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Critical Essays on Cultural Transformations

and Social Dynamics

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Purgatory, Protestantism, and Peonage

Napo Runa Evangelicals and the
Domestication of the Masculine Will

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There is considerable variation in the cultural dynamics and political processes in cases of native Amazonians incorporating Christian identities. Donald K. Pollock (1993:166, 191) has written that one main feature of the native Amazonian Christianity is its "rarity" and association by indigenous peoples as being "the problem, not the solution" (e.g., Muratorio 1984). Some native Amazonians use Christianity to "tear their traditions apart" and create a new order (Brown and Fernández 1991:212–14), while others use it more "conservatively," subordinating its theology to their own symbolic and mythical worlds (Wright 1998:7, 293–94). While more dialogue and research are needed to comprehend these larger "politics of religious synthesis" (Stewart and Shaw 1994; Barker 1998:434; see also Barker 1993; Hefner 1993; Kempf 1994; van de Veer 1996) in Amazonian contexts, my purpose here is to explore how transformations of value are central to such processes among lowland Quichua speakers of Napo Province.

I address three main questions about conversion to Evangelical Protestantism among indigenous Napo people, none of which has been addressed elsewhere. First, why would Napo Runa become "Evangelical" in the first place, and what does "conversion" mean in their terms? In other words, how are the components of Evangelical Protestantism "internally related" (see Ollman 1971) to other realities of indigenous socioculture (and to Catholicism as well)? Second, given the visibility of the new "explosions" of Protestantism in Latin America (see Stoll 1990), I seek to understand the principle issues surrounding a multigenerational Evangelical movement in Napo. Is it expanding or declining? I raise the questions of how religion is transmitted and how converts are reproduced and pursue the contradictions and/or transformations involved. Third, I ask the question of whether this case of Evangelical native Amazonian Christianity forces us to rethink the problematic nature of "conversion" itself (see Asad 1996; Comaroff and Comaroff 1991, 1997; van de Veer 1996) and to consider the local complexities of how

people rework Christian forms to express their own social values and political concerns. These questions and issues are revisited in the conclusion.

The first difficulty in writing about Evangelicals is the need to define what *Evangelical* means. The meaning of *evangélico*, however, is complex and does not correspond to a simple English translation of *Evangelical* or its mutations (such as *fundamentalist*) as they are commonly employed in the United States (Brusco 1995; Stoll 1990). In Latin America, *evangélico* usually describes any non-Catholic Christian, including Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses, as well as those more "liberal" Protestants with a less fervent view of proselytizing (Stoll 1990:4). Elizabeth Brusco (1995:15), for example, states that the Colombian Lutherans, Baptists, Presbyterians, and more theologically "radical" Assemblies of God all identify themselves as *evangélicos* and use the term to describe one another's denominations. I have also observed that most people prefer to use a general term, such as *creyente* (believer) or *evangélico*, rather than specific denominational labels (Brusco 1995:15).

Other ways of classifying *evangélico* movements in Latin America can be formulated by examining specific denominations and their "waves" of arrival (Stoll 1990:4–5). Generally, however, typologies of the *evangélico* scene in Latin America are misleading, especially when compared to the values and practices of their North American or European counterparts (Stoll 1990:5), a point around which I intend to build this chapter.[1] As I will show, Evangelical Protestantism cannot be divorced from the context of Amazonian Runa systems of ideas, social values, and practices from which it derives its meaning and expression.

I now introduce a summary and analysis of an Evangelical Runa oratory, which I witnessed in November 1997, that contextualizes Evangelical Protestantism in opposition to its Catholic past in Napo. The issue here is purgatory, and how Evangelicals should settle their debts with God on the Day of the Dead. This oratory occurred in the local Evangelical church in Pano, an indigenous community on the outskirts of Tena. I include this oratory because it highlights a set of relations between socioeconomic exploitation, racism, and the purgatory concept that are central to the composition of Evangelical identities.

Santiago, an elderly Runa pastor known throughout the Napo region, begins by performing *camachina* (preaching or advising), the Runa practice of giving the gift of truth to others. Santiago uses the Bible to talk about the negative traditions of the Catholic Church, which have continued from *rucu timpu* or "the old times." Santiago explicitly brings up memories of how priests used practices of the Day of the Dead to deceive and exploit the Runa

people by controlling their beliefs about the next world. Santiago complains of purgatory as a fantastic place dreamed up by priests to imprison their deceased (but not the white people's deceased). "We now need to know," he says, "not to be stupid like before. What does the Bible say? There are only two places, only two: Heaven and Hell."

Santiago continues, "The Catholics would ask for money in order to get one leg into heaven, more to get the other leg in, then the arms, the hands, the head would come out first. . . . What do they do? Each mass would only get a part out."

Santiago focuses on subversive acts such as reneging on your promise to God (Ecclesiastes 5:1–7), Peter's denial of Jesus (Matthew 26:33–35), and giving the "impure" gift (Hebrews 9:1–14). The last reference — giving impure gifts — is the most relevant for our discussion.

In quoting Hebrews 9:1–14, Santiago creates a parody of the Evangelical-Catholic comparison regarding the Day of the Dead. Verses 1 through 10 mention the "Earthly Tabernacle" where the "high priest" was accustomed to make offerings of blood for the sins of his people. The passage talks about how these offerings could not clear the conscience of the worshipper because they lack real power. While highlighting verses 11 through 14, Santiago also emphasizes that the only *true* sacrifice was the blood of Jesus. Santiago figuratively associates the Catholic church with the false "high priests" of whom Jesus chose not to become. Santiago then quotes Hebrews 7:12–14, which he posits as a general "rule" of conversion to Evangelical Christianity — that a change in "priesthood" necessitates change in the "law." For Santiago, the Evangelical "law" represents an enlightenment of Christianity from the bondage of *rucu timpu*. The oratory ends with reference to Jeremiah 2:22 and the problem of "purification." Santiago says, "There are some things that do not wash away our sins, if we seek to be pure. The important thing is not to live far away from God, to live close to him in everything we do."

