

**ADVENTURES IN CARIBBEAN INDIGENEITY CENTERING  
ON RESISTANCE, SURVIVAL AND PRESENCE  
IN BORIKÉN (PUERTO RICO)**

**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE DIVISION OF THE  
UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI'I IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE  
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF**

**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

**IN**

**POLITICAL SCIENCE**

**DECEMBER 2004**

**By**

**Anthony Castanha**

**Dissertation Committee:**

**Michael Shapiro, Chairperson**

**Glenn Paige**

**Kathryn Waddel Takara**

**Leslie Sponsel**

**Nevzat Soguk**

**Lou Ann Ha'aheo Guanson**

©Copyright 2004  
by  
Anthony Castanha

For my grandmother,  
Jiqui and for those who have come before us

## Acknowledgements

In a very real sense, I did not write this work. I was assisted all along the way by many, including spirit. I would first like to thank the members of my dissertation committee for their support, and for most of all letting me write pretty much what I wanted to write. I am grateful to my chair, Michael Shapiro, and committee members, Glenn Paige, Kathryn Waddel Takara, Lou Ann Ha'aheo Guanson, Leslie Sponsel and Nevzat Soguk.

I am appreciative of those who assisted me in other ways such as lending moral, academic, technical or grassroots support. Mahalo nui loa to Christina Arce, José Barreiro, Kekuni Blasidell, Roberto Mucaro Borreo, Adela Chu, Joshua Cooper, Coqui and NiJaiba, Lynette Hi'ilani Cruz, Carmen Baguanamey Delgado-Colón, Irene Gordon, Roger Atihuibancex Hernández, Eric Kalaniopu'upo'ohinaikaluaopele, Masahide Kato, Ramon López-Reyes, René Çibanacán Marcano, Danny Merritt, Daniela Rocco Minerbi, Vincent Pollard, Audrey Ululani Po'ohina, Richard Salvador, Vicente Sánchez, Noenoe Silva, Cyril Taylor, Dominga Trusdell, Johann Urschitz, and to my mother and father, Mary and Rodney Castanha, for all their support through the years, and to anyone I may have forgotten. I also wish to thank Kazuaki Tanahashi for his support in awarding me the Tanahashi Peace Fellowship, and the Inter Library Loan service at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa for their assistance in finding some much needed sources.

This work would never have been completed in its current form if it had not been for my interviewees, who often took me in and shared their food, homes, stories, knowledge and lives with me. I am very grateful to Nilda Aponte-Lebron, Baracutey,



Juan Manuel Delgado-Colón, Oki Lamourt-Valentín, Elba Anaca Lugo, Roberto Martínez-Torres, Niña Raffaele-Aponte, Naniki Reyes-Ocasio and Angel Santiago-Cruz.

A big mahalo to my cousin, Ronald Arroyo, for his work was so revealing and inspirational and led to this dissertation.

I wish to especially thank Margarita Noguerras-Vidal for her time, patience, understanding, love, wisdom and knowledge of the deep cultural and spiritual roots of our ancestors and people, and how it all ties together. Muchas gracias!

\*And finally to the Boricua and Kanaka Maoli people: keep giving *Catey! I Mua!*

## **Abstract**

The indigenous peoples of the Antilles were the first to greet the late 15<sup>th</sup> century European explorers to “America.” They were also the first native people to have been declared effectively “extinct” as a result of the encounter. History written by the colonizer has always blanketly described such affairs. However the Caribbean encounter was not as one-sided as previously thought. There was a tremendous amount of violent and nonviolent resistance to Spanish imperialism throughout the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Things did not happen “overnight,” and many indigenous peoples survived and lived on. The main thesis of this dissertation disproves the long-held dominant theory that the Indian people of the northern Antilles had become “extinct” by the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century. With a focus on the island of Borikén (Puerto Rico), this study provides a historical analysis and ethnological genealogy of five hundred years of Carib Indian resistance, survival and presence in the region in relation to the 15<sup>th</sup> century Spanish coming. In Borikén, tens of thousands of Jíbaro people remained in the mountain regions throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and their descendants are still there today. The work concentrates on revealing the physical and, more importantly, cultural survival of the indigenous peoples of the Antillean region.

I further analyze other myths and academic discourses that have been imposed upon the Circum-Caribbean such as the commonly held view that the indigenous peoples present in the 15<sup>th</sup> century Antilles were of South American origin, and how the concept of “discovery” was an invention. Methodological support is most significantly realized by providing a space for indigenous peoples to tell their own histories and stories through

ethnological and written accounts. By allowing the indigenous voice to speak, we are able to dispel key myths and scrutinize certain academic areas of study. Comparative support is found through discussions of the histories, experiences and traditions of other indigenous peoples, groups and movements. The global indigenous movement is looked at for its liberating influences on indigenous peoples and in addressing global matters. Post-colonial theory further importantly assists us in analyzing issues concerning both colonialism and neocolonialism.

## Table of Contents

Acknowledgements . . . . .	v
Abstract . . . . .	vii
<b>Introduction - Dispelling the Myth of Extinction . . . . .</b>	<b>1</b>
Thesis . . . . .	5
Methodology . . . . .	9
Oral Tradition and Memory . . . . .	12
The Global Indigenous Movement . . . . .	17
Post-Colonial Theory . . . . .	22
Chapter Summaries . . . . .	27
<b>Chapter 1 - Discourses in Indigenous Caribbean Identity . . . . .</b>	<b>34</b>
People of the Earth . . . . .	35
The Caniba as “Canibal” . . . . .	39
Dividing the Caribbean . . . . .	44
Naming the People . . . . .	50
Self-Identification and Its Critics . . . . .	58
Conclusion . . . . .	72
<b>Chapter 2-Primitive Discourses in Anthropology, Survival, and the Mayan Past . . . . .</b>	<b>74</b>
“Indian Givers” . . . . .	76
The “Primitive” and “Civilized” . . . . .	80
Rouse and “Prehistory” . . . . .	91
The First “Repeopling” . . . . .	94
The Carib-Maya Cultural Link . . . . .	105
Conclusion . . . . .	117
<b>Chapter 3 - The Politics of Amerindian Language . . . . .</b>	<b>119</b>
Constructing Loci of Enunciation . . . . .	120
The Antiquities of the Indians: Pané’s Work or a “Native Text”? . . . . .	125
Language as a Mode of Power . . . . .	133
Maya Writing . . . . .	137
The Alphabet and Other Ways of Expression . . . . .	141
Conclusion . . . . .	148
<b>Chapter 4 - The Invention and Violence of the Concept of Discovery . . . . .</b>	<b>151</b>
The Invention of America . . . . .	153
Papal Bulls and Encomienda . . . . .	162
The “Doctrine of Discovery” . . . . .	177

U.S. Federal Indian Law . . . . .	183
“Discovery” Today . . . . .	191
“Discovery” and Conversion . . . . .	193
“Discovery” and Scholarship . . . . .	195
“Discovery” and Globalization . . . . .	201
Conclusion . . . . .	208
<b>Chapter 5 - Carib Indian Resistance, Survival and Presence in Borikén . . . . .</b>	<b>210</b>
Early Resistance and War . . . . .	215
Lando’s Census and the Flight of the Jíbaro . . . . .	223
Spaniards, African Slavery and Miscegenation . . . . .	228
The 17 <sup>th</sup> to 18 <sup>th</sup> Century and Origin of the Proletariat . . . . .	234
Late 18 <sup>th</sup> Century Censuses . . . . .	237
The 19 <sup>th</sup> Century Jíbaro . . . . .	243
Conclusion . . . . .	250
<b>Chapter 6 - Boricua Exodus to Hawai‘i . . . . .</b>	<b>253</b>
U.S. Imperialism and Capitalist Expansion . . . . .	257
Huracán, Famine and Emigration . . . . .	258
Reluctant Exodus, Kidnapping and Slavery . . . . .	262
Escape . . . . .	269
The Second Expedition . . . . .	272
El Tren de la Muerte . . . . .	276
Life in Hawai‘i . . . . .	280
Waipaito . . . . .	283
Conclusion . . . . .	285
<b>Chapter 7 - The Borikén Indigenous Movement . . . . .</b>	<b>288</b>
The Global Indigenous Peoples’ Movement . . . . .	291
Indigenous Progress and Obstacles . . . . .	295
The Borikén Movement . . . . .	301
Political Philosophy of the Movement . . . . .	308
Means to Self-Sufficiency . . . . .	312
Linking With Other Movements . . . . .	311
Conclusion . . . . .	320
<b>Chapter 8 - Conclusions . . . . .</b>	<b>326</b>
16 <sup>th</sup> to 19 <sup>th</sup> Resistance and Survival . . . . .	329
Dispelling Other Myths . . . . .	332
Dividing and Naming the Caribbean . . . . .	332
The “Primitive” and “Civilized” . . . . .	334
“Repeopling” and the Mayan Past . . . . .	337
Amerindian Writing and the Pané Native Text . . . . .	339
“Discovery” . . . . .	341
A Final Thought . . . . .	342

Appendix 1 .....	344
Appendix 2 .....	347
Bibliography .....	349

## Introduction

### Dispelling the Myth of Extinction

“The intelligence of America is to be found in an Indian headdress.”

José Martí

A radical history presenting a new version of the past will usually draw on new sources, even though those sources might well be ‘new’ only in the sense that the dominant version had repressed them by never even considering them as sources. Within this model of radical history there are then two interdependent but separable moments: first, a critique of existing versions, partly dependent upon, second, the presentation of alternative and contradictory evidence. This model has its anti-colonial equivalent in the rediscovery of native sources that offer a different and revealing light on colonial events and issues.<sup>1</sup>

The “new version” of the past presented in this work is indeed not entirely new, but one that has been repressed and, for the most part, has only recently been revived. The history of the “West Indian” is neither brief nor is colonialism “the very base and structure of the West Indian cultural awareness,” as George Lamming has said.<sup>2</sup> The story of the indigenous Caribbean is incomplete for it has been told mainly from the point and perspective of European contact irrespective of the thousands of years of human habitation in the Circum-Caribbean region. Thus, the sources that have been repressed here have been the indigenous peoples themselves. This new version of history is not to deny an African or European Antillean influence but *does* attempt to allow the Caribbean *indigenous voice* to speak. This voice has remained silent for far too long.

---

<sup>1</sup>Peter Hulme, *Colonial Encounters: Europe and the native Caribbean, 1492-1797*, London: Methuen & Co., 1986, p. 8.

<sup>2</sup>George Lamming, “The Occasion for Speaking,” (1960), in Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffins, eds., *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*, London/New York: Routledge, 1995, p. 15.

Native Cuban scholar José Barreiro's *The Indian Chronicles* is one of the first in-depth contemporary accounts of the people who encountered the colonial Spanish and the Admiral Christobal Colón as told from an indigenous perspective. The book is perhaps the most significant to come out of the multitude of scholarly writings arising out of the quincentenary in 1992, but unfortunately has received scant publicity and coverage.<sup>3</sup> The work does exemplify the importance of allowing indigenous peoples to tell their own histories and stories. Based on his Ph.D. dissertation, Barreiro provides an interpretation of a fictional journal written by Columbus' principal translator, Guaikán (Diego Colón), a Carib Indian who did in fact greet the Spanish fleet on the island of Guanahani in 1492.<sup>4</sup> Through the eyes of Guaikán, Barreiro tells of the tales of the "Great Admiral," Spanish impetuosity and Guarocuya's (Enriquillo or Enrique's) fourteen-year war against the Spanish crown in Quisqueya ("Hispaniola") leading to one of the first and most important peace treaties signed in the Americas. The indigenous perspective of history has remained mute and thus revitalized in Barreiro's work.

The term "*Indio*" or "Indian" was of course an imaginary creation of Columbus' who believed, or refused to accept otherwise,<sup>5</sup> that he had reached Asia or the "Indies" of the east up until his death in 1506. In other words, Christopher Columbus was virtually

---

<sup>3</sup>See José Barreiro, *The Indian Chronicles*, Houston: Arte Público Press, 1993.

<sup>4</sup>S. Lyman Tyler notes three Indian personages of importance in his work, and "especially Diego Colón, an Indian captured by Columbus to serve as an interpreter; he was taken to Spain after the first voyage and returned to the Indies on the second voyage, where he became a great asset to the Admiral in his subsequent contacts with Indian leaders," in Tyler, *Two Worlds: The Indian Encounter with the European, 1492-1509* Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1988, p. 4.

<sup>5</sup>Hulme, *Colonial Encounters*, p. 20.



lost throughout his four voyages to the “New World.” It is with this understanding and for the sake of clarity that the word is used in this dissertation.

During the past decade or so there has been an evolution of thought among some contemporary scholars and writers regarding the continued existence of the indigenous inhabitants of the Caribbean Antilles. The large majority of scholars have traditionally viewed these peoples as “extinct.” Since this myth had been passed down very early on by the Spanish chroniclers, there seems to be an immediate reversion to certain images or stereotypes frozen in time, such as that of the “noble savage” running around naked or the exceptionally racist depiction of “*Caliban*” (the anagram of “canibal”) in Shakespeare’s *The Tempest*, when the subject of a continued Caribbean indigenous presence is raised. For example, Louis Allaire writes that there were “obviously” no “Taínos”<sup>6</sup> remaining by the 1650s for the “cannibal” raiding Caribs of the Antilles to contend with.<sup>7</sup> Antonio Stevens-Arroyo’s opening sentence in his book *Cave of the Jagua* reads, “The Taínos of the Caribbean islands are extinct.”<sup>8</sup> This statement sets the basis for his study of native mythology and undoubtedly refers to both the physical and cultural extinction of the people concerned. In 1990 Samuel Wilson wrote, “The Taíno were the first New World population to be quickly and completely eradicated as a consequence of the European

---

<sup>6</sup>I have found through careful research that the word “Taíno,” like the word “Arawak,” was not used by indigenous Caribbean peoples as a term of self-ascription. The word was first affixed to the people and language of Haiti by Cornelius Rafinesque and others in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It became popularized in the 20<sup>th</sup> century through the anthropological works of Jesse Walter Fewkes, M.R. Harrington, Sven Lovén, Irving Rouse and Ricardo Alegria. I have found the word “Carib” in its various forms to be the most accurate regional term of self-identification used by the Indian people themselves and, thus, used throughout this work. In Chapter 1, I provide an account of the process of naming in the region.

<sup>7</sup>Louis Allaire, “The Caribs of the Lesser Antilles,” in Samuel M. Wilson, ed., *The Indigenous People of the Caribbean*, Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1997, p. 181.

discovery.”<sup>9</sup> However, the cultural revitalization among indigenous peoples<sup>10</sup> worldwide, the rethinking of the Columbus legacy brought about by the quincentenary, and the reassertion of cultural identity among indigenous Caribbean descendants have led to clear evidence of the continued survival and presence of indigenous Caribbean peoples for over the past five hundred years. Barreiro points out:

Although the genocide against the native peoples of the Caribbean was nearly total, several Indo-Caribbean enclaves have survived. Five or more small communities remain in Cuba, St. Vincent, and Dominica. In the past decade, a revitalization of Taino cultural and family identity has occurred among *mestizo* descendants in Boriquen (Puerto Rico), Cuba, and Quisqueya (Santo Domingo). An estimated one-third of Puerto Ricans have strong Taino ancestry.<sup>11</sup>

In 1997, Wilson came to acknowledge the modern presence of the indigenous peoples of the Caribbean:

On many islands some people trace part or all of their ancestry back to those who lived here before Columbus’s voyages. On nearly every island,

---

<sup>8</sup>Antonio M. Stevens-Arroyo, *Cave of the Jagua: The Mythological World of the Tainos*, Albuquerque: University of Mexico Press, 1988, p. 43.

<sup>9</sup>Samuel M. Wilson, *Hispaniola: Caribbean Chiefdoms in the Age of Columbus*, Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1990, p. 2.

<sup>10</sup>The word “indigenous” or “indígena” is colonial in origin derived from the Latin term “indigena” that defines “the natives of a specific area in comparison to immigrants” (Siebert 1997?). As a collective group name, the term is more acceptable to many indigenous peoples than other terms such as “native” or “aboriginal,” yet most groups prefer to use their own names in their own languages. The use of the “s” in “peoples” refers to collective or group rights to be exercised by the indigenous peoples concerned, including the right of self-determination. Indigenous or first peoples have “a strong sense of their own identity as unique peoples, with their own lands, languages, and cultures. They claim the right to define what is meant by indigenous, and to be recognized as such by others. Some now live in cities, earning their living as, for example, lawyers and community workers - or in many cases struggling to make ends meet; others retain a traditional way of life. But they are united in their desire to maintain their identity and yet be able to adapt and survive” (Burger 1990). As indicated under the 1993 United Nations Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, since indigenous pre-colonial occupation within states is distinguished from minority or ethnic group presence, “indigenous rights” clearly differ from “minority rights.” The “numbers of indigenous peoples, therefore, does not constitute a criterion in their definition” (Trask 1993).

<sup>11</sup>José Barreiro, in Cultural Survival, *State of the Peoples: A Global Human Rights Report on Societies in Danger*, Boston: Beacon Press, 1993, p. 233.

the modern inhabitants relate to the environment in ways they learned from the Indians: they grow some of the same plants for food and other uses, fish the same reefs in the same ways, and follow the same seasonal patterns. Also, on nearly every island--even those where none of the indigenous peoples have survived--the Indians are powerful symbols of Caribbean identity, national identity, and resistance to colonialism.<sup>12</sup>

And in 2001, Stevens-Arroyo noted how he had felt “vindicated after fighting the powers of academia who repudiated my insistence that the Taínos had NOT been wiped out physically by the Spaniards.”<sup>13</sup>

### Thesis

This dissertation analyzes various academic discourses pertaining to the Antilles and attempts to dispel certain myths that for centuries have been imposed upon the Circum-Caribbean region. The myth of the physical<sup>14</sup> and cultural extinction of the indigenous population is the most prominent misperception of all. The main thesis of this study disproves the long-held dominant theory that the Indian people of the northern Antilles had become “extinct” by the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century. With a specific focus on the island of Borikén (Puerto Rico),<sup>15</sup> the work provides a historical analysis and ethnological

---

<sup>12</sup>Samuel M. Wilson, “The Legacy of the Indigenous People of the Caribbean,” in Wilson, ed., *The Indigenous People of the Caribbean*, Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1997, p. 206.

<sup>13</sup>Anthony M. Stevens-Arroyo, Email correspondence on the “tribal-affairs@taino-tribe.org” listserv, April 9, 2001.

<sup>14</sup>Some scholars have come to acknowledge the physical survival of the indigenous population as indicated above, and as noted by Rouse below. In a recently completed study funded by the National Science Foundation, Juan Martínez Cruzado of the University of Puerto Rico, Mayagüez appears to once and for all disprove the *physical* extinction myth. He found that “61 percent of all Puerto Ricans have Amerindian mitochondrial DNA, 27 percent have African and 12 percent Caucasian” (*Indian Country Today*, October 6, 2003). Mitochondrial DNA is inherited from the female only. The significance of the study shows how Indian women survived the Spanish colonial process in large numbers and how this relates to today, e.g., at least 61 percent of Puerto Ricans would be Indian descendants since the study does not consider heredity from the male line.

<sup>15</sup>The word “Borikén” is the Indian name of the island largely known today as “Puerto Rico.” The terms “Boriquén” or “Borinquen” are Spanish derivations of Borikén, which means “land of the noble brave,” or

genealogy of five hundred years of Carib Indian resistance, survival and presence in the region in relation to the 15<sup>th</sup> century European coming. I concentrate on revealing the continued physical and, more importantly, cultural presence of the indigenous peoples of Borikén and the Antillean region in general.

Since previous scholarship has greatly aided in the historical silence of the people concerned, this dissertation provides an important space for the Caribbean indigenous voice to be heard. The study acknowledges the historical convergence or synthesis of the Indian, African and European presence in the region but disputes the claim that the Indian aspect of Antillean society is culturally “extinct.” René Cibanacán, a *cacike* (chieftain) of the organization Nacion Taina, makes it clear that “the people were and are there and their influence was and is very strong in the culture of Puerto Rico and other Caribbean Islands.”<sup>16</sup> Today, some three hundred fifty Indian descendants still dwell in the mountain village of Caridad de los Indios overlooking Guantanamo in Cuba. Describing the survival of his people, *cacike* Panchito Ramirez points out: “[Our] survival is evidence of persistent indigenous resistance to invasion, conquest, colonization, and assimilation. It is

---

“eastern island at sunrise” in relation to the other major islands of the Antilles (Lamour-Valentín 1998). “Boricua” or “Boricano” are indigenous words derived from the name of the island. “Puerto Rico” is a Spanish colonial term meaning “rich port,” originally referring to the city now called “San Juan” where gold was extracted by Spanish colonizers in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century. The name “Puerto Rican” combines the predominantly Indian, African and Spanish heritages into one *nationality* of people, which most on the island identify as. Yet, the term has been controversial among some native descendants as its imposition denied the very existence and right of self-identification of the indigenous population through the elimination of the Spanish census category “Indios” at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Throughout this work, I will use indigenous words where appropriate as efforts to revive the Indian language are currently being undertaken. For an extensive listing of Indian words see, Luis Hernández Aquino, *Diccionario De Voces Indigenas De Puerto Rico*, Puerto Rico: Editorial Cultural, 1993.

<sup>16</sup>Vivian Otero, “Taíno uahakia-ka...ketauriabo! We are Taíno-We Live!” *Vision*, (East Harlem’s Newspaper), Vol. 7, No. 2, October-November 1995, p. 7.

evidence that assimilation cuts both ways – that our colonizers also learned much from us.”<sup>17</sup>

As myths can be sacred stories and real, I mean “myth” in the fictitious sense of the word as in legends that have been passed down in Western tradition with no historical basis of support. For example, Gananath Obeyesekere doubts that the Kānaka Maoli (Native Hawaiians) created the British explorer Captain Cook as “their” god, Lono, but rather “the Europeans created him for them.”<sup>18</sup> In disproving the long-held scholarly theory of Cook as a “god,” Obeyesekere unravels the dominant “evidence” and points out that European mythmaking was prolific in European thought particularly in regard to ancestral heroes of which Cook might easily fit.<sup>19</sup> The Kanaka Maoli scholars and people I have discussed this topic with essentially agree with this assessment, and most view Cook’s legacy as one of death and destruction. In the Americas, there is no historical evidence to suggest that Columbus or Amerigo Vespucci did or could have “discovered” the American continent. Besides a previous indigenous presence, the notion of a European “discovery” is an impossibility since both explorers had no previous idea of the being that was *found*. Though the paradigm is slowly shifting, a positive concept of “discovery” still fuels American public perception as a day to commemorate and teach about in the schools. As to the use of language in the region, terms such as “cannibal,” “primitive” and “savage” came to immediately portray a negative stereotype or image of

---

<sup>17</sup>Panchito Ramirez, in Valerie Taliman, “Defying the Myth of Extinction,” *American Indian*, Vol. 2, No. 2, Smithsonian Institution: National Museum of the American Indian, Spring 2001, p. 19.

<sup>18</sup>Gananath Obeyesekere, *The Apotheosis of Captain Cook: European Mythmaking in the Pacific*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992, p. 3.

<sup>19</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 10.

the native peoples they were projected onto, even though there is no evidence supporting the *basis* of these literary creations. Myths such as these have been passed down through the centuries and still inform contemporary thought. The summaries at the end of this chapter explain in more detail the topics analyzed in the chapters of this work. The most prominent myths and themes discussed include:

- 1) the *division* of the people of the Caribbean Antilles as “peaceful Arawaks” and “man-eating Caribs”;
- 2) the anthropological construction of the terms “Arawak” and “Taíno” as names ascribed to the indigenous population;
- 3) the meaning of the colonial dichotomy created between those deemed as “primitive” and what is said to be “civilized”;
- 4) Irving Rouse’s first “repeopling” theory, which essentially posits that the original indigenous peoples to populate the Antilles were “replaced,” or extinguished;
- 5) the relevance and meaning of Mesoamerican cultural, philosophical and archeological influence in the Circum-Caribbean region;
- 6) how Ramón Pané’s *Antiquities of the Indians* is actually a “native text”;
- 7) how alphabetic writing became a “superior” genre of organizing knowledge compared to Amerindian forms of writing;
- 8) how the concept of “discovery” was a European invention, ushered in an era of immeasurable violence, and how its ideology or the “modern ego” still influences laws and society today; and
- 9) how the dominant 16<sup>th</sup> century scholarly theory advancing the “extinction” of indigenous Caribbean peoples is a fallacy. I provide evidence for cultural survival in the region in general, and unequivocal evidence for 16<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> century Jíbaro Indian resistance and survival in the mountain regions of Borikén. I further elaborate on the subsequent indigenous presence in Puerto Rico today.

## Methodology

It is important to point out that an increasing number of scholars have become aware of much of the controversial evidence surrounding the discourses above. Some have been writing on the imaginary extent of the most dominant myths for a long time. However these scholars have been often marginalized academically as their views have challenged mainstream dominant theories. They will be heard from in this work. For example, Carib-Jíbaro scholar Oscar (Oki) Lamourt-Valentín's *Cannibal Recipes* provides an important indigenous interpretation of the work of Fray Ramón Pané. *Cannibal Recipes* is a socio-linguistic account of Carib Indian culture and rebuttal of Pané's *Antiquities of the Indians*.<sup>20</sup> Lamourt-Valentín was an assistant to Richard Weiskoff while studying at Iowa State University in the late 1970s, and corresponded with the former curator of the Smithsonian Institution, Clifford Evans. His work challenges the myth of the extinction of the indigenous peoples of Borikén and the widely held scholarly view that the first alphabetical work written in the Americas was that of Pané's. As Lamourt-Valentín explains, the Carib people and *cacike* Guarionex, who provide the Jeronymite missionary with all of the information needed in this *transliteration*, turn out to be the true authors of the text. My dissertation then is an elaboration and confirmation of what some scholars already know.

This dissertation is unique in providing an examination of the above areas of study in a single body of work. More importantly, the study is narrated and often told from an indigenous point of view. According to Irving Rouse, however, an ethnology of

---

<sup>20</sup>Oscar Lamourt-Valentín, *Cannibal Recipes*, A socio-linguistic account of Carib-Jíbaro culture and response to the work of Ramón Pané, Ames: Iowa State University, Unpublished, 1979.

this sort is not supposed to happen since in the absence of native survivors “archeologists have had to assume sole responsibility for investigating the cultural ancestry” of the indigenous peoples of the northern Antilles.<sup>21</sup> His “repeopling” theories posit that certain populations in the course of time were “replaced” by other populations. His methodology assigns cultures of a particular age to the people inhabiting certain spaces through a “ceramic subseries.” Rouse’s second “repeopling” theory (I discuss his first theory later in this chapter) refers to the *cultural* “extinction” of the indigenous peoples of the “Greater Antilles” by the Spaniards in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. This is the antithesis of this dissertation.

It is also significant to point out that the anthropological argument for the “extinction” of indigenous Caribbean peoples today is not necessarily a physical one but a cultural belt. Rouse does, in fact, acknowledge Indian descendancy, but his work paradoxically severs the ancestral and genealogical cultural link so crucial to the continued survival of indigenous peoples in general. He writes, “Even though the Tainos *themselves* are extinct, persons claiming Taino ancestry have survived in all three of the Spanish-speaking countries: the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, and Cuba”<sup>22</sup> (emphasis added). Rouse apparently fails to see the dynamics of the process of cultural survival because he freezes the culture of a people into a particular time and space. If we use Rouse’s formula of cultural extinction in defining a people, then the many indigenous peoples “claiming” a lineal ancestry worldwide today might inevitably be considered as

---

<sup>21</sup>Irving Rouse, *The Tainos: Rise & Decline of the People Who Greeted Columbus*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992, p. 30.

<sup>22</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 161.



“extinct” as their ancestors. Many contemporary archeologists investigating the indigenous Caribbean are of a similar mind as Rouse, where the cultural link between the past and present is inevitably severed. Needless to say, these attitudes and interpretations can lead to enormous problems for indigenous descendants. In Puerto Rico, for example, human skeletal remains are routinely excavated and displayed in museums around the island. Anthropologists and particularly the Institute of Puerto Rican Culture appear to have free rein over decisions concerning indigenous matters. “Our Indians” are “extinct,” they say, but they certainly were here before!

In contrast to the above, this work provides tangible evidence for the continued cultural survival of indigenous Caribbean peoples, particularly in Borikén. The work attempts to allow the modern-day indigenous voice to be heard precisely because scholarly interpretation and analyses of the Caribbean indigenous world have been predominately limited to a non-native view. Here the interpretation of indigenous history, culture and spirituality has been based almost exclusively on Western sources, philosophy and religion. My argument for a continued indigenous presence is based in part on oral tradition and ancestry, or one’s genealogical link or “ancestral memory” of the past. Though dependent on dominant historical and anthropological versions of history, which Peter Hulme notes above to be a part of the process of presenting new or alternative versions of the past, I present as evidence in support of my main thesis the following: 1) ethnological and written accounts by indigenous Caribbean descendants; 2) various works, writings and traditions of other indigenous peoples, groups and movements as a

comparative basis of support; and 3) “post-colonial” theory as a partial theoretical basis of study in addressing issues concerning colonialism and neocolonialism.

### **Oral Tradition and Memory**

No one in oral societies doubts that memories can be faithful repositories which contain the sum total of past human experience and explain the how and why of present day conditions. *Tete are ne nne*: “Ancient things are today” or “History repeats itself.” Whether memory changes or not, culture is reproduced by remembrance put into words and deeds. The mind through memory carries culture from generation to generation.<sup>23</sup>

Jan Vansina indicates that oral tradition did not find meaning as a historical methodology until around the mid-1950s. This in spite of the fact that such traditions had been constantly used as sources of information.<sup>24</sup> Oral source material is not only the basis of the history of oral societies but the source for many ancient writings as produced, for instance, in the Mediterranean, India, China, Japan, and later in western Europe. Oral traditions relay ancient messages of the past into the present and, thus, are documents of both time periods: “. . . oral traditions are documents *of the present*, because they are told in the present. Yet they also embody a message from the past, so they are expressions *of the past* at the same time. They are the representation of the past in the present. One cannot deny either the past or present in them.”<sup>25</sup> While oral traditions may be generally less reliable than written sources, when they are cross-checked and confirmed by other sources, “reliability of a high order can be achieved.”<sup>26</sup>

---

<sup>23</sup>Jan Vansina, *Oral Tradition as History*, Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985, p. xi.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., p. xii.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., pp. 199-200.

In Amerindian and other indigenous societies, oral tradition has also been a vital way of transferring information and stories from generation to generation. In Caribbean tradition, history, for one, was “transmitted orally, from generation to generation, in the ceremonies called *areytos*.”<sup>27</sup> Oral tradition was a prominent way of passing down and understanding the meaning of treaty arrangements made between North American Indian and European nations. According to Vine Deloria, fathers and grandfathers would “pass along almost verbatim the words of the treaty commissioners which explained what the various articles and phrases of the treaties were supposed to mean.”<sup>28</sup> However American courts determined that this tradition could not be used in treaty cases, accepting only written testimony by whites.<sup>29</sup> In Hawaiian cosmology, David Malo refers to the *Kumulipo* as a most esteemed genealogical source among all classes of Hawaiians.<sup>30</sup> This 18<sup>th</sup> century oral chant was composed by Hawaiian *kāhuna* (shaman) for the newborn *ali‘i nui* (high chief), Ka-‘Ī-i-mamao, to explain his ultimate origins on earth. The 2,102 line genealogy was published in text by King David Kalakaua in 1889 and is again being orally recited by Kānaka Maoli today. The *Kumulipo* parallels the Darwinian theory, which had encountered church resistance, for its

exception to the prevailing mystical notion of Divine Cause as the source of all life upon earth. The *Kumulipo* suggested not only that life evolved

---

<sup>27</sup>Francisco Moscoso, “Chieftdom and Encomienda in Puerto Rico: The Development of Tribal Society and the Spanish Colonization to 1530,” in Adalberto López, ed., *The Puerto Ricans: Their History, Culture, and Society*, Cambridge, Mass.: Schenkman Publishing Company, 1980, p. 14.

<sup>28</sup>Vine Deloria, Jr., *Behind the Trail of Broken Treaties: An Indian Declaration of Independence*, New York: Delacorte Press, 1974, p. 52.

<sup>29</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>30</sup>Rubellite Kawena Johnson, *Kumulipo: Hawaiian Hymn of Creation*, Vol. I, Honolulu: Topgallant Publishing Co., 1981, p. ii.

of itself upon the earth but also that the visible universe had been set into motion by the heating surfaces of celestial bodies. The rotation of the heavens could then be the means by which cosmic time could be measured and thereby the orderly structure of the universe understood.<sup>31</sup>

An important portion of the data collected in my research is information that has been passed down orally and through memory. Through personal interaction and taped interviews, I collected oral information from mostly indigenous Jíbaro or Boricua descendants in Puerto Rico. Most of the interviews were conducted in 1998 and 1999, and most were done in the mountainous interior regions of the island. Despite Rouse's claim that ethnology cannot be used as a basis of determining indigenous cultural ancestry in the northern Antilles, I collected and recorded an abundance of ethnological data during these two trips to Borikén. The familial stories of our ancestors filled my recorder. Vansina defines oral traditions as "verbal messages which are reported statements from the past beyond the present generation. The definition specifies that the message must be oral statements spoken, sung, or called out on musical instruments only. . . . There must be transmission by word of mouth over at least a generation."<sup>32</sup> This was the case with my interviews as most of the information relayed to me had been passed down orally from at least one generation ago.

The stories told among my interviewees were also quite similar and many of them related back to ancient times, and to the early colonial Spanish era of the late 15<sup>th</sup> and early 16<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>33</sup> I found that many stories had been kept within family histories,

---

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., p. i.

<sup>32</sup>Vansina, *Oral Tradition as History*, pp. 27-28.

<sup>33</sup>Some of the stories were importantly recorded in script by the early Spanish chroniclers. For example, Fray Ramón Pané notes how the people and particularly the leaders he associated with in Quisqueya

often having gone “underground” as the result of an abusive past. Those growing-up in Puerto Rico in particularly the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century were made to feel ashamed of being Indian. This is an all too similar refrain for many indigenous groups around the world during this time frame. As five hundred years is not a long time ago, *collective memory*, which is “activated when people perceive that the patterns of the past are being repeated in the present,”<sup>34</sup> was further apparent throughout my travels as the colonial past was often reinterpreted through the colonial and neocolonial conditions existing in Borikén today.

In addition, some of my sources already contained ethnological data collected from previous studies and through interviews with primarily Indian descendants. Writing in 1907, American anthropologist Jesse Walter Fewkes elaborates on the *existing natives* and indigenous customs he encountered in relation to his study:

The ethnological method considers the survivals in the bodily form and mental characters of the existing natives; their peculiar customs, characteristic words, music, and legends, all that is included in the comprehensive term *folklore*, the old-fashioned ways of life peculiar to the island. It deals likewise with survivals of language in names of places, animals, plants, and objects, including all aboriginal and many dialectic names peculiar to the modern islanders.<sup>35</sup>

---

believed in ancient songs or *areítos* as an important form of communication: “In fact, just as the Moors, they have their laws gathered in ancient songs, by which they govern themselves, as do the Moors by their scripture,” in Pané, *An Account of the Antiquities of the Indians*, (c. 1498), Introductory Study and Notes by José Juan Arrom, Translated by Susan C. Griswold, Duke and London: Duke University Press, 1999, p. 20. Pietro Martire d’Anghiera (Peter Martyr) writes that when the indigenous peoples were asked about the origins of their traditions, “they answer[ed] that they have inherited them from their ancestors; they say those things have been transmitted in that way in songs from time immemorial, ...”, in Pané, *An Account of the Antiquities of the Indians*, p. 50.

<sup>34</sup>Milton Takei, “Collective Memory as the Key to National and Ethnic Identity: The Case of Cambodia,” *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*, Vol. 4, No. 3, London: Frank Cass Journals, 1998, p. 62.

<sup>35</sup>Jesse Walter Fewkes, *The Aborigines of Porto Rico and Neighboring Islands*, 25th Annual Report, B.A.E., Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1907, p. 20.

Ronald Arroyo's 1977 doctoral dissertation, *Da Borinkees: The Puerto Ricans of Hawaii*, provides extensive interviews with first generation Boricuas in Hawai'i and California who had been recruited from Puerto Rico to work on the sugar plantations of Hawai'i in the early 1900s. Many had "escaped" in California on the first expedition to avoid the slave-like conditions they had been placed under before boarding ships to Hawai'i. Most of the Boricuas who came to the Pacific region at this time were Jíbaro Indian people. Stan Steiner's book, *The Islands: The Worlds of the Puerto Ricans*, also provides much information passed down through oral tradition. Ricardo Alegría's statement that, "Unfortunately there are no more Indians on the island of Puerto Rico,"<sup>36</sup> was proven wrong by Steiner through a series of interviews with Jíbaros in the 1970s. He skillfully reveals the ancestral memory of the people there and the man he calls the "storyteller":

His remembrance of history was a tribal memory. The details he knew-- 'Guarionex was a man *close* to six feet,' he said--had come from the dim, unrecorded past, that was 460 years ago, almost to the day he told the old stories.

'All these stories I heard from old people. Who are already dead. Who have died,' he cautiously said. 'My grandfathers. I recall them. As a little boy I heard some of them. As a grown man I heard some. The old people used to tell legends and stories, I recall. From these things the old people tell me I gathered these stories about our history.'

'Our Indians did not die away the way some people think,' the storyteller said. 'If you look in the faces of the *jíbaros*, you know somewhere the Indian history is living.'<sup>37</sup>

As mentioned above, Caribbean oral tradition and knowledge had been also passed down from generation to generation through traditional *areítos*, or ceremonial

---

<sup>36</sup>Ricardo Alegría, in Stan Steiner, *The Islands: The Worlds of the Puerto Ricans*, New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1974, p. 16.

<sup>37</sup>The Storyteller, in Steiner, *The Islands*, p. 15.

dances, recitations and songs. These ceremonies were performed for various occasions such as to celebrate a good harvest, observe the first moon cycle for young women, or to honor the Earth Mother, *Atabei*. The *areíto* is being revived and celebrated today as I witnessed in Borikén in 1999 at both the Caguana ceremonial grounds and in Jayuya. Most importantly, the very act of my writing is a part of what has been prophesied over time. The Caribbean indigenous resurgence and movement today was prophesied at the height of the Spanish atrocities taking place in Borikén. The prophecy of *Aura Surey* (Morning Star), the daughter of the *cacike* Jayuya, decreed that come the 24th generation our people would rise again.<sup>38</sup> The prophecy is a sign of this time of awakening and revitalization for Carib people. The innate ability to perceive is further directly related to an understanding of truth as recognized within many indigenous traditions.<sup>39</sup> Our ancestors communicated through perception, observation, memory, gesture, oral tradition, and hieroglyphic and iconic (ideograms) forms of writing. As Boricua artisan and cultural practitioner Margarita Noguerras-Vidal points out:

Our symbolism is conceptual and encompasses a series of expressions that tell a story. As stone people our ancestors inscribed messages on stone for a time when we would be ready to receive them. The time of awakening is in process and we are all being summoned to join in and be part of the circle of re-membering.<sup>40</sup>

### **The Global Indigenous Movement**

Methodological support for this work is also found through the comparative experiences of other indigenous peoples, groups and movements. The contemporary

---

<sup>38</sup>Interview with Boricua artisan and cultural practitioner Margarita Noguerras-Vidal, July 30, 1998.

<sup>39</sup>Margarita Noguerras-Vidal, "Taíno Indian Symbolism . . . To Feel is to Perceive," (Pamphlet), Jayuya, Boriké, 1996, 1998, p. 1.

Caribbean indigenous movement must be viewed in the context of the larger global indigenous peoples' movement. This worldwide resurgence representing over three hundred million indigenous peoples is a direct response to five hundred years of European imperialism, which has resulted in the indigenous struggle for recognition, greater human rights, and political sovereignty and self-determination. The indigenous movement can be seen as a challenge to the violent beginnings of the state system, analogous to what Pierre Bourdieu identifies as a "tool for rupture" in reconstructing the conflicts and confrontations of the past, and "discarded possibilities" of the future.<sup>41</sup> In challenging the norms of international state theory, Franke Wilmer has described the movement as a kind of "social revolutionary movement taking place on a global scale."<sup>42</sup> The Caribbean movement follows a clear pattern of regional revitalization beginning with the emergence of the African American civil rights and American Indian movements in North America in the 1960s. This helped spawn the political and cultural revitalization of the 1970s in Central America, parts of Asia, the Pacific region, Scandinavia, and elsewhere. During the 1980s, the indigenous movement strengthened at the international human rights level culminating in the 1993 United Nations Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and proclaimed International Year and Decade of the World's Indigenous People.

---

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., p. 2.

<sup>41</sup>Pierre Bourdieu, in Michael J. Shapiro, "Bourdieu, the state and method," *Review of International Political Economy* (9:4), November 2002, p. 615.

<sup>42</sup>Franke Wilmer, *The Indigenous Voice in World Politics: Since Time Immemorial*, Newbury Park/London/New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1993, p. 42.



Despite the progress, the indigenous resurgence in Borikén has been at times labeled as a “New Age” fad or “crazy invention” of Puerto Ricans in the diaspora. It seems beyond comprehension to some Puerto Rican scholars that an Indian identity could possibly be asserted within a multi-ethnic societal context. In their futile search for indigenous “purity,” some have even accused the movement of being “racist” for its “privileging” of the Indian over the African element of society. But these criticisms, particularly issues concerning identity and “extinction,” are the same arguments and criticisms that indigenous peoples have been confronting for a very long time. These issues, in fact, have been critiqued and unraveled by both native and non-native scholars. Dispelling the myth of the extinction of respective indigenous populations around the world has been a hard fought effort because such notions of “purity,” “blood quantum” measurements, and cultures “frozen in time” are embedded in the colonial imagination. Perceptions such as these are Euroamerican ideological constructs that have been internalized in the minds of non-native and native peoples alike. Accordingly, at the first United Nations Conference on Human Rights in 1968 indigenous peoples were basically considered “a remnant of the past,” inevitably assimilated into mainstream society.<sup>43</sup> By 1993, however, the UN Working Group on Indigenous Populations came to recognize that indigenous peoples did have “the collective and individual right to maintain and develop their distinct identities and characteristics, including the right to identify themselves as indigenous and to be recognized as such.”<sup>44</sup> The right of self-identification

---

<sup>43</sup>Julian Burger, in Cultural Survival, *State of the Peoples: A Global Human Rights Report on Societies in Danger*, Boston: Beacon Press, 1993, p. 6.

<sup>44</sup>United Nations Commission on Human Rights, *Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, 1993.

as applied to “all peoples” is a most basic right enshrined in international human rights law. Therefore, indigenous Caribbean peoples have every right to identify themselves as indigenous, and to be recognized as such, and to develop and maintain their cultural and spiritual traditions whether they live in the region or the diaspora. Issues concerning identity and ethnicity are further discussed in Chapter 1.

While indigenous peoples and groups around the world do differ significantly in some respects, e.g., in spoken language or regional development, there are many commonalities that culturally and spiritually link them together. Analogies can be drawn historically from the ways indigenous peoples developed democratic societies, implemented conflict resolution techniques, respected and cared for the land, and accommodated and resisted colonialism. Many of these aspects and values are inherent within native societies today. Many indigenous peoples, for instance, believe that everything on earth is alive and active. For the Kānaka Maoli of Ka Pae‘āina, Hawai‘i, “everything is living: the rocks, the wind, the water, the clouds, the sky, as well as the birds and the trees and the fish. Everything is also conscious and everything communicates.”<sup>45</sup> And in comparison to the Western view and use of technology as a way to overcome the natural world, technology for indigenous peoples is not only conceived of as “material” technology, but as the application of knowledge to social, psychological and spiritual technologies.<sup>46</sup> The indigenous view

begins with the assumption that the limits of nature are ultimately immutable. In order to live within the limits of nature, their cultures have

---

<sup>45</sup>Kekuni Blaisdell, in Robert H. Mast and Anne B. Mast, *Autobiography of Protest in Hawai‘i*, Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 1996, p. 370.

<sup>46</sup>Franke Wilmer, *The Indigenous Voice in World Politics*, p. 207.

emphasized technologies of consciousness and ecosystem management. The technology of consciousness was necessary to the survival of indigenous peoples who chose to remain vulnerable to the natural world. . . . Western culture emphasized changing the natural world wherever it resisted human manipulation. Indigenous cultures, on the other hand, choose ways of adapting to the limits of the natural world.<sup>47</sup>

Such analogies supporting the indigenous Caribbean worldview will be interspersed throughout this work. Some of the most important aspects of Carib society concerned the maintenance of peace and implementation of survival techniques in resisting European colonialism. As Antillean society was matriarchal, political power was shared among gender lines as women's councils selected *cacikes*, which in turn helped stabilize society. Like in other indigenous societies, kinship or familial relationships were vital among the Carib in resolving conflicts. Kinship and reciprocity among the Iroquois were fundamental in achieving and maintaining peaceful relations.<sup>48</sup> In terms of accommodating and resisting colonialism, the Iroquois traditional practice of transforming hostile outsiders symbolically and physically into kinspeople, "to enlarge their world of peace," where "the many become one," was also the approach attempted with the arrival of the Europeans.<sup>49</sup> This contrasted with the Dutch way of organizing their lives around commerce and the market, and the French will to dominate the Iroquois politically, socially and spiritually.<sup>50</sup> Well aware of Columbus' arms and exploits in Quisqueya, the principal *cacike* of Borikén, Agüeybana, prepared to accommodate the

---

<sup>47</sup>Ibid.

<sup>48</sup>Matthew Dennis, *Cultivating a Culture of Peace: Iroquois-European Encounters in Seventeenth-Century America*, Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1993, p. 8.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid., p. 9.

Spanish conquistador Juan Ponce de Leon on his arrival in 1508. In the beginning, the two leaders entered into a “treaty of friendship and alliance.”<sup>51</sup> As a defense mechanism or survival strategy, Agüeybana sought to transform the Spaniards in kinship terms like the Iroquois had done:

Agueybana, the great chief of Guaynia, had news of the devastation of the Tainos of Hispaniola. The historian Fernandez de Oviero affirmed that in order to avoid such a fate in Puerto Rico, Agueybana opted to be a *guatiao* or bloodbrother, with Ponce de León. He agreed to make *conucos* to provide cassava bread to the Spaniards and instructed his subchiefs to assist the colonizers.<sup>52</sup>

### **Post-Colonial Theory**

Finally, “post colonial” theory is also utilized in this work in an attempt to understand and to make sense out of past and present colonial and neocolonial situations. Post-colonial theory has been an important form of liberation for many writers in explaining how such concepts as power, race, class, sex, gender, identity, religion, etc. were politically and morally incorporated into European colonial projects of expansion. In resisting colonialism, post-colonialism seeks to dismantle “the Center/Margin binarism of imperial discourse.”<sup>53</sup> The production of knowledge about the “Other” has been the primary means of manipulating and maintaining power within colonial discourse. To question and analyze this means to cross-examine the colonial and neocolonial response to the Other, to probe deeply into the metaphysical soul of the colonizer. In a sense, then,

---

<sup>51</sup>Federico Ribes Tovar, *A Chronological History of Puerto Rico*, New York: Plus Ultra Educational Publishers, 1973, p. 20.

<sup>52</sup>Francisco Moscoso, “Chieftdom and Encomienda in Puerto Rico: The Development of Tribal Society and the Spanish Colonization to 1530,” in Adalberto López, ed., *The Puerto Ricans: Their History, Culture, and Society*, Cambridge, Mass.: Schenkman Publishing Company, 1980, p. 18.

<sup>53</sup>Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, eds., *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*, London and New York: Routledge, 1995, p. 117.

post-colonial theory is the native academic response to 550 years of European imperialism beginning in Africa in the mid-1400s.

It should be noted that the “post” in post-colonial could be seen as a deceptive prefix. As articulated by numerous post-colonial writers, the “post” does not connote “after colonialism,” or that we live at a time when colonialism no longer exists. On the contrary, post-colonialism has arisen simultaneously as a form of resistance to colonialism and neocolonialism. It is the colonial that brings about the post-colonial. Hence, post-colonialism has existed for a very long time as Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin point out:

‘Post-colonial’ as we define it does not mean ‘post-independence’, or ‘after colonialism’, for this would be to falsely ascribe an end to the colonial process. Post-colonialism, rather, begins from the very first moment of colonial contact. It is the discourse of oppositionality which colonialism brings into being. In this sense, post-colonial writing has a very long history.<sup>54</sup>

Post-colonial conditions are, therefore, not “post-colonial” after all, but are still grounded in colonial and neocolonial institutions and domination. The rise of post-colonial literature in the 1960s is an irony of sorts in the sense that the supposed abolishment of colonialism through the granting of independence to formally colonized countries was short-lived. The continuation of Western influence in the political, economic, military, and ideological spheres (with an “over-riding economic purpose”) led to the Marxist coining of the term “neo-colonialism,” a word quickly adopted by leaders of newly formed or soon to be “independent countries.”<sup>55</sup> Thus, the development of

---

<sup>54</sup>Ibid.

neocolonialism is but another step in the process of imperialism clearly manifested in today's world.<sup>56</sup> However, while post-colonialism has been empowering in theory, whether or not it has brought about practical problem-solving solutions to "life in the real," or to the truly oppressed, is questionable. Indeed, this very question is at the core of post-colonial studies today. The discipline and debates themselves are rooted in the "contemporary academy," which some see as "the product of the institutionalization of post-colonial studies."<sup>57</sup> Thus, the issue of how to "effect agency" for the "post-colonial subject" has remained largely unresolved.<sup>58</sup>

It is this awareness of the strengths and limitations of post-colonial theory that challenges us to better understand the complex and contentious issues regarding indigenous Caribbean self-identification and resurgence. For the purposes of this dissertation, however, I have found it difficult to at least locate post-colonial English texts that specifically address historical and cultural matters concerning indigenous Caribbean peoples. The large bulk of the post-1960s Caribbean literature glosses over the indigenous presence, suggesting it has been removed from this ancestral memory. The post-colonial black consciousness and black literary expression are paramount. I have found, though, that the works of José Barreiro (mentioned above), Roberto Fernández-Retamar, Walter D. Mignolo, Selwyn Cudjoe and Peter Hulme do assist us in producing a deeper meaning for our task of unraveling and articulating the Carib story. The overall theme that could

---

<sup>55</sup>Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman, "Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: An Introduction," in Williams and Chrisman, eds., *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1994, p. 3.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid.

<sup>57</sup>Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, eds., *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*, pp. 10-11.

define their texts as “post-colonial” is the fierce *resistance* to the mainstream epistemological line. There is also an important air of continuity interwoven into their works. As Cudjoe points out, “when we examine Caribbean literature, we look for a continuous thread giving this literature its particular resonance, tonality and, most important of all, content.”<sup>59</sup>

Fernández-Retamar’s classic work, *Caliban*, is said to be the “Latin American” equivalent of Edward Said’s *Orientalism*,<sup>60</sup> originally written in Spanish seven years before it. Here the Cuban scholar provides a critique of the defamation of the name *Carib*, and hence the people inhabiting the region, through the imaginary creation of the “cannibal.” He notes how Columbus’ and an “unending throng” of subsequent followers’ depiction of the Carib as “anthropophagus” was about as probable as the existence of “one-eyed men” or “men with dog muzzles or tails.”<sup>61</sup> For him, Shakespeare’s “Caliban” is the symbol of the *mestizo* inhabitants living today in the very islands where Caliban lived.<sup>62</sup> The *mestizo* sees this with particular clarity: “Prospero invaded the islands, killed our ancestors, enslaved Caliban, and taught him his language to make himself understood.”<sup>63</sup> Fernández-Retamar turns to the Cuban revolutionary, José Martí, for inspiration about the integration of “our America” and “true roots” of the culture. He

---

<sup>58</sup>Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>59</sup>Selwyn R. Cudjoe, *Resistance and Caribbean Literature*, Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1980, p. xi.

<sup>60</sup>Fredric Jameson in, Roberto Fernández Retamar, *Caliban and Other Essays*, (1971), Translated by Edward Baker, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989, p. viii.

<sup>61</sup>Roberto Fernández Retamar, *Caliban and Other Essays*, p. 7.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 14.

writes how Martí “speaks of feeling valiant Carib blood coursing through his veins.”<sup>64</sup> Martí defies “history” when he then states, “The American intelligence is an indigenous plumage. Is it not evident that America itself was paralyzed by the same blow that paralyzed the Indian? And until the Indian is caused to walk, America itself will not begin to walk well.”<sup>65</sup>

Mignolo’s book, *The Darker Side of the Renaissance*, assists us as he emphasizes an oppositional view to the Renaissance period specifically related to the colonization of languages and memories. The need to “decolonize scholarship” and to “decenter epistemological loci of enunciation” are his motivation for articulating the legacies of the “darker side” of the Renaissance into contemporary colonial and postcolonial theoretical discussions.<sup>66</sup> His hermeneutics allow for alternative interpretations of the past and present, which assist in providing a space for the indigenous voice to be heard. Cudjoe’s *Resistance and Caribbean Literature* is a genealogy of Indian and African resistance from the early 16<sup>th</sup> century as revealed through Caribbean literature. He begins with Enriquillo’s war against the Spaniards and how that struggle came to symbolize Caribbean resistance ever since. Cudjoe is important for us in defining the meaning of resistance, which is not only manifested physically or nonviolently, but “the reaction needed to maintain the equilibrium, to preserve human dignity, and to ennoble the human

---

<sup>63</sup>Ibid.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid., p. 20.

<sup>65</sup>José Martí in, Roberto Fernández Retamar, *Caliban and Other Essays*, p. 20.

<sup>66</sup>Mignolo, *The Darker Side of the Renaissance*, pp. viii-ix.



spirit.”<sup>67</sup> In *Colonial Encounter: Europe and the native Caribbean, 1492-1797*, Hulme credits both Fernández-Retamar and Said’s *Orientalism* for helping to influence his work. His meticulous analysis of Columbus’ first voyage provides substance for us in understanding how the discourse and mentality of colonialism initially developed in the Antilles. Columbus’ world is turned upside down when the Grand Khan is nowhere to be found, and the Herodotean “discourse of savagery” and division of the indigenous peoples come to conveniently fill the gap of the former discourse’s blunder.

### **Chapter Summaries**

The chapters in this work are loosely arranged in chronological order on topics ranging from the ancient Antilles to the Borikén indigenous movement of today. The first four chapters concentrate on the areas of history, anthropology and linguistics, and the political themes of identity, resistance, survival, and the meaning of “discovery.” They all revolve around the main thesis disproving the theory of the “extinction” of indigenous Caribbean peoples. These chapters lead into Chapter 5, which provides a detailed analysis and chronology of Indian resistance, survival and presence in Borikén.

Chapter 1 looks at Caribbean identity and how the European arrival disrupted the relative tranquility of life in the region. I first give some background on indigenous origins and cultural and spiritual traditions of the ancient Antilles. The chapter then examines how the dichotomies between “good” and “evil,” “peaceable” and “ferocious” were manufactured in the minds of Europeans through dividing and naming the Indian population and region. These dichotomies were largely created on Columbus’ first voyage

---

<sup>67</sup>Cudjoe, *Resistance and Caribbean Literature*, p. 7.

and would become the basis for how the indigenous world would be viewed for the next four hundred years or so. Contemporary debates and discussions of Caribbean indigenous reidentification and revival can also be directly linked to the past. However, some scholars continue to discredit and uphold the extinction myth by stereotyping and denigrating Carib descendants. I provide a critique of this critique of indigenous identity in the second half of the chapter.

Chapter 2 begins with a brief indigenous analysis of the meaning of the field of anthropology and notes some indigenous contributions to the modern world. We then present a discussion of how anthropological study came to solidify the imperial dichotomy created between the “primitive” and “civilized.” We will see how the concept of “primitivity” as opposed to “modernity” is an intellectual construct defined and empowered by Western academics.

More importantly, this chapter provides a critique of Rouse’s first “repeopling” theory. This theory holds in large part that the original peoples to populate the Antilles from Central America about 6000 years ago – the so-called “Archaics” who are said to have lacked pottery and agriculture – were “replaced” by South American indigenous groups. On close examination of the evidence presented in his book, *The Tainos: Rise & Decline of the People Who Greeted Columbus*, I have been able to determine that “replacement” (or “population movement”) of the original indigenous population did not occur, but rather the people survived and lived on. Many scholars agree that these first people of the region were in all likelihood of Mesoamerican origin. Puerto Rican archeologist Roberto Martínez-Torres, an expert on “Archaic sites,” believes the people

present in Borikén at the time of the supposed South American “Saladoid” arrival (about 2200 years ago) would have controlled the whole island, and certainly the mountain regions.<sup>68</sup> In *Art and Mythology of the Taino Indians of the Greater West Indies*, Eugenio Fernández-Méndez documents the strong cultural, philosophical and archeological influence in the Antilles from Mesoamerica, specifically from the Yucatán. The evidence clearly suggests that the indigenous peoples inhabiting the region on the eve of the European coming were of predominately *Mayan origin*, which infers a direct genealogical link to Caribbean Indian decendancy today. Indeed, in my travels to Borikén I was constantly reminded orally about “our *Mayan* past” and “our *Maya* ancestors.” The final section of the chapter elaborates on the Carib-Maya cultural connection.

In Chapter 3, I compare indigenous and European ways of organizing and interpreting knowledge through the use of language. Mignolo’s work first assists us theoretically in this task. We then present Lamourt-Valentín’s critique of Pané’s *Antiquities of the Indians* (as described above), which lends an important indigenous interpretation of the initial-contact text in the Americas. The chapter further analyzes how language and the alphabet were used as modes of power in the colonization of Amerindian languages. Antonio de Nebrija’s writing of a grammar of the Castilian language, dedicated to Queen Isabella, posited that “language is the perfect instrument of empire.”<sup>69</sup> This belief sets the basis for how the use of “the letter” contributed to the denigration of Amerindian culture by the early Spanish chroniclers. However, we find

---

<sup>68</sup>Interview with Puerto Rican archeologist Roberto Martínez-Torres, July 14, 1999.

<sup>69</sup>Antonio de Nebrija, in Vicente L. Rafael, *Contracting Colonialism: Translation and Christian Conversion in Tagalog Society Under Early Spanish Rule*, Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1993, p. 23.

that indigenous forms of “writing,” such as articulated in the Classic Maya texts, were just as relevant forms of expression and communication as European ones.

Chapter 4 analyzes the Vatican’s role in the initial European encounter in the Americas and how Christianity was used as a tool of imperial domination. Through the work of Edmundo O’Gorman, I initially trace how the concept of “discovery” was an invention of immense proportions. The Spanish *encomienda* (slavery) system was based on both the “discovery” and “just war” theories, which established Christian dominion and called for the subjugation of non-Christian peoples and seizure of their lands. This resulted in the massacres, burnings, torture, forced labor and disease that eliminated tens of millions of indigenous peoples throughout the hemisphere by the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Ironically, we find through the debates of the times that in addition to Indian rights and laws, European nations violated their own laws and doctrines in the colonial process. For example, natural law (*jus naturale*) as derived from the Greeks became an important element of the “law of nations” (*jus gentium*) under the Roman system and applied to the rights of indigenous peoples (*indigena*). The Christian “right of discovery” in the Americas curiously came to supersede the *right of possession* as built into Roman law. The chapter further explores how the “doctrine of discovery” came to form the basis of U.S. federal Indian law, and how the “discovery” principle still pertains to the international system and indigenous peoples today.

Chapter 5 provides a genealogy of Carib Indian resistance, survival and presence in Borikén from the early 16<sup>th</sup> century to approximately the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. Borikén was

the nucleus of the Carib hegemony long before the European arrival.<sup>70</sup> It is important to point out that many indigenous peoples had been living in the mountainous interior regions of the island for hundreds if not thousands of years. The 20<sup>th</sup> century uncovering of numerous *bateys* (ball courts or ceremonial grounds) and cultural artifacts reveal that life there was vital to the indigenous population. After the Indian war of 1511, many more fled to the mountains to escape the Spaniards and the *encomienda*. As we discuss, the resistance to Spanish colonization in Borikén was both passive and active. Since the Spanish did not colonize the mountain regions until the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Indian or Jíbaro remained there for the next three hundred years virtually unknown to the outside world. According to Puerto Rican historian Juan Manuel Delgado-Colón, the late 18<sup>th</sup> century Spanish population censuses' figures for the category "*Indios*" revealed only 10 percent of the total population.<sup>71</sup> As census data then were extracted from church baptism records, the censuses did not take into account the many indigenous peoples who had *not* been baptized. Moreover, this census category considered the Indian population from only one region of the island, Maricao, despite the fact that the Jíbaro had been present throughout the Cordilleras, Sierra de Luquillo, and other regions. The census category

---

<sup>70</sup>Interview with Carib-Jíbaro scholar and artisan Oki Lamourt-Valentín, July 28, 1998.

<sup>71</sup>Interview with Puerto Rican historian Juan Manuel Delgado-Colón, July 15, 1999.

“Free Colored” further reveals that a large number of *mestizos* were residing in the mountains. Thus, the censuses and data analyzed in this chapter reveal that a very large population of Indian people were physically and culturally present throughout the mountain regions of Borikén in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and into the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Chapter 6 looks at the personal experiences of the Boricuas who journeyed to work on the sugar plantations of Hawai‘i at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This was when my family came to Hawai‘i. The movement of labor to satisfy capitalist demands of American sugar planters in the Hawaiian Islands combined with the devastating human, environmental, and economic effects of hurricane San Ciriaco (1899) in Puerto Rico culminated in the arrival of the first laborers in 1900. The chapter reveals that the indigenous population in Borikén had survived until at least this time as the large majority of those who emigrated to the Pacific region were Indian people, who originally identified as *Jíbaro* or *Boricua*. The chapter focuses on the reasons for the exodus and diasporic slave-like conditions the Boricua were subject to. Finally, Chapter 7 examines the dynamics of the contemporary indigenous resurgence or movement in Borikén. The Boricua indigenous voice and advocacy work emphasized strongly confirm a continued regional indigenous presence. We discuss how the larger global indigenous peoples’ movement and Boricua diaspora have influenced indigenous traditional and cultural revitalization efforts on the island. The indigenous movement is also political and pro-independence. Thus, how is and can the movement support and gain support from other sectors of society and from the Puerto Rican independence movement itself? This chapter

will look at issues of contention, building solidarity, and the possible political effects on the island as a whole.

## Chapter 1

### Discourses in Indigenous Caribbean Identity

This chapter provides a discussion of past and present meanings of Caribbean indigenous identity and presence. We first briefly look at the ontological origins and some cultural and spiritual traditions and beliefs of the Carib Indian people. Much of this information was given orally to Fray Ramón Pané in Quisqueya by the *cacike* Guarionex and other Indian leaders and people when Pané lived in Guarionex's territory from 1495 to 1496. Many of the stories were told allegorically, which Pané literally interpreted and condemned in the process. Other information has been passed down through oral tradition through familial and academic accounts.

We then retrace parts of Columbus' first voyage and how European attitudes and the "discourse of savagery" began to define the indigenous world by dividing and naming it. Columbus and the Spaniards created the dichotomy between the "peaceful Arawak" and "man-eating Carib" out of their own moral and economic self-interest, and to seize and maintain control in the region. The "peaceful ones" were ripe for conversion, while those who resisted were "cannibal warmongers" subject to the sword. In both cases lands could be justifiably expropriated. However, we find that the indigenous peoples throughout the Antillean region have a strong common ancestry and are culturally a very similar people. The final section of the chapter examines the issue of indigenous self-identification today and provides a critique of the neocolonial backlash against the indigenous resurgence in Borikén and the diaspora. We importantly touch upon how the



indigenous discourse may be inclusive within such a contentious academic and practical reality.

### **People of the Earth**

The indigenous peoples of the Antilles have been present since time immemorial. In Antillean tradition, the people believed they came from the earth or from caves. In Quisqueya, Cacibajagua is the cave where most people originated. In Borikén, the “Caverns of Creation” in the mountain region of Lares are from where all humans emerged.<sup>1</sup> When the people were asked why they venerate the cavern, “they answered seriously and sensibly because from there emerged the sun and the moon that were to give light to the world.”<sup>2</sup> Regarding the place where the dead go, this place is called Coaybay in Quisqueya. This same place in Borikén is named Coabey, “where the birth of the ‘gods’ takes place” and “where souls go to rest and where strange things are always taking place.”<sup>3</sup> José Juan Arrom notes that in Amerindian tradition Coaybay corresponds to “the *Cupay* of the Incas, *Miclan* of the Aztecs, and *Xibalbá* of the Maya.”<sup>4</sup>

As in many indigenous traditions, the Carib believed in the Earth Mother/Sky Father duality between the female and male energies. The Earth Mother, *Atabei*, *Atabey*, *Atabex* or *Attabeira*, gave birth to *Yúcahu Bagua Maórocoti*, the Sky or Celestial Father. *Yúcahu* has no beginning, signifying the belief in a form of reincarnation and immortality

---

<sup>1</sup>Oscar Lamourt-Valentín, *Cannibal Recipes*, A socio-linguistic account of Carib-Jíbaro culture and response to the work of Ramón Pané, Ames: Iowa State University, Unpublished, 1979, p. 13.

<sup>2</sup>Pietro Martire d’Anghiera, in Ramón Pané, *An Account of the Antiquities of the Indians*, (c. 1498), Introductory Study and Notes by José Juan Arrom, Translated by Susan C. Griswold, Duke & London: Duke University Press, 1999, p. 50.

<sup>3</sup>Lamourt-Valentín, *Cannibal Recipes*, p. 13.

<sup>4</sup>José Juan Arrom, in Pané, *An Account of the Antiquities of the Indians*, p. 17.

of both male and female entities. This thought contradicts the dominant European interpretation of the early chroniclers, who believed that Yúcahu was equivalent to a monotheistic paternal god in the Christian tradition. For example, Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas writes, “The people of this Island of Hispaniola had a certain faith in and knowledge of a one and true God, who was immortal and invisible, for none can see him, who had no beginning, whose dwelling place and residence is heaven, and they call him Yócahu Vagua Maórocoti.”<sup>5</sup> However, the male “god” or energy is not dominant or singular in Antillean tradition. Caribbean cultural society and spiritual belief were matriarchal and polytheistic. Compared to Mesoamerican forces of nature, “the Antillean gods present resemblances which cannot be explained as mere casual coincidences. . . . Such are the beliefs in the Fire-God, the gods of the wind and the hurricane, the mother serpent, etc.”<sup>6</sup> Antillean cosmology here differs from the Christian one-god “supreme” view of the world. Francisco Moscoso points out:

Historians influenced by christianity have mistakenly projected their religious dogma upon the religion of the Tainos. They affirm, for instance, that Yocahú was equivalent to the Christian Supreme Creator, and that Atabeira had much in common with the Virgin Mary. But in fact, as José Juan Arrom has demonstrated in *Mitología y artes prehispánicas de las Antillas*, Yucahú was the god-provider of yuca, the agricultural staple food of the Tainos. Atabeira or Atabex more likely was a divinity associated with the moon and the tides, and with menstruation and fertility. Mautiatihuel was the god of the sun; Huracán was the god of the storms.<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>5</sup>Bartolomé de Las Casas, in Pané, *An Account of the Antiquities of the Indians*, p. 55.

<sup>6</sup>Eugenio Fernández Méndez, *Art and Mythology of the Taino Indians of the Greater West Indies*, México: Editorial Libros de México, 1972, p. 19.

<sup>7</sup>Francisco Moscoso, “Chieftdom and Encomienda in Puerto Rico: The Development of Tribal Society and the Spanish Colonization to 1530,” in Adalberto López, ed., *The Puerto Ricans: Their History, Culture, and Society*, Cambridge, Mass.: Schenkman Publishing Company, 1980, pp. 15-16.

The Carib creation myth of the sea is told through the story of *Yaya*, who is grandfather of the *Four Twins*. Because his son, *Yayael*, wanted to kill him, Yaya killed Yayael and hung his bones in a gourd from the roof of his house. Desiring to see his son one day, Yaya's wife took down the gourd whereupon the bones had been transformed into fish, which they proceeded to eat. While Yaya was out one day in his *conucos* (fields), the Four Twins arrived at his house and while eating the fish they heard Yaya returning home. They urgently attempted to hang the gourd back up, but it fell to the ground and broke. Thus, "They say [the Indian people] that so much water came out of that gourd that it filled up the whole earth, and many fish came out of the water; and thus it was, they say, that the sea had its origin."<sup>8</sup> Pietro Martire d'Anghiera (Peter Martyr) notes of the experience: "The sea spilled out through the cracks, the valleys filled up; that vast surface of that dry world of the island came under water, and the only part spared from that flood, because of their altitude, were the mountains that form the islands we can see now."<sup>9</sup>

In Amerindian tradition the numeral "4" is also of symbolic importance. The Four Twins represent the four corners, directions or winds of the world. Regarding the concept of time, Oki Lamourt-Valentín writes that Yaya does away with Yayael "for a paradigmatic 'four' months, or moons, or lizzards which is a pun for the word 'can', . . . which is also the numeral 'four' ('4'), as well as a concept of time."<sup>10</sup> Lakota medicine man Black Elk further reveals the profound relationship of the corners of the earth in

---

<sup>8</sup>Pané, *An Account of the Antiquities of the Indians*, p. 14.

<sup>9</sup>Martire d'Anghiera, in Pané, *An Account of the Antiquities of the Indians*, p. 49.

<sup>10</sup>Lamourt-Valentín, *Cannibal Recipes*, p. 12.

North American Indian tradition: “Hear me, four quarters of the world—a relative I am! Give me the strength to walk the soft earth, a relative to all that is! Give me the eyes to see and the strength to understand, that I may be like you. With your power only can I face the winds.”<sup>11</sup>

The most sacred and cherished symbol of indigenous Caribbean peoples is the *cemí*. Made of stone or wood, *cemís* are not “gods” or “idols” as has often been interpreted, but personal and familial guardians representing various spiritual entities and a link between the physical and ancestral worlds. They may be compared to the functions of Christian saints.<sup>12</sup> The *cemí*, whose powers were often invoked through the *cohoba* (an herb that is inhaled) ceremony, was used to heal the sick, assist women in childbirth, help bring about rain or an abundant harvest, achieve victory in war, prophesied the future, etc. Although Pané, Martyr and Las Casas all equated the tradition with “devil worship,” they recorded numerous functions of the *cemí*. Las Casas observed, “When I would ask the Indians at times: ‘Who is this zemi you name?’ they answered me: ‘He who makes it rain and makes the sun shine and gives us children and other benefits we desire.’”<sup>13</sup>

These are some of the cultural and spiritual beliefs and customs of the indigenous peoples present in the 15<sup>th</sup> century Antilles. Other traditions are elaborated on in the context of this work, particularly in the last section of Chapter 2. The memories of these times have been prophesied and passed down orally and in writing through the

---

<sup>11</sup>Black Elk, in John G. Neihardt, *Black Elk Speaks: Being the Life Story of a Holy Man of the Oglala Sioux*, Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1979, p. 6.

<sup>12</sup>Loida Figueroa Mercado, *History of Puerto Rico: From the Beginning to 1892*, New York: L.A. Publishing Company Inc., 1970?, p. 46.

<sup>13</sup>Las Casas, in Pané, *An Account of the Antiquities of the Indians*, p. 62.

generations so that indigenous descendants today still identify and find meaning in these stories. It is into this profound and strange world that the Spaniards of Europe would enter.

### **The Caniba as “Caníbal”**

Indeed the radical dualism of the European response to the native Caribbean – fierce cannibal and noble savage – has such obvious continuities with the classical Mediterranean paradigm that it is tempting to see the whole intricate web of colonial discourse as weaving itself in its own separate space entirely unaffected by any observation of or interchange with native Caribbean cultures.<sup>14</sup>

Abdul JanMohamad notes the continuing legacy of colonialist “moral superiority,” where the colonizer rarely question “the validity of either his own or his society’s formation and that he will not be inclined to expend any energy in understanding the worthless alterity of the colonized.”<sup>15</sup> This attitude spans a five hundred year gap in Puerto Rico, from Columbus’ arrival to the contemporary colonial situation as depicted by the recent mass mobilization of citizens protesting and eventually ending the U.S. Navy bombing, desecration and military presence on the island of Vieques (Vieques). In terms of culture and identity, there is an implicit link between the two time periods. It was in 1492 when the colonial was conceptualized in Borikén. What the people there didn’t know at the time was that Columbus’ preconceived notion of the Carib of *Caniba* as “cannibal” had already taken form in the Herodotian tradition, and they were *it*. Indeed, the western territory of Borikén was called “Caniba,” or the

---

<sup>14</sup>Peter Hulme, *Colonial Encounters: Europe and the native Caribbean, 1492-1797*, London and New York: Methuen & Co., 1986, p. 47.

<sup>15</sup>Abdul JanMohamed, “The Economy of Manichean Allegory,” in Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, eds., *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*, p. 18.

“lizard.”<sup>16</sup> As we will later see, the name “*canibales*” (or “cannibal”) appears to originally derive from the word Caniba, and only *thereafter* came to be used as a marker of anthropophagy for the Caribe or Carib people of the region.

The meaning projected in Columbus’ journal (*Diario de Colón*) of his first voyage would assist in dramatically altering the way of life and course of history in the Antilles. While the Indian people were conveniently divided into “good” and “evil” for the sake of the colonizer, the dominant perception of the people depicted back in Europe was that of the “cannibal,” e.g., as portrayed by the antagonistic character “Caliban” in Shakespeare’s *The Tempest*. This is what Roberto Fernández-Retamar means when he says that Caliban, the anagram for “cannibal,” is our symbol.<sup>17</sup> The journal is where the term “*canibales*” first appears in a European text. Peter Hulme indicates it is here where the term comes to define the “Other” in the European imagination “with the practice of eating human flesh.”<sup>18</sup> However, since the original journal and only known copy were lost in the mid-16th century, what has survived as the “journal” is a transcription of a handwritten abstract by Las Casas that was probably taken from the copy of the original.<sup>19</sup> This complex history may obviously lend itself to inaccuracies, for instance if seen as a

---

<sup>16</sup>Interview with Carib-Jíbaro scholar and artisan Oki Lamourt-Valentín, July 28, 1998.

<sup>17</sup>Roberto Fernández Retamar, *Caliban and Other Essays*, (1971), Translated by Edward Baker, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989, p. 14.

<sup>18</sup>Hulme, *Colonial Encounters*, p. 17.

<sup>19</sup>*Ibid.*; Peter Hulme and Neil L. Whitehead further describe the history of the lost journal: “both original version and copy were lost, and all that survives is an extended summary made by the Spanish historian Bartolomé de Las Casas, which refers to Columbus as ‘the admiral’. Before its loss the journal was used extensively by historians like Las Casas and Peter Martyr, and by Columbus’s brother and biographer Fernando. Las Casas’s summary was itself mislaid and not published until the middle of the nineteenth century,” in Hulme and Whitehead, eds., *Wild Majesty: Encounters with Caribs from Columbus to the Present Day*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1992, p. 17.

“genuine” account of the first voyage. Yet, when “bracketing particular questions of historical accuracy and reliability in order to see the text whole,” the journal may take on more importance if simply seen as a narrative of unfolding events.<sup>20</sup> The journal is significant as a piece of the puzzle needed to help understand the early colonial history of the region.

While on Cuba, Columbus records that his Indian translators told him there were people on the nearby island of Bohio (“Hispaniola”) with “one eye in their foreheads,” and others they called “*canibales*” who “eat them” and of whom “they showed great fear.”<sup>21</sup> José Barreiro alludes to this scenario in *The Indian Chronicles* when a *cacike* of Cuba, Bayamo, jokes to Columbus about the “bad men” from the south. The old people had said to him, “Watch out when you see those uglies coming!”<sup>22</sup> These were “a bunch of jokes” being played on the Spanish in order “to get rid of them,” says Lamourt-Valentín.<sup>23</sup> It is important to stress here how two Caribbean Indian scholars draw analogies about “jokes” or games being played on the Spaniards with obvious implications that the notion of “cannibalism” was far-fetched. Lamourt-Valentín has been engaged in studying indigenous Caribbean matters for over twenty years and Barreiro for nearly as long. Regarding Columbus’ understanding of the native language, Hulme provides this explanation for the statement:

---

<sup>20</sup>Hulme, *Colonial Encounters*, p. 18.

