Preserving Indian Culture: Shaman Schools and Ethno-Education in the Vaupés, Colombia

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Tukanoans in the Vaupés region of southeastern Colombia have been mobilizing to preserve their culture and history for some 20 years.[1] This article examines the reactions of a group of Tukanoan primary schoolteachers to a specific instance of cultural revitalization efforts: an attempt to preserve local indigenous medicine using Western pedagogical methods. Although the events this paper discusses occurred among Indians in a tropical forest region in the Northwest Amazon, the issues are similar to those encountered by many other Indian communities which—influenced by the pan-Indian movement now stretching the length of the Western Hemisphere—are attempting to strengthen and renew their culture in highly politicized circumstances.

Background to the Vaupés

Tukanoans inhabit a tropical forest region on and north of the Equator, straddling the border between Colombia and Brazil. They number about 18,000 (Sánchez et al. 1993:55),[2] and the population density is at most .3 per km^2 (PRORADAM 1979:372). They speak Eastern Tukanoan and Arawak languages and participate in a regionally integrated social system characterized by extensive multilingualism and language exogamy.[3] Earlier in this century, four to eight nuclear families typically inhabited a single, patrilocal longhouse; these traditional settlements have mostly been replaced in recent years by nucleated villages ranging in size from 15 to 300 people. Tukanoan men hunt, fish, and clear swidden fields in which the women grow bitter manioc and other crops, a long-standing pattern that still holds except for a few wage labor jobs in mission settlements and in Mitú, the capital of the Vaupés, a town of some 6,000.

Tukanoans have developed an unusual marriage network in which each local community belongs to one of 16 patrilineal groups, each with its own language. Individuals must marry someone who not only is from a different community but has a different primary language as well. The main units of Tukanoan social structure, from least to most inclusive, are the local settlement, the patrilineal clan, and the (ideally) exogamous language group. The language group, referred to somewhat misleadingly in much of the ethnographic literature as tribe, and today increasingly as ethnic group, is composed of from six to more than 30 clans. Each is distinguished by (1) language and name; (2) separate founding ancestors and distinct roles in the origin myth cycle; (3) the right to ancestral power through the use of certain linguistic property such as sacred chants; (4) the right to manufacture and use certain kinds of ritual property; (5) a traditional association with certain ceremonial objects; and (6) a traditional association with a territory with indeterminate boundaries. Membership is permanent and public: the one fact known about an individual before anything else is his or her language group.

Although there are variations in some customs, artifacts, and level of acculturation, in most respects the 16 language-affiliated groups belong to a single cultural universe. This homogeneity derives from the fairly uniform ecological conditions throughout the region and from shared models for structuring and interpreting the world. Vaupés language groups do not occupy clearly demarcated territories, nor do they act as corporate groups, and the vast majority of interactions involve participants from more than one language group. Tukanoans see themselves as parts of a whole in which apparent cultural diversity unifies as much as it differentiates. The various languages facilitate interaction by serving as emblems of the participating groups, somewhat like uniforms in a football game. Like the members of a symphony orchestra, the members of different language groups produce a coherent and often harmonious performance even though they are reading from different parts of the score and playing different instruments.[4]

Outside Influences

The changes that have most affected Tukanoans in the last 20 years are the result of legislation at the national level, particularly with respect to land reform. In 1975, Tukanoans received title to the Vaupés *resguardo* (literally, "protected area"), consisting of 3,354,097 hectares (a hectare is 2.47 acres) of communally owned, inalienable land. Many Indians own their land collectively—at present, remarkably, Colombian Indians own 22 percent of the national territory (they comprise 1.5 percent of the country's population) (Jimeno 1993:245). Other laws ensure that Indians in Colombia enjoy advantages not granted other citizens: they pay no taxes, need not serve in the military, have access to free education through the *bachillerato* degree (roughly equivalent to a B.A.), and receive free health care. Inspired in part by the 1991 Constitutional Assembly, Colombians are debating how to establish an ethnically plural society (Jimeno 1993; Sánchez et al. 1992, 1993). Thus, Indians have the right to be educated in their own languages, to be taught their own history and cosmology in school, and to have their own healing systems incorporated into the Ministry of Health's local programs. In short, Colombia has moved toward the goal of

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giving Indians not only equal rights before the law but special rights based on cultural difference.

Another set of influences reflects the activity of indigenous rights movements, both Colombian and international. A considerable amount of money comes from outside the country intended specifically for Indian communities, and regions like the Vaupés, These areas with substantial Indian populations are especially targeted. Thus, although racist discrimination, oppression, and exploitation of Indians are still extremely serious problems, Indians, including Tukanoans, are now much more likely than in the past to claim rather than disavow their Indian ancestry and to attempt to rediscover and celebrate their Indian culture (Jackson 1989, 1994). This attitude is particularly marked in leaders of the Vaupés indigenous rights organization, CRIVA (Consejo Regional de Indígenas del Vaupés), who are aware of the likely advantages of remaining Indian and argue in favor of resisting pressures to assimilate.

Tukanoans come into contact with a sizable number of non-Indian individuals and agencies including missionaries, personnel from government and NGO (nongovernmental organization) agencies, colonists (homesteaders), coca paste traffickers, guerrillas, and the military. The terms Tukanoans and non-Indians use for each other reflect ethnic rather than racial classifications. Virtually all "whites" (*blanco,* a term increasingly being supplanted by *no-indígena,* "non-Indian") in the Vaupés have partial or complete Indian ancestry. A Tukanoan family can become "white" over a generation or two if it comes to speak Spanish as a first language and repudiates Indian behaviors. The capital, Mitú, is a little island of non-Indians in a sea of Tukanoans (the Vaupés as a whole is 90 percent Indian), and most non-Indians (almost all of them Colombian nationals) living in Mitú and its environs are there to interact, directly or indirectly, with Tukanoans. Whether or not their goal is personal economic gain, non-Indians generally see the Vaupés as an internal colony in need of development, defined as improvement to the region's ability to supply raw materials and native manufactures to the national economy. Thus, most development projects administered in the Vaupés send mixed messages about how Tukanoans must both gain and relinquish control over their lives.

Unfortunately, the change agents working with Tukanoans are often ethnocentric and paternalistic, with interests that diverge from, and at times compete with, one another. While the degree of ethnocentrism has declined, it is still the prevalent mode, and one sees many instances of arrogant, flamboyant projections of self-confidence that some Tukanoans try to emulate. Some of the saddest aspects of culture contact in Mitú involve overtly prejudiced and autocratic non-Indian Colombians (such as some general-store owners and colonists), who place exaggerated emphasis on outward signs of inner worth, ridicule Tukanoans, and encourage them to engage in ultimately harmful behaviors, aiming to create dependency and enjoy the sensation of personal power.

