4. To Be Indian, to Be Bolivian: "Ethnic" and "National" Discourses of Identity

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Introduction

Indians and Colonial Discourse

Many of the authors in this book share the goal of "decolonizing" anthropological approaches to the cultures of Latin America. This necessitates consideration of the colonizing cultures and the colonial situation, along with the colonized, as objects of study. Decolonization requires abandoning the assumption that indigenous societies are autonomous cultural isolates and recognizing that, faced with colonial and state domination, they are inevitably altered by their relationship to dominating forces. This new approach recognizes as well how colonizing cultures, and their "states," are shaped by their relationship to those they dominate (Stoler 1989). It is this interface, this asymmetrical, rigged, power-infused discourse, that is the focus of investigation here.

Such an approach highlights the old problem of defining the unit of study. It certainly does not solve the problem, since we must still analytically "bound" the sociocultural "voices" discernible in intercultural discourse. How we do so must simultaneously offer a viable alternative to the methodological assumptions—involving closed "Saussurean systems"—of a structural-functional or structural/semiotic approach. One option is to focus on the particular situations, institutions, and processes in which colonial interlocutors apprehend one another, recognizing that for the actors, it is this interface that determines the cultural whole, even when the interface is experienced as a defensive wall, insulating their world from that of their Other. Instead of a "whole-cloth," we must see, then, a plurality of partially and asymmetrically interpenetrating meaning systems, and we must ask how these systems form and interact.

In the Andean case, centuries of colonial domination (and resistance to it) have produced many hundreds of small, community-sized "ethnic groups," centered on the "county seats," towns into which pre-Columbian populations were forced to settle. Within these rural towns, "Indians"
Ethnic Categories and Ethnic Groups

In the early nineteenth century, postindependence politicians sought to ban the term "Indian," and to replace it with "Bolivian" or "Peruvian." But that, and allied policies that aimed to privatize land and create the climate in which an agro-industry might ripen, did nothing to stop rural peoples from insisting, sometimes through revolt, on a degree of self-determination, including the retention of collective land tenure and the continued reproduction of cultural difference (see Platt 1982, 1984, Rivera 1984). In this century, postrevolutionary governments legislated the replacement of the resilient "Indian" and "indigenous" by campesino ("peasant"), insisting again on aiding in rural peoples' "self-improvement." Nonetheless, the sorts of "Indian" practices that such regimes have decreed (though for certain circumscribed purposes, admired as well) continue to persist. Multiple and diverse, the "differences" of rural cultural formations can be appreciated in their particulars through an ever-growing body of ethnographies (Abercrombie 1986; Albó 1975, 1976a, 1976b, 1979, 1987; Bastian 1978; Godoy 1981; Harris 1982; Platt 1978, Rasnake 1988a, 1988b).

In the pages that follow, the reader will note that I slip between analysis of a particular rural cultural formation, "K'ulá culture" (itself internally divisible), and references to a generalized rural cultural type to which K'ulá belongs. This slippage, typical of Andeanist ethnography, accedes to the colonial situation itself, which continues to posit itself in the form of a relationship between two opposed cultural poles, "Indian" and "European," glossable as "rural" and "urban." But to suggest the existence of a rural/indigenous culture in the Andes, what is often called, in the literature, "the Andean," is usually to fall victim to "non-Indians" essentializing stereotype of "the Indian." In other words, "the Andean" is only rightly studied as a (usually utopian) image projected by various urban groups (Flores Galindo 1986). This intellectual tradition also defines cultural boundaries "etymologically," assuming that trait continuities from a pre-Columbian past are adequate to analytically constitute contemporary cultures. We must avoid, too, essentializing a Hispanic urban culture. In spite of George Foster's (1960) early warnings, we still fail to appreciate the implications of the cultural multiplicity of the colonizers, who, after all, came from "the Spains," a variety of culturally distinct "nations" within an absolutist empire. In the Andes an "urban," "Hispanic" or "European" culture exists, like an "Indian" one, only when we are studying stereotypes. I do not therefore dismiss such stereotypes as "mere" images, since, as they are produced in, and produce, systems of inequality, they are often invested with terrible power.

Although such power is experienced as symbolic as well as physical coercion, we must beware of psychological reductions that collapse long-term discursive relationships into the minds of individuals. A recent analysis of miners' "popular religion," for instance, suggests that we see such beliefs and practices as a folk-theory or critique of capitalism made through the subtle transformation (or deformation) of Indians' cosmologies as they become proletarianized (Taussig 1980, based largely...
on Nash 1979; see also Platt 1983). This analysis may work as a literary
allegory of the colonial experience, a reading of the colonial context in
the subjective transformation of a single generation. But rural-to-urban
migration and proletarianization is a well-studied reality; it has been
going on now since the conquest (and before), and it has produced some
permanently interstitial cultural formations. There is enough evidence
already to suggest that a specialized urban/miniing "cosmology" has existed
for a few hundred years. The "urban Indian" fashioners of such
cosmoologies (the distinct cultural type known in the eighteenth century
as "indios criollos", now called "cholas") have been around for yet a
longer time, as a dominant force in mining, in petty marketing, and as
rural elites. Consigning such complex and long-lived cultural forms to
the status of an ephemeral subjective acculturation that rural "Indians"
pass through on their way to becoming urban "nationals" misses the
larger point, since even when it is "true" in an individual case, the
cultural order thereby taken up has a life and history of its own.

We can begin to characterize some regional "types" of rural group, the
varying histories of which owe to combinations of pre- and postconquest
sources and effects. For example, the small scale of most social groups
in Bolivia's Department of Oruro contrasts with the size of Macha, in the
neighboring Department of Potosí, which has a population in excess of
ten thousand individuals. While Macha more or less conforms in
territory and internal social divisions to a single preconquest dual-
organized kingdom (see Platt 1982, 1986, 1987), K'ulta, an Oruro group,
is a fragment of what had been a larger kingdom. Yet this process of
fragmentation has advanced still further in the vicinity of Lake Titicaca,
near La Paz. I have documented the colonial and republican dynamics
of this process of fragmentation—which is also a process of cultural
genesis—elsewhere (Abercrombie 1986).

The highly fragmented and factionalized rural region near La Paz (Albó
1975, 1976a) has recently become the principal hotbed of a different sort
of cultural genesis, one that uses language as a key index. Indigenous
nationalist movements like the Movimiento Revolucionario Tupac
Katari foster an equation of language and culture (and class) to self-
consciously generate ethnic awareness. This foment is centered in the
major urban areas of La Paz (for Aymara) and Cochabamba (for Quechua).
The relative success of these movements in their respective zones of
influence may be tied to both the relative fragmentation of solidary rural
groupings in these regions (subject to the greatest incursions of hacendia
expansion and to the deformations introduced by the Agrarian Reform
when haciendas were expropriated) and the reaggregative possibilities
arising especially in these city-influenced areas via city-based indigen-
ous language broadcasting (Albó 1987).

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We must carefully differentiate these essentially political formulations
from the analytic use of the Aymara and Quechua labels in the
anthropological literature. When authors of ethnographies of small-
scale communities have sought to characterize a more-inclusive "type"
to which their community pertains as a "token," they often turn to these
language categories or to the more-embracing "Andean." Perhaps it is
because language seems misleadingly the clearest index of cultural
difference (but see Urban and Sherzer 1988; Boas 1940), but it certainly
also results from the previous existence of these language-equals-cultural
labels in the literature (as in, for instance, the HRAF).

For the fact is, in Bolivia, use of the language name to characterize
cultural pertinence makes no sense at all. As Albó (1976b) has shown,
based on the language data of recent census reports, the boundary
between the two languages is continually shifting in the Bolivian
highlands, with Aymara, in most cases, rapidly giving way to Quechua.
Moreover, some degree of bi- and multilingualism is the norm. Language
here is an index of the relative influence of a linguistic hierarchy
propagated by historically specific forces, not of "indigenous" cultural
boundaries.

