated in an interview:

Veja - Don't you think the Indians deserve a reservation?

Taumaturgo - 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? (Veja, 22 January 1992).

Apart from his interesting system of classification of anthropologists, the general chooses to cloud the issue by associating the need of 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 repeatedly intoned when the demarcation of Indian lands are 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 1996:18).

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 does the general, although no doubt for very different reasons. The reasons for my objection apply to the Yanomami and to any other indigenous group in South America. Nomadic (see for instance Holmberg 19 ; Maybury-Lewis 1974) or semi-nomadic (see for instance Turner 1992) are inadequate terms to refer 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. Shavante 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).

Returning to the Yanomami, let me clarify in what way my rejection of the term nomadism does not coincide with that of general Taumaturgo's. Their spatial mobility is a response to the by now generally acknowledged characteristics of the part of Amazonia where they live: extremely poor soils and widely scattered game animals. One can identify various types of mobility among the Yanomami. A 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 two kilometers every two or three years, the previous ones laying fallow; and a move further away, encompassing from ten to thirty kilometers approximately every generation as the result of the accumulated drain on natural resources in a given area. Furthermore, intervillage conflicts and, after contact with white's diseases, the outburst of epidemics, are other reasons for a community or cluster of communities to move away. Considering that there are nearly ten thousand Yanomami in Brazil grouped in more than two hundred communities, these movements, some being 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, etc., and the capacity for 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 whites about the

exotic primitive. Against common sense that takes any kind of indigenous mobility as a sign of nomadism, we cannot overemphasize the fact that the Yanomami are mobile, not nomadic (Ramos 1996:18).

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 take a "clandestine" word from common sense for a scientific concept. To employ 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 sedentarism. Nomadism is anathema to the exercise of control. As Fisher very properly remarks, "Indian mobility in the nineteenth century was derided because it made for an elusive labor force" (199?:177). Not only this, but

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 anything that is approved and legitimate; you are accused of an offense or of a crime. For 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 the powers-that-be have been doing in Brazil since 1500.

There are, then, two major problems with the notion of nomadism. First, as a value judgement, it opens the grounds 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 quotes from Forde and Maybury-Lewis above make clear.

If, as defined in dictionaries and in common sense, nomadism does not exist among indigenous peoples, does it exist at all? Which 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). Seasonal workers of the bóia-fria type in Brazil, or strawberry pickers in the United States? Apparently not either, for they also return to the same work places at harvest. Perhaps the closest one could find who would qualify as true nomads with no defined trajectory and destination are, for example, 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 paid work. It is ironic that an idea developed in Europe to separate Western civilization -- the hub of civitas, the ultimate form of sedentarism -- 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 which is a direct result of an excess of sedentarization. The polis is no longer a guarantee against nomadism.

Primitive

The concept of "primitive" has supplied anthropology with one of its major narrative threads. Although contemporary authors have insisted that primitive is "essentially a temporal concept, is 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 essentialization. Concrete "primitive" cultures did exist in the periphery of civilized world, exhibiting primitive institutions, primitive ways of life, primitive modes of thought. The result of this experiment has entered common sense in a variety of interrelated meanings. The Webster's Encyclopedic Unabridged Dictionary of the English Language has a rather long entry on 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 which correlates "a race, group, etc., having cultural or physical similarities with their early ancestors." In a nutshell, 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 which was everything that non-urban 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 non-

everything: 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 what the Webster's defines for Biology -- "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 (Levy-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). Indeed, "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 fact is that the primitive has been at the center of the anthropological "master narrative" for over a century. Kuper traces the crystalization 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" (1988:5).

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 in their etymological origins there was nothing pejorative about them:

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

quotation unveils 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 judgement, or getting entangled in complicated circumlocutions which 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 (1981:126, 127, 131),

and concludes with the rather cryptic remark that "we cannot abandon the primitive; we can only outgrow it by letting it grow within us" (1981:173).

