Editing Eden

A Reconsideration of Identity, Politics, and Place in Amazonia

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and Patrick C. Wilson

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3. The Portrayal of Colombian Indigenous Amazonian Peoples by the National Press, 1988–2006

Jean E. Jackson

In this chapter I examine articles published in Colombia's two national daily newspapers on the country's Amazonian indigenous communities. I explore the ways the journalists and photographers working for *El Espectador* and *El Tiempo* construct the differences between indigenous Amazonians and the country's nonindigenous citizens, and between Amazonian indigenous communities (referred to here as *pueblos*, "people," "town") and pueblos located in other regions. The articles were collected as part of a larger, ongoing research project investigating these two newspapers' representations of indigenous Colombia during the period 1988–2006.

When conceptualizing this larger research project I assumed that the two dailies would offer a seriously distorted picture of the country's indigenous people. I envisioned uncovering the newspapers' participation in "opaque as well as transparent structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, power and control as manifested in language" (Wodak 2001:2). I hoped to "investigate critically social inequality as it is expressed, signaled, constituted, legitimized . . . by language use" (2), working to make such discourses more visible

and transparent (Blommaert and Bulcaen 2000:448). I assumed such symbolic domination would be easy to document.

I certainly uncovered examples of bias, ignorance, insensitivity, and ethnocentrism in these two newspapers. Especially in the Amazonian corpus I found examples of texts that masked the effects of power and ideology in the production of meaning, so that unequal power relationships came closer to acquiring stable and natural forms and to being accepted as "given" (Wodak 2001:3). I found many instances of "othering," at times extensive. "Othering" refers to depictions that highlight alterity. Negative othering in its mildest form disparages; in its most blatant form it sends virulently racist, sexist, and xenophobic messages. I found that, overall, Amazonian pueblos are more othered than non-Amazonian pueblos, the contrast sharpest between representations of Amazonian and Andean pueblos. I also found much more pronounced othering of Amazonian women than men, some of it verging on negative othering. However, I found no case of clearly negative representations of pueblos or their members. (Some articles published prior to 1988 do contain negative stereotypes and at times exhibit shockingly biased attitudes.)

The absence of explicitly negative othering is surprising, especially when we take into account the fact that these two newspapers are by no means left-liberal; both are owned by families in the oligarchy. Nor are they especially good. *El Espectador* has challenged government policy more aggressively than *El Tiempo*, and its coverage of the nation's indigenous pueblos has been more extensive and favorable. (Financial problems eventually forced *El Espectador* to publish weekly, although it still publishes daily on the Internet.) The absence is even more striking when we consider the highly negative treatment of indigenous populations in the national press in several other Latin American countries, for example, Brazil (Ramos 1998) and Guatemala (Hale 2006).

Clearly, understanding the historical context is critical if we are to explain my main finding: the absence of truly negative images. The

country's problems, among them poverty (see Ramírez, this volume), rampant corruption at all levels of government, and above all a conflict that has lasted half a century, are vital elements of this context. I argue that the manner in which indigenous Colombians appear in the press, ranging from neutral to positive and though often romantic or stereotypical, is at times a means of critiquing nonindigenous Colombian society, in particular the various loci of power and authority where so many decisions harmful to the country are made. In this respect mainstream Colombian media continue a tradition that hearkens back to Montaigne's and Rousseau's enlistment of New World inhabitants in these philosophers' efforts to critique the European society of their respective eras. My findings fit within this volume's broader argument—that constructions of Amazonian indigenous peoples, whether as nobly savage or ignobly savage, emerge out of specific historical contexts and cannot be understood in isolation from them.

To be included in the corpus being analyzed, an article had to either be about Amazonian pueblos or mention some variant of the word "Amazon."[1] I did not include articles about elections whose reference to the Amazon simply consists of listing candidates from the region. Also not included were articles about pueblos in other parts of the country illustrated with photographs of indigenous Amazonians, a frequently occurring practice. Colombia's politico-administrative units (called departments) do not correspond to Amazonia's boundaries: Amazonian territory is found in the departments of Amazonas, Putumayo, Caquetá, Guaviare, and Vaupés, but only Amazonas consists entirely of lowland tropical forest (below 500 meters) that drains into the Amazon River and its tributaries. Colombia's Amazonia forms 35 percent of the national territory and 5.5 percent of the Amazon basin.[2] There are several ways of defining Amazonian Colombia; Ramírez's chapter in this volume provides an alternative scheme.

My more comprehensive project found three overlapping categories that receive extensive othering in the two newspapers in addition to Amazonian natives. The first is certain Colombian pueblos located

in other regions of the country: the formerly nomadic groups in the eastern plains (*llanos*) in the Orinoco catchment area; pueblos in the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta in the north of the country; the Wayu'u of the Guajira peninsula in the northeast; and the Emberá and Waunan in the Pacific region. Second, depictions of indigenous women contain far more othering than is the case for men. The third category consists of photographs that contain a far greater degree of othering than the texts they accompany. Quite often an editor has stuck in a photograph from the newspaper's archives that has no connection to the article's subject matter (apart from the common theme of indigeneity). For example, an indigenous woman breast-feeding a baby illustrates an article about guerrilla strategies for recruiting indigenous youth.[3] Sometimes even the caption has no relation to the photograph. Such photographs are excellent examples of what Shi-Xu (1997) terms "fossilizing," for they clearly have been chosen for their exotic, often sexualized nature. As expected, photographs of indigenous Amazonian women reveal the greatest amount of othering.

The chapter proceeds as follows: after a brief overview of the situation of Colombia's indigenous inhabitants, four of the most frequently occurring themes in the newspapers' treatment of indigenous Colombia as a whole are briefly discussed: the environment, lessons to be learned, the conflict, and gender. This contextualizing section is followed by a more in-depth analysis of these themes as they appear in articles about indigenous Amazonia. Discussion and conclusions follow.

Background

Colombia's indigenous people form ninety-four distinct pueblos and speak sixty-four different languages. The 2005 national census gives a figure of 1,378,884 natives, approximately 3.4 percent of the total population of about forty-four million (Meltzer, Rojas, and Camacho 2005:15).[4]

Living in exceptionally diverse habitats (mountains, deserts, vast plains, and tropical forests), Colombia's indigenous people have al-

ways been extremely marginalized socially, politically, and economically. Independence from Spain ushered in an ideology of nation building, which required forging a single national identity, a process that would eventually produce a homogeneous Spanish-speaking, Catholic, patriotic citizenry. As in other Latin American countries, the Colombian state espoused policies of *indigenismo*, which worked to incorporate the nation's pueblos into the general population through racial mixing and cultural assimilation. Indigenous communal landholding was especially inimical to the liberal nation-building project, and legislation intended to dismantle the Crown-established reservations (*resguardos*) was proposed. However, Law 89 of 1890 recognized the official status of the collectively owned *resguardo* and legalized the *cabildos*, the councils of respected authorities that govern the communities. Although the law's language was patronizing, participants who mobilized during the 1970s and 1980s came to appreciate the law's value in the struggle to reclaim communal territory. In 1988 Decree 2001 defined the *resguardo* as a special kind of legal and sociopolitical institution formed by an indigenous community or entire indigenous ethnic group (see Ramírez 2002). The 1991 Constitution even more definitively recognizes the *cabildo* as an indigenous community's governing authority, in accordance with its *usos y costumbres* (practices and customs), and recognizes the *resguardo* as a pueblo's communally owned territory.