Having rejected pan-Andean, language-based, and historically derived
"ethnic regions" as characterizers for more general "cultural group-
ings," it behooves us here to limit ourselves to a particularist orienta-
tion. Whatever meanings might adhere to a certain form of kinship
system, or moiety organization, or ritual battle, or whatever other "pre-
Columbian" trait one might highlight, are today coded or interpreted
within the (semi-open) semiotic systems produced at locally or
situationally specific intercultural loci (or "town groups"), which inter-
sect with national and international systems as significantly as with
neighboring town groups. And it is to such a particular example that I
now turn.

Ayllu K'ulta, where I have carried out fieldwork, corresponds closely
to the district recognized by the Bolivian state as Canton Cruce-Culta.
It is a good example for a variety of reasons other than my knowledge of
it: because it is of intermediate scale (about six thousand inhabitants),
because it emerged ex nihilo during the colonial period as a fragment of
a documented pre-Columbian polity, and because it contains internal
ayllu segments in the process of fissioning into yet smaller "cultural
groups," as are most such polities in Bolivia and Peru. That is, K'ulta's
existence as a unit is as contested and contestable as the majority of rural
groups in the area, and midway in the process of fragmentation or
"micro-ethnogenesis," between the Macha and Lake Titicaca extremes.

In the following section of the chapter I will show how K'ulta emerged
as a recognizably distinct voice, with a long history of internalizing its
Other (that is, the "states" that have dominated it). This quest for—and analysis of—a particularly rural cultural identity, suffers the disadvantage of creating a hypostatization, making a whole entity out of what is but part of a relationship. To counterbalance this effect, I will turn in the final section of the paper to K'ulta's urban complement, the modern cosmopolis and state, also a hypostatization, with its own internalized Other. I hope to show that rural/"Indian" and urban/"non-Indian" cultural formations are coopted as parts of a single "colonial situation," while remaining distinct analytic arenas, as experientially "real" mutual hypostatizations constituted by each Other's gaze in a discourse of power and identity. But to demonstrate this we must turn to specifics.

The State within the Indian

Identity and Sociocultural Unit Definition: The Case of K'ulta

Self-labeling in the countryside generally reflects the "segmentary" nature of the region's groups. Each is composed of a hierarchy of aylus (intratown groups), with numerous patrilines and hamlets, the lower organizational levels within each aylu. In the K'ulta case about six thousand people are divided into five territorially bounded and mostly endogamous named aylus. These aylus subdivide a 1,000 sq/km territory, across which more than 120 hamlets are scattered. These constitute landholding exogamous patrilines. Group identity also takes a segmentary form: hamlet/patriline membership (the lowest "corporate" level) is of great significance in terms of everyday practice, while aylu solidarity involves cross-cutting alliances among patrilines/hamlets, the defense of common aylu lands, and by the election of aylu-level authorities through fiesta sponsorship. The moiety level (aylus are grouped into "upper" and "lower" divisions) then intervenes between aylu and the maximal local unit, "Ayllu (and Canton) K'ulta." At the center of this Canton-Ayllu there is an empty ritual-center town with church, offices of the ayllu authorities, civil registry, and so on. When repeatedly asked where he or she is from, a K'ulta inhabitant will recite a litany working inward from most inclusive [Bolivia] to least inclusive (hamlet or lineage name), pausing at length on "Ayllu K'ulta" as the clearest but least compromising or "private" of group memberships.

One certainly will not hear reference to terms like Andean, Indian, or Aymara, nor will one hear any reference to a group called Asanaqi, a conquest-period "kingdom" into which the aylus and territory of K'ulta were once woven. Asanaqi, like the more embracing federation of kingdoms it belonged to (the Killaka federation), has been effectively erased from local memory, except for a trace persisting now only in the ranking of mountain deities. And yet, if one could have crossed today's K'ulta territory with the conquistadors in the 1530s, there would have been no trace of K'ulta.

Indeed, if one travels across "K'ulta territory" today, one might well, in the northern and western parts of the area pertaining to "its" ayllus Alka-Kawalli and Qollana, find that many people there reject the notion of belonging to Ayllu K'ulta. This is because K'ulta is midway along the process of fission along its segmentary seams, as constituent ayllus seek autonomy, which is to say, cantonal status and a direct association with the Bolivian state.

This process of fragmentation characterizes most of Bolivia's rural polities today, and can be accounted for as in part a product of the expansion and improvement of the road system and transportation, increasing participation in the cash economy and marketing activity, and the erosion of the perceived benefits of continued participation in larger segmentary entities like K'ulta. Nonetheless, the groups hiving-off of K'ulta share in common the effort to reproduce, in a microcosmic form, precisely the sort of administrative/ritual structure that characterizes K'ulta: All are planning or building a capital town, dividing into subsections among which authority posts may rotate, and developing some form of fiesta-cargo system by which to create the authorities whose mediating roles will define the new group and its components vis-à-vis the state. The reproduction of this institutional framework can only in part be accounted for as a product of state exigencies. For state recognition, a canton must have a platted capital town, situated on a road. However, the fiesta-cargo systems and internal segmentation reproduced in the new towns in K'ulta territory respond to no state requirements, past or present, though at one time both fiestas (saints' day celebrations) and cargos (offices in town councils) were required by church and state. But to understand the significance of these locally produced sociocultural forms, and to see how they simultaneously meet and subvert interventions of church and state, we must consider how they were produced and what meaning system they engender.

Encomienda, Reducción, Cabildo, and Buena Policía

Until the mid-seventeenth-century foundation of the town of Santa Barbara de K'ulta, "K'ulta territory" was no more than a herding district divided up among several of the aylus of the former Asanaqi kingdom, who held the lands against the expansive pressure of what had been the kingdoms of neighboring Charqa federation. Between "first contact" and the end of the sixteenth century, Asanaqi was turned into a rent-producing property for conquistadores, divided into town districts, and
meddled with in a variety of ways. In 1599, after the first few waves of epidemics, the area of K'ultu was so sparsely populated that Crown representatives were able to declare it uninhabited and, claiming it as Crown territory, put it up for auction. This was not just a revenue-producing measure, of course, but a means of providing lands to those Spaniards without the influence to receive a grant in Indians (an encomienda). In the case of these lands, however, the predominant Asanqui lord was able, because of his people's ready supply of cash-convertible llamas and alpacas, to purchase the land back for the aylus that claimed it.5 Sometime thereafter (by the mid-seventeenth century), the town of Santa Barbara de Cula was founded, and the population of a large territory around it grouped together, as a political and ecclesiastical annex of the capital of the Asanqui, Condo Condo (see Abercrombie 1986).

In part, the "emptiness" of K'ultu territory, a broken high-altitude region unsuitable for most agriculture but with numerous small, grass-rich "plains" between its jagged mountains, was a product of colonial policy as well as European-borne disease. Before the conquest, the kingdoms and federations of the region were in no sense urbanized; "capitals" like Condo Condo were but small settlements, perhaps no larger than many other such settlements clinging to hillsides throughout the territory. Aggregation into "civilized" towns was achieved through the imposition of a colonial resettlement policy, creating a few "concentration towns" in place of a multitude of difficult-to-subjugate hamlets.

In the first wave of Spanish colonial impositions, huge federations like the Killaka, comprising the Killaka, Asanqui, Awllaka-Urukilla, and Siwaruy-Arakahi kingdoms, were divided along social-structural lines as spoils of conquest. Thus, hereditary kingdom lords, and the "subjects" they controlled, became "natural lords" under the protection of the Spanish monarch. Under this system they owed rents to conquistadors who had temporary rights over them. At this early date, the Spanish understood little about indigenous social organization, so many kingdoms, as well as federations, were fractured. However, the Killaka and Asanqui kingdoms were treated in the opposite manner: they were lumped together as a single Crown-supervised grant of Indians (an encomienda, or repartimiento—a distribution and districting unit). The Crown gave a conquistador-encomendero rights to labor and tribute, but demanded in return that the grantee give the Indians civilization and Christianity. Thus, each grantee was to "resettle" the Indians, supervise the building of a church, and hire a priest to convert them.

