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### **Author**

Stefano Varese, Guillermo Delgado and Rodolfo meyer

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## **Indigenous Anthropologies. Beyond Barbados.**

Stefano Varese, Guillermo Delgado and Rodolfo Meyer

*They say that we do not know anything  
That we are backwardness  
That our head needs changing  
for a better one  
They say that some learned men  
are saying this about us  
These academics who reproduce  
Themselves  
In our own lives  
What is there on the banks of  
these rivers, Doctor?  
Take out your binoculars  
And your spectacles  
Look if you can.  
Five hundred flowers  
From five hundred different types  
of potato  
Grow on the terraces  
Above abysses  
That your eyes don't reach  
Those five hundred flowers  
Are my brain  
My flesh*

J.M. Arguedas, *A call to certain academics*

The Peruvian poet, writer and anthropologist José María Arguedas above “A Call to Certain Academics” in Quechua just a few years before his death in 1969. A foundational voice in Peruvian and Latin American anthropology, Arguedas was born “white” *and* mestizo in 1911 in the Peruvian Andes. The son of a provincial middle class lawyer, as a young child he was relegated by his unloving stepmother to indigenous

servants and commoners who raised and nurtured him in Quechua language and culture until he was eight years old. This short formative period of Arguedas' life transformed him into an Andean *Runa*, a blue eyed, light skin indigenous person who could speak and write equally well in Quechua and Spanish and who soon became one of the most outspoken defenders of the millions of Andean indigenous peoples of Peru. Arguedas began to publish in Quechua and Spanish in his early twenties. At age thirty he published his first novel *Yawar Fiesta* (1941). In the following editions of the novel Arguedas included an essay that he had published in 1950 in the journal *Mar del Sur* (Arguedas, 1950). In this essay Arguedas writes as one of the very first indigenous anthropologists about the characters of his novel, the indigenous community, the Andes, the *indios*, the *mestizos*, the town, and the provincial élite. His descriptive analysis of the social setting of the novel is clearly anthropological so is his definition of some of the terms he uses throughout his work: *indio*, *Indigenista*, *Indianista*. Arguedas, however, rejects the notion that his fiction writings can be called *indigenista*. "... my novels, *Agua* and *Yawar Fiesta* have been called *indigenista* or Indian. And that is not the case. It's a matter of their being novels in which the Andean Peru appears with all its elements, in its disturbing and confused human reality, in which the Indian is only one of many different characters." (Arguedas 1985: XIII).

In 1963 Arguedas earned a doctoral degree in anthropology at the National University of San Marcos, Lima, with a comparative dissertation on the Spanish peasant communities and the indigenous Andean communities (Arguedas, 1963). Thereby, he officially entered in Peru's anthropological profession and academia which in the last few decades had grown dramatically under the patronage of other Andean archaeologists-

ethnographers. Some of the early anthropologists, such as Julio C. Tello and Luis E. Valcárcel, were Andean by birthplace and, at least in the case of J.C. Tello, were Quechua speakers and members of indigenous communities. Before them, in the early twentieth century other intellectuals, writers and artists had contributed to the establishment of a school of thought, creativity and political activism that became known, throughout Latin America, as *indigenismo*. What is different in the case of José María Arguedas is that until very recently in modern Peru very few intellectuals (social scientists or humanists) were willing to accept in public their indigenous ancestry and much less claim a generic indigenous identity or a specific one (Quechua, Aymara, Moche, Uru) or any other indigenous affiliation of the dozens of ethnicities existing in the country. Arguedas, a “white mestizo”, educated and socialized by Quechua peoples, was the first intellectual and trained anthropologist of modern Peru who was willing to openly abandon his class and ethnic origin and fully assume the despised cultural identity of the impoverished and disenfranchised natives of Peru. This existential position and political decision earned him a high degree of ostracism by the intellectual élite of Peru and arguably some level of marginalization by the literary community of Latin America (Vargas Llosa 1996).

The dialogue that Arguedas had hoped to open between indigenous Andean and the academic anthropologists and intelligentsia of Peru failed at that time. The colonial and Eurocentric formation of Peru’s intellectual constituency was unprepared to accept a conversation that implied a thorough process of de-colonization, the acknowledgement of different epistemologies, and the possibility of an indigenous anthropology: “*What is there on the banks of these rivers, Doctor?*”

In this chapter, we discuss the artificiality of the indigenista/indigenous divide that has been underscored since the late 1940s by Mexico's governmental policy toward indigenous peoples and followed closely by most of the Latin American states with larger demographic contingents of aboriginal peoples. "Indigenismo," from Mexico to Argentina, has become the dominant discourse (and policy) on indigenous peoples elaborated and imposed by the state, while "indianismo" is increasingly meaning the Indians speaking for themselves. While indigenismo aspires to be a hegemonic argument that neutralizes alternative visions on issues of multiethnicity, indianismo, in its various and multifaceted expression, is the counter-hegemonic and pluralistic response that opens the dialogue of the whole society on the central theme of the "right to diversity."

### **The Past in the Future**

Three hundred and fifty years before Arguedas wrote his poem *A call to certain academics*, Huaman Puma de Ayala, a Quechua native intellectual and scholar from the Central Andean region of Huánuco in Peru wrote explicitly for King Philip III of Spain the long treaty *Nueva corónica y buen gobierno* [1615] (Adorno 1988) as the first ever systematic critique of European colonialism in the Americas<sup>1</sup>. Huaman Puma was blatantly opposed to the direct rule of the invading foreigners and argued strongly in favor of land and territorial restitution to the indigenous peoples as well as the restoration of the original Andean governance and polities. Strongly anticlerical and anti-bureaucratic, he condemned the rapacity, corruption, and thievery of the Spaniards, while acknowledging the ideal expectations and possible benefits of the imported Christianity. Huaman Puma's acceptance of the foreigners' faith, however, is mediated by his radical symbolic reinterpretation of Christian cosmology. In his drawing "*Mapamundi* of the

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<sup>1</sup> For this section on Huaman Puma de Ayala we draw on Rolena Adorno's (1988) excellent study.

Kingdom of the Indies” [1615] (Adorno 1988: 89-99) Huaman Poma reorganizes the conventional European symbolic representation of the world in Andean indigenous terms: the center of the world is now Cusco, not Jerusalem, the six cosmic axes (north, south, orient, occident, zenith, nadir) are now transformed in the four “corners” (*Tahuantinsuyu*: four *suyu*) and two cosmic poles of the indigenous *axis mundi*: upper/lower (*hanan/hurin*) which are now part of an indigenous cardinal points system that reconfigures the universe as social, cultural, “natural” home of the indigenous peoples. The indigenous Andean community, or *ayllu*, is once again recomposed and re-founded by Huaman Puma’s description and analysis as a cosmic site of multiple dualities related through the principles of complementarity and reciprocity.

