The Chamacoco Endurance: Global Politics in the Local Village

(Paraguay 1890s - 1990s)

By

Mario E. Blaser

A thesis submitted to the

Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research

in partial fulfilment of

the requeriments for the degree of

Master of Arts

Departmenet of Sociology and Anthropology

Carleton University

Ottawa, Ontario

April 18, 1997

ABSTRACT

In the process that brought about the formation of a World System the Chamacoco people of Paraguay have been incorporated into a unified discursive field. The Chamacoco have had to accomodate their own discourses as to make them appear attuned to the discourses which are dominant in the unified discursive field. Since this unified discursive field is a changing one the strategies used by the Chamacoco have been modified through time. The latest of this changing strategies has been the development of a traditionalist political agenda. In order for this agenda to succeed at the village level, the leader must find allies among the dominant agents and institutions of the National Society. In turn, these linkages between local and global levels set a limit for political initiatives originated in the village.

Acknowledgements

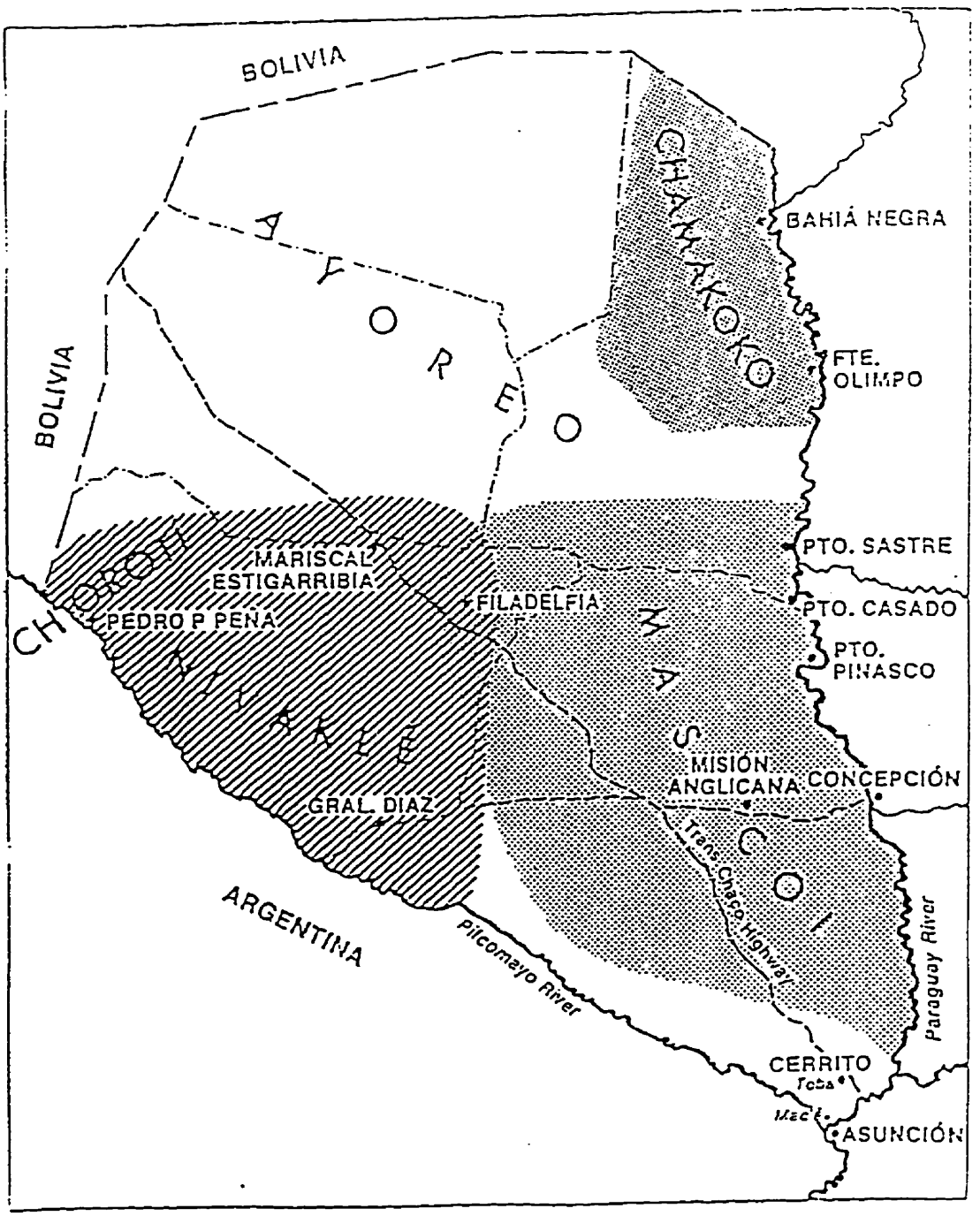
Primero tahamiuro enviar peyuwo a mis dehebich Ishiro-Ebitoso. Neychit que ahlilo amistad e interes. Neychit a Majito Modesto y Majito Leke, Bruno, Mateo, Perla, Papito, Meneto, Sonia, los weterak Babi, Alejo, y a todos los otros. Espero sohmira pakiliye sirva para Maro bolilo de una buena vez. Ishiro wututa!

This work has been possible thanks to the generous financial support of Earthwatch and its Earthcorps. I specially want to thanks George Eade for his constant interest. CONICET from Argentina also contributed financially through a Research Training Scholarsip.

Finally, I have to mention a series of people who has contributed with scholarly and human support. They are Pancho Suarez, Dario Arcella, Mario Rabey, Glenn Edwards and Douglas Green. Special gratitude to my wife Josi, I promise that from now and ahead I will act normal (at least until the next thesis).

CONTENTS

INDIGENOUS PEOPLE OF THE CHACO



Map from Maybury-Lewis and Lowe (1980)

PREFACE

A tale in Parodi's *Elucubraciones sobre la inmortalidad del cangrejo* states that in an unspecified place and time, a group of wise men from around the world gathered to define the essential identity of the onion. One man after another peeled a layer of skin from the vegetable. Each time, he presented it to the public, proclaiming that he held in his hands the 'real' onion. Finally, the demonstration reached a point where no layers of the onion remained. The wise men discussed the situation amongst themselves, and then returned to the stage with a solution to the puzzle: they declared that the onion had never existed.

As with other Indigenous people, circumstances have forced the Chamacoco to play the role of Parodi's onion - objects subject to definition by 'wise' White men. At times these men declared that certain Indigenous people were disappearing (Bruner 1989). In reality, they were growing another 'layer of skin' that no longer fit the wise men's narrow categories of what was an Indian. In our time, academia's deconstructivist peeling away of traditions and identities seems for many to undermine the attempts of Indigenous people to regain control in defining their identity (Jaimes and Noriega 1988; Trask 1991). There is no need here to discuss again what is already a common place in our discipline, that these 'definitions' are not innocent, politically neutral or without 'practical effects'.

In the 1980s some scholars attempted to revese these monologic practices, at least

in ethnographic texts, by proposing dialogic, polyphonic, evocative, and generally more democratic representations of anthropology's subjects. *Writing Culture* (Clifford and Marcus 1986) has become known as the classic reference to these attempts. However, as some critical currents have asserted since then, we must not let a fashionable dialogic trend fool us. The possibility of dialogue is not a matter of voluntaristic editorial decisions, but is determined by the respective power positions of those engaged in a communicative act (Talal Asad 1986, Rabinow 1986). This work represents a contribution to the struggle of the Chamacoco to recover the direction of their destiny, rather than any experimental form of ethnography. In this sense, this writing is a report, from a different perspective than their own, on their recent history. I hope it would prove useful in providing insight into the connections between what happens in their villages to the wider World System.

This focus on the connections between global and local levels is one of the methodological premises of this work. The other is that we can only grasp these connections in their complexity through a processual analysis that considers their unfolding through time. Thus, this analysis fluctuates between local and global levels while considering the different patterns this 'weaving' reveals at various moments of the Chamacoco history. This represents the reverse of peeling an onion, by discussing the conditions in which new layers of 'skin' came to form what is Chamacoco. Rather than focusing on the construction of Chamacoco identity and traditions, this work analyses the degrees of constraint and freedom that, in diverse moments in their history, provided the space for different expressions of what it means to be Chamacoco. The title of this work,

The Chamacoco Endurance, alludes to the persistence of their identity through those moments; the subtitle *Global Politics in the Local Village* refers to the link between levels, and its importance to the design of the weaving.

This work begins at a point in the Chamacoco history that shortly preceded the definitive settlement of Whites in the Alto Paraguay area. This provides enough temporal depth to allow the analysis of at least three major changes in the social 'skin'. These changes relate to distinguishable moments in the Chamacoco history that correspond to qualitative changes in the historical space considered. These moments included the one previous to Mbya-Caduveo influence, White settlement in the area and the rapid inclusion of the Chamacoco within the World System, and the crisis in hegemonic coincidence about the Indigenous 'problem' among dominant Paraguayan groups.

The discussion addresses current debates on power, hegemony and resistance, and relates to the work of authors such as Antonio Gramsci, Michel Foucault, Pierre Bourdieu and James Scott. Although their inspiration is present throughout the analysis, the organization of the text allows the emphasis of particular aspects of the general discussion. The text takes the form of different parts; although linked temporally and thematically, each (except the introductory portion) can more or less stands on its own.

The first part introduces the general research problem, discusses the main concepts used in the analysis, describes the Chamacoco people and their environment, and provides background for this investigation.

The second part discusses the unification of discursive fields and its effect on the Chamacoco way of 'speaking' and practising politics. The third part focuses on the processes of hegemony and counter-hegemony (primarily at the national level), and their correlation with the development of political agendas at the local level.

The fourth part examines current politics at the local level and their links with global processes. The final comments present a series of reflections triggered by the Chamacoco case that, through a 'Foucauldian lens', are shaping new paths for future inquiry.

PART ONE: GENERAL INTRODUCTION

In the classic *Europe and the People without History*, Wolf provides a simple but shattering description of the process that led to the emergence of a World System:

> "From the fifteenth century on, European soldiers and sailors carried the flags of their rulers to the four corners of the globe, and European merchants established their storehouses from Vera Cruz to Nagasaki. Dominating the sea-lanes of the world, these merchants invaded existing networks of exchange and linked one to the other" (Wolf 1982:265).

It would be almost impossible to present in this space a complete bibliography of what has been written on different aspects of this process. Such volume of writing demonstrates the importance and presence of the ongoing effects of that linkage. This work is about some of these effects i.e., the unification of different discursive fields in a hierarchically organized global discursive field in which the originally Western European discursive field had a dominant position[1].

The work discusses how this unified discursive field began, the role that the Chamacoco society's particular conditions had in the process of formation of this field, and the effects that different arrays of power positions had on how the Chamacoco

---

[1]For a discussion of the cultural effects of the World System, see King ed. (1991) and Featherstone ed. (1990).

maneuvered within it. The unification of 'discursive fields' sets the conditions for communication between cultures, "the minimum of communication which is the precondition for economic production and even for symbolic domination" (Bourdieu 1991:45), but also for opposition by subordinated groups.

To address the struggles within the discursive field, I relied on theoretical approaches that focus on domination, compliance, opposition, resistance, and hegemony (Scott 1985;1990; Comaroff and Comaroff 1992; Gramsci 1971; Chambers 1991). These acts of ideological struggle will be identified and related to the discursive field that allows their expression; in Bourdieu's terminology (1977, 1991), the expression of the 'habitus' will be related to the limits imposed by the field. Discourses and acts of opposition or resistance (symbolic or otherwise) will be seen as habitus that can find better or worse possibilities of expression, depending on the conditions of the field.

To address changes in the discursive field, this work focuses on two related areas: the production of habitus as a reproductive stage of the field, and the transformation of the field as a result of the expression of the habitus. Since changes in the discursive field are visible primarily through the changing discourses uttered, Foucault's (1991) theorization on politics and discourse will be a resourceful guide throughout our discussion.

A central aspect of our discussion is that the recent political activism among the Chamacoco has acquired a strong traditionalist component. I will argue that, in part, the

emergence of traditionalism as a political agenda was a consequence of the subordinated position of the Chamacoco in the unified field brought about by their incorporation in the World System. One of the consequences of this subordination is that Chamacoco people (like other Indigenous groups) must answer the question of Indigenous identity in terms of the changing images that Whites create about them (Berkhofer 1979; Sequoya 1993). This relates to disciplinary debates on the construction of tradition (Wagner 1975; Keesing 1989; Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983; Barth 1987; Borofsky 1987; Philibert 1989; Eriksen 1992) and the changing character of identity (Plotnikov and Silverman 1979; Worsley 1984; Rosaldo 1989; Tonkin, McDonald, and Chapman ed. 1989). However, further discussion will clarify why I adopt a different approach than that favored by many of these authors.

The intent of our theoretical framework is to provide conceptual tools, not to constrain the direction of the research. This required the reworking and combination of different theoretical positions for the purposes of this study. Thus, it is convenient to provide a thorough discussion of the concepts and approaches used.

1. Conceptual Framework

Prior to the discussion of concepts, it is helpful to clarify potentially confusing terms. The term 'White' is used in essentially the same way as the Chamacoco do: to refer to any agent of the Global Society, regardless of racial background. Occasionally the

Chamacoco further distinguish Whites as *dibkunaho* (foreigner) and *maro* (Paraguayan). This distinction relates to the second set of terms that require clarification: 'World System', 'Global Society', and 'National Society'. National Society refers to the social order specific to a nation-state (in this case, Paraguay). Although it has its own peculiarities, it is part of the Global Society because of its link to other nation-states through the World System. The World System is the net that links different societies (small scale or so-called 'complex' societies). Global Society refers to the hierarchical organization, with its particular set of values, of these interconnected societies. National Society also refers to the form that the Global Society adopts in a specific territory; therefore, agents of the National Society are simultaneously agents of the Global Society.

The basic concept on which this work rests is that of 'field'. Bourdieu (1992: 94-115) describes the field as space in which a certain set of positions exist, determined by how much power[2] each participant possesses. This space is a place of struggles, where those benefited by a given set of positions attempt to retain the status quo while those less benefited try to improve their position. Logically, the power to pursue or prevent change depends on the distribution of power; therefore those who dominate have a better chance to manipulate the field to their advantage. However, they must always attempt this against the resistance and opposition of the dominated.

---

[2]Bourdieu uses the term 'capital', not 'power'. I prefer the latter, as it avoids the economistic tones of the word capital, and it suggests a variety of different 'powers', which are what different concentrations of capital allow.

What are the limits of this space of struggles? Bourdieu (1992:100) states: "We may think of a field as a space within which an effect of field is exercised, so that what happens to any object that traverses this space cannot be explained solely by the intrinsic properties of the object in question. The limits of the field are situated at the point where the effects of the field cease." The field under consideration here is a kind of meta-field,[3] where the struggle is over the power to define the status of different subfields that the World System has brought together. To some extent, the effects of this field are extremely pervasive.

Imagine that different societies constitute different fields: there is one society in which the power is symbolically mediated by certain attributes associated with the elderly; another where power is symbolically mediated by the pertinence to endogamous castes; and another where power has been transmuted into money. Each society has its own rules and regularities[4] and its own breadth of effectiveness[5]. Suppose that the society whose

---

[3]The State represents Bourdieu's (1992:111-112) idea of meta-field, where different groups struggle "to constitute and to impose as *universal* and *universally applicable* within a given 'nation', that is within the boundaries of a given territory, a common set of coercive norms." In this case the struggle goes beyond the boundaries of nation-states to include the entire set of societies linked by the World System.

[4]Bourdieu (1990:39) also distinguishes between 'regularity' and 'rule'. Regularity points out a "certain statistically measurable frequency" while rules relate to conscious plans or policies.

[5]Bourdieu's analysis focuses on the fields (or subfields) within a society. He talks of linguistic field, academic field, field of power (political parties), etc. In part, Bourdieu's appreciation of the Enlightenment Project of Reason and science's search for explanations are due to this focus on a single society. I agree more closely with Foucault's point that we must bracket the ideas of scientific truth and the goals of the scientific enterprise. They are part of the total

symbol of power is the possession of money conquers the others, and unifies them within a single field whose order replicates its own. These conquerors impose, by different means, the logic of their field; they impose a power-system. Therefore, a power-system will refer to the symbolic mediation of power, and to 'play the game' will mean to act according to the regularities of a specific power-system.

In a more complex fashion, this is what happened to the societies linked by the World System, where the logic of the Western European society's field occupied (and still occupies) a privileged position. Without falling into economic determinism, Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992:109) state that the economic sub-field in capitalist societies "exercise[s] especially powerful determinations." These determinations, or effects of the field, reach the village that is the focus of this research. By contrast, the original field, within which the Chamacoco struggled before the unification, progressively lost its capacity to produce effects. However, events in recent years have indicated that it is fuelling a new, but somehow genealogically related, set of effects. The play of expansions and retreats of fields reinforce the idea that this meta-field is a space of unending struggles. In short, this 'meta-struggle' is a battle over how the unified field will take shape.

Among the effects of a field is the production of dispositions. "The conditioning associated with a particular class of conditions of existence [the position occupied in the

---

logic of the global power-system.

field] produces *habitus*, systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which organize practices and representations" (Bourdieu 1990:53). In a schematic and simplistic form, the mechanics of habitus and field imply that one's position in the field structures his or her dispositions to act in a given field. These dispositions will find better or worse possibilities to express in the field depending on the degree of coincidence between the structured disposition and the structure of the field. For example, an individual socialized within a dominant group will have a better chance that his or her dispositions will coincide with the structure of the field in a way that would tend to reproduce his or her position in the field. Conversely, the acquired set of dispositions will tend to restrain individuals socialized within a subordinated group to reproduce their subordinated position. This system of dispositions is "a present past that tends to perpetuate itself into the future by reactivation in similarly structured practices" (Bourdieu 1990:54).

Bourdieu asserts that due to the conditioning the field imposes in the habitus, "[t]he most improbable practices are excluded, as unthinkable, by a kind of submission to order that inclines agents to make a virtue of necessity," and "the habitus tends to generate all the 'reasonable', 'common sense' behaviours (and only these) which are possible within the limits[. . .]adjusted to the logic characteristic of a particular field" (Bourdieu 1990:54-56). I agree with Scott's (1985:322-335) critiques regarding the idea that situations perceived as unjust by powerless groups become accepted as normal and immutable. The idea of improbable practices as 'unthinkable' conflicts with evidence

suggesting that, if not in the practical sense, at least in the imagination of the subordinated groups, the possibility exists of reversing the situation. Subordinated groups who "believed and acted as if their situation were not inevitable when a more judicious historical reading would have concluded that it was" (Scott 1990:79) contradict the idea that habitus only generates behaviours adjusted to the structure of the field.

If, as Bourdieu (1990:55) states, the habitus provide a 'conditioned and conditional freedom' that is as distant from 'unpredictable novelty' as it is from 'simple mechanical reproduction', at what point between them does freedom stand? Is it a fixed point at all, or a space in which to express degrees of freedom? Thinking in terms of degrees of freedom disallows aprioristic definition of how an agent will act (express the habitus) in a field. Even recognizing that many dispositions acquired by an individual operate unconsciously, drawing the line that separates the acting of unconscious dispositions and conscious behaviour is difficult. Are the exclusions of unthinkable practices, the submission to order, and the making of 'virtue out of necessity' the expressions of unconscious dispositions, or consciously chosen courses of action to be displayed publicly? Scott (1990) maintains that a public transcript[6] exists in which behaviours and discourses must be concordant with the publicly expressed description of the world by dominant groups. In addition, there exists a hidden transcript in which the

---

[6] "*Public*[. . .]refers to action that is openly avowed to the other party in the power relationship, and *transcript* [is] a complete record of what was said [including] nonspeech acts such as gestures and expressions" (Scott 1990:2 fn.1. Italics in the original).

limitations and constraints of the public transcript do not work. A different set of behaviours and discourses appears here, usually in open contradiction to that expressed in the public transcript.

Clearly one cannot aprioristically define the degree of freedom provided by coincidence (or lack of it) between habitus and field by observing the situation of the field. The field does not reproduce itself just by structuring the habitus; coercion plays an important role. Coercion completes the task that habitus cannot, it ensures that the reproduction of the field is closer to mechanical reproduction of the original conditioning than to unpredictable novelty. This freedom (indeterminacy) in the reproductive process allows conscious behaviours and discourses, planning and strategy, in synthesis will. In this spece subjects can attempt to improve their position in the field, either by acquiring the dispositions common among the dominant groups or by changing the field to fit their dispositions.

Both strategies seek the same result (the coincidence between acquired dispositions and field). However, their methods are distinct: one attempts to improve the situation by playing the game, while the other tries to change the game. This distinction parallels one Chambers (1991:xv) made between "opposition, which works within the structure of power, and resistance, which challenges the legitimacy of a given power-system."

Rather than addressing all aspects of the struggles within a field, this work focuses on the political discourses and practices conducted by the Chamacoco. For this reason I will call the field 'discursive'. A discursive field includes all that would be speakable at any time, be it public or hidden. In his discussion of doxa, orthodoxy and heterodoxy, Bourdieu (1977:170) contends that "what goes without saying and what cannot be said for lack of an available discourse" constitutes doxa. It would be something like the fundamentals of a world view that we take for granted and do not recognize as arbitrary. Bourdieu (1977:169) states that dominated groups have an interest in exposing the arbitrariness of those aspects taken for granted, while dominant groups have "an interest in defending the integrity of doxa, or short of this, of establishing in its place the necessarily imperfect substitute, orthodoxy." Orthodoxy exists only against a heterodoxy, which manifests the existence of 'competing possibles'.

To put it in this way, the struggle is about competing views of possible worlds; however, the doxa defines which possible worlds can compete. For example in the U.S. political system, when Democrats confront Republicans, both of them act within the same 'universe of the undiscussed', that is, the Constitutional rules that regulates the relations between government and opposition. By contrast, in a colonial situation, what goes without saying accompanies more what one cannot say because it is repressed and hidden from public view than what one cannot say for lack of an available discourse. If doxa is the universe of the undiscussed (undisputed), it is so by repressing what suggests its fundamental arbitrariness.

The unification of discursive fields repressed what conformed the older Chamacoco discursive field. The dominant group's possible worlds then shaped the doxa. It could be a world with Evangelist, Catholic, business oriented, militaristic intonations but the music was the same: the Indians must be civilized. This doxa only had space for discourses shaped with the tones of the basic music. In other words it was possible to express dissent (orthodoxy and heterodoxy) but always within the space of the doxa. Then, the distinction of orthodoxy and heterodoxy corresponds with an operative definition of ideology used here. This is a group's use of the elements that conform the doxa with the purpose of improving or retaining (depending on the case) their situation in the power-system.

This description of doxa as the legitimate space within which struggle for better positions in the field occurs connects with the concept of hegemony.[7] I use the concept to refer to the leadership a group can exercise over others; in this I follow Gramsci's (1971:57) statement that "the methodological criterion on which our own study must be based is the following: that the supremacy of a social group manifests itself in two ways, as 'domination' and as 'intellectual and moral leadership'." In exercising this leadership a

---

[7]Kurtz (1996) points out that in anthropology the use of the concept more closely follows Williams' (1977) interpretation of Gramsci than the original meaning the latter gave to the term. Most scholars repeat Williams' equation of hegemony with tradition. The Comaroffs (1991) have extensively used the concept, but, as Reyna (1994) pointed out, theirs usage forgets the double nature of an operating hegemony, that is "the balance of force and consent, which balance each other reciprocally" (Gramsci 1971:80).

doxa is formed.[8] This "presupposes the attainment of a 'cultural-social' unity through which a multiplicity of dispersed will, with heterogeneous aims, are welded together with a single aim, on the basis of an equal and common conception of the world" (Gramsci 1971:349). I concur with Scott's (1990:71) criticism of the idea that hegemony plainly produce the consent of subordinated groups. By contrast, hegemony produce different groups operating their struggles within a 'common conception of the world' (within a doxa). However, as coercion always partners hegemony, it is impossible to know the real effect of hegemony on the discursive field, until what was repressed emerges for public view.

When hegemony is in its momentum, the leading group is able to persuade other powerful groups to follow. These moments do not afford much space for subordinated groups to dissent openly. In its minimal expression, hegemony keeps different groups operating with the same fundamentals, but with opposing meanings.[9] These circumstances allow more space for subordinated groups to express dissent. Bourdieu (1977:169-171) states that the struggles between orthodoxy and heterodoxy play an important role in the changes of the doxa. Although I agree with Bourdieu, I believe that it works not as much

---

[8]Kurtz (1996:107) states that "hegemony is always aimed at obtaining consent and establishing its legitimacy [but] it is not synonymous of culture [although] hegemonic practices by agents can and do create cultural formations."

[9]Bourdieu (1991:40) states: "Bakhtin reminds us that, in revolutionary situations, common words take on opposite meanings."

by eroding the basis of the doxa as by the addition of new elements.[10] However, struggles within the doxa pave the way (by loosening constraints) for counter-hegemonic (resistance) movements. They allow the space for alternative ways of conceiving power-systems to emerge and take shape.

In this case, the emergence of challenges to the power-system took the form of traditionalism. Given the importance of theoretical and political discussions around the term, it is necessary to clarify my position. Examining the conditions of emergence of traditionalist discourses, I agree with those who consider the discussion around invention of tradition as politically and theoretically problematic. The uproar surrounding the article "The Making of the Maori: Culture Invention and its Logic" (Hanson 1989) was perhaps the first indication of the problems implicit in considering processes of discourse's formation as 'invention'. Much discussion centered on the problem of essentializing or dis-essentializing native identities and traditions (see Hollinsworth 1992:137-171). However, as Linnekin (1991:445-46) recognized, the fundamental dilemma that cultural invention posed was that of authenticity. The cultural invention thesis eroded subordinated groups' claims based on the authenticity of their traditions. She argued that all traditions are invented "in that they are symbolically constructed in the present and reflect contemporary concerns and purposes rather than a passively inherited legacy" (Linnekin 1991:447). She

---

[10]This discussion has much in common with Williams (1980: 31-49); however, I do not consider 'doxa' the same as 'tradition'. Tradition would be a specific selection of elements from the doxa.

proposed an explicit confrontation to the idea that invention implies inauthenticity as a solution to the ethical dilemma posed by natives' vulnerability to deconstructivist analysis and the scientists' need for reporting their understanding of a situation.

However, this voluntaristic solution misses two important points. First, scholars have a limited capacity to change common-sense understandings of terms. Second, to understand the dilemma posed by the idea of cultural invention, one must determine the necessary conditions for this discourse to appear. For example, Friedman (1992:837-859) discussed the links between the emergence of this kind of deconstructivist approach to identity and the decline of western hegemony. His different approach is consistent with Scott's (1992: 384), in which discussions of cultural invention "occlude[. . .]that since meaning is socially constructed, and since the space of that construction, the 'social' is a contested one (i.e., one constituted by differential forces), what needs inquiring into is how certain meanings or, rather, certain kinds of statements, discourses, certain traditions, acquire force." This approach is the one I use to analyze the politics of traditionalism among the Chamacoco. I will consider the conditions of emergence of this way of doing politics rather than the 'authenticity' of those traditions.

2. Background of the Research

The geographical space where the Chamacoco live is the western side of the Paraguay River, from the current Puerto Sastre in the south, to the swamps of Otuquis in

the north. Their territory inland toward the west covered 50-60 km. The area is part of the region known as Chaco, characterized by a xerophitic (dry) forest with diversified vegetation coverage near the river consisting of open grassy fields, extensions covered by palm trees and swampy areas. The dominant species are red and white *quebracho* (*Schinopsis balansae* and *Aspidosperma*), *Samuu* (*Chorisia insignis*), *algarrobo* (*Porsopis spp.*), *palo santo* (*Bulnesia sarmientoi*) and *guayacon* (*Caesalpinia paraguayensi*).