I have given a brief description of Santiago's Day of the Dead discourse in which a series of positive and negative value contrasts emerge (e.g., Munn 1986). Santiago characterizes Catholic practices as creating negative value for the community, in contrast to the social and spiritual benefit of the "new law" of Evangelical practice. The connection I make between socioeconomic exploitation and purgatory is not unique to Napo, as demonstrated by Norman Whitten's (1974:129) ethnography of African Hispanic culture in Ecuador and Colombia. Like the African Hispanic people in Whitten's descriptions, Santiago complains that the Catholic priests do not let "our" people reach heaven. To grasp why Santiago and many other people in Napo found it desirable and progressive to reinvent themselves as Evangelical Christians,

I first give a brief overview of the Evangelical religion and the historical context of the Evangelical missions in Napo.

Napo was originally a mission field of the Jesuits, a rich and involved historical topic itself (see Jouanan 1941; López Sanvicente 1894; Muratorio 1981, 1991; Oberem 1980). However, after the Jesuits were forced out of Ecuador in the late nineteenth century (approximately 1892), the Napo region was without a missionary presence until the entrance of the Italian Josephines in 1922 (Spiller 1974). It was only a few years later that the first Evangelical missionary entered the region. Ruben Larson, of the Christian and Missionary Alliance, first entered the region in 1925 and a few years later established an Evangelical mission on the outskirts of Tena in Dos Ríos. It was not until 1942, however, that Evangelicals were able to establish a school near the Pano River. With help from the people of Dos Ríos, a mission was begun that later grew into the community of Pano (*Boletín de Pano* 1981).

From the beginning, Evangelicals in Napo began as a minority among the large and institutionally powerful Catholic missions in Napo.[2] Despite being branded as *supai pagris* or "devil priests"[3] initially, Evangelical missionaries gained footholds in rural spaces such as Dos Ríos and Pano because these were not places attended regularly by Catholic clergy (Gianotti 1997). The strategy of the Evangelical missionaries was to use their economic power and their goodwill to act as agents of change and liberation from the exploitative structures of the past. In contrast to the Josephines, who identified with a conservative strand of Ecuadorian politics linked to the former Ecuadorian president García Moreno (see Spiller 1974), Evangelicals sought and gained support from Ecuadorian "liberals" and liberal politics (Bastien 1994; Spiller 1974:204).

Obtaining a land base was essential for Evangelical proselytizing, for this "new" faith rose up only in communities in which the Runa had interpersonal relations with the Evangelical missionaries. For example, the permanent native settlement Shandia was made possible by the assistance of a liberal landowner, Manuel María Rosales, who had been a rubber collector, institutional administrator, and "liberal" in Napo. The Josephine Catholics opposed him for his liberalism and association with the Protestants. In his history of the Josephine mission in Napo, Spiller brands Rosales as "old and obstinate, a liberal of a pure line of those that professed laicism with the fanaticism of a Muslim" (Spiller 1974:204). Such political-religious language between Catholics and Evangelicals used to be common and reflected a struggle for territory throughout Napo. Along the road from Tena to the Jatun Yacu River, for example, Evangelical and Catholic territories dot the landscape as confirmation of past religious battles. Pano, Shandia, and Santa Rosa are mainly

Evangelical territories, although Pano also has a small "counter-reformation" Catholic church competing with the larger Evangelical one. Tálag is the site of a large Catholic mission with a high school and a resident Runa priest. As Spiller (1974:204) indicates, the Catholic mission in Tálag was begun in direct competition with the Evangelical mission in Shandia.

The elder Evangelical generation of Pano has fond memories of the early missionaries. People also associate them with the times of missionaries as a golden age of Evangelical activity, as they received concrete benefits by constituting an Evangelical core area. Missionaries living in close association with the Runa made great (mostly successful) efforts to be seen as generous. Runa Evangelicals received gifts, funding, jobs, and infrastructure from the North American and European missionaries. They received referrals from missionaries to job opportunities with North American and European oil and fruit companies, as well as with the Summer Institute of Linguistics–Wycliffe Bible Translators. Evangelical Runa gained regional prestige from the attention and importance attached to their community by people associated with powerful, materially wealthy, and technologically advanced foreign institutions. These Runa had succeeded in opening up relationship with generous foreigners, becoming a new kind of global "hinge group" (Rogers 1995; Taylor 1988).

While in residence with the Runa, the Western–North American missionaries were perceived as more or less abiding by Runa social values and acting "lawful" in the Runa sense. I never heard anyone in Pano describe a missionary as *mitsa* (withholding or greedy). Many Pano Runa reported enthusiastically how missionaries had gotten them jobs, performed ritualistic roles in marriage ceremonies, cured them, educated them, and taught them various trades and to play musical instruments. I heard accounts of how many missionaries were fond of drinking manioc beer and eating Amazonian cuisine, a sharp distinction to the manioc beer prohibitions promoted by the missionary groups working with the Shuar and Achuar peoples (see Taylor 1981:663).