<sup>21</sup>Bartolomé de Las Casas, in Oliver Dunn and James E. Kelly, Jr., eds., *The Diario of Christopher Columbus’s First Voyage to America, 1492-1493*, Transcribed and Translated into English, Abstracted by Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas, Norman and London: University of Oklahoma Press, 1989, pp. 166-167.

<sup>22</sup>José Barreiro, *The Indian Chronicles*, Houston: Arte Público Press, 1993, p. 36.

<sup>23</sup>Interview with Lamourt-Valentín, July 27, 1998.

More telling is what might be called the internal opacity of the statement. Columbus's 'record', far from being an observation that those people called 'canibales' ate other people, is a report of other people's words; moreover, words spoken in a language of which he had no prior knowledge and, at best, six weeks' practice in trying to understand.<sup>24</sup>

Indeed, Columbus himself notes that he communicated by "signs" with the Indian people, "because I do not understand them through speech."<sup>25</sup>

Former Carib chief Irvince Auguiste of Dominica elaborates on the cannibal myth. He explains how in war a piece of the enemy's flesh might symbolically be eaten but in terms of human meat consumed as a staple food, the charge of cannibalism against his people is "a very wicked lie. . . . It goes back to the Spaniards, to the English. Columbus came to the new world looking for gold . . . he met the people inhabiting these islands and tried to enslave them. And the Carib people had enjoyed centuries of freedom, making their cassava bread and catching fish. Naturally they would retaliate against anyone trying to enslave them."<sup>26</sup> And Fernández-Retamar's analysis of the making of the "cannibal" corresponds to the right wing of the bourgeoisie of the time, "the typically degraded vision offered by the colonizer of the man he is colonizing."<sup>27</sup> Though sides of the same political coin, this view contrasted with the left wing bourgeois vision of the "New World" as depicted in Thomas More's *Utopia*. These competing ideologies informed Columbus' thought. The indigenous peoples were at first no less than angels but soon

---

<sup>24</sup>Hulme, *Colonial Encounters*, p. 17.

<sup>25</sup>Christopher Columbus, in Dunn and Kelly, eds., *The Diario of Christopher Columbus's First Voyage to America*, p. 113.

<sup>26</sup>Irvine Auguiste, in José Barreiro, "Carib Gallery," *Northeast Indian Quarterly*, Vol. 7, Issue 3, Fall 1990, pp. 50-51.

<sup>27</sup>Fernández Retamar, *Caliban*, p. 7.



after became despised. As we see below, the Greek author Herodotus' invention of the "barbarian" during the Greek and Persian wars helped to create the image of the "cannibal" or "savage" on that first voyage.

It is also important to note how the Carib or Caribe was thought to reside in the "Greater Antilles," where the "peaceful Arawak" were supposed to be. In fact, the Arawak did not penetrate the Antillean region.<sup>28</sup> The belief in a Carib presence, not ironically, is repeatedly recorded in the latter half of the journal and on Columbus' last stop in "Hispaniola." It was the indigenous peoples of the region who ascribed the names "Carib" and "Caribes" to a people,<sup>29</sup> not Columbus. Eugenio Fernández-Méndez points out that it is evident to many writers that the Carib were present in the northern Antilles in ancient times.<sup>30</sup> According to Fernández-Retamar, "Before the arrival of the Europeans, whom they resisted heroically, the Carib Indians were the most valiant and warlike inhabitants of the very lands that we occupy today."<sup>31</sup> When Columbus then asks about "gold," he is directed by the indigenous peoples to the next island, "San Juan"<sup>32</sup>

---

<sup>28</sup>Partly through information attained from his correspondence with Clifford Evans, Lamourt-Valentín notes that aside from some transported material on Trinidad, "there is not the slightest evidence to indicate that the arawaks had anything at all to do with the Antillies, they never penetrated the region ...", Lamourt-Valentín, Personal correspondence, February 11, 2002. Irving Rouse confirms, "The Indians who called themselves Arawaks lived only in the Guianas and the adjacent part of Trinidad. Columbus never met them. Moreover, they differed in both language and culture from all of the natives he did meet," in Rouse, *The Tainos: Rise & Decline of the People Who Greeted Columbus*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992, p. 5.

<sup>29</sup>Las Casas, in Dunn and Kelly, eds., *The Diario of Christopher Columbus's First Voyage to America*, pp. 284-287, 330-331.

<sup>30</sup>Fernández Méndez, *Art and Mythology of the Taino Indians of the Greater West Indies*, p. 17.

<sup>31</sup>Fernández Retamar, *Caliban*, p. 6.

<sup>32</sup>The island "San Juan" is confirmed by Las Casas in *Historia de las Indias*, (1875), Vol. I, p. 303, in Samuel M. Wilson, *Hispaniola: Caribbean Chiefdoms in the Age of Columbus*, Tuscaloosa and London: University of Alabama Press, 1990, p. 73.

(Borikén), in the “classic pattern” he had been directed all along the island chain since his first stop in the Bahamas: “Gold now lies to the east: to the east are the lands of Carib. What more could Columbus want?: to find gold and to confirm the teratology of Herodotus at one and the same time.”<sup>33</sup> But he appears to hesitate, writing that the island is difficult to visit because the Caribe is “said to eat human flesh.”<sup>34</sup> He is then blown off course back to Spain, this final and most significant irony that “desire and fear, gold and cannibal, are left in monstrous conjunction on an *unvisited* island.”<sup>35</sup>

### **Dividing the Caribbean**

So how does the Caribbean come to be divided-up between the “peaceful Arawak” and “man-eating Carib”? Outside Western interests enforced the internal divide within native societies out of a seemingly “larger threat and order of destruction” of itself.<sup>36</sup> Gordon Brotherston writes that this ploy has “sustained generations of popular accounts and even academic studies of American civilization; written in this sense from the outside and in third party interests, these enforce the divide between diabolically bad and helplessly good Indians, barbaric Carib, Aztec, and Sioux to one side, helpless Arawak, Maya, and Pawnee to the other, denying strategy and memory to all.”<sup>37</sup> As Brotherston goes on to point out, and we show below in relation to the Antilles, this maneuver actually masks the consistently intense resistance to European colonialism

---

<sup>33</sup>Hulme, *Colonial Encounters*, p. 41.

<sup>34</sup>*Diario de Colón*, in Hulme, *Colonial Encounters*, p. 41.

<sup>35</sup>Hulme, *Colonial Encounters*, p. 41.

<sup>36</sup>Gordon Brotherston, *Book of the Fourth World: Reading the Native Americas Through Their Literature*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992, p. 5.

<sup>37</sup>*Ibid.*

throughout the Americas. The maneuver had to do with attempting to gain and maintain control in the Antillean region and beyond.

Hulme's in-depth examination of Columbus' journal pinpoints two competing outside discourses: the "Oriental" discourse of Marco Polo and the Grand Khan and the "discourse of savagery" in the Herodotian tradition. Both are competing for a "single signifier," the word "*canibales*" (or "Caniba"), which Columbus originally believes refers to "the people of the Grand Khan" ("*la gente del Gran Can*").<sup>38</sup> The crucial moment signaling the defeat of the "Oriental" discourse takes place in Cuba. Columbus thought the island was the province of "Cathay" because it was so extensive. However, his sudden shift from sailing northwest along Cuba's northern coast in order to meet with the Grand Khan, and abortive "embassy" inland only to be met with deference by the Indian people there, were signs that his "Oriental" expectations were "becoming embarrassingly evident."<sup>39</sup> As the Marco Polo scenario fades away the quest for gold takes on paramount importance:

On the coast of Cuba Columbus immediately, without hesitation and without comment, sailed north-west before, in this flurry of explanations, strange manoeuvres and nonsensical assessments of position, changing direction. The basic point, as Sauer recognized, is that when the terrain made a south-westerly course no longer possible and forced a choice between north-west and south-east, Columbus chose south-east because he was more likely to find gold in that direction: not of course the gold of Cathay, but exploitable mines of 'savage gold'. This was not just a difficult decision, it was one that could not be brought to textual consciousness, for to do so would have been to admit that the whole discursive structure of the Columbian enterprise had been in vain.<sup>40</sup>

---

<sup>38</sup>Hulme, *Colonial Encounters*, p. 22.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., p. 26.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., p. 31.

From this moment forward lands and people southeast take on “savage” proportions. The idea of the “peaceful Arawak” came into being through Columbus’ letter written on his return voyage to Spain. The letter, which obviously “puts the best possible gloss” on the events of the first voyage,<sup>41</sup> has been seen as a means of securing funds from Spanish sovereigns for future voyages, in part, by giving the impression that the “peaceable” inhabitants encountered were ripe for Christianity. The portrayal of the Carib as anthropophagic is noted towards the end of the letter and de-emphasized. The letter is immediately translated and widely circulated throughout Europe. It is the principal source in which the dichotomy between the “guileless” and “ferocious” comes to enter the European consciousness.<sup>42</sup>

It would be more accurate to suggest here that the pre-European contact indigenous peoples of the Antilles were both fierce and peaceful. They were fierce in the sense that they adamantly defended their lands against hostile outsiders as best as humanly possible, and peaceful in terms of cultivating harmonious relations within tribal groups and with outsiders. While it could be said that the people of the northern Antilles were “docile” to the point where atrocities carried out by the Spaniards were unfathomable to them, the idea that they simply laid down and “took it” is absurd. Once the Indian people realized that the Spanish were there to exploit their lands and subjugate them, the resistance began. This very resistance was Columbus’ justification to enslave the people as the will of God, to reaffirm “the civilization and nobility of all

---

<sup>41</sup>Hulme and Whitehead, “The Letter of Columbus (1493),” in Hulme and Whitehead, eds., *Wild Majesty*, p. 9.

<sup>42</sup>Hulme, *Colonial Encounters*, p. 43.

Christians.”<sup>43</sup> Resistance and hostility and, thus, *evil* then become synonymous with the terms “Carib” and “*canibales*,” while peaceable and docility and, thus, *good* come to define the “Arawak” or “Taíno,” or those who do not appear to resist. In sharp contrast to this perception, the evidence of resistance to the initial Spanish encroachment among the indigenous peoples of the northern Antilles was great.

One of the first outbreaks of fighting occurred in “Hispaniola” between Spaniards and Indian people who were trading. Peace was made the next day, but not for the thirty-nine men Columbus left behind at “Navidad” on the first voyage. When he returned in November 1493, their fortress had been burned down and all his men slain. According to Las Casas, the men began to quarrel and fight among themselves. They “took women from their husbands and daughters from their parents, and they individually bartered for gold among themselves.” The *cacike* of Maguana, Caonabó, was joined by others against the Christians who were then “separated in the country where they were killed for their offenses and evil doing.”<sup>44</sup> Also in Quisqueya, the *cacike* Guarocuya’s (Enriquillo) fourteen year war against the Spanish crown “nearly paralyzed” the island at one time.<sup>45</sup> Enriquillo and his people won that war, which “resulted in capitulations that constitute the first treaty between a European power and an American indigenous people,”<sup>46</sup> signed in 1533.

---

<sup>43</sup>Alissandra Cummins, “European Views of the Aboriginal Population,” in Samuel M. Wilson, ed., *The Indigenous People of the Caribbean*, Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1997, p. 48.

<sup>44</sup>Bartolomé de Las Casas, *Historia de las Indias*, Vol. I, Chapter 85, in S. Lyman Tyler, *Two Worlds: The Indian Encounter with the European, 1492-1509*, Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1988, p. 125.

<sup>45</sup>Barreiro, *The Indian Chronicles*, p. 24.

<sup>46</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 11.

In Borikén, the implementation of the *encomienda* system led directly to the uprising of 1511 and subsequent war of that year. Gonzalo Fernandez de Oviedo notes the resistance of the uprising and “how they [the Indians] killed half of the Christians that were on the island of San Juan.”<sup>47</sup> Moscoso says that in this battle, “More than 350 Spanish settlers were reported to have been killed in the towns or scattered in the haciendas in the countryside.”<sup>48</sup> And in Xaymaca (Jamaica), Columbus barely escaped death after being hostilely received in 1494. Borikén Taíno cultural practitioner Roberto Mucaro Borrero writes that according to recent scholarship, “there is no evidence to support that they [the Carib] were anymore fierce than the Taino with whom they inter-married.”<sup>49</sup> Thus, while there is a strong belief among indigenous descendants today that their ancestors *were* a peaceful, good and noble people, it could certainly be said that the “Taíno” were just as fierce as the Carib when it came to combating European imperialism.

Given the above depictions and recent ethnological data, the ethnical dichotomy between the two groups begins to fade. Indeed, many scholars have argued that the “Island Caribs” (Caribs from the Antilles rather than South America) are “closely related to the Taino and other Caribbean groups . . .”<sup>50</sup> The social and cultural characteristics and practices between the two groups are very similar, as they “shared a common material

---

<sup>47</sup>Gonzalo Fernandez de Oviedo y Valdes, Chronicler to King-Emperor Charles V, *The Conquest and Settlement of the Island of Boriquen or Puerto Rico*, (1535), Translated and Edited by Daymond Turner, Avon, Connecticut: The Cardavon Press, 1975, p. 18.

<sup>48</sup>Moscoso, “Chieftdom and Encomienda in Puerto Rico,” in López, ed., *The Puerto Ricans*, p. 21.

<sup>49</sup>Roberto Mucaro Borrero, “Caribbean Indigenous Peoples: Clarifications on Ethno-History and Linguistics,” 2000, pp. 2-3.

<sup>50</sup>Wilson, in Wilson, ed., *The Indigenous People of the Caribbean*, p. 177.

culture.”<sup>51</sup> As referred to above, intermarriage provides the strongest evidence of the bond between indigenous Caribbean peoples. Even the dominant view that “Arawakan” was the common origin of the language of both groups has been called into question, especially since the Arawak never entered the region. Fernández-Mendez writes, “the arawak adscription of the Taino language rests on rather flimsy linguistic comparisons. It would not surprise me if a careful checking of linguistic evidence, would reveal as well some Chibchan and Talamacan, that is, Central American affinities.”<sup>52</sup> Lamourt-Valentín points out that the language spoken in the Antillean region was “in fact a member of the mayance family of languages, . . . it is a ‘Maya’ language.”<sup>53</sup> We further explore the Central American migration and Mayan influences in the Antilles in Chapters 2 and 3.

The main point to be made here is that regardless of historical origins, the people of the Circum-Caribbean are much more closely related than previously thought. Most interestingly, Louis Allaire indicates that several publications have even suggested, “the Caribs were in reality a group of Tainos living under different socioeconomic conditions,” a point he opposes.<sup>54</sup> This would imply the two groups were essentially the same people. Allaire notes that before a decade ago no anthropologists supported this theory. However, most if not all anthropologists a decade ago thought the indigenous peoples were “extinct,” and some still hold on to the view that the Carib were “cannibals.” Allaire himself writes that the Carib traditionally “raided for cannibal

---

<sup>51</sup>José Barreiro, “Carib Gallery,” p. 47.

<sup>52</sup>Fernández Méndez, *Art and Mythology*, p. 16.

<sup>53</sup>Lamourt-Valentín, *Cannibal Recipes*, p. 12.

victims,” but by the 1650s there were obviously “no Tainos to contend with . . .”<sup>55</sup> Given this, it is then not surprising to see how some remain trapped within the “peaceful Arawak”/“man-eating Carib” syndrome obscuring views of other paradigms. Were the Carib and Taíno then basically the same people living under different or slightly different socio-economic conditions depending on the island topography? I would affirm this as others have suggested. However, as we see below, it would be more accurate to say that it was actually the “Taíno” who were in reality *Carib*.

### **Naming the People**

As naming in the Antilles became solely a European undertaking, what name/s did the indigenous peoples call themselves? One wonders if Columbus or Pané, who was summoned to live with the people of Quisqueya and study them ethnologically on the second voyage, ever asked the people of the region the peculiar question: “Who are *you*?” European explorers were more concerned with arbitrarily naming and renaming people and places according to their own worldview. This was often in sync with the creation of imperial binarisms. In the Pacific, “Cook circumnavigated New Zealand and proceeded to rename the entire country at will. This renaming was at one level entirely arbitrary, responding to the fortunes or misfortunes of those on board the ship and to the impressions gained from out at sea of the land they were observing.”<sup>56</sup> Columbus did the same in the Antilles regarding lands, e.g., Guanahani (the first island encountered)

---

<sup>54</sup>Louis Allaire, “The Caribs of the Lesser Antilles,” in Wilson, ed., *The Indigenous People of the Caribbean*, p. 181.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid.

<sup>56</sup>Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*, London and New York: Zed Books, and Dunedin, New Zealand: University of Otago Press, 1999, p. 81.



immediately became “San Salvador” (“Our Savior”). This act continued all along the island chain. In this section of the chapter we are concerned with names ascribed to people. It is important to note that because he did not understand the language, Columbus was basically recording the sounds he heard. These sounds were spoken by the indigenous peoples he came into contact with. What we largely seek to find is what these sounds were actually markers for.

After careful research of both English and Spanish texts, I have of course found that the term “Arawak” and particularly the word “Taíno” are not recorded in either Columbus’ letter or journal of his first voyage. These words also do not appear in Pané’s account. Both writers primarily used the terms “*Indio*” or “*Indios*” when referring to the indigenous peoples as a group, and “Carib” and “Caribes” are attributed to a people as written in the journal. We find that the word “Aruaca” or “Arawak,” in its numerous forms, was first recorded by the Spanish in 1520 when referring to a South American province, “*que dize de Aruaca*,” and evidently projected onto the people of parts of Trinidad, the lower Orinoco region, and coastal Guianas.<sup>57</sup> Modern-day descendants of particularly the Guianas call themselves *Lokono*, which means “the people.”<sup>58</sup> So the word “Arawak” was in all likelihood not originally used as a term of self-ascription by South American indigenous peoples and was never used in the Antilles.

One of the first recordings of the word “Taíno,” said to mean “good” or “noble,” was by Dr. Diego Álvarez Chanca in 1494. The report he wrote for the municipality of

---

<sup>57</sup>Arie Boomert, “The Arawak Indians of Trinidad and coastal Guiana, ca 1500-1650,” *The Journal of Caribbean History*, Vol. 19:2, St. Augustine, Trinidad: University of the West Indies, November 1984, pp. 125-126.

<sup>58</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 126.

Seville has been considered the principal account of the events that took place on the second voyage.<sup>59</sup> Continuing where Columbus left off, Chanca proceeds to sketch a familiar story of the peaceful Indians he meets with the “ferocious man-eaters” he has heard about. For instance, the indigenous funerary custom of suspending the bones of the dead in houses or from trees was a sure sign of anthropophagy. When some Spaniards got lost on Guadeloupe, he further surmised they had been “eaten” and was surprised when they returned.<sup>60</sup> It is on Guadeloupe where Chanca writes that when the Spaniards approached the shore in a boat to speak with the people who had gathered “marvelling” at them, the Spanish said to them “*taino, taino*, which means ‘good’, . . .”<sup>61</sup> This statement has been commonly cited as “evidence” that the indigenous peoples of the “Greater” Antilles referred to themselves as “Taíno.” However, the term was obviously not used here by the native peoples as a word of self-identification. It was, in fact, *the Spaniards* who uttered the words.<sup>62</sup> The intruders may have wanted to use the name to make themselves look “good,” just as they were taking captive by force many women and men!<sup>63</sup> Chanca apparently learned of the word from the Indian people Columbus brought back with him to Europe after the first voyage. Martyr writes that they called the sky

---

<sup>59</sup>Hulme and Whitehead, “The Report of Dr Chanca (1494),” in Hulme and Whitehead, eds., *Wild Majesty*, p. 29.

<sup>60</sup>Ibid.

<sup>61</sup>Diego Álvarez Chanca, in “The Report of Dr Chanca (1494),” in Hulme and Whitehead, eds., *Wild Majesty*, p. 33.

<sup>62</sup>The Spanish passage written by Chanca reads: “Este día primero que allí deçendimos andavan por la playa junto con el agua muchos ombres e mugeres mirando la flota e maravillándose de cosa tan nueva, e llegándose alguna barca a tierra a hablar con ellos diziéndolos “taino, taino”, que quiere dezir ‘bueno’, . . .”, in Juan Gil y Consuelo Varela, eds., “Carta del Doctor Diego Alvarez Chanca al Cabildo de Sevilla,” *Cartas de particulares a Colón y Relaciones coetáneas*, Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1984, p. 159.

<sup>63</sup>“The Report of Dr Chanca (1494),” in Hulme and Whitehead, eds., *Wild Majesty*, p. 33.

“*turét*”, a house “*boa*”, gold “*cáunis*”, a good man “*tayno*” (“*al hombre bueno ‘tayno’ . . .*”).<sup>64</sup> He later notes that the word equates to “*nobles*,”<sup>65</sup> and on the island of “Española” a noble is called “*taino*” (“*Al noble se le dice ‘taino’ . . .*”).<sup>66</sup>

In the context in which Martyr writes the word is used as an *adjectival* primarily related to one’s *rank* (consistently written in lower case “t”). There is no evidence here to suggest that the people called themselves “*taino*” as a general term of self-identification. Not surprisingly, in the context in which Martyr uses the word to mean “*nobles*” he directly contrasts the “*taynos*” to the “*canibales*”!<sup>67</sup> In the Caribbean discourse, to say the indigenous peoples used the name “*taino*” as a self-ascriptive term for “good” presumes something counter to it, or “bad,” which falls right in line with the us/them, center/margin, peaceable/ferocious divide and conquer binarisms of imperial discourse. It was the Europeans who divided the Antilles and pitted the people against each other out of their own moral and economic self-interest. The chroniclers subsequent to Columbus – Pané, Martyr, Las Casas, Oviedo, etc. – merely upheld the dichotomy. For over the past five centuries, this is the origin of the way the Euroamerican colonizer separated those who cooperated with them from those who resisted their demands. This scene is most blatantly being played out today in Iraq. Those who resist the American occupation and wish to free their country are called “terrorists,” “evil,” and the “enemy,” while those who appear to cooperate are “friends” and the “good people” of Iraq. In all likelihood, it was

---

<sup>64</sup>Pedro Martir de Angleria, *Decades del Nuevo Mundo*, (1516), Vol. I, México: José Porrúa e Hijos, Sucesores, 1964, p. 109.

<sup>65</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 123.

<sup>66</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 213.

the Spaniards who *imagined* the word “*taino*” to mean “good.” In fact the meaning of the term has been said to be a derogatory one that was used in an attempt to get Columbus killed when he first set foot in Jamaica.<sup>68</sup>

The name “*tayno*” was apparently taken from the word “*nitayno*” (“*vocablo derivado de nitayno*”),<sup>69</sup> which relates to a cultural rank or nobility within society. Columbus does record the name “Nitayno” for “an important person.”<sup>70</sup> Daniel Brinton writes the words “*tayno*” or “*taynos*” are truncated forms of “Nitainos,” the “title applied to the petty chiefs.”<sup>71</sup> The name “*tayno*” was “adopted by Rafinesque and others, as a general name for the people and language of Hayti. There is not the slightest authority for this, nor for supposing, with Von Martius, that the first syllable is a pronominal prefix.”<sup>72</sup> Hulme confirms that Cornelius Rafinesque first adopted the word “Taino” as the language of the “Greater Antilles” in 1836. M.R. Harrington (in 1921) and Sven Lovén (in 1935) also took the name and referred it to the inhabitants and main culture of the region,<sup>73</sup> as did Jesse Walter Fewkes in 1907. Irving Rouse and Ricardo Alegría continued to enhance the anthropological significance of the term throughout the second

---

<sup>67</sup>Ibid., p. 123.

<sup>68</sup>Interview with Lamourt-Valentín, July 27, 1998.

<sup>69</sup>Luis Hernández Aquino, *Diccionario de Voces Indígenas de Puerto Rico*, Puerto Rico: Editorial Cultural, 1993, p. 391.

<sup>70</sup>Las Casas, in Dunn and Kelly, eds., *The Diario of Christopher Columbus's First Voyage to America*, pp. 270-271.

<sup>71</sup>D.G. Brinton, “The Arawack Language of Guiana in its Linguistic and Ethnological Relations,” *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, Vol. XIV, 1870, p. 439.

<sup>72</sup>Ibid.

<sup>73</sup>Hulme, *Colonial Encounters*, p. 60.

half of the 20th century. So the word imperceptibly transferred from “the level of linguistics, to that of culture, to that of ethnicity” without anyone realizing the possible consequences of such decisions.<sup>74</sup> Citing Las Casas, Lynne Guitar most recently writes, “The Taínos do not appear to have had a collective name for themselves, however; instead, they identified themselves by region.”<sup>75</sup> Therefore,

neither Arawak nor Taino were ever, as far as we know, self-ascriptions. We should be clear just what this implies. It does not mean that the natives of the northern Caribbean (or the natives of any particular island) had no self-ascription, or, even without self-ascription, did not consider themselves a community of some sort: it is just that we do not have the one thing (a name used by them) that would count as conclusive evidence.<sup>76</sup>

The key word above is “conclusive.” There were names used as markers of identity by the people the Spanish encountered on that first voyage. The names “Caniba,” “*canibales*,” “Carib” and “Caribes” are repeatedly glossed in Columbus’ journal. The main question to ask now is what were they “actually” markers for? Although Columbus at least initially believed that Caniba related to “the people of the Grand Khan,” the word is repeatedly referred to as a *place* by his Indian interpreters. As noted by Lamour-Valentín, Caniba was indeed the western territory of Borikén. The word “*canibales*” was apparently interpreted by Columbus to be the plural form of Caniba. Later when the word “Caniba” is cited, he equates it with “or from the cannibals [*canibales*],”<sup>77</sup> again

---

<sup>74</sup>Ibid.

<sup>75</sup>Lynne A. Guitar, *Cultural Genesis: Relationships Among Indians, Africans and Spaniards in Rural Hispaniola, First Half of the Sixteenth Century*, Ph.D. Dissertation, Nashville: Vanderbilt University, 1998, p. 3.

<sup>76</sup>Hulme, *Colonial Encounters*, p. 61.

<sup>77</sup>Las Casas, in Dunn and Kelly, eds., *The Diario of Christopher Columbus’s First Voyage to America*, pp. 236-237.

referring to a people. Douglas Taylor confirms that Caniba was modified to “*canibal*,” “perhaps by addition of the Romance suffix *-al*.”<sup>78</sup> So from a native view, the word Caniba, which is corrupted into “*canibales*” and “cannibal,” concerns a place and not a people.

How do we now account for the fact that the words “Carib” and “Caribes” are recorded in the journal? Although these names come to be synonymous in the European mind with the practice of “eating human flesh,” the words do not *phonetically* come out of nowhere. Although Columbus also ascribes the word “Carib” to a place, both the names Carib and Caribe are repeatedly recorded and, as previously explained, initially attributed to a people by the Indian people themselves. As noted earlier, the Carib are thought to reside in the northern Antilles, and specifically on an “unvisited” island that was difficult to go to because the people there were “said to eat human flesh.” This was the island of *Borikén*. It is commonly believed that both Carib and Taíno lived there, the former having been consistently “raiding” the latter on the eastern end of the island. Since we now know that the name “Taíno,” as attributed to a people, culture and language, was an anthropological invention, and since the people of these islands were ethnically and culturally very closely related, what name/s did the indigenous peoples of Borikén call themselves? Here we probe the work of Lamourt-Valentín. In terms of self-identification, he writes:

We are the people who call ourselves the ‘Jíbaro’ and refer to ourselves as, within the context of a nationality: ‘Boricuas’, while our country is called ‘Borinquen’, . . . from which can be seen that these are native language terms. There is however a kind of ‘make-believe’ that treats native

---

<sup>78</sup>Douglas Taylor, *Languages of the West Indies*, Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1977, p. 25.

language terms ‘as if they were spanish’, . . . which means of course that morphemologically [sic] they don’t signify anything on their own, but only as they are defined by another language which makes them epistemologically disauthorized.<sup>79</sup>

The reference to treating native terms “as if they were Spanish” directly applies to the name “Jíbaro.” This word was at one time a proud name for the indigenous inhabitants of Borikén, but came to be a derogatory term, like the word “*kanaka*” in the Hawaiian language became a “derisive metaphor, like ‘nigger.’”<sup>80</sup> “Don’t be a Jíbaro,” indigenous cultural practitioner Baracutey had been repeatedly told while growing up in Puerto Rico.<sup>81</sup> Jíbaro is indeed an Indian word (“*es de origen indio*”),<sup>82</sup> which is equivalent to the word “Guajiro,” the traditional name for the indigenous peoples of Cuba. These are the same words and certainly regional names for the people of both lands, just like Kanaka Maoli, Tangata Maori, and Te Ao Maohi are the same names respectively for the indigenous peoples of Hawai‘i, Aotearoa (“New Zealand”), and Kahiki (Tahiti) in Polynesia.

Expanding on the morphology of the word, Lamourt-Valentín explains that the name Jíbaro is “a native *eponymous* term for Carib (Caribbean : can/(j)íbaro - canibaro - Caribe) . . .”<sup>83</sup> When asked in the mountain town of Lares nineteen years after he wrote *Cannibal Recipes* what name the indigenous peoples called themselves, Lamourt-

---

<sup>79</sup>Oscar Lamourt-Valentín, *Cannibal Recipes*, p. 4.

<sup>80</sup>Kekuni Blaisdell, “‘Hawaiians’ vs. ‘Kanaka Maoli,’ as Metaphors,” *Hawai‘i Review*, Vol. 13, No. 3, Fall 1989, p. 79.

<sup>81</sup>Interview with indigenous cultural practitioner and activist Baracutey, July 24, 1998.

<sup>82</sup>Salvador Brau, in Hernández Aquino, *Diccionario de Voces Indígenas de Puerto Rico*, p. 284.

<sup>83</sup>Lamourt-Valentín, *Cannibal Recipes*, p. 36.

Valentín replied: “Jíbaro.” “We are Jíbaro.” “We are Indians.” “We are the Caribs.”<sup>84</sup> Indeed, the word *Carib* was a name used by the indigenous peoples on that first voyage and certainly attributed to the people of Borikén. If Columbus or Pané had bothered to ask those they first encountered the perennial question, “Who are *you*?”, they might very well have affirmed the above, for it is no coincidence that the regional name was *taken* from the people who were living there. Ultimately, sensing the trouble that was prophesized with the coming of the “covered people,” the indigenous peoples who “discovered” a very lost Christopher Columbus on that first rendezvous really just wanted “to get rid of him,” and to be left alone.

### **Self-identification and Its Critics**

We are descendants of the Carib whose ancestors of Borikén also referred to themselves as Jíbaro or Boricua. The name refutes the division of the indigenous peoples of the Antilles into conveniently held categories noting the people of the region have a common ancestry and are culturally very similar. However, as some of what is expressed above will undoubtedly be seen as controversial, the very issues of identity and descendancy are disputed particularly within academia. In this final section of the chapter, we focus on critical contemporary issues of indigenous Caribbean self-identification. Many of the issues addressed arose in 1998 at a symposium at New York’s *Museo del Barrio*. The subsequent publication, *Taino Revival: Critical Perspectives on Puerto Rican Identity*, neatly articulates many of the views expressed at the symposium.

---

<sup>84</sup>Interview with Lamourt-Valentín, July 27, 1998.



The general sentiment of the presenters at the Museo was highly critical of indigenous “re”-identification, which they generally viewed as a “New Age” fad. The “crisis of identity” begun in the Caribbean with the coming of the Spaniards is often exacerbated today, especially in Borikén and the diaspora. This crisis, part of the “discourse of Chaos” articulated in Antonio Benítez-Rojo’s *The Repeating Island*, has much to do with colonialism and extinction myths of peoples and cultures. “Chaos” here for Benítez-Rojo keeps “repeating” itself, “unfolding and bifurcating until it reaches all the seas and lands of the earth, while at the same time it inspires multidisciplinary maps of unexpected designs.”<sup>85</sup> He provides an example of how breaks in history are produced such as with the “cult” of the “*Virgen de la Caridad del Cobre*,” a tradition still observed by many Cubans.<sup>86</sup> This tradition was first recorded in 1605 with the syncretism of three traditional representations: the Indian deity *Atabey*, the African Yoruba *orisha* Oshun, and the European Virgin of *Illescas*. The importance here lies in how the *Virgen* becomes exclusively appropriated as the “patron saint” and national symbol of Cuba.<sup>87</sup> According to Benítez-Rojo, many anthropologists would rationalize this “break in history,” as such:

They would say, perhaps, that the people who today inhabit the Antilles are ‘new,’ and therefore their earlier situation, their tradition of being ‘a certain kind of way,’ should not count; they would say that with the disappearance of the Antillean aborigine during the first century of colonization these islands were left unconnected to the Indoamerican mechanisms, thus providing a ‘new’ space for ‘new’ men to create a ‘new’ society and, with it, a ‘new’ culture that can no longer be taken as an extension of those that brought the ‘new’ inhabitants.<sup>88</sup>

---

<sup>85</sup> Antonio Benítez-Rojo, *The Repeating Island*, Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1992, p. 3.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 12-13.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12.

There is of course a sense of security in appropriating symbols. However after a few good readings of the story, the reader may begin to lose that sense of nationalism and patrimonial reliance and abandon one's ego to feel Cuban, for a moment. The reader may be surprised to learn that the significance of the "triptych" extends well beyond a spatio-temporal frame of the "*Virgen*," sending the Cuban down the "roads of limitless chaos" any close rereading of the story would afford.<sup>89</sup>

In Borikén, the same "racial triad" of the "Puerto Rican" as a mixture of the Indian, African and Spanish had effectively erased an indigenous presence by the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Spanish censuses after 1799 eliminated the category "Indians" when the governor was faced "with the difficulty of fixing ethnic origins."<sup>90</sup> The birth of a Puerto Rican national identity conveniently formed at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Unlike in Cuba, however, the Creole Puerto Rican elite expropriated the "Taíno" as a national symbol "to be revived, romanticized and manipulated" against the colonial Spanish authorities.<sup>91</sup> But the use of the native as a cultural symbol of Puerto Rican nationalism did not peak until the 1930s, and Pro-Commonwealth cultural policies of the 1950s, when Puerto Rican literature often centered on "the morality and spiritual superiority of Puerto Rico's Spanish legacy in contrast to the 'lack of culture' of the new colonizer – the American invader."<sup>92</sup> So in Cuba and Borikén the rise of nationalism

---

<sup>89</sup>Ibid., p. 13.

<sup>90</sup>Figueroa Mercado, *History of Puerto Rico*, p. 74.

<sup>91</sup>Arlene Dávila, "Local/Diasporic Taínos: Towards a Cultural Politics of Memory, Reality and Imagery," in Gabriel Haslip-Viera, ed., *Taíno Revival*, New York: Centro de Estudios Puertorriqueños, Hunter College, City University of New York, pp. 14-15.

<sup>92</sup>Ibid., p. 15.

forms through the political expropriation of indigenous cultural symbols, outrightly displayed in Borikén and covertly used in Cuba. Perhaps the varying styles explain why the contemporary indigenous resurgence in the Caribbean has mustered some of its strongest influences from Borikén.

Like the Cuban, the Puerto Rican nationalist today appears guarded, a bastion of security, basically viewing “our Indians” as “extinct.” Those identifying as indigenous are often scrutinized by scholars and sometimes ridiculed in public. At the symposium in New York, for instance, demeaning titles of essays presented such as, “Making Indians Out of Blacks: The Revitalization of Taíno Identity in Contemporary Puerto Rico,” “What’s in a name, an Indian name?” and “The Indians are Coming, The Indians are Coming – Becoming Taíno in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century,” led Roberto Borrero to write: “Perhaps unintentionally, these presentations perpetuated the same historical misconceptions that these scholars were attempting to reevaluate. What was therefore suggested to the audience were the very same Eurocentric assumptions that contemporary Taíno activists have been working so hard to change.”<sup>93</sup> Of the four panelists who presented at the symposium, none identified as indigenous or claimed a cultural descendancy to the Indian people they were analyzing. As many indigenous peoples know from experience, the non-native scholar is too often designated as “expert” when it comes to examining indigenous issues and concerns. As a consolation, Borrero was allowed to submit an article for the publication. In it he points out that during the question and answer period the large

---

<sup>93</sup>Roberto Mucaro Borrero, “Rethinking Taíno: A Taíno Perspective,” in Haslip-Viera, ed., *Taino Revival*, p. 111.

majority of comments made took exception to the material presented. Many of the comments came from indigenous descendants, which prompted him to write:

As I continued to listen to the comments of my 'colleagues' in the audience, I could not help but think of all the Indigenous Peoples who have gone through a process of mental abuse, physical exploitation, and genocide, and why many of them deny their heritage. At that moment I could only be thankful that it was my own mother who first told me of my Indian heritage, and even though she thought that her knowledge was insufficient, these 'seeds of identity' were very important and certainly more than what other people have received.<sup>94</sup>

The backlash against the Caribbean indigenous movement is *neocolonial*, so the abuse Borrero refers to has been ongoing. The Puerto Rican elite often choose to delegitimize, silence or ignore the indigenous voice, remaining themselves under the U.S. colonial arm. Thus the backlash against the indigenous resurgence is, for one, politically charged. Jorge Duany emphasizes this when he ironically argues that "this turn to culture has a strong potential to ideologically subvert the colonial regime in Puerto Rico."<sup>95</sup> One might be tempted to inquire here about the dilemma involved in attempting to free the oldest colony in the hemisphere. Although the indigenous movement in Borikén and the diaspora has thus far largely claimed to be "apolitical," this "turn to culture" and self-identification *are* political acts in themselves. These acts are another form of anti-colonialism as the indigenous struggle against imperialism began at the moment of the initial Spanish invasion. However, since the image of the indigenous has been historically and politically deployed by the Puerto Rican establishment as merely a "concept" rather than a "living reality," political mobilization has never been directed against the

---

<sup>94</sup>Ibid., p. 122.

<sup>95</sup>Jorge Duany, "Making Indians Out of Blacks: The Revitalization of Taíno Identity in Contemporary Puerto Rico," in Haslip-Viera, ed., *Taíno Revival*, p. 33.

nationalist ideology since it basically views the Indian people as an “extinct entity.”<sup>96</sup> Therefore, questions and issues of indigenous political mobilization and recognition of an indigenous presence are dismissed by the neocolonialists as they continue to hold on to the extinction myth. An examination of the dynamics of the Borikén indigenous movement is further provided in Chapter 7.

How has Puerto Rico’s nationalist ideology regarding the “extinction” of the indigenous population been upheld? The Spanish gradient system that promoted “racial purity” and “blood quantum” measurements apparently has much to do with ideological racial stereotypes and arguments labeled against the movement today. The gradient system was developed by the Spanish in the Americas based on racial mixtures in relation to European and Indian miscegenation.<sup>97</sup> Some of the sentiment and terminology employed in the symposium essays depict the point that racism is still strikingly prevalent. For example, in Miriam Jiménez-Román’s piece on “The Indians are Coming!”, she rationalizes the extinction of modern-day descendants, in part, by explicitly denigrating them as “sensual squaws,” having the “Red Man stereotype,” and “jumping on the Indian bandwagon.” As the values of the gradient system were subsequently passed down to other European powers like the French and English, the system became pervasive throughout the European colonial world.<sup>98</sup> Thus, one can see how issues of identity between many indigenous nations and state governments became

---

<sup>96</sup>Arlene Dávila, “Local/Diasporic Taínos,” in Haslip-Viera, ed., *Taino Revival*, p. 17.

<sup>97</sup>Peter Roberts, “What’s in a name, an Indian name?” in Haslip-Viera, ed., *Taino Revival*, p. 65.

<sup>98</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 67.

intrinsically linked to “blood quantum” measurements, such as the “enrollment” laws enacted in parts of North America.

For most pre-European contact indigenous peoples the concept of “racial purity” was not a part of their worldview, but rather has been used as a divide and conquer strategy against them. It is, however, the general public perception and dominant scholarly interpretation of determining “Indian-ness,” or who might “count” as indigenous, which has been largely based on the idea of “blood quantum,” or that of which is “pure.” Duany verifies that “any search for the pure pre-Columbian . . . origins of Puerto Rican culture” is complicated due to the large importation of African slaves during the Spanish colonial period. Here he is referring to the nationalist intellectual’s appropriation of “Taíno imagery” as a symbol of “their nation,” or the “first root” of Puerto Rican culture.<sup>99</sup> This “first root,” however, is based on the stereotypical “image” of indigenous peoples *frozen in time*, of the “pure” blooded “noble savage” running around naked, the link with the ancestral past now severed. Indeed, in terms of the anthropological concept of time in relation to the Other, Johannes Fabian writes, “The posited authenticity of the past (savage, tribal, peasant) serves to denounce an inauthentic present (the uprooted, *évolués*, acculturated).”<sup>100</sup>

It should be clarified that any search for “purity” does not begin with indigenous peoples or the Borikén movement, which basically commenced in the 1970s, but has been fueled for two centuries by Puerto Rico’s nationalist ideology and the “racial triad”

---

<sup>99</sup>Duany, “Making Indians Out of Blacks,” in Haslip-Viera, ed., *Taíno Revival*, p. 32.

<sup>100</sup>Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes its Object*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1983, p. 11.

revivalist policies implemented by the *Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña* (Institute of Puerto Rican Culture). These are what have promoted both the romantic image and extinction myth of the native population. Duany lays much of the blame for the racialization and “canonical status” of the indigenous revival on the Institute and its founder and director, Ricardo Alegría. Alegría was most influential in promoting the “harmonious integration” of the “three roots” of the national culture.<sup>101</sup> However, while Duany attempts to distance himself from the rhetoric of those he calls the “cultural nationalists,” he likewise supports the “virtual extinction” and “physical disappearance” myths. Thus, a common theme of the indigenous revival comes to be the “romantic impulse,” which began towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century through creative Puerto Rican literature.<sup>102</sup>

The titled of Jiménez-Román’s article, “The Indians are coming! The Indians are coming!: The Taíno and Puerto Rican Identity,” sets the tone for her vicious diatribe against the indigenous resurgence. One wonders about her motivation in undertaking such a task, especially as she repeatedly declares the indigenous peoples “far from being a tangible presence” in Puerto Rico.<sup>103</sup> Jiménez-Román apparently knows very well that in order to discredit the movement she must first discredit the larger movement of indigenous peoples that began with the formation of the American Indian Movement (AIM) in the late 1960s. There is no other way around this. Regarding those claiming a

---

<sup>101</sup>Duany, “Making Indians Out of Blacks,” in Haslip-Viera, ed., *Taino Revival*, p. 42.

<sup>102</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 37.

<sup>103</sup>Miriam Jiménez Román, “The Indians are coming! The Indians are coming! The Taíno and Puerto Rican Identity,” Haslip-Viera, ed., *Taino Revival*, p. 82.

Native American ancestry, she writes, “The invisible Noble Savage has seemingly been brought out of the closet with a vengeance, this time as both ‘New Age’ symbol of spiritual harmony with the earth and as representative of one more of the multiple cultures that constitute the ethnic diversity of the United States.”<sup>104</sup> She must partake on the de-legitimization path for good reason. Clearly, the indigenous Caribbean movement follows a regional global pattern of indigenous reidentification, cultural revitalization, and self-determination efforts not unlike those of indigenous rights’ movements in parts of Asia, the Pacific, and North, Central and South America. The movement in Borikén, as influenced by but distinguished from the cultural nationalist revivalist policies of the Institute of Puerto Rican Culture, does not gain momentum until the early 1990s. In the Antilles, the year 1992 could be seen as a pivotal time of indigenous “reawakening” as the quincentenary of the European arrival was a time of reflection for many, rather than unwarranted celebration. I have noted previously that since the first wave of colonization into the Americas was so physically and psychologically devastating, it has inevitably taken indigenous Caribbean descendants that much longer to recover in comparison to other indigenous groups.<sup>105</sup> However, the current resurgence was prophesied over five hundred years ago. The prophecy of *Aura Surey* decreed that “in the twenty-fourth

---

<sup>104</sup>Jiménez Román, “The Indians are coming!”, in Haslip-Viera, ed., *Taino Revival*, p. 79.

<sup>105</sup>Tony Castanha, “Boricua Migration to Hawai‘i: An Account of Caribbean Indigenous Resistance, Survival and Presence,” Paper Presented at the 12th Annual School of Hawaiian, Asian, and Pacific Studies (SHAPS) Graduate Student Conference, Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa, April 11, 2000.



generation our people would rise again in consciousness to their connection and responsibility to the EarthMother, (Atabei) and all life.”<sup>106</sup>

Jiménez-Román would of course question this sort of ancestral awareness or collective memory. For her, “newfound” cultural awareness is “at best a dubious sign of progress,” noting that “today more people than ever before claim Native American ancestry.”<sup>107</sup> Indeed, the U.S. federal government’s easing of limitations for groups seeking recognition appears to enhance the right of self-identification. Jiménez-Román points out that this easing of standards could imply an economic threat (as in federal entitlements) to the legitimate claims of those already recognized, such as the Navajo, Lakota and Cherokee.<sup>108</sup> What she doesn’t say is that many of these recognized groups, e.g., the Cherokee, still operated under racist “blood quantum” mechanisms at the end of the 20th century.<sup>109</sup> In Hawai‘i, the U.S. federally created Hawaiian Homes Commission Act of 1921 has continued to divide the Kanaka Maoli community in terms of land awards for those primarily of 50 percent or more “blood quantum” (“n”ative Hawaiian), from those with any amount of “blood” (“N”ative Hawaiian), just as the law of “enrollment” has split the Cherokee. Many Native Americans have been strongly advocating for the abolishment of blood quota systems for years,<sup>110</sup> something Jiménez-

---

<sup>106</sup>Margarita Noguera Vital, “Taino Indian Symbolism,” (Pamphlet), Jatabonuco, Borike, September, 1996, p. 3.

<sup>107</sup>Jiménez Román, “The Indians are coming!”, in Haslip-Viera, ed., *Taino Revival*, p. 79.

<sup>108</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 80-81.

<sup>109</sup>M. Annette Jaimes, “Federal Indian Identification Policy: A Usurpation of Indigenous Sovereignty in North America,” in M. Annette Jaimes, ed., *The State of Native America: Genocide, Colonization, and Resistance*, Boston: South End Press, 1992, p. 136.

<sup>110</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 133-134.

Román apparently supports. Sioux supporters of the Red Nation of the Cherokee explain for themselves what the Carib likewise undertook as a survival strategy:

Had not the newly formed Red Nation of the Cherokee and their ancestors who were of the so called ‘pure blood’ not violated this law of enrollment/genocide, [then] the Cherokee Nation would have been exterminated long ago. It has taken the courage of freely loving the human race to keep it alive. This fact is simply proven, look at any Cherokee today, trace their ancestral heritage and you will find they did love outside of their race. It is that ability to love another that has kept them alive.<sup>111</sup>

The image of indigenous peoples “frozen in time” has certainly not been lost on the movement either. Since many have been indoctrinated with racially stereotypical images of the “Indian” from their youth, these images have inevitably projected themselves into the movement. A third-grade textbook used in Puerto Rico in 1994, for instance, lists certain Indian “traits”: “medium height, copper-tone skin, black and straight hair, prominent cheekbones, slightly slanted eyes, long nose, and relatively thick lips.”<sup>112</sup> Both Duany and Jiménez-Román are quick to emphasize that “physical traits” have come to constitute one’s acceptance into certain groups within the movement. Jiménez Román targets one group in particular for its repeated references to “blood” and apparent high priority for membership to those who possess the “look.”<sup>113</sup> On closer inspection, however, this “priority” is actually based on *genealogy*, which Jiménez-Román herself defines as “the documentation of one’s ‘blood’ ancestry.”<sup>114</sup> In fact, the common understanding of genealogy is *not* “blood” related but “an account or history of

---

<sup>111</sup>Red Nation of the Cherokee-Kansas, *American Comments*, (A Web Magazine), at: <http://www.iwchildren.org/rednation.htm>. Last viewed on November 14, 2004.

<sup>112</sup>Duany, “Making Indians Out of Blacks,” in Haslip-Viera, ed., *Taino Revival*, p. 40.

<sup>113</sup>Jiménez Román, “The Indians are coming!”, in Haslip-Viera, ed., *Taino Revival*, p. 96.

the descent of a person, family, or group from an ancestor or ancestors or from older forms : an enumeration of ancestors and their descendants in the natural order of succession.”<sup>115</sup> Racial stereotypes are indeed ingrained in the psyche of many concerned with indigenous Caribbean revitalization efforts and are obviously not a viable means of determining one’s ancestry, cultural background or group membership. However, genealogy as a basis of determining ancestry for indigenous peoples, rather than “blood quantum” measurements, “DNA testing” (which is basically a *physical* means of measuring identity), or the “physical look,” can be, according to J. Kehaulani Kauanui, an empowering and inclusive way of enhancing the cultural and collective social body. In contrast to the ideology of “blood quantum” politics, Kauanui writes about the importance of genealogy for Hawaiians in terms of its collective significance:

Hawaiian cultural definitions of who is Hawaiian tend to be the most inclusive because they take genealogy into account over blood quantum percentages. In other words, Hawaiians are more likely to go by genealogy over and above blood degree in order to decide who counts as Hawaiian. In Hawaiian contexts, genealogies connect people to one another, to place, and to landscape in the sense that they are about *relatedness* and kinship to the land. . . . These modes of identity also serve as the key contestatory mode of identification in the context of blood quantum politics, which are not only abstract but restrictive. Where blood quantum is always about individualization of particular bodies (already said to be ‘diluted’), Hawaiian genealogical practices enlarge the collective and social.<sup>116</sup>

Finally, Duany and Jiménez-Román also stress that the promotion of the “first root” of Puerto Rican national culture has come at the expense of the “third root,” the

---

<sup>114</sup>Ibid., pp. 95-96.

<sup>115</sup>*Webster’s Third New International Dictionary of the English Language Unabridged*, Springfield, Mass.: G. & C. Merriam Company, 1976.

African people and culture. Duany writes, “the *indigenista* discourse has contributed to the erasure of the ethnic and cultural presence of blacks in Puerto Rico.”<sup>117</sup> And, the cultural nationalists have often “exaggerated the indigenous roots while neglecting the African contribution to the Island’s largely mulatto population and hybrid culture.”<sup>118</sup> Hence, the title of his article, “Making Indians out of Blacks.” There is no doubt the African presence in Borikén has been debased and ignored by the *nationalist ideology*, but to say that “Indians have been made out of Blacks” is extreme. Paradoxically, the title of Duany’s piece seems to be precisely the result of the colonial production and internalized image of the “West Indian” and “West Indian novel” as predominately African, with the original inhabitants *nowhere to be found*. It is in the mid-20th century when the West Indian writer emerges and “[f]or the first time in writing related to the West Indies, the *Black characters* are not restricted to being peripheral or background figures” (emphasis added).<sup>119</sup> As we will see in Chapter 5, while the African influence in Borikén has been strong, the numbers of Africans brought to the island due to topological conditions was small compared to most parts of the northern Antilles. Borrero also agrees with the panelists that “there is definitely racial prejudice towards Blacks in the Greater Antilles,” but says, the “Black Experience” in the United States has been transposed to parts of the Caribbean and in the case of Puerto Rico has served “to perpetuate the idea

---

<sup>116</sup>J. Kehaulani Kauanui, “‘For Get’ Hawaiian Entitlement: Configurations of Land, ‘Blood,’ and Americanization in the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act of 1921,” *Social Text* 59, Vol. 17, Duke University Press, Summer 1999, p. 138.

<sup>117</sup>Duany, “Making Indians Out of Blacks,” in Haslip-Viera, ed., *Taino Revival*, p. 46.

<sup>118</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 50-51.

<sup>119</sup>Kenneth Ramchand, *The West Indian Novel and its Background*, London: Faber and Faber, 1970, pp. 4-5.

that race relations among Puerto Ricans is simply a ‘Black and White’ issue – totally disregarding even the remote possibility of another reality.”<sup>120</sup>

As miscegenation among Indian and African peoples in Borikén was most prominent along the coastal regions, the issue now for the indigenous movement may be to help shed the revivalist “blood quantum”/“racial purity” image and find more inclusive ways of defining the movement, like through oral tradition and genealogy. Inclusiveness of the African presence and influence as, for example, a cultural construct of the Jíbaro or Garifuna (Black Caribs) can only strengthen and lend credibility to the movement. The issue of “hybridity” or “hybrid culture,” alluded to above, is one that further fuels the discourse against the movement. While the indigenous Caribbean voice is surely a “hybrid” in a “post-colonial” sense, it is one that must also attempt, as many indigenous peoples do, to go beyond the nature of “hybridity,” which is the production of colonial power and a “revaluation” of a discriminatory colonial identity.<sup>121</sup> This identity is replicated through neocolonial institutions and practices, such as at the symposium, so that questions of identity are made contentious within groups and communities seeking meaning and respect. Yet, the concept was referred to in a positive light by one of the panelists at the Museo. Dávila notes that indigenous activists’ challenge to the mainstream establishment’s constructs of identity, with a stress on identity that is “more cultural than biological,” has indeed made indigenous Caribbean identification “more

---

<sup>120</sup>Mucaro Borrero, “Rethinking Taíno,” in Haslip-Viera, ed., *Taíno Revival*, p. 116.

<sup>121</sup>Homi K. Bhabha, “Signs Taken for Wonders,” in Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffins, eds., *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*, p. 34.

inclusive than exclusive,” and more tolerant than alternative interpretations of indigenusness.<sup>122</sup>

### **Conclusion**

In Antillean traditional thought, indigenous Caribbean peoples come from the earth or from caves and have been present since time immemorial. Antillean cultural society and cosmology were matriarchal and polytheistic. This view came to clash with the Christian paternal one-god “supreme” view of the world. Though merely one piece of the puzzle in understanding the early colonial history of the Caribbean region, Columbus’ journal of his first voyage provides important clues about European attitudes toward the indigenous peoples encountered. Of course the notion of Caribbean anthropophagy has long been a great myth and has essentially been discarded. However, the continual necessity of creating dichotomies between “good” and “evil” has lived on in the minds of many. More importantly, this necessity masked the intense indigenous resistance to European colonialism from the very beginning. The Spaniards were vulnerable, too. Enriquillo’s fourteen-year war against the Spanish crown, for instance, nearly paralyzed Quisqueya at one time. The “peaceful Arawak” and “man-eating Carib” syndrome was manufactured in order to seize and maintain European control in the region. This ethnological division contrasts with the evidence which shows that the Indian people of

---

<sup>122</sup>Dávila, “Local/Diasporic Taínos,” in Haslip-Viera, ed., *Taíno Revival*, pp. 23-24.

both the northern and southern Antilles were of a strong common ancestry and culturally very similar. We expand more on this theme in the next chapter.

We further find that the word “Arawak” and particularly the word “Taíno,” used as terms of self-ascription for the people, language and culture of the Antillean region, had been anthropologically manufactured since the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. The name *Carib* is the most authentic and genuine regional name of self-identification that was used by the indigenous peoples themselves. In terms of contemporary indigenous self-identification, the academic backlash against the Borikén movement in particular has been quite severe. The divisive colonial concepts of “racial purity” and “blood quantum” measurements used in defining a people and verifying their “extinction” unfortunately live on in the minds of many scholars examining the indigenous Caribbean. However the Caribbean resurgence, both regionally and in the diaspora, follows a clear global pattern of indigenous revitalization. Many indigenous descendants have found strength and meaning in their lives from the cultural and spiritual traditions of the ancestral past. They *choose* to identify themselves as indigenous peoples. Indeed, the right of self-identification is one of the most basic of human rights. Needless to say, they should be respected for identifying as they choose.

## Chapter 2

### Primitive Discourses in Anthropology, Survival, and the Mayan Past

Wherever civilization arises, the primitive in man is subordinated; it withers away, grows attenuated or is replaced. Thus the puzzled search for what is diminished, the search for different ways of being human, for the primitive (which is anthropology) begins.<sup>1</sup>

This chapter begins with a brief discussion of indigenous peoples' perspectives on the field of anthropology and notes some indigenous contributions to modern society. We then present a historical analysis and critique of how anthropological study came to solidify the imperial dichotomy created between those deemed as "primitive" and what is said to be "civilized." This discussion is important because it seems to typify the dominant ideology taking place today in Caribbean anthropology, specifically in the area of archeology. This point is elaborated on in subsequent sections of the chapter particularly in reference to anthropologist Irving Rouse and his "repeopling" theories. Rouse is the most prominent archeologist on the Antillean region and, according to Jalil Sued-Badillo, its most controversial figure.<sup>2</sup> His "mechanical reductionism," or exclusive use of pottery typologies in providing an ethnohistory of the indigenous peoples of the region, "prevents communication among most social scientists and runs counter to

---

<sup>1</sup>Stanley Diamond, *In Search of the Primitive: A Critique of Civilization*, New Brunswick: Transaction Books, 1974, pp. 120-121.

<sup>2</sup>Jalil Sued-Badillo, Review of Irving Rouse's *The Tainos*, in *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 99, No. 1, Washington, D.C.: American Historical Association, February 1994, p. 332.



contemporary movements in both history and anthropology toward an integral understanding of the past.”<sup>3</sup>

More importantly, this chapter seeks to establish a *Mayan* base for the indigenous presence in the Antilles. As we will see, the Antilles were strongly linked culturally and philosophically to Mesoamerica, which comprised much of today’s México and Central America. However, the dominant scholarship done on the Circum-Caribbean has revolved around the belief that the indigenous peoples present in the 15<sup>th</sup> century Antilles originally populated the region through migrations out of South America. If we now shift the initial emigrational pattern to the west, a whole new paradigm or way of viewing the history, culture and people of the region may emerge. Disproving part of Rouse’s first “repeopling” theory helps to reveal that indigenous Caribbean peoples are primarily of Mesoamerican origin. Along the same lines as Ricardo Alegría’s “conquest of the Archaics” theory,<sup>4</sup> Rouse’s theory contends in large part that the original “Casimiroid Indians” of Central America were “replaced,” or extinguished, rather than “colonized.” His second “repeopling” theory posits that the indigenous peoples encountered by the Spaniards were also “replaced,” which is the antithesis of this dissertation. I argue the original peoples believed to have come from Mesoamerica were not “replaced,” but rather survived and lived well into the post-European contact period. Nevertheless, most

---

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 333.

<sup>4</sup>Puerto Rican archeologist Roberto Martínez-Torres confirmed in an interview the similarity between Alegría and Rouse’s theories, July 14, 1999. Also, Eugenio Fernández-Méndez refers to Alegría’s refusal to acknowledge that the ball game played among indigenous Caribbean peoples was influenced and primarily found in Mesoamerica: “... he clings to the traditional but now discredited position that the possible route of diffusion was by way of the northern coast of South America,” in Fernández Méndez, *Art and Mythology of the Taino Indians of the Greater West Indies*, México: Editorial Libros de México, 1972, p. 49. One implication here seems to be that the “Archaics,” as a “primitive” or “weak” people, could not have possibly developed such a game or ceremony.

contemporary Caribbean scholars overwhelmingly link modern indigenous origins to South America. The basis of many of the articles presented in the 1997 publication, *The Indigenous People of the Caribbean*, proves this point. Rouse's first re-peopling theory seems to cement this thought which when carefully examined, easily unfolds.

### **“Indian Givers”**

While it is recognized that a formal “science” of anthropology does not emerge until the 19th century, L.L. Langness notes that “some human beings seem always to have been interested in reflecting upon themselves,” and he cites John Locke, Anne Robert Jacques Turgot, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Ibn Khaldun, and as far back as Herodotus and Tacitus, as examples of individuals engaged in the study of culture.<sup>5</sup> In the Americas, the historical origins of the field of anthropology have been acknowledged by some to begin with the work of Fray Ramón Pané. The European encounter with the Carib sets the precedence for the establishment of the binarism between the “primitive” and “civilized,” which still fuels the psyche and is invariably linked to academia. The early ethnological depiction of the “primitive,” which presumes a “prehistoric” past or a “people without history,” appears to still be an integral concept of anthropological study today. The concept is indeed the basis of Rouse's 1972 publication, *Introduction to Prehistory* (elaborated on later), which sets the basis for his masterwork, *The Tainos*, written in 1992. According to Adam Kuper, “anthropologists took this primitive society as their special subject, but in practice primitive society proved to be their own society (as they understood it) seen in a distorting mirror.”<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, this study or yearning for

---

<sup>5</sup>L.L. Langness, *The Study of Culture*, (Revised Edition), University of California, Los Angeles: Chandler and Sharp Publishers, 1987, pp. 1-2.

knowledge about the “Other” is essentially a political act,<sup>7</sup> intimately related to foreign policy.<sup>8</sup> This is one reason why anthropology has been said to be “an offspring of imperialism.”<sup>9</sup> Eric Wolf explains, “Without imperialism there would be no anthropologists, but there would also be no Dené, Baluba, or Malay fisherman to be studied. The tacit anthropological supposition that people like these are people without history amounts to the erasure of 500 years of confrontation, killing, resurrection, and accommodation.”<sup>10</sup>

For indigenous peoples, the very idea of a study of the Other and defining of “primitivism” are most closely related to anthropology and reasons why anthropologists often epitomize the negatives associated with academics.<sup>11</sup> This sentiment was clearly expressed by Vine Deloria in his 1969 groundbreaking publication, *Custer Died for Your Sins: An Indian Manifesto*, which some anthropologists have taken seriously ever since. Indeed, many scholars have become increasingly sensitive to indigenous peoples’ concerns over the past three decades, and some anthropologists have contributed immensely to helping preserve indigenous cultures. The 1997 follow-up anthology to

---

<sup>6</sup>Adam Kuper, *The Invention of Primitive Society: Transformation of an Illusion*, London and New York: Routledge, 1988, p. 5.

<sup>7</sup>Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes its Object*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1983, p. 1.

<sup>8</sup>John Borneman, “American Anthropology as Foreign Policy,” *American Anthropologist*, Vol. 97, No. 4, Washington, D.C.: Journal of the American Anthropological Association, December 1995, pp. 663-668.

<sup>9</sup>Eric R. Wolf, *Europe and the People Without History*, Berkeley/Los Angeles/London: University of California Press, 1982, p. 18.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid.

<sup>11</sup>Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research, Writing and Indigenous Peoples*, London and New York: Zed Books Ltd, and Dunedin, New Zealand: University of Otago Press, 1999, pp. 66-67.

*Custer Died for Your Sins*, titled, *Indians and Anthropologists: Vine Deloria, Jr., and the Critique of Anthropology*, depicts this point.<sup>12</sup> I further acknowledge my reliance on the field in helping to influence and shape my arguments. Nevertheless, indigenous peoples have been distrustful of anthropology for good reason. Justified by scholars, missionaries, and others in the name of “progress” and for the “betterment” of society, countless numbers of indigenous peoples who had flourished for thousands of years within self-sustaining communities were uprooted and destroyed with the coming of Columbus and the industrial revolution. This process continues today and its impact is affecting us all.

John Bodley elaborates:

In the mid-eighteenth century, the commercialization process and the related technological developments associated with the industrial revolution launched the developing Western nations on an explosive growth in population and consumption called ‘progress,’ which led to an unprecedented assault on the world’s indigenous peoples and their resources. Within the 250 years since then the world has been totally transformed, many self-sufficient small-scale cultures have disappeared, and dramatic resource shortages and environmental disasters have materialized.<sup>13</sup>

One of the great paradoxes of history is the very recent acknowledgement of how indigenous peoples have contributed enormously to shaping world history and modern society, yet were subjugated in the process. In his book *Indian Givers*, Jack Weatherford

---

<sup>12</sup>While still critical of anthropological attitudes and objectives, Deloria offered this assessment of the progress that has been made since the writing of *Custer*: “During these twenty-plus years, however, a great deal has been done to transform the attitudes that American Indians have toward social scientists, and events in the world have conspired to present us with new challenges and a set of problems of which we could not have conceived in the early 1970s. Some immensely useful work has been done by anthropologists on behalf of American Indians,” Vine Deloria, Jr., “Anthros, Indians, and Planetary Reality,” in Thomas Biolsi and Larry J. Zimmerman, eds., *Indians and Anthropologists: Vine Deloria, Jr., and the Critique of Anthropology*, Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1997, p. 210.

<sup>13</sup>John H. Bodley, *Victims of Progress*, (Fourth Edition), Mountain View, California: Mayfield Publishing Company, 1999, p. 12.

systematically documents how Native Americans “transformed the world.” He writes about how the silver extracted from the Cerro Rico (“rich hill”) mountain in Bolivia was the first and probably “most important monument to capitalism” and the subsequent industrial revolution.<sup>14</sup> Amerindian traditional agricultural techniques from *milpa* agriculture (mound cultivation) to the sowing and development of “hundreds of varieties of each plant” to the Indian farmers’ “profound understanding of practical genetics” not only assisted the first settlers in the Americas and the United States, but has informed modern science and its understanding of the genetic reasoning behind the process called “hybridization.”<sup>15</sup> This process was learned and developed through generations of trial and error by native farmers. Also, while some indigenous societies were hierarchical in structure, indigenous forms of governance were in general more egalitarian than the European model.<sup>16</sup> According to Franke Wilmer, in the 15<sup>th</sup> century Americas

many of the societies in these areas were following a much more egalitarian path of social evolution. The Americas were not occupied by hundreds of small and isolated tribes. The predominant pattern in North America was what we would characterize as confederacies--a much more egalitarian relationship among communities than the emerging incorporative nation-state (through monarchies) in Europe.<sup>17</sup>

This relationship appears to have had an important influence on the eventual formation of the American Republic. The Iroquois chief Canassatego was reportedly the

---

<sup>14</sup>Jack Weatherford, *Indian Givers: How the Indians of the Americas Transformed the World*, New York: Crown Publishers, 1988, p. 20.

<sup>15</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 82-85.

<sup>16</sup>Franke Wilmer, *The Indigenous Voice in World Politics: Since Time Immemorial*, Newbury Park/London/New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1993, p. 50.

<sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*

first person to propose a federal model for governing the original American colonies.<sup>18</sup> The model was based on the six-nation League of the Iroquois that was intensely studied and advocated by individuals such as Thomas Paine, Benjamin Franklin and Charles Thomson. Weatherford finds that Thomson's description of Indian social and political institutions reads like "a blueprint for the United States Constitution . . . The Americans followed the model of the Iroquois League not only in broad outline but also in many of the specific provisions of their *Kaianerikowa*" (Great Law of Peace).<sup>19</sup> For example, the five principal nations had councils that chose *sachems* or delegates to represent each nation periodically at a grand Council of the League. The model was apparently later emulated through the U.S. federal system where states maintained internal control of political affairs while the national government determined matters essential to the nation as a whole. Also, the *caucus* (Algonkin) was an important platform for Indian decision-making, which came to be a mainstay of the American democratic process. The informal discussion of issues "agreed with the traditional Indian way of talking through an issue or of making a powwow; it made political decisions less divisive and combative."<sup>20</sup>

### **The "Primitive" and "Civilized"**

While the above contributions have been increasingly acknowledged, they are certainly not a part of mainstream consciousness. It's as if the history of the United States *did* begin in 1776. Ramón Pané receives *sole* credit as the author of the *Antiquities of the Indians*. It is not thought that the *Antiquities* would never have been written had the Carib

---

<sup>18</sup>Weatherford, *Indian Givers*, p. 135.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., p. 138.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., p. 145.

not taken Pané in and given him all of the information he needed. It should be made clear that this discussion is not about receiving “credit.” The crucial anthropological questions to ask here are why have indigenous peoples in general not received *respect* as human beings? And how can this be achieved? The answer to the latter question remains elusive. The answer to the first question harps right back to the dichotomy created between the “primitive” and the “civilized.” The search for and concept of the primitive is generated “out of the social and cultural dynamics of state-level societies and modernity.”<sup>21</sup> Stateless peoples as conceptualized as “primitive” are invented by intellectuals in relation to state societies and are diametrically opposed to what is considered to be “civilized”:

The self-identity or subjectivity of people in state societies . . . requires a concept of the primitive both to bound and to give content to the concept of the civilized. Primitivity is, by definition, diametrically opposite to modernity: the primitive may represent for modernity, negatively, the depths from which we have advanced and back to which we are in danger of regressing without continued vigilance, or, positively, the world we have lost that represents human possibilities undamaged by the oppressive disciplines of modernity. Hence, the negative (heathen) and romantic (noble savage) representations of Native Americans that are a fundamental part of American culture and, more broadly, Western civilization.<sup>22</sup>

Primitivity as opposed to modernity is further an intellectually manufactured construct for it is intellectuals who have ethnocentrically defined the concepts and thus empowered them. The negativist concept of the term has been overwhelmingly employed in practice against indigenous peoples often as a political tool of domination. Ashley Montagu points out that while there is indeed a positive sense in which both the term “primitive” and its concept may be used (“primitivism”), such words can be damaging

---

<sup>21</sup>Thomas Biolsi, “The Anthropological Construction of ‘Indians’: Haviland Scudder Mekeel and the Search for the Primitive in Lakota Country,” in Biolsi and Zimmerman, eds., *Indians and Anthropologists*, p. 135.

<sup>22</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 135-136.

because they may “embody prejudices and pseudological rationalizations based on unanalyzed systems of values.”<sup>23</sup> This applies to the word “primitive.” He writes, “The term ‘primitive’ is such a cliché, and it is a damaging word. Not only confusing and damaging, but obfuscating, corresponding to nothing in reality, and obstructive of progress in understanding the meaning of the great variability presented by man in all his manifold variety.”<sup>24</sup>

In addition, both the concepts of the “primitive” and “civilized” are merely relative to the time periods from which they are constructed. Since “modernity” is directly linked to the creation of state societies or Western civilization from about the time of the Greek nation-state, it is a fairly recent phenomenon when considering that indigenous peoples and cultures had already existed for tens of thousands of years. Moreover, European stateless societies would not have in all likelihood considered themselves to be “primitive,” at least as defined in the negative, just as Western society today would probably not like itself to be thought of as “primitive” when reflected upon ten thousand years from now. Thus, primitivity in the negative presumes that state societies as “civilized” are “advanced” and “superior” to stateless societies. This is a myth of evolutionary theory:

So entrenched, however, have our beliefs become concerning the ortholinear evolution of man that our conceptions of ‘progress,’ ‘development,’ and ‘evolution’ have rendered the assumption automatic that what developed later in time must therefore be more ‘advanced’ and more ‘evolved’ than that which developed earlier. From this the ‘logical’ inference followed that what was less developed must be earlier than that which was more

---

<sup>23</sup>Ashley Montagu, “Preface,” in Ashley Montagu, ed., *The Concept of the Primitive*, New York: The Free Press, and London: Collier-Macmillan Limited, 1968, p. viii.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid.



developed, and therefore the earlier was the more 'primitive' and the later the more 'advanced.' Furthermore, since straight-line evolution is taken for granted by so many, it followed that the more advanced developed from the less advanced, from the 'primitive,' and that the former was 'superior' to the latter.<sup>25</sup>

As could be inferred from the positivist premise of the term, "primitive" ways of life that had sustained indigenous communities could likewise be viewed as "advanced." Stanley Diamond lists some very positive characteristics of indigenous societies, in relation to modern ones, such as their communalistic economic base, leadership roles as signs of respect for one's tradition and self (rather than acts associated with institutional coercion), and technologically conservative systems allowing for greater equilibrium (in contrast to the internal turbulence endemic in contemporary civilizations).<sup>26</sup> Montagu writes that while "primitive" peoples in comparison to Western society are undeveloped in many respects, native cultures are conversely more highly developed in many ways to "civilized" cultures as measured by the latter's own standards. For example:

Eskimos and Australian aborigines, to take two of the so-called most 'primitive' cultures known to anthropologists, are very much more generous, loving, and cooperative than are most of the members of civilized societies. By the standard of our own values in these matters, Eskimos and Australian aborigines are better than we are. Members of these 'primitive' cultures are honest, dependable, cheerful, and courageous, in all these respects to a degree which comparatively few civilized men manage to be. Who is more developed in these respects? Those who pay lip-service to these qualities or those who live them out in their lives.<sup>27</sup>

---

<sup>25</sup>Ashley Montagu, "The Fallacy of the 'Primitive,'" in Montagu, ed., *The Concept of the Primitive*, p. 2.

<sup>26</sup>Diamond, *In Search of the Primitive*, pp. 131, 135, 137.

<sup>27</sup>Montagu, "The Fallacy of the 'Primitive,'" in Montagu, ed., *The Concept of the Primitive*, p. 3.

At the “Man the Hunter” symposium in Chicago in 1965 anthropologists “officially” recognized that hunter-gatherers might actually “enjoy a good life.”<sup>28</sup> The original affluent or indigenous society is one where all the material wants of the people are easily satisfied. “Affluence” may be realized by satisfying one’s wants either through “producing much” or “desiring little.”<sup>29</sup> Industrial production signifies the gap between the former, or the modern market economy’s need to produce, and the latter, human material wants as limited and few, the “Zen road to affluence,” as Marshall Sahlins calls it. This “material plenty” of native societies relies in part upon “the ease of production, and that upon the simplicity of technology and democracy of property. . . . As a rule, neither extraction of the raw material nor its working up take strenuous effort.”<sup>30</sup> The contradictory thought that despite this “material plenty” hunters and gatherers still maintained an “objectively low standard of living,” expressed by Sahlins, is again merely a response relative to the time period from which it is constructed. Viewing “material plenty” here as a “low standard of living” is the difference between measuring “affluence without abundance.” As Martin Gusinde says, it is a “matter of principle” and not misfortune that most hunters are content without abundance or with such few possessions.<sup>31</sup> He writes, “Their extremely limited material possessions relieve them of all cares with regard to daily necessities and permit them to enjoy life.”<sup>32</sup> In this sense,

---

<sup>28</sup>Marshall Sahlins, “The Original Affluent Society,” (1986), in Majid Rahnema and Victoria Bawtree, eds., *The Post-Development Reader*, Zed Books, 1997, p. 3.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>31</sup>Martin Gusinde, in Sahlins, “The Original Affluent Society,” p. 8.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., p. 10.

hunters and gatherers might better be thought of as *free*, rather than the stereotypical view of them as “poor” because they possess very little.<sup>33</sup> One might then ask how this way of life could possibly be considered to be “primitive” as stated in the negative?

John Bodley would likely concur with the sentiments of Sahlins’ when he writes that indigenous cultures in general clearly could “not have survived for half a million years if they did not do a reasonable job of satisfying basic human needs.”<sup>34</sup> The assumption by cultural reformers that all peoples would embrace material prosperity and progress once exposed to it has been rejected outright by the very presence of indigenous cultures, though individuals can be made to reject traditional values when the necessary conditions for their rejection are stimulated by outside interests.<sup>35</sup> There has been a clear, well-documented pattern of indigenous peoples’ resistance to “progress” or industrial civilization by their ignoring, avoiding, or responding to it with defiant arrogance.<sup>36</sup> Therefore, resistance to change perceived as a negative attribute is a positive value. Bodley writes:

For peoples in relatively stable, self-reliant cultures, resistance to change is a positive value. It is only in commercial cultures that such emphasis is placed on change for its own sake and that, among those who make a profession of promoting change, cultural stability is given a negative connotation and is identified as backwardness and stagnation.<sup>37</sup>

---

<sup>33</sup>Sahlins, “The Original Affluent Society,” p. 10.

<sup>34</sup>Bodley, *Victims of Progress*, p. 20.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., pp. 24-25.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., p. 29.

Degrees of engagement in war, peace, and violence as a measure of civilization or “advancement” could be other ways of estimating the meaning between the “primitive” and “civilized.” While conflict has been shown to be largely endemic within many indigenous societies, culturally appropriate conflict resolution techniques were usually in place and practiced. Kinship or familial relationships have been traditionally important elements in maintaining peace among indigenous peoples. The Kānaka Maoli, for example, developed the concept of *ho‘oponopono* (lit. “to set right”) that relates directly to peace-making within family units assuring a certain sense of balance or good relationship: “It is a family group process that helped members heal as large and small problems severed the flow of reciprocity and effective relationship.”<sup>38</sup> Human interaction in Iroquois society was also fundamental in kinship terms and in maintaining peace.<sup>39</sup> This contrasted with the Dutch and French ways of organizing their lives around commerce and the market economy.<sup>40</sup> Although outside the bounds of consanguinity, the Iroquois traditional practice of transforming “hostile outsiders” symbolically and physically into kinspeople, which “enlarged their world of peace,” where “the many become one,” was also the approach taken with the arrival of the Europeans. The Dutch, however, reluctantly became their “brothers” for trading purposes, while the French

---

<sup>38</sup>Manulani Aluli Meyer, *Native Hawaiian Epistemology: Contemporary Narratives*, Ph.D. Thesis, Cambridge: Harvard Graduate School of Education, 1998, p. 45.