Initial policies were, however, relatively vague and laxly enforced, making census, tribute collection, and evangelization difficult. Only with Viceroy Francisco de Toledo was the whole Indian population of Spanish Peru (which then included the area that is today Bolivia) subjected to a sweeping and planned transformation (Málaga Medina 1975). It was in 1574 that Toledo decreed the resettlement of the two kingdoms' population (then 11,526 individuals) from numerous smaller settlements into but four towns. Only two of these early colonial towns, San Pedro de Condo and San Juan del Pedroso (modern Challapata) correspond to the highland extension of Asanqui (AGNA 9.17.2.5.; Cook 1975). The policy of "settling" populations into concentrated reducción towns was to prove impractical to enforce, since Indians needed to reach distant fields and pastures to sustain themselves as tributaries. The result over time as people filtered back to remote corners and the population grew again (after an initial plummet) was the recognition of many more reducción towns, rather than abandonment of the policy.

Each reducción town was created in the image of a model Spanish town, with a plaza at the center of a tick-tack-toe style grid of streets (Foster 1960:34–49). Around the plaza were placed a church, city council offices (cabildo), and jail. Living in them was to inculcate "buena policía," the mark of civilization that Indians, by definition, lacked (Lechner 1981). The cabildo system as institutied by Toledo was modeled upon Spain's "democratic" communities. It included yearly rotating elective authorities, specifically alcaldes and alcaldices, posts inherited by the Spaniards from the Moors. But Toledo was not interested only in a change of forms, or necessarily in the promotion of democracy. Instead, such authorities were to carry out, under the guidance of the encomendero and local priest, the desired cultural transformation. They were to gather their people into the church for Spanish instruction and frequent catechism sessions, help to keep the nightly curfew (to stem adultery and fornication), to act as the jailors of refractory citizens, to do the rounds of their towns at specified hours—now rung out by newly forged church bells, and in general to locally instantiate the European gaze. But in some ways the system was adapted to extant Andean traditions. First and foremost, in the building of new towns and in the collection of tribute, tacit recognition was given to Andean aylus, which were, at this point, smaller territorial fragments of kingdom-level aylus that found themselves under a town's jurisdiction. A number of these fragment aylus constituted the population and territory of each new town. Second, each political unit above the aylus was to be divided into moi eties, and town authorities established in moiety pairs. Finally, to ensure that the hereditary elite (whom Toledo and the chroniclers he commissioned branded as "illegitimate tyrants") did not undermine the supposed democracy of the towns, he excluded native nobility from full participation in the councils.
These steps were allied to some truly repressive measures that sought to extinguish idolatry in all its guises, so that a rational Christianity (and the submission to the divinely sanctioned authority of the absolutist monarch) could take hold. Only when cults devoted to idols, mummies, ancestral mountains, and sky beings were abolished could Andeans be wooed to the advantages of civitas and “good order.”

The former semipriestly local nobility were at this time converted into purely secular “administrators” of royal subjects, who, like the landed gentry of the European dominions of Spain, were allowed to reign as “natural lords” (if only through the sufferance of the king). In pre-Columbian times, the hereditary elite were the patrons of the wak’a, ancestral cults (as representatives of “senior lines” in closer proximity to the gods than their subjects) through which their authority was legitimated at the same time as their subject communities were defined as collective descendants of ancestor deities. Such rites provided a positively laden value and conceptual framework that, by motivating a voluntary subjection of commoners to rulers, linked local kinship-residential units to ayllus, ayllus to kingdoms, and kingdoms to larger political units, including, for a short time, the Inca state. The destruction and replacement of such complex ritual-economic-political cults by Christian practices within reducción towns, and the displacement of noble authority by elective town councils, might therefore have represented a truly radical transformation of Andean cultures.

But while this organized effort at sociocultural reform might seem guaranteed to have eliminated the differentiation of “Indianness,” forces from both above and below mitigated against it: the Spanish semifeudal colony could not do without a labor force culturally constituted as such, and found that they could not make “Indians” work for them through direct rule, without the mediation of native nobles and resultant partial autonomy; the colonized, too, no matter how effective their tactics of appropriation and reinterpretation of colonial impositions, found that retaining limited autonomy under colonial conditions was only possible by reproducing their stigmatized Indianness.

On the one hand, Indians, as a category of person with limited rights, subject to the benevolent paternalism of the colonizers, could not be done away with without losing the prerogative of levyng forced labor, and without threatening the basis of aristocratic privilege (no hay Indias sin Indios, “there is no Indies without Indians,” went the popular refrain — invoked to curb both ethnical and genocidal excesses). Besides, these policies were undermined by both expedience and the very same legal arguments that justified the assertion of the king’s authority. For this reason, and because, as many attested, the Spaniards could not make the naturales (“naturals,” as Indians were sometimes called) do their bidding without the supplication of their hereditary lords, the latter were left in place, although their territories and ayllus were fractured and many of their ritual duties and prerogatives outlawed (see Murra 1968).

Conversely, the “reduced” Indians appropriated the institutions of doctrina (rural parish) and cabildo (town council), and their lessons, in a novel way. Christ was equated with the sun; the Virgin, with the moon; saints, with atmospheric mediating powers [such as lightning] capable of carrying Christian potencies to men (Gisbert 1980; Cock and Doyle 1979; Silverblatt 1988); while the Spaniards’ almost Manichean Christianity (Platt 1987) turned the ancestral deities “of below”—mana yapaca, the Aymara term for underworld chosen as a gloss for the Spanish hell—into the diabolical opponents of the heavenly host. The Christian concepts also articulated, in the cultural synthesis that took place in these towns, with the pastoral and sacrificial idioms of socialization and authority of preconquest days. “Indians” came, at least by the mid-seventeenth century, to regard themselves as civilized sons of a solarized Christ, their pre-Columbian ancestors as the defeated satanic race of a prehuman age, and the underworld place-deities that they continued to ritually celebrate as the sources of necessary chthonic potencies that, domesticated by Christian powers, could still sustain them (Abercrombie 1986). These anti- or pre-Christian underworld beings and powers are portrayed (by today’s “Indians”) in the likeness of the Spaniards’ image of Indians as Others [un-Christian and without buena policia regardless of Spanish efforts, as many colonial Spanish and contemporary urban accounts paint them]. The asymmetrical power of the colonial gaze ensured the alienation of the Indian self (pushing it into the nearby and well-remembered past), but guaranteed its retention, in the shape of the transformed Indians’ Other’s Other.

Fiesta-Cargo Systems and the Demise of Kingdoms and Hereditary Lords

It is ironic that the tactics of resistance should have been developed through the very institutions and doctrines that the colonizers had strategically imposed to erase the past and to destroy resistance, but that is precisely what happened. It was the priests’ responsibility to teach the ritual and doctrine of Christianity in the church during mass and catechism, but the Indians themselves were saddled with the cofradías, lay “confraternities” in the Spanish style, organized for the celebration of Christian feasts and transmission of the faith. In Spain and in colonial cities, these were formed along guild lines, with all of their mutual aid functions (Christian 1981; Celestino and Meyers 1981). But in the reducción towns, they became an essential structure for the articulation
of ayllus. In some cases, each ayllu may have become a separate cofradía and specialized in a particular saint cult (Celestino and Meyers 1981; Platt n.d.; Varon 1981). In the Bolivian area, all Indians in the district of the reducción town seem to have become automatic members of all cofradías of the reducción. That is, elaborate intra- and inter-ayllu turn systems developed to spread the weight and honors of the responsibility equitably around. I have already noted that elective town council (cabildo) posts were instituted as moiety-level rotational posts. Sometime during the seventeenth century, probably, but certainly by the mid-eighteenth, these systems of civil and ecclesiastical obligations merged into a single system throughout the region, becoming what is called, in the literature, the fiesta-cargo system, a "prestige" ladder or fixed individual career of ritual and civil obligations. Individuals also belonged to patrilineages and ayllus, however, and individual careers were intercalated (through patriline and ayllu rotational systems), to reproduce town-level ayllus. Data from the late eighteenth century make it clear that such rotational systems were also extended beyond town boundaries to create complex intertown and interregional rotational systems through which the kingdom links among town-ayllus and federation links among different kingdoms were sometimes reaffirmed (see AGNA 9.6.5.6, F56v-60v). Thus, it seems that while colonial impositions of this sort conspired against the hereditary nobility and their (pre-Columbian-shaped) polities, they could also be made to work for them.