There is a great diversity of animal species in the area. Among the most conspicuous are the *jaguarete* (*Panthera onca*), *ocelote* (*Felis pardalis*), *puma* (*Felis concolor*), *tigrillo* (*Felis geoffroyi*), *tatu carreta* (*Priodonte maximus*), *jurumi* (*Myrm ecophaga trydactilia*), *tapir* (*Tapirus terrestris*), *carpincho* (*Aotus trivirgatus*) and various kinds of monkeys, along with an astonishing diversity of birds and reptiles.

Several authors have described the Chamacoco, or Ishir, who today number approximately 1,500. We can classify these works into two groups depending on the time they were conducted. The first consists of ethnographies and descriptions of the Chamacoco culture, from the end of the nineteenth century to the 1950s. These analyses resemble classic ethnographies, involving the study of material culture, social structure, linguistic and mythology. They include the works of Boggiani (1894, 1900, 1929), Baldus (1927, 1931, 1932), Belaieff (1941, 1946), Fric (1906), Loukotka (1931), Lussagnet (1961) and Metraux (1943, 1946).

The origin of the name 'Chamacoco' for the group that used to call itself 'Ishir' is unclear. Beyond disagreement regarding different tribes' inclusiveness in this term, ethnographers generally recognized Boggiani's distinction between 'fierce Chamacoco' (*Chamacocos bravos)* and 'docile Chamacoco' (*Chamacocos mansos).* Today, the Tomaraho (formerly 'fierce Chamacoco') and Ebitoso (formerly 'docile Chamacoco') represent this division. Early ethnographies described the Chamacoco as a technologically simple society, grouped in small bands without permanent settlements and relying on hunting, gathering and fishing to survive. Their society seems to have organized along a strict sexual division, exogamous patrilineal clans, and age ranks. Scholars also pointed out the group's complex and rich system of mythologies and rituals.

The second group of ethnographies includes those made after the 1950s. Although they vary in scope and objectives, the central focus remains the ancient Chamacoco culture. The early works of Susnik (1957) and most of those by Cordeu (1974, 1984, 1988, 1989a,b,c,d,e,f,g, 1990, 1994) reconstruct what the latter calls 'ethnographic culture' (which existed in the past as the elders remembered when these scholars conducted their fieldwork). Cordeu expressed particular interest in the reconstruction of the traditional symbolic systems and his only analysis involving the contemporary situation (Cordeu 1989h) stresses the disappearance of the Chamacoco ethnographic culture. One of Chase-Sardi's (1987) works relates to the reconstruction of traits characteristic of the ancient Chamacoco culture. This work was part of an attempt to gather information about customary traditional law with the goal of contributing to the administration of justice

involving native people.

The second work of Susnik (1969) makes a new departure in the studies of the Chamacoco. In this ethnography Susnik examines the changes among the Chamacoco since the permanent settlement of Whites until the time of her following fieldwork in 1968. The focus is on what aspects of the Chamacoco culture and personality changed, and on the cause of these changes. Her analysis included an exhaustive number of traits, along with insightful comments and direct quotations from informants that proved useful for the purposes of my work.

My involvement with the Chamacoco began in 1989 when I met Carlos, a Chamacoco leader, on a cruiser that made the route from Asunción to Corumba (Brazil), where I worked as a tour guide. Carlos invited me to pursue my *Licenciatura*'s thesis (Blaser 1992) research in his community, and in 1991 I conducted my first fieldwork in his village. Since then, I have visited the village for at least one month each year. Initially I oriented my research to determine the interaction of traditional traits with newly introduced practices, artifacts, etc. Soon I became involved in much broader discussions of what was traditional and how it related to the definition of identity and the boundaries between ethnic groups (Blaser 1992, 1994a).

As a result of that research, I became involved with the search for solutions to problems identified by the community as critical (i.e., training for agricultural activities,

preservation of traditions, and the potential for tourism-related activities). We accomplished the first step toward these solutions with the assistance of my former supervisor, who obtained a research grant from the Center for Field Research/Earthwatch. We intended the project, which included the use of volunteers, to record the teaching and learning styles of the Chamacoco as part of a training plan for agricultural activities (Rabey 1993). The villagers' reaction, and their changing discourses when facing volunteers and myself alone, compelled me to consider the political implications of how the Chamacoco depicted themselves before different audiences (Blaser 1994a, b; Rabey and Blaser 1994).

In 1995 I obtained financial support from the same organization for a project oriented to the construction of an *in situ* museum and archives on Chamacoco culture and history. Although it was part of the original search for solutions, this project received further interest from the villagers due to the possibility of obtaining economic benefits from the local tourism market. The museum and archives will serve a dual purpose: it will help preserve tradition, while offering (for profit) this tradition in the tourism market.

Parallel to the construction of the museum and archives (which is presently underway), engineers in agronomics conducted the first prospective studies of soil and of the environment's potential for agricultural activities. The initial training workshops in agriculture also began that year.

The project, along with others that indirectly involve the villagers (such as the canalization of the Paraguay River and a sustainable development program for the Chaco area promoted by the European Union), has produced important changes in the internal politics of the villages. In reality, these are the latest and visible effects of processes that have long been under way. The historical depth pursued by this study may provide the perspective to grasp these processes.

This discussion then, is the result of a long involvement with the Chamacoco of Palmares/Ajateri. The material that forms the basis of the study proceeds from individual and group interviews, open and predefined questionnaires, life stories, records of meetings, archival documents, and in general the field observations made since 1991. I have changed the names of persons, villages and towns. I understand the problem this can generate for the reader; however, these events are ongoing and the analysis presented here could harm the agendas of different actors. I have privileged the confidence the Chamacoco people invested in me by opening their arms and minds to this research.

PART TWO: THE UNIFICATION OF DISCURSIVE FIELDS

In *Chamacoco I: Cambio Cultural,* Susnik (1969:9) mentions that the Chamacoco used four terms to designate the airplane. At the beginning of the contact they called it Anorxyt, the mythical flying cannibal. When they became accustomed to seeing it in the sky they called it a 'flying iron box'. Then, upon close observation, they said that the airplane had a face and eyes. Finally, when it had become a normal means of transportation, they adopted the Spanish word *avión* (airplane). The author states that the use of these four terms implies a progressive adjustment of the interpretation to the new elements brought by the Whites. However, one wonders if this process of interpretation developed without struggle, as if the shift from interpreting the 'flying object' as Anorxyt to interpreting it as an airplane occurred by the force of reality.

Here I will argue that the direction implied by the Chamacoco's interpretations of the new conditions of life, and their reinterpretations of old ones, was the product of struggles in previous dispositions of their society and their combination with new conditions resulting from White settlement. We can consider this process part of a more general one, by which unification in a World System linked the destinies of diverse local societies. Particularly, I am interested here in the process of unification of a discursive field that assured the "minimum of communication which is the precondition for economic production and even for symbolic domination" (Bourdieu 1991:45).

The intent in this part is to map out the conditions under which the unification took place. Paraphrasing Bourdieu (1991:45), "it is in the process of [World System] formation that the conditions are created for the constitution of a unified [discursive field], dominated by the [West]." However, the previous conditions of the locality in question are critical to the way the process develops. This requires a schematic picture of: the Chamacoco discursive field prior to White arrival; of the effect of prior conditions on the handling and interpretation of White settlement by differently positioned Chamacoco actors; and of how a new social order occurred from the conjunction of these circumstances.

3. The Chamacoco Discursive Field

To understand how the unification of discursive fields between the Chamacoco and the Global Society unfolded, it is necessary to understand the state of the Chamacoco discursive field before permanent White settlement in the Chaco.[11] As a first step I will present a schematic version of a myth that both scholars and Chamacoco consider the core narrative expressing the fundamentals of the Chamacoco social order. Most people know the myth, which narrates the episode of the transformation of the world, as the *monexne* of

---

[11]I rely primarily on second- and third-hand information; many existing ethnographies, particularly those focusing on the symbolic system, were based on memories of the elders. Thus, the Chamacoco discursive field presented here is necessarily tentative. Therefore, the reader may feel that this section opposes my perception of discursive fields as presented in the introduction: a place of struggle and fights, of gaps and contradictions, and not a monolithic and sealed space in which every element has a clear and fixed position.

the Anabsero.

The word *monexne*, as used by the ancient Chamacoco, meant 'narration'. However, they used it with a modifier to suggest sacredness or profanity, the degree of power and the character of norms passed on by the deities (Cordeu 1989c: 141-144). Susnik (1969:186) notes that the elders referred to this myth as *yraxak*, 'the message', and some still call it *Esnwherta au oso*, 'Esnwherta's word'. This divergence is important because it signals a change in the evaluation that the Chamacoco currently make of these narrative corpuses. Today, they refer to all stories attributed to the ancient Chamacoco as *monexne*, without further distinction. By contrast, they refer to any contemporary narrative by the Spanish word *cuento*.

The myth describes "how the apparition of the Anabsero deities meant, for the people, the acquisition of understanding and critical thought, the foundations of the dual organization, the clans and age ranks, the secret society and the ritual" (Cordeu 1989c:165).[12] Even accepting the existence of discrepant discourses, the dominant discourse in the Chamacoco discursive field must have been closely related to the world view implicitly expressed in the Anabsero's myth.

This version of the myth (a composite of sligthly different versions recorded during

---

[12]Quotations from sources in Spanish are my translation.

my fieldworks) focuses on the central argument; in versions recorded by different authors, secondary aspects can vary.[13]

> A group of women was gathering roots, from a hole left by one of them appeared the Anabsero. These abnormally strong beings had big teeth and skins covered with different drawings. The Anabsero told the women that they have come to be near to them, to be *agalo* (partner). Esnwherta, the mother (or grandmother) of the Anabsero, ordered them to make the *tobich* (a place in the forest that was clean of plants and trees) and to clear the path connecting it with the *xara* (ceremonial center of the village). Then the women had to prepare feather hats and necklaces, paint their bodies following the drawings of the Anabsero-partner, and join them in the *tobich*.
>
> The men observed the unusual behaviour of the women and followed them. In that way they discovered the Anabsero. However, the men were afraid of the Anabsero and kept hidden, fearing what could come out of the women's association with those beings. The women, then, lied to the Anabsero by saying that there were no men among them. However, a woman brought her baby boy to one of the meetings. Even though she had concealed the gender of the baby, the Anabsero discovered the fabrication. The mothers of the Anabsero were angry because of this lie and expelled the women from the *tobich*, ordering them to call their husbands.
>
> The men were frightened but Cyr, the headman, persuaded them to contact the Anabsero. They began to meet the Anabsero in the ceremonial *xara* until they became *agalo*. The Anabsero taught them how to make instruments and where to find food. They worked together as *agalo*, one Chamacoco and one Anabsero, one ignorant and the other informed of everything. During this period the initiatory ritual of the young men began, ordered by Esnwherta. Some Anabsero did not like that Esnwherta treated the Chamacoco the same as the Anabsero and the partnership became competitive. Nevertheless, the Anabsero always dominated over the men, keeping the better food and making the young work hard. Moreover, the Anabsero known as Wakaka used to eat the young people. However, another Anabsero, the old Wyaxo, always revived them.

---

[13]Other versions appear in Cordeu (1989); Susnik (1957 and 1969); and Wilber and Simoneau (1987).

> However one day Wakaka killed the son of Cyr, who asked Esnwherta for revenge. She revealed the secret that to kill Wakaka the men should beat him on the ankle. Knowing the secret, the Chamacoco began to kill not only Wakaka but all the Anabsero. Esnwherta tried to stop the men and make them seek reconciliation with the Anabsero. Thus, she called both to meet in the central *xara* but when they were together the men started to kill the Anabsero again. The men followed the Anabsero from the *xara* toward the *tobich* (west to east), killing them along the way. They killed all the Anabsero but one: Nemur, who, blowing into a shell, created the Paraguay River that separated him from the men. Nemur warned the Chamacoco that, unless they replaced the Anabsero and followed the rules, he would send diseases to exterminate them.
>
> Then Esnwherta revealed to the men the clan of each Anabsero killed, and the killer of an Anabsero became a member of that Anabsero's clan. Also, she created the age ranks and the alimentary and sexual prohibitions related to them. Thus, the men had to replace the Anabsero to survive, and they painted their bodies and used feathers in the same way as the Anabsero during the ceremonies. However, the women knew that they were not the Anabsero, and they made fun of the men. Then, Esnwherta ordered the killing of all the women and the cutting of one of them into pieces from which the new women would grow. They followed this command and the new women did not know that the Anabsero were dead.

In what sense does this myth links with the social order and related practices? What elements of the discursive field does the myth express? The easiest way to answer these questions is to direct our attention toward the initiatory ritual. It represents the main events of the myth, while structuring the social order by sanctioning the positions of the individuals and the relations among them. Cordeu (1989c:120-121) maintains that the oppositions implicit in this myth reveal the central theme of the Chamacoco mythology, which is the transition from life to death. This theme would appear at different semantic levels; the Anabsero's cycle represents one of them and, according to Cordeu (1989c:121), is outstanding in that the theme extends to practically all other aspects of the

cultural reality.

One may not agree with Cordeu regarding reduction of the entire symbolic system to a basic opposition. However, I have to agree that the myth displays an opposition between Anabsero and Chamacoco, and this opposition (and related dispositions and practices) was homologous to an extensive series of different but related aspects of sociocultural life by means of the initiatory ritual. Here I will discuss just those aspects that better illuminate the kind of dispositions that were critically important to the future development of Chamacoco/White relationships. I have chosen these aspects because they are the best suited to exemplify the effect of White settlement on the complex web of relations that wove together discourses, practices and material conditions within the Chamacoco discursive field.[14]

The first aspect to clarify is the spatial coordinates of the mythical events. They are not explicit in the narration, and their visual quality enables an understanding of the link between Anabsero and Chamacoco and related social positions and practices. The Anabsero were associated with the East. Their place was the *tobich*, located east of the *xara*, the ceremonial center of the village. When the Chamacoco exterminated them they were running toward the east. Also, when the men represented the Anabsero in the

---

[14]The aspects analysed here imply the attribution of a certain hierarchy in relation to those aspects not treated here. In this sense this hierarchy mostly obeys the availability of materials rather than theoretical biases (although they played a role as well).

initiatory ritual they came from this direction.

East is also the direction of *osipite*, the land of the dead. The elders, who are relatively closer to death, are associated with the Anabsero, and with a series of characteristics of the mythical beings. Cordeu (1989d:161) mentions other myths that confirm the gradual identification of elders with death and the Anabsero. By contrast, the *dut* (village), the birthplace of children that the Chamacoco associated with life and the feminine space, was west of the *tobich*. In spatial terms, a male throughout his life fulfilled a displacement from west (the *dut*) to east (*osipite*). This displacement was homologous to other aspects of social life. As a male grew older he acquired the characteristics and privileges of the Anabsero: knowledge, power, strength, arbitrariness toward younger people and, importantly, prerogatives over food. Susnik (1981:180) cites the elders' prerogatives over food, and the correlative restrictions imposed on younger males, as causes the Chamacoco identify for the high incidence of schism of younger people from the group.We will come back to this point later.

Now, the first distinction that the myth (through the ritual) inscribed in the social order was the one between men and women. The ancient women *warxa* (women) were separated from the Anabsero, and therefore from the sacred, because of their falsity. After the *warxa* were killed, *temchara* (new women), who knew nothing about the Anabsero, replaced them. As a result of these mythical events a strict segregation, upon penalty of death, of women from religious knowledge was instituted. Parallel to this imposed

ignorance, the Chamacoco considered women neither intelligent nor trustworthy (Cordeu 1989 a: 47). The knowledge obtained through the initiatory ritual was the symbol that marked the separate fields of women and men. Indeed, until the initiation, similar taboos concerning food applied to both women and pre-initiatory men.[15]

Men carried on the initiation within the space of the *tobich*. *Tobich* designated both the space and the institution by which they effected the transmission of the *Esnwherta au oso*. An important component of the teachings in the *tobich* was the secrecy of the assassination of the Anabsero from strangers and women (Cordeu 1989; Susnik 1957 and 1969). All the males who passed the initiation composed this institution. The initiation signaled entrance into the first of four age ranks:

1) Weterak: Males while being initiated.

2) Nakerbitak: Single males already initiated.

3) Nakarap: Married initiated males.

---

[15]One of the biggest shortcomings of this work is the lack of attention to the role of women. The reason for this deficit is the lack of material to support any argument about this sector of the Chamacoco. Existing ethnographies give little attention to women, and I have just begun to realize my own gender bias, with the result that I lack information proceeding from my own fieldwork. I acknowledge that a thorough understanding of the Chamacoco history requires the completion of this missing aspect.

4) Ematak: Male elders.

As a play follows a script, the structure of the initiatory ritual paralelled the structure of the *Esnwherta au oso* in two senses. First, the ritual reenacted the events of the original instruction the Chamacoco received from the Anabsero. Second, the relation between the Weterak and the already initiated men reproduced the set of relations between the Chamacoco and Anabsero. For instance, during (and after) the initiation the Weterak worked with his *agalo*, an elder man. Apparently their relationship followed the pattern of competitiveness and of domination of the elder (the informed) over the younger (the ignorant) as in the myth between Anabsero and Chamacoco. Also, old men used to mediate in this relationship, taking the role of the Anabsero Wyaxo (Cordeu 1989e:174).

The relationship of *agalo* sanctioned exchanges between clans due to the fact that the *agalo* should be of different clans. Cordeu (1989d:123-125) mentions an aspect of these exchanges that demonstrates a correlation in the myth. The fact that the recipient of the gift endured the mockery of the giver reveals asymmetries of the original exchange between Chamacoco and Anabsero, since the latter gave the former the capacity to think rationally, knowledge of the forest, and techniques and instruments for survival. Cordeu insists that the bidirectionality of the exchanges should not drive us to suppose a principle of equality. On the contrary, the inequality consecrated by the gift would be an essential component of the Chamacoco ideology. The exchange "conceived not as much as a

relation between individuals[. . .]but rather as a preestablished relation between roles, one of which, the giver, is given primacy over the other" (1989d:124).

During the first part of his adult life, the individual reciprocated the teachings he received in the form of foods he was forbidden to consume (dietary taboos were extensive). Growing older, he received the first important return exchange: a woman to marry. This woman could be the daughter of his *agalo*,[16] or of any man of the *agalo's* clan. Progressively the individual acquired the status of Ematak and therefore the position of giver of knowledge and of women, and the receiver of food (1989d:222). Within the age ranks two lines of exchange existed: one ascendant from younger to elder, consisting of food; and one descendant from elder to younger, consisting of women and ritual services such as instruction during initiation (1989:50).

The set of oppositions expressed in the Anabsero's myth also influenced the political organization. There were two kinds of leaders, a strong headman and a weak one (Cordeu 1989a:55-6; Chase-Sardi 1987:29-39). Strong leaders were responsible for war (its contact with death gave them its character of strength), while weak leaders mediated conflicts within the group. These roles did not extend beyond their specific circumstances

---

[16]About the marriage there is no coincidence among the authors. Susnik (1969), following Baldus (1927), maintains that the preference in marriage was between mature men and young women, while the young men married mature women. Cordeu (1989) insists that the pattern was to seek equivalence in age. From my own inquiries among the villagers I tend to agree with Cordeu. For a thorough critique of Susnik's position see Cordeu (1987).

or provide the leaders with special access to resources, such as food or women.

Cordeu's (1989d:147-223) analysis of the links between the *Esmwherta au oso* and the social order demonstrates that the reproduction of the society followed the script of the myth. The Chamacoco had to replace the Anabsero just as younger generations replaced older ones. This process of replacement implied a series of positions and prerogatives for the elders, all of which a male could aspire to during the process of generational renovation. He received compensation for the hardship and inequalities (particularly regarding access to food) of the initial part of life in the final part.

We may say that the social order expressed through the *monexne* of the Anabsero (as the elders presented it) contained the promise of a reward for the inequalities within the Chamacoco society. As long as the social order was able to fulfil its promise the *monexne* of the Anabsero, as presented by the elders, worked as a well-established doxa. By contrast, when circumstances were unfavorable to such fulfilment (unavailability of resources for any reason) the intergenerational tension exploded in schisms, as the younger people escaped to form new groups. Scholars and Indigenous people agree that these schisms produced the different tribes that still exist among the Chamacoco.

It is noticeable that even after schism, partly produced by the inherent characteristics of the social order (Susnik 1981:178), the new groups organized themselves around the same set of beliefs, with small variations. The schisms demonstrate

that it was possible to oppose and dispute some interpretations (e.g., that of the elder), converting them into an orthodoxy. Conversely, the fact that new groups organized themselves around a heterodox understanding of the Anabsero myth shows that it constituted the doxa within which groups could think, express and practice 'the social'.

Summing up, we have seen that the *monexne* of the Anabsero constituted an important part of the discursive field within which the positions, relations and prerogatives of the members of the society were expressed. As a doxa, certain aspects 'went without saying', and these aspects made it a recurrent point of reference for organizing new social groups. The disputable aspects of the myth expressed its ideological character. Thus, while conditions were propitious, the interpretations of the elders were hegemonic. When conditions were unfavorable, opposing (or heterodox) interpretations had to arise, giving ideological support to schisms.

The next step will be to demonstrate how some initial reactions toward the permanent settlement of the Whites. This requires examination of an important factor operating from the end of the eighteenth century until one or two decades before the first White settlement around 1890. This factor is the influence that the Mbaya-Caduveo people had over the Ebitoso tribe of the Chamacoco.

The Caduveo Interlude

The Caduveo raided the Chamacoco, as well as other groups, to provide themselves with slaves. Their society was organized around three endogamous castes with different functions and hierarchies. The nobility was responsible for religious and political aspects; warriors secured territory and ensured payment of tribute by subjected peoples; and slaves were individuals captured or traded from other Indigenous groups (Metraux 1946; Boggiani 1895; Olberg 1948).

By 1801 the Ebitoso, after suffering constant raids, agreed to give the Caduveo approximately two hundred slaves (Baldus 1927: 18-19) and persuaded them to join in raiding other Chamacoco tribes. To provide slaves for the Caduveo, the Ebitoso started raiding the Tomaraho. From that point, war became a usual activity among the Ebitoso. Cordeu (1989a:70) hypothesized that this increased the social importance of the war headman to the detriment of other social roles, such as the weak headman, Emataks, and shamans. This hypothesis is consistent with aspects of the early contact with Whites that will be treated later.

The Ebitoso began to retain some of the slaves they captured. They gradually imitated the social model offered by the Caduveo, resulting in the formation of an incipient caste system (Boggiani 1900:123; Metraux 1946:308; Susnik 1969:17). Cordeu (1989a:70) pointed out two contradictory processes. The emergence of hierarchically ordered and endogamous castes implied a specialization of functions and a special kind of

exchange associated with it.[17] Conversely, the intertribal marriages[18] and the incorporation of the children of slaves and Ebitoso within the clan of the Ebitoso parent attested to the survival of the principles of exchange based in exogamous clans.

These contradictory processes resulted in a series of disequilibria: (a) among the clans it created an incipient demographic problem due to the 'unnatural' increase of some clans by incorporating slaves within them (Cordeu 1989a:71); (b) among the specialized roles, we already mentioned Cordeu's (1989a:70) hypothesis that the raids against the Tomaraho must have increased the importance of the war headman; (c) among the age ranks, I will argue that these processes must have jeopardized the usual means of transition in status from Weterak to Ematak. This was due to three reasons: the sealed character of castes meant a strong degree of social immobility; the marriage to a Tomaraho woman captured in a raid connoted a loosening of the younger's obligation to his elder *agalo*; and the availability of slaves to provide food loosened the elder's obligation to his younger *agalo*.

These disequilibria must have strongly impacted the already tense intergenerational relations. I think that the different way in which Tomaraho and Ebitoso faced White

---

[17]The type of exchanges typical of endogamous caste societies implies the circulation of goods and services, but not of women (Levi-Strauss 1969; Dumont 1980).

[18]The war headmen acquired the habit of marrying two or three women, while others remained monogamous (Chase-Sardi 1987:110).

settlement illustrates this. While the entire Tomaraho group retreated from contact with the Whites, the Ebitoso expressed different attitudes depending on their positions within society. The Ebitoso society was undergoing important changes that presupposed a reevaluation of its fundamentals, a testing of the promises made by the hegemonic ideology. The concordance between the model and the social reality was what the Ebitoso were trying to achieve by different means when the *dibkunaho* (Whites) arrived.

Dibkunaho Settlement

Although the Whites had known of the Chamacoco only since the end of the eighteenth century, the Chamacoco probably knew of the Whites well before. Contact between them was sporadic (Susnik 1981, 1969) until approximately 1880. At this time the Whites (first from Bolivia and later from Paraguay) "took effective possession of Puerto Tala's area" (Cordeu 1989a:73). On the Paraguayan side this was part of a process initiated in 1848 by President Carlos Antonio Lopez, aiming to enforce the sovereign rights that claimed the Paraguayan nation-state over lands actually controlled by Indigenous people. The process reached completion after the *Guerra de la Triple Alianza*[19], when Paraguayan president Bernardino Caballero passed two bills (in 1883 and 1885) confiscating for the state all lands remaining under Native control. At the same

[19]In this war (1864-1870) Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay fought together against the increasingly industrialized Paraguay, which threatened the former countries' political hegemony. The war virtually destroyed Paraguay to its foundations, and the interference and influence of the victorious party were immense until well into the twentieth century.

time, the government passed bills allowing it to sell land to private capitalists, particularly foreign investors (Susnik and Chase-Sardi 1995:245-248; Pastore 1972). Since then various labourers, cowboys, soldiers, missionaries, adventurers and even ex-convicts settled in the area. The Paraguayan state considered the Indigenous people an important economic element to achieve control in the Chaco area, over which the Bolivian state also claimed sovereign rights (Cordeu 1989a:73).

The settlers pursued extractive economic activities such as wild animal skins and feathers, and later wood and tannin. They obtained skins and feathers mainly on the basis of exchanges between White traders and tribal headmen. By contrast, the exploitation of the woods and the production of tannin required a more permanent labour force, which was thought to be available in the persons of the 'Indians'. However, the Chamacoco had accumulated significant wealth (such as cows and horses) in the decades prior to White settlement (Regehr 1983), through commerce with the Caduveo and other tribes, and raids of White ranches. Such wealthy 'Indians' were reluctant to engage in permanent jobs, as they could fulfill their needs without working for Paraguayans. Indigenous people usually undertook wage labour to obtain some specific item from the Whites. The permanence of Indigenous workers was a function of the time required to acquire the goods they desired (Susnik and Chase-Sardi 1995:251).

This situation pushed the settlers to use the army both as an explicit assertion of sovereignty (against Bolivian claims), and as a disciplinary institution over Indigenous

people. Paraguay and Bolivia created precedents of occupation in order to substantiate their claims for sovereignty (Rout 1970:9). Given the presence of Indigenous people and their control over these territories, initial occupations required the support of the army. The first Paraguayan settlement in Puerto Tala was an army fort. The army disciplinary function started by 'teaching' the Indigenous people that violent resistance to the changes brought by White settlement would provoke severe punishment. In 1905 a punitive expedition put an end to Chamacoco violent resistance (Susnik 1981:181). Until recently, the Paraguayan army performed this function whenever required by the economic interest of entrepreneurs (Susnik and Chase-Sardi 1995, Casaccia et al. 1986, Vysokolan 1992; Arens 1976, 1978; Maybury-Lewis and Howe 1980). With the connivance of the army the settlers robbed and destroyed the Indigenous peoples' property. Eventually, few alternatives remained other than to surrender to wage labour (Baldus 1927:30; Susnik and Chase-Sardi 1995:251-252).

After 1906 several ports for tannin shipment were constructed on the Paraguay River: Puerto Pinasco, Sastre, Maria, Palmas Chicas and Mihanovich, all located south of Puerto Tala. Between 1906 and 1915 factories, timberyards and railroads were constructed, and river navigation increased in intensity (Olmedo 1966). The new economic activities required workers with minimal skills, such as work discipline and the linguistic competence to understand orders and instructions. The missionaries fit these needs perfectly. Missions from different religious groups had previously entered the Chaco and, according to Belaieff (1946:371), "helped improve relations between estancieros, or

ranchers, and their Indian workers" (also see Herken Krauer 1984:60-3). At that time, there was a coincidence of interests among the three most important agents of the National Society: the State, the business sector, and the churches. Each had its own priorities and goals, but in pursuing them they found a functional coincidence of methods. Just as important, their goals did not contradict each other.