Service, another twentieth-century defender of the primitive, seems to have less qualms about its implications. He disagrees with other anthropologists who object to the notion that contemporary primitives shed light into "our" past by retaining cultural traits long lost on civilization. He criticizes Herskovits for wishing anthropologists 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 (Service 1962:8-9).

"Modern influence" translates as the all-powerful Western Demiurge capable of transforming the primitive into the civilized, when, that is, he does not mismanage and causes the obliteration of his earthlings, "our contemporary ancestors" (Service 1962:8). The anthropologist would then be engaged in a time race against his (it was a pre-her era) own times to collect as much evidence of the cultural big bang as he could before the doom of the primitive. Surely, whoever possesses a time machine is, to all intents and purposes, a Demiurge him(not yet her)self, as science fiction often demonstrates. Curiously, due to his

"neo"-evolutionary emphasis, Service transposes to twentieth-century anthropology a feature associated with the previous century: "Nineteenth-century anthropology is in many respects precisely a time machine" (McGrane 1989:103) in its search for the Western past in contemporary non-Western cultures.

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 as to 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 economies;" "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;" etc., etc. (Diamond 1981, chapter 4).

Kuper's 1988 book, The Invention of Primitive Society, is an attempt to de-essentialize the primitive: "There is not even a sensible way in which one can specify what a 'primitive society is" (:7). "...the history of the theory of primitive society is the history of an illusion" (:8). "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" (:8). But, as old habits die hard, Kuper begins his book with

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,

which follows immediately after this sentence: "The rapidity with which the anthropological idea of primitive society was worked out is very striking, but its persistence is perhaps yet more extraordinary" (1988:1). This reminds one of the old Spanish-language joke about the non-believable existence of witches, yo no creo en las brujas, pero que las hay, las hay! No matter how many '_' are put around the word, the message still remains that such societies do, after all, exist and, to boot, out there in the tropics. The founding fathers having guessed the existence of primitive society before it materialized in ethnographic writings only bestows an aura of inexorability to the concept.

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). Since one is not told what anthropological orthodoxy consists of, or when "modern" began, one is at a loss to place Service and Diamond -- pre-modern, fringe academics?

All this is to make the point that anthropology is one of the inspirations which feed the imaginary of whites about Indians. It is an obvious point but by no means trivial. Anthropological discourse is not sufficiently sheltered as to be incomprehensible by the common citizen. It is serious enough to have some statements such as quoted in this

chapter issued by professionals for professionals or students. It is worse when it comes to radio lectures, television interviews, newspaper articles, and other popular media known to have 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 which is often unrecognizable by the discipline's professional. The result is usually unfavorable to the people being discussed. For example, in a 1981 Newsweek article (September 21:30) titled "The vanishing tribals," anthropologist Francis Huxley is quoted as saying that tribal peoples "will have to join the human race eventually." 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 north Brazil and south Venezuela.

In May 10, 1976, Time Magazine had a piece titled Beastly or Manly? under which it said:

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

In April 7, 1990, O Estado de S.Paulo, a major Brazilian daily, published a remarkable note under the title Feminists attack Yanomami. It comments the reaction of a teacher and students in a Communications classroom at Menlo College, Atherton, California, to Yanomami male violence toward women. The teacher, Marilyn Faulkenburg, responded to a newspaper article about the impact of gold rush on Yanomami lives as follows:

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? (:10).

The teacher is quoted as having said that to preserve "so brutal and primitive" a culture would only benefit anthropologists. Her comments were 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 a double-edged sword. It displays the logic of "exotic" realities in such a way as to generate anything from deep respect to insulted abhorrence. By and large, efforts such as Kuper's to put certain 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. Laymen often pontificate about the stage of indigenous cultures, but the matter becomes more serious when these laymen hold positions of authority and therefore feel confident in uncritically displaying their value judgements. In 1989, the Brazilian Army minister, Leônidas Pires Gonçalves, on 19 April, precisely the National Day of the Indian, declared to the House of Representatives' Committee for Foreign Relations in Brasilia that the Indians should not be protected for, after all, "Indian cultures are very lowly and therefore are not respectable" (IstoÉ Senhor 17 May 1989). The barrage of criticism that followed in the media forced some counter-messages from other military officers, but the minister's crudeness rang throughout the country as an apology for white obtuseness and arrogance. "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..." (Barbosa 1989:1026).