Indeed, although they were in large measure prevented from participating in the cofradías and cabildos, the hereditary elites aimed to become the heads of these organizations (sometimes via end-run maneuver). For example, in Asanaqi, individuals who had reached the post of t'ilaqata in the rotational career system traveled to San Pedro de Condo, which had been the old capital. There they presented their staffs of office to Saint Peter, who is identified with the mountain Tata Asanaqi, and (most probably) were formally endorsed by the hereditary lord.

The hereditary elites' legitimacy was undermined, too, when they were forced by the Spanish to act as the henchmen who exacted the pound of flesh from their loyal subjects. Early on, in part through their efforts as legal advocates, some of these native aristocrats managed to buffer the impact of Spanish extractions of tribute and personal service (Rivera 1978; Stern 1982). A few, the "captains of the mita" who directed the labor levy to the great mining machine of Potosí, even tried to re-create lost glories through their organizational roles there (Sagnières 1987). But by the eighteenth century, Indians had deserted the labor draft and abandoned their origin towns in massive numbers, settling in other areas or even becoming permanent wage-workers in the mines to avoid the combined weight of mita levy, tribute, personal service to priest and mailku (the Aymara term for a hereditary lord), and that most-hated of eighteenth-century obligations, the requirement to purchase unneeded goods from profit-gouging Spanish provincial administrators (corregidores) at exorbitant prices (Colte 1980, O'Phelan 1985).

Leadership, Legitimacy, and Rural Rebellions

A third blow to the native lords' authority came from the priests. Whether out of greed, hunger for power, or humane concern for their flocks, priests often sided against the lords. The Llanquihue brothers, lords of Asanaqi in the town of San Pedro de Condo, apparently sent their priest, who had helped Indians in a suit against them, packing. In the latter case, when Indians from a nearby annex heard a rumor of the priest's exile, they stormed the town and murdered their kingdom lords (ANB EC 1781, no. 83).

From 1780 to 1783, rebellions extended throughout the Peruvian vice royalty, but the balance sheet of victims and alliances demonstrates that it was not a millenarian effort to displace all things Spanish and return to pre-Columbian forms. This was no longer possible. By the 1780s Hispanic and Catholic institutions and practices (and some Spaniards—at least, priests) had become necessary for "indigenous" societies. We can see this both in the nature of rebel fighting strategies and in the importance for rebels of colonial religion and administrative forms. In 1780 in the mining center of Auñagasta, for example, local officials learned that town moieties [from the adjacent groups Macha and Pocoata] were preparing to descend on the town for their traditional postconquest ritual battle (tinku) in order to jointly murder all the town's Hispanic residents. But they were going to do this during the September feast of the powerful, devil-slaying Saint Michael, which now provided the ritual matrix within which such battles were fought (AGNA 9.5.2.1).

Rebel leaders of the 1780s like Tupac Amaru, Tomas Catari, and 'Tupac Catari did not simply take advantage of the priests' hostility to corregidores for strategic purposes; they needed the priests to celebrate the mass. All of these rebel leaders, in fact, dragged priests [at least, those who were not active collaborators] about with them on their campaigns, along with saint images, because Christianity, or aspects of it, like the town and its cabildo and cofradía system, had become an integral part of "being Indian." Although some priests were killed, especially when they tried to give refuge to other Hispanic officials, no rebel leader proposed throwing Christianity or the priests aside in favor of solar idols and witchcraft. Similarly, though Tupac Amaru designated himself Inka Rey del Peru, he also called himself Vicerey; Tupac Catari, acting in such a role, appointed Oidores [col...
appears—"revisionist" and procolonial against the enlightened-individualism with which it struggles. So the synthesis of old colonial institutions of cabildo and cofradía tends still to be reproduced today, even in the midst of social change and fragmentation. This does not mean, however, that the "civilizing" project that accompanied conquest was a complete success, and Christianity and buena policía integrally transplanted. As I will show, its assimilation by the occupants of reducción towns was quite selective, and their interpretation different from what the colonizers might have liked.

**Christian Hegemony in K'ulta Political Theory**

To appreciate the nature of the "local" perspective on the colonial conjuncture, it is helpful to turn to a short example that illustrates the virtual interdependence of "Christian" and "indigenous" deities, and of the state and ethnic group. Elsewhere I have analyzed this in various of its manifestations. Here I will focus on the public fiesta rites by which local authorities are invested with power.

In K'ulta political thought, the power of locally produced authorities is conceived via a metaphor linking productive practice to that of social practice: authorities are respectfully addressed by their "subjects" as *Tata Llantiru,* "Father Herd-Leader," applying to them the "leaderly" qualities possessed in nonhuman "wild" form by the *llantiru* (Spanish *dealantero* = leader), the strong male llamas that lead the herd to and from pasture and to and from the maize-producing valleys to which K'ultas travel yearly with llama caravans. So authorities as ritual sponsors have been equated with the lead llamas, who are the sacrificial victims in fiesta-associated rites. This correspondence encapsulates the authorities' rise in status. They become leaders of the human herd, of which Christ is the herder, and, like Christ, herders of men.

The main events of all K'ulta fiestas—always involving a saint or Christian devotion—involve the acts of sacrifice and consumption of llamas. Events begin with an initial sacrifice in the llama corral in the sponsor's hamlet, accompanied by complex sequences of libation dedications. The llamas to be killed are then "made to flower," colored yarn being sewn into their ears as they are given chicha to drink and coca to chew. After the llamas' blood is dedicated to Tata (the sun, Jesus Christ), and while the meat of sacrificed llamas is still being butchered within the corral, the sponsor's wife-takers [his *taliiras*] don the beasts' pelts and dance in a humorously lascivious way, as *jaiachu* [literally, non-producer, figuratively, male alpaca], just at the moment when the sponsor is addressed, like the real sacrificed animals, *llantiru* [herd-leader]. Then the sponsor's entourage undertakes a mini-pilgrimage to
his “fiesta house” in the town of Santa Barbara de K’ulta.

On the way, the lead llamas are dressed in the sponsor’s ritual clothes (poncho, scarf, and montara [cowhide battle helmet]). Once there, there is a second sacrifice—of more inti males—and while the followers consume the llama meat during the obligatory banquet that follows, the sponsor is draped with gifts of locally woven woolen cloth in a rite parallel to that through which the sacrificial llamas have gone. He is then addressed as Tata Atawiri (Father Shepherd). On the last day of the feast, it is the turn of the saint image to pass through this process, being first stripped of its layers of woolen textiles and then passed on to the next year’s sponsor to be clothed again. The sponsor then distributes the carrying cloths worn by the saint to his followers, who wear them triumphantly back to the sponsor’s hamlet. Here the appropriation of qualities possessed by the saint, as a fragment of the primary celestial power, is clearly expressed.

As a result of these rites, sponsors take on a title otherwise reserved for Christ, “Father Herder,” and respond to their followers with the term t’ara, “herd.” In effect, the sacrificial sequences performed by sponsors as part of all saints’ feasts, and those performed as part of tribute collection, carnival rites, and national holiday sacrifices by cabildo authorities, establish the metaphorical transmutation of “herding” from the plane of “economic” production to that of social production, via the metaphorical equation of human ritual sponsor with their domesticated animal sacrificial victims. Here “interiorization” and “exteriorization” of leadership qualities among animal, human, and divine genera are accomplished with the particular aid of locally produced woolen cloth produced from the “natural” form “worn” by the llamas before it is given human clothing and its pelt converted into humans’ “cultural” skin (see also Turner 1980).