The goals and priorities of each agent may be summed up as follows: the State sought to secure its claims of sovereignty over the territory; the churches sought 'the salvation of those poor souls'; and the entrepreneurs sought profit from a cheap labour force and a resourceful environment, thereby integrating the region into the economic life of the modern Paraguayan nation. The army functioned as an assertion of sovereignty, but also helped to discipline the Native population. The missions, along with saving souls, instructed the Indians in the rudiments of language as well as in a work ethic that was beneficial for business (Belaieff 1946:371; Escobar 1989:13-16). Assaults and abuses by settlers, with the connivance of the army, pushed the Indigenous people to seek protection under the missionaries (Susnik and Chase-Sardi 1995:260-263). They remained under missionary 'protection', although legally they were under military control, until Stroessner's dictatorship ended in 1989 (Kidd 1994a:209-210). This general compatibility of interests would last until the 1970s, when a series of changes in national and international political arenas created the conditions for new interests to enter the scene.

In any case, as long as the coincidences lasted, the Chamacoco were under

extreme pressure to abandon their ancient way of life. Both the state and entrepreneurs contributed to this pressure, but the wheel that directed the intended changes was in the hands of the missionaries. Initially, for the state, the Indians were a problem of security. Later, as long as the business sector was able to lobby state decisions, the Indians became a population that could constitute the labour force required to develop new economic activities. Just recently the integration of Indigenous people as Paraguayan citizens became a state objective. For instance, since 1871, the state has passed bills that practically legalized the enslavement of the workers through the system of debt-bondage. Overseers enticed workers by offering them goods as payment for future work, thereby creating a debt to the company. The debtor had to work to pay his arrears, but meanwhile he had to eat, and the food and alcohol provided by the companies (Baldus 1927:30) further increased his debt. As a result, he never escaped from the trap. The bills established that a worker in debt to a company could not abandon his labor without the permit of the owner. "The worker who abandons his work without accomplishing this requirement [paying the debt] will be imprisoned and brought back to the company, if such is the owner's request. The expenditures of the whole transaction being charged to the account of the worker" (Susnik and Chase-Sardi 1995:249).

"Around the great industrial enterprises of tannin, that capital has created along the Paraguay River to exploit the rich and precious woods of the virgin forest, finally there arises an 'enterprise of souls' ready to pull away from the infernal claws so many savages submerged in ignorance and barbarism, in order to bring them to the light of faith, of

civilization, of Christendom." In this way Alarcon and Pittini (1924:85-86) describe the settlement of a Catholic mission 400 km north of Asuncion. From there the missionaries attempted to evangelize the Chamacoco. The observations of Alarcon and Pittini demonstrate the attitude of these missionaries toward the Chamacoco way of life. With the same attitude, the Protestant New Tribes Mission (NTM) settled in the Chamacoco community of Puerto Rosales around 1942. The NTM (linked to the Summer Institute of Linguistics) has been criticized (Hvalkof and Aaby 1981, Escobar 1989) for its intolerance of Indigenous beliefs, its intrusive and disruptive strategies of evangelization, and its suspected connections with American Intelligence Services and American investors. I will not discuss these accusations here. Nevertheless, this mission strongly influenced many Chamacoco, and helped propagate literacy among them. It achieved this by creating a Chamacoco script allowing the translation of the Bible into Chamacoco (the ultimate goal of the mission).

If we cannot speak of a genocide against the Chamacoco (as is the case of other Native groups in Paraguay), we can speak of an ethnocide. The combination of goals and methods (techniques) sustained by the more powerful agents of the National Society that settled in the area headed toward the extinction of the Chamacoco as a different society.

> "The Chamacoco are perhaps the tribe that have received most influence from civilization through commercial and industrial activities.[. . .]The Chamacoco have been always recognized as skilful workers in ranches, as cart drivers and as axe-men. In this Indian environment, far away from the centres of cultural irradiations, the habit of working has created the first rudimentary signs of evolution. This phenomenon[. . .]had its complement

> twelve years ago. Two self-sacrifying New Tribes evangelist missionaries started their evangelizing work. They did not limit their work to evangelization but they also became teachers, instructing children, young people and adults how to read and write.[. . .]This auspicious event is the ideal that should be accomplished in any process of transculturation of aborigines when these beings are incorporated into Paraguayan citizenship.[. . .]With the same characteristics as their brothers in Puerto Tala, the Chamacoco of Olimpo show a high degree of transculturation, and it would not be audacious to assert that, giving to the task an accelerated rhythm, in a short time just memories will be left of the fact that this region was at one time inhabited by Chamacoco Indians" (Olmedo 1966:38-39).

The person who wrote these lines in approximately 1966, J. A. Borgognon, was Director of the Paraguayan Department of Indian Affairs (part of the Defence Ministry). The paragraph is eloquent in relation to the conscious ethnocidal direction pursued by White agents and institutions, and the relation of the three agents: the entrepreneurs who benefit from the 'skilful workers'; the missionaries who 'civilize' in the process of evangelization; and the State, which praises and supports the former in its direction to leave only memories of the Chamacoco culture. However, to the disappointment of those hopeful civilizers, the Chamacoco have, to the extent possible, accommodated and resisted these pressures. They have changed, no doubt, but they are still there.

4. Facing the Contact

The Chamacoco response to the White presence has made itself felt since the end of the eighteenth century. Susnik (1969:30) mentions a punitive expedition sent by the commandant of Fort Borbon in 1799 to restrain Chamacoco raids in the area surrounding

the fort. These raids increased as more Whites arrived, and by 1905 the robbery of cattle and the attacks on ranches required an energetic answer. A well-organized repressive expedition was sent against the Chamacoco villages. The Chamacoco learned the hard way that open resistance to the new settlers was not a viable way to deal with Whites (Susnik 1981:181).

At the beginning of permanent contact the Chamacoco attitude toward the Whites oscillated between stealing and exchanging. Once they discarded violence, the importance of exchange in their relations with Whites grew. In combination with the economic pressure, as discussed in the previous section, the intensification of extractive activities by the Whites provided a new (and to some extent unavoidable) means of subsistence: wage labour.

The Whites inaugurated their definitive settlement with an exemplary display of force intended to teach the Chamacoco that open resistance to the new settlers' goals was not a viable strategy. Although I agree with Bourdieu (1991:51) that the reproduction of a unified discursive field (linguistic in his case) is achieved by the operation of symbolic violence,[20] the creation of such a field stems from overt violence. Symbolic violence could be established and effective only by referring the symbols to this inaugural violence. Once

---

[20]Bourdieu (1991:51) states that symbolic domination is not experienced consciously as constraint, nor as free adherence to values. It is closer to intimidation, a kind of violence that "is not aware of what it is" and therefore "can only be exerted on a person predisposed (in his habitus) to feel it, whereas others will ignore it."

open violent resistance was no longer an alternative, few others remained except avoidance of the contact, as among the Tomaraho (Cordeu 1990), or active accommodation to the new environment.

From our discussion so far we can assert with some degree of certainty that Chamacoco society experienced internal tension prior to White settlement. This tension expressed itself in the intergenerational relations that occasionally generated schisms in the group (Susnik 1969:12-13). However, even these tensions and schisms were part of the Chamacoco game, which had its own regularities, pace and discourses. First Caduveo influence, and then White settlement, transformed this game. Primarily affecting the more problematic relation of Chamacoco society (between younger and elder), the new conditions were read or interpreted differently by these groups, and generated different practices. While the elders tried to avoid contact, the younger people actively sought it.

In spite of the different readings of the situation and the diverse practices they propelled, these attitudes shared common ground in the Chamacoco discursive field. This section provides analysis of a series of narratives that illustrate this argument and illuminate the dimension of resistance in Chamacoco practices.

Learning the White Way

"The *Lekecito* [grandfather] says that in the past the Chamacoco had no

clothes, and they had long hair, they do not know rice, they eat honey, animals and fruits of the forest. They did not know to eat the food we eat today. Once there was a Paraguayan that knew where the Indians were. But the Indians ran every time they saw a Paraguayan. They did not know anything, they were like animals, wild. Then there was this boss that went where the Indians were. When he entered the forest the Chamacoco did not make anything to him, 'let's see what this person is going to do'. They do not understand Guarani or Spanish, nothing, just their language. Then, when the boss arrived there he spoke by signs. He said, 'Let's go to work, I have work for you. Why do you fear? Let's go out of the forest. Let's go to work. If you work with me I will give you clothes. I have a lot at my house'. The Paraguayan spoke by signs and they understood. The headman stood up and said 'Let's go with the Paraguayan to see what he does. Surely he wants to kill us. When we arrive where he wants us to go, do not put your weapons on the floor. We must be prepared'. Then they went to the Paraguayan's house. There were a lot of Paraguayans there. When the Indians arrived the Paraguayans went to welcome them. The Indians were scared because the Paraguayans were numerous. The boss called the Indians and gave a bag with food to each one, but the Indians did not know that kind of food it was. 'What is this? This must be poison. Do not eat that, these people want to kill us'. The boss then taught them how to cook rice, but they thought it was worms. They did not eat the rice. Then the boss gave them '*yerba mate*'[a kind of herbs for infusion] and *bombiya* [stroll] and said, 'pour water in it; in that way you will forget your house in the forest. If you do not drink this you are not going to forget your house in the forest. You will always remember it. When I am sad, I drink *terere* [mate drink with cold water]. That is why this vice is good for you; try a little'. Then the Indians tried *terere*. They tried and became accustomed to it. Then the boss called the Indians and said, 'now we are going to work.' He let an overseer teach the Indians to work. He also gave them clothes, but they did not use the clothes. The boss brought clothes to where the women stayed. He said, 'Change your clothes; this is nicer'. The women just used the *chiripa*[21]. He said them to take off their clothes (surely he wanted to see their cunts, jua, jua!!!). The Paraguayans taught them to use the axe. They taught how to cut trees, how to work. Then the boss killed a cow and roasted it and called the Indians to try it. He gave a little to taste it and they [the Chamacoco] liked it. When they ate it all, the boss gave them a cup to drink. 'Try this; if you drink you will laugh. It will make you feel happy' [the interpreter says that the beverage was *terere*, but later others said that it was alcohol]. Then the Indians learned to eat White food, cow

[21]A piece of material made out of *caraguata* fibre, used as a breech cloth.

> meat, farina [manioc flour], rice, *terere*. The headman told them not to eat any more food from the forest because the boss was worried that they would get sick. They respected the headman. They feared him. Then they became accustomed to White food. They liked it very much. Then they did not go to the forest for food any more. They worked and had White food to eat." (Blaser 1995).

This story overlaps in many aspects with my account of the goals and methods that the Whites pursued when they settled in the area. However, it is notable that the episode does not directly refer to the use of violence by the Whites. Susnik points out that if the Chamacoco knew of the killings at the beginning of the century, they displaced the events to the time of the ancient people to avoid punishment from their employers. "[T]he stories about the initial contact with the Whites have been silenced[. . .]consciously they do not remember more" (Susnik 1969:41). Although this story does not directly refer to violence, it does so implicitly by saying that 'the Indians run every time they see a Paraguayan'; by the headman's recommendation to prepare for aggression; and by the fear of being poisoned.

Overcoming fear and distrust, the Chamacoco decided to see what the Paraguayans had to offer. We know that the entrepreneurs were looking for cheap labour. We also know how, with the help of the army, the conditions were created to drive the Indigenous people in that direction. Now, through this story we can grasp another component of the method used by Whites in the process of unification: the initial gift of White goods. This places the story at the point of the process where the Chamacoco began to see the work as a good to be exchanged (Susnik 1969:41).

The headman played an important role in this process. According to Cordeu's hypothesis (1989a:70), the role of headman had increased in importance since the Caduveo influence. The story gives the leader a central place. Susnik (1969:44-45) states that the brave headmen (war leaders) were in charge of exchanges with the Whites. A series of conditions was conducive to this relevance of the headman. For example, the headmen were able to offer the Whites the labour force of the captive Tomaraho. As Susnik (1969:86) noted, this was a continuation of the strategy followed with the Caduveo. They offered male and particularly female captives as *criados*,[22] which symbolized a relation of *ymesur*[23] between the *polota* (war-headmen) and the Whites. The *polota* received White goods in exchange for the work his 'sons' and 'daughters' performed for the White 'father.' Apparently the war headmen were in a better position to proceed with this exchange, as they had more captives than anyone. Also, due to the prestigious position that the war-headmen occupied, they were able to persuade and/or intimidate (the Chamacoco respected and feared the headmen) their people to work for the Whites. Once the group completed the work, the headmen received a payment of semi-durable and consumable goods that they distributed among the people.

Through these initial exchanges, the headmen became privileged interlocutors for

---

[22]The term *criado* refers to a person that is both a servant and an adopted relative. The *criado* was supposed to be raised, in the sense of being educated, instructed, and fed.

[23]This term applied to the men who took a fatherless child into his own clan. The White 'father' and the Chamacoco 'father' of the captive shared the title.

the settlers. The nature of this relationship between Whites and headmen had important consequences. It drastically transformed the form, content, and direction of the exchanges. The typical circuits of exchanges before the Caduveo influence[24] were internal (within the Chamacocogroup)[25]. Now the exchanges became external, initially between a group member (the headman) and an outsider (the White boss). The content of the exchanges also underwent transformation. Prior to the Caduveo and White influence the exchanges were primarily of food for women, later they were of White goods for services provided by *criados* or common Chamacoco.[26] Age ranks previously determined the direction of the exchanges (i.e., younger people gave food to elders, who in turn gave them women) and occurred across clans. Now, the headman exchanged the services of his people (either captive Tomaraho or common Ebitoso) for manufactured products from the White boss, and later redistributed these products. The headman's prominent position determined the direction of the exchanges, and clans ceased to have a role in determining who should

---

[24]No specific information exists on the transformations produced in the area of exchanges during the Caduveo influence. However, beyond the disequilibrium produced in this area, the stronger tendency was to maintain the previous system of exchanges based on clans and age ranks (Cordeu 1989a:70).

[25]I am not implying that exchanges with other groups did not previously exist, but my distinction points towards the far-reaching effects of this new external exchange upon the exchanges internal to the Chamacoco.

[26]Besides the case of common Chamacoco working (under pressure or by conviction) for the Whites, the exchanges in which women participated (even if they were *criadas*) represent a continuity with the old contents of exchanges. However the object of exchange, when involving captives, was the service (sexual or otherwise) and not the person him or herself. The evidence is that the Chamacoco 'father' received payments (gifts from the *criado*) on the basis of work done (Susnik 1969:86) and not in the transference of the captive person.

conduct exchanges. When the exchanges involved *criados*' services, the manufactured products went from the White boss to the captive and then to the Chamacoco father, ensuring that the product of the exchanges remained within the clan.

This situation did not last long. The very characteristics of the process limited the rising power of the headman. The *criados* soon learned that they could remain with their White 'fathers' and escape their obligation to their Chamacoco 'father'[27] (Susnik 1969:84). The presumable abuses of the headman, plus the egalitarian tendencies of the society implied in the refusal to concede privileges of access to resources on the basis of specialized roles (Susnik 1969:93-97) compelled the common Chamacoco to seek individually arranged work relationships with the new White 'master.' This brought on a crisis of the headmanship and, with the disappearance of this redistributive figure, the acquisition, circulation and consumption of goods further centered around the nuclear family (Susnik 1969:45, 84).

All these changes were happening simultaneously with a change in the subsistence base of Chamacoco society. As long as working for the Whites was the central subsistence base for the Chamacoco, the younger generation's appetite for new things grew. Consequently, they were more prone to imitate the Whites, particularly the mixed-blood

---

[27]However the offspring of *criadas* and Whites, and generally all new mixed-blood, kept integrating the clan of the Chamacoco 'father,' adding more pressure to the demographic disequilibrium between clans that began with the Caduveo influence.

individuals who joined their White 'fathers' (Susnik 1969:49). The progressive dependence of the Chamacoco on market goods, the new spaces of circulation of goods, the social, cultural and religious imbalances produced by the increasing number of mixed-bloods and the lack of clear leadership were some of the initial problems the Chamacoco faced a few decades after White settlement in the area. In addition to these problems, we will see in the next section how the centrifugal effects of the tensions between generations produced different reactions among younger and older Chamacoco. Unlike the elders, who avoided contact, the younger Chamacoco displayed a new disposition aspiring to equal the Whites. "They rejected keeping the secret about the Anabsero[. . .]and justified themselves by saying: 'It was not the Whites who entered among us' but 'we entered among them to learn things'" (Susnik 1969:50). This last sentence is important because its link with Majito's tale establishes the extent of this attitude within the Chamacoco discursive field. Let us see how the Ematak read and reacted to the new situation.

The Way the Elders Tell the History

> "This is the way our elders tell us our history. It is not like that of the Whites because we do not write it on paper. My father's father told it to him and he told it to me and me to my children. In that way we know our history.
>
> In the old times we did not have diseases. People died because of snake bites or because they were too old. When one was too old, you asked your son to make a hole and to put you inside.' 'I am too old, I cannot see or chew, leave me to die now', said the old men.

An old man died and the son's friend dug a hole to bury him[28]. Then the son of the dead man did not share his food with the person who made the hole. Then he said 'it seems that I buried an animal. His son does not remember that I buried his father.'

The daughter of the dead man heard this and she cried. When her brother came back she told him, 'the guy who buried our father is naming him, he called him an animal'.[29] The son of the dead man was very angry and sad and decided to kill the other man. Then everybody moved to another village and the son remained hidden, waiting for the other man. When he arrived, the son killed him. Then he was afraid of the revenge from the family of the other man and he escaped with his friends and family toward the river.

One day, they heard a sound like rain, brooom!! And they saw two people. They were scared. They did not know what kind of beings were those. They went back to the village and sent somebody to look for the other group. Later they decided to send four warriors to see what that noise was. They painted themselves in yellow (which signifies a visit), and they went without weapons. When they arrived near where the soldiers were camping, they do not know they were soldiers. They showed their hands to indicate that they were not looking for a fight. The soldiers pointed their guns towards them, but one said, 'do not shoot. They look like people'.

They did not understand each other except by signs, but the soldiers brought them to the commandant. He ordered the soldiers to give them clothes and food, but they did not want to eat because they did not know that food. Then the commandant brought a Chamacoco woman who used to live in Brazil[30]. Then the commandant told them to stay there with the soldiers, who would give the Indians food and clothes and axes. When the boat coming from Asuncion arrived, the commandant gave the Indians food, mosquito net, blankets and clothes. Then the Indians went to look for the remaining people and they stayed for two months with the

---

[28]The interpreter indicates that when one helps somebody bury a relative, one becomes his brother.

[29]The interpreter indicates that when somebody dies, no one can pronounce his or her name. Metraux (1946:333) also mentions this custom.

[30]Probably a slave of the Caduveo.

> Paraguayans. Then they began to die because of a disease. Then they did not want to be near the Whites. In the old times we were a lot of people and then the disease came, maybe smallpox, and many died" (Blaser 1994c)

As in the previous story, the Chamacoco's initial reaction towards the Paraguayans is fear mixed with curiosity. In both cases food and goods brought by the Whites play an important role. Finally, both stories portray a change of the world connected with contact with the Whites. However, the way in which each story evaluates the result of the contact, and the subsequent attitudes towards Whites, is different. In one case the result was disease and death, and the attitude was to avoid the Whites. In the other, the result was a change in the way of life, and the attitude was to learn the new ways.

The attitude of the younger people, "who looked for a quick accommodation, an adaptation to the new environment that promised them 'free food' and 'having things'" (Susnik 1969:47), fuelled a millenarian movement. An Ematak called for a return to the forest under the protection of grandfather Xoxyt (Susnik 1969:47-49; Cordeu 1989a:76). What information exists about this movement comes from Susnik (1969), who merely mentions the call of the Ematak during a smallpox epidemic. The call failed because the younger generations, already accustomed to the new environment, refused to hear the elders.[31] This is symbolic of the profoundly divergent ways that elders and younger Chamacoco adopted while facing the Whites. As Burridge (1969:30) has noted, for the

---

[31]Susnik (1969:48) also mentions an Ematak who opposed the movement. However, this elder knew the White world well, which makes a difference, because a characteristic the younger generations attribute to the elders since the contact is their ignorance about the new environment.

millenarian prophet "to communicate, be accepted and recognized, he has to say and do things which are familiar and intelligible to his audience."

Scholars generally agree that millenarian movements are an answer to critical circumstances of dividing, dislocative social changes (Ossio 1973; Burridge 1969),[32] which create dissatisfaction with the social order (Worsley 1968:243), a "profound ambivalence between two competing sets of relationships and values" (Stern 1982:67-79), or a feeling of deprivation (Thrupp 1970). Whichever description applies to the Chamacoco situation (all are appropriate to some extent), it is important to understand why this movement was unsuccessful among the younger generation. The concept of 'relative deprivation' is useful here: "relative deprivation is defined as a negative discrepancy between legitimate expectations and actuality" (Aberle 1970: 209).

Because of changes in the way of life, starting with the influence of the Caduveo, it was difficult to fulfill the promises of compensation implicit in the *Esnwherta au oso*. The headmen benefited from their privileged relationship with the Whites (while it lasted), and the younger people (captive Tomaharo or Ebitoso) found new channels to satisfy their needs and wishes without waiting until old age. The elders, who had paid their tribute of respect and food during their youth, must have expected to fulfill the legitimate expectations of any elder within the Chamacoco discursive field. However, the social,

---

[32]For analysis of a millenarian movement in the Chaco area see Miller (1980:83-97) and Spadafora (1994).

economic and cultural conditions had changed to the extent that they prevented the fulfillment of such expectations. The movement represents the last attempt by the elders to adjust reality to the Chamacoco discursive field as they understood it. The story of the contact presented in this section was, as much as the return to Xoxyt, within this ideology[33].

In the story, a past state in which disease did not exist dramatically changes. This relates to the advent of strangers, but also to the rupture of sociocultural rules and the chain of revenges it created. It echoes the original transformation of the world during the Anabsero's times. The first broken rule is that of sharing food among *agalo*. Some versions of the Anabsero myth allude to this to explain why Wakaka killed Cyr's son and inaugurated the Chamacoco revenge. Food plays an important role: at the initial rupture of the social order; at the initial contact with the Whites when the commandants offer food that the Chamacoco avoid eating; and among the gifts presented by the soldiers before the Chamacoco start to die. We must remember that one of the outstanding aspects of the *Esnwherta au oso* is the regulation of food consumption through the taboos specific to age rank and sex.

As a result of the rupture of social rules, the Chamacoco meet the Whites. This episode highlights the Chamacoco fear of the Whites, in spite of which they decided to

---

[33]Indeed the *monexne* involving Xoxyt is recognized as part of the Anabsero's cycle (Wilber and Simoneau 1987:274).

find out what 'beings were those'. This attitude parallels that of the Chamacoco facing the Anabsero, where in spite of their fear they also felt attracted to the potential benefits the relation with the unknown could bring.

Examining the story of the contact and the millenarian movement under the light of the Anabsero myth (as the elders understood it), we can see that failing the Ematak (also the Nakarap) in their attempt to retreat from the contact, the episode must have represented for them the end of the world. Disease and death were the curse of Nemur come true.

The younger generations had a different reading and attitude towards the situation. The next section describes a series of narratives known as *los cuentos de Majito* (Majito's tales)[34] which demonstrate how this attitude differed from that of the elders.

Majito's Tales

The Majito's tales, which I collected in fieldwork (Blaser 1995) involve approximately twenty episodes, of which I have chosen to present those that demonstrate turning points in the series. These episodes inaugurate a pattern that succeeding episodes follow until another turning point appears, initiating a new pattern. It is impossible to

---

[34]The use of the word *cuento* to refer to these stories signals the relative contemporaneousness of these stories as compared to the *monexne*.

exhaust the potential for multiple readings of these *cuentos*. Instead, this section focuses on those aspects that are relevant to the discussion. Majito's tales are especially suitable for my argument. They reflect tensions between generations and the effects of the new conditions on these tensions, the roots of the younger people's attitudes in the Chamacoco discursive field, and the critical side of their adherence to the Global Society. The following is a synopsis of the selected episodes; the complete transcription appears in Appendix I.

The series of episodes that compose Majito's tales began during his childhood. They can be divided into two groups: episodes that occur within the space of the Chamacoco world (without the presence of Whites), and episodes in which the setting involves the White world.

While living with his people, Majito upset his uncle by improper behaviour, such as having sexual intercourse with holes in the mud or behaving towards cut pieces of palm tree as if they were his wives. In each episode he runs into the forest after being severely punished by his uncle.

In the next episode Majito makes love to a group of five girls, who do not like him, while they are sleeping. He teases them by exchanging their panties with each other. The girls take revenge on him by making him fall in a trap they had prepared. Majito also makes his sisters fight, and is punished by his uncle, whereupon he again runs into the

forest.

Finally, Majito has intercourse with his newly widowed sister-in-law by tricking her. He also has sex with the wives of his *agalos*, cheating everybody and making them fight. The episodes in the village end with Majito running towards the White world.

The second set of stories invariably begins with Majito looking for a job. In the first, he miscarries a job because he does not understand the instructions. Another series follows this episode that repeats the same pattern with different jobs. For example, Majito milks a bull and washes his dirty socks in the soup the boss is preparing.

In the next turning point, Majito purposely miscarries his job. He tricks the boss by convincing him that a herd of pigs is sinking into the soil. In the following episodes Majito intentionally ruins the food of the boss and feeds four tigers with the boss' oxen.

In the third series the Majito's tricks become precise and directed to obtain concrete benefit. He cheats the boss in order to have sex with his daughters. In a departure from previous episodes, Majito not only runs from the boss' anger but finally kills him. In subsequent episodes, Majito kills a cook, sells a horse to a Paraguayan by convincing him that the animal excretes coins instead of feces, and receives a beautiful horse in exchange for his own feces.

Finally, Majito faces the boss, who has decided to punish his trickery. Majito seemingly complies with the boss' intentions. However, he reverses the situation, saves his life, kills the boss and his wife and marries the boss' daughter, thereby becoming the new boss.

Majito's tales display two levels of meaning. One reveals its links with the Anabsero's myth due to their homologous narrative structures, and the other illuminates the new conditions brought about by White settlement.

Let us begin with the homologous narrative structures. Cordeu (1989d:133-6) made a series of observations about the Anabsero's myth that will be useful to highlight the parallelism between both narratives:

- Anabsero and Chamacoco are contraries, opposed to each other despite whatever positive links exist between them. Whites and Chamacoco also have conflicting interests and goals.

- The schema of the myth exposes the process by which the Chamacoco incorporated the pattern of social relationships and the attitudes characteristic of the Anabsero. Majito does the same in relation to the Whites: he learns the necessary skills to operate successfully in the new environment, although he uses these skills heterodoxically.

- Cordeu (1989d:135-136) divides the Anabsero's myth into three periods:

  (a) Initial conciliation: during which the Anabsero and Chamacoco reach equilibrium in virtue of the Chamacoco's acquisition of knowledge. When the Chamacoco meet the Anabsero, they are ignorant, and it is by learning from the Anabsero that they reach this equilibrium. The second set of episodes matches this, by showing how Majito moves from ignorance (first episode), to acquisition of knowledge (second), but still is not able to defeat the Whites, as he has to run after his trickery.

  (b) Chamacoco's rebellion and annihilation of Anabsero: starts when the Wakaka punish the son of Cyr because of the rupture of Anabsero's rules. In revenge the Chamacoco destroy the Anabsero. The sequence shows the Chamacoco breaking the rules imposed by the Anabsero, the Anabsero punishing the Chamacoco, and the Chamacoco getting rid of the Anabsero. In the third episode Majito breaks an implicit rule, he takes the women of the White boss (the unwritten rule states that Whites take Chamacoco women, not the other way around!). The boss attempts to punish Majito, and Majito kills him.