Huaman Puma’s dictum: “Pachacama, maypim canqui?” (“Creator of the world, where are you?) refers to both the loss of the knowledge of God by previous indigenous generations, and the chaos or inversion of a world order which has been brought about by the European conquest. The fact “that there is no God and no king. They are in Rome and in Castille” (Adorno 1988: 140) marks, for Huaman Poma, a theological and ontological disconnection, as well as a political distance separating Andean indigenous peoples from any form of legitimate authority. It is this distance—symbolized by the far off European king and the dismembered and buried Inca monarch--that causes Human Pumas to doubt the possibility of dialogue across barriers between differing civilizations (Adorno 1988: 141-142). Toward the end of his “Letter to the King” and after having produced hundreds of pages of writings and drawings of critical indigenous ethnography and colonial sociology, Puma becomes a skeptical anthropologist who mistrusts the prospect of ever achieving cultural communication between the indigenous and the

Spanish worlds, separated by fundamental ontological difference. His final conclusion is that European modes of thinking are inadequate to recount and decipher American indigenous experiences before and after Spanish invasion. This indigenous anthropological precursor rejects the fundamental Christian concepts of theology, history and justice as well as the narratives that support such world views, while unmasking the intellectual and philosophical enterprises that were all created to justify and memorialize the colonial domination and oppression of indigenous peoples (Adorno 1988: 142-143). Two hundred and fifty years later Europe would witness, with Karl Marx, a similar radical disclosure of the profound reasons for doubting the honesty and trustworthiness of the intellectual undertaking of European élites in regard to the poor and the non-European world.

At this point a preliminary accounting is due regarding what we can call *Indigenous Anthropologies*. On one hand José María Arguedas, a white/mestizo Andean person is reshaped into an indigenous *Runa*, (Quechua speaker and anthropologist) who expresses in tragic manner the radical difference of cultural values co-existing in modern Peru as well as the extreme difficulty of communication between the two worlds. In these worlds indigenous and non-indigenous peoples in Peru, divided by racist and ethnic prejudices, are equally oppressed by a delusion of illegitimacy brought about by a false sense of history and cultural misrepresentations; all of which are sanctified by and are immersed in a “scientific” anthropology that can hardly acknowledge epistemic cleavages and separate rationalities. What good does it do to study years of anthropology if your own culture, your mother tongue, your history, your peoples are all concealed by a scientific apparatus that makes your own indigenous reflection an alienated endeavor? On

the other hand, Huaman Puma, one of the first American indigenous critics of colonialism failed at that time in his anthropological enterprise, while still accomplishing a monumental ethnography of Andean society. In his effort to translate and interpret both cultural worlds, Huaman Puma was coerced into using the invaders' language, Spanish, and with it, all of its intellectual and scholarly arsenal. Huaman Puma's ethnography remained hidden in the archives of Europe for three hundred years, when a few members of the intellectual élite of Latin America, Europe and the U.S. rediscovered the text, interpreting it not as a complex hermeneutics of the indigenous peoples' world but rather as a historical document helpful to interpret the colonial establishment.

Here arises the paradox of indigenous anthropologies in Latin America. Anthropology, as a discipline of modernity, is founded on the rationalist paradigm that was brought to its full development by the European enlightenment. The modern model of science, however does not help the understanding of an anti-ontological subject/object such as diverse human societies and cultures in time and space, precisely because these subjects/objects do not possess a constant permanence, in strict sense they are not "ontologies." In the same manner the monologist science of modernity does not allow for a conversation with nature, the world, the landscape, and the cosmos. "Science, according to Kant, does not dialogue with nature, it imposes its language upon her." (Costa Lima 2003: 30). The fundamental goal of this mode of knowledge/science is to achieve technical domination over nature and the universe. J.M. Arguedas and H. Puma's failure to achieve a dialogic communication between the indigenous worlds and the colonial/neo-colonial world is based on a dichotomy between a relational indigenous approach as opposed to a Western hierarchical rationality. There is a split between a



relational intelligence that approaches the cosmos as a web of relations seeking its meaning through acts of partnership, and an opposite Western logos. Western logos analyzes the cosmos in attempting to understand it, addressing it as an inanimate entity ruled by laws that can be expressed mathematically, manipulated, and subdued to the ruling principles of modern capitalist cosmology: surplus value and the “market laws.” As Max Weber wrote in 1915 “The more the cosmos of modern capitalist economy follows its own immanent laws, the more it becomes inaccessible to any thinkable relation with a religious ethics of brotherhood ...”<sup>2</sup>. (cited in Costa Lima 2003: 42, our translation).

### **The Dialectics of Liberation: Native Americans and Anthropologists**

In the Andean countries, starting in the early twentieth century there were many mestizos and indigenistas who attempted to establish a dialogue with indigenous people. These leaders and intellectuals, who acted as spoke-persons and representatives of entire speechless communities, denounced the forms of discrimination and inequality that oppressed indigenous communities. Among these leaders were Uriel García, the Churata brothers (Quechua, Peru), Pascual Coña (Mapuche, Chile) Eduardo Nina and Fausto Reynaga (Aymara, Bolivia), Dolores Cacuango (Quichua, Ecuador), Quintin Lame (Paez, Colombia), Nele Kantule (Kuna, Panama), Antonio Rodríguez Suysuy (Moche, Peru) and many others who brought to the attention of their national communities powerful indigenous discourses on culture diversity, racism and nation building. Through their actions these leaders acted as collective and representative voices. They were indeed the

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<sup>2</sup> Max Weber, “Zwischenbetrachtung”, (1915), republished in *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religionssoziologie*, v.1, Tübingen, J.C.B. Mohr, 1988, p 544, citado en Luiz Costa Lima 2003: 42, our translation from Spanish.

spokespersons and legitimate representatives of entire speechless communities, challenging the wrong doings of the nation-state and denouncing forms of discrimination and inequality that oppressed their communities. However, none of these indigenous intellectuals were ever taken into serious consideration by anthropologists as valid interlocutors in the debates on ethnicity and nation-state formation. Even post-revolutionary Mexican intellectuals had difficulty acknowledging the presence and contributions of indigenous intellectuals to Mexican history and culture. In 1940, during his last year as President of Mexico, Lázaro Cárdenas convened the First Inter-American Congress of Indigenous Peoples (*Congreso Indigenista Interamericano*). The Congress gathered some of the most visible indigenous intellectuals of the continent, with the noticeable and unfortunate exception of Mexico's delegation which was formed by non-indigenous anthropologists and politicians (Tellez Ortega 1987).

By the end of the '60s and early '70s, Latin America witnessed the growth of an incipient but strong indigenous peoples' liberation movement that would soon gather reputation on the international scene, prompting a reduced number of Latin American anthropologists to call for an action anthropology and urgent ethnology. Some very important meetings of indigenous peoples and anthropologists took place during this period, precisely when indigenous peoples were striving to internationalize themselves as a social movement and assert their political relevance before the various national arenas. Spearheaded by the 1971 Barbados Group of dissident anthropologists, a more equitable dialogue began to take place between anthropologists and indigenous leaders and intellectuals. In this renewed and tense conversation issues about the decolonization of knowledge and its social practice assumed a position of centrality while authoritarian

Western social science with its dominant Eurocentric perspective was slowly displaced into an area of critical re-evaluation (Acosta 1972; Bonfill Batalla 1981; Nahmad 1977; Rodríguez and Varese 1981a, 1981b; Varese 1977, 1978).