Runa cultural values and social forms influenced and delighted many Evangelical missionaries of the Tena region, although as missionaries they were not tolerant of the more esoteric aspects of Runa life (i.e., shamanism) or of the indigenous drunken fiestas. The missionary David Miller (April 3, 1997), who grew up in Pano, writes to me in a personal letter:

I had no trouble drinking *chicha*, eating monkeys, or grubs in people's homes. One time I didn't realize that the *chicha* was quite so fermented and paid the price with an incredible hangover the next day. But by and

large we tried to enter into the people's customs as much as possible. There are scores of Quichua people there in the area that are my *ahijados* [godchildren].

The North American missionaries pulled out of the Evangelical missions in the Tena region in the early 1980s, at the same time that the Ecuadorian Government refused to renew the Summer Institute of Linguistics' contract to continue working in Napo and in the rest of Ecuador (see Stoll 1990:281–82). Some people, both missionaries and Runa, say that the North Americans left because they had trained enough local people to take over the movement; the missionary work was essentially finished. However, other people report that the North American missionaries left because strong anti-American sentiment (on the part of indigenous political organizations and Ecuadorian university personnel) did not make them feel welcome. Both accounts reflect the reality that Evangelical Protestantism had entered into a new epoch wherein Runa believers took control of the institutions of the mission and asserted their own self-determination in the Evangelical sphere.

In short, the Evangelical missions near the Tena region began as a movement that was considered progressive by liberal and Runa advocates. These missions contrasted in doctrine, politics, and practices with conservative Catholicism, which dominated the region and stereotyped Evangelicals as foreigners, devils, and fanatics. Rumors also circulated that the Evangelical missionaries stole children to grind them up and make sausages (Carol Conn, personal communication March 9, 1997).

Behind these labels stood the fact that Evangelical missionaries propagated a different kind of religious system that sought to transform not only religion but also everyday society in Napo. Before I look at how Evangelical missionaries worked to alter the socioeconomic landscape toward more "liberal" economic principles, I first discuss the debtor system of socioeconomic exploitation in Napo.

Through the 1940s and 1950s, the practice of debt-peonage kept indigenous peoples in a type of bondage to patrons and to many government officials. While a full treatment of Napo's history of debt practices is not possible here, a few points about debt and debt-peonage are crucial to my argument. As we saw in Santiago's discourse of purgatory, the message of Evangelical Protestantism for the Runa is one of liberation from the bondage of past structures. A more thorough account of the structures of labor control and debt-peonage in Napo is contained in the work of Blanca Muratorio (1991).

The social logic of exploitation in Upper Napo was defined by debt-peonage, a practice that provided for the labor needs of administrators, mer-

chants, and missionaries. The system worked by creating debt, which then ensured more debt. The debt then "became" the person, who turned into a "living debt" (Taussig 1987: 66). In Upper Napo, it is commonly understood that only Runa people became living debts in the sense that the ethnic label of *indio* placed them into the general pool of potential peons and exploitable labor. Ethnicity, as well as debt, was "fetishized" (e.g., Taussig 1987: 70), an idea that I will further develop.

In the debt-peonage institution, patrons gave goods at outrageous "prices" to Runa people, who were obligated to receive them and then expected to pay with their labor (e.g., Gow 1991; Taussig 1987). Indigenous labor was devalued while goods were heavily overvalued. The logic of this system would be something like a modified commodity-commodity (C-C) exchange sphere transaction described by Marx (1976) in *Capital*. Like the form described by Marx, in Napo, labor power was exchanged directly for goods, but the goods were tremendously overvalued and labor undervalued by way of a mystical process (an "invisible hand") whereby the giver of goods fixed an outrageous "price." The system was one in which money did not change hands, only goods for labor; but in so doing, enormous "money" debts were built up on paper.

Evangelicals from North America and Europe are documented as saying that they found the debt-peonage system highly offensive and worked toward freeing the indigenous peoples from these and other coercive forms of social control. However, in the early days, under Ruben Larson (late 1920s), the Evangelicals adapted the peonage-patronage system in setting up their mission work. As Ruben Larson (n.d.) states in an informal interview about a "first encounter," people initially became affiliated with the mission in Dos Ríos by volunteering to be its "indigenous peons." Later, more indigenous peoples came from other places to join the mission, giving the mission its core group of people. People in town recognized these indigenous peoples as the "peons" of the Evangelical mission and so left them alone. The missionaries were thrilled to be able to "protect them" in this way (Larson n.d.; Páez 1992).

Although the Evangelicals drew upon the patronage system, they saw it as a foreign system of control that was exploitative. Here cultural factors were important. The strangeness of the debt system was at least partially due to the fact that Western and North American missionaries were accustomed to the softer and more modern forms of social control found in capitalist forms, such as the management of people by controlling the means of production. By contrast, the logic of debt-peonage, which continues to exist *culturally* in Napo even after the actual institution does not, is based upon the implicit

racial hierarchy of racially mixed and culturally "whitened" people control-ling the "money" sphere, and indigenous and Black people being subject to the "labor" sphere.

As the years went by, Evangelical missionaries did much to destabilize the legitimacy of the debt system, and practices of debt-peonage offered a unique historical opportunity for Evangelical missionaries to use capital in revolutionizing indigenous labor valuation. Missionaries "bought" many in-digenous debts and gave indigenous people mission jobs so that they them-selves could pay off their enormous balances to patrons. In the spirit of the times, the missionaries were "freeing" people. This buyout strategy was ex-pensive, but it put money as well as Bibles in the hands of indigenous people.

