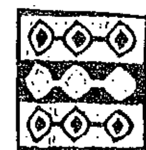
Figure 1. Tape recording a song by the hearth, the tropical forest, Ecuador. (Photos are by author unless otherwise specified.)



Signs, Songs, and Memory in the Andes

Translating Quechua Language and Culture

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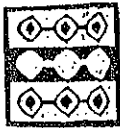
6. *The Metaphysics of Sex: Quichua Songs from the Tropical Forest*



THE QUECHUA-SPEAKING street vendor smiled when I spoke to her in her native language. She recognized that the dialect I spoke was different from Bolivian Quechua and, instead of selling her products, she began asking how I came to learn Quechua, what people were like in Ecuador, how they lived. As I spoke, I bought a few of her bright-colored yarns, some charms floating in used, cast-off hospital syringes, the soapstone carvings of animals and haciendas, and a dried llama fetus. Seeing my interest in these indigenous artifacts, she also pointed out her *warmi munachi*, small carvings of a man and woman locked in a tight, erotic embrace (Figure 21).[1]

When I bought eight of the figures, she surmised that I must be in dire straits sexually and offered to help out. She could make up a special charm to guarantee success in snaring a man and keeping him. She drew me closer, whispered in my ear, turning her head occasionally from side to side to see if other vendors were observing her: "Secretly, secretly you quietly place this in the bed or the room of the man you want. It's full of all sorts of powers; he will be your man." And she busily got to work, making a nest of green, orange, and reddish yarns, placing two spiral seeds (green and yellow) within the magic circle; next she added two *wuraruru* seeds (red and black) and one large natural-colored pod. Three bits of stone were also enclosed and then the entire charm was showered with miniature *milagros*, those metal symbols hung on Catholic altars to ward off evil and disease (Figure 22). Her last action, in the fading light of a sunset in La Paz, was to place the soapstone man/woman figure in the middle. "There you go," she said. "It's all yours."

My interest in the amulets was totally understandable from an indigenous perspective; the only surprise expressed by the vendor was my ability to address her in her own language. Love magic, as Dobkin de Ríos has documented (1978), is widely sought and bought through-

out the coast, the Andes, and the tropical forests. Santacruz Pachacuti Yamqui, the seventeenth-century chronicler whose work we discussed in chapters 3 and 4, mentions much pre-Conquest interest in love potions. He mentions specifically a drug which causes aphrodisiacal effects, *uarnapo* (*Jatropha basiacantha*), and tells how one of the kings eagerly searched for *chotarpo uanarpo* to give away to others so they could use them to fornicate (Santacruz Pachacuti Yamqui [1613] 1927: 155). He also recounts a narrative of two lovers who, through the use of small stones (*china*), were so consumed by sex that they could hardly be separated (ibid.: 153–154). Luis Millones, Virgilio Galdo G., and Anne Marie Dussault (1981) also study the usage of these aphrodisiacs in the colonial chronicles. They suggest that the substances permitted the Incaic subjects to defy the authority and prohibitions of the state in the case of (nonroyal) incest and sexual relations between people of different classes. The mention of these events in the chapters of these early histories indicates a persistent theme of interest in sexual enhancement. The current sale of archaeological postcards and small ceramic pieces depicting copulation in many tourist shops is evidence that this interest is not limited to the indigenous population.

My success in obtaining the magical materials for bewitching a lover was easier in the environs of Lake Titicaca than in the confines of the tropical forests of Ecuador. My access to the lowland "love songs of enchantment" was more restricted. I was told that one reason women were reluctant to sing for me was that "I didn't understand their words well enough yet." Frequently, when a woman encountered me and my Quichua-speaking teacher, I'd hear the question, "Ña kawsanchu?" (Does she live yet?) as she nodded in my direction. This phrase ultimately translates to "Does she speak our language well enough yet?" The ability to converse, for power and for verbal play, is a dominant theme in nonliterate communities. Language skill is commensurate with the acquisition of logical analysis; children are said to be *sin razón* (without power to reason) until reaching the age of ten.

Acute embarrassment among the women prevented my taping songs for many more months. My inquiries were often brushed off with the reply, "Why don't you tape in that village over there? The women there *really* know how to sing." On a rainy day, six months after I first arrived in the Ecuadoran lowlands, one of "those" women walked up to my house and agreed to sing into my tape recorder. The singer insisted that we go off by ourselves to the porch of an empty schoolhouse, where she sang into a hand-held microphone. Although she showed little stage fright, she did voice a request, "Don't play

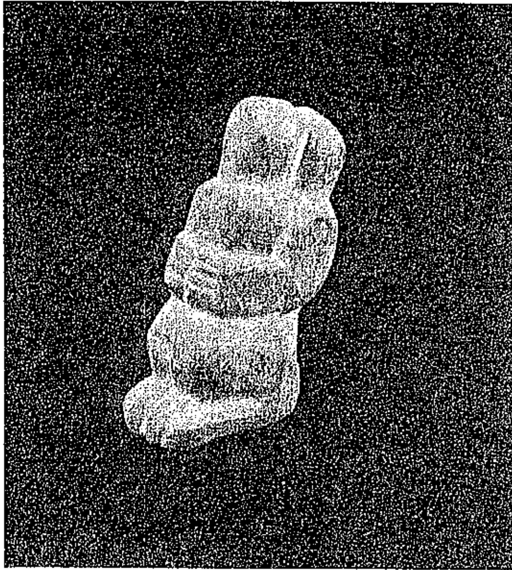


Figure 21. Close-up of the alabaster love charm, *warmi munachi.* Photo by Peter Scarpaci and Beth Carvette.

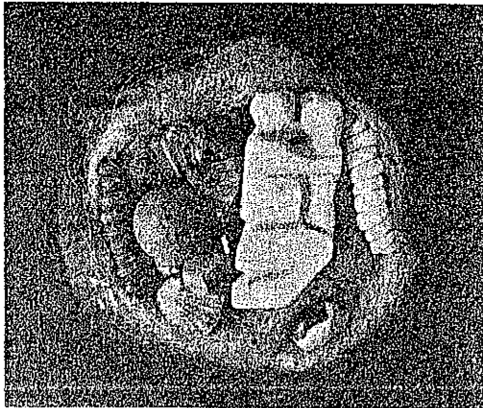


Figure 22. The *warmi munachi* love charm wrapped in colored woolen strands, from La Paz, Bolivia. Photo by Peter Scarpaci and Beth Carvette.

these songs when my husband is around." I honored that request, but it was many more months before I understood the significance of her utterance.

For the women in the tropical forest of Ecuador, singing these songs was a private function. Of course, a woman could sing in the

company of her children and close female relatives, but more often the songs were enunciated in a setting conducive to contemplation, where clear images and thoughts were united in a domain of song. Norman Whitten's research yields information of women "think-singing" some songs, allowing for "integration with mythic time and enactment of mythic structure" (1976: 167). The women I recorded spoke only of gathering thoughts in a contemplative process; the singing was always a process of actual singing of the words and melody. The singer often went up to a high elevation, where the wind blew strong, so that her words would be carried far.

The songs are not categorized and labeled with any one term; however, the motive for singing was attributed to *llakichina,* usually glossed as "songs to make one sad." The older Quechua dictionaries insist on the communicative powers of this verb: "to cause sorrow or cause pain to another person" (González Holguín [1608] 1952: 211).[2] Its more restricted sense is not upheld in the lowlands of Ecuador, however, where it is also synonymous with "loving, to cause to love" (Leonardi 1966: 51). One preface to a song included a statement about the function of *llakina:* "ñuka kunan kantangarawni kanguna churiwna uyak maybi ñuka chingarikpi ñuka wañukpi kanguna llakisha rikusha charingichi churi" (I'm going to sing, you children [will be] listeners, when I become lost, when I die, you [children] saddened, seeing, will have [the song, my] son). The coupling of sorrow and love, pain and romance, refers to a heightened emotional state which is marked in the transmission of songs.

