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Pedro Casanto's Nightmares: Lucid Dreaming in Amazonia and the New Age Movement

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In the past twenty years dreams have experienced a renaissance, both as a subject of anthropological inquiry, and in the imagination of postindustrial societies. In anthropology, the renewed interest in dreams and dreaming came as a result of a change of focus on the subject. Whereas, in the past, followers of the culture and personality school of thought were mostly interested in the cross-cultural analysis of the manifest content of dreams, from 1975 onwards the focus shifted to the study of dreamsharing and interpretation as complex communicative processes. Barbara Tedlock's edited volume, *Dreaming: Anthropological and Psychological Interpretations* (1987), the collection of papers published by Michel Perrin in Spanish under the title *Antropología y Experiencias del Sueño* (1990), and, more recently, Kelly Bulkeley's interdisciplinary edited volume *Dreams: A Reader on Religious, Cultural, and Psychological Dimensions of Dreaming* (2001), are good examples of this new analytical perspective. Seen as modes of communication, both between this and other worlds and between human beings, the articles gathered in these volumes are devoted either to the analysis of the creative aspects of the language and public enactment of dreaming, or to the study of the social and cultural uses of dreams. This includes the analysis of the interactive aspects of dream sharing and interpretation, the relationship between dreams and mythic language and imagery, and the prophetic and diagnostic qualities of dreams. It also includes the study of native theories of dreaming, how these are related to particular conceptions of the self and the cosmos, and how dreams and dreaming are intimately connected to the production of indigenous cultural identity and social memory (e.g., Guss 1980; Kracke 1979; Gregor 1981a; Tedlock 1992, 1994; Goulet 1993; Graham 1995; Shepard 2002).

With a few exceptions, most anthropological and popular literature on the subject deals with dreams as sources of information, knowledge, mystical power, political resistance, or aesthetic inspiration. In other words, they deal with dreams in their positive dimension. Much less attention has been paid to the negative dimension of the dreaming experience, that is, to bad dreams, nightmares and night terrors. This relative lack of interest contrasts with the importance attributed to this subject by native peoples,

among whom the interpretation of nightmares occupies a large portion of the time devoted to dream sharing and discussion. It also contrasts with the increasing attention that nightmares are commanding among cybernetic New Agers.

This paper has a double purpose. On the one hand, I examine, through the analysis of the recurrent nightmares of Pedro Casanto, a Yanesha boy, how Yanesha people of Peruvian Amazonia conceive of nightmares and attempt to control them. I argue that, like other indigenous and ancient societies, Yanesha people do this by altering the course of events in nightmares from the conscious sphere of waking life, a technique that in Western societies has been dubbed "lucid dreaming." This, however, in no way means that Yanesha techniques of dream control and manipulation are prototypical of indigenous theories of dream interpretation. I then analyze the Yanesha theory of dreaming that makes this specific technique possible. I suggest that this is closely associated with particular ontological and cosmological conceptions that oppose the "virtual reality" of the material world and the physical body to the "real reality" of the multiplicity of intangible worlds and spiritual body essences.

On the other hand, I analyze how similar Native American and Southeast Asian techniques of nightmare control have been appropriated, reformulated and marketed by New Age entrepreneurs as a means of personal empowerment. I contend that the alienation and commoditization of native beliefs about nightmares constitute outstanding examples of the type of "cultural cannibalism" that Deborah Root (1996) sees as characteristic of late-capitalist, consumerist neocolonial societies. I further suggest that in this postmodern information age, encounters between members of postindustrial and nonindustrial societies produce two similar, although antithetical, operations by which members of each society attempt to magically seize the power of the Other. In nonindustrial societies, the principal mode is mimesis, the act by which members of these societies replicate powerful objects pertaining to the realm of postindustrial societies in the hope of acquiring its essential power (Taussig 1993). In postindustrial societies, the most important mode is simulation, which in an adaptation of Jean Baudrillard's (1994) notion, I understand to be the act by which members of these societies imitate powerful beliefs, objects, notions and techniques of nonindustrial societies in the hope of appropriating the spiritual wisdom and harmonious lifeways that these primitive "Others" are supposed to possess.

This double movement is characteristic of what Michael Taussig (1993:63) has called the "colonial mirror of production." Through mimesis, members of nonindustrial societies appropriate the infrareal (to name it somehow), that is, the real behind the real, the essence behind the appearance, or the magic that allegedly imbues the powerful material and nonmaterial products created by

postindustrial societies. By replicating cellular phones, trucks, and medical machinery, members of nonindustrial societies hope to seize a share of the wealth, resources, and magical creative powers that postindustrial societies are thought to possess. In contrast, through simulation, members of postindustrial societies appropriate the hyperreal, that is, the signs of the real: decontextualized copies of beliefs, notions, objects and techniques belonging to nonindustrial societies, which have come to stand for the real, that is, the native forms of spirituality that gave origin to them (Baudrillard 1994:2). I conclude that indigenous techniques of nightmare control similar to those of Yanesha people, appropriated by New Age entrepreneurs and marketed in the New Age press and cyberspace as "lucid dreaming," have the quality of the hyperreal, insofar as they have been cut off from the belief systems that granted them meaning, and reshaped in ways that would render them unrecognizable for those who originally practiced them (see Brown 1997:161–167 on similar processes of simulation among channelers in the United States).

In discussing these two seemingly disparate issues, I want to call attention to a phenomenon that has only recently been explored, namely the myriad ways in which Native Amazonian and postindustrial societies are connected and engage each other despite the apparent distance both spatial and mental that seems to separate them. Although in this particular case, as we shall see, New Age entrepreneurs and practitioners have constructed their particular brand of lucid dreaming on the basis of Native American (Ojibwa) and Southeast Asian (Senoi) beliefs, there are innumerable examples of appropriation of Native Amazonian beliefs and techniques by Western practitioners, from Michael Harner's (1980) extremely successful *The Way of the Shaman*, which is in its tenth printing, to the ayahuasca tours organized by cybercompanies such as El Tigre Journeys (www.biopark.org/millennium-spiritquest.html). The study of these situations of interface should provide vital insights on the ways the peoples involved represent and apprehend each other, and give us a better understanding of the ways in which they elaborate their respective political agendas and strategies. It is important to keep in mind, however, that while the impact of Western culture on native peoples all over the world is massive, the influence of native societies on Western culture is more peripheral, being constrained to relatively small fringe groups.

PEDRO CASANTO'S NIGHTMARES

Shortly after his father died, Pedro Casanto[1] began to have nightmares in which his father wanted to kill him. Pedro Casanto was at the time a twelve-year-old Yanesha boy living in one of the thirty-three "native communities" in which members of this Arawak-speaking people of eastern

Peru dwell today. When I did my second fieldwork among the Yanesha (1982–1983), I became very close to Pedro Casanto's extended kindred, whose members descended from the couple who founded the community, and thus held the most important local posts. When I met him, Pedro Casanto was twenty years old. He was literate and was becoming a respected young leader within his community. In late 1983, I hired Pedro Casanto to come with me to Lima, the capital, to help me transcribe and translate part of the many myths and oral narratives that I had recorded while in the field. Pedro Casanto stayed in my house for almost a month. It was during this period of intense work together, and after I recounted a strange dream I had one night, that he told me about the nightmares he started having after his father's death. As far as I know, and in contrast to other types of dreams that are shared with relatives and friends, he had, prior to this, shared these nightmares with only his mother, who at the time was the only person living with him. The events of these nightmares were apparently too emotionally charged to share them more widely. In fact, even eight years after he quit having nightmares, it was clear that it was very painful for Pedro Casanto to recall them.[2]

In his first dreams, Pedro Casanto told me that he was convinced his father was alive. His father insulted and chased him with the intention of killing him. These nightmares were very vivid and caused Pedro Casanto extreme fear and anxiety. He tried to cry for help, but could not utter a word. He tried to wake up, but could not move. Finally, he would wake up terrified, sweating and trembling. The feelings of fear and unrest persisted during the entire day.