This mode of social action undercut the most fundamental assumptions of the social hierarchy as the pseudo-money form of debt-peonage (the appearance of exchange) was replaced by a real money form (an actual "equivalent" form). This new social logic was something similar to what Marx (1976) describes in *Capital* as a transition to a "commodity-money-commodity" (C-M-C) sphere of exchange. Real money, not goods represent-ing a "faked" abstraction of money, became the dominant factor in procuring labor power. Payment in money by the Evangelical missionaries sociologi-cally freed indigenous peoples from the chains of debt-peonage, the purga-tory of the economic sphere. New dependencies, however, would arise.

Within Evangelical mission spheres, Runa were free to buy what they wanted and were unfettered by well-known Catholic institutions of ideo-logical and pragmatic control. In this sense, the Evangelical missionaries helped transform communities by offering a new, more "liberal" vision of the world and the social practices to go with it. Such actions were not foreign; they picked up on a liberal ethos of the times that spoke of liberating indige-nous peoples throughout Latin America (Bastien 1994; Muratorio 1991; Pa-dilla 1989).

Before these transformations, Catholicism focused on external, pre-scribed rituals for everyone, and a certain status was ascribed to indigenous ethnicity. This status was, and continues to be, concordant with the principles of exclusion and "backwardness" implicit within the dominant ideological tandem of *mestizaje* (racial mixing) and *blanqueamiento* (cultural whiten-ing) present in Napo and elsewhere in Latin America (Guss 2000: 60–63; Stutzman 1981: 45–85; Whitten 1981: 16). This ideological system was what made people in Napo potential and actual living debts (e.g., Taussig 1987). The social hierarchy kept nonwhitened people in the lower social spheres of both economic and religious life.

As Whitten (1981: 16) has argued, the values of whiteness are becoming "more urban, more Christian, more civilized; less rural, less black, less In-

dian." David Guss (2000:60–61) maintains that while the all-inclusive language of *mestizaje* masks unequal social relations based on race, *blanqueamiento* operates as the implicit physical and cultural goal. The dominance of the ideology of racial mixing and whiteness continues to put the Runa (and blacks) in a double bind. The Runa are doubly excluded because they are perceived as being racially "pure" (not mixed) and as not sharing in the values of whiteness (e.g., Whitten 1981:15–16; Guss 2000:60–61). In practical terms, this ideology translates into various justifications for the mistreatment and exploitation of indigenous and Black people and transforms their cultural differences into negative values because they are not "whitened."

The dominance of mixing and whiteness has been observed not only in political-economic and religious spheres but also in education. The educational goals and policies of the Josephine and government schools have always prioritized the dominance of whiteness and the process of whitening the Runa (Muratorio 1991:163–64). Runa people expressed to me that in the "early days" of education they were afraid to send their children to schools or to let them pursue a trade career in town for fear of abuse and/or exploitation by the authorities. At that time, the Runa believed that their own forms of social praxis were only expressible and livable in the safe confines of interpersonal and family relations. There was a strict segregation between the "inside" and the "outside" worlds (Barker 1993:216; Whitten 1985:103).

By reworking Christianity as a form of Runa values writ large, Evangelical missionaries were able to draw the Runa into new ways of thinking about themselves and their social bodies in a changing "liberal" social order. There were structural conjunctures formed (Sahlins 1985). The key behind Evangelical missionary successes was their respect for Runa notions of generosity in social relationships, the "equivalent form." While the missionaries expected the Runa to accept the beliefs and practices of Evangelical Protestant life and become "equal" to them spiritually (in the eyes of God), the Runa expected the missionaries to accept the indigenous standards of giving and sharing with friends and kin.

The Runa gave much to the missionaries and essentially allowed their operation to function. They also were the main agents of conversion and proselytizing. In turn, the Runa obligated the missionaries more or less to respect Runa values and act generously with both goods and money. Many Runa told me that this pretense of spiritual equality with the missionaries created the expectation of material equality as well. From the point of view of Runa sociality, it makes sense to assume that new converts would be entitled to North American–European "global" wealth as well as faith. This sense of progress is what seemed to occur in the new liberal age. The closure of the North American missions in Dos Ríos and Pano in the 1980s, however, left the

Evangelical Runa, for the most part, outside the loop of international mission wealth.

The presence of World-Vision in many Evangelical communities is the only continuing link to global capital afforded by Evangelical identity. However, Evangelical Runa see World-Vision controversial and a poor substitute for real mission "wealth," and they find its accounting requirements socially awkward. In 1997, people of the church in Pano considered "canceling" World-Vision, but decided against it because of the high status it confers upon them among Evangelical communities. The consensus opinion was, "If it were not for the fact that the cancellation of World-Vision in Pano would 'sound ugly' (*irus uyarin*) [in the region], we would just let it go." I do not know how serious people were about actually following through with this idea, but it does show a primary concern for social "face" and status, not their "poor" economic condition.

Liberal ideas and practices fostered by the Evangelical missionaries helped to influence a new attitude among the Runa toward education. As more schools appeared in indigenous communities, people ceased to consider them a repressive mechanism of white control and began to see them as representing an opportunity for Runa betterment. Many Runa became teachers and others used their school education to become community leaders. Since colonial times, Runa leaders were those who could deal with outsiders and outside institutions while respecting and defending the values of the inside sphere of Runa life. Education became the latest tool in the continuing effort for self-determination. One could argue that Evangelical Runa were some of the first people in Napo to practice their own version of *autodeterminación indígena* (indigenous self-determination), which Whitten and Torres (1998:9) define as "the assertion that indigenous people . . . must speak to New World nation-states in modern, indigenous ways which they themselves will determine." Among many Evangelical Runa people, one can find various discourses with themes of *autodeterminación*, especially when people talk about the beginnings of educational institutions in Evangelical communities. I revisit the theme of *autodeterminación* in the conclusion. But before I can analyze what "development" or Evangelical self-determination might mean in Runa terms, I must examine their system of social values.