The sequence of events in the metacommunicative process of sacrifice and fiesta performance—and a founding myth describing the celestial origin of this process (analyzed in Dillon and Abercrombie 1988; see also Rasnake 1988)—make it clear that the model for the appropriation of “natural” powers for social purposes is, precisely, the Tata Atawiri who lives on high: Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God and Shepherd of Men. In the myth, it is the Solar-Christ’s conquest of “wild” pre-Columbian beings (the Supay-Chullpas) that creates the conditions required for “civilized” life. In this story, in which the Chullpas (the mumified corpses within pre-Columbian tombs) are portrayed as essentially prehuman, living in an age when animals and humans formed a single, “natural” community without cultivars or domesticates, seasons or death, the figures of the founding time—the Spanish conquest—achieve apotheosis, and colonial discourse is made into a first principle. The gods of the oppressors, residing prototypically in alax pacha [heaven] are required for the reproduction of K’ulta society, and not only of its authorities (who preside in the Spanish-founded reducción town), but of the very processes of food production.

Modern day “indigenous ethnic groups” and “indigenous cosmologies” are unintelligible apart from their struggle with the state: they are founded upon its existence, and are recreated only insofar as they can maintain, and mold to their own purposes, a “state within.” They are also, however, founded upon a vision (shared by rural people, in their images of wild, pre-Columbian Chullpas, and urban ones, in their images of rural people) of pre-Hispanic Indianness, now pushed back into not only a preconquest past, but a precultural one.

City people, however, have constituted themselves in complementary fashion, always via a discourse of mutual incomprehension carried out with “Indians” through a sort of cultural pidgin. Prevailing urban notions romanticize Indians, stripping them of their complex understandings of history and power relations and projecting them as living fossils into the Chullpa past, thus taking a version of one-half of the rural-dwellers’ own ambivalent identity sources for the whole. Urban “non-Indians” also enjoy “playing” Indians, as well as appropriating for themselves (and for their nationalist projects) a generalized indigenous ancestry. In addition, city-dwellers, and especially those most interested in “folklore” and anthropology, have adopted for themselves a very partial reading of “indigenous” cosmology, thereby creating for themselves an “original” and “chthonic” anticosmos that serves as diabolical foil to their “civilized” selves in the tragicomedy played out every day in urban class struggles and exteriorized each year in dance-drama such as those of Oruro’s carnival rites. There, we will find an “Indian” within the “non-Indian,” analogous to the “Chullpa within,” and the complement of “the state within,” K’ulta culture.

The Indian Within: Ethnicity and Urban Identities

As tumultuous change was in progress in the countryside, the cities experienced transformations as well. A series of revolts (some real, others merely feared and imagined; some led “from below,” some by “Creole” elites) jarred the cities and mining centers during the fractious eighteenth century. At stake, fundamentally, was the replacement of a relatively clear-cut two-class system whereby Spanish impositos gained fortunes administering productive enterprises operated by levied Indian labor (an activity from which the interstitial castas were essentially excluded), by a more complex system in which most city dwellers no longer fit neatly into either category. Increasingly important were the
To Be Indian, to Be Bolivian

rural kingdoms, but corresponding to no pre-Columbian polity. Made into a replica of a rural reducción, Oruro's ranchería became, like Potosí, a microcosm of the region from which it drew its labor force.

This “organic,” if invented, urban Indian society was integrated into a whole dominated by the Spanish parish, later the seat of the matriz [matrix or womb], the cathedral of the bishopric established there. Expressed through an asymmetry of power in a system of production, the colonial whole, at the level of the Spanish city, was also dramatized during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in certain orderly religious processions. In Corpus Christi, the body politic paraded in its aggregate parts, divided neatly into its component guilds [brotherhoods of Spaniards and craftsmen] and naciones [urban ayllus]. These marched in hierarchical order, led by the Alférez Real [royal standard-bearer], behind the host, ensconced in its solar-disk monstrance, in an allegory of submission to God and divinely appointed king. Reproduced in the fiestas reales [feasts of the royal rites-de-passage] and for special rogations when epidemics or ruinous weather threatened, such rituals also included dramatic presentations weaving sacramental plays [like Saint Michael’s conquest of Satan and the seven deadly sins] into allegories of divine conquest [like the battle of Moors and Christians], just as in the processions of Spain at the time (Arias 1980; Bayle 1951; Wardrop 1953). Such scenes in the New World differed from those of the Old in their insistence on redoubling the hierarchy of estates and offices with that of native nations. Ambiguities in the determination of nationhood, inherent in the colonial situation itself, were to produce the most disfiguring blemishes on this body politic.

From Indians to Creole Indians

On the one hand, among the inhabitants of the ranchería, ayllu Indians were held [conceptually at least] apart from the guilds, which were dominated initially by the mixed-blood castas [castes, like mestizos, mulattoes, etc.]. But as Indian workers settled into urban life, they progressively lost their ties to home “nations,” and turned to the craft guilds [and to guilds of specialist mining laborers] for their group affiliations... This produced a category known as “Creole Indians,” analogous to today’s mumbled and insulting cholo, urban folk without clear indices of rural ethnic pertinence but “Indians” just the same, in the Spanish and mestizo purview. In the 1680s when that century’s most elaborate census disclosed the extent of the problem for the royal fisc, the Viceroy Duque de la Palata tried to rectify the situation by ordering the return of all such Indians to their home provinces [Sanchez-Albornoz 1978]. This and similar efforts sought not only to buttress the flagging Indian levy

interstitial kinds of people such as the mass of indios criollos [Creole—city-born—Indians], mestizos, freed slaves, and a wide variety of intermixtures, demarcated by a baroque system of racial categories in eighteenth-century censuses. But a simpler, two-category system of ethnic ascription remained operative nonetheless. This bipolar order hinged, of course, on the transmutation to the colonial situation of the ancien régime distinction between plebeians who labored [Indians] and aristocrats who did not [Spaniards]. But the existence, first, of a native aristocracy, second, of categorically ambiguous racial-cultural mixes, and, third, of a host of intermediary occupational strata, as Indians moved permanently into the cities and thus lost the rural-ethnic “nationality” that made them clearly Indians, served to challenge the Indian/Spaniard opposition, and consequently the colonial order itself. This expansion of ambiguous or interstitial roles led to an increase in the complexity of “ethnic” categories, on the one hand produced by those who sought to index, via clothing, speech, and occupation, their departure from some stigmatized—more “Indian”—previous identity, and on the other by the continual effort from above to chill such movement by expanding the reach of the stigma to cover the new categories.

The city of Oruro began as a reducción named San Miguel de Oruro, but when silver was discovered on a nearby hillside in 1609, a Spanish settlement, San Felipe de Austria de Oruro (after Philip II), was established adjacent to the Indian town, which came to be known, like the Indian parishes of Potosí, as la ranchería (Cajías 1883, 1887; Crespo 1967; Mesa and Gisbert 1970). As in many of the early colonial towns meant for Spaniards, farm parish boundaries insulated the Spaniards both from the Indians, and from common labor and the manual trades [oficios]. The latter had become the metier of mestizos as well as an ever-increasing number of indios ausentes who had fled their homelands.

Although there was no forced levy in Oruro, as in Potosí, Spanish mine owners attracted Indian labor through a variety of means, some coercive. But the necessity, after Viceroy Toledo, to pay tribute in coined silver obligated Indians to seek wages in any case. In the first century after its foundation, Oruro’s single Indian parish [the ranchería of San Miguel] filled up with Indians from the southern part of the viceroyalty of Peru. On arrival, they were grouped with others from the same “home” provinces into newly created ayllus, now named after these provinces of origin. Thus, Indians were to be constrained within their naciones even as they fled them. To complete the reproduction of rural reducción structures, cabildo-type authorities were established within the new ayllus, and a new “lordship” was created to rule over all of these: thus, over the (urban) ayllu Indians of Oruro, the Spanish appointed a hereditary cacique gobernador [governor chief] analogous to the native lord of...
pool and the higher tributes paid by Indians who remained in their “original” homes, but also to reestablish the clear lines between Spanish owners and [levied Indian workers. Likewise, royal officials entertained ideas about repatriating mestizos (or at least the “illegitimate” ones, without ties to admitted Spanish progenitors) to the provinces of their Indian mothers. But the urban economy now required these skilled workers and craftsmen. In the mining sector, it was the castas and the Creole Indians who served, now rather than rural natives, as the link between Spanish owners and raw Indian-labor recruits. They performed the roles of work-gang leaders (the whip-wielding caporales) and filled the need for skilled labor in the increasingly technical mining sphere [Bakewell 1984; Buechler 1981].