Arrogance and obtuseness are by no means limited to the military. Civilian intellectuals such as writer Osman Lins and political scientist Hélio Jaguaribe have tried their hands in 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 end of this millenium. A former minister of Science and Technology, Jaguaribe shocked public opinion 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" (Folha de S. Paulo, 30 August 1994). The occasion was his conference during the seminar on "Education Policy for the Army: the year 2000" that took place in the Army Headquarters in Brasilia. 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 itself is to grow into a fully developed nation.

Unfailingly such statements are met with a volley of protests by 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 the field of indigenism as an inverted mirror to the nation at large. For a country as Brazil with a very short history, mentions of primevalness necessarily evoke a temporal proximity between Indians and Brazilians which verges on having the latter polluted by the former. Hence, primeval lifeways are no cause for pride, but, to the contrary, are reminders of the long way ahead toward civilized development. To have primitives within the national territory is equivalent to 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 which far outstretches

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, cyclopes, 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 both 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, while

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 to barbarians, but not to 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 close proximity with 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" (Bartra 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" (Bartra 1994:63). 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 on which Christian values were favorably reflected. 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).

Eye-witness 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" (Ryan 1981:526), 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" (Ryan 1981:527).

On a more down-to-earth, pragmatic key, the wild man was good not only to reflect the superior likeness of the European, but also to serve him, among other things, as 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 Hispanic neighboring countries, people took produce for sale

'on the backs of male and female Indians who carried it as if they were mules, even when they were raising children.' ... 'The beasts rest in the fields and the Christian Indians, faithful to Your Majesty, carry the loads.'

Transportation on the Indians' backs, used in cargoes of any kind, was the main reason for the high prices in São Paulo, given the scarce capacity of the carriers ... (Buarque de Holanda 1986:33. See also Monteiro 1994:122-26).

The mixture of idealization of the exotic with the pragmatic exploitation of the inferior, what Bartra (1994:206) describes as European "horror and fascination for wildness," 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 (Footnote 45. See Murdock, Our Primitive Contemporaries, chap. 1). 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 1988:196).

Back to 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 which peopled the minds of the old "white" continent. In fact, Amerindians were often praised for their physical attractiveness. They thus came to combine two features which had been kept separate in the European imaginary: 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 deduct 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 that 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 directly than 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, as well as 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" (Bartra 1994:89) 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 1994:133). Transposed to literature, these features resolved themselves into characters such as Shakespeare's Caliban, itself a composite of the European wild man and the American cannibal.

Whether explicitly stated or implicitly suggested, the notion of Indian as savage has been rather frequent in anthropological writings in general, and in South American ethnography in particular. In the ingenuous, pre-politically correct days, ethnographers were more candid about their views of the native judging by their descriptions of indigenous peoples, including their 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 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 [Maybury-Lewis on the Sherente].

[The author, his wife, and small child] had lived with some of the wildest Indians in Mato Grosso and even come to like them after a fashion [Maybury-Lewis on the Shavante] (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 with his photograph in full Kayapó regalia over which the caption O Selvagem called attention to the main story titled "the explosion of savage instinct." It was a long report on the scandal that involved Payakan as the alleged rapist of a white girl from the town near his home village. Neither Veja nor the rest of the press seemed concerned to present the

accusation for what it was; 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. The case was repeated over and over 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 S.Paulo, 11 June 1992). Sadistic sex (Webster's "primitive passions") and cannibalism were fused in one 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 girl 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 or not the accusations were justified, 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 mobilized the nation for many weeks. He became the source of erotic jokes. He was rhetorically associated with the political scandal of the day which culminated with president Collor's impeachment.

