

CLOTH, CULTURE, AND CHANGE:

The Effects of Globalisation on Indigenous
Textile Production in Peru.

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Introduction

With the increasing ease of communication and travel differing cultures are ever more in contact with each other. Information and goods flow from country to country, and the exchange of cultures and influences spread around the globe.

We live in a world of “transnational flows and multicultural influences” (Root 2005:1), where the “local is constantly remade for a world market”(ibid.: 2).

Consumers drive a market that requires goods that are special, different and new; wants that cannot be satisfied by what is available at home. Marx was writing a century ago when he said that “modern industry has established the world market...All old-established national industries... are dislodged by new industries whose...products are consumed, not only at home, but in every quarter of the globe. In place of old wants, we find new wants, requiring for their satisfaction the products of distant lands and climes” (cited in Zwingle 1999:12)

Indigenous arts and craftwork satisfy a need for goods that are different, exotic, a fantastic gift. These pieces of art and craftwork are born of years of developing traditions with a rich history and meaning, a part of a culture with specific social meanings and ties. When this work then becomes a commodity for sale to a foreign consumer it changes its form as an item, its ties to the community are cut and its purpose altered. Western societies look across the globe for inspiration and materials, and while this may result in a world-wide culture, rich and varied, a meeting of people, ideas and innovations, it carries its concerns. Is it inevitable that the powerful consumer driven economies and cultural interests of western

nations will over power those in the minority, and will lead to a world without the differences and variability that are so much enjoyed?

A large entailment of globalisation is the movement and flow of people. One of the central causes of this a huge increase in tourism, which as the largest worldwide industry moves people continually around the globe. By visiting distant peoples and lands, communities whose traditions were once isolated are brought into contact with those of the larger world. Interest in their lives and culture may mean that people and their traditions are presented as a commodity, to be appreciated and enjoyed, exciting both interest and income from curious foreigners. Tourist experience without exception has major affect on both the host and the visitor. Concentrating on the affects that tourism has on host communities, several issues are to be considered, among which is the discussion of what it is that makes indigenous communities and their artworks so interesting to the outside world. What is it to consider a people and their culture to be of the 'other', as discussed by academics who are themselves writing from a different point of view, writing about communities and their art work as a subject while coming from different backgrounds?

Peruvian textiles are a visual representation of the fascinating and remarkable Andean culture whose textile practises, from Pre-Inca to current day, continue to amaze and enthrall. Attracting world-wide attention to their culture, they are renowned for their vibrant and complex patterning, highly-developed technical

skill and superb beauty. In museums, pieces up to four thousand years old are regarded in awe. Their textile practises are enduring today, and still hold a pivotal place in the community. Times are changing, and the introduction and increase of tourism has brought along the realisation of the economically beneficial purpose that the textile work can take, Tourists pour into markets to buy up collectable pieces, souvenirs and gifts. It is these same textiles have been a marker of identity within and outside communities; as colour, pattern and structure signify geography, age, and social status. Peruvian textile traditions have an extensive history; long-standing traditions that make them what they are today. There is a need to consider how significantly these traditions have been affected by modern day forces, and to assess the effects on the lives of the people whose arts are so interesting to people with different social and cultural interests, and how this will determine the future of their traditions.

Peru has had a tumultuous past, conquered again and again, and archaeologists have long been drawn towards the study of its impressive civilisations and their remains. The most famous is the Incas, whose civilisation, centred around the valley of Cusco, which is famed for its awe-inspiring buildings and impressive social structures. Their reign lasted from mid-sixteenth to seventeenth century, until the coming of the Spanish who by the mid 1500's had colonised the country. The Spanish, on arrival, were amazed by a culture whose rich artistic traditions were expressive and developed, utilizing superior weave techniques to those on the European side. The conquerors forced the Peruvian inhabitants into

subservience, and there began a regime which put Spanish incomers in power, in a position where they ruled the Indians who were considered to be “expendable labourers”, who were “exploited” (Beech & Rachowiecki 2004: 28). Lacking in freedom, the Peruvians, as other colonized groups, revolted and Peruvian independence arrived in 1824. The majority population of Peru is of Indian or of mixed heritage, and about half live in the rural highlands of the Andes, oft referred to as Andeans, some speaking Quechua and some Aymara. It is only in recent years that they have had significant political power. In 2001, Alejandro Toledo, of Indian descent, was elected president of Peru.