Economic necessity or not, this “nonethnic,” and to a large degree, “non-Indian” mass proved a thorn in the side of the Spanish elite, especially insofar as their unofficial activities, well organized within the guild associations they had formed, produced a burgeoning entrepreneurial system. Replete with a multitude of clandestine ore mills and foundries, guilds of allied mestizos, mulattoes, and Creole Indians, drew disaffected mita-Indian recruits and even an ambiguous class of Spaniards into their ranks, making up an “underground economy” that diverted silver from the official mills and foundries of the elite [Tandeter 1981; Martínez 1975–1977]. Empowered by surreptitiously wresting the means of production from Spanish hands, this was, indeed, an unusually capitalist proto-proletariat.

Identified as a threat, not only economically but to the whole colonial order, this sector was stigmatized as a plebe, precursor to the “popular class” of today. From the Spanish perspective, they formed a particularly pernicious form of debased Indigenous, a wild and unruly lot. The Spanish governor of Potosí, characterized one such group, known as Q’aqchas, in the following terms: “These Cagacha [Q’aqcha] people live like barbarians, without living up to the precepts of religion, since when the Church calls its faithful during Holidays, those who are employed in theft attend neither mass nor Doctrina (catechism), nor any of the other exercises of obligation” [AGI Charcas 481: 3v–4r].

Owners of “official” mills thus argued that these “fallen” Indians could be saved (along with the Spanish monopoly on power) by sending them back to their rural parishes, where they might yet acquire buena policía and become proper Indians. By the eighteenth century, the body politic had been drawn and quartered, and religious processions like sixteenth-century Corpus rites had given rise to devotions divided according to stations, independently organized via guilds and brotherhoods, but also calendrically dispersed and with distinct objects of devotion. The guild rites of the emergent plebe were denigrated by the

“decent folk,” who stayed indoors during such processions. Although it proved impossible to return this plebe to their presumed rural roots, their guild rites were constrained to the sphere of wildness, itself relegated precisely, as are those of today’s miners and the “ideal typical” religious practice of today’s popalacho, to that semitolerated moment of pre-Lenten excess that is carnival.

From Spaniards to Creole-Spaniards to Bolivians

Even as the Spanish elite struggled against the emergence of an empowered urban proletariat, which threatened the fundamental category distinctions between colonizers of European origin and nación-based Indian colonized, problematic nationality became increasingly salient—and divisive—within the category of “Spaniard.” Like the Creole Indians whose Indianness—and subjugability—was suspect, because of their birth within the Spanish urban sphere, the loyalty and civilization of those whom the accident of birth in the colonies made into Creole Spaniards were suspect as far as “metropolitan” were concerned [Lafaye 1976]. Thus, the best administrative posts, and the possibility of parlaying power in the colonies into power within the metropole (in Spain itself), were limited by the Council of the Indies to “real” Spaniards [Anderson 1983; Pagden 1987]. Creoles like Bolívar (who got his comeuppance in a failed social-climbing effort in Madrid), were understandably frustrated, even if they had for the most part managed to achieve positions of “aristocratic” power in the colonies. Erupting finally into a war of independence in the first quarter of the nineteenth century, the frustrations were given an early airing in the city of Oruro during the general rural rebellion of the 1780s.

As rural fighting spread to the Audiencia capital to the west and to the commercial power of La Paz to the north, some of the most powerful Creoles of Oruro decided to seize the moment (the early days of February 1781, near the time of carnival) to achieve independence from Chapetón domination. After grabbing control of the local militia, Oruro’s Creoles, joined by mestizos and urbanites of all sorts, seem to have taken it into their heads to respond to the earlier appeals by Indian rebel leaders (the Amarus and Cataris) to form a common front. The revolution was quashed by royalist troops within ten short days. But in the meantime, Creole idealists lived to regret their actions.

In the opening bouts, Creoles called upon the rural Indians of the region to support them by invading the city, which they did, in the thousands. But how to tell Creole Spaniard from Chapetón from mestizo? The answer was for all of the Europe-affiliated to dress in Indian garb to greet their newfound “countrymen” and lead them to
their proper targets, which resulted in the almost complete elimination of the Spanish-born competition in the space of hours. But within days, Oruro’s Creole rebels found that these Indian allies had their own ends in mind, such as the redistribution of recently collected tribute, and were far from unanimous in their support of Creole and mestizo goals. Subsequently, the Creoles found themselves under attack by the rural Indians (Cajías de la Vega 1982).

After such experiences, Creoles were warier of Indians (and vice versa) in their subsequent struggle for independence against a crippled Spain in the early nineteenth century. “Oppressed” Creoles, which is to say Spaniards-turned-oligarch-Bolivians, did not choose to identify Indians as their spiritual elder brothers in national identity until much later. During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Liberal policies forged an alliance between Creoles and rural land-holding mestizos, by recognizing mestizos’ private claims to (usually usurped) lands. The object of such alliances was, ultimately, Indian ethnicide (Platt 1984; Rivera 1984). Creoles may have thought they were drawing a firmer boundary between savagery and civilization, more effective in combatting the Indian threat. But as Platt (1987: 320) argues, they had taken in a “Trojan Horse,” putting mestizos in position for their ultimately successful drive to national hegemony after the 1952 revolution. Already in the 1940s, in the wake of the disastrous Chaco War, a burst of growth in the cities fueled a rise in the economic, political, and intellectual stature of the mestizo sector of the population, many of whom had served as officers in the war. With their rise to economic and political power came the indigenism that has marked Bolivian political rhetoric increasingly since the 1952 revolution.

But even before the victory of the 1950s revolution, providentialists had begun to discover and promote folk culture: they joined the ranks of the urban dance groups, swelling with pride in the Indian origins of such groups as they did so. The new Creole elite, made up, now, of former mestizos and their more European brethren within a now-wider class of gente decente (decent folk), has once again put on Indian clothing, as they did in self-protection in 1781. But this time they seek to become proud, if temporary, faux Indians in dance, rather than in humiliating flight. The carnival representation of Indians in Oruro may be a joyous celebration of (reinvented) roots, but it involves another equally important aspect. For they dance as a personal sacrifice to the city’s patroness, the Virgin of the Mineshaft. We should not be surprised to learn that this Virgin’s fame reboots to her alleged conquest—in the days before the Spanish conquest—of evil Indian antigods, a feat capable of giving even the preconquest fatherland the caché of civilization.
the offending creatures' heads, turned them to stone in the same act. The monsters became the toads, now fossilized in the city's several stone genius loci (Guerre Gutierrez 1970; Nash 1979).

While the "toads" may have been killed by the Virgin in her earlier incarnation as Isis, they are still held to be very powerful places, spots where Teuchic or chthonic forces from the Indian past—held by city folks to be the same as those of the religion thought to be still practiced in secret by contemporary Indians—can be mobilized by the faithful. These places receive special devotions on the first Friday of each month, but with much greater intensity on carnival Friday, the day before the forces of wildness emerge onto the streets. Nash (1979) describes these rites in some detail (analyzed also in Taussig 1980), focusing on those of the miners.

On the Friday of carnival, miners pour libations to the Tios (anthropomorphic figurines with large and erect phalluses, found in significant tombs in each mine); then offer a white llama in sacrifice. Afterward, the mines are closed for a week while these beings eat and reinvigorate the veins of ore. The sacrifice is performed in conjunction with special devotions to an image of the Virgin of the Mineshaft located at the entrance to each mine. Then, while the mines are closed, miners engage in devotions to the Virgin of the Mineshaft (whose main image is located in a special chapel above the center of the city), along with most of the rest of Oruro's population. The choice of Friday for the sacrifice is not arbitrary: in the countryside, Friday is especially maleficent, not good for sacrifice. But in the mines and cities, every Friday (and to a lesser extent, Tuesday) the toads and the Tio-Supay are thought to be receptive to sacrifices, especially on the first Fridays of every month and carnival Fridays, days when in official Catholicism stations of the cross are performed in memory of Christ's sacrifice.