The year 1977 celebrated for the first time a dialogue between a dozen ‘formally trained’ Latin American anthropologists and seventeen indigenous intellectuals and leaders (Grünberg 1979). The indigenous participants in the Second Meeting of the Group of Barbados; Barbados II) demanded the decolonization of anthropology, turning it instead into a social science committed to the struggle for liberation of indigenous peoples. By calling into question the arrogant centrality of “scientific objectivity,” native intellectuals and activists dislodged European presumptions of knowledge reproduction and established a new intellectual domain - open to indigenous and non-indigenous peoples, for the encountering and sharing of cultural and political creativity. At the Barbados II meeting the indigenous participants proposed that researchers *accompany* (rather than to objectify) the struggles of indigenous peoples. The goal of both indigenous peoples and anthropologists was to galvanize a renewed sense of humanity in the social contract, based on three main points collected, at the time, by French anthropologist Michel de Certeau in his now prophetic article (Certeau 1976). De Certeau summarized the following points in the already on-going indigenous peoples’ struggle: First- The passage from a *micro-politics* (of self-managing communities) to a macro-politics (federations and multi-level organizations); Second- The *collective contracts* with the earth and nature in general, in their dual aspect as economic (cooperatives, collectives) and ecological (harmony with nature); and Third- *cultural pluralism*, not monoculture but pluricultures, as an essential component to the self-management perspective.

During these formative years of indigenous anthropology, specifically in the Andean and Amazonian areas, but also in Mesoamerica, ethnic self-awareness about political agency and the persistence of native languages were stressed. This fact, probably, inspired the early formation of native ethnographers interested in organizing their own materials in their own ethnic language for future generations to study. Following the established tradition of the Andean indigenismo, other trends of studies of indigenous peoples and their struggles emerged in Latin America. Based on the Andean indigenismo of José Carlos Mariátegui, Hildebrando Castro Pozo, Luis E. Valcárcel and José María Arguedas among others, the Mexican indigenismo of Manuel Gamios, Moisés Sáenz, Wigberto Jiménez Moreno, Miguel Covarrubias, Alfonso Villa Rojas, Gonzalo Aguirre Beltrán, and the early Brazilian indianismo of Cândido Mariano da Silva Rondón, and the young Darcy Ribeiro, new emerging indigenous anthropologies began to influence a small sector of the educated Latin American public with their active defense of indigenous cultures. They alleged racial and ethnic discrimination, economic exploitation and political oppression of indigenous peoples. In a sense, these indigenous voices found in the indigenistas the validation of Native worldviews and their opposition to the overwhelming push of the early modernization projects. “Indigenous anthropologies” emerged to directly deny—rightly or mistakenly—the impact of modernization and industrialization on indigenous peoples lives. Both were perceived as destructive forces of “civilization” intruding on traditional life and the autonomy of indigenous communities.

The rise of indigenous anthropology in contemporary Latin America can thus be attributed to the confluence of collective indigenous politics, state policy, and the deeply

fractured character of most Latin American societies. On one hand, indigenous communities and individuals sought acknowledgement and full admittance into the national community without having to repudiate their history and culture, and on the other hand the white/criollo/mestizo communities were expressing a series of national-cultural goals which contradicted radically the ideal coexistence of cultural diversity. The “Right to Difference”, the famous manifesto by French Marxist philosopher Henry Lefevbre, was just becoming known in Latin America about these times (1970s), broadening the debate and the struggle for social justice from a strictly class oriented and mostly economic one to a deeper political commitment to a future society where social equality could be constructed on the bases of legitimate cultural difference and diversity (Bonfil Batalla 1991; Varese 1977). What soon became a domain of contention in the Latin American struggle and dialectics of liberation was the radically different weight given by indigenous peoples and White/Mestizos to analytic, programmatic, and strategic apparatuses. While the progressive White/Mestizos were relying on strict Marxist class analysis to organize and mobilize the people toward social changes, indigenous leaderships and organizations were bringing to the forefront of their struggles a radical critique of European and North American colonialism and imperialism, extended their criticism to include Marxism and the insensibility of Latin American Marxists to issues of cultural sovereignty and ethno-political autonomy (Bonfil 1981; Rodríguez y Varese 1981a, 1981b).

### **Indigenous Peoples in the Anthropologist's Classroom**

Formal academic training became a necessity for some native intellectuals. The co-workings of non-Indigenous and professional anthropologists and so-called “informants” generated among some indigenous peoples, the need to perpetuate, for the generations to come, a desire to preserve narratives of cultural origins and resistance, acknowledging the force of linguistic agency, but also the memory of territorial restoration. It is worth noting the fact that admissions of indigenous students at national universities constituted unspoken veto. Their absence was through exclusion and often by self-denial, at the same time their presence was simply not welcomed, and their levels of retention, when accepted, were very low.

Yet, in the face of those concrete constraints and the intentional marginalization of rural and urban indigenous peoples, western anthropologists more than other academic professionals, made their practices, methods, and aims known or filtered to the “native informants” (soon to become research partners) through actual fieldwork and close collaboration. An ethics of solidarity has largely been present in the anthropological ethos of various anthropologists, in spite of the not infrequently tarnished involvement and misbehavior of a few, as in the infamous case of the Camelot Project in Chile and the documented participation of some U.S. anthropologists in counterinsurgency research in Viet Nam and Latin America. Despite the presence of other practitioners of disciplines such as sociology and economics, or archaeology for that matter, anthropology had a natural appeal and possible accessibility to indigenous peoples. After all, ethnographizing meant the careful practices of “thick description” that inspired other forms of dialogue and assistance between professionals and ‘informants.’ On the other hand, by the end of

the 1940s, archaeologists such as A. Posnansky, J. C. Tello and A. Lipschutz in Bolivia, Peru and Chile, or J. Imbelloni in Argentina and A. Caso in Mexico had already carved a niche to study the archaeological remnants of “Ancient” cultures. Intricate iconographies, stone carved pieces, codices, and monumental urban centers, constituted to the eyes of indigenous peoples, empirical confirmation that something worthy and important belonged to their pasts and immediate lives. The nation-state would appropriate the honorable Indian past to graft it in the recreation of its ‘imagined community’, but to the detriment of the actual presence of indigenous peoples. Leftwing political parties focused on the possibility of transforming the ‘indigenous masses’ into revolutionary cadres, and/or potential members of the early industrial unions in urban and mining centers. Not only that, it was also clear that they, as indigenous peoples, were not part of the dialogue in designing or controlling their own cultural resources as may have been the case for other forms of popular resistance. Indigenous ideologies and practices, such as the ayllu system in the Andean area, accommodated to the aims of unionism, and Marxist doxa found its equivalent in indigenous social practices of communal life and utopian ideologies such as the “Return of the Inka” (Flores Galindo 1987).