The drive for constitutional reform in Colombia arose from awareness that the current social order, in which access to the government was gained exclusively through political parties (all other attempts being ignored or treated as subversion), could not adequately respond to changing social conditions (Van Cott 2000:63–89). The political and moral crisis resulting from the forty-year-long insurgency, the increase in violence as landowners and security forces attempted to stamp it out, and a pervasive distrust of a deeply corrupt state controlled by the oligarchy also strengthened arguments promoting constitutional reform (see Assies 2000:3).[5]

Indigenous political mobilizing during the 1960s and 1970s, which occurred mainly in Andean areas, eventually succeeded in getting the government to recognize the regional indigenous organizations that had arisen during this time (Jimeno and Triana 1985). The National Organization of Indigenous Colombians (Organización Nacional Indígena de Colombia, ONIC), founded in 1982, was also recognized. Largely due to pressure from these organizations and their nonindigenous allies during the 1980s, the government stepped up its program of creating new *resguardos* as part of a land reform that began in 1961. As of 2001 the country's pueblos collectively and inalienably owned 30,845,231 fully demarcated hectares (one hectare equals 2.47 acres), constituting 27 percent of the national territory (Arango and Sánchez 2004:50). Eighty-five percent of these lands are located in the country's plains and tropical forest. The two largest *resguardos* are in Amazonia. As of 2001 approximately 65 percent of the country's indigenous population lived in new *resguardos* (those created from 1961 on), and 22 percent lived in older *resguardos*, some of them established in the colonial period (Arango and Sánchez 2004:104). According to the economist Carlos Ossa Escobar, this "silent revolution," which resulted in pueblos owning 3,250,000 hectares more than the state (as of 1996), reflects a government policy intended to, first, return these lands to their ancestral owners, helping to avert a pattern of ever-increasing concentration of land, and, second, put the land into hands that would best preserve the forested areas and the environment in general (quoted in "Indígenas vuelven a ser dueños de la tierra," *El Espectador*, July 12, 1998).

The new Constitution changed the status of pueblo members from that of minorities without full citizenship to collectivities with full rights as citizens and special rights as distinct peoples. Indigenous leaders' influence during the drafting of the Constitution was far greater than the demographics would suggest (see Gros 2000; Jimeno Santoyo 1996; Laurent 2005; Roldán 1997). The reforms' original agendas had not included benefiting the country's minorities, but during the deliberations

several political interests, not just indigenous and Afro-Colombian, realized that advocating pluralism would bring them closer to their own goals. Indigenous delegates to the Preconstitutional Assembly seemed to embody the hope the country's citizens were allowing themselves to express, for an almost euphoric mood was in the air during the early 1990s. The indigenous delegates' near celebrity status clearly was a factor in the media's overall favorable treatment of the country's indigenous people during that period and subsequently.

Despite these and other significant gains over the past thirty years, Colombian pueblos continue to face daunting challenges. In addition to the ongoing struggle for self-determination, autonomy, and justice, many communities are subjected to serious repression from armed actors, legal and illegal, operating in many areas of the country: two guerrilla armies (the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, FARC, and the National Liberation Army), paramilitaries, and public security forces (the army and national police; see Hunt 2006:98–107). Colombia's guerrilla armies have at best tolerated indigenous aims and at worst assassinated many individuals, leaders in particular. Unfortunately perpetrators of crimes benefit from a justice system estimated to have a 95 percent impunity rate (Aguilera Peña 2001:422, cited in Hunt 2006:100). Colombia's internally displaced citizens exceed three million (Amnesty International 2004:21, cited in Hunt 2006:109).

Overview of the Four Themes throughout Colombia

The background just sketched indicates some of the reasons why media treatment of Colombian Indians evolved the way it did in 1988–2006. I now present a brief countrywide overview of the four themes (which overlap somewhat) that appeared with regularity in articles published during this period: environmentalism, lessons to be learned, the conflict, and gender. (Other topics include politics, education, arts and crafts, religion and traditional culture, indigenous languages, and tourism.) These four themes were chosen because they provide the most useful clues for understanding the overall neutral to positive tone of the othering that appears.

Environmentalism

During the 1990s and the beginning of the new millennium the national press regularly discussed the important links between Colombia's pueblos and the need to safeguard the environment. For example, one article describes how much "greener" indigenous philosophy and practice are when compared to the West's. In a column titled "Fear of the Indian," Miguel Borja writes, "Indigenous models for using and conserving the more than 25 percent of the national territory, and their knowledge of Nature, ecology and biodiversity, are of great value to the country."[6] An article in *El Tiempo* ("Universidad Indígena," July 11, 1997) states that "all sectors of society" have environmental and ecological preoccupations and that "extremely varied kinds of damage occur daily with respect to proper and normal maintenance of the nation's environment." Everyone, therefore, should be supporting a proposed project to create "a kind of Indigenous University" that will develop a specific way to train Indians "as specialists in the protection of the environment, in the defense of their habitat." Obviously the Indians are the ones to do this "primordial task," because they "are so strictly associated with their environment."

Lessons to Be Learned

The examples above illustrate how indigenous values and cosmovision provide guidelines for safeguarding the environment, guidelines that all of the country's citizens would do well to follow. Articles about other topics also feature this "lessons to be learned" theme. An editorial titled "Arquímedes Vitonás: Symbol of the Year" praises the achievements of this Nasa leader, who was declared "Master of Knowledge" by UNESCO in 2004. The editorial praises Nasa organizations' "direct democracy" and "the admirable community independence" that reveals the Nasa community's cohesion and "collective ethics in their confrontations with the armed conflict." The Nasa clearly offer "not a few lessons and challenges . . . to the marked individualism characteristic of our society" ("Arquímedes Vitonás: Símbolo del año," *El Tiempo*,

December 19, 2004). Another journalist writes that indigenous people are "known for their strong sense of identity and for being carriers of a sharp knowledge of their diversity."[7] Other articles link the fate of Colombia's pueblos more directly to the country's future. Here is one discussing the slow progress in legislating the 1991 Constitution-mandated "indigenous territorial entities," a kind of collective land tenure that applies exclusively to pueblo landholdings: "Indigenous territories deserve much more attention, as does the demand for decentralization in general. Colombia cannot put the success of this process at risk, upon which, to a great extent, depend peace and national reconciliation" (*El Espectador*, January 10, 1994). An article about a Bogotá-based meeting of indigenous peoples from various countries comments, "Colombia ought to welcome the delegates to such an important encounter and wish for all possible success. It is to be hoped that their millenarian values and knowledge would not only be respected, but will be taken into account in facing a future that belongs to all of us" ("Encuentro indígena," *El Espectador*, January 21, 1999). Another article states that "[indigenous] territory is nature" and that defending nature has resulted in Indians finding themselves "in the middle of most intercultural conflicts, trying to stop development projects in the country" ("El territorio indígena es la naturaleza," *El Espectador*, July 2, 1997). However, groups that have recently designated themselves indigenous can receive quite critical treatment because they are not taken seriously. One article states that, although a group says its members are descended from the Muisca, a long-disappeared pueblo, their physical appearance shows them to be "wise guys" (*avivatos*) rather than *indígenas puros*. "Incredibly," it continues, this group received transferences from the state "as if they were a real, legally recognized resguardo" ("Resguardo de avivatos," *El Tiempo*, December 11, 2001).