<sup>39</sup>Matthew Dennis, *Cultivating a Culture of Peace: Iroquois-European Encounter in Seventeenth-Century America*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993, pp. 7-8.

<sup>40</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 8.

became their “fathers” in order to dominate them spiritually, socially and politically.<sup>41</sup>

Domestically, however, peace was a way of life for the Iroquois:

Peace for the Iroquois was not an abstract concept; rather, it was concrete, integral, something grounded firmly in the social, economic, and political organization of their everyday lives. Fundamentally, they conceived of peace and lived it in terms of a domestic harmony--which they institutionalized within households, lineages, clans, and villages. Peace was possible only within a group cemented by consanguinity and a common sense of moral order. More than the absence of war, peace meant a practical way of life lived face-to-face with other people--kinspeople--who found shelter, security, and strength under the branches of the Great Tree of Peace.<sup>42</sup>

Regarding warfare, war, as “a state of prolonged armed hostilities between populations,” mostly related to conquest, is of “the greatest rarity among traditional indigenous peoples.”<sup>43</sup> Wars among bands, tribes and chiefdoms have been “generally a matter of petty raiding for small economic gain or for purposes of vengeance or prestige.”<sup>44</sup> According to Montagu, these forms of aggression have been misinterpreted in the literature as the equivalent of warfare.<sup>45</sup> One reason for this is due to the limited research that has been done on the variation in the nature and frequency of war, e.g., in terms of cross-cultural variability.<sup>46</sup> In a critique of one scholar, Leslie Sponsel writes that he “doesn’t develop a working definition of war that is responsive to its diversity and thus

---

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., pp. 7-8.

<sup>43</sup>Ashley Montagu, “Foreward,” in Leslie E. Sponsel and Thomas Gregor, eds., *The Anthropology of Peace and Nonviolence*, Boulder and London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1994, p. xii.

<sup>44</sup>Ralph Beals and Harry Hoijer, quoted in Montagu, “Foreward,” in Sponsel and Gregor, eds., *The Anthropology of Peace and Nonviolence*, p. xii.

<sup>45</sup>Montagu, “Foreward,” in Sponsel and Gregor, eds., *The Anthropology of Peace and Nonviolence*, p. xii.

has greater validity and utility beyond the common, usually implicit, omnibus one-armed conflict between two groups.”<sup>47</sup>

However, wars of conquest by particularly Western states have been all too familiar since the time of Alexander and the Holy Roman Empire. Theological doctrines justifying Christian dominion and “just war” over non-Christian nations and peoples had been formulated by the Catholic Church since the time of the Crusades. In the Americas, more than one hundred million indigenous peoples were probably “‘eliminated’ in the course of Europe’s ongoing ‘civilization’ of the Western hemisphere.”<sup>48</sup> Columbus’ genocide campaign into the region has prompted Jack Forbes to expound on the Admiral’s true legacy:

Thus, Columbus planned to act out his role as a cannibal, in a very literal sense, filling every vessel with slaves. The Americans were simply raw material (grain), constituting a *granjería* (granary) for Spanish consumption. . . .

Even as he was loading five ships with slaves, Columbus was proposing to sell 4,000 in various parts of Europe and Africa, noting that slaves and brazilwood were, in effect, as good as gold.

Columbus knew full well that the enslaved Americans would die in great numbers, but he was not worried since the Africans and native Canary Islanders, when first enslaved, had also died in similar numbers. In short, the huge death rates were justified by ultimate profits. For Colón, the Americans were simply *piezas* (pieces) or *cabezas de cabras* (goat heads), and it did not matter if only ten percent finally reached the slave markets, according to Las Casas.<sup>49</sup>

---

<sup>46</sup>Leslie E. Sponsel, “Response to Otterbein,” *American Anthropologist*, Vol. 102, No. 4, Washington, D.C.: Journal of the American Anthropological Association, December 2000, p. 837.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid.

<sup>48</sup>Ward Churchill, *From a Native Son: Essays in Indigenism*, Boston: South End Press, 1994, p. 7.

<sup>49</sup>Jack D. Forbes, *Columbus and Other Cannibals: The Wétiko Disease of Exploitation, Imperialism and Terrorism*, New York: Autonomedia, 1992, pp. 39-40.

Diamond profoundly writes that civilization originates “in conquest abroad and repression at home.”<sup>50</sup> He also notes that the “original crimes of civilizations, conquest and political repression, were committed in silence and that is still their intention, if not always their result.”<sup>51</sup> Given the cultural stability of indigenous societies, the atrocities carried out by the state against them could only have been seen by many indigenous peoples as “barbaric” in themselves. Although the numbers declined, slaughter perpetuated by the nation-state continued in the 19th century:

For the real work of war in the age of Clausewitz was butchery. Men stood silent and inert in rows to be slaughtered, often for hours at a time; at Borodino the infantry of Ostermann-Tolstoi’s corps are reported to have stood under point-blank artillery fire for two hours, ‘during which the only movement was the stirring in the lines caused by falling bodies’ . . .<sup>52</sup>

These slaughterhouse scenes were the inevitable outcome of a way of warmaking that provoked peoples whom Clausewitz found savage, like the Cossacks, to flight when it threatened to involve them but, if they had not witnessed it, to laughter when they had it described to them.<sup>53</sup>

And in the 20th century, “ninety-nine million people have been killed in wars,” and as of a decade ago “some forty wars [were] being fought, involving about a quarter of the countries in the world. Moreover, modern war kills far more civilians than soldiers: in the 1980s, civilians comprised about 90 percent of war deaths.”<sup>54</sup> Indeed, the Jewish Holocaust, the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and recent UN sanctions resulting in the deaths of half a million Iraqi children could never be justified as acts of

---

<sup>50</sup>Diamond, *In Search of the Primitive*, p. 1.

<sup>51</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>52</sup>R. Parkinson, in John Keegan, *A History of Warfare*, New York: Vintage Books, 1993, p. 9.

<sup>53</sup>Keegan, *A History of Warfare*, p. 10.

<sup>54</sup>Leslie E. Sponsel, “The Mutual Relevance of Anthropology and Peace Studies,” in Sponsel and Gregor, eds., *The Anthropology of Peace and Nonviolence*, p. 2.

“civility.” American anthropologist Harry Turney-High has gone so far as to say that the transition of a society from primitivity to modernity was brought about by the move from “primitive war” to “true war” (or “civilised war”), and the key to the transition was “the rise of the army with officers.”<sup>55</sup> In the move to “modernity,” “civilised war” here is measured by the sophistication of modern weaponry in the taking of human life. If this and the above examples are indicative of an “advanced” state of human development, then the meaning of the concept of “civilization” may urgently need to be rethought and conceptualized. Civilization as “civilized” has been largely determined through economic development justified in the name of “progress” and conveniently said to be “advanced,” often for its own sake. As Bodley notes, “Until recently, government planners have always considered economic development and progress beneficial goals that all societies should want to strive toward.”<sup>56</sup>

In sum, while some social scientists have questioned the above premise, the concept of the “primitive” in the negative is still the dominant ideological perception of the term as portrayed in contemporary society. This is apparent today for many indigenous societies, who remain on the brink of continued development. For indigenous peoples, the positivist concept of the term or “primitivism” is mainly a theoretical anthropological construct, though gaining some practical momentum. Montagu has noted the habit of assuming that what is considered “developed” is not only thought to be “more evolved” but also “better.”<sup>57</sup> But “better” is a value judgment, which is “a quagmire in

---

<sup>55</sup>Harry Turney-High, in Keegan, *A History of Warfare*, p. 91.

<sup>56</sup>Bodley, *Victims of Progress*, p. 132.

<sup>57</sup>Montagu, “The Fallacy of the ‘Primitive,’” in Montagu, ed., *The Concept of the Primitive*, p. 3.



which one may become inextricably bogged.” Civilized humanity appears to have adopted this assumption in terms of those it chooses to call “primitive.”<sup>58</sup> Indigenous resistance to the “civilized” has been precisely to preserve the positive “primitive” nature of the self, which contemporary society has lost and some anthropologists seek to recover. Therefore, the concept of the “primitive” to bound and give content to the concept of the “civilized” should be further *de-emphasized* for its negativist premise, with *greater stress* placed on its positive values.

### **Rouse and “Prehistory”**

The concept of primitivity is developed from the belief that “people without writing,” or those who did not utilize a phonetic alphabet, were “people without history.” This concept comes to set the division between “prehistory” (the “primitive world”) and “history” (the “civilized world”). Prehistoric time is said to be “the period from the first appearance of mankind to the development of written history,” and historic time covers “the period after man became able to produce adequate historical records.”<sup>59</sup> While many anthropologists have come to reject these terms and concepts, this terminology and its inherent taxonomy are “scientifically” vital and invariably used by many today, particularly in the field of archeology. But “history” as defined by “writing” or the phonetic alphabet is of course a subjective interpretation of reality. This idea is further explored in Chapter 3.

---

<sup>58</sup>Ibid.

<sup>59</sup>Irving Rouse, *Introduction to Prehistory: A Systematic Approach*, McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1972, p. 3.

In Caribbean anthropology, the negative concept of the “primitive” is nowhere more apparent than in the work of American anthropologist Irving Rouse. Rouse is the best-known archeologist on the Circum-Caribbean region having done well over fifty years of research. He has undoubtedly influenced scores of students and scholars alike. Some seem to even take his work as almost “sacred.” For instance in a book review of his 1992 masterwork, *The Tainos: Rise & Decline of the People Who Greeted Columbus*, Philip Morrison writes, “His is a wise and powerful method,” with Rouse’s “discriminating arguments”<sup>60</sup> essentially forming the basis of the book. However, Morrison provides little evidence to merit the above statement other than to reiterate dominant migration theories, note the many contributions attributed to the indigenous population, and, of course, remind us that they are “gone now.”

A good example of how “prehistory” developed as a science is outlined and promoted in Rouse’s book, *Introduction to Prehistory: A Systematic Approach*. The taxonomy and “systematic logic” discussed and developed in the work is a primary basis of *The Tainos*. What is most remarkable about *Introduction to Prehistory* is not the extreme classification system developed, nor the ethnocentric approach to the “subpeoples,” “co-subpeoples” and “series” classified, but that the text was written as recently as 1972. This is merely two years before Diamond wrote his critique of civilization stating that a revolutionary transformation in modern society is necessary for another human possibility to be conceived, and he believed this could only be accomplished “through the resolution of the primitive-civilized conflict in our society and

---

<sup>60</sup>Philip Morrison, “Before and After Columbus,” *Scientific American*, Vol. 267, No. 4, New York: Scientific American, October 1992, pp. 122, 124.

in ourselves.”<sup>61</sup> Rouse’s lack of sensitivity runs counter to this possibility as humanity is crudely objectified through the use of artifacts. He is certainly not without his critics. As Frederick Lange points out, Rouse’s “systematic” approach has even been criticized within the area of “prehistory” as disjunctive:

The title denotes a ‘systematic’ rather than a ‘systemic’ approach. The rigid definitions and categories, perhaps necessary for conceptual clarity, nonetheless systematize our perception away from prehistory as the record of systems of human groups interacting against varied cultural and ecological backgrounds. Cultural assemblages are the results of systems of behavior and our analytical framework must reflect this if our reconstructions are to have significance.<sup>62</sup>

Rouse is credited with formulating a theory that assigns cultures of an age to the people who inhabited that space through a “ceramic subseries.” For instance, the “Casimiroid peoples,” named after an excavated site at Casimira in the Dominican Republic, are determined to have been present during the “Lithic age” (beginning around 6000 BP - before present) because “flaked-stone artifacts” indicating “the absence of both grinding and pottery” were recovered from this site in the 1960s.<sup>63</sup> In other words, ceramic material or “ceramic traditions” for Rouse and most archeologists of the region are a vital criterion in the defining of a people. Given that archeology does specialize in the study of material remains of past and present cultures, migrations and human interactions in the Antilles are also primarily viewed in terms of ceramic materials found,

---

<sup>61</sup>Diamond, *In Search of the Primitive*, pp. xv-xvi.

<sup>62</sup>Frederick W. Lange, Review of Irving Rouse’s *Introduction to Prehistory*, in *American Anthropologist*, Vol. 75, No. 4, Washington, D.C.: Journal of the American Anthropological Association, August 1973, p. 1098.

<sup>63</sup>Irving Rouse, *The Tainos: Rise & Decline of the People Who Greeted Columbus*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992, p. 51.

where peoples and cultures are basically interpreted through *objects*. Rouse's extreme approach to the subject matter has been roundly disapproved of by many:

His critics, privately or openly, have disapproved of his positivist approach to the discipline, lack of theoretical perspectives, disengagement from anthropology and ethnohistory—and for that matter from the social sciences in general—and insistence on inferring social processes from the microcosm of pottery decorations. Rouse's work represents an undeniable stage in the development of archaeology in the Caribbean, an American stage which, contrary to its continental matrix, has not been superseded after having served its usefulness. The result has been the continuation of a school of thought alienated from the fresh perspectives and the more interdisciplinary-oriented concerns of archaeology elsewhere.<sup>64</sup>

### **The First “Repeopling”**

Population movement and colonization differ only in degree. In both cases individuals leave their home societies and organize new societies elsewhere. With population movement the invading people's societies take over an entire area, replacing the societies of the previous inhabitants. With colonization the previous people's societies survive alongside those of the invaders.<sup>65</sup>

Rouse's “repeopling” theories posit that certain populations in the course of time were “replaced” or extinguished by other populations. He explains one should not be confused about the difference between population movement (or “repeopling”) and colonization, as noted above. His first “repeopling” theory is the subject of this section. It should be noted that because the taxonomy of his ceramic subseries is highly complex, I have tried to simplify the terminology and discussion. The part of this “repeopling” theory we are concerned with holds that the original peoples to populate the Antilles from Central America, i.e., those who supposedly lacked pottery and agriculture and have come to be known as the “Archaics,” were “replaced” or became “extinct.” I attempt to

---

<sup>64</sup>Sued-Badillo, Review of Irving Rouse's *The Tainos*, in *The American Historical Review*, p. 332.

<sup>65</sup>Rouse, *The Tainos*, p. 73.

show that these original peoples were not “replaced” but rather survived and lived on. The implications here would indicate that 15<sup>th</sup> century indigenous Caribbean origins and influence are not from South America but rather from Mesoamerica, and that Carib descendants today would have a direct genealogical link to the area. In *Art and Mythology of the Taino Indians of the Greater West Indies*, Eugenio Fernández-Méndez indeed documents the strong cultural influence in the Antilles from Mesoamerica, and specifically from the Yucatán. This point is elaborated on later in the chapter. As for the original inhabitants of the region, archeologists have determined that the

earliest evidence of human colonization of the Caribbean is found in Cuba, Haiti, and the Dominican Republic, where sites have been dated to around 3500-4000 B.C. The flaked-stone tools at these early sites are similar to those from sites on the Yucatán peninsula, which suggests that the earliest migrants may have come from the west across the Yucatán Channel or via other routes from Central America. These people hunted, fished, and gathered the wild plants and animals of the sea and island interiors. As far as is known, they did not cultivate food crops.<sup>66</sup>

Rouse agrees the “Casimiroid Indians” from Middle America likely originated in Yucatán and began migrating to Cuba and Hispaniola about 6000 years ago.<sup>67</sup> He further provides evidence of possible “Casimiroid tradition” in Puerto Rico, yielding a radiocarbon date there for “flintworking,”<sup>68</sup> and he later goes on to say that the Indian people from Yucatán *did* move into western Puerto Rico.<sup>69</sup> This contradicts an earlier point he made about the original inhabitants having only colonized Cuba and

---

<sup>66</sup>Wilson, *The Indigenous People of the Caribbean*, p. 4.

<sup>67</sup>Rouse, *The Tainos*, p. 69.

<sup>68</sup>Ibid., pp. 67-68.

<sup>69</sup>Ibid., p. 71.

Hispaniola.<sup>70</sup> Moreover in Borikén, the most revealing anthropological data regarding the earliest indigenous presence there are the radiocarbon datings made at Ponce in the mid-1990s at the south coast site of Maruca. These show “Archaic” habitation dating back to about 5000 BP.<sup>71</sup> Puerto Rican archeologist Roberto Martínez-Torres explained that these were “the most recent findings of ‘Archaic people’ in Puerto Rico. . . . Maruca people from Ponce were living there 5000 to 6000 years ago.”<sup>72</sup> This evidence and other findings in the 1990s support the argument that there was indeed a very early indigenous presence in Borikén most likely from Mesoamerica.

Around 4000 BP, the first wave of peoples (the “Ortoiroid Indians”) are said to have migrated out of South America having halted in Puerto Rico.<sup>73</sup> It is here and at the Mona Passage between Puerto Rico and Hispaniola where they “established a frontier” with the “Casimiroid” lasting until about 3000-2400 BP.<sup>74</sup> The second migration from South America presumably brought the “Saladoid,” who introduced the “Ceramic age” and populated the southern Antilles and Puerto Rico “around 200 A.D. to no later than 250 B.C.”<sup>75</sup> Named after the Venezuelan archeological site of Saladora, the “Saladoid” are thought to be the ancestors of the “Taínos.”<sup>76</sup> It is important to state here, however, that

---

<sup>70</sup>Ibid., p. 69.

<sup>71</sup>Interview with Martínez-Torres, July 14, 1999; Miguel Rodríguez, “Osamenta de 5 mil años de edad,” *El Expresso*, (Puerto Rico), January 18, 1996, p. 24.

<sup>72</sup>Interview with Martínez-Torres, July 14, 1999.

<sup>73</sup>Rouse, *The Tainos*, p. 69.

<sup>74</sup>Ibid., pp. 69, 71.

<sup>75</sup>Ibid., p. 79.

<sup>76</sup>Ibid., p. 69.

Betty Meggers and Clifford Evans, among other scholars, dispute the South American origin of the “Saladoid” series. They favor an expansion from the west “because white-on-red decoration is widespread in Mesoamerica and the Andean area, but has not been reported from central Amazonia.”<sup>77</sup> Rouse writes that because the “Ortoiroid” population was very small and widely dispersed the “Saladoid” had “easily displaced or assimilated” them.<sup>78</sup> This is the other part of his first “repeopling” theory. However, when the “Saladoid” arrived at the Puerto Rican frontier and encountered the “Casimiroid” people a very different scenario presented itself:

The Casimiroids were not sitting ducks like the Ortoiroids. They could retreat into the interior of Hispaniola and use it as a base from which to defend their territory.

Their larger population and more advanced culture must have enhanced their chances of success. Their surviving technology and weapons, for hunting if not for warfare, are superior to those of the Ortoiroid Indians, and they may also have been organized into more complex societies. It is not surprising that they were able to halt the advance of the Saladoid peoples at the Puerto Rican frontier . . .<sup>79</sup>

It should be noted at this point that while Rouse has yet to provide evidence for the “repeopling” of the “Casimiroid,” he does depict their relative strength. Martínez-Torres, who is an expert on “Archaic sites” having completed his Master’s thesis in 1994 on the La Tembladera site in Morovis, Puerto Rico, told me that there have been about ten “Archaic sites” studied, and many more found on the island in the past decade, concluding, “there were a lot of Archaic people around the island living in a lot of

---

<sup>77</sup>Betty J. Meggers and Clifford Evans, “Lowland South America and the Antilles,” in Jesse D. Jennings, ed., *Ancient South Americans*, San Francisco: W.H. Freeman and Company, 1978, 1983, p. 308.

<sup>78</sup>Rouse, *The Tainos*, p. 70.

<sup>79</sup>Ibid.

places.”<sup>80</sup> He thinks the “Archaics” (the first peoples from Central America) present in Borikén at the time of the “Saladoid” arrival controlled the whole island and certainly the mountain regions. The latter group had only established itself on the coast, he said. Unlike in Cuba and Quisqueya, the Spanish chroniclers never came to the center of the island to write about the people here.<sup>81</sup> Furthermore, Martínez-Torres did not necessarily agree with labeling these people as “Archaic” because they had to have been culturally advanced to have survived for so long and to have lived under certain harsh conditions. For the people of La Tembladera, the name “Archaic” is “not proper because they were very recent Archaics. They were very recent Indians,”<sup>82</sup> as we will soon see.

Despite their endurance and formidability, Rouse soon comes to surmise the virtual “elimination” of the “Casimiroids” with the evolution of the “Ostionoids,” who are said to be “descendants” of the “Saladoid.” Towards the beginning of his chapter, titled, “The First Repeopling,” he writes the migrations of these groups “constitute a population movement, so called because the Saladoids replaced the previous Ortoiroid population, and the Ostionoids almost completely eliminated the Casimiroids.”<sup>83</sup> Given this statement, one is led to believe that Rouse would then explain the “repeopling” process of how the original peoples were “almost completely eliminated.” However, he dedicates a mere two-page section to this endeavor called “The Saladoid-Casimiroid Frontier, 200 B.C.-600 A.D.,” where he determines that a “population movement” took

---

<sup>80</sup>Interview with Martínez-Torres, July 14, 1999.

<sup>81</sup>Ibid.

<sup>82</sup>Ibid.

<sup>83</sup>Rouse, *The Tainos*, p. 73.



place at the La Romana site of La Caleta in the Dominican Republic. He writes, “The forward expansion of the [“Hacienda Grande”] style must be due to population movement, for the La Caleta site has yielded no traces of admixture with the previous cultures in the area.”<sup>84</sup> The implication here is that “Casimiroid” descendants there would have been extinguished in the expansion process. However, in reevaluating the “El Caimito” pottery style of the people previously there with the “Hacienda Grande” style, he retracts the above assessment noting that “transculturation” possibly took place among the two styles instead: “Transculturation seems to me to explain the similarities better . . . The Hacienda Grande style of pottery contains all the traits of the El Caimito style noted above,” and the “stone, bone, and shell artifacts found with the El Caimito pottery are all Courian Casimiroid types.”<sup>85</sup> This is the only serious attempt at discussion of a “population movement” on the original peoples in the entire chapter. However, his belief that “transculturation” had taken place between the two groups above actually negates the idea of a population movement having occurred.

In fact, Rouse appears to repeatedly contradict his own theory. He notes that after the “Cedrosan Saladoids” crossed the Mona Passage about 2250 BP, “they succeeded in colonizing the eastern tip of Hispaniola.”<sup>86</sup> As his theory posits, “colonizing” does not mean “repeopling,” or the replacement of one population by another, but rather to “survive alongside those of the invaders.” He then suddenly writes that the subsequent “Ostionan” expansion was “obviously a population movement, for it resulted in

---

<sup>84</sup>Ibid., p. 90.

<sup>85</sup>Ibid., pp. 90-91.

<sup>86</sup>Ibid., p. 92.

displacement of the previous Casimiran population.”<sup>87</sup> But he does not elaborate on this “displacement” other than to describe how “Ostionan pottery” was dispersed in Hispaniola. In the conclusion of the chapter he makes a *comparison* with the “repeopling process” to the evolution of a people: “In writing this chapter, I would have preferred to proceed in terms of the local peoples who participated in the repeopling process, as I did in chapter 3, examining the changes that took place as each peoples’ culture *evolved* into its successor”<sup>88</sup> (emphasis added). He later provides evidence of the sophistication of “Casimiroid” (Mayan?) art in terms of its *incorporation* into “Ostionoid” art, which runs counter to the notion of the latter as dominant:

A third major form of art, Casimiroid, has recently been recognized in the Greater Antilles, where it preceded Ostionoid art. It resembles Ostionoid art in its massivity and boldness; and its artisans were also able to make and decorate large and complex stone artifacts, many of which appear to have had ritual significance. This art could have influenced the development from Saladoid to Ostionoid. Indeed, a number of Casimiroid types of artifacts were incorporated into Ostionoid cultures, including stone vessels, axes as opposed to celts, conical pestles, flint blades (in Hispaniola), shell gouges (in Cuba), and stone balls and pegs.<sup>89</sup>

Interestingly, much of the language employed by Rouse in terms of human contact between the “Casimiroid,” “Saladoid” and “Ostionoid,” i.e., “interaction,” “transculturation,” “trade,” “incorporated,” “diverged” and “evolved,” strongly suggests that colonization, assimilation, acculturation and survival would have taken place between these groups, rather than “repeopling.” The evidence he and Martínez-Torres present depicting the formidability of the “Casimiroid” people even suggests that *they*

---

<sup>87</sup>Ibid., p. 96.

<sup>88</sup>Ibid., p. 101.

<sup>89</sup>Ibid., p. 134.

would have been the ones to assimilate the others. Paul Henley writes that Rouse unconvincingly severs the Central American cultural link in his book:

. . . on the larger islands, and notably on Boriquen, later to become Puerto Rico, they had built substantial ball-courts and practised a form of anthropomorphic sculpture, at first sight suggesting a continuing relationship with Central America. Rather unconvincingly, though, Rouse argues that these latter similarities are due to parallel cultural developments rather than direct contact.<sup>90</sup>

In Chapter 6, Rouse seems to once and for all reassure the reader of the Mesoamerican fate when he states: “In discussing the extinction of the Casimiroids and the Ortoiroids in chapter 4, I relied primarily upon archeological research.”<sup>91</sup> But Rouse does not discuss the “extinction” of the “Casimiroids” in Chapter 4 but merely assumes their “repeopling” through the South American microcosmic dispersement of ceramic art. Samuel Wilson’s summary below of indigenous Caribbean descendancy supports the belief of the continuation of the first peoples of the region:

Most importantly, it appears quite likely that the aceramic people of the Greater Antilles interacted with the descendants of the Saladoid people and that from this interaction emerged the Taino people. In other words, the Taino were descended from both the Saladoid people and the Archaic populations of the Greater Antilles. Clearly the Taino were different from lowland South American groups to which they were distantly related, and some of these differences can be attributed to the Tainos’ legacy from their Archaic forebears.<sup>92</sup>

Indeed, the indigenous peoples present in the 15<sup>th</sup> century Antilles were different from South American groups. We will highlight throughout the rest of this chapter how

---

<sup>90</sup>Paul Henley, “Spanish stew: Justifications of conquest in the New World,” *The Times Literary Supplement*, London, October 22, 1993, p. 5.

<sup>91</sup>Rouse, *The Tainos*, p. 139.

<sup>92</sup>Wilson, *The Indigenous People of the Caribbean*, p. 58.

Mesoamerican Mayan influences were most prevalent here. However, the most convincing evidence that the “Archaics” had not been not extinguished is provided by Martínez-Torres. While excavating the “Archaic site” at La Tembladera in 1986, he uncovered glass tools that had been used as “projectile points.” The glass had obviously come after European contact because glass was not previously found in the Antilles. At the time, these were the “most refined and elaborated glass tools found in the Caribbean.”<sup>93</sup> Similar findings have been also made in Cuba. The two radiocarbon samples he took dated between 1660 to 1820.<sup>94</sup> The importance of the finding reveals that “Indians were recycling glass from some source . . . They were making tools in the same way Archaics were making tools in the Caribbean 6000 years ago. They were using the same techniques. . . . We found glass tools worked in the Indian techniques in an Archaic place with dates two hundred, three hundred years after Columbus.” Similar to Wilson, Martínez-Torres concludes that there was not an “extinction” but rather a *continuation* of the original peoples.<sup>95</sup>

Martínez-Torres also told me about the Indian pictographs he had found in the caves of Morovis. Some of these pictographs are of *horses* that had to be drawn after the Spanish arrival since the horse was not endemic to the region.<sup>96</sup> When he revealed this information to Ricardo Alegría, the director of Institute of Puerto Rican Culture suggested

---

<sup>93</sup>Interview with Martínez-Torres, July 14, 1999.

<sup>94</sup>Roberto Martínez Torres, *El Yacimiento Aracaico De La Tembladera*, Tesis Presentada Como Uno De Los Requisitos Para El Grado De Maestro En Artes En Historia Con Concentración En Arqueología, Centro De Estudios Avanzados De Puerto Rico Y El Caribe, San Juan, Puerto Rico, March 1994, pp. 386, 389.

<sup>95</sup>Interview with Martínez-Torres, July 14, 1999.

<sup>96</sup>Photos reprinted in Roberto Martínez Torres, “El Mural De Los Caballitos,” *Revista Catey*, (Revista Arqueologica, Antropologica E Historica), Morovis, Puerto Rico, January-March 1994, pp. 11-14.

they might have been “dogs,” to which Martínez-Torres replied that dogs did not have reins.<sup>97</sup> He and others have further conducted oral interviews with some of the “old people” of Morovis. These elders revealed stories about their Indian grandparents being *captured* by the Spaniards with their trained dogs.<sup>98</sup> One woman he interviewed, named “La India,” said her grandmother was captured and made to be a wife. Martínez-Torres found out that La India’s grandmother had been baptized in 1842.<sup>99</sup> He stressed these stories are still told in the center of the island, such as how the Spaniards captured Indian women and made them their wives, much of this happening in the 19th century. When he first heard these testimonies, he thought these people were maybe “dreaming with fantasies” and remembering old stories of a very long time ago. But when he found the glass and made his carbon datings, he realized that “these people were talking about their *real grandparents* that were [there] three generations ago. So the Indians *survived* in the center of the island.”<sup>100</sup>

The above findings are significant. They most importantly disprove the essential part of Rouse’s first “repeopling” theory which posits that the original indigenous peoples to populate the Caribbean Antilles became “extinct.” By implication they also dispel Alegría’s “conquest of the Archaics” supposition. In the section on the “Saladoid-Casimiroid Frontier,” Rouse’s retraction of his initial assessment that there were “no traces of admixture with the previous cultures in the area,” and belief instead that “transcultuation” took place between the peoples previously there, means that a

---

<sup>97</sup>Interview with Martínez-Torres, July 14, 1999.

<sup>98</sup>Ibid.

<sup>99</sup>Ibid.

population movement, or “repeopling,” could not have occurred. Other than tracing the dispersement of “Ostionoid pottery” in Hispaniola, this is the only serious discussion of a “population movement” about the original peoples in his chapter on “The First Repeopling.” As revealed by Martínez-Torres’s findings and the radiocarbon datings taken at Maruca in Puerto Rico, the original peoples of Borikén had survived for at least 5000 years, and well into the post-European contact period. This information and the findings uncovered in Chapter 5 further overturn Rouse’s second “repeopling” theory, which states that the Spaniards “eliminated” the indigenous population at the time of their coming.

As modern-day descendants would be ancestral to the first peoples of the region, the data also confirms, ethnologically, other information I learned from my past trips to Borikén. Aside from the archeological record, I was constantly reminded orally about “our *Mayan* past” and “our *Mayan* ancestors.” In addition, the ceremonial grounds or ball game, *batey*, was likely influenced from the Mexican ball game *tlachtli*, and the Mayan game *pok ta pok*.<sup>101</sup> The *bateys* at Caguana in Utuado (Otoao) face the Mayan east, and the second largest city in Borikén on the west coast is named *Mayagüez*. Also, the name *yuca* (cassava) probably derives from the word “Yucatán,” and the indigenous Caribbean custom of forehead indentation was practiced in Yucatán and likely associated with the god of corn.<sup>102</sup> Given the evidence disclosing a regional Mayan influence, the Carib presence needs to be reconceptualized from its Mesoamerican base.

---

<sup>100</sup>Ibid.

<sup>101</sup>Fernández Méndez, *Art and Mythology*, p. 48.

<sup>102</sup>Ibid., pp. 17-19.

## The Carib-Maya Cultural Link

Bright with coral, the American sea first plundered by Europe is its Mediterranean, the Caribbean that takes its name from the Caribs. An emporium and focus of migrations over thousands of years, this sea in fact conjoins the three cultures that principally shared its shores, Carib, Maya, and Chibcha, and through them their hinterland and the continent more generally.<sup>103</sup>

This final section of the chapter finds relevance and meaning in the Mesoamerican cultural and philosophical link to the Circum-Caribbean region. We show there is a strong influence and relationship between Mesoamerica and the Maya to Antillean origins and cultural development, particularly among the indigenous peoples present in the 15<sup>th</sup> century Antilles. Here we primarily compare the works of three 20<sup>th</sup> century scholars. In reviewing the books of Jesse Walter Fewkes (1907), Sven Lovén (1935), and Eugenio Fernández-Méndez (1972), approximately one generation separates their publishing. There is also a significant difference in consciousness between the three periods in terms of the relationship of the Maya to the Caribbean region. However, the archeological and ethnohistorical evidence presented in their works reveal an interesting pattern, or perhaps an internal conflict concerning Lovén, of cultural influence flowing eastward from Mesoamerica to the Antilles.

Regarding Antillean likeness to the interior of Yucatán, Fewkes determined “there was little in common between the Maya race as a whole and the people of prehistoric Porto Rico . . .” [sic].<sup>104</sup> Nevertheless, he does at times refer to particular Mesoamerican

---

<sup>103</sup>Gordon Brotherston, *Book of the Fourth World: Reading the Native Americas Through Their Literature*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992, p. 10.

<sup>104</sup>Jesse Walter Fewkes, *The Aborigines of Porto Rico and Neighboring Islands*, 25th Annual Report, B.A.E., Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., 1907, p. 216.

cultural characteristics and mentions the support among some advocates of a migration route to the Antilles from Yucatán.<sup>105</sup> He also notes that the *batey* played in the plazas in particularly Puerto Rico may have been the same ball game (*tlachtli*) played on the courts in México,<sup>106</sup> and the most unique and striking stone objects and rings found in Haití and Borikén are different from objects found in both South or North America. He attributes the time necessary to develop such stone sculpture to either the inhabitant's "long epoch" on the two islands or the long time spent in another distinctive environment before arriving in the Antilles.<sup>107</sup> Fewkes concludes that in at least Puerto Rico the cultural characteristics "resembled more closely that of South America than it did that of the southeastern United States, Central America, or Yucatan."<sup>108</sup> Thus, he ultimately considered the Antillean race as "inferior" to the culture that developed in the great cities of Central America. Ironically, however, he did find that the stoneworking of Antillean culture "certainly equaled that of other American tribes, and was not far below the highest. To fashion the stone collars peculiar to them and to ornament their idols required both skill and industry. The smoothness of their stone implements, often made of the hardest rock, is unsurpassed, and their textiles were of a high order of merit."<sup>109</sup>

---

<sup>105</sup>Ibid., p. 215.

<sup>106</sup>Ibid., p. 84.

<sup>107</sup>Ibid., p. 215.

<sup>108</sup>Ibid., p. 216.

<sup>109</sup>Ibid., pp. 216, 219.



Lovén concludes how “genuinely” South American (“Arawakan”) “Tainan” culture developed, relying on ethnography from “the early writings.”<sup>110</sup> However, we know that many of the early writings of the chroniclers are not reliable sources and most can hardly be said to be “genuine.” As also explained in Chapter 1, the Arawak did not penetrate the Antillean region. Lovén indeed appears to contradict his basic premise as he provides an abundant amount of evidence in his work to suggest a strong Mesoamerican-Antillean relationship. He confirms that *batey* must have come from the Mexican regions, showing resemblances to the Maya.<sup>111</sup> While a type of ball game was played in South America, stone bordered courts are absent there. He writes, “*ball courts bordered by earth walls or upended boulders* point to influence from the Mexican mainland. They have not crossed over to South America.”<sup>112</sup> He concludes the game must have been propagated from the Yucatán to South America via the southern Antilles. Regarding richly developed Antillean stone sculpture, Lovén notes that stone is scarce or entirely nonexistent among Arawak tribes of South America. However, Mexican influence in Antillean sculpture “for the most part appears in connection with high quality culture objects, such as insignia conveying glamour to the dignity of chieftainship.”<sup>113</sup> *Cacical* insignia, embroidered wooden masks, and “*multiple-rowed bead fillets for head-dresses and girdles, or girdles set with beads of bone or other material embroidered on canvas,*”

---

<sup>110</sup>Sven Lovén, *Origins of the Tainan Culture, West Indies*, Göteborg: Elanders Bokfryckeri Akiefbolag, 1935, p. 661.

<sup>111</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 526.

<sup>112</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 680.

<sup>113</sup>*Ibid.*, 562.

manifests itself to a Mayan-Mexican origin.<sup>114</sup> The women's *nagua* (genital cloth), *manta* (a kind of petticoat), and the abundant cotton-yarn grown in particularly the Xaragúa region of Quisqueya and in Xaymaca (Jamaica), which produced the *hamaca* (hammock), must have been influenced by the "high civilizations" of México-Yucatán.<sup>115</sup> And *maíz* cultivation came from México, while there is "much which suggests that in northern South America tobacco spread from the west."<sup>116</sup> Given the amount evidence he provides in his text regarding Mesoamerican influences, it is somewhat puzzling why Lovén seemed to be so swayed by earlier ethnological data in his ultimate conclusion regarding indigenous Caribbean cultural development.

In their analyses, Fewkes and Lovén of course did not have the benefit of knowing that radiocarbon datings have shown a 5500-6000 year indigenous presence in Cuba and Quisqueya, and 5000 years in Borikén, with origins pointing to the Yucatán peninsula. From our discussion in the previous section, we now know the first peoples of the region survived and were present in the late 15th century and later. Martínez-Torres reminds us about the ten or so "Archaic sites" that have been studied in Borikén in recent years, and the many other sites that have been found on the island. This information and other data presented in this chapter would indicate that there was indeed a large Antillean presence culturally influenced from Mesoamerica. Antillean culture would have been inevitably developing for thousands of years, surely having a "long epoch." We should remember too how both Rouse and Martínez-Torres depict the endurance and relative strength of the

---

<sup>114</sup>Ibid., pp. 677, 691.

<sup>115</sup>Ibid., pp. 667, 677.

<sup>116</sup>Ibid., pp. 669-670.

original inhabitants. This epoch of the geographical origins of the Carib would thus mean a paradigmatic shift indicating a emigrational movement *eastward* from Central America, like it had for the many cultural influences as noted above.

Fernández-Méndez's work certainly signals a paradigmatic shift in terms of Antillean art and philosophy in relation to Mesoamerica. He notes most writers of the indigenous Caribbean agree that "Tainian" culture "might" have had its origin in South America, but "the extraordinary development of this culture in the Antilles was probably the result of Mesoamerican influence."<sup>117</sup> He cites a host of 20th century writers, including Lovén, Paul Kirchhoff, A.L. Kroeber and Walter Krickeberg, who have also shown important links between México, Yucatán and the Antilles. While Lovén writes that Caribbean religious stone sculpture was probably learnt from Yucatán, he concluded that "Tainan ideas" have "nothing to do with Mexican deities."<sup>118</sup> Fernández-Méndez's work indicates otherwise. In terms of mythology, he notes that "certain ancient mythological concepts of the Antilles are definitely of Mesoamerican origin. Such are the beliefs in the Fire-God, the gods of the wind and the hurricane, the mother serpent, etc."<sup>119</sup> He further writes:

. . . we may point out that the Antillean art forms and mythology of very remote times present many similarities to the art forms and mythology of Mesoamerica, Mexico, Yucatán and Central America, but most specially to those of Yucatán, Costa Rica and Panamá, and seem to have been derived from these areas. In 1919, Rudolf R. Schuller had already pointed out that there was a strong resemblance between some of the themes dealt

---

<sup>117</sup>Fernández Méndez, *Art and Mythology*, p. 12.

<sup>118</sup>Lovén, *Origins of the Tainan Culture*, p. 693.

<sup>119</sup>Fernández Méndez, *Art and Mythology*, p. 19.

with in the Antillean narratives of Fray Ramón Pané and certain mythological themes of the famous *Popol Vuh*.<sup>120</sup>

Many of Fernández-Méndez's analogies to the Antilles rely on information found in the Mayan *Books of Chilam Balam* and the *Popol Vuh*. For example, the Antillean Mother Goddess as "the ruler of both winds and waters" has the same association as the gods of wind and rain in the Mayan codices, and Carib mythology tells the story of the power of the sun in turning people and animals into stone, as revealed in the *Popol Vuh*.<sup>121</sup> His methodology includes a historical and mythochronological study of the mythology of the region, with a comparative look at the distinctive characteristics of symbols of gods.<sup>122</sup> He reveals that Antillean symbols are based on Mesoamerican models and could not have been produced otherwise, agreeing with noted scholars who have suggested the primal root of Antillean religion may have been the Olmecan "mother culture," or "Proto-Olmecan."<sup>123</sup> Of his findings, he emphasizes: "*The really suggestive fact—which is more than a purely casual and isolated parallelism—is that we find a pattern of thought in which the details agree with surprising regularity.* I unconditionally dare to affirm that the basic core of this pattern of thought is clearly of Mesoamerican origin. This basic pattern, more than any other factor, confirms our observation that the Antilles and Nuclear America (Mesoamerica mainly) shared one common source for these mythical ideas . . ."<sup>124</sup> For example:

---

<sup>120</sup>Ibid.

<sup>121</sup>Ibid., pp. 26, 52-53.

<sup>122</sup>Ibid., p. 25.

<sup>123</sup>Ibid., p. 26.

<sup>124</sup>Ibid., pp. 26-27.

In essence the Tainians like the Mayans, Mexican and other Mesoamerican peoples considered the world as related to the four basic elements: earth, wind, water and fire, and they worshiped these as Gods, including the Sun and the Moon, male twins. As Mother-Goddess they worshiped the Earth, figured as a serpent (*Coatl*) and as the male incarnation of earth *Coatrisquie*, also rain God, and God of sacrifices and offerings, related to death and the earth horse-shoe sign.<sup>125</sup>

Many indigenous traditions revolve around the basic elements described above. It should be noted, however, that Mayan daykeeper Hunbatz Men has said the Maya “did not have a mythical concept of deities,” but believed that “lords represented the forces of nature, with a sense of symmetry, a redundancy of plurality in unity and unity in plurality.”<sup>126</sup> Our Carib ancestors were polytheistic in the sense that they believed in multiple “gods,” or spirits of higher energy or consciousness. These spiritual forces were materialized symbolically in the form of the *cemí*, usually a three pointed stone or wood figure used as a metaphysical link between the physical and ancestral worlds. As Antillean indigenous society was matriarchal, the concept of fertility as hieroglyphically depicted by the Earth Mother (Atabei) in childbirth formed the basis of Antillean spiritual thought. Fertility was also the basic religious concept in Central America, and partly in Mesoamerica.<sup>127</sup> Similar phallic rites among the Maya and Carib of Borikén have been also documented. According to Stan Steiner:

On the island it was the sex of the male, not the female, that was sacrificed to the gods. The chronicler of such an ancient Borinquén ritual, Francisco Aguado, described this sacrifice” “They [the Indians of Puerto Rico] took this gentleman, and, having removed his clothes, tied him to a tree with heavy ropes, they then began their rejoicing with music and dancing . . .

---

<sup>125</sup>Ibid., p. 26.

<sup>126</sup>Hunbatz Men, *Secrets of Mayan Science/Religion*, Translated by Diana Gubiseh Ayala and James Jennings Dunlap II, New Mexico: Bear and Company Publishing, 1990, p. 25.

<sup>127</sup>Fernández Méndez, *Art and Mythology*, p. 71.

bringing their bows and arrows in their hands, *each one shot at him, almost without missing a shot, making a great shower of arrows, striking him in the part of his body that gives him the greatest pleasure.*' The blood of his phallus was an offering to the gods of fire and fertility. In the Yucatán, Bishop Diego de Landa observed a similar phallic rite among the Mayans, near Chichén Itzá, where the priest '*wounded the victim with an arrow in his parts of shame.*'<sup>128</sup>

The conceptualization of dual or quadruple celestial forms is further of great symbolic significance in Antillean, Central American and Mesoamerican traditions.<sup>129</sup> For instance, the Caribbean creation story of the *four Twins* parallels the *four Tezcatlipocas* and *four Bacabs* respectively in "Aztec" (Mexico) and Mayan cosmogony.<sup>130</sup> Atabei is also mother of the Antillean Sky Father, Yocahú Bagua Maórocoti, who is immortal and has no beginning. This fundamental dual concept or copulation "determines the solar cycle."<sup>131</sup> Fernández-Méndez points out that Yocahú is equivalent to the Mayan, *Hunab K'u*, lord of the solar cycle.<sup>132</sup> Men writes the Maya believed Hunab K'u represented the "Absolute Being," defined as "*measure and movement--measure of the soul and movement of the energy which is spirit.*"<sup>133</sup>

Some have suggested that Hunab K'u is a post-conquest Christian invention meant to emulate Christianity, but *hunab* "does not convey the same idea as the Christian

---

<sup>128</sup>Stan Steiner, *The Islands: The Worlds of the Puerto Ricans*, New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1974, p. 28.

<sup>129</sup>Fernández Méndez, *Art and Mythology*, p. 71.

<sup>130</sup>José Juan Arrom, in Ramón Pané, *An Account of the Antiquities of the Indians*, Translated by Susan C. Griswold, Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1999, p. 14.

<sup>131</sup>Fernández Méndez, *Art and Mythology*, p. 26.

<sup>132</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>133</sup>Men, *Secrets of Mayan Science/Religion*, p. 24.

concept of God.”<sup>134</sup> Likewise, some have attempted to relate Antillean cosmology to the Christian concept of a “supreme being.” Antonio Stevens-Arroyo writes that the indigenous Caribbean name of the “Supreme Being” is “Yaya,” which José Juan Arrom has translated to mean “Spirit of Spirits.”<sup>135</sup> However, Yaya is father of Yayael and grandfather of the Four Twins in the Carib creation story of the sea and means “pain and ulcerated,” symbolized by the Christian saint named “Saint Lazarus.”<sup>136</sup> Yet, Stevens-Arroyo comes to assume that Yaya is “omnipotent” through a “Judeo-Christian” metaphysical interpretation, concluding that “Yaya was superior to all other beings . . .”<sup>137</sup> His notion of “superiority” and that Yaya “ranked above all others” directly contradicts the Mayan concept of Hunab K’u, an apparent attempt to draw a philosophical parallel between a Antillean “high god” and a Judeo-Christian “monotheistic” being. Stevens-Arroyo’s mythological view is clouded from the outset when he notes that the indigenous peoples “may have found praxis in their myths, but they remained a people who acted without a historical consciousness until the revolt of Enriquillo, who had adopted Christianity.”<sup>138</sup> Eric Thompson clarifies that the “notion of a single creator god is out of keeping with the prevalent Middle American concept of a pair of creators who

---

<sup>134</sup>J. Eric S. Thompson, *Maya History and Religion*, Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1970, pp. 203-204.

<sup>135</sup>Antonio M. Stevens-Arroyo, *Cave of the Jagua: The Mythological World of the Tainos*, Albuquerque: University of Mexico Press, 1988, p. 89.

<sup>136</sup>Oscar Lamourt-Valentín, *Cannibal Recipes*, A socio-linguistic account of Carib-Jíbaro culture and response to the work of Ramón Pané, Ames: Iowa State University, Unpublished, 1979, p. 11.

<sup>137</sup>Stevens-Arroyo, *Cave of the Jagua*, p. 89.

<sup>138</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 17.

populate the world by sexual intercourse.”<sup>139</sup> This epistemological view invariably applies to the Antilles.

Men also attributes a monotheistic belief to Hunab K’u as the “Absolute Being,” but a belief that reveals a “god” that is essentially *omnipresent* and *one* with everything, rather than a “omnipotent” hierarchical being. Here is where the Antillean belief in Yucahú, as equivalent to Hunab K’u, would more accurately fall into place, for “absolute” is *not* “supreme”:

Hunab K’u for the Maya is the center of everything, including the sexual act when we engender children. Hunab K’u is here and there, the force around which everything moves. *Hun* is represented by a dot. Thus we have *Hun*-ab K’u as “one,” or the dot as the manifestation of everything. This reasoning reveals that when the Mayan philosopher thought of the number *hun*, it was thought that in *hun* was everything, because Hunab K’u is in everything.<sup>140</sup>

Finally, Fernández-Méndez provides a most important summary of the main points of his work by linking the basic concepts of Antillean and Mesoamerican art and philosophy, which I think are important for future research and worth quoting. He says these similarities or relations can be basically explained by a “genetic connection” between the two regions.<sup>141</sup> He explains that at the time of his writing, the South American-Antillean route was favored by only a few researchers, basically invalidated historically and archeologically. This theory further “lacks the backing of the mythological or socio-political concepts necessary to establish, as a fact, that the important Mesoamerican characteristics, which reached the Antilles, followed a land

---

<sup>139</sup>Thompson, *Maya History and Religion*, p. 204.

<sup>140</sup>Men, *Secrets of Mayan Science/Religion*, p. 142.

<sup>141</sup>Fernández Méndez, *Art and Mythology*, p. 75.



route. The historic evidence and the linguistic analysis as described by Rudolph Schuller also points to a direct maritime contact with Mesoamerica.”<sup>142</sup> Here are some of the main comparisons he makes to the Antilles:

1. Stone sculptures of the idols whose identity symbols correspond on many aspects to those of parallel deities of the Pantheon of Central American and Mesoamerican civilizations.
2. The concept of a dual entity, Mother Creator and Father Creator, associated with certain traces of cosmological legends of the origin of the universe in the sexual act, and the emergence of gods and men from caves.
3. The concept of a single twin or quadruple god represented by four mythological heroes.
4. The concept of the god of fire that was the center of the phallic cult, and was associated with the *Quincunce*, the divine twins, the curing of the *bubas*, and the *guayacán* tree.
5. The myth of the flood associated with the adventures of the four mythological heroes, as in the *Popol Vuh*.
6. The equivalence of *Huracán*, *Gucumatz* and *Quetzalcoatl-Tezcatlipoca*.
7. The symbol of the god of the wind, which has elements in common with *Ehecatl's beak*; with the shells and with the *Quincunce*; or four cornered figure and a center, also a symbol of the god of fire.
8. The concept of the god of rain associated with the mountains and with the four *tlaloques*, or cisterns, where water was collected, associated also with the frog, with rain and with floods and hurricanes.
9. The god of fire, associated with the symbol of the solar cycle, with the phallic cult, with blood offerings and, very probably with the *iguana*, or large land lizard, food of the gods and of the *caciques*, most prominent members of the community.
10. The concept of a god of death, identified by a symbolism in common with the *Ah puch* of the Mayans and the *Mitlantecutli* of the Mexicans, who was also lord over the place of the dead.
11. The probable association of those who committed suicide by hanging with Paradise, which clearly points to Mayan influence on Antillean culture.

---

<sup>142</sup>Ibid.

12. Ball games, probably with a religious significance; also probably related to the sacrifice of human victims who were buried in the ceremonial plaza, as was done by the Mayans.
13. Sacrifices carried out by the bleeding of the hands and feet, which hints at a late Mayan derivation.
14. The presence of fowls, with identical association in the solar cult: the humming bird, the eagle, the turkey, and the owl or *múcaro*, all representing solar deities in various sky positions.
15. The use of the solar disk as a distinctive symbol of the *Caciques* by the Mexicans, Antillean and Central American and Southeastern Indian chiefs.
16. The probable relation of the socio-political organization to religious concepts through the division of the tribe into two separate groups or *moieties*. This form of organization, in the Antilles, has only been hinted at by the morphological analysis of the names of the chiefs and by the ruling concept of duality.
17. The theft of the idols or gods by the chiefs of Yucatán and the Antilles.
18. The relation between the serpent Mother Goddess, protector of the indigenous medicine men or *bohuitihu*.
19. The ritual presence of the *Tlacaxipe-hualitzli* in Puerto Rico, with probable connotations of fecundity.
20. The existing connection between the gods of the earth, of night and of death.
21. The association of the mother goddess with sickness, steam baths, flood and birth.
22. The pectoral shield of the wind god, *Guatauba* made by cutting a Caribbean conch shell transversally.
23. The concept of fire and death Gods, associated with the bare spinal column.
24. The common Mayan concept of the old hunchback god father of the mountains.<sup>143</sup>

---

<sup>143</sup>Ibid., pp. 74-75.

## **Conclusion**

Indigenous peoples have been quite critical of the study of anthropology for good reason. In particular, the intellectually manufactured construct of the concept of the “primitive” has been too often used as a political tool against them. However, both the concepts of the “primitive” and “civilized” are merely relative to the time periods from which they are constructed. What is considered “civilized” by one society may be regarded as “primitive” to another. Western civilization as thought of as “advanced” may be viewed by indigenous societies in a different light when directly on the brink of so-called progress and development. As anthropology is itself ultimately a reflection of one’s own society, some anthropologists have importantly stressed the positive human elements of “primitivism,” which contemporary society has lost and some scholars seek to recover. These positive elements are precisely what indigenous peoples wish to preserve. Paradoxically, indigenous peoples have contributed enormously to shaping world history and modern society, yet have been subjugated in the process. Therefore, the negative concept of the “primitive” should be further de-emphasized with greater stress placed on its positive values.

In Caribbean anthropology, nowhere is the negative concept of the “primitive” more apparent than in the work of American archeologist Irving Rouse. His “repeopling” or “extinction” theories are based on a “ceramic subseries” where humanity is crudely objectified through the use of artifacts. Rouse’s first “repeopling” theory largely posits that the original indigenous peoples to populate the Caribbean Antilles had become

“extinct.” However, he provides a paucity of evidence for this belief, retracts a key initial assessment that a “population movement” had occurred in Quisqueya, and repeatedly contradicts elements of his theory. Moreover, Meggers and Evans state that white-on-red pottery decorations are not found in central Amazonia but are widespread in Mesoamerica and the Andean region. This calls into question the theoretical origins of the South American “Saladoid” migration as promoted by Rouse. In sharp contrast to his “repeopling” premise, the findings by Puerto Rican archeologist Martínez-Torres clearly show that the original inhabitants to populate Borikén had survived for at least 5000 years, and well into the post-European contact period. These first peoples were in all likelihood of Mesoamerican origin. The cultural, archeological and philosophical evidence revealed by Fernández-Méndez bears this out and points to an Antillean cultural development strongly influenced from the Yucatán. Mayan influences were indeed most prominent among the Carib people present in the 15<sup>th</sup> century Antilles. Indigenous descendants today would thus be ancestral to the Maya. Some descendants realize this as a significant portion of information regarding the Mayan past has been passed down from generation to generation.

## Chapter 3

### The Politics of Amerindian Language

One thing I discovered and concluded with certainty is that language was always the companion of empire; therefore it follows that together they begin, grow, and flourish, and together they fall.<sup>1</sup>

Western ways of viewing and interpreting the indigenous world contributed enormously to the clash of civilizations in the 15th and 16th centuries. Respect for plurality or diversity in interpreting the universe was curiously missing here during the European “Renaissance.” This chapter will compare indigenous and European ways of organizing and interpreting knowledge through the use of language. Walter Mignolo’s interpretation of the Renaissance period helps to set the theoretical tone of the chapter. Mignolo emphasizes an oppositional view to the Renaissance, which rationalized the justification for colonial expansion and announced the colonial and postcolonial time frames.<sup>2</sup> His hermeneutics allow for alternative “loci of enunciation,” or interpretations of the past and present, which assist in helping the indigenous voice to be heard.

Carib-Jíbaro scholar Oki Lamourt-Valentín’s *Cannibal Recipes* provides an important indigenous interpretation of the work of Fray Ramón Pané. *Cannibal Recipes* is a socio-linguistic account of Carib Indian culture and rebuttal of Pané’s book, *An Account of the Antiquities of the Indians*. As we will see, the work challenges the widely

---

<sup>1</sup>Antonio de Nebrija, in Vicente L. Rafael, *Contracting Colonialism: Translation and Christian Conversion in Tagalog Society Under Early Spanish Rule*, Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1988, p. 23.

<sup>2</sup>Walter D. Mignolo, *The Darker Side of the Renaissance: Literacy, Territoriality, & Colonization*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1995, p. vii.

held scholarly view that the first alphabetical work written in the Americas was in Spanish and that of Pané's. As Lamourt-Valentín explains, the Carib people and *cacike* Guarionex, who provide the Jeronymite missionary with all the information he needed, turn out to be the true authors of the text. However as history is written by "the victors," Pané receives sole credit for the work. The remainder of the chapter will primarily elaborate on how language, and specifically the Greek alphabet, came to dominant indigenous forms of "writing" and expression. The Maya, for example, had developed their own sophisticated way of recording the past, and the alphabet was *not* a condition for its means of expression. We will specify how alphabetic writing became a superior genre of organizing knowledge compared to Amerindian forms.

### **Constructing Loci of Enunciation**

The Renaissance and birth of modernity as amplified in the late 15<sup>th</sup> century signals a radical transformation in the history of the world. The crystallization of capitalism in Europe and European expansionism and conquest are parallel developments.<sup>3</sup> A capitalist mode of production begins to form in the periphery, though this development as a global phenomenon would not be realized for a significant time to come. Samir Amin elaborates on the transformation:

Things begin to change with the Renaissance because a new consciousness forms in the European mind. It does not matter that at this stage, and for a long time to come, this consciousness is not the one we have today: namely, that the basis for European superiority and for its conquest of the world lies in the capitalist mode of organization of its society.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup>Samir Amin, *Eurocentrism*, Translated by Russell Moore, New York: Monthly Review Press, 1989, p. 71.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., 75.

Mignolo's book, *The Darker Side of the Renaissance*, is about the colonization of languages and memories, and how a European consciousness emerged in mainly 16<sup>th</sup> century central México, and also in the Yucatán and Peru. The need to "decolonize scholarship" and to "decenter epistemological loci of enunciation" are largely his motivation for presenting an alternative view of the Renaissance period into current colonial and postcolonial discussions.<sup>5</sup> The emergence of an "ethnographic reason," the constitution of the "myth of modernity" (modernity emerging in the late 15th century), and the configuration of a "postcolonial reason" are intertwined in "understanding the past and speaking the present."<sup>6</sup> Mignolo finds common ground in his argument with philosopher Enrique Dussel's colonial critique of modernity and the irrational concept it conceals:

Modernity includes a rational 'concept' of emancipation that we affirm and subsume. But, at the same time, it develops an irrational myth, a justification for genocidal violence. The postmodernists criticize modern reason as a reason of terror; we criticize modern reason because of the irrational myth that it conceals.<sup>7</sup>

In attempting to unravel the myth, Mignolo posits an approach to interpretation called "pluritopic hermeneutics," which allows for alternative modes of understanding. While his hermeneutics is a take off of a traditional "philosophical hermeneutics," where universal tradition and subjects spoke for all of humanity, it transcends this by demanding a "colonial semiosis" that presupposes relevance in more than one tradition, or a plurality

---

<sup>5</sup>Mignolo, *The Darker Side of the Renaissance*, pp. viii-ix.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. x.

<sup>7</sup>Enrique Dussel, in Mignolo, *The Darker Side of the Renaissance*, p. xi.

of ways of understanding.<sup>8</sup> This philosophy is not new, he indicates, Dussel for one having been recognized for “politicizing phenomenology as an oppositional way of thinking” in regard to the historically oppressed. However, while Mignolo credits Dussel’s radical loci of enunciation, he also targets him stating that pluritopic hermeneutics also questions the positionality and homogeneity of the subject, which Dussel is apparently above: “One has the impression that Dussel remains within a representational concept of knowledge that questions the conceptualization of the Other as a subject to be understood, without questioning the understanding subject itself.”<sup>9</sup> This is a crucial point in Mignolo’s thesis, which emphasizes the importance of the relationship between intellectual inquiry and cultural intervention.

Mignolo refers to several individuals who appear to bridge the gap between what could be seen as the theoretical and practical dynamics of his hermeneutics. Gloria Anzaldúa, for one, has expounded on an aesthetic and political hermeneutic where Spanish-American, Nahuatl and Anglo-American traditions and ways of knowing meet and individual and collective expressions converge.<sup>10</sup> Ngugi Wa Thiong’o stresses “alternative centers,” rather than center and peripheral relationships, where the empire is critiqued from centers of both expansion and resistance.<sup>11</sup> Consequently, Thiong’o has employed the African language as the interpretive tool of African resistance by exclusively writing in his mother tongue, *Gikuyu*, heeding Chinua Achebe’s description

---

<sup>8</sup>Mignolo, *The Darker Side of the Renaissance*, p. 11.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 12.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 13.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid.



of the “fatalistic logic of the unassailable position of English in our literature.”<sup>12</sup> And Mignolo cites Rodolfo Kusch as perhaps the best example of one who has practiced his form of hermeneutics. Kusch realized the strong legacy and contemporary influence of Inca culture in 20th century Peru, Bolivia and northern Argentina. Through a comparative ethnophilosophical practice, he analyzed the system of thoughts practiced by 16th century Inca elites and Amerindian descendants with Western philosophical traditions in Europe and those colonially employed in the Americas.<sup>13</sup> Mignolo points out that Kusch’s philosophy goes beyond the dialectic between Western causal and “seminal” (of origin, source, or “anchored in religion”) ways of thinking branching into a “third space” presence:

As an Argentinian philosopher, he is able to go beyond a surface of dichotomous oppositions and find the seminal pattern that connects the hidden underground of Western thought with explicit Amerindian attitudes, which have resisted the assimilation to causal thinking, even though peasants of Amerindian descent live within a hybrid context in which the commodification of ‘art crafts’ in Sunday farmers’ markets does not erase seminal attitudes maintained among the members of their own communities. By comparing alternative philosophies in his own and neighboring countries with the same official language (Spanish) and similar linguistic Amerindian configurations, Kusch is no longer the outsider trying to understand the Other from far away. The Other for Kusch is part of his own country, part of his own everyday life and community. ‘Us’ and ‘they’ are subsumed in a third space in which both become ‘we,’ the members of this country, the inheritors of a colonial legacy.<sup>14</sup>

---

<sup>12</sup>Chinua Achebe, in Ngũgĩ Wa Thiong’o, *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Politics*, London: James Currey Ltd., 1986, p. 7.

<sup>13</sup>Mignolo, *The Darker Side of the Renaissance*, p. 13.

<sup>14</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 14.

While Kusch's *own* position could be viewed in a neocolonial sense, pluritopic hermeneutics for Mignolo is meant to be more than an academic exercise, and he praises Kusch for attempting to fill the gap regarding the objective of the concept, i.e., "constructing (e.g., putting in order) that portion of the world to be known."<sup>15</sup> Kusch combines theory and practice where "intellectual inquiry is part of the culture shared by the self-same and the other, by the subject of study and the understanding subject." Mignolo notes, however, that the pluritopic approach does not stress "cultural relativity" or multiculturalism but rather emphasizes the social and human elements of political intervention, such as the *telling of a story* as the locus of enunciation.<sup>16</sup> This is apparently what many post-colonial writers have been attempting to do for decades, yet the political powers that be do not seem to care to listen.

Finally, the pluritopic subject needs to understand the ethical balance between the assumed truth of knowledge and understanding with that of "equal rights to claim the truth" regarding alternative political views.<sup>17</sup> This is worthy but Mignolo then somewhat ironically writes that the ethical problem comes about when "ideal relativism," or cultural relativism, is not checked. While perhaps important in understanding cultural differences, cultural relativism could, for example, transcend into violence if it is "not analyzed in the context of power and domination."<sup>18</sup> This is a very important point and one that certainly should have been heeded historically. But it is curious as to why Mignolo emphasizes this

---

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 15.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid.

ethos when power, at least in a contemporary context, lies firmly in the hands of state and multinational elites. Is there then absolutely no cause or justification for violence? *Who* should really analyze and understand the dynamics and consequences of political realism and its all too often devastating effects? The implications here may be just what ideal or “cultural relativists” would applaud. Nevertheless, Mignolo’s hermeneutics as analyzed historically is essential to our work and does pave the way for alternative loci of enunciation that ultimately creates a space for the *indigenous voice* to speak.

### **The Antiquities of the Indians: Pané’s Work or a “Native Text”?**

The historical origins of the field of anthropology in the Americas have been acknowledged by some to begin with the work of Ramón Pané. Pané, who was from the Spanish region of Catalonia and accompanied Columbus on his second voyage, could be credited with having conducted the first ethnological study in the region. Ricardo Alegría says that Pané’s work could also be called “the beginning of American literature.”<sup>19</sup> In 1495, Pané was summoned by Columbus to live among and collect information on native beliefs and customs of the Carib people in Quisqueya (“Hispaniola”). This mission was set into place for the purpose of “gathering intelligence.”<sup>20</sup> Columbus’ inability to understand the indigenous peoples contributed to his difficulties in governing the island. After the people began to rebel against the Spaniards for cruelties inflicted on them, the Admiral decided he needed more data on the native population “in order to prevent further trouble. Though they had appeared trusting and docile at first, they had now

---

<sup>19</sup>Ricardo Alegría, “The Study of Aboriginal Peoples: Multiple Ways of Knowing,” in Samuel M. Wilson, ed., *The Indigenous People of the Caribbean*, Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1997, p. 14.

<sup>20</sup>Antonio M. Stevens-Arroyo, *Cave of the Jagua: The Mythological World of the Tainos*, Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1988, p. 74.

proven themselves to be clever and brave adversaries.”<sup>21</sup> Perhaps Edward Gaylor Bourne did not know the true intention of the mission when in 1906 he, in a sense, named Columbus as “the founder of American anthropology”?<sup>22</sup>

While Pané is credited as the author of the text called *Relación Acerca de Las Antigüedades de Los Indios* (*An Account of the Antiquities of the Indians*), the myths and beliefs he recorded were actually “transliterated” to him by his Indian interpreter, Guaticabanú Yahubabanú.<sup>23</sup> This is one reason why the Pané manuscript has been called a “native” text written in the Mayan language.<sup>24</sup> Columbus writes that Pané knew the native language<sup>25</sup> (the dialect of Macorix where he first lived), but he was unfamiliar with the language of the Magua region under the major *cacike*, Guarionex, who was his principal interviewee.<sup>26</sup> This is evident as Pané himself questions Columbus’ decision for him to go and live with Guarionex: “Sir, how can your Lordship ask me to stay with Guarionex, when the only language I know is that of Macorix? Let your Lordship permit to come with me one of the Nuhuirey who know both languages.”<sup>27</sup> Thus, there is a contradiction in Columbus’ statement that Pané “knew” the language. Pané knew the

---

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., pp. 73-74.

<sup>22</sup>Edward Gaylord Bourne, in Fernando Colón, *The Life of the Admiral Christopher Columbus*, Translated and Annotated by Benjamin Keen, New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1959, 1992, p. 299.

<sup>23</sup>Interview with Carib-Jíbaro scholar and artisan Oki Lamourt-Valentín, June 28, 1999.

<sup>24</sup>Oscar Lamourt-Valentín, *Cannibal Recipes*, A socio-linguistic account of Carib-Jíbaro culture and response to the work of Ramón Pané, Ames: Iowa State University, Unpublished, 1979, pp. 8, 12.

<sup>25</sup>Christopher Columbus, in Colón, *The Life of the Admiral*, p. 153.

<sup>26</sup>Interview with Lamourt-Valentín, June 28, 1999.

<sup>27</sup>Ramón Pané, in Colón, *The Life of the Admiral*, p. 166.

language of Macorix but not of Magua. The solution to the dilemma was to assign Guaticabanú as Pané's interpreter.

Interestingly, the issue of language acquisition brought about by the initial Amerindian-European encounter appears to be a topic rarely analyzed and engaged in. Who acquired whose language in the beginning, and, more importantly, what was the significance of the acquisition? The unspoken assumption seems to be that the Spaniards had initially acquired the native tongue. However we now know through the work of José Barreiro that Columbus' primary translator was Guaikán (christened "Diego Colón"), one of the numerous women, children and men taken captive on the first voyage.<sup>28</sup> Other Indian people also served as Columbus' interpreters.<sup>29</sup> Barreiro's book revolves around Guaikán, whom Las Casas says he knew "quite well,"<sup>30</sup> and numerous chroniclers have alluded to him in their works.<sup>31</sup> Barreiro explains:

I found after a cursory search of the early chronicles the historical personality named Diego Colón, who was indeed a Taíno Indian. Diego Colón was a young man, twelve years old when taken by Columbus as a captive at the first landfall at Guanahani. A quick study, Diego became Columbus' primary Taíno interpreter within weeks of the first contact. He would not only remain at the center of events throughout the first ten years of the Spanish colonization of La Española, but he lived to full maturity in Santo Domingo. Diego Colón was a native witness to the first half century of that fateful encounter.<sup>32</sup>

---

<sup>28</sup>For a brief account of captives seized by Columbus, see S. Lyman Tyler, *Two Worlds: The Indian Encounter with the European, 1492-1509*, Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1988, pp. 97-98.

<sup>29</sup>Bartolomé de Las Casas, *Historia de Las Indias* (Book I, Chapter 86), in Tyler, *Two Worlds*, p. 124.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid.

<sup>31</sup>José Barreiro, *The Indian Chroniclers*, Houston: Arte Público Press, 1993, pp. 10-11.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., p. 10.

The massacre at fort “La Navidad” presents another intriguing scenario regarding the acquisition of language. The personal interaction between the Carib and the thirty-nine Christians left behind by Columbus in December 1492 was significant. As mentioned in Chapter 1, the men there were killed after they had committed atrocities against the native population. Prior to this moment, a good number of Carib noblemen living in the area and attending to the Christians had acquired the Spanish tongue.<sup>33</sup> Las Casas refers to this when he writes of the Indian people who approached Columbus’ men upon their return in November of the next year: “a brother of the king Guacanagarí came with some Indians who already knew how to speak and understand our language to some extent. They referred by name to all the Christians who had stayed in the fortress.”<sup>34</sup> Lamourt-Valentín points out that the Carib use of the names of the Spaniards meant the two groups had gone through the native ceremony called *guatiaio* (the exchanging of names). Columbus’ surprise was “very great” when he realized that the indigenous peoples were referring to themselves by the names of the dead Spanish, mimicking them and speaking Spanish.<sup>35</sup> Lamourt-Valentín says, “We’re still doing that . . . everybody here [in Lares and the mountain region] has foreign names, the names of dead foreigners. In our own communities we have our own names. . . . ‘Lamourt,’ for example, is the name of a dead foreigner.”<sup>36</sup> Guaticabanú became Pané’s interpreter because he knew both the language of Magua and Spanish, the latter from the men at La Navidad. Pané

---

<sup>33</sup>Interview with Lamourt-Valentín, June 28, 1999.

<sup>34</sup>Las Casas, in Tyler, *Two Worlds*, p. 124.

<sup>35</sup>Interview with Lamourt-Valentín, June 28, 1999.

<sup>36</sup>Interview with Lamourt-Valentín, July 27, 1998.

also chose him because he was the “best of all the Indians,” having been instructed in the Catholic faith and later becoming a Christian.<sup>37</sup>

One of the main reasons why the Pané manuscript has been so difficult to decipher and understand is because it turns out to be neither an interpretation nor a translation of the original Indian words or myths spoken. The text is a *transliteration*, i.e., the Indian words spoken by Guarionex were literally translated by Guaticabanú into Spanish and recorded by Pané, whereby “the text in any European language is almost unreadable,” unless you know “the code” or “what the myth is talking about.”<sup>38</sup> Subsequently, all “translations” of Pané invariably become transliterations because, as Lamourt-Valentín explains, “any ‘translation’ of a ‘transliteration’ is only going to produce a translation of a transliteration anyway, . . . and it is in that manner that it will always say the same thing in every language *with the exception of its own original language* (or original concept) although every other translation (transliteration) can then be said to sustain itself on the basis of its own ideology intended by Pané in the original, and never getting past that point.”<sup>39</sup> This latter point is essentially how the *Antiquities of the Indians* comes to be thought of as a “European text,” sustained by its own ideology, as the indigenous element became disauthorized in the process.

More profoundly, Lamourt-Valentín implies that even if Pané knew the language he could not have possibly been able to comprehend the complex concepts of the Indian

---

<sup>37</sup>Pané, in Colón, *The Life of the Admiral*, p. 166.

<sup>38</sup>Interview with Lamourt-Valentín, June 28, 1999.

<sup>39</sup>Lamourt-Valentín, *Cannibal Recipes*, p. 9.

philosophy in the one or two years in which he lived among the Carib.<sup>40</sup> Pané's biases are obvious as he *narrates* the text. He notes the perplexities in living among "these heathen," that these "simple, ignorant people, who know not our holy faith, believe that these idols or rather demons do all these things," and as "these Indians have no alphabet or writing, they cannot give a coherent account of these matters, but they have them from their forebears. Therefore their accounts do not agree, not is it possible to write down in an orderly fashion what they say."<sup>41</sup> Pané obviously cannot record their accounts in an "orderly fashion" because he is shielded by his own philosophy from grasping the complexities of the nature of the concepts given.

The second reason why the Pané text is so difficult to read is precisely because it was written in code.<sup>42</sup> Stevens-Arroyo and Henry Petitjean Roget also allude to this, both employing a form of structural analysis (Claude Lévi Strauss' structuralism in the case of Stevens-Arroyo) in their "decoding" of the narrative.<sup>43</sup> However, the difference between Stevens-Arroyo and Lamourt-Valentín's interpretations of the myths is that the former's is based on a European model and analysis of what he now considers to be an "extinct" society,<sup>44</sup> whereas Lamourt-Valentín's socio-linguistic interpretation is grounded in oral tradition and looked at from an indigenous Jíbaro perspective, as one who lives and breathes the culture and tradition of his people. He points out that Pané's recordings (in a

---

<sup>40</sup>Interview with Lamourt-Valentín, July 27, 1998.

<sup>41</sup>Pané, in Colón, *The Life of the Admiral*, pp. 154-159.

<sup>42</sup>Interview with Lamourt-Valentín, June 28, 1999.

<sup>43</sup>Stevens-Arroyo, *Cave of the Jagua*, p. 10; Henry Petitjean Roget, "Notes on Ancient Caribbean Art and Mythology," in Wilson, ed., *The Indigenous People of the Caribbean*, p. 103.

<sup>44</sup>Stevens-Arroyo, *Cave of the Jagua*, p. 14.



“memotechnic code”) are of a series of *areitos* (traditional ceremonies, dances and recitations) given by Guarionex in the form of a poem. “This is a recitation of an *areito*. Every event in the myths is the theme for an *areito*.”<sup>45</sup> He further expands on why the *Antiquities of the Indians* ought to be considered a *native text*:

From the starting point however of a native social constitution, whose earliest version appears in a five hundred year old chronicle, and reports the very words of the Lord of Magua, Guarionel Guarionex Cacique, it is about as authoritative as anyone can wish for, . . . if only it could be read whole, because it is a transliteration of a memotechnic code for a poetic-alliterative recitation of the ‘areyto’ to which the cacique in question subscribed in the name of the whole nation.

The very fact that it is a transliteration does not however necessarily bias it from a native point of view however, . . . because it is not in Spanish anyway, but in code, . . . and most of what it has to say is known anyway from the narrative oral tradition.<sup>46</sup>

Through his Jíbaro background and knowledge of the many myths passed down to him through oral tradition, Lamourt-Valentín has been able to relate the myths back to the Indian language, subsequently breaking down the language from the transliteration to reveal the poetics of the narrative.<sup>47</sup> By returning to the original Indian (Mayan) language, he figured out that what Guarionex was talking about concerned “moral production,” social relations of exchange, explaining “exogamy,” and relationships of trade, distance, time and economic productivity.<sup>48</sup> Most importantly, the Pané text is significant because it is “the first Maya language text that can be read and understood. . . . in Maya, not in Spanish. It’s the earliest sample of Maya literature that can be found in any point in

---

<sup>45</sup>Interview with Lamourt-Valentín, June 28, 1999.

<sup>46</sup>Lamourt-Valentín, *Cannibal Recipes*, p. 9.

<sup>47</sup>Interview with Lamourt-Valentín, June 28, 1999.

<sup>48</sup>Interviews with Lamourt-Valentín, July 27, 1998, June 28, 1999.

time.”<sup>49</sup> He explained that this is a very important point because nearly all the literature produced in Mayan was completely destroyed by the Spanish when they got to Yucatán. The Pané account is highly significant because it is “the initial contact text.” It takes place and is created at the initial moment of contact.<sup>50</sup> Therefore, the first alphabetical text created in the Americas regarding pre-European indigenous culture and society was written by the Indian people themselves: “The Indians wrote it because Pané couldn’t be anything else but an amanuensis. He could take down the dictation of his translator. He couldn’t do anything else. It’s impossible.”<sup>51</sup>

Finally, when asked why this information is largely unknown, Lamourt-Valentín replied, “Because nobody has bothered to ask the Jíbaro if [they’re] still alive. Everybody says the Jíbaro is extinct.”<sup>52</sup> Since the early chroniclers pervasively permeated the myth of the extinction of the indigenous population, subsequent scholars – with the certain exception of Stan Steiner’s 1974 partial ethnological account in Puerto Rico – have indeed not bothered to ask the indigenous peoples about the myths and stories of their ancestors. But the stories, particularly in the mountain regions of Borikén, have *survived* through family histories, often having gone “underground” as the result of an abusive past, and are still told by elders, native artisans and cultural practitioners. This information has been passed down through oral tradition from generation to generation as I learned firsthand during my travels. Pané’s work surely would have been much easier to

---

<sup>49</sup>Interview with Lamourt-Valentín, June 28, 1999.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid.

