

MARISOL DE LA CADENA

Indigenous Mestizos

The Politics of Race

and Culture in Cuzco,
Peru, 1919-1991

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Indigenous Mestizos, De-Indianization, and Discrimination

Cultural Racism in Cuzco

Indians as an Essentially Illiterate Race/Culture

In late 1922, a journalist from the Cuzco newspaper *El Comercio* met Miguel Quispe, an indigenous leader from the district of Colquepata in the province of Paucartambo. The encounter took place at the office of the prefecto while both parties were waiting for a hearing with the representative of President Augusto B. Leguía in Cuzco. The 1920s were a particularly unstable period in Cuzco politics. The city was suffused with tensions arising from revived colonial fears about Indian rebellions and from painful urges to modernize the region. Two main elements underscored the tensions. First, indigenous leaders from rural provinces were channeling their complaints to state representatives in Cuzco. Although this was a customary practice, and one that local governments routinely ignored, in the 1920s the novelty was that the authorities were willing to negotiate an official remedy to the Indians' situation. Second, representatives of the local elite intelligentsia were crafting indigenismo—a modern and allegedly pro-Indian science—which later became a long-lasting and pervasive intellectual and political discourse in Peru.

The parties waiting for the prefect, Señor Godoy, represented both the indigenous leaders and the indigenistas. Miguel Quispe was among the most famous and controversial indigenous leaders. A partisan of President Leguía, the Cuzco elite mockingly called him “the

Inca Quispe,” yet at the same time they feared him. The journalist was an indigenista writer, who chose to remain anonymous. While they were waiting for the hearing, the latter approached Quispe. “Distrustful, with a feline look, like a wild beast lying in wait, the Great Emperor threw us a furtive glance of his tiny and deceptive eyes, in a mute inquiry as to what we wanted to say to him,” wrote the journalist about the first glances he and Miguel Quispe exchanged. Then he arranged for an interview that later appeared in *El Comercio*.¹

In his conversation with the journalist, Miguel Quispe denounced the degradations of hacendados against his ayllu, Sayllapata, and the endless tortures he endured as a result of his protests against his exploiters. He denied that he had proclaimed himself an Inca or that he had organized rebellions. Those were inventions of his enemies who did not hesitate to besmirch him, he said. Although the journalist might have believed these assertions, Quispe’s deep and clear insights and the way he exposed them unsettled him and other indigenistas. The journalist began his account of the interview by expressing surprise at this Quispe’s rhetoric. According to the journalist, Quispe “answers without the least trouble, with a tranquil mastery that *makes us doubt his condition as an illiterate Indian. . . .* His conversation is fluid, eloquent; he speaks Quechua very well, and at times, to give us a better sense of his ideas, he adds in a few Spanish words, of course poorly pronounced” (my emphasis). The article ended with the journalist showing his mistrust of “the Indian Miguel Quispe”: “And here we must ask ourselves this disturbing question: Who is Miguel Quispe? Is he perchance a crafty, sly, pettifogging [*tinterillo*], calculating, treacherous Indian who pursues his interests while measuring his words, or is he as he claims the sad victim of the *misti*, educated through experience and adversity? We have no way of knowing.”

Quispe’s demeanor did not correspond to the journalist’s definition of Indians. These, even from an indigenista viewpoint, were racial subjects with *embotamiento intelectual* (intellectual impediment) (Aguilar, 1922:49). An intelligent and articulate Indian politician like Miguel Quispe did not fit their conceptual racial framework. Indians who did not behave like “sad victims” were “astute

liars." Miguel Quispe's informed opinions about Indian participation in solving the country's "Indian question," his declared patriotism, and his familiarity with the subterfuges of state institutions were certainly more than what the indigenista journalist was reasonably prepared to hear from "an Indian." After all, in the year of 1922, when the interview was taking place, dominant Peruvian politicians regretted the political failure to consolidate Peru as a nation and explained this situation as resulting, at least partially, from the significant presence of Indians, a backward race that represented an immense obstacle to progress and, indeed, to the desired national homogeneity. That year, when Miguel Quispe, a self-identified Indian, claimed his membership to the nation by telling the interviewer "You too are Peruvian, that is to say Indian. You are only different from me in your dress and education," he did not have a chance of being heard, much less acknowledged. To his interviewers, clothing and instruction were external manifestations of hereditary cultural differences that characterized "the Indian race." Surmounting these differences required changes, to be met through political processes led by liberal politicians educated in the needs of the country. Evidently Quispe was not racially/culturally endowed to be one of these leaders, and therefore his bid to alter the meaning of Indianness and to make Indian citizens through a literacy program led by the Tawantinsuyu Committee was doomed to failure.

Following culturalist definitions of race (and thus manufacturing their legacy of a racialized definition of "culture"), elite cuzqueños believed that natural evolutionary differences separated Indians from the rest of the nation, inasmuch as they represented a nonrational, essentially illiterate, and non-Spanish speaking racial/cultural group of rural, communitarian agriculturalists. Literate Indians like Miguel Quispe, whose demands were rational, were considered racial/cultural transvestites, ex-Indians who maintained the markers of their previous identity (like indigenous clothes) to manipulate actual (irrational) Indians. By maintaining Indian identity and being literate, Quispe represented a challenge to the dominant definition of Indian-ness. Similarly, Tawantinsuyu's proposal to grant citizenship to literate Indians challenged—even exceeded—the pro-Indian intellectuals' imagination. Citizenship required rationality, an advanced



Miguel Quispe, a follower of President Leguía, whom Indigenistas mistrusted. The original caption says: "The so-called New Inca, Miguel Quispe, of great influence among the indigenes." Photograph from the Lima magazine *Mundial*, July 1921.

stage in the evolution of the mind that Indians as a racial/cultural group had not reached. Given Indians' irrationality, pro-Indian intellectuals explained the series of rural disturbances that agitated Cuzco in the 1920s by benevolently acquitting Indians from guilt because, they said, their animal-like fury had been dangerously provoked either by non-Indian agitators or by local scourges, the gamonales. When the self-identified Indian leaders of the political disturbances were imprisoned and prosecuted, indigenista lawyers defended them by pointing out their irresponsibility as members of an ignorant, inferior race/culture. I argued in chapter 2 that this defense represented the defeat of the social movement that Tawantinsuyu led and that was a bid for Indian citizenship that did not require the transformation of Indians into mestizos. Not surprisingly, the racial/cultural notion of an inferior-but-redeemable-Indian

that the indigenistas used to acquit Indians of crimes and to cancel their political responsibility had a broad appeal and became consensual among both conservative, official legislators, and radical, oppositional thinkers and politicians.