The coincidence that the case happened precisely during the Rio Earth Summit 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 S.Paulo, 9 June 1992). Payakan was being expected in Rio for the 1992 Global Forum when the news of the rape broke out.

Paulinho Payakan's political visibility was catching up with him. In 1988, he received a great deal of publicity for having been on trial (with another Kayapó leader and North American anthropologist Darrell Posey) for having denigrated the image of Brazil abroad after a series of meetings with World Bank officials where he pleaded against the Brazilian plans to build a series of dams in his Xingu homeland. He and his fellow 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 UN 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 press' attention for the wealth he had accumulated with the selling of mahogany and the levies collected from gold miners within the Kayapó indigenous area. The combination of Indian with wealth offended many a Brazilian. In the 1992 episode, there was constant mention of his cars, bank account, and an airplane donated by Body Shop, the British cosmetic chain. For instance, the Veja article had a section on "Rich Indians" expounding 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 his "victim"'s family. The girl's attorney declared that if Payakan was considered guilty by the judge, the family was to file for a one billion dollar indemnity. "The leader possesses wealth and can pay the compensation" (Folha de S.Paulo, 16 June 1992).

The publicity around Payakan's controversial self also exploited the ambiguity of his status as "relatively incapable," pointing out the contradiction between his capacity to manage wealth and his legal condition as non-responsible 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 (Folha de S.Paulo, 10 June 1992). As for Payakan's wife, being obviously "primitive" (Folha on the same day), 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 S.Paulo, 20 June 1992). 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" (Folha de S.Paulo, 28 November 1994). It is possible that Payakan and/or his lawyers took the course of blaming exclusively Irekran for the whole incident counting on the unanimous opinion about her legal unaccountability, thus saving both from possible conviction.

The attacks on Payakan generated much concern about the risk of jeopardizing the Indian cause itself at a time when important legislation was being processed at Congress. "One cannot transform his trial into the trial of the indigenous societies" (Folha de S.Paulo, 16 June 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 which 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 about Indians who are capable of amassing 60 million dollars, live in cities, and participate in the world of finances (Folha de S.Paulo, 13 June 1992). Much rhetoric both in favor and against Indians swept across pages and pages of newspapers, some focusing on the unfair treatment the Indians get 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 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" (McCallum 1994:2).

Underneath 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, a demonstration against the Kayapó, the rich indigenous neighbors of a baffled non-Indian population, carried placards saying Lugar de índio é na aldeia e de estuprador é na cadeia (The Indian's place is in the village, the rapist's place is in jail. Folha de S.Paulo, 11 June 1992). Rumors had it that the Kayapó were preparing themselves for a counter-attack. When Payakan's arrest was ordered by the judge in charge of the case -- according to whom "Payakan is very dangerous and puts the public order at risk" (Folha de S.Paulo, 10 June 1992), the Military Police of the state of Pará sent two hundred men to Redenção, "prepared for a war operation within the reserve" (Folha de S.Paulo, 15 June 1992).

As it turned out, Payakan was under house arrest in his home village for two years. The white girl got married a year later. In November 1994, Payakan was acquitted on the grounds of insufficient evidence. He was then "saluted" by the judge with the exhortation: "go back to your people" (Folha de S.Paulo, 29 November 1994). That judge interpreted the scratches found in the girl's vagina to have been made by Irekran's

fingernails. And since Irekran was "primitive," she could not be held accountable for what she did, so 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 which was bound to happen had Payakan been ruled guilty. Predictably, the decision was openly criticized. One female attorney declared: "In Payakan's case, Justice was intimidated by Kayapó pressure" (Folha de S.Paulo, 4 December, 1994).

