

IMPERIAL SOLDIERS

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ABSTRACT: My goal in this text is to examine, from post-colonial perspective, some travel writings on the Amazon and demonstrate how they represented the Brazilian Amazon, its natural landscapes, its geography, its economies, ornithology, its cities and its inhabitants in end of the last century. For I intend to examine some images of Amazon in a post-colonial view I am going to use notions as colonialism, post-colonialism, culture and imperialism as well as Foucault's notion discursive practice.

Key-words: Amazon, Representation, Discourse, Post-colonialism.

RESUMO: Meu objetivo neste texto é examinar, de uma perspectiva pós-colonial, alguns relatos de viagem sobre a Amazônia e demonstrar como esses viajantes representaram a região, as suas paisagens naturais, sua geografia, suas economias, ornitologia, suas cidades e seus habitantes no final do século XX. Tendo em vista que pretendo examinar algumas imagens da Amazônia de um foco pós-colonial, usarei noções como colonialismo, pós-colonialismo, cultura e imperialismo, como também a noção de prática discursiva advinda de Foucault.

Palavras-chave: Amazônia, Representação, Discurso, Pós-colonialismo.

Post-colonial theory is needed because it has a subversive posture towards the canon, in celebrating the neglected or marginalized, bringing with it a particular politics, history and geography.

Post-colonial Literatures in English: History Language - Dennis Walder

It is a cause of very regret to me, but I would like to begin this text by asserting that the Amazon region continues to be observed by imperial eyes. It is not just because of its rainforests, its rivers, animals, insects and its species of plants that Amazon is under vigilance, or just because its dwellers can destroy it completely in few years, weeks or days, but it is because there is always a foreigner, who works for his/her imperial metropolis, infiltrated in the region, exploring it as if it were a place to be

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explored and submitted to the metropolis, or a location for wanderings in his/her search of his/her alterity. In this sense, his/her reports are always against native population. Moreover, Amazonian people know what these imperial “soldiers” affirm is that the Amazon region should be ruled by them – the explorers. The term “last frontier”, for example - used to refer to Brazilian Amazon - abounds in many travel writings as an attempt to persuade us to accept it as natural. Then Amazonian people are depicted in a depreciative way to maintain them in a colonial situation as Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin assert in their work *The Empires Writes Back* (1989). According to these authors, “In order to maintain authority over the other in a colonial situation, imperial discourse strives to delineate the other as radically different from the self, yet at the same time it must maintain sufficient identity with the other to valorize control over it” (1998, p. 103).

In this way, Legal Amazon has been seen by many historians, scholars, critics and travelers as an internal colony of Brazil. A place where all its dwellers have been accused of being its principal destroyers. If you just read one travel writing on the Amazon region, you will know that Brazilian Amazon is depicted as the last new world leading to development or submitted to the “First World’s greed - as all Amazonian people have been experienced in their everyday lives. In order to discuss against these statements, one of my aims in this text is to examine some travel writings and demonstrate how they have been depicted the Brazilian Amazon, its natural landscapes, its geography, its economies, its cities and its inhabitants and so on.

I do not just want to demonstrate it but to comprehend it and to warn Brazilian readers about the imperial tendencies perceptible in travel writing on the Amazon. So I intend to offer an approach to these texts following a post-colonial perspective. I will explore authors such as Frantz Fanon, Albert Memmi, Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, Helen Tiffin, Edward Said, Mary Louise Pratt, Homi Bhabha, Ngugi wa Thiong’o and I will also have a glance at Aimé Césaire’s *Discourse on Colonialism*. In order to follow these purposes I will first take a glance at George Monbiot’s *Amazon Watershed: the new environmental investigation*. Monbiot is a British journalist who traveled into

Amazon in 1980's. His investigative narrative is suggestive to understand why "First World" keeps on depicting its peripheries as the un-aculturated societies. Brazilian Amazon is a "disorderly world", a place where "an observer is a potential victim of the troubles" (1990, p. 03), Monbiot affirms at the beginning of his sentimental narrative. His depictions of the Amazon are more a result of auto congratulation (he does not belong to this place) than a historical and critical writing and heterogeneous discourse that exist among Amazonian people. Either he was not completely able to see it or, as I advocate, he is more one of those imperial soldiers that see only what he/she wanted to see. An illustrative passage, for example, can be quoted to confirm my arguments:

Latin America's history is, since the Conquista, the story of exploiters and exploited. When the tribal people of the Amazon that the colonists made of died out, the *caboclos* and a new underclass of Portuguese Brazilian peasants took their place. When these proved insufficient, no social organization was required to admit imported slaves. It was in the days of the conquistadores that the great division between rich and poor were first established. They have persisted to the extend that 29 per cent of workers now earn less the minimum salary, while some Brazilian businessmen are among the highest earners in the world.