  (c) Definitive conciliation: corresponds to the establishment of the ancient

Chamacoco social order after the killings of the Anabsero. This order implied the replacement and imitation of Anabsero by Chamacoco. This is basically what Majito does in relation to the boss he has killed.

Let us turn toward the another level of meaning. The tales exemplifies the new conditions brought by the Whites from three angles: how they affected intergenerational tensions in Chamacoco society; how the younger generations faced them; and how the younger generations evaluated their position in the new social order.

Regarding intergenerational tension, what does Majito represent? He is a troublemaker, but a special one who leaves no order unchallenged, either natural or social. In the first group of episodes, Majito crosses the frontier between natural and social when he behaves towards the inanimate as if it were human. He also disregards social prescriptions on deflowering and courtship (Susnik 1969:159; Cordeu 1989a:51-54; Chase-Sardi 1987:110) when he has sex with the young women without their consent. He disrupts the harmony that must prevail among sisters and brothers (Susnik 1969:179-181). Again he disregards social rules and almost commits an incest when he has sex with his sister-in-law (Susnik 1969:185); and finally he disrupts the social peace by making wives and husbands fight. Each time, his uncle punishes him in an attempt to make him behave properly. This, according to Susnik (1969 Ibid:181), was the attitude expected from the patrilineal uncle in ancient Chamacoco society.

Once Majito establishes himself as a rebel and a socially maladjusted individual, he runs towards the White world. This escape discloses the availability of a new space where the discontent individual can go. Stories involving the rupture of social order, usually by younger people, and their subsequent escape from punishment, explained the existence of different tribes among the Chamacoco. However, these new tribes repeated the original social order (with small variations imputable to internal process within each tribe), and therefore the Anabsero's myth continued to constitute the dominant discourse on social order. This mechanism, of 'breaking social order/schism/creation of new social order on the model of the original', changes dramatically when Whites settle permanently in the Chamacoco area. In fact, it started to function in a new set of conditions when the Caduveo influence was felt.[35] Under the new circumstances the tension between generations found radically different conditions to express. Young people who rebelled against the Ematak's rules had no need to escape to form a new tribe, as they had a place with the Whites.

The second set of episodes follows a path, from ignorance of White ways to a thorough knowledge, which allows Majito to imitate and replace them. In the first episode Majito's ignorance results in the miscarriage of the job. Subsequently, he still miscarries jobs, but purposely; he gains no benefit beyond fun. This and the episodes that follow

---

[35]I do not advocate a theory of social change based on solely external factors. It must consider both external and internal factors. However, even when the Chamacoco society changed at its own pace and due to more internal factors, the Caduveo influence and White settlement imposed a rhythm and a direction to this change that had no precedent.

account for Majito's testing of his own capabilities to outsmart the Whites. Once Majito feels confident, he directs his tricks toward the acquisition of what he considers valuable, such as the more inaccessible (from the Chamacoco point of view) of the Whites' goods: their women. He achieves these, and in addition rids himself of the possible source of punishment, by killing the boss. Finally, when the boss attempts to re-establish the 'proper' order, Majito kills him and occupies his position. After learning how to operate in the new environment, Majito was able to outsmart and replace his (unwilling) teachers.

I will argue that learning how to operate in the new environment created by White settlement implies a disposition to accept the new power-system. For instance, Majito does not attack the basis of the power-system (the hierarchies based on the possession of ranches, cows, horses, women, etc.); by contrast, he learns a heterodox way to obtain those things, consequently improving his position in the hierarchy. In the end, Majito is the boss. This learning brings us back to the Anabsero's myth. Cordeu (1989d:120) states that "all its narrative texture can be focused from the point of view of the description of the progressive acquisition by the men of the qualities and basic capacities of the gods." In Majito's tales, the narration focuses on the Chamacoco's progressive acquisition of the capacities needed to operate favorably in the new environment created by White settlement.

However, the inversion of hierarchies implicit in the tales is a veiled criticism of the actual conditions of domination of Whites over Chamacoco. In this sense, although the

process of learning those basic capacities implied an acceptance of the legitimacy of the power system, the heterodox practices exemplified in the tales illuminates the oppositional attitude (in Chamber's sense) that the younger *Chamacoco* adopted toward the Whites. Scott (1990:162) points out that trickster's tales[36] are the more illustrative cases of "cultural resistance of subordinated groups", and relates the "great deal of violence and aggression" that these tales contain, with "severely punitive situations" (Scott 1990:163). In this sense, Majito's tales provide indirect evidence of the repressive conditions to which Indigenous people, particularly those working for the Whites, were subjected. When circumstance in the discursive field permit, the criticism implicit in Majito's tales will find more direct ways to reach the public transcript in the form of political agendas.

To sum up, elders and younger people adopted different attitudes and practices towards White settlement. Once open violent resistance was no longer viable, the elders resisted by linking discursive contact with disease, and by developing a millenarian

---

[36]Although the use of the term 'trickster' applied to cross-cultural analysis has been criticized (Beidelman 1980), I coincide with Babcock (1975) that, viewed as a liminal figure, the trickster presents remarkable similarities across cultures. Many of Majito's features qualify him as a trickster (Babcock 1975: 159-160), either in the sense of a selfish buffoon or culture hero (Carroll 1984). The events of singular episodes (particularly in the Indigenous village) resemble oral tricksters' stories from North and South American societies (see Radin 1972, and Metraux 1946) as well as African societies (Konrad 1994, Evans-Pritchard 1967). In those stories, the trickster deceives or is deceived by actions directed to satiate his appetites. Focusing on the actions of the character as a biographical narrative (Basso 1987), the image is that of a social bandit (Hobsbawm 1965), clever hero (Klapp 1954) or *picaro* (Babcock 1978:94-116) who attempts to invert the social order or to climb its hierarchies. Majito's tales are exceptionally suited to the analysis of aspects of "sociological changes such as the rise of individualism, expansionism, materialism, and secularism" (Johansen 1994:8). They deserve attention exceeding the objectives of this work.

movement. The younger generations, as Majito's tales reveal, accommodated to the new environment while trying to improve their position in relation to the Whites. The resistance of the elders and the opposing discourses implied by Majito's tales are what Scott (1985:xvi) calls "ordinary weapons of relatively powerless groups."

Although the attitudes of elders and younger people differed, a link existed in their common discursive ground. Majito's tales were to the new situation what the Anabsero's myth was to the pre-White (and maybe Caduveo) situation.[37] As did the ancient Chamacoco in relation to the Anabsero, younger people engaged in learning the necessary skills to operate in the new environment. The Anabsero myth implies this disposition towards the new conditions, supporting the hypothesis that, with the elders, the younger generation's answer to White settlement was within the logic of the Chamacoco discursive field. The Chamacoco addressed the new situation, discursively and in practice, within the rationality of their own game: the elders by turning to Xoxyt; the younger generation by adopting towards the Whites the same attitude as ancient Chamacoco had towards the Anabsero.

5. Conclusions to Part Two

---

[37]The correlation between sets of narratives is not perfect. This is not surprising, since it would imply a rigidity of the symbolic system that appears suspicious in light of current studies on semiotics (see Leeds-Horwitz 1993; O'Sullivan et al. 1983). However, I hope to have shown enough of a correlation to sustain my point.

We have seen in this Part that the Chamacoco social order prior to White settlement comprised a tension between generations that occasionally favored schism. This tension found new conditions to express when Whites settled in the area. Elders and younger people generated divergent interpretations and practices to deal with the new environment. However, these divergent attitudes were within their shared discursive field. Each group stressed different interpretations of this discursive field. The elders paid special attention to the repressive (punitive) and prescriptive aspects of the *Esnwherta au oso*, which favored the ancient status quo; the younger people stressed those aspects that provided a model to deal with the unknown.

This divergence of attitudes based on the same discursive field, and its consequences, brings into focus three related aspects of this field. First, it reveals the aspect of struggle of any discursive field, even those associated with relatively egalitarian societies (thus the ever-present conditions for transformation). Secondly, it reveals the ever-changing quality of the field. As Sahlins (1981:67-68) has argued for the Hawaiian case, it is difficult to maintain that reproduction and transformation are truly distinct. By focusing on reproduction, we will see that practical actions are taken on the basis of 'given concepts'. For example, Majito's attitude (symbolizing the younger generations) towards the Whites follows the model of the Anabsero's myth. Conversely, focusing on transformation, we will see that "the specificity of practical circumstances [. . .] sediment new functional values on old categories" (Sahlins 1981:68). For example, traditional attitudes of learning from strangers brought the incorporation of different contents than

those associated with the Anabsero's myth. Paraphrasing Sahlins, the Chamacoco "incorporated braches of the *Esnwherta au oso* by the logic of the *Esnwherta au oso.*"

The Chamacoco enacted their internal tensions under new conditions while these conditions were discursively expressed within the Chamacoco discursive field. This brings us to the third aspect of the discursive field: its structuring force in that it creates regularities in the way individuals think and act. To use Bourdieu's concept, the discursive field creates a discursive habitus. The habitus and the Chamacoco discursive field that produced it were correlated, so that an individual could operate in that environment with ease. When exercising this habitus under new conditions, the individuals had to explore new correlations of it with the discursive field. Thus we can say of the younger generation of Chamacoco what Burridge (1969:32) said about the prophets: "the attempt to rediscover and remould traditional sources of authority and power[. . .]by digging new channels for tradition, also allows the new to flow in." Majito's tales will be an expression of such 'digging new channels for tradition.' The 'new' will be that the Chamacoco engaged in a chain of change that, conjoining social, economic and symbolic effects of White settlement, translated into rejection of the ancient way of life (at least in public discourse).[38]

This engagement of the Chamacoco in a chain of change, which ultimately drew

---

[38]This public discourse will be displayed in both situations when involving Whites and Chamacoco audiences.

them into integration with the World System, resulted from a combination of initial violence and progressive dependence on White goods for subsistence. The violent aspects of this process of unification were silenced, at least in the public space. New generations were born into a world that was ready to be reproduced by symbolic violence. The only alternative remaining in the new order (working for the Whites) appeared as a free choice, and thus as a normal order of things. Although it is unlikely that the Whites created this situation consciously, they understood the importance of creating the need for White goods in the Indigenous people, to tie them to the work discipline.[39] This is clear in the first story, when the boss introduces the *terere*, along with other White goods, to make the Chamacoco forget their house in the forest.

When Nemur's promised extermination did not occur, the elders interpretation of the Anabsero's myth lost credibility. Then, forty years ago, the *Chamacoco* decided to abandon the initiatory ritual. Thus, the the ritual knowledge was no longer transmitted; the secret about the *Anabsero*s was disregarded; the women stopped to fear the punishment of the *Anabsero* beginning to name them openly;[40] and the *monexne* became scattered stories that few young people knew how they were related. Organization by age ranks, with its associated obligations and prerogatives, lost importance until it disappeared. With the

---

[39]This picture of free choice, combined with silence about initial contacts with the Whites, created an ideology in the Marxist sense that was central when the younger generations began to criticize the ancient way of life.

[40]Susnik (1969:50) mention that the women stopped faking they did not know the *Anabsero* were personified by the men during the ceremonies.

general demerit of old things, the elders suffered from the disrespect of younger generations.[41] Even the distribution of the village space changed: the square pattern of Spanish towns replaced the semicircular village; the central *xara* and the *tobich* disappeared [42] (Susnik 1969; Cordeu 1989).

The younger generations embraced a way of life that connoted, "instead of hunting, the work for profit; instead of the strict dietary taboo, the ingestion of anything they wanted; instead of prestige by clan affiliation, the prestige by having things; instead of the open challenge of strength, knowledge and magic, the silent, speculative, treacherous attitude" (Susnik 1969:50). The abandonment of the initiatory ritual marks the entrance into the unified discursive field's hidden transcript of what had previously composed the Chamacoco discursive field.

The Chamacoco discursive field provided a referential framework to cope with initial contact (Majito's tales and millenarian movements have roots in the old discursive field). However, the consequence of its conjunction with new conditions was that the younger people relied, for their social practices, on a new referential framework. Paraphrasing Marx (1970:21), the material conditions for new ways of thinking matured in the womb of the old discursive field.

---

[41]Susnik and Cordeu note this as a chronic complaint of the elders during their fieldwork.

[42]Susnik (1969) provides an extensive discussion of the massive changes she observed between both periods of her fieldwork (1955, 1968).

PART THREE: HEGEMONY AND COUNTER-HEGEMONY IN THE UNIFIED DISCURSIVE FIELD

The analogy of tides is appropriate for what happened once the Chamacoco were included in a unified discursive field. Imagine the Chamacoco discursive field as a beach covered by successive discursive tides. Each time these tides rise the Chamacoco discursive field is at the bottom; therefore we cannot see directly what is happening. When the tides recede new sediments remain, but some have also disappeared.

What we see directly is part of what Scott (1990:2 fn.1) calls a public transcript. That which is not directly visible constitutes the hidden transcript. This transcript exhibits three important features. It is "elaborated among a restricted public that excludes[. . .]certain specified others"; "it does not contain only speech acts but a whole range of practices," including millenarian movements and tricksters' tales; and "the frontier between the public and the hidden transcripts is a zone of constant struggle between dominant and subordinate" (Scott 1990:14). The extent to which dominant groups are able to define the limits of the public transcript is a measure of their power.

This point begs the question of how various moments in the discursive field (different arrays of power positions) produce different limits for what is public or hidden. I will discuss in this Part how, for a long time, the degree of coincidence among the dominant society's agents and institutions strongly influenced the limits of the public

transcript. In connection with this we will see how these changing arrays of power positions settled the threshold for what passed from the hidden transcript to the public.

Foucault's notion of 'episteme' (1991:55-57) may be helpful to understand this. Schematically, the episteme consists of several discursive formations and the relations among them. For example, within the episteme of the late nineteenth century in Paraguay we can distinguish a tentative list of discursive formations: scientific discourse, religious discourse, economic discourse, etc.[43] Each stands in a relative position of power depending on the period, but in relation to the Chamacoco discursive field the entire set of discursive formations stands in a dominant position. In addition, as long as different agents and institutions coincided in aspects of their discourses about Indigenous people, such coincidence had a hegemonic effect. It provided direction for the entire situation (and therefore defined the limits of the public and hidden transcripts).

---

[43]Foucault's concept of episteme implies narrower categories than my own. In his example (Foucault 1991:57) two discursive formations (biology and grammar) are distinguished within one of my categories (i.e., the scientific discourse). I adapted the concept to the conditions under study. Such a distinction of discursive formations is useful when studying the transformations within western society. It is less so when studying the process of transformations triggered by the contact. The results of an epistemic redistribution at the level presented by Foucault was relevant to the Chamacoco just as a final product, not as a process. Suppose a change in the diagram of hierarchy, as biology takes over grammar. The scientific discourse spoken would express the effects of this change in a unified discursive field (involving Whites and Indigenous people). However, until recently, the distinction between scientific discourses was irrelevant to Indigenous people, since they used it only superficially (except for professional or amateur ethnographers, the same can be said of most Whites in contact with them). By contrast, a change of the diagram of hierarchy among the wide categories I propose as discursive formations had important consequences for this unified discursive field. The position vis-à-vis each other will influence the Native accommodation and use of other discourses.

As an effect of the hegemonic situation, certain elements that constituted the dominant group's doxa became part of the new sediments in the Chamacoco discursive field. However, hegemony only operates with the support of coercion. The imposed character of these sediments is clear in a situation of dominance, where "the cultural translation [was] all one-way, and the penalty to the subordinated group for not adapting to the demands of the dominant group [was] to cease to exist" (Murray 1991:6). Because the Chamacoco were constrained to operate in a field in which their own discourses were at the bottom of the hierarchies, in the public transcript they showed a high degree of compliance. Paraphrasing Bakhtin (1971:187), 'the Chamacoco's everyday speech became full of other people's words: with some of them their voice was completely merged, and they forgot whose words they were; they used others that have authority, in their view, to substantiate their own words; and in yet others they implanted their different, even antagonistic intentions" (Bakhtin 1971:187).

6. The Hegemonic Coincidence

As we have seen in Part Two, different agents of the National Society displayed a kind of functional coincidence regarding their policies toward Indigenous people, based on a general understanding of the 'Indian problem.' Of course, there were fights, contradictions and disagreements. In the Paraguayan case, disagreements occurred between missionaries and businessmen regarding the payment of Indigenous people's

wages in alcohol. Also, since the time of de Las Casas, missionaries and humanists have criticized the hyper-exploitation of Indigenous people. However, beyond these discrepancies, all who had power to influence policies toward the Indians shared an understanding that, in spite of the negative effects, there was no better alternative than to transform the Indians into civilized persons. The Anglican missionary Barbrooke Grubb (1993:187) expressed this idea:

> "We all know that the sudden changes from one social and religious state to other produce bad consequences but, without doubt, no reasonable men would ever assert that keeping a people in ignorance and [spiritual] enslavement is better than to allow them to attempt to reach a superior and more dignified life, just because in the transition can occur irregularities and disorders."

This understanding permeated the official policy of the Paraguayan state as well as the semi-official policies of private persons and institutions involved in the field of *indigenismo*. We can say about Paraguay's *indigenismo* what Cardoso de Oliveira (1990:151) has about Brazilian *indigenismo*, that "it was a long and annoying monologue: the White men's knowledge, anthropological or not, was sufficient in itself." In Paraguay, this monologue was mainly expressed in Christian terms. This was because the missionaries actually carried out the policies of 'civilising' the Indians (Escobar 1989:10; Kidd 1994a:209-210).

Among the consequences of this hegemonic coincidence was the progressive imposition of limits on the public transcript. When facing a White audience, the

Chamacoco had to evaluate the process of the contact and their own ancient culture within those limits. In this process they incorporated elements of dominant discourses. However, as "any ideology which makes a claim to hegemony must, in effect, make promises to subordinate groups by way of explaining *why* a particular social order is also in their best interests" (Scott 1990:77), the divergence between promises and actual conditions would give way to criticism of the social order. Also, the minimal divergence within the hegemonic allies gave the Chamacoco the space for maneuver necessary to get the most from their subordinated position. The following is an examination of the hegemonic coincidence in more detail.

Two factors make the missionaries the central figures in the process of 'civilising' the Indigenous people. There was the legal factor: Article 72 (13) of the Constitution of 1870 stated Congress' obligation to promote Indigenous people's "conversion to Christianity and civilization;" the law of 7-25-1904 promoted the "reduction of Indian tribes by establishing them in missions." In addition, there was the economic factor: the Paraguayan government sold huge tracts of State lands in the Chaco to foreign investors. As the government adopted a policy of laissez-faire toward private enterprise (Roett and Sacks 1991:66; Maybury-Lewis and Lowe 1980:40), the conditions under which Indigenous people worked for those investors were extremely harsh. To Indigenous people, the missions represented a place to settle as the land was progressively alienated from them, and a place to seek protection from the unbearably repressive and exploitative conditions of work with the businessmen. Commonly (and as recently as 1979, see

Maybury-Lewis and Lowe 1980:45), the missionaries arranged the working conditions for their 'protégées' with the employers.

After the Chaco War (1932 - 1935) General Belaieff (who had used Indigenous scouts during that war) became Director of *Patronato Nacional de Indigenas*. This would be the first state agency involved in Indigenous affairs; however, it was short-lived due to lack of financial support. By the 1940s, Belaieff, Barbero and other concerned people created the *Asociacion Indigenista del Paraguay* (AIP), a semi-official "gentlemanly and somewhat club-like" institution (Maybury-Lewis and Lowe 1980:88-89) attuned to the objectives of the inter-American *indigenista* movement. The newly created institution sought "the integration of Indigenous communities into the economic, social, and political life of the nation" (Caso 1958:27). Despite the good intentions of this "generation of the 1900s" (Susnik and Chase-Sardi 1995:282), many held the attitude that, for better or worse, Indigenous cultures should disappear (Alcina 1990:38).

When Stroessner took power in 1954, State intervention expanded in all areas: labour unions, economic development, health (Lewis 1980:160-161; Roett and Sacks 1991:67) and Indigenous affairs. In 1958 the government created the *Departamento de Asuntos Indigenas* (DAI) whose task was to take the "necessary steps toward putting [the Indigenous population] on track for their integration into the civilised national life" (Bejarano 1976:135). We have seen which objective the appointed Department Chair, Borgognon, sought. The Department called missionaries and other interested people for *I*

Congreso Nacional Indigenista. The conclusions of that meeting reflected the spirit that would govern the National Society's policies toward the Indigenous people for the next ten years (Bejarano 1976:137):

- Missions and employers should continue to inscribe Indigenous people in the official records;
- Missions should continue to settle Indigenous people in fixed locations;
- A *Consejo Nacional Indigenista* should be created to seek more convenient means to "convert [the Indians], with the time, in good family and community members, and in socially useful citizens";
- DAI should act as an intermediary between the missions and State authorities; an
- Missionaries should orient the activities of Indigenous leaders.

Even with the creation of state institutions the missions were primarily responsible for incorporating Indigenous people into national life. As a result, the ideological discourses of the missionaries, which equated Christianity with civilization, permeated Indigenous politics, among themselves and toward outsiders.

Christian Discourses and the New Chamacoco Leadership

Regarding the effects of White settlement on Chamacoco society, Susnik (1969:50) said: "to plant on this experience of mental and cultural accommodation the

evangelical Christianity was easy, given the Chamacoco orientation toward the Word (*au oso*)" (Susnik 1969:50). I am not sure if the evangelical Christianity was easy to plant on *Chamacoco* 'soil', the success and depth of the evangelization is at the least variable and in many cases extremely superficial. However, it profoundly affected the way power struggles would be discursively addressed. The Chamacoco appropriation of Christian discourse signals the point in which the Chamacoco discursive field definitively merged under that of the Global Society. After establishing the material conditions for a new way of thinking, references to the social reality (and, to a lesser extent, the natural reality) were progressively made in terms of a new discursive field characterized by the dominance of Western discourses over Chamacoco ones.

This section focuses on how, during hegemonic coincidence, Christian discourses assume a prominent position among the Chamacoco's public expression of their political struggles. It also examines how the conditions that bestowed the prominence of Christian discourses contributed to the emergence of a new leadership among the Chamacoco.

The first visible condition in the dominance of Christian discourse was the character of the monologue of Paraguayan *indigenismo*. The state made the missions responsible for 'civilising the Indians'. Therefore, the latter had to adapt to an essentially Christian monologue. Moreover, the specific interests of the entrepreneurs and the highly repressive conditions that characterized their relations with Indigenous people precluded Chamacoco accessibility to other dominant White discourses.

Before the NTM settled in Puerto Tala around 1942, the Catholic Salesians of Fuerte Olimpo had missionized some groups of Chamacoco. However, the geographic area was far north of the missionary center. Therefore, the enterprise of evangelization lacked the systematic character of NTM.

Escobar (1989:28-29) says of NTM: "the[ir] speciality [is] those groups located exactly at the critical point of the dramatic choice between survival or submission [*sic*]." Their main technique is to "exploit generational conflicts" pushing the younger generations, which have greater disposition to change than older people, to choose between "traditional culture, which 'holds people back and condemns them', and foreign culture, which 'redeems and makes progress'." Clearly, NTM techniques matched the internal tensions of the Chamacoco.

The missionaries deemed (and often still do) the customs and beliefs of the ancient Indigenous people 'mortal sins', 'devil's lies', 'reigns of darkness' -- characteristics worthy of profound rejection. They presented the missionary culture as the only path for salvation and progress. They complemented these ideological pressures with material baits such as "clothing, pieces of iron, sweets and other fruits of civilization" (Escobar 1989:29-33). When Native people took the bait and surrendered "their weapons, their feathers, and (it is said) their souls, [they] receive[d], as symbols of safe conduct, clothing, Christian names, and the guarantee of tutelage and protection after certain evangelical procedures. [Thus, they became] dependent upon medical attention, education, work and subsistence

which the missionaries [gave] them" (Escobar 1989:33).

The conversion strategy of NTM typically begins with the settlement of missionaries near or within an Indigenous community. They distribute "medicines, gifts and explain that [they have come] to learn the language, translate and teach people to read" (Stoll 1981:33). Eventually they begin preaching and searching for adepts. Meanwhile they establish themselves as an economic unit by trading natural resources of the area with faraway markets, and manufactured goods with the Indigenous people (Stoll 1981:33). Those first to convert are usually also the first to learn to read and write. Later, many of the first converts became 'people of confidence' in charge of the mission store (Maybury-Lewis and Lowe 1980:45). Among the multiple objectives of such a strategy, one is to show the Indigenous people that upwards social mobility is possible for a good Christian (Cano et al. 1981:84).

As Comaroff (1992:258) noted regarding the Tswana, life around the missions, the discourses authorized by the missionaries, the activities, "its theatre of the mundane[. . .]enmeshed the [Chamacoco further] in the *forms* of [the Whites]: the commodity form, linguistic forms, kinship forms, rhetorical forms."

They already knew many of these forms, but the Chamacoco under the protection of the missionaries experienced systematic and conscious exposure to them. Evidence exists that NTM missionaries, in different settings, introduced a system of fees for health

services to Indigenous people. The express intention was to "instruct the Indians in the value and management of money" (Vickers 1981:58; see also Maybury-Lewis and Lowe 1980:45). Apparently they also "encourage[d] private ownership and the private use of gardens" (Arcand 1981:81).

The missionaries also introduced literacy among the Chamacoco, which meant the first systematic training in the language of the settlers. Reading and writing skills became important to the election of leaders. Written language surpassed spoken language in prestige. For example, traditionalist leaders today find it critical to write down the *monexne* to keep them, and young evangelized people avoided formal marriage because "then it is impossible to leave your woman, it is written in the record book and it cannot be erased" (Susnik 1969:166).

In relation to the family, Vickers (1981:59) pointed out that missionaries strongly discouraged marriages between Indigenous people converted to Christianity and those who were not. The changes in the subsistence base conjoined with the model of the Christian family resulted in the decreasing importance of the residential group and the kinship ties that bound individuals to it (Susnik 1969:166).

The rhetorical form that Protestant discourse offered was especially important

besides the disciplinary effects of its precepts.[44] It also became the discursive tool with which the Chamacoco dealt with the new environment. They discursively expressed the rejection of the ancient way of life more and more within a Christian frame. Thus, the pejorative references to ancient beliefs and ways of life, which crowd the younger generations' speeches in Susnik's ethnography, appear colored by Christian terms and even "when they talk about their 'fatherland' they use many pompous words, learnt through the Bible" (Susnik 1969:51).

Christian discourses not only provided the Chamacoco with rhetorical forms to criticize the ancient social order. They also provided a discourse in which the evangelical Chamacoco could address themselves as a community of 'brothers'. 'Brothers' is today the preferred word used by leaders to address their people. Significantly, the idea of brotherhood among people of different ages would make no sense in the Chamacoco discursive field. We should remember that in it prerogatives and obligations of different age ranks -- even in relation to the sacred --, were carefully distinguished.[45] It is in the Christian framework, provided by Biblical teachings, that people of different ages could be considered as brothers. After all they had the same father, God.

---

[44]The creative effects of discipline favour dispositions compatible with certain logics of the social system, in the same way that the Protestant ethic was akin to the spirit of capitalism (Weber 1958).

[45]For instance, the teachings that a man received in the *tobich* changed depending on his age rank, as did his role in the ceremonies.

This Protestant brotherhood also provided a means for comparison with the Paraguayan and the ancient Chamacoco in positive terms. It stressed Chamacoco evangelism as a factor of superiority (particularly for economic success) when compared to the poor Catholic Paraguayan peasants and other nonconverted Chamacoco (Susnik 1969:51). This new context deemed ancient rituals 'clownish,' the *monexne* as 'devil's lies' (symbolic of 'elders' 'wrong thought') or 'funny stories,' and elders were belittled as 'forest animals' (Susnik 1969: 10). In this situation, Christian conversion gave the individual an emblem with which to distance himself from those scorned traits.