Amazonian Quichua kinship has been described as an "open-ended" and "polysemic" system that is manipulated by people (Whitten 1976:121). In daily life, the Runa conceptualize a distinction between two contradictory values in social and kin relationships. On the one hand, the Runa believe that people, especially males, should develop firm dispositions and become strong willed. The Runa begin this socializing process among young children through a series of practices designed to make them *sinzhi* (strong). This con-

ceptual model of strengthening begins with fasting entailed in couvade practices. Later, children are strengthened by putting capsicum pepper in their eyes, making them drink the *puma yuyu* (jaguar plant), and bathing them in cold, early morning rivers (see Uzendoski 1999). All of these practices, the Runa say, contribute to the strengthening of the *shunguyachina* (will) and the *sinzhi tucuna* (becoming strong).

The Runa also say that people need to be sensitive to the needs and demands of others. People should listen (*uyana*) to their loved ones, help out whenever they are needed (*yanapana*), and reciprocate gifts and favors. The Runa stigmatize anyone who does not behave reciprocally and generously as *mitsa* (greedy). This sensitivity to the needs of others is held by the Runa as an implicit "law" that is sometimes glossed as "living with love" (*llaquisha causana*). One way of describing this value might be what Joanna Overing and Alan Passes (2000:14) term "conviviality," and this implicit value demands specific kinds of behavior in daily life. For example, one is expected to send gifts of food and meat to *auya* (affines) and *compadres* (ritual kin people) as well as offer manioc beer to those who visit. I see the Runa hold these two values — willfulness and lawfulness — in complementary opposition.

The will (*shungu*) manifests itself mainly in the problem of creating social arrangements. Among the Runa, the will as a social concept is a key ingredient in activating relationships of the *muntun*, or the extended-family residence unit. The paternal figure, which in past times (*ñaupa timpu*) was always an elder shaman, forms a node of social structure around which relationships congeal (MacDonald 1979; Whitten 1976, 1985). The nodal structure is characterized by an overall amorphousness and interconnectedness wherein almost everyone living in a region can be related to everybody else in some way. Networks of relationships span large geographical distances and are maintained through webs of reciprocal exchange.

The core relationships of the *muntun* expand and deepen as people mature. People grow up in a *muntun*, but as they mature they form their own. *Muntun* break up when their founders die (see Oberem 1980). Mature *muntun* are built up through relational links to other *muntun* through the high-value relations of siblingship (*wawqui, pani, turi, ñaña*), *compadrazgo* (*compadre, comadre*), and alliance (*auya*). These mature relationships all imply a status of full personhood based on the proposition that one is a successful life giver and producer of other people (i.e., children) through procreation, adoption, and/or co-parenthood (see Uzendoski 2000). Value is contained within these horizontal relationships among mature persons.

Although missionaries chose not to adopt social idioms of adoption and/ or alliance in relating with the Runa, they did actively participate in the so-

cial forms of *compadrazgo* to become integrated into the Runa system of kinship. *Compadrazgo* among the Runa is not a white institution (as is commonly misunderstood), and it is fully woven into their system of kinship as a form of networking kindred groups within and between communities (Whitten 1976, 1985). *Compadrazgo*, like adoption, is a means by which people who may not be biogenetically related can become "substance" related kin (see Weismantel 1995). This kind of a metamorphosis goes on when people become *compadre* and *comadre* to each other. There is little that is "fictive" in such relations.

In daily life, it is the willfulness of certain persons that determines where people live and with whom they spend their time and resources. Willful people create nodal networks and viable social arrangements, which are a complex conglomeration of substance and alliance relationships. The substance relation between brothers, for example, is usually not enough to keep them together as a domestic unit without the presence of a strong paternal will. In addition, it is necessary to have a willful father (*yaya*) and godfather (*marca yaya*) to perform roles in courtship and wedding rituals. Willfulness is also expressed in alcoholic drinking bouts and fighting, and most young men regularly engage in such behavior.

Men do not engage in such drinking practices for pleasure but rather to demonstrate to one another and to the world that they are willful, dangerous, and powerful. At one drinking session, Jorge said to me, "Here we are Runa, drinking *aguardiente* [cane alcohol] because we are strong [*sinzhi*]." People also say that drunken states are good because one's innermost inhibitions come out and "one can see the real being underneath." Willfulness (or "hardness") is a core value of masculine personhood and drinking is one of its associated practices.

Drunkenness is perceived as a form of masculine knowledge. The term *machana*, which means "to be drunk," conveys both drunkenness caused by alcohol and an altered state of reality induced by shamanic hallucinogens (ayahuasca or *wanduj*); these altered states of reality are sometimes equated. Some men expressed the ability to "see" shamanic visions while being drunk and commented that the sinews of their bodies transformed into anaconda flesh. In terms of what it means to be a masculine person in Runa society, drunken states are a rite of passage and a form of attaining knowledge (see also Abercrombie 1998 : 317– 67).

Although being willful and strong is mainly a masculine value, women are also *sinzhi*. In feminine terms, this means that women have the ability to nurture and maintain the home and the family sphere. Feminine powers are personal powers that derive from a cosmology of shamanism and are expressed through dreaming, ritual-healing practices called *paju*, and women's songs

(see Harrison 1989; Muratorio 1991; Whitten 1976, 1985). In Runa life masculine/feminine are complementary aspects of the human condition, and all aspects of Runa social life revolve around the productive practices and concepts of the gender opposition (see also Whitten 1976, 1985).