It is the pattern of colonization and exploitation from which the Amazon still suffers. Amazonia is now used by the south of Brazil much as Brazil was once used by Portugal. It is in many respects an internal colony, from which wealth is drained by the rich and to which the undesirables of the nation - the poor whose problems must be swept out the sight if they are not to upset the established order - are sent. (MONBIOT, 1990, p. 220).

Monbiot's criticisms are always against the native people of the Amazon. Who are the "undesirables of the nation"? The Indigenous peoples? The Caboclos? The poorest Brazilian populations? All of them, it is clear. But, please, listen: They were all much rich before "white" men arrived their territories. Are you able to understand it? Their nations were destroyed by whom? By violence, my brothers were forced to work to the "White" men. By violence, all my kinships were Christianized. Our beliefs were paganism - they assert - I mean, European colonizers use this sort of statement to re-affirm in their colonial discursive practices that native's religious rituals were paganism. But it is only another repulsive lie. As we can see, "they" - those undesirables of the nation - are all my ancestries and because of it I am rewriting this sordid history

invented and reinvented by those “captains of industries” (Aimé Césaire’s expression) in their travel writings. These captains of imperialism are just another prejudiced men working to their capitalist societies and much more. If we are the slaves, they are judges. In this text, this cruel and unfortunate way of telling the history of the Amazon people is reverted.

Against such depictions we have to struggle not just because of it is wrong or it does not represent the “real” history of the Amazon, but because every people who have been lived here for centuries, must be respected and considered its as people who belong here, and not simply the Other. Then, Amazonian way of life, work practices, religious ceremonies and multifarious cultures must be recognized as part of our identity then as part of us. Being ashamed of these ways of life is to deny our cultural identity and confirm the inferiority performed by those/these men that represent their imperial country. It is just because they have dreamed to be a great power in the world - through subjugation of others people - that many travelers depicted this region like that and, for a specie of historical condemnation, they depicted themselves as monstrous human beings. In this way, the colonizer and the colonized are under the same level of political process. Our cultures, our way of being in the universe must be preserved. Ngugi wa Thiongo, for example, speaking about cultural values in his work *Decolonising the Mind* punctuates:

There is a gradual accumulation of values which in time become almost self-evident truths governing their conception of what is right and wrong, good and bad, beautiful and ugly, courageous and cowardly, generous and mean in their internal and external relations. Over a time this becomes a way of life distinguishable from others way of life. They develop a distinctive culture and history. Culture embodies those moral, ethical and aesthetic values, the set of spiritual eyeglasses, through which they come to view themselves and their place in universe. Values are the basis of a people identity, their sense of particularity as members of the human race. All this is carried by language. Language as culture is the collective memory bank of a people’s experience in history (1981, p. 14-15).

We, Amazon people, know that Brazil still has great problems to solve. Here I ask: Who created this infernal separation in the Latin America’s history? Of course, the

travelers contributed so much with this way of representation. Since the “invasion”, the History of exploiters and exploited abounds in the Amazon. Is it different from other colony? When Monbiot affirms: “when the tribal people of the Amazon that the colonists made of died out, the caboclos and a new *underclass* of Portuguese Brazilian peasants took their place”, he is serving orthodox capitalism that rules his country completely. Tribal people did not die, as he simply affirmed, they were brutally assassinated by those greedy “white” men. They - the caboclos - belonged to an “underclass” of Brazilian because they were (are) plundered, stolen and they have continued to be assaulted today. By whom?

The naturalization of colonialism, like any form of oppression, can be seen in Monbiot’s writing. When he affirms that “Latin America’s history is, since the Conquista, the story of exploiters and exploited”, for example, what does it mean for us, Brazilian Amazon people? I think this assertive drives into subjugation of all peoples who have been struggling against Latin American servitude. Against condemnation of this region to subjugation to the “great nations” we have to rewrite it according to our own historical process. The Caboclos’ importance in the history of Amazonian people should not be denied, but it has to have to be exalted. They - the caboclos - are representative for local development and they are responsible for many myths, legends, *representations* and allegories of Amazon region. Fanon, however, asserts in *The Wretched the Earth* (1990, p. 171) that “Colonialism has made effort to plant deep in the minds of the native population the idea that before the advent of colonialism their history was one which was dominated by barbarism”. Aware of this effort, Amazonian people ought to drive their forces against any kind of oppression.