While some songs are readily understandable, with themes drawn from a singer's life or childhood, the taking of a husband, drinking songs, and planting songs, the songs of enchantment are the most private and least communicative to anyone beyond the singer and the person to whom she sings. Communication in these songs is distinct from everyday syntax and semantics. If the content of these songs were stated in everyday speech, even the men would understand the songs, but when they were sung, it was difficult to comprehend the message: "Kariwna rimawkpichu *intindi*nawn, mana *kanta*shka mana *intindi*nawn *kanta*shka *parti*mandakmari" (If we said [the words] the men would understand, but not when we sing [them], they really don't understand [anything] from the [version in] song).

A stated theme is used to begin the song; the chosen image is frequently one seen in a tropical forest environment, such as a yellow-handed monkey, a newly blooming flower of the manioc plant, the toucan bird with its bright plumage, or the fearsome water boa. The thematic phrase is usually repeated two or three times, a type of entitlement procedure in a nonliterate society. Singers are aware of the

demands of oral communication; the motive given for so much repetition in the "public" songs is so that "people can hear it well." Of course, repetition is also cause for mental pauses, a search to best continue the song within the demands of the form.

The more "private" songs pertain to a special memory of hallucinogenic visions which relate to life crises. Because of the seriousness of an event in the life of a singer, she often uses hallucinogens, usually datura. Highly symbolic, each song forms a nucleus of perception which is stored in memory. The image-producing capacity of datura is well documented in scientific studies which trace the effects of the plant hallucinogen. Sometimes a "screen full of visions" appears in much the same manner as a projection of a movie with tropical animals, rivers, and individuals engaging the drug taker's consciousness. Sometimes images, not continuous action, predominate (Dobkin de Ríos 1972: 117–118). The appearance of images, snakes in particular, is an expectation of users of *ayahuaska:* "A commonly reported vision is that a very large snake enters the circle around which a person is seated in the jungle or else enters the room where one is taking *ayahuaska*" (ibid.: 120). The person seeking a vision allows the giant snake to come into his/her presence; some patients report the snake entering their body, often through the patient's mouth (ibid.).

One experience of taking the drug often involves learning a song which both reinforces the descriptive images and is correlated intimately with major episodes in a woman's life. In narrating the vision in the process of song, each woman reenacts a central image which is useful in defining her personality. The images are culturally laden and bound to the environment which surrounds her, yet the associations with which she invests the images surge forth from many experiences in her lifetime. The image produced by hallucinogens may become a dominant organizing principle with which the singer integrates life episodes and an analytical tool with which she assesses the behavior of others. It focuses her attempts to understand significant aspects of her life which are troublesome, beyond her power to control, and laden with anxiety.

Many of the songs refer to difficulties in sexual and amorous relationships. Men in the tropical forest frequently leave home to embark on hunting expeditions, to purchase necessary household goods, and, more recently, to cut forest paths for oil company explorations. These trips away from home, although accepted by the wives, are seen as potentially disruptive because a man, through sexual liaisons, may be persuaded to abandon his children and wife. Sexual relationships with extramarital partners are not necessarily cast in

negative moralistic censure, but the fear of abandonment by the spouse is significant. Even more threatening is the capture of a man's soul by a *sacha warmi*, a spirit woman, who serves as a man's knowledgeable assistant in the hunting of game but who also demands a close sexual union with the man she accompanies. A Quichua woman will tolerate the man's consorting with a *sacha warmi* for its promise of providing a protein source for the family, yet this relationship often carries her partner deep into the forest and far away on the rivers, away from his domestic obligations. Both human women and spirit women then pose a threat to the stability of the nuclear family. A mechanism of balancing the powers, of asserting domestic claims, is found in the song visions, which distill a methodology for winning back a spouse's heart and soul as well as his physical return.

Discourse and Poetics: Sisa's Visionary Song

The integrating nature of the symbolism is outlined in a lengthy song taught to a lowland Quichua singer, whom I call Sisa, by a snake-woman (Figure 23). As a prelude to singing the song, Sisa told me of the event of taking *wanduk*, not for recreational purposes, but to resolve a crisis in her life. Her motivation to embark on a datura trip is to rid herself of a terrible pain in her lower spine, which hurt so much that she compared it to the pain of childbirth. She makes no mention of any other crisis in her telling of the event, yet in her hallucinogenic encounter with the snake-woman she participates in a deeper understanding of the nature of her life crisis: her children, reaching adulthood, will travel far and wide, virtually abandoning her in a pattern similar to that she experienced with her distant traveling husband.

Discourse with the snake-woman clarifies the problems Sisa will later experience. Her transcription of the encounter with the snake-woman in the vision demonstrates the nature of the clarification. When the snake-woman first questions Sisa as to why she has come to see her, she says that she's just walking around, ambling around the area for no specific reason. The snake-woman, however, pierces the veil of ambiguity and questions further: "Is there something that you don't know [or want to find out]?" The snake-woman encourages her to reflect on the cause of her sadness and her loving, yearning.

This encouragement of self-reflectiveness is particularly phrased "llakinamanda iyaringichi" (you-all think about the sadness, the loving). Specifically, the snake-woman addresses a plural *you* as the essence of the woman's identity in causing her to ponder an unper-

Figure 23. Woman singer of the "Ukumbi Snake-Woman" song.

ceived emotional state. The utterance of a plural future imperative (the command *iyaringichi*) is a definite shift from the singularity with which Sisa was addressed in the first question, "What are you [singular] doing here?" This switch from singular person to a plural form is in keeping with Lawrence Carpenter's insightful analysis of an individual's dual nature among the Quichua. This duality is marked morphologically and syntactically in Carpenter's study. Quichua speakers, in addition, specify the existence of two "hearts"—a physical organ (*kurasun*) and an "inside" heart (*shunku*), a spiritual center very important to an individual's well-being (1980: 7).

This depiction of two organs essential to an individual's existence attests to the fused relationship of the physical and spiritual. With two existences, both linked in a holistic manner, the means of fulfilling both natures becomes the basis of self-reflection and masterful interpretation. Often it is the shaman's lot to elicit the correct analysis of the symbolism; many times the interpretation resides in the participation of family members' commentary. In this song, the purpose is explicitly stated: In singing this song, the singer will avoid the pain of being alone and forgotten by her grown-up children.

The consolation obtained from the learning of the song is immediate. The snake-woman herself is reassuring; she has gone through a

Figure 24. Child in a canoe, tropical forest, Ecuador. Photo by Ted Macdonald.

similar period of worry about the loss of her children, as stated in the opening lines of the song she sings (Figure 24). Her assurance that the song is an effective remedy to loneliness is emphasized in the concluding statement: "Sing [the song] just like this. Don't abandon me [forget me], my children. Even far away, wherever [they've] gone, it [the song] will make [them] yours."

The explanatory discourse which precedes the song describes Sisa's reasons for taking datura (*wanduk*). So powerful is the boiled essence that she claims she "died" for several days with its strong effects:[3]

> Ungushkay ungushka wañungarawni shina nisha wañusha nisha. Pura nanaku *enteru* siki tulluka, wawa pagarina *uras kwinta*. . . . Wandukta upikani upiklleira ishqi punllara wañushka kaylla. Kimsa punlla tukunara tiyak kani. Chimanda purikani, anakma purikani. Chai *parti* sanka tiyashkay, huasi tiyashka. Wanduk warmi pichawaka, pichaka. Ukumbi warmi pungura paskaka, shamuk warmi shamusha.
>
> "Ima *milagro* kayma puringi?" nin.
>
> "Yanga puriunimi ñuka llaktamanda yanga puriusha," rimakani.
>
> Shina nikpi, "shuk *cosa* mana yachangi? Llakimanda iyaringichi," nin.
>
> "Shinalleira kambak kari mayta rikpis, churiuna ichusha riunawn iñachin,"

nin. "Atun tukun pay kasna tukungami," nin. "Karan llaktawna kay *Guayaquil* lamarman—ima llakta tukuy llaktara riman—churiuna ichusha ichusha risha rinawkpica mamaga tiyarisha *kantawna*," nin.