It might be said that feminine willfulness facilitates masculine lawfulness and that femininity in Runa culture is associated with the collective value of lawfulness and social sensitivity. Women, however, perceive their feminine abilities as toughness, but simultaneously recognize that feminine strength and endurance are different from the masculine forms. While masculinity generally makes femininity appear "soft," life presents constant situations in which femininity covers up for the weaknesses of masculinity. For example, when a "strong" man sprains his ankle and needs a specialist to cure him, women are the ones who have the special powers (spiritual and physical) associated with massage. When men get tired (or drunk), women often do their work. Also, it is said that men do not really know how to grow food, cook, or prepare manioc beer "well." These are the true staples of life and social reproduction, and they are produced in feminine domains. Women enable men to live, a point that I revisit in the context of Evangelical redemption.

Drinking and the manifestations of traditional masculinity create specific problems for Evangelical men. In contrast to their Catholic neighbors, Runa Evangelicals maintain an active focus on personal sin and the conflict between the flesh and the spirit. Indeed, Evangelical law is almost synonymous with the individual avoidance of sin, an ideal that is described as becoming a *chuyaj Runa* (pure Runa). Practically, this means that Evangelical Runa must avoid drinking, dancing, smoking, and getting angry. However, because drinking, dancing, smoking, and fighting are physical manifestations of a strong will and quintessential of masculine will, Evangelical actors are constantly preoccupied with sin. All Evangelicals find it difficult to stay "pure," and many who attend Church occupy the category of *urmashca* (fallen).

Like other men, Evangelicals describe themselves as *sinzhi* and devoted Evangelicals describe themselves as *sinzhi ciricguna* (strong believers). However, Evangelicals have transformed the notion of a defining, masculine, and powerful will to a more passive state that they achieve through biblical reflection, prayer, and worship. To Catholic men, Evangelical men are feminized. Evangelicals see their masculinity in relation to a personal ability to avoid sin and to talk about such a state as having a "strong heart for God." Evangelicals are generally not concerned with any kind of aggressive action in this world, but rather see themselves as controlling otherworldly justice via, in their terms, "feminized" behavior.[4] Thus the inherent aggression of the male will has become more ascetic, disciplined, and domesticated.

Because the viability of Evangelical relationships depends upon their strict control of body practices, and members are constantly preoccupied with bodily control, the church paradoxically creates the "falling" of its members. This process presents new internal problems for relational symmetry and spiritual equality, for some members succeed while others fail, and even strong believers sometimes fall. Recognizing sin is a very delicate process.

It is the equality of potential and a shared similarity that is emphasized within relationships with the fallen, for every Evangelical family has them (usually more fallen members than faithful). The fallen are viewed as converts who either have not fully realized the conversion process or have briefly separated from it. Those who live within an Evangelical community or have knowledge of its "new law" are obligated to live within it, even if they are fallen. The faithful continue to treat their fallen loved ones well, yet family relations are stressed by the contradiction of altered status. This contradiction is felt most acutely by men. A father might have his moral authority questioned in the most inopportune of situations. A drunken son might bring shame upon his parents in his quest to display masculine willfulness. Despite the fact that an Evangelical has fallen, he or she cannot simply become Catholic. Evangelicals, like all Runa, are not only individuals; their identities are packed in the social relations that make up their person. They must live the contradictions.

Evangelical Protestantism also produces acute contradictions for feminine personhood, contradictions that adversely affect women's reputations in the church and the community. As Blanca Muratorio (1998:412) has argued, women must be generous and hardworking and worry intensely about having a good reputation in their in-laws' home based on the "sociality of their work." Like men, women must behave willfully in the appropriate and lawful manner. However, feminine personhood and the development of a willful and lawful self depends upon marriage and the severing of relationships from one's natal *muntun* (extended-family residence unit) for incorporation by her husband's *muntun* as a new daughter-in-law (*cachun*). It is in the social action of marriage and sexual cultural politics that Evangelical women's selves are most at risk. While men "fall" because of their need to be willful, women "fall" because of their need to marry (as marriage is the domain wherein women become "willful"). Just as the Evangelical Church paradoxically encourages the falling of men because of strict body practices, its equally strict regulation of feminine bodies in marriage and sexuality inhibits women from becoming full social persons as wives and mothers.

Evangelicals believe that one should marry by the literal instructions in the Bible and should marry a "pure" Evangelical person. Because many, if not most, Runa Evangelical men are fallen (or repeatedly fallen) in and out of

the church, Evangelical women are hard pressed to find a man who fits the bill as a Runa man and a "pure" Evangelical. Evangelical women often choose marriage over their faith (marriage to a Runa rather than to God), which subsequently endangers their Evangelical reputations. Like men, women also fall. Even if women do not drink, smoke, dance, or get angry, they nonetheless are in danger of falling if they cannot keep their men pure. Any woman who makes pretenses to purity while her husband remains outside of Evangelical law (e.g., drinking) quickly is the object of gossip. Not only would a woman in such a position be seen as a hypocrite, but she also risks losing her femininity as well as her faith, since men are supposed to dominate the external aspect of the conjugal unit.

This dynamic between drinking and Evangelical reproduction is complex. In Runa society, celebratory practices that include alcoholic consumption (and dancing) are viewed as acts of social reproduction (e.g., Gow 1989) and a means to "making kin" (see Weismantel 1995). During drunken fiestas, of which ritual wedding ceremonies are the fiesta par excellence (*tapuna, pactachina, bura*), the relational barriers between people are transformed and new relationships are formed. During weddings, for example, collective drinking and dancing are the primary means of relational transformations that "make" a wife and mediate the opposition between the two families, termed the "man's side" (*cari parti*) and the "women's side" (*warmi parti*). The wedding fiesta process is what allows the asymmetry between "wife givers" and "wife takers" to be transformed into a sense of relational "equivalency." Drinking is part of a series of acts that transform the relationship between the two families from one of suspicion and hostility to one of intimacy and "love" (*llaquina*).