Tourism is by no means the only way in which globalisation affects the population of Peru. Latin Americans are, just as the rest of the world, seen as consumers. Global corporations see opportunities for mass consumerism, and the phenomenon of globalisation has impact on local lives. New ideals and ways of life are introduced into daily life, as the Peruvian government is determined that the incorporation of indigenous people with the rest of the nation is vital. Both parties gain from this, but there necessarily belies other issues. Standards of living may be improving, but the results are unequal, and as for peoples the world over, material possessions do not necessarily equal wealth, and the same, Ackerman cites, goes for Quechua’s as for a native Alaskan man who spoke these words “We did not know we were poor until people came up here and called us poor” (Heckman 2003: 161).

Being given the opportunity to visit Peru enabled me to see the textiles that are being produced and sold to tourists. I was able to experience personally what it is like to be a tourist visiting indigenous communities, to be interested in their artworks, to want to buy textile pieces for myself, for gifts. I walked around markets held by members of indigenous communities in Peru, looking to buy jewellery and clothing items because they will be an interesting addition to my wardrobe at home, to buy a hand-woven brightly coloured textile piece with which to decorate my room. Taking work that is inspired by age-old traditions and to enjoy it thousands of miles away on the other side of the world, in an entirely different social, cultural, economic setting without ever being able to fully understand, despite my interests, the conditions that have inspired such work.

These questions are sourced by subject matter that is incredibly broad in nature, spanning many different subject areas and touching on a world of issues that, being so broad, would be too vast to assess within the limits of this study.

Notwithstanding informal conversations and brief meetings with members of communities I visited, there are limitations to my research. I have, for example, without being able to speak Spanish, or Quechua, been unable to personally conduct interviews with members of the indigenous communities. The aim of this essay is not to make precise measurements, but is to recognise and discuss the multi-faceted nature of the issues that affect indigenous society in Peru. It is impossible to come up with definite answers with such a huge realm of variables and theories. The intention is to select and appreciate those issues which are

most important, while considering how the uncountable forces of globalisation may affect indigenous society in Peru. There is a need to narrow the focus, by concentrating mainly on tourism and fashion and considering whether expression through exceptional and confident aesthetic cultures will endure in a fast changing world. By looking at a broad spectrum of opinions and theories as outlined by experts, I will inform my own first hand experiences of being a tourist in Peru, and my understanding of the issues which affect the lives of the people who live there and the production of their textiles.

One

Globalisation and Change

Business is global; big names compete on a worldwide scale. McDonalds is consumed the world over. Adidas, Nike, Puma; three examples of the prodigious amount of world-renowned brand-names with massive advertising capacity that infiltrate into so many of the world's cultures and spread ideas of western ideals and standardisation. There is a network of political structures that govern in world terms; the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the United Nations. At the same time, these are all organisations where the central power lies with the most powerful i.e. most developed nations.

Technological revolutions mean that with the spread of the phone, fax and world wide web the world is well connected. Television, cable and Sky T.V. mean that people from all over the world will watch the same sports, music, film and news channels, and that international politics and sports will take place on a "world stage". It is so that, in the "Global Village", "distances and borders don't matter". (Goldstein 2003: 65).