The Conflict

One would expect sympathetic coverage of the plight of the nation's pueblos in so violent a country, and one finds it. Serious repression

has been the norm in many locations. Pueblos are regularly described as caught in the cross-fire.[8] One article refers to them as a *colchón de resorte* (spring mattress), "primordial victims of the repressive campaigns of the Army, which often labels them 'collaborators with the guerrilla'" ("La política indígena, un acierto," *El Espectador*, July 27, 1988). Pueblos are especially targeted because they are in rural areas and because they are in strategic parts of the country, areas worth fighting over because, for example, they contain corridors for drug or weapons trafficking. Also, isolation and inaccessibility characterize some pueblo locations, which can attract narcotraffickers, and many pueblo territories have important natural resources such as minerals and oil or are targeted for large-scale development, like the huge Urrá hydroelectric project that flooded Emberá-Katío lands in the northwest of the country. Pueblos are poor and for this reason are sometimes suspected of having leftist leanings, and the pueblos' stance against all armed actors in their territories, including the army, is acceptable to none of these groups (ONIC 2002). Pueblos characterize their position in terms of autonomy rather than neutrality, for they want to be seen as ready to defend their communities rather than as passively neutral. Pueblos have thought long and hard about resistance: Avelina Pancha, a member of ONIC, reminds a reporter that Colombian pueblos draw on ample experience resisting armed actors: "We have been resisting for five hundred years" ("Indígenas no darán ni un paso atrás," *El Tiempo*, July 26, 2002). In the same article a Catholic missionary in one community voices the same idea: "This [resistance] isn't against only the guerrilla, rather, [pueblos] are protesting whatever form the violence takes."

Although indigenous protests (for example, large demonstrations against free trade agreements) do not always elicit praise in the press (especially when the Pan-American Highway is blockaded, which periodically occurs), unarmed confrontations with armed actors always inspire favorable write-ups. Whether the action is a mass demonstration, the takeover of a government office, or a confrontation with FARC,

indigenous participants will be unarmed. Following the demobilization in 1990 of an indigenous guerrilla organization known as Quintín Lame, the Andean Nasa (also known as Páez) resolved to oppose the presence of all armed actors in their territory.[9] Beginning in the late 1990s they developed a campaign of pacific civil resistance, organizing an Indigenous Guard (*guardia indígena*) whose members are unarmed, save for ceremonial staffs.[10] The Guard currently numbers about seven thousand men and women (see Rappaport 2003). If FARC warns a community that any kind of civil resistance—for example, ignoring its commands—will not be tolerated, the response of *cabildo* authorities might consist of just that, even if brutal repression follows. A number of articles discuss instances when members of several Nasa communities have confronted armed actors with firm, united actions. In 2001, when FARC began firing homemade mortars on a police station in the Nasa community of Toribío, more than four thousand unarmed community members flooded its streets, ending the attack (Rappaport 2003:41). On another occasion a large contingent of community members traveled to a guerrilla stronghold to obtain release of a kidnapped leader ("Indígenas rescatan su alcalde," *El Tiempo*, April 14, 2003). This ability to arrive at a consensus and forge a collective will to act in the face of great danger has occasioned laudatory commentaries in the media, church sermons, school lessons, and everyday conversations, as does pueblo members' obvious respect for leaders and traditional authorities. An example is the interest displayed when governors of fourteen indigenous *cabildos* in northern Cauca received the National Peace Prize for their Proyecto Nasa, a coalition working to maintain community neutrality and autonomy in the face of threats by armed combatants ("Más que neutrales, autónomos," *El Espectador*, December 12, 2000).

Articles about the conflict often include critiques of the Colombian government or Western civilization, a type of "lesson to be learned." One journalist describes indigenous protests as "beginning a movement that could change the direction of the war. . . . Indigenous communities seem to bring together the conditions that the rest of the country seeks in vain" ("Indígenas no darán ni un paso atrás," *El Tiempo*, July 26, 2002). Nonindigenous commentators believe that successful indigenous organizing is key, as well as pueblos' "strong identification with something, be it land, culture or a social or political project. . . . 'We're all owners of the indigenous project.' . . . Indigenous resistance doesn't consist of a show of force, but, rather, demonstrating cohesion" ("Indígenas no darán ni un paso atrás"; also see Espinosa 1998, Rappaport 2005). Pueblos' struggles are described as reclaiming "respect for life and co-existence" ("Indígenas no darán ni un paso atrás"). An editorial states that Nasa symbolizes two things that are seriously lacking in Colombia, which could "drastically change the equation of this unending war that bleeds the country: organization and independence. Indigenous power is synthesized in these." The year 2004 in particular offered the country "more than sufficient" demonstrations of this power to convince Colombians to take these lessons to heart ("Arquímedes Vitonás: Símbolo del año," *El Tiempo*, December 19, 2004). There is even an article about indigenous women's response to the violence (articles featuring indigenous women are very rare). This one describes how the women of one community are organizing "for autonomy and peace" ("Las indígenas, contra la violencia," *El Tiempo*, July 5, 2005). These indigenous responses, and the media's reports about them, resonate with Ramírez's discussion (this volume) of "perverse" and "productive" social capital. We see productive social capital being created when indigenous communities nonviolently resist the "perverse" capital that is so easily generated in "an institutional environment that favors opportunist and criminal behaviors" (Rubio 1997:805, cited in Ramírez, this volume). Such perverse illicit economies promote the abuses perpetrated on pueblos by both legal and illegal armed combatants.

Gender

With respect to the attention indigenous women receive in these newspapers, one would not conclude that they constitute 50 percent of the

native population, for they appear very seldom in the texts themselves. This is especially true for the first years of the period under examination. The ratio of women's appearances in photographs as compared to text is much higher than the ratio for men. Indigenous women appearing in texts or photographs very rarely speak for themselves. Instances of orientalizing and naturalizing women in patronizing ways are especially found in human interest stories. Depictions of indigenous women in these two newspapers, I would argue, are intended to entertain (as opposed to inform) far more than are depictions of indigenous men. Despite what must be a substantial number of female readers, the two newspapers are clearly oriented to a male audience, resulting in Colombia's indigenous women and other minority women (e.g., Afro-Colombians) being doubly erased and "male-gazed" into what is at times a parody of themselves.

We should probably look to gender relations in Colombia in general, and within its indigenous communities in particular, to explain these gendered differences rather than lay most of the blame at the feet of biased journalists and editors. Articles about violence focus on men because men are more often its victims; so far as I have been able to find out, all assassinated indigenous leaders have been men, which is not surprising given the tremendous dearth of indigenous women leaders.[11] An occasional article will mention an indigenous female leader but, with one exception (see below), not in Amazonia. Of course, indigenous (and nonindigenous) women suffer tremendously from the conflict, but their suffering tends to be less newsworthy. The paucity of indigenous female leaders means that stories about indigenous leaders doing other newsworthy things will also be about men.[12]

Analysis of the Four Themes for Amazonia

As already noted, for the most part the two daily newspapers "other" Amazonian natives more than pueblos located elsewhere. Tourists are assured they will encounter "real" Indians (*indios de verdad*) there.[13] The indigenous Amazonian body, especially in ceremonial dress, signals a

clear-cut, satisfying indigenousness that leads editors to choose photographs of Amazonians over, say, a member of the Andean Guambiano pueblo in traditional dress. Amazonian ceremonial dress is a powerful signifier that references the Amazon region itself and suggests such themes as the Primitive, Innocence, Harmony with Nature, Mystery and Adventure. The symbolic value of the Amazonian indigenous body is evident from the frequency with which photographs of Amazonians are used to illustrate articles about non-Amazonian topics. For example, a photograph accompanying an article about the opening of a photography exhibition on "Indigenous Colombia" in downtown Bogotá shows a shirtless, elderly indigenous Amazonian man using a traditional implement to scoop powdered coca leaf into his mouth. The caption reads, "An Amazonian shaman in communication with the higher spirits" (*El Espectador*, April 14, 1994). An article titled "Whites: Respect Indian Justice," about indigenous jurisdiction, is illustrated by a bare-chested Amazonian Indian with a feather crown. A large photograph of an Amazonian man in a feathered crown, loincloth, and jaguar-teeth necklace is the initial illustration for an article about racism throughout the country ("12 de octubre, Día de la Raza," *El Espectador*, October 12, 1997). We do not know for sure what such photographs are intended to communicate, nor how their message is in fact received by readers, yet we can conclude that although a significant degree of othering is apparent, these are not straightforward instances of symbolic violence. However, as Chaves's chapter in this volume describes, such exotic imagery can prevent members of communities that no longer use such signaling devices from being considered "really" (*de verdad*) indigenous people. If they respond to disparaging comments about their authenticity by reindigenizing, and this is their sole motivation, we have an example of self-orientalizing. While Chaves (2005) has demonstrated that such enactments can be performative, putting into play a much more profound reindigenizing process, in some cases petitioners are denied recognition because

they do not look or act the part (for a non-Amazonian case, see Jackson and Ramírez 2009).