Once this social process of re/membering started in different regions of indigenous Latin America during the 40s, 50s and 60s, it slowly influenced the designing and implementation of various schools of anthropology especially in the Andean countries and Mexico. Obviously, the very heavy Western bearing of the anthropological discipline with both its traditions of materialist and more metaphysical components affected those indigenous peoples touched by the presence of national and foreign professionals doing research on indigenous peoples’ materials. Issues of social inequality,

cultural and racial discrimination, economic exploitation, and political oppression became the focus of indigenous intellectual activists engaged as assistants or “informants” in anthropological studies. Early indigenous intellectual leaders and activists were calling into question the aggressive impact of modernization, trying to understand this renewed confrontation with the nation-state, now allegedly post-colonial in its structure but discriminatory in its practices. It is interesting to note that since the 1940s the notorious Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL) and its evangelical branch, the Wycliffe Bible Translators, were present and very active in most countries of Latin America. Their well financed project of translating the Bible into indigenous languages was intended to promote the conversion and “salvation” of indigenous peoples’ souls, in addition to easing their assimilation into a U.S. version of Western modernity (Aaby and Hvalkof 1981; see also Harvey, this volume). Yet, the real effects of this proposal could not be controlled as geared only to inspire ‘salvation’ in another world, while suffering in this one. Instead it furthered legitimization of indigenous languages as valid systems of thought, even theological, and broader political communication. In a twist of irony that did not escape the attention of the SIL evangelical directives, some of the most radical indigenous political leaders of the Amazon region had been trained as preachers by the Institute (Espinoza 2004).

Parallel to this extensive process of neo-colonialist Evangelical missionizing on indigenous communities, the sixties and early seventies witnessed {also} the incursion of the ecumenical movement of Liberation Theology and the openness brought in by the Vatican Council II (1962-1966) regarding other forms of conceptualizing the sacred and alternative and interrelated forms of indigenous religious practices (Gutiérrez 1973).



These western Christian religious institutions of all shapes and forms can be considered responsible, intentionally or not, for the formation of “organic intellectuals” amidst the early manifestations of organized indigenous movements. As a result of the influence of Liberation Theology that emphasized social rather than individual sin, priests and missionaries affected by the Christian-Marxist dialogue of the post-war worked on securing leaders rather than converts among indigenous activists (Garaudy 1970). Some of the tools shared by these newly trained indigenous leaders were ethnographic methods as well as anthropological theory that recentered traditional knowledge.

The political program of the new indigenous movements included demands concerning language, culture and religion, and history and ethnography, all organized along the central issue of decolonization. It was clear that, behind the native languages that have resisted forced ‘castellanization’, and colonial languages in general, another indigenous view of history and indigenous culture was kept at the core of the collective memory and the indigenous project of autonomy and equality. Castellanization could also be equated to another unidirectional concept in vogue at the time: acculturation. A hegemonic social practice that fuses together the notions of social change, progress, development, modernization and national integration without implementing the notion and practice of citizenship. Any resistance to acculturation could be interpreted by the national élites as conservative traditionalism or as an irrational attachment to archaic and obsolete cultural practices. This despite the fact, that Cuban anthropologist Fernando Ortiz had already published his famous *Contrapunto del azúcar y del tabaco* (1947), where he formulates the notion of transculturations as the correct approach to address non-intrusive cultural changes and exchanges. This was understood as a process in which

something is always given in return for what one receives, a system of give and take, a term that does not contain the implications of one certain culture toward which the other must tend, but rather an exchange between two or more cultures cooperating to bring about a new reality (Malinowski [1940] 2002: 125)

These formative decades of indigenous anthropologies were accompanied by processes of ethnogenesis or the formation of “new” or, in some cases reborn, indigenous ethnicities. This was the case, for example, of the Cocama, Cocamilla in the Peruvian Amazon, the Zenues in Córdoba, Venezuela, and some new “tribal” communities in North Eastern Brazil. In most of these cases the interaction between anthropologically trained indigenous peoples and their communities gave rise to territorial demands and specific cultural rights based on collective claims of indigeneity re/membering after a cultural and historical introspection. In truth, some of these new claims of indigenous legitimacy became linked to a growing trend in agrarian legislation throughout Latin America which acknowledged specific land and territorial rights to indigenous communities.

We can tie the emergence of this activist indigenous anthropology led by a handful of native intellectuals to the parallel development of a series of formal and non-formal close conversations with non-indigenous anthropologists (see Barragan and Hale, this volume). In a sense, the creation of an indigenous anthropology could be seen as a journey into the soul of Autochthonous Peoples, armed with concrete proposals to ensure that cultural survival on their own autonomous terms could be a viable alternative to absolute *mestizaje*, which has been the accepted norm, discourse, or expectation, as an inescapable destiny for indigenous peoples. On the one hand the nation-state’s hegemonic

message was that cultural resistance was irrelevant, for modernization will erase the remnants of the past. In this discourse, the past meant the presence of indigenous peoples with their languages, cultures, institutions, material assets, and spiritual legacy and an ethics respectful of nature. Still, modernization has been a distorted, uneven, partial, and discriminating social process linked to an unequal course of urban and rural industrialization (factories, mining, plantations, ranching) built, in most cases, on indigenous land and natural resources, and based on indigenous exploited labor. On the other hand indigenous cultural resistance and alternative autonomy projects have always been the unconditional program present in the historical horizon of indigenous intellectuals, even more so when such resistance could be articulated in native languages and specific cultural values reconfigured by renewed self-analyses achieved in cooperation with non-indigenous anthropologists.

In the Andean countries and Mexico, indigenous anthropology was substantively redefined from the 1960's onward by the rural to urban migration, the shift from subsistence or community-based agriculture to agribusiness and international labor markets, and, in the 1970s and 1980s, the increasing presence of indigenous peoples at university centers. Inspired by the written record left since the sixteenth century, indigenous peoples focused on re-constructing records, ideas and cultural values that have survived in the practices of concrete contemporary indigenous communities. The circulation of texts that were re-introduced and re-interpreted in various areas of the Americas, such as Huaman Puma, Santa Cruz Pachacuti, Joseph de Acosta, Cieza de León, and the Relaciones Geográficas de las Indias for the Andean countries and Mexico; the Chilam Balam, the Annals of the Kakchiquels, and the Popol Vuh, for Guatemala;

and the various codices for Mexico, opened the indigenous peoples' interest to document actual cultural practices that some non-indigenous anthropologists labeled "cultural continuity." By the early 1980s it was becoming evident in Peru, Bolivia, Ecuador, Colombia Guatemala, and Mexico that indigenous traditional intellectuals as well as university trained indigenous ethnologists could master the interpretation of texts (in Latin alphabet, in hieroglyphic writing, or other forms of inscription found in ceramic, weaving or monumental works) much more efficiently than non-native scholars. It would be presumptuous and offensive not to acknowledge the fundamental role played by indigenous intellectuals, either "traditional" or formed in urban universities, in the enormous development of modern ethnohistory, anthropology, archaeology, and linguistics of Latin America. Part of the cultural recuperation of indigenous intellectual sovereignty, as a fundamental objective of indigenous peoples, has been staged by indigenous intellectuals and non-indigenous scholars in an uneven and contested multidisciplinary field where natives have been previously considered useful –but uneducated and ignorant- informants who could only provide raw material and data to be analyzed only by (white) anthropologists. In retrospect, the enormous development of Andean and Mesoamerican anthropology between 1950 and 1980 most likely could not have been achieved without the participation of numerous unnamed indigenous assistants. This hidden history of Latin American anthropology is finally emerging in the first decade of the third millennium in the works of indigenous scholars trained and now teaching in formal university programs where indigenous knowledges are imparted (Bartolomé 2003; 23-49; Choque et al. 1992; Mamani 1980; Turpana 1987).