Interactions between Tukanoans and even the best-intentioned change agents can also be painful to observe: often these exchanges induce deep shame, destroy pride and confidence, and leave dignity trampled into the ground—even

though the non-Tukanoans believe they have their target populations' best interests at heart. The realization that even the most enlightened outside interventions implicitly carry the power to convince those who are oppressed that the system dominating them is just and proper is behind some of the current efforts to mobilize Indians to become their own change agents. It is a lesson that anthropologists, both Colombian and foreign (like myself), need to grapple with continually.[5]

The Tukanoan situation illustrates a now familiar case: relatively powerless people trying to maintain cultural and political autonomy within a highly bureaucratized and centralized state. Changes in legislation and in national consciousness mean that Tukanoans are learning that if they are to have any power at all, not only must they understand non-Indian Colombian society, they also must maintain a version of their traditional culture that is understandable and acceptable to outsiders, both Indian and non-Indian.[6] Thus, winning the battle for self-determination increasingly involves acting and speaking with an authority derived from an "Indian way" that demonstrably draws on traditional Indian culture, but in settings that persistently attest to the far greater authority of institutions outside Tukanoan society.

Hence, at present, the problem for Tukanoans is not the relatively straightforward one of resisting or accepting Western society, or even of resisting or accepting notions of Indianness introduced from outside (including some from other Indians, Colombian and non-Colombian). Rather, Tukanoans are involved in a process of contesting and negotiating what cultural forms they wish to retain (or modify or discard), a process that involves dialogues with themselves, with change agents in the region, and with Indians and non-Indians in Bogotá and elsewhere in the country.

The Shaman Workshop

In the last 15 years, the Ministry of Health, in addition to being concerned about providing adequate health services in rural areas, has begun to pay attention to the negative consequences of introducing Western medicine in Indian communities (see ONIC 1987). In the Vaupés, some officials have asked themselves whether existing public health programs are instances of cultural imperialism. These concerns no doubt reflect, at least in part, pressure from other change agents in the region, including individuals who work for such agencies as Family Well-Being, the Ministry of Education, and the Division of Indian Affairs, many of them trained as anthropologists.

Existing legislation on health services for Colombia's Indians recommends establishing local health care systems that can coexist "with the traditional indigenous systems and be compatible with them" (*Ministerio de Gobierno* 1984:14). A major goal is to involve those living in rural Indian communities in administering programs to provide potable water, improved nutrition, general health education, and so forth. These programs establish a hierarchy of local health workers, such as *auxiliares de enfermería* (nursing aides) and *promotores de salud* (health promoters) who link indigenous communities to local

hospitals. These efforts come out of several national workshops (most notably in Florencia, Valledupar, and Arauca) that discussed and made policy about indigenous rights and indigenous health (Ministerio de Gobierno, Comisión de Asuntos Indígenas del Vaupés 1987:3; also see Sluys 1983).

A program more ambitious than those mentioned above, one that recommended an "empirical" approach to gather and disseminate shamanic knowledge, was attempted in the Vaupés in 1983. This was the project of Pedro Henao (not his real name), an anthropologist in charge of community health programs in the region and a man strongly interested in trying to salvage the native healing system.[7] Henao is a dedicated official who has produced reports on a wide range of topics pertaining to health in indigenous communities, particularly on creating programs in the Vaupés that recognize and valorize traditional health practices. Under his guidance, the Vaupés Health Service, in collaboration with Indian communities, has published several pamphlets in Spanish and in one or more Tukanoan languages that deal with tuberculosis, stomach diseases, traditional plant remedies for snake bite, oral health, and community action in health matters (see, for example, ORIT n.d.; Rodríguez Martínez n.d.; Servicio de Salud del Vaupés n.d.). As of 1993, Henao had worked in public health for more than 15 years, mostly in the Vaupés; in addition, his bachillerato thesis in anthropology was based on fieldwork in the region.

While a report submitted to the Ministry of Health on the 1983 shaman workshop does not discuss the problems participants encountered (see Guevara n.d.), Henao confided to me in 1993 that the workshop had indeed faced many problems, mainly because there were too many items on the agenda and because the shamans fought among themselves. A second workshop, held seven years later, was much more successful, he said, and despite inevitable problems, Henao still supports the basic philosophy behind such endeavors.

Henao's vision of his work among Tukanoans is a complex one. He is committed to advocacy anthropology and has no time for anthropologists (particularly those from other countries) who are interested in collecting data but not in helping the people they study. His goals are several. One is to alter, insofar as it is possible, the hegemonic relationship in the Vaupés, which will eventually lead Tukanoans to despise everything Indian. Henao offers many examples of Tukanoans, especially younger ones, disparaging cultural preservation attempts such as a project to resurrect pottery making and other crafts. He also wants to improve the deteriorating health situation in the region but is often powerless to do so; pollution, malnutrition, alcoholism, epidemic diseases, and other white-introduced problems add to the already difficult situation of dispersed populations with little access to even rudimentary Western medicine—and that often delivered in ways conflicting with Tukanoans' own notions of proper practice. According to Henao and other officials with whom I have spoken, despite considerable effort, the overall health of Vaupés Indians has actually deteriorated in the last 25 years, due to malnutrition and introduced diseases such as tuberculosis and Hepatitis B.

These two concerns come together for Henao. He wants Tukanoans to valorize their traditional healing practices in part because some of them are effective and in part because he thinks that if people believe they can act to prevent and cure disease, the resulting sense of empowerment will itself promote health. He worries about the possibility that traditional authority structures might collapse, and this is one reason for his support of the shaman school idea: if non-Indians show respect for traditional practices, Tukanoans will not feel so inferior and will be less inclined to abandon their social structure and cosmology. In short, Henao supports programs that promote traditional healing practices not only because they can be medically efficacious—directly or by promoting feelings of competence—but also because they can alter the unfavorable relationship between Tukanoans and non-Tukanoans. Henao is fully aware that many of the health problems in the Vaupés would not be affected at all by his campaign to inform people of the correctness of Tukanoan "ecological medicine" (a more descriptive name, he informed me, than "traditional medicine," noting that it is incorrect to speak of shamans as doctors, because shamans safeguard the health of the cosmos, the community, and individual human beings by maintaining the environment—something physicians do not do).

Henao writes articles and books on Vaupés ecological medicine to demonstrate how remarkable and ecologically sound it is, and to inform and convince others that his approach to anthropology and to Western medicine is correct. However, he admits that he finds writing extremely hard, as he feels inferior to many of those who have worked in the Vaupés because they have more advanced degrees and are foreigners. It is my impression that Henao, as a strongly leftist Colombian (he was a guerrilla during an earlier period of his life), identifies with Tukanoan oppression; he likens it to the way Colombia as a whole is positioned on the lower rungs of a ladder whose highest rungs are occupied by multinational interests located, for the most part, in the United States. Any conversation with Henao sooner or later involves invective against the United States, which holds Colombia in thrall in ways similar to those used by Colombian national society to keep Tukanoans at the bottom: the gringos have "invented everything by now" and are destroying Colombia by addicting it to the U.S. drug market. Hence, this very dedicated man wants to help Tukanoans both because he is committed to bettering their lives and because they symbolize to him other cases of oppression.