Chita nisha kamachina. Ñukaman kamachishka washa pay *kantanawn*.

"Shina *kantay*," nin. "Churi wawawna ama ichusha tukungichi," nin. "Karu llaktara mayta rishashka kambaklleira ranga," nin.

Kantak akas, chi *señora*. Kantaringarawni pay kantashkara.

I was sick, really sick, I'm going to die, I said [to myself], I will die, I said. One tremendous pain at the base of my spine, just like when I gave birth, just like that. . . . I did some datura, and I was "dead" right here two days after taking it. Three days later I was "here." After that I walked, upriver I walked, until I reached [a place] upriver. There where that cliff was, there was a house. A datura woman cured me, cleansed [me]. A blue-colored *ukumbi* snake-woman opened the door, she, coming over [to me], came over and said, "What in the world are you doing here?"

"I'm just wandering around for the hell of it, getting out of my village and I'm wandering around," I said.

Then she said, "Is there something you don't know? [something you want to find out?] You-all think about your sadness/loving, yearning," she said. "Just like your husband who travels all over the place, your children will leave you, abandoning you, they grow up," she said. "They get big, just like that, he [your son] will get [big]," she said. "To Guayaquil, to the ocean, to each and every town—all names of cities, she named every city—your children will go away, abandoning [you], forgetting [you], going away and when they go away, you, the mother, will be sitting there singing [your] songs."

With that [that's exactly how] she counseled me. After giving me [that advice] she sang.

"Sing just like this," she said. [Say] don't abandon me [forget me] children. Even far away, wherever [they've] gone, it [the song] will make [them] yours."

What a singer she was, that woman. Now I'm going to sing her song:

ukumbi warmiga
ukumbi warmiga
karan yakupichu
puskuman armachisha
karanbi shayasha

Ukumbi snake-woman,
ukumbi snake-woman,
in every river,
bathing in the foaming waters,
5 in each [river] standing

churi-wawa rikpiga
urayta risha
uraymanda shamusha
karan yaku chimbata
puringa warmiga
killa simayukawachu armarisha purisha

ñuka purishkalla
ñuka churishitu
ñuka chakillayta
killu simayukahua
chapasha purikpi
maykan llaktara rishaska
kaylla shamungi
ñuka churishituga

tukuy yaku uma

tukuy rishkara shamusha
karan lenusbichu
yaku puskullawa
armarisha shayasha
maykan llaktaras rishas
ñuka maymanda shamungi
churishitunaska
ima kusashitu
simayukawaga
armasha chapasha
mayta purishaska
atun yaku lenusbi
rumipi tiyarisha
puskuta armarisha
payñarisha shayasha
maybi puripiska
mana kungariwangi
mana kungariwangi
karumanda warmi
ñuka mamashitu
chapasha tiyawnimi
ima simayuka
payñawa payñarik ashay

karan puskupi puskuta upyasha itarisha

because your [my] son went away.
Going downriver,
coming back from downriver,
along each riverbank
10 a traveling woman
with yellow love potion bathing,
traveling.
I have traveled just like that,
my dear little son.
On my feet
15 yellow *simayuka* love potion
waiting because he went away.
Wherever he went,
come back here, right here,
my dear little son,
20 from all the headwaters of the
rivers,
from wherever you went, coming
back,
in each pool of water,
with just the bubbly water,
bathing, standing.
25 Wherever you go,
from wherever, come to me,
my dear little son.
Just like a dear husband,
with *simayuka* love potion,
30 bathing, waiting, [I will wait]
to wherever you have gone.
In the large pools of a big river,
on a rock sitting,
in the bubbles bathing,
35 with combed hair, standing,
wherever you have gone,
don't forget me,
don't forget me,
woman from far away,
40 my dear mother.
waiting, I am existing,
whatever kind of *simayuka*
with a comb, I am combed,
in each bubbly water place,
bubbly water drinking, sitting,

yaku puskutami upyarisha tiyarisha	45	drinking bubbly water, sitting
karan yaku umay		to each river's headwaters,
puringa warmiga		a traveling woman.
ñuka churi asha		My son is
maybi kusagasha		wherever my husband is.
simayukawa armashkay	50	With *simayuka,* bathed,
ñuka wasi tiyani		I am in my house.
paktamungi churi		It will be time for you to come before me.[4]

Although the narrative version of the encounter with the snake-woman is barren of images, the song version is colored with descriptions of the *ukumbi* snake-woman, the rivers, the foam on top of the water, and the snake's children. This kernel of expressive poetics appears in two shorter versions of songs which Sisa sang for me earlier.

ukumbi warmi		*Ukumbi* snake-woman,
ukumbi warmi		*ukumbi* snake-woman,
uraymanda shamukanimi		from downriver I came for sure.
uraymanda shamukanimi		From downriver I came for sure.
puskuy puskuy armarisha	5	Bathing in the bubbles, in the bubbles,
shayakshami		standing there
puspi		in the bubbles,
ñuka ayllumi armashami shayakuni		bathing with my family, I am standing,
simayuka warmiga		*simayuka* love potion woman.

A second version, sung immediately after this short version, revealed more about the function of *simayuka* in the layering of the verses. *Simayuka* (love potion) is mentioned in the context of calling out to woo the return of the *ayllu* (members of the family) who no longer live in the house. The calling or singing is specifically accomplished with the strength of the wind that comes from downriver ("wayra shinachu uraymanda"):

ukumbi warmigalla		*Ukumbi* snake-woman,
ukumbi warmigalla		*ukumbi* snake-woman,
ukumbi warmi shayashachu		*ukumbi* snake-woman, standing,
ñuka aylluguna		my family,
kayashami shayasha	5	calling, standing
simayukawachu		with *simayuka* love potion,
purishka shinalleira		just as if [I had] walked,

ñuka washallami shamungi		later, come back to me.
wayra shinachu uraymanda		Like the strong wind from downriver,
ichayta shamusha	10	from upriver [your] arrival
yana yana kuchapi		in the black, black lake,
puskuy armarisha shayasha		in the river bubbles, bathing, standing.
ñuka churi wawanachu		My little children,
puringa-a-a		you will all wander off.

This poetic discourse above, in comparison to the aforementioned longer version of the song, is more directly focused on the snake-woman herself. The singer's biography is not present here; this version, in abbreviated fashion, emphasizes the person in the hallucinogenic vision, the *ukumbi* snake-woman. The provocative image of the bathing and splashing in the foam of the river is later reiterated in the image of the human woman, Sisa, imitating the very same motions.

The mention of the snake, the rivers, the foam, and bathing in an area where water traverses rocks is rich in associations for Quichua-speaking people (Figure 25). These images are coded to reveal a woman's need to pick up strength and power (*urza*), generally acquired in these well-defined areas of the river. The theme of women's power has been examined in chapter 5, with a discussion of women's songs; women boast of their physical prowess, the transmission of the strength of a family from one woman to another (*supay*), and define their defiance of mistreatment at the hands of their spouses ("even though he beats me, I'll stand up to him").