The adoption of a favorable tone toward the nation's pueblos by Colombia's national daily newspapers began in earnest with the coverage of President Virgilio Barco's 1988 trip to La Chorrera in the department of Amazonas to hand over more than five million hectares to the region's pueblos. The articles' positive tone clearly follows the lead of the chief of state; for example, Barco addresses the hundreds of assembled people in the Huitoto (also spelled Uitoto and Witoto) language: "Good morning, we are with you and we are here to give you your lands."[14]

Barco's speech to the crowd employs a rhetoric stressing the value of Amazonian indigenous citizens' contributions to nation building. The reporter comments, "The Head of State indicated that Colombians need to revalue the image that we have of Amerindian peoples, and the government proposes to inform everyone about their true value, as well as their contributions to the formation of our nationality." Upon departing Barco said, "Here are your lands, beloved compatriots. Continue loving them and taking care of them as you have until now . . . because only you know its secrets, its generosities, its weaknesses and its most subtle attitudes."[15] *El Tiempo* covers the occasion in a similar manner, with one article concluding, "Finally, after an incessant fight, these communities achieved an act of justice that will redeem the most vital component needed for their survival in the enormous Amazon. . . . Like a dream come true, those who were slaves will have enough land to work" ("De esclavos a propietarios de tierra," April 9, 1988). Interestingly the article in *El Espectador* describes Indians holding placards that read "Handing over what one owes is not generosity, it is scarcely doing what must be done."

The positive tone of these articles by no means indicates an absence of othering, an example being the description of Barco as the first president who visited *indígenas incrustados* (encrusted, inlaid)

in the jungle.[16] A photograph of the president and his wife in feather crowns is captioned "Indigenous President."[17]

Articles in the two newspapers on Amazonian topics that might reasonably warrant a somewhat negative tone either are not negative or are so only indirectly, through criticism voiced by someone in the story. For example, several articles mention *saneamiento* (ethnic cleansing) of *resguardos*, which involves relocation of nonindigenous residents, usually poor *colonos* (settlers). A 1988 article simply mentions that the *saneamiento* of nonindigenous inhabitants from the new Predio Putumayo *resguardo* must occur within six months.[18] None of these articles contains any hint of sympathy for the plight of these *colonos*.

Nor do articles adopt a critical gaze with respect to the controversial issue of the "proliferation" of Indians, which refers to groups of reindigenized natives soliciting and obtaining official recognition of *cabildos* they have recently formed. Such solicitations increased especially after Law 60 of 1993 was passed, which enlarges indigenous authorities' sphere of action with respect to obtaining economic resources from the state. One year after the law was passed 80.4 percent of the country's *resguardos* presented projects to be funded (Laurent 2005:342).[19] The Putumayo is the site of much of this activity.[20] One article reports that the government office of Asuntos Indígenas (Indigenous Affairs, renamed Etnias, Ethnic Affairs, in 2003) estimates that about 350 communities throughout the country are seeking recognition as *aborígines*. The agency's director, Marcela Bravo, is quoted as saying categorically, "Indigenous pueblos that disappeared before the Spaniards arrived cannot reappear now."[21] Leaders from ONIC counter, "Communities that weren't indigenous are now recognizing themselves as such because for 500 years they were told that to be *indio* was a shame. But they now realize that this is not so and they are recovering their dignity. Nevertheless, this process is being delegitimized by the government." They go on, "We don't agree that the Ministry of the Interior should be the one to recognize who

is and isn't indigenous. The community ought to define itself. What is really going on is a dispute over resources and lands."[22] The only criticism in the article comes from the mouth of the Etnias director. The contrast with the extremely negative tone of the article about the "wise guys" (*avivatos*) falsely claiming Muisca identity (see above) could not be stronger.

In cases involving clearly reprehensible behavior on the part of indigenous politicians and government appointees (corruption being the most frequent topic), criticism appears mainly in quotes from fellow Indians. (Note, however, that the well-known phrase *malicia indígena* [indigenous malice, mischief] appears in one article and in the title of an editorial.)[23] A story in *El Tiempo* reports that on September 21, 1994, Maximiliano Veloz was obliged to renounce his position as mayor of Mitú, the capital of the Vaupés, because a substantial number of indigenous "brothers," upset by the nonpayment of 150 million pesos the mayor's office owed the *resguardos*, took over his office and occupied it until he agreed to resign.[24]

Environmentalism in Amazonia

The theme of environmentalism and Amazonian pueblos appears in a major way in the newspapers. The notion of danger posed to both the environment and its inhabitants, who are described as closely linked to their surroundings, reflects themes found in media treatments of indigenous communities elsewhere in the country, but in Amazonia the connections are more tightly drawn. Settlers pose dangers to the environment, as do fumigation of coca fields and the conflict.

The far-sightedness of Colombia with respect to saving both the Amazon and its inhabitants is featured in numerous articles. President Barco describes his new policy goals as recognition of the rights of aboriginal communities and establishment of a "rational, balanced, and sustainable management of natural resources," to be achieved by turning over huge swaths of territory to the members of these communities.[25] Another article puts a nationalistic spin on Barco's

policy, describing it as a model for other countries. The author, Edgar Cadena, writes that the new *resguardo* constitutes the largest indigenous reservation in the world, bringing the amount of Amazonian land "that has passed into the hands of its legitimate owners" to a total of almost twelve million hectares. These achievements demonstrate that "Colombia has authority: it is the most advanced country with respect to conservation of the environment, because it has not had to exploit this region. The Colombian Amazon is more preserved than other countries' Amazonian territories."[26] Barco states that even prior to handing over the Predio Putumayo, Colombia received "expressions of support and congratulations from the international scientific community. I consider . . . that this international recognition today is even greater due to the country's having doubled the area of protection and development for the indigenous communities and conservation of the environment."[27] An article published later that year discusses the favorable attention the *Miami Herald* was paying to Barco's Amazonia policies.[28] A 1989 article titled "The Key to Amazonian Success" praises the region's inhabitants, who are the answer to the problems that countries within the Amazon basin are experiencing with respect to management of the environment. The reporter claims that Colombians now understand that Indians utilize a large area around their longhouses; the idea of a virgin forest was erroneous because although the jungle surrounds Man, human culture extends through the jungle, regulating it ("La clave del éxito amazónico," *El Espectador*, May 13, 1989). By 1990 the number of hectares in Amazonia had increased to 18 million; Barco is quoted stating that these forty-two *resguardos*, along with the country's system of natural parks, show that Colombia is today one of the countries protecting the largest amount of tropical forest ("Colombia, el mayor protector de la selva tropical: Barco," *El Espectador*, April 24, 1990).