The twentieth century has seen the forces of globalisation, by no means new, developing at an ever-increasing pace. Many fears have been expressed as to the loss of the world's borders, within which we would see the production of a "unified and integrated common culture" (Featherstone 1990: 115). Theories of

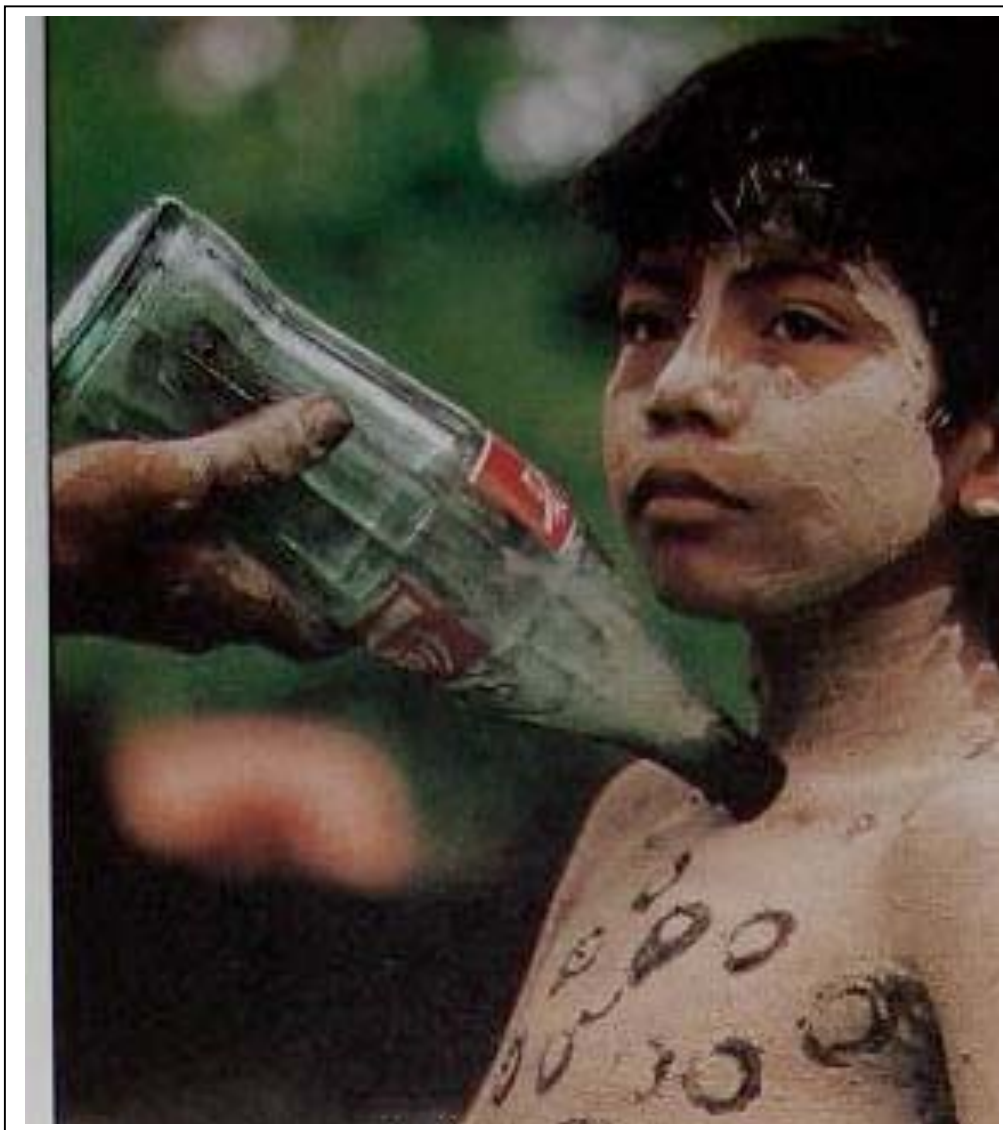
cultural and media imperialism expressively communicate that the influx of media, advertising and consumer goods, the dominating western capitalist market, will pummel local cultural ideas from existence (Featherstone 1990), by luring “communities into dependency on the fringes of an expanding world-wide consumer society” (Hannerz 1991: 108). This scenario of globalisation entails that the circulation and flow of ideas will be moving in a one way direction, from the centre to those seemingly flimsy cultures of the outside where “the loss of culture would show itself more distinctly at the periphery” (ibid.), a process described by Tomlinson as neither “inclusive nor balanced, nor in the best sense synthesising. It does not draw equally on the worlds’ diverse cultural traditions...it is in short the global extension of Western culture” (Tomlinson 2000: 23).