The image of standing (*shayasha*) transforms the symbolic coding to an association of contemplativeness, where the singer's evocative forces of seeing and remembering are called forth, as well as providing a transition to the more erotically charged meaning. In the act of "standing" the son appears in the image, going downstream on his own, as his mother remembers him (lines 6–7): "churi wawa rikpiga/urayta risha." The next image pattern is his return from downriver significantly cast in a gerund form (*shamusha,* coming back), which illustrates a potential return as she produces the image.

The focus then shifts to the snake-woman again, the riverbanks, and her experiencing of existence articulated with the verb *purina* (to walk, to exist). This existence is explicitly linked to the powerful love potion (*killu simayuka*) with which, along with the foam in the river, she is bathing. The two substances, river foam and love potion, are conjoined in the domain of bathing in the river. Thus

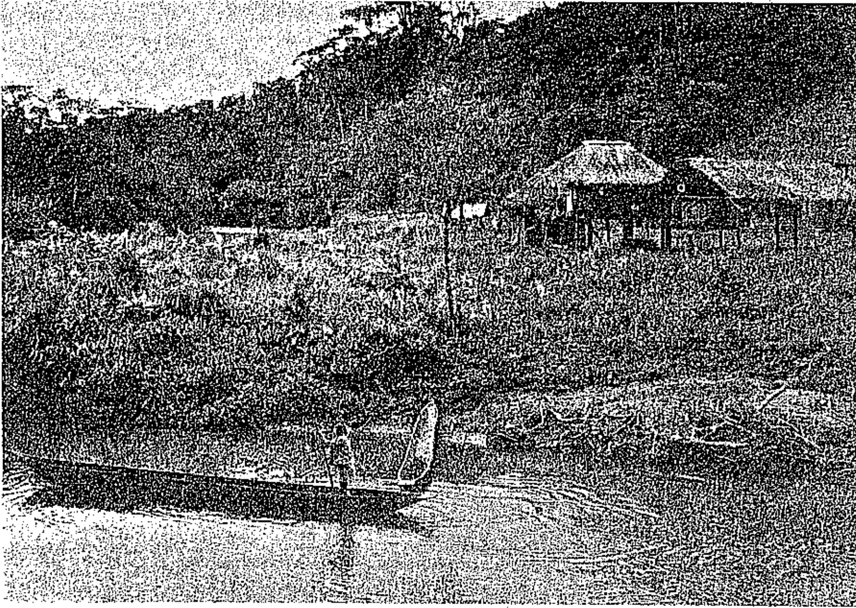


Figure 25. Riverine settlement, tropical forest, Ecuador. Photo by Ted Macdonald.

conjoined, a meaning emerges which associates this snake-woman as powerfully reinforced by the strength of the river foam and the love potion. The prominence of these two concrete images serves to more graphically define existence (*purisha*), investing the woman with sexually explicit powers.

Focus on the sign itself, the *ukumbi* snake-woman, does not unravel the complexity of the associational imagery. In fact, the name *ukumbi warmi* does not reveal the kind of snake which appears in the vision and the song. According to the singer, the *ukumbi warmi* is not a harmless, nonpoisonous snake, which the name denotes, but is, in fact, the water boa, the boa wife of the water boa. She also has another form, for she can appear as a beautiful, white-skinned foreigner, with long black hair down to her hips. Without *wanduk* she would look like a snake, but with it one sees her in the human form, transposed. Because of the foam and the *simayuka*, the snake generates yet another image of itself which the singer is given to understand by means of the song and the snake's appearance. The image of the snake arises from memory, and it is with words that the singer attempts to infer the fullness of this existence. The succinct image of the snake is transformed to words which then undergo a second transformational level of associations.

A translation of the song must take into account the dual nature

of the message it contains. The snake-woman who teaches Sisa the song is included in the song, and the singer also comments about her self. The repetitive usage of the gerund ending *sha* lends ambiguity, for it is identical to the first-person marker of the future tense *sha*. Thus, in line 5 "karanbi shayasha" could be translated "in each [river] stand*ing*," which refers to the snake-woman, or "in each [river] *I* will stand," which then refers to the singer. The shifting of lyrical voice is intentional, as singer and song-mistress are seen as one. Both women experience the same predicament with husbands who have taken up with many other women. The snake-woman tells Sisa that her husband will leave her: "'Kambak kari ichungarawn,' nin" ("Your husband will leave you," she says) and "when he does, you must sing this song" ("'ichukpi rawpika chita *kantangi*,' nin"). The snake-woman has a similar problem; her husband has been with a lot of women: "Pay shinalleira; paywa kari ashka warmiunara charin" (Her husband is just like this, too; her husband has [had] a lot of women). For this reason, the first eleven lines of the song refer to the snake-woman, and in line 12 the pronoun orients the listener to the singer's tale.

The song, for all its ambiguous personal references, is clear in the description of women splashing, standing in river currents, drinking the foam of the river, traveling in pursuit of men, or waiting quietly at home. Paralleling this description is one of men intertwined in the text; men, husbands and sons, leave home to venture off to distant places. It is to the men that the imperatives in the song are directed: "shamungi" (come home) (line 18); "mana cungariwangi" (don't forget me) (lines 37–38); and "paktamungi" (arrive back here) (line 52).

While the men are distantly wandering, the women are actively engaged in securing their return. Their technique for accomplishing this feat concerns the usage of *simayuka*, a type of love potion. This substance, which may be prepared from many types of materials, is chosen by the individual who wants to effect a charm. Often *simayuka* consists of an essence of the *tura turá* bird, the *yakumangu* bird, gratings from the *achiote* plant or from the wild potato plant. Women do not admit freely to cultivating *simayuka*, but each woman is able to allude to the types of *simayuka* that another woman has acquired. Although the word is frequently used in the tropical forests of Ecuador, the word is only listed in one dictionary of the many I have consulted (Leonardi 1966). There is a verb *yukuna* (to copulate) in the dictionary entries of Santo Tomás ([1560] 1951: 303); however, I cannot ascertain a possible derivation. Udo Oberem (1980: 286) acknowledges the magical power of *simayuka* to be-

Figure 26. Serving *aswa* (manioc beverage) in a ceramic bowl, tropical forest, Ecuador.

witch women in his reading of older sources, although he also does not cite lexical sources.

The sexual dimension of *simayuka* is understood, although it is mentioned devoid of overt sexual allusions in discussions of men's hunting magic. *Simayuka* figures prominently in the domain of men's power, as it is an essential ally to male activity. This essence is necessary to acquire the power to hunt successfully. For men, the symbolic power of the pulverized head of a boa is seen as the most powerful attractor. After killing a snake, the head is buried and allowed to decompose, and the man observes prohibition of sex, certain foods, and salt. Later, the head is dug up, pulverized, and stored away secretly.[5]

In questions of sexual alliance, the *simayuka* is usually imbibed or ingested and massaged into or rubbed onto another person. The Hispanic gesture of shaking hands is a perfect means of transferring the *simayuka* at a public gathering or fiesta. Another propitious moment, mentioned by women, is in the passing of the manioc beverage, which is served in shallow, wide-mouthed ceramic bowls (Figure 26). A woman intent upon establishing a liaison with a man will dip her *simayuka*-coated thumb into the liquid as she passes it on to her future desire. The *simayuka* causes the person to "go crazy" and "to loosen him/herself" (*lluspirin*).

Semantic Domains: Verbal Metaphors

Three verbal concepts dominate this song and many others because they are useful in attracting male human lovers and spirit lovers. These verbs both define spatial categories and are synonymous with emotional states: *purina* (to walk, travel); *tiyana* (to be, to be located); and *shayana* (to stand, to stop). Their inclusion and prominence in the song allude to Quichua understanding of the nature of existence within their culture.