As the recurrent nightmares were deeply affecting him, Pedro Casanto asked his mother what he could do to thwart his father's attacks. His mother was an exceptional woman. Yanesha women rarely train as shamans, for it is believed that their menses prevent them from accumulating and, even more importantly, retaining mystical powers. In spite of this, when she was younger, Pedro Casanto's mother began training on her own as a tobacco shaman or *pa'llerr*. She was unsuccessful, and almost ended up deranged, but in the process she acquired a type of mystical knowledge that Yanesha women seldom possess. She told her son that the first step to hinder his father's attacks was to become aware in his dreams that his father was dead, and that the one who was attacking him was not his live father, but his father's "shadow soul" (*yechoyeshem*). Pedro Casanto followed her advice. In his first dreams, his father looked vital and had a healthy countenance. But when Pedro Casanto forced himself to become aware in dreams that his father was dead, the latter, he told me, appeared to him with the pale skin of the gravely ill and the contorted face of the dead.

This, however, did not stop his father's shadow soul from attacking him in dreams. Pedro Casanto escaped from these attacks by flying. In his first dreams, he did not know how to fly, and his father was always about to catch him. He told me that he used to flap his arms desperately, trying to fly, while his father attempted to grab him from the ground. He would wake up terrified, his body aching as a result of his desperate efforts to fly. Thus, the second step in his attempts to escape from his father was to teach himself in his dreams how to fly. This, he said, he achieved gradually, by learning, in dream after dream, how to control his body during flight. But his father also learned how to fly, and so continued chasing him.

As the nightmares persisted, Pedro Casanto's mother became increasingly worried about her son's health. She was convinced that the dead man's aim was to drag Pedro Casanto's shadow soul to the world of the dead, or to bewitch him in his dreams, so as to cause his death. To prevent this, she ritually vaporized Pedro Casanto to turn him invisible in his dreams.[3] She made a large fire to produce abundant hot coals. Once the firewood had been consumed, she told him to stand, legs spread and covered with blankets, on top of the hot coals. Then she threw water in which she had boiled magical herbs unto the coals. The cloud of ashes that covered Pedro Casanto's naked body was supposed to turn him invisible to his father's shadow soul, or to any malignant being that wanted to harm him. Unfortunately, this stratagem did not work, and the nightmares persisted.

With the passage of time, according to Pedro Casanto, he became very adept at flying and did not become as tired as at the beginning. During this training process, Pedro Casanto came to the conclusion that the only way of forestalling his father's attacks was to kill him in his dreams. In a society where the father/son relationship is not only extremely close, but also the locus for political authority and the matrix for the ideological representation of power relations in general (Santos-Granero 1991:163–164, 169–170), this decision put a lot of emotional stress on him. About eight months after his father's death he gathered sufficient strength, he told me, to confront the latter's shadow soul. The following is a transcription of the notes I took after Pedro Casanto recounted, in Spanish, the dream in which he finally killed his father:

> One night Pedro Casanto dreamt of his father and of Enrique, a fifteen-year-old half brother by his father, who at the time lived with them. Enrique appeared frequently in Pedro Casanto's dreams. His [Pedro's] father got along well with Enrique but hated Pedro Casanto. In this particular dream his father and half-brother were eating fish wrapped in aromatic leaves and cooked on hot ashes. Pedro Casanto was hungry but did not dare to get near them for fear that his father would catch him. He was at a certain distance from where his father and brother were sitting, and watched their movements while

slowly approaching them. His father seemed not to see him, but when Pedro Casanto got closer his father noticed him and looked at him from the corner of his eye. He then pretended not see Pedro Casanto, so that he would come closer. Pedro Casanto realized that his father had seen him, however, and prepared to escape.

At first, Pedro Casanto wanted to run. His father was wrapped in his long tunic (*shetamuets*)[4] and had drawn his arms within it [to keep himself warm]. When Pedro Casanto saw that his father was trying to free his arms, he decided to fly instead of running. His father pulled his arms out of the tunic. He had very long fingernails and wanted to seize Pedro Casanto. Pedro Casanto started flying. His father chased him. Pedro Casanto flew like pigeons do [when attacked by a bird of prey]. He flew up and up, and when his father was about to grab him, he dived at full speed. His father did not fly as well as he did.

Pedro Casanto had decided long ago that the only way to get rid of his nightmares was to deceive his father and kill him in his dreams. On that occasion he decided to put his plan in practice. He determined to tire out his father while at the same time pretending to be exhausted and at the limit of his strength. They flew and flew. They flew to Oñapuepen [a mountain]. From there they flew to Atcha'pellen [a mountain range]. They flew between the mountains. Pedro Casanto flew around them trying to hide from his father. He wanted to deceive his father, to make him believe that he was tired, so that he would come off guard. He wanted to approach his father from behind without him noticing it. He did not want his father to become aware of his tactic. They went on flying. From time to time, Pedro Casanto would allow his father to get near him. When his father was about to catch him, he would hide behind a mountain. They went on like this for a long time.

His father was already tired. Then Pedro Casanto hid behind a mountain. He flew around it and approached his father from behind. Pedro Casanto was carrying an old and blunt machete his mother had given him some time ago [in waking life]. He continued flying and approached his father from behind without being seen. When he was slightly above his father, he slashed him with his machete, opening a large wound on his father's back. His father started falling to the ground. He fell like a rag from high above. Since Pedro Casanto had that dream, the shadow soul of his father never bothered him again.

Pedro Casanto's nightmares reflect the conflictive relationship that he had with his father. According to him, his father died after a prolonged illness, probably cancer. When he fell ill, he became very irritable and constantly quarreled with Pedro Casanto's mother. By then, they were living in his mother's settlement. After a while, his father decided to move to his settlement of origin, so all the family—Pedro Casanto, his parents and his elder half brother Enrique—moved there. In the new setting, the

quarrelling intensified. It was then, Pedro Casanto told me, that his father started "hating" his mother. As a result, his mother moved back to her settlement with him. His half brother stayed with his father.

Despite their separation, Pedro Casanto's mother continued visiting her husband regularly. Pedro Casanto dreaded those visits, for, as he told me, his father mistreated him. As the disease progressed, his father's features became increasingly altered. One day, his father asked him to sit next to him. Pedro Casanto refused, for he could not stand being close to him. From then on, his father abused him even more. Pedro Casanto did not want to visit him, but his mother forced him to do so. When visiting his father, it was customary for him to sleep with his father and his half brother. Being the youngest, Pedro Casanto was supposed to sleep in the middle. But as he could not stand being in contact with his father, he always managed to move to his half brother's side. One day, Pedro Casanto and his mother were told that his father was about to die. When they last visited him, his father was so ravaged by the disease that he was unrecognizable. Back in his settlement, Pedro Casanto cried inconsolably. Ten days later, his father died. Pedro Casanto refused to go to his funeral. A few weeks later he began dreaming that his father wanted to kill him.

It would be tempting to interpret Pedro Casanto's nightmares in psychoanalytic terms as the result of an Oedipal situation. Waud Kracke (1981:259, 274) has demonstrated that it is possible to achieve psychoanalytic understanding in intercultural situations, and that "cultural difference is not an insuperable obstacle to communication and to understanding of psychological states in another person." Both he (1979) and Thomas Gregor (1981b) have also shown that the psychoanalytic treatment of dreams can provide deep insights on a variety of aspects of native Amazonian social life, such as the mourning process, or the nature of masculinity. In such an explanatory framework, it would be Pedro Casanto who wished the death of his father, his main rival for the love of his mother. His mother's ambivalence with respect to his father deepened this sense of rivalry, for in spite of their being separated, she continued visiting her husband. Because, at the level of the unconscious, wish and reality are confused, the actual death of his father generated in Pedro Casanto a profound sense of guilt. Thus, when he cried inconsolably, he did so not out of sadness for his father's imminent death, but out of guilt because he had so fervently wished his death. According to Freudian theory, at the level of the unconscious his superego had to punish him in some way in order to expiate this guilt. The punishment, in this case, took the form of nightmares in which his father's shadow soul chased him and attempted to kill him. The "second" killing of his father in his dreams, justified because

it was in self-defense, brings the circle to a close. Having expiated his guilt, Pedro Casanto experienced no more nightmares (see Freud 1938, Chapter 2, on the emotional ambivalence linked to the fear of the souls of the dead).