The historical conditions preventing a political alliance between indigenistas and Tawantinsuyu Committee were embedded in decencia, a moral class ideology shared by both progressive and conservative intellectuals and politicians. During indigenista times, combining decency with popular Lamarckian beliefs, and attracted to culturalist postulates about race, Cuzco intellectuals believed in the potential of education to uplift racial conditions. It followed, from this perspective, that cultural/racial hierarchies depended on the quality and quantity of formal education, which also reflected the moral status of an individual. These opinions implied that literacy transformed Indians into mestizos if they migrated to the cities or found a job away from agriculture. For those indigenistas who, like Valcárcel, advocated for racial/cultural purity and believed in "racial proper places," cuzqueño mestizos symbolized degeneration, while the same cuzqueño mestizos represented the ideal national type in the eyes of neoindianista, who championed constructive miscegenation. Both groups shared a view of actual living Indians as a wretched racial/cultural group, made what they were by years of colonial subjugation. This image was strengthened as indigenista beliefs in the preeminence of racial/cultural purity and the abhorrence of mestizaje faded and were replaced by populist advocacy for regional mestizaje. In 1959 a well known neoindianista intellectual taught a course in human geography at the local university. Depicting the Indians from Ccolquepata, the district where Miguel Quispe was born, a student in that class wrote: "Like all Indians, [the Ccolquepata Indian] is timid and skeptical; he expects nothing of anyone, and distrusts everything and everybody. . . . The Indians live dispersed in communities called 'ayllus'; their huts are distant from each other, are unhygienic and very primitive. They do not use beds, or if they do these are made of some filthy llama and sheep hides. . . . The Indians have not formed neighborhoods, much less small towns. Their isolation contributes considerably to their unsociability and makes for a sullen character."²

Indians as an Essentially Illiterate Class/Culture

Starting in the late 1930s—and after being defeated in their endeavor for Indian citizenship and consequently in their attempt to redefine Indianness as a literate condition—indigenous leaders shifted the focus of their struggle. The new focus was *sindicalización*, which consisted in organizing peasant unions (sindicatos campesinos) that handled legal claims against *haciendados* through the Federación de Trabajadores del Cuzco (FTC), the Cuzco Federation of Workers. In the 1950s the FTC thrived as the organization for both urban and rural regional working classes. Led by urban workers and with the legal advice of intellectuals, many of whom belonged to the Communist Party, the FTC replaced indigenistas as the urban-based political allies of indigenous peasants. Although communists and other leftist leaders (inspired by Marxist-Leninist manifestos declaring the dictatorship of the proletariat) subordinated peasants to urban workers, rural unions and their indigenous organizers became the key leaders of the political turmoil that hit Cuzco beginning in the late 1950s, eventually precipitating in the 1970s the long-awaited agrarian reform. Avoiding self-reference as Indians became an implicit point in the indigenous agenda for an empowered identity. During this period, rural leaders identified themselves as peasants and called each other "compañero," which became a common label that continues to be used even in religious rituals. The violence conveyed by the word "Indian" led to the silencing of this word, but this attitude, in turn, implied the consensual acceptance of the inferior social condition of those meriting such a name.

Some years ago, in theorizing about the political dimensions of ethnicity, John Comaroff asked if there was a moment when ethnic ideologies broke down and gave place to class consciousness instead. He also asked if the reasons that provoked such circumstances could be identified (1987:319). In Cuzco, the spread of class rhetoric among so-called Indians, and probably of class consciousness too, did not imply the breaking down of ethnic ideologies nor the cancellation of racial/cultural hierarchical feelings and structures. Instead, one of its causes was the political defeat (at the hands of liberal

indigenistas) of the political project that Tawantinsuyu had raised, which rested on racial/cultural agendas to promote indigenous citizenship and to de-stigmatize Indianness and thus emancipate Indians from images of racial inferiority. Starting in the 1950s Marxist oppositional politics emerged as an alternative to the racial/cultural path to emancipation, wielding a class rhetoric that relegated “culture” to the realm of false consciousness. However, the identity labels then popular, such as “peasant,” “worker,” or “classist intellectual,” were laden with references to evolutionary stages that were explicitly evaluated according to the person’s potential to develop “class consciousness” and to lead the revolutionary process; yet they were also implicitly colored with beliefs in racial/cultural differences. The “peasants” (definitely a gloss for Indians) occupied the lowest ranks in leftist groups. “For the transformation of rebellions into revolution, peasants require the leadership of other classes,” proclaimed a leftist lawyer in the 1980s, who justified his declaration by stating that because peasants believed that the Pachamama guided their own land seizures, they not be real political leaders (García Sayán, 1982:211–212). The implicit, yet obvious, idea was that peasants were only motivated by superstitions that belonged to prerational, inferior stages of knowledge. Thus the leftist deployment of “class” continued to rely on the earlier race/culture evolutionary assumptions. Most intellectuals believed, as did Aníbal Quijano (1978), that Indians were unable to create their own leadership; “peasant leaders” were those that had superseded the cultural stage of Indianness and had become *cholos*.

Following a common pattern of reasoning that was used by Marxists theorizing about subaltern identities during those years, these ideas conflated economist definitions of “class” with an obviously evolutionary notion of “culture,” still inspired by racialized notions of inherited and geographically bounded traditions and transmitted to mid-century leftist thinkers by means of their unimaginative readings of José Carlos Mariátegui. In the 1920s, the period of high racial thought, the leftist thinker José Carlos Mariátegui joined the trend to define race in cultural terms and thus countered dominant European inclinations to racial pessimism. In so doing, he denied the fixed nature of races as well as the preeminence of biological determinism and proposed, like many others, that surrounding conditions (which

in Marxist fashion he called “productive forces”) were crucial in determining races. Similarly, following the antiracist trend, he outlined an environmental definition of race, which included economic and cultural elements (1981:21–33). Inspired by indigenista readings of Luis E. Valcárcel and José Antonio Encinas, he asserted: “The indigenous race is a race of agriculturalists. The Inca people were a peasant people dedicated to agriculture and herding” (1968:45). But even more important (probably inspired also in this by Valcárcel), Mariátegui followed notions of “racial proper places” to articulate his proposals. Accordingly, he stated that the task of improving the Indian race had to be accomplished by preserving its historical/cultural symbiosis with the land and asserted “to remove the Indian from the land is to vary profoundly and possibly dangerously the race’s ancestral tendencies” (1968:33).