Following these sorts of depictions on the Amazon from post-colonial perspective - *Amazon Watershed* - like many other travel writings - omits the caboclo’s importance in the History of Brazil Colony and in Amazon historical settlement. Over these Amazonian peoples horrible things have been said and divulged yet, some stereotypes were/are forged as a form of relegating them to a marginalized place. The greed, violence and brutality suffered by these Amazonian inhabitants - the caboclos -

from the days of colonization to present moment of history have condemned them to death. It is not a surprise to hear some of them replying, when they are asked about their origin or ancestries: “I am not caboclo”; “I am not from that tribe”; “I am not riverman” or as many people say in Lábrea, my hometown, in Purus river border: “I am not praiano”. Let us see a suggestive passage quoted from Geoffrey O’Connor’s *Amazon Journal: dispatches from a vanishing frontier* (1997) in order to illustrate this kind of posture.

There is Ana, a big-boned woman in her late teens who is constantly teased by others for being an Indian. Her features resemble those of the Macuxi, a local indigenous group contacted by Brazilian society more than a century ago, but she denies any kinship. She is the housekeeper. Then there is Arthur, a plump gay man in an open short-sleeved shirt and bikini bathing suit talking incessantly about his crushes on various miners who have appeared that day at the encampment, just some of the two hundred men said to be arriving daily in Yanomami territory. A few minutes after our arrival Arthur pulls me outside and insists that I take a photo of him so that *gatos americanos, sexy American men, “can see what a real Brazilian man looks like”*. (1997, p. 20).

As we can observe, O’Connor follows the same Monbiot’s paradigm. Indigenous peoples and the Caboclos are forced into the same framework. Ana is teased constantly by other for being an Indian girl, but she denies it not just because she does not want to be an Indigenous woman. She denies because she is intelligent to notice her life among “White men” just can get better if she refuses her kinship. Instead of being proud of her indigenous kinship, she refuses it to conquer her place among her colonizers. Then her denial is simply a strategy of negotiation with those who have had teased her constantly. Here we can ask: who is the savage? That who fights for a dignified life in his/her own territory or those who invade other territories, destroy cultures and kill their inhabitants? As Neide Gondim affirms, “*selvagens deveriam ser alcunhados aqueles que modificam a cultura dos outros e que vêm o novo com o olhar do passado*” (1999, p. 14). How can we, Amazonian people, survive in a different way? Our place is here in Amazon. The Geography is absolutely part of our territorial identity. It means what we are because it represents our place in the world. The local is

so important to our idea to belonging to a human community in the tropics. Colonization, in a horrifying way, goes on, but now we are aware and we know that we can fight against kind of oppression. From here we cry out following the Madeira river waters.

For his own end's, O'Connor depicts Ana and Arthur as a local deviation. Ana as a big-boned woman in her late teens should signify to his comrades, an ugly, almost old and not interesting woman. Her late teens deny her beauty and her activities. Her attractiveness was at the end. For O'Connor and for his readers, Ana is condemned to death. Nothing has value on Ana, even if she is an Elton Kronholt's housemaid. Arthur, a plump gay man in an open short-sleeved shirt and bikini bathing suit, is O'Connor's mockery on native men. Meanwhile Ana is a big-boned woman Macuxi and Arthur is a plump gay man, O'Connor then is a god who judges and condemned them to hell. He, as a filmmaker and writer, puts himself as god, Adam and, at the same time, as Narcissus. He creates Ana and Arthur according to his desires, dreams, imagination and he gives them names and nicknames, but he should feel himself as Narcissus among Amazonian "deviation". Then we can ask again: what does civilization mean?

From this representation the reader is roused to indignation. How do Amazonian fellows get a dignified life serving these invaders? Why are Ana and Arthur depicted depreciably as intruder's serves? Who is Elton Kronholt if not a stranger among us? Why do they – Ana and Arthur - work in Kronholt's home? Prosperos and Calibans communities must not be restructured in real life once again. I do not to suggest any kind of xenophobia, but I do suggest we miss a fair world. For sure Ana and Arthur - as I believe - are aware that Kronholt is in their hands. From this perspective, the treatment applied to us, caboclos, not only in travel writing literature, is shameful and unacceptable. Our philosophy, beliefs, economies, histories, myths, etc., must be valorized if we want to exist.