How sincere was the Chamacoco acceptance of Christianity? If it was not a facade, did the Chamacoco accept it exactly as the missionaries transmitted? These questions are difficult to answer on the basis of direct evidence, which is scarcely available for that period. Beyond making inferences from indirect sources, we must wait until the tide recedes to see what remains. Most recorded situations where Chamacoco uttered Christian discourses were within the public transcript. However, part of the hidden transcript finds its way into the public in two forms: Majito's tales and the re-signification of the Christian Pantheon. In the first case, we have already discussed Majito's roots in the Chamacoco discursive field. In the second case we find that a series of associations was made between concepts and figures of the Christian imagery with the Anabsero. For example, they identified Satan with the Anabsero Nemur, and Jesus Christ with the *komsaho ukutusur* (a powerful category of shaman) who were able to rescue the souls of ill people from *osipite* (the land of the dead). Susnik (1969:186-216) concluded that by

1968 the Christianity of the Chamacoco settled in Rosales was superficial and served more as a "simple social mechanism" of accommodation to new circumstances than a religious belief.

However, Christian discourse had a more profound impact than this evidence suggests. Comaroff (1992:259) states that people can "reject an ideological message yet be reformed by its medium." Christian discourses were, and are, used to criticize the position to which the social order relegates the Chamacoco. It is common to hear among leaders that the difficult situation in which Indigenous people live is due to differences between what White people preach and what they actually do. Lack of Christian charity, disregard of the fact that 'Indians' are also children of God, and forgetfulness of Christian brotherhood are among the reasons that, from these discourses, attempt to explain the situation of the Indigenous people. In this sense, Christian discourses allowed some space for the introduction of opposing postures in the public transcript.

Then I would say that the appropriation of Christian discourses was not only instrumental; it also involved a real embodiment of its forms. This became clear when the hegemonic tide receded and many Chamacoco insisted on using Christian discourses to address political struggles. Among those struggles was the value given to the ancient culture. In synthesis, Christian discourses provided the Chamacoco with "accepted and familiar categories of moral discourses [that] minimize[d] the risks of a more dramatic confrontation" (Scott 1989:340).

Now we can focus on how these combinations of factors, plus others such as labour relationships, new symbols of prestige, and the relationship between missionaries and 'trustworthy' Chamacoco, shaped a new kind of leadership among the Chamacoco.[46]

We have seen that during the initial exchanges with the Whites, the Chamacoco war leaders were in a privileged position. Although they distributed goods obtained from the White boss among the workers, they could not impede the common Chamacoco from seeking individual agreements with the White boss, which continued without their intermediation. Because the Chamacoco still based their subsistence on hunting and gathering, they oriented wage-labouring to the acquisition of specific goods. However, the next generation had to adapt to a new situation, where social needs[47] could be only satisfied by working for the Whites (Susnik 1969:84-87).

The next generation intensified the acquisition of White goods through work. With new needs, and the means to cope with them (i.e., wage labour), new values and symbols of prestige appeared. By contrast with the ancient good hunter who provided meat for the residential group, the ideal man was the good lumberer who earned things for himself and his immediate kindred (Susnik 1969:87-90). They perceived the gain in relation to the

---

[46]In a different setting, Carstens (1991:52) notes the importance of the Oblates (since 1860) in the emerging leadership among the Okanagan people of Canada.

[47]'Social needs' implies all needs, even bodily needs such as food. Although any foods can be nutritionally appropriated, not all are socially appropriated.

things acquired and retained. They no longer related the idea of possession to the use of something but "to have, to exhibit, to accumulate" it (Susnik 1969:109). However, too much gain was "looked at with suspicion" by the Chamacoco (Susnik 1969: 93). As working became a critical resource to satisfy new social needs, so did the stable boss who could assure gains and provisions, by providing credit during times of scarce economic activity, especially wet seasons[48] (Susnik 1969:95).

Early in the contact, the Chamacoco rid their headmen of responsibility as intermediaries between them and the White bosses. However, there was always a 'man of confidence who could gather his mates' for a job. In spite of their outstanding position, these men of confidence could not become leaders, because the power was in the hands of the Paraguayan overseers, and few Chamacoco reached that position. The main reason seemed to be their lack of skills for the task[49]. The few who attained the position were the object of gossip and distrust because of their exertion of pressure over their peers (Susnik 1969:94-97).

---

[48]In relation to working, the situation changed progressively. At first the Whites needed to pressure the Chamacoco to work, but once they became dependent on jobs to survive, the mechanics of supply and demand began to operate. While they had no compelling reasons to labour, Indigenous people experienced an economy of terror characterized by physical brutality, which later entered a phase of "debt-peonage and the subculture of mutually respected obligations it assumed" (Taussig 1987:51-73). This would present a Gramscian plot in which the system would move from domination to hegemony.

[49]Susnik (1969:97) mentions that the Chamacoco cite illiteracy as a reason why they were not chosen as overseers. Reading and writing symbolized knowledge of the White way; the word *letrado* (literate) today implies a person who knows 'how things work'.

Two events changed this situation. First, the settlement of NTM missionaries, who taught reading and writing, also taught men of confidence the necessary skills to be an overseer. Second, the crisis in labour demand in the late 1950s (INDI 1985:46) made the availability of work on an individual basis more unreliable. In these conditions a network of connections, which invariably involved overseers in charge of hiring personnel, was more secure. These events tended to fuse both figures, and their traits would shape Chamacoco leadership up to the present. These traits include knowledge of the White world (in the Chamacoco's words, to be *letrado*); the capacity to obtain jobs for followers; and the ability to remain (or appear) relatively equal to avoid gossip and suspicion.[50]

The people who better displayed these characteristics were what I call 'Christian Chamacoco'[51]. A series of cooperating factors contributed to this situation. To acquire the skills to operate with the Whites (to become *letrado*) a Chamacoco should have attended the mission school. Moreover, sometimes the same people played the roles of White bosses and missionaries since the missions also operated as economic units. It is logical that those who displayed a higher degree of Christianity received an outstanding position within the communities under missionary supervision.

---

[50]INDI (1985) also notes the first trait as a difference with traditional leadership.

[51]In referring to 'Christian Chamacoco', I make no assumption about their beliefs, but merely point out the discourses they speak.

Maybury-Lewis and Lowe (1980: 47) noted that the first converts among the Ache under NTM protection "amassed considerable power over the others there," and observed the increasing power of Christian converts in other missions (Maybury-Lewis and Lowe 1980:45; 70; 76). Susnik provides indirect information for the Chamacoco when she refers to Cleto, Puerto Rosales's leader in 1968, as 'the village pastor' (Susnik 1969:40). In other passages she mentions the Chamacoco pastors as 'figures of authority'[52] (Susnik 1969:153). Vickers (1981:59) pointed out, for the Siona-Secoya case, that the NTM missionaries try to "promote the teacher-Christian leader as *de facto* headman of the native community. [As the community is] enmeshed in an ever-intensifying culture-contact situation the teacher enjoys concrete advantages over [other figures] as a cultural broker due to his Spanish fluency, literacy and educational experience in the non-Indian world."

Closer to the present, INDI's report (1985:57) transcribes the declaration of a Chamacoco: "I am not certain of whom is the authority here, if it is the leader or the Priest." Although the statement was about a Catholic mission, we can legitimately infer that the same situation occurred in NTM. Since the missionaries were figures of authority, they probably refereed and judged many conflicts (between Chamacoco and Whites, and among the Chamacoco themselves). A Chamacoco involved in a dispute would more likely describe his or her position in the rhetoric imposed by the public transcript (i.e.,

---

[52]Susnik (1969:153) argues that this authority must be exercised cautiously because of the Chamacoco discomfort with any "modern concept of 'authority' within the group." She also mentions the role of pastors as referees who impose "new norms" or oppose others considered "old fashioned."

Christian rhetoric) than in terms of the *Esnwherta au oso*. Again, those more familiar with this rhetoric had a better chance to improve their position than those less experienced.

To sum up, Christian discourses were dominant in the public transcript, where they provided a referential framework to handle changing social conditions, as well as an authorized voice to criticize the social system that relegated the Chamacoco to the lowest position. As long as the hegemonic coincidence lasted, any dissidence had to be addressed in the public transcript, within a Christian discourse. During this period the Chamacoco discursive field composed what Foucault (1980:82) meant by 'subjugated knowledges': "knowledges that have been disqualified as inadequate to their task or insufficiently elaborated: naive knowledges, located down the hierarchy, beneath the required level of cognition or scientificity." However, evidence suggests that the Chamacoco discursive field was still active in the hidden transcript. Clues to this are provided by Majito's tales and the resignification of Christian imagery, and also in the fact that not all Chamacoco converted.

In the 1970s, the end of this hegemonic coincidence among the agents and institutions of the National Society revealed two things. As the Chamacoco dissent found new ways for expression, even with important transformations, the subjugated knowledge re-emerged when the conditions were propitious. By contrast, well beyond the period of hegemonic coincidence, some Chamacoco factions framed their discourses on their social life within Christian forms and contents. This provides a hint into the kind of elements

that, from the dominant group doxa, trickled down to the dominated group discursive field.

7. The End of the Hegemonic Coincidence

We have already seen that the hegemonic coincidence among agents and institutions of the National Society had limitations that gave the Chamacoco room for manoeuvre. This section will show how the end of the hegemonic coincidence in the 1970s created an entirely new space for the Chamacoco to express their dissent and political and projects. Understanding this process requires, at first, a wide focus of analysis.

In 1961 the Kennedy administration launched the Alliance for Progress with the objective of improving American images among Latin Americans and "forestalling any further Castroite revolution" in the area (Stravianos 1981:685; Rogers 1967). The program contemplated issues such as land reform, trade diversification and increased agricultural productivity. However, "trade diversification clashed with the interest of American multinationals, and meaningful agrarian reform was a mortal danger to Latin America's ruling elite the contradiction was reflected in the juxtaposition of Kennedy's idealistic reform rhetoric and his counterinsurgency schools teaching Latin American officers the latest techniques for suppressing any peasants who might attempt to transform Kennedy rhetoric into reality" (Stravianos 1981:685).

Multinationals and land-owning classes profited from the Paraguayan state policies of investment in road building, dam construction, incentives and subsidies for agriculture (Stravianos 1981; Lewis 1980:166). As a result, by the early 1970s Paraguayan landowners were untouched by serious agrarian reform, and the business classes "were given relief from labour problems" (Lewis 1980:166). As with many Latin American dictatorships, Stroessner relied on the doctrine of national security to control dissidence. This stemmed from the supposition that an internal enemy was ready to give up the country to the communists. This justified the persecution of any critic of the regime. Those "standing in the way of development," considered a matter of national security, were potential targets for repression (Wilmer 1993:100). With minimal resistance (Lewis 1980:166), the state carried out policies worsening the workers' living conditions and benefiting the wealthy, who profited from huge injections of money from the United States and multilateral lending institutions.[53]

Persecution was not the only policy designed to prevent subversion. Training in the United States Army's School of the Americas emphasized the importance of community development programs as a weapon against 'guerrillas'(Lewis 1980:172). During the 1970s, General Bejarano, president of AIP, proposed an intensification of plans for the economic integration of Indigenous people. His argument was that "it is better to make a

---

[53]Roett and Sacks (1991:67) point out that by the early 1960s, Paraguay received economic aid and grants from the United States in nearly the same amount as the state's annual expenditures.

revolution from above to avoid a rebellion from below" (Bejarano 1976:73). His suggestion of an expanded state institution (within the Ministry of Defence) responsible for Indigenous affairs reveals how the *indigenista* establishment perceived the Indigenous 'problem'. General Bejarano followed the Brazilian *indigenista* ideologue General Rondon, for whom "the demarcation and organization of Indigenous reserves are problems of National Security." Bejarano further argued that the army was better able "to act quickly, reliably and with independence, even in the usual cases of interethnic friction, since it retains the respect of both *criollos* and Indigenous people" (Bejarano 1976:143-144).

Indigenous affairs became an issue of national security as part of the general problem that the rural poor posed to the regime, as potentially fertile soil for subversive (in the eyes of the regime) activities. At the beginning of the 1970s an unexpected institution conducted these activities: the Catholic Church.

In 1960 the Church opened the *Universidad Catolica de Asunción.* Due to the lack of an autochthonous faculty the University had to import them from Europe. Among this imported faculty were many Jesuits from Spain. They brought the reformist ideas that the encyclicals of John XXIII promoted as a solution to the social problems of the world (Lewis 1980:190). The 1968 Latin American Bishop's meeting in Medellin that proposed a "preferential option for the poor" in the Church's work also strongly influenced this group of priests. The theology of liberation emerging in Paraguay and other Latin

American countries[54] criticized the failed developmentalism of the 1960s and sought compromise with the "oppressed sectors" in their liberation fights (Gutierrez 1988:49-57).

As part of its compromise with the liberation fights, *Universidad Catolica* provided training for reform oriented Catholics. These people took part in the organization of *Ligas Agrarias Cristianas* (LAC) among peasants and Indigenous people in the countryside (Roett and Sacks 1991:95; Susnik and Chase-Sardi 1995:329). Also, the University created the *Centro de Estudios Antropológicos*, whose actions greatly impacted the future direction of *indigenismo*.

While these reforms took place in the Catholic Church, and Protestant churches enrolled in the World Council of Churches (Wilmer 1993:157), a major change in attitude was occurring in the social sciences. Contributing to this shift were: the political crises in Third World countries; critical writings from Third World intellectuals; critical currents in First World countries; increasing interest in the role of colonialism in ethnicity; and particularly a critical appraisal of the idea of progress (Wright 1988:371-373). In 1971 the World Council of Churches sponsored a symposium on inter-ethnic contact in South America. That meeting resulted in *The Declaration of Barbados for the Liberation of the Indians* (IWGIA 1971), which demanded: the end of internal and external colonialism (from nation states); the end of evangelization (from the churches); and active involvement

---

[54]Torres (1992) made an interesting analysis of the emergence of liberation theology as the reflection of the class struggle within the Church.

in the liberation of Indigenous people (from anthropologists). The anthropologists signing the document included members of *Centro de Estudios Antropológicos*.

In response, the Catholic and Protestant churches presented the *Document of Asunción*, which resulted from a conference held in Paraguay's capital in 1972. In this document the churches recognized the critics of Barbados. However, they asserted that the missionary work should not end. Instead it should change in direction to emphasize social work. Nevertheless, they considered proclaiming the Gospel of Christ "essential for the full liberation of Indigenous people" (Escobar 1989:18).

Meanwhile, *Centro de Estudios Antropologicos* organized the Marandu project, which maintained the position of "absolute respect that the national society should have toward Indigenous self-management" (Susnik and Chase-Sardi 1995:326). The project intended to inform Indigenous people of their rights and to train their leaders in organizational aspects. As the organizers of Marandu came from the same academic and political background as those of the LACs, Stroessner's regime placed them under strict surveillance (Maybury-Lewis and Lowe 1980:98; Susnik and Chase-Sardi 1995:328). After the repression of the LACs in 1969 (Roett and Sacks 1991:97), Marandu's organizers had to be very careful. They organized open meetings in the capital between Indigenous leaders and government related figures, international press and other organizations (Susnik and Chase-Sardi 1995:328).

In this context, the hegemonic coincidence among the institutions and agents of the National Society was desintegrating. The *indigenistas*' different stances, depending on their ideologies, alliances and interests, were no longer compatible. The growing tension was clear in the signal General Bejarano[55] was sending to Marandu organizers and reformist missionaries that the regime was reaching the end of its limited tolerance.

> "Another important aspect to consider is: **the selection of personnel** that will take contact with the Indigenous people; [we have to] avoid the incorporation of **potential demagogues**. The explanation to the Indigenous people of their **rights** without having in sight a **practical and immediate solution** is a position that, good or badly intentioned, can incite to unnecessary violence. Violence in which the damaged will be the Indigenous people, because of the reactions that can provoke among their neighbours. [T]he revolution in Latin America is carried on under the mask of Religion and Culture" (Bejarano 1976:109, emphasis in original).

To make relations between 'official' and 'radical' *indigenistas* worse, by 1973-1974 members of Marandu supported Mark Munzel's (1973, 1974, 1976) denunciation of an implicit government policy of genocide against the Ache (Arens 1976; Chase-Sardi 1972)[56]. Despite this tension, in 1974 Marandu's members organized the *Primer Parlamento Indio Americano del Cono Sur.* Indigenous leaders issued a document stating

---

[55]Surprisingly, Maybury-Lewis and Lowe (1980:89) dismiss many accusations of AIP as a semi-official organization. Although the authors recognize that AIP directive members were part of the establishment, they deny these links due to lack of "formal ties"! Bejarano's *Solucionemos Nuestro Problema Indigena con el INDI* demonstrates the closeness of the government and AIP, in the way they perceived and tried to solve the 'Indigenous problem'.

[56]Implicated by negligence were the members of *Comision de Ayuda al Indigena Guayaki*, including General Bejarano.

that they owned the land (with or without titles), insisting on an end to work-related discrimination, and calling for respect for the integrity of Indigenous culture (Bejarano 1976:214-215; Susnik and Case-Sardi 1995:327-328). The meeting eventually resulted in the creation of a *Consejo Indigena del Paraguay* in 1975.

Marandu's organizational activities; its members' links with LACs (Maybury-Lewis and Lowe 1980:97-98); the incorporation of Indigenous people in the Labor Union of Carlos Casado S.A. (a powerful and exploitative lumber enterprise); and the increasing consciousness of Indigenous people (Susnik and Chase-Sardi 1995:329) finally angered the regime. In November 1975 it arrested the members of Marandu, including its Director, Chase-Sardi. The regime expelled Jesuit Spanish priest Melia, who had some involvement in the project (Arens 1976:xii; Escobar 1989:19). The justification of the regime: "Marandu members were communists" (Susnik and Chase-Sardi 1995:329).

However, Marandu's organizers convinced the government that the Indigenous organization posed no significant threat. This resulted in the creation (in 1976) of the *Asociación de Parcialidades Indigenas* (API), the first Indigenous led organization of national scope in Paraguay. However, a few months prior to the official recognition of API, the state's *Instituto Nacional Del Indigena* (INDI), created in 1975, received an extension of its original faculties. These included the commission to "oversee, orient and coordinate all the projects or enterprises promoted by official or religious organisms, people and private entities nationals or foreigners whose objects are Indigenous

communities; to recheck the projects and actions in execution with the authority to prohibit their continuity, to introduce corrections considered necessary or to authorize their continuation" (Bejarano 1976:238). In this way, the government could control the entire *indigenista*'s activities.

The situation of Indigenous affairs in Paraguay were then settled by the mid-1970s. There were not many changes until the overthrow of Stroessner in 1989, and even then they were more cosmetic than structural (*see* Kidd 1995). However, this turbulence in national politics had important consequences. The discursive field in which Indigenous people operated changed dramatically as a result of the end of a hegemonic coincidence that had limited their space for political maneuver to a few alternatives. The discursive field fragmented along the lines that divided the agents and institutions of the National Society concerning how to address the 'Indigenous problem'.

Two groups of allies held different attitudes toward Indigenous people. The first consisted of the state, landowners, businessmen, official *indigenistas* and religious institutions uninfluenced by liberation theology. The other included the Catholic Church, Protestant churches linked to the World Council of Churches, and radical *indigenistas*. Each group internally exhibited different orientations, but the coincidences were more significant than the discrepancies.

Thus, the state organization INDI sided with landowners against their supposed

protégées (Kidd 1994a; Chase-Sardi 1990:16; Vysokolan 1992:138-146). The official *indigenistas* displayed discourses in consonance with theoreticians of development that did not find "much to say about Indigenous culture." Therefore, except "some few cases of alcoholism", contact with "civilization" could not provoke disequilibrium among Indigenous people (Sosa 1979:75). General Bejarano, with a stunning array of recalcitrant evolutionist ideas, advocated coordinating activities to help the "backward" Indigenous people evolve towards the cultural stage of the National Society (Bejarano 1976). NTM agreed with this attitude and shared the state's paranoia about communists. In fact, Maybury-Lewis and Lowe (1980:78) interviewed a missionary who felt that communists had promoted a new land law as well as outspoken criticism of missionary work.

On the other hand, progressive churches and radical *indigenistas* shared a common discourse regarding the value of Indigenous culture, although their emphasis differed. The first assumed a Christian ethical base in traditional Indigenous culture (Von Bremen 1987:42); the second promoted the traditional Indigenous culture, which was thought in terms of a pristine culture prior the contact. Given the relation of forces with the other group, and the Catholic background of the radical *indigenistas*, these two philosophies were inclined to work closely, especially when supporting Indigenous land claims (Escobar 1989:20).

The two groups into which we have divided the *indigenistas* did not identify

themselves as such. Given the patrolled tolerance displayed by Stroessner's regime,[57] these seemingly opposed groups often worked together (Maybury-Lewis and Lowe 1980:89-91). Nevertheless, the fragmented discursive field provided Indigenous people, particularly the Chamacoco, with new discursive spaces in which to express their dissidence.

Christians, Moderns and Traditionalists

This turbulence took place primarily in the capital. It reached the Chamacoco like ripples in water, through leaders who participated in the workshops organized by Marandu, and also through the new spaces for dissent opened by the end of hegemonic coincidence. Where White institutions had almost exclusively recognized only those leaders who complied with the missionaries, now dissenting leaders could seek support from dissenting institutions. By the 1980s, the situation in Rosales had reached a critical point. The decreasing labour demand, plus the unavailability of fertile soil for agricultural activity, pushed the Chamacoco leaders to claim lands from the Paraguayan government. Attuned to State plans to extend crop exploitation, the Chamacoco claimed the lands of Melaza on the basis that they would accommodate such activity (INDI 1985:36-46).

In an INDI report (1985) the State emphasized the negative effect of intrusion by

---

[57]Lewis (1980:200-224) describes how the regime accepted (to some degree) the activities of people considered hostile to the government, and even supported some of them financially. The intent of the policy was to control those activities that were potentially dangerous for the regime, and at the same time to coopt those individuals.

Catholic missionaries on the Chamacoco's potential for self-management. It mentioned nothing of the sort regarding NTM, despite many reports that emphasize its intrusive policies towards Indigenous people (Escobar 1989; Perasso 1987; Hvalkof and Aaby 1981; and especially Maybury-Lewis and Lowe 1980:74-79, which compares the respective intrusiveness of NTM and Catholic missions). The biased evaluation of the INDI report reflected the tension between the State and the Catholic Church.

The State preferred anyone but the Church in charge of a newly created Chamacoco settlement. State ally NTM had already accomplished one of its objectives: to create a nucleus of believers to carry on the project of evangelization (Stoll 1981:33). Among the leaders claiming new land was Esteban, whom Chase-Sardi (1987:126) mentions as one of the youth evangelized by NTM and "the fiercest enemy of the traditional culture." This situation ended with the Chamacoco obtaining Melaza, a ranch of 22,000 hectares, part of which is on the Paraguay River. They settled there in 1983, the first self-managed community since the Whites brought them under their control.

This settlement was legally possible due to the newly sanctioned law 904 of 1981, among whose articles were the following:

- Article 1: "This Law has for its objective the social and cultural preservation of the Indigenous communities, the defence of their patrimony and traditions, the improvement of their economic situation".
- Article 4: "In no case will the use of force and coercion be accepted as means to promote the integration of the Indigenous communities into the National collectivity, neither measures oriented toward an assimilation that does not take

into account the feelings and interests of the Indigenous people".

- Article 5: "The Indigenous communities could apply their customs to regulate their coexistence, in all that is not incompatible with the principles of public order".
- Article 7: "The state recognizes the legal existence of Indigenous communities and will grant them *personeria juridica* (legal incorporation)".
- Article 12: "The leaders will legally represent their communities. The nomination of the leaders will be communicated to INDI" (INDI 1981).

Many authors argue that this law was simply a declaration of principles that did not change actual State policies (Susnik and Chase-Sardi 1995:350-351; Vysokolan 1992:141-146, 169-179; Chase-Sardi 1990:26; Kidd 1994a, b). However, it did change the public transcript of the discursive field. Now *indigenismo* increasingly claimed respect for the culture, interests, and feelings of Indigenous communities (although the term 'respect' is open to discussion).

This was the scenario when nearly seventy Chamacoco families moved from Rosales to Melaza's land by the river. Approximately the same number remained in Rosales. In Melaza, the group splintered into two factions, following leaders who promoted different economic activities. Esteban's followers opted for hunting and trading of furs along with minor cattle-raising. Carlos' followers preferred crop agriculture (Cordeu 1990:5). Apparently, this split entailed a different attitude toward the traditional culture. The agricultural group were the traditionalists, and the hunters, paradoxically, rejected tradition, wanting to become full members of the National Society (Chase-Sardi 1987:126).[58]

---

[58]Unfurtunately I have not been able to obtain more information on the details of this splint.

In 1986 the *Comisión de Solidaridad con los Pueblos Indígenas*, with the assistance of Carlos and his stepfather Fermin, convinced a group of Tomaraho settled near San Carlos to move to Melaza. There they would be "under the protection of Carlos' group and could work in agriculture or, if they so wished, they could retake their ancient way of life" (Cordeu 1990:5). Chase-Sardi (1987:125-129) described this invitation as an example of increasing ethnic consciousness and the revalorization of the traditional culture that Tomaraho preserved[59]. Cordeu (1990:7) in contrast, pointed out that Carlos intended the invitation to increase his number of followers. In this way, the faction could face Esteban's group under better conditions. Carlos also possibly intended the invitation to result in a share of the funding with which the radical *indigenistas* would support the Tomaraho.

By 1988, tensions between both Ebitoso factions resulted in a new split. Carlos' group, along with the Tomaraho, moved to Palmares, an inland section of Melaza. In the new settlement both tribes constructed neighbouring villages. With the assistance of *Ayuda a la Comunidades Indígenas del Paraguay* (ACIP) both villages began a project of agricultural exploitation (Chase-Sardi 1990:60-63). By 1989, Carlos was depicting his community as the 'traditionalist Ebitoso'. He claimed that they followed the traditional religion and rejected the intervention of religious organizations (Blaser 1992:19). The reality was not that simple or clear, but let us look more closely at the schism of the group

---

[59]The Tomaraho still conduct the initiatory ritual, and the objective of the *indigenistas*, besides humanitarian reasons, was to preserve this disappearing culture.

of Melaza.

This split followed the lines that divided the attitudes of agents and institutions of the National Society involved in Indigenous affairs. The Chamacoco, as a subordinated group, appropriated the National Society's discourses as a way to cope with the new environment. These discourses entailed a different appreciation of their past culture, and in relation to this, their prospect for their future. More importantly, along with these discourses there was financial support. Thus, political struggles among the Chamacoco can be seen as part of the struggle among Global Society's agents and institutions. At any level the struggle was expressed within the frame of different discourses about ancient Indigenous culture and the results of the European contact.

When the hegemonic tide receded, the public transcript had profoundly changed. It was now possible to express a diversity of discourses (and practices). However, the Chamacoco's subordinated position within the discursive field remained unchanged. The combination of this factor and the new leadership, which emerged during the period of hegemonic coincidence, affected the political agenda of the leaders. Now they had to coincide with the agenda of some segment of the National Society to obtain benefits for their communities.

The political agendas of the three villages (Puerto Rosales, Puerto Melaza and Palmares-Ajateri), which originated by political struggle, corresponded to three dominant

discourses about the meaning of the contact and its results. The discourses and agendas include the following:[60]

- A sinful way of life characterized the past; people used to live cheated by the devil. Now, people know God and must live as good Christians. This is the position of one of Melaza's leaders. He is a Pentecostal preacher, and insists that the Chamacoco forget the past to live in peace with themselves and God. The discourse relates to Christian discourses of the first stage of contact (which is still the NTM discourse), where the old beliefs were associated with evil. The community seems to oppose non-believers, including non-Pentecostal Chamacoco and Paraguayans. This kind of self-identification has been observed in other groups evangelized by NTM (Pereira 1981:109-119).