Referred to as the "first shaman congress" and a "congress of traditional doctors," the shaman school organized by Henao was supposed to analyze the problem of integration between indigenous and nonindigenous medicine and to provide a setting in which shamans (locally referred to in Spanish as *payés*) would teach younger Tukanoans some esoteric shamanic knowledge (see Guevara n.d.:12). Henao called this an "empirical" approach to disseminating shamanic knowledge. The school was held in 1983 in the mission town of Acaricuara, on the Papurí River. The shamans were paid by the Ministry of Health and the Convenio Colombo-Holandés de Salud, a public health development project receiving funding from the Netherlands.

I have no firsthand knowledge of this shaman school. I heard about it six years later, during the summer of 1989, while attending a two-week seminar on ethno-education in Mitú. This paper is actually about the reactions to the shaman school expressed by 13 Tukanoan primary schoolteachers attending the ethno-education seminar.[8]

Ethno-Education in the Vaupés

Ethno-education became the philosophy behind the Colombian government's programs in Indian education (Ministerio de Educación Nacional 1986a, 1986b) after a series of important steps beginning in 1975, when Colombian Federal Law 53 nationalized primary and secondary education, ending the monopoly of the church in the national territories. The following year, the government began decentralizing educational programs by creating *Fondos Educativos Regionales* (FER) as administrative units (see Correa 1993:170; Gros 1993:16). A decree (No. 1142) implementing the 1976 law creating FER called for ethno-education. This legislation was in part a result of Colombia's signing various international treaties on minority rights and a response to pressure from the organized Indian movement in Colombia (see, for example, *Unidad Indígena* 1986). From that time on, education in indigenous communities was carried out by both the church and the Ministry of Education.

Ethno-education was first introduced in Colombia among Arahuacos of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, who, beginning in 1976, worked on curricular change and in 1983 succeeded in ejecting from the area the Capuchin missionaries in charge of education. Briefly, ethno-education is

> a permanent social process, immersed in the culture, that consists of the acquisition of knowledge and values, and in the development of capabilities, in keeping with the needs, interests and aspirations of the community, that will give to it the capacity to fully participate in the cultural control of the ethnic group. [Ministerio de Educación 1986a:59]

Ethno-education is flexible, participative, bilingual, intercultural, and systematic (Ministerio de Educación 1986a:59–62). The director of the Mitú ethno-education team told the teachers attending the 1989 seminar that ethno-education promotes cultural relativism and maintained that, while cultures may differ, no culture is inferior or superior to any other. She also said that one must learn about one's own culture, for "you can't say 'if I'm a member of a culture, then I know it.' " Furthermore, to avoid being ethnocentric, one must learn how to criticize one's own culture rather than talk about only its "pretty" aspects. The director confided to me that ethno-education seminars attempt to convince local teachers—who are the targets of the seminars—that they can control the content of what they teach rather than passively accepting what is given to them "in little packages from the Ministry of Education." Hence, ethno-education supports the idea that teachers should decide, with input from the community, what kind of education is right for that community.

All members of the team conducting the seminar were employees of the Ministry of Education; none were Indian or had had any experience working in Indian communities. They had operated as a team in several other communities and worked well together during their time in Mitú. However, they knew very little about the Vaupés or about Indian rights activism—issues that surfaced repeatedly during the two weeks.[9]

There was a great deal of discussion about Pedro Henao's shaman school (the teachers referred to the congress as a school or workshop) during those two weeks. After being told about the shaman school, the seminar leaders themselves periodically brought up the topic, because it always provoked productive discussion of just what ethno-education was all about. For example, a seminar leader used the idea of traditional versus Western medicine to illustrate the necessity of a community's deciding the content of its educational programs for itself:

> For example, take the case of diseases. There are *chamanes* [shamans], *payés*. But to have the best health possible you can have an exchange [of medical traditions]. It is universal to want to live healthily, so we have to fill in the spaces [that is, where proper health-maintaining activities and knowledge are lacking in the local culture] with proper language and content. You must decide to do this for yourselves because the other route will be that someone—the Summer Institute of Linguistics, for example—*tells* you what to do. You must change this relationship because it is one of coercion. But neither must you close down completely and say "no one is permitted to enter here."

A great deal could be said about the design and operation of the ethno-education seminar. For example, it was fascinating to observe how team members established their own authority in a situation ostensibly designed to encourage the participants to assume authority. The passage quoted above provides an illustration: the speaker introduces a technical term *(chamán)* employed in anthropology but unknown to Tukanoans even though it is being used to describe a part of their culture; he then follows it immediately with a Carib word, *payé*, to show his knowledge of local colloquial Spanish. As one might expect, the fact that ethnolinguistics and bicultural education were being stressed in a seminar attended by inhabitants of a region where the languages and culture were very different from the (Spanish) language and (Colombian national) culture of those leading the seminar produced some extremely interesting interaction. However, the point here is that the context—the setting and purpose of the seminar—resulted in very open and passionate discussions of the shaman workshop, even though the seminar leaders had known nothing about the workshop beforehand.

The Schoolteachers' Analysis

The postmortem I witnessed illustrates many of the problems of relations between Indians and non-Indians in the Vaupés. All the Tukanoan schoolteachers had evidently been disappointed with the shaman workshop. One major reason for this disappointment was that the teachers worry it will soon not be pos-

sible to cure Tukanoans of some ailments because when the older generation dies, all their knowledge will die with them. Another reason for their unhappiness was that the failure of the shaman school seemed to reflect negatively on the Tukanoan community as a whole—one more in a long list of failed projects—and the teachers openly wondered, "Is it our fault?" One teacher commented, "Is it that we are blockheads?" And another responded, "Well, there are a lot of retrograde people among us."

The teachers were also let down because the shaman school plan had promised to increase Tukanoan self-sufficiency. It symbolized community values, participation, and links between generations. It showed that the government was at last recognizing that some aspects of traditional Tukanoan culture were valuable and unique; for once, non-Indians were not only interested in an area of Tukanoan knowledge but were even willing to pay people to help preserve it. Tukanoan traditional culture was being celebrated as well as preserved.

Some of the teachers' disapproval focused on the shamans themselves. Several teachers commented on how egotistical shamans are: after agreeing to participate, they had proved unwilling to impart their knowledge and had been suspicious of one another. One teacher spoke of a shaman he knew who was so possessive of his knowledge that he refused to teach even his own son: "and so he threw his sacred equipment into the river." Another teacher described a shaman he knew who preferred to die with all of his knowledge: "they don't want to share the formulas. . . . We, the young people, are paying for his egotism because we get sick and there's no one to cure us. Some of this is due to difficulties between young and old. If there is a spell against a venomous snake, [the shaman] doesn't want to tell it."