The 1960s leftist politicians adopted Mariátegui’s thought. But by then race had been internationally dismissed as a scientific concept, thus rendering superfluous and even racist the culturalist definition of race that undergirded Mariátegui’s reflections about the “indigenous question.” Thus the unquestioned adoption of Mariátegui’s definition of Indians as “peasants” essentialized indigenous Peruvians as agriculturalists, fixed them to the countryside, and in anachronistic conceptual fashion, extended Mariátegui’s culturalist definition of race into the class rhetoric that prevailed in the sixties. Unscrutinized by those who implemented it, indigenista cultural fundamentalism thus survived in the leftist political and academic sphere, which in many cases overlapped. Currently, this view still legitimates notions of a primitive Indianness, rooted in an imagined Andean culture that is fixed in the mountains and incapable of dealing with modernization. Mario Vargas Llosa’s statements, which I used in the introduction of this book, are a perfect example of the currency of indigenista racialized notions of culture. Anachronistically—and worst of all, unknowingly—assisted by the legacy of early twentieth-century indigenismo, Vargas Llosa made his cultural fundamentalist pronouncements on the occasion of the Quincentennial of the Spanish Conquest of America. In it he chose to make a bid for “modernization,” and invoked the incompatibility between modern and indigenous Peru, which he deemed archaic (Vargas Llosa, 1990b:50).

Ironically, Vargas Llosa, a right-wing proponent of neoliberalism,

had the same beliefs—which I repeat derived from Valcárcel’s and Mariátegui’s teachings—as Antonio Díaz Martínez, one of the leaders of the Maoist Shining Path. Díaz Martínez also used a geographically determined racialized conflation of culture and class to define peasants as those agriculturalists who felt such “love, attachment and gratitude for the Pacha Mama that they were unable to break their ties with her.” In a conceptual tone like that of Vargas Llosa, Díaz Martínez believed that “the clash between the westernized cities and the indigenous communities . . . prevented the technological modernization of the community, which [instead] resorted to the magical and conventional principles of its own culture” (1969:249). So, at the turn of the twentieth century, the intellectual leadership of the Shining Path and Mario Vargas Llosa—the two extremes of the Peruvian political spectrum—shared a crude racial/cultural evolutionism that posited incommensurable differences between “indigenous society” (terminally defined as premodern, illiterate, magical, and backward) and nonindigenous Peru, defined as modern, literate, rational, and with a potential for (communist or neoliberal) progress.

Prior to the 1969 agrarian reform, landowners used the expression “*Indio leído, Indio perdido*” (A literate Indian is a lost Indian). Using it, they referred either to the fact that literate Indians did not want to work as peons and migrated to the cities or to the idea that literacy transformed Indians from passive victims of abuses into stubborn producers of written denunciations against it. The same saying—which in its mildest version means that a literate Indian is not an Indian anymore—is implicit in the common definition of Indianness, and with marginal exceptions it reflects a belief that traverses the country. Still drawing on racial/cultural fundamentalism, this expression defines Indians as so essentially opposed to literacy and to urban ways that if they learn to read and write or migrate to the city, they are no longer Indians but racial/cultural mestizos.

De-Indianizing Indigenous Culture: Education and Respeto

Since the turn of the century indigenous leaders (including Miguel Quispe and the Tawantinsuyu organizers) have shared with domi-

nant politicians a belief in the redemptive powers of literacy. However, while for the conservative and progressive official intellectuals, the effect that literacy had on Indians was to gradually cleanse them from their original race/culture, for indigenous leaders, literacy had different effects. For Mariano Turpo, a prominent leader of the hacienda Lauramarca, for example, literacy was empowering; yet, as illustrated by his own life, it did not imply “cultural passing” to a nonindigenous status. When he started his career as a unionist in the 1940s, one of his first goals was to get permission from the state to build a school in the hacienda against the wishes of the hacendados. In the late fifties, Turpo’s profound knowledge of legal concepts yielded the first successful verdict from the state in support of the immediate expropriation of Lauramarca. In 1975 he continued to be an important local leader and was reputed to be a *paqo* (a diviner) and even an *altomisa* (the highest ritual specialist in the zone) with the ability to communicate directly with the Apus, the great indigenous protective deities (Gow, 1982:213–215).

Although Alejandro Condori, the urban choreographer of the Capac Qolla de Haukaypata, is not as prominent a politician as Turpo, he is a respected leader in his own terms. This street vendor believes in the power of Ausangate, the indigenous regional Apu, and takes his dancing troupe in an annual pilgrimage to honor him during the celebration of Our Lord of Coyllur Rit’i. Like Turpo, he derives his leadership from being both literate and an indigenous ritual specialist. Additionally, and probably as in Turpo’s case, Alejandro’s literacy has removed him from Indianness, a social condition that he does not consider to be coterminous with indigenous culture. Rather, Alejandro considers himself and his production as neto (indigenous) inasmuch as he draws inspiration for his choreography from his rural background, and also as mestizo because he colors it with what he considers urban manners. Coupling rural and urban practices (instead of opposing binary racialized notions of culture that assign practices either to the city or to the countryside but not both) some indigenous grassroots creators have opened up the possibility of redefining dominant evolutionary notions of mestizaje while de-Indianizing cultural identities and the productions they designate as “authentically” cuzqueño. Dominant intellectuals and politicians define indigenous culture—the *neto*, regional “Andean” and, yes,

subordinate culture—as exclusively rural, essentially backward, irrational and illiterate. The grassroots indigenous intellectuals with whom I interacted have redefined it (mainly through their productions, but also in their daily lives) as both rural and urban and compatible not only with literacy but also with progress and even academic education. They see indigenous culture as being like this while retaining—many times purposefully—its distinctiveness within the national formation rather than simply being “assimilated” into it.

To draw analytical cultural boundaries (no matter how fluid) between present-day Indians and mestizos is to abide by only one definition of indigenous culture and, indeed, the dominant one. Significantly, in doing so, one dismisses the crucial detail that from some cuzqueño grassroots viewpoints, indigenous culture exceeds the scope of Indianness and includes subordinate definitions of the mestizo/a. Included in the grassroots definition of indigenous culture are definitions of Indian and mestizo as relative social conditions. From this standpoint calling someone mestizo/a (or Indian) is fixing momentarily a point of reference inherently related to that which is Indian (or mestizo/a). Similarly, becoming mestizo implies distancing oneself from the Indian social condition and thus de-Indianizing. But it does not mean “disappearing” into a national, gradually homogenizing culture. In Cuzco, from the viewpoint of those grassroots intellectuals who allowed me to participate in some aspects of their lives, de-Indianization is the process of empowering indigenous (neto) identities through economic and educational achievement and proudly displaying these identities in regional events of popular culture promoted by cuzqueñismo.

