

**“OUR GRANDPARENTS ARE BURIED HERE;
OUR GRANDPARENTS KNOW:”
RE-MEMBERING A QUIJOS TERRITORY AND IDENTITY**

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B.A. Community Health and Human Rights, New York University, 2004

A Thesis
Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies
Of the University of Lethbridge
In Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree

MASTER OF ARTS

Department of Anthropology
University of Lethbridge
LETHBRIDGE, ALBERTA, CANADA

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For my grandfather, Winslow Long (1922-2013),
who taught me how to see a plant.

For Marco, Lucas, and Asha.
Thank you for joining me on this amazing ride.

And for my dear friends in Jondachi.
From the bottom of my heart, thank you for everything.

Abstract

In this thesis I explore how memory shapes Quijos notions of territory and identity. My research is based on fieldwork I conducted with the Amazonian Quijos in Napo, Ecuador. I examine how the places on the land are intimately tied to Quijos production of shamanic knowledge, health, and social wellbeing, as well as how the land is an essential element that enables the Quijos to remember. The Ecuadorian state has historically attempted to control the Quijos using models of “behavior” imposed through agrarian reform and the creation of ecological conservation areas. I explore the emergence of the “new” Quijos identity and focus on how its members interact with the state as they attempt to gain autonomy. Finally, I argue that through memory-work, the Quijos effectively produce their own identity and territory, thus creating a space independent of state intervention that provides the autonomy they are seeking.

Acknowledgements

I could not have written this thesis without the love and support of so many people. I am profoundly grateful to the family I lived with in Jondachi and their extended family, who gave my family a home in Napo, friendship, and invaluable insights that allowed me to understand my research in a different light.

My deepest, heartfelt thanks also goes to Patrick Wilson, who taught me how to do anthropological research and who gave me incredible support and insights along the way; to Judy Whitehead and Mike Cepek, who were kind enough to reflect on my research with comments, suggestions, and support, as it went from proposal stage, through research stage, and to the final draft; and to Jenny Oseen, who always made time for a smile and conversation, and without whose logistical support I could not have completed this thesis.

Over the extended course of researching and writing this thesis, I have bundled up to face -30 degree Canadian winter chills, sweated the heat of a plains' summer and Amazon days, had a baby, trudged through U.S. immigration policy, moved overseas multiple times, enjoyed the red-hot sunsets over the Andes, and planted a garden. It is impossible to separate the academic part of my life from the rest of my real lived life. I could not have completed this thesis without the help, support, and inspiration I received from the following amazing people: Estanislao Pasmiño, for his incredible support and friendship from beginning to end; Steffi Dudley, Patrick Dudley, Jordy and Maddie, for giving us an unforgettable home, family, and friends in Lethbridge; Karen Llusca, for taking Lucas along to her cooking classes and giving him so much love; Hannah Forbes, for being a great neighbor, taking great care of Lucas, and emailing me transcriptions of

his toddler Spanish when she needed urgent translation while I was in the library working on this thesis; Briar Forbes and Djamel Pazmiño, for giving Lucas two amazing best friends and playmates in Lethbridge; Sara Ortiz, Luz Janeth Ospina, and Alejandro García for all their love, open arms, and delicious food; Julie and Henry Klok, for their kindness and warmth; Marinus Swanepoel, for always being concerned about my bibliography and wanting to know more; Claudia Malacrida, for being real; Madeline Neufeld and Liz Martin, for their all-day smiles and warming conversations; Samantha Pownall, Andrea Smith, Ellie Walton, and Sarah Weintraub, who took special trips to see me and kept our friendship strong; my entire family in Cuenca, Sra. Melchora, Don Ricardo, their children, and grandchildren, for always giving me a home and a family away from home; my parents, Bob Korn and Pam Long, for their constant love and support; and finally, to Marco, Lucas, and Asha, who were there for all the laughs, tears, learning, and adventures. I could not have done it without you.

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List of Abbreviations

REA: *Reserva Ecológica Antisana*, Antisana Ecological Reserve

CTI: *Circumscripción Territorial Indígena*, Indigenous Territorial Circumscription

FOIN, FONAKIN, CONAKIN: all acronyms which the organization that represents the Napo Kichwa has passed through: **FOIN** (*Federación de Organizaciones Indígenas de Napo*, Federation of Indigenous Organizations of Napo); **FONAKIN** (*Federación de la Nacionalidad Kichwa de Napo*, Federation of the Kichwa Nationality of Napo); and, currently, **CONAKIN** (*Coordinadora de la Nacionalidad Kichwa de Napo*, Coordinator of the Kichwa Nationality of Napo).

CONFENIAE: *Confederación de Nacionalidades Indígenas de la Amazonia Ecuatoriana*, Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of the Ecuadorian Amazon

CONAIE: *Confederación de Nacionalidades Indígenas del Ecuador*, Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador

CODENPE: *Consejo de Nacionalidades y Pueblos del Ecuador*, Council of Nationalities and Peoples of Ecuador

IERAC: *Instituto Ecuatoriano de Reforma Agraria y Colonización*, Ecuadorian Institute for Agrarian Reform and Colonization

NAOQUI: *Nación Originario Quijos*, Originary Quijos Nation

List of Foreign Words

Abuelos: Grandparents

Cacique: Indigenous leader during colonial times.

Chicha: traditional beverage drunk daily in Napo made from chonta fruit or yucca.

Chonta: Fruit that grows from the chonta palms that is mashed to make *chicha*.

Curaga: Leader

Finca: Large pieces of land off the road that were the Quijos traditional forest residences before agrarian reform in the 1970s. They are now used for horticulture, cattle ranching, and forest growth.

Guayusa: Traditional tea that the Quijos brew in the early mornings.

Mayores: Elders

Sacharuna: Forest spirits who live underground and form relationships with Quijos yachaks.

Samay: Life energy and wisdom, mobilized by breath.

Shigra: Traditional woven bag used for carrying, usually strapped onto the forehead.

Yachak: Traditional Quijos shaman.

Introduction

He runs to the shade of the cacao trees: “Do you remember?” With small hands, he grasps the fiery-red cacao pod and I feel his mouth salivating at the memory of sucking the sweet white goo two years before, knowing what magic lies inside. “Do you remember?” asks my little Lucas, just shy of four, his voice bubbling with unconstrained excitement. His long brown hair is matted with sweat, its part now a thing of the past, a casualty of this revolt. Each clump of hair has stubbornly chosen a direction to fly in; all finally concede by settling into an impressive do that I am afraid to even touch. A second later he is off to the chicken coop: “And do you remember?!?” His eyes jump with glee as he lurches forward, trying to catch the little chicks, their desperate chirps like fingers giving him the tickles. Ana¹, who is watching from behind, lets out a laugh, a whooping “WEEE-hee-hee” that starts up high then slides down the scale, the contagious one that always cracked a smile from me. She hands Lucas a baby-bowl of chicha². This stops him in his tracks. He cautiously eyes it, sniffs at it, then, slowly, takes a guarded sip. His eyes close, and for one long second there is a rare silence. Then, “DO YOU REMEMBER!!!!” he shouts out, gulping down that beautiful orange chicha. And I did. It was chonta season again. It felt good to be back.

It had been two years since we lived in Jondachi, a small Amazonian community in Ecuador, to conduct fieldwork and we had returned for a visit. Our trip coincided with an important event which was the very first “Congress of the Originary Quijos Nation.”

¹ In this thesis I have changed all names to protect peoples’ identities, except for my own family members’ names and those of national public figures, such as Rafael Correa, the president.

² Chicha is a traditional beverage drunk multiple times a day. During the chonta season, which, in Napo, lasts from April to September, most people make chicha from the orange chonta fruit. At other times it is made with yucca, which makes the beverage white.

The Ecuadorian government had just legally recognized the Quijos as a “Nation,” and people in Jondachi buzzed with motivation and anticipation as they worked to rebuild their ancestral identity and territory. As the day went on, friends filled me in on the advances the Quijos had made and how the future looked for the Nation, while memories of my time doing fieldwork in Jondachi sent me from here to there, both physically and mentally. Likewise, the Congress focussed on electing a new leadership for the Quijos movement, setting a new agenda, and establishing new protocol, but to do this, Quijos participants engaged in activities that concentrated on remembering their ancestral Quijos past. I saw that memory-work was a key component to shaping the Quijos knowledge of who they were and what land was theirs. Now, when I go through my fieldnotes and interviews I see remembering everywhere. My research therefore came to revolve around this question: How does the act of remembering help forge a Quijos identity and territory?

The shape of this thesis takes the path I took while researching, beginning with chapter one, which focuses on discoveries I made early on in the field. In this first chapter I describe how territory is understood on a day-to-day basis in the form of “fincas,” large plots of land owned by individual families. I explain how the land, its places, and the spirits that inhabit them, are essential for Quijos health, knowledge, and well-being. I discuss the history of agrarian reform of the 1960s and 70s in Napo province and how much of the land tenure struggles that existed then continue on to this day. I detail a conflict between one Quijos family, the Arévalos, and the Antisana Ecological Reserve, which has appropriated the Arévalo’s ancestral land, and how this conflict represents the inherent difficulties of the global conservation movement. Finally, I demonstrate how the

state has imposed contradicting models of how indigenous Amazonians should work and live, making the actual Quijos lifestyle wanting and problematic in the eyes of the government. These expectations and contradicting realities are played out on the land, where Quijos territory becomes contested and the focus of intense struggle. Quijos memory-work, I begin to see, is essential for their relationship with the land; land and the places on it, in turn, are vital components for how the Quijos remember.

In chapter two, I begin to settle into the routine of Jondachi life and to follow the Quijos identity movement, focusing on the movement's leader, Raúl. I situate this movement within the complex workings of neoliberal multiculturalism as myself and the movement's members attempt to understand if and how the movement can forge autonomy while working within prescribed governmental structures. I learn that Raúl is a *yachak* (shaman), and begin to see the conundrum of leading a traditional Quijos lifestyle while being the leader of a social movement. I end by arguing that Raúl may represent a shift in the political leadership of indigenous Amazonian social movements, from the cosmopolitan leaders who emerged as the typical federation leaders of the 1980s and 90s, to leaders who now more closely embody cultural tradition and "authenticity." To develop their new identity it becomes important for the Quijos to strengthen ties that link them to their past and that activate their remembering. People see Raúl as embodying deep knowledge of their ancestors and as being closer to the essence of a Quijos past because he is a *yachak*. As a living link to the past, he lends the identity a sense of authenticity because of the memory-work that is inherent in his role as a *yachak*.

In chapter three, I focus my discussion on the act of remembering, something I only began to muse on long after I had left Jondachi, when even fieldwork had become a

memory for me. During hours spent reviewing fieldnotes, interviews, video recordings and late night almost-decipherable scribbles, I realized that the theme of remembering made strong appearances throughout. I began to see that the act of remembering was incredibly important for the Quijos and was what drove them to do much of what I write about in this thesis, although I was not totally aware of this while I was in the field. In this chapter, I use elements of the Arévalo's conflict with the Antisana Ecological Reserve, the emergence of the Quijos identity movement, the performance of Quijos cultural memory, and other stories and daily rituals to demonstrate how remembering helps forge a Quijos identity and territory. Finally, I argue that the Quijos actually gain autonomy and identity through the act of remembering.

The Historical Quijos

Reconstructing a Quijos identity requires recovering forgotten memories of times past and cultivating ancestral traditions that have been neglected over the years. This thesis attempts to understand the ways in which this remembering actually allows the Quijos to construct their new identity and to solidify their territory. The modern Quijos believe that they are descendants of the historical Quijos, a large ethnic group that lived during pre-Colombian and early colonial times, primarily in the foothills of the Andes that slope down into the Amazon, in what is now the Napo province. The way the modern Quijos conceive of the historical Quijos is fundamental to how they construct their new identity. Their conception of the historical Quijos, however, significantly contrasts with scholarly accounts of the historical ethnic group. Here I outline the basic scholarly

understandings of who the historic Quijos were, while, in chapter three, I describe the Quijos understandings of their ancestors.

Scholars believe that the historical Quijos maintained relationships with people in both the lowlands and the Andes, through trade networks (Oberem, 1980; Reeve, 1994) or through exchange, circulation, and intermarriage (Taylor, 1999; Uzendoski, 2004a). According to some accounts, when the Incas began conquering peoples in the Quito region, they debated going into the Amazon to conquer the Quijos, but “were tired of conquering such primitive and poor peoples” (according to Cabello Valboa, 1951, p. 438, quoted in Oberem, p. 36). It was not until 1539, and then 1541-42, that the Spanish sent expeditions into Quijos territory. Almost all incursions into Quijos territory were met with resistance by the Quijos, who attacked the colonists, and for sixteen years the Spaniards abstained from entering the region.

In 1556, the Spaniards finally attempted to pacify the Quijos and subsequently established the Spanish towns of Baeza, Avila, and Archidona to use as centers for religious conversion (Newson, 1995). During this time the *encomienda* system was established, in which the Quijos were made to work to generate tribute for the colonists and through which they were relocated and assigned to a colonist *encomendero* (Reeve, 1994). The Quijos’ conditions quickly deteriorated and in 1562 they revolted. The Spaniards defeated them and became harsher in their treatment to the point that many Quijos fled up into the Andes or committed infanticide (Newson, 1995; Ospina, 1992). The Spaniards forced the Quijos to work as domestic servants, weave cloth, pan for gold, and carry cargo, by foot, to Quito. There were complaints that women were raped and mutilated, and ferocious dogs were set on anyone who rebelled (Oberem, 1980).

In 1578, the Quijos carefully organized a general rebellion to eradicate the Spaniards. It involved strategic planning that included simultaneous uprisings among highland groups as well as other Amazonian peoples. The rebellion, known as the Revolt of the *Pendes* (shamans), was organized by the famous Quijos shamans Beto, from Archidona, and Guami, from Avila. To rally people to fight, they capitalized on the widespread feeling of hatred towards the Spaniards. They also threatened the people with their shamanic powers (Newson, 1995; Oberem, 1980; Ospina, 1992). These shamans led the Quijos in their attack and successfully burned the towns of Avila and Archidona, killing all of the Spanish colonist residents and the highlanders who served them (Oberem, 1980). They then decided to elect Jumandi, a well-known *cacique* (indigenous leader), to lead the next attack on the colonial town of Baeza. The Spaniards had been forewarned of the plot, however, and sent troops in from Quito; the attack failed. Afterwards, many Quijos surrendered, while the shaman leaders fled and hid in the forest. Four months later, they were found and sent to Quito, where the Spaniards used them as public displays of punishment that would be administered to anyone who dared to rebel. They were paraded through the city, tortured, and finally quartered, after which their heads were displayed in the streets (Landázuri, 1989; Newson, 1995; Oberem, 1980; Uzendoski, 2004a).

Subsequently, the Spaniards began a campaign of extreme persecution against all those who identified as Quijos (Reeve, 1994). Many Quijos involved in the rebellion were killed, but those who survived were either reincorporated into the *encomienda* system to serve the Spaniards, or fled down the mountains into the Amazon, where they were able to evade Spanish control for the moment (Newson, 1995; Ospina, 1992). By

doing this, they gained a certain form of freedom from the colonists, but lost much of the social organization that had allowed them to be a cohesive ethnic group (Ospina, 1992). This is the point, many authors argue, at which the Quijos identity began to disintegrate, as people dispersed and incorporated themselves into other ethnic groups, or grouped together with members of other ethnic groups who were also fleeing colonial domination (Newson, 1995; Ospina, 1992; Uzendoski, 2004a). It is theorized that the modern-day Amazonian Kichwa identity evolved out of this new social formation of people from different ethnic origins who became loosely joined and eventually organized by the mission system that taught Kichwa (Taylor, 1999). Eventually, the Quijos identity and language disappeared, becoming a thing of the past, just one of the many ethnic groups that vanished in the tumult of colonization.

The Quijos Today

I conducted my fieldwork in the community of Jondachi, a small Amazonian community on the side of a paved road in Napo province, Ecuador. The people I worked with identify themselves as indigenous Quijos, which is a relatively new way of identifying for them that has just emerged in the last decade or so. Previously, they identified themselves as Quichua, Kichwa, Napo Runa, or simply “natives” and scholarly literature continues to use many of these labels when describing them. Throughout my research I consistently use the word “Quijos” to identify the people I worked with, even when I am writing of a time in the past when they may have identified as something else. I choose to do this in order to avoid confusion. Nevertheless, because the Quijos emerge

from the Napo Runa/Kichwa identity, much of the literature that works with Napo Runa/Kichwa population also accurately describes the Quijos population I worked with.

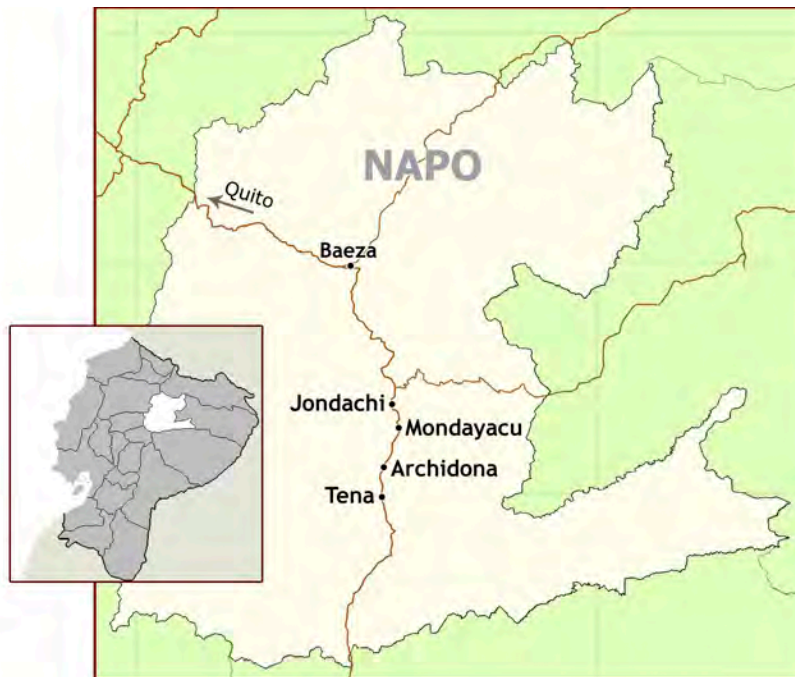


Figure 1: Map of Napo Province

The Quijos identity movement began with just a few people from a few communities but is gradually gaining steam. In 2013 the Quijos gained legal recognition from the Ecuadorian state for the first time. There are currently twenty-two communities in Napo that officially identify as Quijos communities. The Quijos speak Kichwa, but believe that the Kichwa they speak is linguistically slightly different from the Kichwa that other Napo Runa speak. Most Quijos live in houses on the main paved road that leads from the lowland city of Tena to the highland capital of Quito.

When the opportunity arises, Quijos often work as construction workers for hydroelectric plants and oil companies, as schoolteachers, government workers, in

agriculture for modern-day colonists of the Amazon³, or making and selling crafts and jewelry made from seeds. Almost all Quijos also maintain links to houses they own off the road, on the land they call their “fincas.” These large expanses of land are filled with primary and secondary forest, as well as cattle pasture, naranjilla plants, cacao trees, and coffee shrubs, all of which provide some sporadic income for the Quijos. Previously, hunting was common for the Quijos, but now that many live on the road, the practice has diminished and is often remembered as “what our grandparents did.” The Quijos continue to be expert subsistence horticulturalists and plant yucca and *papa china* (taro), among other crops, on their fincas and close to their homes on the road for self-consumption.

Most Quijos have houses on the main road and houses in the forest due, in large part, to the national agrarian reform that the Ecuadorian state began in 1964. The agrarian reform laws focused on the land-tenure problems in the highlands and had the purpose of redistributing large Andean haciendas to smallholders and the landless. The state’s mission was to develop and modernize the country, which took the form of agricultural production as a measurable form of “progress” (Macdonald, 1999; Perreault, 2003a). The reform contained a powerful colonization component that dramatically affected the Ecuadorian Amazon. The 1964 *Ley de Tierras Baldías* (Law of Unused Lands) declared uncultivated lands to be uninhabited, and thus prime land to be colonized (Macdonald, 1999; Yashar, 2005). Colonization of the Amazon became a successful state-backed project and between 1964 and 1979 around 15,000 families from the highlands descended into the Amazon region to colonize approximately 750,000 hectares (Haney & Haney,

³ To this day, people who are not indigenous Amazonians but who reside in the Ecuadorian Amazon are referred to as “*colonos*,” or colonists. Because this is the term used in Ecuador, I utilize it in the same way throughout my thesis to refer to contemporary non-indigenous residents of the Amazon. I also use the term “colonists” to refer to the Spaniards of the colonial period (1531-1822).

1987, as cited in Wilson, 2010a). Napo province was especially affected because large oil reserves were discovered there in 1967; infrastructure was quickly needed, which required workers, many of whom were poor peasant colonizers from the highlands (Selverston, 1995; Wilson, 2010a).



Figure 2: Regional map of Ecuador

The Amazonian forest *was* already inhabited by numerous indigenous groups who did use the forest, but because these people were indigenous Amazonians living in a country where racism was institutionalized and socialized, and because their ways of using the forest did not align with the government’s capitalistic development project of market-oriented production, the forest was considered uninhabited, and the government encouraged poor Andean peasants to colonize this “empty” space. Hugh Raffles (2002)

argues that although Amazonia is actually a very anthropogenic landscape, outsiders frequently see it as a type of wasteland, thriving in the wildness of its supposed disuse. In Ecuador, as in much of the rest of the continent, the Amazonian forest became equated with “empty space” to be colonized. A road was built, leading from the highland capital of Quito, down through Napo, to Tena and on. This became the first major artery for colonization from the highlands.

The state’s objective of colonization was to take “unused” land (the forest) and turn it into “productive” land. In the eyes of the state and much of non-Amazonian-indigenous Ecuadorian society, indigenous Amazonians were seen as lazy and unproductive because their lifestyles were not market-oriented. The new agrarian reform laws encouraged indigenous Amazonians to “improve” as citizens by working in cattle production, a labor deemed worthy because it produced capital. This labor also significantly turned forest landscapes, seen as wasteland, into productive landscapes dotted with cattle, evoking the idealized European landscape (Gow, 1995). Agrarian reform essentially converted what had been understood as Quijos “territory” into private property, with plots of land assigned to individual families, what are now called “fincas.” Over time, although many people continued to live in their homes on their fincas, they began to build houses along the new road, thus forming populated centers, such as Jondachi.

As a result of the sudden influx of highlander colonists due to agrarian reform, indigenous peoples of the Amazon began to organize in order to defend their territory. For the first time in history, many indigenous groups formed their own federations, including FOIN (*Federación de Organizaciones Indígenas del Napo*, or Federation of

Indigenous Organizations of Napo)⁴, which was created in 1969 and represented many of the communities that now identify as Quijos. The primary objective of these early federations was to defend indigenous territory from colonists, whether they were poor Andean peasants or multinational oil companies. To do so, they began to utilize the very laws that the land reform had instated to legally secure their territories (Macdonald, 1999; Perreault, 2003a; Sawyer, 2004; Wilson, 2010a; Yashar, 2005).

From the 1960s through the 1980s indigenous groups built and strengthened their organizations. Although the Amazonian federations were first formed with the purpose of defending the territories of individual communities, in the 1980s they shifted their focus to legally claiming and defending larger ethnically-based territories grounded in identity politics (Macdonald, 2002; Perreault, 2003a, 2003b). In 1980, a number of Amazonian indigenous organizations allied to form what would become known as CONFENIAE (*Confederación de Nacionalidades Indígenas de la Amazonia Ecuatoriana*, or Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of the Ecuadorian Amazon).

The regional Amazonian and Andean indigenous organizations joined in 1984 to form the country-wide indigenous confederation that would become known as CONAIE (*Confederación de Nacionalidades Indígenas del Ecuador*, or Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador) (Selverston, 1995; Yashar, 2005). Since its inception, CONAIE has become the most important social movement organization in Ecuador and the national indigenous movement has become arguably the most organized and successful in the continent (Lucero, 2003; Macdonald, 2002).

⁴ FOIN has changed its name multiple times. Currently, the name of the organization is CONAKIN (*Coordinadora de la Nacionalidad Kichwa del Napo*, or Coordinator of the Kichwa Nationality of Napo).

CONAIE and its member organizations have greatly influenced political debates in Ecuador and have challenged hegemonic conceptions about the state, territory, and what it means to be an Ecuadorian citizen (Perreault, 2003b; Radcliffe, Laurie, & Andolina, 2002). Importantly, CONAIE proposed an alternative vision of the nation, which promoted multiculturalism. Within this project, CONAIE consciously decided to redefine indigenous groups as “nationalities” (Andolina, 2003; Lucero, 2003). They selected this term in order to replace derogatory words used to describe indigenous peoples and to project a specific sociopolitical situation. A crucial concept that was embedded in the use of the term “nationality” was that Ecuador was not a homogenous nation, but that it was made up of various peoples, languages, cultures, and economies (Lucero, 2003, 2008) and that each indigenous “nation” had a separate origin, history, tradition, and territory (Macdonald, 2002). As part of changing how people understood what it meant to be “Ecuadorian,” indigenous peoples and organizations rose up in massive protests in 1990, 1992, and 1994, essentially paralyzing large parts of the country. They demanded recognition and significant changes in the government, such as constitutional reforms, territorial recognition, and more indigenous representation.

Indigenous organizing was not a task free from obstacles. While FOIN’s primary goals in the 1970s and 80s were territorial consolidation, uniting many Napo communities towards a common cause, their focus shifted in the 1990s towards community development (Perreault, 2003a; Wilson, 2010b). With this new emphasis, conflicts arose, centered on which communities would receive the benefits of these projects, most of which were sponsored by NGOs. FOIN’s strength as an organization that represented Kichwa communities began to falter as certain member communities felt

excluded from the benefits that came with NGO projects (Wilson, 2010a). At the same time, FOIN began working more in conjunction with national indigenous politics and many communities began to resent what they saw as a new federation elite, who were more interested in national politics than in local issues (Perreault, 2003b).

The Quijos identity movement emerges from this history of indigenous organizing. In 1999, the community of Mondayacu in Napo province declared itself to be Pueblo Kijus⁵. Since then, those involved in this movement have gone through a series of institutional recognitions, beginning in 2004 when they presented a proposal to CODENPE (*Consejo de Nacionalidades y Pueblos del Ecuador*, or Council of Nationalities and Peoples of Ecuador)⁶ to be recognized as APUNAKI (Association of *Pueblos* of the Kijus Nation). This proposal was rejected because the Quijos could not sufficiently substantiate why they should legally be recognized either as a *pueblo* (a people) or as a nation. After they submitted a study done by local Tena historian David Guevara Yépez, they were finally given legal recognition in 2007 by CODENPE as

⁵ The “Kijus” spelling was changed to “Quijos” in 2011.

⁶ CODENPE is a state institution that was created in 1998 as a measure of democratization and indigenous political representation. It emerged from an older institution that gave indigenous *organizations* decision-making power. CODENPE, on the other hand, now gave indigenous *nationalities* (and in the case of the largest nationality, the Kichwa, the smaller unit of *pueblos*) decision-making power. At the time of inception, representatives of 12 indigenous nationalities and 15 *pueblos* (all from the Kichwa Nationality) were on CODENPE’s Executive Council of Nationalities (Lucero, 2003, 2008). At the present time, CODENPE represents 15 indigenous nationalities and 18 *pueblos* (Codenepe, 2013). These number alone demonstrate that indigenous nationalities and *pueblos* are constantly in the making and in the process of becoming legally recognized by the state. It also becomes clear how much political weight can be gained in the national context by becoming legally recognized as a Nation. Until February of 2013, the communities who identified as Quijos were still considered to be part of the Amazonian Kichwa Nationality; with legal recognition of Nationhood, they automatically gain an institutionalized space and voice within government structures, such as CODENPE.

ACOKI (Association of Kijus Communities). In 2005, they also presented a proposal for recognition to the Amazonian indigenous confederation, CONFENIAE, but it was not until they added a newly published study called “Our Quijos Genes” by David Guevara Yépez (2010) that they were officially recognized as a “nation” in 2010. Not surprisingly, CONAKIN (the organization that represents Kichwa from Napo, previously called FOIN) initially opposed the Quijos Nation proposal, since it would draw member communities away from their organization. Nevertheless, with the support of the Shuar (a neighboring indigenous group) representatives, CONFENIAE did finally accept the Quijos Nation proposal.