<sup>51</sup>Interview with Lamourt-Valentín, July 27, 1998.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid.

decipher if the native descendants had been asked about the myths contained in the text. Aside from his own personal and often discriminatory narration, Pané was one of the first Europeans to have lived directly among the Indian people, and he should be credited for having *dictated* the words said to him by Guaticabanú. In this sense, he was the first ethnographer in the Americas. But Pané did *not* write the main text concerning the antiquities of the Indians. The first alphabetical text recorded in the Americas was a native account *given* by Guarionex and the Carib people for the benefit of those to come.

### **Language as a Mode of Power**

The first European chroniclers in the Americas were not genuinely interested in indigenous peoples' thoughts or beliefs, and much less in how they conceived of their language. As we recall, the primary purpose of Pané's transliteration was to squash the Indian rebellion. Fernández-Méndez notes how Pané, Las Casas and Oviedo did not write about things they had no practical interest in, and "ignored those things which seemed incomprehensible or which were contradictory to their preconceived notions. This is what Las Casas did."<sup>53</sup> As referred to above, Spanish friars immediately ordered the destruction of native chronicles in México and set about writing their own histories from their own perspectives.<sup>54</sup> Mignolo notes that when they did listen to the indigenous peoples, they often included native self-descriptions as their own: "I emphasize that Castilian descriptions of Amerindian interactions either suppressed Amerindians' own self-

---

<sup>53</sup>Eugenio Fernández Méndez, *Art and Mythology of the Taino Indians of the Greater West Indies*, México: Editorial Libros de México, 1972, p. 68.

<sup>54</sup>Hunbatz Men, *Secrets of Mayan Science/Religion*, Translated by Diana Gubiseh Ayala and James Jennings Dunlap II, Santa Fe, New Mexico: Bear & Company Publishing, 1990, p. 109.

descriptions or, when the Castilians did listen to the Amerindians, incorporated Amerindians' self-descriptions into their own."<sup>55</sup>

The colonization of Amerindian languages began with the publication of Antonio de Nebrija's *Gramática de la lengua castellana* in 1492. In writing a grammar of the Castilian language, dedicated to Queen Isabella, Nebrija claimed that "language is the perfect instrument of empire."<sup>56</sup> The endowment of the Castilian vernacular with a grammar was based on Latin, the language Castilian was believed to have derived from. The language of the Roman Empire provided Nebrija with a crucial foundation that established Castilian as the language of hegemony over the Iberian Peninsula.<sup>57</sup> This ideology of linguistic power would subsequently be extended to the Americas. The thought that the Indian people had not been "blessed" with the "most marvelous human invention," which Nebrija had argued was "the letter,"<sup>58</sup> played an important role in the denigration of Amerindian culture by the early chroniclers.

Writing one hundred years after Nebrija, Mignolo cites Bernardo de Aldrete for his narrative of the origins of the Castilian language. One of Aldrete's theses concerned how conquerors throughout history inflicted their language on the conquered, though this was not always the case as Mignolo reveals certain contradictions in Aldrete's thesis, e.g., how the Visigoths as vanquishers actually *adopted* the language and culture of the Iberian

---

<sup>55</sup>Mignolo, *The Darker Side of the Renaissance*, p. 2.

<sup>56</sup>Nebrija, in Rafael, *Contracting Colonialism*, p. 23.

<sup>57</sup>Rafael, *Contracting Colonialism*, pp. 23-24.

<sup>58</sup>Mignolo, *The Darker Side of the Renaissance*, p. 37.

Peninsula.<sup>59</sup> One of Aldrete's chapters, titled, "The Vanquished Receive the Language of the Vanquishers, Surrendering Their Own with Their Land and People," elaborates on this argument as applied to the Iberian Peninsula and the Antilles. Aldrete was primarily concerned with the spreading of Castilian over newly organized territories. Territorial organization to him was intimately linked with language, which "comes with memories shared and stored in a common language."<sup>60</sup> However Aldrete observed that the "los indios," other than some of the nobles ("Indios principales"), did not speak much Spanish in general, preferring to speak their own language. He is critical of his Spanish peers for not being efficient enough in teaching the Castilian language in the "Indies," though he is confident that God and the Spanish Crown would eventually succeed in the task.<sup>61</sup> What is significant to note here is that Aldrete was writing in 1606, whereas the overwhelming presumption again is that the indigenous population in the "Indies" had been "eliminated" by the 1550s. The fact that the general population preferred speaking in their native language in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century is a strong sign of resistance to the Spanish presence, and again contradicts Aldrete's thesis. From the above description, the vanquished had yet to receive the language of the vanquisher, although we know from the previous section that the indigenous peoples did acquire the Spanish tongue when the circumstances necessitated it and when it was to their advantage.

Aldrete also strongly ties together indigenous peoples' perceived lack of letters with "civility" and "nakedness." Since the Antilles had not been invaded by a foreign

---

<sup>59</sup>Ibid., p. 30.

<sup>60</sup>Ibid., p. 33.

<sup>61</sup>Ibid.

nation before the arrival of the Spaniards (unlike the Iberian Peninsula that had been invaded several times before the Romans), and thus lacked “any kind of letters,” and consequently science, literature and “civility,” Aldrete abruptly concluded that “they live like beasts, naked.”<sup>62</sup> There is a strong causal link here between language and clothing: “Aldrete states blatantly that because they lacked letters, most Amerindians were naked or seminaked.”<sup>63</sup> Therefore, indigenous peoples’ linguistic behavior, i.e., preferring to speak in their own language, results in their lack of clothing, or “bad manners.” Both points are directly related to “civility,” or the lack of it. The thought that nakedness might be linked to climate or an alternative hermeneutics obviously did not occur to Aldrete. An image of the Indian people living plentifully “in nature,” or perhaps in a “Garden of Eden” as originally depicted by Columbus, would be a sure sign of heresy. This was because the meaning of “civility” for the chroniclers was directly linked to Christianity, for religion was the most important aid in the altering and maintenance of language, according to Aldrete.<sup>64</sup> Christianity as imbedded in the European psyche of the time drew on an ethos Aldrete could not avoid: “a feeling of *civilitas*, the way people look, the way people speak, the way human beings should behave.”<sup>65</sup> The role of Christian conversion and the alphabet are further discussed later in this chapter. Aldrete’s depictions of Amerindian culture also extended beyond the Antilles to México and Central and South America. But just how accurate were his and other chroniclers’ assessments of the “lack of letters”

---

<sup>62</sup>Ibid., p. 34.

<sup>63</sup>Ibid.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid., p. 30.

<sup>65</sup>Ibid., p. 35.

among indigenous peoples? How did alphabetic writing as a genre of organizing knowledge become superior to Amerindian forms of organization, including oral tradition? In short, how did the phonetic alphabet become the universal standard of measuring “civilization”? We examine these questions in the final sections below.

### **Maya Writing**

Fifteen hundred years or more before the arrival of the Spanish, the Maya had utilized a written script and were the first to cultivate maize, beans and squash. It is said the Mayan “codices” written during the “classic period” (c. 200-900) distinctly resemble a similar tradition of writing as reflected in the Egyptian papyrus, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and the Medieval Codex.<sup>66</sup> Anthony Aveni writes the Classic Maya “possessed a visible language that consisted of letters and a grammar, and one of the products of their literacy was the book.”<sup>67</sup> A large part of the original calendric system was also maintained through oral tradition after European contact.<sup>68</sup> The use and meaning of letters and numbers were of great cultural significance to the Maya, which have astounded Western scholars:

When we discover that these books contain calculations that reach into the millions, dates protracted backward toward a mythical creation era that happened 3 millennia before they were written down, and when our studies uncover Mayan predictions of the first predawn appearance of the planet Venus or a total eclipse, each accurate to the day a century in advance, all without benefit of any astronomical technology and all directed towards metaphysical ends, our fascination becomes awe.<sup>69</sup>

---

<sup>66</sup>Anthony F. Aveni, “Introduction: Making Time,” in Anthony F. Aveni, ed., *The Sky in Mayan Literature*, New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992, pp. 3-4.

<sup>67</sup>Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>68</sup>Barbara Tedlock, “The Road of Light: Theory and Practice of Mayan Skywatching,” in Aveni, ed., *The Sky in Mayan Literature*, pp. 24-25.

<sup>69</sup>Aveni, “Introduction: Making Time,” in Aveni, ed., *The Sky in Mayan Literature*, p. 5.

Mayan knowledge regarding time, numbers, the calendar, and the prediction of natural events were based on the celestial world. The sky was the most reliable and constant indicator of astronomical and mathematical knowledge in measuring time.<sup>70</sup> Of all celestial objects, the sun has always been “the fundamental unit of timekeeping” for both ancient and modern-day Maya.<sup>71</sup> The sun governed all forms of life from which everything was possible.<sup>72</sup> The Maya came to recognize that they, too, were an integral part of nature and that everything has material form, or *soul*. According to Hunbatz Men, soul is a manifestation of spirit, called *k'inan*, derived from *k'in* (sun) and the suffix *an*, a form of the verb “to be.”<sup>73</sup> Men explains, “the Maya understanding of the concept of the soul is as a manifestation of spirit, that is, of intelligent energy sublimated in body, form and figure. So the soul was perceived by our Mayan ancestors as the object which is a conduit for spirit, the energy which permits human intellectual manifestations.”<sup>74</sup> It would be from this manifestation that the Maya were writing independently for hundreds of years, doing things in their own way and living up to their own cultural standards.

Upon European contact, the Maya found themselves having to conform and adapt to Western modes of writing. Although most of the “books” were destroyed upon initial contact, two prominent ones did survive and have been preserved in time. First produced in the ancient Mayan language, both the *Books of Chilam Balam* and the *Popol Vuh* were

---

<sup>70</sup>Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>71</sup>Tedlock, “The Road of Light,” in Aveni, ed., *The Sky in Mayan Literature*, pp. 24-25.

<sup>72</sup>Men, *Secrets of Mayan Science/Religion*, p. 25.

<sup>73</sup>Ibid., p. 24.

<sup>74</sup>Ibid.



written predominately in alphabetic script between the 16th and 19th centuries. Consequently, these books based on a Western system of writing helped sustain Mayan cultural tradition offering “good examples of the survival and adaptation of indigenous generic categories during the colonial period.”<sup>75</sup> The *Books of Chilam Balam* transformed oral tradition and the ancient hieroglyphic style of writing, organizing and transmitting Mayan knowledge.<sup>76</sup> Numbering about a dozen, the *Books* were written in numerous towns in Yucatán bearing the town’s name, such as Chilam Balam of *Chumayel*, *Tizimin* or *Ixil*. *Chilam* was the title of one of the great “prophets” of Mayan civilization, named *Balam* (meaning *jaguar*), who lived around the turn of the 16<sup>th</sup> century and is thought to have predicted the coming of the Spaniards. Relating directly to the subject matter in the codices, the *Books of Chilam Balam* are “post-Conquest counterparts of pre-Columbian hieroglyphic codices.”<sup>77</sup> Ralph Roys has suggested that each book of Chilam Balam is “a small library in itself and contains a considerable variety of subject material. Besides the prophecies we find brief chronicles, fragmentary historical narratives, rituals, native catechism, mythological accounts of the creation of the world, almanacs and medical treatises.”<sup>78</sup>

Yucatec names also link the lowland *Books of Chilam Balam* with the highland Quiché Maya sacred text of creation, the *Popol Vuh*. The *Popol Vuh* (the root *pop* means “woven mat,” “seat of authority,” and “counsel”; *vuh* refers to “book”) has been called

---

<sup>75</sup>Mignolo, *The Darker Side of the Renaissance*, pp. 204-205.

<sup>76</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 206.

<sup>77</sup>Merideth Paxton, “The Books of Chilam Balam: Astronomical Content and the Paris Codex,” in Aveni, ed., *The Sky in Mayan Literature*, p. 216.

the “Bible of America,” for it reveals the genesis of the American story and search for the “heart of native America.”<sup>79</sup> Gordon Brotherston points out the *Popol Vuh* clearly tells the indigenous creation story relying ingeniously “on the native-script tradition from which it claims to have been transcribed.” The text provides an unrivaled geographical reference point for cosmogonical accounts from cultures throughout the hemisphere,<sup>80</sup> although we now know that the *Antiquities of the Indians* has been similarly interpreted. The *Popol Vuh*, written alphabetically in the 16th century, is based on an original ancient writing also called the *Popol Vuh*.<sup>81</sup> This book or writing is traced to an ancient city east of Santa Cruz Quiché, likely *Copán*.<sup>82</sup> Brotherston describes how the *Popol Vuh* in its post-contact “Christian frame” is almost evenly divided into two parts:

The first concerns the origins of the world itself and, culminating as it does in the Twins victory over the Lords of Hell, prepares us for the creation from maize of the first people of our current age. This event in fact provides the hinge into the second part, insofar as these first people are also more narrowly defined as the first Quiché and the remotest ancestors of the dynasty reigning in that town when Alvarado arrived. The maize creation at the start of Part 2 is, then, the pivotal moment of the whole narrative, toward and away from which everything tends.<sup>83</sup>

Finally, while the *Books of Chilam Balam* are based on hieroglyphic writing, there appears to be uncertainty as to whether the ancient *Popol Vuh* was originally written in

---

<sup>78</sup>Ralph L. Roys, in Mignolo, *The Darker Side of the Renaissance*, p. 206.

<sup>79</sup>Gordon Brotherston, *Book of the Fourth World: Reading the Native Americas Through Their Literature*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992, p. 215.

<sup>80</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>81</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 216; Dennis Tedlock, “Myth, Math, and the Problem of Correlation in Mayan Books,” in Aveni, ed., *The Sky in Mayan Literature*, p. 248.

<sup>82</sup>Tedlock, “Myth, Math, and the Problem of Correlation in Mayan Books,” in Aveni, ed., *The Sky in Mayan Literature*, p. 248.

hieroglyphic or iconic script. Brotherston notes that both Dennis Tedlock and Muro Edmonson automatically assume it is in the former script, while he provides evidence for the latter style: 1) Mayan hieroglyphics are solely attributed to the phonetics and formations of consonants and vowels of lowland Maya (Chol-Yucatec); 2) the Quiché Maya area lies “outside the hieroglyphic zone as this is defined by surviving monuments and inscriptions”; and 3) the *Popol Vuh* as written in Quiché incorporates many words of *Nahuatl* origin, a language historically linked to an iconic script.<sup>84</sup> Writing as recently as 1992, Tedlock *may* be conceding his earlier assumption when he apparently distinguishes between the two books: “But there is a problem here: The hieroglyphic books offer idealized charts of recurring astronomical and meteorological events that serve as signs of the mythic deeds of gods, while the stele [like the *Popol Vuh*] chronicle the real lives of historical royal personages.”<sup>85</sup> Regardless of the style, the Maya were certainly writing and utilizing “the letter” in their own unique way for a long time. However, to most of the early Spanish chroniclers who converged on the region any writing other than the Greek alphabet did not count.

### **The Alphabet and Other Ways of Expression**

The belief that only alphabetic literacy allowed for a reliable recording of the past was so authoritative among Spanish intellectuals of the sixteenth century that the society in which they lived translated the medieval *litteratus* by *letrados* (men of letters) and changed its meaning to designate the social roles involved in writing matters.<sup>86</sup>

---

<sup>83</sup>Brotherston, *Book of the Fourth World*, p. 218.

<sup>84</sup>Ibid., pp. 217-218.

<sup>85</sup>Tedlock, “Myth, Math, and the Problem of Correlation in Mayan Books,” in Aveni, ed., *The Sky in Mayan Literature*, p. 249.

<sup>86</sup>Mignolo, *The Darker Side of the Renaissance*, p. 128.

History and the alphabet in the Western world were simultaneously conceived of in Greece at the time (c. 2400 BP) of Herodotus and Thucydides, who were considered the “fathers of history.”<sup>87</sup> Mignolo explains that during the European Renaissance, the concept of history draws on Cicero’s definition based on the Roman Empire, where “there is a remarkable tendency to link history with rhetoric instead of philosophy,” where history is looked at as a report of past events rather than emphasizing philosophy as a rational foundation in the understanding of human civilization, like Ibn Khaldun had attributed to Arabic societies in the late 14th century.<sup>88</sup> In terms of the development of the alphabet, the Roman experience differed from that of the Greeks. While alphabetic writing had become a part of Roman society, Herodotus and Thucydides lived at a time when records were still “kept in the body’s memory and transmitted orally.”<sup>89</sup> It is indeed ironic that like the Greeks, the indigenous peoples the Spaniards first encountered relied heavily on oral tradition, where memories shared conveyed a deep cultural sense of the past. However, Mignolo points out that “New World” historians were deprived of the Greek perspective relying on Roman and humanist traditions more akin to Cicero’s definition of history. He writes:

A deep sense of the past, paradoxically, did not belong to them who wrote history but to those who the Spanish doubted had history because they did not have writing. The tension between those who had the memories and those who appointed themselves to write history was not an easy problem

---

<sup>87</sup>Ibid., p. 135.

<sup>88</sup>Ibid., pp. 135-136.

<sup>89</sup>Ibid., p. 135.

to solve, even by a careful and relentless person such as Bernardino de Sahagún.<sup>90</sup>

Among the beliefs of some past and present scholars, oral tradition, memory, ideas and gestures, like hieroglyphic and iconic writing, were just as relevant forms of communication and expression as the phonetic alphabet. In the Antilles, the innate ability to perceive is directly related to an understanding of truth as practiced within many indigenous cultures.<sup>91</sup> Our ancestors communicated, for instance, through perception, memory, oral tradition, and hieroglyphic and iconic (ideograms) forms of “writing.” Artisan and cultural practitioner Margarita Nogueras-Vidal says a main form of expression among indigenous Caribbean peoples was through the *ideogram*, or “a geometric form which expresses some idea. According to the different writings that I came across, the type of writings that our people expressed were considered ideograms, unless they had some type of zoomorphic or anthropomorphic form which was either animal or human in nature.”<sup>92</sup> As strongly implied by Brotherston and Jacques Derrida below, Carib ways of knowing can only be seen as equally legitimate in communicating knowledge as the alphabet. More importantly, whether or not we can today understand our ancestors’ ways of communication does not for one moment detract from the fact that their means of communication was relevant and understandable to *them*, and, therefore, equivalent to any other form of communication.

---

<sup>90</sup>Ibid., p. 137.

<sup>91</sup>Margarita Nogueras-Vidal, “Taíno Indian Symbolism . . . To Feel is to Perceive,” *Jayuya, Boriké*, 1996, 1998, p. 1.

<sup>92</sup>Interview with Boricua artisan and cultural practitioner Margarita Nogueras-Vidal, July 10, 1999.

Contrary to dominant linguistic beliefs derived from 16th century intellectuals, Italian scholars Giambattista Vico and Bernardo Boturini Benaducci realized in the 1700s that throughout time every nation of people recorded history in a language corresponding to its own age.<sup>93</sup> According to Mignolo, Boturini concluded that the Mexica (“Aztec”) had their “own legitimate way of recording the past,” and the alphabet was “not a necessary condition for writing history, despite the fact that sixteenth-century scholars had difficulties in understanding this.”<sup>94</sup> Brotherston notes how writing for Jacques Derrida is in fact “present everywhere, in gesture and speech itself, in the traces and paths of landscape: Orality and script do not therefore constitute a mutually exclusive binary; still less are they moral opposites.”<sup>95</sup> In a chapter titled, “The Violence of the Letter: From Lévi-Strauss to Rousseau,” Derrida provides a most insightful critique of Lévi-Strauss’ “structuralism,” where he says that writing for native societies is defined as the “condition of *social inauthenticity*” in the Rousseauian tradition.<sup>96</sup> Brotherston points out how Lévi-Strauss’ binary between orality and script is undermined by the evidence that proves degrees of phoneticism change, and even alphabets cannot fully register sound, while a type of language is always implied from even the most “rudimentary-seeming” pictography.<sup>97</sup> And while Vico ultimately hailed the superiority of “the letter,” he believed the alphabet was only one form of writing (opposed to *Nebrija*) and that all

---

<sup>93</sup>Mignolo, *The Darker Side of the Renaissance*, p. 146.

<sup>94</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 146-147.

<sup>95</sup>Brotherston, *Book of the Fourth World*, p. 42.

<sup>96</sup>Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, Translated by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1974, 1976, pp. 136-137.

<sup>97</sup>Brotherston, *Book of the Fourth World*, p. 42.

visible signs comprised writing as related to ideas, rather than writing as necessarily related to speech.<sup>98</sup> This was because, “he did not accept that writing was invented after speech. He believed that semiotic processes from the beginning of human existence involved sound, body movement, ideas, and graphic signs by which some kind of coordinated behavior among living nervous systems was attempted.”<sup>99</sup>

So how did alphabetical writing become a superior genre of organizing knowledge compared to Amerindian forms? The effective spread of language was thought to be paramount in the Christian conversion of indigenous populations. Brotherston notes that indigenous societies were, in fact, well aware of the potential impoverishment of the phonetic alphabet on their “script-saturated” texts.<sup>100</sup> Thus, the philosophical challenge to the biblical version of history resulted precisely in the burning of “whole libraries” of Mesoamerican texts by the first missionaries. The symptomatic erasure of texts occurred throughout the hemisphere, such as the confiscation of “pagan libraries” of Mide scrolls in northern Turtle Island.<sup>101</sup> Paradoxically, European knowledge of indigenous peoples’ languages and religions were further instrumental in reproducing “the word” of the Christian God in converting local populations. In the Philippines, Latin and Castilian were used to reconstruct Tagalog grammar into an effective tool for translating scripture and in turn to convert the Tagalogs.<sup>102</sup> Calvinist missionaries in Hawai‘i early on acquired and transformed the Kanaka Maoli language into an alphabetic script for the same

---

<sup>98</sup>Mignolo, *The Darker Side of the Renaissance*, p. 147.

<sup>99</sup>Ibid., p. 148.

<sup>100</sup>Brotherston, *Book of the Fourth World*, p. 45.

<sup>101</sup>Ibid., p. 49.

purpose. In México, the use of the alphabet and conversion went hand-in-hand as Bernardino de Sahagún's work in the 16<sup>th</sup> century had begun as a project to convert the indigenous population under the Franciscans. Sahagún was attempting to *know* native souls through the ancient Mexica religion:

Sahagún referred continually to his writing as 'this work' (*esta obra*), implying 'written work,' and in the opening paragraph of his prologue, he compared his own work with that of the medical doctor. In the same way that the doctor has to diagnose his or her patient in order to reestablish the order in the body, the missionaries had to diagnose theirs in order to *restore order to their soul*<sup>103</sup> (emphasis added).

Sahagún gathered an abundant amount of information in Nahuatl through oral contact with the Mexica. He began translating his work into Spanish upon the request of the governor and president of the Council of the Indies, Fray Juan de Ovando. His method of organizing indigenous knowledge was through an alphabetical *encyclopedic* genre.<sup>104</sup> According to Mignolo, the twelve books (*Florentine Codex*) he wrote are assumed to be part history and part encyclopedia, though this is not clear. What is clear is that Sahagún did not ask the Mexica how they organized their own knowledge and assumed that it should be in "book form": "What should hold our attention for the next few pages is the taken-for-granted belief that it was perfectly natural to organize all the information he gathered over the years into twelve books, without asking how the Mexicas themselves organized and transmitted their knowledge."<sup>105</sup> While the *Florentine Codex* helped to preserve certain aspects of the Mexica culture, Sahagún's classification and

---

<sup>102</sup>Rafael, *Contracting Colonialism*, p. 27.

<sup>103</sup>Mignolo, *The Darker Side of the Renaissance*, pp. 195-196.

<sup>104</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 194.



reconfiguration of Mexica knowledge repressed Mexica ways of knowing.<sup>106</sup> The preservation of indigenous culture at that time was clearly for the benefit of the non-Mexica. The points above show the complicity between alphabetic writing as believed to be a superior form of organizing knowledge and how it was then transmitted into a tool of conversion. Indeed, Sahagún's work ended in 1578 as an official report of the Council of the Indies, the same year the Council began to systematically collect and organize information in the "Indies."<sup>107</sup>

Finally, Derrida offers some interesting suggestions as to why 18th century writers continued to privilege the alphabet. After noting how Rousseau and Hegel hailed the alphabet as the most intelligent, he writes that *ethnocentrism* had always and everywhere "controlled the concept of writing."<sup>108</sup> He remarks how "logocentrism" or the "metaphysics of phonetic writing" (phonologism), referring to the alphabet, was nothing but "the most original and powerful ethnocentrism, in the process of imposing itself upon the world, controlling in one and the same *order*." The origin, history and "truth of truth," which is assigned to the concept of science as "always" having been logical, has always been "the debasement of writing, and its repression outside 'full' speech," i.e., of nonphonetic writing.<sup>109</sup> Non-European writing was viewed as a threat to such 18th century philosophers as Descartes, Leibniz, Rousseau and Hegel because "it seemed to

---

<sup>106</sup>Ibid., p. 199.

<sup>107</sup>Ibid.

<sup>108</sup>Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, p. 3.

<sup>109</sup>Ibid.

suspend the voice,” and thus the need to defend phonologism.<sup>110</sup> This subversion has been constantly restrained within a system of “direct address” (what Derrida apparently means by “logocentrism”) from which the “project of science” and “conventions of all nonphonetic characteristics” were conceived.<sup>111</sup> Thus, the project of science as “novelty” has not been afforded the ability to translate into “clear cut notions of mutation, explicitation, accumulation, revolution, or tradition,” whose values are no doubt intrinsic to the dislocation of the system.<sup>112</sup>

### **Conclusion**

Language in its various forms is the centerpiece for transmitting cultural knowledge among societies. Language can also be used as a political instrument for transforming cultures as witnessed during the Renaissance era. Mignolo’s oppositional view to the Renaissance in relation to the Americas offers a plurality of ways of interpreting and understanding this history. His alternative hermeneutics further offers a space for the indigenous voice to be heard. Indeed, although the spread of the Castilian tongue was successful in the Antilles, indigenous resistance to the Spanish expansion of language and ways of doing things was also strong: they either totally rejected these ways, or adopted them to their advantage.

Lamourt-Valentín’s critique of Pané’s work offers an important alternative indigenous interpretation of the dominant European perspective. Since Pané did not know the native language (much less the complex concepts of the myths given) of the region

---

<sup>110</sup>Ibid., p. 99.

<sup>111</sup>Ibid., pp. 3-4.

from where the *Antiquities of the Indians* was produced, the text could only have been a *transliteration* of the words spoken by his primary interviewee, *cacike* Guarionex. This is why the *Antiquities* has been so difficult to decipher. However, through his Jíbaro background and knowledge of the myths passed down to him through oral tradition, Lamourt-Valentín has been able to relate the myths back to the original Indian language to reveal the poetics and meaning of the narrative. He determined that what Guarionex was talking about concerned “moral production,” social relations of exchange, explaining “exogamy,” and relationships of trade and economic productivity, etc. Most importantly, the Pané account is important because it was the first alphabetical text written in the Mayan language in the Americas.<sup>113</sup> Because Pané did not understand the native language, this first text was written by the indigenous peoples and should be considered from this perspective.

In terms of writing, since the Greek alphabet was established as the premier form of expression and communication during the Renaissance, Europeans came to disauthorize all other forms of “writing.” As indigenous knowledge was viewed as a “threat” to the biblical version of history, early Spanish friars ordered the destruction of

---

<sup>112</sup>Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>113</sup>Interview with Lamourt-Valentín, June 28, 1999.

native texts and set about rewriting indigenous histories from their own perspectives. The alphabet became a superior genre of organizing knowledge and was subsequently transmitted into a tool to convert indigenous populations. However, as some past and present scholars have suggested, and as many indigenous peoples realize, oral tradition, memory, ideas, gestures, and hieroglyphic and iconic writing were just as relevant forms of communication as the alphabet, and were practiced among indigenous groups. The Maya, for example, had developed a sophisticated form of written expression that consisted of letters and a grammar. The *Popol Vuh* reveals the genesis of the American story relying on a native script tradition that provides an important reference point for cosmogonical accounts from cultures throughout the hemisphere. In the Antilles, the ideogram, or a geometric form of writing that expresses ideas, was one prominent way of transmitting cultural knowledge through the generations. Upon European contact, the Mayan *Books of Chilam Balam* transformed oral tradition and the ancient hieroglyphic style of writing by adopting the alphabet, which helped to sustain Mayan cultural tradition and knowledge.

## Chapter 4

### The Invention and Violence of the Concept of Discovery

He [Columbus] was to seize on the way anything that might belong to the 'heathen,' as a preliminary to their conversion, simply because the heathen were assumed to have no rights of possession, and not because the previous existence of the property was unknown. The so-called 'right of discovery,' as superior to the right of possession, was a peculiar conception of fifteenth-century Christianity. It was really the right to take by force whatever did not already belong to Christian nations.<sup>1</sup>

If there is one word that comes to sum up the imperial enterprise initiated by the Papacy and Spanish Crown at the end of the 15th century, it is the word *discovery*. The right or concept of "discovery" is a contradiction that comes to be associated with such terms as "Christianity," "America," "New World," "Indians," "infidels," "papal bulls," "conquest," "just war," "*encomienda*," "freedom," "democracy," "manifest destiny," "subjugation," "expropriation," "slavery," "genocide," and indigenous "resistance," "survival" and "presence." As it is well known among some scholars and shown in this chapter, "discovery," specifically the "discovery of America" by European explorers, was an impossibility and could not have happened. This is not to deny the horror and destruction that occurred in its name since "discovery" did sanction conquest or the so-called "just war" theory in the modern world, but it is an attempt to show the senseless legal and moral nature of the concept and how its ideology still fuels the psyche today. For instance, when former General Electric CEO Jack Welch plopped down \$45 billion to

---

<sup>1</sup>Amos Kidder Fiske, *The West Indies: A History of the Islands of the West Indian Archipelago, Together with an Account of their Physical Characteristics, Natural Resources and Present Condition*, New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1899, p. 24.

buy Honeywell stating the acquisition would have made GE “the greatest company in the world,”<sup>2</sup> his dominant attitude constitutes what Enrique Dussel calls “the modern ego,” which spans the modern era. Thus, Welch’s super ego is no different from Columbus’ ego, will and desire to seize foreign lands and convert human souls for the Spanish Crown.

This chapter will provide a genealogy of the concept of “discovery” by mapping out how it was invented, used as a tool of religious conquest, and how its ideology has come to form the basis of laws, attitudes, and, inevitably, contemporary policies. We first look at two reasons why the basis for attributing a European “discovery” to the lands that came to be known as the “Americas” are fallacies. First, it is impossible to “discover” lands that had already been inhabited for thousands of years. The concept of “*terra nullius*” as applied to “uninhabited” lands was based on the Christian “right of discovery.” As we explore later in the chapter, Christian dominion as a justification for this principle was not only ethnocentric but a violation of European laws that ushered in the “discovery era” to begin with. Secondly, we examine how Edmundo O’Gorman’s important work, *The Invention of America*, traces the voyages of Columbus and Amerigo Vespucci to Asiatic lands and labors over the *idea* that “America” had been discovered. O’Gorman provides unequivocal evidence that when looked at carefully, the “discovery” premise “reduces itself to an absurdity when it reaches the limits of its logical possibilities.”<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup>Jack Welch, in Tony Emerson and Daniel McGinn, “Super Mario Trips Up Neutron Jack,” *Newsweek*, Vol. 137, Issue 26, June 25, 2001, p. 36.

<sup>3</sup>Edmundo O’Gorman, *The Invention of America*, (An Inquiry into the historical nature of the New World and the meaning of its history), Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1961, p. 45.

We next examine the basis of the *encomienda* system of institutional slavery in the Antilles. This system of order and governance was sanctioned by the Roman Catholic hierarchy and Spanish Crown through four papal edicts granted in 1493. The bull *Inter Caetera* of May 4 was the most important of these decrees, which explicitly called for the subjugation of non-Christian peoples and divided the world in half in favor of Spain. Non-Christians were subject to the “just war” principle through the *requerimiento* as a preliminary to their conversion. Both *Inter Caetera* and the 1494 Treaty of Tordesillas are the basis of what became known as the “doctrine of discovery” and subsequently the Law of Nations as applied in the Americas. Regarding the formation of the United States, the discovery doctrine was further used as the basis for the acquisition of lands and establishment of U.S. federal Indian law. The *Johnson v. McIntosh* (1823) and *Cherokee v. Georgia* (1831) Supreme Court decisions bear this out. Finally, as it had been said that *Inter Caetera* was the “foundation-stone” of the international system in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, we briefly discuss how the concept of “discovery” is still relevant today. This notion is explained through the areas of conversion, scholarship and contemporary “globalization” policies.

### **The Invention of America**

The voyages which Columbus undertook were not, nor could they have been, *voyages to America*, since the interpretation of the past is not retroactive. To believe the contrary is to deprive history of the light which it sheds on its own unfolding, and also to deprive events of their profound human drama, of their intimate personal truth.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 74.

Edmundo O’Gorman is here referring to the “discovery of America” based on the epistemological belief of 15th century scholars of a previously unknown geographical landmass. However, there is a more important and justifiable reason why “discovery” is invalid, one that O’Gorman, in his otherwise in-depth and excellent analysis, does not mention or acknowledge. The European “discovery” of unknown lands did not happen, first and foremost, because it is impossible to “discover” lands that had already been inhabited for thousands of years. The “historical success” of Amerigo Vespucci’s label called the “New World” is absurd when considering that indigenous peoples had been present in the hemisphere up to 40,000 years ago or more.<sup>5</sup> To then coin the 1492 “discovery” as a time when the “first European” arrived (despite the expeditions of the Norsemen) is plainly ethnocentric and racist because it denies the prior American Indian presence and possibility of *their* previous “discovery.”

The lands that come to be called the Americas were actually well known to “the millions of people who inhabited them and who had discovered them on behalf of the human species tens of thousands of years before.”<sup>6</sup> Many indigenous peoples, past and present, whose lands and ancestors were said to have been “discovered,” outrightly reject this legal claim on the very grounds of a previous ancestral presence that dates back “since time immemorial.” The acknowledgement by numerous individuals, organizations

---

<sup>5</sup>David Stannard points out that among scholars today it is undoubtedly recognized that “numerous complex human communities existed in South America at least 13,000 years ago and in North America at least 6000 years before that. These are absolute minimums. Very recent and compelling archaeological evidence puts the date for earliest human habitation in Chile at 32,000 B.C. or earlier and North American habitation at around 40,000 B.C., while some highly respected scholars contend that the actual first date of human entry into the hemisphere may have been closer to 70,000 B.C.,” in Stannard, *American Holocaust: The Conquest of the New World*, New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992, p. 10.

<sup>6</sup>Kirkpatrick Sale, *The Conquest of Paradise: Christopher Columbus and the Columbian Legacy*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1990, p. 69.



and international bodies of law that recognize indigenous peoples as *first peoples* directly contradict the possibility of a European “discovery.” Luis Rivera expands on the inanity of attributing the concept to lands already inhabited: “To speak of a discovery, in an absolute and transcendental sense, would imply the absence of a prior human and cultural history in the newfound lands. This is absurd and reveals a deep-rooted and anachronistic ethnocentrism.”<sup>7</sup> Therefore, most importantly, attributing “discovery” to lands inhabited by indigenous peoples is legally and morally groundless. We will expand on this point in the next section as we see that the validity of the “discovery” theory is based upon Christian supremacy over other beliefs and religions. Indeed, the concept of “discovery” as inscribed in the 15<sup>th</sup> century papal bulls was based on Christian dominion, which called for the subjugation of non-Christian peoples and confiscation of their lands.<sup>8</sup>

The second reason why “discovery” is an impossibility in reference to the Americas is predicated on O’Gorman’s theory that European explorers who had supposedly “discovered” a hemispheric land base *did not know of its prior existence*. For O’Gorman, discovery requires the discoverer to be previously knowledgeable of the nature or existence of that which is found.<sup>9</sup> Both Columbus and Vespucci believed they had reached *Asia* on their voyages, and Columbus insisted on this view up until his death in 1506. O’Gorman writes the most important problem concerning this history, or “the history of America,” is explaining how “America” appeared on the historical scene. The

---

<sup>7</sup>Luis N. Rivera, *A Violent Evangelism: The Political and Religious Conquest of the Americas*, Translated by Westminster/John Knox Press, Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992, p. 4.

<sup>8</sup>Steven T. Newcomb, “The Evidence of Christian Nationalism in Federal Indian Law: The Doctrine of Discovery, *Johnson v. McIntosh*, and Plenary Power,” *Review of Law and Social Change*, New York: New York University, 1993, pp. 309-310.

dominant scholarly interpretation in the past has been that it was “discovered” one day in October of 1492, on an island Columbus believed to be in the vicinity of Japan.<sup>10</sup> However, instead of concentrating on the history of the “discovery of America,” O’Gorman’s work focuses on the *idea that America had been discovered*. He found the logical conclusion of this *idea* “implies a *reductio ad absurdum*, and, therefore, that it is an inadequate way to understand the historical reality which it attempts to explain.”<sup>11</sup> He thus asks, since Columbus was actually not responsible for the belief that America had been “discovered,” where did it come from?

First, O’Gorman disproves the wild rumor known as “the legend of the anonymous pilot,” where a pilot awashed on the shores of Quisqueya tells Columbus of unknown lands to the west. The story, said to have been told by some of the Spaniards who first settled on the Caribbean island, is important because it is used to conceal Columbus’ true motives and belief he had reached Asia. As it is revealed that the “discovery” of unknown lands also comprised an unknown continent, and in order “to maintain that Columbus had revealed the existence of such a continent, it was necessary to establish that he was previously aware of its existence; otherwise there would be no justification in attributing the ‘discovery’ to him.”<sup>12</sup> Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo’s *Sumario de la natural historia de las Indias* is apparently the first text where Columbus appears as the “discoverer,” published about thirty years after the said event. O’Gorman is

---

<sup>9</sup>O’Gorman, *The Invention of America*, p. 17.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., pp. 9-10.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 15.

able to infer from Oviedo's statement of Columbus' "discovery" "*as is notorious*" that Oviedo must have known of the legend of the unknown pilot<sup>13</sup> (emphasis added). Since he does not seem to believe that providing proof or justification is necessary to explain the event, O'Gorman determines "the reason must be that it was understood beforehand. He was merely dealing with an opinion which he had picked up and was passing on."<sup>14</sup> Regardless, the legend soon comes to be questioned and disputed by various writers, including Oviedo himself and Columbus' son, Ferdinand, and, while many continued to support the myth, it comes to lose any traces of credibility.

O'Gorman next dispels the most prominent attempt to justify the "discovery," i.e., the argument Columbus really knew where he was going and thus knew of the existence of a new continent. Ferdinand Columbus is the most ardent advocate of this view pointing out that the Admiral had basically drew such an inference through his own reading and observation, a stroke of genius according to him.<sup>15</sup> Bartolomé de Las Casas also comes to support this view but, most importantly for the friar, providence dictated that Columbus was bound to be the "discoverer" of America, what he termed a "divine feat."<sup>16</sup> Unlike Ferdinand, Las Casas does not seek to conceal the true motives of Columbus' voyages, providing direct evidence in his *Historia de Las Indias* of the Admiral's real objective

---

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 14.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 18.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., pp. 19-20.

and conviction he had reached Asiatic lands. It did not matter to him what Columbus thought or wanted to do, since “God” had inspired him to fulfill a “divine” plan.<sup>17</sup>

The evidence of Columbus’ intention to reach Asia and belief he had done so is clear. The Florentine scholar Paolo dal Pozzo Toscanelli’s thesis of a western route to India supported Marco Polo’s story.<sup>18</sup> Columbus received a copy of Toscanelli’s letter and chart of a “shorter route” to the east rather than the West African route the Portuguese had been pursuing. This convinced him he could sail westward and is referenced in his journals.<sup>19</sup> His *Lettera Rarissima* written to Ferdinand and Isabella on his fourth and final voyage insisted that “Cuba was part of the Chinese province of Mangi.”<sup>20</sup> And Bartholomew Columbus’ maps (c. 1503-1506) depict the belief surrounding the fourth voyage with the South American continent connected to southern Asia!<sup>21</sup> Nevertheless, despite the overwhelming evidence to the contrary, Ferdinand Columbus deliberately misleads the reader into thinking his father really knew of the circumstances regarding his location. Knowing full well the Admiral’s intentions, Ferdinand states some maliciously inferred that Columbus thought he had made it to Asia.<sup>22</sup> He seeks to credit him with something he knew was a lie:

---

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., pp. 20-21.

<sup>18</sup>A. Garcia, *History of the West Indies*, London: George G. Harrap & Co., 1965, p. 15.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid.

<sup>20</sup>O’Gorman, *The Invention of America*, p. 165.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., pp. 111-112; Composite of Bartolomé Columbus’ three sketch maps illustrated in O’Gorman, *The Invention of America*, (Plate VI).

<sup>22</sup>O’Gorman, *The Invention of America*, p. 18.

Ferdinand Columbus not only takes advantage of the current concealment of his father's true opinions, but deliberately fosters it with the hope of hiding them permanently, for there is no question that he was well aware of them. There are many reasons for assuming that such is the case; not the least is the fact that Ferdinand accompanied Columbus on his fourth voyage, when the Admiral, setting aside his previous hesitancy, convinced himself, finally and absolutely, that all the shores he had explored belonged to Asia. So much for the poorly understood and equivocal thesis of Ferdinand Columbus.<sup>23</sup>

However it was not until Martín Fernández de Navarrete published his *Collection* (1825-1837) when the ambiguities of the early chroniclers and unequivocal intentions of Columbus would once and for all be settled. Navarrete's work is based on the principal documents of Columbus' voyages that prove he had "no other objective than to reach Asia."<sup>24</sup> Subsequently, Washington Irving, Alexander von Humboldt and Samuel Morison further agreed the Admiral's goal and intention were specifically to reach Asia, yet they all (including Navarrete) managed in one way or another to rationalize Columbus as the "discoverer." According to O'Gorman, Morison's rationale for the "discovery" of the American continent is that it was purely by chance, an accident, since Columbus had no purpose of getting there nor the "faintest suspicion" of its being.<sup>25</sup> O'Gorman explains that this is the way the chance 1492 "discovery of America" is taught today, as the "irrefutable truth."<sup>26</sup> The extreme irony of the time is that neither Columbus nor anyone else, including the scholars, knew what had happened. Encouragingly, despite the fact that years later O'Gorman himself comes to believe that the invention is "the decisive and

---

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., pp. 18-19.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., p. 26.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., p. 35.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid.

irreversible step toward the fulfillment of the ecumenical program of Western culture . . .”<sup>27</sup> an increasing number of writers today openly acknowledge the impossibility of a European “discovery.” As Kirkpatrick Sale writes, “Whatever may have been in the Admiral’s mind . . . we can say with assurance that no such event as ‘discovery’ took place.”<sup>28</sup>

While Columbus evidently never let go of the relentless conviction that he had reached Asia, there was some skepticism of his assertions and the Crown “did not share his blind faith in the success of his enterprise.”<sup>29</sup> Indeed, it was not until Vespucci’s third voyage to *the Asiatic mainland* in 1501 and the writing of his famous letter *Mundus Novus* (1503?) when a whole “New World” became apparent. This “New World” view contrasted from the dominant European belief in the “one world” theory called *Orbis Terrarum*, or the “Island of the Earth” extending from the western coast of Europe to the Far East, including Africa.<sup>30</sup> As Vespucci explored the eastern shores of the Asiatic coast (Brazil) seeking a passageway leading to the Indian Ocean, the fleet continued to traverse endlessly south near the region of the Antarctic Circle.<sup>31</sup> Extremely confused and apparently still thinking they had found the Indian passage at the end of the Asiatic peninsula (the mouth of the Río Jordán),<sup>32</sup> Vespucci headed back to Portugal.

---

<sup>27</sup>Edmundo O’Gorman, in Rivera, *A Violent Evangelism*, p. 5.

<sup>28</sup>Sale, *The Conquest of Paradise*, p. 69.

<sup>29</sup>O’Gorman, *The Invention of America*, p. 76.

<sup>30</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 113-114.

<sup>31</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 108-109.

<sup>32</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 109, 164.

However upon further thought and analysis, yet apparent continued uncertainty, Vespucci composed *Mundus Novus*.<sup>33</sup> His justifications for the “New World” theory were that: 1) nobody knew beforehand of the existence of these lands; 2) the Southern Hemisphere, which was commonly thought to only consist of ocean, comprised a land mass; and 3) the lands were inhabited, contradicting the heretical view of Christian authorities that no worlds other than *Orbis Terrarum* could possibly be inhabited.<sup>34</sup> Though hypothetical in nature, Vespucci proposed an inhabited geographic entity in the Southern Hemisphere separate from the *Orbis Terrarum*. Still, it was not until 1507 when the celebrated *Cosmographiae Introductio* was published and Martin Waldseemüller printed his famed world map that meaning was provided for Europeans to the being which was found, the map depicted with a separate land mass with the name “America” on it.<sup>35</sup> The name ironically comes about years after its 1492 “discovery,” a name that is not altogether foreign to the continent it attempts to define,<sup>36</sup> and dedicated to an explorer who was not previously aware of the nature or being of that which was *found*. As O’Gorman concludes, this is the basic process in which the chance “discovery of America” came to be:

The time has now come to answer the question with which our inquiry began. We asked whether or not the idea that the American continent was ‘discovered’ was acceptable as a satisfactory way of explaining its

---

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., pp. 112-113.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., pp. 113-114.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., pp. 122-123.

<sup>36</sup>It should be noted that the word “*Amerrique*” is the name of a mountain range in Nicaragua, and “used by early explorers for the newly discovered lands,” in Webster’s *New World Dictionary*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, 1994, p. 44. This seems to call into question the origin of the name “America” as first used in reference to the Southern Hemisphere, and later applied to the entire Western Hemisphere.

appearance on the historical scene of Western culture. We may now answer that it is not satisfactory, because this interpretation does not account adequately for the facts that it interprets; it reduces itself to an absurdity when it reaches the limits of its logical possibilities.<sup>37</sup>

### **Papal Bulls and Encomienda**

Jiqui was a young Indian warrior who had been captured after stabbing a guard in the leg while attempting to escape the *encomienda*. The *encomienda* system, or “apportioning” of land and people, was meant to entrust the care of the Carib people for Christian conversion in exchange for free labor, or “tribute.” In reality, it was a brutal system of forced or institutional slavery. The idea was originally conceived of by Columbus and formalized by Fray Juan de Ovando,<sup>38</sup> the one who murdered the *cacica* Anacaona at her banquet and burned our people in groups of thirteen in celebration of Christ and the twelve apostles.<sup>39</sup> The system was informally imposed with the implementation of the early *repartimientos* (like *encomiendas*; meaning “to divide”), which were a response to the first Indian battles in Quisqueya in 1495 and ostensibly a way to “settle” the population for evangelization.<sup>40</sup> The *encomienda* “granted to specific conquistadors the right to use Indians as laborers in the farms and mines, on sea and anywhere,” and followed the Admiral’s thought that “in return for their labor, the Spanish masters would Christianize the Indians.”<sup>41</sup>

---

<sup>37</sup>O’Gorman, *The Invention of America*, p. 45.

<sup>38</sup>Guaikán and Bartolomé de Las Casas, in José Barreiro, *The Indian Chronicles*, Houston: Arte Público Press, 1993, pp. 86-87.

<sup>39</sup>Guaikán, in Barreiro, *The Indian Chronicles*, p. 83.

<sup>40</sup>Barreiro, *The Indian Chronicles*, p. 86-88.

<sup>41</sup>Guaikán, in Barreiro, *The Indian Chronicles*, p. 86.



Labeled a “heathen” rebel for cutting a Christian, Jiqui’s sentence for trying to escape would be cuts across the back of his calves, an attack by two mastiff dogs, and the slow roasting of his body over a fire.<sup>42</sup> Many townspeople had gathered in the square on that hot afternoon in Santo Domingo, including women, children, and the many Carib brought in to witness the execution as an example to them. Las Casas and Guaikán (Diego Colón) were also there to see what had already been taking place in Quisqueya for years. Guaikán recalls the guard had the honor of first cutting two deep slits across the calves of Jiqui, who in the Spanish custom had been well fed beforehand, followed by the dogs:

Mastiffs of war, they sniffed blood excitedly and lunged for Jiqui’s bloody calves. The handlers held the dogs up on hind legs inches away from the calves. I wished to yell my love to the boy, but was silent. Next to me, I could tell the good friar was praying. At a signal from the marshall, the mastiffs were allowed close enough to lick the blood with their extended tongues, snarling up on hind feet. At a second signal, they tore in, one on each calf, tearing flesh in sharp bites as Jiqui yelled and yelled and yelled.

The dogs were yanked away when they bit into bone. The two balls of the calves were gone. Two men with hot irons burned into the cavities left by the mastiffs and Jiqui slumped as if dead, but his eyes stayed open. Jiqui was untied and lashed by wrist and ankles to a thick iron bar, which was propped between two Y poles with dry brush gathered underneath. He was washed with water and, as he did move his head, he was made to drink copious amounts of it. Then the fire was started.

All watched intently. Jiqui dangled by hands and feet six feet over the fire. His back blackened slowly, his hair singed and the horrible smell hung like a mist throughout the square. The sun grew intensely hot and you could feel the heat of the fire itself. He groaned for two hours before he expired, but no one left the square. Many Indians, including myself, cried quietly for Jiqui as he burned, and among the women in the slave group I did hear the hummed refrains of our areito song of death, to accompany the separation of the goeiç from the body and the birth of the opia. Poor boy, I

---

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., p. 82.

felt, how happy he might have been but for the existence of the Castilla on our lands!<sup>43</sup>

Many have said the conquistadors in the Americas often “acted on their own,” were “out of control,” and had not followed the “true word” of Christ. While they were undoubtedly out of control, they were *not* acting on their own. Despite apologists like Demetrio Ramos, who in 1984 insisted the Spanish Crown did not initially come to conquer,<sup>44</sup> the Crown, in every instance, “endorsed the *fait accompli* of these armed territorial acquisitions.”<sup>45</sup> However, things may have very well been different if the carnage and genocide had not been imposed and sanctioned from the very beginning by the Roman Catholic Church. Many have also attempted over the years to pardon the church by separating its theological doctrines from the actions of its members. For indigenous peoples, however, there is a fine line between theory and practice. What is professed in words and documents has often meant nothing in practice. When Pope Paul III issued the papal bull *Sublimis Deus* in 1537, which, according to Gustavo Gutiérrez, is regarded as “the most important papal pronouncement on the human condition of the Indians,”<sup>46</sup> one wonders about the enforcement mechanisms and practical consequences of such a decree since, if it had carried any juridical weight, there would be no need for an account of those declared to be “extinct,” nor for the tens of millions of indigenous

---

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., p. 83.

<sup>44</sup>Rivera, *A Violent Evangelism*, p. 13.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid.

<sup>46</sup>Gustavo Gutiérrez, *Las Casas: In Search of the Poor of Jesus Christ*, Translated by Robert R. Barr, Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1993, p. 302.

peoples who had been eliminated by the end of the 16th century!<sup>47</sup> Las Casas participated in and his work influenced the implementation of *Sublimis Deus*.<sup>48</sup> Despite his flaws, including his initial advocacy for the introduction of African slavery (which he came to regret), and his relentless belief in the “benefits” of Christian evangelization, Las Casas was one of the very few who staunchly advocated for and supported indigenous peoples, and his work is vital to us today. Yet, in commenting in a note to him in 1546 on the atrocities taking place in México and Peru, and how the “New Laws” of 1542 that had prohibited Indian slavery and banned the *encomienda* had been revoked,<sup>49</sup> Guaikán remarked on a very real contradiction of the times: “Oahh, guatiao Las Casas, everything you do is good and yet does nothing!”<sup>50</sup>

On his second voyage to the Caribbean in 1493, Columbus was well equipped with seventeen warships and juridically armed with four papal bulls, the bulls of Alexander VI (Rodrigo Borgia). He later noted in a letter to the Catholic monarchs in

---

<sup>47</sup>Based on total hemispheric counts, it has been estimated that between 60 to 80 million indigenous peoples in the Antilles and Central and South America had been killed by this time, in Stannard, *American Holocaust*, pp. 95, 305-306. Regarding early indigenous population totals for the hemisphere, Lenore A. Stiffarm with Phil Lane, Jr. write, “By the early 1960s, California anthropologists Woodrow W. Borah, Leslie B. Simpson, and Sherburn F. Cook had completed long and excruciatingly detailed analyses--focusing on anthropological evidence and known agricultural techniques, region by region--of pre-Columbian hemispheric demography which led them to project a hemispheric total of some 100 million at the point of first contact. They were joined by Henry F. Dobyns who, working independently and employing somewhat different techniques, arrived at a ‘tentative’ hemispheric estimate of ninety to 112 million, with about 12.5 million people living north of the Río Grande in the year 1500,” in Stiffarm with Lane, Jr., “The Demography of Native North America: A Question of Indian Survival,” in M. Annette Jaimes, ed., *The State of Native America: Genocide, Colonization, and Resistance*, Boston: South End Press, 1992, pp. 25-26.

<sup>48</sup>Gutiérrez, *Las Casas*, p. 302.

<sup>49</sup>Lewis Hanke confirms that in 1545 Charles V revoked the virtual prohibition of the *encomienda* system as stipulated in the “New Laws.” He notes how Las Casas reacted “with horror” when he learned that some of the laws he had worked so hard for had been repealed, in Hanke, *Aristotle and the American Indians: A Study in Race Prejudice in the Modern World*, London: Hollis & Carter, 1959, pp. 29, 72.

<sup>50</sup>Guaikán, in Barreiro, *The Indian Chronicles*, p. 294.

Spain how he had truly come “to conquer.” He writes: “Illustrious Princes: When I came here I brought many people for the conquest of these lands . . . and I stated clearly that I came to conquer.”<sup>51</sup> Of course he was merely reflecting back to the king and queen what *they* had originally commanded him to do before departing on his first voyage: “Our will is, That you, *Christopher Columbus*, after discovering and conquering the said Islands and Continent in the said ocean, or any of them, shall be our Admiral of the said Islands and Continent you shall so discover and conquer.”<sup>52</sup>

The most important of the four papal edicts possessed by Columbus was the bull *Inter Caetera* of May 4, 1493. This decree basically restated the imperial sentiment of the bull *Inter Caetera* of May 3, but added to it a demarcation line from the Arctic to Antarctic poles, 100 leagues west of the Azores and Cape Verde Islands, granting to Castile “the exclusive right to acquire territorial possessions and to trade in all the lands west of that line, which at Christmas, 1492, were not in the possession of any Christian prince.”<sup>53</sup> Territories not in the possession of any Christian prince west of the demarcation line referred to “all their dominions, cities, camps, places, and villages, and all rights, jurisdictions, and appurtenances, all islands and mainlands found and to be found, discovered and to be discovered . . .”<sup>54</sup> “Discovery” and Christian domination went hand-in-hand as Columbus seized on the opportunity to claim all lands possible.

---

<sup>51</sup>Passage of letter (1499), translated and cited in Rivera, *A Violent Evangelism*, pp. 12-13.

<sup>52</sup>Letter from Ferdinand and Isabella to Columbus, “Privileges and Prerogatives Granted to Columbus,” April 30, 1492, in Henry Steele Commager, ed., *Documents of American History*, (8th edition), New York: Appleton Century Crofts, 1968, p. 1.

<sup>53</sup>Frances Gardiner Davenport, ed., *European Treaties bearing on the History of the United States and its Dependencies to 1648*, Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1917, p. 71.

<sup>54</sup>The Bull *Inter Caetera* (Alexander VI), May 4, 1493, in Davenport, ed., *European Treaties*, p. 77.

Since the indigenous peoples present were obviously not Christians, Indian lands were thus seen as “unoccupied,” “vacant,” or “*terra nullius*,” the origin of the concept established in Roman law.<sup>55</sup> After Portugal protested what it saw as Spain’s unfair territorial advantage as granted in *Inter Caetera*, the Treaty of Tordesillas signed between the two powers in 1494 shifted the demarcation line to 370 leagues west from the original 100 league mark.<sup>56</sup> This is how Portugal came to claim Brazil.<sup>57</sup> Both countries apparently considered that the new line established “passed around the earth.”<sup>58</sup>

*Inter Caetera* was issued in keeping with a papist tradition of religious conquest since the time of the Crusades. In the 13th century, King Alfonso X incorporated into Castilian law the *Las siete partidas* (Seven divisions of law), one division explicitly referring in part to the monarchical granting of political and territorial jurisdiction by “papal or imperial donation.”<sup>59</sup> This “right of donation” came to influence the granting of numerous 15th century bulls, most profoundly the bulls of Alexander VI. *Inter Caetera* was further strongly impacted by the ideology of prior papal decrees. Regarding Portugal’s colonization of Africa, Pope Nicolas V confirmed the powers of the 1452 bull *Dum Diversas* when he instructed King Alfonso V in the 1455 bull *Romanus Pontifex* “to invade, search out, capture, vanquish, and subdue all Saracens and pagans whatsoever, and other enemies of Christ wheresoever placed . . . to reduce their persons to perpetual

---

<sup>55</sup>Franke Wilmer, *The Indigenous Voice in World Politics: Since Time Immemorial*, Newbury Park/London/New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1993, p. 173.

<sup>56</sup>Davenport, ed., *European Treaties*, p. 84-85.

<sup>57</sup>Commager, ed., *Documents of American History*, p. 4.

<sup>58</sup>Davenport, ed., *European Treaties*, p. 2.

<sup>59</sup>Rivera, *A Violent Evangelism*, p. 28.

slavery, and to apply and appropriate to himself and his successors the kingdoms, dukedoms, counties, principalities, dominions, possessions, and goods, and to convert them to his and their use and profit . . .”<sup>60</sup> Non-Christians were thus essentially viewed as “subhuman” and therefore expendable. These papal decrees along with others such as *Dudum cum ad nos* (1436), *Rex Regum* (1443), *Inter Caetera* (1456), and *Aeterni Regis* (1481) were the formal precedent for the 1493 Alexandrian bulls.<sup>61</sup>

In *A Violent Evangelism*, Louis Rivera points out the unprecedented intensity of the theological debates taking place in Spain during its 16<sup>th</sup> century expansion. He writes, “Those debates caused the ethical conscience of Spain to argue forcibly for a century over the justice of the military conquest of the native peoples in the New World . . .”<sup>62</sup> While there was strong resistance to this view as elaborated on below, “ethical conscience” here usually referred to the many scholars such as Hostiensis and Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda, who used “God,” Christian theology and “natural slavery” to justify conquest. Rivera stresses that while the conquistadors were motivated by desire for “God, gold, and glory,” the word of God or theology was the primary rationale for their avarice and ambition. It was not the other way around, but “religion that attempted to sacralize political dominion and economic exploitation.”<sup>63</sup> Stuart Hall confirms that Christendom ultimately regulated political, economic and social life during the early colonial era:

---

<sup>60</sup>The Bull *Romanus Pontifex* (Nicholas V), January 8, 1455, in Davenport, ed., *European Treaties*, pp. 12, 23.

<sup>61</sup>Rivera, *A Violent Evangelism*, p. 28.

<sup>62</sup>*Ibid.*, p. xiv.

<sup>63</sup>*Ibid.*, p. xv.

Political and class struggles, economic life and even wars were, to a degree, regulated by an unseen hand, not Adam Smith's but Jesus Christ's. . . . The community depended on the general recognition of norms regarding property rights and free exchange. These were guaranteed by a mixture of local customs and privileges, some judicial regulation by weak states, but above all by the common social identity provided by Christendom. . . .<sup>64</sup>

Jurists and theologians like Juan López de Palacios Rubios and Fray Matías de Paz met in Burgos in 1512 to discuss and further justify the legality of Spanish dominion in the Americas and form of “servitude” (or conversion) to be imposed on the Indian inhabitants.<sup>65</sup> Palacios Rubios, who apparently authored the *requerimiento* of 1513, believed the grant of Pope Alexander VI affirmed the Supreme Pontiff's spiritual and temporal powers as successor of Saint Peter and vicar of Christ and, thus, allowed the pope maximum authority and jurisdiction over both the “faithful” and “infidels.”<sup>66</sup> It had become necessary to Spanish scholars to somehow require (*requerimiento*) native peoples to “peacefully” consent to convert to Christianity. To this effect, Queen Isabella had issued an earlier royal decree in 1503 justifying the subjugation and enslavement of the Carib Indian people by authorizing war on them if they refused to convert.<sup>67</sup> Not surprisingly, the decree was usually read in Spanish and often from a distance. The *requerimiento* explicitly presents one of the first instances of the “just war” theory as applied in the Americas. The version quoted here is Oviedo's:

---

<sup>64</sup>Stuart Hall, “The West and the Rest: Discourse and Power,” in Stuart Hall, David Held, Don Hubert, and Kenneth Thompson, eds., *Modernity: An Introduction to Modern Societies*, Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell Publishers, 1996, p. 199.

<sup>65</sup>Rivera, *A Violent Evangelism*, p. 38.

<sup>66</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>67</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 33.

I beg and require of you . . . to recognize the church as lady and superior of the universe and to acknowledge the Supreme Pontiff, called pope, in her name, and the king and queen . . . as lords and superiors . . . by virtue of said donation; and consent to have these religious fathers declare and preach these things to you. If you do so, you will be acting well, and those who are over you and to whom you owe obedience, and Their Highnesses and I [whosoever leads the Spanish expedition in question] in their name would welcome you with love and charity.

If you do not do it . . . then with the help of God I will undertake powerful action against you. I will make war on you everywhere and in every way that I can. I will subject you to the yoke and obedience of the church and of Their Highnesses. I will take you personally and your wives and children, and make slaves of you, and as such sell you off . . . and I will take away your property and cause you all the evil and harm I can.<sup>68</sup>

In sharp contrast to these views, Pope Innocent IV had upheld the temporal authority of “infidels” in the 13th century where “all rational creatures, not only Christians, could legitimately own property and exercise political authority. Furthermore, all men have the right to select their own rulers. The pope does not have the right to deprive a non-Christian ruler of his office.”<sup>69</sup> Paul Gottschalk also writes that the Spanish theologian Francisco de Vitoria and Hugo Grotius, both considered founders of modern international law, rejected the “papal donation” theory and “partition” of the world, stating to the effect that the pope “could neither dispossess the Indians of their property nor donate property which he had never owned . . .”<sup>70</sup> Vitoria articulated a system he saw as not only morally absurd, but legally unjust. He rejected the basic tenet of the *requerimiento*, which posed that it was just to wage war against Indian people as a

---

<sup>68</sup>Oviedo, in Rivera, *A Violent Evangelism*, p. 34.

<sup>69</sup>James Muldoon, “Extra Ecclesiam non est imperium: The Canonists and the Legitimacy of Secular Power,” *Studia Gratiana IX*, Bononiae: Institutum Iuridum Universita, 1966, pp. 573-574.



preliminary to their conversion. Lewis Hanke states Vitoria's basic arguments including his rebuttal to the idea of Spain's claim of title to all Indian lands:

First, he appears to have been the first Spaniard to assert that the papal grant had no temporal value. Secondly, he emphasized the fact that certain titles were illegitimate and these he specified in detail. The emperor, he stated, was not the lord of the whole world and neither was the pope, who had no temporal power over the Indians or over other unbelievers. A refusal by the Indians to recognize any dominion of the pope is no reason for making war on them or for seizing their goods, nor are they bound to hearken to the faith. Even if the emperor were the lord of the whole world, that would not entitle him to seize the Indian provinces, erect new lords, or levy taxes.<sup>71</sup>

Furthermore, the indigenous peoples themselves condemned the granting of *Inter Caetera*. According to A. Garcia, the Indian people who had been taken to Cartagena commented, "The Pope must have been mad when he did so, for he was giving what was not his."<sup>72</sup> Writing in 1519, Martin Fernández de Enciso explained in his *Suma de geografía* how the Indian people of the province of Cenú reacted to the reading of the *requerimiento* based on the papal bull:

They answered me that regarding what it said about there being only one God who governed heaven and earth and who was lord of all, that seemed fine to them, but in so far as what it said about the pope being lord of the universe in God's place, and that he donated the land to the king of Castilla, they said the pope must have been drunk when he did that because he gave what was not his to give, and that the king who asked for and took the grant must have been crazy because he asked for what belonged to others, and that he should go there to take it so they could hang his head from a stick as they had hung other heads . . . belonging to

---

<sup>70</sup>Paul Gottschalk, in Paul Gottschalk, ed., *The Earliest Diplomatic Documents on America: The Papal Bulls of 1493 and the Treaty of Tordesillas Reproduced and Translated*, Berlin: Paul Gottschalk, 1927, p. 15.

<sup>71</sup>Lewis Hanke, *The Spanish Struggle for Justice in the Conquest of the America*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1949, p. 151.

<sup>72</sup>Indian comment quoted in Garcia, *History of the West Indies*, p. 23.

their enemies . . . and they said that they were lords of their land and did not need another lord.<sup>73</sup>

As Jiqui had attempted to escape the *encomienda*, the Carib naturally resisted a system they believed to be grossly inhumane, unjust, and a violation of their own laws and custom. They did not willingly consent to such a proposition as the *requerimiento*, where Christian conversion amounted to cultural genocide, or the stripping of a people's will and desire to live. As indigenous peoples have asserted for decades within the international community, and Canadian researchers Mark Davis and Robert Zannis sum up succinctly, "One should not speak lightly of 'cultural genocide' as if it were a fanciful invention. . . . The cultural mode of group extermination is genocide, a crime. Nor should 'cultural genocide' be used in the game: 'Which is more horrible, to kill and torture; or remove [the prime cultural symbol which is] the will and reason to live?' *Both* are horrible."<sup>74</sup> Indeed, the option presented to the Carib was either to be stripped of their cultural soul, or die. Many preferred the latter, which helps to explain the high rate of suicide among our ancestors at that time. On the contrary, as we will see in the next chapter particularly in relation to Borikén, Christianity was also adopted as a survival strategy. In any event, the rejection of Christianity obviously had its consequences as Rivera points out: "the rejection of Christian preaching converted them, ipso facto, into rebels against the faith, into provokers of a grave offense against God and the cause of the

---

<sup>73</sup>Martin Fernández de Enciso, in Rivera, *A Violent Evangelism*, p. 36.

<sup>74</sup>Mark Davis and Robert Zannis, in Ward Churchill, *From a Native Son: Selected Essays in Indigenism, 1985-1995*, Boston: South End Press, 1996, p. 321.

just war against them, the confiscation of their property, and their possible enslavement.”<sup>75</sup>

The Spanish debates generally revolved around the legal and moral legitimacy of the Alexandrian bulls, in which Spanish theologians steadfastly maintained the ecclesiastical authority of the decrees.<sup>76</sup> The principal issue addressed during the “great debate” between Las Casas and Sepúlveda at Valladolid in 1550-1551 concerned the validity of the application of the “just war” theory. Las Casas’ central argument, as it had been for years, was to “convert the Indians by peaceful means alone and they will afterwards become faithful Spanish subjects.”<sup>77</sup> Sepúlveda’s *Machiavellian* approach to the matter relied on the Aristotelian “doctrine of natural slavery.” For the first time in modern history, Sepúlveda attempted to brand a whole race of people as “inferior.”<sup>78</sup> Hanke explains that “Sepúlveda made plain in his treatise, despite its complex and often confusing argument, that he considered the Indians to be natural slaves according to Aristotelian concept and the Spaniards amply justified in carrying on war against them as an indispensable preliminary to Christianizing them.”<sup>79</sup> Here the theory of “natural slavery” is used as a means of conversion through the “just war” theory, which as applied in the Americas is ultimately based upon the concept of “discovery.” Las Casas also attacked the Aristotelian doctrine by arguing, for one, that as natural law pertained to all

---

<sup>75</sup>Rivera, *A Violent Evangelism*, p. 34.

<sup>76</sup>Hanke, *Aristotle and the American Indians*, p. 31.

<sup>77</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 33.

<sup>78</sup>*Ibid.*, p. x.

<sup>79</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 72-73.

human beings so too did it apply Amerindians.<sup>80</sup> Nonetheless, the debate ended in a stalemate with the judges reaching no collective decision.<sup>81</sup> Las Casas later stated he had succeeded; yet, “unfortunately for the Indians the measures decreed by the Council [the judges at Valladolid] were not well executed”<sup>82</sup> (emphasis added). Sepúlveda thought all but one of the judges had agreed with his ideas.<sup>83</sup> Both would go on to enhance, author and gain support for their various treaties.

Regarding the Alexandrian bulls of “donation,” Sepúlveda wrote another treatise at about the same time of the Valladolid debate entitled, “Against those who depreciate or contradict the bull and decree of Pope Alexander VI which gives the Catholic kings and their successors authority to conquer the Indies and subject those barbarians, and by this means convert them to the Christian religion and submit them to their empire and jurisdiction.”<sup>84</sup> The treatise affirmed the dominant attitude of the time and how the ideology of Christian supremacy and dominion would continue to be carried out in practice primarily through the *encomienda* system. The *encomienda*, which Franciscan Gerónimo de Mendieta described as “harsh slavery,” “what the devil promotes for

---

<sup>80</sup>Timothy J. Christian, “Introduction,” in L.C. Green and Olive P. Dickason, eds., *The Law of Nation and the New World*, Edmonton: The University of Alberta Press, 1989, p. xi.

<sup>81</sup>Hanke, *Aristotle and the American Indians*, p. 74.

<sup>82</sup>Las Casas, in Hanke, *Aristotle and the American Indians*, p. 74.

<sup>83</sup>Hanke, *Aristotle and the American Indians*, p. 74.

<sup>84</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 40.

perdition,” and “the main and most harmful offense [and contrary] to Christianity,”<sup>85</sup> was not abolished until the 18th century!

Finally, there is an important observation needed to be made here. Throughout all of the debates of the 16th century, no theologians, scholars, government officials or movements appear to have come forward to support *the right of the Indian people to maintain their own philosophical or religious belief, or their right of self-determination*.<sup>86</sup> The only solution to the “pagan problem” was through “peaceful conversion” or “by force.” Sepúlveda believed that “the great mass of Indians would never voluntarily give up their own religion.”<sup>87</sup> He was absolutely correct. Why would the Carib, Maya or Inca have surrendered their belief systems and laws when they had already been living quite well for thousands of years? For the indigenous peoples of Borikén, it must have been difficult “to throw their traditional beliefs out the window and embrace an unknown religion—especially since its preachers had the intention of overthrowing the sovereignty of the country of the future converts.”<sup>88</sup> Whether through peace or by force, the Christian conversion project based on “discovery” was without a doubt legally and morally unjust to the indigenous peoples concerned (and a few scholars of the time) because it posited a

---

<sup>85</sup>Gerónimo de Mendieta, *Historia eclesiástica indiana*, (1596), 3rd facsimile, ed., México, D.F.: Editorial Porrúa, 1980, pp. 37-38, 519-529, in Rivera, *A Violent Evangelism*, pp. 122-123.

<sup>86</sup>According to Manuel Giménez-Fernández, “during the whole unfolding of the political domination of the Indies by Spain, there is not one single ideological movement intended to reform Spain’s established legitimacy, nor the direction of the governance of the Indies by the State, that in various ways does not allege the historical fact of Alexander’s letters in respect to the Indies to support its thesis, interpreting them in the light of its own conceptions,” Giménez Fernández, *Nuevas consideraciones sobre la historia, sentido y valor de las bulas alejandrinas de 1493 referentes a las Indias*, Sevilla: Escuela de Estudios Hispano-Americanos de la Universidad de Sevilla, 1944, p. 142, in Rivera, *A Violent Evangelism*, p. 31.

<sup>87</sup>Hanke, *Aristotle and the American Indians*, p. 60.

<sup>88</sup>Loida Figueroa Mercado, *History of Puerto Rico: From the Beginning to 1892*, New York: L.A. Publishing Company Inc., 1970?, pp. 59-60.

belief in the “moral superiority” of the Christian faith over “idolatrous” native belief systems, and, in turn, used this rationale to subjugate non-Christian peoples and *seize possession of their property*. The very basis for the “legality” of Spanish sovereignty in the Americas was continually reinforced through this rationale. As Rivera notes, the *natural right* of Indian self-determination was grossly violated in the process: “From this perspective, the act of taking possession of the indigenous peoples, of expropriating their lands, goods, and persons, violating their autonomy and self-determination, goes against all law and justice.”<sup>89</sup>

To conclude, the conquistadors in the Americas were not acting on their own. They were merely fulfilling a “civilizing” mission that had been dictated to them from the top. They were following orders! We can now see how the rationale for religious and military conquest initiated by Columbus and the Spanish Crown had been sanctioned at every stage by the Roman Catholic Church. While the Carib resisted and did not willingly consent to conversion, the large majority of Christian theologians and scholars continually justified in doctrine the primary message of the bulls, i.e., lands and peoples “discovered and to be discovered” were ultimately subject to Christian dominion. Whatever the “true word” of Christ might have been, an intricate web of cooperation between the Papacy, Crown, theologians and conquistadors resulted in untold human misery, the 16th century witnessing “the greatest genocide in human history.”<sup>90</sup> Like the gas chambers of Nazi Germany, the *encomienda* Jiqui was subject to was an

---

<sup>89</sup>Rivera, *A Violent Evangelism*, pp. 65-66.

<sup>90</sup>Tzvetan Todorov, *The Conquest of America: The Question of the Other*, New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1984, p. 5.

institutionalized system of terror and extermination. The Vatican and Crown have yet to directly address or come to terms with this holocaust, the *American Holocaust*.

### **The “Doctrine of Discovery”**

The discovery doctrine, rather than being a ‘doctrine’ as such, was more akin to a set of customary rules that guided the conduct of the nations of Western Europe as they endeavored to locate and to appropriate non-Christian lands. During the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, law and religion were not clearly divided. Fundamentally, the discovery doctrine merely reflected aspects of Christian theology that became militaristic policy toward unconverted peoples and their territories. The discovery doctrine was predicated on the belief that one day all the lands of the earth would be placed under Christian sovereignty and dominion.<sup>91</sup>

By the early 20th century, it had often been said that the demarcation of the world as built into the bull *Inter Caetera* was the “foundation-stone” of the modern international system of law and colonial system of the time.<sup>92</sup> Gottschalk noted back then that *Inter Caetera* and Treaty of Tordesillas “still speak” the language and show the cultural influence of the first “discoverers.”<sup>93</sup> For the Spanish Crown, the juridical power of the Alexandrian bulls as stated in the 1680 “Compilation of the *Leyes de Indies*” continued to maintain its status as the “first foundation” for the perpetual possession of the Americas.<sup>94</sup> For what would become the “United States,” it is acknowledged that several of the treaties between European nations, and “several of the bulls issued by the popes in virtue of their powers of international regulation,” are fundamental to early parts of

---

<sup>91</sup>Newcomb, “The Evidence of Christian Nationalism in Federal Indian Law,” p. 335.

<sup>92</sup>Gottschalk, in Gottschalk, ed., *The Earliest Diplomatic Documents on America*, p. 15.

<sup>93</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>94</sup>Rivera, *A Violent Evangelism*, p. 32.

American history.<sup>95</sup> The papal grant was further used at the beginning of the 19th century to discredit the Latin American independence movement,<sup>96</sup> and Venezuela's claim against Guiana in 1894-1899 was made by virtue of the "great importance" of the bulls of Alexander VI.<sup>97</sup> Most importantly, the ideology of "discovery" as grounded in *Inter Caetera* came to form the basis of U.S. Federal Indian law, which is the law of the land pertaining to American Indian people today. This section of the chapter and the next will elaborate on how "discovery" and the bull *Inter Caetera* remained in force, despite its legal and moral flaws, through the so-called "doctrine of discovery."

Vine Deloria cites the debate at Valladolid and the scholarly writings of the English, French and Swiss in developing a theory or "new agreement" called the "doctrine of discovery." The agreement formed an integral part of international law for centuries, which afforded European nations "all of the advantages."<sup>98</sup> These advantages were often pursued and justified through what is known as the "law of nations." According to Emmerich De Vattel, "*The Law of Nations is the science of the rights which exist between Nations or States, and of the obligations corresponding to these rights.*"<sup>99</sup> Foundations of the rights of international law are found in Roman law, the very phrase

---

<sup>95</sup>J. Franklin Jameson, in Davenport, ed., *European Treaties*, p. iii.