The notion of indigenous mestizaje is also evident in everyday subordinate discourses and is concretely embodied in the figure of mestiza market women. They fuse the dominant rural-urban divide, and the elite would not hesitate to call them “uppity” Indians. Their gendered identity, which slipped through the grasp of class rhetoric and continues to defy *decencia*, connotes a notion of mestizaje that runs counter to its dominant definition. I see mestizas as Andean indigenous individuals, mostly non-Indian, yet occasionally and relatively Indians, whose identities combine the endless motion between contestation and acquiescence suggested by the notion of he-

gemony, with the inherently relational dynamic, of the kind implied in the concept of fractal identities (Wagner, 1991). Contemporary indigenous mestiza/os *may seem* an anomaly when seen from the perspective of taxonomies built upon classificatory notions defined in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, which, allowing no room for uncertainties, rigidly moved between purity and impurity, city and country, literacy and illiteracy, and thus yielded “mestizaje” as a concept inserted in the dichotomies. Instead, the cuzqueño mestiza identity does not refer to the culturally or racially “evolving” mixed individual implied in modern taxonomies. By calling themselves mestizas/os and silencing Indianness, urban indigenous cuzqueños rebuke stigmas of all sorts and proceed to de-Indianization, which consists of (among other things) producing, celebrating, and staging a very “impure” indigenous culture, which is empowering because it has been stripped of such elements of Indianness as illiteracy, poverty, exclusive rurality, and urban defeat. In individuals, de-Indianization refers to the process of moving up through indigenous ranks. These harbor inherently relative Indian and mestizo identities that connote the educational and economic achievements of the individuals involved in the interactions. Far from representing flawless stories of subaltern resistance and success, these achievements represent differentiating mechanisms and legitimize daily life and ritual discriminatory behavior among indigenous cuzqueños. Notwithstanding its potential for contradiction, the subordinate notion of mestizaje not only contests certain aspects of its dominant counterpart but also represents an empowering alternative for the expression of indigenous identities.

Fractal Ethnicity and Subordinate Meanings of Mestizaje

Klor de Alva has suggested that “resulting from the variety of processes it has stood for, Latin America ‘mestizaje’ has a chameleonic nature that allows it to be western *in the presence of Europeans*, indigenous *in the native villages*, and Indian-like *in contemporary United States barrios*” (1995:243, my emphasis). While I agree with this heteroglossic nature of mestizaje, I differ from Klor de Alva in

another respect. I think that the different meanings of *mestizaje* represent competing and situated political statements that dominant and subordinate individuals make about the national place of subaltern identities, rather than only reflecting a chameleon nature that unproblematically changes colors with different interlocutors. Thus viewed, “*mestizaje*” is not a meeting ground—the Latin American melting pot—as the Mexican dominant view bequeathed from Vasconcelos (1925) proposed. Rather, it is a terrain of political contestation and dialogic reformulation in which elite and grassroot intellectuals dispute meanings of identity labels and rights to equal citizenship.³

Drawing on Paul Gilroy (1993:2), I think that creolization, *métissage*, *mestizaje*, and hybridity derive from turn-of-the-century formulations and thus are rather unsatisfactory ways of naming identity processes that exceed the bounds of binary discourses of race and ethnicity. The indigenous mestizos from Cuzco, who are dialogically exposed to the dominant evolutionary notion of *mestizaje* that would make them incomplete participants in two discrete cultural formations, advance a different notion of hybridity: one that “continually breaks down the unitary aspect of each culture” (Anzaldúa, 1987:80)⁴ thus allowing them to *completely* participate in both. Working-class cuzqueños taught me about a kind of hybridity that was not meant to be solved in the manner of “either/or” choices, but rather to assert that they were different from Indians yet also like them. This notion of hybridity connects with Roy Wagner’s concept of fractals as “something as different from a sum as it is from an individual part” (1991:164)⁵ as well as with Robert Young’s interpretation of Bakhtinian hybridity as bringing “difference into sameness, and sameness into difference but in a way that makes the same no longer the same and the different no longer simply different” (1995:26).⁶ Adriana and Isabel, the two young women whom I quoted in the introduction, translated this into their words when they said that they were both different from *and* like Indians, and that they were different from *and* like me: “Some mestizos like us are also indigenous, aborigines, *oriundos*, because of our (neto) beliefs, others are only mestizos like you.”

These two women, and many other people whom I befriended in

the process of doing this research, taught me another important distinction: indigenous culture and Indianness are not synonyms. This distinction is conceptually significant, as it opens up the notion of indigenous culture to include these mestizos who like Adriana and others, share neto beliefs yet are literate, earn an urban salary, and have what they consider to be “refined” manners. By including these mestizos, the grassroots intellectuals’ definition of indigenous culture displaces the conceptual binarism of traditional intellectual narratives that fix the indigenous as one discrete colonized pole, subject to liberation only through wholesale rejection of its cultural markers in favor of others that mark the other discrete pole, which may be referred to as Hispanic, white, or coastal. Rather than signifying innate traits, the definition of culture underlying fractal hybridity highlights the capacity of individuals to *achieve*. Concomitantly, their acquisition of empowering knowledge (ranging from university education to the beginnings of literacy) is not underpinned by the “antinomy of loss” of indigenous culture (cf. Harris, 1995). Likewise, because achievements are calculated individually, rather than collectively, this definition of culture does not connote groups, let alone rank them. It does, however, rank individuals.

Grassroots intellectuals who use this definition of culture deessentialize dominant racial/ethnic identity categories and formulate prismatic ethnic taxonomies. I call them prismatic because they are shaped from infinite relational observation-points, which are agreed upon in each interaction only after taking account of the achieved culture, gender, and age of the persons involved.⁷ Phrases such as “I owe Juan respect because he is more educated than me, but Cornelio has to respect me because my manners are refined and his are not,” result from such prismatic and relational indigenous constructions of Indian and mestizo identities in Cuzco, in which self-subordination and superordination are in constant flux. Rankings are therefore perceived as valid, deriving from common sense.

Fixing the observation point in each interaction is a conflict-laden process, because, like their dominant equivalents, alternative prismatic taxonomies privilege urban formal education over countryside knowledge, and “Indianness” persists as the archetypal inferior social condition, a combination of poverty, illiteracy, powerless-

ness, and rural coarseness. Thus even as Indianness and mestizioness emerge from interactions rather than from fixed evolutionary features, on implementing these reformulated taxonomies, subordinate cuzqueños reproduce some aspects of the dominant classifications. At the same time, they contest others, as indicated by their own gendered and geographically formulated interests and their possibilities to make them prevail. From this perspective, de-Indianization in Cuzco is a process of empowering indigenous identities and cultures by redefining the dominant social classification, yet it is itself built upon unchallenged hierarchies that legitimize power differences and discrimination among indigenous cuzqueños. This identity-making process consists in the appropriation of the term “mestizo” and its redefinition to include powerful, successful urban indigenous individuals positioned in hierarchical opposition to “ignorant” rural Indians.