One way in which the groom's family achieves this transformation is through giving a lot of manioc beer as well as bottles of liquor to the bride's family to "show them a good time." These are gifts that are said to eventually obligate the bride's family to hand over the bride (see MacDonald 1979, 1999; Uzendoski 2000). The presentation of male and female dancing is also essential to the social transformation, as the lines of male/female dancing publicly "finish" the metamorphosis and represent the masculine/feminine complementarity. The two families are said to become "*shujllayachina*" (just one). Furthermore, wedding fiestas are the ideal time for young men and women to flirt; the ritual space of wedding celebrations provides an ideal context for initiating new sexual liaisons.

It is not surprising that weddings are difficult times for many Evangelical men and women, and many Evangelicals "fall" during weddings. One friend of mine was Evangelical up until his own wedding when he married a Catholic girl and was forced to drink with her father and brothers. Evangelical

women who marry into non-Evangelical families also end up in the category of the fallen. Evangelicals try to emphasize the consumption of food over drink at weddings, but even weddings sponsored by Evangelical families must offer significant quantities of alcoholic drinks and manioc beer as gifts to others.[5] Evangelical practices have not transformed Runa society into a collection of individuals mainly because people emphasize a relational focus on creating and interacting with webs of kin. Practices of consumption are oriented toward creating relationships, not individuals, and are essential to achieving adult personhood. Like a weak magnet that creates a field that can draw but not hold an object as fixed, Evangelical Protestant ideals transform both male and female selves without being able to hold or fix the individual identities they create (e.g., Robbins 1994).

In the constant struggle against falling, women remain more steadfastly pure than men do, for they are under little pressure to consume strong alcohol and do not display the masculine behaviors that contradict Evangelical identity. However, because the Runa view the actions of husbands and wives as complementary, women cannot remain pure in the eyes of other Evangelicals if their husbands repeatedly fall. Complementarity is a complicated business. The flip side is that women often facilitate the redemption of their men (husbands, sons, and sons-in-law) by helping curb their drinking excesses and bringing them back into the activities of the local church. In life crises (accidents, sickness, death), Evangelicals are ready and willing to "bring people back to God," and women, as the main agents of crying, compassion, and nurturing, are the main facilitators in this process.

In the church it is the spiritual, visionary, and transformative powers of women that keep things going and are the basis of women's redemption of men. As the primary agents of song (see Harrison 1989), women also take on a leading role in this area in the Evangelical church. In Pano, for example, the women's group is mainly dedicated to song, and, when they sing, the women's voices always drown out clumsy masculine tones. It is said among the Runa that women make life *cushi* (happy) and feminine singing is a key application of this idea in the church context; without feminine voices, Evangelical life (and life in general) would be unbearable. It is my sense that the Runa see singing as an elevated and powerful form of prayer and worship, not as an "adjunct" to those worship practices led by men. I have often seen singers and other church members cry during Evangelical songs as well as seek comfort in singing and listening to them.

What do we learn about Christianity and religious synthesis from this brief study? From the material presented in this chapter, the macrocosmic aspect of Christianity incorporating people into socially expansive moral orders fits well as an explanatory paradigm (see Hefner 1993). For example,

this essay has discussed how various Christian forms (Jesuits, Josephines, Evangelicals) were central to how Runa people related to authorities, colonists, and larger Ecuadorian society. My main argument in this respect is that Evangelical Protestantism represented a break with the past structures of conservative Catholicism in Napo, which kept the Runa in the lower spheres of the religious cosmos (purgatory) and in economic life (peonage). Evangelicals sought to produce new macroidentities and relations that articulated the values and ideas of Latin American liberalism. They preached and worked toward giving the Runa full personhood in both Christianity and the capitalist economy.

While macrocosmic, world building relations are a central aspect of Christianity in general, as shown clearly in Hefner's (1993:3–46) piece "World Building and the Rationality of Conversion," equally salient is the idea that Christian forms are highly adaptable when articulated with local social values and political culture in situations of change (see also Robbins 1998). In this respect, I examined how Runa people transformed the values and practices of the Evangelical message to reflect the realities of their social and cultural world; I gave examples of willful or strong Christians taking turns in leading their churches and preaching on Sundays — a mirror image of their social structure — and I offered and explored the hypothesis that the people understand many aspects of Christian theology through shamanic-cultural models of *samai* (breath) and power. I presented differences between masculine and feminine forms of strength and endurance (*sinzhi cari* and *sinzhi warmi*) and corresponding Evangelical forms of being a strong believer (*sinzhi ciric*). I also presented an analysis of the cultural factors and social processes that explain why Evangelical Runa are preoccupied with sin and bodily practices of not drinking, smoking, dancing, or displaying anger. This same cultural knowledge allows the Evangelical Runa to emphasize the practical healing power of Christianity and recognize the real presence of demons (or spirits), aspects of the Christian message that Walls (2000) argues most modern Euro-American Christians do not take seriously today.

These processes of transformation and active reworking of Evangelical Christianity in Runa culture are ongoing; they did not cease with the departure of the North American missionaries in the 1980s, and they will not cease in 2002 with the conclusions of this essay. On the contrary, the Runa continue to innovate their own and Christian forms and practices to reflect emerging cultural identities and concerns within Napo in relation to the nation-state and the larger world. One way to think about this problem is as an issue of scale — how the macrocosmic meets the local — and this concern is central to what Evangelicals think and do.