Analysis of Quechua verse uncovers a basic semantic coupling which often centers on the opposition of paired concepts. Bruce Mannheim, for instance, argues for a "relationship of semantic markedness, with one member of a pair characterized by a property that the other distinctly lacks" (1987a: 282). When he discusses *purina* and *tiyana*, Mannheim observes a "common element [of] a notion of kinetic or dynamic existence based in the cancellation of the boundedness property. . . . *Puriy* thus presupposes *tiyay* conceptually . . . *puriy* [is] the marked member, *tiyay* [is] the unmarked" (ibid.).

In an early gloss written by the priest González Holguín, *purina* is equated with "walking, liquid running" ([1608] 1952: 297), but this gloss is too restricted. *Purina* embodies notions of activity, motion, sexuality, and existence which go beyond this semantic restrictiveness. In the songs of the Ecuadoran lowlands, *purina* carries connotations as a verb which is a metaphor to define existence. Women, when asked to sing extemporaneous songs detailing their life (*kawsana*), often sang of the many towns and cities they had traveled to on foot, accompanying their husbands and lugging their young children on their backs. "Ñuka purishkara" (my travels) often begins the songs filled with autobiographical details.

Purina is also used in a wide variety of expressions to describe the behavior of women. A "sumak purik warmi" (a woman who walks beautifully, correctly) is an ideal in Quichua culture. She walks along "seriously" ("*siriu* purina"), she walks in a "positive" manner ("alli purina"), and she doesn't wander "aimlessly" ("*mana yanga purina*"). In other words, she works long hours in her garden and resists the efforts of men to "bother her" ("mana piwas *molesta*shka"). As is conveyed in the last description, the verb also connotes adolescent, youthful sexual activity and passion. A similar connotation is noted among the Ilongots, where traveling is seen as youthful prowess, of potency and expansion, before one gets married and settles down (Rosaldo 1980: 149–150).

Lira's gloss of *purikukk* (1944: 772) as "one who does what he/she wants" comes close to the meaning of *purina* in the sexual connotation. Other phrases reinforce this interpretation, for "koskalla purik" (a walker who stays even with another) is known to be a woman who "accompanies her husband, not smiling at others, who comes directly home not looking for lovers." González Holguín's gloss of "karihuan purini" (literally, I walk with a man) is a more explicit allusion to sexuality, "fornicar la mujer" (a woman who has sexual relations) ([1608] 1952: 527).[6] *Tiyana*, as seen in lines 41 and 52 in the song, also refers to physical location, to sitting down, and to settling down. This verb may refer also to the "calming of passion." Lira's entry, which describes the "force of a stream of water diminishing" (1944: 971), alludes to a possible interpretation of *tiyana* as cooling of ardor. In the song, this sense may be inferred, as the woman singer, when she uses it, is in her house and often sitting in her house; her passion is not described by the active *purina* but the collected passion of *tiyana*.

The overwhelming presence of the verb *shayana* marks all the songs of erotic love. As in those songs of women's strength and women's will (chapter 5), it also is repeated in the love songs. Father

Monteros, collecting songs in the Ecuadoran lowlands in 1942, records a similar use of *shayana* in the song text (my translation):

lomo sisa mani-a		I am a manioc flower,
lomo sisa cayari		call manioc flower.
tigrashpa shayani		Returning [home], I stand,
tigra, tigra shayani		returning, returning, I stand.
inti runa cayari	5	Call, man of the sun,
puca, puca yaycuri		enter here, red, red
yaypushcalla shayani		in the cut down part of brush, I stand,
inti runacituca		beloved man of the sun.

(Monteros 1942: 26)

Lira's dictionary gloss of *shayana* alludes to characteristics of "stable personality or sense of self, loyal" (1944: 887), while González Holguín's older dictionary specifies "personal presence" or "stature" ([1608] 1952: 325). An earlier dictionary published by Antonio Ricardo also mentions this meaning and another which refers to the age of sexual encounters in adolescence. A particular type of young woman is mentioned, a *sayacsipsa* (unmarried woman) (*Vocabulario y phrasis* [1586] 1951: 79). There is some reference to a connotation of sexuality in the song in two instances: "armarisha shayasha" (bathing myself, standing) (line 24) and "payñarisha shayasha" (combing [my hair] standing) (line 35). These *shayasha* activities do refer to preparations of a sexual encounter which includes the technique of love potions. This "standing around" is the type associated with "kari apina uras" (the age when one "gets" a man). One singer specifically mentioned standing on top of a large hill, "urku punday shayawnchi" (on the top of a hill we stood), in order to see a lover approach.

In a more general sense, *shayana* refers to a contemplative meditative self which draws inspiration from the vivid imagery of the tropical forest. "Shayarisha iyarisha tiyana" (standing, thinking, act of existence) is one of the most meaningful experiences for a woman; it is a moment when she is gathered up into her own self, summoning her creative energies. It is an individual act, brought about by her contemplation of her life and her spiritual nature or is devoted to thoughts transmitted to her by her own spirit woman vision.

The choice of these verbs describes modes of existence which define the dynamics of a women's self-reflection on her life. *Purina* alludes to the carefree times of sexual encounters, *shayana* describes the contemplative process which remembers and calls forth the rep-

etition of the sexual attraction, and *tiyana* demarcates a space of grounded activity where passion is more restricted, passive, awaiting a lover, as in the house.

However, to fully explicate the song there is one more level of meaning to explore which consists of the physical and spiritual experiencing of existence. The song is not merely about a woman's powers to "call back" her husband or roving children. It also refers to the important number of spirit helpers who guide human activity in the environment of the tropical forest. The music of this song is one of a number of melodies that it is possible to hear in the lowland environment. The powerful water anaconda knows how to sing and to use his own *simayuka:* "The boa, he himself, has his own *simayuka,* then he overpowers Quichua women. When [these] boa spirits rub *simayuka* dust on you, you turn into spirits just like them" ("payguna kakukpi shina tukuna turkarinawn"). The boa transforms himself into a handsome foreign-looking man with white skin and a beard; he stands on the riverbank and calls and sings to *runa* women.

The singer said that when a Quichua woman sings her songs, she is just like the boa spirit who makes women fall in love with him. It is said that he tricks them with his song, and they fall in love with him: "Runara apinara munanchi nin chita llustirina ushanchi, nin" (We want to carry off some Quichua [women], they say. We can unloosen them [unclothe them], they say). The boa spirits think of taking away *runa* women in the same manner that *simayuka* functions: "Iyarisha simayuka kwinta simayuka aysashka *kantan*mi." (Thinking, they drag the women to them by means of song). No matter how far away, even at a great distance, the boa lovers have great power to draw the women to them: "Karulleira api nin apinawn" (Even from far away he picks [them up], they say they pick them up).

Women also have this type of seduction song which they sing, certain that a man will be attracted and desire them: "Chi karira munakpi *canta*kpi kari *enamora*n kallarin, nin" (When she wants that man when she sings, the man begins to fall in love with her, they say). But it must be this special song, not just any kind of song: "Warmi yanga *kant*oyga yanga *kanta*kpika mana piwas *enamora*wn" (If a woman sings any old song, when she sings it, no one will fall in love with her).

The Water Domain: The Symbolism of Bathing

The bathing complex, essential to the song, is one of the favorite spots for engaging in sex. As explained by one singer, the place in a stream or river where the current hits the rocks is a highly regarded domain. Women who bathe in the early morning interact with this foam in the river, for it gives spiritual and physical force/strength: "Chibi shayarisha sambayan tiyawn *urza*ra apinga." This implicit connotation, which cannot be entirely recovered with direct exegesis by the natives, is also found in the myths about the *yaku runa,* the men of the water domain, who are at the same time anacondas and beings with human shapes. These beings reside in the large whirlpools of the rivers (*molino*). In one myth from the lowlands, the boas are said to capture human beings there and live with them forever (Ortiz de Villalba 1976: 90–91).