De-Indianization, Dominant Mestizo Nations, and Indigenous Social Movements

I would venture that de-Indianization, defined as the struggle against the wretchedness implicit in the dominant definition of Indianness, is an ongoing process in other Latin American indigenous projects, such as those occurring among the Aymara or Maya, for example. Kay Warren reported that Maya leaders, fearing that youths might “abandon their ethnicity and use their education to disappear into Ladino society,” are looking to modernize Maya culture and thus make it more attractive to new people (1989:200). Likewise, in a conference in 1995 Rigoberta Menchú told how her young nephews and nieces still living in Guatemala responded to people who called them Indians, by answering, “We are not Indians, we are Mayas.”⁸ Thomas Abercrombie (1991) has also reported indigenous Bolivians’ refusal to identify themselves as “Indians,” and their choice instead of the term “Aymara.” Such proud assertions of indigenous identities as Maya or Aymara (rather than Indian) suggest processes of de-Indianization.⁹ Yet, it is striking how, unlike the Peruvian case, neither in Guatemala or in Bolivia does de-Indianization imply the indigenous appropriation of the label “mestizo” or in the case of

Guatemala, “ladino.” Moreover, according to Brooke Larson, indigenous social movements in Bolivia reject mestizaje as a requirement to participate in a “national culture” imagined by a small creole elite in an attempt to claim hegemony by defining indigenous cultures within the nation-state as obstacles to national development and integration (1998:333).

The cuzqueño redefinition and appropriation of the category of “mestizo” to connote indigenous identities—and the current absence in Peru of indigenous social movements that raise ethnic banners—attests that contemporary indigenous social movements in Latin America are not only the result of the colonial definition of Indian-ness. On the contrary, they have been strongly influenced by the conflict-laden, implicit or explicit dialogue between the dominant nation-builders and grassroots intellectuals who have shaped images of the nation since the late nineteenth century. In this dialogue, which is still ongoing, hierarchies and taxonomies have been racially defined and then, since mid-century, given new terminologies in ethnic or class lexicons. During the initial years of the national period, Latin American elites also negotiated their own identities in racial terms. In Peru, indigenismo was—among other things—the project that made intellectuals from the sierra comparable to those from the coast. Through culturalist concepts of race, serranos negotiated their geographically defined racial inferiority with formulations and practices that reinforced the superiority of their honorable manliness and lofty intellectual qualities. Implicit in the casting of their own racial identity was the rejection of the “mestizo” label for themselves and, additionally, the stigmatization of mestizos as immoral. This apparently marginal result of the dominant indigenismo of the 1920s (namely, the defeat of mestizaje as a national project) forcefully colored images of the Peruvian nation and made it an exception among other Latin American countries, in which mestizaje was a nation-building goal. Leading the process, Mexicans have cast mestizaje as the paradigmatic identity of their nation since the nineteenth century. After the Revolution, and particularly—but not only—under Lázaro Cárdenas, the Mexican state set about creating *la raza cósmica* and at promoting its image as a mestizo nation (Mallon, 1995; Becker, 1995). The case of Bolivia was less straightforward and turn-of-the-

century rulers constructed a “cult of antimestizaje” (cf. Larson, forthcoming), but later a mid-century nationalist revolution altered this attitude. Starting in 1952, and after decades of racial pessimism and white supremacist thought (during which Indians were kept back and “educated” in crafts but prevented from becoming literate), the state mounted a pomp-filled celebration of mestizaje in quintessential populist nation-building fashion (Gotkowitz, 1998). Following their own path, Ecuadoran elites made Indians invisible to national audiences in the nineteenth century while exporting idealized images of their “disappearing” native populations to international expositions (Guerrero, 1994; Muratorio, 1994). Not surprisingly, by the mid-twentieth century, Ecuadoran rulers were using the rhetoric of national mestizaje to express cultural “whitening” ideals (Stutzman, 1981). In Guatemala violence against “Indians” was as ruthless as it was in the other countries, but it was also blatantly undisguised. The proposals for national “ladinization”—the Guatemalan word for mestizaje—were brutally scornful of anything indigenous. In the introduction I quoted the analogy drawn by Guatemalan Miguel Angel Asturias between Indians and animals, which he used to promote biological eugenics to improve “the Indian race” (1923). That Asturias was considered an indigenista writer illustrates the inchoate nature of Latin American indigenismo. Official brutality in that country was curbed in the 1940s, as a reformist government took strides to reduce indigenous exploitation. Under the leadership of President Arévalo, the newly founded Instituto Indigenista de Guatemala aimed at implementing a policy of indigenous assimilation similar to Mexico’s (Smith, 1995). This attempt did not last long, and ladinoization prevailed, not only in the format of assimilation but as a genocidal war led by the military against indigenous communities since the 1960s. This was complemented by a savage eugenicist ideology prevalent among the dominant classes, which I want to illustrate with the following unabashed and relatively recent confession by a Guatemalan landowner: “The only solution for Guatemala is to improve the race, to bring in Aryan seed to improve it. On my *finca* I had a German administrator for many years, and for every Indian woman he got pregnant I would pay him an extra fifty dollars” (Casaus Arzú, 1992:289). Not surprisingly, according to the Guatemalan Mayan

intellectual Demetrio Cojtí Cuxil “assimilation” in his country was the label for the policies by which “the ladino prescribes the Maya’s death in order to solve the ‘Indian problem’ of the ‘ladino’s country’” (1997:21).¹⁰ Mayan intellectuals have articulated heterogeneous responses that range from political organizing to intellectual self-representation and include strategic essentialisms to define (and thus defend) themselves from brutal attempts to homogeneity. As in Guatemala, Ecuador, Bolivia, and Mexico since January 1994 (after the indigenous resurgence in Chiapas), indigenous social movements have raised ethnic banners as political forces that challenge prevalent “mestizo” national images.

Within the current context Peru represents an exception. Not only do indigenous grassroots intellectuals appropriate the label “mestizo” for self-identification, but crucially, no indigenous social movement exists currently in Peru that rallies around ethnic identities. Peruvians were conspicuously absent from the 1991 meeting in Quetzaltenango protesting the Spanish Conquest (Hale, 1994). While I do not consider that the absence of indigenous ethnic movements in Peru is irreversible, I do not think it is a mere coincidence either.¹¹ Peru already represented an exceptional case during the peak period of Latin American populism, when, unlike in the aforementioned countries, “mestizaje” did not become a state-sponsored image. Purist indigenistas, including the leftist José Carlos Mariátegui, rejected it flatly, and actual proposals for mestizaje never achieved consensus, probably because they represented diverse and at times even antagonistic political tendencies. One such proposal was the aristocratic project of Víctor Andrés Belaúnde and José de la Riva Aguero (identified as hispanismo), which proposed mestizaje as a nation-building alternative and viewed it as spiritual “whitening”: converted into Catholicism, Indians would be integrated into the Peruvian nation. Another was the largely anticlerical, populist definition of mestizaje that the Apra and the Communist Party advanced from the 1930s, which was populist, *procholo*, and colored by working-class ideals. Although these proposals occupied long hours of political debate in mid-century, neither became official state politics, and while conservative hispanismo faded, populist mestizo projects remained confined to regional orbits (as in the case

of neoindianismo) or to the realm of oppositional politics, as with the Apra. Evidently, the Peruvian state did not represent the Latin American pro-Indian vanguard. However, unlike in Mexico and Guatemala, because mestizaje never became an explicit and official nation-building project in Peru, the state did not sponsor Spanish as the official national language, nor did “integration” or “assimilation” ever explicitly and officially signify a bid for the disappearance of “Indians.”