But it is not only good Catholics, performing the stations of the cross, and Oruro's miners who perform first Friday rites, but the bulk of Oruro's population as well. The majority stick with the burning of incense-offering bundles within their businesses or homes, often presided over by hired shamans (curanderas [Sp.], yatiris [Aym.], yachaq [Qu.]). The object is to increase well-being, especially of the economic sort. In some cases, businessmen have shamans "consecrate" a special amulet, to draw customers and increase sales. The offering bundles, or mesas as they are called, are sold in quantity at special stands in all of Oruro's markets, and business is brisk on first-Friday evenings.

A fraction of devotees, especially petty street merchants and truck drivers, burn their mesas at one of the stone relics of the "toads" conquered by the Virgin. Like the miners' Tio-Supay, the everyday citizens' toads and the chthonic Wari/Puchama conjunct reached through them are especially efficacious in connection with lucre. Their efficacy, at least in generating an identity that satisfactorily taps the wild powers apparently unattainable for nonbelieving, civilized folk, depends in great part, like the K'ulta sacrificial scheme, on the recreation of a particular strain of history. This history superposes the powers of Christian beings over those defeated but still-powerful forces left over from the previous, chthonic "Indian" age. Consequently, most practitioners assume that their rites are authentically "Indian," and take the deities addressed, the toads and Pachamama and the Tios, for "Indian" gods. The Indians whose cosmos corresponds to these urban beings, however, may only be found a few days each year, dancing in the streets.

Over five thousand Orureños, mostly from the urban bourgeoisie, dance through the streets each year during carnival. Organized into cofradia-like troupes dedicated to the Virgin of the Mineshaft, the vast majority of dancers are costumed as wild Indians and pre-Columbian devils. In carnival's climax, all of these teluric beings—associated with pre-Columbian Chullpas and mine tio-supays, shed their wildness, their proud links to the past, and bear mass before the Virgin. The variety of motives for joining groups and meanings attached to dancing within Oruro today makes interpretation of the whole a difficult endeavor. A whole social history and morphology, too complex to analyze in the present context, parades through the streets during carnival nowadays, in which membership in a specific group often indexes neighborhood of residence, class background, ideological stance, and social aspirations of those who join.

The imagined Indian who is briefly lionized in carnival costume is not the contemporary professed Christian type who lives in places like K'ulta, but an Indian from the past, one whose religion is dedicated entirely to underworld beings like those that Oruro's Virgin conquered, in myth, and domesticates, in pantomime, at carnival's end. Orureños' creation of their "masqued" images of suppressed past identities, forms but a prelude to the resuppression of such identities in the abnegations of Lent (as of Ash Wednesday) that presage renewed submission to the Christ of Easter and of official church doctrine. Regardless of the diverse origins and orientations of Oruro's dance groups, and the brevity of their masques, all represent, in some form, an "Indian within," elevated to a high and powerful rank within urban "folk" religion, as it is within a nationalism in some need of an anti-imperialist and legitimating identity. There may have been no Indians before Columbus, and there may be extremely few self-identified Indians in Bolivia today, but in this nation founded by the "illegitimate" American-born among America's European conquerors, there is no legitimate citizen without Indian alters to be represented.
Conclusion: Cultures in Colonial Discourses

Like rural dwellers who call upon the dead and *Chullpa* forces to aid them in production, only to exile them once again, city people do likewise with the Indian within them, externalized in dance as a form of personal sacrifice, and then dutifully "re-repressed." The *Chullpas* and "Indians" thus brought into being are, however, very different entities, even if the general shape of the colonial discourse in which both are engaged seems to remain constant. It would be as foolhardy to lump them together as some generalized Andean culture as it would be to treat them as the still-separate products of entirely discrete cultures. In the Andes, serious distortions result when we seek to portray indigenous cultures in an allochthonous [Fabian 1983] ethnographic present. Even if our goal is to represent a clandestine culture of resistance, cleaned up by expeditiously "air-brushing" out [in Clifford's 1986 metaphor], all the "our cultural" impurities that mar our vision of a fully "Other" Other, we end up only with another abstract semantic schema, a *virtual langostrue* [as a hard-bitten Braudelian Sausure might have expressed it], which exists not across time, but at no time. When we excise the Hispanic and Christian from our accounts of rural Andean cultures and paint them as purely ethnom, insular indigenous cosmos, we deny the counterhegemonic effect achieved by rural peoples when they subject their own representations of an uncivilized, antinomian past to the enculturing transformations of their brand of Christianity. To peg them to this vision of a pre-Colombian past, even if the *Chullpa* age is in some sense a past that has been alienated from them, is to reproducing the urban/Hispanic stereotype of rural Indians, and make ourselves into colonial coconspirators.

These related images of Indians and *Chullpas*, distinct in the meanings they engender within the action contexts in which they are brought into being, both describe, within their respective forms of historical consciousness, a remembered past that must be transformed by heavenly Christian powers in order to become fully human. As Taussig (1987:377) has put it:

these "memories" [are] hegemonic fictions read into the past as an outcome of the ideological struggles of the present—an invented tradition, fictions held by both Christianized Indians, such as those of the Sibundoy Valley [and we might add, the Andes in general], and the Church, as well as by the colonists as a group.

Both forms of historical consciousness repress and then resurrect wild pasts, which might be ultimately transcended within their social narra-
gives but are at the same time ineradicable, converted into needed sources of power and generation within their respective systems of social production. I am not suggesting that Ouro's carnival and K'ult'a's fiesta enact the same narrative. On the contrary, their narrative structures are quite different, and "formulate different narrative meanings, and they constitute those meanings in different modalities of social time and space. These in turn are correlated with different forms of social agency and different patterns of relationship between social actors and processes" [Turner 1988: 276]. It is true that such symbolic orders are the means by which political economies, structured systems of inequality, reproduce themselves. This fact leads some [such as Friedlander 1975] to suggest that we should contribute to the future genesis of a redemptive class consciousness by refusing to credit such ideologies, turning instead to class analysis (and so the ritual systems by which rural ethnic groups produce themselves are instead to be considered the ideological instruments by which they are oppressed as a peasantry). But this is to miss the point that "the way in which relations in any system are signed is an irreducible part of its reality" [Comaroff 1987: 312], and, consequently, may become instrumental in challenging and changing that reality. Redemption is possible, in the discursive narratives of conquest in which "Indians" and "Chullpas" persist, not because such schemas create an ideological smoke screen to conceal the origin of the structured system of inequality to which they give form, but precisely because these images, referring always to concrete social groups, make it "virtually impossible to ignore the dependence of meaning on politics—in this case colonial, racist, and class oppression" [Taussig 1987: 391].

Colonials may have tried to extirpate Indians' "memories" of the power of their precolonic past, but:

the Church and its culture of conquest were in fact strengthening them as a new social force, ensuring the transmission of myth into reality and of memory into the future. Yet while a mystique was thus built into the past to haunt the living as mal aire [the "evil wind" that blows up from *chullpa* tombs], this same invented past could be seized for magical power to thwart not only mal aire but the vast range of distressful conditions ascribable to sorcery. [Taussig 1987: 377]

Taussig describes some forms of intercultural shamanism—specific to the Sibundoy valley in Colombia—by which, he suggests, it may be possible to rework or undo "the history of sorcery with its memory," perhaps disordering the structures "whereby history has put memory at the service of colonization" [Taussig 1987: 391–392]. While the specific
forms of shamanism evoked by Taussig—invoking the use of hallucinogens—may not be characteristic of the Bolivian Andes (where hallucinogens are generally not employed), shamans devoted to the cure of non-Indians through the invocation of Indian wilderness do excellent business in Bolivia's cities and pilgrimage centers. Yet, these shamans, whose commercial success hinges excessively, perhaps, on the embodiment and commoditization of the urban image of Indian wilderness, do not, I would argue, constitute the most effective forms of rural counter-hegemony. This can be found, instead, in the appropriation of hegemonic powers in meaning orders such as K'ult'a's sacrificial fiestas and libation "memory paths." The specialized shamanic forms of city and pilgrimage centers—which accompany and give expression to rural-urban linkages through petty marketing and labor migration—contribute their share to the effect. They do so, however, through the structured miscommunication that they engender, as a pidginized and personal contact point between discourses that may be historically linked, but continue (as long as each other's image of its alter is affirmed through such links) to be shielded from one another as interpretive contexts, as distinct foci of cultural production.