Predictably, money came up several times. Some maintained that shamans did not want to share their knowledge and did not have the community's best interests in mind, but would claim, "only I can do this," because they were interested in creating a monopoly. One teacher pointed out that payment was part of traditional shamanistic practice: shamans paid their teachers and were paid themselves—shirts, cigarettes, and record players were mentioned. Overall, ambivalence about the financial aspects of traditional shamanism was (again, predictably) very marked. "It's all a business," said one. The rivalry among shamans, described as sometimes occurring along language group lines, was also noted and censured.

Another issue was shamans' unwillingness to teach others because they feared their would-be apprentices only wanted to become rich. A Cubeo teacher said, "I have been studying traditional medicine [with a shaman], I know 70 formulas. I want to write them in Cubeo, this is why I'm studying how to write in Cubeo. But one day someone [another Tukanoan] said to me, 'you are doing this to earn money, and this is prohibited, this you shouldn't do.' "

Another topic of teacher comment, one that elicited less self-blame and less criticism of shamans, concerned Pedro Henao's format and the setting for the workshops. The teachers agreed that many elements were missing: the location (the mission town of Acaricuara) was a far cry from the traditional site for shaman apprenticeship, the longhouse *(maloca)*. The workshop had been billed as one where "empirical medicine" would be taught, but the teachers were unsure what this meant. One asked outright, "What *is* empirical medicine?" Another tried to explain, beginning by speaking of indigenous science, but ending up confused:

> Empiricism . . . this empirical school . . . well, the maloca illustrates it, the maloca is the peak of the culture, of indigenous science. It is like a school, for the young. Including the purgatives. What significance did all of these practices have? We can't know. We believe that bad things enter through the mouth and thus a young man has to maintain himself in a pure state with purgatives. [Traditional shaman apprenticeship] was a true school, everyone with his stomach purified, with his person purified. Then everyone would have the capacity to concentrate on this indigenous science. With *yajé* [*banisteriopsis caapi*, a hallucinogenic infusion]. But now, they don't do all of this practice, this maintenance, so it will be difficult. The effect of the yajé on the dancer is to be showing him . . . everything. Exactly the same with the shaman.

Another young man agreed that shamans taught their apprentices under the inspiration of yajé, and he defended this practice by noting that although shamans take yajé and coca and pray with tobacco, they are never addicts. Even today, he added, prayers are made before allowing a youth to take coca for the first time. (From what I could tell, this workshop did not involve these substances, and no schoolteacher suggested it should have.)

Other conditions had not been met: "the shamans said, 'This isn't permitted. You have to have a special diet, a special preparation in order to learn.' " Learning to be a shaman (in the Vaupés as elsewhere in lowland South America) takes a long time and involves sacrifices, such as abstaining from certain foods and activities. The schoolteachers knew this perfectly well, but had accepted at least the possibility that some shamanic knowledge could be taught following Western pedagogical models. They all agreed that a great deal of shamanic knowledge cannot be taught "empirically," and it was understood that the shamans would teach only what they were comfortable teaching in such a setting. They also knew that to establish a school the shamans

> would have to abandon some of their traditions. For example, [in earlier times] the grandfather or the father,[10] when the son was born, would go through a process to make him become a shaman. They were very strict. And the same continues [in some places], there are strict rules, like the requirements for entering a university. And the majority don't want to go through such a difficult apprenticeship.

Still, many Tukanoans apparently thought *some* shamanic knowledge could have been imparted (although they also noted the community itself sometimes disapproved of teaching traditional medicine in this way), and the teachers had had hopes of running workshops elsewhere in the region in the malocas that remain.

The seminar also included comments about the contemporary context of shamanic healing and its connection to the fate of the shaman school project.

One teacher noted that since missionaries had, until recently, been against all ceremonies—particularly those involving shamanism and the consumption of yajé—this part of Tukanoan culture had disappeared almost entirely in certain regions and among certain language groups, most notably the Tukano (although he said some Tukano curers improvise prayers). This individual recommended taking an inventory to see what traditional practices remained in the Papurí River region, the locus of the most intense missionary activity over the last 70 years. Other teachers testified about other changes—one noted that most shamans themselves no longer live in malocas, and several commented that young Tukanoans are lazy and reluctant to study shamanism in the proper manner: "Nowadays someone will come to the shaman and say, 'tonight I want to study what you know.' In one night, now, people want to [learn everything], to be cured rapidly." Others commented that shamans so fear the inroads of Western medicine into their practice that they feel threatened or they quit:

> These were Sirianos, a Uanano, even a Cubeo. A headman, an old one, of Santa Marta said, "Yes, I was a shaman, well-trained, good, a graduate. But I became an evangelist and I threw the stones away." And another headman said, "Yes, I was also a shaman but I left off doing it." They are very reserved people, they don't talk about it.

This teacher noted that one Tukanoan was currently learning how to be a *promotor de salud* (community health promoter) at the hospital in Mitú while continuing to practice shamanic healing, but no one in Mitú knew he was a shaman.

Throughout these discussions, the teachers grappled with the lessons this example offered about preserving culture. What could one do, for instance, to preserve a practice that could be taught only by a group that did not want to teach under what it saw as inappropriate conditions? What if the shaman school were the only way to save shamanic lore? Would the culture preserved be authentic? One teacher noted, "Medicine is a part of culture also, but it is very difficult to find people to teach it. People can't be found who know how to pray and chant like the elders. And the elders prefer to do the prayers and chants by themselves." Another teacher added that even though individuals like himself wanted to "save" Tukanoan culture, what could *they* do in the area of traditional medicine? Tukanoan teachers, he commented, can teach a child the Tukanoan names of trees, even though they are employees of the state, but a health promoter cannot teach the child traditional prayers and chants. Although they were Tukanoans, in a complex way traditional medicine was and was not "their" culture. The whole notion of culture preservation was hard to apply because it was unclear who "owned" these areas of culture; did they belong to everyone or just the specialists who knew them? Were the shamans justified in their reluctance or not?

One aspect of the shaman workshop that the schoolteachers spoke of approvingly was the fact that it did not involve transmitting "patterns culturally very foreign to us," as the teachers must do in their own work. Indeed, given the

bitterness of their complaints about having to act as brokers between non-Indian culture and Tukanoan children, this is probably the main reason for the teachers' disappointment about the shaman school. They emphasized over and over how much they felt themselves in a pervasive bind between those aspects of traditional Tukanoan culture they were supposed to save and those they were supposed to jettison. Also, they had come to see themselves almost as quislings in their roles as transmitters of foreign ideas and values:

> We, as schoolteachers, are products of a formation that is distant from that which is ours. We are trying to change this, this idea that the only thing that is good is that which is foreign. This is what is characteristic of the schools we teach in . . . [but] we have to promote that which is ours.

Another teacher agreed, and added,

> What Pedro says is very good. I feel myself in a paradigm [paradox?] between the house and the maloca. How? Which direction to go in? Speaking of the actual situation, it pains us to talk of that which is ours. It's very hard to go back to the maloca, so I'm in this paradigm.