- In the past, the people were ignorant; they lived like animals in the forest. Now they have learned how to work and care for their families. This position is sustained by the leader of Rosales, which became practically a neighbourhood of Puerto Tala. The discourse relates to modernization and individual progress, promoted by local agents of government and political parties. What is noticeable about this village is the increasing tendency of politically active individuals to be

---

[60]My knowledge of the political situation in the two first villages is not broad; I have merely spoken with their leaders. Except regarding the traditionalist village, my assertions about the dominance of various agendas are tentative.

co-opted by political parties. The sense of pertinence to Indigenous communities is still progressively waning in favour of political parties.

- In the past, the Chamacoco cared for each other, they cared about nature and they were free from the Whites. Now they must work for the Paraguayans to survive, and they must fight for their lands if they want to be free. This is Carlos' position, and it closely links to the radical *indigenistas*' discourses, although recently they have increasingly associated with environmentalist discourses.

Paraguay (as around the world) has experienced a progressive closeting and interpenetration between traditionalism, as seen by the *indigenistas*, and branches of the environmentalist movement.[61] Such interpenetration is twofold: the Indigenous culture can only become traditionalist in an environment that is free from the exploitation promoted by western capitalism. This coincides with the need expressed by environmental movements to protect natural areas from industrial exploitation (Wilber 148-149; Wright 1988:384; Schwartzman 1984; Davis and Ebbe 1993; Davis 1994). "As conservationists seek to protect Latin America's forest, new voices are being raised in defence of Indigenous peoples' traditional use of these resources with the help of the anthropologists, the [Indigenous people] are being recognized as a critical aspect of this ecological system" (Reed 1995:215-16). These new allies sometimes impose a heavy load on Indigenous

---

[61]This association between environmentalists and the National Society's supporters of traditionalism falls within the group Bodley (1982) calls 'primitivist-environmentalist'.

traditionalism, which now involves modes of production in addition to rituals and customs. In an interview, the representative of European Union in Paraguay was eloquent on this point. The goal of the interview was to include the project, which our team had developed in consultation with the community, in an ambitious European Union program of development of the Chaco area. The representative's first comment was that our project would not work within the scheme of the European Union program, since its intent was to initiate agricultural activities within a community that were traditionally hunters and gatherers. He explained that the European Union program sought the promotion of economic activities that related to the traditional way of life. He suggested that breeding wild animals would be more successful for the Chamacoco case. It never occurred to him that the Chamacoco have not based their subsistence on hunting for at least the last forty years,[62] or that breeding wild animals was as far from hunting as hunting was from agriculture. I conceded that breeding wild animals could be among the activities, and in return I stimulated his interest in visiting the village to observe the situation and talk with the residents.

The alliance between traditionalism and environmentalism seems unstable, for two related reasons. The first is the asymmetry of power between allies. Because Indigenous people are less powerful, they must comply with more powerful institutions. As Reed

---

[62]Carstens (1991:109) makes a pertinent comment: "it is important to distinguish between hunter-gatherers as a societal type and the subsistence activity of hunting and gathering." Although the Chamacoco still hunt and gather when no jobs are available, we can hardly define their society as hunter-gatherer in the classic sense.

(1995:218) exemplifies with the Chiripa case, "with little power to confront an international environmental movement" Indigenous people must compromise in using the 'reserve of biospheres' as these institutions decide. Secondly, given the strategic character of this alliance, any change in the field could cause a desintegration. This seems to be the case with the multinational project of canalization of the Paraguay River. The state is supporting the project, and a flock of politicians of the official party are appearing in the area promising benefits. By contrast a multitude of NGOs foresees calamities if the project goes forward. In both cases, representatives target the Indigenous population as a recipient of either benefits or calamities. The Chamacoco will ally with the party which, in their eyes, offers them the better deal.

The fact that the three discourses (and agendas) presented above are the dominant ones in a village (in that they express the political agenda of the leader and his followers) does not mean that everyone complies with them. I have heard all three in the same village, uttered by the same person in different moments. Therefore, when focusing at the village level we can see that there is a kind of sub-field which, if not completely disconnected from the wider one, has regularities that are proper to it. We will examine these in more detail in the next part.

8. Conclusions to Part Three

Once a concrete and exemplary tour de force inaugurated the unification of

discursive fields, its reproduction became based on symbolic power, which implies that those actors participating in the field recognized the power-system as legitimate. In Thomson's words (commenting on Bourdieu 1991:23), "those who benefit least from the exercise of power fail to see that the hierarchy is, after all, an arbitrary social construction which serves the interests of some groups more than others." As a subordinated group, some Chamacoco accepted the game imposed by the Whites, but not the specific hierarchy that situated them at a lower level. Thus, the practices and discourses that I call oppositional did not challenge the legitimacy of the game but a particular round of it. I disagree with Scott's (1985:315 and 317) characterization of hegemony as that which produces merely false consciousness.[63] On the contrary, it produces something more subtle and difficult to grasp as arbitrary: 'what goes without saying' (a doxa).

Due to the (initially clear) coercive situation, the Chamacoco had to speak and act as Christians (buying, selling, working). New generations born under these conditions, where the memory of the violent beginnings was fading, began to accept them as normal; the game of working for food, accumulating goods, etc., appeared to be a worthwhile pursuit. The new generations worked, accumulated and played the game so that the arbitrary condition of that way of life was effaced.

---

[63]Most of Scott's examples criticizing the concept of hegemony support my idea that most subordinated people's criticism of the social order points to their position in a given moment and not the legitimacy of the order itself (see Scott 1989:317-350; and 1990:5-6).

It is difficult to grasp how much of this recognition of legitimacy is a failure to see the arbitrariness of the social order, and how much is a facade that subordinated groups use in the public transcript to work the system to its minimum disadvantage. Beyond some indices of what was happening in the hidden transcript, during hegemonic coincidence, answers to these questions can only be provided *ex post facto*, after the limits of the public transcript change and what was in the hidden transcript becomes visible.

While the hegemonic coincidence lasted, the Chamacoco discourses in the public transcript showed a high degree of compliance with the dominant group's discourses. Even dissidence, to be heard, had to be dressed with Christian rhetoric. What was in the hidden transcript during this period? The Chamacoco discursive field was outside the doxa imposed by the Whites. This subjugated knowledge was part of the hidden transcript, as well as heterodox understandings of the new order, such as those expressed in the public transcript by Majito's tales, and to some extent resignification of Christian imagery.

The effects of the imposition of a doxa on the Chamacoco will become visible at the end of the hegemonic coincidence. At least two of the factions described here (Melaza and Puerto Rosales) have stuck to it even after the coercive force of the hegemonic coincidence began to decrease. Even the traditionalist faction in its first years operated within this doxa.

When the hegemonic coincidence among the agents of the National Society

reached an end, new and different discourses emerged, expressing the diverse readings of the Indigenous reality. The Chamacoco splintered along the lines of those divisions in the dominant group. Most of the discourses the Chamacoco adopted, after their incorporation into the Global Society (particularly during the hegemonic coincidence but also after), reflect a subordinate reading of the reality.[64] They found a space in the public transcript as part of the discourses sustained by agents of the Global Society.

As long as these discourses and practices operated within the doxa (either as orthodox or heterodox understanding) we may call them, following Chambers (1991:xv), 'oppositional discourses and practices.' Given the new array of power positions implied by the end of the hegemonic coincidence, the limits of the public transcript changed to incorporate these forms of oppositional discourses and practices.

We will see in Part Four that the practice of opposition in addition to the new spaces for manoeuvre gave way to a process Foucault (1980:81) calls an 'insurrection of subjugated knowledges.' This is the irruption in the public transcript of what was at the bottom of the hidden transcript: what survived of the Chamacoco discursive field. This newly unveiled hidden transcript suffered important transformations. However, it will provide the raw materials for an incipient and local-level resistance movement. In

---

[64]Fiske (1982:113-114) states: "the dominant reading, convey[s]the dominant group's values; the subordinate reading, where a non-dominant group accepts the basic structure of power relations in the society, aspiring only to a higher standing within that structure."

Chambers' (1991:xv) terms, this means a challenge to the legitimacy of the power-system.

PART FOUR: THE POLITICS OF TRADITIONALISM

The Ebitoso-Chamacoco manoeuvred within different arrays of power positions in the unified discursive field brought about by their incorporation in the World System. This manoeuvring included the intrusion within the public transcript of oppositional readings of reality (through tricksters' tales, criticism based on Christian discourses and on the gap between rhetoric and reality). Each of these oppositional practices will, when conditions allow, "turn out to be a practical means of *producing* historical consciousness" (Comaroff and Comaroff 1992:259). These practices, along with a widening of the space for manoeuvre (resulting from the end of hegemonic coincidence) created the conditions for the emergence of a new political agenda. This agenda embodied a clearer consciousness of the arbitrariness of the current power-system. Parallel to this critical appraisal of the world, a revaluation of the ancient Chamacoco way of life took place.

Revaluation of the ancient way of life and criticism of current society became intertwined in a feedback process, giving way to a traditionalist agenda. However quickly it happened, the emergence of traditionalism as historical consciousness was a process that had distinguishable stages. It first found its place in the public transcript as a discourse subordinated to that of the radical *indigenistas*. In this stage, traditionalism did not seem as deeply rooted among the common Chamacoco as it was in Carlos (the traditionalist leader). In this sense I will argue that both radical *indigenistas*, and especially the leader,

played the role of 'organic intellectual' in the Gramscian sense (1971:5ff).

The next (and current) stage of the process has been the acquisition of a hegemonic status by traditionalism. In this hegemonic space some have begun to challenge the very basis of power in the village. Nevertheless, links with the World System impose limits to these challenges.

9. The Traditionalist Village

When I first visited Palmares in 1991, the situation was not exactly as Carlos depicted. Despite his assertions about the traditionalism of the Ebitoso, it appeared that the Tomaraho conducted the rituals with little Ebitoso participation. However, some Ebitoso insisted that they were traditionalists, that they believed in Esnwherta and nothing else. Not surprisingly, these people were close members of the leader's family. After two sessions in the field (1991-1992), some began to recognize that they were either *Evangelistas* or Catholic. Carlos' stepfather stated that he was a preacher of the Bible, and he often attempted to preach to me about my agnosticism (Blaser 1992; 1994). I have argued (Blaser 1992:18-20) that, given the previous experience of the Ebitoso with *indigenistas* and anthropologists, they expected that any potential benefit of a relationship with me depended on their traditional culture and its preservation. This expectation had very good foundation. As we will see, it will reveal many characteristics of the Ebitoso

traditionalism and its discursive counterpart in the National Society, the radical *indigenismo.*

With their policies, the radical *indigenistas* intensified the Ebitoso's image of them, that any aid was dependent on Chamacoco traditionalism. For example, to the Tomaraho's socio-cultural rescue by *Comisión de Solidaridad con los Pueblos Indigenas* followed a project by ACIP of "ecodevelopment, which includes[. . .]the revalorization of the **traditional diet**" (Case-Sardi 1990:63, emphasis mine). Moreover, since the field coordinator of ACIP consistently encouraged the Tomaraho to conduct their rituals, they and the Ebitoso reinforced their oxymoronic idea that financial support for development projects and traditionalism were inseparable[65] (Blaser 1992).

The criticism of radical *indigenistas* by Indigenous people with other agendas (such as Esteban) reveals attitudes of the former. "[M]ost of us have a clear idea of our needs for change, for progress and development for the Indigenous people, but these people that I have mentioned [people enrolled in radical *indigenismo*] wish that all of us will return to primitivism" (Esteban in a newspaper interview, *Hoy*, May 11, 1989). Even if the *indigenistas* did not have such an overtly extreme position, there was (and is) a bias or tendency towards revivalist agendas. Chase-Sardi (1987:125-129) described the Ebitoso process of cultural revival: "the socio-cultural rescue carried on by the *Comisión*

---

[65]During my first fieldwork a veterinarian replaced this coordinator. He complained about the funds and time wasted because the former coordinator "wanted to write a nice thesis and to collect wonderful samples for the museum [*Museo del Barro*] they constructed in Asuncion."

de Solidaridad con los Pueblos Indigenas, and the training courses for Indigenous leaders offered by AIP, initiated a turning point in the cultural evolution of the Oshoro [author's writing of Ishir, Chamacoco self-denomination]. The acculturated and detribalized Obotoso [Ebitoso] **return** their gaze, with lively expectation, **toward their traditions**, and attempt to organize themselves, in their new settlements, having them into account.[. . .]But the worse danger handing over this possibility of **reencounter with the own culture**[. . .]is the schism between 'hunters' and 'agriculturist'. The authorities in Puerto Tala[. . .]see with respect, their **return to the old traditions**" (emphasis mine). Chase-Sardi's version came primarily from Carlos (the informant for most contemporary investigations on Chamacoco society). However, Carlos' version was sensitive to his audience. For the radical *indigenistas*, the only alternative to the loss of identity and the Chamacoco incorporation within a "miserable countryside lumpemproletariat" (Chase-Sardi 1987:129) is the return to traditions. Thus, they are more willing to support these agendas financially; consequently, a traditionalist leader would have more chances to allure the *indigenistas*.

It is in a context of increasingly dominant traditionalism (at the village level) that we must understand the discourses (and changes in them) about the ancient culture among the Ebitoso-Chamacoco. Given the political agenda of the leader, and their experiences with ethnographers and *indigenistas* primarily interested in the past, at the beginning of my field work many Chamacoco hid their non-traditionalism. With time and mutual inquiries, they realized that any benefit that I could bring to the community did not depend

on their traditionalism. Once they discarded this idea, I could record varied and opposing discourses on the value of the ancient culture within the village. I will present these positions as they relate to the *monexne*, or how they were valued.

The older people considered the *monexne* the basic explanation for the natural, sociocultural and supernatural order. It makes sense that the elders who worked with Susnik in 1957 and 1968 called the *monexne* of the Anabsero 'message', while most of the people with whom I worked simply called it *monexne*. This demonstrates the loss of the sacred character of the narrative.[66] People sixty years and older complained about the changes occurring in the society, and offered the elders' loss of control as an explanation for the 'evils' that the Chamacoco suffer. However, during my first visit, only the leader suggested seriously that the *monexne* could be, in the near future, the source of norms to regulate life in the village. Due to the rejection and undervaluation of the elders' position, and paraphrasing Scott (1989:325), they were unable to see the 'political opening which created new possibilities or revived old aspirations, thus an attitude of pragmatic resignation prevailed" among them.

A second position relates to the people whom the missionaries of NTM deeply

---

[66]Cordeu (1989h) noted that the capacity for exegesis of the symbols included in the *monexne* was disappearing with the elders, and that these stories had become tales for the entertainment of the young generations. However some people, particularly those who participated in the initiatory ritual, still correlate the *monexne* with the ancient social order.

influenced. Usually these people associated the *monexne* with evil:[67]

> "Before, I used to sing [shamanic songs] but then I read the Bible and then I preached the word of God. I made a compromise. I preached the Bible to catch those who did not believe and then I baptized them. Now I do not sing anymore, because my dreams and my songs are in collision with the Bible. The Tomaraho, for example, they are still in darkness. They do not believe the word of God. They follow this Esnwherta which is like a devil. She and Satan lie, and they say 'I am your God and you must do this and this'" (Blaser 1991).[68]

The third position that people in the village adopt toward the *monexne* is as if they were a symbol of ethnic traditionalism. The transmission of the *monexne* appeared as a way to keep the tradition:

> "The Chamacoco to keep their identity must recover some custom. For example, once the *monexne* have been written down in the books, why we have to talk of other cultures? We have to talk about the culture of the *monexne*, the traditional history. Here we do not have to talk of Mariscal Lopez, because nobody knows. Here we can talk of the forest with authentic knowledge. I cannot talk about Christopher Columbus, I know nothing about. But I can talk of the history of Basebuky, of Pime, the moon, of Berpel. Now if some teachers want to teach something of other culture but just a little, more from here" (Blaser 1991)[69].

In 1991, few people supported this discourse about the ancient knowledge, but over the years the number of people adopting it increased significantly, and it progressively began to merge with the first reading listed here.

---

[67]The Chamacoco even now divide the dead between those in *osipite*, now associated with hell, and those who go to paradise. All ancient people who died before baptism are in *osipite*.

[68]Interview with Fermin.

[69]Interview with Carlos.

Until 1993, traditionalism 'paid back' only through the assistance provided by ACIP. That year, Carlos and other leaders of the *Comisión*[70] obtained new lands in Ajateri, where Nemur blows into the shell creating the Paraguay River. Most of the Ebitoso from Palmares moved there. A year later the Tomaraho got their own land, their leaders attained legal status, and ACIP suspended assistance to the Ebitoso. However, the move toward the river allowed the Ebitoso to exploit a new resource: tourism[71].

Carlos had established links with a tour company that followed a route up the Paraguay River. He offered the company a stop in Ajateri, where passengers could buy traditional handicrafts and observe the *konsaho* (shaman) in action.[72] In 1994 the *Comision* asked me to prepare a project to record "the traditions that we are losing," and, a year later, the project was extended to include the construction of a museum and

---

[70]When the Ebitoso settled in Palmares they established a *Comision Directiva* with a president, vice-president, secretary and accountant.

[71]In this year my supervisor and I conducted a research project on the transmission of knowledge among the Chamacoco. The project involved hiring Indigenous people to train volunteers to conduct everyday tasks (see Rabey 1993). This created a problem, as the Tomaraho were performing the initiation ritual at the time. They wanted to participate in the research (which meant paid jobs) even at the cost of interrupting the ritual. We finally decided to record the ritual to the extent allowed by the Tomaraho, and to use the funds (initially intended to pay salaries) to purchase a milk cow and food for the village. This may have influenced the Ebitoso's subsequent idea to sell traditionalism in the tourism market. Indeed, a precedent existed in Melaza, where an old *konsaho* used to perform dances for tourists brought by a cruiser.

[72]This resembles what Gewertz and Errington observed among the Chambri (1991).

visitors' house.[73]

In the (austral) winter of 1996, thirty-six years after its last performance, the Chamacoco reenacted the initiatory ritual.[74] The young people (teenagers or older) passed several weeks of intensive training, and three boys of approximately ten years old went into seclusion for three months in a newly constructed *tobich*.

When I visited Ajateri in July and August of that year, there was considerable unrest in relation to Carlos' leadership. The struggle involved many issues. Yet, as the struggle was discursively addressed in terms of attachment to traditional rules, it demonstrates that, between 1991 and 1996, the traditionalist discourse had become even more hegemonic among this group of Ebitoso.

Hegemonic Traditionalism

We have seen that among the pillars of leadership was the leader's capacity to obtain benefits from the National Society for his community. In this sense Carlos has been relatively successful. His ability and knowledge of the National Society have provided

---

[73]Both parts of the project implied hiring people acquainted with some aspect of the traditional culture.

[74]When the ceremony began in May, no outsiders observed it. Therefore, the Chamacoco must not have considered tourism an important reason for the revival of the ritual.

benefits to his community such as projects (ACIP, Earthwatch)[75], business (tourism and handicrafts), and successful land claims (Ajateri). These achievements are the result of his traditionalist agenda, and account in part for the increasing hegemony of the traditionalist discourse. Scott (1985:336) states that the gaps between "the promises that any hegemony [ideology? discourse?] necessarily makes and the equally inevitable failure of the social order to fulfill some or all of these promises[. . .]provide the raw material for contradictions and conflict." If so, the successes in fulfilling such promises must provide the material for compliance with the hegemonic discourse, particularly where the asymmetries of power are not too pronounced, as among the Chamacoco.

Beyond the visible benefits of traditionalism, others (more subtle, but no less recognized) played a role in its increasing hegemony. For example, in my first visit, I heard these statements:

> "Because some guys want to be western but they do not know very well what is being western. That is why Christianity has failed, because the guys do not know very well their new beliefs" (Carlos).
>
> "[. . .]what worries me is that civilization makes silly the new kids. A school student learns how to read, how to add, but education they do not know. Because our grandparents did not want that younger people to be stubborn, to walk around in the night, to fuck old women, to drink alcohol, to smoke" (Fermin).
>
> "[. . .]the Ebitoso does not have their culture any longer.[. . .]It is too bad that our grandparents abandoned our culture [referring to the initiatory

[75]I count this project among Carlos' achievements for two reasons: he initially invited me to conduct research among his people, and he presents the project as his achievement.

> ritual] because before our grandparents lived all together, they did not go near the Paraguayan, they did not know to dance, they did not know how to drink *caña* [liquor]" (Timoteo).

Discourses from Carlos and Fermin illustrate that even if they had different valuations of the ancient culture (see their discourses on the *monexne,* above), they agreed, together with Timoteo, that there was something missing in the new Chamacoco society. This 'something' was a sense of direction, of identity, of control over their destiny. The elders in charge of the reborn initiatory ritual unanimously cited this sense of alienation when asked what compelled them to organize the ritual again:

> "Do you see these youngsters?[T]hey do not know anything, they do not have church, they do not go to the *cuartel* [military service], they smoke, they drink, they wander around without sense.Do you see this one, my grandson? He brought a girl from Rosales without asking her mother,she wanted to put him in jail, I have to go and appease her. That is why we construct again our *tobich* to educate these stubborn youngsters" (Venancio, the village *konsaho*).

All these economic, psychological and socio-cultural factors contributed to the emergence of the traditionalist agenda. However, the role of Carlos (and to some extent the radical *indigenistas)* was central, since he acted as an organic intellectual. He provided the Chamacoco with a counter-hegemonic discourse. He articulated a series of diverse and loosely connected oppositional practices to develop a political agenda. The intent of the agenda was, in principle, to regain self-control of the destinies of the group and to improve its position within the system. An important aspect of the agenda is a reevaluation of the past, both in the sense of how the historical events unfolded and of the ancient way

of life before the Whites.

In the first sense, the reevaluation of how White settlement was conducted is more openly critical than previous accounts, such as those presented in Part One. Let us examine a new critical evaluation of this process.

> "Ajateri is the historical land of the Ishir-Ebitoso, but then the foreigner came. They took the land from us. They pushed our ancestors to the interior. Now the new generation is claiming this land with documents and history that show that this is our land. This building is old but the Chamacoco have been here much earlier. Before the Chaco War [1935] the Ebitoso recovered this land from the Caduveo, and they had a lot of cows and horses. Then, when the war finished some expert people, or better, some cheater, arrived and they envied all our wealth. They came with papers, and our elders did not know that to own the land they have to make a map and legalize it. Nevertheless, in their thoughts this land was always theirs. But they came with papers, they cheated and they took from the Ishir [Chamacoco] all this land. The Indigenous people had a map in their heads, a map of their territory and of their history.
>
> These people who came with their papers were people of the Uruguayan Balbiano, whose grandchildren still own it. He bought this land from the government but he was afraid of the Ebitoso. The Ebitoso came since thousands years ago to watch over this river which they considered a source of life. Then Balbiano sent a Paraguayan, an overseer, to take control here. Once, the Ebitoso came to fish and found out this *señor*. As they did not understand each other, the overseer showed them a rifle, the Ebitoso showed him a spear. Then, instead of having a good relationship the overseer shot them, but nobody got harmed. Immediately, the Ebitoso charged against him and killed him. Only one of his work mates escaped and ran to the fort to inform the military. Thus, the soldier came and made the Ebitoso to run into the forest. These soldiers then kept shooting at any camp they found in their way. Then the Ebitoso ambushed and killed two soldiers. They splintered their bodies in two parts, and arranged the remains as if the soldiers had been cooked and eaten as a barbecue. The other military men saw this and thought that the Ebitoso ate people, and so they were afraid and returned to their base.
>
> When the Ebitoso were no longer attacked, they sent a group of four headmen to talk with the commander. They went there and made peace with the military and

> the Ebitoso promised not to kill more Paraguayans and the soldiers promised not to kill any more Ebitoso" (Blaser 1995).

This clearly contrasts with the two previous stories, in which the contact either meant the end of the world or the inclusion within a new one. Now the narration describes the contact as a struggle that has not been settled. As part of the historical consciousness mentioned in our introduction, this is the reassessment of the part that coercive force played in shaping the current situation. For instance, the details of fights between Whites and Chamacoco contrast with the silence about bloodshed in other stories.

These previously effaced, at least from the public transcript, aspects of the history of contact play an important role in the changed discursive field. The current situation within this discursive field endorses a negative evaluation of the use of force against Indigenous people. The public exposition of its use during the process of expropriating land from the Chamacoco further legitimized their land claims.

The other aspect of the reevaluation of the past is the new appraisal of the ancient culture. This aspect has two sides. Although people view their past in a new and positive way, traditionalism does not imply that they had begun to think about reality as their grandfathers did. As diverse authors (Borofsky 1987; Philibert 1989; Eriksen 1992) have pointed out, traditionalism is, primarily, to think of the past as a means of orienting the present. Some aspects of the past are stressed, others sent into shadow or relativized. Conversely, the Global Society, through its agents and institutions (including the

indigenistas), expects a traditionalism attuned to the attributes with which western thought represents it (i.e., a set of traits with visible boundaries that is transmitted from past to present) (Honko 1986; Handler and Linnekin 1984).

Traditionalism has external limits in the way Indigenous people can represent it. Beyond the constructivist discourses on ethnicity, traditionalism, etc., that permeate institutions of the World System (such as academia), other institutions such as the legal system or the political representative system still function from a modernist point of view. Paraphrasing Friedman (1992:843), traditional culture is "the social order that predated contact" with the West. Thus, multiple experiences showing that "ethnicity is something reinvented and reinterpreted in each generation by each individual" (Fischer 1986:195) have no echo in political decision-making in the Global Society. In this context local cultures must represent themselves discursively in terms of essentials in order to be heard. This situation clarifies the notorious coincidence between Carlos' depiction of the Ebitoso traditionalism and the idea that *indigenistas* have about traditionalism.

To sum up, traditionalism became a hegemonic discourse in Ajateri due to a combination of factors. These included the peoples' lack of control over their destinies, the action of an organic intellectual (Carlos) who experienced initial success by pursuing a traditionalist agenda, and the favorable conditions that the radical *indigenistas* (and environmentalists) provided for such an agenda. However, things did not run so smoothly in the village.

10. Struggling in Traditional Contexts

When I visited Ajateri in July 1996, there was considerable unrest regarding Carlos' leadership. A few days prior to my arrival, Fermin (Carlos' stepfather) had beaten Carlos' daughter, Ceci, who was the village teacher. Carlos had the military arrest Fermin for two days in Puerto Tala. Upon Fermin's release, he began to campaign against Carlos on the basis that he had acted as a Paraguayan and not within the tradition. When I arrived in the village a few days later, Carlos had gone to Asunción. Fermin complained about Carlos and gave me his version of the events. He said that Ceci was a bad example to the schoolchildren, as she used to drink and have sex with the Paraguayans. Now that the elders were trying to educate the children (with the initiatory ritual) her behavior was unacceptable, so he had beaten her 'softly.' Nevertheless, she called Carlos, who came from Asunción and had the military put him in jail. Now, he said, the entire community was angry with Carlos. The elders, particularly, expressed disappointment in Carlos' untraditional behavior, since he should have dealt with the problem within the community and through the *tobich*. As a result of all this, Fermin continued, the community was going to dismiss Carlos as leader.

Fermin had gathered the support of many of the villagers, but for reasons different from those he mentioned. More than supporting him, they acquiesced with another reason to dismiss Carlos. Beyond his successes in furthering the traditionalist cause, Carlos' leadership was criticized by his tendency to direct the benefits of dealing with the National

Society toward his family. Also, his long absences from the village were motives of criticism.[76] Since 1993, I have heard bitter complaints against Carlos due to these absences and because of his preference for his closer relations. However, the distribution of benefits was still wide enough to avoid a general animosity towards him. The following is a schematic idea of the types of benefits, and the methods of distribution.

The benefits can be grouped in two classes: material goods and jobs. The first group includes motorboats, cows, ox-carts, materials for construction such as barbed wire, cement and pipelines, windmills, water pumps, etc. According to some villagers, these benefits always ended up in the hands or under the supervision of a close relative of Carlos, usually his stepfather or half brother.[77] The jobs that Carlos offered mainly consisted of fishing (for which he provided the tools, such as nets and skiff),[78] and handicrafts, which he was in charge of commercializing. With these jobs, villagers complemented other subsistence activities, such as hunting, lumbering and working (on an sporadic basis) for the Paraguayans. Although he widely assigned these appointments, some people felt they did not receive anything from Carlos. The people agreeing with

---

[76]Carlos spends more than half the year in Asuncion, where he has a house and his children attend school.