The theme of the Amazon as supplier of the world's oxygen also appears. One 1999 article about a "journey to the lungs of the world" reports on an international symposium in Leticia during which del-

egates traveled to a *maloka* (the traditional Amazonian longhouse) to hear indigenous leaders explain the significance Amazonia has for them. The article states that "within each maloka live the world's most efficient administrators [of the environment]" and quotes a Muinane leader: "We have demonstrated that we know how to carry out development without destroying nature. In this way we have always managed the environment" ("Viaje al pulmón de la Tierra," *El Espectador*, November 23, 1999; also see *El Tiempo*, December 9, 2005). Another article laments the negative impact of settlers on the ecosystem but speaks very favorably of indigenous Amazonians; after briefly recounting an origin myth and describing indigenous daily life, the author discusses the deleterious impact of the rubber boom and contemporary coca cultivation introduced by outsiders.[29] Another article describes the effect of illegal cultivation on indigenous Amazonians' way of life, in particular the negative impact on their ecosystems, which "is leading to extinction and displacement of these populations" ("Los indígenas también pierden," *El Tiempo*, May 18, 1998; also see *El Espectador*, April 27, 1994). In contrast, another article sympathetically describes indigenous Amazonians' need to cultivate coca for their own ritual consumption ("Queremos coca, no cocaína," *El Tiempo*, October 14, 2000). An article on a meeting in Bogotá of the National Congress of the Environment contains a photograph of an Amazonian man with feathers, necklace, and staff; the caption reads, "Indians were present in the congress to express their thinking about the fatal destiny of Mother Nature, and were radical in their opinions" ("Fin de semana verde," *El Tiempo*, July 27, 1998).

Amazonian "Lessons to Be Learned"

Although relatively little writing features Amazonian pueblos teaching "lessons to be learned," we have seen such suggestions indirectly mentioned in a number of articles described earlier. Here is a more direct example: "The elderly Uitotos talk about principles of peace, liberty, and abundance, because when speaking about traditional

medicine they refer to the environment, to education and coexistence. Their knowledge is holistic and, like the universe, without fragmentation."[30] An article titled "Indigenous Wisdom, a Model for Peace" describes a workshop to discuss ways to end the conflict. A step forward was learning that those who dwell within the *maloka* respect their traditions, including myths and beliefs, as well as the environment. This is because the *maloka* represents the center of the community, where culture is born and knowledge, thoughts, and religiosity are transmitted ("Sabiduría indígena, un modelo para la paz," *El Espectador*, May 1, 1999).

The Conflict in Amazonia

Amazonian pueblos, many of whom find themselves extremely beleaguered (Jackson 2005), receive especially sympathetic treatment in the media. Extinction is mentioned more than once; because of their relatively small numbers, forced displacement and killings put many pueblos at risk of entirely disappearing ("Colombianos en peligro de extinción," *El Tiempo*, November 27, 2003). A 2003 article reports that twenty-two of the fifty-four pueblos are in danger of disappearing.[31] Three articles report on the massacre of seven Koreguajes in July 1997, which brought the total number of Koreguaje assassinations to forty-two (an additional four were "disappeared") in only four years.[32] This pueblo has only two thousand members. A Koreguaje leader concludes, "They want to violently obliterate us" ("Violencia contra koreguajes deja 42 muertos en cuatro años," *El Tiempo*, October 2, 1997). Another article quotes a Huitoto at a meeting: "Violence is the result of consumerism, of not wanting to share with others. From this comes hate." The reporter comments, "His words brought a message of hope, for he assured us that peace would be attained when Man comes to live harmoniously with Nature."[33] An article containing a photograph of three Amazonian indigenous men deep in the forest, where they have sought refuge, is captioned, "They are trying to conserve their tradition, despite the pounding of the West" ("El mapa no es el territorio," *El Espectador*, September 10, 2000).

Stories about Amazonian pueblos protesting guerrilla armies' forcible recruitment of their youth show another side of the conflict's negative impact.[34] Such forced recruitment is "against the philosophy of their communities, which support solidarity, respect and unity" (*El Espectador*, March 9, 2003).

Amazonian Gender

The overall higher ratio of photographs to text for women as compared to the ratio for men is especially true for articles on Amazonia. As already noted, indigenous women appearing in texts or photographs are quoted far less often than men, and this is particularly true of Amazonian women. Photographs of Amazonian women tend to embody sexual and "primitive" themes (see Pietikainien 2003:590); for example, a photograph illustrating an article titled "Indigenous Communities: Victims of 'Civilization,'" is captioned "Indigenous communities were persecuted in Colombia." But the photograph is a close-up of a bare-breasted young Amazonian woman flanked by two older women ("Comunidades indígenas, víctimas de la 'civilización,'" *El Espectador*, May 23, 1999). A photograph illustrating a story on special indigenous jurisdiction is captioned "The punishments handed down by the cabildos vary according to the crime and the community. They can stretch from the whip or communal labor all the way to banishment." But the photograph itself shows an Amazonian woman sitting in a chair with a hammock nearby and two boys in the background ("Ley de 'blancos' para indígenas," *El Espectador*, September 6, 1999). An article's photograph of three little Amazonian girls is captioned "The Indians of the region fight to preserve their culture" ("Amazonas, Cinco pasos por la selva," *El Tiempo*, November 9, 2006). In fact, only one of *El Tiempo*'s stories that feature photographs of Amazonian women shows a link between the text and the photograph (June 6, 1997), but only in passing: the text is about an arts fair in Bogotá. And only three *El Espectador* articles do so. The first, also only in passing, is found in a story about President Barco's visit to La Chorrera in 1988, which includes a photograph of

a woman and an infant. The caption indicates that she resides in the *resguardo* that had received the large tract of land the previous day ("Barco, al rescate del Amazonas," *El Espectador*, April 24, 1988). The second, an article about the 1990 "Woman of the Year" prize given by the Fund for Family Compensation (Caja de Compensación Familiar), contains a photograph of the winner, the Huitoto María Encarnación Sukroque.[35] A captioned photograph was published the following day ("Figura de hoy," *El Espectador*, March 9, 1990). The third article that contains a photograph linked to both the caption and text features a Nukak-Makú high-fashion model in Bogotá (see below).

Although a few newspaper articles featured indigenous women, with two exceptions they live elsewhere in the country. The story about Sukroque describes her as an "authentic" leader who founded a women's community group that successfully pushed for better education and public health services. But the article also displays the familiar othering: she "embodies the authentic indigenous woman, working on a par with the man, barefoot, in the rain, cutting down trees with a machete in her little piece of jungle" in order to provide her husband and five children "with pineapples and other kinds of fruit."[36] No quotes are provided. The other article is about Francy Buitrago, a Nukak fashion model in Bogotá, "the model with nomadic blood." Although she is ostensibly "modern" and urban, this Amazonian native woman is the subject of a story whose main message is about a very exoticized other; for example, her totally plucked eyebrows receive serious attention.[37] Although clearly responding to feminist currents in the new millennium, both of these stories that feature Amazonian women are unmistakable examples of tokenism, both highly exoticized. The closest *El Tiempo* comes to such tokenism is a story published on Mother's Day titled "The Indigenous Woman: Authentic Mother through Tradition." A superficial survey based on an interview with the Colombian anthropologist Nina de Friedmann, the article mentions Amazonian women (described as "submerged in the jungle") three times.[38]

At this juncture I want to explore further what Colombia's indigenous Amazonians, especially women, symbolize for mainstream Colombian society. Familiar alterity signaling associated with the Amazonian native includes images of "the primitive," links to nature and the natural (the Amazon region itself), and tropes indicating child-like naïveté, ignorance, and inferiority. Contrasting images also appear that reference valuable attributes, such as authority vested in the elders, authentic spirituality, and possession of powerful esoteric knowledge used for the benefit of the community.