With this institutional recognition from the regional indigenous federation, the goal was to gain legal recognition as a Nationality from the Ecuadorian government, once again through the CODENPE institution. The Quijos submitted the proposal and, after revising it multiple times at the request of CODENPE, the state finally legalized the “Quijos Nation” on February 6, 2013. This was an extremely important achievement for them – without legal recognition they were limited in how they could interact with the national government and could not access national and international funding.

Amazonian Political Leadership

Throughout the history of indigenous Amazonian politics, different types of leaders have emerged. The current leader of the Quijos Nation is Raúl, an older yachak (shaman) who leads a lifestyle that contrasts with that of most other Quijos. My investigation of Raúl as the Quijos Nation leader rests on the work of anthropologists who have focused their research on Amazonian political authority. In 1967, Lévi-Strauss

argued that the political power of Nambikuara chiefs was founded on reciprocity, generosity, the consent of their followers, and their lack of coercive power. Much of the research that has followed Lévi-Strauss (1967) supports his original insights and demonstrates the idea that the power of traditional Amazonian political leaders is based on persuasion, rather than coercion, on the consent of followers, on excellent oratory skills, and on displays of generosity (E. B. Basso, 1973; Clastres, 1987 ; Lévi-Strauss, 1967). Although leadership usually entails an increase in power, prestige, and often wealth, that wealth must be redistributed to followers through gifts, including chicha, food, money, and NGO projects, if a leader is to maintain the legitimacy in the eyes of his supporters (Kracke, 1978; Lorrain, 2000; Wilson, 2010b). Most of these authors concur that Amazonian political leadership is often fragile and can quickly dissolve when a leader fails to carry out any one of these moral mandates.

Santos Granero (1986) argues that traditional Amazonian leaders always control what he calls the “mystical means of reproduction,” or mystical knowledge, including rituals, that ensure the survival of individuals as well as the collective. This knowledge varies, depending on the culture, but is almost always possessed by older shamans, priests, or war-chiefs. Traditionally, political leaders in Napo were often yachaks because of their ability to control game for hunting, protect their followers from attacks from other yachaks, and control their territory (Macdonald, 1999; Muratorio, 1991).

In the 1970s, when Amazonian peoples began to unite to resist colonization and defend their territories, the characteristic traits of the groups’ leaders began to change. The new leaders, instead of being the older, most knowledgeable people of ancestral traditions, were young, literate, bilingual, and often educated by outsiders, such as the

church (Brown, 1993; Conklin, 2002; Lauer, 2006). New leaders now needed to be just as knowledgeable about national policies, laws, the dominant society, and how to interact with politicians from the capital, as about their own culture. A new type of Amazonian leader appeared, while leaders from the older generation who had previously held political power, such as yachaks, took a step back.

Lauer (2006) explores how leadership among the Ye'kwana in Venezuela has changed as their involvement with the state has increased. He argues that leaders' legitimacy continues to be based on their ability to control certain forms of knowledge; the content of that knowledge, however, has changed. So while the Ye'kwana previously valued leaders' ritual knowledge of the cosmos, they now place more weight on their knowledge of contemporary national politics. Nevertheless, the importance of a leader's access to esoteric knowledge has not changed.

Many authors therefore argue that although these new, younger Amazonian political leaders are quite different from their more traditional predecessors, they still need to possess certain traditional characteristics in order to acquire and maintain power, such as being persuasive speakers, conspicuously gifting, and leading by example (Brown, 1993; Lauer, 2006; Wilson, 2010b). Thus, while the characteristics of leaders have changed drastically in recent decades, reflecting changes in historical circumstance, the moral mandates upon which a leader's power rests continue to be generally the same (Wilson, 2010b).

Raúl, the *Curaga* (leader) of the Quijos Nation, is both political leader and yachak. Beth Conklin (2002) argues that in Brazil, shamans are emerging as new indigenous rights leaders because of the esoteric knowledge that they possess. Michael Cepek (2009)

demonstrates that for the Cofan, an indigenous group located in the northern Ecuadorian Amazon, shamans and political leaders share many of the same character traits. I argue that Raúl, with his traditional yachak lifestyle, may represent a trend in indigenous Amazonian social movements that have again begun to elect more “traditional” leaders. Because of their traditional lifestyles, these leaders extend an aura of authenticity to political movements that focus on identity; as such “authenticity” becomes emphasized, making “traditional” leaders more desirable.

Place, Space, and Territory

I concentrate much of my research on the importance of place for the Quijos and use other authors’ theoretical work on place as a foundation. Many anthropologists have written on the idea of place, landscape, and space in the last two decades, beginning with critiques on the lack of serious attention to the subject (K. H. Basso, 1996; Moore, 1998; Rodman, 1992). While discussions on place began among cultural geographers in the late 1980s, anthropologists were soon adding important ethnographic insights. Productive interdisciplinary discussions followed. These understandings stemmed from philosophers’ ideas, such as Henri Lefebvre’s notion of place as “lived and grounded space” and phenomenologist Heidegger’s concept of “dwelling,” while post-structuralist, postmodern, and third-wave feminist movements propelled an intellectual movement on place. In the past, anthropologists generally saw place as a backdrop or setting where things happened; they have now become concerned with places as sites of contestation, as well as with the process of place-making (Feld & Basso, 1996).

During the modern era, space was considered to be a pre-existing, absolute, infinite, and empty medium, while place became a way of compartmentalizing space. This conceptualization began to radically change with a phenomenological approach, which saw place as a lived experience, a site of perception (Casey, 1996; Escobar, 2001; Tilley, 1994). “There is no knowing or sensing a place except by being in that place, and to be in a place is to be in a position to perceive it. Knowledge of place is not, then, subsequent to perception – as Kant dogmatically assumed – but is an ingredient in perception itself...” (Casey, 1996, p. 18). Soon scholars’ focus turned to people’s sense of place and the embodiment of place (K. H. Basso, 1996; Tilley, 1994).

An important turn in the scholarly perspective on this subject was to begin to reveal and analyze how places are constructed, how they are embodied, and how bodies are “implaced.” My research on the places and spaces of the Quijos incorporates the insights of many authors who argue that places are produced through and by the people who inhabit them, and that people are also produced by their places (K. H. Basso, 1996; Casey, 1993, 1996; Farrar, 2011; Ingold, 1993; Rodman, 1992; Tilley, 1994). Anthropologists add important insights to how this dialectical production of place and people occurs in different cultures and how place is shot through with power differentials and struggles (Arhem, 1998; Colwell-Chanthaphonh & Ferguson, 2006; Escobar, 2008; Farrar, 2011; Ganapathy, 2013; Moore, 1998; Morphy, 1993).

My conceptual foundation relies upon the idea that places are not static; they are produced by people and people are produced by the places they inhabit. By exploring the importance of links between Quijos memory, identity, and place, it is not my goal to develop a nationalist argument for place, in which the Quijos might be seen as the only

people who can control their territory because of their ancestral links to it; nor is it to advance an essentialist argument, in which the Quijos might be understood to be solely determined by their places or environment. Rather, my intent is to explore the nuanced ways in which the Quijos construct their places and territories, and how these places help shape the way in which they identify as Quijos.

Memory-work

The power of memory weaves in and out of the lives of the Quijos, as it does with my research. My academic pressure-driven eyes swept quickly past what I later came to understand as the most interesting and important aspect of my research. Everywhere I went, the air was thick with memory. There has been a recent surge in the interest of memory within academia, leading to a plethora of interdisciplinary work that centers on the theme. For the purposes of my research, I limit my discussion to the debates I believe are most germane to the Quijos context. I find that remembering is a truly three-dimensional phenomenon that acquires different shades and shapes from different angles. Adhering too tightly to labels and theories can often make remembering appear two-dimensional and, in the worst of cases, one-dimensional. I therefore keep what Davis and Starn (1989) write close to heart: “Memory, like the body, may speak in a language that reasoned inquiry will not hear” (p. 5).

A major preoccupation for memory studies has been to understand, one: what exactly collective memory is, and, two: how to understand that fine line between memory and history. Anthropologists enrich this discussion by delving into alternative non-western understandings of and workings with time and the past. The Quijos maintain

their own forms of remembering and also interact with and use outsiders' methods of remembering, namely in the forms of academic and historical texts. Of course the reality is that remembering is more like the flow of water, washing in, sweeping out, and swirling together. It is futile to distinguish "indigenous Quijos forms of remembering" from "western forms of remembering", as this would be an outsiders' attempt to simplify and compartmentalize the living and thriving thing that is remembering. Nevertheless, the memory work that has been done around the world lends insights useful for understanding how the Quijos are currently using memory for their identity, for their territory, and for their autonomy.

My analysis of how the Quijos remember is largely based on the understanding that memory is much more than just thinking about what happened in the past. It is both construction and interpretation of the past that bolsters an individual or groups' identity and knowledge of who they are (Cattell & Climo, 2002; Megill, 1998; Olick, 2003; Rappaport, 1990; Said, 2000). It is never static or simply stored information waiting to be retrieved from our consciousness; rather it is reflective of the present and activated, modified, and utilized depending on different contexts (Cattell & Climo, 2002; Farrar, 2011; Megill, 1998; Said, 2000). Writing on identities, Hall (1990) questions,

Is it only a matter of unearthing that which the colonial experience buried and overlaid, bringing to light the hidden continuities it suppressed? Or is it a quite different practice entailed – not the rediscovery but the *production* of identity. Not an identity grounded in the archaeology, but in the *re-telling* of the past? (p. 224, italics in original)

Memories can also be inscribed on and in the body – body memory – which exist “alongside and also deeper than – our conscious narrative about the past” (Farrar, 2011, p. 724). A significant part of remembering is its supposed opposite, forgetting. But

authors remind us that forgetting is not a mirror image of remembering, but actually a dialectic part of it, working with memories to form our understandings of the past (Brockmeier, 2002; Fabian, 2007). Remembering can be conflictive and also normative, telling people not only what happened in the past, but what responsibilities they have inherited from the past and how they should behave in the present (Poole, 2008). As Megill (1998) writes, “we do not remember the past. Rather, what we remember is the present: that is, we ‘remember’ that which, *from* the past, continues to live within our situations now” (p. 51).

There has been much debate about whether “memory,” considered from a psychological perspective to be an inherently personal phenomena, can ever really be shared, nullifying the entire concept of “collective memory.” In 1925, Maurice Halbwachs (1992), the seminal scholar who introduced the term “collective memory,” argued that all memory is necessarily social and interactional and emerges from a collective consciousness. Halbwachs (1992) argued that collective memory, which can be understood as a group’s vision of its past, must depend on direct memories of lived experiences, giving it a shelf-life of up to about three generations. In this sense of the term, the ways in which the Quijos think about their past cannot be considered collective memory, because of their temporal distance from the historical Quijos.

Aleida and Jan Assmann (2008; 2011; 1995), however, introduce the concept of “cultural memory,” which is a form of long-term memory that is transmitted across generations and does not depend on lived experience. This type of memory is maintained through such elements as symbols, rites, places, and ceremonies, among others. While the memories of direct lived experiences are often diverse and even conflicting, Aleida

Assmann (2008) and Jan Assmann (2011) argue that cultural memory that is inherited over generations becomes a relatively unified vision of the past:

As we pass the shadow line from short-term to long-term durability or from an embodied intergenerational to a disembodied and reembodied transgenerational memory, an implicit, heterogeneous, and fuzzy bottom-up memory is transformed into a much more explicit, homogeneous and institutionalized top-down memory. (A. Assmann, 2008, p. 56)

Some authors argue that even the concept of “memory” evokes far too static a phenomenon, while “remembering” suggests an organic and relational process that involves agency and creativity (Olick, 2003; Wertsch & Roediger III, 2008; Winter & Sivan, 1999). For the purposes of my research, I rely on the concepts of “cultural memory” and “remembering” to describe the ways in which the Quijos employ creativity and agency to think about events that took place hundreds of years ago. However, I keep in mind Stern’s (2006) insight: “especially for the theme of charged collective remembrance, too much conceptual tidiness may be as self-defeating as too little of it” (p. 130). My intent is not to create yet another new label for remembering, but to borrow others’ terms that I feel are useful for describing the fluid and dynamic act of Quijos remembering. I recognize that certain terms may be applicable in certain contexts, while in others the same terms may become inappropriate.

The Quijos must actively grasp the history of their people in order to develop their new identity. Much has been written on the distinctions and relationships between history and memory, and there is no doubt that they are closely tied. But in the western world, such ways of thinking the past were not really considered separate until recently; rather, the purpose of writing history was considered to be a form of conserving memories (A. Assmann, 2008; Fogu & Kansteiner, 2006). What we now know as historical scholarship

emerged in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, after which the “objectivity” of historical “truth” was understood to contrast with “subjectivity” of memory. We are now in a period where, rather than contrasting the two modes of thinking the past, many scholars attempt to understand how they are related and how they interact (A. Assmann, 2008; Hutton, 2000).

Perhaps most important for this discussion, however, is one glaring hole – the fact that much of the theoretical discussions on memory and history create global theories that are based on European and North American experiences, and completely disregard indigenous ways of thinking the past. A large portion of the research done in memory studies revolves around Jewish collective memory, which has provided truly thought-provoking insights about the workings of collective memory. But many scholars use these studies to create universal theories that simply do not find ground in societies whose members understand time and the past differently from the linear and chronological western conception of time. “History” has become naturalized in the western world as “what happened in the past.” This has not necessarily happened in Amazonia. What we forget is that “history,” as an institutional endeavor, is produced and created in a certain way that reflects the cultures that produce it. Amazonian peoples produce other ways and forms of understanding the past and incorporating it into the present. The debates on the differences between history and collective memory are therefore not totally pertinent because they do not emerge from Amazonian realities, but from academic environments that come from, and mostly study, Europe and North America. Nevertheless, they become relevant because the Quijos are involved in

foreigners' academic research, and the Quijos utilize this historical research for the construction of their own identity.

A number of anthropologists have taken this ethnocentrism to task and propose alternative ways of thinking about memory. Kohn (2002) approaches the history of Oyacachi, Ecuador, by studying it in a "backwards" fashion, not only relying on official written documentation, but using contemporary oral traditions as primary sources. As such, he discovers an alternative account of the past that is quite different from official history and reveals how, though relying on the same historical images and events, people from different cultural perspectives (indigenous and ecclesiastical) can produce hugely divergent histories. Salomon (2002) supports this notion and argues that peasant communities should be understood as research communities, and its members as "fellow intellectuals," not as "native intellectuals." He does not brush aside indigenous understandings of the past, but takes them seriously, despite the fact that the revelations that emerge are often at odds with scholarly perspectives on history. Abercrombie (1998), on the other hand, values oral narrative, but believes that writers of "official history" privilege it because it most-resembles written records and event sequences, while they have ignored what he calls the "poetic forms of historical understanding," or "remembering through different non-narrative acts" (p. 25). Bacigalupo (2013) argues that Mapuche shamans possess a "shamanic historical consciousness." By incorporating deceased shamans' souls into their own, ancient shamans are rehistoricized as they are reborn. This shamanic historical consciousness challenges official Chilean narratives of history, making history local and contextualizing it within Mapuche mythic cycles. I appreciate the way these alternative perspectives provide creative paths for understanding

how Quijos remember and how they use that memory. I also recognize that I am an outsider and my own understandings of a Quijos reality and memory will always be approximations, attempts to describe, in my own foreign way, a phenomenon that is difficult to translate.

Methodology

It swelled inside of me, and I remembered. All at once I was overwhelmed, amused and exhausted, but all I could think to do was keep smiling. I had been in Jondachi for just a few hours, and was quickly feeling the effects of struggling to interact with Ana, after our conversation fell deafeningly silent when I realized she only spoke Kichwa and I had no way of understanding her. I had not felt this way since I was sixteen years old, when I first came to Ecuador as a volunteer, with timid and imperfect Spanish. Almost fifteen years later, now with my own child in tow, I slid quickly into the familiar sensation of new culture shock. “What is fieldwork but another childhood?” writes Taussig (2009, p. 96), and I feel like a child all over again.

This thesis attempts to describe the learning and growing up that I did in this new childhood of mine while I lived in Jondachi. I arrived knowing very little, and left knowing slightly more, but with so many more questions. I also left with new family members and new friends. Through friendships, parties, boredom, rainstorms, meetings, hikes, deaths and births, I began to think about how the act of remembering shapes the Quijos’ identity and territory; I have transformed these reflections into this thesis.

I did not plan to conduct fieldwork in Jondachi. My original idea was spend the first few days there, where I had a contact, Ángel. He would help me get to Shamato, a

smaller community a few-hours hike off the main road, where I would live and conduct fieldwork. To my surprise, when I arrived, Ángel told me that all of the community members of Shamato had moved to the main road, and only one family remained. Conducting fieldwork there was no longer an option. Ángel was a busy man, and could only take me to visit other distant communities in a few weeks time. After a month of traveling, my two-year old son was finally adjusting to Ángel's house where we were staying. The thought of packing everything up and uprooting my son once again was unappealing, to say the least. We decided to stay in Jondachi.

I conducted fieldwork while living in Jondachi from May to October of 2011, as well as a visit we made to Jondachi in May of 2013, a visit from Ángel to our house in highland Cuenca in June of 2013, and various phone and email communications over these three years. Additionally, I spent countless hours in the library at the University of Lethbridge, where I was fortunate enough to have access to all of the books and articles I could ever want.

Most of my research is based on participant-observation while I lived in Jondachi. My husband, two-year old son, and I lived in a small room in Ángel's house. Because of his busy lifestyle, Ángel was rarely there; rather we spent most of our time with his elderly parents, Ana and Jaime. Jaime, who had gone to school as a child, was bilingual in Spanish and Kichwa, while Ana comprehended some Spanish words but spoke only Kichwa. Our house was almost directly across the street from the Jondachi community building and I attended numerous meetings there, mostly focused on the Quijos movement. I also accompanied Ángel, his sister-in-law Viviana, and Raúl, the *Curaga* of

the Quijos movement, to various meetings in Archidona and Tena. When I could, I accompanied Ana to her finca, and took a trip with Viviana to her parents' finca as well.

Often the people I wanted to speak with most were the busiest. In these cases, I chose to conduct semi-structured interviews, which I recorded and later transcribed. I also shot and edited a video about the Quijos Nation with the intention of giving it to the leaders of the nation to be used the way they best saw fit. Although I knew this video would not form part of the thesis, my experiences shooting it gave me a great deal of food for thought, and I have incorporated some of those impressions into this work.

I had very little contact with or knowledge about the Quijos before I began my research. Throughout my childhood growing up in Washington, D.C., I was in constant connection with Latinos – first through a bilingual public school, and later through an international school. My first immersion experience was in the Andes in Ecuador, when I was sixteen. From that point forward, I found every reason and excuse to return to Latin America, where I began to feel more at home than in the U.S. In 2005, I moved with my partner, Marco, from New York to his hometown of Cuenca in the highlands of Ecuador, where we lived until beginning the master's program at the University of Lethbridge in 2010. While in Cuenca, I worked for a study abroad organization and travelled throughout the country, including the Amazon region, with many North-American university groups. One trip happened to pass through Jondachi, where we spent a short afternoon. However, not until I stepped off the bus in 2011 on my first day in the field did I realize that this was the same town I had been to years before. Before doing fieldwork, my trips to the Amazon were always brief and I was required to focus most of my attention on logistics and university students' erratic needs. Nevertheless, I was

drawn to the cultures of the people I had the opportunity to briefly work with and always had the intention of returning to spend more time there.

In 2009, our first son, Lucas, was born, and he accompanied us as a two-year old to the field in Jondachi. In 2012, our second son, Asha, was born, and he made his first trip to Jondachi after I had already completed fieldwork and while I was writing up the thesis, to attend the first Quijos Originary Nation Congress as a six-month old. My fieldwork experience was greatly shaped by the fact that my first son accompanied me. I believe it made connecting with people of such a different culture easier. For example, Lucas had no problem conversing with Ana in his blended Spanish, English, and quickly-learned Kichwa. His yearning to play with other children made me meet our neighbors and their children much sooner than I would have had my heart not been tugged by my child's loneliness. And his craving for fresh papayas obliged me to visit Cecilia at her house surrounded by papaya trees almost every day. On the other hand, I was often limited to where I could go and what activities I could participate in. I could not carry thirty-pound Lucas on the muddy four-hour round trip hike to my host-family's finca. Thus, I had many fewer experiences on fincas than I would have had I been alone. I also could not participate in many yachak rituals, virtually all of which take place during the middle of the night. Yet because of Lucas, my bonds with my host family became life-long kin bonds, as they became his godparents and our *compadres*, or co-parents. In short, my research would have taken a much different shape had I not had to collaborate with my little one's agenda.

Though I knew this to be true in theory, it became impossible for me to ignore that this thesis is as much a product of who I am and my personal experiences, as it is a product of my research in the field and in the library. While writing this thesis, memory became important to me. Perhaps this allowed me to see the memory-work occurring in the Quijos with more ease. In any case, it made me refocus and produce something quite different from what I had originally intended to do. What follows is the meandering path that I took to go from here to there and back again, from researching in the bitter Canadian winter, to conducting fieldwork through steamy days and nights of Amazonia, to beginning to write under the sweltering sun of the northern prairies, and to continuing to write through chilly Andean nights. Finally, three years later, I wrap-up and conclude to the bright melody of crisp fall leaves crunching under my feet. Now, let me remember.

Chapter One: From Cattle to Conservation: Changing Sacred Space and Place in Napo

I sit to write in this cold Canadian winter; my body cannot even remember the stickiness of that heat. But I know a sun was hot above us and Ángel was on fire. It was the first time I had seen him so upset. He had been annoyed before, but this time it came straight from his gut, and he didn't hold back. We trudged through the stifling air in the outskirts of Tena, down a dusty dirt road, having just come out of a meeting at the Ministry of Environment. Ángel and his family had gone there to fight, because they were about to lose a piece of their existence that they knew, deep inside, their lives depended on – their land. And it was none other than the Antisana Ecological Reserve that, for this moment, became the villain; the Arévalo family's land, lived on for generations, was about to be appropriated by and incorporated into this state-run reserve for the purpose of ecological conservation. For Ángel and his family, this spelled doom. They were not opposed to conservation efforts; rather, they felt that their own existence, as indigenous Amazonian Quijos, would end if they could not access and control their land and forest, what was their territory, what was their place.

In this chapter, I discuss what land, and the places on it, mean for the Quijos. I explore how place and territory are tightly linked to yachaks, just as how understandings of health and illness are rooted in the land, its spirits, and its disputes. I examine how the sense of place is vital for identity and well-being, a concept that came quickly into focus as I witnessed the Arévalo family's fight against the Antisana Ecological Reserve's appropriation of their land. I explore the global conservation movement's effects on local

places and peoples and, finally, I examine the ways in which the Ecuadorian state attempts to control Quijos ancestral land and impose contradicting models of how the Quijos should live, beginning with the agrarian reform of the 1970s to the present creation of ecological reserves. For the Quijos, one's place, or one's territory, it became apparent to me during fieldwork, is no less than life; and the perceived consequences of losing it make it impossible not to fight back

Fincas as Place in Napo

Most of my days in the field were spent in Jondachi, a small community built up alongside the main paved road leading to Quito, but much of what people in Jondachi talked about concerned other places: namely, their "fincas." In reality, because of the timing of my fieldwork, most of which coincided with school vacation, the town was hardly ever fully occupied by all of its residents, and more often than not, it felt like a ghost town. People were at their fincas. Or they were about to leave for their fincas. Or they had just gotten back from their finca, but, no, they couldn't meet up on Monday, because they would be returning to their finca over the weekend.

A phenomenon that I first experienced as frustration, as my neatly laid out plans seemed to constantly fall through, became a lens into a reality upon which most of the lives of the Quijos who live on the main road are constructed. "Finca," a Spanish word that normally translates as "farm," has a very different meaning in Napo. Fincas are the typically vast extensions of land (usually between 20 and 100 hectares) that many Quijos own and that emerged as a product of the agrarian reform of the 1960s and 70s, which I

discuss in the introduction. I quickly discovered that they are the spaces and places that the Quijos think, walk, breathe, dream, tell, and remember.

Casey (1996) writes, “we are not only *in* places but *of* them. Human beings – along with other entities on earth – are ineluctably place-bound. More even than earthlings, we are placelings, and our very perceptual apparatus, our sensing body, reflects the kinds of places we inhabit” (p. 19). The places that the Quijos produce and embody are these fincas. Before the 1970s, these lands served as many of the their homes; during the agrarian reform of the 1970s, many of these people built residences on the main road, while they sought out property titles for their fincas, a process that legally contained family territories that had up until then been slightly more fluid, but not without locally understood boundaries and limits. Before land reform, I was told, much of this land had been virgin forest, used for hunting, with small parcels occupied for horticulture. Nowadays, most fincas still have some virgin forest, though most is secondary forest, with varying expanses used for cattle pasture, naranjilla plants, coffee bushes, and cacao trees, and smaller parcels still used for planting for personal consumption, principally yucca, the staple used for making chicha, *papa china* (taro), and occasionally corn, with banana and plantain trees and chonta palms interspersed.

Today, many people live on the main road, but routinely visit their fincas. Fincas are no “vacation” home; they are places to work. Nevertheless, they aren’t necessarily seen as places of hard labor, even though at specific times, such as a naranjilla harvest, or when timber is needed, the work that goes on there is mind-boggling from my physically labor-light perspective. However, the times when I visited my host-family’s finca, a two hour uphill trek from their house on the road, the days were filled with light and

pleasurable subsistence activities, such as pulling down the chonta bunches from their sky-high homes, picking guayusa leaves for tea, fishing, harvesting seeds to make jewelry, hunting out the delectable *chontacuro* grub from the chonta palm, or harvesting a few of the ripest cacao pods and sitting on the ground among family, engaging in the most enjoyable ritual of sucking the sweet white goo, then spitting out the cacao seeds into a pile to dry, and to later to sell for a few cents in town. After a morning of these activities, the family would stuff their shigra bags with the heavy chonta and light guayusa, hoist the straps onto their foreheads, and start the hour-and-a-half trek back to their house on the road. With a half a day visit to their finca, they would have enough of the staples – chonta for chicha, and guayusa for tea, plus some cacao seeds for a few extra cents – to last about a week. People never go to their finca without expecting to work and bring back food for their house on the road, but aside from the sweaty balancing act of returning from the finca with heavy shigra bags hanging from one's forehead, the intensity of labor is more often than not light, though highly productive for personal use.



Figure 3: Harvesting seeds on a finca to use later for jewelry making.

Thus, fincas do represent a form of economic production, through the intensive harvesting of the naranjilla fruit, which is not consumed locally, but sold to intermediaries who sell them wholesale in the Andean city of Ambato; through the occasional sale of cattle; and through the harvesting of cacao and coffee. However, it became obvious that the fincas weren't just seen as a source of gaining capital but that people enjoyed going to their fincas for other reasons. They seemed to prefer being there and, despite the fact that most of their year was spent in a house on the main road, I gained a sense that they often felt more at home on their fincas than on the road. When given the opportunity, many would rather live there, as demonstrated by the mass exodus from town at the beginning of summer, after all the baptism and graduation parties had died down.

Much of this sense of feeling at home on the fincas is related to the fact that nowadays, it is often the only place where people have access to the forest, which evokes a sense of familiarity for many. Tilley (1994) writes,

Familiarity with the land, being able to read and decode its signs allows individuals to know 'how to go on' at a practical level of consciousness or one that may be discursively formulated... The place acts dialectically so as to create the people who are of that place. These qualities of locales and landscapes give rise to a feeling of belonging and rootedness and a familiarity, which is not born just out of knowledge, but of concern that provides ontological security. (p. 26)

Often people I spoke to referred to their finca as the only place where they could really relax and be themselves, as opposed to on the road, where they felt that their lives were at the mercy of the push and pull of money, and the constant lack thereof. On the fincas, one did not need money on a daily basis because it was relatively easy to subsist on chonta, yucca, fish, plantains, guayusa, and raising chickens. While the few people I spoke to who spent most of the year on their fincas lamented that when they were on the road they

could not function or support their families because they simply did not have enough money, many of the people who spent most of their time on the road or in the cities of Archidona or Tena intensely complained that they were becoming ill because they had not been able to spend time on their finca. There was a constant unfulfilled desire that I felt, especially from people involved in political community organizing, of needing to go to their fincas, to be in the forest, and to feel in place.