[77]One year, ACIP donated a water pump to the community. The next year, Fermin was using it as his private property. When asked why they permitted this, the people answered that Carlos placed his stepfather in charge of the pump, and Fermin later claimed the pump had broken and that he had paid to repair it. Since then, he had used it as his property.

[78]Apparently, these means of production came from Carlos' savings from his INDI salary.

Fermin were those who thought they had experienced systematic neglect in the distribution of benefits. Curiously, these same people had complained before about Fermin's authoritarianism, egotism, and greediness. Among these people were three of the four elders who were in charge of the initiatory ritual, and supposedly more informed about traditions.

Fermin attempted to gain my support. He insisted that I take a position on the issue; others also tried to see which side I would adopt. I clearly stated that I would not take a position, that it was an internal matter that the community should solve without my participation. Then the villagers asked if I was going to 'go away with the projects' in case they replaced Carlos. I answered that I considered working with the community and, if they decided to change the leader, I would still work with them. This seemed to satisfy the opposition to Carlos, since they stopped insisting that I take a position, after assuring my neutrality.

A few days later, I went to Asunción to interview the representative of the European Union. Carlos, who had a good relationship with this individual, had arranged the interview. By the end of the meeting it was clear that our project could get financial support, but that first the representative should visit the village to get a personal idea of what was happening there. We agreed that I would ask Carlos to invite this person in the near future, whereupon I returned to the village.

While I was in Asunción, Carlos had also returned to the village. When I arrived, all the characters of this political drama were on stage. Now it was Carlos' turn to try to co-opt my support. He justified his behavior, saying that the villagers were tired of Fermin's authoritarian manner, and by beating the teacher he was a bad example to the children when the elders were trying to educate them! Fermin behaved outside tradition since he did not discuss with the *tobich* the supposed bad behavior of the teacher, nor receive approval from the elders to punish her. In Carlos' view, the problem was 'family business', and he related a series of rancorous misunderstandings that went back a long time.

In the next few days the village was a boiling pot of gossip, rumors, and visits between houses. Carlos kept me informed of his research on traditions. Each evening he took Lekecito, the oldest man in the village, and tape-recorded long interviews about traditional norms. He described to other villagers and myself certain norms that supported his actions. As a counterattack, the other elders organized a meeting in the *tobich* in which every man, including me, should participate. The meeting was supposedly to evaluate how the work in the museum was progressing, and to pay the salaries for the week. The election of the place surprised me, since the community usually conducted these meetings at the school. Carlos declined to go, on the basis that 'Lekecito said' that, after the initiatory ritual, the *tobich* must remain closed. Besides, it was not a place to treat profane matters: "the *tobich* is a sacred place." Neither Carlos nor his followers attended the meeting on this basis. The others argued that traditionally the *tobich* was the place to treat

any issue of interest to the community.

Later a friend from the village explained that the reasons given for attending or not attending the meeting were not the real ones. He said that Fermin and his supporters had tried to use the meeting in the *tobich* to discuss the continuity of Carlos as a leader. What difference would it make to hold the discussion inside or outside the *tobich*? The participation of the women made the difference. The Chamacoco strictly separated women from sacred spaces. Carlos had good support among the women because they benefit most from the handicraft trade, as they are the artisans in the village. Both groups knew this. For Carlos' opponents, the only way to secure a victory was to divide his followers. By meeting in the *tobich* they would accomplish two strategic goals: to remove women from the discussion, and to attract Carlos' male followers to the meeting. There, by virtue of being a minority, they could be influenced against the leader.

Carlos escaped the trap and the next day he took the initiative. He called a general meeting to address my interview with the European Union representative and the perspectives for our development project. He introduced the meeting by clarifying that **he** had arranged my interview with **his friend** from the European Union and that **he had to invite** him for a visit that could improve our chances of obtaining funding. He followed by saying that this project could only proceed if there were **unity and agreement** in the community. To ensure that the project could go ahead, the people should talk openly in order to determine **if he should or should not invite his friend to visit the village**. Only

Fermin spoke against Carlos. He stated that for him there was no leader, that he would proceed without considering what Carlos did or said. Venancio (the *konsaho*) supported him. Others spoke about the need for unity now that a possibility existed for a project that could help. They supported the idea (presented by an elder) of having the *tobich* collaborate more closely with Carlos on internal matters. The meeting continued for approximately three hours and then people began to leave, having implicitly settled that Carlos was still the leader.

This struggle illuminates multiple interesting aspects of the politics of traditionalism performed in Ajateri. It involved the discussion of what was and was not traditional, the recourse to different sources of authority, and the ever-present 'shadow dialogues'[79] with the Whites.

The first aspect of the struggle is that it took place within the discursive framework of traditionalism. The two main characters, Carlos and Fermin, addressed their audiences (including me) in those terms. It is especially clear in the event in which Fermin tried to induce Carlos' followers to the meeting in the *tobich*. During that episode nobody except my friend talked explicitly of the exclusion of women. The whole discussion was explicitly around the traditionalism of meeting in the *tobich* for the end expressed.

---

[79]I have borrowed the term from Crapanzano (1992: 96). Although some connections exist between our uses of the term, here it strictly refers to the implicit presence of a third party (the Global Society) in the dialogue between the two parties.

Traditionalism provided the perfect discursive instrument to generate unity within Fermin's faction.[80] He could not have gained support on the basis of the (supposed) inequity of Carlos (of which Fermin was, in the eyes of many, the main beneficiary). However, the elders accepted this neutralized language allowing the establishment of "a practical consensus between agents[. . .]having partially or totally different interests" (Bourdieu 1991:40), because it gave them a central role in the resolution of the problem, therefore increasing their influence on political matters.

Carlos had to play Fermin's game, because otherwise he would have had to face the implicit reasons Fermin's supporters had for opposing him (i.e., his bias toward his family). Therefore, I concur with Scott (1990:25-27) that any space considered has its own public and hidden transcript. For example, Heath (1990:214) pointed out (for factional practices) that struggles between opposing groups take place outside public view since "politics of reputation on which factions are built must be conducted delicately; today's adversaries are tomorrow's potential political companions."

It is interesting that both individuals deferred to the authority of the elders to prove their positions, since it would signal a new status for them. In a context in which tradition is valuable, the elders regained part of the power lost in the near past. The politics of

---

[80]Carstens (1991:158-159) points out that "[f]actions are important because they constitute the informal and unstructured associations for channelling conflict", and coincidentally, among the Okanagan, they "owe their origin to locality and people's perception of their past."

traditionalism, with all their benefits (projects, counter-alienation, control over the past), has its climax with the significant re-enactment of the initiatory ritual, but also with the first serious threat to Carlos' leadership. In this sense, Carlos' traditionalist rhetoric had a performative quality. It empowered the elders who, at the time that the traditional *tobich* was re-inaugurated, claimed a re-inauguration of their traditional central role in the decision-making of the community. The changes occurring in the village since my first visit created the conditions for them to abandon their pragmatic resignation. Although the conflict ended favorably for Carlos, the elders had made an important point: they decided to take an active role beyond the rhetorical one assigned to them by Carlos' traditionalism.

Thus, Carlos found himself in a situation of contesting the traditions sustained by Fermin's allies. Their disagreement over what was and was not traditional, supports in principle the theoretical position that all traditions are "constructed in the present and reflect contemporary concerns and purposes rather than a passively inherited legacy" (Linnekin 1991:447). This view is valuable in that it highlights the contemporary quality of 'uses of the past'. However, it is also flawed in that it does not realize that tradition is not about construction or inventions, but about the authority of certain interpretations of the past.

The process of disagreement with a particular tradition, and its resolution, points to the conditions for a certain interpretation to be authoritative. The past is not a symbolic resource to mold at will (Appadurai 1981); readings of it obey regularities of the

discursive field in which such interpretations are embedded. To discuss tradition, Carlos had to sustain his interpretation through the authorized voice of Lekecito, since within the traditionalist discourse, one of the regularities is that the elders know about traditions.[81] Playing the game within more or less flexible limits, the other elders dismissed Lekecito's account of tradition based on his senility.

Under this circumstance, Carlos had to shift the terrain on which the conflict was progressing, from tradition to development. In a thoroughly traditionalist sense, authority rests in the hands of the elders, not in those of *letrados*. Within a traditionalist terrain, the community could challenge the basis on which Carlos maintained his power (i.e., knowledge of the National Society). The attitude of the opposition can be considered 'resistance' in Chamber's (1991:xv) sense. Now, two events account for the limits imposed externally on the possible actions the community (or the faction) can develop, based on certain interpretations of tradition. The first was the opposition's attempt to secure either my complicity or neutrality. This points to that faction's need to clear the field of strange elements in order to proceed with their purely traditional opposition without fear of consequences (i.e., that 'my' projects would go with Carlos). The second event is Carlos' use of his relationship with the European Union representative to isolate his stepfather by threatening the community with the suspension of a big project. This strategy goes in the opposite direction of the clearing of the field by Carlos' opposition.

---

[81]Other examples of regularities would be that the Chamacoco have a right to the land because the Whites stole it, or that the ancient culture is valuable.

These events illuminate connections between 'the fragment' (the local politics of traditionalism) and the 'field' (the global field in which such politics are embedded), that Comaroff and Comaroff (1992:17) view as the greatest analytic challenge. The shadow dialogues with the Global Society's powerful institutions and agents point to the global political economy's weight in the local village, as it limits traditionalism's ability to reshape power relations.

11. Conclusions to Part Four

Scott (1985:xv) has noted that "most subordinated classes throughout most of history have rarely been afforded the luxury of open, organized, political activity." Therefore, they develop what the author calls 'everyday forms of resistance' (such as imaginary reversal of the society's status, resignification of Christian symbols, etc.). The particular character (opposition or resistance) that struggles for power adopts depends significantly upon the conditions of the discursive field.

Without the hegemonic coincidence among the National Society's agents, the emergence of open, organized political activity was possible. Chamacoco traditionalism as a political agenda is the result of the end of that hegemonic coincidence. One could ask if historical consciousness existed prior to this activity. The answer is 'yes' and 'no'. 'Yes', because the historical consciousness expressed in traditionalism draws from preexisting modes of opposition. Many of these modes subtly link to the *monexne* of the Anabsero

(now the central symbol of traditionalism). 'No', because these previous modes of opposition were intended to 'work the system to their minimum disadvantage', not to change the existing power-system. In this sense, historical consciousness is inescapably embodied in the experience of articulating those modes of opposition into a political agenda that, by means of the practice, manifests the constructed character of a power-system.

It is not just coincidental that the community challenged Carlos' oppositional traditionalism[82] exactly when reviving the ritual of initiation. This rebirth is a visible symbol of an alternative power-system, of another logic of power relations. Any traditionalist agenda among Indigenous people carried out to its final consequences must render obvious, by contrast, the arbitrariness of the basis on which the current social order rests. Then it may transform itself into a movement of resistance.

However, the resolution of the struggle in the village clarifies the limits that local resistance has by virtue of being enmeshed in a global power-system. The use of another logic of power relations is restricted, since the local character of the resistance does not touch (nor has enough power to do it on its own) the basis on which the global power-system rests. This brings into focus the need for alliances among local resistance in order

---

[82]By 'oppositional traditionalism' I mean a political agenda that, by rhetorically complying with the radical *indigenistas*' idea of traditionalism, seeks a better position within the system without necessarily questioning the power-system.

to be effective.

FINAL REFLECTIONS

Rather than a conclusion that will entail significant repetition, I present here a series of reflections that the Chamacoco case has triggered in me. These comments more closely resemble an incipient program for future research than a well-founded argument. The reader will forgive assertions that appear unfounded, and consider them as insights rather than conclusions.

The process that leads to the formation of the World System enabled the unification of discursive fields that is basic to the imposition of certain discourses as dominant. The unification of discursive fields does not mean the random aggregation of different discursive fields, but does mean the intention of hierarchically ordering them. In the Chamacoco case (which serves as a particular example of a general process) an independent discursive field was incorporated into a larger field and allocated the lowest positions. At certain moments almost no direct evidence of it was clearly visible.

By contrast with Europe, where hegemonic activities paved the way to power for the bourgeoisie (Gramsci 1971:57), in the colonial Americas the exercise of power preceded any attempt of hegemonic activity. In Europe a field, through successive stakes, produced the apparition of the state. In America the state (representing the dominant group), through intervention, created the conditions for the formation of a unified field. In

our case, coercion has been the inseparable companion of hegemony since the beginning. The preservation of the status quo is accomplished by the permanent menace of punishment (symbolized in the Chamacoco area by the military), especially over those groups less benefited by the system.

The legitimating effect of hegemony depends also on a coincidence of interests among the dominant group. Once the coincidence disappears, the way is clear for opposition to transform into resistance, to shift from challenging a particular round of the game to challenging the legitimacy of the game. Still, as the Chamacoco case shows, the particular array of power positions in the field limits the scope of this challenge.

We have discussed how the traditionalist agenda became linked with a global movement such as the environmentalists. Within this broad movement we can discern different tendencies. One of them is to seek changes in the mode of production to avoid the depletion of natural resources, but without necessarily changing the social relations of production. The search is for a change in the technological base of the capitalist society, allowing the economic system to avoid the consequences of earth's resource depletion (produced by the industrialist period) without having to change the power-system.

In developing countries such as Paraguay, those groups that still support industrialist development oppose this shift. For example, the canalization of the Paraguay River is supported by the industrial associations of the countries involved (and their

international partners). However, the European Union representative, who supports resource conservation, and therefore ecologically sustainable development, is sceptical about the project.

A shift in material technologies corresponds to a shift in abstract or immaterial technologies in the Foucauldian sense. This suggests a change in the art of government; the triangle "sovereignty-discipline-government, with the population as its target" (Foucault 1991:102), is being replaced by the triangle 'autonomy-information-management', with resources as its target.

Sovereignty, in Foucault's view, seeks "the common welfare and the salvation of all" through attainment of the rules and laws of the sovereign (Foucault 1991:94). The end of sovereignty is the exercise of sovereignty itself, since its rules and laws define the common welfare and salvation. Sovereignty is the search and exercise of a right to rule and legislate that a power gives itself over a certain population and territory.[83]

We can accept that 'common welfare' is concordant with the interest of the

---

[83]This view of sovereignty is suitable for Latin America and our case in particular. After the independence from Spain the new states proclaimed their sovereignty even over territories clearly under Native control and overlapping with other states' sovereignty claims. For sovereignty, what counts first is the right, and second the exercise of the right, the latter being crucial when the first is seriously challenged. An example is the long conflict about sovereignty over the Chaco between Paraguay and Bolivia. This conflict ended in a war when both states began to develop policies aimed at the actual exercise of sovereignty. These policies were developed after the consolidation of the states, when expansion (or actual exercise of sovereignty) was vital in the competence for supremacy among the regional states.

dominant groups and not necessarily with that of subordinated groups. Therefore, the exercise of sovereignty, in our case, was indivisible from disciplinary policies, because to fulfill the interests of the dominant group the Chamacoco (among other Indigenous people) had to allow the disciplinary institutions (missions, schools, tannin factories, armies) to transform them into productive members of society.

Closing the triangle, 'government' as presented by Foucault is a relatively late outcome in the area. The maximum degree of intervention represented by the construction of a *savoir* such as statistics only appeared in the 1980s (INDI 1981), and overlapped with the first emerging tendencies toward the technological shift discussed here.[84] As discussed in Part Three, the political instability of the 1970s and the economic crisis of the 1980s required the increased involvement of the Paraguayan state in Indigenous affairs. This involvement had its momentum with the first Indian Census in 1981. The intensification of State intervention also related to increasing preoccupation with the situation of Indigenous people in Paraguay, which was part of the general preoccupation about Native people in International Arenas.

This preoccupation was associated with the conservation of the environment, especially when traditional cultures appeared to be the more 'environmentally friendly' adaptation for human beings. In many cases the support to Indigenous people's

---

[84]This belated application of statistics implies its relative uselessness to accomplish the ends of the different agents who influence the design of State policies.

traditionalism is just a euphemism for keeping access to natural resources that are in danger of disappearing. Viewing this project within the field of international relations, clearly issues of sovereignty are at stake, and it will not be surprising if advocacy for greater Native autonomy parallels biodiversity conservation's plans. Then the first side of the triangle: 'autonomy'.

The second side of the triangle, 'information', replaces 'discipline'; as resources (including human resources) are the targets, qualitative knowledge about them as a system allows the managers to apply minimal interventions to keep the system in a state of homeostasis. The objective is to balance the elements of the system to optimize the conservation of resources. Therefore, it is unnecessary to constrain them into a pattern (that was the function of discipline) but to let the resources develop their 'natural potentilities'.

'Management,'[85] a form of maximum control over resources through minimum intervention, completes the triangle. This requires precise information on the function of the system, to predict and resolve imbalances well before they became critical. In human resources the idea is to harmonize its needs with the equilibrium of the environment (i.e., traditional modes of production).[86]

---

[85]Donzelot (1991:251-280) discusses management of work conditions in a similar fashion as myself.

[86]Indigenous people can be seen further as resources to exploit if we consider the patenting of cell lines that emerges from research sponsored by the Human Genome Diversity

This last point relates to another aspect of these processes that the struggle in the village illuminates: the external limits to the freedom of 'human resources' to develop their 'natural potentialities'. The limit imposed to the traditionalist challenge of the basis of leadership shows the influence that particular arrays of power positions have on how much freedom the Chamacoco have to develop their 'natural potentialities'. The subordinated position of the Chamacoco put their limits to initiatives internally generated. This seems to be the destiny of the local initiatives within the new scheme of autonomy-information-management. One wonders what faction would have supported the European Union representative, provided that he did not have a special relationship with Carlos and had witnessed the struggle. Indeed, one of his biggest concerns about our project was that in the best scenario the community would be able to produce enough to participate in the circuits of commercialization. For him this was out of the question. The program would finance the project only with subsistencial purposes. I suspect that a truly traditional traditionalism[87] would have appealed to him, and the result of the struggle would be very different.

Project (HGDP) (see Cultural Survival 1996). I found a document on the Internet that Rural Advancement Foundation International (RAFI) attributes to HGDP, which lists Indigenous groups from around the world as priority targets for genetic research. Among the groups listed are the Chamacoco.

[87]I am thinking of a traditionalism that hypothetically could drive the community to resume a hunter-gatherer way of life. From a naive point of view (naiveté that is part of the apriori labelling of traditional cultures as 'ecologically friendly') the more visible traditionalism is more likely to have this final result. In our case, the village would have identified the elders in charge of the ritual as truly traditionalist.

The new scheme leaves the local village to become whatever it wants (moreover, it probably will be stimulated to do so), as long as that does not include improving its position within the system. Instead of trying to model Indigenous people after the western *Homo aeconomicus*, now the goal is to divert these people from the system. Why? Because the pursuit of a better position within the rules (regularities) of the system threatens the system itself, by depleting its material bases: resources.

Due to this situation, and paradoxically, local resistance (the challenge to the power-system at the local level) as attempted by the elders in Ajateri, came to be functional to the triangle autonomy-information-management. By trying to play another game with other rules, the autonomous local village relieves the system of part of its pressure while on a global scale the basis of the power-system remains untouched.[88] Thus, subordinated groups living in an artificial paradise persist in being dependent on the more powerful actor's changes of humour.

However, these tendencies to produce change in order to keep the fundamental the same must unfold against other tendencies whose description would take more space than we have here. It should be enough for illustrative purposes to say that amid these other tendencies there is room for opposition and resistance due to the high fragmentation of the field. Nevertheless, the more powerful actors are in a better position to make the field

---

[88]The technique of stimulating the games that are harmonious with the final goal of resource conservation would be an example of minimal intervention.

work to their benefit. The Chamacoco case illustrates that the chance of producing change that returns to local communities the power to define their destiny depends on their capacity to link their local resistance in a polymorphic movement able to generate a challenge in a global scale.[89]

---

[89]This strategy had a symbolic starting point for me with the Zapatistas's call for the organization of a *Consulta Intercontinental por la Humanidad y contra el Neoliberalismo* (See EZLN).

APPENDIX

When Majito was a child, ten years old or so, he used to walk in the riverside. He liked to make little holes in the mud, holes with cunt's shape. Then he would fuck those holes. Once, some people saw him fucking the mud and went to tell his uncle, "Majito is fucking the mud!!!" They said to his uncle. "Oh no! Again this piece of shit is doing that." Then he went were Majito was and beat him very much. Majito run into the forest. He run very angry. Once he reached the forest, he found some 'trocillos' [cut pieces of palm tree trunk], he accommodated them around him and begun to talk with them as if they were his wives, "You come here and clean the lice off my head. You, move near me I want to rest over your waist." In such a way he was talking with the trunks when somebody saw him and run to tell his uncle, "Majito is talking with the trunks as if they were his wives!!!" The uncle went where Majito was talking with the trunks and beat him very hard and Majito run. He run to his sisters' house.

There were many beautiful girls where Majito was living. He wanted those girls but none of them wanted Majito. They asked Majito if he had songs and Majito sang but the girls laughed to Majito's songs. That night Majito went near the girls' house and begun singing very loud. Then he asked, "There is somebody who heard my song." Nobody answered, everybody was sleeping. Then Majito sang louder and louder and each time he finished he asked if somebody have heard his song. When he was sure that everybody was deeply slept he said, "Now you are going to see . . . I will fuck all of you." Thus, Majito entered the house and take off the panties of one girl and fucked her, then he took off other girl's panties and fucked her too, and so he did with all the five girls. While he was fucking the girls he changed their panties to each other.

In the morning the girls awaked and saw that they have the panties changed and all dirty with blood. Then they realized that Majito had fucked them. The mother of the girls beat them very much. The girls were very angry and decided to trap Majito and punish him. They started a game inside their room. They made a lot of noise and attracted Majito who approached his head to the window trying to see. "Hi Majito! Come inside to play with us" said the girls. "No thank you I just will see from here" said Majito. The girls kept playing and making noise, Majito was very curious and was entering his head more and more through the window. Suddenly one of the girls that was hiding behind Majito run and pushed him throughout the window. The girls caught Majito and took off his clothes, one of them has piranha teeth and started to lacerate his body. "Ay, ay!! No my balls please, no!!!" said Majito. And the girl passed the teeth by his balls. "Ay, ay!! No my ass please, no!!" said Majito. And the girl passed the teeth by his ass. They hurt Majito very much, all over his body. And Majito run, all broken he run, to the forest he run.

Majito was a long time in the forest, he didn't want to come out. It was night when he came out. He was all painted with an orange paint that the ancient people used. He went to his sister house. The sister was very worried because Majito didn't come, "where did

you go? I don't know what happened to you, I was very worried." "I am going to hunt very early in the morning with our uncle. He says I have to paint myself with this colour in order not to scare the carpincho [capivara]", said Majito. "OK then go to sleep because you have to awake very early tomorrow." The next day his sister saw that Majito was still sleeping, she call the other sister and said to her, "go and awake Majito! Our uncle must have gone by now!!" When the little sister went to Majito's bed he begun to scream, "Ay, ay, ay." The older sister run towards the bed and lift up the mosquito bed and saw Majito's face all broken, "What you have done to our brother?" she said to the younger sister. Then both sisters begun to fight because of Majito. Majito make them fight. The uncle appeared there, when he heard the noise of the fight, he thought, "this is Majito who is making troubles again." When he arrived there beat Majito very much and Majito run, run to the forest.

Then Majito was growing. He had three friends, like brothers [agalo]. These three guys had beautiful wives and Majito wanted to fuck them, but they didn't want Majito. One day another brother who lived in other village died and Majito thought of going for the wife of this guy. He convinced his other brothers to go with him. So, when they arrived in the village Majito asked for the widow and went to see her. "I am worry that you are going to marry other guy and the children of my brother are going to be mistreated. Why don't you marry me? I promised to take care of my brother's kids and of you." In that way talked Majito to the widow. He talked and talked until he convinced her to have sex. At dawn Majito said he has to go pee, he was laying. He took his horse and ride to the other village. When he arrived went to see the wives of his brothers. " I am very angry! Your husbands fucked my sister-in-law!! Now, in revenge we have to fuck too!!" said Majito. After he have sex with both women he took his horse and run. When the other guys came back they asked for Majito. "He was here and told us that you fucked his sister-in-law. Then we fucked with him to teach you a lesson" said the wives. The husbands were very angry and beat the women very much. That was a big fight, everybody got angry. Then Majito escaped. He went with the White.

1

"Then Majito went to the Paraguayan's house. When he arrived there he asked the Paraguayan if there was some job for him. "OK Majito I have a work for you. Come tomorrow morning and you will clean off my *chacra* [crops]." The Paraguayan have a lot of fruit trees and vegetables, oranges, corn, watermelon, mamon. The next morning Majito appeared there and was ready to work. The Boss gave him an axe and told him I want you to clean my crop very well. Then Majito was alone and he started to cut down everything. He cut down the fruit trees, the vegetables, everything. He doesn't know, he is like that, he doesn't know that he have to clear the bad weed. He just cleaned off everything. When he finished he called the boss, "It is done boss, come on to see my work!!" The boss came and begun crying and shouting, "what have you done idiot!! I told you to clean my crop not to cut it down!! Oh god!! My crop, my crop!! I am not going to pay you anything, run away from here, Go!!. And Majito run."

2

"Majito arrived to this boss' place. He said, "Hello boss, do you have some work I can do. I want to work I need to buy some food for me." "Yes, Majito, I need you to make a pig-pen for me. Come tomorrow morning and I will give you the tools for the job." Next morning Majito came very early to see his boss. "Hello Majito, here you have the tools. I want you to make a nice pig-pen here in the backyard." When Majito was alone he took the pigs one by one and cut their tails; the pigs run desperately towards the forest. Majito made small holes in the soil and stabbed the tails on them. Then he scream, boss!! boss!! Come here quickly, I don't know what is happening with the pigs[. . .]!!" The boss came and saw the little tails appearing in the soil's surface. "What have you done Majito?! Where is the pig-pen, what happen with my pigs, what have you done beast. I have to rescue my pigs" said the Boss while pushing the tails out. "Don't do that boss!!! the pigs will sink to the bottom!!"said Majito laughing. Then he run away."

3

"Majito went to other Paraguayan asking for job. This boss had two beautiful daughter of whom he was very jealous. Majito went there and asked for a job. The boss said "yes I want you to assist me while I fish. Come tomorrow morning and I will go fishing." Next day Majito went with the boss to the river that was in the front of the house, some 200 metres distant. They begun fishing until the boss caught a piranha that cut his line. He changed the line but another piranha cut it again. He had no more hooks so he asked Majito to go to the house for two extra hooks. Majito went to the house and when he arrived there he said to the boss' daughter, " Your father said I have to come and fuck you both." "What?!" they screamed, "it cannot be possible since our father is very jealous of us. He is not going to give us to somebody like you." "If you don't believe me let us go and ask him" said Majito heading to the front of the house. From there he shouted the boss, "Didn't you tell me to fuck both of your daughters?", shouted Majito with his hand up showing two fingers. The boss who could not hear him very well thought that Majito was asking if he had to bring to hooks. Moving his head affirmatively the boss shouted "Yes, yes idiot!! I told you two hooks." Majito and the girls could not hear the boss but they could see his affirmative gesture. "Do you see, I am not lying to you, he told me to fuck you both. Then move to the room I am going to do so!!" After Majito finished he run away. Tied of waiting for Majito the boss went to the home where he found the girls crying, "Why did you make Majito to fuck us, are you stupid or what?" "What do you say? I just asked for two hooks!!" Then he went after Majito.