The psychoanalytic interpretation of Pedro Casanto's nightmare may reveal much more about the latent content of his dreams than the above, extremely simplified analysis would suggest.[5] Nevertheless, my interest here is rather to understand how Yanesha people manipulate dreams from the sphere of waking life, and to uncover the native conceptions that make this practice possible.

SELF, COSMOS, AND DREAMING

The conscious transformation of events in dreams and nightmares is possible among Yanesha people because they hold particular ideas about the constitution of the self and the world and, above all, about what is "real," which in Yanesha thought is equivalent to what is "true" (*po'ñoch*). According to Yanesha ontological conceptions, a tangible dimension, the body, and two intangible dimensions, known as *yecamquëm* and *yechoyeshem*, compose the self. The body is referred to as *yeshtam*, our tunic, in reference to the long tunic that was worn traditionally by men and women.[6] In spite of its materiality, the body is seen as a mere wrapping of what constitutes the real, or true, essence of the self, that is, its immaterial dimensions. *Yecamquëm* can be translated literally as "our soul," but because it can become detached from the body, it could also be translated as "free soul." The latter is the manifestation, at the individual level, of the cosmic soul of Yato' Yos (Our Grandfather Yos), the creator of all things.[7] This cosmic soul, or *camuequeñets*, "exists everywhere and is the life force of all existence" (Smith 1977:96).[8] In turn, *yechoyeshem* is an intangible entity whose visible manifestation is a person's shadow. For this reason, the term can be translated as "our shadow" or "shadow soul."

Yecamquëm, the free soul, has two manifestations: one that is detachable from the body and enjoys wandering along this earth while a person sleeps, and another that remains as a guardian under the guise of an *homunculus*, or tiny man sitting in the pupils of the sleeping person. The free souls of newborns are particularly unstable until they are four months old. Known as *anclleto*, probably a term derived from the Spanish word *angelito* (little angel), the free souls of newborns are prone to separate from their bodies to follow their parents. If not recovered in time, the soulless child withers and dies (Santos-Granero 1984:9). In turn, the free souls of adults can

detach from their bodies as a result of extreme grief, love sickness, or grave physical illness (Santos-Granero 1991:215). They can also be captured or abducted by evil beings while they wander in the "dream world." In all of these cases, the soulless person dies. In contrast, *yechoyeshem*, the shadow soul, is inseparable from the body as long as a person is alive.

The fate of the intangible dimensions of the self after death also differs markedly. Free souls go to Yomporesho, the earth immediately above this mortal earth, which is ruled by Yompor Ror (Our Father the Sun and present solar divinity). This ascension takes place regardless of whether the dead person has or has not led a correct life, that is, a life in accordance with the rules of generosity and generalized reciprocity that are central to Yanesha notions of sociality. In Yomporesho, free souls merge once more with the creator's cosmic soul. In contrast, the destiny of shadow souls depends on the morality of the dead person's life in this earth. If the person has led a moral life, his or her shadow soul goes to any of two mountains in Yanesha territory known as Choyeshematsesho (the land of the shadow souls of the dead). There, shadow souls lead a joyful life, drinking manioc beer, and singing and dancing to the sound of *coshaṁñats* (sacred music). On the contrary, if the person has led an incorrect or immoral life, his/her shadow soul goes to another earth, below this one, known as Concheñtso (the land of suffering). This is the Yanesha equivalent of hell, an underworld ruled by Yosoper, the evil classificatory brother of the creator divinity Yato' Yos, where the shadow souls of the dead burn in molten iron for eternity.[9]

Whereas free souls go directly to the realm of the solar divinity after death, shadow souls take some time before abandoning this earth. Yanesha people believe that the disintegration of the self after death is a gradual process (Santos-Granero 1991:216). Thus, it is said that after dying the shadow soul of a person tends to wander about the places where that person dwelt, worked, hunted or fished. Known as *choyeshe'mats*, these shadow souls haunt the living, both in waking life and in dreams, often performing minor mischievous acts, such as hiding things, breaking clay pots, or causing the food to burn or beverages to spill. For this reason, people used, in the past, to abandon the house where a person had died. After a while, however, the shadow souls of good people abandon this earth to gather at Choyeshematsesho.

This is not true for shadow souls of persons who had a violent death, either as the result of an accident, such as drowning, or because they were killed in warfare or murdered. In such cases, their shadow souls remain in this earth, wandering about and haunting the living. Known as *esartena*, these erring shadows, considered to be extremely dangerous, like to wander along the riverbanks. They manifest themselves to the living through shrill

calls, which paralyze those who hear them. One must not answer these calls, and must escape as soon as possible, for those who see an erring shadow will doubtless die shortly after. To drive them away, some Yanesha hang small wooden tablets from the beams of their houses. Carved in the form of human beings, and painted to resemble a face or decorated with geometric designs, these tablets, known as *meramer'tall*, make a distinctive sound when moved by the wind that is supposed to repel erring shadows. Alternatively, people burn a variety of dried peppers, known as *chemuellerrem*, whose pungent smoke is supposed to have a similar effect. In the past, if these ruses did not work, and a menacing erring shadow continued to trouble the living, the body of the dead person was unburied and burnt. This had the effect of forcing his shadow soul to go to an upper world called Sanrronesho, or "land of the murdered ones."

Yanesha elders assert that when the solar divinity returns to this earth, the free souls and the shadow souls of the dead will reunite with their bodies, which had been left behind in this earth under the guise of invisible tunics. It is believed that on that day the divinity will pass judgment over his creatures, raising (resurrecting) those who have led a good life, and condemning those who have not.[10] This suggests that the three parts that compose the self—body, free soul, and shadow soul—are of equal importance. However, Yanesha people say that the free soul is the essence of the self, for it is both the source of life and what makes them one with the divinities. The fact that the fate of the free soul is not dependent on the morality of the acts of its owner confirms this idea. The free soul, detachable from the body, is beyond good and evil. In contrast, the shadow soul, being attached to the body, is subject to its desires and appetites. Thus, its destiny depends on its owner leading a correct life. In accordance with the principle that the day-to-day reality of the senses is a disguise, or cloak, for a more profound reality, Yanesha people conceive of the intangible dimensions of the self, which are essential and eternal, as more real, or truer, than the tangible body. The latter is conceived of as being perishable, serving only as a container of the shadow soul and the free soul. As such, it is considered to have only a virtual reality (although Yanesha people do not have a word for virtual). However, this does not mean that Yanesha reject or neglect the things related to the body, or to its needs. They very much enjoy their bodily existence and sensual life. Except for specific instances, such as shamanic training, which requires ascetic practices, their ideal of the good life is one of abundant food, drink, and sex in an atmosphere of peace and harmony. Their distinction between body and soul is not a distinction between real and unreal, but rather one between appearance and essence, vessel and content.

A similar view lies behind Yanesha cosmological conceptions. Yanesha conceive the cosmos as being composed of five flat earths, each with its own sky, and one on top of the other (Smith 1977:90–93). The one in the bottom is Concheñtso (the land of suffering), where the shadow souls of those who have led an incorrect life burn in molten iron for eternity. The earth on top of that is Añe patsro (this earth), or Rromue patsro (the earth in which people die). This is the earth inhabited by Yanesha people. In it are also other spheres of reality not visible in waking life, such as the chthonic world of mountains, and the aquatic worlds behind waterfalls, and in the bottom of lakes and rivers. These other spheres of reality are inhabited by nonhuman beings: a few major and minor divinities that stayed behind when the solar divinity ascended to heaven, the *mellañoteñ* spirits, the primordial essences of plants and animals (which were originally human), and a host of evil and demonic beings. This mortal earth is illuminated by Yompor Ror (Our Father the Sun), and Yachor Arrorr (Our Mother the Moon). These two divinities also illuminate the underworld.