One of the most striking features of the Payakan affair is the total blend of his act with his ethnic identity. It was not simply as a man that he raped the girl. He was a savage Indian and as such he committed a sexual crime. With very rare exceptions -- journalist Gilberto Dimenstein commented on how "the image of the rapist is muddled with that of Indian, the eternal victim of savagery" (Folha de S.Paulo, 21 June 1992) -- there was no attempt to separate male violence from Indian identity. He incarnated the sexually unbridled wild man, "o cacique tarado que estuprou uma garota" (the sexually depraved Indian leader who raped a young girl), as a journalist heralded six months before the trial (Folha de S.Paulo, 28 May 1994). The image is disquietingly evocative of the Middle Ages wild man, "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).

Another thing is the public's reaction to his wife, Irekran. Veja and Folha de S.Paulo informed, matter-of-factly, that in 1991, a Redenção white surgeon had linked her 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 on his wife. 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]" (Folha de S.Paulo, 22 June 1992).

One may well ask why, amidst the generalized sexual violence in Brazil and elsewhere, was this Kayapó man 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 traveller. 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 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' looms 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.

Three final comments by way of summary. The first relates to the construction of the images represented above as entries in a dictionary of prejudice. What do the images of the Indian as child, heathen, nomad, primitive, and savage have in common? It is a question also addressed by Bestard and Contreras who 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" (Bestard and Contreras 1987:11). Administrators, missionaries, anthropologists, and journalists are the main producers and/or consumers of these images. The state administrator attempts to control "Indianness" through the construction of the Indian as a dependent child; the missionary transforms the Indians into heathens to justify his mission; the anthropologist constructs a universe of differences based on concepts such as nomad and primitive in order to theorize about human diversity; and the journalist captures the Indian at his most exotic as a publicity stunt. Each with his own agenda, all these agents have in common an underlying feature, namely, they all help build up indigenism as a multi-layered, multi-faceted mosaic. In its own way each one 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, etc., has been to foster the conquest of indigenous peoples.

The second comment has to do with the spirit of the age of discovery and its consequences to the future of interethnic contact in the New World. Brazilian Indians, as all other original inhabitants of the Americas, were a pre-fabricated construction the Europeans carried along in their vessels. The Portuguese, like the Spaniards and the English, incarnated 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 according to which all cultural differences were interpreted. It was "as if real discovery were not the exoticism of the other but his ultimate similarity with peoples already assimilated into European consciousness" (Ryan 1981:529; emphasis in the original). Thus, "the Spaniards treated the Aztecs and the Incas following their experience in dealing with the 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, every image about the Indians had already been elaborated back in Europe. They were simply adapted to the new environment. Transatlantic travel fused the European wild man with the inhabitant of the Americas, pagans with heathens, Sabbath witches with cannibal Tupinambá women, destitute medieval peasants with nomadic tribes. Even the name of 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 (giants, monsters if not in the physical sense, certainly in terms of customs). There was too much at stake in terms of their own self-identity for Europeans to admit the existence of a whole universe of differences that had not been previously conceived in Europe. With a certain dose of Latin American magical realism, Europe proceeded to renovate its construction of otherness in the light of the empirical evidence that, in the New World, Europeans 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. In similar fashion, when anthropology allows terms such as nomad, primitive, or savage to enter its disciplinary vocabulary, it shows itself amenable to uncritically incorporate received ideas smuggled into the profession from the ideologically laden realm of common sense.

The third comment refers to the specular value of otherness. Several of the 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 identity" (1981:211). For "human" one should read "Western." Kuper, on the primitive as the antithesis of the civilized, comments 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 "Whiteman" is not at all surprising. Although Christianity provided the thread which tied all Western Europeans under 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" (Hobsbawm 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 in one fundamental thing -- to conquer the natives of the Americas. But, Christianity being what it is, conquest needed to be duly justified, and the only possible justification 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 incurred in 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 creator would look himself 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 as to the workings of western imagination regarding alterity. Consider, for instance, the hyperbolic pun depicted in the title and original dust jacket of an anthropological masterpiece, La Pensée Sauvage. Could it be otherwise?

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