Although purist indigenismo à la Valcárcel may have been inconspicuous, its diffusion from the Ministry of Education after the 1940s reduced the influence of assimilationist projects in Peru, while similar programs spread to the rest of Latin America from the Inter-American Indigenista Institute created in the same decade and which had its headquarters in Mexico. During the peak period of inter-American indigenismo (roughly 1940 to early 1960s), state-sponsored Peruvian educational policies, under the leadership of Valcárcel (with the aid of José María Arguedas), advocated bilingual Quechua and Spanish literacy campaigns, for which they promoted the training of Quechua-speaking rural teachers (Contreras, 1996). Meanwhile, during the same period, Mexico, Bolivia, Guatemala, and Ecuador implemented educational policies emphasizing Spanish literacy and promoting the elimination of vernacular languages.¹² It is no accident that in those countries, indigenous intellectuals emerged during the same years to reject forced assimilationist ambitions and launch projects that prominently asserted indigenous identity and rejected national mestizaje projects. Significantly, the indigenous emergence in Guatemala and Bolivia, for example, initially centered around an academic-type of revival of indigenous languages (Smith, 1990; Albó, 1987). A recent study on Mayan cultural activism notes that language is central to Guatemalan indigenous social movements and an important marker of indigenous identity (Fischer and McKenna Brown, 1997:5). Likewise, in Mexico, until the recent adoption of ethnic self-identification on national censuses, speaking an indigenous language was the ultimate marker of Indianness (Gerardo Rénique, personal communication). Similarly, while the Mexican and Bolivian states (backed by either the memory or the implementation of their respective populist revolutions) developed

assimilationist policies to solve “the Indian problem,” the Peruvian Ministry of Education promoted purist manifestations of “indigenous folklore,” policy that was complemented by the absence of a state-promoted mestizo nation against which to assert indigenous identities. Why these efforts did not result in indigenous movements of “ethnic pride” in Peru is explained by the fact that these projects were led by elite intellectuals, who saw themselves as salvaging and uplifting a tradition encroached upon by modernization and despised by Hispanization. A second important element in the explanation is the political experience of the indigenous leadership, who since the defeat of the Tawantinsuyu project in the 1920s, had successfully joined the increasing, leftist, organized opposition that was dismissive of the “culturalist” political activism sponsored by the state. Not surprisingly, indigenous leaders participated in political movements as “peasants” not as “Indians.” Confirming the tendency to assume class identities rather than culturalist ones in political projects, the 1969 leftist-inclined military government decreed that the label “Indian” would be banned from official state rhetoric and replaced with “peasant,” which by then (and speaking to the ways in which Mariátegui’s and Valcárcel’s teachings had become part of intellectual and political culture) conveyed images of Indianness. Asserting its propeasant vocation, the same military junta made bilingual (Quechua/Spanish) education official and used indigenous symbols to promote their agrarian reform. All these elements help explain the current absence in Peru of a social movement led under the banner of indigenous ethnic nationalism. Likewise, they help understand the indigenous appropriation of the term “mestizo” and its redefinition to develop de-Indianization as a decolonizing indigenous strategy. Ignored by the state, the label “mestizo” was not charged with the same anti-indigenous culture emotion that the term (and its equivalent, “ladino”) carried in Ecuador, Mexico, Guatemala, and Bolivia.

Evidently, neither the absence of self-identified Indian intellectuals nor de-Indianization implies that “the Peruvian peasantry did not succeed in incorporating anti-colonial and ethnic dimensions into its struggle to any real extent” or that among indigenous rural migrants to the cities, “actual ethnic suppression is the norm,” as Silvia Rivera,

a Bolivian intellectual, has asserted (1993:83, 85). This interpretation, which only too easily equates the process of accepting the stigma adhered to “Indianness” (and therefore silencing the label) with the suppression of indigenous ethnicity, privileges the academic concepts defined by elite intellectuals while ignoring the discourses of grassroots producers of meanings. This kind of analysis also privileges politics defined as overt ideological oral, or written speeches (and thus the politicians who deliver them) while dismissing the manifestations of politics in daily life and those who practice them. But what most prompts my rejection of Rivera’s argument is that it seemingly assumes that there is universal value in the cultural/ethnic politics as they currently exist in Bolivia, and that the same cultural political strategy ought to apply in other Andean regions. My analysis instead shows that the conditions in Peru are different for historical reasons, and hence, the political-cultural strategy has been different. After the defeat of Tawantinsuyu’s cultural/racial project, indigenous culture along with its emblems and symbols became subordinate practices in explicit political speeches. But, obviously, Andean culture did not disappear from everyday politics. Andean practices—such as being a ritual diviner, or *pajqo*—were important in legitimating indigenous leaders, such as Turpo from Lauramarca, to name but one, even during the period when class struggle prevailed and “culture” was not a consideration of the country’s Marxist leaders. Quechua, the indigenous language, was used in massive demonstrations in Cuzco’s Plaza de Armas, which, during such events, was blanketed with ponchos and chullos, the clothes that express indigenous identity and that were specially and symbolically worn for those occasions. The absence of culturalist (or ethnic) political slogans among the people during that period, rather than a failure to incorporate anticolonial or ethnic rhetoric, represented both a historical shift and political strategy resulting from the earlier defeat of the indigenous movement led by Tawantinsuyu and from the need to distance themselves from state-sponsored indigenismo and its culturalist oral and written language. In earlier chapters I have explained that instead of using modern dichotomies and making “either/or” choices, people like Alejandro Condori or Lucrecia Carmandona use a logic of coupling “rural” and “urban” that cancels the dominant opposition by which indigenous culture is fixed to

the countryside. Similarly, in the sixties, indigenous politicians fused cultural symbols and class rhetoric. The huge political demonstrations that they organized in the Plaza de Armas del Cuzco expressed a hybrid political discourse that was not *either* ethnic *or* classist. Instead, it coupled both. During this period the absence of “Indianness” and the assertion of peasant identity were gestures to empower the prevalent indigenous crusade, which in mid-century was for agrarian reform. In addition to what I have mentioned, my study has also shed light over other minor—yet also historically produced—reasons that endorsed the avoidance of indigenous ethnic labels as an efficient political strategy: Indianness was consensually deemed inferior, and Quechua was not synonymous with Indianness, as the elites used the language too. Neither of these trends however led to ethnic suppression. The case of Cuzco shows that the endurance of indigenous practices and discourses are not to be proven or refuted as a function of indigenous verbal compliance with the dominant lexicon, be it racial, ethnic, or classist. The suppression of certain labels and the enhancement of others does not automatically reflect the suppression and enhancement of “the culture” that the dominant meanings of those labels connote, or of “ethnicity” as prescribed in dominant scripts. Quite the opposite: the suppression of Indianness from subaltern practices meant the subaltern rewriting of dominant definitions of indigenous culture to include mestizo identities that exalt rather than extinguish their “authenticity.”