## **History Reclaimed**

In the early twentieth century a whole generation of indigenous intellectuals and activists became very closely linked to the anarchist political movement and early socialism brought to Latin America by Spanish and Italian anarchists and socialist immigrants. José Carlos Mariátegui, a Peruvian mestizo founder of the Socialist Party of Peru (later Communist Party) who had been exiled to Italy for a few years, addressed the question of indigenous land rights from a class analysis perspective. Mariátegui argued that a Peruvian socialist revolution could only be achieved with the full participation of the indigenous peoples as rural proletariat. Víctor Raúl Haya de la Torre, a member of the Peruvian criollo political élite, called attention to the contributions made by indigenous peoples to the Mexican Revolution and Sandinista's resistance to the U.S. invasion of Nicaragua. In Colombia, the Páez leader Quintín Lame, mobilized indigenous communities in collaboration with the Communist Party, by teaching them their "true" history and by stimulating their cultural pride. Quintín Lame considered native knowledge to be the single most important weapon in the fight to achieve liberation and autonomy. Before European-born ideas of social revolution ever came to indigenous America, other indigenous intellectuals and leaders had fought colonial oppression and advocated indigenous peoples' liberation from Spain and the creation of "Indian Kingdoms and Republics". For example, Juan Santos Atahualpa (1742, in Peru's Amazon region and Central Andean region), Tupac Amaru II (1780-81, Southern Peru), Tupac Katari and his wife Bartolina Sisa (1780-81 Bolivia) and dozens of other revolutionary indigenous peoples in the Andes, Amazonia and Mesoamerica had severely destabilized the colonial establishment and awakened the ancient indigenous ideals of

justice, freedom, and restored deities (Barabas 1987; Carmagnani 1988; Rappaport 1990; Taylor 1979; Varese [1968] 2002).

In the late 1960s and 1970s, a small number of revisionist versions of Andean history, emphasizing indigenous peoples' active participation in their own struggle for liberation, made their way through the traditionally conservative historiography, reaching indigenous intellectuals and opening new ways of indigenous historical thinking allowing a re-positioning of indigenous perspectives on their teachings, discourses and oral histories (Condarco 1965; Ossio 1973; Millones 1964; Murra 1975; Pease 1973; Piel 1973; Schaedel 1952; Varese 1968; Wachtel 1971). The thoughts and actions of these buried intellectuals and leaders were brought back to life by native intellectuals as inspirational, formative and ethical texts (Reinaga 1970). Parallel to these events and prompted by European authors (Mariscotti 1978), indigenous worldviews contained in manuscripts and lesser known texts were being validated as legitimate components of humanistic and social science scholarship. Historical facts, interpretations, ideas that had been dismissed as not reliable enough by previous ideological and methodological limitations of the historical craft, emerged now with force and impatience in indigenous documents and declarations: "Our imperative is to decolonize history," declared the new indigenous leaders (Bonfil Batalla 1981: 38).

### **The Aymara Example**

The Aymara of Bolivia constitute one of the most relevant cases of an indigenous nation's re-appropriation of its own history. In the 1970s in Chuquiawu Marka also known as City of La Paz, Bolivia, a group of Aymara students led by anthropologist

Sylvia Rivera Cusicanqui founded the Taller de Historia Oral Andina (THOA, Workshop of Andean Oral History; see Barragan, this volume). THOA's objective was to rewrite the history of the Aymara peoples not as the history of an 'Other,' but rather as a history in which Aymara peoples figured as protagonists. THOA authors used both Aymara and Spanish language to render their accounts.<sup>3</sup> Placing Aymara people at the center of history had an important impact on the process of decolonization, the plight for indigenous peoples' rights, the movement towards self-determination, the emancipation of marginal groups, the strengthening of disenfranchised labor organizations, and the emancipation of indigenous women. Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui left THOA in the late 1980's. Her book *Oprimidos pero no Vencidos* (1987) speaks about indigenous peoples struggles from a peasant point of view. Her recent work on the plight of coca farmers and women's struggles in the city are also key texts to understand the Andean peoples process of decolonization. Other key writings from THOA's indigenous scholars include Carlos Mamani's *Los Aymara Frente a la Historia* (1992) and Maria Eugenia Choque's works promoting the return of peasants from a labor union oriented organization to previous indigenous form of communal organization, the ayllu. THOA's work includes the re-inscription of once marginal people's voices emerging from the collective memory via a vital oral tradition. Following the strategy of THOA, a number of scholars later co-worked in association with Aymara people as in the case of Alison Spedding and Abraham Colque producing *Nosotros los Yunqueños. Nanakax Yunkas Tuqinkiripxtw* (2003), Another important trend in Bolivia's indigenous intellectual movement and

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<sup>3</sup> Interestingly, this indigenous Latin American movement of historical recuperation was happening a few years earlier than the South Asian *Subaltern Studies* movement, see Guha (1983) which has become the flagship of post-colonial analysis in English speaking academia. Two decades earlier Varese (1968 and 2002) published a study on the campa-asháninka peoples of Eastern Peru in which the history of resistance to colonial invasion and domination is written from within the indigenous nation using "emic" or endogenous interpretive categories.

historiography is that native Quechua and Aymara historians and social scientists are studying their counterparts in indigenous communities of the Bolivian Amazon.

### **Asserting Different Voices in the Andes**

Conceptions of indigeneity rest upon different assumptions of cultural identity. Some people claim territory and place, others claim a linguistic-cultural affiliation, and still other groups claim practices of self-determination. Yet, there is another practice that has been at work even before the beginning of the European invasion. Such practice is not articulated in a manifesto, nor does it work at the conscious level, for this conduct has more to do with a way of being Andean (, a way of relating to one's own place, the cultural landscape, the environment including plants, animals, water, rocks, underworld, celestial sphere, and other peoples around us. This way of being Andean is an aesthetic sensibility, a pan-Andean identity that rests upon behaviors emanating from indigenous knowledge and its practice. This knowledge is enunciated through and by language in the symbolic order, and by a material culture belonging now to a diverse peoples that includes indigenous and non-indigenous communities (Grillo, 1998: 128). Being Andean inhabits a different attitude to life and the whole environment which is perceived and conceptualized as a living organism, thus radically differing from Euroamerican culture. It is a difference established, maintained and diffused through Andean forms of signification in the material world of textiles, pottery, stonework, agro-ecological and architectural landscaping; in the ritual world of dance, music, performance and, again, by the use and reproduction of languages in the symbolic world. Among several languages



still in use by millions along the Andes, this difference is marked by the Aymara and Quechua languages which work as guarantor of difference and specific identities.