But Amazonian odyssey is satirized and ignored by a traveler-journalist who judges himself as an expert on Brazilian History. It is not a secret to notice it at some - if not all - travel writings on the Amazon. From page to page these imperial soldiers

paint the Amazon this or that atrocious way. Brazilian reders know what they are always saying, painting and rewriting. As Fanon claims once more: “The ‘ex-native’ too often gets the impression that these reports are already written. The photos which illustrate the article are simply a proof that one knows what one is talking about, and that one has visited the country. The report intends to verify the evidence: everything’s going badly out there since we left” (FANON, 1990, p. 60).

Therefore, if the reader is reading from postcolonial perspective, it is completely possible to interrogate some travel writings that were written mainly after Chico Mendes’s murder, for example - as a temporal and historical portrait. They depicted Amazon region as a place of primitivism, ugliness, bestiality and trivialities. As interrogate the authors of *The Empire Writes Back*, “why should post-colonial societies continue to engage with imperial experience?” (1989, p. 06). For the purposes of this text, I interrogate some travel writings searching for comprehension and seeking to subvert them using postcolonial theory as a tool for suggesting ways to decolonise these oppressive ways of writing, which are against Amazonian societies. In other words, I am telling you that is necessary to subvert this kind of writing if we wish to get rid off this colonial mind. Amazonian Indian or Caboclos are not strangers as they have been depicted in these travel writing. So these depictions must be dismantled not only because of they are wrong, but because Amazonian people claim for justice.

Thus if the basic ingredient of colonialism is seen as oppression, the ingredient of post-colonialism is the flexibility, as asserts post-colonial theory. It is a movement that exposes to both the colonizer and ex-colonized the falsity or validity of their assumptions. Post-colonialism is a dialectical movement that searches not only to deny some “truths” constructed by colonialism, but asserts that no culture is better or worse than other culture, as declare the precursors of post-colonialism: Frantz Fanon, Edward Said, Homi Bhabha, Mary Louise Pratt, Chinua Achebe, Aimé Césaire, NgugiwaThiong’o and Helen Tiffin, for example, and also writers like Mia Couto, J. M. Coetzee, Derick Walcott, R. K. Narayan, Raja Rao, Alice Walker, Toni Morrison, among others.

Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* claims that “decolonization is a historical process: that is to say that it cannot be understood, it cannot become intelligible nor clear to itself except in the exact measure that we can discern the movements which give it historical form and content” (1990, p. 27). Fanon's idea is that “colonial world is divided in two” and only by violence the real man can be born, because it was through violence that natives were forced to work in slavery systems. Thus Fanon advocates that “the native is an oppressed person whose permanent dream is to become the persecutor” (1990, p. 41).

Fanon conceives decolonization as “a programme of complete disorder” (1990, p. 27) necessary to reach the new organization of the colonial world where native must be included. Then, perhaps, the native peoples are condemned since born to this war. Colonized decided to fight against any form of oppression, negligence and authorities which come from colonizer's will, because it is a fair war. According to Fanon, “decolonization unifies that people by the radical decision to remove from it its heterogeneity and by unifying it on a national, sometimes a racial basis” (1990, p. 35). These people, for instance, as says Fanon, are aware of this unity. It is necessary to the struggle against any colonizer discourse.

Therefore, following the post-colonial perspective, as I have been discussing, we can refute the colonial discourse that unites all travel writing on Amazonian regions and rethink our way of representations. As Mary Louise Pratt writes in her work *Imperial Eyes* (1990), “redundancy, discontinuity and unreality are some of coordinators of imperialist text”. Then, travel writing constitutes the major source for deconstruction of some stereotypes that circulate in this writing process. This discursive practice (Foucault's expression) must be used as a process of “writing back” as affirm *The Empire Writes Back*'s authors: “the alienating process which initially served to relegate the post-colonial world to the ‘margin’ turned upon itself and acted to push that world through a kind of mental barrier into a position from which all experience could be viewed as uncentred, pluralistic and multifarious. Marginality then became an unprecedented source of creative energy” (1989, p. 12).

As any Brazilian student knows and a large number of travel writing affirms, among them, Andrew Revkin's *The Burning Season*, "The Amazon could also help absorb 'surplus population' from the overcrowded, permanently depressed northeast" (1990, p. 104). So, the development of the Amazon suited the generals' military plan to occupy so as not to surrender ignored Amazonian people that have been living here for many centuries: Indigenous peoples, rubber tappers, riverbank peoples, fishermen and extractivists peoples etc. As recognizes *The Burning Season's* author: "Brazil's grandiose strategy for occupying the Amazon failed to take into account an important fact: the forest was already occupied. Thousands of Indians, ribeirinhos, rubber tappers, Brazil nut gatherers, and other groups had been living and working in the forest for decades, some whose cultures dated back centuries" (1990, p. 116).