Fincas, as spaces and places, are imbued with history and memory, which is constantly recalled and recreated through talking about them, walking to them, and walking through them. The concept of “finca” did not come into existence in Napo until the 1970s as a result of agrarian reform, with the subsequent construction of the road and the political organizing for the defense of indigenous territory, which I discuss later in this chapter. Walking along the dirt path from one’s house on the road to one’s finca in the forest, one walks through the memories of historical relocation, of modernization and westernization, through a process of rapid and radical economic and ecological change, through religious and educational institutionalization, and through a process of linguistic transformation. *Language* permeates this path and these lands. It is no surprise that those who permanently live on the fincas are the older generation of monolingual Kichwa speakers. The main road and the life it embodies and produces is unintelligible to much of the older generation, in part because it is a foreign language in a holistic sense. Thus, even the sounds heard in the fincas activate memory. “To perceive the landscape is therefore to carry out an act of remembrance, and remembering is not so much a matter of calling up an internal image, stored in the mind, as of engaging perceptually with an environment that is itself pregnant with the past” (Ingold, 1993, pp. 152-153). Fincas, and

the way people access them, play active roles in the process of remembering, which I discuss at more length in the third chapter. All these memories that might be recalled are not necessarily stirred up at once or constantly; rather they are written into the landscape and strategically tapped into and read as foot meets ground, smells meet nose, and color meets eye. As slowly, step by step, one sinks into the familiar.

Sacharuna, Healing, and the Sacred Places on This Land

A sharp whistle cuts through the mellow buzz of the forest hum. I glance over at Viviana. “Birds?” I ask doubtfully. “No,” she replies, “Sacharuna.” We had left the asphalt of the road an hour ago, had trudged along many paths, and had entertained ourselves by taking turns shocking the other with stories of our contrasting pasts. We had already waded through three crystalline rivers and my toes were still wading inside my leaky boots. Tall trees peered down at us and even the air smelled deeply green.

We had just entered her parents’ land and I was slightly shocked to know that what we had just heard was the call of a sacharuna. “They always warn strangers who enter their forests. They know we’re here and they are letting us know that they’re watching us.” She explained that people who enter the land must always ask permission from her father, Santiago, who maintains close relationships with the sacharuna who live in that area of the forest. By requesting permission, both from Santiago and the spirits who inhabit the land, we were ensuring a safe trip. By entering without the required permission, however, Viviana assured me that the sacharuna would quickly disorient us, cause a storm, or send an animal to attack – we would get lost in the forest and likely be taken into the sacharuna’s underground world. Our fate would leave us with the

sacharuna and it would be nearly impossible to return. I swallowed hard and thanked Viviana for her lovely company.

Santiago, Viviana's father and the owner of the land being contested by the Antisana Ecological Reserve, is a yachak. "Yachak," which literally means "he who knows," is the Kichwa word for the local shaman figure, though the word "shaman" is often used, especially when talking to someone who does not speak Kichwa. Yachaks are extremely important figures for Quijos identity. In the past, as in the present, other ethnic groups and urban mestizos around the country have revered the Quijos culture for their especially powerful yachaks (Muratorio, 1991). Despite this widespread publicity, individual yachaks within Napo are difficult to locate, primarily because they consider it important to keep their identity a secret (Uzendoski, 2005). I only learned this after making more than a few mistakes typical of a bumbling new anthropologist. I was finally told directly and quite late in the game that when one learns that someone is a yachak, she should not assume other people know, and *definitely* should not share that information with others. Nor should she ask about how the yachak obtained his or her powers, since identifying their source of power actually reduces it. As Viviana's husband, Francisco, told me, "my parents always said that one's identity is sacred." This statement is layered with meanings, but it became clear, from what he continued to say, that a person maintains his or her power by hiding the fact that they possess that power. Obviously, this rule cannot be strictly followed, otherwise no one would know where to find a yachak when in need and yachaks would never heal people, but the information is selectively and thoughtfully shared.

Yachaks are key figures within Quijos society. In the past, they have been the ones who controlled both local and intercultural social relations (Muratorio, 1991; Whitten, 1985). Often communities were formed around a central yachak, who protected the people and provided them with game for hunting, through his⁷ intimate relationship with the sacharuna, the owners of the forest animals (Kohn, 2007b; Macdonald, 1999). Most importantly, health, social wellbeing, and death are also controlled by yachaks, who, through rigorous training, acquire the powers to cure; it is these same powers, however, which can be used to kill, if so desired (Uzendoski, 2005).

To become a yachak, one can either begin as a child, by regularly receiving the *samay*⁸ of an initiated yachak, or one can begin as an adult, though many people believe that the most powerful yachaks begin as children. To become a yachak, a person must spend years adhering to rigid lifestyle rules, such as fasting from certain foods, namely hot pepper, meat, and salt, and, if unmarried, abstinence from sex. A potential yachak must spend a great amount of time in the forest, near lakes, mountains, waterfalls, rocks or rivers, for it is in these places that they receive their yachak powers.

But how did this or that yachak receive those powers (asks the awkward anthropologist before learning to make her yachak questions anonymous)? It is not the actual river, rock or cave that gives the yachak power, but the spirits that inhabit these places who form relationships of respect with the yachak and who transmit their powers to them for use in the human world. Santiago has spent much of his life visiting the caves

⁷ Most of the yachaks around which communities were formed were men.

⁸ *Samay* is a complex and meaning-laden term. In general, it means the energy of a person, which is mobilized through a person's breath; the Quijos believe that this energy can be transferred from one person to another. Yachaks will regularly blow forcefully onto the crown of a child's head to transfer their *samay*, in which their knowledge and power is embedded. In this way, a child slowly gains healing powers and becomes prepared for initiation to become a yachak.

on his land, the rock outcroppings, the rivers, the waterfalls, and the forests; it is in these places that the spirits have called him, taken him into their world, and given him the powers to heal. When he returned to this world, he was now endowed with healing and magical abilities. The most powerful yachaks have spent the most time in, what the Quijos call, these sacred places, and have received powers from spirits from multiple sacred places. However, lay people also depend on these sites for healing. Although Ángel, a political and community activist, rarely has the time to visit his parents' or his uncle's finca, he clearly identifies it as a place to heal and where he needs to go so that he can be strong and healthy again. When people fall ill they go to the waterfall, for example, and ask it, and its spirits, to heal their ailment. It is quite simple, Viviana assured me – there is no specific ritual, no chants, no talisman – it is just a matter of requesting, with respect and from your heart, that that specific place heal you.



Figure 4: The river and the forest, territory of the sacharuna.

The underground world of the sacharuna is similar to the Quijos world, with towns, roads, and cities. The sacharuna, however, are usually blonde, blue-eyed, and very attractive. Men who want to become yachaks must literally marry a sachawarmi (a woman spirit), while women who wish to become yachaks marry sacharuna (men spirits). Once married, these yachaks carry out alternate lives with their spirit spouses, parallel to their own lives, and possible marriages, in this world. Occasionally, Quijos will encounter the spirits in the forest. They are always of the opposite sex, and often try to seduce the person, enticing him or her to follow them down into their underground world.

Just as the Quijos have different territorial limits, the sacharuna also have different territories. The spirits do not simply wander the world, but are very localized and place-based. Yachaks' territories usually coincide with sacharuna territory, which is why it is imperative to request permission from a yachak before entering certain territories – the sacharuna allow entrance because the yachak with whom they have a strong relationship has given permission. Macdonald (1999) notes that “muntun⁹ territory and supai¹⁰ territorial limits are coterminous” (p. 43).

Yachaks, and occasionally lay people, also make contact with these spirits by smoking tobacco, drinking tobacco juice, taking ayawaska (Banisteriopsis) or wandu (Datura) brews, and through dreaming. When a sick person requests the healing services of a yachak, the yachak will wait until nightfall to begin a healing ceremony, which often involves drinking ayawaska. Ingesting this plants opens up communication with the

⁹ “Muntun” is an extended-family residence unit.

¹⁰ “Supai” is the term used in much literature about the Quijos to refer to the spirits of the land, the equivalent of “sacharuna.” Throughout my fieldwork, I never heard this term used; instead, “sacharuna” (meaning person of the forest) or variations, such as “cocharuna” (person of the lake) were used to refer to spirits that inhabit the land. When I asked what “supai” meant, the response I received was “the devil.” This is a fascinating thread that, for lack of space, I simply cannot weave into this research.

spirits, who the yachak requests to help in curing the sick person (Macdonald, 1999; Muratorio, 1991). The literature generally refers to these states as “altered states of consciousness,” though the Quijos understand them more as “alternative” states of consciousness, since they do not believe they are hallucinating; rather, they believe they are able to see reality more clearly.

For many Amazonian cultures, these alternative states of consciousness are generally understood as channels for accessing different realities or worlds, where one can freely communicate with and receive messages from beings such as spirits, animals, and plants (Kohn, 2007b; Kracke, 2006; Macdonald, 1999; Peluso, 2004). Kohn (2007b) discusses Napo Runa dreaming, explaining that it is a product of the ambulations of the soul, which has separated from its owner and can now communicate with the souls of beings from different ontological realms. This dream world is literal, while the waking state is a metaphor and “dreams are not representations of the world. Rather, they are events that take place in it” (Kohn, 2007b, p. 12). Peluso (2004) argues that these other worlds are indeed considered even more real than our waking state, and that altered states of consciousness are considered paths to “the world as it truly is” (p. 109).

Much of this general research touches on the idea that, through these alternative states of consciousness, one can receive new knowledge and power, acquiring a form of “supernatural agency” (Gow, 1996). For the Ese Eja of the Peruvian Amazon, the word used for dreaming means “for one to know/ see/ learn in sleep” (Peluso, 2004). Descola (1989) demonstrates that, for the Achuar of Ecuador, certain dreams can be channels through which Arutam, the great life force, manifests itself and gives strength and knowledge to the dreamer, thus shaping his or her destiny. Brown (1988) discusses the

shaman's ability to bear witness to distant events and see hidden danger, and Kracke (2006) writes of dreaming as a way that ordinary people can approach the power of a shaman. For the Napo Runa, the actions that take place in altered states of consciousness "initiate a chain of events that continue into waking life" (Macdonald, 1999, p. 38).

The first major in-depth anthropological studies of shamanism began in the 1960s and 70s, with authors such as Eliade (1964), who sought to create and define a universal shaman figure by finding commonalities among different cultures, and Dobkin de Rios (1972; 1975), who attempted to investigate the essence of "the drug experience." These studies focused on representations of shamans as healers and portrayed them and altered states of consciousness as being rather isolated from other people or experiences. Meanwhile, Reichel-Dolmatoff (1975) did stress the cultural importance of what he called "narcotic drugs" for certain Tukanoan groups of the Colombian Amazon, and highlighted the need for understanding these altered states of consciousness in order to truly appreciate social and religious customs. Yet his work concluded by defining the Otherworld, accessed through altered states of consciousness, as nothing but a projection of the individual mind.

Following this initial boom in interest in shamanism, later research attempted to situate shamans within society and saw them as integrated into sets of social relationships. Salomon (1983), for example, reaches into archival colonial records in Ecuador to demonstrate the complex relationships between indigenous practices, colonial institutions, and the political dimensions of shamanism and its magic, which, until then, had been unseen in academic works. Brown (1988) works to deepen understandings of the relationship between the shaman, his patients, and the community, and in so doing,

dissolves unifying visions by depicting them as diverse and often in conflict. Meanwhile, Taussig (1987) powerfully dislodges any essentialist ideas about the timelessness of shamanism among indigenous groups in southern Colombia. He explores the process of invention and reinvention of the sorcery and spirit practices of indigenous, mestizo, and white shamans as a result of tense racial and inter-ethnic relations that developed throughout the colonial period and after.

Breaking with the initial research on shamanism, many other authors, such as Salomon (1983), Hugh-Jones (1996), Wright and Hill (1986), and Gow (1996), in addition to Taussig (1987), also help deconstruct the stereotypes of shamanism created as a result of the popular imaginary of Amazonia. They abruptly shatter the image of shamans as the uniform, “traditional,” indigenous unified fighters-of-evil who are limited to spiritual matters. Instead, what we find is a heterogeneous group of people who are very political and whose rise to power has ironically often been a result of the same colonial institutions who wished to abolish them. Neil Whitehead (2002) develops this argument, demonstrating how in the nineteenth century, the Guyanese government suppressed indigenous warfare in an attempt to “civilize” the indigenous Patamuna. Warfare, however, was the exact tool that the Patamuna used to restrain the threatening and barbarous force of *kanaimà*, a gruesome form of shamanistic killing. With the lack of warfare, the *kanaimà* were given a new opportunity to hunt that they never had before. Whitehead (2002) also demonstrates how *kanaimà* shamanism is actually “a truly postmodern development”(p. 178) which draws its power from new local, regional and global processes and phenomena – with modernity’s ever-more powerful influences, the Patamuna of Guyana increasingly feel that it is important to maintain the *kanaimà*

tradition, which they believe to be a symbol of tradition and the past, as shamans who work to continue the cosmological balance created in the beginning of time. Shamanism is thus both primordial, seen as a link to traditional cosmological cycles, as well as constantly produced and reinvented by class struggle and modern politics.

It is impossible to understand healing and yachaks' powers outside of their social context, precisely because health and healing emerge from cultural perspectives and local social relationships. Soon after arriving to Jondachi, I began to see how most illness was attributed to envy – often concerning wealth and land. Uzendoski (2005) discusses how, among the Napo Runa, “thought itself is productive or destructive power” (p. 160) and “In Napo... anger is supposed to make people sick, cause tragedies, and even burn down houses” (p. 161).

A few weeks after arriving to the field, I found myself sitting in the dark. The air around us was dense with tobacco smoke and its strength brought us to our senses. The family sat on the stools in the kitchen and passed around cigarettes rolled with the potent locally-grown tobacco, so strong it made people “*chumado*” – dizzy or drunk. They told me the spirit of tobacco was present. The *abuela*¹¹ had been smoking all day. She smoked to connect to her tobacco spirit and to see more clearly. That morning I had woken up to find her in the kitchen, peeling chonta to make chicha. Ana, the grandmother we lived with, had woken up before dawn to bring her from Archidona. Jaime, Ana's husband, was ill, and Ana wanted the *abuela* to cure him; however, many family members took advantage of her presence. She had participated in all the daily activities until the early afternoon, when she began to smoke. After a few hours, she asked to lie down to be able

¹¹ “*Abuela*” is Spanish for “grandmother.” This yachak is not a member of the family but is called *abuela* out of respect.

to be with the spirit of tobacco. During this time, all the family members began to smoke the tobacco. Finally, she was ready to begin her work.

She began with Jaime. She blew tobacco smoke all around him for protection and then began sucking aggressively at his neck and head. Between each suck she would wrench violently and spit into a bowl filled with tobacco. She explained that she was sucking out the evil that his enemies had placed inside him, which was causing his illness. She attributed his failing eyes to envy from a nearby *yachak*. Jaime was the owner of an extensive finca that spanned 100 hectares and had, at one time, owned hundreds of cattle. The envy people felt towards him because of his extensive territory had settled in his body and caused him to suffer. She ended the session, which lasted about a half hour, and told him that she would need an entire night working with him to rid him of the evil for good. Until then, the spirit of the tobacco would protect him.

The knowledge and power of *yachaks* such as the *abuela* and Santiago are at once political, modern and ancient. Their expertise in combating envy and healing sickness relies on their access to the sacred places on the land, and the maintenance of their relationship with the spirits that inhabit them. These places allow *yachaks* to produce knowledge and power, and provide health and healing for lay people. Quijos productive practice and cultural knowledge are thus intimately tied to place and territory. Health, I began to see, is intrinsically related to the land – specifically, how the Quijos remember the land. Illness emerges from sentiments attached to the land that arise in the past and haunt the present. Illness is therefore a part of memory-work. Jaime is sick because someone envies his land and the memories of the cattle that once roamed it. This envy, Jaime's illness, is deeply embedded in the act of remembering, as well as in the changing

spaces and places of Napo, which emerge from a history of agrarian reform and state-backed colonization of Amazonia.

Changing Space through Agrarian Reform

Agrarian reform began in 1964 and initiated dramatic changes in land-use in the Amazon, as well as massive waves of colonization from the highlands, which I discuss in the introduction. For all of the Quijos I met during my fieldwork, the 1964 land reform laws were first felt in the 1970s in the form of a road. For them, agrarian reform took the face of civil engineers and soldiers of the then-military government, headed by Guillermo Rodríguez Lara, moving into their territory to construct this road. People remember members of the army coming through their territory, constructing the road, and their threat of colonization. Colonizers would travel a few kilometers into the forest, where they knew the road would soon be constructed, and lay claim to the “unoccupied land”; when locals challenged them, the colonizers would threaten to kill them. Local indigenous people thus became an obstacle to the colonization efforts of what was officially considered “uninhabited” space. Local people, on the other hand, realized they needed to act quickly in order to defend their territory. In 1972, about seventy Quijos who lived dispersed in the territory of what is now Sardinas gathered along the road that was under construction to confront the military, telling them that they would have to kill them before they took their land away.

With the help of a Josephine priest, Father José Rivas, from the nearby Cotundo parish, the local families organized themselves to secure legal land titles, virtually the only way for the Quijos to safeguard their territory from colonist appropriation. Yet

stipulated in these legally binding contracts was that 50% of the land had to be converted into “productive” use within the first five years of acquiring the land title; otherwise, the land would be seized by the state and resold. The fastest, easiest, and cheapest way to show productive use of the land was to cut down the forest and plant *gramalote* grass for cattle (Perreault, 2003a). The state created projects so that people who would normally not qualify for bank loans, such as poor colonists or indigenous people with no credit, could purchase cattle with low interest loans. The Quijos had very little choice but to drastically change their habitat into cattle pasture, or they would lose their land.

Once the road was built, the small elementary school that the Josephines had built in the middle of the forest was moved to the road. Here began the interesting and radical transformation of place and culture for the Quijos. While families still lived in their homes in the forest, they built small houses on the road, near the schoolhouse, so that their children could live there during the week to attend school, and return to the forest homes on the weekends. At first these houses simply served as sleeping places; home life was still in the forest, and parents usually did not accompany their children to the houses on the road. Older children took care of younger siblings in what was sort of a liminal space, in between the life of the school and their homes and families in the forest.

Thomas Perreault (2003a), who did fieldwork only eight kilometers away in the nearby community of Mondayacu, a place which was affected by agrarian reform in ways very similar to Jondachi, discusses how “the concentration of houses and other buildings along the highway represents the first line of defense against the incursions of colonists from the highlands or coast and the first stage in the long process of obtaining legal title to the community’s land claims” (p. 96). The fact that houses on the road were an

obvious sign of habitation, a necessary element in defense of territory from colonists, surely helped the people living in the Jondachi territory to ward off colonists.

Nevertheless, in all my time in Jondachi, this was not the principal reason given for constructing the houses on the road, but a welcomed benefit. Rather, people built them on the road for convenience so that their children would not have to brave the elements while hiking hours each day between home and school, what most children had previously done.

As a small child, Viviana would have to walk two hours to and from her parents house, in the forest, to go to the newly-built school on the new road in Jondachi every day, until her parents built a small house on the road where she would stay with her brother during the week. At one point, she became extremely ill, and, not able to make the hike home, her uncle took her to the nearby city of Archidona. It took weeks for her desperate parents to discover where she was located. At the age of eight, her parents then sent her to live in a residential mission school in the nearby parish, Cotundo, where she was confronted with the culture shock of living among non-indigenous people, and where the nuns tried to erase her indigenous customs.

Why would parents put up with sending their young children away, enduring separation and hardship, to be educated by the church, with which they were so often at odds? In the context of agrarian reform, it becomes clear. Schooling was the only way their children could learn Spanish, learn to read, and learn to write. These were essential tools for defending their territory from colonizers and for acquiring, understanding, and negotiating land titles, which the childrens' illiterate, Kichwa-speaking parents could not decipher. One of the primary purposes of the Josephine schools was to "civilize" the

indigenous Amazonians of Napo by teaching them to change their “uncivilized” characteristics (Muratorio, 1991). The Quijos recognized this, but also understood that schooling was an essential tool for their children to integrate themselves into contemporary society with less marginalization. As in much of Latin America, schooling was also believed to be a path to escape social and economic marginalization (Hornberger, 1988; Starn, 1999). According to Nancy Hornberger (1988), whose research focuses on the Peruvian highlands, “Although only a small percentage attains social advancement through formal education, a widespread belief among the population is that all may attain it. Free public education is perceived as a means of escape from a situation of exploitation and dominance” (p. 22). A similar belief exists in Napo; during agrarian reform, the Quijos therefore appropriated the school system to serve their own needs – in this case, to gain the means they felt they needed to resist, the tools they felt they needed to survive. Viviana’s parents obviously did not feel good about leaving their children in the hands of the Church, which they spurned, but it became their lifeline as the only outlet they saw to resist oppression and to be able to keep their territory, which they believed was essential for their life.

The newly learned Spanish language, literacy, and an increasing familiarity with non-indigenous society became the most effective ways for the Quijos to mediate with the state in the context of land reform. From the initial confrontation on the dirt road in 1972, it took four years for the Quijos residents of that area to gain legal land titles to their territory, due to the fact that every time they had to submit paperwork or deal with government bureaucracy, they had to walk, on foot, to Quito, some 200 km. away. In 1976 they received the legal titles to the territory that they named Sardinias (in reference

to the abundance of sardines that could be fished in the rivers; nowadays sardines almost always come from a can).

Yet this way of “securing” territory through legal means in no way meant actual security or that they could continue to live life the way they had done in the past. Despite having gained legal ownership of the communal territory of Sardinas, an expanse that stretched 3,325 hectares, the local Quijos still felt threatened with the possibility of colonization, and felt they needed to demonstrate “productive” use of their land. Within the territory of Sardinas the land was divided unequally between the community members, depending on how much they were able to “work” the land, by turning it into cow pasture. Fincas were then born, a new version of people’s original forest residences.

The original official name of the Sardinas territory was the “Sardinas Association of Autonomous Agricultural Workers,” a name that hardly seems to reflect the lives that they had led before land reform. Reviewing the archives in Jondachi, the first populated center of the territory, I found that the documents that dated back to the first years after the territory was legalized are filled with never-ending pages of bank notes, requests from territory members for loans to purchase cattle, and lists of required payments for the fees of acquiring the land-title, for a community store, and for a saw mill. Even on paper, it is clear that just by acquiring legal rights to their territory the Quijos felt the transformation of territory into property through an agrarian market economy.

It is not easy to understand local versions of land reform because there are so many layers, voices, perspectives, and memories. The first time I hiked with Jaime to his finca, he would occasionally stop, look around, and nostalgically reminisce about the old times, right after land reform – when the overgrown jungle that now enveloped us had

been “clean” cattle pasture. Because he had aged, become sick, and was no longer able to work, the swift growth of the jungle had taken over. What Jaime remembered through the sweaty thickness of the trees and vines was a time when he had been physically strong and hard-working; when, for the first time, his life had begun to reflect what the state and church promoted as a “good, civilized citizen”; when he was able to make some form of money; and when he was revered and envied by neighbors for having large expanses of land and numerous cattle.

According to Jaime, his family had secured a large amount of land (over 100 hectares) for their finca because they were smart and decided to work the land, turning it into cattle pasture, when they realized it would be taken away from them if they didn’t. But a neighbor told me that Jaime’s family had obtained so much land, not because of their hard work, but because their grandfather was a yachak and had used evil magic to kill off their neighbors and subsequently appropriate their land. Meanwhile, Jaime’s family attributes all of their physical ailments to neighbors’ jealousy about their large amount of land and all of the cattle they once had. Health is thus intimately tied to the land in this way, as well as to its conflicts.

Gradually, over time, the younger generations who had lived on the fincas permanently moved to the small houses on the road, which morphed into one-story wooden houses, then two-story cement-based houses, which is what they look like today. Their parents generally continued to live on the fincas until, because of their age, they needed to move into their childrens’ houses on the road to be cared for. Nevertheless, almost everybody retains links to their fincas, which they visit whenever they can and live on during summer vacation. This process of moving to the road as a result of land

reform and retaining connections to the fincas is parallel in almost all of the small communities of Napo that are now located on the main road leading to Quito.



Figure 5: Houses lining the road in Jondachi.

While many of the Arévalo family members live in the Sardinas territory, the finca that Santiago and his wife, Nuri, own is outside of the Sardinas territory. They therefore had to acquire land titles on their own for the land that the Arévalo family felt they were already rightful owners of due to the years of use and living they had put into it. Santiago and Nuri had had very little contact with, or use for, money before agrarian reform. They had generally been able to subsist quite well on their land. But with the need to acquire land titles to maintain their territory, they felt they had no choice but to plunge into the currents of capital. For one thing, the IERAC (*Instituto Ecuatoriano de Reforma Agraria y Colonización*, Ecuadorian Institute for Agrarian Reform and Colonization) determined how much a person's land was worth, and even if a person had already been living on that land, as Santiago and Nuri had, they had to come up with the

money to *buy* their own ancestral land from this government agency. The only way for this to happen for many Quijos was to take out a loan from the bank. The *Banco Nacional de Fomento* (National Bank of Foment) established these low-interest loans specifically for this purpose and used the ancestral land being bought as collateral. Once people acquired the land titles, they had five years to turn at least half of their land into use for market-oriented production, requiring more loans for planting grass and buying cattle.



Figure 6: A typical contemporary landscape in Napo, where cattle pastures abut forests, a product of agrarian reform.

Within a period of just a few years, people like Santiago and Nuri who had very little contact with money, were up to their necks in bank loans and cattle sales. This was obviously a very risky endeavor because if a cow or few were to die, there would be no way to pay back the bank loans except by taking out more loans, beginning a never-ending cycle of debt. It was not uncommon for the bank to seize newly-legalized

ancestral land because people could not pay back their loans. In these cases, the bank took possession of the land and resold it, usually to incoming colonists.

With the new agrarian reform policies, the state effectively took control of the land, despite the fact that indigenous people had lived there for decades and more. They began determining how people should behave correctly (working in agricultural market-oriented production), rewarding those who followed through by granting them land titles, or punishing those who didn't by making them land-less and debt-ridden. A picture of a "model citizen" emerged and, more often than not, the Quijos fell short of that ideal. The Quijos had "worked" their land through living and dwelling, remembering, planting, building, healing, producing power and knowledge, and engaging in relationships with the spirits of the land. During agrarian reform, however, in order to acquire land titles, they were forced to shift their modes of production and orient them towards the market. Seeing no choice, they cut down their forests and planted cattle pasture, the only way they would be able to maintain control of their territory.

The Arévalos' Conflict with Antisana Ecological Reserve

In 1993, the land which Santiago and Nuri had worked to gain legal titles to during agrarian reform appeared in a satellite image; their forests and home and cow pastures and paths became numeric coordinates, which the state used to delimit the newly formed *Reserva Ecológica Antisana* (Antisana Ecological Reserve or REA). In an office in Quito, maps were made; months later, the Arévalo family was informed that half of the land that they had lived on for generations now pertained to this ecological reserve. Reminiscent of the agrarian reform of the 1970s, the state was once again determining

the way in which Quijos land should be used – this time, for ecological conservation rather than agrarian production. Again, the Quijos feel they have to fight to maintain control over their territory.

The Antisana Foundation was established in 1991 with the goal of creating the Antisana Ecological Reserve (REA), which occurred in July of 1993, the result of a long process of legalizing natural conservation in Ecuador. The first protected area in Ecuador was established in 1959, when the government created the Galapagos National Park in order to protect the wildlife of the Galapagos Islands after seeing its rapid demise caused by tourism. In 1971, the state passed the National Parks and Reserves Law that prohibited using protected areas for hunting, fishing, agriculture, cattle grazing, timber, mining, or colonization. In 1996, the Ministry of Environment was created; currently there are 42 protected areas on land in Ecuador, in addition to other marine protected areas (Ministerio de Ambiente, 2002).

When the Ecuadorian national park system emerged, it was based on the Yellowstone model, which prohibits people from inhabiting park land or using it for anything other than for leisure and education (Luque, 2008). Since the state began legalizing protected areas, it has recognized that many people do actually live in these areas and has attempted to find creative solutions to this “problem.” In 2005, 95% of the protected areas in Ecuador were involved in land disputes (Rivera, 2005), precisely because the spaces that the state has legalized as “protected areas” have, in fact, been inhabited by people for centuries. While relocation has often been part of the “solution,” there have been various cases in which indigenous peoples who reside inside park territory are granted legal rights to remain there. They often end up collaborating with the

state and NGOs to ensure the conservation of the protected area. The case of the REA, however, is quite different. Because of a severe lack of funding, the REA does not have the resources or capacity to work through the conflicts that exist between the reserve and many indigenous families and communities, let alone collaborate with them so that they become stakeholders in the conservation area. Instead, the REA continues to view people as problems and does not provide a way for them to continue living inside the reserve's territory.