He later commented that "we aren't going to put on loincloths, but putting on loincloths *is* a way of recuperating our culture." The ethno-education team leader responded to this by telling him that he was going to find this an even more difficult problem as time went on, and spoke of having to "make culture."

Analysis

Clearly, the shaman school was an example of how not to go about implementing health care in intercultural contexts. The teachers' own comments explain most of the reasons behind the school's failure, and I will not repeat them. Instead, I will offer some commentary about why the shaman school was probably doomed from the start.

Without doubt, the main reason for the failure was the project's intent to use some, but not all, of the characteristics of the shaman's role. In designing the school, Henao apparently thought it possible to deconstruct shamanism into component parts and deliver those characteristics that looked amenable to Western teacher-student patterns of interaction. But shamans in the Vaupés (and elsewhere in South America) are not just curers and teachers of curing; they are much more, as many authors have indicated.[11] Shamanism, "a globalizing and dynamic social and cultural phenomenon" (E. J. Langdon 1992:4, discussing Chaumeil 1983), expresses central tenets of a culture's worldview. Shamans, according to Wright (1992:37), cure, advise, and guide people in virtually all areas of life. He points out, as do other ethnographers of the Northwest Amazon (especially the Hugh-Joneses), that no distinct myths about shamanism can be found; rather, the importance of shamanism as an institution and as a symbol of a culture is illustrated throughout any given set of myths, just as its meaning and functions permeate every aspect of life in these societies.

Shamanism has multiple sociological functions. In the Vaupés, unlike some lowland South American societies, leaders (settlement headmen, for example) are not necessarily shamans, but this is not to say that Tukanoan shamans have no political power (see Arhem 1981; S. Hugh-Jones 1979; and Santos Granero 1986). Shamans are the quintessential mediators (Jackson 1983:197); in the Vaupés they mediate between this world and the supernatural world, between stages of an individual's life, and between individuals and communities. Indeed, from the native viewpoint, the two roles, secular and sacred, can be understood as one, since shamanism in the Vaupés, as elsewhere in South America, has to do with maintaining and restoring a correct balance of energy. As E. J. Langdon puts it, "Illness is an expression of conflict, a disturbance of the psychosocial and ecological balance of the group. In the global conception of the world, these concerns cannot be separated from the extra-human world that influences daily events." (1992:16)

None of the schoolteachers attending the seminar stated explicitly that shamanism must be seen as an integrated system, that Tukanoan medicine was holistic, or that concerns about specific cases of illness are always linked to a supernatural world not usually apparent but nonetheless affecting daily life. Indeed, the schoolteachers had believed the workshop could succeed. Nevertheless, their comments convinced me that their understanding of the significant gap between traditional shamanic practice and what shamans were asked to do in the school setting contributed to the teachers' confusion about the project and about the larger issue of cultural preservation. Their questions about "empirical" medicine probably reflect an intuition that one cannot separate the objective from the subjective in Tukanoan shamanic ritual as easily as one can in Western biomedicine.

This intuition probably also figured in the teachers' remarks about shamanic formulas: they were well aware that a great deal of shamanic ritual in the Vaupés depends on the power of words. It seems likely that the teachers wondered just how effective a shaman's words can be when they are chanted in so different a context. While the teachers did speak of formulas and specific chants, with the implication that reciting a chant would have some effect, they undoubtedly knew that shamanic language is esoteric and difficult to comprehend even for native speakers, because many words and phrases have two or more meanings. The teachers must know that these meanings are important to shamanic practice and cannot easily be taught in workshops. Buchillet demonstrates that words are endowed with a physical effect (they are performatives), and that the ritual specialists she studied reactivate power already in the cosmos (1992:211; see also S. Hugh-Jones 1979).

A second reason for the school's failure concerns the broader issue of how to implement programs of cultural preservation and reconstruction (see Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983). The teachers themselves brought up many specific issues in this regard, one of them being the clear contradiction between traditional Tukanoan social structure and the pan-Tukanoan (and, increasingly, pan-Indian)[12] mentality and institutions that are supposed to supplant these in

some areas of culture. Regional variations in level of acculturation, and the complex way Tukanoan language groups map onto the landscape, mean that some language groups have many more shamans and more ritual knowledge than others. What persists as a vibrant tradition in one region cannot be easily reintroduced in another. For example, consider the teacher's suggestion of taking an "inventory" of shamans in regions containing Tukano (a group that tends to inhabit downriver, more acculturated locations). This would presumably lead to efforts to revitalize shamanic knowledge and practices in these areas. But who would carry out such a project? Certainly not a non-Tukanoan Indian, and very probably not a non-Tukano Tukanoan. Shamanic knowledge is esoteric knowledge, some of it secret, acquired during a long apprenticeship; preserving this part of culture would seem to require violating the terms under which it was traditionally transmitted.[13] The teachers' concern about whether such an inventory should be undertaken, whether shamans would agree to be interviewed—and, if so, whether they would actually tell the truth—represents a deep and thorny issue: again, who "owns" culture?[14]

Another thorny issue has to do with Indian dependence on non-Indians. A priest once commented to me that when Tukanoans first mobilized around indigenous rights and preservation of culture, the Catholic Prefecture's policy toward helping Indians in this mobilization could be illustrated by the phrase "give me [that is, give to us Tukanoans] a weapon so I can defend myself from you"—it was a policy that perpetuated Tukanoan dependency on the church. (The Prefecture was the main force behind the founding of CRIVA, the Vaupés indigenous rights organization. See Angel Ramírez 1994:2–3; Jackson 1991a; Stoll 1982:173–177.) He added that a dependency relationship still remains because groups like CRIVA use weapons from the oppressors. The shaman school is clearly another version of such a problem. During the seminar, the Tukanoan teachers were eloquent about the ongoing negative effects of non-Indian intervention in the region, even though the programs of the last two decades had been far less oppressive than the forced recruitment to rubber camps and missionary activity of previous eras. One Cubeo man referred to the plethora of development programs as "the bombardment of our villages." There were so many change agents in the region, he said, that the situation is "ya como deporte," like a game. In fact certain communities close to Mitú have virtually become experimental communities, so many development projects have been introduced. And, seeing program after program fail, these communities have tended to blame themselves.

The teachers also commented on a "collision of authorities" in these communities. Settlements that traditionally were composed of a headman, a shaman, and the rest now include as "officials" the headman, the representative of Family Well-Being, the *catequista* (catechism instructor), the schoolteacher, the health promoter (and sometimes a nursing aide), the shaman, the representative from Communal Action, the representative from Indian Affairs, and sometimes other representatives delegated by agencies in Mitú. Not surprisingly, disputes have

arisen.[15] For example, Correa describes the medical service of the Vaupés health promoter program:

> Ultimately the Medical Service of the Vaupés has been the national pivot in its attempt to integrate the two kinds of medical knowledge; its experience began with the training of Indian "health promoters" and "nursing aides" located in the communities who would contribute to supplying primary care and community education. Despite their good intentions, this generated competition with shamanic practice. The control this new kind of "doctor" has over materials belonging to his office (drugs, radiotelephones, outboard motor boats) contributes to increasing stratification in the communities and the appearance of new local "authorities." [1993:180]

Pedro Henao himself is quite critical of the promoter program, saying it has produced hybrid, superior-acting Indians (personal communication, October 15, 1993).