<sup>96</sup>Rivera, *A Violent Evangelism*, p. 32.

<sup>97</sup>Gottschalk, in Gottschalk, ed., *The Earliest Diplomatic Documents on America*, p. 15.

<sup>98</sup>Vine Deloria, Jr., *Behind the Trail of Broken Treaties: An Indian Declaration of Independence*, New York: Delacorte Press, 1974, pp. 85-86.

<sup>99</sup>E. De Vattel, *The Law of Nations or the Principles of Natural Law: Applied to the Conduct and to the Affairs of Nations and of Sovereigns*, (1758), Translated by Charles G. Fenwick, Washington: Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1916, p. 3.



“law of nations” a literal translation of the Latin term “*jus gentium*.”<sup>100</sup> Further, the Greek concept of natural law (*jus naturale*) importantly influenced the Roman system of jurisprudence and notion of *jus gentium*, the two terms soon becoming synonymous.<sup>101</sup> It is of significance to mention here how Cicero’s concept of natural law, which includes the right to own property as referred to earlier by Las Casas and Rivera, would invariably apply to indigenous peoples, or “all peoples,” then as well as now. He writes:

There is in fact a true law namely right reason, which is in accordance with nature, applies to all men and is unchangeable and eternal. . . . It will not lay down one rule at Rome and another at Athens, nor will it be one rule today and another tomorrow. But there will be one law eternal and unchangeable binding at all times and upon all peoples.<sup>102</sup>

During the Middle Ages, however, the concept of natural law was profoundly impacted by Christian theology and became identified with the “law of God” as elaborated on by scholars such as Thomas Aquinas, thus acquiring “an authority far superior to that of man-made ordinances.”<sup>103</sup> Therefore, the rights of nations or states referred to in the law of nations during the “discovery era” came to primarily pertain to Christian European powers. Oscar Svarlien concludes that it was not until the 18th century when international law became “fully” elaborated and separated from its theological union.<sup>104</sup> In contrast, we will soon see how the distinction between the

---

<sup>100</sup>Oscar Svarlien, *An Introduction to the Law of Nations*, New York/Toronto/London: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1955, pp. 67-68.

<sup>101</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 68-69.

<sup>102</sup>Cicero, in Svarlien, *An Introduction to the Law of Nations*, pp. 435-436.

<sup>103</sup>Svarlien, *An Introduction to the Law of Nations*, p. 69.

<sup>104</sup>*Ibid.*

separation of church and state as related to the development of U.S. property law was really a fabrication in terms of international law.

As *treaties* and *custom* among nations or states are the primary sources that make up the laws of nations,<sup>105</sup> it is now apparent how the Treaty of Tordesillas based on the bull *Inter Caetera* became the foundation for subsequent treaties and custom related to the Americas, and, according to Deloria, was “the genesis of the doctrine of discovery.”<sup>106</sup> Thus, the concept of “discovery” applied to all lands occupied or unoccupied that were not in the possession of any Christian prince. While the demarcation line drawn by the Spanish and Portuguese was basically scorned and often violated by particularly the French, English and Dutch, “the line” remained the principal territorial mark in the numerous treaties and articles signed between the Iberian powers and other European nations until the mid-17th century.<sup>107</sup> Most notably, while the primary European powers did not exactly recognize Spain’s claim to “discovery” in the Americas, these nations ultimately used the “discovery” principle to carve up lands *for themselves* in their dealings with the indigenous peoples of the hemisphere. For example, Steven Newcomb points out how the Cabot charter imitates the language of the papal bulls:

The Cabot charter, issued to John Cabot and his sons in March of 1493 [1496] by King Henry VII of England, imitated the language of papal bulls, and gave Cabot the authorization to ‘seek out, discover, and find whatsoever islands, countries, regions or provinces of the heathens and infidels, whatsoever they be, and in what part of the world soever they be,

---

<sup>105</sup>Ibid., p. 65.

<sup>106</sup>Deloria, Jr., *Behind the Trail of Broken Treaties*, p. 88.

<sup>107</sup>See Davenport, ed., “Introduction,” *European Treaties*, pp. 1-8.

which before this time have been unknown to all Christians.’ Cabot was also instructed to ‘subdue, occupy and possess’ the discovered lands ‘as our vassals and lieutenants, getting unto us the rule, title, and jurisdiction of the same.’ Cabot was given this authority because it was ‘at that time accepted as a fundamental law of Christendom that all Christians were in a state of war with all infidels.’<sup>108</sup>

The application of the “doctrine of discovery” in North America is particularly relevant to the eventual formation of the United States of America. In the beginning, the English pilgrims were highly dependent on American Indian nations for their very survival. In the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century, “the Indian nations were the equal of any power on earth. The European nations scraped and bowed before the Indian chiefs, hoping for allies to insure the existence of their colonies. Without the Hurons, the French would have been unable to exist in North America, and the Iroquois enabled the English colonies to withstand the might of the French and their Indian allies.”<sup>109</sup> The first treaty made between the United States and an Indian nation (the Delaware) took place in 1778, which for one allowed American troops access through Delaware lands in order to fight the British.<sup>110</sup> Thus, one might wonder and ask how the peoples who once controlled and flourished off much of this vast land now comprise less than 1 percent of the total population? As the law of nations applied in theory to rights of “occupancy” recognizable to sovereign status,<sup>111</sup> how then were North American native peoples cleared off their

---

<sup>108</sup>Newcomb, “The Evidence of Christian Nationalism in Federal Indian Law,” p. 311.

<sup>109</sup>Deloria, Jr., *Behind the Trail of Broken Treaties*, p. 83.

<sup>110</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 118-119.

<sup>111</sup>Vattel writes, “Hence the Law of Nations will only recognize the *ownership* and *sovereignty* of a Nation over unoccupied lands when the Nation is in actual occupation of them, when it forms a settlement upon them, or makes some actual use of them,” in E. De Vattel, *The Law of Nations or the Principles of Natural Law*, p. 85.

lands? We will examine in the next section how the concept of “discovery” played a fundamental role here.

Finally, Deloria writes that the primary purpose of the caravan of indigenous peoples who converged in Washington, D.C. in 1972, known as the “Trail of Broken Treaties,” and the standoff at Wounded Knee the next year, was to address past treaty arrangements between Indian nations and the U.S. government, which many American Indians still considered to be legally binding.<sup>112</sup> The most important of the “Twenty Points” framework presented to the Nixon administration concerned: 1) the restoration of treaty-making powers as mandated under the U.S. Constitution, which in regard to Indian nations had been banned under the 1871 appropriations statute; and 2) the demand that “all Indians be governed by treaty relations.”<sup>113</sup> The acceptance of the Twenty Points would have accorded past Indian treaties their rightful legal status equivalent to the status of foreign treaties.<sup>114</sup>

In addition, shortly after the caravan arrived in Washington, a telegram was sent to the Vatican requesting the pope “to revoke the Proclamation of 1493, which divided the New World between Spain and Portugal and which was later used to justify the legal doctrine under which the United States held its claim to the lands of North America.”<sup>115</sup> This Proclamation was the May 4 bull *Inter Caetera*, as the Indian leadership had realized its paramount importance at this juncture of the American Indian movement. While the

---

<sup>112</sup>Deloria, Jr., *Behind the Trail of Broken Treaties*, p. 48-49.

<sup>113</sup>Ibid.

<sup>114</sup>Ibid., p. 53.

<sup>115</sup>Ibid., p. 58.

Twenty Points were ultimately rejected by the administration task force on the “vague grounds” of the Indian Citizenship Act of 1924, which, according to Deloria precluded that Indian people “happened to be United States citizens,”<sup>116</sup> the Indian movement had gained international coverage and support in its continued assertion of its right to self-determination and independence. We will now see how the “doctrine” referred to above was used by the U.S. Supreme Court to subvert the basic human rights of Native Americans.

### **U.S. Federal Indian Law**

The *Johnson v. McIntosh* decision of 1823 has long been recognized by many scholars as the unquestionable beginning of U.S. federal Indian law.<sup>117</sup> In this Supreme Court decision, Chief Justice John Marshall ruled that the United States could not recognize Indian title to lands that had been purchased by the plaintiffs from the Piankeshaw Indians in 1773 and 1775, thus ruling in favor of the defendant who held a land grant from the United States.<sup>118</sup> The decision articulated the U.S. theory of “aboriginal title” that came to define American domestic law and establish the federal government’s *plenary* power over Indian affairs.<sup>119</sup>

While “aboriginal title” or rights of “occupancy” came to be a legal concept within the Anglo-American judicial system, its origins are found in the 15<sup>th</sup> century

---

<sup>116</sup>Ibid., p. xii.

<sup>117</sup>Newcomb, “The Evidence of Christian Nationalism in Federal Indian Law,” p. 304.

<sup>118</sup>*Johnson v. McIntosh*, 21 U.S. (98 Wheat) 543, 1823, p. 543.

<sup>119</sup>Deloria, Jr., *Behind the Trail of Broken Treaties*, pp. 98-99.

European system of jurisprudence.<sup>120</sup> The Spaniards had acknowledged a form of “occupancy” rights as seen in the *encomienda* system. Deloria explains the English, in countering Puritan guilt in taking possession of another’s property, had to develop certain theories of justification to seize lands: “Obviously, to recognize the Indian title as sacred as the title of an English landowner would have left them in an untenable position: They would have been unable to purchase any land at all. To ignore the Indian would spell disaster. To escape the dilemma, they espoused different theories to justify the taking.”<sup>121</sup> In essence, the English reverted back to similar justifications the Spaniards used in *reducing* “occupancy” rights. The most obvious of these was Sepulveda’s “just war” theory of military superiority in removing Indian people as a class from laws applicable to them.<sup>122</sup> Like the Spaniards, Deloria shows how “discovery” and the justifications for conquest by the Puritans were ultimately approved of by “God”:

The Puritans needed not only justification, but approval from God; not surprisingly, they looked to the Scriptures for guidance. After careful examination, they found that not one right existed to the land but two, civil and theological, and both were ordained by God. The Bible provides that man must go forth and multiply; since man cannot multiply where there is no room, the discovery of a new continent was by divine revelation. America was obviously meant to be occupied by Christians fulfilling their deity’s command. While the right to ownership was not fully covered by this argument, legal title was of little concern; the issue was whether the Scriptures could provide guidance. While many leading colonists pointed out the absurdity of the argument, reason vanished before practical political realities of the day.<sup>123</sup>

---

<sup>120</sup>Ibid., p. 86.

<sup>121</sup>Ibid., p. 92.

<sup>122</sup>Ibid., pp. 92-93.

<sup>123</sup>Ibid., p. 93.

The need to “go forth and multiply” was an important rationale in reducing “occupancy” title. The Puritan work ethic, evolution of private property as “fundamental to the civilization of man,” and the role of the farmer as paramount to the traditional role of indigenous peoples as hunters and gatherers, seemed to be “common-sense explanation[s] of the universal laws of nature” to the average colonist.<sup>124</sup> The ascendancy of the farmer over the hunter and grazer was clearly advanced by the law of nations. At the same time Vattel implied that Indian nations in the “New World” had rights of “occupancy,” he branded them as “wandering tribes” and “savages” whose “small numbers” could not possibly populate large territories of land, much less fulfill their “obligation of cultivating the earth.”<sup>125</sup> He therefore legalized the taking of their lands: “Their uncertain occupancy of these vast regions can not be held as a real and lawful taking of possession; and when the Nations of Europe, which are too confined at home, come upon lands which the savages have no special need of and are making no present and continuous use of, they may lawfully take possession of them and establish colonies in them.”<sup>126</sup>

Vattel was of course invoking the idea of “*terra nullius*.” His justification for the taking of Indian lands said to be “uninhabited” ultimately reverted back to the “discovery” principle: “In this way navigators setting out upon voyages of discovery and bearing with them a commission from their sovereign, when coming across islands or other uninhabited lands, have taken possession of them in the name of their Nation; and

---

<sup>124</sup>Ibid.

<sup>125</sup>Vattel, *The Law of Nations or the Principles of Natural Law*, p. 85.

<sup>126</sup>Ibid.

this title has usually been respected, provided actual possession has followed shortly after.”<sup>127</sup> Paradoxically, the need to “cultivate the earth” was merely an excuse to take it, for Indian people had long been fulfilling their obligation as the “first agriculturalists” of the Americas as noted in Chapter 2 and explained here by M. Annette Jaimes:

Upwards of 60% of the subsistence of most Native American societies came directly from agriculture, with hunting and gathering providing a decidedly supplemental source of nutrients (just as fishing did and does, throughout the world). This highly developed agricultural base was greatly enhanced by extensive trade networks and food storage techniques which afforded precontact American Indians what was (and might well still be, if reconstituted) far and away the most diversified and balanced diet on earth. . . .

In actuality, fully two-thirds of all the vegetal foodstuffs now consumed by humanity were under cultivation in Native America--and nowhere else-- at the moment Columbus first set foot on Hispaniola. An instructive, but by no means exhaustive, list of crops includes corn, potatoes, yams, sweet potatoes, tomatoes, squash, pumpkins, most variety of beans, all varieties of pepper except black, amaranth, manioc (tapioca), mustard and a number of other greens, sunflowers, cassava, some types of rice, artichokes, avocados, okra, chayotes, peanuts, cashews, walnuts, hickory nuts, pecans, pineapples, bread fruit, passion fruit, many melons, persimmons, choke cherries, papayas, cranberries, blueberries, blackberries, coffee, sassafras, vanilla, chocolate, and cocoa. In order to raise this proliferation of food items, American Indians had perfected elaborate and sophisticated agricultural technologies throughout the hemisphere long before the arrival of the first European. This included intricate and highly efficient irrigation systems, ecologically integrated and highly effective planting methods such as *milpa* and *conuco*, and the refinement of what amounted to botanical experimentation facilities, among other things.<sup>128</sup>

While Marshall in *Johnson v. McIntosh* also designated American Indians to have rights of “occupancy,” he determined that Indian nations’ “rights to complete sovereignty,

---

<sup>127</sup>Vattel, *The Law of Nations or the Principles of Natural Law*, p. 84.

<sup>128</sup>Annette M. Jaimes, “The Stone Age Revisited: An Indigenist View of Primitivism, Industrialism and the Labor Process,” *New Studies on the Left*, Vol. XIV, No. 3, Winter 1990-1991, p. 59.



as independent nations, were necessarily diminished . . .”<sup>129</sup> In justifying this point, he was forced to revert back to the “doctrine of discovery,” where “discovery” gave sovereign title to European governments to the exclusion of all others:

The potentates of the old world found no difficulty in convincing themselves that they made ample compensation to the inhabitants of the new, by bestowing on them civilization and Christianity, in exchange for unlimited independence. But, as they were all in pursuit of nearly the same object, it was necessary, in order to avoid conflicting settlements, and consequent war with each other, to establish a principle, which all should acknowledge as the law by which the right of acquisition, which they all asserted, should be regulated as between themselves. This principle was, that discovery gave title to the government by whose subjects, or by whose authority, it was made, against all other European governments, which title might be consummated by possession.

The exclusion of all other Europeans, necessarily gave to the nation making the discovery the sole right of acquiring the soil from the natives, and establishing settlements upon it. It was a right with which no Europeans could interfere. It was a right which all asserted for themselves, and to the assertion of which, by others, all assented.<sup>130</sup>

Despite this assertion as seen below in the Cherokee case, indigenous peoples certainly did not “assent” or consent to a principle that was not only senseless to them, but one where they would actually willingly forfeit their lands. In addition, Newcomb pinpoints how the terms “European” and “Christian” are indistinguishable in that “replacing the word Christian with the metaphor European when referring to the Age of Discovery obscures the religious basis of the discovery principle.”<sup>131</sup> He further elaborates on how the “Christian/heathen” distinction as the foundation of the *Johnson* decision became the ideological basis of U.S. federal Indian law. This distinction has

---

<sup>129</sup>*Johnson v. McIntosh*, p. 574.

<sup>130</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 573.

<sup>131</sup>Newcomb, “The Evidence of Christian Nationalism in Federal Indian Law,” p. 307.

become “obscured over time” and is rarely noted or within the consciousness of contemporary academic discussions of Indian law.<sup>132</sup> Most importantly, he points out that the violation of the separation between church and state and thus legal assertion of U.S. plenary power over Indian affairs highlights the unconstitutional basis of federal Indian law:

Making the distinction between Christians and heathens explicit in federal Indian law identifies the nonconstitutional basis of the United States’ plenary power over Indian peoples. Although the standard interpretation of the plenary power doctrine erroneously traces its source to the United States Constitution, in reality the doctrine of plenary power is a logical extension of John Marshall’s theoretical construct of Christian dominion, which is found in the subtext of the *Johnson* ruling.<sup>133</sup>

As a result of the court’s decision, native “occupancy” rights were ultimately subverted through a “discovery” principle that justified “conquest” and the taking of *occupied* lands that were not in the possession of any Christian prince. Thus, Marshall reverted back to the principal set forth in the May 4 bull *Inter Caetera*. The “discovery” rationale is further played out in the 1831 landmark case, *Cherokee Nation v. Georgia*. Here Justice Marshall and a majority of the Supreme Court ruled that the Cherokee Nation was not a foreign state as defined in the U.S. Constitution, and, therefore, they could not sue the state of Georgia in the Supreme Court from usurping the gold found on their land.<sup>134</sup> However, the bill initiated by the Cherokee contended that they were since time immemorial a “sovereign and independent state,” and through various treaties “a foreign state, not owing allegiance to the United States, nor to any state of this union, nor

---

<sup>132</sup>Ibid.

<sup>133</sup>Ibid., pp. 305-306.

<sup>134</sup>Deloria, Jr., *Behind the Trail of Broken Treaties*, p. 8.

to any prince, potentate or state, other than their own.”<sup>135</sup> The Cherokee rejected the “right of discovery,” which was the foundation of the English charter asserting a claim to their lands. They denied this claim:

The foundation of this charter, the bill states is asserted to be the right of *discovery* to the territory granted; a ship manned by the subjects of the king having, ‘about two centuries and half before, sailed along the coast of the western hemisphere, from the fifty sixth to the thirty eighth degree of north latitude, and looked upon the face of that coast without even landing on any part of it.’ This right, as affecting the right of the Indian nation, the bill denies; and asserts that the whole length to which the right of discovery is claimed to extend among European nations is to give to the first discoverer the prior and exclusive right to purchase these lands from the Indian proprietors, against all other European sovereigns: to which principle the Indians have never assented; and which they deny to be a principle of the natural law of nations, or obligatory on them.<sup>136</sup>

Despite their contention, Marshall denominated the Cherokee Nation a “domestic dependent nation,” a definition that has “plagued everyone ever since” according to Deloria.<sup>137</sup> Stemming from the Indian Removal Act of 1830, the Cherokee were soon after herded off to Oklahoma in what became known as the “Trail of Tears.” Ward Churchill comments on the federal government’s relocation project of American Indians living east of the Mississippi:

With native military capacity east of the Mississippi thus eliminated, the government launched, during the 1820s and ‘30s, a policy of forced relocation of entire indigenous nations to points west of that river, ‘clearing’ the eastern United States more or less *in toto* for repopulation by white ‘settlers.’ Attrition among the affected populations was quite severe; more than half of all Cherokees, for example, died along the 1,500-mile ‘Trail of Tears’ over which they were marched at bayonet-point. This

---

<sup>135</sup>*Cherokee Nation v. Georgia*, 30 U.S., (5 Pet.) 1, 1831, p. 3.

<sup>136</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 3-4.

<sup>137</sup>Deloria, Jr., *Behind the Trail of Broken Treaties*, pp. 114-115.

federal 'removal policy' was to find echoes, of course, in the articulation of '*lebensraumpolitik*' by Adolf Hitler a century later.<sup>138</sup>

Most interestingly, at least two justices dissented in the case stating that the Cherokee were unquestionably a "foreign nation" as required under the Constitution in terms of the Supreme Court.<sup>139</sup> Justice Thompson's opinion directly contradicted Marshall's ruling by strongly relying on the foreign status of a nation as defined in the law of nations:

Testing the character and condition of the Cherokee Indians by these rules, it is not perceived how it is possible to escape the conclusion, that they form a sovereign state. They have always been dealt with as such by the government of the United States; both before and since the adoption of the present constitution. They have been admitted and treated as a people governed solely and exclusively by their own laws, usages, and customs within their own territory, claiming and exercising exclusive dominion over the same; yielding up by treaty, from time to time, portions of their land, but still claiming absolute sovereignty and self government over what remained unsold. And this has been the light in which they have, until recently, been considered from the earliest settlement of the country by the white people. And indeed, I do not understand it is denied by a majority of the court, that the Cherokee Indians form a sovereign state according to the doctrine of the law of nations; but that, although a sovereign state, they are not considered a foreign state within the meaning of the constitution.<sup>140</sup>

In sum, both the Cherokee and Justice Thompson asserted and revealed the historical basis and rights of the Cherokee Nation as a sovereign state since time immemorial and under the law of nations. There can be no doubt that most other Indian nations at this time asserted similar rights and claims of sovereignty. When the Ogala Sioux Nation declared its independence from the United States on national television in

---

<sup>138</sup>Churchill, *From a Native Son*, pp. 23-24.

<sup>139</sup>Deloria, Jr., *Behind the Trail of Broken Treaties*, p. 115.

<sup>140</sup>*Cherokee Nation v. Georgia*, pp. 53-54.

1973, the foundation of the declaration concerned its relationship with the U.S. as specified in the Fort Laramie treaty of 1868.<sup>141</sup> Indeed, the nations comprising the Trail of Broken Treaties caravan that converged on Washington the year before demanded to be governed by past treaty arrangements. However, the ambiguous interpretation of the principles set forth in the law of nations allowed these treaties to be manipulated and used against indigenous peoples. For the enlightened Vattel, the native peoples of the Americas were “savages” compared to the “more industrious Nations” of Europe, and since he branded them “wandering tribes” unable to “cultivate” the land, Indian nations were not viewed as the equivalent of nations or states as defined in the *natural law* of nations. This is clearly revealed in both the *Johnson* and *Cherokee* decisions. In subverting “aboriginal” or “occupancy” rights, Marshall simply reverted back to the “doctrine of discovery,” which justified Christian warfare over “heathen” peoples as stipulated in the bull *Inter Caetera*. Marshall was basically following the orders of the pope. He not only violated Indian law but the law of nations itself and the separation between church and state as built into the U.S. Constitution. Finally, the Cherokee rejection of the “right of discovery” says it all: there is no way *any* people on the face of the earth would have willingly submitted to such a preposterous supposition. Let’s now see how the “discovery” principle lives on today.

### **“Discovery” Today**

If it often had been said that the influences promulgated in the bull *Inter Caetera* were the “foundation-stone” of the international system and “still spoke” in the early 20th

---

<sup>141</sup>Deloria, Jr., *Behind the Trail of Broken Treaties*, pp. 77-79.

century, it may then be logical to say that *Inter Caetera* is the foundation of the world system a mere century later. The Vatican's refusal to formally revoke this edict, despite five hundred years of resistance to it and persistent pressure by a formal movement initiated in 1992,<sup>142</sup> is a telling sign that the ideology of "discovery" is alive and well today. "Discovery" can manifest itself in various ways. It is both subtle and overt, represented as an ingrained *attitude* just as much as a physical tool of domination. It can be seen as an attitude as expressed in Roman law, where "everything in this world can be owned,"<sup>143</sup> including intellectual property and one's DNA. It is a "macho" attitude as depicted by the "heroic" image of the conquistador to Michael Shapiro's portrayal of Norman Schwarzkopf's role "in the assertion of a masculinizing of American selfhood . . ."<sup>144</sup> It is an attitude of arrogance, egoism, and extreme material and spiritual greed as displayed through the continued exploitation of world resources and maintenance in the conversion of souls. In this sense, monotheism and the capitalist world-economy as "the origins of universalism as an ideology of our present historical system" are not necessarily contradictory ideas.<sup>145</sup> This final section of the chapter will explore some of the ways in which the concept of "discovery" is manifested today: subtly, as seen in scholarship and even through "canonization"; and in its more overt forms, like

---

<sup>142</sup>See Appendix 1 for "Chronology of the Movement to Revoke the Papal Bull *Inter Caetera*."

<sup>143</sup>Johan Galtung, in Johan Galtung and Poka Laenui, *Imagine an Independent Hawai'i: Dialogues on What It Could Be Like*, Honolulu, June 1997, p. 50.

<sup>144</sup>Michael J. Shapiro, *Violent Cartographies: Mapping Cultures of War*, Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1997, p. 153.

<sup>145</sup>Immanuel Wallerstein, "The Ideological Tensions of Capitalism: Universalism versus Racism and Sexism," in Etienne Balibar and Immanuel Wallerstein, *Race, Nation, and Class: Ambiguous Identities*, London and New York: Verso, 1991, p. 30.

governmental oppression against indigenous peoples such as the Maya during the Chiapas uprising in January 1994, and through the recent U.S. military bombing of the island of Bieke (Vieques) in Puerto Rico. Regarding the phenomenon known as “globalization,” we will see there is a direct link between “discovery” as promulgated five hundred years ago and the corporate multinational plunder of the planet today.

### **“Discovery” and Conversion**

Though seeped in contradiction, Pope John Paul II’s latest and likely final trip to México in 2002 was hailed as nothing less than spectacular. Some two million Mexicans attended the various events staged during the pope’s three-day visit. The pontiff was in México City to “canonize” and “beatify,” and even received a kiss on his ring from Mexican president Vicente Fox, breaking a 140 year taboo revealing in part “the clandestine relationship between Mexican leaders and the church.”<sup>146</sup> Underlying the visit was the Roman Catholic Church’s concern about “Protestant gains” in México, and “reinforcing the church’s appeal to Indians” to counter the Protestant threat.<sup>147</sup> One of the ways in reinforcing the appeal was to canonize the first Indian “saint” in the Americas, Juan Diego. Diego is purported to have seen the Virgin Mary in 1531, and the pope called him “a catalyst in the conversion of millions of Indians to Christianity.”<sup>148</sup> Paradoxically, there is no hard evidence proving the historical existence of Juan Diego.<sup>149</sup> The fact that

---

<sup>146</sup>Eloyo O. Aguilar, “Mexican leader’s kiss of papal ring evokes criticism, praise,” *Associated Press*, August 2, 2002.

<sup>147</sup>Victor L. Simpson, “Pope beatifies Mexican martyrs, heads home,” *Associated Press*, August 1, 2002.

<sup>148</sup>“A Coming Together of Cultures: Pope John Paul II canonizes the first Indian saint in the Americas,” *Associated Press*, August 1, 2002.

<sup>149</sup>Mexican writer Omero Aresis (sp?), Interview by Robert Siegel, National Public Radio, Washington, D.C., July 30, 2002.

the Catholic Church was the root cause of the cultural genocide against the Maya and Mexica in the conversion process to begin with did not seem to daunt the pope. However, the continued bleaching of the Indian soul and deeply embedded cultural racism of the church was most prominently revealed when church officials changed the official church portrait of Juan Diego, painted in the 1500s, from “dark skin” to “pale.”<sup>150</sup> This act appeared to be totally unnecessary as the pope obviously seemed to be enjoying himself while admiring and “blessing” the numerous Indian dancers and performers throughout his stay!

Encouragingly, the pope did specifically call for greater sensitivity and support for México’s indigenous peoples. While the spectacle ensued, however, some Mexicans were offended, or “uneasy,” particularly regarding the beatification of two Zapotec Indians.<sup>151</sup> The two men were informants working for the colonial church to stamp out Indian religious culture and non-Christian ceremonies and practices.<sup>152</sup> In 1700, they reported to authorities about an Indian ceremony being performed. Enraged because they felt betrayed, Zapotec villagers then executed the two. The church is obviously well informed about the incident. In accounts made public this year they reported that fellow villagers “dragged them, hung them and finally decapitated them, cut open their sides to pull out their hearts and gave them to the dogs.”<sup>153</sup> To put such a gruesome account into proper perspective, it must be remembered that this type of butchery was all too common among

---

<sup>150</sup>Ibid.

<sup>151</sup>Simpson, “Pope beatifies Mexican martyrs, heads home,” *Associated Press*, August 1, 2002.

<sup>152</sup>Ibid.



the conquistadors. As we know, the Spaniards had been committing similar atrocities in México since their arrival in 1520, but obviously on a much larger scale. Yet, the church in the Year 2002 decided to beatify the “martyrs,” even though they were traitors to their own people and culture, and despite those who the church knew would be offended, including descendants of the Zapotecs. While the pope often speaks great words of kindness and certainly appears to be well intentioned, his actions and the actions of the Catholic Church, couched in the spectacle of religious deception, are often deplorable. If the pope and church were truly sensitive and respected the rights and needs of indigenous peoples, they would not have beatified these two men. However, the *underlying mission* of the visit took precedence over everything else. The church’s fear of losing “its converts,” albeit to another *Christian* sect, reveals its deep-seated arrogance and continual spiritual greed. It can be said here that Christian dominion and cultural racism are alive and well within the Roman Catholic Church today.

#### **“Discovery” and Scholarship**

Scholarship is an important area where the right or concept of “discovery” developed and continues to be justified today. However, this justification is not usually so blatantly shown as it is in L.C. Green’s article, “Claims to Territory in Colonial America,” published in *The Law of Nations and the New World* in 1989. Green’s 127 page diatribe, most of which is filled with long drawn out quotations by popes, crowns, international scholars and legal bodies, essentially seeks to justify the “legality” of European conquest in seizing native territory in the “New World.” Not surprisingly, the

---

<sup>153</sup>Ibid.

article begins with the most important document professing a claim to the hemisphere, the bull *Inter Caetera* of May 4, 1493.<sup>154</sup>

Green's motivation in writing the piece stems from the post-World War II legal challenges by indigenous peoples, "to assert that they are the true and sovereign owners of the territories they occupy, regardless of the fact that they may constitute a minority of the population."<sup>155</sup> He is particularly concerned with the claims by Canada's indigenous peoples and assesses "the history of Western settlement and the legal basis of claims to territory and sovereignty in international law."<sup>156</sup> To begin, in an attempt to diminish indigenous claims, Green's use of the term "minority" is misleading. As previously noted, the use of language and terminology pertaining to indigenous peoples has been repeatedly addressed in international law. Under the 1993 United Nations Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, for example, "Indigenous peoples are defined in terms of collective aboriginal occupation prior to colonial settlement. They are not to be confused with minorities or ethnic groups within states. Thus 'indigenous rights' are strictly distinguished from 'minority rights.' The *numbers* of indigenous peoples, therefore, does not constitute a criterion in their definition."<sup>157</sup> Both the International Labor Organization (ILO) and the UN Working Group on Indigenous Populations have addressed the use of

---

<sup>154</sup>L.C. Green, "Claims to Territory in Colonial America," in Green and Dickason, *The Law of Nations and the New World*, p. 4.

<sup>155</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>156</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>157</sup>Definition in Haunani-Kay Trask, *From a Native Daughter: Colonialism and Sovereignty in Hawai'i*, Monroe, Maine: Common Courage Press, 1993, pp. 42-43.

language, such as the terms “minority” and “population,” by majority settler nation-states attempting to subvert indigenous rights:

One of the most effective is the use of language to deny the unique status of various groups. This can be illustrated by the problem of defining indigenous status vis-a-vis minority status, and in the use of either peoples or populations to refer to distinct groups within a modern nation-state. To be indigenous or a people confers a psychological benefit over being merely a minority population. That this is recognized by the governing powers is illustrated by the debates in both the ILO and the Working Group on Indigenous Populations on the use of the words people or population. While the ILO decided to use both words, the Working Group uses populations. The debate makes clear that the reason to use population rather than people is to lessen the weight of any argument for self-determination and territorial independence by the indigenous peoples against the majority settler nation-states within they have been submerged.<sup>158</sup>

The main basis of Green’s argument is to consider the validity of claims to titles of land “at the time when the title was claimed to have been established, and not now when its validity may be challenged.”<sup>159</sup> Since international law has evolved over time, “claims of an indigenous people which might be recognised today, might well have been unknown then.”<sup>160</sup> This latter point may be true when it comes to technical matters, such as the meaning and use of terms like “peoples” in regard to the right of self-determination. But as explained earlier, for instance with the Trail of Broken Treaties, many indigenous peoples and nations have always maintained their rightful sovereign status. This most basic of human rights is inherent and was well known to indigenous peoples long before the European arrival. In regard to challenges by indigenous peoples

---

<sup>158</sup>Steven C. Perkins, “Researching Indigenous Peoples Rights Under International Law,” Document prepared for the 1992 Annual Meeting of the American Association of Law Libraries, 1992, pp. 1-2.

<sup>159</sup>Green, “Claims to Territory in Colonial America,” p. 3.

<sup>160</sup>Ibid.

today to past land title claims, the Canadian Supreme Court has in fact ruled that Indian rights to lands in British Columbia “were not invalidated by European settlement.”<sup>161</sup> In 1997, Canada’s highest court ruled that the Gitksan and Wet’suwet’en peoples had a “proprietary” right to 22,000 square miles in western B.C. Don Ryan, head negotiator for the Gitksan, said, “We’ve got a decision from the Supreme Court of Canada that says that we have a proprietary interest in the land, and that we have an interest in the forests, land and resources—all the commodities.”<sup>162</sup> In this case, the colonial British authorities had not signed land treaties for most of British Columbia. Thus, the judge ruled that native peoples maintained “aboriginal title” or rights to “exclusive use and occupation of the land.” Nevertheless, the “plenary” power of the Canadian government could still infringe on “aboriginal title”: “But he [the judge] added that the government could infringe on aboriginal rights for a wide range of activities such as agriculture, forestry, mining, hydroelectricity, economic development and the settlement of non-Indians to support those aims.”<sup>163</sup>

Regarding this last point, the question to ask now is where did Canada’s assertion of its “plenary” power come from? As Green alludes to, this right comes from the “doctrine of discovery” as spelled out by John Marshall in the *Johnson* decision.<sup>164</sup> Canada’s Supreme Court implemented the concept in reference to Indian rights based on

---

<sup>161</sup>Randall Palmer, “Canada court gives wide land rights to natives, *Reuters*, December 11, 1997.

<sup>162</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>163</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>164</sup>Green, “Claims to Territory in Colonial America,” pp. 81-82.

the leading case of a royal proclamation issued in 1763. In the *St. Catherine's Milling & Lumber Co. v. The Queen* decision of 1887, Chief Justice William Ritchie wrote:

all ungranted lands in the province of Ontario belong to the crown as part of the public domain subject to the *Indian right of occupancy* in cases in which the same has not been lawfully extinguished absolutely to the Crown, and as a consequence to the province of Ontario. I think *the crown owns the soil of all the unpatented lands, the Indians possessing only the right of occupancy, and the crown possessing the legal title subject to that occupancy, with the absolute exclusive right to extinguish the Indian title either by conquest or by purchase.*<sup>165</sup>

Green actually echoes the sentiment of Marshall and Ritchie in continuing to justify the “legal” taking of native lands by stressing how consent to title was made exclusively among European nations. He expresses throughout the article how this was done through the “discovery” and “just war” theories, from the planting of crosses as signs of sovereignty to treaties made among European monarchs. The fact that Indian nations did not willingly assent to European claims, as clearly shown by the Cherokee rejection of the “right of discovery” and Carib resistance from the very beginning, is of no concern to Green. Although he obviously realizes the justifications for “conquest” were irrational and extreme, he uses these very justifications to bolster his case and, hence, his own complicity in the continued destruction of indigenous cultures by maintaining the validity of these views. Though he ostensibly comes across as merely narrating the course of historical events, Green’s argument seethes with the same sentiment, language and *purpose* as Sepúlveda and the Spanish Crown:

In any case, for the most part the general attitude, to some extent flowing from the Papal attitude to non-Christian heathen, was that the indigenous population of the New World lacked any identity that required recognition

---

<sup>165</sup>William Ritchie, in Green, “Claims to Territory in Colonial America,” pp. 113-114.

or rights which were entitled to respect. Rather, these people were looked upon as savages or barbarians who, rightly, could be subjected to the rule of European monarchs, under the ideological pretence that this subjection was, in the first place, for the glory of the Church, and only secondly for the greater aggrandisement of the monarch and country concerned.<sup>166</sup>

Finally, Green even contradicts his own argument in weighing the “legality” of claims *at the time when title was established*. He writes:

That the sixteenth and seventeenth century explorers were aware that their activities were not and were not intended to be in accord with the principles of international law as understood at the time is clear from such statements as that by the French lawyer Lescarbot, who was at Port Royal with Champlain: ‘there is here no question of applying the law and polity of Nations, by which it would not be permissible to claim the territory of another. This being so, we must possess it and preserve its natural inhabitants.’<sup>167</sup>

He then concludes, “Insofar as international law is concerned, there can be no doubt that the title to the land belonged, in the first instance, to the country of those who first discovered and settled thereon.”<sup>168</sup> However, as European nations knowingly violated international law, as expressed above, any claim to indigenous lands through “discovery” would thus be legally invalid according to the law of nations. He apparently assumes that since Indian nations and peoples were not a party to the law of nations, European nations could then violate international law with impunity. His argument proves there is still deep controversy over the legality of land title in North America, as demonstrated in the case of the Gitksan and Wet’suwet’en Indians, and numerous other cases pending or having been resolved since his article appeared in this text in 1989. It also shows how Christian

---

<sup>166</sup>Green, “Claims to Territory in Colonial America,” p. 17.

<sup>167</sup>Ibid., p. 17-18.

<sup>168</sup>Ibid., p. 125.

supremacist views perpetuated through scholarship unceasingly seek to maintain the status quo. Green thus continues to reinforce the theft of indigenous lands and property through an irrational belief in the legal and moral superiority of Christian nations and peoples over non-Christian “heathens.”

### **“Discovery” and Globalization**

Abuse against members of indigenous groups tends to be the most severe. As Amnesty International noted, ‘There have been frequent reports of torture of indigenous people, and particularly of leading members of indigenous organizations.’ The National Indigenous Institute, an agency of the government, estimated that at the beginning of Salinas’s term there were some 20,000 Indians in jail. During Salinas’s term, violations continued against members of Mexico’s 56 Indian groups, who number over 10 million. Such violations include summary execution, unequal administration of justice, and the systematic impunity of their abusers.<sup>169</sup>

Finally, what do the “right of discovery” as promulgated five hundred years ago and the current phenomenon known as “globalization” have in common? On January 1, 1994, the day the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) went into effect, members of the Zapatista National Liberation Army (Zapatistas) “lashed out against the poverty and injustice that each year kills thousands in Chiapas and grinds tens of thousands more into landless dependency” by capturing several towns in the southernmost Mexican state of Chiapas.<sup>170</sup> NAFTA and the thirst for profits by corporations in both the United States and México were at the heart of the uprisings. It is widely believed that NAFTA was the impetus for the Mexican government to amend laws which now allow foreigners and foreign corporations to buy up communal land holdings

---

<sup>169</sup>Philip L. Russell, *Mexico Under Salinas*, Austin: Mexico Resource Center, 1994, p. 154.

<sup>170</sup>José Luis Morín, “An Indigenous Peoples’ Struggle for Justice,” *Covert Action Quarterly*, No. 48, Spring 1994, p. 38.

and exploit resources where indigenous peoples live.<sup>171</sup> The trade agreement encourages foreign investment and commercial development in México at the expense of particularly indigenous groups such as the Maya.

The Mexican government's response to the uprisings was brutal, as reported by a network of human rights organizations who arrived shortly after the military infiltration:

Why the military and the government insisted on restricting access became apparent as we collected testimonies of summary executions, torture, disappearances, arbitrary detentions and indiscriminate bombings of civilian communities. These acts constitute serious violations of both fundamental human rights and the Geneva Conventions and its Protocols.

Our delegation confirmed numerous disappearances and abductions by the Mexican military of indigenous non-combatants. In the indigenous community of San Antonio de los Baños, for example, eyewitnesses recounted how family members were abducted and forced to wear Army uniforms ostensibly to guide patrols through unfamiliar terrain. We also discovered mass graves. As part of a massive cover-up operation, the Mexican military had secretly buried 48 unidentified bodies in Tuxtla Gutiérrez and numerous corpses of indigenous peoples in Ocosingo.<sup>172</sup>

As depicted here, governmental oppression against indigenous peoples in México has not changed very much since the arrival of the Spaniards. What is the link between Christian dominion then and corporate atrocities today? The answer to this question concerns the continued abuse against indigenous and "third world" peoples worldwide, especially in the global south. It is important to point out that many nation-states look to U.S. federal Indian policy as a standard in the treatment of their respective indigenous populations. This policy of course is based on the "discovery" principle. In fact, the United States today "continues to claim that the subjection of indigenous nations to the

---

<sup>171</sup>Ibid., p. 39.

<sup>172</sup>Ibid., pp. 41-42.



legislative power of the United States is based on the international law of conquest.”<sup>173</sup> Given that the U.S. track record has been one of the near obliteration of indigenous rights, is it any wonder why other governments often repress their own populations? The exploitation of lands and resources, thirst for profits and material greed as sacralized during the 16<sup>th</sup> century mining of gold and silver remain vital processes and attitudes driving the world economy today. Modern-day massacres in Guatemala, El Salvador, Rwanda, Bosnia and East Timor, and the many subtle genocides taking place such as the continued relocation of the Diné in Arizona onto toxic radioactive lands to make way for uranium mining, and the spread of disease among the Yanomami in Brazil by government-backed *garimpeiros* (gold miners), are clear indicators that cultural violence and genocide are still strikingly prevalent when it comes to the “money god.”

As the world capitalist system was initiated with the European coming to the Americas, the issue of the bombing of the island of Bieke (which ceased in May 2003) adds another imperial layer to the exploitation of people and the planet. The issue exemplifies the intricate relationship between corporations and the military, specifically multinational corporations and the U.S. military-industrial complex, and how the military is used to protect global corporate interests. It has been a five hundred year struggle in Borikén against both secular and non-secular interests:

---

<sup>173</sup>Wilmer, *The Indigenous Voice in World Politics*, p. 168. Franke Wilmer further notes how indigenous peoples have rejected the historical legality of the norms of “conquest”: “... the U.N. Sub-Commission Working Group on Indigenous Populations has also recently discussed the proposition that indigenous peoples have in the past been subjugated lawfully according to norms of conquest and concluded by rejecting the idea. When present conditions follow from past norms since deemed invalid, such as in the case of slavery and segregation in the United States, does this not throw into question the validity of present status insofar as it is an extension of the past norm, and perhaps raise the possibility that reparative or affirmative action to remedy the consequences of the past are in order?” pp. 58-59.

Our ancestors, *Kasike Kasimar* and his brother *Yahueribo* (who killed the infamous mastiff *Berecillo* used to disembowel Taíno women and children), were the first to die fighting to protect Bieke against the Spanish invaders. From this time forward, the foundation of the struggle against injustice and the destruction of our Mother Earth has been to keep our ancestral ways alive through our words, deeds and acts.<sup>174</sup>

On April 19, 1999, a U.S. Navy FA-18 jet pilot launched two errant five hundred pound bombs killing David Sanes-Rodríguez, a civilian security guard working at the Navy's observation post. The incident immediately rekindled local animosity against the Navy since its forced expropriation of the island in 1941. The *Washington Post* reported that Sanes-Rodríguez's death "is more than an isolated accident. It is the latest instance of predictable harm to the people of Vieques that goes back through decades of military neglect of island interests."<sup>175</sup> Indeed, the Navy had bulldozed and relocated most of the civilian population in the early 1940s and "took two thirds of the best farming lands and prohibited the Fisherman of Bieke from fishing in their traditional fishing waters."<sup>176</sup> Sanes-Rodríguez's death sparked a fury of protests against the military presence. To prevent further bombing, Viequenses and supporters occupied target ranges for months. Many were subsequently arrested when the military resumed bombing, including prominent international figures.

The protests further addressed the appalling health conditions on the island. Many unusual cases of cancer, kidney failure, and high levels of heavy metals in children's

---

<sup>174</sup>Naniki Reyes Ocasio, "The Indigenous Presence in Bieke (Vieques): The 508 Year Old Struggle Against Invasion, Contamination, and Relocation," *La Voz del Pueblo Taíno*, (Newsletter of the United Confederation of Taíno People), Vol. 5, Issue 1, January-March 2002, p. 1.

<sup>175</sup>Quoted in, Robert L. Rabin Siegal, "Paradise Invaded," *Comité Pro Rescate y Desarrollo de Vieques* (Committee for the Rescue and Development of Vieques), 1999, p. 1.

<sup>176</sup>Reyes Ocasio, "The Indigenous Presence in Bieke (Vieques)," p. 1.

blood have been reported.<sup>177</sup> The Navy has admitted that it used depleted uranium shells and highly toxic napalm during military exercises.<sup>178</sup> Pablo Connelly, whose one-year-old son's blood level contains dangerous amounts mercury and lead, said, "It just makes us feel like we've been guinea pigs for the last 60 years. During the heavy bombing days, the smell of sulfur and powder would be so heavy that the kids would be screaming in bed that they couldn't breathe."<sup>179</sup> Robert Rabin Siegal summarizes some of the negative social impacts of the Navy's presence:

. . . 72% of its population of approximately 9,000 live below the poverty level. The Municipal Government reports over 50% unemployment. Studies by the University of Puerto Rico School of Public Health indicate that Vieques suffers a 27% higher cancer case rate than the rest of Puerto Rico. The Puerto Rico Legislature approved legislation ordering an epidemiological study to determine the causes of the higher cancer rate. People on Vieques, environmental and health experts throughout Puerto Rico, relate the abnormally high cancer rate to the environmental degradation caused by U.S. Navy and NATO bombing (the Navy 'rents' Vieques to NATO and other countries for bombing practice) on this small Caribbean island.<sup>180</sup>

The case of Vieques presents a microcosm of how the U.S. military operates worldwide. Although it has withdrawn from the island, military operations were transferred elsewhere and the land remains a toxic nightmare. Vieques served as a key training site for American and multinational operations throughout the "Cold War" era ending with the most recent incursion into Iraq. Both U.S. and other foreign troops had conducted exercises there on most days of the year, and during the past fifteen years,

---

<sup>177</sup>Jonathan Gelb, "Navy exit from Vieques seen as merely a start: Islanders fear environmental and health legacy," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, April 14, 2003.

<sup>178</sup>Albor Ruiz, "Vieques bombings, protest to square off," *New York Daily News*, August 2002.

<sup>179</sup>Gelb, "Navy exit from Vieques seen as merely a start."

“more than 1,300 warships and 4,200 aircraft used the island for target practice.”<sup>181</sup> All of this depicts how the U.S. military is really a guardian for larger global interests, or corporate multinational interests that keep the military in operation to begin with. Multinational corporations and intergovernmental organizations like the IMF, WTO, World Bank and NAFTA are the driving forces behind the world capitalist system, or what is known today as “globalization.” For most, however, this “one size fits all” program is actually synonymous with *fragmentation*. “In any poll of non-Western peoples,” according to Samuel Huntington, “the IMF undoubtedly would win the support of finance ministers and a few others, but get an overwhelmingly unfavorable rating from just about everyone else . . .”<sup>182</sup> Samir Amin has noted that economic alienation “constitutes the essential content of the ideology of capitalism.”<sup>183</sup> His book *Eurocentrism* point out how the “European conquest of the world” polarized it into centers and peripheries unable to close the gap between rich and poor. The unequal distribution of resources and wealth has led to the fragmentation of the world economic system. This is apparently inevitable within a capitalist framework:

The subsequent unfolding of the history of the capitalist conquest of the world showed that this conquest was not going to bring about a homogenization of the societies of the planet on the basis of the European model. On the contrary, this conquest progressively created a growing polarization at the heart of the system, crystallizing the capitalist world into fully developed centers and peripheries incapable of closing the ever widening gap, making this contradiction within ‘actually existing’

---

<sup>180</sup>Rabin Siegal, “Paradise Invaded,” p. 1.

<sup>181</sup>Ruiz, “Vieques bombings, protest to square off.”

<sup>182</sup>Samuel P. Huntington, “The Clash of Civilizations,” in Frank J. Lechner and John Boli, eds., *The Globalization Reader*, Malden, Mass. and Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2000, p. 32.

<sup>183</sup>Samir Amin, *Eurocentrism*, Translated by Russell Moore, New York: Monthly Review Press, 1989, p. 5.

capitalism—a contradiction insurmountable within the framework of the capitalist system—the major and most explosive contradiction of our time.<sup>184</sup>

Therefore, both the concepts of “discovery” and “globalization” are ideologies based on principles of domination and subjugation of peoples, cultures and the natural environment. Both concepts are Western based and span a mere five hundred year gap within the modern system. Globalization based on the policies of multinational corporations and intergovernmental organizations operate under an international system of law grounded in the same mentality as the “law of nations,” which was basically an agreement between Christian European nations to “keep the peace” among themselves which allowed for their colonial wars of expansion. Globalization today results in an extreme disparity of wealth among nation-states, particularly the global divide between north and south where half the planet lives in poverty! Thus, Christianity’s role in the advancement of capitalism is not a contradictory idea:

In this domain, Eurocentrism rests upon teleology: namely, that the entire history of Europe necessarily led to the blossoming of capitalism to the extent that Christianity, regarded as a European religion, was more favorable than other religions to the flourishing of the individual and the exercise of his or her capacity to dominate nature. The corresponding claim is that Islam, Hinduism, or Confucianism, for example, constituted obstacles to the social change necessary for capitalist development. Their plasticity is therefore denied, either because it is reserved solely for Christianity, or even because it is believed that Christianity carried the seeds of capitalist advancement within it from the beginning.<sup>185</sup>

---

<sup>184</sup>Ibid., p. 75.

<sup>185</sup>Ibid., pp. 84-85.

## Conclusion

The “discovery of America” by European explorers was an impossibility and could not have happened. The fact that Western hemispheric lands had already been inhabited for thousands of years, and given that it is impossible to “discover” an entity previously unknown to exist as elaborated on by O’Gorman, preclude the possibility of a European “discovery.” However, the Roman Catholic Church developed a theory whereby in their view “discovery” justified the taking of such lands. On his second voyage to the Caribbean, Columbus was granted the May 4, 1493 papal bull *Inter Caetera* by the Vatican and Spanish Crown. This edict and the 1494 *Treaty of Tordesillas* signed between Spain and Portugal stipulated that non-Christian “pagan” peoples and lands “discovered and to be discovered” were subject to the authority of the Christian world.

In consolidating this view, the large majority of theologians and scholars continually used “God,” Christian theology and “natural slavery” to justify religious conquest. The *requiermiento* of 1513 presented one of the first instances of the “just war” theory as applied in the Americas. Other scholars such as Vitoria and Grotius rejected the “papal donation” premise and “partition” of the world between the Spanish and Portuguese Crowns. The Carib people further rejected *Inter Caetera* by condemning the pope for giving what was not his to give. Las Casas and others affirmed that *natural law* as originally derived from the Greeks protected Indian rights. Nevertheless, the “right of discovery” as based on Christian dominion came to form the basis of a body of laws known as the “doctrine of discovery.” The discovery doctrine became the foundation of the “law of nations” as applied in the Americas and many other parts of the world. Since

the law of nations recognized “occupancy” rights as essentially equivalent to sovereign status, Vattel reduced this status by labeling Indian nations of particularly North America as “wandering tribes” and “savages” unable to fulfill their “obligation of cultivating the earth.” This was an insidiously false statement as indigenous peoples were clearly the first agriculturalists of the hemisphere.

In the *Johnson v. McIntosh* U.S. Supreme Court decision of 1823, Chief Justice Marshall also recognized native “occupancy” rights but in diminishing rights to complete sovereignty he, like Vattel, reverted back to the “discovery” principle that gave sovereign title to European governments to the exclusion of all others. The *Johnson* case and the 1831 *Cherokee v. Georgia* decision, where Marshall branded the Cherokee a “domestic dependent nation,” came to form the basis of federal Indian law. In the process, Marshall violated Indian law, the law of nations, and the separation between church and state as written in the U.S. Constitution. As exemplified by the Trail of Broken Treaties and Carib resistance from the beginning, indigenous peoples have continually rejected the European principles of “discovery,” “conquest” and “natural slavery” as legally applicable to them. As it often had been said that the influences set forth in the bull *Inter Caetera* were the “foundation-stone” of the international system in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, we have further argued that in addition to U.S. federal Indian law, the “discovery” principle still informs contemporary international laws, policies and thought in such areas as conversion, scholarship and “globalization” policies. This is also evident by the Vatican’s refusal to revoke *Inter Caetera* even though they say it no longer carries juridical weight.

## Chapter 5

### Carib Indian Resistance, Survival and Presence in Borikén

A man may not know that he is Indian. A man may know and may not admit he is Indian. ‘But it does not matter. The ignorance of your father and mother does not change who you are,’ he said. ‘No matter what a Puertorriqueño decided he is, it already has been decided for him.’

‘So if I did not have Indian blood in my heart, my heart would not beat. Yes, it would kill me not to have the blood of an Indian,’ the old man said.<sup>1</sup>

As the Spanish chroniclers had written the indigenous peoples of the Caribbean out of the history books by the mid-16th century, they forgot to do one important thing along the way. They forgot to ask the native peoples concerned what *they* thought about *their* “extinction.” If the chroniclers had asked, they would have undoubtedly been ridiculed in the process. This is certainly the way it would have been on the island of Borikén, since everyone had agreed with this history except the Indian people themselves.

Borikén was the indigenous stronghold of the Antillean chain long before the European arrival. The southern coast, known as *Baneke* or the territory of the “sea iguana,” was the nucleus of the Carib hegemony led by the *cacike* Agüeybana.<sup>2</sup> “This was the nucleus of the empire,” says Oki Lamourt-Valentín. “We were a great empire.” Loida Figueroa-Mercado writes that the indigenous culture “reached its zenith in Boriquén,”<sup>3</sup> and the Caguana ceremonial ground in Utuado (Otoao) was said to be a major gathering

---

<sup>1</sup>The Storyteller, in Stan Steiner, *The Islands: The Worlds of the Puerto Ricans*, New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1974, p. 19.

<sup>2</sup>Interview with Carib-Jibaro scholar and artisan Oki Lamourt-Valentín, July 28, 1998.

<sup>3</sup>Loida Figueroa Mercado, *History of Puerto Rico: From the Beginning to 1892*, New York: L.A. Publishing Company, 1970?, p. 41.



place for American Indians from North, Central and South America. Borikén was also the island Columbus said was the most beautiful of all the islands he had visited, an “earthly paradise” in the vicinity of the “Garden of Eden.”<sup>4</sup> This island further comprised the western territory called *Caniba*, or the “lizard,”<sup>5</sup> from where the creation of the “canibal” came to be derived for the Carib people living there. Our ancestors fiercely resisted the Spanish encroachment so that cultural and oral traditions survived and were passed down through the centuries and are preserved today. Cognizant of the indigenous influence and legacy in 1974, Stan Steiner writes:

Of all the islands in the Caribbean the influence of the Indians has been the strongest and most lasting in Borinquén. In the traditional words and music, dishes, and dances. And some say the ways of the Indians are visible in the easygoing way people look at the earth, the life of the family, and the life of the spirits of the dead.<sup>6</sup>

This chapter provides a genealogy of indigenous resistance, survival and presence in Borikén from the early 16th century until well into the 20th century. We find that the Indian people and their cultural traditions as practiced by their *Jibaro* descendants were not at all “extinguished,” but continued and developed over time. The Carib were exogamous<sup>7</sup> so the miscegenation with Africans and Spaniards was the continuation of a long tradition. This intermarriage did not “dilute” the culture and people but rather enhanced them and increased the chances of survival.<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, miscegenation did

---

<sup>4</sup>Steiner, *The Islands*, pp. 20-22.

<sup>5</sup>Interview with Lamourt-Valentín, July 28, 1998.

<sup>6</sup>Steiner, *The Islands*, p. 18.

<sup>7</sup>Interview with Lamourt-Valentín, July 28, 1998.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

not always occur over the first three hundred years. Thousands of “full blooded” Indian people had survived in the *Indiera* mountain region of Maricao as interpreted from late 18th century Spanish censuses. Consequently, tens of thousands of “full blooded” and *mestizo* Indians remained throughout the entire mountain region at the end of the 18th century, and well into the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This is not surprising when considering that the Cordillera and Luquillo mountain regions are extensive territories of caves, hills and valleys. In fact, 40 percent of Borikén is covered by mountains and 35 percent by hills.<sup>9</sup> Thus, by the end of the 19th century “there were still entire villages of Indians in the mountains.”<sup>10</sup>

We arrive at our conclusions by examining the oral tradition and written history that have been passed down through the generations, along with analyses of Spanish population censuses and figures recorded in the Antilles, México, Columbia, and especially Borikén. In addition, although the colonization and slavery process developed uniquely on each of the Caribbean islands, there are important parallels regarding resistance and cultural assimilation in Borikén that can be drawn from particularly the neighboring indigenous stronghold of Quisqueya. Lynne Guitar’s recent dissertation on the cultural genesis among Indians, Africans and Spaniards in rural “Hispaniola” during the first half of the 16th century is very helpful to us in this regard. Contrary to common thought, things did not happen overnight in Quisqueya and the indigenous population there did not become “extinct.” Although Sherburne Cook and Woodrow Borah have written that “all scholars” agree the indigenous peoples of the island became “extinct”

---

<sup>9</sup>Figueroa Mercado, *History of Puerto Rico*, p. 31.

<sup>10</sup>Steiner, *The Islands*, p. 18.

within a few decades,<sup>11</sup> some scholars, at least in more recent times, do not agree with this assertion. “The island did lose much of its indigenous population—but not all of it,” writes Guitar, “as well as much of its Spanish population—but not all of it.”<sup>12</sup> While introduced diseases did devastate the population, Guitar points out that the effects of the epidemics were often exaggerated by the colonizers in order to secure favors from the Spanish Crown: “It would not have been beneficial for the officials and encomenderos on Hispaniola to give an accurate count of the Indian workers who remained under their control or to admit how many had fled to regions outside their control; therefore, the documents exaggerate the effects of the epidemics and report that ‘less than one-third’ of the Indians survived, or ‘less than one-fourth,’ or ‘few,’ ‘an insufficient number,’ or even, in several cases, ‘none.’”<sup>13</sup> On a trip to Quisqueya in 1999, I met a fairly large extended Indian family living in the far eastern province of Higüey. The people there seemed to be quite aware of the colonial history to the point where one village elder was still cursing the Spanish!

One of the biggest dilemmas in the area of scholarship is that since the epistemological and ontological boundaries of the early literature and history on the indigenous Caribbean had been written through colonial eyes, key fallacies have been passed down and unequivocally accepted by most non-native and native writers alike.

---

<sup>11</sup>Sherburne F. Cook and Woodrow Borah, “The Aboriginal Population of Hispaniola,” *Essays in Population History: Mexico and the Caribbean*, Vol. I, Berkeley/Los Angeles/London: University of California Press, 1971, p. 376.

<sup>12</sup>Lynne A. Guitar, *Cultural Genesis: Relationships Among Indians, Africans and Spaniards in Rural Hispaniola, First Half of the Sixteenth Century*, Ph.D. Dissertation, Nashville: Vanderbilt University, 1998, pp. 264-265.

<sup>13</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 271.

This is symptomatic of the colonial histories written about most indigenous groups for centuries, the myth of “extinction” being among the most damaging aspects of this narrative. For instance the regarded Puerto Rican scholar Manuel Maldonado-Denis unwittingly falls into this trap when he writes about Borikén: “The extinction of the natives around the middle of the sixteenth century made the introduction of a new type of labor—that of black slaves—indispensable.”<sup>14</sup> As previously mentioned, Bartolomé de Las Casas is partially responsible for creating this myth by noting that no more than two hundred native people remained there by 1552.<sup>15</sup> He essentially wrote out of history those he was attempting “to save.” He did this in part to make the destruction in the Antilles look more severe in order to booster his case for the “peaceful conversion” of those very people.

In attempting to calculate indigenous population figures, many recent scholars, like Cook and Borah, have also tended to *totalize* respective indigenous populations out of existence. This is problematic for indigenous peoples and native scholars alike because the dominant scholarly view effectively suppresses the indigenous voice and presence in the process. When indigenous peoples speak out their credibility is often immediately diminished. However, we find through the words and work of Lamourt-Valentín, Steiner, and others a very different development in Borikén. Steiner actually goes to the mountain regions to record the legends and stories of the Jíbaro, and Lamourt-Valentín does not tell the story as an outsider, but lives the culture and language of the region where the Indian

---

<sup>14</sup>Manuel Maldonado-Denis, *Puerto Rico: A Socio-Historic Interpretation*, Translated by Elena Vialo, New York: Random House, 1972, p. 15.

<sup>15</sup>Bartolomé de Las Casas, *The Devastation of the Indies: A Brief Account*, (1552), Translated by Herma Biffault, Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1992, p. 43.

words are still used. Steiner records the words of a man born on a mountain from one of the oldest and most respected families in his village, the one he calls the “storyteller.” ““Our Indians did not die away the way some people think,’ the storyteller said. ‘If you look in the faces of the *jibaros*, you know somewhere the Indian history is living.’”<sup>16</sup> And Ronald Arroyo points out that for hundreds of years, “it was thought that the Boricua Indians were extinct. But it was not so. They believed in their own way of independence and paid little attention to the outside world. They were content to live poorly but free. However, each time their freedom was threatened, they would resist.”<sup>17</sup> We will now look at some early passive and active forms of political resistance to Spanish imperialism on the island.

### **Early Resistance and War**

Columbus first landed along the western shore of Borikén on his second voyage on November 19, 1493 and christened the island “San Juan Bautista.” It is said he thought the island was uninhabited because the indigenous inhabitants had so ignored him.<sup>18</sup> This indignation could be seen as one of the first acts of resistance to the Spanish coming, a rejection of the idea that Columbus had somehow “discovered” the island since the indigenous presence had been well-established. This rejection of the principle of “discovery” meant that as far as the natives peoples were concerned, the Papacy and

---

<sup>16</sup>The Storyteller, in Steiner, *The Islands*, p. 15.

<sup>17</sup>Ronald D. Arroyo, *Da Borinkees: The Puerto Ricans of Hawai‘i*, Ph.D. Dissertation, Cincinnati: Union Graduate School, 1977, p. 9.

<sup>18</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 7.

Spanish Crown had no legal and moral right to take possession of Borikén, or to wage war against them for being non-Christians as stipulated in the 1493 bull *Inter Caetera*.

Political resistance can be both passive and active. Selwyn Cudjoe writes that active resistance involves “open revolts and rebellions,” while passive resistance can include “suicide, voluntary abortion, poisoning masters and sabotaging crops.”<sup>19</sup> In his in-depth study of Indian and African forms of resistance in Caribbean literature, Cudjoe defines resistance as “any act or complex of acts designed to rid a people of its oppressors, be they slave masters or multinational corporations.”<sup>20</sup> I would define “resistance” similarly as applied to Borikén, though my focus in this chapter primarily concerns Indian resistance. Indigenous acts of resistance to be covered below include the *guatiao*, war, fleeing, avoiding census takers, miscegenation, and the adoption of the Spanish language and Christian symbols into the indigenous cultural realm. Resistance to European colonialism in the Antilles was essentially about human survival, but further concerned maintaining one’s human dignity, spirit and sense of equilibrium, as Cudjoe points out:

The corresponding resistance on the part of the Indians and the Africans in the New World was the necessary corrective to that expansion and dehumanization, one action bringing an equal and opposite reaction in order to retain equilibrium. Resistance, then, was the reaction needed to maintain the equilibrium, to preserve human dignity, and to ennoble the human spirit.<sup>21</sup>

---

<sup>19</sup>Selwyn R. Cudjoe, *Resistance and Caribbean Literature*, Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1980, p. 19.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., p. 7.

When Juan Ponce de Leon arrived in 1508 to begin the formal colonization of Borikén, the principal *cacike*, Agüeybana (The Elder), was well aware of Columbus' arms and exploits in Quisqueya and prepared to accommodate him on his arrival. In the beginning the two leaders entered into "a treaty of friendship and alliance."<sup>22</sup> This treaty was accomplished through a traditional Indian *areito* (ceremony) called *guatiao*, or the exchanging of names in order to establish kinship relations, peace and friendship. In order to make peace, Agüeybana opted to transform the Spaniards symbolically and physically into kinspeople, just like the Iroquois had done since ancient times and attempted to do with the Dutch and French settlers in Iroquoia.<sup>23</sup> In Borikén, our grandmothers and grandfathers "blessed the alignment of the Spanish blood with the Indian blood in order for the children to survive. . . . in order [that] the seed that the woman carried would not be eliminated."<sup>24</sup> This form of passive resistance was also the standard response in Quisqueya: "Instead of fighting, the standard reaction of the Taínos to their early encounters with Spaniards included attempts to adopt Spaniards into their cacicazgos [territory of a *cacike* or chiefdom] and to recognize their leaders as caciques in their own right. The Taínos' aim appears to have been to join with the Spaniards in reciprocal kinship and trade relations, as they would have done with a powerful Indian group"<sup>25</sup> (emphasis added). Francisco Moscoso describes the aim of Agüeybana in Borikén:

---

<sup>22</sup>Federico Ribes Tovar, *A Chronological History of Puerto Rico*, New York: Plus Ultra Educational Publishers, Inc., 1973, p. 20.

<sup>23</sup>Matthew Dennis, *Cultivating a Landscape of Peace: Iroquois-European Encounters in Seventeenth Century America*, Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1993, p. 8.

<sup>24</sup>Interview with Boricua artisan and cultural practitioner Margarita Nogueras-Vidal, July 30, 1998.

<sup>25</sup>Guitar, *Cultural Genesis*, p. 335.

Agüeybana, the great chief of Guaynia, had news of the devastation of the Tainos of Hispaniola. The historian Fernandez de Oviedo affirmed that in order to avoid such a fate in Puerto Rico, Agüeybana opted to be a *guatiao* or bloodbrother, with Ponce de León. He agreed to make *conucos* to provide cassava bread to the Spaniards and instructed his subchiefs to assist the colonizers.<sup>26</sup>

Agüeybana agreed to allow Ponce de Leon to set up a settlement of his choice on the island. This resulted in the founding of Caparra on the northern coast next to the bay that came to be known as “Puerto Rico.” As designated by the name “Puerto Rico” or “rich port,” Ponce de Leon chose the area because it was abundant in *guanín* (gold). The Indian *cacikes* had provided *naborías* (a class of workers) to assist in the search for gold in the northern rivers of Bayamón, Cebuco, Cayniabón and Manatoabón.<sup>27</sup> However the *naborías* kept fleeing from the mines, which soon after resulted in the implementation of the *encomienda* system that attempted to force them to work.<sup>28</sup> Paradoxically, even though the Carib leaders were contributing to their own colonization, “Of course these concessions do not signify that he [Agüeybana] was ceding any sovereign rights to the Spaniards.”<sup>29</sup> The use of the *guatiao* meant the *cacical* system became secularized by the *cacikes* and, thus, was not destroyed as it had been in Santo Domingo.<sup>30</sup> “The *cacical* system persisted here. It was changed. It was secularized. Instead of *cacikes*, you had a lot of economic arbitrators. You had large landowners, large properties producing and

---

<sup>26</sup>Francisco Moscoso, “Chieftdom and Encomienda in Puerto Rico: The Development of Tribal Society and the Spanish Colonization to 1530,” in Adalberto López, ed., *The Puerto Ricans: Their History, Culture, and Society*, Cambridge, Mass.: Schenkman Publishing Company, 1980, p. 18.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid.

<sup>28</sup>Steiner, *The Islands*, p. 13.

<sup>29</sup>Figuerola Mercado, *History of Puerto Rico*, p. 57.

<sup>30</sup>Interview with Lamourt-Valentín, July 27, 1998.



exporting. This was always an exportation economy,” points out Lamourt-Valentín.<sup>31</sup> Again, given the knowledge of the carnage taking place in Quisqueya, it makes more sense to view these initial events in Borikén as tactical long-term survival strategies.

In addition, an active rebellion against the Spaniards was brewing. The exploitation of labor and gold for profit was completely incomprehensible to the Carib, who had only used the mineral for ornamental purposes.<sup>32</sup> They resented their own labor being used to enrich the colonizers and deprive themselves of their cultural ways and customs:

What they would not tolerate was that their own labor had to put the gold in the hands of the invaders. These realities and the belief of the natives that they could not have intercourse with their wives while working the mines, prolonged by many days when carried out by the Spaniards, began to create in the landowners a growing resistance to the demands of the invaders, in spite of the agreement with the Caciques, who were becoming more and more reluctant to lend laborers. . . .

The meaningless work in the mines; the insistence [sic] on the abandonment of their customs, such as the bathing and nudity; the changing of their diet of yuca derivatives for others requiring less time in preparation; the impeding of the celebration of the areytos and the missionary spirit of those who arrived as guests and now were converted into lords, began the slow incubation of the desire and the duty to throw off the yoke.<sup>33</sup>

The implementation of the *encomienda* led directly to the Indian war of 1511. After the death of Agüeybana, his nephew Agüeybana II (the Brave) led an uprising and destroyed the Spanish settlement at Guánica. This form of active resistance or war was

---

<sup>31</sup>Ibid.

<sup>32</sup>Figuerola Mercado, *History of Puerto Rico*, p. 59.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., pp. 59-60.

meant to free the land from “foreign domination and exploitation.”<sup>34</sup> Juan Angel Silén notes, “When the Indians began to protest, it was against a violence imposed by forced labor, against a religion which threatened their whole world, and against a European morality which threatened their legitimate customs.”<sup>35</sup> Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo writes about the initial Indian rebellion and “how they killed half of the Christians that were on the island of San Juan.”<sup>36</sup> Moscoso says that in this uprising, “More than 350 Spanish settlers were reported to have been killed in the towns or scattered in the haciendas in the countryside.”<sup>37</sup> Steiner also comments on the revolt:

The revolt of the Indians failed. Yet it was not a failure. Within a few days the Indians had killed ‘more than half of the Spaniards’ on the island. Led by the *caciques* Guarionex, Urayoan, and Agueybana the Brave, they burned not only the town of Sotomayor, but other settlements. The mines were halted. The battle reports of the Conquistadors boasted of no more than a few hundred dead Indians. Most had safely escaped.<sup>38</sup>

Most fled to the mountain regions where the Indian people had already been living for hundreds and hundreds of years in the *yucayekes* (villages or *provinces*) of Guainia, Guama, Utuado, Coabey, Jatibonico, Guajataca, Guaynabo, Guayama, Turabo, Cayey, etc., all of which extend into the mountains. There were always Indian *bateys* (ceremonial

---

<sup>34</sup>Moscoso, “Chieftdom and Encomienda in Puerto Rico,” in López, ed., *The Puerto Ricans*, p. 21.

<sup>35</sup>Juan Angel Silén, *We, the Puerto Rican People: A Story of Oppression and Resistance*, Translated by Cedric Belfrage, New York and London: Monthly Review Press, 1971, pp. 22-23.

<sup>36</sup>Gonzalo Fernandez de Oviedo y Valdes, Chronicler to King-Emperor Charles V, *The Conquest and Settlement of the Island of Boriquen or Puerto Rico*, (1535), Translated and Edited by Daymond Turner, Avon, Connecticut: The Cardavon Press, 1972, p. 18.

<sup>37</sup>Moscoso, “Chieftdom and Encomienda in Puerto Rico,” in López, ed., *The Puerto Ricans*, p. 21.

<sup>38</sup>Steiner, *The Islands*, p. 14.

grounds or ball courts) near villages and vice versa.<sup>39</sup> Many *bateys* were uncovered in the 20th century, most significantly in the region of Utuado. The indigenous peoples fled to the mountain areas to survive the hard labor of the *encomienda* and the spread of diseases.<sup>40</sup> Since very few Carib had actually been killed in the initial uprising, the battle reports referred to by Steiner above would have been in all likelihood the recorded deaths from the subsequent battles at Yauco, Culebrinas Valley and in the Yagüeza province. Ponce de Leon went on the offensive and had supposedly “pacified” the island after the battle at Yagüeza. By writing that the revolt had failed, perhaps Steiner was referring to the fact that the Carib were unable to expel the Spaniards from the island. But the revolt was not a failure because the indigenous peoples had formidably challenged the colonizers and dealt them a severe blow. While a number of prominent *caciques* were killed or surrendered, the mountain regions were definitely not “pacified” because the colonial Spanish did not settle there, except for having established a royal plantation in Utuado. In any event, the war of liberation continued until 1516.<sup>41</sup> When Diego Colón established a Christian settlement near the “rebel center” on the eastern side of the island in 1514, it was reduced to ashes in a brutal attack before the settlement could be relocated.<sup>42</sup> However, Indian casualties were severe in the eastern *yucayeke* of Bieke:

The war was carried to the island of Vieques, east of Puerto Rico, where 530 war captives were taken and hundreds of others killed. As a dramatic method of intimidation, 88 Tainos (most of them elders because of their

---

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., p. 10.

<sup>40</sup>Interview with human rights advocate Nilda Aponte-Lebron, July 26, 1998.

<sup>41</sup>Juan Manuel Delgado Colón, “¿Dónde están nuestros indios?” *El Nuevo Dia*, (Puerto Rico), November 19, 1977.

<sup>42</sup>Figuerola Mercado, *History of Puerto Rico*, p. 65.

‘negative’ influence among the youth) were killed and their bodies cut to pieces and scattered along the shore. Thousands of Tainos and Caribs attacked and burned Caparra, and were later confronted in the Aymanio (the region of Loiza in northeastern Puerto Rico). It was reported that 1,000 Tainos and Caribs were killed in battle and 1,200 were made captives. Many clanlords were executed in the presence of the villagers in several *yucayques*. Still others, among them subchiefs, were exiled and enslaved in Hispaniola.<sup>43</sup>

Finally, it is important to point out that the war in Borikén had a most significant impact on the theological and juridical debates taking place in Spain during 1512 and 1513. The first protests by the Spanish clergy of abuses against the indigenous peoples in the Antilles, and some “dangerous uprisings” taking place, specifically in “San Juan Bautista,” resulted in the issuing of the *requerimiento* in 1513.<sup>44</sup> The *requerimiento*, as previously discussed, was “an attempt to give theological legitimation to the papal grant of the New World to the Castilian sovereigns for the purpose of evangelizing it.”<sup>45</sup> While this forced conversion method was obviously detrimental to the indigenous population, Indian resistance to Spanish colonialism has been largely ignored as a factor contributing to changes in Spanish policy. It is the clergy’s stance against abuses that has accounted for changes in policy, rather than the “principal protagonist” indigenous peoples’ resistance and wars versus the colonizer. Luis Rivera notes, “Spanish scholars generally stress the first factor, neglecting the importance of native rebelliousness, especially in Boriquén. This is in line with the continual omission of the principal protagonist of the

---

<sup>43</sup>Moscoso, “Chieftdom and Encomienda in Puerto Rico,” in López, ed., *The Puerto Ricans*, p. 22.

<sup>44</sup>Luis N. Rivera, *A Violent Evangelism: The Political and Religious Conquest of the Americas*, Translated by Westminster/John Knox Press, Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992, pp. 32-33.

<sup>45</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 33.

conquest—the subjugated native.”<sup>46</sup> It is actually the shedding of Indian blood that provides the stage for the Spanish chroniclers to assume their “immortal” roles.

### **Lando’s Census and the Flight of the Jíbaro**

Indigenous resistance to the Spanish presence continued throughout the 16th century in Borikén. Physical rebellions, taking flight to the mountains, avoiding census takers and miscegenation were among the most prominent forms. Resistance was recorded in the mountain regions in 1517 and during the 1520s,<sup>47</sup> and was stepped up in the 1530s against coastal settlements.<sup>48</sup> The Indian people continued “to harass the Spaniards for half a century, especially the itinerant village of San Germán.”<sup>49</sup> Puerto Rican historian Juan Manuel Delgado-Colón mentions that with the assistance of African runaway slaves and the Santa Cruz Indians, “guerrilla” warfare organized in particularly the Sierra de Luquillo lasted until the mid-16th century.<sup>50</sup> Since the *encomienda* system was never well-established in Borikén, many Carib continued to freely revolt. Steiner notes the system was “doomed” in Borikén and exported to México.<sup>51</sup> This would be a logical result of King Charles V’s freeing of all Indian slaves in the Antilles in 1520, although we know from our discussion in the previous chapter that most scholars and colonists strongly resisted and prevented actions to this effect.