Amazonian women have often symbolized a mysterious and profound alterity, frequently of a sexual nature. A familiar image in earlier periods is the New World represented as indigenous female. She is a dusky, seductive, beautiful young woman ready for the taking, as in William Blake's famous etching of "Europe Supported by Africa and America" (see Nagel 2003) or Theodore Galle's "Vespucci 'Discovering' America," where America is depicted as a naked indigenous woman in a hammock (see Faery 1999). We also have Sir Walter Raleigh's famous characterization of Guyana as "a Countrey that hath yet her Maydenhead" (1997; Slater 2002:34; also see Faery 1999). Although in these earlier representations the attractive, inviting native woman represents all the Americas, the image fits stereotypes of Amazonian-like women far more than, say, Andean native women, for they are nearly nude and often portrayed in a supine, languorous pose. Clothing, work, children, and native men are nowhere to be seen.

As happens with the symbolics of the Amazonian native of unspecified gender, contradictions are easily found within the totality of symbols contained in representations of the Amazonian woman: a set of alternative, equally familiar images oppose the preceding set of images of the seductive and passive young native woman. These tropes reference power, most famously personified by the Amazons, the strong and independent women warriors of myth and explorer accounts. Literature about them, along with the literature that analyzes this literature, abounds (see, for example, Bamberger 1974; Murphy and Murphy 2004; Steverlynck 2003; Tiffany and Adams 1985). The message of power characterizing the warrior Amazon image is sometimes heightened by additional attributes that also signal power and authority, such as physical height and, occasionally, relative whiteness of skin (Slater 2002:89). These Amazons signify not only power and a will to violence, but independence from men and a renunciation of conventional (hetero)sexual and reproductive roles, symbolized by their willingness to cut off a breast to become more skillful archers. Or, if not renunciation, they indulge in a variety of sexual perversions that invariably challenge patriarchal authority. As Candace Slater (2002) points out, the powerful matriarch is also a member of this subcategory. We can conclude that ambiguity and ambivalence, at times profound, characterize the entire domain of warrior Amazon images. The nearly universal dictum that powerful women cannot be a good thing definitely characterizes this set of images.

Amazonian women are also recruited as symbols of the mysterious jungle and Nature herself. Representations along these lines include those in the Brazilian author Alberto Rangel's *Inferno verde* (Green Hell) and the Colombian author José Eustacio Rivera's *La vorágine* (The Vortex) and by the native woman in the Brazilian film *Como era gostoso o meu francés* (How Tasty Was My Frenchman, 1971). Slater cites Rivera's characterization of the Amazon jungle as "the wife of silence" and the "mother of solitude and mist" (*La vorágine* 99, cited in Slater 2002:252). A third trope, the Amazon region depicted as an elusive female, is exemplified in Lévi-Strauss's frustration at the Amazon forest's refusal to let him in on "the secret of its virginity" (Slater 2002:101, citing *Tristes Tropiques* 1964).

Clearly, the blatantly sexist and racist depictions of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries are a thing of the past. However, it is important to note that the two newspapers' treatment of the country's Amazonian women makes use of only some of the tropes just described. The powerful Amazon warrior is totally absent, as is the powerful matriarch.[39] All depictions of indigenous power and wisdom appear in masculine

form. The Amazonian woman, when she appears, is voiceless and, with the exception of "Woman of the Year" Sukroque and perhaps the Nukak Francy Buitrago, without agency, an object to be observed (and, of course, fantasized about). The Amazonian woman's frequent appearance as a type of exotic eye candy, as happens in photographs of young, often semiclothed women, recalls the earlier representations of the New World as seductive, passive, and, often, supine female native. The other, far less frequent type of representation in the two newspapers shows the indigenous Amazonian woman as an ordinary mother in tropical domestic surroundings, although the article about Sukroque does briefly mention her activities as a leader.

An article published in *El Espectador* slightly before the period under examination illustrates my point. Titled "God, Fertility and the Universe of Indigenous Longhouses" it describes the longhouse of the Murui-Muinane, a Colombian Amazonian pueblo. The article is illustrated with a large line drawing of a longhouse that encircles a naked indigenous woman with long hair and a fiber headdress. She has assumed a crouched position; the article describes this posture as the position for giving birth. Many of the symbols we have just examined are contained in this drawing: a young, enclosed, domestic, fecund, naked (save for a head ornament), crouched woman with her head lowered.[40] The fact that the Murui-Muinane do characterize their longhouses in somewhat similar terms (Carlos Lodoño, personal communication, September 8, 2008) does not alter this reading of the illustration, for I am analyzing the symbolic roles indigenous Amazonian women play for nonindigenous readers.

Discussion

Press coverage of Colombia's pueblos during the period 1988–2005 reveals a much more positive tone than I originally predicted. Favorable press attention to indigenous issues began in 1988 with stories covering the Barco administration's deeding large portions of the national territory to pueblos, especially in Amazonian departments. Of course at certain earlier moments during the 1970s and early 1980s pueblos

received fairly positive media attention, for example, President Belisario Betancur's visit to Silvia, Cauca (an Andean department with a large indigenous population) in November 1982 to announce a new state policy addressing pueblos' territorial claims. But the most extensive and favorable coverage begins in 1988.

Obviously the phenomenon of increased and more positive media coverage during the 1990s was not simply due to a newly discovered perceived need on the part of the country's national newspapers to jump on the multicultural bandwagon. Several additional contributing factors played important roles. First, changes in the cultural politics of indigeneity over the past twenty years have been considerable; during this time Colombia witnessed all sorts of efforts on the part of its pueblos and their nonindigenous allies to achieve cultural revitalization. An example of self-indigenizing is the evolution of some indigenous leaders' speech, which showed a marked increase in indigenous words and phrases as well as allusions to indigenous values and cosmovision. Their choice of clothing and hairstyle also evolved over the period 1988–2005. Leaders such as the Tule (Kuna) Abadio Green and the Ingas Gabriel Muyuy and Antonio Jacanamijoy increasingly donned indigenous clothing.[41] The fact that many of the indigenous leaders described in the articles in the entire corpus are themselves very actively performing alterity needs to be considered when interpreting the degree of othering that appears in newspaper articles. To what degree are the journalists, photographers, and editors misleading readers through their choices of exotic images, and to what degree are these images appearing simply as the result of deliberate self-reindigenization through changes in clothing, speech, and nonverbal behavior?

An additional and related consideration is the significant change in the nation's imaginary of what I call Colombia's "jungle Indians," those pueblos found in the regions of Amazonia, the Orinoco basin, and Pacific lowlands. In previous eras everyone, not only nonindigenous Colombians but its natives as well (including lowland communities

themselves), saw the lowland Indian as the stereotypical dirty, poor, ignorant, naïve *indio* who spoke a barbarous language. But as positive discourses of indigenous alterity came to the fore, pueblos whose members looked more indigenous found themselves becoming the standard-bearers in certain crucial symbolic respects, and these tended to be lowland pueblos (see Jackson 1991). Pueblos that retained their language, continued their traditional practices and customs (*usos y costumbres*), and wore some form of indigenous clothing had higher standing in the "authenticity" rankings. Because Amazonian natives in fact do differ from mainstream culture and society to a greater extent than most pueblos (even those retaining their language and traditional costume; as is the case for the Andean Guambianos), we cannot automatically conclude that the greater amounts of othering apparent in articles and photographs are due either to recent reindigenizing efforts on the part of Amazonian pueblos or to an excessive journalistic othering that misrepresents the actual situation.