On top of the mortal earth is Yomporesho (the land of the gods or land of immortality), inhabited by most of the powerful divinities of the "father/mother" category, including the Sun and the Moon. Yompor Pueponcho (an old solar divinity) illuminates it. Yomporesho is the final destination of the free souls of the dead. In the end of times, it will be the home of the people who led a moral life and will therefore be resurrected by Yompor Ror. The fourth earth is also inhabited by divinities of the "father/mother" category. The unspecified solar divinity that illuminates this earth is so potent that he has scorched the land below. For this reason, this land is known as "the land of the burned-over clearing." The last earth is Sanrronesho (the land of the murdered ones), to where the erring shadows of those who have been murdered, or have died in warfare, eventually migrate. Yompor Rreť, a malignant solar divinity, who used to illuminate this mortal earth before the present solar divinity banished him to the uppermost part of the cosmos, illuminates this earth.

Yanesha people consider all the worlds that are invisible in daily life as more real, in the sense of more essential, than the visible world. This does not mean that they consider this mortal earth as unreal, but rather they believe that the visible aspect of this earth conceals a more essential reality: sacred worlds that are home to powerful extraordinary beings. In other words, like the reality of individual bodies, this mortal earth has the quality of a "virtual" reality. Except for the more militant Evangelicals and Adventists, Yanesha, therefore, continue to perceive the visible world as a world of appearances that hides a more transcendental reality. This perception, they believe, is bilateral, and as such they hold a "perspectivist" view of the world. Thus, they claim that certain animals see humans as

humans see them, i.e. as animals and, in some cases, as potential game (see Viveiros de Castro 1996). Whereas the bodily senses are sufficient to grasp and operate in this earth, they are inadequate to grasp the real worlds beyond that of the waking life. It is only through the real (true) essence of the self, the free soul, that people can have access to the real (true) essence of the cosmos, the extraordinary sacred worlds. According to Yanesha, this is possible only through dreaming.

Under the term *c̈hopo'teñets* "to dream," Yanesha people group a variety of experiences that in many other societies, including ours, are distinguished by the use of different terms. Thus, *c̈hopo'teñets* alludes to the dreams we have when asleep, to day dreams, to the images perceived during the astral voyages resulting from ascetic practices, and to the visions engendered by the consumption of a variety of hallucinatory or narcotic substances (see Kracke 1979, for an analogous notion of dreaming among the Kagwahiv). If all of these experiences are grouped together under the same term it is because of the belief that all derive from the detachment of the free soul from the body. The differences between these experiences (see Santos-Granero 1991:106–121) lie in the fact that while dreams and day dreams are experienced by everybody, soul flights and hallucinatory visions are mostly experienced by adult males, and, more specifically, by those training to become major healing specialists such as herbalists (*apartañ*), tobacco shamans (*pa'llerr*), and ayahuasca shamans (*ayahuasqueros*). From the Yanesha point of view, dreams are real or true because they are the expression of the wanderings of what for them are the very real free souls along the very real worlds that exist beyond the waking, visible world. In the following paragraphs, I will focus on the first type of experience—dreaming when asleep.

DREAMING WHEN ASLEEP

Among the Yanesha, it is said that, when dreaming, the free soul detaches from the dreamer's body and wanders in the worlds that are invisible in waking life (see Guss 1980 and Gregor 1981a, who discuss similar dream theories among the Makiritare and Mehinaku respectively; and O'nell 1976, who asserts that the wandering soul concept of dreams has a world-wide distribution). Free souls can travel to the world of the mountains, where they visit the *aspeɨenesha'* or "mountain spirit people." They can also visit the underwater worlds, where ancient divinities, mermaids, and powerful *mellañoɨeñ* spirits dwell. Free souls can also have encounters with intangible extraordinary beings that wander along this

earth, namely, personified diseases, the primordial essences of plants and animals, and the erring shadows of those who have experienced a violent death. Finally, they can also meet the free souls of other sleeping people, sometimes relatives and acquaintances, or even strangers.[11]

Because they act as a bridge between the world of waking life and the invisible extraordinary worlds, Yanesha people consider dreams to be important sources of knowledge. Dreams, they assert, can predict the future. This they generally do by inversion, so that if a person dreams that a close relative is in good health, dancing, drinking and enjoying himself, the dream is interpreted as a sign that that person will soon die. Dreams also reveal past events. Thus, some shamans give their patients an herbal infusion that induces dreaming, so that they can identify in their dreams the person who has bewitched them. Dreams provide key knowledge for the successful carrying out of important activities. For instance, if a man dreams that the place he has chosen to build a new house is the abode of an evil spirit, he looks for another more auspicious site. Finally, dreams have an aesthetic, creative dimension, providing the dreamer with new designs, melodies or lyrics. Dreams have even more important functions for those training to become major healers, since they are the main means of accumulating mystical power through the acquisition of spirit familiars, sacred songs, and magical spells. As is the case among the Kagwahiv (Kracke 1979:160–162), individuals make an idiosyncratic use of widespread dream beliefs and notions when interpreting their dreams and those of others.

Given their importance as sources of information, knowledge and power, Yanesha people place great emphasis on dream recollection, dream sharing, and dream interpretation. Because they consider that their free souls are vulnerable, while sleeping, to attacks by dream enemies, household heads wake up several times every night and wake up everybody, even little children.[12] This promotes the remembrance of dreams, and increases the number of dreams recalled. During those brief waking periods, members of the household exchange impressions about their respective dreams, consulting each other as to the meaning of a particular image or event. Children are encouraged to tell their dreams, and are assisted by adults to interpret them. Early in the morning, when everybody has woken up, people share their dreams once more. People often asked my opinion about a particular aspect of their dreams (although they often found my interpretations invalid or disconcerting). They also asked me about my dreams, and were happy to help to interpret them (often disconcerting to me).

Unfortunately, dreaming is not only an important source of knowledge; but can also be extremely dangerous. Nightmares are the result of the free

soul's encounters with evil beings during dreaming. Especially feared are *choyeshe'mats* "the shadow souls of recently dead people" (see Kracke 1979, 1988 on *añang* ghosts among the Kawaghiv for similar notions). These evil beings can attempt to deceive the dreamer's free soul with offers of extremely palatable, though fake, food. If the soul eats this food, the food turns into what it really is—human flesh, maggots, or other disgusting nonfood—and the soul finds itself trapped forever in the dreamworld. This is another instance of the distinction, central to Yanesha thought and worldview, between mystifying appearances and true essences. Evil beings can also attempt to seduce the wandering soul. Those who have sexual relations with these beings find out, later on, that they cannot go back to the waking world. The free soul of the dreamer can also be intercepted by the souls of other people who want to harm it, or by the special soul that only shamans possess (*chañapchenaya*). Finally, evil jaguar spirits, shadow souls, and other monstrous beings can chase the dreamer's free soul to devour or kill it. All of these situations produce fear and anxiety. Although not all nightmares are thought to pose a threat to the life of the dreamer, Yanesha are taught that it is possible to avert the potential threats that appear in their dreams by controlling, manipulating, or changing the course of events in their nightmares to their own benefit. This is precisely what Pedro Casanto did to eliminate the threat posed by his dead father's shadow soul.

LUCID DREAMING AND NEW AGE SPIRITUALITY

The idea of consciously controlling dreams, common among ancient and indigenous cultures, has been gradually incorporated into New Age spirituality under the notion of lucid dreaming, or "the highly enlightened state in which the dreamer is totally awake within a dream, and reality merges with the dreamscene" (dreamemporium.com). Interest on the subject is not only manifest in the profusion of specialized literature for New Age practitioners (Garfield 1974, 1995; LaBerge 1985; Harary and Weintraub 1989), but also in the New Age cyberspace.[13] Lucid dreaming has become so popular in recent times that there is scarcely one website devoted to dreams and dreaming that does not mention it as an important tool, not only for the treatment of nightmares, but also for the enhancement of personal knowledge and capabilities.

Most websites and books on the subject define nightmares as disturbing dreams in which unpleasant visual imagery and/or emotions awaken the sleeper. They distinguish nightmares from bad dreams, whose subject matter

is not disturbing enough to awaken the dreamer, and from night terrors that produce body paralysis and a sort of amnesia that prevents the dreamer from recalling the dream's imagery. In contrast, there is less agreement as to the cause and function of nightmares.