---

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., p. 280.

<sup>47</sup>Moscoso, “Chieftdom and Encomienda in Puerto Rico,” in López, ed., *The Puerto Ricans*, p. 22.

<sup>48</sup>Adalberto López, “The Evolution of a Colony: Puerto Rico in the 16th, 17th, and 18th Centuries,” in López, ed., *The Puerto Ricans*, p. 25.

<sup>49</sup>Figueroa Mercado, *History of Puerto Rico*, p. 66.

<sup>50</sup>Delgado Colón, “¿Dónde están nuestros indios?” *El Nuevo Dia*.

<sup>51</sup>Steiner, *The Islands*, p. 14.

The instability of the *encomienda* in Borikén helps to explain the extremely low indigenous population figure recorded in the 1530-1531 census by the governor of the island, Francisco Manuel de Lando. According to Moscoso, Lando reported that “there were less than 2,000 natives (many of whom had been brought from other parts of the Caribbean) registered in the last *encomiendas* in Puerto Rico.”<sup>52</sup> Figueroa-Mercado points out that Lando’s census showed 1,148 “total Indians.”<sup>53</sup> The dilemma with this census figure is that it has been inevitably interpreted by scholars over the generations to be a good indication that the native population had been “exterminated.” As Figueroa-Mercado indicates: “. . . the idea that has survived from generation to generation is that the Spaniards exterminated the Indians in thirty-six years.”<sup>54</sup> Of course this was an “idea” the Spaniards sought to perpetuate in order to rid themselves of the “Indian problem.” It is also important to clarify here that some have attempted to negate the Borikén indigenous population by arguing that indigenous peoples had been brought in from other places, as noted above. However those brought in were obviously subject to the *encomiendas*, which had been primarily set up near the gold mines on the northern coast and near the southwestern settlement of San Germán. While some would have inevitably escaped to the mountain regions, those imported would have made up a very small percentage of the total Indian population as we will soon see.

Most significantly, Lando’s census did not take into account the large numbers of Indian people in villages in the mountainous interior, with the likely exception of the

---

<sup>52</sup>Moscoso, “Chieftdom and Encomienda in Puerto Rico,” in López, ed., *The Puerto Ricans*, p. 22.

<sup>53</sup>Census data in Figueroa Mercado, *History of Puerto Rico*, p. 83.

<sup>54</sup>Figueroa Mercado, *History of Puerto Rico*, p. 73.

plantation at Utuado, nor those in other parts of the island. This is confirmed by Delgado-Colón when he writes that the census of 1531 did not account for the “hundreds or thousands” hidden in the mountains.<sup>55</sup> Indeed, the census notes that the “number of natives *not* under the *encomienda*” was not stated<sup>56</sup> (emphasis added). This underestimation is typical of Spanish census misinterpretations of lower than actual native population counts throughout the Americas. For example, the earliest tribute records covering the first two generations in central México only accounted for about 200 out of approximately 2,000 “towns,” a 10 percent sample.<sup>57</sup> Accordingly, pre-European contact indigenous population totals have been just as deflated.<sup>58</sup> Regarding the Western hemisphere, scholars today commonly accept population counts ten times higher than previously thought:

Less than twenty-five years ago conventional scholarly opinion held--as it had for generations--that the pre-Columbian population of the Americas was somewhere between 8 and 14 million persons, with no more than a million in North America. Today's historians and anthropologists now commonly accept figures up to ten times as high--as many as ten million in North America, twenty-five million in central Mexico alone, and 90 to 112 million for the entire hemisphere. If correct, such estimates mean that the population of the Americas in the 15th century was equal to that of Europe, including Russia, at the time. And the numbers keep climbing.<sup>59</sup>

Given Charles V's declaration of emancipation, the *encomienda* population for Indian slaves in the Antilles would have been inevitably reduced. Moreover, as Guitar

---

<sup>55</sup>Delgado Colón, “¿Dónde están nuestros indios?” *El Nuevo Día*.

<sup>56</sup>Census data in Figueroa Mercado, *History of Puerto Rico*, p. 83.

<sup>57</sup>Cook and Borah, *Essays in Population History*, p. vi.

<sup>58</sup>In appendix 2, I provide an early 16<sup>th</sup> century indigenous population count for Borikén.

<sup>59</sup>David E. Stannard, *Before the Horror: The Population of Hawai'i on the Eve of Western Contact*, Honolulu: Social Science Research Institute, University of Hawaii, 1989, p. xv.

pointed out earlier regarding Quisqueya, it was not in the interest of *encomenderos* (slaveholders) to give accurate counts of native laborers. While the measles and small pox epidemics of 1518 and 1529 would have enormously reduced the indigenous *encomienda* population in Borikén, as Moscoso writes,<sup>60</sup> the *encomenderos* there undoubtedly exaggerated their losses for other reasons: “It might also have been true that the colonists who held natives under the *encomienda* exaggerated the disappearance of the native element to force the limitless introduction of Negro slaves, which were not subject to the ordinances or scruples that impeded the exploitation of native labourers.”<sup>61</sup> In addition, it is not clear who was included in the *encomienda* count in Borikén. The 1514 *repartimiento* (distribution) of indigenous peoples assigned to work and tribute (*indios de servicio*) in Quisqueya included “all adults, male and female, from the age of 14 upward, who were capable of work.”<sup>62</sup> However, *cacikes* were definitely not a part of the count, and most, if not all, censuses apparently ignored *niños* (children under the age of 14), and *viejos* (elders).<sup>63</sup> Cook and Borah estimated that for the period 1514-1519 *niños* and *viejos* comprised roughly 20 percent of the total population in Quisqueya, and would have most likely accounted for “fully 40 percent” of the pre-contact total because they were in “bad physical condition” by 1514.<sup>64</sup> Thus, *niños* and *viejos* may not have been a part of the tribute count in Borikén either. Given the discussion above, Lando’s census figure

---

<sup>60</sup>Moscoso, “Chieftdom and Encomienda in Puerto Rico,” in López, ed., *The Puerto Ricans*, p. 22.

<sup>61</sup>Figueroa Mercado, *History of Puerto Rico*, p. 75.

<sup>62</sup>Cook and Borah, “The Aboriginal Population in Hispaniola,” *Essays in Population History*, pp. 380-381.

<sup>63</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 382-384.

<sup>64</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 383-384.



would certainly concern a smaller percentage of the total *encomienda* population. Most importantly, the survey deals with a very small percentage of the *total* indigenous population in 1530-1531 since most Indian people in Borikén had fled or had not been a part of the *encomienda* system. This becomes strikingly clear when we look at two late 18th century population censuses.

Furthermore, it was not in the interest of the Carib or Jíbaro to be counted by the Spaniards in their surveys, anyway: “A man hiding in the hills from the swords of the Conquistadors was not likely to report his wife and his children to the census taker. The official censuses of the Indians grew smaller and smaller. Any count of the conquered by the conquerors was always about as meaningful as a census of rabbits made by wolves.”<sup>65</sup> Writing about Quisqueya, Jerónimo de Aguero likewise noted, “Indians want very much never to see Spaniards . . . so they frequently go to the mountains.”<sup>66</sup> This pattern was similar throughout the Spanish colonies.<sup>67</sup> Still, the indigenous peoples would pop up from time to time in the 16th century history in Borikén. Six years after Lando’s census, the lawyer Governor of the island found “a great number of natives on the rural farms, all mixed up with African slaves and subject (as the slaves), for sale and purchase.”<sup>68</sup> In 1586, the Bishop declared the Indian people to be ill-concealed heathens falling back into idolatry.<sup>69</sup> And when General Don Francisco Coloma retook the city of San Juan in 1599,

---

<sup>65</sup>Steiner, *The Islands*, p. 16.

<sup>66</sup>Jerónimo de Aguero, in Guitar, *Cultural Genesis*, pp. 336-337.

<sup>67</sup>Guitar, *Cultural Genesis*, p. 337.

<sup>68</sup>Figuerola Mercado, *History of Puerto Rico*, p. 73.

<sup>69</sup>Steiner, *The Islands*, p. 16.

which had been captured earlier by the English Earl of Cumberland, he was amazed to find the city “inhabited almost entirely by Indians. He reported that the settlers had fled to the mountains, from the city, and the Indians had fled to the city, from the mountains.”<sup>70</sup> This is part of the evidence that proves the indigenous peoples of Borikén had survived throughout the 16th century. It shows the Carib had indeed fled the colonial Spanish by the hundreds or thousands after the beginning of the war. The exodus of the Indian heading to high places is remembered as “The Flight of the Jíbaro”:

On the mountainous island there were hundreds of deep caves and hidden valleys. In these the Borinqueños hid and lived for generations. They became even then, as they were to become again, exiles in their own land. A writer of contemporary Puerto Rican history, Marianna Morris, has said: ‘They escaped by the hundreds, making their way into the hills at night.’ It was the fleeing Indians who were the ancestors of the *jibaros*, the men from the mountains, she has written . . .<sup>71</sup>

### **Spaniards, African Slavery and Miscegenation**

While Indian population figures had been grossly underestimated, the Spanish population in Borikén was never very large. Moscoso notes, “The Spanish population was small and most of the settlers were heavily in debt.”<sup>72</sup> By the 1530s, many of the original settlers and officials had died, returned to Spain or, as mining declined, moved on to more profitable pursuits in México and Perú.<sup>73</sup> Figueroa-Mercado says it is very obvious from Lando’s census that whites were a “dangerous minority.”<sup>74</sup> According to the census data,

---

<sup>70</sup>Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>71</sup>Steiner, *The Islands*, p. 17.

<sup>72</sup>Moscoso, “Chieftdom and Encomienda in Puerto Rico,” in López, ed., *The Puerto Ricans*, p. 23.

<sup>73</sup>Ibid.

<sup>74</sup>Figueroa Mercado, *History of Puerto Rico*, p. 83.

there were 387 married and unmarried Spanish colonists in Borikén around 1530, not including wives and children.<sup>75</sup> Others have written there were only 327 whites on the island in 1530.<sup>76</sup> The Spanish exodus became so severe that Governor Lando concluded, “unless it was checked all the Spaniards would eventually leave and the island would be lost to Spain. He issued an order that no one was to leave the island without permission from him and he brought his point home by publically cutting off the legs of two Spaniards who tried to disobey him.”<sup>77</sup>

Since gold mining was no longer economically viable, the Spaniards who remained on the island turned to agriculture and cattle raising. Several sugar mills had been established by the late 1520s, and sugar became the principal export product by the mid-16th century.<sup>78</sup> The sugar farms were mostly small family-run businesses located along the northern coastal plain.<sup>79</sup> As Indian labor had sharply decreased due to factors discussed above, the planters turned to the importation of African slaves to fulfill their labor demands:

Since Indian labor was rapidly disappearing by the 1530s and since there were too few Spaniards available and willing to supply the necessary labor in the sugar farms and cattle ranches, Spanish landowners on the island turned to the importation of black slaves to meet their labor needs. Permission to import black slaves into its American possessions had been granted by the Spanish Crown in 1503, and in the years immediately following the Spanish occupation of Boriquén some slaves were brought

---

<sup>75</sup>Census data in Figueroa Mercado, *History of Puerto Rico*, p. 83.

<sup>76</sup>Michael L. Conniff and Thomas J. Davis, *Africans in the Americas: A History of the Black Diaspora*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994, p. 76.

<sup>77</sup>López, “The Evolution of a Colony,” in López, ed., *The Puerto Ricans*, p. 25.

<sup>78</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 25-26.

<sup>79</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 26.

to the island. However, it was not till the late 1520s and the 1530s . . . that black slaves assumed an economic importance on the island.<sup>80</sup>

It is important to point out here that in comparison to other Caribbean islands, slavery was limited in Borikén. Through information attained from Ricardo Alegría in an interview, Steiner noted, “Slavery in Puerto Rico had always been limited by the island’s geography. On the coastal plains there was little more than fifteen miles of flat, arable land. There was simply not the land for the vast slave plantations that were cultivated in the rest of the Caribbean, and in the Southern United States.”<sup>81</sup> Michael Conniff and Thomas Davis report that by 1530 Puerto Rico had 2,292 slaves.<sup>82</sup> Indian and African slaves would be included together in their count as Lando’s census revealed that there were a total of 675 Indian slaves and 1,523 African slaves at this time.<sup>83</sup> In Hispaniola, however, approximately 30,000 slaves may have been brought in by 1565.<sup>84</sup> Cudjoe says that by 1787 the French were importing more than 40,000 slaves per year to Haití, as there were over 11,000 annual deaths.<sup>85</sup> And Jamaica (Xaymaca) brought in more than 63,000 slaves between 1801-1807.<sup>86</sup> In sharp contrast, Alejandro O’Reilly’s census in Puerto Rico in 1765 indicated that there were 5,037 black slaves out of 44,883 total

---

<sup>80</sup>Ibid.

<sup>81</sup>Steiner, *The Islands*, p. 60.

<sup>82</sup>Conniff and Davis, *Africans in the Americas*, p. 76.

<sup>83</sup>Census data in Figueroa Mercado, *History of Puerto Rico*, p. 83.

<sup>84</sup>Conniff and Davis, *Africans in the Americas*, p. 76.

<sup>85</sup>Cudjoe, *Resistance and Caribbean Literature*, p. 14.

<sup>86</sup>Ibid., p. 22.

inhabitants.<sup>87</sup> A 1778 census on the island revealed 6,603 “negro slaves” and 4,657 “mulatto slaves.”<sup>88</sup> Figueroa-Mercado notes that after a slave uprising was brutally crushed by whites in 1532, “the numerical superiority of the Africans diminished, and, apart from that early epoch, Puerto Rico differed to the other Antilles in that she never had great numbers of slaves.”<sup>89</sup>

As the Carib had rebelled against the *encomienda*, Africans too resisted an inhumane system they were subjected to as depicted by the uprising above. They often joined up with the Carib along the coasts and in the mountains to battle the Spanish. The political relationship was one emboldened by a love of freedom and fierce resistance to colonialism, like that of the *Garifuna* (Black Caribs) of St. Vincent, who were ultimately exiled by the British to Central America at the end of the 18th century. In terms of miscegenation, African slaves in Borikén tended to intermix and marry with Indian, *mestizo* and Spanish people along the coasts, where the plantations were primarily located.<sup>90</sup> Many poor Spaniards who did not receive “the gifts” or lands went to the mountains to become subsistence farmers. They tended to intermix and marry with the Indian people there.<sup>91</sup>

---

<sup>87</sup>López, “The Evolution of a Colony,” in López, ed., *The Puerto Ricans*, p. 40.

<sup>88</sup>Census data in Figueroa Mercado, *History of Puerto Rico*, p. 74.

<sup>89</sup>Figueroa Mercado, *History of Puerto Rico*, p. 84.

<sup>90</sup>Interview with Aponte-Lebron, July 26, 1998.

<sup>91</sup>*Ibid.*

African slaves too often fled, alone or in groups, into the forests and mountainous interior.<sup>92</sup> The Indian people there would have been their best potential allies, like they had been in Brazil and Quisqueya.<sup>93</sup> Guitar points out that the indigenous peoples of Quisqueya “knew the island—the escape routes, the isolated regions, what grew where and how to find it or grow it, and how to best utilize the region’s resources.”<sup>94</sup> This knowledge would be no different for any people residing in a particular place for hundreds of years. Thus, the African and Spanish people who fled to the interior of Borikén were often embraced by the Indian culture and people and inevitably *assimilated* through miscegenation as their numbers would have been small compared to the indigenous population. This assimilation process occurred throughout the mountain regions. While foreigners along the coasts and in the cities assimilated the Indian people there, it was the opposite transformational process when it came to the Jíbaro in the mountains.<sup>95</sup> According to Don Pedro Matos-Matos, the Jíbaro has always resisted assimilation: “And that is why the *jibaros* are so stubborn, so silent, so humble, and so independent. Because we are so Indian. That is why we resist assimilation.”<sup>96</sup> Arroyo notes that miscegenation “may have changed the outward features of the Boricuas, but only strengthened the inner spiritual need for freedom.”<sup>97</sup> Don Pedro describes the

---

<sup>92</sup>López, “The Evolution of a Colony,” in López, ed., *The Puerto Ricans*, p. 27.

<sup>93</sup>Guitar, *Cultural Genesis*, p. 359.

<sup>94</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>95</sup>Jíbaro Don Pedro Matos-Matos, in Steiner, *The Islands*, p. 91.

<sup>96</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 94.

<sup>97</sup>Arroyo, *Da Borinkees*, p. 9.

assimilation process and the heart and soul of the Jíbaro, a fiercely independent people whose cultural and spiritual roots and love of the land extend back since time immemorial:

‘If it were not for us, the *jíbaros*, there would be no Puerto Rico,’ said Don Pedro Matos Matos. ‘The heart and soul of Puerto Rico is in the heart and soul of the *jíbaros*.

‘For hundreds of years we have resisted all the foreigners--the Spaniards and the Americans. You know how? It is no mystery. On the coasts, in the cities of San Juan, Ponce, Mayagüez, when the foreigners came, they assimilated the Puerto Ricans. Not here! In Utuado, in the mountains, the foreigners were assimilated by us. ¡Sí! They marry our women. And our women they make Puertorriqueños out of them. The *jíbaros* are very stubborn. Especially if they are women. I think our women may be a little more Indian than our men.

‘Anyone who wishes to know the Puerto Rican must know the *jíbaros*,’ said Don Pedro. ‘Or he knows *nothing*. We *are* Puerto Rico.’<sup>98</sup>

The social interrelationship that formed in the mountain regions resulted in the continued political and cultural development of the Jíbaro over the next three centuries. The development of Jíbaro music, art, dance, poetry and food crops, for example, provide important clues about the growth of the Jíbaro culture. Regarding music, there were originally eighteen Jíbaro instruments such as the drum, trunk, tortoise shell and string instrument.<sup>99</sup> The gourds used for percussion instruments like the *güiro* (which make a scratchy sound), *maracas*, and early drum were of Indian origin, while Africans introduced a certain drum and a one-string instrument like a harp, and the Spanish brought over the six-string guitar.<sup>100</sup> This synthesis forms the basis of the Jíbaro music

---

<sup>98</sup>Matos-Matos, in Steiner, *The Islands*, pp. 90-91.

<sup>99</sup>Interview with indigenous cultural practitioner Niña Raffaele-Aponte, July 26, 1998.

<sup>100</sup>Interview with Raffaele-Aponte, Aponte-Lebron, and Baracutey, July 26, 1998.

that lives on today. The development of food crops in the interior was also uniquely Jíbaro, as elaborated on by Don Pedro:

It was the Indian way. And it was the *jibaro* way. The colonization of the land by the Spaniards and then the Americans, into a one-crop economy, was resisted by the *jibaros*. 'At first, we grew cocoa beans for the conquerors, then we grew ginger, which grows wild along the riverbeds, then we grew coffee, then we grew sugar cane, and then tobacco,' said Don Pedro. 'But in Utuado we always managed to grow many crops simultaneously--the tobacco, the coffee, and our own food. So, though in the lowlands they had a one-crop economy, in the mountains we boasted a diversified agriculture. That accounted for our more sound economy in our towns. In our land we raised corn, all kinds of beans, rice, and roots--the old Indian food. Even our land had an independent spirit.'<sup>101</sup>

### **The 17<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> Century and Origin of the Proletariat**

By the beginning of the 17th century, a large cultural and psychological gap between the towns and rural areas permeated the island until the end of the 19th century.<sup>102</sup> There were hundreds of subsistence farmers in the rural and interior areas basically isolated from the sugar farms, cattle ranches and towns. In fact the only towns established at this time were San Juan and San Germán, both of which were small and sparsely populated.<sup>103</sup> More surprisingly, there were no roads built on the island at the end of the 18th century.<sup>104</sup> Sugar production and cattle exports grew slowly and the island was of little economic value to Spain until the late 1700s.<sup>105</sup> Spain's interest in Puerto Rico was essentially strategic in terms of maintaining control over the Spanish Caribbean

---

<sup>101</sup>Matos Matos, in Steiner, *The Islands*, p. 94.

<sup>102</sup>López, "The Evolution of a Colony," in López, ed., *The Puerto Ricans*, p. 33.

<sup>103</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 31-32.

<sup>104</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 44.

<sup>105</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 27.



and Central America. “It was imperative that Spain hold on to the island, for should it fall into the hands of the enemies of Spain it could serve as a base of operations that could disrupt and even paralyze the entire Spanish-American commercial system,” writes López.<sup>106</sup> Indeed, attacks by the English, French and Dutch throughout the 17th century revealed Spain’s weaknesses and loss of territory, which resulted in the establishment of a permanent presence among Spain’s enemies in the Antilles and on the American continent.<sup>107</sup> From a contemporary perspective Figueroa-Mercado concluded, “there was more smoke than fire and that Spain was not as powerful as was thought.”<sup>108</sup> Lamourt-Valentin affirms Spain’s weaknesses, loss of influence throughout the Caribbean, and how the Spanish were astounded at the major civilization they had encountered:

This [was] a major civilization. It freaked the Spanish out. The Spanish were not established in the Caribbean. They reestablished themselves on the continent. They lost the Caribbean. . . . They were kicked out of all the major islands. They only had Havana and the western part of Cuba. . . . In Santo Domingo, the only thing they had were two or three trade outposts. And the rest of Santo Domingo they never conquered, and they never conquered, definitely, never conquered Haití. The French were invited into Haití by the *cacikes*.<sup>109</sup>

One of the interesting phenomena about Borikén was the large number of non-slaves who contributed to the labor force on the sugar farms and cattle ranches. This had begun in the early 17th century.<sup>110</sup> As the economy began to grow in the 18th century, particularly the sugar industry, more slaves were imported to the island as a needed

---

<sup>106</sup>Ibid., p. 28.

<sup>107</sup>Ibid., p. 34.

<sup>108</sup>Figueroa Mercado, *History of Puerto Rico*, p. 93.

<sup>109</sup>Interview with Lamourt-Valentín, July 27, 1998.

<sup>110</sup>López, “The Evolution of a Colony,” in López, ed., *The Puerto Ricans*, p. 33.

source of labor.<sup>111</sup> However, non-slave labor by the mid-18th century had “assumed great importance in certain activities, and in some sugar and coffee farms non-slave laborers often outnumbered the slaves. These free laborers, however, constituted an unstable labor force since many of them would work only for part of the year, and others often left their employers and settled as subsistence farmers in the interior.”<sup>112</sup> This situation resulted in the first appearance of the *proletariat* as recorded in Western history.<sup>113</sup> The Frenchman Ledru was sent to Puerto Rico in the 1790s where he recorded free laborers working “arm-in-arm, shoulder-to-shoulder at the same work in the same way as the slaves. What he’s describing is the proletariat.”<sup>114</sup> Marriages by slaves to Indian people compromised the slave-owner to employ the free laborer. The slave would not be allowed to work if the owner did not also employ the free laborer because the slave belonged to the community, not to the owner.<sup>115</sup> These “free laborers” would have been mostly “Free Colored” Indian people and “Free Negroes” as interpreted from the 1771 and 1778 censuses (see censuses below). By the end of the 18th century, some important censuses had been taken and the population of the island had grown:

The population was over 150,000 and a significant proportion of it was now concentrated in the mountain chain of the interior. There were several dozen towns; Ponce and Mayagüez were expanding commercial centers, and San Germán had a population of several thousand. Town life throughout the island was livelier than in the past; contact between the towns and the rural areas was greater. More merchants now traveled

---

<sup>111</sup>Ibid., p. 38.

<sup>112</sup>Ibid., pp. 38-39.

<sup>113</sup>Interview with Lamourt-Valentín, July 27, 1998.

<sup>114</sup>Ibid.

<sup>115</sup>Ibid.

through the interior and more people lived year round in the towns. San Juan, which still remained the commercial, administrative and ecclesiastical capital, was a bustling community of over 10,000 people.<sup>116</sup>

### Late 18<sup>th</sup> Century Censuses

In order to get a better idea of the size of the Indian population in the mountain regions at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century we will examine two population censuses taken at that time. Most of the data from the censuses of 1771 and 1778 are provided here by Figueroa-Mercado and Delgado-Colón, who are informed in part by the renowned Puerto Rican historian Salvador Brau. The censuses were by order of King Carlos III,<sup>117</sup> and conducted by Fray Iñigo Abbad y Lasierra. Both reveal the category “Indians,” or “*Indios*” as written in Spanish. This category was of those officially shown to be “full blooded [*de raza pura*] descendants of those who, emancipated by Charles V, tried to distance themselves from their oppressors. Still settled in lands close to San Germán del Guadianilla in 1570, they migrated up to the harshest [*agrio*] areas in the mountains, in a vicinity called La Indiera.”<sup>118</sup> The group comprised “360 heads of family with 752 male sons and 1,190 women of every age and status,”<sup>119</sup> for a total of 2,302 people as noted in the 1778 census. The region where these censuses were taken was in the municipality of Maricao, in the communities now known as Indiera Alta, Indiera Baja and Indiera Fria.<sup>120</sup> A census taken in 1799 showed that their numbers had remained virtually unchanged with

---

<sup>116</sup>López, “The Evolution of a Colony,” in López, ed., *The Puerto Ricans*, p. 44.

<sup>117</sup>Figueroa Mercado, *History of Puerto Rico*, p. 74.

<sup>118</sup>Salvador Brau, in Delgado Colón, “¿Dónde están nuestros indios?” *El Nuevo Dia*.

<sup>119</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>120</sup>Delgado Colón, “¿Dónde están nuestros indios?” *El Nuevo Dia*.

2,300 Indian people counted.<sup>121</sup> The results of the 1771 and 1778 censuses and the note below are quoted in Figueroa-Mercado:

	<u>Year 1771</u>	<u>Year 1778</u>
Whites.....	31,951	46,756
“Indians”.....	1,756	2,302
Free Colored.....	24,164	34,867
Free Negroes.....	4,747	7,866
Mulatto Slaves.....	3,343	4,657
Negro Slaves.....	4,249	6,603

“Please note that there was a majority of non-whites. In 1771, 38,259 compared to 31,951, and in 1778 56,295 compared to 46,756. Please note, moreover, that crossbreeds are not specified (native with White) or other mixtures, under the term ‘free coloured people’. If we compare this census with O’Reilly’s made in 1765 we note an increase in the number of slaves from 7,592 in 1771 and 11,560 in 1778, as compared to 5,037 slaves in 1765.”<sup>122</sup>

In a personal interview with Delgado-Colón, he made three important points clear to me regarding the data from the census category “Indians”: 1) at the time these censuses were taken and previous to that La Indiera (lit., “place where the Indian lives”) comprised the *entire* mountain region, not just the areas around Maricao as La Indiera is known as today; 2) the censuses were conducted by the Catholic Church and the data extracted from church baptism records, or from “Indians” who had been baptized; and 3) the censuses did not take into account the many who had not been baptized. Delgado-Colón emphasized, “there were many more people there than the census indicates.” In fact, the census data revealed “10 percent of the reality.”<sup>123</sup> Given our discussion above of typically underestimated indigenous population figures in the Spanish colonies, and

---

<sup>121</sup>Ibid.

<sup>122</sup>Figueroa Mercado, *History of Puerto Rico*, p. 74.

<sup>123</sup>Interview with Puerto Rican historian Juan Manuel Delgado-Colón, July 15, 1999.

grossly underestimated totals for the Americas as a whole, the implications in terms of estimating an indigenous population count for the mountain regions of Borikén in the late 18th century are enormous.

In looking at the 1778 census, since the category “Indians” only took into account those who were baptized (or 10 percent of the total), there would have been approximately 23,020 “full blooded” Indian people in the vicinity where the census was taken, i.e., in the communities now known as Indiera Alta, Indiera Baja and Indiera Fria in the municipality of Maricao. Next, the general data for the censuses were extracted from numerous “towns” around the island, primarily coastal and rural *pueblos* including the capital of San Juan.<sup>124</sup> Since the censuses only considered the category “Indians” from the region of Maricao, they did not take into account the Indian people throughout the Cordilleras or other mountain regions, *as La Indiera was known back then*, nor those in the Sierra de Luquillo. If we estimate the number of indigenous peoples in the mountain regions of Las Marias, Lares, Adjuntas, Jayuya, Ciales, Morovis, Orocovis, Villalba, Barranquitas and Aibonito, who were not a part of the census count as there were *no towns* established in these areas at this time,<sup>125</sup> the population count becomes much larger. By multiplying Maricao and the ten regions above by the population count we determined for Maricao in 1778 (11 x 23,020), we arrive at a tentative figure of 253,220 inhabitants. However, since indigenous survival was probably greatest in Maricao due to the remoteness of the region, we need to reduce the 23,020 count for the other regions. If

---

<sup>124</sup>Census data in Arturo Santana and Rafael A. Torrech, *Atlas De La Historia De Puerto Rico*, San Juan: Editorial Cordillera, 1988, p. 37.

<sup>125</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 37, 55.

we half this figure, which may be generous because we know indigenous survival permeated throughout the interior, we come up with a indigenous population count of 11,510 per region. By multiplying this figure by the ten regions above and adding the 23,020 figure for Maricao, we come to a total count of approximately 138,120 “full blooded” Indian people residing in the above mountain regions in 1778.

For those who may be skeptical about this figure, the count would no doubt include many “Free Colored” or *mestizo* Indian people. This category of the censuses is the other important area to consider. “Free Colored” people, or “*pardos libres*” (“free browns”) in Spanish, comprised the largest population of non-whites in the censuses and their numbers had actually increased considerably from 1771 to 1778. “*Pardos* people” were commonly descended from Indians.<sup>126</sup> In his research at the Catholic Church in Morovis, Roberto Martínez-Torres found out that Catholic priests had written in their baptism records that “*pardos* people were Indian descendants.”<sup>127</sup> The category “Free Colored” thus primarily pertains to *mestizos*, or Indian people intermixed with Africans, or “native with White,” as noted by Figueroa-Mercado. This category would also most likely have included Africans who intermixed with Spaniards, or so-called “mulattos,” who were not slaves. As elaborated on in Chapter 1, these “mixed” (*mestizo*) Indian people are to be considered *no less* indigenous than their “full blooded” brothers and sisters since we realize that the concepts of “racial purity” and “blood quantum” measurements were European “divide and conquer” strategies meant to separate indigenous peoples from each other and gradually verify their very “extinction.” Thus,

---

<sup>126</sup>Interview with Puerto Rican archeologist Roberto Martínez-Torres, July 14, 1999.

<sup>127</sup>Ibid.

Indian descendants as *first peoples* comprised the second largest total in the censuses. However, since the ten regions above were not a part of the census count, this group would have certainly made up a much larger portion of the population in the interior than this census category indicates.

Nevertheless, the total population count noted above is most probably an underestimation since the censuses did not account for the people living in other mountain and rural areas such as Cidra, Aguas Buenas, Comerio, Naranjito, Corozal, which had yet to establish towns, nor in the Sierra de Luquillo region.<sup>128</sup> We can now estimate that there could have been well over 200,000 *Jibaro* Indian inhabitants throughout the entire mountain region at this time. As for the island as a whole, this figure does not account for Indian descendants along the coastal areas. The figure above does not contradict López's comment that the population on the island in the late 18th century was over 150,000 with a "significant portion" concentrated in the mountain interior. This figure further does not contradict the hundreds or thousands of *Jibaros* who had fled to the mountains two hundred fifty years earlier and would have continued to propagate among themselves and with those who were already there. The main point to be made about the late 18th century censuses is that they grossly underestimated and did not take into consideration the tens of thousands of Indian people residing in the mountain regions of Borikén at that time.

Finally, altitudinal factors have helped to explain long-term indigenous survival in various mountainous interior regions in the Americas. Cook and Borah's methods and findings of demographic pre and post-European contact population counts for central

México and Columbia could have direct implications for Borikén. Indigenous survival in the mountain regions could be explained by Cook and Borah's look at zonal differences and climate in relation to the destruction of population. Their inquiry into differences between the plateau, intermediate zone and coastal regions of central America led them to the realization that "the higher the altitude the less the loss of population in central México through factors introduced by the Europeans. Obviously the relation is one of temperature and humidity."<sup>129</sup>

In Columbia, the variety of climate zones also exhibits a direct corollary between altitudinal differences and destruction of population. Like central México, "the areas studied in Columbia show destruction of population but with the same marked altitudinal differences in impact; that is, the higher the altitude and consequently the colder the climate, the less massive the operation of the factors and the greater the proportionate survival of the aboriginal population."<sup>130</sup> For example, the Tunja and Pamplona living in the interior regions of Columbia had a much lower rate of population loss than the Quimbaya, who resided in the "intermediate zone" analogous to central México.<sup>131</sup> The Tunja and Pamplona achieved equilibrium and began the recovery process near the mid-18th century, whereas the Quimbaya are said to have become effectively "extinct" by 1650.<sup>132</sup> In Borikén, the mountain interior regions cover approximately 40 percent of the

---

<sup>128</sup>Santana and Torrech, *Atlas De La Historia De Puerto Rico*, pp. 37, 55.

<sup>129</sup>Cook and Borah, *Essays in Population History*, p. viii.

<sup>130</sup>*Ibid.*, p. xiii.

<sup>131</sup>Cook and Borah, "The Historical Demography of Interior Tribes of Columbia in the Studies of Juan Friede and German Colmenares," *Essays in Population History*, Vol. I, p. 429.

<sup>132</sup>*Ibid.*



total landmass with altitudes of up to 4,000 feet. Again, many Carib had fled to the extensive web of caves, hills and valleys of these regions after the war of 1511, where many had already dwelt for hundreds if not thousands of years. Given that the Spanish did not colonize the interior of the island until the 19th century (as discussed below), the altitudinal factor appears most credible in helping to explain indigenous cultural survival and presence in the mountain regions of Borikén.

### **The 19th Century Jíbaro**

The 19th century began with the erasure of the census category “Indians” from the census records. The population census of 1800 listed the category of “*Indios*” as “*pardos libres*.”<sup>133</sup> Figueroa-Mercado states that when “faced with the difficulty of fixing ethnic origins,” Governor Toribio Montes “banded all the non-whites together under the title of free colored people (*pardos*).”<sup>134</sup> Paradoxically, this act came directly on the heels of the development of a “Puerto Rican” political and national consciousness. In other words, the creation of the “Puerto Rican” came at the expense of the Indian or Jíbaro. This act of genocide negated or instantly wiped out the Indian presence from the record books since the category “*pardos libres*,” which primarily pertained to Indian people, has not been interpreted this way in the history books. As with indigenous groups historically, this negation assumes a national consciousness to be superior to and, thus, takes precedence over all things indigenous, particularly one’s identity. Franke Wilmer explains that the push for national integration was a phenomenon that came at the expense of indigenous peoples and encouraged by a world system primarily centered on economic benefits:

---

<sup>133</sup>Delgado Colón, “¿Dónde están nuestros indios?” *El Nuevo Dia*.

<sup>134</sup>Figueroa Mercado, *History of Puerto Rico*, p. 74.

Indigenous peoples belong to the non-European, decentralized local communities that resisted the process of assimilation, national integration, and incorporation into areas of the world colonized and now controlled by descendants of Europeans. Because incorporation into the world system is largely, but not exclusively, an economic process, claims to resources (land and subsurface minerals) occupied or used by indigenous peoples are often made by the modern state on the grounds that indigenous peoples are morally incompetent to make the so-called best use of resources.<sup>135</sup>

Those who set the political or *neocolonial* boundaries of the Puerto Rican national consciousness were the colonial Spanish and Puerto Rican creole elite, who were socially and politically conservative and displayed a “fear of and contempt for the masses.”<sup>136</sup> The “masses” referred to here would primarily be the tens of thousands of Jíbaros in the mountains, who remained a free people up until this time. The Spanish did not begin to colonize the mountain regions of Puerto Rico until 1812, and they did not take over the island until after the 1868 *Grito de Lares* (the Cry of Lares).<sup>137</sup> According to Lamourt-Valentín, “We were a free country up until 1812. This is the same history as any of the African and Asian countries when European expansionism explodes after the Napoleonic wars, and they [the Spanish] take over Puerto Rico. . . . Historically, the Spanish supposedly had sovereignty here over all that period of time previous, but that was only an economic arrangement. What they had is San Juan. They didn’t have the island.” The Spanish did not have sovereignty over Borikén until after the 1868 military occupation.<sup>138</sup> Although the *Grito de Lares* revolution led by Ramón Emeterio Betances was lost, it

---

<sup>135</sup>Franke Wilmer, *The Indigenous Voice in World Politics: Since Time Immemorial*, Newbury Park/London/New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1993, p. 7.

<sup>136</sup>Adalberto López, “Birth of a Nation: Puerto Rico in the Nineteenth Century,” in López, ed., *The Puerto Ricans*, p. 53.

<sup>137</sup>Interview with Lamourt-Valentín, July 27, 1998.

<sup>138</sup>*Ibid.*

became a catalyst and reference point for subsequent liberation efforts. It was the Jíbaro people who were the driving force behind the revolution. They were the impetus to expel the Spaniards from the island, which eventually succeeded, throughout the 19th century:

In these mountain towns lived the *guerrilleros* and *macheteros* who had fought the Spaniards in the revolts of the early 1800s. On the Plaza of Lares it was the *jíbaros* (many had come from the neighboring Utuado) who raised the flag of Puerto Rico in the Revolution of 1868. When that revolution was lost after the Spanish repressions of 1887, the 'Terrible Year,' many of its intellectual leaders had to flee the country, but it was the illiterate but knowing *jíbaros* who kept the movement stubbornly alive. By 1891 they had become so strong that the colonial police arrested seventy members of the Asociación Liberal Separatista de Utuado on the charge of 'conspiracy' to drive the Spaniards out. They were defended by the statesman and poet José de Diego. Not even his eloquence could help them, though, for several of the accused proudly proclaimed their guilt in court.

'A man ought to say what he believes for everyone to hear. He ought to be proud of his beliefs,' said one of their descendants. 'If I have to choose between my life and my conscience, I choose my conscience.'<sup>139</sup>

There were other tactics of political and cultural survival employed that persisted in the 19th century. This included the *naturalization* of the Spanish language into the native tongue. The Indian language spoken was "an 'original' native discourse in a 'naturalized' language, . . . which happens to be Spanish, but with a native frame of reference which does not qualify Spanish as a pre-american language, nor the native language with a colonial identity."<sup>140</sup> Lamourt-Valentín indicates the commercial language in Borikén was never Spanish. Spanish was a secondary language. The first social language of the masses at the time of the *Grito de Lares* and forty years before then was the native language. At this time, "you could probably go anywhere on the island and

---

<sup>139</sup>Steiner, *The Islands*, p. 90.

<sup>140</sup>Oscar Lamourt-Valentín, *Cannibal Recipes*, A socio-linguistic account of indigenous Carib-Jíbaro culture and response to the work of Ramón Pané, Ames: Iowa State University, Unpublished, 1979, p. 7.

speak Indian and everybody would know what you're talking about.”<sup>141</sup> Indeed, the Commissioner of Education in Puerto Rico once reported to the U.S. Congress that a “majority of the people . . . do not speak pure Spanish. Their language is a patois, almost unintelligible to the natives of Barcelona and Madrid.”<sup>142</sup> And the ethnological methodology employed by American anthropologist Jesse Walter Fewkes in his 1907 study considered the survival of “*existing natives*” and deals with “survivals of language in names of places, animals, plants, and objects, including all aboriginal and many dialectic names peculiar to the modern islanders.”<sup>143</sup>

The practice of native spiritualism (*espiritismo*), or spiritual thought and healing, through traditional medicinal and healing practices was vital in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Native medicinal practitioners, or *curanderos*, were advanced in their knowledge of medicinal herbs. Since doctors and hospitals in the 19th century were mostly located in the urban towns caring primarily for the elite, in the rural areas “the vast majority of people usually turned to home remedies or local *curanderos* when ill.”<sup>144</sup> As documented by María Dolores Hajosy-Benedetti in interviews with native practitioners, healing through traditional medicinal plants and herbs, planting crops by the cycles of the moon, and

---

<sup>141</sup>Interview with Lamourt-Valentín, July 27, 1998.

<sup>142</sup>Commissioner of Education, in Norma Carr, *The Puerto Ricans in Hawaii: 1900-1958*, Ph.D. Dissertation, Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa, 1989, p. 47.

<sup>143</sup>Jesse Walter Fewkes, *The Aborigines of Porto Rico and Neighboring Islands*, 25th Annual Report, B.A.E., Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1907, p. 20.

<sup>144</sup>López, “Birth of a Nation,” in López, ed., *The Puerto Ricans*, p. 61

*espiritismo* were being practiced in Puerto Rico in the late 1980s.<sup>145</sup> Regarding her own experiences, Hajosy-Benedetti writes:

Personally, I can attest to the efficacy of many of the remedies described in this work: aloe (*sábila*) for bronchial complaints, burns and constipation, wild balsam apple (*cundeamor*) for skin problems, chicken bone broth for chronic fatigue, rue (*ruda*) and broadleaf coriander (*recao*) for menstrual irregularity, and herbal baths for physical and spiritual renewal are among them.<sup>146</sup>

And the early adoption of Christian symbols that *physically* substituted for indigenous ones further permeated the 19th century until today. For example, Yaya, grandfather of the Four Twins in the Carib creation story, is depicted as the Christian Saint Lazarus, patron of the poor.<sup>147</sup> Yaya means “pained and ulcerated,” and Saint Lazarus is represented as an old man on crutches escorted by four dogs:

There is very little trouble in discovering him in religious stores which purvey images of saints but he will be called Saint Lazarus, Patron of the Poor and his iconography represents him as an old man supporting himself on crutches accompanied by four dogs, or ‘cans’ (*cannis*), which is a ‘clue’ because ‘can’ signified reptile (*lagarto*) and much the same occurs in this case with ‘christian’ personalities who assume animal symbols associated to another and alternative ‘system of belief’ indigenous to the same cultural area from pre-columbian times associated to agricultural deities who bring the gift of water from the sky; are associated to certain constellations and fulfill a calendrical role, . . . chiefly at planting time; like the Virgin.<sup>148</sup>

Finally, as the population in the mountain regions of Borikén at the end of the 18th century was primarily indigenous, this was largely the case throughout the 19th

---

<sup>145</sup>See María Dolores Hajosy Benedetti, *Earth & Spirit: Healing Lore and More from Puerto Rico*, Maplewood, N.J.: Waterfront Press, 1989.

<sup>146</sup>Hajosy Benedetti, *Earth & Spirit*, p. xv.

<sup>147</sup>Lamour-Valentín, *Cannibal Recipes*, p. 11.

<sup>148</sup>*Ibid.*

century and later. At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, there were “entire villages” of Indian people there.<sup>149</sup> There were three thousand inhabitants living in the village of Barrio de los Indios.<sup>150</sup> After the American takeover in 1898, the building of modern cemeteries were directly related to the indigenous presence. Steiner remarks how indigenous religious offerings continued “*well into the twentieth century.*”<sup>151</sup> He notes, “Even after the conquest of the island by the United States, the religious rites of the Borinquén Indians seemed to have survived at Caguana, near Utuado. The ‘pagan rituals’ of the dead caused the first American Governor to order the immediate building of modern cemeteries.”<sup>152</sup> And when Fewkes revisited Caguana in 1903, he was disturbed to find:

The ground was very damp, not at all suitable for the preservation of the bones or any fibrous material. Nevertheless, we found ten skeletons of both adults and children with funeral vessels so distributed that they were very evidently offerings of the dead.<sup>153</sup>

In the section of his study titled, “Present Descendants of the Porto Rican [sic] Indians,” Fewkes repeatedly noted the “Indian features” of some of the inhabitants he came across in particularly the mountain areas.<sup>154</sup> Of the *bohíos* (thatched-built houses) the people lived in, he compared the modern “cabins” he encountered in his research with traditional Indian *bohíos* revealing another important aspect regarding *cultural survival*:

---

<sup>149</sup>Steiner, *The Islands*, p. 18.

<sup>150</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>151</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 10-11.

<sup>152</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 11.

<sup>153</sup>Jesse Walter Fewkes, in Steiner, *The Islands*, p. 11.

<sup>154</sup>Jesse Walter Fewkes, *The Aborigines of Porto Rico and Neighboring Islands*, 25th Annual Report, B.A.E., Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1907, pp. 24-26.

The houses of the aboriginal Porto Ricans were like those of the Haitians and not very different from the cabins of the poorer people of the island today, especially those in the mountains, where old types of construction still survive. Naturally modern cabins present many modifications, as the use of iron nails in fastening the beams, but the materials used in construction are practically the same, and the old architectural types are still followed in modern dwellings.<sup>155</sup>

Martínez-Torres told me that people were still living in *bohíos* in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. Regarding present-day descendants in the town of Morovis, he said, “There are a lot of families here in Morovis who are Indian descendants.”<sup>156</sup> This information is corroborated by Boricua Indian descendant and President of the United Puerto Rican Association of Hawai‘i, Angel Santiago-Cruz. He told me that when he was growing up in Bayamón in the 1960s and 1970s, *bohíos* were still being used, and, while most people were not living in them, there were Indian families scattered throughout the area. He also said there were a lot of Indian families present in many other regions of the island at the time.<sup>157</sup> Santiago-Cruz recalls that many of the things his mother and grandmother did were not European-introduced. For instance, the way they prepared their foods and the ingredients and utensils they used were indigenous in origin. Those around him specifically grew plants for medicinal use such as the lemon tree, and they always planted by the cycles of the moon. He pointed out that during his mother’s and grandmother’s generation, it was not popular to talk about these things because they had been made to feel ashamed of their Indian background. This was due in part to the American takeover

---

<sup>155</sup>Ibid., p. 41.

<sup>156</sup>Interview with Martínez-Torres, July 14, 1999.

<sup>157</sup>Interview with Boricua Indian descendant and President of the United Puerto Rican Association of Hawai‘i (UPRAH), Angel Santiago-Cruz, September 19, 2004.

of Puerto Rico and the cultural influences that had been brought in. Nevertheless, they still did things in the Indian way.<sup>158</sup>

As I refer to throughout this work, it is important to say that I have heard numerous stories such as these since I began my interview process in 1998. Given the pattern of resistance and survival outlined in this chapter, and the statements above, it can be confirmed that indigenous Caribbean peoples of the mountain regions of Borikén survived throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and their descendants are still there today. The contemporary indigenous presence and movement are further discussed in Chapter 7. And in the next chapter, we find that most of the 5,000 or more people recruited from Puerto Rico to work on the sugar plantations of Hawai‘i in 1900-1901 were also Jíbaros primarily from the mountain regions.

### **Conclusion**

The evidence presented in this chapter documents the physical and cultural survival of the indigenous peoples of Borikén from the early 16<sup>th</sup> century until well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This is accomplished in narrative form by allowing indigenous descendants to tell their own history and stories, and through analyses of certain population censuses that had been conducted on the island. Early forms of resistance to the Spanish invasion were both passive and active. The implementation of the *guatiao*, war and rebellion, fleeing, avoiding census takers, miscegenation, and the adoption of the Spanish language and Christian symbols were all survival strategies that proved to be long-term. For the hundreds or thousands of Carib who fled to the mountain regions after

---

<sup>158</sup>Interview with Santiago-Cruz, November 11, 2004.



the war of 1511, life continued though no doubt under more difficult conditions. Many had already been living in *yucayes* in the mountains for hundreds and hundreds of years. Lando's census of 1530-1531 did not take these people into consideration, for it primarily measured the *encomienda* segment of the population on the northern coast and near San Germán.

In terms of miscegenation, the Spanish population in Borikén was consistently small. Many of those who remained after the 1530s went to the mountains and became subsistence farmers. They tended to intermix and marry with the Indian people there. Because 40 percent of the island is mountainous and 35 percent covered by hills, the introduction of European agriculture and African labor was practically speaking much less prevalent than in the rest of the northern Antilles. African slaves tended to intermix and marry with Indian, *mestizo*, and Spanish people near the plantations along the coasts. They also fled to the mountains where the Indian people would have been their "best potential allies." Both Africans and Spaniards were assimilated into the Indian culture in the mountain regions as their numbers would have been small compared to the indigenous population.

The Spanish censuses of 1771 and 1778 grossly underestimated and did not take into consideration the tens of thousands of Indian people residing in the mountain regions of the island at that time. We estimate that there could have been well over 200,000 Jíbaro Indian inhabitants throughout the entire region. This includes both "full blooded" and *mestizos*, who had always been *one people*. This figure does not account for indigenous peoples along the coasts. The figure does not contradict López's comment that

the population of the island at this time exceeded 150,000 with a “significant portion” concentrated in the mountains. Indigenous cultural survival permeated throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century as the Spanish did not colonize the mountain regions until this time. Altitudinal factors also appear to have contributed to survival. Therefore, the evidence revealed in this chapter effectively disproves the long-held theory that the Indian people of the northern Antilles had become “extinct” by the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century. The early forms of resistance proved to have been successful in Borikén, for this history has been passed down for generations and is still recounted by indigenous descendants today.

## Chapter 6

### Boricua Exodus to Hawai‘i

“Yo Seria Boricua, Aunque Naciera En La Luna”  
(I would be Boricua, even if I were born on the moon)

Poet Juan Antonio Corretjer

The train was parked in the great desert 300 miles outside of El Paso. No one was allowed to leave the cars. Sweltering heat by day and cool nights affected the passengers, but they were allowed no relief from either. At first no one approached the train, but on the second day, some Indians ventured near. They approached cautiously; some carried weapons. They could see the armed guards and wondered at what treasures they might be guarding. At closer view, the Indians saw only passengers. Strange brown-faced men and women, very unlike the usual white faces that rode the iron horses. As the Indians neared the train cars, the passengers were frightened. Each group cautiously surveyed the other. Gradually, a recognition took place. Indian brother was looking at Indian brother. Without knowing the other’s language, they began to communicate. The passengers began to sing and laugh. The Indians brought food and drink. They exchanged gifts. They were brothers in spirit, of the same earth family . . .<sup>1</sup>

From November 1900 to September 1901, eleven expeditions carrying 5,203 Boricuas departed from Borikén to the sugar plantations of Ka Pae‘āina, Hawai‘i. Most of the Puerto Ricans who emigrated there were Jíbaros from the mountain regions of Yauco, Lares, Utuado, Ajuntas and Maricao. Most of them were coffee farmers whose homes and crops had been destroyed in 1899 by the hurricane *San Ciriaco*. Others came from the coastal regions of Ponce and Mayagüez. Many more went to Hawai‘i in 1921 from such areas as Aquadilla, Coamo, Cayey, Caguas, Peñuelas and Aquas Buenos. The Boricua

---

<sup>1</sup>Ronald D. Arroyo, *Da Borinkees: The Puerto Ricans of Hawaii*, Ph.D. Dissertation, Cincinnati: Union Graduate School, 1977, p. 14.

were recruited by the Hawaiian Sugar Planters' Association (HSPA) to work on the lucrative sugar plantations scattered throughout the major islands of the Hawaiian chain.

This chapter will primarily examine the causes of the Boricua exodus to Hawai'i and effects of the initial voyages on the people who made the journey. We will look at the political and economic circumstances that led to the Puerto Rican emigration. The overthrow of the Kingdom of Hawai'i and subsequent American annexation of both Hawai'i and Puerto Rico in 1898 made the transfer of labor between the two colonies advantageous for the Hawai'i planters. The exploitation of labor contained in the official reports of the time omitted "the human cost of the process of capital expansion and the geographical relocation of the labor force."<sup>2</sup> Indeed, malnutrition and starvation were rampant among the passengers being transported to Hawai'i. Many died along the way. Juan Manuel Delgado-Colón told me candidly that my family was very lucky to have survived the trip.<sup>3</sup> They were from Yauco and left on the second voyage from Ponce on December 26, 1900. Regarding the eleven expeditions to Hawai'i, the stories and headlines surrounding the events of these journeys are fascinating and abundant. We will analyze the circumstances and conditions these expeditions faced and charges of "kidnapping" and "slavery" that surfaced in major U.S. newspapers, and in newspapers in Hawai'i and Borikén. Finally, we will briefly discuss the immediate post-migration and long-term effects and influence of the Boricua presence in Hawai'i, and the adjustments made to life there.

---

<sup>2</sup>Centro de Estudios Puertorriqueños, *Documents of the Puerto Rican Migration: Hawaii, Santo Domingo, Cuba, Ecuador*, New York: City University of New York, 1977, p. 5.

<sup>3</sup>Interview with Puerto Rican historian Juan Manuel Delgado-Colón, July 15, 1999.

Regarding the meaning of the Boricua emigration in terms of *diaspora*, James Clifford writes, “Diasporas usually presuppose longer distances and a separation more like exile: a constitutive taboo on return, or its postponement to a remote future.”<sup>4</sup> Although a few would return to the homeland, the Boricua exodus to Hawai‘i fits this more traditional definition of diaspora in that their leaving was basically permanent with little chance of physical return. The “host country” alienation aspect of the diaspora also played out as the Boricua were treated horribly by the sugar planters in the beginning. However, their departure does not mean that the desire for eventual return and cultural and ancestral connection to the homeland were diminished. The myths, memories and stories were kept alive. The Boricua community in Hawai‘i has always maintained a traditional loyalty to Puerto Rico. This is typical of most diasporic communities. For the many Kānaka Maoli born and living in the continental United States, “a common characteristic of Hawaiians on the continent is a sense of loyalty to Hawai‘i as an ancestral land base.”<sup>5</sup> So while Hawai‘i is their adopted home as they were eventually accepted by the *host* Hawaiian culture, Borikén will always be the indigenous ancestral homeland of the Boricua wherever they may be.

In terms of self-ascription, Ronald Arroyo, a cousin and descendant of the first Boricuas in Hawai‘i writes, “I have ascertained that the original groups of migrants

---

<sup>4</sup>James Clifford, “Diasporas,” *Cultural Anthropology* 9(3), American Anthropological Association, 1994, p. 304.

<sup>5</sup>J. Kehaulani Kauanui, “Diasporic De-Racination: Tracing the Contours of an Off-Island Hawaiian Category of Subjectivity,” *Out of Oceania: Diaspora, Community, and Identity*, Paper presented at the twenty-fourth annual Pacific Island Studies Conference, Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa, October 1999, p. 6.

referred to themselves as Boricuas or Boriqueños.”<sup>6</sup> These are terms of self-identification still used today. Boricua, Boriqueño and Boricano are used with “a tone of intimacy and endearment” in the poetry, popular songs, and in “all that refers to the character, customs, and sentiments of the inhabitants.”<sup>7</sup> The Boricua who went to Hawai‘i at the turn of the 20th century also identified as *Jibaro* because they were Indian people. This further debunks the myth of Carib extinction. As long as I can remember, my mother and grandmother always reminded their children and grandchildren about their “Spanish-Indian” identity, although the cultural connection to this line was rather silent. Learning from the storytellers in his family and from interviews with first generation Boricua in Hawai‘i and California, Arroyo gathered and put his information together in the form of a dissertation completed in 1977. The evidence of ascription is also apparent in the use of the derogatory sugar planter term “Borinkee,” a play off of Arroyo’s title. The suffix “ee” was attributed to most of the major laborer groups that came to Hawai‘i, such as the “Chinee,” “Japanee” and “Portagee.” Arroyo describes the use of terms and cultural heritage of the original Boricuas in Hawai‘i:

When the Porto Ricans [sic] said they were Boricuas, they were then called ‘Borinkees.’ If these migrants had called themselves Porto Ricans, they would have been called ‘Portoricanee’ or some such term. But these were people who were Boricua indians. They were proud of their indian culture as inhabitants of the island of Boriquen. Their heritage was based on a love of freedom and independence. The Spaniards called them ‘jibaros’ which meant men of freedom. They were also called ‘Los Macheteros’ for their use of cane knives as weapons in the fight for freedom and independence. An early commander of the island’s Spanish regiment referred to the jibaros as ‘the free coloured inhabitants of Porto

---

<sup>6</sup>Arroyo, *Da Borinkees*, p. 2.

<sup>7</sup>María Teresa Babín, *The Puerto Ricans’ Spirit: Their History, Life, and Culture*, Translated by Barry Luby, New York: Collier Books, 1971, pp. 1-2.

Rico.’ So the most significant aspect of the Porto Ricans who migrated to the plantations in Hawaii was that they were free persons. Their attitude of freedom was to determine their behavior in a slave-like environment on those plantations. The haoli [e] (white) landowners, in their ignorance of culture and history, seeking laborers for their sugar cane, sent agents to Puerto Rico to recruit to a slave condition a group of people who had historically fought for and fiercely protected their freedom.<sup>8</sup>

### **U.S. Imperialism and Capitalist Expansion**

By the end of the 19th century, both the Monroe and Tyler Doctrines of “manifest destiny” ultimately influenced and justified the American seizure of Puerto Rico and Hawai‘i. Along with the colonization of Cuba, the Philippines, Guam, American Samoa and the Mariana Islands, the United States entered into a new period of its history as a global hegemonic power. American military interests prevailed in Hawai‘i with the signing of the “Bayonet Constitution” in 1887 securing Pearl Harbor. This act disenfranchised the native citizenry and meant the Hawaiian nation would continue to export sugar duty-free to the U.S. continent. When Queen Lili‘uokalani attempted to promulgate a new constitution restoring Hawaiian rights in 1893, the ex-missionary led sugar planters overthrew her authority and established a “provisional” government. American President Grover Cleveland called the events surrounding the Overthrow an “act of war” and a “lawless occupation.”<sup>9</sup> Nevertheless, the *haole* oligarchy held on to power establishing a “Republic of Hawai‘i” in 1894. The outbreak of the Spanish-American war became the final justification for the American annexation of Hawai‘i in

---

<sup>8</sup>Arroyo, *Da Borinkees*, p. 3. Note: In his work, Arroyo uses the American racialized terms “Porto Rico” and “Porto Rican” in the context of the times he is writing.

<sup>9</sup>Grover Cleveland, Written Address to the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives Relating to the Hawaiian Islands, Washington, D.C., December 18, 1893.

1898, which was a blatant violation of U.S. and international law.<sup>10</sup> American foreign coercion also prevailed in Borikén. After finally having established an autonomous government from Spain in February 1898, Spain ceded Puerto Rico to the United States in the Treaty of Paris on December 10, 1898. In both cases, the mass population opposed annexation and was denied their right of self-determination.

As American capitalist interests increased in the 20th century, both Hawai'i and Puerto Rico played key military and economic roles in their respective regions. Both were used as strategic "outposts" of expansion to Asia and South America. U.S. territorial control also allowed for the free flow of labor from Puerto Rico to Hawai'i beginning in 1900. The exploitation of Puerto Rican labor in the 20th century went hand-in-hand with North American capitalist expansion:

The Puerto Rican working class has been a part of the process of North American expansion since it began. In 1900, 1950, or 1976 (with all the sharp differences that must be established), Puerto Rican workers have been subjected to the oscillations of North American capital, to its expansion and retrocession, to its organic composition, its geographic location and, in general, to the degree of development achieved in the mode of production.

Whether it be in Puerto Rico, Hawaii, Cuba, Santo Domingo and New York, whether it be in the sugar mills, in iron mines, picking tomatoes, sewing, or processing petroleum, Puerto Rican workers since their formation as a social class have been controlled and exploited by the North American bourgeoisie.<sup>11</sup>

### **Huracán, Famine and Emigration**

In Borikén, political and economic factors combined with the forces of nature predominantly influenced the Boricua emigration to Hawai'i. An American military

---

<sup>10</sup>See U.S. Public Law 103-150, November 23, 1993.

<sup>11</sup>*Documents of the Puerto Rican Migration*, p. 5.



government was established after annexation and cut off trade with Europe, thus, severing the incoming cash flow from exports.<sup>12</sup> In becoming an American possession, Puerto Rico's former trading partners had begun levying tariffs on its products, and the United States stopped importing 60 percent of the island's sugar crop.<sup>13</sup> This latter act would primarily benefit sugar planters in the American south. These factors, along with the low wages paid to workers and the devaluation of the Spanish *peso*, led to depressed economic conditions on the island.

Then, on August 8, 1899, the Antillean mother goddess of the winds and waters dealt Borikén a critical blow when the *huracán* (*hu* meaning wind or great wind) *San Ciriaco* struck the island. The hurricane most severely devastated the coffee growing country of the southwestern region. Coffee was first introduced to Borikén in 1754, and cultivation of the crop was best realized in the southwest.<sup>14</sup> It became a primary export product by 1758. Since coffee farms were mostly small family-run businesses, they did not depend on slave labor.<sup>15</sup> Coffee cultivation and the isolation of farms supported an ethos of self-sufficiency and independence among the people.<sup>16</sup> Much of this would change with the coming of the great wind. Blase Camacho Souza and Alfred Souza describe the effects of the disaster:

---

<sup>12</sup>Norma Carr, *The Puerto Ricans in Hawaii: 1900-1958*, Ph.D. Dissertation, Honolulu: University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, December 1989, p. 47.

<sup>13</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 48.

<sup>14</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 17.

<sup>15</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 27-28. Regarding the total number of farms and ranches on the island, Alejandro O'Reilly wrote in his 1765 report that there were 4,579 small farms and 269 cattle ranches. O'Reilly's report is partially quoted in, Kal Wagenheim, ed., with Olga Jimenez de Wagenheim, *The Puerto Ricans: A Documentary History*, New York: Praeger Publishers, 1973, pp. 29-33.

. . . the hurricane *San Ciriaco* of August 8, 1899, which swept over the island causing more deaths and destruction than all other previous hurricanes combined, was the one the Hawaii emigrants remember. A record 3,369 persons died. Torrential rains caused flooding which destroyed coffee, tobacco, sugar, and fruit and vegetable crops. Many buildings and homes were flattened, and towns suffered great damage. The poor in the countryside who lived in *bohios* (round huts made of poles and palm leaves) saw what little they had completely destroyed.<sup>17</sup>

With homes and crops destroyed, starvation and famine soon began to take effect in particularly the mountain and southwestern regions of the island. A report filed by Dr. A.D. Williams, an assistant surgeon of the U.S. Army, to the Adjutant-General of the “Department of Porto Rico” in San Juan, highlighted the conditions in the mountains:

At Adjuntas the conditions were appalling. Men, women and children were swollen, bloated, diseased and emaciated, whose pinched and haggard features appeared weighted with the sorrow of years. When I asked the city physician of Adjuntas the cause of such a large death rate-- fifty-two deaths and four births the week immediately preceding our visit there--he replied: ‘The death rate is about the same every week. The prime cause, chronic starvation.’<sup>18</sup>

On the heels of this famine would soon appear agents of the Hawaiian Sugar Planters’ Association. The HSPA seemed to show up at the right time in the right places to acquire the cheap labor needed for its plantations. They had recruited many laborers from other famine stricken areas in China, Japan, and later Korea.<sup>19</sup> When the Organic Act of 1900 abolished the contract labor system in Hawai‘i, the importation of Chinese

---

<sup>16</sup>Ricardo Alegría, in Carr, *The Puerto Ricans in Hawaii*, p. 27.

<sup>17</sup>Blase Camacho Souza and Alfred P. Souza, *De Borinquen A Hawaii Nuestra Historia: From Puerto Rico to Hawaii*, Honolulu: Puerto Rican Heritage Society of Hawaii, 1985, p. 16.

<sup>18</sup>Excerpt from report, in “Dying of Starvation by Scores in Porto Rico,” *The Examiner*, December 23, 1900, p. 20.

<sup>19</sup>For brief accounts of the famine-like conditions in these countries see Ronald Takaki, *Pau Hana: Plantation Life and Labor in Hawaii 1835-1920*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1983.

labor was no longer permitted as prescribed under American law, and Japanese laborers began demanding better work and wage concessions and threatened to strike. The HSPA thus sought out a new source of labor in Puerto Rico to counter the dilemma. Naturally the agents in charge, R.A. Macfie and W.D. Noble, combed the worst hurricane stricken areas seeking workers. The great irony, however, was the recruiters knew from the beginning that the Boricua were in no physical condition to make the trip. The journey to Hawai'i was a long one consisting of three legs: Puerto Rico to New Orleans to San Francisco or Los Angeles and then to Honolulu. The U.S. Department of Labor later reported: "The men had been carelessly recruited at a time when the laboring population of Porto Rico was in a condition of acute distress. It is probable that few of them were in a physical condition to make a long voyage when they went on shipboard."<sup>20</sup> The result was that many would die along the way, a point the labor department actually contradicts when they stated that there were "few deaths among them while en route."<sup>21</sup> The Puerto Rican newspaper *La Correspondencia de Puerto Rico*, which closely covered the emigration from beginning to end, apparently underestimated the severity of the trip. Providing humanitarian aid did not seem to be an option, but rather emigration thought to be "the only way out":

It is a sad and desperate situation that has now befallen this once happy and prosperous people. Since our commerce has been paralyzed and we have no other way to make a living, emigration is the only way out.

---

<sup>20</sup>United States Department of Labor, "Report of the Commissioner of Labor on Hawaii," *Bulletin of the Department of Labor*, No. 47, Washington, D.C., July 1903.

<sup>21</sup>*Ibid.*

Hundreds of people, among them some of good families, are preparing to emigrate rather than starve.<sup>22</sup>

### **Reluctant Exodus, Kidnapping and Slavery**

Thus it may seem inconceivable that a people who so loved their homeland would ever leave, but the conditions of the times caused by both the U.S. takeover and *San Ciriaco* dictated their next move. Nonetheless, there were major problems with recruitment from the start. Most of those who left on the first expedition from San Juan on November 22, 1900 thought they were being transported to another part of the island. Arroyo writes, "Whether the laborers were clearly deceived or whether they did not understand where Hawaii was, most of them thought they were merely being transported to another part of Porto Rico."<sup>23</sup> Many were lured into making the trip through verbal promises of becoming wealthy in Hawai'i and told that Spanish was the primary language spoken there.<sup>24</sup> When the *S.S. Arkadia* arrived in New Orleans a week later, the 114 passengers aboard were immediately hustled from ship to train and held incommunicado.<sup>25</sup> No one was allowed to leave the train until it stopped in Sanderson, Texas. The Boricuas were being held under armed guard:

Always the watchful eyes of the guards were on the passengers. At first no one was allowed to leave the train. The Boricuas grew angry at this treatment. They were bewildered since they had been told that they were being contracted for labor on another part of Porto Rico. On this condition they boarded a ship. After several days at sea, they arrived at New Orleans and were hurried aboard a train. Only now were they told of their true

---

<sup>22</sup>El Corresponsal, "De Yauco," *La Correspondencia de Puerto Rico*, March 12, 1901 in, *Documents of the Puerto Rican Migration*, p. 26.

<sup>23</sup>Arroyo, *Da Borinkees*, p. 18.

<sup>24</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 26-27.

<sup>25</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 18.

destination--the plantations of Hawaii. The guards, armed with rifles, continued their watch as the Boricuas were finally allowed to 'stretch their legs.' Most of the men left the train. A few women also got down. The angry men decided it was time; they had had enough. They searched near the way station and momentarily armed themselves with railroad irons. The Porto Ricans rushed the train to take it over and force the trainmen to take them back to New Orleans. The guards fired several shots over their heads. The rebellion was quickly squelched. The Boricuas realized that they were out-armed.<sup>26</sup>

The secrecy of the trip was not revealed until the train reached El Paso, where newspaper reporters would learn more about the expedition. The *New York Times* December 7, 1900 front-page read: "PORTO RICANS GO TO HAWAII: Men say they were kidnapped for the Spreckles Sugar Plantation - Closely Guarded on Train." Critical reports also appeared in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, *San Francisco Call*, *Los Angeles Times*, and in other newspapers in the United States. William Randolph Hearst, editor of *The Examiner* in San Francisco, immediately sent his top political reporter, Edward Livernash, to investigate. Hearst shared his father's hatred of the Southern Pacific railroad's monopoly on power.<sup>27</sup> Livernash blasted the railroad calling attention to the plight of the Puerto Ricans:

#### HAVE WE A NEW KIDNAPPING AND SLAVERY?

The report regarding the trainload of Porto Ricans now headed for San Francisco is one that calls for attention. It points to the beginning of a system of kidnapping laborers from our new possession in order to furnish cheap labor for Hawaii, and perhaps for other sections where laborers are in demand. The story is, in brief, that 114 Porto Ricans were put aboard a vessel on the understanding that they were to be taken to the other side of their own island. At the end of a six days' voyage they found themselves landed at New Orleans, bundled aboard a Southern Pacific special train and started slow time for San Francisco.

---

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., pp. 15-16.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., p. 18.

It may seem incredible that such a story should be true, but it is not half so incredible as the well-authenticated accounts of the horrors of the middle passage when slaves were brought to the United States by the shipload, chained and without room to lie down, and scarce a chance to breath. The railroad company and the men in charge of the Porto Ricans act in a way to confirm reports furnished by correspondents. The timetable of the trip is so arranged as to take eight extra days in traveling from Porto Rico to San Francisco. The men are guarded closely to prevent any American talking to them. The railroad officials refuse absolutely to furnish information in regard to the whereabouts of the train or the time it is to arrive at any place. It does need a Sherlock Holmes to say that the importers of the Porto Ricans are not going to the expense of feeding and guarding them for eight extra days merely for the fun of the thing. Furthermore, men do not make a mystery of an ordinary business transaction in which there is nothing to conceal.

If men are being taken from one part of the United States to another by fraud and force, the Government should put a stop to the enterprise at once. The time to end this sort of traffic is at the beginning. Slavery and involuntary servitude, except in punishment for crime, is forbidden throughout the United States. Under the beneficent laws of the Union, no man may be held to labor against his will, no matter what agreement he has been induced to sign. The only resource of an employer injured by breach of contract lies in a civil suit for damages. Porto Ricans, Hawaiians, Filipinos [sic]--all are legally as free in their persons as men born in New England, and may make and break contracts as they please, subject only to those liabilities imposed by the civil law.

If the Porto Ricans want to work in Hawaii, why that is alright. Let them go there, if they can get there and find employment. If they do not want to go to Hawaii, let them stay away. No slave-driving in this country. Just remember that Messieurs the contractors and railroad managers.<sup>28</sup>

Norma Carr notes that Hearst had “a reputation as a racist who favored American expansionism,” but she also points out he had no respect for the aristocratic sugar planter oligarchy in Hawai‘i.<sup>29</sup> Not surprisingly, the accusations of “kidnapping” and “slavery” had been questioned by some, most notably the *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*. This

---

<sup>28</sup>Edward Livernash, quoted in Arroyo, *Da Borinkees*, pp. 19-20.

<sup>29</sup>Carr, *The Puerto Ricans in Hawaii*, pp. 97, 106.

paper was owned by the principal conspirator in the Overthrow of the Queen, Lorrin A. Thurston, who was a racist in his own quest. Since Thurston was one of the most prominent supporters of the sugar industry in Hawai‘i, the bad publicity was not at all in his interest. He sent a letter to *The Examiner* supporting the planters. Thurston stated the “transaction” taking place was “fair,” made in “good faith,” and that they would be doing the passengers a “kindness” by allowing them to proceed to Hawai‘i.<sup>30</sup> Despite his benevolent claims, we see below how the large majority of Boricuas on this first expedition were being transported against their will. Most would soon be relegated to a condition of “indentured slavery” on the Hawai‘i plantations like most of the other laborer groups imported there,<sup>31</sup> “reduced to commodities” as Ronald Takaki has written.<sup>32</sup>

At Indio in the California desert, Livernash attempted to interview the Boricuas. If the railroad had nothing to conceal, why were the passengers being transported under armed guard? At first, Livernash was denied access by the head guard, Edward Rundle. The reporter then reminded Rundle about the severity of the situation and was finally allowed to interview the passengers.<sup>33</sup> Carr notes with skepticism how Livernash claimed to have interviewed ninety of the passengers. “All the emigrants supposedly agreed that they had been deceived about Hawaii and had been treated as prisoners from the moment

---

<sup>30</sup>Lorrin A. Thurston, in “Dash for Liberty by Porto Ricans,” *The Examiner*, December 14, 1900, p. 2.

<sup>31</sup>Arroyo, *Da Borinkees*, pp. 79-80.

<sup>32</sup>Takaki, *Pau Hana*, p. 55.

<sup>33</sup>Arroyo, *Da Borinkees*, pp. 25-26.

they disembarked at New Orleans,” she writes.<sup>34</sup> Arroyo verifies through the personal accounts of the passengers given to Livernash that they indeed had been deceived. He narrates in detail the words said by a number of Boricua regarding the circumstances of the journey.<sup>35</sup> Ramon Santiago, described as a young man of good character, summarized the sentiment of the group. He is quoted in *The Examiner*. Arroyo narrates:

Ramon told Livernash that he had no contract and that he had been afraid to go so far from home, but was told that Hawaii would be like Porto Rico because the Spanish language was spoken everywhere since Spaniards and Portuguese were the laboring class. He was unaware the Japanese and Chinese also composed the laboring crews in Hawaii until he had talked to some Mexican people who visited the train. Ramon claimed that he was not going to Hawaii voluntarily and ‘that nearly every person of the company feels as I do.’

Ramon did not want to continue on the trip but he had been told that under American laws he must board the steamship. Speaking for the rest of the Porto Ricans, Ramon said, ‘We would not have left home had we known we would be at the mercy of the planters in Hawaii, nor would we have left had we not been led to believe that in Hawaii we would find nearly everybody to be Portuguese, Spaniards and Americans, with Spanish the language of the country, and with great chances open to us to become wealthy. None would have sailed from San Juan--not even the few who are paid to say they are contented--had it been supposed there were Chinese and Japanese on the plantations and that Spanish is not the principal tongue in Hawaii.’<sup>36</sup>

Livernash filed his story highly critical of the venture in progress. However, along with other critical newspaper accounts, the condition of the Boricuas began to improve. Fresh bread and meat began arriving daily from Los Angeles.<sup>37</sup> A *Los Angeles Times*

---

<sup>34</sup>Carr, *The Puerto Ricans in Hawaii*, p. 98.

<sup>35</sup>Arroyo, *Da Borinkees*, pp. 26-31.

<sup>36</sup>Ramon Santiago, quoted in Edward J. Livernash, “Porto Ricans Enticed From Their Homes by Promises of Luxury and Wealth and Kept Prisoners by Threats of Violence,” *The Examiner*, December 11, 1900, pp. 1-2.

<sup>37</sup>Arroyo, *Da Borinkees*, p. 25.



reporter suddenly wrote a report favorable of the journey: All of the passengers “seemed to be in good health and spirits, have perfect liberty, going all over the town and country surrounding, bathing and washing their clothes at the artesian well.”<sup>38</sup> Both the *San Francisco Chronicle* and *The Examiner* were not at all convinced. They called for a full investigation by federal authorities centered on the issue of slavery.<sup>39</sup> Livernash presented ten violations of freedom to the American people against the Southern Pacific railroad and the Hawai‘i plantation owners. Arroyo summarizes them:

1. That the Porto Ricans had been promised by Macfie and Noble that before departure from San Juan each of them would receive \$25.00 apiece but only \$5.00 was paid.
2. That they were promised that a personal physician, known to several of them, would accompany them from San Juan to New Orleans, but no physician was present.
3. That since their clothes were ragged, they were promised good clothing before reaching New Orleans, but clothes were only given to a ‘very few of the most pressing cases.’
4. That they were promised abundant and well-prepared food but ‘had fare worse hitherto in their experience.’
5. That no Porto Rican was given a contract even though several had been promised contracts enroute.
6. That the laborers were told that Spanish was the common language in Hawaii.
7. That they were not properly informed that there was a large number of Chinese and Japanese laborers with whom they would have to work.
8. That they were also told that the Hawaiian Islands had prevailing Spanish customs.
9. That enroute the Porto Ricans had been treated ‘as prisoners’ and forbidden ‘to converse with strangers’ and also led to believe that under the American law they would be hung or sold for disobedience.

---

<sup>38</sup>Reporter quoted in, Arroyo, *Da Borinkees*, p. 32.

<sup>39</sup>Arroyo, *Da Borinkees*, pp. 33-35.