Appropriating the term “mestizo,” and silencing Indianness has allowed indigenous intellectuals to thrive as cultural producers, free of the geographical, economic, and social boundaries that the label “indio” imposed on them. But, most important, by rejecting self-ascribed Indianness, they have been able to produce dignified lives and indigenous practices. Currently, as a result of de-Indianization, indigenous culture is neither specific to the countryside nor to the urban poor. It is as ubiquitous and heterogeneous as the comparsa dance groups in which street vendors accompanied by university students journey throughout the region’s peasant communities and towns, connecting such urban and “decent” icons as the Plaza de Armas with rural and Indian ones, such as the Ausangate Apu, where indigenous ceremonies include both Indian and mestizo participants.

In present-day Cuzco, elite intellectuals have acquiesced to silence

Indianness in their practice of *cuzqueñismo*. Although—not surprisingly—the local commemoration of the 1992 Quincentennial of the Spanish Conquest went almost unnoticed, one of the celebratory events that the leftist municipal authorities implemented was to replace the Spanish name of the city (with the Quechua “Qosqo,” because, according to them “such was the name of the Inca city.”) Along with this, they coined the word *Qosqoruna*, an all-encompassing label that includes all the inhabitants of the region. It means “person of Cuzco.” According to some anthropologists (e.g., Allen, 1988) *runa* is the term that monolingual indigenous peasants use in the countryside to refer to fellow *comuneros* and is thus used instead of “Indian.” “Qosqoruna,” as coined by the municipal authorities would have the same application, noticeably avoiding allusions to Incanness.

De-Indianization and Discrimination

The Hegemony of Education and the Silencing of Racism

It would be a simplification to present de-Indianization as a successful story of political resistance, moved by feelings of harmony and equality. In fact de-Indianization also reveals complicity between dominant and subaltern groups in identifying “Indians” as the most contemptible members of society. Moreover, this complicity constitutes one basis for the hegemony of Peruvian racism and is located—to use a phrase of Michael Taussig’s—in that “sweaty warm space between the arse of he who rides and the back of him who carries” (1987:288). Constructed following the dominant racial interpretation of the regional geography, the conundrum of the cuzqueño subaltern definition of *mestizaje* that undergirds de-Indianization, is that although it values rural practices, it also accepts the preeminence of urban knowledge and its male (or masculinized) representatives. In spite of its empowering potential, the alternative definition of *mestizas/os* does not negate their subordination to “gente decente,” which they accept even if insolently so. *Mestizas* represent economically successful indigenous women and occupy an important place among cuzqueño plebeian sectors, as is obvious in major

urban religious rituals. Yet they also occupy the social space where “trato” signals the difference between indigenous mestizos from nonindigenous mestizos, or “whites.” Moreover, rules for *trato* are grounded on norms of respect, which contest dominant propositions to evaluate identities based on ascribed features, yet which perceive social hierarchies as legitimate if they reflect educational and economic differences. They thus converge with dominant discrimination even if the latter orders hierarchies according to racial criteria. This convergence makes racism a hegemonic practice, as widespread discrimination measured by educational achievement takes place in the midst of decaying ascribed racial singularities, and even as indigenous mestizos themselves challenge cultural fundamentalism.

At the turn of the century, as Valcárcel (1914) admitted, a university degree could erase the stigma of nondecent origins. Considered proof of an individual’s intellectual capacity and moral quality, university education erased stigmas of origin and could lift nonaristocrat middle classes to a higher social status, allowing them to join the cuzqueño elite as *gente decente*. Notwithstanding the important regional political changes, throughout the century the promise of an academic degree has always been able to raise an individual’s social status, even if this transformation was not perceived in racial terms anymore. Adriana’s words, quoted in the introduction (“En nuestro país la raza ya no manda, ahora manda la inteligencia, la educación”) reflect how education has maintained its discriminatory potential. Formal education—better yet, university education—is among the few experiences by which an individual can overcome the stigma of lower-class origins. It can take an individual from earning a livelihood in the marketplace—or similar environment—and “promote” him or her to work in an office job, a hospital, a primary school, or a childcare center.¹³

Mid-century intellectuals were thinking simply—or only academically and not politically—when they proposed that the replacement of the concept of race by one of ethnicity would eradicate racial discrimination. The conceptual shifts to “culture” (or ethnic groups) in the 1930s and to “class” rhetoric and “peasant” identity a little later preserved former discriminatory feelings and continued to legitimate them by resorting to the turn-of-the-century cultural funda-

mentalism that, while originally antiracist, legitimated ideas about the inferiority of "Indians." Obviously, the conceptual shifts to culture and class did not mean the end of discrimination. Moving away from biological notions of race has provided for a comfortable self-absolution of racist guilt, without eradicating culturalist notions of race, which now cohabit with gender, class, ethnic, and geographic discrimination. The hegemonic acceptance of the "legitimate" hierarchies produced by education accommodates the relationship between the dominant and subordinate forms of discrimination. This hegemony of educational hierarchies makes dominant culturalist racism not only possible but apparently unquestionable and thus all the more formidable.