The bubbles and the foam of the river partake of this sexual meaning, as we saw in the song. There are several studies which argue that foam is a pan-Andean symbol of sexual power. Water which flows through irrigation canals is given an interpretation as a masculine force of fertilization by Billie Jean Isbell (1978: 143). Also, Urton's analysis of *pusuqu* (foam) is revelant for an understanding of the dynamics of seduction. According to his analysis of the Milky Way, the "foam" of the bright stellar clouds in the southern area of the sky results from a collision of two celestial rivers (Urton 1981: 59). This foam (*pusuqu*) is seen as the place of the "union" of the rivers; Viracocha (sea foam), the deity, may represent "the synthesis of opposing motions or objects in the sky and on earth" (ibid.: 204).

For these reasons this ecological area where earth and water forces conjoin (water currents hitting rocks) is seen as a special place. The act of water hitting rocks and splashing has a particular verb, *lluspin* (González Holguín [1608] 1952: 219), which, we may remember, is the verb used to describe the act of escaping or loosening bonds (Lira 1944: 602). In a vivid description of the bathing imagery, the foam is said to "loosen" a woman's bonds (to her lover) so that another desirous lover may have sexual access to the woman: "Yaku puskuyga chimi *enamora*shka *enamora*kpi armanga, nin. Kuti kuti *enamora*nga yaku puskuy armarisha. Puskuwa lluspirin nin paywa *enamora*sha simayuka puskuy" (In the river's foam here he wooed her. When he makes love to her she will [want to] bathe, they say. Again and again he/she/they make love, bathing with the foam of the river. With this foam, she is "loosened," they say. Making love with him with *simayuka* and in the foam of the river).

The "unfastening" or "unloosening" may refer to the process of having part of one's identity wander off with a spirit being. Women often refer to a *duyñu* (a spiritual "master") who has power over them and makes them crazy (*loca*) to have sexual intercourse. This "loosening" also may refer to the conception of a child, fathered by

the spirit with whom she has intercourse. This child, a *supay wawa*, is an imperfect baby with lots of hair, a cleft pallet, and web feet. When the *runa* woman consents to liaisons with the water spirits, she may not be able to conceive her own (human) children. This is the inference of one man's enraged accusation and the resultant interrogation of his wife: "Kan supay karira tiyashami nin." (Are you with a spirit "master"? he said). Her answer was a firm "No, I don't have one," yet her husband had seen a spirit he thought was her lover in a vision after he took *wanduk*. She took *wanduk* herself "because [she] didn't know for sure" ("mana yachakani"); her spirit lover did not appear ("mana rikurik") in a *wanduk* vision, so that she was convinced that she did not have a lover. Her husband's anger and suspicions were aroused because she had recently experienced the death of her first child. Since women commonly refer to "finding" a certain number of children inside their bodies, usually twelve, if one of these children becomes a *supay wawa* as a result of a liaison with a spirit then she will give birth to fewer human children.

The Primacy of "Seeing": Andean Realities

Although the verb *rikuna* (to see) is not mentioned in this song, sensorial, visual impressions are the basis for the generation of song texts. Songs are visual impressions of a tropical forest environment where associations create a narrative of personal meaning and serve to organize experience. Visual imagery, as we have seen in previous chapters, is a primary domain of Quechua existence. As we saw in the lengthy poem recited by Manco Capac, seeing and experiencing the presence of the divine being are paramount. This presence did not imply necessarily that the actual physical being of the god(s) become manifest. As we observed in chapter 4, the understanding of the wishes and the future actions of the god(s) might be discerned by seeing specific objects as signs—the entrails of sacrificed animals, the direction in which saliva dripped off fingers, the lay of the coca leaves as they fell in a pattern. A specific meaning could then be extracted from a complex and intricate web of significance and thus a person could expect to understand and know the outcome of an event. The reading of signs transcended ritual events which involved the elite trained for such purposes; the common populace was trained to interpret family matters in their dreams and in their visions as part of daily existence.

Perception also contributed to Andean spatial mapping and categorization. The empire was divided into four distinct regions and

local topological direction was oriented to a larger scheme of the entire territory. In the cosmology, domains of significance were described using visual signs. In the case of Santacruz Pachacuti Yamqui's drawing of the temple of Coricancha, the information drawn is greater than that conveyed in the European system of a written narrative text.

Seeing, in its specific literal sense and as a broader semantic referent, is accorded special status in a number of contemporary Quichua songs of the lowlands. One segment of an autobiographical song from the tropical forest is nonsensical when first reading the phrase "aychataska rikusha mikusha purik warmi mani" (I am a woman who's seen, who's eaten [Andean] fish, who has been all over). The parallelism of the placement of "seeing" and "eating" is semantically significant, as we also saw in our discussion of the coupling of *purina* and *tiyana* previously. *Rikusha mikusha* (seeing, eating) coupled reveals an approach to the very nature of existence where sight provides the first confrontation with experience, and the act of eating the heretofore unknown fish from highland lakes enriches the singer's understanding of the world. In fact, she incorporates this new world within her, nurturing her existence. Again, while *purina* may be glossed narrowly as "travel," here the reference is to someone who has lived a rich life, full of many experiences. She has not merely been told what the world is like; instead, she accompanied her husband on foot and has firsthand knowledge of the Andean area.

This same singer, in another song, emphasizes the contrast inherent in the verb form *rikuna* (to see) and *rikurimuna* (to appear). In singing of another trip to Tungurahua Mountain in the highlands, she notes how green it appeared as she looked at it: "virdilla rikurimushka." This verb often is used in contexts of fleeting visions, when the human subject has no controlling mechanism to influence the circumstances. Thus stars coming out at night would be described with this verb, as would physical appearances of human, plant, and animal forms. On the other hand, in González Holguín's seventeenth-century dictionary *ricurimuni* is glossed as "aparecer vision" (when a vision appears) ([1608] 1952: 317). This form in the Peruvian dialect includes an inceptive *ri* which communicates an act in which the subject takes the initiative in carrying out the action (Cusihuamán 1976: 210). Thus *ri* paired with the directional *mu* brings, in this case, the color green revealing itself to the viewer. The passive stance of the seer in this act contrasts markedly with subsequent lines in the same song where the singer describes actively looking at a lake on top of a mountain, bending over to peer

down into the water: "Rumi pundamanda kumarisha rikuk warmi mani" (From the top of a boulder, bending over, I am a woman who has seen).

The distinction in the two verb forms does not ascribe greater reality to one over the other. Although González Holguín conveys the "unreality" of this seeing with a gloss containing the semantically loaded *visiones*, in actuality the Quechua speakers do not discriminate in categories of the "real" as opposed to "visions." It is true that syntactically there is acknowledgment of actually being present at an event instead of merely hearing secondhand about it in the use of the verb ending *ska* to denote the latter concept. However, what we nonindigenous people would call "visions" have the force of reality and are described in those terms by Quechua speakers.

The singers are aware, however, that *wanduk* provides an alternate method of "seeing": "Without drinking *wanduk* nothing appears. With it every kind of thing appears, everything shows up." This kind of seeing often includes another soul or spirit being: "When we drink *wanduk* we change into something else and we can see everything. We begin to become like the spirit forces. We don't see with our Christian souls [*yaya dios alma*] but we change into our other spirit souls. Then we see everything." The purpose of this "seeing" is to know, to enlarge one's understanding. Without taking the *wanduk*, this profound seeing is not possible, as is evident in this phrase, "Mana yacharin mana rikurin" (Nothing is fully understood, nothing appears).