10. Finally, that, when the Porto Ricans told Alves and Rundle that ‘they had been so cruelly deceived they would not embark at San Francisco,’ some were told that under American law, they could be and would be forced to embark.<sup>40</sup>

A U.S. attorney named Flint stated the federal government could not do anything because the Puerto Ricans had not filed an official complaint. If they were being held against their will, they could have “the matter tested by a writ of habeas corpus.”<sup>41</sup> But how could they do this if they were being unlawfully restrained to begin with? The federal government had turned a blind eye to the matter as the Treasury Department declared that no action could be taken until the case had been brought before the “Supreme Court”!<sup>42</sup> Some apparently put the blame for the condition of the Boricuas in the hands of Livernash. Carr states how he wrote “one flamboyant report after another,” demonstrated “racist beliefs,” and played on “the existing prejudice against Spain and the inheritors of its culture.”<sup>43</sup> The Boricua were not being victimized but a part of Livernash’s crime. She writes, “It seems fair to say that he added to the sense of confusion and apprehension the group was suffering. He was orchestrating the little drama.”<sup>44</sup> Livernash’s writing does display a paternalistic attitude toward the Boricua, but this in no way nullifies the larger story of the condition they were placed under. His “little drama” would play out when nearly half of the passengers would escape or refuse to board the Honolulu-bound vessel once they arrived in San Francisco. If the Boricua

---

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., pp. 35-36; Violations quoted in full, in Edward J. Livernash, “Porto Ricans are Prepared to Resist,” *The Examiner*, December 12, 1900, p. 1.

<sup>41</sup>Flint, in Arroyo, *Da Borinkees*, p. 33.

<sup>42</sup>“Government Blind to Trade in Labor,” *The Examiner*, December 9, 1900, p. 1.

<sup>43</sup>Carr, *The Puerto Ricans in Hawaii*, p. 102.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., p. 103.

had been satisfied with the circumstances surrounding the trip, why would so many of them “jump ship”? This final act would present the unequivocal evidence of the fraud taking place.

### Escape

By this time word of the plight of the Boricuas had filled the San Francisco newspapers. The railway had planned to rendezvous with the vessel *Rio de Janeiro* in San Francisco and whisk the passengers off to Hawai‘i. The Boricua were keenly aware of the situation. They knew time was running out and were determined to seek their freedom. In Ontario, five young men leaped off the train. The man in charge, Frank Alves, pursued them and through vile threats convinced three of them to jump back on. Two had escaped.<sup>45</sup> In Pomona, twenty-seven more men grabbed their belongings and jumped off. With help from the local railroad, Alves pursued and apparently caught them about two miles down the track beside an orange grove.<sup>46</sup> The train now made a mad dash for San Francisco to catch up with the *Rio*. They arrived on December 15, 1900. It was a rainy and windy day, one of San Francisco’s worst winters in history. In an unusual move, the *Rio* left the dock and anchored in the middle of San Francisco bay. The passengers were to be transported on the steamer *Caroline* out to the *Rio* from Porto Costa. This maneuver was to avoid publicity, as “there could be no indignant crowds, no inquisitive public officials, no Spanish-speaking listeners to the appeals and protests and inquires of the

---

<sup>45</sup>“Dash for Liberty by Porto Ricans,” *The Examiner*, p. 1.

<sup>46</sup>*Ibid.*

victims.”<sup>47</sup> Upon arrival, Alves and his men began shouting commands to board the *Caroline*. The Boricuas moved very slowly. This was the moment of truth. They would not board the boat. In desperation, Alves told them, “The big boat is gone. Go aboard this boat and do not be afraid. This will take you to San Francisco, and days will pass before you will have to go to Hawaii, if you go at all.”<sup>48</sup> Arroyo describes what happened next:

Only then did some of the Porto Ricans board the vessel. Others waited on the dock unsure of their fate but sure that they wanted to go no further. These few grew to forty who hesitated. The guards became angered. They began to grab at the Porto Ricans trying to push them up the gangplank. The Boricuas resisted. Some who were already on the *Caroline* raced down the gangway to join their comrades. The Boricuas scuffled with the guards. The surprised guards backed off. It was the first time they had witnessed the fury of the Boricuas.<sup>49</sup>

Of the original 114 passengers to make the trip 66 ended up boarding the *Rio*, which immediately steamed toward the open sea and out into the Pacific. The front page headline of *The Examiner* on December 15, 1900 read: “THREATS AND FORCE PUT 66 PORTO RICANS ON RIO, BUT FIFTY OTHERS ESCAPE.” Below the headline was a large photograph showing a few men walking up the gangplank to board. On the left, a woman holding a child is desperately attempting to move in the opposite direction from the ship. On her right, a guard is tugging her in an effort to make her board and, on her left, another guard is taking the child from her arms, which he succeeded in doing.<sup>50</sup>

---

<sup>47</sup>Edward J. Livernash, “Threats and Force Put 66 Porto Ricans on Rio, But Fifty Others Escape,” *The Examiner*, December 15, 1900, p. 1.

<sup>48</sup>Frank Alves, in Livernash, “Threats and Force Put 66 Porto Ricans on Rio,” *The Examiner*, p. 2.

<sup>49</sup>Arroyo, *Da Borinkees*, p. 40.

<sup>50</sup>Photograph, in Livernash, “Threats and Force Put 66 Porto Ricans on Rio,” *The Examiner*, p. 1.

Finally, of the sixty-six Boricuas who set sail for Hawai‘i, only fifty-six were recorded to have arrived.<sup>51</sup> The ten not recorded or some of them may very well have died along the way. Indeed, those who stayed behind in San Francisco were in very poor health, which Dr. N. Rosencrantz attributed to “malnutrition and starvation.”<sup>52</sup> Dr. Eustypio Calderon, who also examined the emigrants, said, “I found the Porto Ricans who arrived in this city last evening in a very poor and miserable condition. Seven of the children were quite anemic and emaciated, suffering from intestinal disturbances, no doubt due to bad food--especially so in the case of the infants.”<sup>53</sup> Nevertheless, the Boricuas were soon after provided permanent housing and employment around the bay area. They would begin new lives there. It was *The Examiner* that took the initiative in seeking housing, donations and assistance from the community. No other major group knowledgeable about the matter lifted a hand. The whole affair was nearly resolved by December 26, which prompted *The Examiner* to write:

Yesterday was a very merry Christmas for the Porto Ricans who, escaping an involuntary journey to Hawaii, have settled in California. . . . Nearly all the strangers had been placed with Spanish-speaking employers and most of them in neighborhoods still strikingly Spanish in population and customs, so that to the majority yesterday had the fine charm of Spanish-American hospitality. As for the others, they had been established with persons having a fondness for the West Indian character, and reports all show that the day was for each of them a time to be loving and pleasantly remembered.<sup>54</sup>

---

<sup>51</sup>Carr, *The Puerto Ricans in Hawaii*, p. 90.

<sup>52</sup>N. Rosencrantz, in Livernash, “Threats and Force Put 66 Porto Ricans on Rio,” *The Examiner*, p. 6.

<sup>53</sup>Eustypio Calderon, in Livernash, “Threats and Force Put 66 Porto Ricans on Rio,” *The Examiner*, p. 6.

<sup>54</sup>“Christmas of the Exiled Porto Ricans,” *The Examiner*, December 26, 1900, p. 6.

## The Second Expedition

Despite the concern and media coverage of the first emigration, the next four to five expeditions appear to have been similarly problematic for the Boricua. Harsh conditions persisted in Borikén that invariably affected the physical condition of the travelers. It is important to point out that the labor contract drawn up and often cited was signed by the agents R.A. Macfie and W.D. Noble on April 16, 1901.<sup>55</sup> This was done *after* the first five voyages had already departed for Hawai'i. The laborers did not have written contracts before this time. This no doubt affected the way passengers were treated. While overall conditions would gradually improve, there was still controversy and problems throughout the Boricua emigration process to Hawai'i. Regarding the second expedition, Arroyo comments on the *Arakadia* that arrived in New Orleans on January 2, 1901 with three hundred and eighty-seven passengers:

The second migration of Porto Ricans was in a more pitiable condition than the first. Starvation was more rampant in Porto Rico. In a condition much like the first group, these emigrants were thinly clad. Unlike the first migration, there was more illness and deaths. The quarantine doctor [in Hawai'i], Dr. Thomas, described them as all suffering anemia due to lack of food. The doctor reported that the men were too weak to stand during the examination. He said that it would take months of good feeding to prepare them for work.<sup>56</sup>

Two persons died of anemia on the voyage to New Orleans, Ezequiel Rodriguez, 15, and Pedro Andujas, 22. Maria José Torres, 80, passed away on January 2 and was

---

<sup>55</sup>See Appendix 2 for contract agreement.

<sup>56</sup>Arroyo, *Da Borinkees*, pp. 50-51.

buried in New Orleans.<sup>57</sup> Carr notes that “no reports have come to light of any problems during the train trip.”<sup>58</sup> But the second train trip was under much tighter security than the first.<sup>59</sup> The HSPA did not want another media blitz. Carl Wolters, a representative of the HSPA, referred to this point and refused to discuss the arrangements of the journey. *The Examiner* reported that Wolters had denounced the San Francisco newspapers stating they had “done all in their power to kill the slave business.”<sup>60</sup> Wolters and the guards in charge were able to avoid any publicity along the train route:

Unlike the inexperienced Alves and Rundle, these guards were able to keep the train and its cargo successfully away from any publicity. The train sped across the Southwest avoiding cities and large towns, and more importantly, reporters. The train would pass through large cities at night. Many of the passengers would later only have a memory of the United States as being a large wasteland because they saw no cities or people. Having left New Orleans on January 5th, the train reached San Francisco in only four days. The first migration had taken twice as long to travel just from El Paso to San Francisco. Communication was completely shut off all along the line.<sup>61</sup>

Like the *Rio de Janeiro*, the *City of Peking* was scheduled to rendezvous with the railway in San Francisco. To observers, it was evident the train’s movements were being regulated to arrive in the city after nightfall.<sup>62</sup> What did they have to hide this time? The train tracks were ordered to be cleared between Mendota and San Francisco. *The*

---

<sup>57</sup>“Los emigrantes puertorriqueños en New Orleans,” *La Correspondencia de Puerto Rico*, January 13, 1901, in *Documents of the Puerto Rican Migration*, p. 21.

<sup>58</sup>Carr, *The Puerto Ricans in Hawaii*, p. 110.

<sup>59</sup>Arroyo, *Da Borinkees*, p. 51.

<sup>60</sup>Carl Wolters, in “Islanders Arrive Starving and Sick,” *The Examiner*, January 3, 1901, p. 2.

<sup>61</sup>Arroyo, *Da Borinkees*, p. 51.

<sup>62</sup>“Porto Ricans Sent, Helpless Chattels, Hustling to Hawaii,” *The Examiner*, January 9, 1901, p. 1.

*Examiner* reported that this was very unusual “as no train goes through Porta Costa without stopping.”<sup>63</sup> The train raced past Porto Costa and stopped in Oakland. The Boricuas were then put on the ferryboat *Newark* that took them out to the *Peking*. The transfer worked!

All along the line, precautions against escape had been flawless. Now remembering that forty persons had marched away from the last passenger loading attempt, the Southern Pacific ‘assembled fifteen gruff section hands under the foremanship of a boss named Murdock.’ Guards were stationed all around the wharf to keep intruders and reporters away and to keep the Porto Ricans in line. As soon as the trains carrying the Porto Ricans drew up to the ferryboat, the railroad men grabbed what little belongings the emigrants had and took it quickly aboard the ferry. This had been the most effective means of getting the Porto Ricans on the boat the previous time, so the procedure was repeated. The guards shouted to the passengers to move from the train to the ferry. The Porto Ricans hesitantly moved out into the cold night. The frigid wind swept off the bay. Dressed in light clothes, each person shivered as the wind’s chill cut through to their bones.<sup>64</sup>

The *Peking* docked in Honolulu on January 16, 1901. The frustrations that had mounted with this second group would finally surface soon after their arrival. The passengers had been very patient up until this point. The headline in the *Pacific Commercial Advertiser* on January 17 would read: “SHIP CAPTURED BY PORTO RICANS.” The incident that materialized proved the Boricuas had been ill treated along the way and were a group the Hawai‘i planters would have to reckon with for a time to come. On the day of their arrival, the passengers had not been fed breakfast. Since they had only been given rice and stale bread the night before, they had hoped to receive some

---

<sup>63</sup>Ibid.

<sup>64</sup>Arroyo, *Da Borinkees*, pp. 52-53.



good hot food after the customs procedure.<sup>65</sup> The Boricuas were then divided into two groups. Two hundred and eighty-two were put aboard the *Helene* and sent off to Maui. The rest boarded the steamer *Keauhou* bound for the island of Hawai‘i. The *Keauhou* did not depart until two o’clock in the afternoon, and the passengers still had not eaten. Once again out on the open sea, some of them went to see about getting some food. An argument broke out when the cook said no food would be served. He then dumped some loaves of stale bread on the forward hatch where the cattle were normally carried.<sup>66</sup> The Boricuas were outraged and demanded food. They tore off their *bangos*, a metal tag with a person’s number stamped on it, and threw them into the ocean. When the crew continued to ignore their pleas, one passenger, Baltazar Fortuno, put a knife to the throat of the wheelman and threatened to kill him if he did not take them back to the dock. The others gathered around to support him. Arroyo describes what happened next:

Captain Olsen, at first wanted to rescue his wheelman, but when he saw the Porto Ricans gathered around in support of the Boricua, he ordered the ship stopped. The anchor was dropped in midstream and the Captain signaled the dock for the police. Deputy Sheriff Chillingsworth, with two officers, went aboard. The sheriff directed the officers to arrest the Boricua. Again the other Porto Ricans moved to defend their comrade. They told the sheriff that if the man was taken off the ship, they would not allow the vessel to go to sea and would fight if they had to. Now it was the sheriff who backed down. Chillingsworth conferred with Captain Olsen and his officers. They decided that the best course was to feed the Porto Ricans immediately. The sheriff assigned his officers to accompany the ship. The Porto Ricans were fed and the *Ke-Au-Hou* put out to sea again. This time without incident.<sup>67</sup>

---

<sup>65</sup>Ibid., p. 72.

<sup>66</sup>Ibid., p. 73.

<sup>67</sup>Ibid., pp. 73-74.

## El Tren de la Muerte

While American media coverage would subside after the second expedition, the controversy surrounding the emigration mounted in Puerto Rico. All of the social classes were worried about the fate of the agricultural industry and working class.<sup>68</sup> Many of the best workers were also leaving for Ecuador, Cuba and Santo Domingo. Agriculturalists and tradesmen met to decide how to halt the emigration. In March 1901, a hostile group of two hundred people drove the labor agents contracting for Hawai'i out of the town of Utuado.<sup>69</sup> Although the resistance did slow the exodus, the unemployment situation and low wages paid to those who could find work still did not stop those who wanted to leave.

The fifth expedition that left from Guanica to Hawai'i on March 26, 1901 was quite notable. The *La Correspondencia de Puerto Rico* had interviewed two of the passengers on this voyage, who had managed to return to the island from New Orleans. They stated they had been "mistreated aboard ship and that because of this ill treatment six children and three women died on the way to New Orleans."<sup>70</sup> Moreover, the old people who spoke of the train that then left from New Orleans to Los Angeles referred to it as the *tren de la muerte*, or "the death train."<sup>71</sup> Although medical staff was present on

---

<sup>68</sup> M. Romero Haxthausen, "Causa principal de la emigración, y medios de contrarrestarla," *La Correspondencia de Puerto Rico*, March 26, 1901, in *Documents of the Puerto Rican Migration*, p. 28.

<sup>69</sup> "Los agentes de emigración al Hawaii son mal recibidos en Utuado," *La Correspondencia de Puerto Rico*, April 2, 1901, in *Documents of the Puerto Rican Migration*, p. 31.

<sup>70</sup> "Emigrados q: regresan," *La Correspondencia de Puerto Rico*, April 17, 1901, in *Documents of the Puerto Rican Migration*, p. 31.

<sup>71</sup> Arroyo, *Da Borinkees*, p. 60.

this trip, seven persons were reported to have died from “dysentery.”<sup>72</sup> The coroner surmised, “they were not the only deaths, but rather the only deaths that needed to be reported.”<sup>73</sup> The following “behind the scenes” drama is narrated by Arroyo. It vividly depicts the “catch-22” situation the Boricuas were continually placed in between starvation on the island and mistreatment on the expeditions. It also displays the contempt yet genuine concern for them:

\*The coroner was upset. He did not like the tone of Deputy Coroner Strubel’s conversation on the telephone. “What was so complicated about two deaths?” he questioned as he strode down the hall. Coroner Holland walked briskly to the examination room. Struble was a good man, he should have handled this with no problems. As the coroner approached, his assistant, Strubel, waved him over to the two bodies and spoke in low tones.

“Over here, Doctor Holland.”

“What is the matter here, Strubel?” asked the coroner impatiently, “I have a busy schedule. This should be routine, mere routine.”

“Well, Dr. Holland, I thought so at first, but, I believe you will see another matter here,” replied Strubel excitedly.

“Well, have it out,” said Holland.

“Very good. I received a call a little after 10:30 to come to the Arcade station here to receive a report of two deaths on a train. All seemed routine. When I arrived a Dr. J.E. Jennings who accompanied the passengers--a group of Porto Rican laborers bound for Hawaii--presented me with two death certificates. Both stated the cause of death to be pernicious anemia.”

“All well and good, Strubel, but what is the point?”

“Here’s my findings, but let me also tell you first of what I learned in talking to a porter. He was disturbed at the conduct of the railroad men. It seems this is not the only death, or rather deaths, that occurred on that train. To his knowledge, the porter said there

---

<sup>72</sup>Ibid., p. 61.

<sup>73</sup>Ibid., p. 62.

were at least seven others. When I inquired of Dr. Jennings about those, he presented me with seven death certificates--all attributing the cause of death to dysentery."

"Hardly plausible," commented Holland, "possible, I suppose, but highly unlikely."

"I thought the same."

"Well, is there more?" asked the coroner his professional curiosity aroused.

"Oh, yes, much more. I also learned from the porter that the deceased, Manuel Ruiz--only nine years old, sir, and Roman Caballero--he was twenty-three--both died shortly before the train reached this city--before it reached Los Angeles. Yet I was not called until later. The railroad men, it seems, put the bodies in the baggage car and proceeded, quite against regulations, about their business of debarking the Porto Ricans to the steamer Zealandia."

"Wait, Strubel," the coroner was now deeply concerned. "Are you saying that the train did not stop as it must to report the deaths? That there was an ignorance of the law?"

"Definitely so. I confirmed the matter with station personnel and onlookers. It was only after they debarked the passengers--those Porto Ricans--that it returned to the Arcade station and our office was notified."

"I am hard put to believe this, Strubel. What made the porter disclose this to you, do you know?" asked Holland.

"Oh, yes," Strubel replied, "the porter was much disturbed because of a certain treatment to the mother of the dead boy Ruiz. It seems that the mother asked permission of the agents to say goodbye to her son. She begged to be allowed to kiss the dead child's face for the last time. The agents refused her permission on the excuse that there was no time. The porter was much shaken by this--what he believed unfair conduct on the part of the agents."

"Let me see your examination."

The coroner read the report, then he went to each body and examined it carefully. As he finished, he looked up at his assistant and heaved an audible sigh.

"I agree with your report, Strubel. It is a good job."

"What can we do of this matter?" asked Strubel.

"I'm afraid we can do very little," the coroner answered wearily. "The death certificates are signed by a doctor--no matter what his competency. I would venture to say that none of the seven other deaths were properly recorded. I would surmise that they

were not the only deaths, but rather the only deaths that needed to be reported. However, these are merely conjectures.”

“Cannot something be done? What of the disobedience of regulations? They flaunted the law.” Strubel was desperate for some action.

“No, I’m afraid we are not policemen. Nor perhaps, have we real proof.”

“Then we shall do nothing?” asked Strubel.

“Perhaps not. Perhaps so. The reporters are outside. I saw them as I came in. I will have a word with them. At least, Strubel, we will let the city, perhaps the country, know that all is not right.”

The coroner walked out of the examination room and to the waiting area where the reporters were gathered patiently waiting for any story.

“Gentlemen,” announced Dr. Holland, “I wish to make a statement. You know of the deaths of two Porto Ricans emigrants--one Manuel Ruiz, nine years of age and the other, Roman Caballero, twenty-three. My statement in the connection of their deaths is that the death certificates were not proper. Our examination shows the two died of starvation and not anemia. However, I must add that, though displeased as I and my staff are at this situation, there is nothing I can do about it. The death certificates have been properly and regularly signed. That is all I can say of the matter.”<sup>74</sup>

To conclude, the emigration flow to Hawai‘i would continue until the last group left from Mayagüez on September 29, 1901. However, the HSPA’s original expectation to recruit 25,000 laborers was far less successful. Approximately 5,200 Boricuas made the trip in 1900-1901. The problems had persisted. The resistance to the recruitment continued for various reasons: the loss of labor and protests in Borikén, harsh conditions and negative publicity surrounding the emigration process, and the less than favorable reports coming back from Hawai‘i regarding labor conditions all contributed to stopping the exodus. Let’s now take a look at how the Boricuas would fare in Hawai‘i. While the first generation toiled in the fields, life for future generations would improve.

---

<sup>74</sup>Ibid., pp. 60-63.

## Life in Hawai‘i

The dark man jumped off the wagon. His legs were stiff. He walked to stretch them. He strolled down the red dirt road into the tall forest of cane stalks. As far as he could see the cane grew. Taking out his machete, he grabbed a stalk with his left hand and with his right, he swung the large knife. The cane stalk was severed with two slashes at the bottom and the top. With four quick moves, he cut away the outer skin and laid bare the sweet, white meat.

The man chewed into the cane. The sweet taste of sugar filled his mouth. This cane is good he thought. It is sweet, but it can be sweeter with good care. I don't think they burn it. If they burn it, it will taste sweeter. He looked back at the others standing by the wagons. Like this cane, he commented to himself, life can be sweet, but I think here in this new island, it will take awhile. Maybe a long while. Right now, it is not so sweet. He threw the rest of the stalk down and walked back to join his family and friends. Now he wanted to see his new home . . .<sup>75</sup>

In Hawai‘i, the image of the Puerto Rican laborers depicted by the negative media and publicity was not very complimentary from the outset. The people of Hawai‘i had read newspaper accounts describing them as having “not a sound body among all of them and all looked like consumptives,” that they were a “mongrel breed” and intermarriage had “so evidently depleted their vitality.”<sup>76</sup> The plantation owners did not really want Boricua labor and had hoped the U.S. Congress would repeal the Chinese Exclusion Act reallowing the importation of Chinese labor.<sup>77</sup> The Boricua’s place within the occupational hierarchy did not fare well since they were not Caucasians, U.S. citizens, or even “aliens” with representation back home because Puerto Rico was an American possession.<sup>78</sup>

---

<sup>75</sup>Ibid., p. 71.

<sup>76</sup>Quoted in Arroyo, *Da Borinkees*, p. 75.

<sup>77</sup>Arroyo, *Da Borinkees*, p. 74.

<sup>78</sup>Souza and Souza, *De Borinquen A Hawaii Nuestra Historia*, pp. 28-29.

Once on the plantations, the Boricua found the topography of the land and climate similar to Borikén. The vegetation was comparable and many of the same fruits could be found. Of the fifty-five plantations in Hawai‘i in 1902, the Boricuas were employed on thirty-four of them.<sup>79</sup> However, the hard work, long hours and low pay did not improve their lives. The words and promises of the labor agents were unmet.<sup>80</sup> A typical response regarding the labor conditions among the early immigrants was “*trabajo y tristeza*” - work and sorrow.<sup>81</sup> A main reason for the disappointment was that the Boricuas were not used to the regimental labor conditions employed on the Hawai‘i plantations. The siren-to-siren 5am to 5pm whistle was foreign to them. The people who came to Hawai‘i were Jíbaro farmers and “free laborers” who were used to setting their own schedules and freely choosing where they wanted to work. Their attitude and work ethic were very similar to the Kānaka Maoli, who worked when they wanted to and often refused to labor for the *haole* planters. Traditionally, both groups had worked in accordance with their own cultural customs for centuries. While most of the Boricua adjusted to the new schedule, some would “wander off” from work place to work place and often ended up in the city. This is how they gained a reputation as “vagrants.” When they protested the living conditions, wages and cruelty of the *lunas* (overseerers), they were commonly labeled as “vagrants,” “criminals” and “vindictive.” But they were good workers. The public attitude toward them became twofold: “The feelings toward the Borinkees became

---

<sup>79</sup>“Report of the Commissioner of Labor on Hawaii,” *Bulletin of the Department of Labor*, July 1903.

<sup>80</sup>Arroyo, *Da Borinkees*, p. 79.

<sup>81</sup>Souza and Souza, *De Borinquen A Hawaii Nuestra Historia*, p. 26.

two sided. Borinkees on the plantations gained a reputation as good workers, while those in the city, who found jobs scarce, became known as vagrants and criminals.’<sup>82</sup>

Racial discrimination was rampant on the plantations of Hawai‘i, with the spreading of “Caucasian civilization” coming at the expense of nonwhite laborers.<sup>83</sup> According to the HSPA, Caucasians were “constitutionally and temperamentally unfitted for labor” in the tropics, while Asians and “brown” men were “peculiarly adapted to the exactions of tropical labor,” and could be satisfactory and “permanent” field workers.<sup>84</sup> As previously shown, however, the Boricuas were not intimidated by this. They attempted to protect their personal dignity and freedom under all circumstances. If they were sick, they did not work. This sometimes came into conflict with the *lunas* who had a different attitude toward work. The story of “The Lady and the Luna” exemplifies the conflict. Coming from a matriarchal indigenous culture, Boricua women were decision makers and role models in society. They have always been strong. The story highlights the Boricua attitude under intimidating circumstances:

The most told story depicting the attitude of freedom and physical revolt of the Porto Ricans is the story of a Porto Rican woman who confronts a luna foreman. As the story is told, a luna, seeing that a certain Borinkee was not at work rode his horse to the man’s house. He told the man to come out and go to work. The woman of the house came out. She told the luna that her man was too ill to work. The luna informed the woman that everyone works. No one was too sick to work. The woman protested. Her man could not work if he was ill. The luna persisted. The man would work. If he did not come out of the house, he, the luna, would go in and drag him out. The woman pleaded to no avail. The luna demanded that she go into the house and fetch her man to work. The woman told the luna to wait and went into the house. Momentarily, she exited from the house with

---

<sup>82</sup>Arroyo, *Da Borinkees*, p. 75.

<sup>83</sup>Takaki, *Pau Hana*, p. 66.

<sup>84</sup>HSPA, quoted in Takaki, *Pau Hana*, p. 66.



a machete in hand. She charged the luna and cut off the head of his horse. The luna ran back to the fields. . . .

While most lunas may not have been cruel, they were quick to enter houses, drag workers out of bed, even when ill, and beat, kick or whip the laborers. 'They used to do anything they want. But they couldn't do that with the Borinkees. They stopped it.' The Porto Ricans were quick to retaliate against cruel treatment or invasion of privacy.<sup>85</sup>

### Waipaito

The most extreme case of racial abuse in the early days concerned the death of Samuel Damon and subsequent execution of Waipaito, or José Miranda. The event "cemented the prejudices of whites against all Porto Ricans and it forced the Porto Ricans to assume a low profile."<sup>86</sup> Miranda had been accused of murdering Damon, heir of the "Big Five" corporate dynasty in Hawai'i and son of Samuel Mills Damon, in September of 1904. Miranda did kill Damon but, as it turned out, in self-defense. The old people say it was an "act of rebellion" and not murder.<sup>87</sup> Carr concludes the incident "merely exacerbated prejudice and discrimination already active."<sup>88</sup>

While walking home one evening with two friends on Moanalua Road, Miranda had taken a safety lantern used to light the road for the horse buggy travelers. The story as told by Arroyo is that one of Miranda's companions, Maria Collona, stepped on a thorn and needed the light to see. Miranda used the light to help pull the thorn from her foot. They then continued down the road with the lantern when Damon approached in a carriage. He was returning home after spending the day working on his boat. Damon

---

<sup>85</sup> Arroyo, *Da Borinkees*, pp. 81-82.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 178.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 177.

<sup>88</sup> Carr, *The Puerto Ricans in Hawaii*, pp. 207-208.

demanded that Miranda return the lantern. When Miranda refused, Damon grabbed him by the shoulder. Arroyo tells us what happened next: “Waipaito struggled to free himself from the grip, but was unable as Damon was a strong, athletic man. Damon proceeded to push Miranda toward the lantern, occasionally cuffing him as well. Feeling the blows raining on him, Jose pulled a knife and struck out at Damon. Damon released his hold and staggered back toward the carriage. ‘I’m stabbed,’ he said. Blood stained his white linen coat.”<sup>89</sup> Damon died shortly afterwards, and Miranda, having fled the scene out of fear, was soon caught.

The incident sent a wave of rage throughout the white community in Honolulu. One of their brightest sons, rumored to be a prime candidate for governor,<sup>90</sup> had been “murdered” by a “Porto Rican.” A hostile crowd immediately gathered at the police station on the corner of Fort Street and Merchant. Some demanded Miranda be lynched. The police had to sneak him out of the station to avoid the would be lynchers.<sup>91</sup> The media was now at liberty to relentlessly unleash their racist vindictive against Miranda and the entire Boricua community:

The moral to be drawn from the cowardly assassination of Eddie Damon is that more strict espionage and more stringent punishment is needed in Honolulu to repress imported criminals. Reverra (Miranda) will probably be hung, but that is only a cheap satisfaction for the loss of such a man as his victim. It is too late to lament now about having brought such a class of man as Reverra (Miranda) to the Islands. They are here, just as the lantana, the mongoose, the mynah bird and the Japanese beetle and the only thing to do is to thoroughly infect the class with such a dread and fear of the penalty of crime that they will be willing and anxious to be good. In the

---

<sup>89</sup> Arroyo, *Da Borinkees*, p. 180.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 179.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 182-183.

meantime, the citizens of Honolulu should prepare themselves to do just what ought to be done in case they encounter a Porto Rican after nightfall.<sup>92</sup>

José Miranda did not come close to receiving a fair trial. The publicity surrounding the event would not allow it. It was nearly impossible to find an attorney to defend him before the all-white male jury.<sup>93</sup> Within a month after the death of Samuel Damon, Miranda was convicted of “first degree murder” and sentenced to hang. Justice would once again prevail in the oligarchy. Knowing he was innocent of the crime for which he would die, Miranda proudly took it on the cheek:

On October 26, less than a month after the slaying, Jose Miranda was hanged on a gallows in the yard of Oahu prison. Wearing a dark blue suit, new shoes, a negligee shirt with loose collar and a black tie, he stood on the gallows so proudly that it was reported that he ‘exhibited wonderful nerve (and) perfect composure.’ When asked if he had anything to say, Waipaito replied in Spanish that he wanted to write something. The High Sheriff ignored his request saying if he wanted to say anything he could do so. Waipaito said no more.<sup>94</sup>

### Conclusion

The Boricua community was essentially forced to go “underground” after the Miranda event. This proved to be the low point of their early presence in Hawai‘i. Both the seizure of Puerto Rico by the United States and the hurricane *San Ciriaco* had set the stage for a new life to begin. Amid the social and economic hardships, things would slowly improve for the Boricua and their families. A certain acculturation also took place, where the collective experiences of the Kānaka Maoli and the various ethnic groups who

---

<sup>92</sup>*Maui News*, October 8, 1904, p. 6.

<sup>93</sup>Arroyo, *Da Borinkees*, p. 186.

<sup>94</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 196.

emigrated to work on the sugar plantations came to develop a strong relationship of common values. According to Davianna Pomaika'i McGregor:

With the majority of Hawaiians who were planters and fishermen, they shared a respect for the land and a strong reliance on extended family relations. Loyalty, respect, and caring for family elders and the overall well-being of all family members were important values that came to characterize "local" people.

In rural plantation communities, the immigrant workers shared the common experiences of oppressive working conditions, living in plantation camp housing, and being in constant debt to the plantation store. Children of immigrant and Native Hawaiians alike attended Hawai'i's common public schools. There they were socialized by the American school system. The children learned together, ate and shared meals together, and communicated across cultural barriers in pidgin dialect.<sup>95</sup>

Although assimilation within the local Hawaiian culture was strong, a strong sense of identity, for example as "Boricua" or "real Borinkee," and bond to the homeland remained for generation after generation.<sup>96</sup> This identity and bond are still alive today in the music, food, dance, stories, history, and politically, such as the United Puerto Rican Association of Hawai'i's support to stop the U.S. military bombing of Bieke (Vieques). Finally, it is important to state that the Boricua and every ethnic group that has come to Hawai'i owe a great deal of gratitude and respect to the *host* Hawaiian people and culture, who have had to endure the severity of the capitalist transnational border crossing in their own homeland for over the past two hundred years. The Kānaka Maoli have *survived* this era and have taken in the rest of us in the process. We should not forget this. Encouragingly, as with many indigenous groups, there has been a cultural renewal and

---

<sup>95</sup>Davianna Pomaika'i McGregor, *Sovereignty: Hawaiians and Locals*, Paper presented at the Association of Asian American Studies Conference, University of Michigan, 1994, pp. 12-13.

<sup>96</sup>Arroyo, *Da Borinkees*, pp. 223-225.

revitalization taking place in both Hawai'i and Borikén, and globally as we see in the next chapter.

## Chapter 7

### The Borikén Indigenous Movement

“You will not find a more extreme case of colonialism  
in these past 500 years than that of Puerto Rico.”

Ramsey Clark, 1989

Borikén is one of the oldest colonies in the world. While the mountain regions remained free until the 19th century, the island itself has been occupied and used by foreign powers since the implementation of the *encomienda* in 1508. The 19th century independence struggle had finally seen the Jíbaro expel the colonial Spanish in 1898, only for Puerto Rico to be retaken by the United States later that year. Throughout the 20th century the independence struggle had been similarly adamant in its demand for freedom. Many Puerto Ricans have spent years in U.S. prisons fighting for the cause of independence. Because the United States has consistently kept a firm grip on the island, violent and nonviolent action have been wielded by Puerto Rican nationalists as tools of liberation and self-defense. However, while the Puerto Rican independence movement has for decades raised consciousness among Boricuas regarding the nationalist plight, Puerto Rico still remains a colony of the United States. Furthermore, the independence movement today is marginalized and does not have the popular support of the people. In fact “statehood” had become in 1990 the most widely supported political option on the island.<sup>1</sup> Four hundred years of Boricua resistance and survival and a century of economic dependency on the United States have brought us to this point in time.

---

<sup>1</sup>In November 1990, 41 percent of the electorate endorsed statehood, while 34 percent of voters supported the Commonwealth option, Pedro Cabán, “Redefining Puerto Rico’s Political Status,” in Edwin Meléndez

This final chapter will present and discuss some historical, philosophical and key elements of the indigenous movement or resurgence in Borikén. What is the meaning of this movement in terms of the future? What is its link or potential link with other groups and movements on the island? What does this resurgence have to offer the general population in Puerto Rico? Margarita Nogueras-Vidal says that the indigenous movement is really about a change in lifestyle or consciousness, e.g., by becoming more self-sufficient as Puerto Rico imports 90 percent of its food products.<sup>2</sup> One strategy then is an attempt to break the cycle of dependency on particularly the United States through more localized economic self-sufficiency models. Not surprisingly, the indigenous movement is naturally more akin to the independence political option. Most of the native practitioners and activists I met on the island are *independentistas* themselves. However breaking the cycle of dependency is much more than a nationalist issue. Multinational corporations today easily penetrate national borders. The forces of “globalization” dictate this “one size fits all” program for modern society in general. Thus, the Borikén indigenous movement attempts to address issues of concern on both the national and international levels. As we will see, the Puerto Rican diaspora has been very influential at both levels. Many Boricuas have returned to the island to become politically and culturally active. The diaspora community today is playing a substantial role in helping to shape the movement.

---

and Edgardo Meléndez, eds., *Colonial Dilemma: Critical Perspectives on Contemporary Puerto Rico*, Boston: South End Press, 1993, p. 36.

<sup>2</sup>Interview with Boricua artisan and cultural practitioner Margarita Nogueras-Vidal, July 14, 2004.

There is further an important link to be drawn between the Borikén movement and the larger global indigenous peoples' movement. The latter has strongly influenced the indigenous resurgence in Puerto Rico. As we first discuss in this chapter, the global indigenous movement is a direct response to a world economic order based on exploitation, the unequal distribution of resources and wealth, and the exclusion of rights of peoples. The origins of the current world system were ushered in during the Renaissance era, when "the crystallization of capitalist society in Europe" fuels European expansionism and domination of the world.<sup>3</sup> Thus, in order to understand and place the Borikén movement in its proper context, we must first examine the emergence and progress of the global indigenous movement and some continuing obstacles indigenous peoples face. It is also significant to point out that the three hundred million or more indigenous peoples around the world are not confined to a single contiguous territorial boundary, but spread out in order to plant seeds for future generations. This allows us to understand that the indigenous movement in Borikén is an inevitable outgrowth of a larger movement that has to do with creating change both locally and globally. As mentioned earlier, the Borikén movement was prophesied by the daughter of a *cacike* after the arrival of the Spaniards, just as our people knew well beforehand of the coming of the "covered people." Both movements are also nonviolent. The tremendous power of nonviolent resistance has been most recently realized by the people of Bieke in expelling the U.S. Navy from the island after sixty-two years of bombing. We will thus expand on the theme of nonviolence intermittently throughout this chapter. Finally, it is important to

---

<sup>3</sup>Samir Amin, *Eurocentrism*, Translated by Russell Moore, New York: Monthly Review Press, 1989, p. 71.



note that this discussion and the emergence of an indigenous movement in Puerto Rico are merely the continuation of a five hundred year old struggle. In terms of the modern-day movement and creation of social change, more follow-up work will obviously need to be completed in this area.

### **The Global Indigenous Peoples' Movement**

First peoples have a strong sense of their own identity as unique peoples, with their own lands, languages, and cultures. They claim the right to define what is meant by indigenous, and to be recognized as such by others. Some now live in cities, earning their living as, for example, lawyers and community workers--or in many cases struggling to make ends meet; others retain a traditional way of life. But they are united in their desire to maintain their identity and yet be able to adapt and survive.<sup>4</sup>

The global indigenous movement is a fairly recent phenomenon. Indigenous peoples and nations joined together to voice their concerns and demand equality at the national and international levels as they were typically denied recognition and rights within the countries they live. In this sense, the indigenous movement is like a "social revolutionary movement taking place on a global scale."<sup>5</sup> International indigenous activism "represents a movement that is made up of political communities of indigenous nations. It is both national and international because it is directed toward institutions at both of these levels and aims for inclusion of indigenous peoples on an equal basis at both levels."<sup>6</sup> The movement also has to do with transforming the global system, as we will soon see.

---

<sup>4</sup>Julian Burger, *The Gaia Atlas of First Peoples: A Future for the Indigenous World*, New York: Anchor Books Doubleday, 1990, pp. 16-17.

<sup>5</sup>Franke Wilmer, *The Indigenous Voice in World Politics: Since Time Immemorial*, Newbury Park/London/New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1993, p. 42.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 47.

At the first United Nations World Conference on Human Rights in 1968, the term “indigenous people” was not a part of the vocabulary of the conference. At this time indigenous peoples were basically considered no longer in existence, “a remnant of the past” inevitably assimilated into mainstream societies.<sup>7</sup> However, indigenous peoples such as the Maori of Aotearoa, Aborigines of Australia and various Indian nations of Canada had been advocating for rights and the resolution of conflicts at the international level since the late 19th century.<sup>8</sup> In the 1920s, Maori and North American Indian leaders appealed to the British Commonwealth and League of Nations in an effort to have their treaty rights recognized. Their appeals were rejected on the basis that “domestic” jurisdiction issues fell within the domain of national governments. Similar appeals made to United Nations officials in the 1940s and 1950s were also rejected.<sup>9</sup>

In 1957, the International Labor Organization’s (ILO) Convention 107 attempted to protect indigenous rights, but the document formulated was criticized as assimilationist and paternalistic.<sup>10</sup> Nevertheless, the convention made a significant first step in recognizing that indigenous peoples had contemporary political, cultural and land rights and interests.<sup>11</sup> In 1989, ILO Convention 169 “updated the archaic provisions of 107 but was reviled by many native peoples as ignoring the legitimate aspirations of indigenous

---

<sup>7</sup>Julian Burger in, Cultural Survival, *State of the Peoples: A Global Human Rights Report on Societies in Danger*, Boston: Beacon Press, 1993, p. 6.

<sup>8</sup>Glenn T. Morris, “International Law and Politics: Toward a Right to Self-Determination for Indigenous Peoples,” in M. Annette Jaimes, ed., *The State of Native America: Genocide, Colonization, and Resistance*, Boston: South End Press, 1992, p. 75.

<sup>9</sup>Wilmer, *The Indigenous Voice in World Politics*, pp. 2-3.

<sup>10</sup>Burger in, Cultural Survival, *State of the Peoples*, p. 5.

<sup>11</sup>Morris, “International Law and Politics,” in *The State of Native America*, p. 76.

nations and continuing to protect states in their denial of native claims for self-determination.”<sup>12</sup> By this time, however, indigenous peoples had been taking matters into their own hands. Indigenous movements like the American Indian Movement (AIM) of North America arose and grew in the 1960s and 1970s calling for international recognition of treaty and traditional rights. The Kanaka Maoli cultural renaissance and rights movement that began in the 1970s resulted in calls for Hawaiian sovereignty and independence. Indigenous peoples from North America, Scandinavia (the Saami), Aotearoa and Australia formed the World Council of Indigenous Peoples (WCIP) in 1975, the first of eleven indigenous represented NGOs to eventually gain consultative status at the UN.<sup>13</sup> The International Indian Treaty Council, Indian Law Resource Center and Indigenous Peoples’ Network were among these organizations, along with the Grand Council of the Crees. The 1971 and 1977 Declarations of Barbados, which were documents drafted by indigenous representatives and progressive anthropologists, expressed the need for a global reexamination of the impact of colonialism on indigenous peoples, and recognized “the necessity of a hemispheric indigenous movement led by native peoples.”<sup>14</sup> Franke Wilmer describes the common cultural perspective that formed among indigenous peoples at this time:

International contacts among indigenous leaders in the 1970s aroused a sense of common concern and shared experiences in relation to the states whose territorial claims had made enclaves of their indigenous communities. Through these contacts and communications, indigenous leaders also began to recognize a common cultural perspective. This

---

<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

<sup>13</sup>Wilmer, *The Indigenous Voice in World Politics*, p. 3.

<sup>14</sup>Morris, “International Law and Politics,” in *The State of Native America*, p. 76.

underlying worldview starkly contrasted with the materialistic and instrumental orientation of Western civilization and seemed to be shared consistently among a larger group of indigenous peoples similarly struggling against territorial and cultural encroachment by the advance of modernizing societies.<sup>15</sup>

Aside from the recently established Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, the United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Populations (UNWGIP) has been the only body of the UN where indigenous peoples, nations and organizations have had a right to speak publicly, though the five member body representing them comprises non-indigenous delegates. The establishment of the Working Group in 1982 is partially a response to the UN Charter, which in 1946 did not recognize indigenous peoples or their fundamental human rights. The mandate of the Working Group is twofold: “(1) to review developments regarding the human rights of indigenous populations and (2) to develop standards concerning indigenous rights.”<sup>16</sup> The group’s work culminated in the 1993 Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. This most comprehensive document includes addressing political, social, cultural and economic needs and wants of indigenous peoples, including the international right of self-determination. Significantly, the document allows for the means to greater cultural control over and access to public services since the denial of services has been a main reason why indigenous peoples have consistently fared, socio-economically, at the bottom of society.<sup>17</sup>

---

<sup>15</sup>Wilmer, *The Indigenous Voice in World Politics*, p. 18.

<sup>16</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 19.

<sup>17</sup>Burger in, Cultural Survival, *State of the Peoples*, p. 6.

The Working Group has further fully rejected “the applicability of conquest to the present circumstances of indigenous peoples.”<sup>18</sup> In fact, the use of the concepts of “discovery,” *terra nullius*, and conquest as applied to indigenous peoples’ lands have been rejected as “no longer valid in international law.”<sup>19</sup> In addition, 1993 was the International Year of the World’s Indigenous People, when the second UN World Conference on Human Rights asked the General Assembly to proclaim a decade of commitment in support of the rights of indigenous peoples.<sup>20</sup> Also in 1993, American President Bill Clinton and the U.S. Congress formally apologized to Native Hawaiians for the illegal overthrow of the Hawaiian nation a century earlier. And in 1992, a K’iche’ Maya woman named Rigoberta Menchú Tum was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for her efforts to battle human rights abuses in Guatemala, while the quincentenary of European voyages to the Americas prompted a profound reinterpretation of events occurring over the past five hundred years.

### **Indigenous Progress and Obstacles**

The change in perspective of the World Conference on Human Rights is indicative of the progress that has been made by indigenous peoples at the international level over the past three decades or so. On the recommendation of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, a sixteen member Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues was established in 2000 by the UN Economic and Social Council to further indigenous

---

<sup>18</sup>Wilmer, *The Indigenous Voice in World Politics*, p. 168.

<sup>19</sup>United Nations Economic and Social Council, Commission on Human Rights, “Discrimination Against Indigenous Peoples,” Report of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations on its Seventh Session, E/CN.4/Sub.2/1989/36, August 25, 1989, p. 9.

<sup>20</sup>Burger in, Cultural Survival, *State of the Peoples*, p. 6.

involvement in issues relating to “economic and social development, culture, the environment, education, health and human rights.”<sup>21</sup> Thus, while still marginalized at local, national and international levels, indigenous peoples have had a significant impact in shaping various policies and in raising consciousness regarding their concerns. Wilmer expands on this by writing, “Because marginal sites are places where interpretations deviate from those created and sustained by power elites, the growing power of dissident voices suggests important changes in the social context.”<sup>22</sup> The emergence of the indigenous voice in world politics suggests that the indigenous experience is becoming less marginalized, and indicates an influential change in the distribution of power and how power elites are responding to indigenous peoples’ concerns.<sup>23</sup> Although World Bank policies are still controversial among many indigenous rights and anti-globalization activists today, the bank’s issuing of a set of policy guidelines in 1982 regarding the impact of development projects on indigenous peoples is another example of the power of advocacy work. Some changes in attitudes, perspectives and policies toward indigenous peoples have been fundamental enough to prompt Wilmer to write:

If indigenous activism is bringing about a transformation of the meaning of something as fundamental to the world social system as development, then the content of the normative beliefs promoting a certain way of life through the allocation of values on a global scale is also changing. Responsiveness is occurring in both national and international political contexts . . .<sup>24</sup>

---

<sup>21</sup>United Nations Economic and Social Council, “Establishment of a Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues,” Economic and Social Council Resolution 2000/22, July 28, 2000.

<sup>22</sup>Wilmer, *The Indigenous Voice in World Politics*, p. 38.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., pp. 39-40.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., p. 40.

The global indigenous movement has much to do with transformation and shaping values within any future system of government. Indigenous peoples do not simply oppose modernization and progress but insist on defining and pursuing development consistent with their own cultural beliefs and practices.<sup>25</sup> For the indigenous world, technology is not only conceived of as “material technology” but as the application of knowledge to social, psychological and spiritual technologies. In contrast to the Western view of “solving the problems” of the natural world through material technology, the indigenous view

begins with the assumption that the limits of nature are ultimately immutable. In order to live within the limits of nature, their cultures have emphasized technologies of consciousness and ecosystem management. The technology of consciousness was necessary to the survival of indigenous peoples who chose to remain vulnerable to the natural world. That is, natural phenomena viewed as problems to Western civilization were ‘solved’ by Western materialistic technology: if land was too dry for crops, it would be irrigated; if it was occupied by dangerous animals, exterminate them; and so on. Western culture emphasized changing the natural world wherever it resisted human manipulation. Indigenous cultures, on the other hand, choose ways of adapting to the limits of the natural world.<sup>26</sup>

There are at least two central areas where the indigenous peoples’ movement can help benefit the planet in the near future: 1) through knowledge of ecological preservation and economic subsistency; and 2) by less dependency on the material world, increased levels of spiritual awareness, and thus greater chances for *nonviolence*, may be realized. Both areas are interrelated though the latter is basically contingent on success in the former. That is, there will not be any possibility for heightened human spiritual

---

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., p. 55.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., p. 207.

development and peace as long as humanity continues to worship the “money god,” value excessive materialism, and exploit the natural world. This trend surely spells the demise of the human race. However, indigenous spiritual awareness and technology can contribute to creating and enhancing nonviolent societies and cultures. In relation to ecological preservation, Wilmer further notes that in addition to

the development of a kind of ‘inner technology’ of heightened consciousness, indigenous peoples also acquired a different kind of knowledge about the natural world, a kind of knowledge that is unique to oral history and a philosophy of learning to live within the limits of the natural world. Knowledge of patterns of climate and earth changes are essential to peoples determined to live within natural limits. Prior to colonization, for instance, African peoples stored three years’ harvest and ate from the third year’s supply. This practice reflected knowledge of the probability and frequency of drought conditions in the ecosystem. Indigenous peoples’ knowledge of the environment is based on information accumulated over hundreds, even thousands, of years. It is not a knowledge of the ecosystem that can be acquired in a laboratory in a matter of several decades. It can only be acquired over time if it is the sort of knowledge considered valuable. This kind of information was not deemed valuable to Western societies until very recently.<sup>27</sup>

Despite the progress and future possibilities, multinational corporations and the nation-state are the most prominent players today contributing to the degradation of indigenous rights, lands, culture and environment. In 1981, the WCIP stated that multinationals were “the most immediate and serious threat to the survival of Indigenous Nations of the Fourth World.”<sup>28</sup> Deforestation, mining ventures, oil drilling, toxic dumping and mass tourism on native lands are examples of how multinational corporate interests fuel big business profits and the military industrial complex. The indigenous

---

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., p. 208.

<sup>28</sup>Julian Burger, World Council of Indigenous Peoples, “Transnational Corporations and Their Effect on the Resources and Land of Indigenous People,” NGO Conference on Indigenous Peoples and Land, September 1981.



presence on these “frontiers of development” is “incidental” to developers, investors, financial institutions and governmental elites.<sup>29</sup> Accordingly, the vast Pacific region has been particularly vulnerable to the business of toxic and nuclear dumping of radioactive wastes. Haunani-Kay Trask elaborates on the practice of “toxic colonialism” in terms of environmental racism in the underdeveloped world and Pacific basin:

Multi-national corporations, First World coordinating committees like the World Bank, and the First World nations themselves practice what is called ‘toxic colonialism’ by planning large-scale relocation of ‘dirty industries’ to the Third World. In the Pacific Islands, these include disastrous mining industries in Papua New Guinea, Bougainville, and other parts of Melanesia, as well as Australia. For example, mining in Papua New Guinea has caused tremendous environmental damage to the forests, the rivers, and the homelands of many tribal peoples. Although nominally independent, Papua New Guinea is in reality thoroughly dependent on Australia and other countries for foreign investment. Predictably, such investment comes at the price of ecological disaster as well as the devastation of the region’s tribal peoples.<sup>30</sup>

One of the biggest dilemmas indigenous peoples have had to contend with is how *they* are actually perceived of as a threat to the state. Indigenous land claims, treaty rights recognition, and the assertion of the right of self-determination are matters of serious concern to nation-states. However, the state tends to indiscriminately lump distinctive situations of “ethnic nationalism” together “as threats to the stability of existing nation-states. Epithets like ‘Balkanization’ and ‘separatism’ have been used by UN officials and academics to condemn politicized groups in multi-ethnic states.”<sup>31</sup> Many observers

---

<sup>29</sup>Wilmer, *The Indigenous Voice in World Politics*, p. 128.

<sup>30</sup>Haunani-Kay Trask, “Environmental Racism in the Pacific Basin,” *Lei o Ka Lanakila*, (Newspaper of the Center for Hawaiian Studies), University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa, Spring 1995, p. 15.

<sup>31</sup>Kay B. Warren, *Indigenous Movements and Their Critics: Pan-Maya Activism in Guatemala*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998, p. xiv.

express two fears centered on ethnic mobilization: “that calls for self-determination inexorably lead to the destructive breakup of existing states and that ethnic violence is the sign of our times.”<sup>32</sup> This helps to explain why the Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples has been derailed on its way to the General Assembly, with Article 3 addressing self-determination constantly being subverted. A group of states, led by the United States, have taken the liberty to determine what the Draft Declaration will imply as policy.<sup>33</sup> The U.S. intends that its own treatment of indigenous peoples under U.S. federal Indian law be emulated by other nation-states, and “is attempting to create a broader, more encompassing hegemony that minimizes the possibility that indigenous peoples might actually be protagonists of their own destinies.”<sup>34</sup> Of course this treatment would be disastrous as Congressional plenary power under federal Indian law has meant the extermination and relocation of millions of North American Indians since the turn of the 19th century, with Indian rights still being subverted today. Regarding threats to the state, it is in fact the nation-state that has been on the violent offensive against indigenous nations since the creation of the modern state system. The emergence of the indigenous peoples’ movement has been overwhelmingly *nonviolent*.

Finally, there is an important point to be made about possible violence and contiguous and non-contiguous state territories. In the cases of Puerto Rico and Hawai‘i, for example, both territories do not border other states. Thus, transitions to independence

---

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., p. 5.

<sup>33</sup>Glenn Morris, “US Model of Indigenous Rights Subverts Inter-sessional Working Group,” *Fourth World Bulletin*, Spring/Summer 1996, p. 1.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid.

here may be easier and less contentious than on a contiguous land base comprising many states. However, while there is a strong cry for independence in certain segments of society in both Puerto Rico and Hawai‘i, most indigenous groups around the world today are not advocating for independence in the international arena, but for political, cultural and economic *autonomy* within the states they live. And most indigenous groups reside in contiguous land-based areas. Nevertheless, some international law experts like Richard Falk have pointed out that UN member states have deliberately overreacted to indigenous peoples’ call for self-determination.<sup>35</sup> Kay Warren narrates Falk’s argument that nation-states are

particularly threatened by this new category of several thousand potential claimants residing in countries throughout the world. Furthermore, the geographic distribution of indigenous groups does not conform to the colonial units that were the archetypal candidates for decolonization in international law. He concludes that the international order has tactically overreacted to indigenous movements’ use of the language of self-determination despite the fact that ‘it is widely appreciated that the goal of such claimants is ‘autonomy’ in an economically, politically, and culturally meaningful form, rather than an effort to be a separate state in the international sense.’<sup>36</sup>

### **The Borikén Movement**

The global indigenous movement has inevitably influenced the indigenous revitalization taking place in Borikén. There is a clear global pattern of cultural resurgence occurring there. The indigenous reawakening and movement on the island have been also significantly influenced from the diaspora. Many indigenous activists in Puerto Rico today were affected by their experiences while living in the United States.

---

<sup>35</sup>Warren, *Indigenous Movements and Their Critics*, p. 6.

<sup>36</sup>*Ibid.*

The American Indian Movement of particularly the 1970s had a strong impact on some of those returning. This “rite of return” occurred in other places too like Hawai‘i, which helped spawn the Kanaka Maoli cultural renaissance of the 1970s. In this sense, the indigenous resurgence and modern movement in Borikén began in the 1970s.

The experiences that have shaped the Boricua recovery are similar and abundant. Grandmother Naniki Reyes-Ocasio, Margarita Noguerras-Vidal, Elba Anaca Lugo and Baracutey recalled their early experiences in Borikén and abroad, and how most of them had been drawn back to the homeland through oral tradition, ancestral memory and spirit. Naniki grew up between both Puerto Rico and New York City. She was always aware of her Indian roots. While it took her awhile to act on the culture, she always knew of her indigenous identity.<sup>37</sup> Her awareness became visible through tradition, through how her family lived their lives. She learned much from her father’s mother’s recounting of what her life was like when she was growing up as a child. Naniki recalls that her grandmother used to tell her about *areitos* and *conocos*, using the Indian words to describe her farm and agricultural work. She would tell her about the particular *areito* ceremony that is done at the end of harvest, or the celebration or “harvest fest” performed. Her grandmother was the cultural bearer and strength of the family. She kept things together and raised a lot of children, many of whom were not her own. This exemplifies the important indigenous cultural link sustained between the elders and the raising of children.<sup>38</sup>

---

<sup>37</sup>Interview with indigenous cultural practitioner and activist Naniki Reyes-Ocasio, July 12, 1999.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid.

Heeding Juan Antonio Corretjer's famous quote, Nogueras-Vidal is Boricua even though she was born and raised in North America. She knew about her indigenous roots from the times her mother would talk about her grandmother and her father about his grandmother and great grandmother, who were "Indian of Boriké."<sup>39</sup> She said her indigenous reawakening began in the North, as she was guided by North American Indian grandmothers and grandfathers. An Algonkin grandmother exposed her to the "spiritualness of the Indian world." Nogueras-Vidal always had a calling to return to Boriké and did so permanently in 1978. Once there, she experienced a strong connection to the land and started to "work the earth," which was the key to her cultural recovery. She became an artisan. Then, "my art work started to reveal itself, and the need to expose traditional indigenous works was what pushed me into this greater awareness of who I was. And then the meeting and speaking with the old ones brought me into the center of reasoning so that I could understand what my mission [was] - here's what I'm here for. Things came together. A lot of people helped that to happen within my life."<sup>40</sup>

Anaca Lugo is from Tetuan, Utuado and has lived for most of her life in Borikén. As a girl of five or six, she remembers having intense feelings when watching movies of the North American Indians of the plains fighting against the United States of America. She said every time the cowboys would kill the Indian people, and win "every battle," she used to cry a lot. She did not know why she cried but felt that a people who were a part of her were dying. She started thinking about "why" she was crying because she did not know those people. At the age of thirteen or fourteen, she began her journey to recover

---

<sup>39</sup>Interview with Nogueras-Vidal, July 30, 1998.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid.

her cultural roots through the arts, especially music.<sup>41</sup> Baracutey's earliest recollections about American Indians were also through watching "cowboy and Indian" movies. He knew that "something was wrong" because the "Indians" were always depicted as the "bad guys," and the cowboys the "good guys." Through study and talking with indigenous peoples, he came to realize that the depiction portrayed between the two parties was actually the opposite of what he had thought. Born in Utuado, Baracutey returned to the region around 1993 after having lived in upstate New York for thirty years.<sup>42</sup>

Many indigenous groups and organizations have subsequently formed over the past fifteen years in both Borikén and the diaspora. One of the first and most important organizations inspiring the resurgence on the island is the Consejo General de Tainos Boricanos, founded in 1979. According to Anaca Lugo, one of the Consejo's first directors and current President, the organization's central purposes have been to recover indigenous cultural values and to unify other groups in Borikén and the diaspora.<sup>43</sup> The organization comprises three circles. The nucleus of the First Circle is the Council of *Arocoels* (Elders), and those who first started the movement, including Naniki Reyes-Ocasio. They established the bylaws and fundamental elements of the organization. The Second Circle is made up of professional resource people such as writers, historians, anthropologists ("humanistic archeologists"), and business people who work to promote the culture in areas like research, economics and resource management. This circle also comprises professional artisans, poets and musicians. The Third Circle primarily consists

---

<sup>41</sup>Interview with indigenous cultural practitioner and activist Elba Anaca Lugo, July 17, 1999.

<sup>42</sup>Interview with indigenous cultural practitioner and activist Baracutey, July 24, 1998.

<sup>43</sup>Interview with Anaca Lugo, July 17, 1999.

of the people, or those who are interested in learning about the culture and in recovering their indigenous heritage. The elder's council provides spiritual and cultural guidance and knowledge to members of the organization. They oversee all three circles. "We have elders representing every part of the Antilles," Anaca Lugo said, who "as grandfathers [and] grandmothers are the ones who through experience can give us the guidance and the orientation" to make the proper decisions in our future quest.<sup>44</sup>

Another group established in Borikén about 1993 is called Caney Quito Mundo. Founded by Naniki, Noguerras-Vidal and others, the Caney seeks to unify and maintain indigenous cultural traditions through spiritual gatherings and community work. The recovery and reinterment of ancestral human and cultural remains has been one of their most important tasks.<sup>45</sup> One of the most recent organizations to form in Borikén is called Otu-kan. Founded in October 2003 by Noguerras-Vidal, Christina Arce and Nelson Monge, Otu-kan is a non-profit organization dedicated to traditional, spiritual and ancestral indigenous education. Their purpose is to practice and teach spiritual and ancestral wisdom of the Native American people of Boriké. According to Noguerras-Vidal, those who came together are artisans grounded in spiritual teachings and dedicated to living an Amerindian way of life. The group provides orientations and educational workshops on healing, self-healing, and other practices. One of their objectives is to secure a piece of land for burial of ancestral remains.<sup>46</sup>

---

<sup>44</sup>Ibid.

<sup>45</sup>Interview with Anaca Lugo, November 2, 2004.

<sup>46</sup>Interview with Noguerras-Vidal, September 2, 2004.

There have also been a number of indigenous organizations established in the diaspora, particularly in New York City. Three of the most notable are Nacion Taina, the Taino Inter-Tribal Council, and the United Confederation of Taino People (UCTP). All three organizations have ties and affiliations with various indigenous groups in Borikén and the Antillean region. For example, the UCTP was originally founded in Borikén and is a chapter of the Consejo General de Tainos Boricanos.<sup>47</sup> Nacion Taina was proclaimed in New York City on November 19, 1992 as “the restoration of the Taíno Nation after almost 500 years of its dismantling by the invading Spaniards.”<sup>48</sup> The organization was established after the disintegration of a predecessor group called the “Indigenous Taino Association,” which began in 1990.<sup>49</sup> That group formed with the goals of “reaffirming Taíno identity and cultural restoration.”<sup>50</sup> Nacion Taina set up a “Council of Nitaínos” to introduce and study the concepts of “Peoplehood” and “Nationhood” in order to debunk the extinction myth. They attempted to prove the “experts” wrong in showing that the people and nation still exist: “1992 was the year of the Quincentennial, and we would not allow it to end without having had the Nation of the Taino People restored.”<sup>51</sup>

---

<sup>47</sup>Interview with Anaca Lugo, November 2, 2004.

<sup>48</sup>Vivian Otero, “Taino uahakia-ka...ketauriabo! We are Taíno-We Live!” *Vision*, (East Harlem’s Newspaper), October-November 1995, p. 6.

<sup>49</sup>“History of the Resurgence of a People,” *Nacion Taina de Las Antillas*, (Informational Bulletin), May/June 2002.

<sup>50</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>51</sup>*Ibid.*



The Taino Inter-Tribal Council is a non-profit Native American organization founded on November 24, 1993. It was incorporated in the state of New Jersey in 1995.<sup>52</sup> The organization's main purpose is to "promote and protect the Taino Indigenous people's cultural and religious rights via international public educational means."<sup>53</sup> Through education, the council seeks to promote awareness of the traditional Caribbean indigenous culture at an international level. They have also set up various projects such as a national directory list, a repatriation committee, and an elder's documentation project.<sup>54</sup> The UCTP was also established in New York City on March 27, 1998. The confederation comprises a number of Caribbean indigenous organizations that "now present a unified voice to address the many issues which concern contemporary Taino People."<sup>55</sup> Article 1 of the UCTP's Declaration notes some of these issues: "Taino cultural heritage and spiritual tradition includes but is not limited to the protection and maintenance of our ancestral remains, sacred sites, artifacts and religious practices which involve the use of ceremonial objects such as sacred plants and various feathers indigenous to the Circum-Caribbean region which shall include: the greater and lesser Antilles, the Bahamas, *Bimini* (Florida), the northern coastal area of South America and the Yucatan peninsula."<sup>56</sup> In addition, both the states of New York and Illinois respectively recognized

---

<sup>52</sup>The Taino Inter-Tribal Council, "Taino Inter-Tribal Council Charter," Adopted June 23, 1995; Amended May 16, 1996, on the web at: <http://www.hartford-hwp.com/taino/docs/charter.html>.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid.

<sup>54</sup>The Taino Inter-Tribal Council, "The Taino People," (Informational Bulletin), on the web at: <http://www.indians.org/welker/taino.htm>.

<sup>55</sup>"Taino Indian Leaders Sign Historic Declaration at New York's City Hall," *La Voz del Pueblo Taino*, (Newsletter of the United Confederation of Taino People), Vol. 1, Issue 3, May 1998, p. 2.

<sup>56</sup>Article 1, "Declaration of the United Confederation of Taino People," January 3, 1998.

March 27, 1998 and 1999 as “United Confederation of Taino People Day.” As presented by Representative Luis V. Gutierrez in 1999, part of the Illinois congressional record states:

The Taino people have the collective and individual right to identify themselves as indigenous, to be recognized as such, and to practice, revitalize, develop and transmit to coming generations the past, present and future manifestations of their distinct identity, ethnic, cultural and spiritual traditions, history, language, and customs.

The Taino people, beyond international and political borders, have taken positive steps for the recognition, promotion and protection of their collective and individual rights and freedoms, by organizing themselves for their spiritual, social, political, economic, and cultural enhancement.<sup>57</sup>

### **Political Philosophy of the Movement**

“This is a political movement,” says Nogueras-Vidal, regarding the indigenous resurgence in Borikén. “I see this as an embodiment of a political force” that has to do with all facets of the movement whether it concerns identity, recognition, cultural protocol or political activism.<sup>58</sup> On a deep level, the movement addresses issues concerning the darkest moments of Caribbean history. The holocaust initiated by the Spaniards and the Roman Catholic Church and the meaning of this history have not been fully explored or acknowledged by Spain or the Vatican. Remarkably, King Juan Carlos of Spain recently asserted that the Spanish language had never been forcibly imposed upon another people. It would be interesting to learn of Carlos’ response to the numerous treaties signed in the Antilles, which were subsequently violated by Spain:

They do not speak of the times when our people met in peace because our people were people of peace, and how many treaties were broken. They do

---

<sup>57</sup>Luis V. Gutierrez, Illinois House of Representatives, *Congressional Record*, Washington, D.C.: March 18, 1999.

<sup>58</sup>Interview with Nogueras-Vidal, July 30, 1998.

not speak about the treaties that were written just like with the North American Indians. We had treaties with these people. They broke our treaties! There is documentation that verifies this. We had treaties written in Spanish language. Our *cacikes*, our leaders, signed. They [the Spaniards] broke all the treaties just like the North American government.<sup>59</sup>

The modern indigenous movement was prophesied at the height of the Spanish atrocities taking place in Borikén. The prophecy of Aura Surey (Morning Star), the daughter of the *cacike* Jayuya, decreed that come the 24th generation our people would rise again.<sup>60</sup> Regarding the decline and fall of the Carib nation, Noguerras-Vidal notes that while our people were humble, honorable and relatively peaceful, “there is nothing that says that our people were angels. They were human beings.” Our people were entering into a process where “their spirituality is in decline and the struggle for the use and misuse of energy takes over.” There was a misuse of power that contributed to the decline. When the Spaniards arrive and start in the mentality of control and evangelization, those who are not spiritually aligned are engulfed in this mentality. In this struggle the energy of Aura Surey comes “in the essence of love” and *decrees* that our people will rise again. In the 24th generation “the awakening of responsibility, service and self-knowing comes.” Within each Boricano is “that light of eternal love and peace and wisdom that guides our way. And the wisdom is what is awakening now because of the process of cleansing. So that the children now are coming back, and we’re in the

---

<sup>59</sup>Ibid.

<sup>60</sup>Ibid.

process of cleaning the mentality and the struggle of the fight between our own darkness and our own light.”<sup>61</sup>

Nogueras-Vidal says that the recovery of our indigenous cultural heritage is going to take time. While many people in Borikén are not conscious of their indigenous background, there are small groups of people all around the island who come together, who are connected to the Earth Mother. The people “who are conscious of the fact that we are a people, we are a nation . . . are planting our seeds. We are planting the seeds for this generation and all generations to come.”<sup>62</sup> For example, the main objectives of the artisans are to perpetuate the traditions and culture and to educate. In keeping with the mandate that the “Puerto Rican Indian” be honored on August 12, which was passed by the state legislature in 1970, cultural practitioners opened a *batey* in Jayuya in 1997 and performed a ceremony in honor of the ancestors. This is now an annual event. Sharing and teaching the children about the traditions, such as in the area of pottery, are also an important part of the revitalization process.<sup>63</sup> Thus, the indigenous movement in Borikén concerns the political, cultural and spiritual recovery of the people there and in the diaspora.

The movement is also about the restoration of political independence, which means ending colonialism and dependency on the United States. Nogueras-Vidal remarks, “It just so happens that one hundred years of colonization by the North American government is in alignment with the awakening of the people of this land. . . . The people

---

<sup>61</sup>Ibid.

<sup>62</sup>Ibid.

<sup>63</sup>Interview with Nogueras-Vidal, July 10, 1999.

who are grassroots and awakened and know that the North American government has exploited this land know that this whole mentality that we cannot live if they are not here is totally untrue.”<sup>64</sup> Here the identity issue is crucial in Puerto Rico today because of its political status as a “Commonwealth” torn between independence and statehood. She says our people have always been knowledgeable about their Indian identity and the traditional ways. Yet, while the sense of being was always there, the past two or three generations did not openly express their identity and remained very silent because societal forces of the time did not allow for it.<sup>65</sup> This is the same 20th century narrative expressed by many indigenous groups in North America, the Pacific and other parts of the world, when indigenous peoples were meant to feel ashamed of who they were. Thus, as more Boricuas begin to uncover their indigenous identity, and subsequently learn more about the history and traditional cultural ways, an important force for political change could occur in Borikén. This has happened with many indigenous groups worldwide. According to Warren, for example, “Maya culture represents the meaningful selective mix of practices and knowledge, drawn on and resynthesized at this historical juncture by groups who see indigenous identity as highly salient to self-representation and as a vehicle for political change.”<sup>66</sup>

---

<sup>64</sup>Interview with Noguerras-Vidal, July 30, 1998.

<sup>65</sup>Interview with Noguerras-Vidal, July 10, 1999.

<sup>66</sup>Warren, *Indigenous Movements and Their Critics*, p. 12.

## Means to Self-Sufficiency

Elaborating on self-sufficiency and the dependency model, Naniki notes how Boricuas need to economically take matters into their own hands. She points to the work of Wilma Mankiller (Cherokee) in helping her people break the cycle of dependency on the United States. In constructing a needed well system, for instance, Mankiller hired outside expertise to train her people to acquire the skills needed to construct and maintain the system. This allowed them not to have to lease help from an outside entity after the system was completed.<sup>67</sup> Naniki says:

They [the U.S.] have created for us so many dependencies that we as people feel that we can't do it. We feel that we need to hire them, and we need to lease land to them to do for us because we are unable to. Wilma decided somewhere along the line that she wanted to break with dependent models, and she wanted to create self-sufficient models so that her people could once again take pride in themselves, not just as human beings, but as being able to sustain themselves, being able to provide for their own people. . . . The model must be that the arrogant North American technocrats need to let go. They need to come in, provide our training and go back home. And allow us to maintain and keep our own systems going. Often times what we see is that they come and they that want to do the training, but then they want to stay as the teachers and the keepers. And so Wilma said 'no way.' That's just not going to be what happens here.<sup>68</sup>

There are several other relatively successful models where foreigners and Western academics and institutions have supported and trained indigenous peoples. In her book *Decolonizing Methodologies*, Linda Tuhiwai Smith elaborates on how Maori researchers and scholars have been able to advance a research agenda in order to suit Maori needs. Although there can be an intense struggle among native scholars between loyalty to community and commitment to academic research, i.e., the perceived contradictions

---

<sup>67</sup>Interview with Naniki, July 12, 1999.

<sup>68</sup>Ibid.

between the two areas, appropriate conditions can be causes for accomplishment. Smith notes, “What large research institutions and research cultures offer are the programmes, resources, facilities and structures which can, if the conditions are appropriate, support and train indigenous researchers. Although communities have a critical perspective of universities and what they represent, at the same time these communities want their members to gain Western educations and high-level qualifications.”<sup>69</sup>

In Guatemala in the early 1970s, North American volunteers set about on a five year plan to help train the Maya in linguistics and the implementation of language projects. They fulfilled their objective on time in 1976. The foreigners promoted the study, use and development of Maya languages in education and community development, “rejecting the social hierarchies conventional to development assistance.”<sup>70</sup> According to Warren, some students received M.A. level training and others “applied their lessons by producing studies and educational materials based on language practices in their home communities. After classes, the trainees, who came from all over the highlands . . . exchanged experiences and ideas among themselves in an environment highly sympathetic to indigenous issues. The result was an extraordinarily wide construction of linguistics as a scholarly and activist field of knowledge.”<sup>71</sup> By the late 1990s, hundreds of Maya had been trained and worked as linguists and administrators at

---

<sup>69</sup>Linda Tuiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*, London & New York: Zed Books Ltd / Dunedin, New Zealand: University of Otago Press, 1999, p. 134.

<sup>70</sup>Warren, *Indigenous Movements and Their Critics*, p. x.

<sup>71</sup>Ibid.

the Linguistics Project, studied in linguistics programs and research centers, and enrolled in and taught university courses.<sup>72</sup>

In terms of political activism, language issues have been at the heart of the Maya movement. There is a revitalization of the indigenous language taking shape in Borikén too, though it is nowhere on the scale of the Maya. For Naniki, economic self-reliance through the education and training of business people and technicians is the key to breaking the cycle of colonialism.<sup>73</sup> One important area where Boricuas can become more self-sufficient is through agriculture. Our ancestors were expert agriculturalists highly knowledgeable of the symbiotic relationship among plants. But doing agriculture alone is not enough in today's world. In selling these products and meeting consumer demands you need to set up a system in order to market, transport, and eventually export these goods.<sup>74</sup> According to Naniki, many Boricuas are already knowledgeable and skilled in these areas, so the question is how to pull the people and resources together. A chain of self-reliance can be created "when we begin to look within to see the skills that each of us have that comprise the totality of that particular venture."<sup>75</sup> This is a model of self-sufficiency and a "steppingstone for independence . . . breaking colonialism must come from within us. We must begin to break and shatter that illusion of dependency and

---

<sup>72</sup>Ibid., p. xi.

<sup>73</sup>Interview with Naniki, July 12, 1999.

<sup>74</sup>Ibid.

<sup>75</sup>Ibid.



reliance upon others . . . and if we can do this we can break with that colonial mentality and therefore break with colonialism.”<sup>76</sup>

### **Linking With Other Movements**

This final section of the chapter looks at some commonalities and how the indigenous movement in Borikén can possibly build solidarity with other groups and movements on the island. Writing in 1993, Edwin and Edgardo Meléndez note how the increase in conservative solutions to the political and economic crisis in Puerto Rico are partially due to the inability of progressive organizations, like the pro-independence movement, to respond to the changing political and economic environment.<sup>77</sup> They point out that some traditional popular movements are showing new vitality, but “newer ones such as the women’s, youth, environmental, and other movements are leading the way to new forms of struggle and empowerment. Popular struggles offer several solutions to the colonial dilemma.”<sup>78</sup> As the indigenous movement was perhaps not noticeable at the time of their writing, it is not mentioned in their anthology, titled, *Colonial Dilemma*, but can certainly be subsumed under the category “other movements.” Important elements of solidarity can be found between the indigenous resurgence and other social movements in Puerto Rico. We will attempt to show here that the indigenous movement can play an important role in the future, particularly in supporting independence, and is intrinsically linked to the independence, women’s, environmental, youth/education, and peace and nonviolent struggles on the island today.

---

<sup>76</sup>Ibid.

<sup>77</sup>Meléndez and Meléndez, eds., “Introduction,” *Colonial Dilemma*, p. 10.

<sup>78</sup>Ibid.

The indigenous movement is basically pro-independence as previously mentioned. It is precisely the indigenous element of Puerto Rican society that has been most adamant in fighting for independence since the early 1500s. The 16th century battles of liberation against the Spanish were bloody encounters. The struggle did preserve the sovereignty of the mountain regions for the next three centuries. The 19th and 20th century independence movement took on a more nationalist tone. By the turn of the 20th century, however, “a social class clearly committed to define and defend a national project” had not formed in Puerto Rico like it had in Cuba.<sup>79</sup> During the 20th century, the independence movement was strongest in the 1930s under nationalist leader Pedro Albizu-Campos and in the 1970s when nationalist and socialist ideologies merged. But by the early 1990s, the largest and most prominent independence organization, the Puerto Rican Independence Party (PIP), maintained only 5 to 7 percent of electoral support on the island.<sup>80</sup> While politically waning, cultural nationalism does remain strong in Puerto Rico.<sup>81</sup> This is often tied to the prominent use of the Spanish language opposed to English. It is also important to point out that the above statistic can be misleading regarding the total percentage of those who actually support independence. Naniki maintains that many Boricuas are “silently independent” because of the intense repression against *independentistas* and nationalists in the past. Being vocal about independence can

---

<sup>79</sup>Wilfredo Mattos Cintrón, “The Struggle for Independence: The Long March to the Twenty-first Century,” Meléndez and Meléndez, eds., *Colonial Dilemma*, p. 201.