For Andean intellectuals and writers it is a difficult task to attempt translations of these fields of “indigenous anthropologies” since it seems that there are no equivalents in European languages. The best ‘explanation’ would be to experience this attitude to life and the environment, and this way of being Andean in everyday practice. But again this way of being is not suitable for an intellectual exercise, but rather for a way of being, knowing, relating, feeling, sensing, living. It is a living that does not favor individualities, but rather relations among all individuals and communities; it is a horizontal complementary structure devoid of hierarchies; it is a living that creates a Self/Other positioning in a nurturing way. It is a living that requires the honoring of the intangible, deities, nature, people, ancestors, animals, mountains, plants, water, rain, lightning, life and death. In sum, it is a whole learned cultural approach that is rooted in Andean forms of signification and Andean languages.

Tristan Platt in his essay, “Entre Ch’axwa y Muxsa: Para una Historia del Pensamiento Político Aymara” (1987) brings attention to the need for a new way of reading objects, myths, mountains, legends as new cultural sources that will need to be placed in relation to the imagination of distinct ethnic groups in the Andes. This approach grows out of a need to adjust the use of analytic language with the representational work of the collective memory as it is expressed by ritual, custom, legend and personal anecdote. The problem, observes Platt, occurs when the line blurs between the use of a verified document, or an ethnographic source, and a more creative use that would extend the reference of concepts to new fields and social phenomena.

This problem emerges particularly when the researcher is thinking along the lines of the historical processes, and wants to link them with Aymara analytic concepts. However, what is important in Platt's observations is that he sees the need for two approaches to anthropological work in the Andes: one is a documentary or ethnographic approach, and the second is a more creative approach, even if the difficulty lies in establishing criteria that would help judge any choice as a legitimate Aymara approach. In addressing this difficulty, Platt acknowledges the importance of attempting to develop an Aymara anthropology. "But this problem is related with another one: that which tries to establish and create an 'Aymara anthropology' as an instrument of self-reflection, and at the same time as a tool to break the communicative fence, and to place oneself in contact with other American and global thinking traditions in conditions of a "balanced symmetry" (tinku)." (our translation, Platt 1987: 124). This insight in Platt's work provides an objective that can be coupled with the epistemological disposition that we have described as Andean ('lo andino') to form a strategy for constituting a body of work in diverse fields as Aymara works, and in this case, as Aymara anthropologies. Hence, Aymara anthropologies partake of analytical categories inscribed in the Aymara language, its cultural context and oral traditions, and the documentary evidence disseminated throughout the Andean material world.

The Aymara people not only have different conceptions of space and time, but also, and more importantly, they have some specific linguistic markers for personal location and time orientation which are essential in the construction of discourse. In the grammar of the Aymara language there are *personal knowledge* categories and *impersonal knowledge* categories, which mark explicitly the position of the describer in

time and space and in relation to the item being described. The language also implies the impossibility of a clear separation between deities-humanity-nature -the impossibility of knowledge that is not embodied- and a distinct notion of *man*, which is not severed from *woman*. All of these linguistic and cultural markers are needed to maintain a difference that speaks about the culture's values and priorities: a different conceptualization of *humans*, but also a very different and singular *relationship of humans to the land, to nature, and to beliefs*. All of these differences are in direct contrast to Euroamerican notions of time, space and the *subject*.

Similarly, the notions and practice of place in the Andean cultures challenge Euroamerican anthropologies. *ayllu* and *pacha* (earth) are in dialogue and this conversation takes place in Quechua language (*Runasimi*). "The Pacha is the house of the ayllu and the ayllu is all that lives in the Pacha: the stars, the rocks, the plants, rivers, animals, human beings dead and alive, all is Pacha." (Valladolid 1998: 57). The *ayllu* often has been portrayed, in a very reductive way, solely as an organizational social unit. However, the *ayllu* is also the place where a set of nonhierarchical relations of nurturing takes place involving deities, nature, and humanity. In this place of regeneration a conversation takes place among all members of the community, including animals, plants, rocks, water, and the land; all of which are treated as part of a family, all are relatives. In this family-conversation the deities (*huacas*) and humanity (*runa*) have equal footing, just as humanity and the natural world (*sallqa*) have equal footing, for wo/man is not the center of this world, nor is s/he above all other living organisms (Grillo 1988: 89-123), Consequently, "In the *ayllu* the activity of its members is not modeled from the outside, it is not the product of a planning act that transcends it, but rather it is a

result of the conversations...” that take place in an atmosphere of profound equivalency among humans, deities and the natural world (Allen 1989; Rengifo 1998: 89). This conversation, this dialogue does not take place in a vacuum, nor does it take place in a form of intellectualism devoid of an engagement with all the constitutive parts of *Pacha*.

Thus, it is evident that a better approach to indigenous knowledge and indigenous anthropology in the Andes would be an integrated approach, where local knowledge is contingent, interrelated and working in tension with all forms of local life -people, animals, rocks and plants- and now also with other people’s cultures and ways of life experienced by humans elsewhere, in a globalized context. Local knowledge now is increasingly becoming also a conversation with foreign forms of conceptualization and thinking.

### **Knowledge as Resistance**

Indigenous anthropologies inevitably answer to five centuries of colonial and neo-colonial occupation and oppression of “Indian Country” in the Americas. Any attempt to separate analytically indigenous intellectual endeavors and counter-hegemonic constructions from indigenous peoples re- appropriation of their knowledge, their history, their collective identity, their intellectual sovereignty, and their ethno-political autonomy, is bound to fail. Since the early sixteen century invasion of their lands by European powers the indigenous peoples have resisted colonial domination by preserving their forms of knowledge.

Dismemberment of civilization, utopia and secrecy mark the thoughts and historical memory of the indigenous peoples and constitute the ideological and spiritual

structure of their centuries-long cultural resistance, as well as of the cyclical manifestations of their ethnic nationalism. Throughout five centuries of colonial domination, indigenous peoples have repeatedly rebelled. The historiography of these rebellions has only recently begun to be written. Alicia Barabas (1987, 2002) analyzes 56 Indigenous rebellions of messianic character for Mexico between the 16<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries; Taylor (1979) studies 142 Indigenous rebellions for a period of 131 years in only three regions of Mexico: Mexico Valley, Mixtec Highlands and the Oaxaca Valley. For a rewrite of the history of the Indigenous people of the Andean and Meso American regions see also Carmagnani (1988); Castillo Cardenas (1987); Rappaport (1990); Stern (1987), Varese (1987, 2002), Wankar (1981).

This thick collective memory of opposition and resistance constitutes the foundation of indigenous social thought and its use of anthropology as a tool borrowed from the dominant society. As already pointed out by Bonfill Batalla (1981) more than twenty years ago the indigenous liberation movement is centered around seven fundamental processes of cultural reclamation/recuperation that imply a profound knowledge of the historical relation between the colonial occupiers and the indigenous societies. First: at the forefront of its strategy of liberation the indigenous peoples put the reclaiming of time, the recuperation of their own history. Second: the recuperation of place/space/territory/lands and resources. Third: the recuperation of voice, language and the right to use it creatively and politically. Fourth: the recuperation of knowledge, both indigenous and exogenous. Fifth: the recuperation of the “moral ecology”, as a relation of stewardship, partnership and nurturing of “nature”, and the world. Sixth: the axiological recuperation as the reclaiming of the moral, ethical, spiritual primacy over materialism.