When the singer is taught the words of the song in special occasions of drinking *wanduk*, this song shares in the special aura of "seeing" where a person experiences "total knowledge." Signs are revealed in a complete meaning system which allows the seeker of "true seeing" to integrate problematic aspects of life within the focus of the one illustrative scene. The song itself, because of the symbolic layering of images and its transmission by a spirit woman, is an act of metacommunication which defies definition in terms of this world. The words of bathing with *simayuka* become a type of *simayuka* themselves, with a power to draw loved ones back to her. Paralleling the experiencing of knowledge in the vision, the singing of the words reconstructs that all-knowing moment for the singer.

The song itself serves as a vehicle for the transmission of the knowledge through "seeing" its imagery and "hearing" its message. We remember that Sisa specifically dedicated her song to her children with the words "you will have it, lovingly saddened, seeing." In this statement she alludes to a heightened emotion as the children will remember their deceased mother's love for them and they also

re-experience the nature of her knowledge, her seeing. Also, by inference of the verb *charina* (to have), they will "possess" her through the lyrics of the song and "see" her in the unfolding of the images.

The nature of memory, the vast domain of seeing, and the stark reality of visions operate to endow communication through song with a privileged function in the society. By means of song, a specialized kind of "thinking," sentiments of love and desire are communicated to a distant receptor. Contemplation, a gathering of forces, is necessary to begin the process: "Iyarisha iyarikpi rikusha *kwinta* iyachin" (Thinking, when you think, just like seeing you are caused to think [of it]). This "thinking" is generated by what one has seen, which is conjured up again to form the dominant imagery of the song: "Rikushkamanda tiyarishka iyarina *mas* yalli rikunga" (You will see better [clearer] in thoughts contemplated, gathered up from what you have seen).

When the seeing of the *wanduk* vision is combined with what is known (or seen) of the intended recipient, then communication to far distant recesses is possible:

> Kantakpi shinalleira kariuna uyarinawn *duyño* warmira. Maybi tiyawshas *duyño* warmi yapa iyarin mana karuman purinawn. Uyarin. Mayta tarabana maytas maytas mana cungarin. Chiraygu iyarishkamanda *kantanawn.*
>
> When you sing, in that moment, just like that, the men hear their "real" wife. Wherever they are, they will think a lot about their "real" wife. They won't go far away. They will hear. Wherever they might be working, wherever, wherever [they are] they won't forget. For that reason, women sing about what they have thought [seen] before.

Thus, wherever the men are, they will come back to their "real" wife through the lyric force of the song and the images that are sent.

The song itself is a type of *simayuka* with a metacommunicative function. The words sung by the snake-women serve to bewitch (*upallachina*) the human males with whom they want to make love: "Paygunaga shuk runara *enamora*sha shinalleira *kantan*chi, nin . . . upallachin, nin" (The spirit women when they want to seduce a human male, "we sing just like this," they say . . . "it bewitches [him]," they say). The words, the conveying of the images, are not to be sung in vain. The one woman who is taught the song is empowered to use the words; in the vision she was specifically instructed not to explain the song. Although she may sing the words, she is not supposed to say them or explicate them, as in a long narrative discourse:

"Ama rimangi. Ama *kwintangi*" (Don't say [these words]. Don't tell a story [about this song]). Furthermore, the snake-woman instructed her not to reveal the prohibitions of fasting, not using salt (*sasimi*), and the actual meaning of the words (*shimi*): "Mana kasnay *kwintasha* kwinta *kantakani* ñukalleira" (Not like this, like telling a detailed story, did I myself ever sing it myself). The learning of the song and the knowledge that it contains confers responsibility on the part of the singer to not be careless with it, for fear of harming others who cannot accept its knowledge.

Paktamuna/Shayana: Presence as Prescience

The power of the thoughts and the words of the song serve to draw back to the singer the person to whom she sings. Often women use the metaphor of fishing with a fishing line, an infrequent method of catching fish in the tropical forest, to describe how a person may be lured back into their power, *anzelushka* (caught on a fishhook). Some refer to song as *simayuka,* ascribing to its lyrics and melody a force of the magical charm which is used to track and pursue game: "Iyarishkami simayuka *kwinta* simayuka aysashka *kantan*mi" (In thinking just like *simayuka,* like *simayuka* pulls an animal in, [they] sing).

It is in regard to this model that the verb *paktamuna* deserves more attention. In a standard gloss common in the tropical forests of Ecuador *paktamuna* means "to arrive"; however, in actual discourse "ña shamun" (he/she is arriving) is more commonly used to indicate the arrival of a person. In the song, the verb recovers some of its more traditional semantic base of equilibrium and balance, as was discussed for the adjective *pactay pactaylla,* "dos cosas iguales parejas" (two equal things) (González Holguín [1608] 1952: 273). In Bolivia, contemporary usage still acknowledges orientation toward balance, of adjustment to create equality, to level off (Lira 1944: 727). We already have seen a variant of this meaning in the songs of the tropical forest in the phrase "mana piwas paktanga" (no one will equal [me]), where the singer boasts that no other woman works as hard as she (the singer) does in her garden plot (chapter 5).

Also, in describing the attributes of a strong wind, Sisa uses *paktamuna* in one more sense which ties it closely to what we would call visionary experiences: "When wind, rain, lots of rain come, trees *kuk-kuk-kuy* [sound], the shamans cause us to dream. Just like that, they come here [*shinay paktamunawn*] and they cause good dreams." So here the arrival is of a different nature than a friend showing up for a visit. In the domain of singing, considering that the song itself is a *simayuka* love device, the one sought after is compelled to arrive in this special manner.

In the highland Quichua dialect of Ecuador, in fact, the verb has a basic meaning of "something that fulfills a basic need and accomplishes a goal that one proposes" (Cordero [1892] 1967: 68). When *paktamuna* is coupled with the verb *shamuna,* it is easier for us to discern its special nature: "*duyño* kari shamusha paktamunga shayarisha iyarisha tiyana" (The "real" [keeper of my essence] man will come, will appear, perfectly ready for what is intended, standing, contemplating, existing). The *paktamunga* and the *shayarisha* described here in song argue for an interpretation of a coming into the presence, of the physical existence of the absent person. While the corporeality of the distant person may prove troublesome for those of us from a modern industrialized society, in the understanding of Quichua speakers this "coming into physical existence," summoned forth by the magic of song, is part of tropical forest reality.[7]

Once again, we turn to González Holguín's definition of the root *sayay* (in Ecuadoran dialects *shayay*) because he explains the physical-spiritual dimensions. Glossed as *estatura* (stature) in many instances, it also can mean the presence of a person, "la presencia personal" (González Holguín [1608] 1952: 325). And, as an outgrowth of the previous situation, *sayay* means "quando aparece en cuerpo visible" (when it appears in a body [one can] see) (ibid.: 627). The flesh-and-bone nature of this appearance is more apparent in the entire passage, which attempts to elucidate the spiritual nature of God and the angels:

> . . . ni ay Diospa sayanin, que no hay en Dios sayay, que es estatura, sino en Christo solo por ser hombre, y en el angel no ay sayanin, sino es quando aparece en cuerpo visible. (Ibid.: 627)

> . . . nor is there presence in God, God does not have *sayay* [bodily presence], which is stature, only Christ because he is a human, neither do angels have *sayay,* except when they appear in human [bodily] form.