I have here used the term discourse, qualified as colonial to highlight its asymmetrical power dimension, as an aid in conceptualizing the mutually internalizing relationship between rural and urban poles in a more embracing sociocultural order. The term is, however, problematic. On the one hand, it reinforces a tendency to latch onto easy oppositions (like rural/urban, Indian/state, etc.) as hypothesized speakers engaged in discourse. But cultures and the groups they constitute do not speak to one another, it is their members who formulate and share images of cultural alters, and interact with individuals from other milieu (as in urban shamanism, pilgrimage rites, marketing). From the essentialized group perspective, one might imagine two partially intersecting discourses, but each involves an imaginary, self-constructed alter, even if both assume it to be embodied in "real" Others.

Another difficulty with discourse ensues from imagining it in the singular, when in reality members of multiple contexts of cultural communication evoke, for distinct ends, varying images of cultural alters. Cultural orders are not closed systems; they assume and interpret cultural others with whom they, periodically, engage in more overt forms of contact and struggle. But there is a degree of insulation between the K'ult'a fiesta-sacrifice and the Oruro carnival, an insulation born of prejudice and exclusion (which we call, in the rural context, clandestinity). And this insulation creates a degree of interpretive closure that the systemic and individual links between rural and urban contexts do not penetrate. It is, of course, an extreme oversimplification to reduce the many sorts of communicative contexts that do generate such partially closed interpretive systems to two, as I have done by privileging urban carnival and rural fiesta.

Examining the full range of "sub-" and "intercultural" meaning contexts within the rural and urban areas and between them is a task beyond the scope of this chapter. I must nevertheless suggest that shifting from a "semantic-grid" to a "pragmatic interaction context" framework for cultural analysis opens an analytical Pandora's box, one in which we must imagine a great multiplicity of "cultures" overlapping in a great many ways; sometimes intersecting outright, along a border, but more often segmentally embedded or cross-cutting one another through individuals' plural "memberships" in them. Not all are of the same type or scale or significance. For the purposes of my own argument I have privileged two sorts, and have downplayed some of the cross-cutting contexts/foci that make these less distinct (shamanism, pilgrimage rites, urban migrants' clubs, marketing, etc.). I have done so in part because these latter have, of late, received so much attention (as in Taussig 1987) that they threaten to overshadow the degree to which frontier sorceries fail to create a single discourse, a fully shared interpretive field, out of the conjunction of Spaniard and Indian, and of city and countryside. This continuing failure contributes to the continued success of cultural resistance to colonial hegemonies, even as it thereby helps to reproduce the system of domination.

Bolivian "Indians" and their "cultures" may be, as successive national regimes have had it, either the salvation of the nation or the principal obstacle to its development, but the images of them entertained in rites such as Oruro's carnival (like images of state-Christian power internalized in rural cultural contexts) will be at the heart of national development—and the development of a national identity as well as a multitude of "ethnic" identities within the nation—for many years to come, especially as the "Indians" they purport to represent come increasingly to adopt the Other's Other as their own internal demon. It seems to me that the challenge to culture theory that confronts us as we face up to the complexities and ambiguities of partially intersecting urban and rural (and intermediary) spheres of colonial discourse in places like Bolivia will be anthropology's internal demon for many years to come as well.

Notes

The fieldwork from which the ethnohistorical and ethnographic cases of K'ult'a and Asamaq have been drawn was carried out between 1979 and 1982, and was supported by doctoral research fellowships from Fulbright-Hays, Sigma XI, the Center for Latin American Studies and Division of Social Sciences at the University of Chicago, the Whatcomb Museum, and Fulbright IIE, and is
presented in Abercrombie [1986]. Research on colonial ethnogenesis in eighteenth-century rebellions (in the AGI, Seville, during 1987), was supported by a postdoctoral fellowship from the U.S.-Spanish Joint Committee on Cultural and Educational Cooperation. Research during 1988 on carnival in Oruro was made possible by postdoctoral grants from the Joint Committee on Latin American Studies of the ACLS and SSRC, from Fulbright, and from the Wenner Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research. Revisions on this chapter were carried out while I was a Mellon Fellow at the Stanford Humanities Center during the 1988–1989 academic year. I thank all of these institutions for their support. Discussions with Rafael Sanchez were instrumental in formulating, in an earlier version of this chapter, some of the ideas developed here. Mary Dillon, who accompanied me as co-worker in most of the above research endeavors, made extensive comments and criticism that have led to substantive changes. I have also made free use of comments and criticism offered by Nancy Fattal, Ruth Mazo Karras, and other participants in the Ethnohistory Seminar at the University of Pennsylvania, where I presented (in November 1988) one of the arguments developed here. Finally, I must acknowledge the criticism of Greg Urban and the participants of the Austin conference that gave rise to this book, which has also had an impact on revisions. As always, I alone bear the responsibility for the shortcomings of the final product.

1. The main exception in Bolivia is the recent appropriation of the term by Katarismo, the La Paz–based Indian nationalist movement, which tries to revalue “Indian” in a way comparable to North America’s “black pride” (see Albé 1975).

2. Ayllu is a name for a unit of social organization about which there is much confusion in the Andean literature, in part owing to the wide variability among the sorts of units to which it is applied in different regions. In the K’ulta and Macha case, an ayllu is a political and territorial unit, composed of many exogamous patrilineal/hamlets among which the ayllu lands are divided (except for certain lands held in common among all the patrilines), and in defense of which often feuding lineages will fuse in lands known as ch’axwes (see Platt 1987).

3. Hamlets and patriline are often, but not always, identical. Some hamlets are divided into more than one patriline, while some patrilines include more than one hamlet.

4. I use the term kingdom here with some trepidation, since it implies monarchy, whereas the Andean norm was dual organization. No unambiguous native terms for these units have emerged from the documents. Platt [1987] chooses étnico group for such units, while Silliman [1988] uses nacional.

5. This particular land title, copied into a 1940s K’ulta petition to the Villarred government, is in the possession of J.C., an elder leader of the area. Yuspayraran.

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5. Being and Becoming an Indian in the Vaupés

Jean E. Jackson

Introduction

Tukanoans, the indigenous inhabitants of the Vaupés region of southeastern Colombia, are being introduced to a new form of Indian consciousness as a consequence of their increasing incorporation into the Colombian nation-state. This chapter argues that the nascent self-awareness Tukanoans are acquiring represents a significant shift from their traditional notions of themselves as tropical forest Indians and as Tukanoans to one more akin to ethnic group consciousness. An ethnic group is here conceived of as a recognizably distinct group of people substantially embedded in a larger society (see Barth 1969). Rather than a separate culture, an ethnic group is to be thought of as a subculture, its inventory of culturally distinct traits having been produced to a significant extent by interaction with other sectors of the society. Traditional tribal cultures are usually conceptualized as having been formed by factors such as isolation and adaptation to a specific ecological niche, with any extratribal contact generally limited to interaction with neighbors. While Tukanoan culture differs in some significant respects from this ideal type, as present-day Tukanoans evolve into an ethnic group, we can say that traditional Tukanoan culture fits the tribal schema more than the newer one.

This chapter examines an indigenous rights organization in the Vaupés, using it as a springboard for understanding how Tukanoans' concept of themselves is beginning to change in its essential nature. In a sense, then, this chapter is not so much about being Indian as becoming Indian. What is particularly valuable in an analysis of the Tukanoan case is that we can see the beginnings of a "tribal" group becoming incorporated into the dominant society to such an extent that virtually all of the cultural forms comprising their legacy from the past are being redefined, reevaluated, and assigned new functions. Of course, in a region so vast, some Tukanoans (a minority) have traveled along this road quite a bit,