The paradox involved in using foreign methods of education and organizing to promote Indian self-sufficiency and preserve Tukanoan culture was an issue throughout the seminar. One teacher pointed to political battles still to be won: "Preserve for what? Indians [still] feel inferior to whites. If we don't organize ourselves, what organization are we going to give to the old people?" The teachers agreed that the non-Indian model of teaching definitely could not be used to transmit some areas of cultural knowledge—about the ancestor cult known as *Yuruparí*, for instance. Furthermore, they acknowledged that they themselves were speaking Spanish in the seminar and taught Spanish to children, at one point criticizing themselves for not teaching their own children the necessity of preserving Tukanoan languages. They also implicitly acknowledged that many facets of the concept of "culture" are foreign to Tukanoan thinking (as indicated when the seminar leaders had to instruct them in how to think of culture and ways to renew it).

In short, many comments made during the two-week seminar illustrated the very contradictions the teachers were struggling to recognize and understand. This was the case, for instance, when speaking of shamanism as an indigenous "science," with entrance requirements as strict as those of universities, or referring to the maloca, "the height of indigenous culture," as the place where people could learn "how to maintain all of these practices," using techniques introduced from outside. Were non-Indian forms of instruction (such as workshops) and technologies (such as tape recorders) appropriate for preserving Tukanoan culture? Yes and no, the discussion seemed to conclude.

Throughout the two weeks, the teachers debated the degree to which the project of studying their own culture was already underway. They did not always agree on what actually constituted "Tukanoan culture." Some said no worthwhile studies existed because only Tukanoans could study Tukanoan culture; others said studies had been completed but by people from far away, writing in languages Tukanoans could not understand, and that "*we* have to take control of the word," as one teacher put it. Another, who attended ethnolinguistics courses offered by SIL (Summer Institute of Linguistics/Wycliffe Bible Translators) so he could analyze Tukanoan languages, said he was only beginning to understand what investigating his own culture was really about. "Now I can say, 'I'm going to learn how to investigate my own culture'; you [speaking to the ethno-education seminar leaders] have shown us, you have made us see the reality." And there were some who agreed with the ethno-education team that Tukanoans could learn about their culture from studies done by others, and that outsiders could help Tukanoans study their own culture. But nothing was resolved. Overall, these young men seemed to remain confused about the issue of understanding or investigating culture—a confusion in ways reminiscent of some of the current discussions in anthropology (such as Clifford 1988; Fabian 1983; Handler 1988; Keesing 1992; Rosaldo 1989; Thomas 1991).

One source of confusion lay in knowing what to save and what to discard. One teacher's comment—"we will save our culture but we're going ahead, and we will adopt new things if they are of benefit to us" framed the debate. A comment another teacher made, that "in all cultures are good things and bad things," expresses the notion that one can (and should) pick and choose among cultures and acquire the very best that each has to offer—a kind of supermarket notion of culture.[16] Discourses about culture (see Jackson 1995) abound in the region around Mitú. For example, the local missionary magazine, *Selva y Río*, which is read by many of these teachers, at times situates itself squarely on the side of Indian rights: "The God of Life dies anew in the fights of Indian peoples, and in the solidarity of all, for the recognition of their ethnic rights and the defense of their traditional territory" (*Selva y Río* 1992: cover). But when it comes to culture, the message is more confusing:

> Today when in Latin America *autonomy, land, culture,* and *unity* of Indian peoples are insisted upon, it is good to ask ourselves from where we have arrived and where we are going. Whoever makes an argument based only on culture as the way to demonstrate how great it is to be Indian . . . is wasting their time. [We must overcome] indigenism . . . just as we must overcome false Christianity . . . we fight to conserve all that which is valid and change all that which does not conform with Culture and the Gospel [*Selva y Río* 1990:2; emphasis in original]

And, of course, when Tukanoans begin to talk about their real everyday problems, contradictions emerge: contradictions about their identity, about their second-class status (and possible routes to first-class status), about self-sufficiency and autonomy, and about non-Indian-derived resources everyone wants to acquire, traditional Tukanoan culture or not. For example, the seminar leaders spoke approvingly of the fact that many Tukanoan men living near Mitú now help their wives in the manioc fields, since these men hunt and fish far less frequently than in the past. But this is in fact a major change from the traditional gender division of labor, and the teachers had to reconcile their approval with the fact that the older generation made fun of this practice, saying these men were not setting a good example of proper Tukanoan behavior.

Finally, throughout the two-week seminar the leaders and the teachers spoke of "inventing" and "creating" culture. Thus, in a way, the rather subver-

sive message of the ethno-education program had reached the teachers, who freely criticized the curriculum they were required to teach. They were attracted to this level of discourse because it offered empowerment; one teacher even said "we have to invent God." But at the same time, the teachers appeared extremely confused about these ideas, or how to implement such a philosophy. What does "making culture" mean in a community of Indians? The ethno-education team had previously worked in peasant communities, and the message that inventing culture brought empowerment probably made more sense in those contexts. But ethno-education's philosophy of seizing power and creating community control of government programs, in particular educational curricula, did not easily translate into a program that dovetailed with the Tukanoan community's interest in finding ways to rescue, revive, recuperate, renew, etc., their culture. How could agents and institutions from a "foreign" culture help rescue a threatened culture before it was irretrievably lost? Might not such efforts actually help to speed up Tukanoan culture's demise? The teachers grappled with these questions and seemed quite aware that they themselves were embodiments of the dilemma.

Conclusions

While I have been critical of Henao's project, in several important respects it represented progress, an improvement from the myriad public health programs in indigenous communities in Latin America which are often heavily ethnocentric and paternalistic and which manifest a certainty about the superiority of biomedicine—perhaps the most authoritative institution in the West. In the Vaupés, while shamans have always been respected to some degree (power of any kind is usually somewhat respected), until recently both Catholic and Protestant missionaries considered them the enemy: some SIL missionaries considered shamans literally to be agents of the devil. And shamans' reputation among secular non-Indian authorities in the region was not much better.

To almost all non-Indians in the region, shamans represent the most extreme manifestation of the Other, with power and authority derived from everything that change agents, until recently, have wanted to eliminate: non-Western authority in general (unless it is a type of indirect rule); non-Christian spirituality; an intact, functioning non-Western worldview; and the threat of rebellion inspired by millennarian and nativist movements (see S. Hugh-Jones 1989). In contrast, Henao's notion of a shaman school recognized the value of shamans in several ways. In some respects, it represents a very well intentioned response to what anthropologists (in Colombia and elsewhere) have, after all, been saying for years: respect indigenous culture, support traditional authority, make sure development projects do not leave people with empty spaces filled by neither Western nor traditional knowledge and practice.