For the tropical forest peoples of Ecuador, this explanation might cause some difficulty. As is illustrated by the *ukumbi* snake symbol in the song, things are not always what they appear to be. The harmless *ukumbi* snake is also the fearful water boa, and the boa itself can be a foreign-looking woman with long black hair. Whatever the changing form, it still must be stressed that there is a definite corporeal shape which makes itself known to the singer. The *shayana-*

paktamuna concept may well serve to delineate the change from one bodily presence to another. In the Quni Raya myth from Huarochirí (chapter 4), the ragged old beggar who fathered the royal woman's child changed to another form when she ran away in disgust. The Quechua transcription includes the verb *sayarca* in this instance to indicate that when he stood up he transformed himself and was dressed in a shining golden tunic: "*Pachactapas hillarichispa sayarca*, 'mientras hacía relucir su vestidura se paró'" ([His] clothing shining too, he stood [transformed]) (Urioste 1983: 8, 9).

Among the lowland Quichua of Ecuador, a being which "our" world considers a spirit, a vision, may have corporeal presence. Women speak of frightening instances of having sexual relations with boa-men and of bearing their children for them. The description of the act of seduction is done in the concrete imagery of everyday language. Sex is described, when I probed into this, as being "just like with humans, the same." But this erotic union which arouses our curiosity did not elicit a similar response among the singers when I asked, "Does your lover *really* come into your existence?" or "Do you have *real* sex?" or "Was it a man-lover, was it a snake-lover?" In the shifting realities of the tropical forest cosmology, a snake transforms itself into a woman and is also a snake-woman. More important than sexual ecstasy, the songs serve as an explanation of the "forms of life" in that culture.

While the song distills the erotic expression, the companion narrative pinpoints a larger philosophical domain. We see this in the speech of the snake-woman's question, "What in the world are you doing here?" *Yanga*, the evasive answer, "I'm just wandering around," prompts the snake-woman to question further: "Is there something you want to know?" The process of discovery is explored in the switch from singular to plural. "You-all think about it," her command to the singer, attests to Carpenter's (1980) research into the existence of two hearts—a physical center (heart) and a spiritual center (another heart). Self-reflection and interpretation reside in a holistic joining of the dual selves. With the snake-woman's commentary, the woman singer is assured that she will survive her greatest fear that her husband and her children will abandon her, forget her.

"Mana kungariwangi, mana kungariwangi" (Don't forget me), the singer cautions twice in the song. In this act, her own memory of learning the song serves to have others remember her as well. She remembers the song in relation to a specific life crisis, a severe bodily pain, the time she was abandoned by her spouse, a time when she was barren of children. Taking *wanduk*, she sees a vision of her entire life, the world inside and out, and meets up with a special person

who befriends her and teaches her a song. The snake-woman, in this specific instance, inspires confidence that the crisis can be rectified, explains the nature of men who wander off and children who grow up. More than that, she reassures with the gift of song, destined for this one woman with this one purpose in mind.

Remembering, for this tropical forest singer, is recreating the visual stimulus which triggers the memory. The image of the snake-woman splashing, bathing, with her children grouped around her visually assures her of the continuity of familial affection. Each layer of the description—the *simayuka*, the foam of the river, deep pools—provides access to remembering and causing others to not forget, to also remember.

Identity is expanded and merged through song; the ambiguity of the person markers allows for a collapsing of rigid boundaries of definition of self, for the (human) woman singer becomes the (spirit snake) woman singer who empowers lover, son, and spirit lover to come into her presence. Time ceases to be measured in the usual categories, for past and present are held close in song. The song, translated accurately, is not a song of "Love Potion Number Nine," full of the ego-centeredness of Western thoughts, rational and scientific attempts to control and dominate one's surroundings. It is much more a song about alignment, of balancing male and female forces, of conjoining what we would call physical and spiritual constructs into one whole.

guro, Ecuador, 1975. Louisa Stark first told me about this song; she and Pieter Muysken also loaned me versions.

7. The exact location of Tiupulillu is near Tulcán, according to information in the volume on Ecuador, *Gazateer* no. 36, p. 176: 0425/78-38w.

8. Schechter (1983) gives further details regarding the child's wake in Ecuador and other countries of Latin America.

6. The Metaphysics of Sex

1. For additional information regarding the use of amulets, see Haley and Grollig (1976), Mariscotti de Görlitz (1978), and Girault (1984).

2. Seitz (1982) limits her study of communicative acts to only one sense of the verb.

3. For a description of the preparation of datura, see Whitten (1976: 98–100).

4. This song was taped in the environs of Arajuno, Ecuador, in 1975.

5. See Macdonald (1979) for male perspectives on *simayuka* and the hunting complex in the lowland regions of Ecuador.

6. The ambivalent attitudes toward *puricc* are examined by Delgado Vivanco (1942), who states that the "foreigner" represents the opposite of all that the *ayllu* stands for in continuing cultural traditions. Yet the *puricc* also is very much sought out as a mate to introduce new customs.

7. For an alternate version of the metacommunicative act of lowland songs, see Seitz (1981b, 1982).

7. Potato as Cultural Metaphor

1. A conservative figure of 400 B.C. is utilized by Ugent (1970) for the domestication of the potato; other researchers allude to "thousands of years of cultivation."

2. There are other sources for potato nomenclature in Sánchez Farfán (1979) and Vargas (1936).

3. Rolena Adorno very astutely investigates Guaman Poma's illustrations as a visual myth, "a system of signs that communicates on more than one level . . . the first system [is] the set of pictorial signs that constitutes the immediate substance of the particular representation, and the second level system [is] the syntagmatic combination of those elements in space" (1979: 31).

4. The potato was identified as a root in *Gerard's Herball* ([1597, 1636] 1927) and therefore was ascribed the negative attributes. Kahn (1984: 94) also comments on the conception of root crops in the United States: "Emerson, Thoreau, and their fellow Transcendentalists, for instance, would have no truck with food that grew below ground."

5. Potato nomenclature analyzed by Sánchez Farfán (1979) reveals additional classificatory categories of food, food processing (*chuñu*), storage qualities, size, shape of tuber, texture, and meal consistency.

6. Jabs (1984) promotes the concept of genetic diversity; many crops are grown from standardized, hybridized seeds so that a fungus can destroy millions of one plant in one season. Gene pools of seeds, such as the National Seed Storage Laboratory in Colorado, stockpile seeds that may be used to create new cultivars. In Peru, the International Potato Center maintains an inventory of 13,000 varieties of potatoes native to South America, stored as both true seeds and tubers (Woods and Martin 1987).

7. The original Spanish text: "En sus remotas páginas está escrito que los animales se dividen en (a) pertenecientes al Emperador, (b) embalsamados, (c) amaestrados, (d) lechones, (e) sirenas, (f) fabulosos, (g) perros sueltos, (h) incluidos en esta clasificación, (i) que se agitan como locos, (j) innumerables, (k) dibujados con un pincel finísimo de pelo de camello, (l) etcétera, (m) que acaban de romper el jarrón, (n) que de lejos parecen moscas" (Borges 1974: 708).

8. This subheading and the analysis are inspired by Paul Friedrich's comments on the "poetry of peppers" and many other provocative thoughts in his *The Language Parallax* (1986).

9. For further analysis of the Quechua themes in Arguedas's work, see Escobar (1984) and Harrison (1983).

10. John V. Murra's (1978) introduction to *Deep Rivers* gives further analysis of Arguedas's social consciousness.

11. Frances Horning Barraclough's English translation (1978: xiii), based on Arguedas's Spanish version of this poem, differs from my English translation derived from the Quechua.

12. I am indebted to Christine Franquemont for bringing this song to my attention and to Billie Jean Isbell for lending me the anthology. The poem appears in the anthology *Urqukunapa Yawarnin/La sangre de los Cerros* (Montoya, Montoya, and Montoya 1987). It was collected by Leo Casas, transcribed by Yanet Oroz, and offered to the anthologists by William Rowe.

13. I am grateful to Rolena Adorno for sending me a copy of this poem after reading an earlier version of this chapter. I acknowledge David Williams's kind permission to include the poem in this book.