The REA runs from the high paramo grassland of the Andes (4,700 meters), including the Antisana volcano, down to the Amazon (1,200 meters). The Andean part of the REA was originally inhabited by *caciques* (indigenous leaders) from Pintag, who sold the land in 1619 to Spanish colonists in order to pay accumulated tributes and avoid imprisonment. This land eventually became what is known as the Hacienda Pinantura, which is now located within the REA limits and is still owned by wealthy descendants of Spanish colonists. The Andean areas of what is now the REA were used as bases for European scientific investigations as far back as the eighteenth century and hosted Alexander Von Humboldt's expeditions and studies of flora and the Antisana volcano in the early nineteenth century. The REA now spans 120,000 hectares and is deemed a biodiversity "hotspot" by the World Wildlife Fund (Ministerio de Ambiente, 2002).

Numerous authors have demonstrated how the enclosure of land in the name of environmental conservation is a direct act of dispossession (Igoe, 2004; Li, 2007; West, Igoe, & Brockington, 2006; J. Whitehead, 2003). This harkens back to Marx's theory of primitive accumulation, in which land is privatized and accumulated in the hands of just a few, while the majority of the population lose their access to it, and hence, their means of

a livelihood, making them now dependent on wage labor (Li, 2007; J. Whitehead, 2003). Tania Li (2007) argues that this process is inherently violent. For the Quijos, the appropriation and enclosure of their lands by the REA parallels the appropriation of their land during the waves of colonization of the 1970s; again, they lose access to and usufruct rights over their ancestral territory. Land, and who controls it, is once more at issue.

The Arévalos have realized that the REA is a massive and powerful space, and that it is nearly impossible to find real people to speak to who represent the reserve and who can answer questions. It took many months and letters to the Ministry of Environment for the Arévalo family to finally be granted a meeting with a REA representative. At this meeting on July 29, 2011, which I attended, they demanded that their territory not be included within the REA limits. They argued that even parts of the land that they did not legally own, such as Supay Rumi, a sacred rock outcropping they use for healing, should not be included in the REA limits because it was part of their ancestral land. The REA representative responded like a broken record – “without paper documentation, we cannot help you,” to which Viviana finally cried out: “Our grandparents are buried here! Our grandparents know!” The REA representative simply said he was not in the position to make decisions – that he had just been given the job and that he did not know how long he would be there. At the end of the meeting, the Arévalos were still left unsure of the fate of their land.

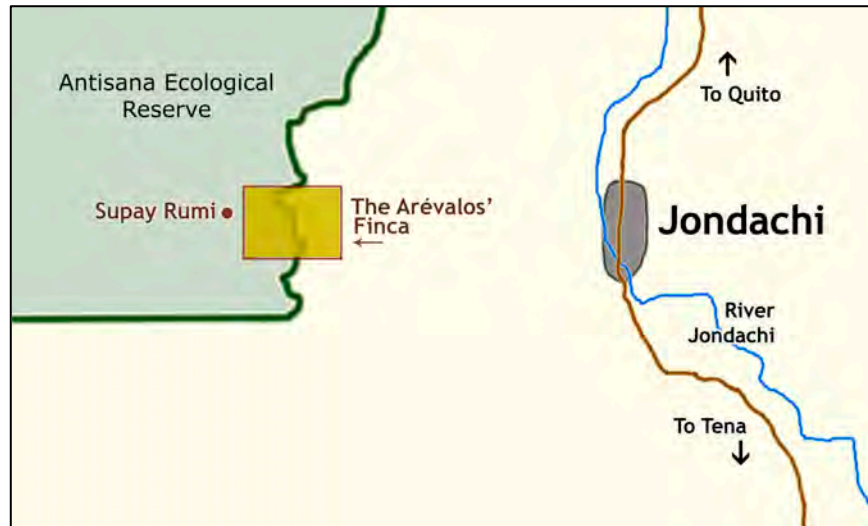


Figure 7: Map of Arévalos' finca in relation to Antisana Ecological Reserve and Jondachi

When I later went to Baeza to speak to the same REA representative, he refused to be interviewed, and told me that all the information I needed could be found in an official document called the *Plan de Manejo de la Reserva Ecológica Antisana* (Management Plan of the Antisana Ecological Reserve) (Ministerio de Ambiente, 2002)¹², which he gave me hesitantly, after writing an official petition (on his computer) and leaving all my personal information and a copy of my Ecuadorian ID. The land dispute between the REA and local populations was obviously a sensitive matter and he was not interested in feeding information to me, who he saw as an ally of Arévalos and a potential problem-maker.

The land that the Arévalo family is struggling to keep from being appropriated by the REA is legally owned by Santiago, but it is his wife, Nuri's ancestral land and her family has lived on it for numerous generations. Nuri's mother, herself, and her children

¹² I translate all of the quotations used from the *Plan de Manejo de la Reserva Ecológica Antisana* (Ministerio de Ambiente, 2002) from Spanish to English.

were all born on this land. This land makes up the memories of an entire family. Santiago and Nuri, both now elderly, are the only ones who continue to live on this 50 hectare expanse. Every day, Nuri wakes up hours before dawn to start boiling guayusa tea and to weave shigra bags. An hour or so later, Santiago wakes up. At dawn, both leave their house and head in different directions to do work on their land. The day I visited them, their daughter, Viviana, who now lives in the city of Archidona, lamented that we had not arrived at dawn, because she was sure that they would have left the house and that it would be difficult to find them. She was right – we waited for two hours at their house, then wandered to different parts of the finca in search of them, Viviana unsuccessfully trying to track her parents' and their dogs' footsteps in the mud. We finally gave up, took over their kitchen, and cooked lunch. At around 11am, Nuri arrived to the house, carrying a bunch of bananas and a shigra full of guayusa leaves; a half hour later, Santiago sauntered in. They had finished the hard work of the day – Santiago had been building a fence, and Nuri had been planting yucca. After drinking massive bowls of chicha made from yucca and eating the rice and sardines Viviana and I had brought from the road, I began to interview them about the situation they were faced with concerning their land.

The first time I met Nuri was at the Ministry of Environment in Tena, when the Arévalo family met with the representative of the REA to heatedly discuss the fate of their land. Nuri had been there, present, but had not said a word. She spoke only Kichwa, thus could not defend her land with words to the white, Spanish-speaking REA representative from the capital. Her present body, however, was her testimony. The next time I met her and her husband, Santiago, was in Jondachi, when they came to celebrate the graduation of their youngest son from high school. A big party was held, and Nuri

and Santiago were overjoyed, yet it was clear they felt out of place, there on the big road. The next day, they quickly hiked back to their finca.

While I felt Nuri to be very sweet and kind, despite our language barriers, Santiago had intimidated me. I had been told that he was a powerful yachak; his way of relating to people was definitely different from the social norm. The whole time I observed him in my host-family's house I did not hear him utter a single word, despite being in his brother and sister-in-law's house. He generally seemed irritated, but I was assured that this was just his normal demeanor. When I had first arrived to Jondachi and expressed an interest in interviewing yachaks, people had told me that Santiago would be a perfect candidate, however they were always doubtful that he would talk to me, stressing that someone from inside the family should be there to get him to talk. Viviana had told me that he usually was not in a talking mood, but she remembered and valued those rare occasions when he had been of jolly humor and shared with her stories of his experiences with the spirits of the forest, about his healing, and about his past. I was nervous that day, to say the least, and prepared for a blank stare from him when I asked if I could interview him about his problems with his land.

But Santiago was incredibly grateful that I wanted to talk to him about this issue and demonstrated that when something as important as life is at stake, it is easy for a person to break their habits. Earlier, Viviana had sadly related to me how Santiago had told her that he had wanted to go to the Ministry of Environment to defend his land, that he had so much to say, that he wanted to scream just so that they heard; but he had so little confidence speaking Spanish, thought he sounded silly making those foreign sounds, that he stayed quiet, muted in his desperation. The situation reflected Rodman's

(1992) observation in Melanesia: “The connection between place and voice was direct. Followers who lacked the power to voice their objections also lacked the power to regain their land” (p. 648). So speaking to me, at his home, in Kichwa, a language that made him comfortable and confident, translated by his daughter into Spanish, was a welcomed opportunity for Santiago. As his story unfolded, my nervousness dissolved into relief, then to sadness. I saw the worry in his eyes, the helplessness in his body – this body, so powerful, so respected, and so strong, yet so weak in this dispute against the Antisana Ecological Reserve.

“This land is our life,” he told me. “If the reserve takes it away, we are nothing; we will die.” The death that he feared was not simply the end of life, but the end of security, the end of health and healing, the end of knowledge, and the end of his people’s identity. It was not just the resources of the land that Santiago, Nuri, and the rest of their family valued, though those were important too. It was so much more than that. Their land represented a way of life for them, life with which, for generations, they had formed relationships; it was land from which their own lives and their own identities had sprouted. Their memories emerged from this land and shaped their knowledge of who they were.



Figure 8: Nuri, Viviana, and Santiago, in their home on the finca.

But this land, this home for Santiago and Nuri, becomes empty, mapable space for the state. The REA takes on the role of what Edward Soja (1996) describes as the “spatial scientist of Firstspace,” turning landscapes, places, and space into quantifiable, mathematical, spatial data. In this way of thinking, space boils down to its material and physical qualities, regressing to the modernist outlook of space as absolute, while “place” is disempowered by becoming simply a function of compartmentalization (Soja, 1996). In conservation areas, abstract space reworks the landscape, “which becomes emptied of people, history, myth and magic” (J. Whitehead, 2003, p. 4229).

Space that is quantified and abstracted is easy to empty; in the case of conservation, it is people who are the first to go. The global conservation movement has created a vision of nature that is free of humans:

This virtualizing vision, although rarely contested, has imposed the European nature/culture dichotomy on places and people where the distinction between nature and culture did not previously exist. As such, protected areas have become a new cosmology of the natural—a way of seeing and being in the world that is now seen as just, moral, and right. In effect, protected areas are the material and discursive means by which conservation and development discourses, practices, and institutions remake the world. (West et al., 2006, pp. 255-256)

Imposing the idea that nature and culture are separate through the creation of conservation areas has serious consequences for local populations, namely that there is a high risk of displacement, for people simply do not fit in conservationists' visions of pristine nature; rather, they are seen as destroying it. As I walked with Ángel down that dusty road in Tena after the meeting with the REA representative, he fumed and said, "If they care so much about conserving nature, they should help conserve *us*. We are part of nature and of that place. Instead, they kick us out and we have no way to go on living."

In the REA's Plan de Manejo (Ministerio de Ambiente, 2002), human use of the reserve is referred to as "land invasion" (p. 76), the lowland forest is called "*terrenos baldios*", or "empty lands" (the same term used during the land reform of the 1970s) and the areas that the Napo Quijos consider their ancestral land are called "points of invasion" (p. 75). The Plan de Manejo (Ministerio de Ambiente, 2002) states that "it is indispensable to give attention to the human pressures that could cause major ecological damage and alter the ecosystems" (p. 58) and "the macro-problem that has been identified for the REA is the following: Human activities that are not compatible with the conservation objectives of the REA" (p. 55). What the people who manage the REA don't consider is that the ecosystems that they are trying to protect from human intervention are actually created *by* humans, specifically, in this case, by the Quijos. Despite the fact that outsiders view Amazonia as nature at its purest, most of the forests

and rivers have actually been worked by the people who live there, in effect creating the very nature that conservationists and others see as devoid of humans (Raffles, 2002).



Figure 9: The Arévalo's home on their finca; a "point of invasion" for the REA.

Throughout its history, the conservation movement has rested on different ideologies, beginning with the human-free model described above. Conservation management then transitioned to an alternative standard that does see certain humans as compatible with conservation areas. However, there are strict expectations of who these people are and how they should behave. Typically, these people must be indigenous, steer clear of modern technology, live “traditionally,” and be in complete harmony with “nature.” Kent Redford (1991) explores this western imaginary of the “ecologically noble savage” – the idea that “traditional” indigenous people are logically the ultimate stewards of nature because of their spiritual connection to, and deep wisdom of, the natural world. This concept of the ecologically noble savage pervades the global conservation

movement and imposes an ideal impossible for indigenous people to achieve (if they were interested in achieving it at all) (Lu Holt, 2005).

The REA clearly implements this ecologically noble savage ideal: indigenous naranjilla plantations, cattle ranching, and timber extraction are unacceptable within the reserve limits, but traditional subsistence horticulture is welcomed. Paul Nadasdy (2005) argues that even the terms of the ecologically noble savage debate ignore the complexities of native realities that simply cannot be defined on an environmentalist spectrum; as such, outsiders continue to evaluate indigenous peoples on Euro-North American environmental terms, instead of attempting to understand the indigenous realities and conceptions of nature from a local perspective. For example, while subsistence horticulture is still an important part of the Quijos lives, so too is occasional timber extraction and cattle ranching, activities that have allowed the Quijos to earn capital in order to function in this modern world. But when the Quijos fail to meet the ecologically noble savage expectation, the state removes their control over their land.

The ecologically noble savage is given a space within conservation areas because it bolsters one of the primary, though often discreet, goals of conservation: ecotourism, and the profits that accompany it. It is no surprise that in Ecuador the Ministries of Environment and Tourism have often been fused together. “Conservation” is a priority for Ecuador’s economy because it attracts tourists, who bring in millions of dollars each year. Ecuador’s economy depends on producing an image of nature that tourists want to consume; unfortunately, the Quijos, with their western clothes, cattle ranching, TV sets, and parties that overflow with beer do not fit into this manufactured picture of “pristine nature.”

Brockington and Scholfield (2010) argue that,

Conservation is not a domain separate and set apart from capitalism. It is produced by it, and thoroughly integrated into it, such that capital and conservation become two core complementary and mutually enforcing processes in the contemporary production of nature. (p. 552)¹³

Nature is swept into capitalism by the global conservation movement, which turns images of nature, such as that ecologically harmonious Indian, into commodities (Brockington & Scholfield, 2010; Garland, 2008; Holmes, 2010). Reflecting numerous other realities around the globe, conservation in Napo becomes a new form of accumulation by dispossession, as nature is commodified and people who do not fit the ideal model, such as the Quijos, are pushed off the land.

Conservationists and the Ecuadorian state have imposed this “ecologically noble savage” standard of indigeneity that holds that because the Arévalos have cut down the forest on half of their land, they can no longer be trusted to conserve the forest, ignoring the fact that that deforestation was actually mandated by the state during agrarian reform.

One day, as we talked about the land conflict with the REA, Viviana vented to me:

“Before land reform, they used to say, ‘Lazy Indians, they don’t work the land!’ Now they are telling us that we are no good because we have not conserved the forest.” The

¹³ Many protected areas are formed to mitigate environmental damage caused by extractive industries, such as oil extraction (Igoe, Neves, & Brockington, 2010). The REA’s major list of donors includes, among others: the “Agip Oil Ecuador” company, the largest donor of the REA, which was given concession of Oil Block 10 in the Amazon region by the Ecuadorian government, “with approximately 50 million barrels of oil still to be recovered” (Eni, 2010); Philip Morris International (which funded the reserve until 1999); and USAID, which has pressured the Ecuadorian state to invest in large-scale mining and oil extraction, despite strong protests from Ecuadorian citizens in defense of their environment. Obviously, conservation is not the main goal of these multinational enterprises. It could not seem more ironic that part of the REA (as well as the entirety of the Sardinias territory) is located in Oil Block 20, concessioned by the Ecuadorian state to the Canadian Ivanhoe Energy Company to extract the estimated 6.4 billion barrels of oil under the ground (Ivanhoe Energy, 2013).

Quijos are thus held up to new standards imposed by the state, and when they don't meet them, they are seen as "problems" for state projects, becoming failing and burdensome (Conklin, 2002; Conklin & Graham, 1995; Redford, 1991; West et al., 2006). During agrarian reform, the Quijos were seen as preventing the country from modernizing and the Ecuadorian state forced them to cut down half of their land's forests if they had any hope of conserving their territory. Now the state sees them as impediments to conservation efforts, and once again they are threatened with having their land taken away.

Conclusion

By living on their ancestral land for generations, the Arévalo family has made paths through the forest, cleared parts of their land, built houses, torn them down, planted their plants, bathed in the rivers, named its places, healed by the waterfalls, and learned from the sacharuna. With all of this "living" that they have done, through time they have thus created this place, building it even stronger with the stories they now remember and tell, the dreams they have at night that are linked to this place and its spirits, and the myths they know about the sacred places on this land. Through living and sensing and remembering, the members of the Arévalo family are the *producers* of this place, but they are also produced by this place. It is important not to jump to the conclusion that the Arévalo family has created this place and is produced by this place because of some essential characteristic of them being indigenous Amazonians. Rather, the Arévalo family can be considered the "rightful producers" because of the work that they have done on and with this place; not just physical work for the economic profit, though that can be

taken into consideration too, but more importantly the work on their stories, on their sensing, on their living and dwelling.

The Quijos' land is intrinsic for their health and healing. Access to the sacred places on the land becomes essential to combat illness, and a lack thereof can allow illness to prevail – either because one does not have the possibility to be directly cured by the spirits of that place, or because the *yachak* to whom one goes to be cured no longer has that source of power. When the state appropriates Quijos land in the name of conservation, it breaks the Quijos' continuous relationship with their *sacharuna*, an essential component of their historical production of knowledge. Desjarlais (1989) describes how, in their trances, Nepali shamans first uproot geographical images that are endowed with illness, thus releasing their power over the patient, only to return to reconstruct a new landscape of healing geography. In a similar sense, if the landscape that provides cures, as well as causes, for illnesses becomes inaccessible, the Napo Quijos believe that their health and the power of their *yachaks* will be dramatically affected.

Since the 1970s, the state has imposed contradictory models of how indigenous Amazonians are expected to live, beginning with the market-oriented model of cattle ranching during agrarian reform, and ending with the ecologically noble savage model that supports tourism and that is fundamentally linked to ecological conservation. The Quijos have attempted to fit into state models with varying success, while simultaneously continuing to engage in their own culturally specific productive practices, which do not match either one of the state-imposed models. Because of this, the state denies them control over their ancestral territory; as a result, they feel that they must continually struggle to prove their rightful ownership.

I come to understand that land and the places on it are not inert or agent-less; history, power conflicts, and memory are embedded in the very ground we walk, in every step we take. This very same land is also a highly active and necessary component for Quijos social wellbeing. It is because of this integrality of land to social welfare that the Arévalo family understands the consequences of losing their land as so dire. Land, for them, is not simply empty space, as the Ecuadorian state often implies through its policies, but vital to their existence, to how they act and interact in this world, and necessary for a good, healthy life.

Chapter Two: Reconstructing an Ancestral Quijos Identity

At ten in the morning, I spotted the “Jumandy” bus round the bend; I waited for it, sitting by the side of the road in Jondachi. It was my second-to-last day in the field, and I was rushing around trying to tie things up. With flashing red lights, the bus slowed to a stop just long enough for me to get one foot on the bus and the other off the road – then it was off. I climbed up the stairs and scanned the faces of the passengers. And there he was! My heart jumped with delight and I did my best not to shout out when I saw him. But he did not seem too surprised and just smiled.

“I knew I would see you today – last night I dreamt it,” Raúl said. I had sought Raúl out for months, trying to track him down to interview him for a video that I had proposed to make for the Quijos Nation. As the *Curaga*, or leader, of the Nation, I knew it was important to include his voice and opinions in this video. But he had been elusive, to say the least. Out of money, the phone company had cut off his landline, and his cell phone happened to die around the same time. He had decided to spend most of his time on his finca, a two hour hike from the road, where he did not need to rely on money, rather than at his house in the community of Mondayacu, which was on the main road, making stopping-by-just-to-see-if-he-was-in less than practical. Whenever I did run into him, he was rushing somewhere else and was unsure where he would be in the coming days – “I have to go to Quito this week, and if I can find enough money, I’ll return home on Wednesday. Or maybe Thursday morning. But then I’ll head to my finca.” Despite the fact that the trail head to his finca was actually at the house in which I was living in Jondachi, the days he did enter or exit were always the days I missed him because I had

given up hope of seeing him, and the days I did wake up at dawn to wait for him, I was left sleepy-eyed, contemplating the lonely company of chirping birds and the boosted-bass of a distant techno-cumbia.

I diverted my destination from Tena to Raúl's house in Mondayacu and thanked my intuition for making me stick my camera in my backpack at the last minute. We got off the bus at Raúl's house and set up the camera. He washed up, having been on the bus from Quito, and came outside with beaded necklaces and a yachak's leaf bundle used for healing. He was ready to be interviewed. Raúl was quite an interesting person. In addition to being the leader of the newly formed Quijos Nation, he was a yachak, and it had been interesting to see him act in different contexts. The first time I met him was in Jondachi, where he made a rallying speech in Kichwa at an assembly of leaders from different communities who were considering joining the efforts to identify themselves as Quijos. The community leaders were obviously motivated by his speech, by their heads nodding in agreement and their final decision to join with the Quijos Nation for national recognition. Despite the fact that I only understood a few words here and there while most of the content washed over my head, even I felt motivated by his tone and energy.

At other times, however, Raúl seemed to step back from his leadership role – there was the meeting of the Quijos Nation council, which was attended by a few community leaders, as well as Vicente, a Quijos who worked at the Ministry of Culture in Tena. Here, Raúl seemed to defer to this government worker, who was more skilled at organizing timelines and who Raúl hoped would be able to provide funds from the Ministry of Culture. At a different meeting, which Vicente also attended, Raúl again

seemed to step away from his leadership role deferring to Vicente this time as a more “educated” leader. With me, he always seemed friendly, but shy.

Now, he sits on a layer of dried leaves in front of my small camera that is balanced on a stool I have set up on the dirt path outside his house; once again he emanates confidence and authority. The camera is rolling. A chicken pecks the ground behind Raúl as he tells the camera,

Because of threats and the arrival of the colonists, our brothers, our heroes, our fathers and our mothers have been lost. As their children, we now want to be reconstituted and recognized nationally and internationally. That’s why we are very concerned to not lose our [cultural] inheritance that has come from before us – the territory, the culture, the language, the dress, the food, the forms of cultivation... Even among ourselves, among brothers we have sometimes believed that the Quijos nation did not exist. In reality, over a thousand years the Spanish have arrived many times, and they have broken our culture, broken our language. From this point of view, our culture has been lost, and therefore now ... other brothers and sisters believe that they are Kichwa, but in reality we are not Kichwa, we are Quijos.

Raúl remembers his ancestors as Quijos and remembers the Spanish colonists as killing his ancestors and his culture. But for Raúl, the memory of his Quijos ancestors is no longer lost, as it had been for generations, but is alive and worth remembering. After a half hour, I end the interview. He brings me into his house and serves me a welcomed bowl of cool chicha made from mashed yucca. The chonta fruit season is finally over, and the bowls of chicha have gone from being filled with sunset orange to creamy white. We talk a bit more and exchange email addresses. I shake his hand, we wish each other luck, and I head down the path to catch the bus toward my original destination, Tena.

In this chapter I examine the leadership of the Quijos identity movement and explore if and why yachaks may be emerging as the new leaders of contemporary Amazonian movements. To understand the complex dynamics of the emergence of the

Quijos Nation, I focus on the current reconstitution of Quijos identity in Napo and explore how the Quijos harness insider and outsider knowledge in order to generate memories of the historic Quijos, which allows them to construct their identity. I examine how the Quijos Nation attempts to emerge and define itself while working within prescribed governmental structures that have developed from neoliberal multiculturalism and for state legibility. I end the chapter by describing general trends in Amazonian political leadership and suggest that the unique characteristics of Quijos leadership might reflect a changing need for Amazonian identity movements to possess a leader who demonstrates “authenticity” by being seen as closer to the essence of an ancestral past, rather than possessing fluency in cosmopolitan politics.

In the past, Amazonian leaders were often shamans or spiritual leaders and healers; however, since the 1970s and 1980s Amazonian social movements have typically been led by members of a younger age-set who are able to bridge the cultural divide between their own ethnic group and outsiders, such as the state or NGOs. Raúl, leader of the Quijos Nation, represents an interesting change in the typical leadership trends of these social movements because he is a yachak, with the unique lifestyle that it entails. In this chapter I explore how Raúl’s uniqueness affects the potential success of his leadership as well as that of the Quijos Nation. I also suggest that Raúl brings a quality of authenticity to the Quijos identity, precisely because of his yachak lifestyle and that this authenticity may be critical for cementing the legitimacy of a Quijos identity.

The Quijos movement is interesting in that it emerges both from personal and collective, as well as insider and outsider, initiatives of exploring identity and history. The contemporary Quijos argue that they are descendents of the historical Quijos based

on the work of non-indigenous scholars, as well as cosmological knowledge that is produced by their yachaks. I argue that this mixing of insider and outsider sources falls in line with traditional Quijos ways of legitimizing political stances and that the Quijos deliberately choose which sources of information to emphasize, depending on particular contexts. As various authors argue, many Amazonian groups legitimize political power and leadership through access to exotic knowledge (Lauer, 2006; Santos Granero, 1986; Wilson, 2010b); I argue that the Quijos' reliance on scholarly research to solidify their identity can be understood as a new variation of this traditional political practice.

The Quijos have decided to use a government initiative, called CTI (*Circumscripcion Territorial Indigena*, or Indigenous Territorial Circumscription) as a way to achieve territorial autonomy. As such, much of what the Quijos do now revolves around government deadlines and requirements, which strongly contrasts with local Quijos needs and expectations. The CTI emerges from a history of neoliberal multiculturalism, in which the neoliberal state opens political spaces for indigenous peoples as a result of decentralization. The Quijos are simultaneously wary of government intervention, while actively participating in the state initiatives, which they see as one of the only viable paths for legal recognition and funding. In this chapter I explore how the government frameworks within which the Quijos Nation works might be seen as a method that the neoliberal state uses to organize, mediate, and control the various indigenous groups that exist within Ecuador, through the notion of state legibility, but how, paradoxically, those same state measures may provide the Quijos with the tools and spaces needed to protest and resist those neoliberal policies which they feel threaten their own existence and identity.

I initially had no intention of including the Quijos Nation in my research. While writing my thesis proposal in Canada, one day my advisor mentioned that he had just found out that people in Jondachi were beginning to identify as Quijos; I thought that, for the purposes of my research, the effects of this would be limited to simply changing the word I used to describe the people from “Kichwa” to “Quijos.” Soon after I arrived in Jondachi, however, I realized that Quijos identity was what was on many people’s minds. While most residents of Jondachi didn’t actually consider themselves Quijos, and many didn’t know what “Quijos” was, some were highly active in the Quijos identity movement, and Jondachi became a locus of action for the Quijos Nation. Its meetings were held at the community building in Jondachi, where leaders of dispersed communities would converge to discuss the different steps and processes of the formation of the Quijos Nation. For a few weeks I attempted to swim against the current by sticking to my original research proposal; before long, I realized that my thesis needed to follow this new direction, and I was soon swept in.

The Modern Quijos Identity Movement

The Quijos identity was assumed to have vanished sometime during the 18th century (Taylor, 1999), after members of the Quijos culture dispersed to evade Spanish repression and integrated themselves into different ethnic groups, or joined people from other ethnicities who were also evading the colonists, as I outline in the introduction. Vanished, that is, until about 15 years ago, when a few indigenous people living in Napo, who previously identified as Kichwa or Napo Runa, began identifying themselves as Quijos. The Quijos identity movement began in the small community of Mondayacu,

located on the main road, about eight kilometers south of Jondachi. A few people, a new idea. Slowly, more and more people began to wonder where they actually came from and who their ancestors were. In 1999, the community of Mondayacu declared itself to be Pueblo Kijus, or Kijus People, and soon began involving more people and other communities, including Jondachi, in this movement for recuperating their lost identity. After many years of proposals and institutional recognitions, the Ecuadorian state finally legally recognized the Quijos as a “Nation” on February 6, 2013.