Those New Age thinkers who propound a more psychological point of view say that nightmares are caused by a traumatic event from the past, or a troubling and unresolved issue in the present (thriveonline.com).[14] Nightmares arise from the dreamer's deepest frustrations, repressions, and inner conflicts (stanford.edu/~corelli/nightmares.html), as well as from fears and tensions of which the dreamer is unaware in waking life (lucidity.com). They are also considered to be a form of self-punishment for the unacceptable parts of ourselves with which we need to come to terms. From this point of view, nightmares "bring the gift of self-awareness" by drawing attention to serious psychological problems that need to be confronted (leland.stanford.edu). In other words, by paying attention to these "urgent psychological messages," dreamers gain the "treasure" of understanding themselves.

In contrast, those New Age practitioners who endorse a more mystical view suggest that nightmares are the "enemy bearing gifts" (lifetreks.com). Nightmares are the most helpful of our dreams, for they scan for threat and provide early warnings by focusing on emotionally unfinished business, thus improving the dreamer's survival skills. According to this view, because evolution has trained us to pay attention to threatening things, when the "deep source within" has important information to convey to waking consciousness it "dresses up" as a nightmare (jeremytaylor.com). Nightmares are frightening in order to get our attention, pointing to areas in a person's life that need to be "healed or worked upon" (dreamemporium.com). Thus, recurring nightmares are explained as important messages that the dreamer has not understood or addressed. For this reason, "the dream keeps 'sending' the same message over and over" (dreamtree.com). The information conveyed in these messages is generally associated with survival issues, such as actual physical health, or "psychospiritual health and wholeness." It prepares the dreamer for current and future events in his or her waking life.

The more scientific and the more mystical New Age perspectives overlap in that the best "cure" for nightmares is thought to be through dream control (changing the course of events in dreams from the sphere of consciousness). This notion has become increasingly popular since the appearance in 1974 of Patricia Garfield's book *Creative Dreaming*. This work has been extremely successful, being reprinted nineteen times in mass-market paperback editions, and translated into eight different languages

(see Garfield 1995:8).

Creative Dreaming, which begins with the description of a young man having a nightmare, is devoted to teaching readers "to use [their] conscious mind to confront and conquer [their] dream enemies" (Garfield 1995:29). To do so, Garfield resorts to the belief systems and techniques of dream control developed by past civilizations such as the Greeks and Assyrians, ancient cultures such as the Tibetans, and indigenous peoples of Asia and America. Here, I shall concentrate on the use Garfield makes of examples drawn from Native American peoples and from the Senoi of Malaysia, and how these methods and techniques have been popularized and increasingly simplified on the Net.

Although Garfield refers to Native Americans in general, her examples are taken mainly from the Ojibwa. In order to present Ojibwa theories of dreaming and dream planning, she recreates the dream quest of an imaginary Ojibwa boy, whom she names Footprints-of-a-Bear. This fictionalized account is based on several anthropological works (Garfield 1995:247–248). On the basis of this imaginary dream quest, and of the analysis of the dreaming activity of would-be Ojibwa midwives, Garfield (1995:100) extracts thirteen "principles" of Native American dream theories and practices. For the sake of brevity, I have summarized these principles into four basic propositions: (1) Dream recollection can be increased by valuing dreams, encouraging dreaming, and rewarding yourself for dreaming; (2) Dream induction is possible by planning dream content before going to sleep; (3) Dreams are a source of dream friends, songs and symbols that can be deeply satisfying in both dreaming and waking life; and (4) Dreaming can develop skills of independence and problemsolving in waking life.

Garfield's presentation of "dream planning" among the Ojibwa sets the scenario for her discussion of "dream control" among the Senoi, horticulturalists of the mountainous jungles of Malaysia. Garfield bases her description of Senoi dream theories and practices on the information provided by British anthropologist Herbert Noone (as it appeared in Noone and Holman 1972), and on the work of Kilton Stewart (1972), an anthropologist who worked with Noone and developed his own system of therapy on the basis of Senoi dream practices. This time, however, Garfield presents the main tenets of the Senoi system of dream control through an imaginary dialogue between a boy, his parents, and other family members, which occurs while sharing dreams during breakfast. Garfield (1995:133) concludes that dream control among the Senoi is based on three general rules: (1) Always confront and conquer danger in dreams; (2) Always move toward pleasurable experience in dreams; and (3) Always make your dream have a positive outcome, and extract a creative product from it.

According to her account, Senoi children are taught to overcome nightmares by gaining lucidity during their dreams and attacking or killing if necessary their dream enemies. They are also taught to change dream events to bring dreams, and especially nightmares, to a positive end. As a result of these practices, Senoi youngsters do not have nightmares anymore by the time they reach adolescence. It is then that they are taught to enhance the pleasurable aspects of dreaming, particularly those associated with sexual activities, and to obtain "dream lovers." They are also taught to turn defeated dream enemies into useful dream "servants." Finally, they are taught that they have to obtain valuable "gifts" from conquered dream aggressors, newlymade dream friends, or attractive dream lovers. These gifts can be songs, designs, or helpful information. It is only when youngsters learn how to make dream characters help them and serve them that they achieve adult status.

Garfield equates Ojibwa and Senoi notions of dream control with "lucid dreaming," a kind of dreaming activity that has been reported in Western societies since the late nineteenth-century (Saint-Denys 1982[1867]). The term "lucid dream" was coined by the Dutch psychotherapist Frederik van Eeden (1913), as one of the nine categories of his dream typology. According to van Eeden: "In lucid dreams the reintegration of the psychic functions is so complete that the sleeper remembers day-life and his own condition, reaches a state of perfect awareness, and is able to direct his attention, and to attempt different acts of free volition." Van Eeden's paper has become so popular among New Age practitioners and dreamworkers that it has been reproduced in several websites, acquiring a sort of iconic value (e.g., see wondersmith.com).

Celia Green (1968), of the Institute of Psychophysical Research in Oxford, was the first to examine the phenomenon of lucid dreaming in the West. In her book *Lucid Dreams*, she analyzes van Eeden's experiences, as well as those of several other well-known European lucid dreamers. However, it was not until the publication of Garfield's book, which relies heavily on Green's work, that the notion of lucid dreaming became popular in New Age circles (Garfield 1995:149). Garfield defines lucid dreams as those in which the dreamer is aware that he or she is dreaming, and can thus change dream events at will. She argues that the extent of this awareness varies, as lucid dreaming is a skill that develops with training.

Garfield's account of the experience of lucid dreaming in the West greatly coincides with what we know of dream control among Yanesha people. First, the experience of lucidity often results from recurring nightmares, since the fear and anxiety it produces triggers brief flashes of awareness in which the dreamer realizes that he or she is dreaming.

Unfortunately, this period of lucidity is extremely brief, generally waking up the dreamer. However, through the use of certain techniques, this type of "chance lucidity" can be transformed into planned lucid dreaming. Second, flying dreams commonly precede lucid dreaming. These, in turn, are often triggered by recurring nightmares in which the dreamer tries to escape from fearful beings or things by flying. There is evidence that in such instances lucid dreamers are able to learn how to fly in dreams. This was the case for Mary Arnold-Forster, a well-known British lucid dreamer, who in the 1920s reported that she learned to fly in a recurring nightmare in which she had to walk down a particularly dark staircase at night (Garfield 1995:161). Finally, lucid dreams are characterized by their extreme sense of reality. As Garfield puts it, in such dreams "the physical world appears real, psychological behavior seems real, and the dreamer's perceptions seem like waking life" (Garfield 1995:157).

At the time Garfield wrote her book on creative dreaming, there was no scientific proof confirming the reality of lucid dreaming. Lucid dreams were dismissed as "micro-awakenings" that produced brief flashes of consciousness while dreaming. This changed in 1977, when Stephen LaBerge, a student of the Stanford University Sleep Research Center, conducted a series of experiments that entailed signaling a state of lucidity while sleeping with predetermined eye movements. This demonstrated without doubt that it was possible to gain consciousness while dreaming. LaBerge has combined his scientific pursuits with more commercial endeavors directed to the growing New Age market. In concert with many practitioners of New Age spirituality (cf., Brown 1997 on channelers), LaBerge conceives of training in lucid dreaming as an investment, a technique that will benefit its user. His commercial endeavors include the writing of two popular how-to-do-it books (La Berge 1985; LaBerge and Rheingold 1990) in which lucid dreaming is marketed as a means to "solve problems," "gain greater confidence," "improve creativity," "face and overcome fears and inhibitions," and "create a new sense of empowerment and liberation in your life." It also includes the selling of a series of technical devices developed by him, such as the DreamLight and NovaDreamer masks, that are said to induce lucid dreams by means of light cues. In addition, LaBerge has founded the Lucidity Institute, devoted to promoting research on lucid dreaming and to applying its results "to the enhancement of human health and well-being" (1990:305). The institute markets a variety of products related to lucid dreaming, and keeps a very complete and popular website (lucidity.com) on the subject.