Notes

Introduction

- 1 Mario Vargas Llosa has articulated his position in his fictional and nonfictional writing. Among his fiction see, for example, *Death in the Andes* (1996), and among what he would consider nonfiction see "Questions of Conquest" (1990b:45–46), and his very consequential "Informe sobre Uchuraccay" (especially 110–114) (1990a:79–114).
- 2 Such ambiguities in the definition of race disappeared as class, gender, and geography increasingly structured racial relationships and consolidated individual racial labels.
- 3 Besides Gramsci (1987), the works of Williams (1977); Hall (1986); Laclau and Mouffe (1985); and Mallon (1995), have inspired my treatment of the aspects of hegemony relevant to my study. I thank Florencia Mallon for illuminating discussions and inspiration on this topic.
- 4 This paraphrases Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist, "Glossary," in Bakhtin, 1990:427.
- 5 In Cuzco, for example, dominant male intellectuals performed self-representations within a gendered racial discourse that contested their subordination vis-à-vis dominant Lima intellectuals while deploying discourses that subordinated regional "inferior" others. This process repeated itself at other levels, where subordinate cuzqueño men and women became the superordinators of even more "inferior" others.
- 6 Other scholars agree on the point. See Stepan, 1982; Barkan, 1992.
- 7 Paraphrased in Stoler, 1995:72; and Poole, 1997:212.
- 8 About race as a politically defined notion see Omi and Winant, 1986; Gilroy, 1987; Frankenberg, 1993; Anthias and Yuval-Davis, 1992; Goldberg, 1993; among others.
- 9 Knox, 1862:497, quoted in Young, 1995:17.
- 10 Knox published in 1862; Broca in 1864; Spencer from 1864 to 1867 (see Young, 1995; Stepan, 1982).
- 11 Clemente Palma was a limeño Le Bonian, who denied the possibility of racial improvement by means of formal instruction. He followed the European thinker's belief that "racial souls" could not be

7 Indigenous Mestizos, De-Indianization, and Discrimination

Cultural Racism in Cuzco

1 *El Comercio*, December 1, 1922, p. 1.

2 Abril, 1959.

3 Hale, Gould, and Smith (1994) also analyze "mestizaje" from a perspective that takes into account its multiple and competing meanings. They define it as "the outcome of an individual or collective shift away from strong identification with indigenous culture and to the myth of cultural homogeneity which elites imposed from above as a standard part of their repertoire of nation-building." And, crucially, they add: "Most simply, mestizo is a 'mixed race' identity category, and mestizaje refers to the process through which that category is created. But the culturally elaborated content and meaning of the identity varies widely—from the complete suppression of Indianness such that it remains only a distant memory; to a superficial acceptance of the dominant society as a facade, behind which a deep adherence to Indian culture persists; to a simultaneous affinity with multiple cultural traditions not completely compatible with each other." I understand the need to cautiously stress the potential incompatibility of different cultural traditions, and agree with their definition of mestizaje and their political position toward indigenous cultural struggles. However, to avoid slippages à la Vargas Llosa (see the first epigraph in the introduction), I want to make an obvious, yet also cautious remark: this supposed incompatibility of cultural traditions is not inevitable. Among other factors, it depends on the manner in which dominant politicians formulated "mestizaje" as a nation-building project and on mestizaje's impact on indigenous struggles for citizenship, or even survival. Indeed, cultural extermination, as in Nicaragua (Gould, 1998), or physical massacres, as in El Salvador or in Guatemala (Carmack, 1988; Falla, 1994), can be carried out under the banner of national "mestizaje," thus making factual the incompatibility between nonindigenous and indigenous traditions. The popular and subordinate politics of "mestizaje" in Cuzco, however, express an alternative of compatibility with dominant ways, one that does not reflect superficial acceptances of facades, yet also does not imply shedding indigenous ways. As I have explained in the last three chapters, this alternative is not free of friction or contradiction. A similar situation apparently exists in Cochabamba (Bolivia), where, according to Brooke Larson, the subaltern mestizo political culture is characterized by a "fluid in-betweenness" that undermines preconceived dichotomies (between rural/urban,

peasant/laborer, Indian/mestizo), with compatible, yet still conflict-laden articulations between indigenous and nonindigenous cultural traditions (1998:349–353).

- 4 I find Anzaldúa's work in *Borderlands* enormously inspirational as a new way of writing, thinking, and feeling. Yet in some of her work, I still get a sense of a lingering binarism, that sometimes gets to be surprisingly positivistic. This tone is evident in phrases such as "As a culture, we call ourselves Spanish when referring to ourselves as a linguistic group, and when coping out. It is then that we forget our predominant Indian genes. We are 70–80% Indian." She weights "syncretism" similarly: "The *indio* and the *mestizo* continue to worship the *old* spirit entities (including Guadalupe) and their supernatural power, under the *guise* of Christian Saints" (1987:31, my emphasis). Her apparent leaning toward genetic Indianness (as in the first statement) or cultural essences (as in the second) may be a strategic position (Spivak, 1988b), but I find it difficult nevertheless to reconcile the rigidity they imply with the fluidity of her own notion of "being a crossroads" (195) that explodes binarisms, syncretism, and essentialized hybridities splendidly.
- 5 I thank Penelope Harvey for having suggested the notion of fractal identities, as well as for having called Roy Wagner's article to my attention.
- 6 This is not how García Canclini (1995) defines hybridity. I think, as Rosaldo does (1995), that he continues to imply a space between two *discrete* cultural entities, thus maintaining the idea of "purity" and "impurity" initially entailed by modern notions of hybridity (Young, 1995).
- 7 Although I do not use it in its original sense, I have borrowed the expression "observation point" from Michel Foucault's essay "The Eye of Power." He proposes that the exercise of power needs a center, which he calls an "observation point," which is also the place from which knowledge is registered (1980:148). Although among cuzqueño commoners the act of fixing an observation point implies itself the exercise of power, the observation points are multiple, and this allows for constantly challenging dominant assignments of univocal identities.
- 8 Rigoberta Menchú, speech at the Latin American and Iberian Studies Program, Distinguished Lecturers Series, October 10, 1995, Madison, Wisconsin.
- 9 A similar move is illustrated by the proposal of Bolivian indigenous intellectuals to use the term "originario" in an attempt to get away from degrading categories (Sinclair Thomson, personal communication).
- 10 See also Trujillo, 1993; Barragán, 1992; Smith, 1990; Knight, 1990.

¹¹ In fact there are some attempts to politicize overtly indigenous identities. However many of these are still marginal and mostly promoted by intellectuals who have not—as of yet—self-identified as indigenous. An exception is the nongovernmental organization Chirapaq Centro de Culturas Indias (in Lima), which is directed by a female grassroots intellectual, Tarcila Rivera, who self-identifies as indigenous.

¹² According to Carol Smith, many of the first generation of Guatemalan anthropologists supported the Instituto Indigenista in Guatemala, also established in 1945. They aimed at implementing a policy of indigenous assimilation like Mexico's (Smith, 1995:14). In the case of Mexico, according to Nancy Leys Stepan, Indians were admitted into the mestizaje process only if “they adopted the rationalism and materialism of the Mexican state. . . . The eugenic goal was not to give value to the variety of biological and cultural types that made up the nation, but to eliminate heterogeneity in favor of a new homogeneity, the Europeanized mestizo” (1991:15; also in Smith, 1995:32).

¹³ Not surprisingly the number of university students increased from 215 in 1925 (a little over 1 percent, when the city housed not more than 20,000 dwellers) to 18,511 in 1988, almost 10 percent in a city close to 200,000 inhabitants (Tamayo Herrera, 1992:769).

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