Those who identify as Quijos in the present remember the past by tapping into it in numerous ways, through daily and ritual activities, what Abercrombie (1998) calls “poetic forms of historical understanding” (p. 25), which I develop in the following chapter. Ironically, however, the “re-birth” of a Quijos collective memory has been greatly influenced by outsiders. Many of the leaders of the Quijos movement had their curiosity about their origins initially sparked by outsiders’ interests in researching the historical Quijos ethnicity. Raúl, the current *Curaga*, or leader, of the Quijos Nation, describes how in the mid-seventies, his community organized the “Association of Indigenous Workers of Mondayacu” in an attempt to defend their territory from the onslaught of colonists as a result of national agrarian reform, a strategy that many communities took, and almost identical to what occurred in Jondachi, which I describe in the previous chapter. As a result of this organization, the leaders of the community participated in numerous national events and workshops, one of which included a talk on how the historical Quijos Nation had existed in what is now Napo province. This is what motivated Raúl to inquire more about the Quijos past, and eventually led him to identify as a Quijos descendant.

Vicente, who now works for the Ministry of Culture, described to me how, as a youth, he and his friends would make a point to speak Kichwa in public, unlike many other people who were ashamed of being identified as indigenous. He thought it was important to be proud of his indigenous identity. Later, as a young man, he learned to play the guitar and accompanied many musical groups, including the well-known Chawamangos. During his stint as a musician, he met the local writer and historian, David Guevara Yépez, a descendent of colonists himself, who wrote poems about the great Jumandi hero and the Quijos past. Guevara Yépez asked Vicente to compose the music to some of his poems, and together they created songs about the Quijos. This kindled Vicente's curiosity about the Quijos past. He delved into the research Guevara Yépez had conducted about the Quijos and began searching for other scholarly texts on the subject. He soon saw that he was a descendent of the Quijos, and began claiming a Quijos identity. Guevara Yépez eventually wrote the report entitled "*Nuestros Genes Quijos*" ("Our Quijos Genes") (2010) that was used as evidence to support the Quijos petition to the CONFENIAE (Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of the Ecuadorian Amazon), which was approved in 2010.

Finally, Ángel, who is leading the work for the Quijos CTI (Indigenous Territorial Circumscription), which I discuss later in this chapter, and who was elected Chief of Justice of the Quijos Nation in 2009, found his interest in his Quijos past piqued by outsiders as well. Throughout the 1990s and 2000s, Dr. Andrea Cuéllar, an archaeologist from the University of Lethbridge, contracted Ángel and many other people from his and surrounding communities to assist in her archaeological research outside of the town of Baeza, in the Quijos Valley. This valley is in the Quijos Canton, in the Napo Province,

and Baeza was where Jumandi's plan to attack the Spaniards was foiled and where he was captured and taken to Quito to be killed. For numerous consecutive summers, Ángel and his friends excavated remains, were taught archaeological and mapping techniques, and learned about the history of the people who inhabited this valley centuries ago. As these people gained a new historical perspective, some began applying what they were learning about the historical Quijos culture to their own lives, and began linking their own present to a chain of events that began as an exodus of escape from the slopes of the Andes in search of refuge from Spanish brutality. Curiosity was sparked, links were formed, and Ángel is now a proud member of the Quijos Nation.

In all of the Quijos Nation meetings that I attended, Quijos leaders would refer to these outsiders and their studies as having proved that the people of Napo are descendants of the Quijos, which they saw as giving them a legitimate right to identify as such. "Kichwa is a language, not ancestral roots. How do we prove this? With archaeological and anthropological studies conducted by volunteers."¹⁴ They are the ones who leave us the book on identity. They have shown that we are the grandchildren and great-grandchildren of the Quijos," said one Quijos leader at a community meeting. In the beginning of my fieldwork, Raúl also greatly hoped that I would be able to research the Quijos culture to be able to provide more concrete evidence that they were indeed Quijos, which they could then use to gain legal recognition by the state (in lieu of that, I offered to shoot and edit a video about the new Quijos identity, something I felt a bit more

¹⁴ All foreigners, including well-funded scholars, as well as myself, were referred to as "volunteers," regardless of whether they were being paid or not. I believe this comes from the era of NGO development projects when many of the foreigners who came to the region were volunteers and came with the intention of "helping" communities. It seems that it is now assumed that any foreigner who wants to live in a community has come to "help."

capable of doing). Most of these Quijos meetings were held in order to “educate” members of different communities on the link to their Quijos ancestors and to motivate them to identify as Quijos. I found it interesting that the reasons given for knowing why they were Quijos were that outsiders had demonstrated it through their research. These non-indigenous researchers, some Ecuadorian, some foreign, gave the Quijos a sense of external legitimacy, thus bolstering their identity claim.

Relying on outsiders to solidify political legitimacy is not new or unique to the Quijos identity movement. Multiple scholars have researched the role that outsiders play in internal Amazonian politics, which is helpful for understanding the Quijos use of outsiders’ knowledge to help legitimize their identity. Michael Brown (1991) writes that members of many Amazonian societies reach out

to powerful outsiders in search of new insights and conceptual categories. This openness to exotic knowledge is part of the highly nuanced, dialectical ballet by which Amazonian peoples incorporate and, at the same time, define themselves against the differences of others. (p. 406)

Patrick Wilson (2010b) demonstrates how important it is for the Napo Runa to mobilize exotic goods in order to legitimize leadership. He specifically analyzes the leadership of the federation FONAKIN (the predecessor to CONAKIN – Coordinator of the Kichwa Nationality of Napo), and argues that leaders gain legitimacy as their ability to control and circulate NGO-sponsored development projects grows. Generosity is a key element in solidifying a leader’s authority, prestige, and legitimacy, thus the distribution or “gifting” of development projects, most of which are created and funded by outside NGOs, to different communities increases a leader’s popularity.

Santos Granero (1986) argues that traditional Amazonian leaders possess what he calls the “mystical means of reproduction,” or mystical knowledge and rituals that ensure

the survival of individuals as well as the collective – “the exercise of political power in lowland South America is seen as encompassing the highest of moral purposes: the giving of life” (p. 678). In the case that Wilson (2010b) explores, the distribution of NGO development projects can be considered life-giving – not from the perspective of the NGOs which evaluate the success of a project by its results, but from the perspective of the Napo Runa, who value “giving” as essential for the reproduction of social ties and thus of the society as a whole (Uzendoski, 2004b).

Meanwhile, Lauer (2006) explores how leadership among the Ye’kwana in Venezuela has changed as their involvement with the state has increased. He argues that legitimacy of leaders is still based on their ability to control certain forms of knowledge; what has changed, however, is the content of that knowledge. While the Ye’kwana previously valued leaders’ ritual knowledge of the cosmos, they currently place more weight on leaders’ knowledge of contemporary national politics. The importance of a leader’s access to knowledge, however, has not changed. Hanne Veber (1998) adds, “native Amazonians incorporate nonindigenous concepts and technologies into the fabrics of their social cosmologies... these inform viable, novel, localized practices and meanings in currently changing environments” (p. 387).

In this light, using outsiders’ scholarly knowledge to solidify Quijos identity can be understood as consistent with their traditional forms of enhancing political power. Just as before, when access to NGO projects was an essential foundation for cementing political legitimacy, access to outside sources (now scholarly knowledge) continues to feed political authority (now as the Quijos identity movement). The political weight of having scholars support their identity, whether the scholars themselves know it or not,

and of Raúl having access to scholarly research is of no small matter. The Quijos still value and desire development projects for their communities, despite the fact that it is now much more difficult to access them. Although there are no definitive projects being funded by these scholars, the Quijos leaders seek such projects and believe that there is increased potential for future projects by making contact with these foreigner researchers. Access to foreign scholars and the potential for the giving and distribution of future projects becomes a component of the “mystical means of reproduction” – controlling life support for Quijos’ well being and the reproduction of their culture.

Although Raúl’s expertise is in the esoteric knowledge of yachaks, he increases the legitimacy of his leadership position in the eyes of other Amazonians by harnessing this outsider scholarly knowledge, which naturally extends to him as the movement’s leader. His augmented authority does not go unnoticed by the nearby Kichwa who are skeptical of Quijos identity in general as he is credited with the ability to obtain and control such knowledge. Raúl, and indeed the entire Quijos Nation, enjoy greater power because they are able to produce these connections with outsiders and their knowledge.

But, at a Quijos meeting that took place in the Ministry of Culture in Tena where only the movement’s leaders were present, an interesting twist occurred. A mestizo¹⁵ man walked into the area where the meeting was taking place and began talking to Claudio, the secretary of the Quijos Nation. “But what data do you rely on? How can you prove that you are Quijos?” To which Claudio responded, “Our yachaks are our historians.

They go back into our past and recall things. Though much of our history has been lost,

¹⁵ “Mestizo” is a complex and socially constructed racial term that implies being of both indigenous and white ancestry. In Napo, the landed and political elites have always been mestizos and have been the ones who have held authority in public and political contexts. Historically and currently, racial tensions between indigenous people from Napo and mestizos abound.

our yachaks are our link to the past and bring our Quijos past back to us in the present.”

There was no mention of the outside researchers I had heard so discussed at other meetings. At this moment, knowledge of history was controlled by the Quijos themselves.

The particular mestizo who was questioning the indigenous Quijos identity in Tena was well educated and moved fluidly and comfortably through the government office of the Ministry of Culture. It would have been easy for Claudio to use the outside scholarly sources as proof of the validity of their identity, since this mestizo would have been familiar with using academic documentation as evidence for an argument. But Claudio chose not to, instead turning to the cultural icon of yachaks as convincing proof. In this case, explaining to the mestizo that the evidence for their Quijos identity came from outsiders would have demonstrated that these “Indians” were dependent on non-Indians (mestizos and Whites) for their existence. There might have also been the potential for the more educated mestizo to debate the validity of these scholarly texts. Because most of the members of the Quijos movement have, at most, a high school education, to debate the arguments of foreign scholarly texts would be a daunting task, to be avoided.

Perhaps most importantly, Claudio may have used yachaks as “proof” of Quijos identity because people commonly believe that yachaks are authentic representatives of indigenous cultures’ ancestral pasts. In the face of this mestizo who was questioning the legitimacy of a Quijos identity, providing him with a cultural icon that embodies a traditional lifestyle would strengthen the sense of authenticity, and therefore legitimacy, of a Quijos identity. By using their own yachaks as links to their past, they draw a

continuous and unbroken cosmological line from Quijos past to Quijos present by using a traditional member of their society to which they can claim sole ownership. They can contend, through spiritual means, that a constant Quijos essence has existed, albeit quietly, throughout the generations.

And we should not forget that Raúl, the leader of the movement, just so happens to be a yachak. As such, he becomes living proof of Quijos identity, because of his inherent and authentic connection to his ancestors, and directly controls a major part of evidence that the Quijos use for demonstrating their Quijos roots. Were the Quijos to rely solely on scholarly texts, the modern Quijos identity might be interpreted as instrumentalist, an opportunistic invention of the present with no links to an ancestral past, and would be difficult for the Quijos to control. Interestingly, Claudio's use of yachaks' knowledge, considered exotic from the mestizo's point of view, is consistent with traditional Quijos use of outsider knowledge for validating legitimacy.

I see this mixed use of knowledge sources about Quijos identity – the written scholarly works as well as the lifeways of the elders and yachaks – as an important strategy to prove to others, whether they be other indigenous people in Napo or non-indigenous outsiders, the validity of a Quijos identity. Rappaport (1990) writes that in Colombia,

The Paez have been forced by colonialism to operate at the interface of the oral and the literate. On the one hand, they must survive within a society that fetishizes the written word and, consequently, bestows power upon those who manipulate it effectively. On the other hand, given that literacy is a necessary but inadequate tool for achieving power in Colombia, the Paez must also consolidate themselves as an ethnic group, working in the oral realm. (p. 186)

I believe this to be true for the Quijos as well. The written word, especially that of people who hold university degrees, is extremely powerful – here we see it having power over

the Quijos and the other indigenous people they are trying to educate about their identity, as well as in the realm of political and legal recognition, which requires academic studies to back up a people's claim for identity. However, save for a sprinkling of people who might be more used to reading academic texts and can therefore gain somewhat of an understanding of them, most of the people talking about these written texts are doing just that – *talking*, using the spoken word. The power of writing bleeds into the oral realm. In the end, the spoken and written word bounce off each other – the spoken word being the vehicle that carries the weight of the texts and the texts giving the spoken word the veil of authority – in an interplay that buoys both and provides each with different but complimentary forms of power.

Perreault (2003a) discusses how FOIN (*Federacion de Organizaciones Indígenas de Napo*, or the Federation of Indigenous Organizaitons of Napo, predecessor to CONAKIN) uses a form of what Mary Loise Pratt (1994) calls “autoethnography”–

Text[s] in which people undertake to describe themselves in ways that engage with representations others have made of them.... They involve a selective collaboration with and appropriation of idioms of the metropolis or conqueror. These are merged or infiltrated to varying degrees with indigenous idiom.... (p. 28)

Though what she discusses takes place in a different context, I would argue that the Quijos are also engaging in a form of “autoethnography” by selectively using others' representations of them and their history to inform and produce their current identity. The Quijos draw from both scholarly and local knowledge to produce and sustain their identity, retaining the power to choose which sources to use and when.

It is important to clarify, however, that the Quijos identity does not strictly emerge *from* these outside sources, rather it is a *choice* already made by those who identify as

such, who then use these sources to inform, validate, and reshape their choice. Rather than materializing from primordial bonds, ethnic identity develops from interactions with cultural outsiders (Barth, 1969). In Latin America, ethnic identities have, without a doubt, emerged from indigenous peoples' relations with the state (Urban & Sherzer, 1991). The state often constructed, and later imposed, ethnic divisions depending on the different ways in which certain groups of people interacted with the state, resulting in "state tribalization" (Brown, 1993; N. L. Whitehead, 1992). These ethnic labels were frequently adopted by indigenous peoples who began to identify by them. Pieterse (1996) writes,

An important starting point is that ethnicity is frequently imposed and that what often precedes it is a process of othering on the part of the dominant group.... Accordingly, ethnic identity may derive not from roots, but from politics of domination and exclusion, imposed through labeling and legislation from above and subsequently internalized. (pp. 33-34)

This process of "tribalization" was carried on by missionaries, who began differentiating between "wild Indians" and "pacified Indians" (N. L. Whitehead, 1992). The Kichwa ethnicity was a label used by the missionaries to distinguish the "pacified" native people from the Napo Province who had adopted the Kichwa language that the missions taught. These people eventually adopted the Kichwa identity, despite the fact that they did not originally identify themselves as such (Muratorio, 1991). They then especially embraced this identity during the period of agrarian reform of the 1970s, when indigenous groups united under federations to demand land rights in order to protect their territory from the incoming colonists.

The modern day Quijos, however, reject the Kichwa identity precisely because they feel it is imposed by outsiders and has nothing to do with their ancestral identity, which they claim to be Quijos. They believe that claiming a Quijos identity is thus an act

of resistance towards colonial forms of domination and a way of feeling more autonomous and less controlled. Throughout the months of fieldwork, I became attuned to a sometimes subtle, sometimes overt, sense of Quijos superiority towards the Kichwa identity, precisely because the Quijos identity is being consciously claimed, while the Kichwa identity is seen by the Quijos to be passively assumed. The Quijos have begun to view the Kichwa, who they see as less “ethnic,” with little identity and no ancestral links, as becoming an almost dominant group with their powerful federations and access to funds; the Quijos, on the other hand, “other” themselves by becoming a sub-altern group in resistance. In various conversations and meetings, I heard comments such as, “We are more advanced than the Kichwa, because we know where we come from.” The Quijos did not make these comments aggressively; rather, they were attempting to enhance the authenticity of their new identity by emphasizing its time-depth and ancestrality, comparing themselves to other more “modern,” less “authentic,” ethnic identities.

The Quijos, CTIs, and Neoliberal Multiculturalism

As I learned through sitting in numerous Quijos meetings and conducting interviews with their participants, there are a number of goals that Raúl and the Quijos Nation hope to achieve in order to gain more control over many aspects of their lives. I will briefly outline some of the main ambitions the Quijos have. Each of these subjects has deep and complex histories, but to delve into them here would only deviate from the direction of this chapter; nevertheless, to not mention them would be an oversight.

One aspect of their lives the Quijos wish to control concerns language. Many highland indigenous people speak Kichwa and there has been a movement to unify the

different variants of the language spoken throughout the country. Unified Kichwa has been promoted through the Intercultural Bilingual Education system and in these schools, one of which is located in Mondayacu, where Raúl lives, children are given textbooks with a standardized Kichwa which is based on the Kichwa spoken in highland Otavalo. The Quijos are greatly opposed to this as they feel it undermines their own cultural distinctiveness, expressed through their unique form of speaking Kichwa. Incidentally, while I was doing my fieldwork, the Quijos Nation decided to officially change the spelling of their name from Kijus (the “K” and “u” reflecting unified Kichwa) to Quixos, although this was later changed to Quijos, after acknowledging that the “x” was just as much an imposition, in this case from the Spanish colonists. They also often mentioned their hopes of creating a Quijos dictionary, with the words that they use that are linguistically distinct from highland Kichwa and neighboring Amazonian Kichwas, who speak a slightly different form of Kichwa than those in this region of Napo. They believe that through governing their territory with autonomy, they will be able to create Quijos schools that reflect their own cultural values and linguistic distinctiveness. They also hope to be able to get scholarships for Quijos individuals at different academic or trade institutions, both nationally and internationally, so that they gain new skills and knowledge and return to teach other Quijos.

The Quijos also hope to resist transnational oil companies drilling in their territory. The Canadian Ivanhoe Energy Company now has exclusive rights to explore, develop and produce oil in an approximately 1,100 square kilometer expanse that covers Quijos territory, called Block 22. Multiple efforts, some successful, some not, have been made throughout the Ecuadorian Amazon by indigenous groups to resist oil exploitation. While

almost everyone agrees that the environmental effects of oil exploration are negative, new schools, health centers, and jobs are just some of the “gifts” oil companies offer communities to persuade them to accept oil development, and are hard to resist when living with the pressing constraints of the market economy. Raúl was adamant, however, that the Quijos would resist oil exploitation in their territory because they recognize that without the forest and animals in it, they have no future.

A third goal of the Quijos is to develop agricultural production of crops such as cacao, yucca, and naranjilla, and to distribute them without the use of intermediaries. Right now, despite the fact that almost all families grow at least some cacao, chocolate is not produced in the region, and the only option they have for selling the seeds is to bring them to Tena or Archidona, where distributors buy them and send them to Quito, where they are roasted and made into chocolate. Yucca is used almost exclusively for family consumption or taken to Tena or Archidona to be sold on the street corner when in need of cash. Naranjilla fruits are always packed into boxes and left on the side of the road where a truck picks them up and takes them to highland city of Ambato to be sold in the markets. Aside from the production stage, the Quijos have no control over the processing, sales or distribution of their products. They wish to change this and secure funds, legal power, and institutional organization to be able to gain control over agricultural production.

In order to achieve these goals, the Quijos want to consolidate and gain autonomy over their territory. The government has proposed a unique opportunity for them to do so, which enables indigenous groups to obtain territorial autonomy. While the Quijos engage

in this process, they necessarily interact with the state, its policies, and its guiding ideologies, all of which I explore in this section.

Sitting at a meeting in the communal house in Jondachi, I hear Raúl say, “The President of the country [Rafael Correa] asked us if we wanted to defend our territories, and we said yes. Now the president has given us the opportunity to do so.” Once again, the meeting is held during the vacation time, but they need to submit paperwork to the government for a deadline, even if only 15 people are present, out of the 40 communities that were invited. The purpose of this meeting is to come to an agreement on the budget for a proposed autonomous territory, called *Circumscripcion Territorial Indígena* (Indigenous Territorial Circumscription), or CTI. In 2008, a referendum was held in Ecuador to approve a new constitution, which is what Raúl was referring to. The constitution was approved, and Article 257 paves the way for indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian regions of the country to create and manage their own autonomous territorial governments, called CTIs, which are to be guided by the “principles of interculturalism, plurinationalism, and conform with collective rights.... The law will establish the norms of conformation, functioning, and competencies of these circumscriptions” (Art. 257, Constitución del Ecuador, 2008).

Any group of indigenous or Afro-Ecuadorian people can propose to create a CTI, and the Quijos Nation has decided to go this route. However, despite the fact that the concept of the CTIs exists in the constitution, the specific CTI laws have yet to be written, so at this stage people are simply submitting proposals to create an autonomous territory, awaiting government approval, and waiting for the laws to be written and approved so that they can legally create their CTIs. CTIs are a government initiative and once the

Quijos Nation expressed interest in the idea, the government actually paid the salaries of five Quijos people, called *técnicos*, to educate and organize communities to get involved with the creation of their CTI, called the Territorial Circumscription of the Originary Quijos Nation (this was not unique to the Quijos but to all groups who wanted to initiate a CTI). The work only lasted a few months, but allowed them to organize communities and spread the word about the Quijos CTI, which would span almost 14,000 hectares.

The state-led CTI initiative is a product of the neoliberal turn in Ecuador since the 1980s. During the economic crisis of the 1980s, and continuing into the 1990s, the Ecuadorian state went through a process of democratization, moving away from corporatism and adopting neoliberal policies, as in much of Latin America. These neoliberal policies espoused free trade, privatization, deregulation, and a reduction of the state's control over the economy. As part of decentralization and democratization measures, the spaces of politics shifted away from metropolitan areas and into more local municipalities (Radcliffe et al., 2002), and in a seemingly counterintuitive process, Ecuador embraced a state ideology of multiculturalism, thus opening new political spaces for indigenous populations to assert demands for cultural rights and recognition. Indigenous peoples used these spaces to formally participate in state politics, to protest many of the detrimental neoliberal policies that were affecting them, and to achieve greater degrees of autonomy. The CTI is one such space that the state has created for indigenous peoples to exercise "autonomy." There are a number of perspectives on why the state's stance on indigenous populations shifted, and what effects this has really had on indigenous empowerment and social change. Here I explore this debate in order to

better understand the political contexts of the Quijos CTI and its possible uses and outcomes. While the current Ecuadorian president, Rafael Correa, has publically decried neoliberalism, many aspects of identity politics and the state's involvement in them continue to have the same socio-cultural implications as they did during the neoliberal era. Correa's government has continued the emphasis on identity politics in indigenous communities, a holdover from the neoliberal multiculturalism from the 1980s, which emphasized the right to the expression of cultural difference while curtailing the pursuit of more fundamental structural change. I suggest the CTIs may reflect many of the tendencies of neoliberal multiculturalism.

Charles Hale (2002) argues that neoliberal supporters promote multiculturalism and indigenous cultural rights out of self-interest, in order to advance their political agendas. Importantly, he sees neoliberal multiculturalism as a precautionary measure taken to quell any outright opposition to the neoliberal state, but believes that it provides too little political space to create any substantive societal change. He notes that despite the fact that the ancestral cultures they now embrace seem to contradict individualist neoliberal ethic, in reality the state does not simply recognize existing cultures, but attempts to remake them in an image that aligns with their neoliberal discourse. Hale (2002) writes that this has the effect "of separating acceptable demands for cultural rights from inappropriate ones, recognizing the former and foreclosing the latter, and thereby creating a means to 'manage' multiculturalism while removing its radical or threatening edge" (p. 507), leading to "a disconcerting combination of genuine democratic opening and persisting authoritarian practice" (p. 509). Vinueza (2005) supports this idea, arguing that unless the unequal systems of economic accumulation and political domination are

changed, multiculturalism simply becomes the state's tool to depoliticize social movements and avoid outright confrontation. Additionally, Patrick Wilson (2008) argues that often neoliberal policies, despite employing multicultural or environmental discourses, simply perpetuate a continuation of old racist and modernizing ideologies. Nancy Postero (2007) writes,

...Neoliberalism includes a seductive cultural project. It does not merely encourage individualism; rather, it urges citizens – be they individuals or organized into collective groups – to take on the role of solving the problems in which they are immersed in collaboration with nonstate civil society entities like NGOs. This valuing of civil society can be compatible with some facets of indigenous cultural rights – but only as long as there are no fundamental threats to the productive regime or to state power. The bottom line is that successful neoliberal subjects must govern themselves in accordance with the logic of globalized capitalism. The result... is that those Indians who conduct themselves within this logic and are appropriately 'modern' and 'rational' are rewarded and empowered.... Unruly, conflict-prone Indians, however, are condemned to the racialized spaces of poverty and social exclusion. (p. 16)

These authors demonstrate how neoliberal multiculturalism can become a form of what Foucault (1991) referred to as “governmentality” – the “conduct of conduct” – or the ways in which projects and practices are put in place that direct and manage social behavior towards a certain outcome. Meanwhile, James Scott (1998) argues that states attempt to make legible societies whose realities are too complex for the state to understand and therefore control without simplification and standardization. Through this process of legibility, states are now able to carry out large-scale social engineering.¹⁶

¹⁶ It is always a priority for states to control their territories, and right now there are numerous factors making it important for the Ecuadorian society, especially ethnic groups, to be made legible to the state. Ecuador is known for being the country with the most organized indigenous movement in Latin America. In the last few decades indigenous people have organized well enough to stop state projects with protests and roadblocks, as well as garner international support in defense of their territories from state-endorsed multinational extractive industries. It is convenient for the state to appease indigenous people by giving them “autonomy” through projects like CTIs, while

...The modern state, through its officials, attempts with varying success to create a terrain and a population with precisely those standardized characteristics that will be easiest to monitor, count, assess, and manage. The utopian, immanent, and continually frustrated goal of the modern state is to reduce the chaotic, disorderly, constantly changing social reality beneath it to something more closely resembling the administrative grid of its observations. (Scott, 1998, pp. 81-82)

However, Michael Cepek (2011) cautions researchers not to exploit the governmentality paradigm, arguing that in doing so, indigenous agency, critical consciousness, and cultural complexities can be underestimated. Postero (2007) and Lynn Horton (2006) recognize that neoliberal multiculturalism can be a state tool, but maintain that it is a product of both top-down and grassroots efforts, as the contents of multiculturalism are continuously contested by the state and indigenous people. Horton (2006) sees this as a continuum – on the transformative end there are opportunities for political, material, and cultural empowerment for indigenous people; on the disempowering end, multiculturalism has been coopted by the elite, is largely symbolic, and used to reinforce the neoliberal project and existing exclusionary practices. Horton (2006) argues that both ends of the continuum can exist, and interact in complex ways that are dependent on local experiences, creating unique outcomes for different places and different moments in time. Lucero (2008) notes, for example, that in Ecuador indigenous people have mobilized to fight detrimental neoliberal policies and the elites that promote them, but have also been able to negotiate with them and shape new multicultural frameworks that benefit indigenous populations. As he writes, “Both the critics and proponents of multicultural neoliberalism may turn out to be right in that

simultaneously using those projects to administer and keep track of the population more closely.

changes may yield real breakthroughs for the livelihood of indigenous people *and* lead to inevitable compromises with dominant power centers” (Lucero, 2008, p. 132).

The CTIs are an example of this neoliberal multicultural continuum. Reflecting the effects of both state decentralization and state acceptance of multiculturalism, the CTIs are government controlled spaces for local indigenous people to more autonomously govern their territories and people. It is both top-down – created and managed by the state – and grassroots – an opportunity for indigenous people to gain a certain degree of autonomy for which they have been fighting for years. I became accustomed to seeing Raúl’s face weary from the internal struggles this conundrum produced in him. As the Quijos leader, would he be able to forge a truly autonomous nation within the state framework of the CTI? Would he be able to push through all of the bureaucracy in order to achieve a legally autonomous territory, even while this top-down management conflicted with Quijos lifestyles at every step of the way?

During the meeting in Jondachi, the general tone for why they wanted to create the Quijos CTI was to recuperate their territory, their identity, and to be autonomous, the same issues that have been the pillars of indigenous organizing since the 1970s. But the pressing issue was to submit the project budget to the government by the deadline, which is why the meeting could not be delayed, despite the room’s emptiness and the glaring fact that the decisions made about the budget would therefore not come from consensus among the communities. After community leaders asked a number of questions, the *técnicos* began to outline their budgets. The budget seemed extremely high at \$100,000 just for the initial planning phase (after submitting it to the government, they were told they had to make adjustments and lower costs), and included everything from salaries for

cartographers, geographers, *técnicos*, mapping devices and training, printers, office space, to transportation, and even money allotted for mobilizing people to march to Quito and strike so that the National Assembly passes the CTI laws.