Since Amazon River first was traveled by Orellana group in 1541-2, searching reach the Atlantic Ocean, this region has been depicted as a place at same time dangerous and promising. Alexander von Humboldt, according to Pratt's *Imperial Eyes*, reinvented American at the same time as "wild and giant". According to Pratt, his experimental narratives are responsible for many misunderstanding.

Pursuing my analysis, I am going to quote some passages from Alex Shoumatoff's *The World is Burning*. Shoumatoff is one more of those who were influenced by books of opinions on the Amazon or by stories told by someone based on impressions on Amazonian inhabitants. Then, he hastens to alert his readers at the beginning of his book: "to what extend can you believe anything? Especially in a place like Brazil, where the general outlook on the passing scene is so fluid, where so many things - cultural attitudes, even the continuously changing currency - conspire against the vision of a stable, fixed reality" (1990, p. xvi). Here again, doubt, hypocrisy, misbehavior and weakness are underlined as synonyms of a retrograde and narrow-minded society. Instead of an exchange of experiences, stories, examples or common life, we have judgment which drives into a shameful imperialist practice.

According to Edward Said, in his work *Orientalism*, imperialism "means the practice, the theory and the attitudes of a dominating metropolitan centre ruling a distant

territory”(1979). What can you see on Shoumatoff’s assertive if no imperial practice? In fact, what he wants is to continue the European propagation about inferiority on their others. In this perspective, their travel writings, diaries and political speeches reinforces that there are no discipline, no stable history, no political and economic structures. If “the general outlook on the passing scene is so fluid”, as Shoumatoff wants, he must be the omniscient guy lost in Amazon valleys. This is not an exercise of wisdom, but an exercise of arrogance and insult. But this - we should know - is a discursive practice reinvented to keep authority on other lands and its inhabitants. We must be aware of this sordid way of discourse. Our historical identity must be preserved. Earth - Nature and Spirit we are. Our exercise of wisdom is our mark of humanity and happiness. It is like that that we are looking at that great light in the horizon, beyond our place.

This kind of prejudiced journalist is not a friendly person, says Aimé Césaire’s *Discourse on colonialism*. For Césaire, enemies are “not only sadistic governors and greedy bankers, not only prefects who torture and colonists who flog, (...) but likewise and for the same reason, venomous journalists, goitrous academicians, (...) - all of them tools of capitalism, all of them, openly or secretly, supporters of plundering colonialism” (Italics are mine) (1972, p. 33). It is not aggressiveness, but the consequences of their insults. As Césaire recognizes “no one colonizes innocently, no one colonizes with impunity either” (1972, p. 18).

Shoumatoff’s travel writing is full of misunderstanding, misrepresentations, abuses and insults. His depictions of Amazonian people are more a form of racism than an exercise of equality and respect for the others. In this manner, a passage will be quoted to show his racism, xenophobia and narcissism.

It was an open border into Bolivia: there were no guards. The people along the road on the other side of the bridge were much more Indian in appearance. The frontier was like a cultural ecotone. The main square was colorful, antique, arcaded, more in the crumbling Spanish colonial mode, like in Mexico. It wa like a movie set, the caricature of a South American hole - Cobija, the notorious border town . Many of the stores were completely devoted to scotch. Bottles of the best brands, Chivas, Glenfiddich, trucked up from Chile, stood in glass windows and display cases. A painted, dolled-up sensual dwarf in a tight blouse and skirt with platform shoes sashayed across

the square for our benefit as we sat licking mango ice cream cones (SHOUMATTOF, 1990, p. 80).

Then, it seems to me that the journalist and his colleague are observers - Adams in Amazon Garden? Nobody did tell them that respect is necessary? For preserving our lives in frontier we show our teeth, like jaguars in front of their predator. Our crying, our feeling, our love, our children, our animals are gods for us. Our magical way to stay in the world must be respected and preserved. Shoumatoff does not know, I think, that Amazonian Indian were taught to drink firewater with strangers “white” invaders. There is no necessity to put guards there, because Brazilian and Bolivian people respect each other. What does he have against Indigenous people? Why does he depict Indigenous peoples like a monstrous creature? He believes and reproduces the climatic or geographic theory as responsible for create this kind of people - it is a shameful enunciation. It is really shameful to read it and not answer. Our stories, our way of making love are ours. Our richness is also ours. Here we can visualize aggressiveness again. So, to sit, to watch and to eat a delicious ice-cream are their success? It is a shameful posture too. For me, it seems that Amazonian peoples are generous with their inhabitants and invaders, but be careful with it. Amazon produces everything to reproduces itself. It is sufficiently intelligent to get along with glory, with pleasure and with torture too. It is not a dying place; on the contrary, it is a vivid organism which has been producing me and have being producing all human “green” fellows - my comrades.