Finally, the recuperation of the indigenous aesthetics: music, dances, performance, weaving, art, literature.

Some of these processes of cultural recuperation and affirmations resulted from a forthright collaborative alliance between indigenous intellectuals and anthropologists. Guillermo Bonfil Batalla's creation, in the early 1980s, of the program of Indigenous Ethnolinguistics (a M.A. graduate program directed at members of indigenous communities located initially in Patzcuaro, Michoacán, later in Tlaxcala, and later in Mexico City). The program has awarded numerous M.A. degrees to indigenous intellectuals and activists mostly from Mexico, but also from other countries. The intellectual production of the "etnolingüistas indígenas" has been an outstanding contribution to the development, in Mexico and other countries, of a corpus of materials for bilingual education and printed materials in indigenous languages. A certain number of these indigenous linguists have earned doctoral degrees in linguistics and anthropology (see Bartolomé, 2003).

In the early 1980s under the leadership of three Mexican anthropologists, Guillermo Bonfil Batalla, Rodolfo Stavenhagen and Leonel Durán, the Mexican government established a national program of Popular and Indigenous Cultures with the mandate of training members of indigenous communities and "mestizo" social scientists, humanists, and natural scientists in transcultural dialogue and the establishment of joint projects of culturally appropriate ethnic development. Some of the indigenous participants in this program have become active intellectuals, writers, and spoke persons of the indigenous autonomy movement in Mexico (Castellanos 1994, 2002, 2003).

Between 1969 and 1975 Peru witnessed a progressive governmental push to recognize Andean peasants' land rights, as well as the territorial claims of indigenous peoples of the Amazon region. (On Peruvian agrarian reform, see Seligmann, this volume.) The process of defining and titling indigenous territories in the Amazon required both a massive mobilization of the communities themselves and the self-training of leadership cadres knowledgeable and ethnically committed with their own peoples. The process and interaction of social scientists and Amazonian Natives around central issues of territoriality, management and governance generated intellectuals and activists who later organized themselves in national and international ethnopolitical organizations (Brysk 2000; Varese 1994).

There are many other Latin American examples of creative relations between indigenous peoples mobilized by national and international politics and anthropologists who dedicated themselves to contribute in solidarity to indigenous struggles for autonomy. One of the most notorious is the case of the Miskitu, Sumo, Rama and Creoles of Nicaragua before, during and after the Sandinista Revolution. The complex and conflictive struggle of the indigenous people to achieve autonomy within a socialist revolution which was, at least initially, insensitive toward ethnic claims of sovereignty, required delicate collaborations between indigenous leaders and anthropologists that most of the times resulted in sophisticated indigenous cadres: indigenous anthropologies formed in the praxis rather than in the classroom. In the specific case of the Atlantic Coast of Nicaragua anthropologists and indigenous leaders worked together toward a political program that tended to minimize class contradictions while emphasizing ethnic-cultural commonalities (Hale, 1994).

## History, Ecology and Indigenous Resistance

Two disciplines seem to have demonstrated more sensibility than anthropology and other social sciences regarding the indigenous peoples political emergence and their intelligentsia. On one hand, we are thinking of the historians who, by epistemological mandate and necessity of method, position themselves at a prudent distance from events and, as a consequence, perform a factual treatment that neither questions nor radically confronts the cultural — and therefore ethical — premises, of the analyst. A great many of the works compiled by Steve J. Stern (1987) for the Andean case are illustrative in this respect, although it could be asked why Stern himself and several of the authors avoid the use of ethnic denominations or the terms "Indigenous" or "Indian" preferring that of generic *campesino/peasant* when they refer to indigenous societies. One can not help but suspect that in the case of historians the class category of *campesino/peasant* takes precedence displacing other factors of ethnicity and of collective identity to secondary levels.<sup>4</sup>

On the other hand, we see the ecological approaches of a recent generation of biologists and eco-economists, especially in the case of studies on indigenous people in Mexico, who have known how to recount more sensitively the indigenous peoples'

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<sup>4</sup> The Andean bibliography that bears witness to a greater sensibility of historians to the question of ethnicity and "Indianness" of the historical subject is, however, relatively abundant. Suffice it to cite only a few of the most relevant texts: first, the foundation works of Murra (1975, 1978); Flores Galindo (1986, 1987); Ossio (1973); Pease (1973); and Stern (1987.) For the case of the Andean jungle of Peru, see the study by Zarzar (1989) on the pan-Indian rebellion of Juan Santos Atahualpa in the eighteenth century as well as the new revision on the same insurrection by Stern (1987) and my own work from some years ago (Varese, 1973, 2002). For the case of Meso-America there are also important historical works in this line, to cite only a few: Barabas (1987) has conducted a detailed and fundamental study of religious ethno-history and anthropology of the Indian resistance movements in Mexico over four and a half centuries of colonial occupation; see also Carmagnani (1988), Fariss (1984); Taylor (1972 and 1979); Whitecotton (1977), among many others.



struggles to defend and preserve their autonomy, concretely by focusing on the indigenous resistance in the field of ethnic and ecological knowledge transformed into political strategies (Altieri et al., 1987; Caballero, Mapes, 1985;; Posey, 1984; Toledo, 1976, 1980). We believe that the encounter between the bio-ecologists and the various manifestations of the culture of indigenous resistance, in its modest, daily strategies of use and defense of their territories and resources as well as the direct verification of the overwhelming, ecocidal arrogance of the dominant societies have enabled them to see and understand the subtle and tenacious political quality of native peoples that has often escaped socio-anthropological attention. Finally, environmentalist concerns have become - perhaps only through imitative osmosis- part of the cultural interests of Latin America's middle classes and, as a consequence, it was to be expected that a rediscovery of the "noble savage" turned into "noble environmentalist" should have occurred sooner or later.

The paradox in this story is that, precisely during these last 30 years, anthropology in the metropolis (especially the US) has become involved increasingly in an effort to define ethnicity, and the formation, meaning and deployment of identity categories, especially in regards to the political and economic dimensions of social organization (Williams, 1989). So, while anthropologists are trying to untangle a complex network of theoretical and methodological problems derived from the redefinition of the boundaries between the traditional areas of study (the domestic units, the rural community, the indigenous region), and the redefinition of the analytical contexts (world economy-politics in interdependence with the rural *campesino* community), the indigenous peoples of Latin America are once again fully entering the political scene as politically militant ethnic groups, although few scholars in the hegemonic social sciences

seem to want to realize this. Yet anthropology, like all social sciences, is not only a field of study but also a field for social struggle (Bourdieu quoted in Kearney, 1990). In its epistemological and methodological definitions, in the choice and definition of the "object" of study, in the paradigmatic construction of the "other," anthropologists, despite their best wishes, therefore express the hegemonic project— in the Gramscian sense of a struggle— of the class and ethnicity of which they form part.