Yet even in the case of extensive differences it usually is easy to spot media othering techniques. Media treatment of the Nukak-Makú pueblo offers a clear case of othering, their very real and visible differences notwithstanding. An unwilling poster pueblo for the category "jungle Indians," the Nukak-Makú would win any "authentic traditional Indian" contest hands down. Nomadic foragers who wear very little or no clothing, they are depicted as child-like and extremely naïve, effectively eliminating the possibility of their being viewed as intelligent, adult, and agentive people. Even the most sympathetic articles (the Nukak-Makú's very existence is imperiled by the conflict and infectious disease) almost invariably dwell on the most exotic items of their cuisine and almost always feature photographs of nearly naked and nearly bald Nukak-Makú women (all Nukak-Makú sport U.S. Marine-style haircuts).[42]

Over the past twenty years Colombia's indigenous communities have occupied a much larger space in the national media than their numbers would warrant. I have concluded that, to a greater degree

than happens in the national media of other Latin American countries, Colombia's indigenous people play the role of a messenger who shows Colombians who they are by revealing what they are not, in particular what they lack. (We must keep in mind that such "lessons to be learned" are not always based on accurate or comprehensive information.) Pueblos are seen to possess attitudes and practices that Colombians would do well to take to heart. Pueblo members husband the environment. They respect elders and traditions (e.g., shamanic medicine). They maintain a less hectic pace, keep their spirituality intact, and value their community, which they defend unarmed, save for ceremonial staffs. Pueblos' traditional judicial systems are described as functioning well, getting things done without either the long delays or the endemic corruption found everywhere else. Pueblos are also shown fighting transnational domination. For example, in contrast to a private Colombian university, which is depicted as having sold out to powerful foreign scientific institutions and multinational pharmaceutical companies, sympathetic stories show pueblos accusing these institutions of biopiracy.[43] Finally, pueblos are described as having an enviable ability to collectively solve problems, internal as well as external, without resorting to violence. Even extremely divisive intrapueblo battles, some of them closely followed in the media, merit positive media treatment, for these conflicts' peaceful resolutions are seen as a lesson to mainstream society, which all too often fails in this area.[44]

Although Amazonian indigenous leaders play such roles in the press far less frequently than leaders from certain other regions of the country (which is not surprising when we consider the small numbers and dispersed settlement pattern), when indigenous Amazonia appears in the press the treatment is similarly positive. From Barco's 1988 La Chorrera speech to more recent depictions of indigenous Amazonians as eco-friendly stewards of the forest and deeply wise practitioners of traditional medicine, remarkably favorable coverage continues to appear, along with portrayals of the Amazon region itself

as a unique source of pure and uncorrupted nature. The exception is press treatment of Amazonian indigenous women, which, although not overtly negative, cannot really be called positive. Even given the relative voicelessness of ethnic minorities that characterizes journalistic practice in general (Pietikainen 2003:595), press treatment of this minority is extreme in this regard, for they are, in effect, rendered mute.

Conclusion

As the title *Editing Eden* suggests, this book's main goal is to demystify the Amazon and its native inhabitants. The authors seek to engage with and analyze the dominant themes, stereotypes, and fantasies that work to create particular imaginings of the Amazon so as to reveal shortcomings and contradictions. In this chapter I have analyzed an extraordinary set of images and symbols found in articles about the country's indigenous peoples in Colombia's two national newspapers. The tone of the articles, which ranges from neutral to favorable, is unusual in Latin American media representations of indigenous communities. The nation's pueblos have played a pronounced hermeneutic role during the past twenty-odd years, in particular in those articles that invite nonindigenous Colombians to reflect on the nation's problems and to consider pueblos as role models pointing the way to solutions. Colombia's unfortunate position as a "façade democracy" (98 percent of crimes go unpunished, corruption is rife at every level, and the government is seen to be run by a coterie of elite, self-interested politicians) surely has played a part in bringing this role into being. The horrendous impact of the conflict is another key factor; not surprisingly, the disproportionate amount of the violence pueblos are subjected to educes sympathetic coverage, as do instances when unarmed communities resist domination by armed actors, legal and illegal. In short, press treatment will be favorable whenever pueblos are the underdog, no matter what the issue. This is not to say that the media always support pueblo positions. A columnist, for example, might wholeheartedly support oil exploration; however, even if the article discusses the U'wa pueblo's categorical rejection of

seismic tests in their territory, they are not directly criticized. Instances of poorly planned and implemented neoliberal policies also inspire favorable narratives, as do cases demonstrating the negative side of globalization (e.g., biopiracy) or development projects that run roughshod over indigenous territories and desires.

Indigenous Amazonia inspires articles that continue the long tradition characterized by bell hooks as a "concrete search for a real primitive paradise, whether that location be a country or a body" (cited in Rodríguez-Mangual 2004:40). These denizens of an Edenic Amazon are portrayed as guardians of an imperiled ecosystem and practitioners of a shamanism characterized by an authentic and traditional spirituality. The two daily newspapers' treatment of indigenous Amazonian women constitutes the one glaring exception to positive portrayals. Although we have no definitive evidence of truly negative othering—in the sense of blatantly sexist and racist depictions—the fact that only two articles in my Amazonia corpus feature women, and that invariably when women appear (most often in photographs) they communicate very familiar and regressive messages, leads me to conclude that this is a case of "same old, same old." The way Amazonian women are depicted is all too recognizable; most often they are simply invisible, but when they are present they are almost always objects to be seen but not heard. This is especially so in the case of photographs, which at times offer up the Amazon woman as a kind of exotic eye candy to be savored by the male gaze. Insofar as we can infer the authors', photographers', and editors' intentions, the motivations and goals that led to these images being created and disseminated reveal a very distanced perspective, a need to objectify, and a disinclination to attribute agency to a collectivity that constitutes, after all, 50 percent of Amazonia's adult indigenous inhabitants.

Notes

An earlier version of this essay was presented at the 2006 Latin American Studies Association meetings in San Juan, Puerto Rico, in the session "De-essentializing Amazonian Social and Political Space." My thanks to Frank Hutchins and Patrick Wilson for organizing the session and subsequently providing very helpful editorial

comments. The first presentation of this research, "Documenting Ethnic Resurgence and Ethnocide: Representations of Indigeneity in the Colombian Press," took place in 2003 in the symposium "The Violence of Representation and Its Discontents: Creating Publics, Borders, and Bridges" at the AAA annual meeting in Chicago in November, organized by Charles Briggs.