There was a sense of urgency to comply with the government deadlines and rules even while this way of organizing contradicted local realities and dynamics, namely the fact that most people, including the president of Jondachi, were at their *fincas*. Yet people were dependent on the government proposals because it provided them with the opportunity to create a new form of local government, as well as with large quantities of funds that would otherwise be inaccessible. By agreeing to take on the CTI initiative, the Quijos way of recuperating ancestral territory and organizing for “autonomy” became completely dependent on government decisions that were far removed from local reality and needs, instead having state interests in mind. At most Quijos meetings, Raúl and other leaders felt frustrated at having their identity and struggle for autonomy tightly managed by the state, feelings that were reminiscent of the foundations of what Foucault (1991) termed “governmentality.”



Figure 10: Elected officials of the Quijos Nation.

On the one hand, the formation of CTIs can be seen as an initiative that allows different indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian groups to become legible to the state under the guise of autonomy. The Ecuadorian State is the entity creating the template for these autonomous territories and “the law will establish the norms of conformation, functioning, and competencies of these circumscriptions” (Art. 257, Constitución del Ecuador, 2008). It is not autonomy from the state that the CTI will provide the Quijos, but perhaps autonomy from other local forms of government which the CTI would replace. Power of local governance would be transferred, but the state would still control, mediate, and administer that change.

On the other hand, the Quijos leaders realize the irony of this, and are completely aware of the limitations of any “autonomy” granted through the CTI, but they also acknowledge that by going the CTI route, they can acquire funds and solidify their Quijos identity with a legal territory, which they feel make it worth the compromise. Veronica Schild (1998) writes, “although state forms define and impose, what people and groups do with these forms is another matter” (p. 99). Both the Quijos Nation and the CTI project are still in their beginning stages and it is therefore impossible to know what the outcome will look like. Will the Quijos CTI, if approved, be just another form of government control over an indigenous population? Or will the Quijos Nation use the spaces provided by the government to their advantage in order to truly gain more autonomy over their lives and to gain strength to fight policies that they feel harm their way of life? The fact that the Quijos Nation has allotted money in their CTI proposal for mobilizing a protest against the government “just in case” demonstrates that they are in no way ready to simply accept the state’s agenda in its entirety.

Through the creation of a CTI, the Quijos hope to be able to challenge many neoliberal state policies and modern realities that they face, such as oil development, economic hardship, dependence on intermediaries, and language imposition and unification. The outcome, or where this will fall on the transformative-disempowering continuum that Horton (2006) outlines for state multiculturalism, will depend on the strength of the Quijos Nation as a collective, and will inevitably morph through time, contingent upon the local, national, and even international political and economic climate. The movement's leadership will also be pivotal, influencing the direction and momentum that this identity movement takes on its road to autonomy. Raúl, just one Quijos out of hundreds, has become perhaps the most decisive person in determining whether or not the Quijos nation will "make history," so to speak, by placing this new identity on the national map and by gaining territorial autonomy.

A New Amazonian Leader?

He was different. His thinning black hair, long enough to be combed to the side and to peek out under his ears, distinguished him from the other crew-cut men that surrounded him. He looked relaxed, and when called on to address the leaders from nearby communities he spoke with ease and confidence. While the CTI *técnicos* fumbled with their PowerPoint presentations and spoke in Spanish, he didn't bother with mechanical devices, and simply rose from his chair to speak in Kichwa, easing into a figure who commanded the attention of everyone present. The fluidity that threaded his speech and body gave the impression that he knew what he was talking about, like it was in him. His voice was loud and striking, a motivational speaker. While the chatter level

rose when other CTI *técnicos* presented the topics for which they were responsible, everyone's attention focused on Raúl when he stood to speak.



Figure 11: Raúl, *Curaga* of the Quijos Nation.

There has been much anthropological work done on Amazonian political leadership. As I discuss in the previous section, Santos Granero (1986) argues that in traditional Amazonian societies, leaders must control the “mystical means of reproduction,” or life-giving knowledge, which is almost always possessed by either shamans, priests, or war-chiefs, depending on the culture. Anthropologists have argued that traditional Amazonian leaders were generally of older generations, skilled orators, able to mobilize action through persuasive language and example rather than coercion, and solidified their positions through acts of conspicuous generosity (Brown, 1993; Clastres, 1987 ; Wilson, 2010b). Traditionally, political leaders in Napo were often

yachaks because of their ability to control game for hunting, protect their followers from attacks from other shamans, and control their territory (Macdonald, 1999; Muratorio, 1991).

Since the 1970s, however, Amazonian peoples began to unite to resist colonialism and defend their territories, thereby increasing their interactions with the state and other institutions. The characteristic traits of the groups' leaders began to change. No longer were they of the older generation, the most knowledgeable of ancestral traditions; rather, they were young, literate, bilingual, and often educated by outsiders, such as the Catholic missions (Brown, 1993; Conklin, 2002; Lauer, 2006). Now, leaders needed to be just as knowledgeable about national policies, laws, the dominant society, and how to interact with politicians from Quito, as about their own culture. Nevertheless, many authors argue that these new leaders were still dependent on traditional forms of achieving power, such as being persuasive speakers, conspicuously gifting, and leading by example (Brown, 1993; Wilson, 2010b). So while the characteristics of leaders have changed drastically in recent decades, reflecting changes in historical circumstance, the moral mandates upon which a leader's power rests continue to be generally the same (Wilson, 2010b).

Raúl was elected as *Curaga* (leader) of the Quijos Nation in 2009. He has his home in the small community of Mondayacu, about 100 feet from the main paved road. He stays here because his children attend school nearby, but he spends most of his time on his finca, a two hour hike from the main road in Jondachi. Here, he does not rely on money, and easily subsists on catching fish, and eating chonta, yucca, and chickens that he raises. Of everyone that I met who had a residence on the road, he is the person who spent the most time absent from the road and on his finca, even during the school year

when most people stay close to the road. As I interviewed him one day after a Quijos meeting, I inadvertently discovered that he himself was a yachak. No one had mentioned this fact before, nor had he publicized it. With this new information, I learned that the principal reason Raúl spends most of his time at his finca and not on the road is because the forest is where he connects and contacts the sacharuna and other spirits of the waterfalls and rivers. His presence in the forest is essential for maintaining these relationships with the spirits and for conserving his curing powers. Just like Santiago, he feels most at home at his finca, surrounded by nature. His absence from the road is thus imperative for sustaining his power as a yachak.

And yet, he is the *Curaga* of the Quijos Nation. He needs to be at meetings in Quito to pressure CODENPE for approval for Nation-hood. He needs to be in Tena, discussing budgets and statutes with other Quijos leaders. He needs to be on a bus traveling to different communities to garner support for the Quijos Nation. He needs to be within cell-phone range in order for Quijos members, CONFENIAE representatives, and anthropologists doing fieldwork to contact him so that they don't give up on him in frustration. His weathered and tired face said it all. It was more than difficult for a yachak to be a political leader in these modern times. No wonder the contemporary political leaders were of the younger generations, more accustomed to urban life. It seemed almost impossible to maintain the traditional lifestyle of a yachak as well as to adopt the fast-paced mobile lifestyle of a modern Amazonian political leader.

The qualities that one needs to become a yachak, however, do not necessarily contradict the qualities one needs to become a modern political leader; rather, they are quite similar. Michael Cepek (2009), who works with the Amazonian Cofán located to

the North of the Quijos, demonstrates that both Cofán shamans and Cofán political leaders share key character traits – both are intercultural and able to mediate with outsiders, and “appear to be only partially oriented by the norms that structure life in Cofán communities” (Cepek, 2009, p. 239). This resonates with the situation of yachaks and leaders among the Quijos. Political leaders cannot lead a “traditional” lifestyle because of the constant travel to cities, interaction with outsiders, and learned fluency of dominant culture. Though they are Quijos, they are not entirely so, because of their adoption of outside practices intrinsic to being a political leader. Yachaks also typically live on the fringes of society, residing in isolated places deep in the forest, disappearing for extended periods as they go to the underworld of the sacharuna, abstaining from eating “typical” foods and engaging in “typical behavior” while they train, and shape-shifting into jaguars or other animals, thus becoming distinctly non-Quijos for certain periods of time. Shamans have traditionally been political leaders in many Amazonian societies, including the Quijos (Cepek, 2009; Salomon, 1983; Santos Granero, 1986), and many leaders have worked “within a politics of difference” (Cepek, 2009, p. 231), being quite distinct from the people they lead. A great number of Amazonian millenarian movements have been led by individuals who have ambiguous identities, many of whom are shamans (Brown, 1991; Brown & Fernandez, 1993; Cepek, 2009; Hugh-Jones, 1996; Robin Wright & Hill, 1992).

Both political leaders and yachaks are also skilled intercultural mediators (Cepek, 2009; Conklin, 2002). Leaders must become competent at negotiating with government institutions, politicians, leaders of other indigenous groups, and foreign NGO workers (Brown, 1993). Yachaks must become expert in interacting with the sacharuna spirits of

the underworld (often described as blonde, blue-eyed and living in underground cities) to negotiate cures for illnesses, the release of game for hunting, and territorial protection. Yachaks are also frequently sought out by people of other cultures, and often travel further and more frequently than the typical Quijos lay person. The result of this is that often yachaks are multi-lingual and will sometimes make arrangements for their children to marry the children of well-respected members of other indigenous groups in which they have cured. Such was the case of the president of Jondachi, whose mother was from the Andean town of Cotacachi, because his grandfather, a yachak, arranged for his son to marry the daughter of a well-respected Cotacachi yachak. Thus, both political leaders and yachaks are well-versed in intercultural mediation. People also slightly distrusted both of them, as they see them as not being fully Quijos, though they acknowledge dependence on them for collective well-being. As Cepek (2009) writes, “it is difficult to draw a line between political and supernatural power. The defensive and acquisitive functions of shamans and leaders overlap” (p. 240).

Beth Conklin (2002) argues that in Brazil, shamans have recently begun to emerge as important political actors in the indigenous rights movements because of the potential esoteric knowledge and spiritual power they possess. Attention is shifting away from indigenous communities’ tangible actions and focusing on the knowledge indigenous people may possess about the forest. She claims that shamans’ political authority is legitimized because outsiders are rarely in a position to contest traditional and spiritual knowledge. Nevertheless, her analysis focuses on shamanism’s public face, rather than the intricacies of internal politics and power negotiations. It is unclear if and how these yachaks are able to maintain the lifestyles inherent for preserving their esoteric

knowledge as well as adopt the lifestyle of a political leader. She argues that this “generic brand” of shamanism that is developing in the indigenous rights movement often diverges from actual native shamanistic practices. Yachaks in Ecuador definitely do have a “mystical” appeal for westerners and environmental movements, and, as Conklin (2002) argues, are often treated as representatives of native cultures, but currently there is little overlap between the two roles.

Except in Raúl’s case. But Raúl does not publicize his yachak identity at all; rather, he is quite discreet about it, conforming to Quijos tradition of maintaining power sources secret. In fact, very few people in the Quijos movement actually knew that he was a yachak. I began to wonder what influence, if any, his yachak identity played on the success of his leadership role. He publically discussed the importance of yachaks for maintaining their culture and connecting to their ancestors, but he did not use these ideas to politically self-promote. When I spoke to him about how he used his knowledge as a yachak in his leadership role, he told me that he interpreted his visions and dreams in order to know how to act the following day – whether or not to contact someone or to visit a certain community and knowing, for example, that he would see me on the bus the day before I left the field. It was obvious that he did not distinguish his political life from his spiritual life, yet his yachak knowledge and powers were limited to his personal decisions and actions, and did not extend to the entire movement. Nevertheless, even though people did not automatically identify Raúl as a yachak, his traditional lifestyle was evident by the fact that he spent most of his time in the forest and because, although he is bilingual, his Spanish has a notable accent and he is much more confident speaking Kichwa.

By local standards, Raúl is considered an elder, thus more knowledgeable about the past and the ancestors. The fact that an elder who spends most of his time in the forest leads the Quijos movement grants the Quijos identity an aura of authenticity. People see this movement not led by the typical young and cosmopolitan political leader, but by a man deemed “authentic” because of his traditional lifestyle and perceived connection to the past. For a movement that is trying to recreate an identity that has not existed for hundreds of years and that is now largely based on academic historical analyses, Raúl’s traditional lifestyle, which resembles “the way the ancestors used to live,” lends the Quijos movement a quality of authenticity that is greatly needed. Raúl embodies memory-work that makes the Quijos feel more deeply connected to their past. But by not possessing the leadership traits of the new younger cosmopolitan leaders suggest that he might fail as a modern leader? Or might it indicate that political leadership is changing, or that the Quijos identity movement differs significantly from other indigenous movements that have resulted in federations and organizations led by young cosmopolitan men?

The members of the Quijos movement criticize the Kichwa federation, CONAKIN, because they feel that they are not interested in their ancestral roots. Perhaps for the Quijos Nation, it is more important to emphasize cultural authenticity and tradition, making Raúl’s traditional lifestyle appropriate and even beneficial for being the *Curaga*. While many people do not know that Raúl is a yachak, what some Quijos call “the base of our identity,” his traditional yachak lifestyle is quite obvious. Virtually all of the younger generations are now fluent in Spanish, which is often taught as their first language and many older people lament that the youth have lost their culture. Perhaps

being bilingual is therefore no longer seen as an advantage for being a leader; rather, fluency and comfort in Kichwa and a traditional Quijos lifestyle – the makings of a strong Quijos identity – might be characteristics that make a more appropriate leader for a movement focused expressly on regenerating an identity.

Raúl does not necessarily have the “new” knowledge that other younger modern indigenous leaders possess, such as ease in working with state institutions, but as a *yachak*, he has a strong hold of traditional ancestral knowledge. He also controls connections to the exotic knowledge possessed by foreign academics, which I discuss in the previous section. Interestingly, the other members of the Quijos Nation government do in fact possess the qualities of the young new Amazonian leaders. So while Raúl might not be totally comfortable negotiating with politicians in a government office in Quito, he works with people who are. Might it be that as long as Raúl works with these young political leaders who hold the “exotic” knowledge of state politics, and as long as he can maintain access to and control of academic knowledge that backs the Quijos identity, he doesn’t actually need to possess that exotic knowledge himself? Perhaps it is not necessary for him to be a “new” Amazonian leader, and might even be beneficial to not be, as long as he can create and maintain connections to the sources of the “mystical means of reproduction” (Santos Granero, 1986) needed to sustain the Quijos identity. For sure, the task is not easy; Vicente Grefa summed up the predicament with these thoughts:

The fact that Raúl is a *yachak* gives him strength to continue with this process of being a leader, which is not so easy, especially for someone who lives in the forest like him. It is hard because it means leaving the forest, leaving your land, not planting and not tending your plants, because you have to go do work [for the Nation] that is sometimes successful, and sometimes not. But going out for a day to work means you have lost a day in the forest. It is hard – no one pays movement leaders here, everything is done for free. It is hard, it is very hard. So I think the fact that he is a *yachak* helps him a lot because it gives him strength to

continue doing this type of work, which is done for the love of our culture and identity Then comes the question, how do you lead the Quijos in the social context that we are living in – capitalist, unequal, exploitative. It is hard – how do we bring our people to rise together? (Interview, September 8, 2011)

Conclusion

On May 24, 2013, I returned to Jondachi with my family, after having been absent for almost two years. We spent the first day catching up with the family that we had lived with, while my son, now a few days shy of four years old, ran around the house remembering what he could of his life there as a two-year old, and while our Jondachi friends passed around the newest giggling addition to our family, our seven-month old son. The day came to an end, our bellies stretched taut with chicha, and we said our goodbyes with the promise of returning the next day. As we drove away, I craned my neck out the window to read a banner that had been strung above the road: “Gathering of Ancestral Knowledge of the Quijos People of Napo. First Congress of the Originary Quijos Nation, ‘NAOQUI’. A tribute to the reconstitution of the Quijos Nation and to the Great Warrior, JUMANDI, National hero and symbol of anticolonial resistance.”

The next day I walked into the roofed cement court of Jondachi. After a few minutes of greeting old friends whom I had not seen since the fieldwork days, I scanned the faces of people sitting on the cement bleachers and folding chairs for anyone else I might know. I soon spotted Raúl, busily walking from one end of the court to the other, filled with the responsibility of organizing the very first congress of the newly legalized Quijos Nation. I quickly intercepted him to say hello. He was surprised to see me, since we had been out of touch for the last two years, but was happy I had come to the congress. He told me they weren’t sure what the outcome would be like – they had hired two buses

to pick up representatives of different communities, but the drivers had been no-shows, so they didn't know whether the people invited would arrive or not. He also told me that during the congress the Quijos would elect the new government for the Nation – “today the people will decide who they want to lead the Nation. It is in the people's hands, and they will decide if they think I have been a good leader, and if they want me to continue leading the nation, or if they choose someone else.”

I was impressed with the scope of this congress, as it seemed to be so much larger than the smaller organizational meetings I had attended while I conducted fieldwork. In the two years I had been absent, the Quijos Nation had garnered recognition from various national organizations, in addition to the recent legal status granted by the state.

Throughout the morning various well-known representatives of regional and national organizations filtered in, and by the end of the day, the list of invited special guests who were present included the President of CONFENIAE (Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of the Ecuadorian Amazon); the President of CONAKIN (Coordinator of the Kichwa Nationality of Napo); the president of the Amazonian Parliament; a representative of the Waorani, a neighboring Amazonian indigenous group; and a representative from the National Bilingual Education Office. The agenda of the new Quijos Nation was to work to create a legally autonomous territory with the CTI project, to build an intercultural health system by integrating Quijos traditional healing into the existing allopathic health posts, and to reinforce Quijos culture through the intercultural bilingual schools.

The congress took up the whole day, starting early in the morning and stretching into the night. Throughout the event there were numerous traditional dance and music

presentations, elections of the new Quijos government, approval of accords and resolutions, and a yachak ceremony, among other things. I learned that the Quijos Nation now boasted of 22 member communities and ten independent organizations that identified themselves as Quijos. Around midmorning, I saw Raúl in a huddle with four other men near the bleachers. A few minutes later, he emerged half-tiger, half-human, with half of his face painted with red and black stripes and spots. When I asked a friend what this meant, I was surprised to be told that it meant that he was half nature, half human, because he was a yachak, and that the four other men who had painted their faces were also yachaks.



Figure 12: Yachak elders confer at the first Quijos Nation Congress.

Raúl's yachak identity was no longer discrete, as it had been two years before, but immediately visible to everyone. As the time came to elect a new Quijos government, Raúl stood at the microphone on multiple occasions. Each time he spoke, he did so with assuredness and resolution, yet he never made a case for why he should be re-elected,

rather, that debate was left to others. Numerous people spoke at the microphone to discuss who should be elected president. The majority suggested that Raúl deserved to be re-elected. “Why start all over when we already have Raúl, who knows what he is doing and has brought us this far?” said one. “He is the father of the Quijos Nation. Let’s keep him,” said another. After about an hour of positing reasons for and against, Raúl was unanimously re-elected *Hatun Curaga* (Great Leader) of the Quijos, with a loud round of applause. As Raúl stood to accept the re-election and thank his supporters, he announced that those in this new Quijos government would not act like typical politicians, but would work to recover the Quijos identity and the natural resources of their territory. Instead of the elected government holding all power, Raúl declared that each Quijos community’s president would automatically be on the Quijos council, ensuring that all interests be heard and that the Quijos Nation not become just another political movement distanced from the communities and their people.



Figure 13: Raúl speaking at the Quijos Nation Congress

As the sky darkened, the Congress came to a close, ending with a final ceremony. Raúl and his four fellow-yachaks, began to smoke tobacco and blow its smoke onto the crown of each of the newly elected Quijos officials's heads, passing their *samay*, spirit and wisdom, into the souls and bodies of the new Quijos government. They drank *ayawaska*, which they shared with each of the elected members, thus officially initiating them into the Quijos government with an ancestral brew to connect them to the spirits. Soon speaker towers were plugged in and music began to pump into the open court. Couples began dancing while chicha and beer were passed through the crowds. The party had begun, the only true way to legalize the Quijos Nation, according to Quijos tradition.

With my return to Jondachi after my two-year absence, I found that the Quijos identity was no longer simply the interest of a few eccentric people scattered throughout Napo. Headed by Raúl, they had grown into a large movement and had achieved national recognition. Raúl had gone from being a person who often stumbled in trying to shuffle his yachak identity with his Quijos leader identity, to being a strong and well-liked Yachak-Curaga of the Quijos. It is clear that people now see Raúl as being closer to the ancestral Quijos identity because of his powers and knowledge as a yachak, which has allowed him to solidify his leadership position and lend an aura of authenticity to the Quijos identity. The Quijos have also brought memory-work, through the development of ancestral rituals and traditions, to the center of their movement's discourse, as the Congress revealed, giving the space and opportunity for Raúl to integrate his knowledge as a yachak with his role as a leader and emphasize the authenticity of their identity. It is possible that this will also provide Raúl a way to continue to exercise parts of his yachak lifestyle, without having to completely give it up, while simultaneously using it to deepen

Quijos identity. Reflecting the nature and direction of the Quijos identity movement, the roles of the yachak and leader might begin to conveniently converge, if only just slightly.

Conklin (2002) explains how shamanism can at times become a political disqualification in places where the practice is associated with sorcery, and multiple authors (Salomon, 1983; Michael Taussig, 1987; N. L. Whitehead, 2002) describe how shamans are often feared because the same powers they use to cure illness can also be used to kill. While I found that in Napo people identify yachaks as *either* being benevolent (only using their powers to cure) or malevolent (only using their powers to cause illness or death, which destroys their powers to cure) and never both, there is never unanimous agreement about whether a particular yachak is good or evil. Most yachaks have both supporters and people who are cautious of them. I found that the majority of people believed that Raúl used his powers solely for healing, though it is possible that some people were wary of him. Nevertheless, despite the fact that individual shamans may be morally ambivalent and live on the outskirts of society, people understand the cultural institution of shamanism as forming a timeless link between the Quijos past and present, as being closer to the essence of a Quijos past. As such, the fact that a yachak leads the Quijos movement imbues the identity with a sense of authenticity and of being legitimately connected to their Quijos ancestors.

Raúl, being a more traditional yachak, signals the possible emergence of a new “old” form of leadership of Amazonian social movements, in which traditional lifestyles and ancestral knowledge are valued more than the cosmopolitan intercultural knowledge required of the Amazonian leaders that emerged since the 1970s. If the Quijos movement is at all representative of a new direction that Amazonian social movements are taking, in

which recuperation of identity is at the crux, I would expect there to be an increase in more traditional leaders, like Raúl, who might be seen as approximating the essence of such identities, thus strengthening their aura of authenticity. Thus far, Raúl has successfully been able to swing the Quijos Nation into momentum, and along the way has, and continues to, learn how to converge his traditional lifestyle as a yachak with the cosmopolitan lifestyle of the Nation's leader. If the Quijos movement continues to accrue more member communities and more national and international recognition, the spotlight will increasingly fall on Raúl, who, it turns out, may just have the perfect combination of lifestyle and character traits to head the reconstitution of the ancestral Quijos identity.



Figure 14: Raúl and I at the congress, with my two children.

Chapter Three: To Re-Member

“Where did it all go, the songs, the cries, the surging sea of green becoming blue in scenes of wonder and cruelty? How much more cruel has been the not-knowing and the forgetting...? Can we retrace the steps?”

Michael Taussig, *What Color is the Sacred?* (2009, p. 207)

I pick up Fabian’s book, *Memory against Culture* (2007). Beside me, my grandfather is dying. His body is so thin and curved – it has been days since he has eaten anything, though his hands still seem large and strong. His breath is heavy and deliberate, his exhales followed by rhythmic pauses, each breath a contained unit, creating a tempo to wait by. Sometimes his breathing stops and his chest is still. Seconds stretch into minutes and the air becomes thick and heavy– is this really it? Then, he takes a weary sigh and begins to breathe again. Each day we take shifts to be with him. Mostly we just sit as he lies there sleeping, drifting in and out of consciousness. On a walk I took earlier in the day to stretch my legs, I went to the University Bookstore. Now I sit beside my grandfather, his breath a beat to my ears, and take up Fabian’s book. Upstairs, my six-month old son, Asha, is taking a nap. The day we arrived, my grandfather, in a surprisingly lucid moment, roused himself to sit up and greet us. There is a picture of Asha on his lap, reaching with excited eyes towards the oxygen tube. There, between those two sweet faces, is a difference of exactly 90 years. One, at the very beginning of his life, and one, at the very end. What memories can our grandparents give to our children? What memories can our children take from them? I think about my grandfather, and I think about the Quijos and their *abuelos*, who have also died.

I did not start thinking deeply about Quijos memory until after I left the field, until everything I had experienced in Jondachi had too become a memory for me, and until my memories came back to me with full force and demanded me to reconsider everything I knew to be true. And here my dying grandfather lies beside me. Memories of him fill my mind. A self-taught botanist, he would walk through the woods and as the sunrays beamed down, his green friends photosynthesized and he breathed in the oxygen they produced. Now a tube snakes from under the doorway up to his bed, over his ears, and into his nostrils; the low hum of the oxygen tank can be heard pumping in the background. Sarah, his cat, lies on his legs.

A half hour later, my grandfather has died. It is the wee hours of the morning of April 27, 2013. Lying in bed a few hours later, unable to fall asleep just as a soft light is starting to drizzle over Seattle, I hear a distant, unmistakable call. A flock of Canadian Geese begins to fly over, finally heading north. Winter is over. The comings and goings of Canadian Geese were familiar company for me as I began to research, and then write, my thesis in Canada. But this morning, lying in bed, before I can even name that sound, I am brought back to the Eastern Shore of the Chesapeake Bay in Maryland, where my grandparents used to live. Sound sends me back to place. My memory of Canadian Geese begins there, in the crisp cornfields, where each year thousands of geese would rest from their weary southern migrations. My little-girl-hands are numb inside my knit gloves, my coat zipped a little too tightly. I am on a walk with my grandfather, who picks up stones and pinecones. It is cold and I want to go home, but my grandfather seems immune to it, and always keeps going.

Two days after he died, we begin to sort through his things. We find he had over 300 books on botany in his small basement apartment. Two years earlier I had walked with Viviana through the forest to her parent's land in Napo and heard the call of the sacharuna. I remember wanting to tell my grandfather about it. What would he have thought? I never did get a chance to ask him, or to tell him about my research, about how part of it was on global conservation efforts' harmful effects on local peoples. I am curious what insights a Quaker botanist would have had for me. Now I can only imagine.

Fabian (2007) writes: "memories – even the briefest flashes of recollection – probably cannot be put into words except as stories" (p. 85). I realize I cannot write on or understand memory without being brought back to that which is my own. I read on and out they come, my memories, my feelings on memory, my struggles with memory and forgetting and my questions. What would my story have been to my grandfather had I told him? Perhaps it would have been this.

This chapter is fundamentally about remembering, and with it, I ask these questions: How does remembering help forge a Quijos identity? How does remembering produce a Quijos territory? And how do the Quijos gain autonomy through remembering? I heard Ángel's voice crack and his eyes tear up for the first and only time when he told me about his memories of how, as a ten-year old boy, he helped his father fell the trees on his land at the mandate of the state, it being the only way they would be able to retain their territory, as the implementation of national land reform swept through Napo. A sentence later, his voice found grounding and strength, as he told me that these memories have rooted in his heart and obligate him to fight to defend his territory and to recuperate his identity. With this chapter, my intent is to explore the essence of what Ángel feels in

his heart: how remembering guides the Quijos in knowing who they are and what land is theirs. And I argue that this, more than any CTI program implemented by the state, is what gives the Quijos true autonomy.

Cultural Remembering for the Quijos

The members of the Quijos Nation are actively rekindling their ancestral memory, which they use as the foundations for their identity. Much of this Quijos memory is being consciously re-created, but they believe that what is now being remembered is a part of their cultural memory that has been silenced for generations by repressive colonialism and is just now resurfacing. This remembering comes in the form of historical consciousness, part of which draws on scholarly research on the historical Quijos. Nevertheless, the Quijos understand this history from their own perspective, and produce a unique historical memory that defies the dominant narrative of conquest.

I am sitting in a mostly empty auditorium in the city of Tena, on a typical hot and sticky day. Although only 15 community leaders are present because most others are at their fincas, Raúl decides to begin the Quijos Nation meeting that will focus on fine-tuning the statutes to submit to the state in order to be considered for legal recognition as a Nation. Government deadlines mean they cannot delay any longer. After a few words of introduction, Raúl calls on Vicente to provide a historical briefing of the Quijos culture.