In 1984, Garfield, LaBerge, psychologists Strephon Kaplan-Williams and John Van Damm, and two Bay Area dreamworkers, Rev. Jeremy Taylor

and Gayle Delaney, founded a professional organization devoted to dreamworkers that eventually became the Association for the Study of Dreams (Garfield 1995:15). This organization, which since 1991 has published a journal called *Dreaming* and operates a very popular website (asdreams.org), has contributed even further to the popularization of lucid dreaming and dream control. Through its international annual meetings, it has also managed to attract anthropologists interested in the study of dreams, such as Barbara Tedlock (1987:xiii–xiv).

SIMULATION AND THE APPROPRIATION OF NATIVE BELIEFS

Native American and Senoi conceptions of dream control have had a great success among New Agers in the United States and Europe. Their dream beliefs and practices, as presented by Garfield, were rapidly incorporated into New Age literature and, later on, with the development of the Internet, into New Age cyberspace. At present, references to these beliefs are common in almost every dream website, particularly in the "frequently asked questions," or FAQs sections. However, as Root has argued, the capitalistic appropriation of non-Western beliefs and objects by the West is realized "sometimes by domesticating and sometimes by erasing [their] origins" (1996:76), that is, by decontextualization and pasteurization. These are the processes at play in the following assertion by the author of a popular guide for the treatment of children's nightmares: "The idea of confronting the enemy and finding the gift in the dream is from the work of the anthropologist Kilton Stewart and the Indians from whom he took many of his ideas" (Wiseman 1989:1). By a swift play of hands, the Senoi of Malaysia, the famous "dream people," have been turned into "Indians," not only distorting their identity, but also turning them into generic indiscernible "Others."

But the most important simplification began with Garfield herself. In her book she obviates the important issue that for the Ojibwa and the Senoi dreams are real, and the actions that take place in dreams are true. Nowhere in her description of the dream beliefs of these peoples does Garfield state that for them the cosmos and the self are composed by a multiplicity of tangible and intangible worlds and entities, or that they consider dreamworlds as coexistent with our tangible world and dream characters to be as real as the tangible people that surround us. Likewise, there is no mention of the fact that the Ojibwa and the Senoi believe that what we experience in dreams is real, because it is experienced by one of

our spiritual essences or vitalities. Thus, Garfield secularizes indigenous dream experiences, stripping them of their more mystical or magical aspects, and retaining only the more operational and technical aspects. In other words, she reduces rich and complex worldviews to sets of simple and generic principles, rules and techniques.

This decontextualized and secularized view of indigenous beliefs, frequently based on imaginary ethnographies (see Brown 1997:163 for similar use of ethnographic texts by channelers), has carried over to the New Age cyberspace. As a result, even the most radical New Age websites adhere to the Western vision of dreams as "illusions" (dreamemporium.com), "entirely illusory" (lucidity.com), or "an illusion created by the mind" (dreamtree.com). There is also general agreement that nightmares are more common among children because they still cannot draw the boundary between fantasy and reality (harthosp.org). In fact, according to New Age dreamworkers, the effectiveness of lucid dreaming for the curing of nightmares relies precisely on the idea that the sudden awareness that what one is experiencing is a dream, that is, an illusion, allows dreamers to dismiss their fears, confront their dream enemies, and bring the dream's course of events to a happy ending.[15]

I contend that the appropriation of indigenous beliefs and practices by the West is characteristic of neocolonial encounters in the age of globalization, and on what, until recently, was called the "information highway." By neocolonialism, I understand the powerful force that influence-groups in postindustrial societies (rather than states) exert indirectly over nonindustrial societies—and particularly over indigenous societies—through transnational corporations, international financial organizations, international cooperation agencies, nongovernmental organizations, and global media networks. In such contexts, the exchange of information between members of postindustrial and nonindustrial societies is much more intense than in past colonial situations, but at the same time it is less direct. This is so, insofar as neocolonialism is not based on the direct physical subordination of the colonized by the colonizers. At the present time, we know more about the world as a whole than we ever did in the past, but what we know, or are made to know, is produced and distributed by very few transnational information networks. Even scientific information that in the past was transmitted through very exclusive and excluding means, is nowadays rapidly incorporated into mainstream channels of information. The knowledge and imagery thus generated is, in turn, replicated ad infinitum through information age technologies such as cable television, the World Wide Web, electronic mail, scanners, digital photography, recordable CDs, and laser printers.

Very few places can be said to be remote in the new globalized world. While visiting a quite isolated Ngobe village located in Península Valiente, on the Caribbean coast of Panama, I was asked by a prophet of the Mama Chi messianic cult how scientists had been able to clone Dolly, an event he had heard about on his transistor radio. In contrast, in a fancy dinner party in Panama city I was asked by the hostess, the wife of an affluent businessman, to tell her about my experiences with Amazonian shamans and, particularly, about their astral voyages, of which she had heard through the Discovery Channel. The fascination of the colonized for the science and technology of the colonizers is thus mirrored by the fascination of the colonizers for the magic and ritual of the colonized. In such neocolonial contexts, the colonized attempt to appropriate the power of the colonizers through "mimesis," while colonizers attempt to appropriate the power of the colonized through "simulation."

Taussig (1993), who was the first to realize the importance of mimesis in the power relationship between colonized and colonizers, has explored this phenomenon in its multiple dimensions. In his view, mimesis is the act by which the colonized—indigenous, aborigine or native peoples—replicate beings, objects, notions, or practices pertaining to the sphere of the colonizers that are considered to be manifestations of their power, in the hope of capturing the magical power of the original. One of the most commanding examples of the workings of mimesis in colonial situations is that of Melanesian "cargo cults" (see Burridge 1954, 1962 and Worseley 1957). In the Amazon, mimesis can be seen at work in the imitation of books by Shipibo and Yanesha peoples during the nineteenth century (Gebhart-Sayer 1985; Santos-Granero 2002), and in the magical replication of the act of reading by Piro people at the beginning of the twentieth century (Gow 1990). The magical power of replication resides in the fact that, from a native point of view, the image—the represented—affects the material (cars, boats, radios, telegraph posts), or immaterial (songs, dances) products that it replicates, while at the same time acquiring the power of that which it represents (Taussig 1993:2). However, as Taussig points out, for the copy to be effective it is not necessary for it to be completely faithful to the original (Taussig 1993:51–52). This is so because what the magician is trying to appropriate is not the outward appearance, but the essence of that which is being replicated. What is important is not the appearance, considered to be virtual and deceitful, but the powerful, true essence of the objects, practices and beings belonging to the colonizers' world. The magician is not interested in reproducing the material or immaterial products of postindustrial societies themselves. A simplified copy of the material appearance, a "copy that is not a copy" according to Taussig

(1993:52), is enough to capture what for the magician is really important, that is, the magical power of the represented.

The counterpart of mimesis in such neocolonial situations is simulation. Baudrillard (1994) has developed the notions of simulation and simulacra as part of a postmodern critique of the modern conception of "representation." This entails criticism of the notion of "originality," which in the ideology of modernity is perceived as the mark of an authentic art object or text, as the product of a highly individualized and autonomous subjectivity, and as proof of an absolute and absolutely accessible "Truth." Baudrillard (1994:1) argues that the technological developments of the postmodern age, and especially the proliferation of a diversity of means of mechanical reproduction, have not only shattered the notion of "originality," but have eliminated the distinction between the real and the imaginary. In the age of simulation, he asserts, the signs of the real (the copies) have replaced the real. Simulation, according to Baudrillard, is the generation of a real "without origin or reality," that which he calls a "hyperreal" (1994:1). Models of reality dominate the hyperreal world, and reality itself has given way, first, to simulations of the real, and, later on, to simulations of simulations that have neither anchor nor interest in the real.