Henao the change agent is also admirable in several respects. Unlike many

their culture they are losing but also in involving non-Tukanoans who have political and economic power—which is why he writes articles and books. He has an encompassing vision about sickness and health, rather than the reductionistic and piecemeal approach taken by some health-related development projects. Despite his strong negative feelings about the dominant society and its ideology, he tries to work within the system. The lessons he absorbed from his anthropological training—about the value of cultural integrity, the validity of indigenous healing techniques—are still standard anthropological fare; if anything, they have become more popular recently with the rise of multiculturalism.[17] Yet Henao's project was doomed, nonetheless, mostly because of the large number of factors far beyond his control, but also because this particular project was both piecemeal and very naive. That such an anthropologically informed project with such good intentions failed is one more example of how difficult it is to put even the most persuasive of programmatic statements about enlightened development into practice.

This article has depicted a group of lowland South American Indians grappling with two interrelated questions. First, which parts of their traditional culture and identity are to be preserved? And second, who is to manage that effort and decide what is to be preserved in the future?[18] Several sets of actors were involved: young, politicized primary schoolteachers; a team of non-Indian, nonlocal ethno-education specialists; a public health official; and shamans themselves—all, presumably, interested in rescuing and revitalizing local culture and history. But the shaman workshop project failed, and an examination of that failure shows why local indigenous people often react negatively to outsiders' attempts to aid and influence processes of renewal. Issues of authenticity are raised, as are questions about the intentions of change agents—agents who now dispense a rhetoric about valorizing traditional culture but who offered very different discourses and practices in the recent past and may change again in the future. More shadowy issues are also present, such as the evolving boundaries of traditional Tukanoan social units. The shaman workshop was based on the idea that shamans could share their knowledge with any young men attending the workshop (the issue of including young women, as far as I could tell, was never considered)—a pan-Vaupés conception. But shamans are seen (and see themselves) as having knowledge that is profoundly affected by the language containing and transmitting this knowledge, and the different languages in the Vaupés are affiliated to exogamous, patrilineal clans which stand in a complex, at times rivalrous, relationship to other language-affiliated clans. Thus, the ways in which Tukanoans—and CRIVA—are revising their views of themselves as Tukanoans and as members of these distinct language groups are also involved: the language groups and exogamy are still in force, despite the fact that outsiders do not understand this system and consider it complicated, cumbersome, and divisive, and Tukanoans want to preserve this institution. Thus we

Tukanoans because these efforts are being carried forward by individuals associated with only one or two language groups, and members of other language groups feel left out and resentful.

This account has also shown that the *how* of cultural preservation is contested as well. Non-Indian models emphasize workshops and seminars, where one writes and learns in schoolroom-like settings, and emphasize the notion that Tukanoan culture belongs to any Tukanoan who wants to learn it. Traditional models, in contrast, emphasize that esoteric knowledge is most often passed along patrilineal lines: its transmission can require long apprenticeships and initiations that involve purgatives, dietary restrictions, and so forth, all occurring within the traditional settlement form, the multifamily maloca. Remuneration is another sticking point; participants in the ethno-education seminar focused on shamans as overly concerned about money, and those Tukanoans who had wanted to learn what the shamans had to teach were sometimes suspected as simply wanting the knowledge in order to get rich.

In sum, the seminar revealed a great deal about current Tukanoan debates and negotiations with respect to indigenous rights mobilizing and efforts to preserve Indian culture. The shaman workshop, the ethno-education seminar, and CRIVA itself illustrate the oft-made conclusion that preserving indigenous culture and history frequently implies increasing use of non-Indian models, models that are worlds away from traditional Tukanoan ways of organizing politically or maintaining cultural forms.

Certainly, many Tukanoans are concerned with reclaiming their past, their culture, their identity, and their self-esteem. However, the activities of administering their own territory, mobilizing around indigenous rights, and saving cultural forms require increased interaction with Colombian national culture and society. Tukanoans are seeking a place for themselves within this larger polity without being absorbed into it or being transformed into a "culture" that, while distinctly Indian, they do not see as Tukanoan.[19] The teachers' discussion of the failure of the shaman workshop is a compelling example of this mixture.

What might happen in the future? Pedro Henao organized a second shaman congress that, according to him, was more successful, in part because it focused on a narrower topic, the relationship between Western biomedicine and traditional shamanic practice. In a few years, a somewhat revised effort to enlist shamans in culture preservation efforts might meet with even more success. For example, CRIVA might attempt to establish an official list of fees for the services of shamans and require them to seek formal recognition, as occurred among the Aguaruna (Brown 1988:104). (At present, such an outcome is highly unlikely, due to the weak position of CRIVA vis-à-vis most Tukanoan communities.)

Palomino Flores writes of "creating the Indian church in South America," an effort that would finally reunite all Indians in the single religion they professed "millennia before the arrival of the Europeans" (1986:52). A movement to establish the pan-Indian spiritual life as the result of successful pan-Indian ethnic nationalistic efforts might come into being at some future time and be adopted, at least to some degree, by communities like those around Mitú. If so, a rather different form of shaman school might appear in the Vaupés, with Tukanoan shamans, having returned from ceremonial gatherings elsewhere in the country or continent, instructing Tukanoans in the rediscovered pan-Indian religion.

Or, as Brown (1993) suggests, a Christianized indigenous religion might arise in the region, perhaps similar to Hallelujah in the Guianas (Butt Colson 1971) or the Brotherhood of the Cross among the Tikuna (Agüero 1985, cited in Brown 1993). Whether its leaders would still be referred to as shamans is, of course, pure speculation, but elsewhere in the world, particularly Africa, there are models of such indigenization of Christian doctrine and practice, and if it were linked to successful cultural preservation campaigns, such a scenario is not impossible.

Each year I receive a catalogue from an organization called Interface that advertises classes in shamanic healing of various sorts; the anthropologist Michael Harner leads one workshop in shamanic drumming (see Harner 1988). I also have a flyer that invites the public to a presentation by Mark Nolan, Australian didgeridoo musician, titled "Dreamtime—The Eternal Bridge To Creation." If I can avail myself of the power of Indian (or aboriginal) healing practices that have clearly undergone radical change, why not Tukanoans themselves?[20] Although I have indicated that the shaman school instituted by Pedro Henao was probably destined to fail, a similar attempt in the future might not be so doomed. Examples of schools and other institutions established for the purpose of recovering and preserving native culture can be found all over the Americas (see, for example, Hervik 1992:74; Warren 1992:206). In the Vaupés, the Macuna, for example, received a considerable amount of money for just such an enterprise from the producer of the *Millennium* series (see Arhem 1993). Perhaps in five or ten years we will see a new incarnation of the shaman school that is much better received, with Tukanoans much happier about its outcome than in 1983, at least according to Pedro Henao and the teachers I listened to in 1989.