It is common then, when approaching globalisation to be talking about westernisation; the extension of western ideals and values, reflecting capitalist and western trends of consumption, dress, fashions, eating habits, music and films. It may be viewed as “ a Golden Arch in every town, a Madonna on every magazine cover, a sweatshop in every alley, a coke on every table” (Feffer, J 2002 ;1). Figure one makes a strong statement – the body ornamentation of a young tribal boy by utilising a coca cola bottle to make the marks. The spread of European languages, centrally English, is something that signifies such concerns for all-consuming western cultures. Currently, nearly 7000 languages are at the risk of extinction. A quarter of the population of the world speak at least some English. (Goldstein 2003). It is possible that in a century nearly half the world’s

languages currently spoken may be no more. Surely the loss of this divergence, this distinction that separates but also enriches, would be something to lament, something more Davis writes, than “a cluster of words ... a language is a flash of the human spirit by which the soul of a culture reaches into the material world”.

(Davis 1999: 65)

Figure One
Coca Cola bottle used to adorn young boys skin.



But intercultural contact works both ways – the spread of world cultures flows in and out of western countries, and as Feffer exemplifies, when “New Yorkers eat sushi, Tokyoites dance to Hong Kong Pop, Chinese watch French Movies, Parisians read Senegalese novels, the residents of Dakar visit Argentinian web sites and New York-style bagels are a hit in Buenos Aires” (2002: 1), rather than curtailing diversity there seems to be an vastly expanded range of life-choices.

Humans have the need to build an identity – visual symbols and actions that signify what we want others to understand from our actions and appearance. Clothing for example, or the way we decorate our homes. This is true of people all over the World, but consumers in western countries (Europe, North America) are by now especially used to being able to select from a wide range of cultural meanings and to be able to select them to create a self-identity. (Arnould et al 2004; 134). It is the movement of cultural values into a product that makes it appealing to a consumer. Marketeers talk about the how cultural meaning attached to a product is transferred from a social and physical environment into a consumer good, so that people who share cultural values and experiences will share a common association of a meaning in a product. (ibid.) Goods accumulate symbolic cultural meaning, signs and symbols that are attached by cultural implication. Clothes are a good example of this; it is generally understood in Western countries that someone wearing a suit and tie looks smart and will probably work in a formal environment. Other assumptions maybe made in different countries according to a differing perspective. It is this that is picked

up on by advertisers – so for example the cultural value of a good being environmentally friendly or fair trade, is a trend that is currently an emphasised point of many advertising campaigns, as it is perceived culturally to be morally sound buying. The fashion-system is a way which marketing is transferred into goods – ie. Designers, reporters, celebrities, opinion leaders; influence what is considered to be good to have.

By our choices we determine how we want others to see us and how we understand ourselves, as a cultural experience, fashion is a profoundly social experience that invites individual and collective bodies to assume certain identities and, at times, also to transgress limits and create new ones". (Root 2004; 1) Infact, Pancrazio asserts that, "emanating from capitalist excess, fashion is very much part of the symbolic order; it is structured like a language...clothing, styles, accessories, and cosmetics depend largely on the combination of structures that produce the image of a complete (textual) body" (cited in Root 2005 :232).