Communicative processes in neocolonial situations do not escape from the logic of simulation as developed by Baudrillard. Here, however, I would like to restrict Baudrillard's notion of simulation to refer to the secular appropriation of objects, notions and techniques from the realm of the colonized through the simplified and generic replication of their belief systems. This is exactly the opposite of mimetic reproduction. In mimesis, the colonized replicate mostly the material products of postindustrial societies (books, radios, medical machinery) to extract from them their magical power. In other words, science and technology are turned into magic. In contrast, in simulation, the colonizers replicate mostly the immaterial products of nonindustrial societies (beliefs, esoteric knowledge and practices) to extract from them powerful techniques, operations and skills. In a sense, they turn magic and religion into a mere technique or technology. However, mimesis and simulation share one trait. In order for them to be effective, they both have to simplify that which they replicate. This is certainly true of the appropriation of dream beliefs and practices.

Garfield's representation of Ojibwa and Senoi dream beliefs falls into the category of simulation. This is so, first, because it is based on the production of fictionalized recreations, in the Ojibwa case of a dream quest, in the Senoi case of a morning session of dream sharing. Next, it strips native beliefs of those aspects of the supernatural that would be more unpalatable for Western tastes. But then there is a third reason that suggests

that the indigenous dream beliefs and practices disseminated through New Age literature and websites should be considered not only simulations, but also simulations of simulations. As Garfield (1995:9–12) herself notes in the preface of the revised edition of her book, after the publication of *Creative Dreaming* in 1974, the authenticity of the Senoi materials she used as re-elaborated by Kilton Stewart on the basis of Herbert Noone's ethnography was called into question.

In his book, *The Mystique of Dreams*, William Domhoff (1985) examines the anthropological literature on the Senoi and suggests that the Senoi never performed some of the practices—dream sharing in community councils, the carrying out of dream-inspired collective projects, and dream shaping—that Stewart attributed to them. After a compelling detective-like investigation of Stewart's personal and academic life, Domhoff concludes that Stewart was "a well-meaning charmer and story-teller" (1985:96). This position is supported by other dreamworkers, such as Anne Sayre Wiseman, who says that a friend of Stewart asserted "he created his Senoi dream approach out of a mélange of ideas he took from American Indians, the Senoi tribe, and from the Mormons" (1989:5). However, not everybody agrees with this criticism. Some, e.g., Rev. Jeremy Taylor, a renowned dreamworker, suggest that the Senoi practiced all of the techniques mentioned by Stewart but that after the Second World War their society experienced such disruptions that many practices were lost (Garfield 1995:10). However, Garfield points out, since both Noone and Stewart are dead, we will probably never know the full truth.

CONCLUSIONS

Whether or not we ever come to know the truth—whatever that means in this particular case—we can assert that the appropriation, popularization, and commoditization of Native American and Southeast Asian dream beliefs by New Age thinkers and entrepreneurs has resulted in their simplification. This impoverishment, characteristic of simulation in neocolonial situations, is expressed as a shift in emphasis from the mystical to the secular, from the ideational to the operational, and from the specific to the generic. Such tendency to decontextualize native beliefs, presenting them in generic ways, has been neatly depicted by Beth Conklin (2002:1056–1057) in her analysis of how shamanism is represented nowadays by non-natives, in both Brazilian and international political arenas.

Baudrillard has argued that to simulate is "to feign to have what one

doesn't have" (1994:3). Thus, he suggests that the real function of simulation is "to mask the absence of a profound reality" (1994:6). I argue that this is precisely the case in the particular kind of simulacra on which New Age spirituality is often based and which results from the spiritual void felt by many people in postindustrial societies. This void, resulting from the extreme materialism and individualism of these societies, as well as from the incapacity of hegemonic religions to fulfill genuine spiritual needs, has resulted in a massive decline in congregation attendance and church membership. In England, Church attendance on Sunday has dropped from 4.7 million in 1989 to 3.7 million in 1998 (Brierley 2000). In the United States, it is estimated that mainstream Protestant churches have lost between one-fifth and one-third of their membership during the period 1965-1990 (Johnson et al. 1993). According to the General Social Survey, the number of people who never attend church or synagogue in the United States doubled from 9% in 1972 to 19% in 1998 (www.icpsr.umich.edu). In Canada, the percentage of people aged fifteen and over who attend a religious service at least once a month dropped from 41% in 1988 to 34% in 1998 (Couto 2001). Since 1980, the percentage of the population claiming membership in a religious denomination has dropped more than 20% in Belgium, 18% in the Netherlands, and 16% in France (Chu 2003). Multiple and frequently contradictory theories have been advanced to explain this trend, but what seems incontrovertible is that established religions in postindustrial societies are not fulfilling the needs of their adherents (Johnson et al. 1993). This would explain the search for alternative spiritualities, including the New Age movement.

The growth of the New Age movement contrasts, however, with other collective religious shifts that have taken place in Western societies, such as the massive conversion of African Americans to Islam—according to the American Muslim Council, 24% of African Americans are Muslims—or the conversion of many poor Latin Americans to diverse Evangelical denominations. First, New Age spirituality is not based on a structured, well-defined and coherent set of beliefs, but rather on a loosely organized collection of beliefs, therapies and practices derived from a wide range of religious and spiritual traditions. Second, unlike these other movements, New Age spirituality does not strive to contest hegemonic religions, and is not linked to social and political agendas. Indeed, the New Age appears as a heterogeneous movement of individuals; most of them tend to graft their New Age beliefs onto their regular religious affiliation. Thus, New Age spirituality endeavors to compensate for the secularization and loss of spirituality of hegemonic Western religions with a proliferation of simulated—in Baudrillard's sense—spiritualities. It is worth noting,

however, that people involved with the New Age movement neither "belong" to the movement, nor are generally conscious of its guiding mystical or philosophical principles. Most New Age practitioners enter the movement attracted by specific beliefs, therapies or esoteric practices, and many are only consumers of specific products labeled New Age. Indeed, most are attracted by the promise that the adoption of certain rituals and practices (meditation, channeling, firewalking), or the use of certain products (crystals, dreamcatchers, aromatic essences), will enhance their mental and/or physical well-being.

Most New Age adherents are not always interested in learning about the mystical or religious philosophies that confer meaning on these practices and products in their native settings. As one source points out: "This fits perfectly into the patterns of consumption in societies where amusement and leisure play such an important part. The "movement" has adapted well to the laws of the market, and it is partly because it is such an attractive economic proposition that New Age has become so widespread. New Age has been seen, in some cultures at least, as the label for a product created by the application of marketing principles to a religious phenomenon" (Pontifical Council for Culture 2003). Like Lévi-Strauss' "bricoleurs," New Age scholars and entrepreneurs have created a piecemeal kind of spirituality that allows its followers to choose from a wide range of religious beliefs and practices to satisfy their particular personal needs. Michael Brown (1997:173) suggests that the highly personalized, customized and commoditized quality of New Age spirituality is a reflection of the consumeristic, late capitalist societies where it thrives: "If channeling sometimes looks more like a boutique in the shopping mall of the New Age than it does a religious movement grounded in shared commitment and a sharply defined moral vision, it is because it mirrors perfectly the society in which it has arisen."

Nourished by means of the mass media, New Age has become a global phenomenon that, at least in principle, champions the religiosities of native and ancient peoples. Unfortunately, as I show below, in so doing it redesigns the religious notions and beliefs it claims to adhere to in ways that contribute—even if unintentionally—to the misrepresention and perpetuation of the negative image that Westerners have of the original bearers of those beliefs. It is worth noting, however, that simulation is not the only, inevitable way in which native dream beliefs can be incorporated into Western practices. In recounting her experiences in Canada teaching psychology classes in Native American colleges and organizing dream workshops for indigenous and Western people in collaboration with Native American specialists, psychologist Jayne Gackenbach (1996) narrates how

these experiences became two-way roads of knowledge exchange between indigenous and Western participants. In this sense, a distinction should be made between New Age intellectuals and entrepreneurs, who are the most actively engaged in practices of simulation—and, thus, bear most of the responsibility for the misrepresentation and commoditization of native beliefs and practices—and New Age practitioners, who may have a genuine interest in the cultural practices of the Others in order to find spiritual solutions that have eluded the West. It should be stressed also that the fact that lucid dreaming has been mostly appropriated through processes of simulation in no way dampens its efficacy. A brief exploration of the pertinent literature, websites and chat rooms provides numerous examples of people—raped women, cancer patients, children whose parents are divorcing—who, after adopting lucid dreaming techniques, claim to have been able to control their nightmares and improve, sometimes dramatically, their waking lives. The same can be said of other mystical practices adopted by New Agers such as, for instance, firewalking (see Danforth 1989).