All of the foregoing scenarios, despite their considerable differences, involve a state or state surrogate (pan-Indian organizations or evangelical or Catholic missions) influencing and being influenced by local religious belief via the medium of workshops and schools in which local religious leaders teach. Whatever happens in the Vaupés, the Indian ethnic nationalism that began in the early 1970s will continue to have an effect. We may be concluding, 20 years hence, that the shaman school of 1983, while a failure, was nonetheless a harbinger of similar efforts that turned out to enjoy much more acceptance.

Notes

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1. Although many Tukanoans live on the Brazilian side of the border, this paper concerns only those in Colombian territory. The non-Tukanoan Makú, forest dwellers inhabiting the Vaupés, are also not included. Tukanoan classifications of themselves vis-à-vis the Makú are being contested in the current context in which hunter-gatherer Indians are at times seen as purer, almost "hyper-Indians." This can elicit a sympathy toward Makú greatly resented by Tukanoans, who have traditionally considered themselves superior to Makú in almost every respect. See Jackson 1991b.

2. Arango and Sánchez (1989) gave a total of 18,749 for the following language groups: Bará, Barasana, Cabiyari, Carapana, Cubeo, Desana, Guanano, Macuna, Piratapuyo, Pisamira, Siriano, Taiwano, Tariano, Tukano, Tuyuka, and Yurutí. Excluded from these figures are Makú, Carijona, Curripaco, Letuama, Matapí, Tanimuka, and Yucuna, some of whose members reside in the Vaupés territory.

3. The Macuna (studied by Arhem [1981]) and the Cubeo (studied by Goldman [1963]) are exceptions to the rule of language group exogamy.

4. For more comprehensive treatments of Tukanoan ethnography, see Arhem 1981; Brüzzi 1962; Chernela 1993; Goldman 1963; C. Hugh-Jones 1979; S. Hugh-Jones 1979; Jackson 1983; and Reichel-Dolmatoff 1971. Also consult Gómez-Imbert 1991 and Sorensen 1967.

5. A great deal has been written about the anthropological gaze and its potentially pernicious effects, and the relationship between anthropology and advocacy, with respect to both political activism and development. See, for example, Asad 1973; Bodley 1990; Doughty 1988; Downing and Kushner 1988; Escobar 1992; and Harrison 1991.

6. Handler (1988) characterizes this process as the "politics of culture" (see also Clifford 1988).

7. Traditional Tukanoan medicine, defined to include beliefs and practices concerned with the health of the individual and of society, has been the focus of an impressive amount of research in the Vaupés (Buchillet 1983; Goldman 1963; C. Hugh-Jones 1979; S. Hugh-Jones 1979; T. Langdon 1975; Reichel-Dolmatoff 1971, 1975, 1978). J. E. Langdon expresses the inclusive quality of shamanic practice nicely:

> In all its expressions, the one role that is constant in these shamanic systems is that of healer. It is essential to all because health is viewed holistically. In the native perspective, it is intimately concerned with the energy forces that lie behind well-being, and well-being is not only the absence of sickness, but implies nutritional, economic, and social well-being for the community as well as for the individual. [1992:16]

8. Attempts to obtain more information about the shaman school were unsuccessful. While the Tukanoan teachers were willing to have me present during the ethno-education seminar, they were reluctant as individuals to answer direct questions about the school itself. As the topic involved men's issues, shamanism, and failure, I was sympathetic to their unwillingness to talk about it with an inquisitive female anthropologist they did not know well (I was acquainted with only two of these teachers). For understandable reasons, Henao (who has been extremely forthcoming and helpful in general) was similarly disinclined to talk at length about this particular topic.

9. Two documents written prior to the seminar related to ethno-education work in the Vaupés. The first (Ministerio de Educación Nacional 1986c) is a ten-page report on Indians in the region and a history of educational programs there, with special attention to bilingual education. The second (Ministerio de Educación Nacional 1987) is a 35-page report on the ethno-education project for the Vaupés. Both documents illustrate how politicized the educational programs for Indians in the region have become. A more comprehensive discussion of fighting among change agents in the Vaupés regarding religion and education is beyond the scope of this paper; however, it should be noted that the teachers participating in the seminar knew some of this history, although I am not sure how familiar they were with the philosophy behind ethno-education prior to the seminar. For further background information, see Alfonso et al. 1988 and Jimeno 1979.

10. See Buchillet 1992 on Desana shamans keeping their knowledge within a lineage.

11. For example, see several recent book-length treatments: Brown 1985; Chaumeil 1983; Crocker 1985; Taussig 1987; and the contributors to the collection J. E. Langdon and Baer 1992.

12. For an example of pan-Indian mentality with regard to religion, see Palomino Flores, who speaks of a prophecy that said:

> When the Eagle of the North and the Condor of the South reunite, all these peoples will come together, and nothing that the whites might do will impede the fulfillment of the prophecy. . . . Our North American Indian brothers have shown us in numerous opportunities that their ancestors originated in South America—generative mother—and for them, to look for their own roots means, without question, travelling, making pilgrimages to this South, and reencountering the Indian peoples of this part of America. [1986:52]

13. E. Reichel (1992:56–57) discusses how shamanic knowledge and practice with respect to territory radically contrast with the way Indian *resguardos* have been demarcated in some areas to the south of the Vaupés.

14. See Pollock 1992:180–182 for a compelling discussion of a missionary organization (CIMI, the Conselho Missionário Indigenista) in Brazil that attempted to impose its version of pan-Indianism onto a Culina community. Pollock's paper also discusses the negative effects of a "pervasive bureaucratic rationality" in CIMI's project of developing a rubber collective that parallels the design of the shaman school in some important respects. Shapiro 1984 also presents a case of CIMI promoting "consciousness raising" in a Brazilian Indian community in order to create a sense of pan-Indian history and identity (1981; cited in Pollock 1992:179–180).

15. See Chaumeil (1990:108) for a discussion of this problem in Peruvian Indian communities, and Brown (1993:316) on a Guaymí community in which many adults had a formal bureaucratic title.

16. Compare Correa's characterization of the goals of the Ministry of Education with respect to its ethno-education program: "The education sector considers that

participation by the community, using resources from its own culture, will foment its socio-cultural patrimony and capacitate its members to select knowledge and technologies from other cultures for their development" (1992:101).

17. For a brief discussion of what the anthropologist's role should be when studying shamans and disseminating information about their practice, see Glass-Coffin 1994:A48. Also see the section in Atkinson's review of recent scholarship on shamanism, entitled "Postscript: Neo-Shamanism and Anthropology" (1992:322–324).

18. Turner provides an interesting discussion of who controls preservation efforts among Kayapo video cameramen (1992).

19. I have termed this process one in which Indians "orientalize" themselves—turn themselves into something the West conceives of as Indian, but which is not Tukanoan in some important respects (see Jackson 1995).

20. Note that indigenous peoples are protesting the use of their symbols and practices by various kinds of New Age groups. See, for example, Ford 1993:41, 44; Johnson 1994:A7; *New Mexican* 1993:A6; Smith 1990:6, 7; and *Sojourner* 1990.

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