For example, the main talk in Upper Napo during summer of 2001 sur-

rounded the events of a two-week-long uprising in Napo (and all of Ecuador) that occurred in February. Within the Tena-Archidona region, two people died during a military repression, and a good number were wounded in the violence that occurred.[6] Many of those protesting and the wounded were from Evangelical communities (including men and women), and some of those wounded are permanently disabled. The Federation of Evangelical Indigenous People of Ecuador (FEINE) works along with the flagship national federation, CONAIE, and FENOCIN to negotiate with the government indigenous demands surrounding a February 7 agreement that settled the uprising. Among the demands are compensation to the families of those killed and wounded by the military, and concerns with taxes, bus fares, and gas distribution.[7] These are important issues that have a critical impact on Runa life in the countryside of Napo.

In addition, indigenous Evangelical leaders in Napo have recently transformed their association (Association of Indigenous Evangelicals of Napo [AIEN]) into a full-fledged Evangelical federation. This federation also has its sister component run by women leaders who focus on projects for the betterment of women's lives. People told me that federation status allows them to negotiate and work directly with governmental, nongovernmental, international, secular, and religious organizations. Two areas in which leaders are interested in collaborations are in the areas of education and community-based ecotourism. Such Evangelical projects are run at the level of communities, so that all Evangelicals in a particular community benefit from their collectively oriented projects regardless of "pure" versus "fallen" members. The concept of an indigenous Evangelical federation is a complex and innovative move that reflects indigenous concerns with *autodeterminación* and the collective values of living in a *comunidad* (community) in a rapidly changing world (see Whitten 1976, 1985; Whitten and Torres 1998).

My endeavor in this section is to highlight a concrete example of *autodeterminación* as part of the action sphere of the indigenous Evangelical movement in Ecuador and specifically in Napo. As long as the Evangelical movement retains *autodeterminación* within the sphere of its operations, I believe it will remain a social force in Napo. Perhaps this situation echoes Sahlins' (1993:338) point that many cultures practice development from within their own cultural sense of value, "development from the perspective of the people concerned: their own culture on a bigger and better scale." It is clear that Runa people and Runa Evangelicals are concerned with development and value on their terms, their cultural practices on a different scale — the scale of an ever shrinking system of global relations. Santiago's oratory about purgatory was just that, an Evangelical statement of *autodeterminación* and *scale*, depicting how the Evangelical Runa should treat *their dead* on the day

when all people are supposed to think about into which worlds the dead travel or will travel.

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NOTES

1. It has been more than ten years since the publication of Stoll's (1990) study of Evangelical Protestantism in Latin America and more studies are badly needed on current transformations and political-cultural relations involved with Evangelical identities. For example, Stoll's (1991) study develops the position that Evangelicals (and Ecuadorian Evangelicals) have generally opposed Catholics and leftist positions associated with liberation theology. This essay suggests that the Ecuadorian reality is more complicated, as there are also highly conservative strands of Catholicism as well as emergent/historical forms of Evangelical liberation theology.

2. The late Maximiliano Spiller, Obispo Vicario Apostólico Emérito de Napo, in 1974 estimated that, in all, there were some 2,000 to 2,500 Evangelicals in Napo. In a more recent work, Spiller (1989) reports that "faithful Catholics" make up 71,330 of

the total population of 82,315 in Napo (this includes indigenous people, mestizos, and whites). Although these statistics are probably exaggerated, that would leave only 10,985 of the "not reached," "unfaithful," and Evangelical, or only about 14 percent of the total population. This is in a province where vast areas lack urban infrastructure, roads, and modern communications.

3. *Supai* has a double meaning in the Runa universe. It generally is used to describe any kind of supernatural being or spirit. These beings can be good, bad, or neutral depending on the specific context. For example, *supai* are agents of healing (or illness) in shamanic ritual (see e.g., Whitten 1976, 1985). Here, *supai* is translated as *devil* because this is the sense of the gloss I have cited.

4. Even Evangelicals themselves realize this. They will say that they are like "wives" to Jesus Christ, who is like their husband. "We must wait for Jesus, just as a wife waits for her husband."

5. Gerald and Carol Conn, missionaries who arrived in Pano in 1953, write in a personal letter (March 9, 1997): "We had no problem with the old style *bura* [wedding], again with the exemption of drinking. Colas began to be used or later on beer (which we did not favor). There was difficulty for the Christians [Evangelicals] if the family of the bride or groom demanded hard liquor. It was the custom of the family of the groom to have to give everything the parents of the bride demanded or the girl would not be given. . . . As for drinking *chicha* [manioc beer] . . . we never did forbid as did missionaries in the south jungle. But of course we did preach and teach against their old practice of preparing large amounts of *chicha* used for feasts or weddings when all would end up in a drunken stupor."

6. In interviews, people were not sure of the exact number of deaths but said between three and four and a number of wounded. News sources indicated that between one and four were killed. See "Police Kill Protestors" at http://www.americas.org/news, which cites as sources *La Hora* (Quito), February 7, 2001, from AFP. A boy from the El Dorado neighborhood in Tena was among those killed.

7. My source of negotiation data is a piece from the news Web site http://www.americas.org/news titled "Indigenous Dialogue Fails," which cites the following newspapers: *El Diario–La Prensa* (New York), July 18, 2001, from EFE; July 21, 2001, from AP; *La Hora* (Quito), July 17, 2001, and July 18, 2001; *El Telégrafo* (Guayaquil), July 18, 2001.

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