The following narration, taken from Garfield (1995:141-142) and which mirrors that of Pedro Casanto, the Yanesha boy, bears witness of the efficacy of lucid dreaming in the West:

> After my father's death in 1968, he often appeared to me in my dreams as a dangerous figure that insulted and threatened me. When I became lucid, I would beat him in anger. He was then sometimes transformed into a more primitive creature, like a dwarf, an animal, or a mummy. Whenever I won, I was overcome by a feeling of triumph. Nevertheless, my father continued to appear as a threatening figure in subsequent dreams. Then I had the following decisive dream. I became lucid, while being chased by a tiger, and wanted to flee. I then pulled myself together, stood my ground and asked, "Who are you?" The tiger was taken aback but was transformed into my father and answered, "I am your father and will now tell you what you are to do!" In contrast to my earlier dreams, I did not attempt to beat him, but tried to get involved in a dialogue with him. I told him that he could not order me around. I rejected his threats and insults. On the other hand, I had to admit that some of my father's criticism was justified, and I decided to change my behavior accordingly. At that moment, my father became friendly, and we shook hands. I asked him if he could help me, and he encouraged me to go my own way alone. My father then seemed to slip into my body, and I remained alone in the dream.

I began this paper with the examination of the nightmare of a Yanesha boy. I end it with the presentation of a similar nightmare, this time of Paul Tholey, a German dream researcher renowned in New Age circles. In both cases, their fathers assaulted them in dreams. And in both cases, they

decided to change the course of events of their nightmares by becoming lucid in their dreams. Nevertheless, their respective strategies for dealing with their aggressors are diametrically opposed. Despite the empathy that New Age adherents feel for native peoples in general, in the West "we" do not kill our fathers, not even in dreams. Arguing that to kill a dream enemy is to kill a part of ourselves we do not want to reckon with, Tholey (1988) rejects Senoi—and, by extension, Yanesha—approaches to the curing of nightmares and developed a new, less violent method that advocates conciliation rather than confrontation, making friends rather than killing enemies (LaBerge 1990:236–239; Garfield 1995:141–145). In other words, let the "Others" kill their fathers.

Even when simulating the beliefs of indigenous peoples to incorporate them into its new brand of spirituality, and even when dealing with the seemingly innocuous (because supposedly illusory) realm of dreams, Westerners cannot refrain themselves from drawing the boundary between the "civilized" West and the "savage" Others. In brief, not only do members of Western postindustrial societies appropriate through simulation the spiritual beliefs and practices of non-Western Others, but these are frequently modified in ways that mark (one more time) their original bearers as "savages." As Brown so aptly puts it: "the New Age case is suffused with an irony at once poignant and bitter: by turning to Native American traditions for models of more vibrant ways to live and to worship, Americans may simultaneously threaten the integrity of Indian spirituality and accelerate the cultural processes that make modern life so disenchanting" (1997:167).

NOTES

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1. Pedro Casanto is a pseudonym used to protect the privacy of a Yanesha friend and informant whose nightmares I analyze in this article. The names of all the other persons mentioned in his narrative are also pseudonyms.

2. Reviewer #2 of this paper pointed out that given that there was a gap of eight years between the time in which Pedro Casanto had these nightmares and the time in which he recounted them to me, his narration might have been affected by what is known in psychoanalysis as "secondary revision." As a result of this major mechanism of dream

work, the dream and its telling might be radically different, obscuring the dreamer's motives, and requiring more tentative interpretations. Insofar as my intention in this article is not to provide a psychoanalytic interpretation of Pedro Casanto's nightmares, but rather to illustrate how Yanesha people act upon their dreams from the sphere of vigil, the possible distortions resulting from "secondary revision" should not affect the analysis.

3. Vaporizing is a widespread procedure used by Yanesha herbalists (*apartañ*) to extract from the bodies of their patients the mystical pathogenic objects sent by human or non-human witches to make them ill. I am not sure whether the use of this shamanic technique to render a person invisible to the shadow souls of the dead is idiosyncratic, or is part of the culture of how to respond to threatening nightmares.

4. The generic term for female tunic is *cashemuets*; *necashem* = my tunic or body, for female ego. The generic term for male tunic is *shetamuets*; *neshtam* = my tunic or body, for male ego.

5. In fact, this is not the only possible interpretation. Reviewer #1 of this paper has suggested as an alternative interpretation that Pedro Casanto might not only have felt guilty for the death of his father, but, as is often the case with an abusive parent, he might have also felt, deeply buried, love for his father. When he cried at his father's imminent death he was expressing not only fright at his father's physical transformation, but also distress at the impending loss of the father he used to have before he was affected by illness. It might have been, Reviewer #1 suggests, "the return of this positive attachment to his father that, repressed, is responsible for the persistent image that his father is pursuing him: a fearful manifestation of the repressed love for his father that, despite his fear, persists and keeps him bound to his father's image".

6. It is worth noting that when Pedro Casanto killed his father in dreams, he says that the dead man "fell like a rag from high above." This alludes in symbolic terms to the Yanesha notion that the body of a dead person, detached from his or her souls, is like a tunic without content.

7. The term "Yos" probably derives from the Spanish "Dios" or God.

8. The term *"camuequeñets"* seems to derive from the Quechua word *camaq* or creator, which is also found in the name of the Andean divinity Pachacamac (Smith 1977:96).

9. The term Yosoper probably derives from Lucifer, the fallen angel of the Christian tradition.

10. These beliefs betray the influence that Franciscan missionaries exerted over Yanesha people and other neighboring Arawak-speaking peoples during the seventeenth and eightteenth centuries.

11. It is not clear to me whether in waking life Yanesha people check with the people they have dreamt of to determine whether they also experienced the encounter. I suspect that they do not. What I do know is that allied shamans claim to consult each other while wandering in the dream-world.

12. Reviewer #2 suggested that as a result of this practice Yanesha people "must be radically sleep deprived." This is not the case. Given that Yanesha adults and children—except for men going on nocturnal hunting expeditions—go to sleep shortly after sunset, at around 7:00 p.m., and sleep until around 5:00 a.m., these frequent awakenings do not hinder them from fulfilling their sleep needs.

13. By "New Age" I refer to a decentralized and unorganized spiritual movement that has thrived in postindustrial societies as an alternative or complement to established religions and that draws its inspiration from a variety of religious or magical traditions, often, but not always, of non-Western origins. It lacks dogmas, creeds, holy texts, central organization, formal membership and clergy. It is rather a "free-flowing spiritual movement; a network of believers and practitioners who share somewhat similar beliefs and practices,

which they add on to whatever formal religion that they follow" (http://www.religioustolerance.org/newage.htm).

14. It is difficult to attribute specific New Age ideas to particular individuals, since in most cases the ideas that appear in New Age websites are not identified to anyone in particular—although there are exceptions. This is precisely one of the appealing aspects of these ideas, namely that they seem to have no individual origin, that they are presented as being timeless and the result of common sense, and that they are ubiquitous—they appear again and again in almost the same words in dozens of different websites. As a result, these notions become almost invulnerable to criticism.

15. As Reviewer #1 of this paper points out, these notions have seeped into other realms of popular culture, finding expression in films such as *The Matrix* trilogy. In them, we are told that only after Neo, the hero, becomes aware of the illusory quality of the world in which he lives is he able to achieve a higher degree of mental and physical control, overcome his fears, and combat the enemies of humanity to gain personal and collective liberation.

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