The worldwide scope for choice allows for multi-cultural selection, and as anthropologists refer to, the 'consumption of ethnicity". The desire for that which is construed to be 'hand-made', 'ethnic', more-over out of the ordinary means that designers and fashion leaders – including not only clothing but interiors, food, music, movies and advertising borrow ideas from around the world. (Arnould, 2004;103) This has created endless marketing opportunities for that

which is to be considered to be ethnic. The late 1980's saw a boom in western consumer desire for the ethnic – a reaction to industrialisation and desire for the handmade, authentic, lead to purchasing interest in third and fourth world ethnic art. (Zorn cited in Root 2004; 135). Looking through any current fashion glossy, arrays of 'ethnic' catwalk garments adorn the pages. With fashion influences gathered from all over the world, designers take inspirations from a diverse range of cultures and traditional arts, 'borrowing' ideas from age old traditions. A trend that has continually reappeared, a recent fashion editorial for the financial times declares that this season "global exotica – in all its various manifestations is predominant"(Freidman 2005: W6) Figure 2 shows an excerpt from British vogue, and the influence of the South American on current fashion trends. Fashions inspired by the Indian continent as declared to be "well, fashion", and "in vogue" is anything that "might inspire the spirit of Africa, from beading and ethnic embroidery to tribal prints and macramé". (Ings-Chambers 2005: W7)



Figure Two

There is what Hannerz suggests is the development of a class that is relatively well-off, educated, “globally sophisticated” (Niesson 2003;14), whose “passionate pursuit of the new and diverse drives the creation of global culture” (Niesson 2003;14). It is generally considered that in developed countries, especially the U.S.A, society tends towards independence goals, whereby individuals strive to be independent and to stand out. This leads to the uniqueness motive, which is a product of the “drive to perceive oneself as different from others” (Arnould 2004; 274). It is clear that “the vision of a homogenous world without differences

leaves an unsatisfied feeling, which is translated into an idealisation of the past and yearning for the authenticity it represents” (Rivers 1995: 39). A result of postmodernist reaction is that there is a yearning for that which is authentic, out-of-the-ordinary, something different to the mass-produced, machine-made. The notion of the “old ways”, Stephens says, is “as important as buying the products themselves”. (cited in Schevill 1991: 382). Reactions to the accumulation of such goods may be rewarding, as Graburn (1976: 2) explains ‘one gains prestige by association with these objects, whether they are souvenirs or expensive imports; there is a cachet connected with international travel, exploration, multiculturalism etc.’ Tourists purchase items from tourist markets for, as an example, decoration of the home, buying a textile because it will look good spread across the sofa. It is attractive, probably relatively cheap, a signifier of foreign travel and international wisdom. Gift buying plays a huge part in consumer spending in tourist markets. To buy something unique, special, hand-made; carried back from abroad is a personal, individual and significant gift which fits into the “meanings (and) feelings evoked” which are emphasised as the “heart of an enormous amount of consumer behaviour”. (Arnould et al 2004 :670)

Consumers with a high need to express uniqueness may do this through the accumulation of products that are unique, and scarce. Goods that are more difficult to come by, hand-crafted and one-off ‘exotic’ or traditional items such as indigenous textiles pieces shown in Fig 3 as being sold to a tourist in Northern Vietnam would fall into this category.

Figure Three



This hunger for the traditional is an interesting concept, as what is considered to be traditional or ethnic is something that involves an “idealised notion of the past” (Miller Goin 1993; 46), but this notion of something being old, un-changing is out of sync with what tradition means; traditions are not static, not something that stands unmoveable in the past. They are ever changing and adaptable, the continual practise of a cultures customs. The designs we see in Western fashions and markets bear only the smallest resemblance to the cultures that inspired them. Emblems, patterns, colours are taken and adapted to suit a different purpose, which cannot be termed to be traditional. Figure four shows a page from an American website advertising images of Massai drummers as a

wallpaper border, and African style patterns painted onto fabric and wallpaper, “perfect for your sewing or craft room, kid’s room, or anywhere you need a splash of colour!” (www.culturedexpressions.com) These are sold as “cultured expressions” but really have very little relation to the indigenous crafts which inspired them. Indigenous crafts are much more than just objects, they are made as an integral part of their cultural, representing the socio-economic environment they are made in, representing the thoughts and ideas of historic communities. They are intertwined with the identity of their makers.