<sup>80</sup>Meléndez and Meléndez, eds., “Introduction,” *Colonial Dilemma*, p. 5.

<sup>81</sup>Juan Manuel Carrión, “The National Question in Puerto Rico,” in Meléndez and Meléndez, eds., *Colonial Dilemma*, p. 71.

mean losing employment or being jailed.<sup>82</sup> Ronald Fernández similarly wrote in 1987 that there were indeed a large number of “closet independentistas” on the island at that time.<sup>83</sup> Nevertheless, some main reasons for the drop in favor with the independence movement appear to have been its focus on “status politics” and inability to respond to the social needs of society. Meléndez and Meléndez summarize Wilfredo Mattos-Cintrón’s argument that

the traditional focus on status politics by pro-independence political organizations is at the expense of the active participation of popular sectors in the political process. The struggle for independence divorced from a social agenda that responds to working class communities and the poor, the labor movement, feminism, students, and other popular sectors is likely to continue to be marginal--contained to a small proportion of the electorate and with limited influence in the political arena.<sup>84</sup>

The PIP apparently does not recognize a distinct indigenous presence on the island. For them, indigenous peoples would be subsumed within the “racial triad” nationalist realm as “Puerto Ricans remain a distinct and homogeneous Latin American nationality,” with Spanish the measure of “high culture.”<sup>85</sup> However, Anaca Lugo told me that one sector of the “nationalist movement” has endorsed the indigenous movement in

---

<sup>82</sup>Interview with Naniki, July 31, 2003.

<sup>83</sup>Ronald Fernandez, *Los Macheteros: The Wells Fargo Robbery and the Violent Struggle for Puerto Rican Independence*, New York: Prentice Hall Press, 1987, p. 159.

<sup>84</sup>Meléndez and Meléndez, eds., “Introduction,” *Colonial Dilemma*, p. 15.

<sup>85</sup>Rubén Berríos Martínez, “Puerto Rico’s Decolonization,” *Foreign Affairs*, Council on Foreign Relations, November-December 1997, Retrieved on the Web at: <http://www.independencia.net/ingles/figAffairs.html>, November 10, 2004, p. 6.

Borikén.<sup>86</sup> Also, the Los Macheteros (a leftist independence organization) were identifying with their Indian roots back in the 1980s.<sup>87</sup>

The pro-independence movement has also been criticized for its paternalistic structure. According to Margarita Mergal, the Puerto Rican Socialist Party has a Women's Commission that is very small and limited to traditional roles because of the party's organizational weakness and insistence on "orthodox structures, practice, and outlook."<sup>88</sup> As of 1993, the PIP had not been able to promote women leaders within its party. Mergal writes that "President Rubén Berríos and Vice-President and Senator Fernando Martín believe there is nothing that can be done to remedy this situation, mainly because women must take care of their homes, children, and husbands. The Independence Party's retrograde position has not advanced in the last 20 years."<sup>89</sup> There is no doubt that the introduction of Catholicism and its patriarchic approach and ideology have not only influenced the pro-independence movement but other sectors of Puerto Rican society where women struggle within male-dominated hierarchical institutions.

In sharp contrast, women are important leaders in the Borikén indigenous movement as demonstrated above. Men also play leading roles though the matriarchal origins and influence of Caribbean cultural society are having a strong impact on the indigenous movement. Naniki says this influence is not so much about gender, or women

---

<sup>86</sup> Interview with Anaca Lugo, November 2, 2004.

<sup>87</sup> Fernandez, *Los Macheteros*, pp. 160-161.

<sup>88</sup> Margarita Mergal, "Puerto Rican Feminism at a Crossroad: Challenges at the Turn of the Century," in Meléndez and Meléndez, eds., *Colonial Dilemma*, pp. 134-135. It should be noted that I repeatedly attempted to phone the PIP in San Juan in November 2004 in order to obtain an update on their positions. My messages to speak with their leaders were not returned.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 135.

assuming predominant roles, but about tearing down barriers and *changing the structures* of oppression and domination. She explains the indigenous culture was not about dominance or the exploitation of people, but where both women and men leaders were required to serve the people.<sup>90</sup> Women are further playing major roles in the larger global indigenous movement. This attests to the fact that the origins of many indigenous societies are matriarchal and *democratic* in nature. Regarding the crisis of feminism in Puerto Rico, Mergal writes about “the need to create a historical project: a flexible but clear set of goals and strategies that women of different political persuasions can identify with, but which nevertheless has a progressive ideological content.”<sup>91</sup> Mergal also notes how feminist and women’s movements should be the fundamental movers in the deconstruction of male structures of subordination and domination.<sup>92</sup> She further acknowledges that other social movements are important in resolving gender gap issues. Thus, in terms of attempting to create a more egalitarian society, there may be some important commonalities to be found between the women’s and indigenous movement:

Present-day social movements may hold the key to these prison doors, and it is up to us to meet the challenge of learning how to open them. In Latin America, the process has already begun. Housewives, farm laborers, workers, African-Americans, and indigenous peoples are becoming Gramsci’s philosophers—human beings who change the world as they change themselves in the dialectics of social relations.<sup>93</sup>

---

<sup>90</sup>Interview with Naniki, July 31, 2003.

<sup>91</sup>Mergal, “Puerto Rican Feminism at a Crossroad,” in Meléndez and Meléndez, eds., *Colonial Dilemma*, p. 133.

<sup>92</sup>Ibid., p. 137.

<sup>93</sup>Ibid.

As elaborated on above, education is really the focal point of the indigenous resurgence in Borikén. Naniki notes the importance of the relationship between elders and the youth, while Anaca Lugo discusses the Three Circles of the Consejo promoting indigenous education. Nogueras-Vidal sees the youth in Puerto Rico as a subculture “searching for their spirituality” through venues such as music and the internet.<sup>94</sup> This search is in line with the community-based approach to educational reform written about a decade ago by Ana María García-Blanco and José Javier Colón-Morera.

García-Blanco and Colón-Morera mentioned the extremely high public dissatisfaction with the educational system in Puerto Rico. With a drop-out rate hovering around 50 percent, they note the public school system is failing “to prepare the majority of Puerto Rican youth to assume the future direction of the island and, by default, is fomenting anti-social, criminal, and drug-related activities. It is almost impossible to visualize a productive Puerto Rican society in the future without, among other reforms, a radical transformation of its educational system.”<sup>95</sup> They present a reformist agenda based on community service that addresses the political, social and cultural needs and interests of particular communities. In contrast to the Puerto Rican government’s top-down approach to educational reform, García-Blanco and Colón-Morera “propose a process that visualizes school change as a constructing, decolonizing, and liberating experience.”<sup>96</sup> They highlight the school district of Juan Domingo, an urban barrio in San Juan, where a

---

<sup>94</sup>Interview with Nogueras-Vidal, July 14, 2004.

<sup>95</sup>Ana María García Blanco and José Javier Colón Morera, “A Community-Based Approach to Educational Reform in Puerto Rico,” in Meléndez and Meléndez, eds., *Colonial Dilemma*, p. 157.

<sup>96</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 158.

community-based initiative begun in the 1970s transformed the area into a learning environment conducive to academic and extracurricular activities.<sup>97</sup> They point out that educators have argued since the 1960s that “one of the problems of the educational system is the growing gap between the schools and the communities they serve, the gap between their cultures, between their characters.”<sup>98</sup>

There is probably no more meaningful area of education than teaching students about their culture and history. This would include the teaching of the indigenous culture of the very place where the youth are from. Students would naturally want to learn about this aspect of their history and certainly should not be deprived of it. Although not a part of the educational curriculum in Puerto Rico, indigenous education has been offered on a small-scale. Noguera-Vidal has conducted many cultural workshops over the years, and has been invited to speak to students in the schools. Baracutey, along with Niña Raffaele-Aponte, had been also conducting indigenous cultural workshops in the schools for a number of years. Some of the topics of their talks stressed indigenous values, visions of nature, history, demonstrations of musical instruments and dance instruction, and the meaning of paints and ornaments.<sup>99</sup> Class excursions to parts of the mountain regions have taken place, too, where students visit indigenous sites and learn from practitioners. The students’ overall response to this learning experience of their culture and history has been very positive. This is the sort of education and material that are clearly liberating to the youth and should be a part of the mainstream curriculum in the public schools.

---

<sup>97</sup>Ibid., p. 159.

<sup>98</sup>Ibid., p. 163.

<sup>99</sup>Niña Raffaele-Aponte, “Taino Culture Workshops,” (Brochure), 1998.

Raffaele-Aponte elaborates on the importance of emphasizing for students the roots of

Boricua culture:

Our ancestors left us a very valuable legacy that has not been extinguished. We bring to light our indigenous qualities that remain in our traditions and language. The humble purpose of our work is to bring to life our history and to teach Taino values, enriching the school curriculum. . . .

Because of their belief that Mother Earth is sacred they were the first environmentalists, making them a good example for our youth. They built their homes in harmony with nature without wasting what they gathered. Before acting they reflected about how it would affect future generations of all the living creatures with whom they shared the right to a healthy, clean life.

We bring to life a culture that doesn't deserve to be left to history books. We are all descendants of this noble people. We plant precious seeds to recover our indigenous values. We hope teachers will continue to water them so that they bloom one day.<sup>100</sup>

Finally, there is something important to say about the power of nonviolent action and possibly freeing Borikén from the yoke of its colonial legacy. Like the global movement, the Borikén indigenous movement concerns pressing for change nonviolently. However a change in attitude and consciousness among enough people must first take place in order for this power to be ultimately successful. The mentality of everlasting dependency must be broken. With a focus on the indigenous paradigm which has always supported independence, this could be accomplished by looking more closely at some of the themes stressed in this chapter: 1) the Puerto Rican Independence Party/Movement should clearly recognize the indigenous presence on the island and its potential liberating influence on the population and party politics in general; 2) more economic self-sufficiency models need to be explored stressing economic self-reliance through

---



education, training, and realizing that the people basically already have the skills necessary to break the cycle of dependency; 3) women need to continue to play more assertive roles in breaking down the structures of oppression and domination in creating a more egalitarian society; and 4) the community-based approach to educational reform should continue to be supported but should implement, for one, a curriculum that emphasizes indigenous cultural values and history that can be personally liberating and that students so desire to learn about.

Once there is a more heightened awareness that political, economic and cultural dependency on the United States can be shattered, the power of nonviolent resistance could be the final key to expelling the colonial power from the island. There is strong precedence for this action as most recently displayed in Puerto Rico itself. The final two-and-half year push to expel the U.S. Navy from Vieques after nearly sixty years of occupation and bombing was overwhelmingly nonviolent. The most powerful military on the face of the earth was forced to withdrawal from the island in May 2003. Throughout human history, many struggles have been waged nonviolently by one side using psychological, social, economic or political methods.<sup>101</sup> There have been many cases when nonviolent resistance has prevailed against oppressive regimes that wielded overwhelming political and military power. India in the 1940s, the “people power” revolution in the Philippines in 1986, and the overcoming of *apartheid* in South Africa in the early 1990s, are just three examples. If enough Boricuas truly will to be independent and break the cycle of dependency, the power of nonviolence as a liberating force can

---

<sup>100</sup>Ibid.

<sup>101</sup>Gene Sharp, *There Are Realistic Alternatives*, Boston: The Albert Einstein Institution, 2003, p. 4.

certainly be applied in freeing Borikén. Gene Sharp describes in more detail the function of the practice of nonviolent action:

Nonviolent struggle has occurred in widely differing cultures, periods of history, and political conditions. It has occurred in 'the West' and in 'the East.' Nonviolent action has occurred in industrialized and nonindustrialized countries. It has been practiced under constitutional democracies and against empires, foreign occupations, and dictatorial systems. Nonviolent struggle has been waged on behalf of a myriad of causes and groups, and even for objectives that many people reject. It has also been used to prevent, as well as to promote, change. Its use has sometimes been mixed with limited violence. . . .

From the late eighteenth century through the twentieth century, the technique of nonviolent action was widely used in highly diverse conflicts: colonial rebellions, international political and economic conflicts, religious conflicts, and anti-slavery resistance. This technique has been aimed to secure workers' right to organize, women's rights, universal manhood suffrage, and woman suffrage. This type of struggle has been used to gain national independence, to generate economic gains, to resist genocide, to undermine dictatorships, to gain civil rights, to end segregation, and to resist foreign occupations and coups d'état.<sup>102</sup>

### **Conclusion**

The Boricua indigenous voice and advocacy work emphasized in this chapter by Naniki, Nogueras-Vidal, Anaca Lugo, Baracutey and Raffeale-Aponte strongly confirm a continued regional indigenous presence. There is a vibrant cultural resurgence taking place in Borikén today. This movement has been strongly influenced by the larger global indigenous peoples' movement. According to Wilmer, the global movement is like a social revolutionary movement occurring on an international scale. The movement is directed at both the national and international levels addressing the political, social, economic and cultural wants and needs of indigenous peoples. There has been much progress made in the past thirty years in changing some attitudes, perspectives and

policies toward indigenous peoples, e.g., in terms of greater recognition, achievement of rights, and even the rethinking of the concept of development. Yet, indigenous peoples still struggle in what seems like an unending battle for equal rights at all levels of society.

The Borikén indigenous resurgence concerns addressing the darkest moments of Caribbean history. The movement has much to do with personal empowerment and fulfillment, but just as importantly addresses issues of social, cultural, economic and political importance in Puerto Rico. Though not limited to these sectors of society, its inherently pro-independence sentiment can be directly linked to the independence, women's, youth/education, and peace and nonviolent struggles on the island today. As education is really the focal point of the movement, educating the youth about their deep cultural heritage and assisting the community on how to break the cycle of dependency are key components in terms of creating social change. Given that Western colonialism has endured now for almost five hundred years in Borikén, it may be time to once again seriously consider the deep roots of Boricua culture in ultimately freeing the island.

---

<sup>102</sup>Ibid., pp. 4-5.

## Chapter 8

### Conclusions

The tale of the “extinction” of indigenous peoples has a long legacy. Many indigenous groups had been effectively written out of the history books and considered remnants of the past, only to reemerge publicly in most recent times. While numerous indigenous cultures have in fact become extinct during the imperial and industrial expansion process of the past five centuries, *who* is it that determines whether a people are to be subject to their immortal doom? Overwhelmingly, those who are not intimately a part of the indigenous culture concerned, and those who stand to benefit the most from a people’s demise, have decided this question. Hence, non-native peoples and scholars have been most responsible for determining both the practical and theoretical fate of indigenous societies worldwide. The indigenous voice was silenced in the process and has only recently been revitalized.

In this dissertation, I have most importantly attempted to argue that the indigenous peoples of the northern Antilles survived the initial 15<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> century European colonial process. An abundant amount of evidence is presented to refute the long-held dominant theory that the Indian people of the region had become “extinct” by the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century. This is accomplished by revealing both the physical and cultural presence of the indigenous Carib people, with a focus on the island of Borikén. I specifically provided a historical analysis and ethnological genealogy of 16<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> century indigenous resistance, survival and presence there leading well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The work also sought to dispel other myths laid upon the Circum-Caribbean

region such as the commonly held view that the indigenous peoples present in the late 15<sup>th</sup> century Antilles were of South American origin, and how the concept of “discovery” was in fact an invention. I define “myths” as primarily legends that have been passed down in Western tradition with no historical or scholarly basis of support. Though dependent on dominant academic texts, methodological support for this study is concentrated in three areas: 1) allowing indigenous peoples to tell their own histories and stories through ethnological and written accounts; 2) utilizing various works, writings and traditions of other indigenous groups comparatively; and 3) employing post-colonial theory in addressing issues concerning colonialism and neocolonialism.

The first area above is most critical because it *included* those who are most intimately a part of the indigenous culture we are concerned with. Through personal interaction and taped interviews, I collected an abundance of oral tradition from mostly indigenous Jíbaro or Boricua descendants in Puerto Rico. Most of the interviews were conducted in the mountain regions of the island where indigenous survival was strongest. Jan Vansina defines oral traditions as “verbal messages which are reported statements from the past beyond the present generation. The definition specifies that the message must be oral statements spoken, sung, or called out on musical instruments only. . . . There must be transmission by word of mouth over at least a generation.”<sup>1</sup> Most of the information relayed to me by my interviewees had indeed been passed down orally from at least one generation ago, and much of it related back to ancient times and the early colonial Spanish era. I also found that because of the island’s colonial legacy, many stories had been kept exclusively within family histories. This knowledge assisted us in

---

<sup>1</sup>Jan Vansina, *Oral Tradition as History*, Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985, pp. 27-28.

helping to fill in the missing pieces of the puzzle in terms of explaining the process of cultural survival. In addition, some of my sources already contained ethnologies from previous studies and through interviews with primarily Jíbaro Indian descendants.

In terms of miscegenation, this work acknowledged the historical convergence of the Indian, African and European peoples of the region. However, the acculturation and assimilation process in particularly the mountain regions of Borikén differed sharply from other islands of the northern Antilles for two main reasons. First, the European population in Puerto Rico had always been small. By the 1530s, many of the original settlers had died, returned to Spain, or had gone on to pursue more profitable ventures in México or Peru. The governor had even declared that the island would be lost to Spain if Spaniards continued to leave. Secondly, slavery in Borikén had always been limited due to the topography of the island. Forty percent of Puerto Rico is covered by mountains and 35 percent by hills. There was simply not enough land appropriate for plantations to flourish. Alejandro O'Reilly's 1765 census indicated 5,037 black slaves present on the island at that time. In contrast, by 1787 the French were importing more than 40,000 slaves per year to Haiti, and more than 63,000 slaves were brought to Jamaica between 1801-1807.<sup>2</sup> Those who came to Borikén primarily settled along the northern coastal areas where most of the plantations were located. As we have discussed and note below, both Africans and Spaniards often fled to the mountain regions where they were basically assimilated by the Indian people and culture there.

---

<sup>2</sup>Selwyn R. Cudjoe, *Resistance and Caribbean Literature*, Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1980, pp. 14, 22.

## 16<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> Century Resistance and Survival

Chapter 5 presented the bulk of the data supporting my main thesis. In Borikén, I examined the cultural legacy and survival that permeated through the centuries by revealing some of the oral tradition that has been kept alive, and by analyzing various population censuses. We found that the Indian people and their cultural traditions were not at all “extinguished,” but continued and developed over time. The stories, music, language, philosophy, agricultural techniques, traditional healing methods, burial practices, and other cultural traditions persisted and lived on. The factors that led to this survival included the implementation of the *guatiao*, war, rebellion, fleeing, miscegenation, avoiding census takers, and the adoption of the Spanish language and Christian symbols.

Violent and nonviolent action defined the resistance to Spanish colonialism in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. When Juan Ponce de Leon arrived in 1508 the principal *cacike* of the island, Agüeybana, was well aware of the crimes taking place in Quisqueya. In accommodating the Spanish conquistador, the two leaders entered into a treaty of peace and friendship through the Indian ceremony called *guatiao* (exchanging names), and thus became “bloodbrothers.” Agüeybana sought to transform the Spaniards in kinship terms as other indigenous groups like the Iroquois had done in resisting the Europeans. The act initiated the kinship process and preserved the peace for a time, but an indigenous rebellion had been brewing due to the deteriorating conditions of the Indian population. The Carib resented their own labor being used to enrich the colonizers, while uprooting themselves of their cultural ways and customs. The initial uprising of the war in 1511 saw half of the Spanish population on the island eliminated. Ponce de Leon had supposedly “pacified”

Borikén by the end of that year leading to the mass exodus of Indian people to the mountain regions, known as the “flight of the Jíbaro,” where many Carib-Jíbaro had already been living in the *yucayekes* (provinces) for hundreds if not thousands of years. Many did flee to the mountains but indigenous rebellions and attacks on Spanish settlements are documented to have continued throughout the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

Regarding Spanish population censuses, Francisco Manuel de Lando’s census of 1530-1531 grossly underestimated the indigenous population on the island. His census only measured those subject to the *encomienda* (slavery) system near the gold mines on the northern coast and near the southwestern settlement of San Germán. It did not take into account the large numbers of Indian people in the mountain interior regions, nor those in other parts of the island. Juan Manuel Delgado-Colón confirms that Lando’s census did not account for the “hundreds or thousands” hidden in the mountains.<sup>3</sup> The census indeed noted that the “number of natives not under the *encomienda*” was not stated.<sup>4</sup> This underestimation duplicates trends of lower than actual native population counts from Spanish censuses throughout the Americas. For example, Lynn Guitar points out that in Quisqueya the effects of epidemics were often exaggerated to secure favors from the Spanish Crown. Consequently, officials and *encomenderos* (slaveholders) routinely underestimated the Indian workers under their control.

The Jíbaro persisted for the next two hundred and fifty years in the mountain regions of Borikén as interpreted from the late 18<sup>th</sup> century censuses taken. Both the 1771

---

<sup>3</sup>Juan Manuel Delgado Colón, “¿Dónde están nuestros indios?” *El Nuevo Día*, (Puerto Rico), November 19, 1977.

<sup>4</sup>Census data in Loida Figueroa Mercado, *History of Puerto Rico: From the Beginning to 1892*, New York: L.A. Publishing Company, 1970?, p. 83.



and 1778 census data also significantly underestimated the size of the Indian population on the island as a whole, and in the mountains in particular. The censuses only counted “full blooded” Indian inhabitants from but one region of the island, Maricao, which was clearly an indigenous stronghold. Of these inhabitants, the censuses only took into account those who were baptized, or “10 percent of the reality,” as indicated by Delgado-Colón.<sup>5</sup> The censuses did not take into consideration the indigenous peoples from any of the many other mountain and rural regions of the island. Furthermore, “Free Colored” people or “*pardos libres*” were not included as “*Indios*,” even though it was known that “*pardos* people” were commonly descended from Indians.<sup>6</sup> This category comprised the second largest population in the censuses. Given the data examined in this chapter, we estimate that there could have been well over 200,000 Jíbaro Indian people throughout the entire Cordilleras, Sierra de Luquillo, and other mountain regions at this time. As for the island as a whole, this figure does not account for indigenous descendants along the coasts.

The 19<sup>th</sup> century began with the erasure of census category “*Indios*” from the population records. This act of genocide came on the heels of the development of a “Puerto Rican” national consciousness. This negation occurred historically with many indigenous groups. The push for national integration based on a capitalist driven market economy often came at the expense of the social, cultural and spiritual values of indigenous societies in general. Nevertheless, the Jíbaro masses remained in the mountains. In fact, the Spanish did not begin the colonization of the mountain regions of

---

<sup>5</sup>Interview with Puerto Rican historian Juan Manuel Delgado-Colón, July 15, 1999.

<sup>6</sup>Interview with Puerto Rican archeologist Roberto Martínez-Torres, July 14, 1999.

Borikén until the 19<sup>th</sup> century. “We were a free country up until 1812,” states Oki Lamourt-Valentín. “Historically, the Spanish supposedly had sovereignty here over all that period of time previous, but that was only an economic arrangement. What they had is San Juan. They didn’t have the island.”<sup>7</sup> It was the Jíbaro who led the revolts against the Spaniards throughout the century. They were the impetus or “people power” behind the eventual expulsion of the colonial Spanish government in 1898. Indigenous physical and cultural survival permeated well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. For example, most of the 5,203 people recruited from Puerto Rico to work on the sugar plantations of Hawai‘i in 1900-1901 were Jíbaro Indian descendants. I found through my travels and interview process that many cultural traditions had remained in practice, and that there are still a lot of Indian families and people living in particularly the mountain regions of Puerto Rico today.

### **Dispelling Other Myths**

Other myths and discourses are analyzed in this dissertation. Some myths are less obvious than others and, therefore, may not be considered as “myths” per se but as “discourses” needing to be unbound. An increasing number of scholars have become aware of much of the controversial evidence surrounding these discussions, and some have been writing on the imaginary nature of the most dominant myths for a long time. Here are the other important themes looked at in this work.

### **Dividing and Naming the Caribbean**

Spanish imperialism prompted the division of the indigenous peoples of the Antillean region into the diabolically bad (“man-eating Carib”) and helplessly good

---

<sup>7</sup>Interview with Carib-Jíbaro scholar and artisan Oki Lamourt-Valentín, July 27, 1998.

("peaceful Arawak"). Western interests enforced the internal divide within indigenous societies in general out of a seemingly "larger threat and order of destruction" of itself.<sup>8</sup> Gordon Brotherston writes that this ploy has "sustained generations of popular accounts and even academic studies of American civilization."<sup>9</sup> This maneuver actually masked the intense indigenous resistance to European colonialism throughout the Americas. In the beginning, the Spaniards were vulnerable, too. Many were wiped out as a result of war, rebellion and disease. In fact, the *requerimiento* was issued largely because of the "dangerous uprisings" taking place in Borikén. In the Antilles, the move to divide had to do with attempting to gain and maintain European control in the region. However, we find that the ethnological division created contrasts with the evidence which shows that the Indian people of both the northern and southern Antilles were of a strong common ancestry and culturally very similar.

Likewise, the arbitrary naming of indigenous populations was solely a European undertaking. Many of the names ascribed came to be validated anthropologically over time. As many non-native and native scholars realize, there is no evidence to suggest that indigenous Caribbean peoples called themselves "Arawak" or "Taíno" as terms of self-ascription. The word "Taíno" was used an adjectival, always spelt in lower-case. Typically, in the context in which Peter Martyr used the word "*tayno*" to mean "*nobles*" he directly contrasted the "*taynos*" to the "*caníbales*"!<sup>10</sup> In the Caribbean discourse, to

---

<sup>8</sup>Gordon Brotherston, *Book of the Fourth World: Reading the Native Americas Through Their Literature*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992, p. 5.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

<sup>10</sup>Pedro Martir de Angleria, *Decades del Nuevo Mundo*, (1516), Vol. I, México: José Porrúa e Hijos, Sucesores, 1964, p. 123.

say the indigenous peoples used the name “Taíno” as a term of self-identification meaning “good” presumes something counter to it, or “bad,” which falls right in line with the us/them, center/margin, peaceable/ferocious divide and conquer colonial binarisms of imperial discourse. I found that the name *Carib* is the most authentic regional name of self-identification that was used by the indigenous peoples themselves, and subsequently came to name the region. Indeed, the Indian name *Jíbaro* as used as a term of self-ascription by the people of Borikén is “a native *eponymous* term for Carib (Caribbean : can/(j)íbaro - canibaro - Caribe).”<sup>11</sup>

### **The “Primitive” and “Civilized”**

In the field of anthropology, and as elaborated on in Chapter 2, the use of the term “primitive” has been overwhelmingly employed as a negative concept against indigenous societies and peoples. The concept was invented by intellectuals in relation to state societies and said to be diametrically opposed to what is considered “civilized.” While there is a positive concept of the term called “primitivism,” such words can be damaging because they embody prejudices and rationalizations of unanalyzed values systems of particular societies. By extension, words like “cannibal,” “savage” and “barbaric” are terms used synonymously versus the unknowable “Other.” Ashley Montagu notes the term “primitive” is a cliché, and “it is a damaging word. Not only confusing and damaging, but obfuscating, corresponding to nothing in reality, and obstructive of progress in understanding the meaning of the great variability presented by man in all his

---

<sup>11</sup>Oscar Lamourt-Valentin, *Cannibal Recipies*, A socio-linguistic account of Carib-Jíbaro culture and response to the work of Ramón Pané, Ames: Iowa State University, Unpublished, 1979, p. 36.

manifold variety.”<sup>12</sup> Thus, primitivity in the negative presumes that state societies as “civilized” are “advanced” and “superior” to stateless societies. This is a myth of evolutionary theory:

So entrenched, however, have our beliefs become concerning the ortholinear evolution of man that our conceptions of ‘progress,’ ‘development,’ and ‘evolution’ have rendered the assumption automatic that what developed later in time must therefore be more ‘advanced’ and more ‘evolved’ than that which developed earlier. From this the ‘logical’ inference followed that what was less developed must be earlier than that which was more developed, and therefore the earlier was the more ‘primitive’ and the later the more ‘advanced.’ Furthermore, since straight-line evolution is taken for granted by so many, it followed that the more advanced developed from the less advanced, from the ‘primitive,’ and that the former was ‘superior’ to the latter.<sup>13</sup>

In looking at the positivist premise of the term, “primitive” ways of life that had sustained indigenous societies since time immemorial could themselves be viewed as “advanced.” John Bodley writes that indigenous cultures in general clearly could “not have survived for half a million years if they did not do a reasonable job of satisfying basic human needs.”<sup>14</sup> The assumption by cultural reformers that all peoples would embrace Western materialism and progress once exposed to it has been rejected by the very presence of indigenous cultures, and there has been a clear, well-documented pattern of indigenous peoples’ resistance to “progress” or industrial civilization through their

---

<sup>12</sup>Ashley Montagu, “Preface,” in Ashley Montagu, ed., *The Concept of the Primitive*, New York: The Free Press, and London: Collier-Macmillan Limited, 1968, p. viii.

<sup>13</sup>Ashley Montagu, “The Fallacy of the ‘Primitive,’” in Montagu, ed., *The Concept of the Primitive*, p. 2.

<sup>14</sup>John H. Bodley, *Victims of Progress*, (Fourth Edition), Mountain View, California: Mayfield Publishing Company, 1999, p. 20.

ignoring, avoiding, or responding to it with defiance.<sup>15</sup> Therefore, resistance to change perceived as a negative attribute is a positive value. Bodley notes,

For peoples in relatively stable, self-reliant cultures, resistance to change is a positive value. It is only in commercial cultures that such emphasis is placed on change for its own sake and that, among those who make a profession of promoting change, cultural stability is given a negative connotation and is identified as backwardness and stagnation.<sup>16</sup>

Degrees of engagement in war, peace and violence could be other ways of measuring civilization or “advancement.” Conflict has been shown to be largely endemic within indigenous societies. Warfare, or war as “a state of prolonged armed hostilities between populations,” mostly related to conquest, is of “the greatest rarity among traditional indigenous peoples.”<sup>17</sup> On the other hand, wars of conquest by particularly Western states have been the norm since the time of Alexander and the Roman Empire. In addition to the horrors of the Crusades and the Spanish inquisition, for instance, more than one hundred million indigenous peoples were probably “‘eliminated’ in the course of Europe’s ongoing ‘civilization’ of the Western hemisphere.”<sup>18</sup> Stanley Diamond writes that civilization originates “in conquest abroad and repression at home.” He also notes that the “original crimes of civilizations, conquest and political repression, were committed in silence and that is still their intention, if not always their result.”<sup>19</sup> One scholar has even boldly stated that the transition of a society from primitivity to

---

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., pp. 24-25.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 29.

<sup>17</sup>Ashley Montagu, “Foreward,” in Leslie E. Sponsel and Thomas Gregor, eds., *The Anthropology of Peace and Nonviolence*, Boulder and London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1994, p. xii.

<sup>18</sup>Ward Churchill, *From a Native Son: Essays in Indigenism*, Boston: South End Press, 1994, p. 7.

<sup>19</sup>Stanley Diamond, *In Search of the Primitive: A Critique of Civilization*, New Brunswick: Transaction Books, 1974, pp. 1-2.

modernity was brought about by the move from “primitive war” to “true war” (or “civilised war”), and the key to the transition was “the rise of the army with officers.”<sup>20</sup> If the promotion of “civilised war” is any indication of a heightened state of human development, then the concept of “civilization” may urgently need to be rethought and conceptualized. We concluded the section by saying that the concept of the “primitive” to dichotomize and give content to the concept of the “civilized” should be de-emphasized for its negativist premise, with greater stress placed on its positive values.

### **“Repeopling” and the Mayan Past**

In disproving Irving Rouse’s first “repeopling” theory, we have been able to determine that the original peoples to populate the Antilles from Mesoamerica did not become “extinct.” Based on a “ceramic subseries,” Rouse’s theory posits that a “population movement,” or the complete replacement of one society by another, had occurred among the “Casimiroid Indians” from Middle America, who originally populated the Antillean region about 6000 years ago. However, he provides a paucity of evidence to support his thesis, retracts a key initial assessment that a “population movement” had occurred in Quisqueya, and repeatedly contradicts elements of his theory.

Roberto Martínez-Torres pointed out that many “Archaic sites” have been recently uncovered in Puerto Rico. Radiocarbon datings made at Ponce in the mid-1990s at the south coast site of Maruca show “Archaic” habitation dating back about 5000 years ago.<sup>21</sup> Martínez-Torres believes that these first peoples would have controlled the entire

---

<sup>20</sup>Harry Turney-High, in John Keegan, *A History of Warfare*, New York: Vintage Books, 1993, p. 91.

<sup>21</sup>Interview with Martínez-Torres, July 14, 1999; Miguel Rodríguez, “Osamenta de 5 mil años de edad,” *El Expresso*, (Puerto Rico), January 18, 1996, p. 24.

island of Borikén, and certainly the mountain regions at the time of the supposed “Saladoid” arrival.<sup>22</sup> The implication here is that this latter group would have been absorbed by the former. The most concrete evidence he found revealing the continued survival of the original population were the glass tools he excavated at La Tembladera in 1986. The two radiocarbon samples he took dated between 1660 to 1820. The importance of the finding reveals that “Indians were recycling glass from some source . . . They were making tools in the same way Archaics were making tools in the Caribbean 6000 years ago. They were using the same techniques. . . . We found glass tools worked in the Indian techniques in an Archaic place with dates two hundred, three hundred years after Columbus.” He concludes that there was not an “extinction” but rather a *continuation* of the original peoples.<sup>23</sup>

Eugenio Fernández-Méndez’s work confirms that the indigenous peoples present in the 15<sup>th</sup> century Antilles were in all likelihood of Mesoamerican origin. His findings reveal how Antillean art and philosophy strongly relate to Mesoamerica. Of the latter field, he writes, “*The really suggestive fact--which is more than a purely casual and isolated parallelism--is that we find a pattern of thought in which the details agree with surprising regularity.* I unconditionally dare to affirm that the basic core of this pattern of thought is clearly of Mesoamerican origin.”<sup>24</sup> The cultural, archeological and philosophical evidence brought out by Fernández-Méndez points to an Antillean cultural development importantly influenced from the Yucatán. Mayan influences were indeed

---

<sup>22</sup>Interview with Martínez-Torres, July 14, 1999.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid.

<sup>24</sup>Eugenio Fernández Méndez, *Art and Mythology of the Taino Indians of the Greater West Indies*, México: Editorial Libros de México, 1972, pp. 26-27.



most prominent among the Carib present in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Indigenous descendants today would thus be ancestral to the Maya. The significance of the above findings reveals that the original indigenous peoples to populate the Caribbean had indeed survived and have been present in the Antillean region for at least the past 5000 to 6000 years.

### **Amerindian Writing and the Pané Native Text**

The Greek alphabet as the premier form of knowledge in measuring indigenous cultures and civilizations in the 16<sup>th</sup> century Americas strongly influenced how Amerindian languages were interpreted by European scholars. As indigenous knowledge was viewed as a “threat” to the biblical version of history, all forms of “writing” other than alphabet became immediately discharged. This is apparent in Ramón Pané’s narrative of the Indian culture in Quisqueya. He writes that as “these Indians have no alphabet or writing, they cannot give a coherent account of these matters . . .”<sup>25</sup> These “matters” concerned how the Indian people effectively communicated among themselves regarding their own ways and customs, e.g., through perception, memory, oral tradition, gestures, and hieroglyphic and iconic (ideograms) forms of “writing.” Given his religious bias, Pané could not have possibly understood the philosophical ways of the indigenous peoples in the short time he lived among them.

Moreover, Pané did not understand the language of the region from where the *Antiquities of the Indians* was written. This is why Guaticabanú Yahubabanú became his interpreter. The difficulty in reading the Pané account is because the text turns out to be a *transliteration* of the Indian words spoken by Pané’s principal interviewee, the *cacike*

---

<sup>25</sup>Ramón Pané, in Fernando Colón, *The Life of the Admiral Christopher Columbus*, Translated and Annotated by Benjamin Keen, New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1959, 1992, p. 154.

Guarionex, as it was literally translated by Guaticabanú into Spanish and merely recorded by Pané.<sup>26</sup> Thus, as Lamourt-Valentín explains, all “translations” of Pané invariably become transliterations because “any ‘translation’ of a ‘transliteration’ is only going to produce a translation of a transliteration anyway, . . . and it is in that manner that it will always say the same thing in every language *with the exception of its own original language* (or original concept) . . .”<sup>27</sup>

More importantly for Lamourt-Valentín, the Pané text is highly significant as it reveals the linguistic basis of the Antillean language as tied to a Mesoamerican root: it is “the first Maya language text that can be read and understood. . . . in Maya, not in Spanish. It’s the earliest sample of Maya literature that can be found in any point in time.”<sup>28</sup> This data would also confirm the Mesoamerican basis of Antillean culture. Through his Jíbaro background and knowledge of the many myths passed down to him through oral tradition, Lamourt-Valentín has been able to relate the myths back to the Indian language, subsequently breaking down the language from the transliteration to reveal the poetics of the narrative. By returning to the original Mayan language, he determined that what Guarionex was expressing concerned moral production, social relations of exchange, explaining exogamy, and relationships of trade, distance, time and economic productivity.<sup>29</sup> Therefore, as Pané could not have been anything else but an

---

<sup>26</sup>Interview with Lamourt-Valentín, June 28, 1999.

<sup>27</sup>Lamourt-Valentín, *Cannibal Recipes*, p. 9.

<sup>28</sup>Interview with Lamourt-Valentín, June 28, 1999.

<sup>29</sup>Interviews with Lamourt-Valentín, July 27, 1998, June 28, 1999.

amanuensis, the first alphabetical text produced in the Americas was written by the Indian people themselves and should be considered from this perspective.

### **“Discovery”**

It is said, and still commonly taught in the schools, that European explorers led by the Admiral Christopher Columbus “discovered” the American continent (specifically South America) in October 1492. This premise is fallacious on two counts. Most importantly, it is impossible to “discover” lands that had already been inhabited for thousands and thousands of years. To coin the “discovery” as a time when the first Europeans arrived in foreign lands is ethnocentric and racist because it denied the prior American Indian presence and possibility of *their* previous “discovery.” The concept of “discovery” as stipulated in the papal bulls of 1493 is based on Christian dominion, which called for the subjugation of non-Christian peoples and confiscation of their lands. The principal is indeed based on the idea that non-Christian “pagans” were considered *subhuman* and therefore expendable. The concept was a peculiar one because it superseded the right of possession as grounded in Roman law. The very basis for the “legality” of Spanish sovereignty in the Americas was continually reinforced through the rationale of Christian supremacy. However a few prominent scholars like Francisco de Vitoria, Hugo Grotius and Bartolomé de Las Casas perceived the illegal and immoral nature of the meaning of the concept and rejected the “papal donation” on the grounds that the pope could not dispossess Indian people of their land and property, and that *natural law* applied to all human beings. In addition to the rights and laws of the indigenous peoples concerned, the Spaniards apparently violated their own laws in the colonial process.

The second reason why the “discovery of America” could not have happened is because it is impossible to “discover” lands previously unknown to exist. European scholars of the time were not aware of the entity that came to be known as the “Western hemisphere.” Columbus originally set sail for Cipangu (Japan) and China to order to meet with the Grand Khan in the tradition of Marco Polo. He insisted that he had reached *Asia* up until his death in 1506. However, according to Edmundo O’Gorman, discovery requires the discoverer to be previously knowledgeable of the nature or existence of the being that is found. His work concentrates on the *idea that America had been discovered*, rather than the history of the “discovery” itself. He found the logical conclusion of this *idea* “implies a *reductio ad absurdum*, and therefore, that it is an inadequate way to understand the historical reality which it attempts to explain.”<sup>30</sup> O’Gorman unequivocally argues that the “discovery of America” by European explorers was unachievable:

The voyages which Columbus undertook were not, nor could they have been, *voyages to America*, since the interpretation of the past is not retroactive. To believe the contrary is to deprive history of the light which it sheds on its own unfolding, and also to deprive events of their profound human drama, of their intimate personal truth.<sup>31</sup>

### **A Final Thought**

I think it is a sad commentary that DNA testing has had to be resorted to in Puerto Rico in order to “prove” that a people still exist, and to quell the skeptics who have feverishly maintained that these indigenous peoples are long gone. The findings by Juan Martínez-Cruzado of the University of Puerto Rico at Mayagüez that 61 percent of Puerto Ricans possess mitochondrial DNA today would seem to once and for all disprove the

---

<sup>30</sup>Edmundo O’Gorman, *The Invention of America*, (An Inquiry into the historical nature of the New World and the meaning of its history), Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1961, p. 4.

<sup>31</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 74.

myth of the *physical* extinction of the indigenous population. However, in continuing to uphold the myth, some scholars are still saying that because of the importation of Indian labor to Puerto Rico during the slavery era, a distinct Boricua Indian presence cannot be determined. This belief is far-fetched. As we have articulated in Chapter 5, those who were brought in would have been subject to the *encomiendas* primarily along the northern coast. They would have made up a very small percentage of the total Indian population, who were not subject to the *encomienda* and were mainly present throughout the mountain regions of the island.

As Lando's census indicates, there were only 675 Indian slaves in Puerto Rico in the early 1530s. O'Reilly's 1765 census counted 5,037 black slaves, and the censuses of 1771 and 1778 mentioned no Indian slaves at all. Most convincingly, mitochondrial DNA is inherited *from the female line only*. Thus, how many female Indian slaves were imported to Borikén during this time? I think this can hardly be said to have occurred on any significant scale. While I have been somewhat critical of Martínez-Cruzado's study because it merely measures the "physical" aspect of contemporary society, I hope and believe my work will booster his argument. However, my study is not at all dependent on DNA testing in its examination and findings. I believe it stands on its own merit in terms of arguing for *both* the continued physical and cultural presence of the indigenous population through the oral tradition brought forth and analyses of the censuses. For it is precisely the process of *cultural survival* that has transcended the physical element of society, where the faces have changed but the spirit has remained the same. This is what has allowed for the indigenous voice to continue to speak, cry out to be heard, and move forward.

## Appendix 1

### Chronology of the Movement to Revoke the Papal Bull *Inter Caetera*

\*13<sup>th</sup> Century Crusades Era - King Alfonso X incorporates the *Las siete partidas* (seven division of laws) into Castilian law, one division explicitly referring in part to the granting of political and territorial jurisdiction to a monarch by “papal donation”;

\*January 8, 1455 - The papal bull *Romanus Pontifex* is issued by Pope Nicolas V to King Alfonso V of Portugal. This edict established Christian dominion throughout Africa;

\*May 4, 1493 - The papal bull *Inter Caetera* is issued by Pope Alexander VI to King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella of Spain. This edict established Christian dominion in the Americas, and everywhere 100 leagues west of the Azores and Cape Verde Islands;

\*September 26, 1493 - The papal bull *Dudum Siquidem* is issued by Pope Alexander VI. It confirmed the bull *Inter Caetera*, and *revoked (revocamus)* all earlier papal grants to Portugal which might give her a claim to westward lands. The language of revocation here is precedence for papal edicts to be revoked;

\*November 1493 - Carib Indian resistance to *Inter Caetera* begins. In Quisqueya (“Hispanola”), the *cacike* Caonabó orders the execution of the thirty-nine Christians left behind by Columbus at La Navidad after atrocities committed by them. Later, indigenous Caribbean peoples publicly reject the “papal donation” stating the pope had no right to give what was not his;

\*June 7, 1494 - Spain and Portugal signed the *Treaty of Tordesillas* based on the bull *Inter Caetera*. The Treaty divided the world in half between the two nations, and is the foundation for subsequent treaties and custom related to the Americas and the international system in general;

\*June 2, 1537 - Pope Paul III issued the Papal Bull *Sublimis Deus*, which supposedly “freed the Indians,” and is regarded as “the most important papal pronouncement on the human condition of the Indians” (Gutiérrez, *Las Casas*, 1993). However, as history unequivocally shows, *Sublimis Deus* is purely a *theoretical* act since there would be no need for an accounting of those declared to be “extinct,” nor for the tens of millions who had been eliminated by the end of the 16th century;

\*June 19, 1538 - Pope Paul III *revoked Sublimis Deus* at the urging of Spanish Emperor Charles V. However, there is controversy as to whether the Pope actually revoked *Sublimis Deus* or the brief *Pastorale Officium* of May 29, 1537. Revoked or not, it should be made clear that *Sublimis Deus* did *not* revoke *Inter Caetera* (Boyle, 1998, 1999);

\*1542 - The “New Laws” that had prohibited Indian slavery and banned the *encomienda* slavery system are *revoked*;

\*1823 - In the *Johnson v. McIntosh* case, U.S. Chief Justice John Marshall quietly inserted the language of “discovery,” or Christian dominion, into the decision based on the bull *Inter Caetera*. He thus violated the separation of church and state as built into the U.S. Constitution;

\*1831 - In *Cherokee v. Georgia*, Justice Marshall ruled that the Cherokee Nation was not a “foreign state” as defined under the U.S. Constitution, and therefore they could not sue the state of Georgia in the Supreme Court from usurping the gold on their land. The concept of “domestic dependant nation” status established;

\*1992 - A formal movement to revoke the bull *Inter Caetera* is initiated by the Indigenous Law Institute based in the United States;

\*1993 - At the Parliament of the World’s Religions in Chicago, Illinois, sixty indigenous delegates drafted a Declaration of Vision calling for the revocation of the bull *Inter Caetera*;

\*October 12, 1997 - An annual papal bulls burning commenced in Honolulu, Hawai‘i calling international attention to the papal bulls issue;

\*October 12, 1998 - Over 50 indigenous and human rights advocates gathered in Honolulu to demand the revocation of the bull *Inter Caetera*, and called for it to be revoked by the year 2000, or by the beginning of the “new millennium”;

\*November 28, 1998 - Pope John Paul II called “Christianity’s 2,000 anniversary a year of mercy,” as reported by AP, saying “the church will seek forgiveness,” “atonement,” and that he “wants the church to enter the third millennium with a clear conscience”;

\*February 19, 1999 - The United Church of Christ, Hawai‘i Conference, passes a resolution which resolved that: “President Paul Sherry on behalf of the United Church of Christ urges and calls upon people of conscience in the Roman Catholic hierarchy and in other organized religions to persuade Pope John Paul II to revoke the Papal Bulls *Dum Diversas* of 1452 and *Inter Caetera* of 1493 by the year 2,000”;

\*May 1999 - At the international Hague Appeal for Peace conference, indigenous delegates directly addressed and called for the revocation of the bull *Inter Caetera* on both “Interfaith” and “Root Causes of War/Culture of Peace” panel presentations;

\*October 2000 - Indigenous Peoples’ Delegation (nine delegates) went to Italy and the Vatican pressing for the revocation of *Inter Caetera*. Delegates met with an official from the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace;

\*2001 - Pontifical Historical Commission studied the papal bulls issue for the first time and determined that “*Inter Caetera* is no longer juridically valid.” The indigenous rights organization Kosmos Indigena is founded, based in Honolulu. Continues to call on the Vatican to revoke *Inter Caetera* if it is no longer juridically valid;

\*October 2003 - Seventh annual papal bulls burning enacted in Honolulu. Call is made to return to Rome in October 2005.



## Appendix 2

### Agreement for the Employment of Laborers for the Islands of Hawaii

The Planters' Association of the Hawaiian Islands needs laborers for the cultivation of cane and the manufacture of sugar, and therefore makes the following offer to working people and their families who will go to that country:

1. To furnish such laborers, their wives, children, and relatives free passage from Porto Rico to Honolulu, including subsistence and medical attendance during the journey.
2. To furnish such laborer upon his arrival with agricultural employment for the period of three years from the date of actually commencing work; also furnishing employment to his wife and elder children if they so desire.
3. To guarantee the laborer the following wages for each month of 26 working days of actual labor.

	Per month.
During the first year .....	\$15
During the second year .....	16
During the third year .....	17

and to pay his wife and elder children, if they wish to work, as follows:

	Per day.
Boys from 15 to 18 years of age .....	\$0.50
Girls from 15 to 18 years of age .....	.35
Women from 18 to 40 years of age .....	.40

4. The laborer and his family will receive, free of cost, living apartments, fuel and water for domestic use, medical attendance, and medicines.
5. The laborer shall be exempt from personal taxes, he and his family will enjoy the full protection of the laws of the Territory of Hawaii, and his children under 14 years of age will be provided with primary instruction in the public schools.
6. At the conclusion of three years from the time of actually beginning work the planter will pay the laborer \$72 bonus, providing always that the laborer shall have worked continually during this period upon the plantation to which he was assigned an average of not less than 20 days in each month.

Upon their arrival in Honolulu the workmen and their families will be instructed in the methods of cane culture followed upon the Hawaiian plantations.

Ten hours constitute a working day in the fields and 12 hours in the mill, it being understood that this work is not continuous, as the laborer is given time to eat his meals and rest from his work.

All overtime in excess of the hours stated will be paid for at the rate of 10 cents an hour; 26 working days constitute a month.

The journey will be made as follows: The laborers will embark upon comfortable steamers for New Orleans, a trip of 4 days; from there they will travel by rail to San Francisco, which will require about 4 days more, and from California they will embark in a Pacific liner, which will take them to Hawaii in 6 days more. The whole journey will occupy about 14 days.

The workmen and their families will be provided by the Planters' Association upon embarking with *clothing, under-clothing, footwear, and blankets*, as follows:

For the men and boys, 1 pair of shoes and stockings, 1 suit of underwear, 1 shirt, 1 pair of trousers, 1 hat, and 1 blanket. For women and girls, cloth for a dress and undergarments, stockings, shoes, a head cloth and blanket.

The climate of the Hawaiian islands is similar to that of Porto Rico, inasmuch as it lies in the 18th degree of latitude, and the temperature does not fall below 15 C. (59 F.) or rise above 25 C. (77 F.) a less degree of heat than in Porto Rico.

The products of the islands are sugar, coffee, tobacco, pineapple, and all the fruits found in Porto Rico such as bananas, yams, sweet potatoes, etc.

The inhabitants of the islands profess different religious faiths, among them the Roman Catholic, which denomination has many churches and priests there.

From cablegrams and letters received we know that the Porto Ricans, who have gone to Hawaii in the first five expeditions have been given satisfactory employment upon the plantations of the islands, as well as their wives and children. This is corroborated by letters which the emigrants have sent to their families in Porto Rico. Letters of a very satisfactory tenor have been received by several commercial establishments in Yauco for delivery to friends. These letters are on file at the Hawaiian agency, at the disposition of any who care to examine them.

Porto Rico, April 16, 1901

R.A. Macfie,  
W.D. Noble,  
The Agents, San Jaun [sic], Ponce, Adjuntas

## Bibliography

- Amin, Samir, *Eurocentrism*, Translated by Russell Moore, New York: Monthly Review Press, 1989.
- Aquino, Luis Hernández, *Diccionario de Voces Indígenas de Puerto Rico*, Puerto Rico: Editorial Cultural, 1993.
- Arroyo, Ronald D., *Da Borinkees: The Puerto Ricans of Hawai'i*, Ph.D. Dissertation, Cincinnati: Union Graduate School, 1977.
- Ashcroft, Bill, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffins, eds., *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*, London and New York: Routledge, 1995.
- Aveni, Anthony F., ed., *The Sky in Mayan Literature*, New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992.
- Babín, María Teresa, *The Puerto Ricans' Spirit: Their History, Life, and Culture*, Translated by Barry Luby, New York: Collier Books, 1971.
- Balibar, Etienne, and Immanuel Wallerstein, *Race, Nation, and Class: Ambiguous Identities*, London and New York: Verso, 1991.
- Barreiro, José, "Carib Gallery," *Northeast Indian Quarterly*, Vol. 7, Issue 3, Fall 1990.
- \_\_\_\_\_, *The Indian Chronicles*, Houston: University of Houston, Arte Público Press, 1993.
- Benítez-Rojo, Antonio, *The Repeating Island*, Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1992.
- Berrios Martínez, Rubén, "Puerto Rico's Decolonization," *Foreign Affairs*, Council on Foreign Relations, November-December 1997.
- Biolsi, Thomas, and Larry J. Zimmerman, eds., *Indians and Anthropologists: Vine Deloria, Jr., and the Critique of Anthropology*, Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1997.
- Blaisdell, Kekuni, "'Hawaiians' vs. 'Kanaka Maoli' as Metaphors," *Hawai'i Review*, Vol. 13, No. 3, Fall 1989.
- Bodley, John H., *Victims of Progress*, (Fourth Edition), Mountain View, California: Mayfield Publishing Company, 1999.

- Boomert, Arie, "The Arawak Indians of Trinidad and coastal Guiana, ca 1500-1600," *The Journal of Caribbean History*, Vol. 19:2, St. Augustine, Trinidad: University of the West Indies, November 1984.
- Borneman, John, "American Anthropology as Foreign Policy," *American Anthropologist*, Vol. 97, No. 4, Washington, D.C.: Journal of the American Anthropological Association, December 1995.
- Brinton, D.G., "The Arawack Language of Guiana in its Linguistic and Ethnological Relations," *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, Vol. 14, 1871.
- Brotherston, Gordon, *Book of the Fourth World: Reading the Native Americas Through Their Literature*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.
- Burger, Julian, *The Gaia Atlas of First Peoples: A Future for the Indigenous World*, New York: Anchor Books Doubleday, 1990.
- Carr, Norma, *The Puerto Ricans in Hawaii: 1900-1958*, Ph.D. Dissertation, Honolulu: University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, December 1989.
- Castanha, Tony, "Boricua Migration to Hawai'i: An Account of Caribbean Indigenous Resistance, Survival and Presence," Paper Presented at the 12th Annual School of Hawaiian, Asian, and Pacific Studies (SHAPS) Graduate Student Conference, Honolulu: University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, April 11, 2000.
- Centro de Estudios Puertorriqueños, *Documents of the Puerto Rican Migration: Hawaii, Santo Domingo, Cuba, Ecuador*, New York: City University of New York, 1977.
- Churchill, Ward, *From a Native Son: Essays in Indigenism*, Boston: Southend Press, 1994.
- Cleveland, Grover, Written address to the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives relating to the Hawaiian Islands, Washington, D.C., December 18, 1893.
- Clifford, James, "Diasporas," *Cultural Anthropology* 9(3), American Anthropological Association, 1994.
- Colón, Fernando, *The Life of the Admiral Christopher Columbus*, Translated and Annotated by Benjamin Keen, New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1959, 1992.
- Commager, Henry Steele, ed., *Documents of American History*, (8th edition), New York: Appleton Century Crofts, 1968.
- Conniff, Michael L., and Thomas J. Davis, *Africans in the Americas: A History of the Black Diaspora*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994.

- Cook, Sherburne F., and Woodrow Borah, *Essays in Population History: Mexico and the Caribbean*, Vol. I, Berkeley/Los Angeles/London: University of California Press, 1971.
- Cudjoe, Selwyn R., *Resistance and Caribbean Literature*, Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1980.
- Cultural Survival, *State of the Peoples: A Global Human Rights Report on Societies in Danger*, Boston: Beacon Press, 1993.
- Davenport, Frances Gardiner, ed., *European Treaties bearing on the History of the United States and its Dependencies to 1648*, Washington: Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1917.
- De Vattel, E., *The Law of Nations or the Principles of Natural Law: Applied to the Conduct and to the Affairs of Nations and of Sovereigns*, (1758), Translated by Charles G. Fenwick, Washington: Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1916.
- Deloria, Jr., Vine, *Behind the Trail of Broken Treaties: An Indian Declaration of Independence*, New York: Delacorte Press, 1974.
- Dennis, Matthew, *Cultivating a Landscape of Peace: Iroquois-European Encounters in Seventeenth-Century America*, Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1993.
- Derrida, Jacques, *Of Grammatology*, Translated by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Baltimore and London: John Hopkins University Press, 1974, 1976.
- Diamond, Stanley, *In Search of the Primitive: A Critique of Civilization*, New Brunswick: Transaction Books, 1974.
- Dunn, Oliver, and James E. Kelly, Jr., eds., *The Diario of Christopher Columbus's First Voyage to America, 1492-1493*, Transcribed and Translated into English, Abstracted by Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas, Norman and London: University of Oklahoma Press, 1989.
- Fabian, Johannes, *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes its Object*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1983.
- Fernandez, Ronald, *Los Macheteros: The Wells Fargo Robbery and the Violent Struggle for Puerto Rican Independence*, New York: Prentice Hall Press, 1987.
- \_\_\_\_\_, *Prisoners of Colonialism: The Struggle for Justice in Puerto Rico*, Monroe, Maine: Common Courage Press, 1994.
- Fernández Méndez, Eugenio, *Art and Mythology of the Taino Indians of the Greater West Indies*, México: Editorial Libros de México, 1972.

- Fernández Retamar, Roberto, *Caliban and Other Essays*, (1971), Translated by Edward Baker, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1989.
- Fewkes, Jesse Walter, *The Aborigines of Porto Rico and Neighboring Islands*, 25th Annual Report, B.A.E., Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1907.
- Figueroa Mercado, Loida, *History of Puerto Rico: From the Beginning to 1892*, New York: L.A. Publishing Company, 1970?
- Fiske, Amos Kidder, *The West Indies*, New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1899.
- Forbes, Jack D., *Columbus and Other Cannibals: The Wétiko Disease of Exploitation, Imperialism and Terrorism*, New York: Autonomedia, 1992.
- Garcia, A., *History of the West Indies*, London: George G. Harrap & Co., 1965.
- Gil, Juan, y Consuelo Varela, eds., *Cartas de particulares a Colón y Relaciones coetáneas*, Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1984.
- Gottschalk, Paul, ed., *The Earliest Diplomatic Documents on America: The Papal Bulls of 1493 and the Treaty of Tordesillas Reproduced and Translated*, Berlin: Paul Gottschalk, 1927.
- Green, L.C., and Olive P. Dickason, eds., *The Law of Nation and the New World*, Edmonton: The University of Alberta Press, 1989.
- Guitar, Lynne A., *Cultural Genesis: Relationships Among Indians, Africans and Spaniards in Rural Hispaniola, First Half of the Sixteenth Century*, Ph.D. Dissertation, Nashville: Vanderbilt University, 1998.
- Gutiérrez, Gustavo, *Las Casas: In Search of the Poor of Jesus Christ*, Translated by Robert R. Barr, Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1993.
- Hajosy Benedetti, María Dolores, *Earth & Spirit: Healing Lore and More from Puerto Rico*, Maplewood, N.J.: Waterfront Press, 1989.
- Hall, Stuart, "The West and the Rest: Discourse and Power," in Stuart Hall, David Held, Don Hubert, and Kenneth Thompson, eds., *Modernity: An Introduction to Modern Societies*, Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell Publishers, 1996.
- Hanke, Lewis, *Aristotle and the American Indians: A Study in Race Prejudice in the Modern World*, London: Hollis & Carter, 1959.
- \_\_\_\_\_, *The Spanish Struggle for Justice in the Conquest of America*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1949.

- Haslip-Viera, Gabriel, ed., *Taino Revival: Critical Perspectives on Puerto Rican Identity and Cultural Politics*, New York: Centro de Estudios Puertorriqueños, Hunter College, 1999.
- Henley, Paul, "Spanish stew: Justifications of conquest in the New World," *The Times Literary Supplement*, London, October 22, 1993.
- Hulme, Peter, *Colonial Encounters: Europe and the native Caribbean, 1492-1797*, London and New York: Methuen & Co., 1986.
- Hulme, Peter, and Neil L. Whitehead, eds., *Wild Majesty: Encounters with Caribs from Columbus to the Present Day*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1992.
- Jaimes, Annette M., ed., *The State of Native America: Genocide, Colonization, and Resistance*, Boston: South End Press, 1992.
- \_\_\_\_\_, "The Stone Age Revisited: An Indigenist View of Primitivism, Industrialism and the Labor Process," *New Studies on the Left*, Vol. XIV, No. 3, Winter 1990-1991.
- Johnson, Rubellite Kawena, *Kumulipo: Hawaiian Hymn of Creation*, Vol. 1, Honolulu: Topgallant Publishing Co., 1981.
- Kauanui, Kehaulani J., "Diasporic De-Racination: Tracing the Contours of an Off-Island Hawaiian Category of Subjectivity," *Out of Oceania: Diaspora, Community, and Identity*, Paper presented at the twenty-fourth annual Pacific Island Studies Conference, Honolulu: University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, October 1999.
- \_\_\_\_\_, "'For Get' Hawaiian Entitlement: Configurations of Land, 'Blood,' and Americanization in the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act of 1921," *Social Text* 59, Vol. 17, Duke University Press, Summer 1999.
- Keegan, John, *A History of Warfare*, New York: Vintage Books, 1993.
- Kuper, Adam, *The Invention of Primitive Society: Transformation of an Illusion*, London and New York: Routledge, 1988.
- Lamourt-Valentín, Oscar, *Cannibal Recipes*, Ames: Iowa State University, Unpublished, 1979.
- Lange, Frederick W., Review of Irving Rouse's *Introduction to Prehistory*, in *American Anthropologist*, Vol. 75, No. 4, Washington, D.C.: Journal of the American Anthropological Association, August 1973.
- Langness, L.L., *The Study of Culture*, (Revised Edition), University of California, Los Angeles: Chandler and Sharp Publishers, 1987.

- Las Casas, Bartolomé de, *The Devastation of the Indies*, (1552), Translated by Herma Briffault, Baltimore and London: John Hopkins University Press, 1992.
- \_\_\_\_\_, *Historia de las Indias*, (1875), Vol. I, Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1951.
- Lechner, Frank J., and John Boli, eds., *The Globalization Reader*, Malden, Mass. and Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2000.
- López, Adalberto, ed., *The Puerto Ricans: Their History, Culture, and Society*, Cambridge, Mass.: Schenkman Publishing Company, 1980.
- Lovén, Sven, *Origins of the Tainan Culture, West Indies*, Göteborg: Elanders Bokfryckeri Akfiebölag, 1935.
- Maldonado-Denis, Manuel, *Puerto Rico: A Socio-Historic Interpretation*, Translated by Elena Vialo, New York: Random House, 1972.
- Martínez Torres, Roberto, "El Mural De Los Caballitos," *Revista Catey*, (Revista Arqueológica, Antropológica E Histórica), Morovis, Puerto Rico, January-March 1994.
- \_\_\_\_\_, *El Yacimiento Aracaico De La Tembladera*, Tesis Presentada Como Uno De Los Requisitos Para El Grado De Maestro En Artes En Historia Con Concentración En Arqueología, Centro De Estudios Avanzados De Puerto Rico Y El Caribe, San Juan, Puerto Rico, March 1994.
- Martir de Angleria, Pedro, *Decades del Nuevo Mundo*, (1516), Vol. I, México: José Porrúa e Hijos, Sucesores, 1964.
- Mast, Robert H., and Anne B. Mast, *Autobiography of Protest in Hawai'i*, Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1996.
- McGregor, Davianna Pomaika'i, *Sovereignty: Hawaiians and Locals*, Paper presented at the Association of Asian American Studies Conference, University of Michigan, 1994.
- Meggers, Betty J., and Clifford Evans, "Lowland South America and the Antilles," in Jesse D. Jennings, ed., *Ancient South Americans*, San Francisco: W.H. Freeman and Company, 1978, 1983.
- Meléndez, Edwin, and Edgardo Meléndez, eds., *Colonial Dilemma: Critical Perspectives on Contemporary Puerto Rico*, Boston: South End Press, 1993.
- Men, Hunbatz, *Secrets of Mayan Science/Religion*, Translated by Diana Gubiseh Ayala and James Jennings Dunlap II, New Mexico: Bear and Company Publishing, 1990.



- Meyer, Manu Aluli, *Native Hawaiian Epistemology: Contemporary Narratives*, Ph.D. Thesis, Cambridge: Harvard Graduate School of Education, 1998.
- Mignolo, Walter D., *The Darker Side of the Renaissance: Literacy, Territoriality, & Colonization*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1995.
- Montagu, Ashley, ed., *The Concept of the Primitive*, New York: The Free Press, and London: Collier-Macmillan Limited, 1968.
- Morín, José Luis, "An Indigenous Peoples' Struggle for Justice," *Covert Action Quarterly*, No. 48, Spring 1994.
- Morrison, Philip, "Before and After Columbus," *Scientific American*, October 1992.
- Muldoon, James, "Extra Ecclesian non est imperium: The Canonists and the Legitimacy of Secular Power," *Studia Gratiana IX*, Bononiae: Institutum Iuridum Universita, 1966.
- Neihardt, John G., *Black Elk Speaks: Being the Life Story of a Holy Man of the Oglala Sioux*, Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1979.
- Newcomb, Steven T., "The Evidence of Christian Nationalism in Federal Indian Law: The Doctrine of Discovery, *Johnson v. McIntosh*, and Plenary Power," *Review of Law and Social Change*, New York: New York University, 1993.
- Obeyesekere, Gananath, *The Apotheosis of Captain Cook: European Mythmaking in the Pacific*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992.
- Oviedo y Valdes, Gonzalo Fernandez de, *The Conquest and Settlement of the Island of Boriquen or Puerto Rico*, (1535), Translated and Edited by Daymond Turner, Avon, Connecticut: The Cardavon Press, 1975.
- Pané, Ramón, *An Account of the Antiquities of the Indians*, (c. 1498), Introductory Study and Notes by José Juan Arrom, Translated by Susan C. Griswold, Duke and London: Duke University Press, 1999.
- Perkins, Steven C., "Researching Indigenous Peoples Rights Under International Law," Document prepared for the 1992 Annual Meeting of the American Association of Law Libraries, 1992.
- Puerto Rican Heritage Society of Hawai'i, and Hawai'i Heritage Center, *Change and Continuity: Puerto Rico and Hawai'i*, Honolulu: Puerto Rican Society of Hawai'i, 1992.

- Rafael, Vicente L., *Contracting Colonialism: Translation and Christian Conversion in Tagalog Society Under Early Spanish Rule*, Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1988.
- Rahnema, Majid, and Victoria Bawtree, eds., *The Post-Development Reader*, Zed Books, 1997.
- Ramchand, Kenneth, *The West Indian Novel and its Background*, London: Faber and Faber, 1970.
- Ribes Tovar, Federico, *A Chronological History of Puerto Rico*, New York: Plus Ultra Educational Publishers, 1973.
- Rivera, Luis N., *A Violent Evangelism: The Political and Religious Conquest of the Americas*, Translated by Westminster/John Knox Press, Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992.
- Rouse, Irving, *Introduction to Prehistory: A Systematic Approach*, New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1972.
- \_\_\_\_\_, *The Tainos: Rise & Decline of the People Who Greeted Columbus*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992.
- Russell, Philip L., *Mexico Under Salinas*, Austin: Mexico Resource Center, 1994.
- Sale, Kirkpatrick, *The Conquest of Paradise: Christopher Columbus and the Columbian Legacy*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1990.
- Santana, Arturo, and Rafael A. Torrech, *Atlas De La Historia De Puerto Rico*, San Juan: Editorial Cordillera, 1988.
- Shapiro, Michael J., "Bourdieu, the state and method," *Review of International Political Economy* (9:4), London and New York: Routledge, November 2002.
- \_\_\_\_\_, *Violent Cartographies: Mapping Cultures of War*, Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1997.
- Sharp, Gene, *There Are Realistic Alternatives*, Boston: The Albert Einstein Institution, 2003.
- Silén, Juan Angel, *We, the Puerto Rican People: A Story of Oppression and Resistance*, Translated by Cedric Belfrage, New York and London: Monthly Review Press, 1971.

- Smith, Linda Tuhiwai, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research, Writing and Indigenous Peoples*, London and New York: Zed Books, and Dunedin, New Zealand: University of Otago Press, 1999.
- Souza, Blase Camacho, and Alfred P. Souza, *De Borinquen A Hawaii Nuestra Historia: From Puerto Rico to Hawaii*, Honolulu: Puerto Rican Heritage Society of Hawaii, 1985.
- Sponsel, Leslie E., "Response to Otterbein," *American Anthropologist*, Vol. 102, No. 4, Washington, D.C.: Journal of the American Anthropological Association, December 2000.
- Sponsel, Leslie E., and Thomas Gregor, eds., *The Anthropology of Peace and Nonviolence*, Boulder and London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1994.
- Stannard, David E., *American Holocaust: The Conquest of the New World*, New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992.
- \_\_\_\_\_, *Before the Horror: The Population of Hawai'i on the Eve of Western Contact*, Honolulu: Social Science Research Institute, University of Hawai'i, 1989.
- Steiner, Stan, *The Islands: The Worlds of the Puerto Ricans*, New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1974.
- Stevens-Arroyo, Antonio M., *Cave of the Jagua: The Mythological World of the Tainos*, Albuquerque: University of Mexico Press, 1988.
- Sued-Badillo, Jalil, Review of Irving Rouse's *The Tainos*, in *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 99, No. 1, Washington, D.C.: American Historical Association, February 1994.
- Svarlien, Oscar, *An Introduction to the Law of Nations*, New York/Toronto/London: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1955.
- Takaki, Ronald, *Pau Hana: Plantation Life and Labor in Hawaii 1835-1920*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1983.
- Takei, Milton, "Collective Memory as the Key to National and Ethnic Identity: The Case of Cambodia," *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*, Vol. 4, No. 3, London: Frank Cass Journals, 1998.
- Taliman, Valerie, "Defying the Myth of Extinction," *American Indian*, Vol. 2, No. 2, Smithsonian Institution: National Museum of the American Indian, Spring 2001.
- Taylor, Douglas, *Languages of the West Indies*, Baltimore and London: John Hopkins University Press, 1977.

- Thiong'o, Ngugi Wa, *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Politics*, London: James Currey, 1986.
- Thompson, Eric J., *Maya History and Religion*, Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1970.
- Todorov, Tzvetan, *The Conquest of America: The Question of the Other*, New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1984.
- Tovar, Federico Ribes, *A Chronological History of Puerto Rico*, New York: Plus Ultra Educational Publishers, 1973.
- Trask, Haunani-Kay, *From a Native Daughter: Colonialism and Sovereignty in Hawai'i*, Monroe, Maine: Common Courage Press, 1993.
- Tyler, Lyman S., *Two Worlds: The Indian Encounter with the European, 1492-1509*, Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1988.
- United Nations Commission on Human Rights, *Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, UN Working Group on Indigenous Populations, 1993.
- United Nations Economic and Social Council, Commission on Human Rights, "Discrimination Against Indigenous Peoples," Report of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations on its Seventh Session, E/CN.4/Sub.2/1989/36, August 25, 1989.
- United Nations Economic and Social Council, "Establishment of a Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues," Economic and Social Council Resolution 2000/22, July 28, 2000.
- United States Department of Labor, "Report of the Commissioner of Labor on Hawaii," *Bulletin of the Department of Labor*, No. 47, Washington, D.C., July 1903.
- United States Supreme Court, *Cherokee Nation v. Georgia*, 30 U.S., (5 Pet.) 1, 1831.  
\_\_\_\_\_, *Johnson v. McIntosh*, 21 U.S. (98 Wheat) 543, 1823.
- Vansina, Jan, *Oral Tradition as History*, Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985.
- Wagenheim, Kal, ed., with Olga Jimenez de Wagenheim, *The Puerto Ricans: A Documentary History*, New York: Praeger Publishers, 1973.
- Warren, Kay B., *Indigenous Movements and Their Critics: Pan-Maya Activism in Guatemala*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998.
- Weatherford, Jack, *Indian Givers: How the Indians of the Americas Transformed the World*, New York: Crown Publishers, 1988.

Williams, Patrick, and Laura Chrisman, eds., *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1994.

Wilmer, Franke, *The Indigenous Voice in World Politics: Since Time Immemorial*, Newbury Park/London/New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1993.

Wilson, Samuel M., *Hispaniola: Caribbean Chiefs in the Age of Columbus*, Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1990.

\_\_\_\_\_, ed., *The Indigenous People of the Caribbean*, Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1997.

Wolf, Eric R., *Europe and the People Without History*, Berkeley/Los Angeles/London: University of California Press, 1982.

World Council of Indigenous Peoples, "Transnational Corporations and Their Effect on the Resources and Land of Indigenous People," NGO Conference on Indigenous Peoples and Land, September 1981.

### **Newspapers, Magazines and Other Publications**

Aguilar, Eloyo O., "Mexican leader's kiss of papal ring evokes criticism, praise," *Associated Press*, August 2, 2002.

"Christmas of the Exiled Porto Ricans," *The Examiner*, December 26, 1900.

"A Coming Together of Cultures: Pope John Paul II canonizes the first Indian saint in the Americas," *Associated Press*, August 1, 2002.

"Dash for Liberty by Porto Ricans," *The Examiner*, December 14, 1900.

Delgado Colón, Juan Manuel, "Dónde están nuestros indios?" *El Nuevo Dia*, (Puerto Rico), November 19, 1977.

"Dying of Starvation by Scores in Porto Rico," *The Examiner*, December 23, 1900.

Emerson, Tony, and Daniel McGinn, "Super Mario Trips Up Neutron Jack," *Newsweek*, Vol. 137, Issue 26, June 25, 2001.

Gelb, Jonathan, "Navy exit from Vieques seen as merely a start: Islanders fear environmental and health legacy," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, April 14, 2003.

"Government Blind to Trade in Labor," *The Examiner*, December 9, 1900.

"Islanders Arrive Starving and Sick," *The Examiner*, January 3, 1901.

- Livernash, Edward J., "Porto Ricans Enticed From Their Homes by Promises of Luxury and Wealth and Kept Prisoners by Threats of Violence," *The Examiner*, December 11, 1900.
- \_\_\_\_\_, "Porto Ricans are Prepared to Resist," *The Examiner*, December 12, 1900.
- \_\_\_\_\_, "Threats and Force Puts 66 Porto Ricans on Rio, But Fifty Others Escape," *The Examiner*, December 15, 1900.
- Maui News*, October 8, 1904.
- Morris, Glenn, "US Model of Indigenous Rights Subverts Inter-sessional Working Group," *Fourth World Bulletin*, Spring/Summer 1996.
- Otero, Vivian, "Taíno uahakia-ka...ketauriabo! We are Taíno-We Live!" *Vision*, (East Harlem's Newspaper), Vol. 7, No. 2, October-November 1995.
- Palmer, Randall, "Canada court gives wide land rights to natives," *Reuters*, December 11, 1997.
- "Porto Ricans Sent, Helpless Chattels, Hustling to Hawaii," *The Examiner*, January 9, 1901.
- Rabin Siegal, Robert L., "Paradise Invaded," *Comité Pro Rescate y Desarrollo de Vieques*, (Committee for the Rescue and Development of Vieques), 1999.
- Reyes Ocasio, Naniki, "The Indigenous Presence in Bieke (Vieques): The 508 Year Old Struggle Against Invasion, Contamination, and Relocation," *La Voz del Pueblo Taino*, (Newsletter of the United Confederation of Taino People), Vol. 5, Issue 1, January-March 2002.
- Rodríguez, Miguel, "Osamenta de 5 mil años de edad," *El Expreso*, (Puerto Rico), January 1996.
- Ruiz, Albor, "Vieques bombings, protest to square off," *New York Daily News*, August 2002.
- Simpson, Victor L., "Pope beatifies Mexican martyrs, heads home," *Associated Press*, August 1, 2002.
- "Taino Indian Leaders Sign Historic Declaration at New York's City Hall," *La Voz del Pueblo Taino*, (Newsletter of the United Confederation of Taino People), Vol. 1, Issue 3, May 1998.

Trask, Haunani-Kay, "Environmental Racism in the Pacific Basin," *Lei o Ka Lanakila*, (Newspaper of the Center for Hawaiian Studies), University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, Spring 1995.

**Oral Interviews (cited in-text)**

Nilda Aponte-Lebron – July 26, 1998

Baracutey – July 24, 1998, July 26, 1998

Juan Manuel Delgado-Colón – July 15, 1999

Oki Lamourt-Valentín – July 27, 1998, July 28, 1998, June 28, 1999

Elba Anaca Lugo – July 17, 1999, November 2, 2004

Roberto Martínez-Torres – July 14, 1999

Margarita Noguerras-Vidal – July 30, 1998, July 10, 1999, July 14, 1999, July 14, 2004, September 2, 2004

Niña Raffaele-Aponte – July 26, 1998

Naniki Reyes-Ocasio – July 12, 1999, July 31, 2003

Angel Santiago-Cruz – September 19, 2004, November 11, 2004