Vicente begins. What follows is a paraphrase of what Vicente discussed and considers the key historical aspects of the Quijos identity:

I want to talk about the parts of history that will make us reflect and think. Why do we call ourselves Kichwa, if that was the language of the Inca? Let's dig back into history, and think about what language our people spoke before the proliferation of Kichwa. There was a special people, a large nation, which existed before the arrival of the Incas or Spaniards, that was based in Napo province.

They were experts in trade, traveling to the Andes and the Coast, and were also renowned for their shamanic powers.

These people, our ancestors, were Quijos. They did not specialize in war, but in political strategies, interculturalism being their forte, as they befriended different nations and learned from other cultures. When the Incas traveled North, incorporating different cultures into their empire, they encountered the Quijos, but were not able to conquer them. Rather, the Quijos, who were uniquely intelligent, befriended the Incas. When the Spanish colonists began to arrive, the Quijos initially did not fight them, as they were interested in learning about this new culture's knowledge. However, the colonists soon began enslaving the Quijos and forcing the bible on them; when the Quijos did not submit to their proselytizing efforts, the Spanish would release starved dogs on them to attack. This is when the Quijos organized to fight back.

It was the yachaks, who felt that their beliefs and ways of existence were most attacked by the Spaniards' imposition, who initiated revolt. The yachaks Beto, from Archidona, and Guami from Avila, began organizing their people and asked Jumandi, who became the great Quijos hero, to lead the revolution. Jumandi was a special warrior, in that he was a political strategist – he did not just reactively fight against “the white people,” but proposed a revolt for liberation – for liberation of the people, of their territories, and of all the other peoples dominated by the colonists. He called on many different nations, all over Amazonia, the Andes, and the Coast to unite and fight for this liberation. Jumandi's forces burned two colonist towns, Avila and Archidona, and the Spaniards in them, but a *cacique* from Cayambe, in the Andes, betrayed Jumandi and revealed his plan of attack on the colonist city of Baeza to the Spaniards. Jumandi and his forces were caught by surprise. Jumandi was taken to Quito, where he was tortured and quartered.

Seeking revenge, the Spaniards did not hold back their rage against the Quijos, and within six months, the Quijos population that had been about 16,000 diminished to less than 2,000. Anyone who was Quijos was seen as the enemy, and either enslaved or killed. The yachaks, who were the leaders at that time, strategized, and realized that if they were to continue fighting they would all die and lose their culture. They told their people to flee and hide. Those who could not escape or who decided to continue living in the haciendas were told to hang in there, but not to die. The Spaniards wanted to erase the name “Quijos” because of the strong blow these people had given to the colonists, so when a Quijos was called a “Yumbo,” or “Alama,” that person would accept that new identity because admitting to being Quijos would be a sure way to be killed. After years and years, the Spanish finally ended up calling us “Kichwa,” and we accepted, because if we said we were Quijos, we would be killed.

Steve Stern (2006) asks, “What do I do if I have experienced or witnessed atrocity beyond the imaginable?” (p. 129). His question settles into my mind as I try to grapple

with the Quijos past. While the modern Quijos did not directly experience what they consider to be genocide by the Spaniards after the revolt of 1578, they consider those Quijos who fled to the forest for survival to be their *abuelos* (grandparents), and thus kin. They therefore claim ownership of the memory of Jumandi's revolt, collective trauma, and the subsequent identity crisis, all of which is in the process of becoming part of their remembering.

The historical Quijos past was obviously not directly felt by any living person, but many modern-day Quijos have experienced forms of neo-colonial injustices and oppression throughout their lifetimes, as well as the lifetimes of the recent generations, and feel their modern experiences are not far from those of their Quijos ancestors. They can therefore easily relate to the horror of their ancestral Quijos' experiences because they feel that that was the beginning of a form of colonial repression that continues to this day and with which they are very familiar. The Quijos therefore feel the colonial past in the present, and collective memory is stretched further than ever before.

When Quijos remember how the Spaniards enslaved their people and made them exchange their original belief system for the Bible, they can easily see this past reflected in their own, and their parents', lives. Throughout the 20th century, missionaries in Napo required that children attend schools run by the church, many of which were residential. Many young children were separated from their parents, who lived in the forest, and sent to live at mission schools in towns, where they were taught to be "civilized" by eating non-native foods, dressing differently, learning colonists' social habits, and reading the bible. At the age of eight, Viviana was moved into one of these residential schools run by the Church, which she attended until the age of eighteen. She remembers this as a time of

difficult struggle, being without family and without roots, made to forget and forced to change. Many people who now identify as Quijos went through residential schooling, or had their families separated by residential schooling, and can relate to the ancestral Quijos' experience of religious conversion, relocation through *reducciones*, and resulting social disjunction.

The parents of many modern Quijos worked on colonists' haciendas throughout the 20th century. Eduardo Kohn (2007a) writes:

The Amazonian hacienda was much more like the colonial *encomienda* than the Andean hacienda in that the status and wealth of the *patron* depended more on the coercive control of people than it did on the control of land as property.... These estates focused primarily on creating debt obligations among the natives through the forced distribution at inflated prices of commercial goods such as clothing, beads, and steel tools in exchange for extractive products. These products included rubber, gold, and pita fiber. (p. 115)

Jaime remembers that during the 1950s, he would walk three to four days by foot to reach the haciendas in Baeza and Chaco where he was obligated to work. The *patrones* (colonist hacienda owners) would not feed the workers, so Jaime and others would pack a sack full of chonta or yucca (little enough to be carried, enough to last) and survive on the chicha they would make. People were never paid what they were promised, they were separated from their family for months throughout the year, and work was extremely labor intensive; but if they didn't go, the *patrones* would threaten and often incarcerate them. What the Quijos of the 16th century experienced with colonial abuse and the forced labor of the *encomienda* system, many modern Quijos elders have also experienced through the coercive labor of the colonist haciendas. While the historical Quijos retreated to the lowland forest or to the Andes to escape colonial abuse, the modern Quijos also

often retreated deeper into the forest to avoid the threats and power abuse of the colonist *patrones* and the church (Muratorio, 1991).

So while the historical Quijos past is distant, the modern Quijos create affective connections to this past and make this past theirs, these Quijos their ancestors. As Vicente demonstrated in his summary of the Quijos history at the meeting on that hot day in Tena, the modern Quijos focus on aspects of the past that differ greatly from the standard academic retelling of history, which I outline in the introduction. They see their ancestors as intercultural ambassadors; as unconquerable to the Incas, but equally intelligent, thus becoming their allies; the Spaniards no longer initiate history with a “discovery” of native populations, rather the Quijos treat the Spaniards as the arrival of just another different culture with the potential for knowledge exchange; when this does not prove to be the case, it is the Quijos who use political strategy to fight the Spaniards from the ideological position of general liberation; they give a hard blow to the colonists with their revolt, and, when in the end that blunders, they *decide* to hide their Quijos identity as a strategy to survive the brutality and genocide of the Spaniards. The leaders order their people to flee and go undercover; Quijos instruction was therefore what caused population dispersal, not a fearful reaction of Spaniards, as standard history would have it.

Whitehead (1993) supports this notion, writing:

...the social transformations that have occurred in Amazonia should not be simply treated as a symptom of social collapse, as has often been the case in the extant literature of the Amerindian. Rather, in conjunction with the native political principle of the permeability of group and linguistic boundaries, adaptiveness to ever changing historical circumstances must be considered as fundamental to the operation of political power in these societies as it is elsewhere, and a strong indication of the continuity and vivacity of indigenous traditions, even into the 20th century. (p. 298)

Rather than a “failed” revolt against the colonists, with the Quijos eventually becoming socially disorganized and transculturated, the Quijos remember their ancestors as using strategy to resist total cultural destruction, by going “underground” (into the forest) and blending with other indigenous groups. As Peter Gow (1993) writes, “...‘acculturation’ is simply a shorthand cover term for our ignorance of what was happening in Western Amazonia...” (p. 329). The Quijos, then, with this new form of remembering their past, take back historical agency from the predominantly colonial and academic texts that have historically been inaccessible to them, and make it their own.



Figure 15: Statue of the great Quijos leader, Jumandi, at the entrance to the city of Tena in Napo province.

Stern (2006) lends a powerful understanding of memory in his account, *Remembering Pinochet's Chile*. His discussion focuses mostly on memory that is produced by at least some form of personal experience which is obviously absent in the Quijos case because of its antiquity, but many of his ideas on how collective memory is

produced and solidified can be applied to the modern Quijos. Stern (2006) argues that collective memory is incited by “knots” on the social body, those

specific social groups, networks, and leaders who are sufficiently motivated to organize and insist on memory....[and who] interrupt a more unthinking and habitual life, they demand that people construct bridges between their personal imaginary and loose personal experiences on the one hand, and a more collective and emblematic imaginary on the other. (p. 120)

Vicente becomes a memory knot – he pushes, sparks, and squeezes people’s cultural remembering about their Quijos past. He lets the memories he has gathered of the Quijos’ past seep into the ears and brains and cells of those 15 leaders and one gringa who listen with attention. “It is clear that we are not Kichwa. We will get a new name and a new identity,” says one man in the audience. “Our father’s name is already in Quito,” says another, referring to a plaque set in the location where Jumandi was killed in the capital city.

After years of having virtually no conscious memory of their Quijos past, the modern Quijos identity movement is trying to change the hegemonic ways of remembering, which usually go back no further than their Kichwa identity that emerged during the late colonial period, a phenomenon that Foucault (1977) describes as “counter-memory.” The memory that Vicente is helping to establish for the Quijos emphasizes certain primordial traits including strength, political savvy, resistance, and interculturalism. Stern calls this an “emblematic memory,” which “purports to capture an essential truth about the collective experience of society. It tells not only what happened to a person or to one’s family, friends, or comrades, but suggests that this experience reveals something fundamental about a broader social circle....” (Stern, 2006, p. 113).

Narrative templates are schematic and general ways of describing history that carry deep emotional weight and become the bedrock of a group's identity claim (Wertsch, 2008). A narrative template emerges from Vicente and the other Quijos' discourse that centers on enduring strength, resistance towards injustice, defense of territory, and unparalleled shamanic power. Remembering the Quijos as ancestors, remembering them before the arrival of the Incas and Spanish as great traders and yachaks, remembering them during colonization as the greatest and strongest resisters of the time— this new way of remembering a collective Quijos origin changes the way one thinks about one's self, changes the way one knows one's self, and changes the way one acts. A fresh framework for thinking about and organizing memory and identity emerges. In a conversation shaped by bodies rocking back and forth as we rounded the never-ending bends of the mountains on a bus ride towards Baeza, Ángel told me,

Kichwa language was imposed on us, and now the Kichwa people from the highlands are trying to impose their culture on us. We Kichwa of the Amazon are left without identity; we are like children of the wind. We speak Kichwa, but we don't have our own identity. Someone tells us who we are, and we just say, 'ok, I guess so.' But we aren't even the owners of our own identity. But, now, by having a Quijos identity, we are motivated to advance, to know who we are, to be someone, to take the reins on our own lives.

Clearly, remembering a Quijos past shapes the Quijos present and future.

There has been much debate and discussion within memory studies about the differences, interactions, and overlaps between history and memory. But the question of whether what the Quijos describe as their past is simply "memory" or "history" becomes uninteresting when both memory and history are treated as two different varieties of historical consciousness (Olick, 2003), when history is understood as a mode of remembering (Tamm, 2008), or when authors like Taussig (1987) endeavor to see "myth

in the natural and the real in magic, to demythologize history and to reenchant its reified representation” (p. 10). The distinction also becomes less clear when we understand that:

...history is memory seen through and criticized with the aid of documents of many kinds – written, aural, visual. Memory is history seen through affect. And since affect is subjective, it is difficult to examine the claims of memory in the same way we examine the claims of history. History is a discipline. We learn and teach its rules and its limits. Memory is a faculty. We live with it, and at times are sustained by it.... But this set of distinctions ought not lead us to conclude... that history and memory are set in isolation, each on its separate peak. Historians bring their own memories to bear both on the choice of subjects they study and on the character judgments they make about human behaviour. Stories about the past that we remember are collages, complex and shifting mixtures of narratives, some of which arise from historical writing and history as visualized in a dizzying variety of films, plays, museums, and websites. (Winter, 2010, p. 12)

Winter and Sivan (1999) suggest that the details of professional history are important to only a small population. I would argue that while this might be true, its effects are actually quite widespread and reach people, such as the Quijos, in many different and life-changing ways. I believe the key difference between history and remembering lies in the fact that history seeks accuracy in interpreting the past, while remembering is usually used as a basis of identity construction and knowing “who we are” (Wertsch & Roediger III, 2008). As Jan Assmann (2011) argues,

cultural memory reaches back into the past only so far as the past can be reclaimed as ‘ours.’ This is why we refer to this form of historical consciousness as ‘memory’ and not just as knowledge about the past. Knowledge about the past acquires the properties and functions of memory if it is related to a concept of identity. (p. 113)

Anthropologists such as Kohn (2002), Salomon (2002), Abercrombie (1998), and Bacigalupo (2013), whom I discuss in the introduction, lend insights into understanding alternative indigenous forms of historical consciousness and it is helpful to consider their perspectives when analyzing Quijos forms of thinking about their past. From an academic perspective, the Quijos relate to their past in many different ways, labeled as historical

consciousness, remembering, myth making, etc. The subtleties that differentiate each label emerge from academia and are projected onto native societies. These conceptualizations do not emerge from the Quijos, who believe that they are simply thinking about their past, which they do in many different ways, including analyzing information that emerges from academia, valuing their yachak's ancestral connections, and repeating traditions that they understand to come from their Quijos ancestors.

Key to this discussion, regardless of the debatable terminology, is that without remembering their past, it would be impossible for the Quijos to construct their present identity. "The past," Joanne Rappaport (1990) writes, "is only useful insofar as it sheds meaning on the problems of the present" (p. 179). By remembering their past as specifically Quijos, they are able to contrast themselves with their neighboring Kichwa because now they "know where they come from," and the Kichwa do not. They also use their understandings of the past to create moral baselines for "who they are:" they are intelligent, they resist, and they defend their territory, to which they are intrinsically connected.

The Quijos also use this narrative template that emerges from remembering their history in their present day struggles: they will fight against mining companies who intrude into their territory at all costs; they will create an autonomous territory through the CTI program; and they will reconstruct their culture and traditions which they have inherited from their Quijos ancestors but which have been forgotten for a number of generations due to colonial repression. Through remembering their past, the Quijos are literally re-membering – constructing a new cultural group and engaging in a process of self-selective membership. Now, those who remember their ancestors as Quijos are re-

membered into the new Quijos Nation. Remembering a Quijos past is thus inherently a process of membership and inclusion into a Quijos identity.

Performing Quijos Ancestral Memory

Of course the Quijos do not just adopt Quijos history and relate what they learn to their present. Rather, they also believe that despite the centuries-long identity gap, Quijos cultural memory has been passed down quietly through the generations and remains active to this day, in everyday acts and specific rituals that are most concentrated in the *mayores*, or elders. To understand these acts as carrying ancestral memory, I use “performance” as a methodological lens. I lean on Richard Schechner’s (2013) understanding of performance as “restored behaviors” or “twice-behaved behaviors:”

performed actions that people train for and rehearse. That making art involves training and rehearsing is clear. But everyday life also involves years of training and practice, of learning appropriate culturally specific bits of behavior, of adjusting and performing one’s life roles in relation to social and personal circumstances. The long infancy and childhood specific to the human species is an extended period of training and rehearsal for the successful performance of adult life. (p. 28-29)

I also use Joseph Roach’s (1996) perspective on performance:

the social processes of memory and forgetting, familiarly known as culture, may be carried out by a variety of performance events, from stage plays to sacred rites, from carnivals to the invisible rituals of everyday life. To perform in this sense means to bring forth, to make manifest, to transmit. To perform also means, though often more secretly, to reinvent. (p. xi)

By using performance as an analytical lens I recognize that it is I who is bracketing many of these actions, especially the more quotidian ones, as “performance” while the Quijos do not necessarily consider them so. Nevertheless, I believe this approach is helpful because it brings light to subtle and often ignored forms of cultural memory; most

importantly, it highlights actions to which the present-day Quijos turn in order to recuperate their ancestral memory.

I do not believe that all aspects of culture can be considered a performance of cultural memory. Rather, I agree that

it is not sufficient for an artifact or practice to have its origin in the past for it to count as cultural memory. Social objects count as cultural memories, not merely because they are historical residues, but because they have *as part of their meaning* a reference to some specific aspect of the past – a person, an achievement, or something of the sort. (Poole, 2008, p. 151, italics in original)

This point is important because it helps explain why some people see their culture as inheriting a Quijos past and identity, while others do not. People who now identify as Quijos see certain traditions as specifically “Quijos” traditions because they feel that those same actions were performed by their Quijos ancestors. While others may acknowledge that certain rituals or traditions have been carried down to them from previous generations, they continue to carry them out without much thought or analysis; meanwhile, the Quijos see a specifically Quijos past in those same actions. As such, they acquire new meaning for the Quijos, and become moments and sites for regenerating Quijos cultural memory.

There are certain rituals that the Quijos consider to be “the way the *abuelos* did them.” By continuing to perform these rituals, they feel that they connect to their ancestors and also feel that they strengthen their identity and cultural memory. Yachaks, for example, are considered to be the people who are most connected to the past and to their ancestors, through the lifestyles they lead as well as the rituals they conduct, their relationships to the forest spirits, and the knowledge they possess (Whitten, 1976).

Yachaks form specific relationships with the spirits of different sacred places, with the spirits of tobacco, through smoking or ingesting large quantities of it over extended periods of time, and with the spirits of *ayawaska*, by drinking it. People consider this connection with the spirits to also be a connection with the ancestors and the past, as they believe the spirit world has always been constant and does not change over time like the peoples' world does (Kohn, 2007a). These spirits abide by the same laws and require the same respect now, just as they have forever. Thus the spirits of the forest with whom a modern-day yachak, such as Raúl, connects, are the same ones with whom Beto and Guami and all the powerful yachaks of the past formed relationships. People believe yachaks see the world how it really is, unlike lay people, because the spirits reveal to them unchanging truths. Thus activating and utilizing forms of knowledge, specifically yachaks' knowledge, become ways of remembering and connecting with the past.

The specifics of yachak rituals are also considered to be ancestral, and performing them becomes a form of body memory. Cleansing a sick or afflicted person by blowing tobacco smoke over them, beating them with a leaf bundle, and aggressively sucking parts of the body where evil energy has settled, or by blowing *samay* into the crown of someone's head to transfer power and knowledge, are ritual actions that people consider to be performed in the same way as the ancestral Quijos performed them. Yachaks also sing certain songs while they are in trances, often in unfamiliar languages that are considered to be ancient and taught to the singer by the spirits.

For Russian Zionist Jews of the late nineteenth century, the image of the Bedouin shepherd became a symbolic bridge to their past and helped them bridge over historical

gaps and connect to their ancient homeland (Y. Zerubavel, 2008). In this same sense, yachaks serve as symbolic (and quite literal and spiritual) bridges to the past and to the land, and people see them as anchoring their present to a Quijos past and identity.

Vicente explained yachaks' connection to the past in this way:

The rest of us, we're intermingling with the rest of society, with other people in general – we learn different parts of our culture, and also cultural traits from the outside; we take up bad habits that come from the outside, we aren't that strict. Theoretically we can know all about history, but it is the yachaks who are closest to the roots of our identity.... Because of their way of being, they maintain the most ancestral ways. Of course there are other elders who, without being yachaks, also have their ancestral knowledge. (Interview with Vicente Grefa, Sept. 8, 2012)

As Vicente says, people also consider elders to be tightly linked to the past because people believe that they maintain the ancestral traditions. Through interacting and conversing with elders, younger people can learn about the past. Eviatar Zerubavel (2003) writes,

...as traditional mnemonic go-betweens, old people ... often link historically separate generations that would not otherwise have mnemonic access to each other. Such mnemonic transitivity enables us to preserve memories in the form of oral traditions that are transmitted from one generation to the next" (p. 6)

Many Quijos believe the most significant moment for sharing this knowledge occurs before and during dawn, when people begin to wake up. The whole family traditionally gathers around the fire, where a pot of *guayusa* leaves are put to boil to later drink as tea. During this time people sit to weave their *shigras* (a traditional bag usually carried by the strap on the forehead) and share their night's dreams for parents or grandparents to advise the younger people about their significance. The elders also tell stories of how things were and how things came to be, and give the younger generations advice on how to live their lives prudently and correctly.



Figure 16: Ana serving Marco and Lucas an early morning bowl of guayusa.

While *guayusa* is still boiled in virtually every household today, people wake up later, are rushed to get ready to go to work or school, and thus have less time to spend simply sitting and listening to the elders' words. Perhaps because there are fewer moments like these, people who are interested in their Quijos past highly value the knowledge acquired by speaking to elders. A friend of mine told me that now only the children who are sent to live with their grandparents to give them company are the ones who learn the traditions and become connected with their culture's past, while most children who grow up with only their parents are completely disconnected from any form of cultural memory.

Viviana told me that she fondly remembers those dark mornings around the fire listening to her father and mother share stories and give advice on living a good life. At the residential mission school she later attended the nuns did everything possible to rid

the indigenous students of their “uncivilized” ways and make them more like the mestizo students. They never realized, however, that many of the children made a conscious effort to remember. Recess began at four o’clock every day, and while many of the children would spend the hour playing, Viviana began to organize a group of her indigenous friends, all of whom were obligated to share with the others what they remembered of the stories or advice that their parents had told them in the early *guayusa* mornings. In this way, even at such a young age, some of the children resisted losing their identity and made conscious efforts to remember the wisdom that their parents had imparted to them about their traditions and their past.

Cultural memory “is materialized in ‘old timey’ or archaic plants that persist, in seeds and stories that travel, in recipes that recall intimacies and comforts of the past and reinvigorate the present” (Nazarea, 2006, p. 327). Just like boiling *guayusa*, the making of *chicha* is considered to be something the ancestors made as well, so by mashing the *chonta* or *yucca*, mixing it with one’s hand in water, and serving it in a bowl to family or guests, one is ritually performing an act that the Quijos believe reinforces a connection with the ancestors. Despite the fact that modern-day Quijos no longer masticate the *yucca* to begin the fermentation process as their ancestors did (this, I was told, was a result of church influence which considered consuming something already masticated as uncivilized), the final product is the same and serves the same purposes of sociality (Uzendoski, 2004b). The same applies for the planting of what are considered ancestral plants, such as *yucca*, *taro*, and *tobacco*, and weaving *shigra* bags. Abercrombie (1998) calls these embodied ways of remembering through non-narrative acts “poetic forms of historical understanding” (p. 25). They are all acts that the Quijos understand to have been

repeated over the centuries, and by continuing to do so, they believe that they maintain a link to the past.



Figure 17: Mashing the chonta fruit with a large stone for chicha preparation.

The performance of memory extends to the land as well. Not only do the Quijos consider making and drinking the guayusa and chicha ancestral; so too is planting the chonta palms and guayusa trees, then, years later, going to them to collect their fruit and leaves. This ancestral act requires going to places on the land and territory, converting its fruits into a drink, and finally consuming it. Through performing this more-than-daily ritual, people literally connect to their land, an act that is only possible with the passing of time. Simple quotidian rituals as these can actually become ways the Quijos embody their territory and past, if they are conscious of the cultural memory that is imbued in such everyday items such as chicha and chonta. Most people do not think twice about downing

these drinks multiple times a day; but a growing few have begun to think about how these “mundane” acts are filled with the cultural memory that may allow them to recover their Quijos identity. Ana Ramos (2010) writes that,

The destruction of certain images of the past in the public arena ... does not necessarily lead to the interruption of the daily flow of transmissions. Hence, I understand forgetting as the inaccessibility to particular images of the past that, nonetheless, and in different ways, may still be transmitted from generation to generation. Thus, remembering is the historical possibility of bringing those images inherited in silence to the present identifying coherence where there was disconnection. (p. 59)

The Quijos believe that they were forced to forget their historical memory by colonial oppression, and they believe that many people continue to forget their ancestral memory of being Quijos, which is why they continue to identify as Kichwa. But they find that not all of their Quijos cultural memory has disappeared, but that it has been passed down to them, silently, in simple daily rituals such as drinking chicha, planting, and healing.

There are also more formalized performances of rituals that place emphasis and rely upon elders sharing their knowledge of the past with younger generations, in the form of advice and counsel. These rituals include weddings, baptisms, confirmations, and even graduations. In these rituals a couple is usually chosen to be the *padrinos*, which loosely translates to godparents, thus creating a relationship of *compadres* (co-parents) between two couples (the parents of the child, for example, and his or her *padrinos*). During these rituals, there is usually a formal moment when the chosen *padrinos* individually take turns giving advice to the child, wedded couple, or person who graduated, as well as to the new *compadres*. People take this advice very seriously and respect it because they believe that they are being told how to live well and correctly according to traditional and ancestral ways, which are passed down through the elders.

Music also often accompanies these rituals, ranging from traditional music played with an Amazonian violin and drum, to music played with electronic drum sets and keyboards. Despite the wide variation of genres available, even the most modern music played often maintains certain beats and rhythms that are considered to be linked to ancestral music. Paul Stoller (1994) writes, “collective memory is derived from sentiments so elemental that they are beyond words. When Ursa sings the blues, she is possessed by the spirit of cultural memory” (p. 640). Music, whether it accompanies a more formal ritual dance between *compadres* and couples that are being wed, or more modern party couple-dancing, can possess that “spirit of cultural memory” and become a constant reminder of the past during these ritual events that occur various times throughout the year. Just as all traditions change over time, the Quijos musical tradition has too; recently the rituals have de-emphasizing the roles of traditional music and the *padrinos*, thus reducing the transmission of Quijos cultural memory to the younger generations. Nevertheless, there has been an upsurge in recreating these rituals, or, to use Hobsbawm’s (2012) term, an “invention of tradition,” precisely because some Quijos have begun to realize the importance and value of elders’ knowledge of the past and the vital place music has in maintaining the cultural memories vital for their identity.

The Quijos have begun to recognize types of everyday performances of cultural memory like the ones I describe above. But they have also begun to consciously perform their past with an audience in mind. Just because there is an audience, however, does not mean that what they perform is inauthentic or solely for the spectators. Performance can transmit information, emotions and memories to the performers just as much, if not more, than to the spectators; in addition, the spectators are not necessarily outsiders, but are

often fellow Quijos themselves. Brockmeier (2002) writes on narratives as performances, and his insights can be applied to all types of performance: it is “not only a product, a story, but also a process, a telling, it is not only an account of an action but an action itself ... a social process of telling and enacting in which teller and listener are not stable and permanent positions but moments of an interplay whose outcome remains open” (p. 35-36).

As I walked into the open court of Jondachi to attend the first Quijos Originary Nation Congress, a performance was underway. An elderly woman stood with a microphone in hand, and narrated, in Kichwa, the traditions of the ancestors. In front of her, young women served chicha to the performers, some of whom were pretending to weave shigras. Soon a young man and his “father” took up spears and began to enact a hunt. The elder woman narrated what they were doing, as she simultaneously instructed them on what to do, and at times, humorously scolded them for doing certain things the wrong way. After the hunt, the young man was brought to sit on a chair in the middle of the performance. The elderly woman took a leaf bundle, as she continued to narrate, and began beating the leaves on and down the man’s body, part of the cleansing and healing ritual. She then prepared a dish with hot chili pepper, and dripped the liquid into the man’s eyes. A murmur arose from the almost-entirely Quijos audience and people moved in to take pictures. This pepper-in-eyes ritual, she explained in Kichwa, was part of the ancestral traditions that helped give strength to young people and allowed them to see the world as it really was.



Figure 18: Narrating elders' cultural memory at the Quijos Nation Congress

I was brought back to something Vicente had told me two years earlier, as he described an incident that had occurred with the Quijos dance group that I filmed. The young dancers had choreographed a dance representing the same pepper ritual that the elder woman had just performed in Jondachi. One dancer represented a “youth” and an elder woman was asked to participate and told to pretend to put the pepper in the boy’s eyes. As the dancer knelt before the old woman, on stage and in front of a crowd, the old woman asked the boy if he wanted her to really drip the pepper into his eyes. To everyone’s surprise, he consented. The performers continued to shock the audience and each other, as each and every one of the 15 youth stood in line to have the *abuela* drip pepper into their eyes, in order to become strong Quijos people.