In July of 1990, the representatives of 120 Indian nations met in Quito to celebrate the Continental Meeting "500 Years of Indian Resistance". The Declaration of Quito begins with these words: "We the American Indians have never abandoned our constant fight against the conditions of oppression, discrimination, and exploitation that were imposed on us because of the European invasion of our ancestral territories." The Meeting was held a few weeks after the conclusion of negotiations between the government and the Ecuadorian Indian organizations. These negotiations marked a truce in one of the strongest Latin America Indigenous uprisings of the past few years. According to independent analysts, it was the most important popular mobilization of the country's last decade (*Andean Report*, London 1990). More than 100,000 Indigenous people participated in the mobilization that lasted several weeks and kept the highways to Quito and other cities around the country closed to all access. Territorial recovery and control, self-determination, economic-political autonomy, and Indian self-government were the central demands of the uprising and were taken up again in the Continental Meeting.

Analyses of the long conclusions and resolutions of the Meeting reveal that the political platforms of the organized indigenous peoples of the hemisphere are basically

identical to the demands that have driven indigenous struggles during the last five centuries;

- Recovery and recuperation of the territories lost because of the colonial and national occupation;
- Defense and recuperation of the natural resources and the environment destroyed by mercantile exploitation;
- Right to maintain, reestablish and develop the indigenous economies based on community solidarity and principles of reciprocity;
- Respect for the sovereignty of indigenous nationalities, right to self-determination and political autonomy;
- Right to the full use and development of indigenous languages;
- Right to the use and development of one's own culture, forms of spirituality, scientific-intellectual development without oppressive and authoritarian interference of Christian evangelization and colonizing educational systems.

Organized indigenous peoples recognize that the struggle "... has acquired a new quality in recent times. This struggle is less and less isolated and more organized. Now we are fully conscious that our definitive liberation can only be expressed as the full exercise of our self-determination. Our unity is based on this fundamental right ... without Indian self-government and without the control of our territories, there can be no autonomy... (In) our general struggle strategy (we seek) the full exercise of self-determination through the Indian peoples' own governments and the control of our

territories ... (for this) it is necessary to have an integral and in-depth transformation of the state and national society; that is, the creation of a new nation."

The spiritual basis for the indigenous resistance, insurrection, and autonomous political projects are found in conceptions of humanity and nature that are essentially community oriented.

We do not feel we are the owners of (nature): it is our mother, not merchandise; it is an integral part of our lives; it is our past, present and future. We believe, in this sense, that what is human and the environment itself is not only valuable for our communities or for American Indian peoples. We believe that this way of life is an option, an alternative, a light for the peoples of the world, oppressed by a system sustained on domination over men, between peoples, on the domination of nature; a system where individuality comes first, where the rights of the people are empty declarations that are incoherent with that which is practiced ... because, for the capitalist system, diversity, commons good, solidarity, autonomy and self-determination only represent obstacles to exercising imposition, exploitation and domination" (Resolutions: 6). In light of these reflections . . . we wish to look at the history of our peoples ... the history that intends to hide the invaders, despising and denying our cultures, treating them as archaic and backward, to justify the invasion, the genocide, the permanent pillaging over 500 years, and denying their historical responsibility" (Resolutions: 6).

The achievements of Quito 1991 must be seen as a continuation of the dialogues of the 1971 and 1977 Barbados meetings between Indians and committed anthropologists. The visible “object” of ethnography, the Indians of the Americas, answers back with full agency. The dialogue built in the Barbados meetings reached far. The object of research, at this point, cannot be disciplinary anymore: A new concretely *decolonizing* anthropology -holistic and interdisciplinary- creates the coming together of new forms of problematizing reality, but it is also committed to offer solutions to--rather than simply analyses of--given situations. Indeed the Barbados dialogues and the agency of Indigenous Peoples have very much been represented by a 21<sup>st</sup> century anthropology that has relinquished “studying” the Indians of the Americas. Self-reflection has become a necessary way to rethink human prejudice and Western intellectual prerogative. In a sense, Indigenous Peoples forced anthropologists to historize, self-reflect and risk the comfort of writing the predicament of culture.

### **The Dialectics of Opposition: Indigenous Anthropologies**

The continental indigenous peoples resistance movement is disinterring its gods. It has done it over and over again in the last two decades: in Chiapas, Mexico (Zapatista Maya insurrection), in Bolivia (Cocaleros struggle, “water wars”, general uprisings against neo-liberalism), in Guatemala (Maya civil war resistance and post-war reconstruction), in Colombia (constitutional reforms, anti-war movement), in Chile (land recuperations), in Venezuela (political organization in support of social reforms). The movement is taking the utopian ideals out from the underground, from the secrecy to which it had been relegated during centuries of oppression. The spiritual sustenance for these political and cultural actions is centered on a moral system that favors the principles

and norms of reciprocity above those of individual accumulation, and privileges an ecological concept of the cosmos and nature above the utilitarianism characteristic of European “modernity.” This moral ecology grants to the collective and individual right to subsistence an essential, undeniable and non-negotiable civilizing role. Rooting the indigenous cultures in a normative system that assumes reciprocity and sharing in the social and the ecological spheres as the central axis of the political-cultural platform and project itself, reveals an idealist and--why not?—a utopian tone.

An alliance between *indigenous anthropologies* and their dissenting, contradictory and dialectical couple, *academic anthropology*, is not only possible but also inevitable. It implies a re-appropriation of the political and cultural space by indigenous communities and intellectuals that were forced underground and by the non-indigenous intellectuals and practitioners disillusioned by military authoritarianism, skepticism, and despair at given stages of Latin American recent history. Such a [A] process of cultural creation — and therefore political inventiveness — [that] strongly believes in a future scenario in which diversity and the right to be different will be as important as the right to social equality and political justice. Last but not least, as it was expected, the development of Indigenous agency throughout the Americas makes us aware of the strong potential of the ecological, anthropological and Indigenous philosophies correlations that are leading Indigenous Peoples toward broader and more effective forms of participation in elected governments.

The December 2005 presidential elections of Aymara Evo Morales Ayma, the first Aymara elected to lead as head of the Bolivian state since its inception in 1825 is but a logical consequence of Indigenous Peoples rethinking politics and globalization while

seeking self-determination. President Morales Ayma is calling for the total restructuring of the Bolivian state in a nation of indigenous majority. In times of neo-liberalism and globalization that strongly recommend the shrinking of the state and the reduction of welfare and safety nets for the poor, the Aymara president calls for a reinvented state that delivers rather than abdicate its responsibility. To the globalizing forces and the inevitability of a well-interconnected world that places hardship on historically exploited peripheral areas, Aymara President Morales Ayma responds that the Indian Country's riches of land, water, oil, natural gas, minerals, preserved forests, high levels of biodiversity, cultural diversity and millennial heritage of social organization will be the tools for defeating the never solved poverty of Bolivia and its Indigenous Peoples. Can we think of a better prospect for academic anthropology than to position itself on the side of these renewed Indigenous Anthropologies that are betting all their resources to make this world better than the one we found?

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