1. Pueblos include Andoke, Bora, Carijona (Karijona), Cocama, Coreguaje, Hupdu (Makú), Juhup (Makú), Kakua (Makú), Kofán (Cofán), Kubeo, Letuama, Makaguaje, Makuna, Matapí, Miraña, Muinane, Nonuya, Nukak (Makú), Ocaina, Tanimuka, Uitoto (Witoto), Siona, Tikuna, Yagua, Yukuna, Yuri, and the "Tukanoan cultural complex" (Bará, Barasana, Carapana, Desana, Kawiyarí, Piratapuyo, Pisamirá, Siriano, Taiwano [Eduria], Tariano, Tatuyo, Tukano, Tuyuka, Wanano, and Yurutí). In 2004 the vice minister of defense, Andrés Peñate Giraldo, said that fifty-six pueblos are in Amazonia (defined as including the departments of Amazonas, Caquetá, Guainía, Guaviare, Putumayo and Vaupés). "Militares, también a curso de indígenas," *El Tiempo*, July 13, 2004.
2. Winston Manrique Sabogal, "Tríptico de la selva," *El Espectador*, April 27, 1994.
3. Marisol Gómez Giraldo and Glemis Mogollón, "Seducción, arma de guerra contra indígenas," *El Tiempo*, July 31, 1998.
4. Carl Henrik Langebaek, "En busca del Colombiano Perfecto: El mestizaje se convirtió en una forma de exclusión social que aún perdura," *Semana*, October 30, 2006.
5. In 1990 *The Economist* named Colombia one of the world's five most corrupt countries (Buenahora 1991, cited in Van Cott 2000:49).
6. Miguel Borja, "El Miedo al Indio," *El Espectador*, May 8, 2000.
7. Blanca Lucía Echeverry, no title, *El Tiempo*, February 12, 1998.
8. Sixto Alfredo Pinto, "Sangre Indígena Bajo dos Fuegos," *El Tiempo*, November 1, 1998; José Navia, "Indígenas, entre fuego cruzado," *El Tiempo*, February 4, 1996.
9. Bibiana Mercado, "'Estamos en el centro de una guerra': Indígenas," *El Tiempo*, November 21, 1993.
10. José Luis Valencia, "Indígenas prohibirán paso a actores armados," *El Tiempo*, May 16, 2001.
11. Victoria Neuta, member of the ONIC executive committee in charge of women's issues 2005–2007, personal communication, November 2006.
12. But see Adriana Espinel, "6 mujeres asumen como gobernadoras," *El Tiempo*, January 19, 2005.
13. Alvaro López Pardo, "No hay que ser 'Rambo' para recorrer el Amazonas," *El Espectador*, April 11, 1989.
14. Orlando Henríquez, "Barco traza bases para política amazónica," *El Espectador*, April 24, 1988. Also see Lucy Nieto de Samper, "Martín von Hildebrand, un Antropólogo Dedicado a los Derechos de la Comunidad Indígena," *El Tiempo*, December 7, 2005.

15. Henríquez, "Barco traza bases para política amazónica."
16. Henríquez, "Barco traza bases para política amazónica." Also see Edgar Cadena, "Colombia: Líder de la cuenca amazónica?" *El Tiempo*, May 15, 1988.
17. Edmer Tovar, "Barco y García cumplieron una función social con los indígenas," *El Tiempo*, April 26, 1988.
18. Cadena, "Colombia: Líder de la cuenca amazónica?" See also Luzdary Ayala, "La tierra no está perdida," *El Espectador*, September 25, 1994.
19. In November 2006 I was told by an official in Etnias that as of October 2006 the office had received 150 formal petitions for recognition and knew of 250 others being prepared.
20. Andrea Linares, "Proliferación de indígenas," *El Espectador*, March 28, 2001. Also see Chaves 2003, 2005, and in this volume; Ramírez 2002 and in this volume; Jackson 2007.
21. Linares, "Proliferación de indígenas."
22. Linares, "Proliferación de indígenas."
23. Regina Matta, "No me condenen, soy indígena," *El Tiempo*, August 15, 1999; "Y la malicia indígena?" *El Tiempo*, September 19, 2003.
24. "Renunció ayer el alcalde de Mitú," *El Tiempo*, September 22, 1994. Also see María Ximena Godoy, "Maximiliano Veloz, Un indígena educando a más indígenas," *El Tiempo*, June 3, 1988.
25. Edmer Tovar, "Nueva política indigenista anuncia Barco," *El Tiempo*, April 24, 1988.
26. Cadena, "Colombia: Líder de la cuenca amazónica?"
27. Henríquez, "Barco traza bases para política amazónica."
28. Gerardo Reyes, "Barco indígena," *El Tiempo*, October 6, 1988.
29. Manrique Sabogal, "Tríptico de la selva."
30. Marta Morales, "Desalojan etnia del jardín botánico," *El Espectador*, March 17, 1998.
31. Álvaro Serra, "La Amazonia, asediada," *El Tiempo*, November 23, 2003.
32. "Asesinan a siete indígenas coreguajes en Caquetá," *El Tiempo*, July 26, 1997; "Masacrados 13 indígenas," *El Espectador*, July 26, 1997; "A punto de acabarse la comunidad Koreguaje," *El Espectador*, August 12, 1997. Also see Jorge Cardona, "El etnocidio de koreguajes," *El Espectador*, August 17, 1997; "El exterminio Koreguaje," *El Espectador*, October 2, 1997.
33. "La paz de los indígenas," *El Tiempo*, July 31, 1998. Also see Mauro Salcedo, "Indígenas sionas denuncian su extinción en el Putumayo," *El Espectador*, March 2, 1998; Bibiana Mercado, "Indígenas Buscan Refugio Antiaéreo," *El Tiempo*, September 22, 1997; Espinosa 1998; Consultoría para los Derechos Humanos y el Desplazamiento 2003.
34. "Asesinan a siete indígenas coreguajes en Caquetá," *El Tiempo*, July 26, 1997. Also see Luís Esnal, "Farc recluta a indígenas," *El Tiempo*, May 1, 2003.

35. Patricia Fajardo, "Una indígena, mujer del Año Cafam 1990," *El Espectador*, March 8, 1990.
36. Fajardo, "Una indígena, mujer del Año Cafam 1990."
37. Sonia Perilla, "Una Nukak se 'roba' la pasarela," *El Tiempo*, May 16, 2003.
38. Mónica del Pilar, "La mujer indígena: Madre auténtica por tradición," *El Tiempo*, May 4, 1998.
39. Another negative depiction of Amazonian women comes from a surprising source: Susan Kellogg's *Weaving the Past: A History of Latin America's Indigenous Women from the Prehispanic Period to the Present*: "To the extent that lowland women can be said to have an image either inside or outside their own nation-states, misogyny shapes how they are perceived" (2005:142). Unfortunately Kellogg herself has such a negative assessment of lowland women's status that a close reading reveals substantial bias. She consulted me about Tukanoan women and I happily agreed. I regret that my scholarship played a role in producing so distorted an image.
40. Claudia Cano, "Dios, la fertilidad y el universo de las malocas indígenas," *El Espectador*, February 15, 1987.
41. See *Actualidad Etnica*, no. 206 (February 14, 2006) for a photograph of Jacanamijoy. Also see Laurent 2005:249–50.
42. Diana Alexandra Mendoza, "Entre Dios y el demonio: Los Nukak siguen su peregrinaje por plena selva," *El Tiempo*, June 28, 1994. Such treatment can also be found in English-language publications on the Nukak-Makú; see, for example, "Colombia: Nukak Tribe—'We are being wiped out,'" *Survival*, May 18, 2006, www.survival-international.org. An article by Juan Forero contains such copious amounts of egregious othering that we must describe it as negative. Juan Forero, "Leaving the Wild, and Rather Liking the Change: Driven from Jungle, and the Stone Age, by Amazon Strife," *New York Times*, May 11, 2006.
43. See, for example, Matta, "La biopiratería, el último saqueo?" *El Tiempo*, October 6, 1997.
44. An oft-cited example is a fierce, deeply conflictive battle in 1998 involving Jesús Enrique Piñacué, a Nasa senator in the national congress; ASI (Alianza Social Indígena), an indigenous political party; and various Nasa communities and factions. Piñacué had agreed to and then disregarded ASI's instructions with respect to the upcoming presidential elections. The dispute was resolved with Piñacué receiving a traditional Nasa punishment that was satisfactory to all actors, at least according to press coverage. Further discussion is found in Laurent 2005:45; Jackson 2007.

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