As part of a video I made about the Quijos, I filmed this same dance group. Since they had no space indoors, they would rehearse outside, in the middle of a side street in Archidona. The day I filmed, all the teenaged dancers changed into their costumes, which

were meant to represent traditional Quijos dress, pulled a large speaker out into the street, and began one of their choreographies. This particular one represented the Quijos traditions of planting, yachaks healing with leaf bundles, revolting against the Spaniards, and Jumandi, along with other Quijos, being killed. They blasted the song they danced to into the street air. It was a modern one, sung in Kichwa, about Jumandi, Guami, and Beto, the yachak leaders of the revolt in 1578. Neighbors popped their heads out of their windows and passersby casually turned their heads to watch the dancers as they walked by.

Taussig (1993) argues that through the “mimetic faculty,” of copying, one is able to comprehend that which is different and strange. “Miming something entails contact.... Knowing is corporeal. One mimes to understand. We copy the world to comprehend it through our bodies” (Stoller, 1994, pp. 642-643). By performing their cultural memory at the Quijos congress and with the dance group, these youth learn what it means to be an ancestral Quijos through embodied mimesis. It makes no difference if some of this cultural memory is invented. By pretending to become strong Quijos by participating in the hot-pepper ritual, by pretending to plant while singing ancestral songs, by pretending to hunt, by pretending to be yachaks, by pretending to revolt and die, these youth are embodying these actions of the past, incorporating them into their present selves through the senses.



Figure 19: Dripping hot pepper into a young man's eyes, as performance blends into the real, and past blends into the present.

Smelik and Plate (2013) write,

It seems that the live aspect of performance brings home the embodied as well as the mediated nature of cultural memory. There is yet another important consequence of the liveness, the very present-ness, of the act of performing cultural memory. It blurs the boundaries between past and present, by bringing the past to and in the here and now. (p. 11)

Through performance, these youth *feel* and *become* more Quijos. It is impossible for them to pretend to be their ancestors, to revolt, and to die in a performance, without leaving that performance feeling differently. As Berenice, the director of the dance group said, “we want to get these kids to dance so that they start learning, remembering, and practicing... so that they don’t forget.” Dance is so much more than just movement. For these Quijos youth, it becomes a form of remembering and becoming.

Winter (2010) writes,

Memory performed is at the heart of collective memory. When individuals and groups express or embody or interpret or repeat a script about the past, they galvanize the ties that bind groups together and deposit additional memory traces

about the past in their own minds.... Thus the performance of memory is both a mnemonic device and a way in which individual memories are relived, revived, and refashioned. (p. 11)

And I realize that these Quijos perform their cultural memory in so very many ways, and by doing so, continually practice and become experts in “being Quijos.” Through dance, through listening to music about ancestors and feeling ancestral rhythms, through healing rituals, through *compadrazgo* advice-giving, through making and consuming drinks, through explaining Quijos history at meetings, through participating in interviews with me – all of these acts perform a Quijos past and, in doing so, help construct their new identity.

To Remember a Quijos Territory

I never made it to Supay Rumi, which can be translated as both “Spirit Rock” or “Devil Rock.” My nursing, wean-resistant two-year old son said no to me leaving him in Jondachi for the two-to-three-day trip. But people told me about what their elders remembered: atop a mountain, on a large stone, the Boa, king of the forest, would shape-shift into a hawk and take people to kill and devour. The *cullores*, the stars, were tired of this boa’s habits and one day decided to trick him. They set up a trap on the rock, and when the boa brought his prey there to eat, the trap snapped down on his tail. To this day, the boa is trapped by a rock pinned to his tail; the boa and trap remain in stone.

It is not easy to get to Supay Rumi. From Viviana’s parents house, it takes a full day. And it is a trip that cannot be done without respecting the proper rituals of smoking tobacco and requesting the sacharuna and local yachak’s permission. Without performing the rituals, a storm can blow in, making it impossible to reach the destination. Once you

get there, the rock changes its appearance depending on who sees it and on the day.

Sometimes the rock is smooth and sparkly; other times it appears just like a normal rock; and at other times, writing appears on its surface.

Supay Rumi is where Viviana's father, Santiago, and her great-grandfather (Santiago's grandfather, who was also a yachak) fasted and retreated to gain their yachak powers. This is a sacred place and it, along with the spirits that inhabit it, have taught hundreds of Quijos yachaks over the centuries, and will continue to teach more. Here lies the primordial power and knowledge that Quijos believe to be the foundation of their identity and to which yachaks have a special connection. Yachaks connect to their Quijos past and ancestors through sacred places like Supay Rumi, because there they perform the same age-old rituals that their ancestors performed and they acquire the same healing powers their ancestors acquired. But most importantly, they learn to be yachaks from the eternal spirits of these specific sacred places, the same teachers that have taught their ancestors. When Santiago spent months learning to be a yachak at Supay Rumi, he connected to all the yachaks of the past who had learned in that same place and who had shared those same spirit teachers. By going to Supay Rumi and performing the Quijos rituals that have been performed for eons, a yachak connects to all time, becoming one with the past, present, and future.

Supay Rumi is part of Santiago's territory. To reach Supay Rumi you must first ask his permission, or the sacharuna will make sure you don't make it. But during the 1970s, the IERAC would only give Santiago titles to land that was relatively flat and "workable." Since Supay Rumi is on a steep mountainside that rises towards the Andes, it was considered "unusable" for market production and was therefore left out of his land

title. This did not prevent the family from continuing to access the sacred spot for healing and acquiring powers. But now that the state has delimited the Antisana Ecological Reserve, Supay Rumi lies within the reserve limits. For the Arévalo family, their sacred place, the land and place that has taught them and given them powers, the place that allows them to remember and connect to their ancestors and continues to heal them, becomes inaccessible.

“It’s a good story,” says Viviana, before she tells me how the stars trapped Boa up at Supay Rumi. She and her family remember this place as a place that has given yachaks their powers forever. But this place is also essential for her family and for all those who have been there to remember their ancestors. Supay Rumi acts as a physical and spiritual remembering place, where Quijos remember what makes them Quijos by connecting to those immortal spirits that teach the primordial powers of what they believe to be the essence of the Quijos. This sacred place, like all others, has time-depth and links to the past. This territory, in this case, Santiago’s territory, teaches ancestral knowledge and ancestral memory. Bacigalupo (2013) describes how the Mapuche people in Millali lost access to a sacred hill and cosmic order was disrupted, resulting in a massive flood. Because it is an ecological reserve that is appropriating Supay Rumi, the Quijos do not believe that the spirits of the place will be disturbed or that cosmic order will be disrupted; rather, they feel that their social order will be disrupted and that by losing their territory, they will lose access to the places that enable them to connect to their ancestral past.

On our way to Viviana’s parents’ finca, we stop at the edge of a river before wading through. It has not rained for at least a week, and the water level is relatively low. Still, after only a few steps, I feel the cold water quickly spill into my tall rubber boots

and have to steady myself against the drag of the strong currents. By the time I reach the other side, I am soaked up to my thighs. As we sit on a rock and pour the water from our boots, Viviana tells me how, as a four-year old, she and her eight-year old sister would wake up at dawn to hike down to Jondachi, where they would attend school in the morning, and then spend the whole afternoon hiking back to their home on the finca.

On one particular day, after it had down-poured the whole morning, they arrived at the river we had just crossed. Because the river was raging, and it continued to pour down rain, the sisters waited, hoping the river would settle. Hours passed and they began to worry. As afternoon turned to dusk, Viviana's older sister made the decision to cross. Though she knew they might be swept up and carried down the river, she saw no other option. The sisters cried as they held each other's hands, closed their eyes, and hoped for the best. Miraculously, the four- and eight-year olds made it across this river that had reached my adult thighs on a "dry" day. As we squeak our boots back on over our wet socks and continue on our way, I realize – there is no way for Viviana to walk this path and cross this river without remembering that day as a four-year old. And here she walks steadily on; after all, this is her territory and it is completely familiar to her – her memories of this land make her know it and make it hers.



Figure 20: Viviana remembers crossing the river as a child.

As we continue to hike to her parents' finca, Viviana tells me another story. As a child, she would always have to ask her father's permission to go anywhere on their land. Her father had told her about a sacred cave with nearby lakes that always had an abundance of fish, and one day she wanted to see if this was really true. She took her little brother along. Their father warned them that if anything out of the ordinary should happen, to return to the house immediately. When they reached the lakes, they started to fish, but didn't catch a thing. Viviana started making fun of the *mayores* (elders), saying that they didn't know a thing and the advice they gave was all lies.

They finally spotted the cave and a small lake right in front of it. She decided to throw her bait, and to her surprise her net came back full of fish. With just four throws of the net, she filled her *shigra* bag full of fish, and continued to catch more. Her brother

realized that this was not normal, and reminded her of what her father had warned: if anything strange happened, return immediately to the house. Viviana paid no mind and continued to fish. Her brother was scared and began to hit her. “I’ll just fish for two more minutes,” she said. Just then, they heard a loud roaring sound coming from the top of the trees. Her brother said, “let’s go!” but Viviana just told him to point the shotgun he had with him up at the trees. She did nothing, and instead stood there, immobile.

Their father had told them, if ever someone stops responding and doesn’t listen it is because the sacharuna are trying to take that person away. To stop this from happening, a person needs to find a vine, tie a knot in it, and use it to hit the person being taken on the feet, which is what Viviana’s brother did. Viviana came out of her stupor, and they started to return home. But a few paces down the trail, they came upon another cave and lake, and Viviana wanted to stop to fish just a bit more. Her brother convinced her to keep going, and they finally made it home. When they arrived, they poured all the fish from the *shigra* into a big basket. Their father saw this, got worried, and demanded to know why they had fished so much, when just a few fish were more than enough for the whole family. All of a sudden, they heard a loud buzzing sound and soon the house was filled with a swarm of bees that had followed Viviana and her brother down the trail.

That same night Viviana dreamed this: she went to the community of Shamato, where her mother was originally from. Instead of a few wooden houses that make up the community in the waking world, in this dream there was a huge skyscraper in the center of the community. She went into the building and was sent from one office to another, until she started hearing doors slam and realized she was being trapped inside. “It can’t be. I can’t stay here!” she dreamed, and with a leap, slid out of a window, where her little

brother was waiting for her. They started running home and soon a big black barking dog began to chase them. They stopped to rest, and told the dog they didn't want to hurt it and that they were its friends. Soon they realized they were surrounded by chonta spines and could not escape. Out of nowhere, a young, attractive, blue-eyed man appeared and asked Viviana, "would you like to visit my house? My parents are there and I want you to meet them." Viviana agreed, but her brother started to cry and told her that the man was tricking her. "Run!" he wailed, and they began their escape; but because they were barefoot, they couldn't find a way around the chonta spines. Viviana's little brother picked up a stick and hit the spines, which suddenly began to lower and finally disappeared, allowing the two children to run home, where Viviana woke up.

Amazonian peoples often believe that dreams are thought to be channels for accessing different realities or worlds (Kracke, 2006; Peluso, 2004), and often consider them to be experiences even more real than the waking state (Kohn, 2007b; Peluso, 2004). In waking life, Viviana did not understand what was really happening – that the sacharuna were taking her away to their world because she had disrespected the elders and her father – as she was fishing and ignoring her brother's requests to return home. Rather, she saw and experienced reality through her dream – the skyscraper was the underworld of the sacharuna, located in Shamato, and the young man was a sacharuna luring her to go to his underworld with him. "After dreaming and realizing what really happened earlier that day, I then had much respect for my father and for his wisdom, and since then have always requested his permission before I go out into the forest," says Viviana. We walk on. Soon, we will reach her parent's finca.

Margaret Farrar (2011) writes:

...‘memories’ are not simply stored, wholesale, in the recesses of our consciousness, but are reactivated and transformed through physical engagement with particular places. It is through one’s lived encounters with landscapes and architectures that one makes sense of and remembers the world; it is through one’s own body that one experiences the past, reflects on it, and reinvents it. Walking through a place ... social and political relationships write themselves on and through the body. In this way, urban history is thus intensely physical, located in a being filled with memories that spill over into the present, a body shot through with other places, other times.” (p. 731)

While Farrar writes specifically on urban history, her point can easily be extended to *any* type of history, including Amazonian history, since even the forest is a constructed and manipulated landscape (Raffles, 2002). Viviana is who she is because of her memories of living on this territory; and this territory acquires meaning and significance because she has lived on it. Through the acts of walking through, working, and engaging with this territory, Viviana activates her memories which, in turn, reinforce the fact that this territory is, most definitely, hers.



Figure 21: Viviana leading me on the path towards her father's territory.

And yet, as I write about remembering, I am brought back to Fabian's (2007) obsession with forgetting. He writes, "Political, economic, and scientific appropriation of Africa was based on denial of recognition and therefore on suppression of memory" (Fabian, 2007, p. 66). I see this happening as I hear Viviana's words, recounting her memories to me, knowing that the very land on which we are walking may soon be property of an ecological reserve, and no longer Quijos territory. What place do her memories have in a reserve focused on scientific ecological preservation, where humans are considered "points of invasion?" By seizing Quijos territory, is the REA silencing, suppressing memories, denying recognition? I argue that it is.

In official REA documents, Viviana, her family, and the Quijos are voiceless and do not exist except as "problems" for the reserve. Lunstrum (2010) writes that "turning to the place-based memories of residents slated for relocation... renders these silences audible" (p. 132). By remembering, by telling me her memories and stories of the land and of her childhood, Viviana demands recognition and declares herself and her family rightful owners of this territory. Because she is and has been a witness to this animate territory too. Who working for the REA has crossed these rivers as a four-year old, who has been to Supay Rumi and smoked tobacco to heal, who has battled with the sacharuna, on walks and in dreams?

One of the main goals of the Quijos is to legalize what they believe is their rightful territory, through the CTI initiative. They consider this territory to be their ancestral territory, the same territory that their Quijos ancestors occupied. In this sense, territory *is* memory. The Quijos now feel that they need a place, a territory, to develop their new identity. The map of their territory that they wish to create through the CTI

project would be completely different if their memories of their ancestors' territory did not play a central role in their basic understanding of what their territory is. The fact that may Quijos call much of their territory "*tierra ancestral*" (ancestral land), reveals the fact that, for them, the past is embedded in the very ground they walk upon because it is the same ground their ancestors walked.

"Far from being simply points on a map, places are shot through with relationships, tensions, contradictions, *and* time; geopolitics is thus always also chronopolitics" (Farrar, 2011, p. 732). Which could also be said like this: "What the map cuts up, the story cuts across" (de Certeau, 1984, p. 129). While the Quijos are trying to legalize their ancestral territory through the CTI project, the Antisana Ecological Reserve is in the process of mapping its own territory, via satellite. For the reserve's purposes, place and space no longer become lived and experienced phenomena, but colors and lines on pieces of paper that make up a map. In power struggles over land and resources, maps hold tremendous weight. Suzanna Sawyer (2004) writes of maps:

When crafted by a government, this planned product reflects the dominant social order by insinuating the state's desired form and silencing competing realities.... The lines, degrees, emblems, and seals that purportedly mirror reality and grant maps their authority reveal not the topography but instead the power and the social interests that compromise the production of and the breaking up of space. They are powerful texts that condense the past, present, and future longings of those who craft them and often deny the historically constructed senses of place and identity felt by local inhabitants. (p. 55)

I feel the power of maps when I look at the "Map of Protected Areas of Napo Province" made by the Ministry of Environment, because the immense expanse of land that makes up the Antisana Ecological Reserve, which includes all the territory that the Arévalo family, just like hundreds of other families and communities throughout the affected provinces, is fighting for, is colored a nice pastel blue. It is a sea of baby blue. It

is empty blue space, swimming on white paper in a government office. Right here, a simple color carries the power to silence Quijos memory and existence, and becomes an efficient spatial form of forgetting. Peter Gow (1995) is dead on when he writes, “The empty spaces on maps of Amazonia have already allowed too many people to pretend that nobody lives there” (p. 45).



Figure 22: Detail from “Map of Protected Areas of Napo Province”

In the formation of natural parks, the abstract space paradigm of modernity is imposed on local places, most noticeably through the mapping of space (J. Whitehead, 2002, 2003). The maps of sanctuaries, reserves, and parks use universal references, such as coordinates of longitude and latitude, while populated areas within these conservation spaces are invisibilized and local place names are absent – “it involves a conception of space that involves the erasure of place-based narratives and a wilderness which appears

to be untouched by the messiness of settlements” (J. Whitehead, 2002, p. 1366). Where on the map is Supay Rumi? Where is the lake with an abundance of fish? Where is the cave where the sacharuna live? And where is the sacharuna underground city? Certainly a big city should have a place on a map?

And this must make us remember how Amazonia has long been thought to be empty space, wasteland, devoid of life, and how this perspective was the backdrop to the massive waves of colonization propelled by the agrarian reform in the 1960s, historically among one of the most radical life changing policies for the Ecuadorian Amazon. Gow (1995) adds,

Looking at a deforested Amazonian landscape, we are looking at a visual environment constructed from maps, and at a simulacrum of a northern temperate environment. Much of the recent colonization of Amazonia has proceeded along roads, which themselves had their first existence as lines drawn across the empty spaces on maps. (p. 43)

I look at the faded photocopies of the legal property deeds and incorporated maps of the Arévalo’s finca; they are points and lines that neither I, nor the Arévalo family, can relate to any form of experienced reality of their ancestral land. Yet it brings up memories, memories of colonization and land reform, of their fight and subsequent lifestyle changes in order to defend their territory. A map, a piece of paper – a way to own, a way to power, a way to remember.

Re-membering for Autonomy

When children learn about the history of Ecuador in schools, there is no mention of the historical Quijos. Until recently, for the purposes of educating Ecuadorian children, all Amazonian ethnicities, historical and modern, were lumped into the pejorative label,

“Jívaro.” And while a handful of historians, anthropologists, and archaeologists have researched the history of the Quijos, the information they have produced has not found a way into the official state discourse on history. According to popular history produced by the state, the Quijos did not transculturate, disappear, or even die out; they simply did not exist and a tremendous silence occupies their place and space in the history of Ecuador.

What fascinates me is this: the present-day Quijos hold and control a powerful tool that gives them autonomy. This tool is the faculty of remembering. By remembering that their Quijos ancestors actually lived, they resist state silences and obliteration. And by remembering the Quijos as *their* ancestors, ancestors to people who are still alive today, they challenge the assumption that the Quijos identity disappeared long ago and that there are no longer any Quijos. When the Quijos remember the Quijos past as *theirs*, they actually remember themselves back into existence as modern-day Quijos.



Figure 23: Elders re-memorizing themselves as Quijos. Here, at the Quijos Nation Congress, waiting to perform "traditional" Quijos dance and music.

In other words, when the Quijos remember, they are actually re-membering – they are re-constituting themselves, coming into being again. By re-membering through remembering, they control of the process of identity construction. They control how and when they remember, giving them full autonomy on this process of coming into being. Much of the way the Quijos remember the history of their ancestors contradicts, or as Kohn (2002) describes, “turns topsy-turvy,” official understandings of colonial history as a Spanish “conquest.” Salomon (2002) writes that,

This version of the past shows originality and intellectual self-reliance; it is an independent solution to the enigmas of historical discontinuity, putting the facts as they are known into coherent order, without reliance on the models of state hegemony projected by schools, churches, and non-governmental organizations. (p. 492).

By remembering their past differently, the Quijos avoid being subjects intellectually controlled by outsiders; instead, they control their past and, consequently, the process of reconstructing their identity.

Much of the ways in which the Quijos remember and connect to their past are inaccessible to non-Quijos. For example, *yachaks*, with their arcane knowledge and rituals; *compadrazgo* advice-giving rituals; planting; and *chicha* and *guayusa* making, serving, and drinking – these are all forms of remembering that go mostly misunderstood or ignored by outsiders, and can thus be nurtured in what Nazarea (2006) describes as “private, more sovereign places such as sacred groves, tangled plots, and steaming kitchens” (p. 327). When Viviana organized a group of children at the residential school to remember their parents’ traditions and wisdom, she effectively protected her identity from erasure by the nuns. Not only were the nuns limited in their efforts to eliminate indigeneity, they literally had no idea that Viviana and her friends were actively

remembering and therefore had no control over what was being remembered and how those memories supported the children's indigenous identities. By remembering, Viviana and her friends erected a protective wall around them that allowed them to remake themselves indigenous. She and her friends effectively built autonomy through remembering.

The Quijos are able to cultivate much of their cultural memory in these independent and, from the outside, largely incomprehensible spaces, thus retaining autonomy over how these memories are developed and what their content is. Rappaport (1990) writes that for the Paez of Colombia, "orality ... permits the community to maintain some history as its own, not shared with the dominant society and told in the Paez language" (p. 24). This is true for the Quijos, and can be extended to the unspoken and cryptic "languages" of formal and daily Quijos rituals.

Kohn (2002) argues that despite the fact that both the people in Oyacachi and the Church use the same historical images and events to produce historical understanding, two completely different versions of history emerge. He notes that "the messages in oral traditions are housed in powerful nondiscursive images. This ... is what affords them a certain degree of autonomy; images can be compelling without necessarily being fully understood" (563). This same phenomenon occurs with the Quijos, who believe that a specifically Quijos cultural memory is carried on in certain day-to-day rituals, while others see nothing Quijos about them whatsoever. Rappaport (1990) adds that "the non-narrative, non-stylized and episodic nature of the historical vision is fundamental to its usefulness: flexibility and ambiguity permit knowledge to be used in a variety of forms across a broad array of situations" (p. 11). It is precisely the ambiguity that abounds in

the meanings of cultural traditions that allows the Quijos a great degree of autonomy in controlling which acts they consider to be performances of cultural memory and how those memories can build a Quijos identity and territory. Through remembering, the Quijos effectively acquire autonomy in how they make themselves.

Epilogue

Almost three years after I arrived for the first time, I leave Jondachi again. Ana's small body gives me a fierce squeeze as I say goodbye. I strain a smile, but inside I feel this might be the last time I will see her, and this makes me sad. Just a week ago, in Seattle, I said goodbye to my grandfather before he passed away. Goodbyes are always hard and I linger, not wanting to take the leap. Now, in Jondachi, I see Ana; she is aging and often ill, though her smile still shines peace and always lights up the room. Her face is creased with her years, like lines on a map showing us the way; in it I see what she must have looked like as a child. I hold onto her warm squeeze for just a while longer, not really wanting to let go. Then I turn and walk down the path I have walked a million times, open the car door, and start the engine. With waves and a sigh, we drive away, towards Tena, then Puyo, then wind up into and through the mountains, sweat turning to shivers. Three days later, we arrive home in Cuenca.



Figure 24: Ana in her kitchen.

Soon after, I begin to write the final chapter of this thesis. Memories and memory fill my mind. I take what I have learned about territory, the sacharuna and their yachaks, sacred places and healing, the history of relations between the Quijos and the state, the global conservation movement, CTI formation, and Quijos leadership – I take it all in and think: How do the Quijos remember? How do they remember themselves into being? How does their remembering produce their territory?

And now, at the end of this story for my grandfather, at the end of this new childhood, I know that this research has taught me this: remembering is what brings the Quijos into being, what re-members them, what makes them now them. Without the memory-work that they have done, they would still identify as Kichwa. Their memories – stored in traditions, reinvented in performance, felt on muddy paths walked and on aching bodies healed – tell the Quijos where they come from and who they are, thus shaping their identity. The Quijos remember their past in new ways that challenge state forgetting and traditional conquest narratives. By remembering their past as a specifically Quijos past, they create new modern subjects and new paths for their future, based on the essential and timeless “Quijos” characteristics of resistance, intelligence, and spiritual expertise. Through remembering, they re-member themselves into subjects they deem worthy of being Quijos descendants. With memory, they learn they are no longer “children of the wind,” but grounded in history, with ancestral traits that guide them in knowing who they are and how to be.

I recently watched a video of spoken word artist Shane Koyczan perform “Remember How We Forgot” (2013), accompanied by a sweet fiddle’s song. I cannot

help but think of the Quijos and their acts of remembering as his word tumble out and into my ears:

And we believe ourselves to be members of this family
Not just one branch on one tree
But a forest whose roots make up a dynasty
So when I call you sis or bro
It's not lightly
And when I ask you to remember
It's because the future isn't what it used to be.
So remember now
Pay tribute to every sacrifice laid upon the altar of somehow
For all the times
Somehow we overcame
Somehow we pushed on
Somehow we've gone the distance
And in going there we've possessed the freedom to map the uncharted lands of
any and everywhere
We are unbound
(Excerpt from "Remember How We Forgot," Shane Koyczan, 2013)

Memory-work tells the Quijos who they are, but also tells them where they belong, what land is theirs. They identify their territory based on the places they see as forming part of their memories: paths to their fincas, forests that were used for hunting, sacred places, old garden plots, and land for which they fought with might to gain legal titles; as well as on memories of important life-events, of battles with raging rivers and seductive spirits, that were grounded in place, that took place *somewhere*. But they also identify their territory based on the places that literally connect them to their past – sacred sites, like Supay Rumi, places that open mental and spiritual doors to their ancestors because of their persistence through time. The yachaks know their land and know their territory. Through the places on it, they learn from the sacharuna who have also taught timeless knowledge to their ancestors; if the Quijos can maintain access to these sacred spots, the sacharuna will likely continue to teach their children and grandchildren as well.

These places the Quijos remember, this territory, has been the cradle for multiple attempts by the state to control the Quijos. State models of “correct behavior” tie, and at times untie, the land to the Quijos in different ways— through agrarian reform, during which the Quijos were pressured to produce for the market economy; through the present creation of the Antisana Ecological Reserve, where the Quijos are expected to be “ecologically noble savages”; and with the formation of the CTI, where the Quijos are granted “autonomy” if they comply with state regulations. The Quijos’ responses to these state requirements and attempts at control always simultaneously involve creativity and intense power struggle. But alongside these power struggles, in a realm if only slightly removed from this state control, Quijos memory-work becomes a space for autonomy, as the Quijos control their memory entirely – how it develops, where it takes place, and what significance it takes on. As such, they fully determine how they build their Quijos identity and are able to protect it from outside manipulation. They control how they conceive of their territory because they are the ones who give value and significance to the places that allow them to remember. The Quijos use remembering as a weapon against forgetting and disappearing; through remembering the Quijos as ancestors, they inherently produce themselves as their descendants, thereby negating the idea that the Quijos no longer exist. Thus, through remembering, the Quijos control the production of their identity and territory, giving them autonomy. Again, Koyczan’s (2013) melodic words resound:

So forget every would, could, or should not
Forget remembering how we forgot
Live like a plot twist
Exist now and in memory because we burn bright
Our lights leave scars on the sun
Let no one say we'll be undone by time's passing
(Excerpt from "Remember How We Forgot," Shane Koyczan, 2013)

At this point in the development of the Quijos identity, remembering provides a space in which the Quijos can build autonomy. It is, of course, a complex and layered process, one that is constantly shifting and reshaping itself. Quijos remembering and re-remembering are truly in their beginning stages – memories are general and form a narrative template that guide the Quijos in how to be. As more and more people and communities adopt a Quijos identity, conflicts may arise in which memory will likely play a determining role. At present, while not all Quijos have the same memories, especially those tied to specific places, when they are used for nurturing their Quijos identity there is generally little contestation. However, what is now a general "Quijos" memory that provides a base for the Quijos Nation and a template of actions for their future, may, in time, become contested and multiple. This is, of course, what gives life to remembering, change to identity, and agency to place; in short, what makes us go on.

In writing this thesis I hope to have shed light on the multiple realities of memory, identity, and territory that began for me in the small town of Jondachi, on a road in Northwest Amazonia; that spread through a region that was and has become the territory of the Quijos Nation; and that settled at home in my own migrant body. Many of the subjects I treat here have previously been studied, but often in isolation or in contexts outside of Amazonia. I believe the reality in Northwest Amazonia is quite different. With my research I have attempted to demonstrate that shamanic knowledge and healing, the

power and spirits of place, the politics of social movements and state power, and the incredible strength of memory are all interrelated and overlapping. All combine to produce a Quijos identity and territory; all are upheld by the act of remembering. And now, for the moment, I'll take leave of these memories with these words:

The memories we are amassing will stand as testament
That somehow we bend minds around the concept
that we see others within ourselves.
That self-knowledge can be found on bookshelves
So who we are has no bearing on how we appear
Look directly into every mirror
Realize our reflection is the first sentence to a story
And our story starts:
"We were here."
(Excerpt from "Remember How We Forgot," Shane Koyczan, 2013)

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