As we can perceive in the quotation above, comparisons and metaphors are used by Shoumatoff to paint us as a form of humiliating ourselves. The place from where I have been speaking, then, must not be used only for make accusation - it is not my really intention - in spite of this, what do you expected from my part? Silence? Agreements? Congratulations? Sorry for my way of walking, of constructing another direction for my way of thinking. Amazon rivers, valleys, magical landscapes, waterfalls, representations, festivals, animals, insects, and different peoples have been stayed in an upper level of comprehension of the Amazon world. Calibans changed the

direction. Prosperos are not in the command. For we can resist any invasion, any wrong way of construction depicted by any journalist, sadistic travelers, with our way of be in the world. “Dissimulated people” - as say a lot of these journalist and filmmakers? I do not believe it - because it is just another lie – Aimé Césaire has warned us: “The colonialists may kill in Indochina, torture in Madagascar, imprison in Black Africa, crack down in the West Indies. Henceforth the colonized know that they have an advantage over them. They know that their temporary “masters” are lying” (1972, p.10).

In this perspective, post-colonial philosophers, post-colonial writers, have been crying out that colonial discourse have created and recreating only lies on the “colonized” fellows. Is it not shameful? Unacceptable, we are conscious. We never work against ourselves, on the contrary, for our survival and continuity in the world like intelligible peoples. We, Amazonian peoples, camouflage ourselves when hunting. And we are always hunting. The use of branches, paints, nets, smokes and words, mainly, are our speciality - our special forces. We learned from the beginning that if we wanted to exist we had to struggle for survive as African peoples also know.

If Shoumatoff says “Many of the stores were completely devoted to scotch. Bottles of the best brands, Chivas, Glenfiddich, trucked up from Chile, stood in glass windows and display cases”, I say that we are nor divorced from others countries of the South America, neither unconscious of our interchange with each other. This completely devoted is just his way of see himself separated from others countries, not ours. We know that United States of America dream to be the center separated from others parts of the world, but judging and wanting to rule these parts. Does a “pure” society go ahead in their mind? No, but the peacock is passing among us. His domination does not work with us. As Aimé Césaire - when writes about proletarianization and mystification - punctuates: “Every day that passes, every denial of justice, every beating by the police, every demand of the workers that is drowned in blood, every scandal that is hushed up, every expedition, every police van, every gendarme and every mutilation brings home to us the value of our old societies (1972, p. 23). All of them, shameful, fetid and putrid ways of “beastification”.

Césaire's discourse oscillates between two great lies: civilization and colonization. I say lies because these two concepts were forged by Europeans for invading, for plundering, for subjugation of all human being who differs from, who rejects, who struggles against Europe ideas on colonialism. Césaire, then, makes a discussion on how colonization works to decivilize the colonizer and colonized man. The “dishonest equations” Christianity = civilization and paganism = savagery are “abominable” and they have “racist consequences, whose were to be the Indians, the yellow peoples, and the Negroes” (1972, p. 11). “Colonization”, he says, “works for decivilize the colonizer, to brutalize him in the true sense of the word, to degrade him, to awaken him to buried instincts, to covetousness violence, race hatred, and moral relativism (1972, p. 13).

To conclude this text, I would like to state following Said's suggestion that cultural discourse and exchange within a culture is commonly circulated not as ‘truths’, but representations. In fact, the language, the written language, for example, is a representation. In this way, all constructions on the Amazon are only configurations, representation, and never real depictions. All depictions quoted from the travel writings - of course constructed by these journalists and filmmakers - only try to represent for their readers an exotic thing, as the first travelers always represented the Amazon to the European and North American readers. My anxiety was to review these depictions and try to reply them. I hope that the practice of reading and “writing back” some passages from these travel books make clearer what they really want to demonstrate and re-create: from their part, an Amazon always exotic and inert, from our part, show them how much Amazon peoples are aware of this kind of representation and that we are able to rewriting back some of these insults.

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