Majito was running and running to escape from the boss. He passed by a pig-pen and killed a pig, cut its stomach and put the tripes under his shirt. Then kept running. When he arrived to a house he call "There is somebody here?" A woman came out. "Somebody is following me, when he arrived tell him that if he want to catch me he will have to get as light as I am" and while saying that Majito cut his shirt letting the tripes fall in the floor. Then he kept running. When the boss arrived to this woman house he asked for Majito. "He passed by here but he said that if you want to catch him you will have to be as light as he is now. Look he took off all his tripes" said the woman pointing towards the tripes in

the floor. The boss said, "OK I will get as light as he is" and by saying so he cut his stomach killing himself."

4
"One day the boss awaked and told his wife, " I am tired of Majito and his tricks. I am going to kill him." Then he called an assistant and told him to bring a cow skin and to call Majito. Majito came where the boss was, "Yes boss, what is what you want?" "Look Majito, you are a liar and cheater and because of that I am going to kill you. Now you go and get into that cow skin that my assistant is going to sow, tomorrow morning we are going to throw you into the river.
"OK boss", said Majito and enter into the skin. Then the assistant sow it and hang it from a tree near the river. During the night Majito saw a Brazilian walking around. Majito begun to call him. "Who is there" the Brazilian said. 'It is me, Majito." "What are you doing inside there?" the Brazilian asked. "The boss put me here as a punishment because I don't want to marry his daughter and tomorrow he is going to throw me into the river." "But are you stupid or what? The daughter of the boss is beautiful and wealthy, why don't you marry her?" "I don like because I am poor and I don't feel comfortable among the rich. I am not going to marry her even if they kill me!!" "To bad I am not in your place, if I were you I would marry her" said the Brazilian. "Why don't you enter here and tomorrow when the boss came and ask you if you agree to what he wants you say yes" proposed Majito. "OK brother lets do that" said the Brazilian freeing Majito from the skin and replacing him. Majito run away.

The next morning the boss picked up the skin and brought it to the middle of the river. Before throwing the skin into the river he asked, "Do you agree with what I want to do with you?" "Yes, yes!!" said the Brazilian. And the boss throw him in the water.

Majito went to other boss ranch. This boss wanted to sell three hundred cows and forty horses. Majito said " I know who will buy these animals, if you want boss I will carry them and sell them." The boss agree with that and gave Majito the animals. In the way Majito sold twenty horse and with the money bought the more expensive clothes and jewelleries. Then he headed to his former boss ranch. When he was near there the boss' wife said, "is not Majito who is coming there?" " No, I already told you that I killed Majito" said the boss. "Well, the one who is coming with all those cows looks very much as Majito." "It cannot be Majito[. . .]" insisted the boss. But it was Majito. When he arrived where the boss was he got down of the horse, "hello boss, I came to thank you that you throw me into the river because in the bottom there is a lot of people living, and they are very rich. They have a lot of cows and nice houses. They loved me as a son and they gave me these clothes and a lot of food. But I missed you very much, and also your wife and you daughter, then I wanted to come back. They gave me these cows. Thank you boss for throwing me into the river." "It is true what are you telling me my son? There is really rich people in the river, and they give cows and clothes" asked the boss. "Yes, truly. If you want to go I put you into a skin and throw you into the river." "OK Majito but wait I am going to put my better clothes." Then the boss enter into a skin that Majito brought to the

middle of the river. "Now you will see asshole" said Majito throwing the boss into the river.

After some month the boss' wife was worry about her husband. "You better forget your husband", said Majito, "for sure he already married other woman there. Don't you know that the women there are all young and beautiful?" "Then Majito bring me the rifle and prepare a skin. I am going to look for that son of a bitch." Majito did so, and when in the middle of the river with the woman inside the skin he said, "now you die also, piece of shit." Then Majito married the daughter of the boss and remained as the ranch's boss."

Bibliography

Aberle, D.
1970 "A note on relative deprivation theory as applied to millenarian and other cult movements" in Thrupp, S. (ed) *Millenial Dreams in Action. Studies in Revolutionary Religious Movements*, 207 - 214. Shocken Books: New York.

Alarcon y Canedo, J. and R. Pittini
1924 *El chaco paraguayo y sus tribus*. Sociedad Editora Internacional.

Alcina Franch, J.
1990 "El Indianismo de Fray Bartolome de Las Casas" in Alcina Franch eds. *Indianismo e indigenismo en America*, 34 - 44. Alianza Editorial: Madrid.

Appadurai, A.
1981 "The Past as a Scarce Resource". *Man* (N.S.)16:201 -219.

Arcand, B.
1981 "God is an American" in In S. Hvalkof and P. Aaby (Eds.) *Is God an American?*, 77 - 84. IWGIA and Survival International. London, Copenhagen.

Arens, A. (Ed.)
1976 *Genocide in Paraguay*. Temple University Press: Philadelphia.

1978 *The forest Indians in Stroessner's Paraguay: survival or extinction?*. London: Survival International (Document no. 4).

Asad, T.
1986 "The concept of Cultural Translation".In Clifford, J. & E.Marcus, *Writing Cultures: The poetics and politics of ethnography*, 149 - 164. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Babcock-Abrahams, B.
1975 "A Tolerated Margin of Mess: The Trickster and His Tales Reconsidered." *Journal of the Folklore Institute* 11: 147- 186.

1978 "Introduction" in Babcock B. (Ed.) *The Reversible World. Symbolic Inversion in Art and Society*. Cornell University Press: Ithaca and London.

Bakhtin, M.

1971 "Discourse Typology in Prose". In L. Matejka & P.Steiner (Eds.), *Readings in Russian Poetics: Formalists and structuralist views*, 176 - 196. Cambridge: MIT Press.

Baldus, H.
1927 "Os indios Chamacoco e a sua lingua". *Revista do museo Paulista* 15 (2).

1931 "Indianerstudien im Nordostlichen Chaco", *Forschungen zur Volkerpsychologie und Soziologie*, XI. Leipzig.

1932 "Beitrage zur Sprachenkunde der Samuko-Gruppe". *Anthropos* 27.

Barbrooke Grubb, W.
1993 [1911] *Un pueblo desconocido en tierra desconocida*. Biblioteca Paraguaya de Antropologia Vol. XIX.

Barth, F.
1987 *Cosmologies in the making: A generative approach to cultural variation in inner New Guinea*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Basso, E.
1987 *In favor of deceit. A study of Tricksters in an Amazonian society*. The University of Arizona Press, Tucson.

Beidelman, T.
1980 "The Moral Imagination of the Kaguru: Some thoughts on Tricksters, Translation, and Comparative Analysis". *American Ethnologist* 7:27 - 42.

Belaieff, J.
1941 "Los Indios del Chaco Paraguayo y su tierra". *Revista de la Sociedad Cientifica del Paraguay* Vol. 3.

1946 "The present-day indians of the Gran Chaco". In Steward J. (Ed.) *Handbook of South American Indians*, 371 - 380. United States Government Printing Office, Washington.

Bejarano, R.C.
1976 *Solucionemos Nuestro Problema Indigena con el I.N.D.I.*. Serie Estudios Antropologicos 6: Asuncion.

Berkhofer, R. F.
1979 *The White Man's Indian*. Vintage Books:New York

Blaser, M.
1991 Tape recorded interviews. Fieldwork season 1991.

1992 *Innovando Tradiciones: Estartegias para la supervivencia de la cultura local en el asentamiento Chamacoco de Palmares.* Tesis de Licenciatura, FfyL Universidad de Buenos Aires.

1994a ". . . Y ya se es Ishir: Tradicion e identidad en Palmares". In I Congreso Argentino de Americanistas *V Centenario del Descubrimiento de America (1492 - 1992)*, 57 - 72.. Liga Naval Argentina: Buenos Aires.

1994b El emerger de otras voces: Discursos globales y textos locales. En *Runa* 21: 83 - 97.

1994c Tape recorded interview with Emilio. Fieldork season 1994.

1995 Field notes and tape-recorded interviews. Fieldwork season 1995.

Bodley, J.
1982 *Victims of Progress*. Menlo Park: Benjamin/Cummings. 2nd ed.

Boggiani, G.
1894 *I Ciamacoco*. Societa Romana per l'Antropologia. Torino.

1895 *I Caduvei (Mbaya o Guaicuru)*. Roma.

1900 "Compendio de etnografia paraguaya moderna". *Revista del Instituto Paraguayo*, III, Asunción.

1929 *Vocabulario dell'idioma Ciamacoco. Anales de la Sociedad Cientifica Argentina*, Vol. 108.

Borofsky, R.
1987 *Making history: Pukapukan and Anthropological constructions of knowledge*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bourdieu, P.
1977 *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. Cambridge University Press.

1990 *The Logic of Practice*. Stanford University Press.

1991 *Language and Symbolic Power*. Edited and Introduced by J. Thompson. Harvard University Press: Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Bourdieu, P. and L. Wacquant
1992 *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*. The University of Chicago Press.

Bruner, E.
1986 "Ethnography as Narrative". In Turner, V. & E. Brunner *The Anthropology of Experience*, 139 - 155. U. Of Illinois Press: Urbana.

Burridge, K.
1969 *New Heaven, New Earth. A Study of Millenarian Activities*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Cano, G. et al
1981 *Los Nuevos Conquistadores. El Instituto Linguistico de Verano en America Latina*. CEDIS and FENOC, Quito.

Cardoso de Oliveira, R.
1990 "La politizacion de la identidad y el movimiento indigena" in Alcina Franch eds. *Indianismo e indigenismo en America*, 145 - 161. Alianza Editorial: Madrid.

Carrol, M.
1984 "The Trickster as a Selfish-Buffoon and Culture Hero". *Ethos* 12:2. (105 - 131).

Carstens, P.
1991 *The Queen's People. A Study of Hegemony, Coercion, and Accomodation among the Okanagan of Canada*. University of Toronto Press.

Casacia, G. et al
1986 *La lucha por la tierra en defensa de la vida. El pueblo Maskoy frente a Carlos Casado S.A.* Equipo Nacional de Misiones, Conferencia Episcopal Paraguaya, Asuncion.

Caso, A.
1958 "Ideals of an action program. National Indigenous Institute of Mexico: a report". *Human Organization* 17(1):27 - 29.

Chambers, R.
1991 *Room for Maneuver. Reading (the) Oppositional (in) Narrative*. The University of Chicago Press.

Chase-Sardi, M.
1972 "The Present Situation of the Indians in Paraguay". In W. Dostal (ed.) *The Situation of the Indians in South America*, 173 - 217. World Council of Churches, Geneva.

1987 *Derecho consuetudinario Chamacoco*. RP ediciones, Asunción.

1990 *El Derecho Consuetudinario Indigena y su Bibliografia Antropologica en el Paraguay*. Biblioteca Paraguaya de Antropologia, vol. 6, Asuncion.

Clifford, J. & E.Marcus (Eds.)
1986 *Writing Cultures: The poetics and politics of ethnography*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press

Comaroff, J. and J. Comaroff
1991 *Of Revelation and Revolution: Christianity, Colonialism, and Consciousness in South Africa*. Vol. 1. Chicago: Chicago University Press.

1992 *Ethnography and the Historical Imagination*. Westview Press: Boulder.

Cordeu, E.
1974 "La idea de mito en las expresiones narrativas de los indios Chamacoco o Ishir". *Scripta Ethnologica* 2(2): 75 - 117. Buenos Aires.

1978 "Los Monexne os lote de los indios Chamacoco o Ishir: La narrativa festiva y la vision etnosociologica de un grupo etnografico". *Relaciones de la Sociedad Argentina de Antropologia* (Buenos Aires) 12:19 - 34.

1984 "Categoria basicas, principios logicos y redes simbolicas de la cosmovision de los indios Ishir". *Journal of Latin American Lore* 10(2):189 - 275. Los Angeles.

1988 "Algunas etnocategorias narrativas de los ebidoso y los tomaraxo del Chaco Boreal". *Suplemento Antropologico* 24(1): 7 -77. Asuncion.

1989 "Aishtuwente. Las ideas de deidad en la religiosidad Chamacoco". *Suplemento Antropologico*: a, 24(1): 7- 77; b, 24(2): 51- 86; c, 1990 25(1): 119 - 211; d, 1991 26(1): 85 - 165; e, 26(2):145 - 233; f, 1992 27(1):187 -294; g, 1992 27(2):167 - 301.

1989h Los chamacoco o ishir del chaco boreal. Algunos aspectos de un proceso de desestructuración étnica. *América Indigena* 69(3):545 - 580.

1990 "Lo cerrado y lo abierto. Arquitectura cosmovisional y patron cognitivo de los tomaraxo del Chaco Boreal". *Scripta Ethnologica - Supplementa* 11:9-31. Buenos Aires.

1994 "Una version inedita de la saga de Basebuky". In I Congreso Argentino de Americanistas *V Centenario del Descubrimiento de America (1492 -*

1992), 15 - 29. Liga Naval Argentina: Buenos Aires.

Crapanzano, V.
1992 *Hermes' dilemma and Hamlet's desire: on the epistemology of interpretation*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Cultural Survival
1996 "Genes, People, and Property" in J. Firedlaender Guest Editor, *Cultural Survival Quarterly*, 20(2).

Davis, S. (Ed.)
1993 *The Social Challenge of Biodiversity Conservation*. The Global Environment Facility, Working Paper No.1.

Davis, S. and K. Ebbe (Eds.)
1994 *Traditional Knowledge and Sustainable Development*. Enironmentally Sustainable Development Proceedings Series No. 4. The World Bank, Washington, D.C.

Donzelot, J.
1991 "Pleasure in work". In G. Burchell, C. Gordon and P. Miller (Eds.) *The Foucault Effect. Studies in Governmentality*, 251 - 280. The University of Chicago Press.

Dumont, L.
1980 *Homo Hierarchicus. The Caste System and Its Implications*. The University of Chicago Press.

Escobar, T.
1989 *Ethnocide: Mission Accomplished?*. IWGIA Document no. 64. Copenhagen.

Eriksen, H.
1992 Multiple Traditions and the Question of Cultural Integration. *Ethnos* 57 (1-2): 5-30.

Evans-Pritchard, E.
1967 *The Zande Trickster*. Oxford:Clarendon Press.

Featherstone, M. (Ed.)
1990 *Global Culture. Nationalism, Globalization and Modernity*. London: Sage.

Fischer, J.
1986 "Ethnicity and the Post-Modern Arts of Memory". In Clifford, J. & E.Marcus, *Writing Cultures: The poetics and politics of ethnography*, 194 - 293. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Fiske, J.
1982 *An introduction to communication studies*. London:Methuen.

Foucault, M.
1980 *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews & other Writings*. C. Gordon ed. Pantheon Books: New York.

1991 "Politics and the study of discourse" and "Governmentality". In G. Burchell, C. Gordon and P. Miller (Eds.) *The Foucault Effect. Studies in Governmentality*, 53 - 72 and 87 - 104. The University of Chicago Press.

Fric, V.
1906 "Note on the mask-dances of the Chamacoco". *Man* No. 77.

Friedman, J.
1992 "The Past in the Future: History and the Politics of Identity". *American Anthropologist* 94(4):837 -859.

Gewertz, D. and F. Errington
1991 *Twisted histories, altered contexts; representing the Chambri in a World System*. Cambridge University Press: England.

Gramsci, A.
1971 *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*. Edited and translated by Q. Hoare and G. Nowell Smith. International ublishers: New York.

Gutierrez, G.
1988 *A Theology of Liberation*. Orbis Books: New York.

Handler, R. and J. Linnekin
1984 "Tradition, Genuine or Spurious". *Journal of American Folklore* 97: 273 - 290.

Hanson, A.
1989 "The Invention of the Maori: Culture Invention and its Logic". *American Anthropologist* 91:890 - 902.

Heat, D.
1990 "Spatial politics and verbal performance in urban Senegal". *Ethnology* 29(3): 209 -223.

Herken Krauer, J.
1984 *El Paraguay rural entre 1869 y 1913: Contribuciones a la historia economica regional del Plata.* Centro Paraguayo de estudios Sociologicos: Asuncion.

Hobsbawm, E.
1965 *Primitive Rebels: Studies in Archaic Forms of Social Movement in the 19th and 20th Centuries.* New York: Frederick Praeger.

Hobsbawm, E. & T. Ranger, eds.
1983 *The invention of tradition.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hollinsworth, D.
1992 "Discourses on Aboriginality and the politics of identity in urban Australia". *Oceania* 63:137 - 155.

Honko, L.
1986 "Studies on Tradition and Cultural Identity. An introduction". *Scandinavian Yearbook of Folklore*, 42: 7 -26.

Havalkof, S. and P. Aaby eds.
1981 *Is God an American? An Anthropological Perspective on the Missionary Work of the Summer Institute of Linguistics.* IWGIA: Copenhagen

Instituto Nacional Del Indigena
1981 *Censo y Estudio de la Poblacion Indigena del Paraguay.* Instituto Paraguayo del Indigena: Asuncion.

1985 *La Sociedad Nacional y las Comunidades Indigenas.* Instituto Paraguayo del Indigena: Asuncion.

1986 *Ley 904/81. Estatuto de las Comunidades Indigenas.* Instituto Paraguayo del Indigena: Asuncion.

International Work Group of Indigenous Aaffairs
1971 *Declaration of Barbados.* IWGIA- Document no.1. Copenhagen.

Jaimes, A. and G. Noriega
1988 " History in the Making: How Academia Manufactures the "Truth" about Native American Traditions". *Bloomsbury Review* 4(5):24 - 26.

Johansen, R.
1994 *The Narrative Secret of Flannery O 'Connor. The Trickster as Interpreter.*

The University of Alabama Press: Tuscaloosa.

Keesing, R.
1989 "Creating the Past: Custom and Identity in the Contemporary Pacific". *Contemporary Pacific* 1:19 -42.

Kidd, S.
1994 "Los Indigenas del Paraguay durante la transicion". *Revista Paraguaya de Sociologia*, Ano 1, No. 90: 209 - 229.

1995 "Land, politics and benevolent shamanism: The Enxet Indians in a democratic Paraguay". *The Journal of the Latin American Studies*, (27):43 - 75.

King, A. (Ed.)
1991 *Culture, Globalization and the World System. Contemporary Conditions for the Representation of Identity*. Current Debates in Art History, Three. Department of Art and Art History, State University of New York at Binghamton.

Konrad, Z.
1994 *Ewe Comic Heroes*. Trickster Tales in Togo. Garland Publishing, Inc.

Klapp, O.
1954 "The Clever Hero". *Journal of American Folklore*, 67(263):21 - 34.

Kurtz, D.
1996 "Hegemony and Anthropology. Gramsci, exegeses, reinterpretations". *Critique of Anthropology*, Vol. 16(2): 103 - 135.

Leeds-Hurwitz, W.
1993 *Semiotics and Communication: Signs, Codes, Cultures*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers.

Lewis, P.
1980 *Paraguay Under Stroessner*. The University of North Carolina Press: Chapel Hill.

Levi-Strauss, C.
1969 *The Elementary structures of kinship*. Beacon Press: Boston.

Linnekin, J.
1991 "Cultural Invention and the Dilemma of Authenticity". *American Anthropologist*, 93:446 - 449.

Loukotka, C.
1931 Die sprache der Zamucu und die Wierbandehafterhaltnisse der Chaco-stämme. *Anthropos*, 32: 115-230.

Lussagnet, S.
1961 "Vocabulaires Samuku, Morotoko, Poturero et Guaranoka, precedes d'une etude historique et geographique sur les anciens Samuku du Chaco bolivien et leur voisins". *Journal de la Societe des Americanistes*, 50:185 - 243.

Marx, C.
1970 *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*. New York: International Publishers.

Maybury-Lewis, D. and J. Lowe
1980 *The Indian People of Paraguay. Their plight and their prospects*. Special Report #2, Cultural Survival, Inc.

Metraux, A.
1943 "A myth of the Chamacoco indians and its social significance". *Journal of American Folklore*, 56: 113 - 129.

1946 "Ethnography of the Chaco". *Handbook of South American Indians*, 1: 197-379. Washington: Smithsonian Institution.

Miller, E.
1980 *Harmony and Dissonance in Argentine Toba Society*. Human Relations Area File, Inc. New Haven, Connecticut.

Munzel, M.
1973 "The Ache Indians, Genocide in Paraguay", *IWGIA* Document no. 11. Copenhagen.

1974 "The Ache, Genocide Continues in Paraguay", *IWGIA* Document no. 17. Copenhagen.

1976 "Manhunt". In R. Arens (ed.) *Genocide in Paraguay*. 19-45. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Murray, D.
1991 *Forked Tongues. Speech, writing & representation in North American Indian Texts*. Indiana University Press: Bloomington and Indianapolis.

Olberg, K.
1948 *The Terena and the caduveo of Southern Mato Grosso*, Brazil. Smithsonian Institution, Institute of Social Anthropology, Publication no. 9.

Olmedo, N.
1966 *El Chaco Paraguayo: Amparo de Civilizacion y Progreso*. Editorial de las Fuerzas Armadas, Asuncion.

Ossio, J. (Ed.)
1973 *Ideologia Mesianica del Mundo Andino*. Edicion de Ignacio Prado Pastor.

O'sullivan,T., Hartley,J., Saunders,D.,& Fiske, J. (Eds.)
1983 *Key concepts in communication*. London:Methuen.

Parodi, I.
1942 *Disquisiciones sobre la inmortalidad del cangrejo*. Editorial Plaza Las Heras: Buenos Aires.

Pastore, C.
1972 *La lucha por la tierra en el Paraguay*. Montevideo.

Perasso, J.
1987 *Cronicas de Cacerias Humanas. La Tragedia Ayoreo*. Asuncion: El Lector.

Pereira, L.
1981 "Go Forth to Every Part of the World and Make All Nations My Disciple. The Bolivian Instance". In S. Hvalkof and P. Aaby (Eds.) *Is God an American?*, 109- 120. IWGIA and Survival International. London, Copenhagen.

Philibert, Jean-Marc
1989 "Broken premises". *Anthropologica*, 31 (1): 45-63.

Plotnikov & Silverman
1979 "Jewish ethnic signaling: Social bonding in contemporary American society". *Ethnology*, 17 (4)

Rabey, M.
1993 "Learning from the Chamacoco". *Earthcorps Briefings*. Earthwatch: Massachusetts.

Rabey, M. y Blaser, M.
1994 "Contextos en conversacion: Los lideres etnicos y sus interlocutores". In G. Karasik (comp.) *Cultura e Identidad en el noroeste argentino*, 146 - 168.Centro Editor de America Latina.

Rabinow, P.
1986 "Representations are social Facts: Modernity and Post-Modernity in Anthropology". In Clifford, J. & E.Marcus, *Writing Cultures: The poetics and politics of ethnography*, 234 - 261. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Radin, P.
1972 *The trickster: A Study in American Indian Mythology*. New York: Schocken Books.

Reed, R.
1995 *Prophets of Agroforestry: Guarani Communities and Commercial Gathering*. University of Texas Press: Austin.

Regehr, W.
1983 *La situacion socio-economica de los Chamacoco del Alto Paraguay y el terreno de Puerto Melaza*. Conferencia Episcopal Paraguaya/Equipo Pastoral de Misiones. Asuncion.

Reyna, S.
1994 "Unsocial Analyses: Habitus, Hegemony, and Self". *Reviews in Anthropology*, Vol.23, pp. 189 -203.

Roett, R. and R. Sacks
1991 *Paraguay. The Personalist Legacy*. West View Press: Boulder, San Francisco, Oxford.

Rogers, W.
1967 *The Twilight Struggle. The Alliance for Progress and the Politics of Development in Latin America*. Random House: New York.

Rosaldo, R.
1989 *Culture and truth*. Boston: Beacon Press.

Rout, L.
1970 *Politics of the Chaco Peace Conference 1935 - 1939*. The University of Texas Press, Austin.

Sahlins, M.
1981 *Historical Metaphors and Mythical Realities. Structure in the Early History of the Sandwich Islands Kingdom*. The University of Michigan Press: Ann Arbor.

Schwartzman, S.
1984 "Indigenists, environmentalists and the multilateral development banks". *Cultural Survival Quaterly*, 8(4): 74 - 75.

Scott, J.
1985 *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

1990 *Domination and the Arts of Resistance. Hidden Transcripts*. Yale University Press: New Haven and London.

Scott, D.
1992 "Criticism and Culture. Theory and post-colonial claims on anthropological disciplinarity". *Critique of Anthropology*, Vol. 12(4):371 - 394.

Sequoya, J.
1993 "How(!) is an Indian?: A Contest of Stories". In A. Krupat ed. *New Voices in Native American Literary Criticism*. Smithsonian Institution Press: Washington and London.

Sosa, H.
1979 *El Chaco, gran desconocido de nuestro tiempo*. Direccion de Publicaciones de las Fuerzas Armadas, Asuncion.

Spadafora, A.
1994 "Movimientos Sociorreligiosos y lucha politica: el movimiento de 'La Buena Nueva' y la rebelion del '62 entre los Nivakle del Chaco Boreal Paraguayo". *Runa*, 21:301 - 315.

Stern, S.
1982 *Peru's Indian Peoples and the Challenge of Spanish Conquest. Huamanga to 1640*. The University of Wisconsin Press.

Stoll, D.
1981 "Words Can Be Used In So Many Ways". In S. Hvalkof and P. Aaby (Eds.) *Is God an American?*, 23 - 40. IWGIA and Survival International. London, Copenhagen.

Stravianos, L.

1981 *Global Rift. The Thirld World Comes of Age*. William Morrow and Company, Inc. New York.

Susnik, B.
1957 *Estudios Chamacoco*. Museo Etnografico Andres Barbero: Asuncion.

1969 *Chamacocos I:Cambio cultural*. Museo Etnografico Andres Barbero: Asuncion.

1981 *Los aborigenes del Paraguay. Etnohistoria de los Chaquenos (1650 - 1910)*. Vol. 3(1). Museo Etnografico Andres Barbero: Asuncion.

Susnik, B. and M. Chase-Sardi
1995 *Los Indios del Paraguay*. Editorial Mapfre: Madrid.

Taussig, M.
1987 *Shamanism, Colonialism, and the Wild Man. A Study in Terror and Healing*. The University of Chicago Press: Chicago.

Thrupp, S. (Ed.)
1970 *Milleninial Dreams in Action. Studies in Revolutionary Religious Movement*. Schocken Books: New York.

Tonkin, E. McDonald, M. and M. Chapman (Eds.)
1989 *History and Ethnicity*. Routledge: London.

Torres, C.
1992 *The Church, Society, and Hegemony. A Critical Sociology of Religion in Latin America*. Praeger: Westport.

Trask, H.
1991 "Natives and Anthropologists: The Colonial Struggle". *Contemporary Pacific*, 3:159 - 177.

Vickers, W.
1981 "The Jesuits and the SIL: External Policies for Ecuador's Tucanoans through Three Centuries". In S. Hvalkof and P. Aaby (Eds.) *Is God an American?*, 52 -62. IWGIA and Survival International. London, Copenhagen.

Von Bremen, V
1987 *Fuentes de caza y recoleccion modernas. Proyecto de ayuda al desarrollo destinados a los indigenas del gran Chaco (Argentina, Bolivia,*

Paraguay). Servicios de Desarrollo de las Iglesias.

Vysokolan, O.
1992 *La traicion de Papa Rei*. Helvetas, Asociacion Suiza para el Desarrollo y la Cooperacion. Ediciones Cabichui: Asuncion.

Wagner, R.
1975 *The invention of culture*. Englewood Cliffs.

Weber, M
1958 *The protestan ethic and the spirit of capitalism*. New York:Scribner

Wilber, J. and K. Simoneau (Eds.)
1987 *Folk Literature of the Chamacoco Indians*. UCLA Latin American Center Publications.

Wilmer, F.
1993 *The indigenous voice in world politics*. Sage Publications: Newbury Park.

Williams, R.
1977 *Marxism and Literature*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

1980 *Problems in Materialism and Culture*. Verso:London.

Wolf, E.
1982 *Europe and the People without History*. University of california Press.

Worsley, P.
1968 *The Trumpet Shall Sound. A Study of 'Cargo' Cults in Melanesia*. 2d. Edition. MacGibbon and Kee.

1984 *The Three Worlds*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Wright, R.
1988 "Anthrpological Presuppositions of Indigenous Advocacy". *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 17:365 - 90.