Figure Four

The screenshot shows the Cultured Expressions website with a navigation bar at the top containing links for home, view basket, checkout, and ordering info. The main content area is titled "Shop Online Home Decor" and features a list of products, each with a description, dimensions, and pricing options.

What's New
Meet the Author
Shop Online:
Fabrics & Kits
Quilting & Craft Supplies
Books & Videos by Lisa Shepard
Gift Ideas - Baskets & More
* Home Decor
Art Gallery
Event Calendar
Arrange an Event For Your Organization
Community
Try It Now
For The Media
Tell A Friend
Contact Us
Mailing Lists:
 General Info List
 Travel Info List
 NJ-NY Area Events List
 [join!](#)

Hurricane Katrina Relief
How We Can Help

SECURE ONLINE ORDERS
VISA MASTERCARD DISCOVER
TOLL FREE ORDERS
1-866-MUDCLOTH

Shop Online Home Decor

- All borders are pre-pasted, scrubbable, and removable
- Available in 10-foot rolls
- Easy installation instructions
- Cultured Expressions exclusive! Includes bonus PROJECT IDEAS Sheet
- Save 1/3 off manufacturer's suggested retail pricing!
- First orders will be shipped beginning March 1, 2005

African Fabric Wallpaper Border
Perfect for your sewing or craft room, kids' room, or anywhere you need a splash of color! Border is cut out along the edges of the bolts.
Height: 8 1/4"
Design repeat: 25" across
more info...

Classic Mudcloth Wallpaper Border
This bold, graphic pattern gives designer look. Plain eggshell wall looked so good!
Height: 6"
Design repeat: 5 1/2" across
more info...

Abstract Masks Wallpaper Border
Especially striking when applied to a wall that is painted using one of these deep rich colors!
Height: 9 1/4"
Design repeat: 24" across
more info...

Maasai Drummers Wallpaper Border
This vivid design features the Maasai people of Eastern Africa.
Height: 9"
Design Repeat: 18 1/4" across
more info...

Each product listing includes pricing options: **\$24.95 per 10-foot roll** and **\$5.00 Sample (12" length)**, with an **add to basket** button.

It is of utmost importance then, to recognise that items are, when sold outside the community judged out of context, by those with a different understanding of the tradition, and community value from which they come. This awareness is absolutely key to the survival of their art form. Foreign consumerism is changing the nature of the indigenous art. This so desired 'traditional' item, implying authenticity, becomes paradoxical. This textile is removed from context, becoming a constructed phenomenon, made with the foreign consumer in mind; often involving middlemen who decide what is the desirable "authentic" textile; its social, cultural framework far removed. In fact, the items are whether made by an indigenous crafts person and sold to a foreigner, placed in a museum, or serving as inspiration for a catwalk design in a western country, a "symbol of modernity" (Miller Groin 1993; 47) as they are created to meet contemporary consumer desires. Crafts that were once created with a functional and symbolic purpose appear at a tourist market, or for sale on a foreign website. It is central to the argument that there is a need to approach the way that this affects the people whose traditions draw such attention, and to look at what it is that makes the product of their culture, and how this foreign interest affects their lives.

A major market for ethnic crafts and artwork arises from the tourist trade.

Tourism is a major part of cultural exchange. Tourists cross borders five hundred million times a year, and tourism ranks amongst top export industries worldwide. (Goldstein 2003; 405). The tourist industry has a huge impact on the countries visited and on the visitors. Culture flows in and out of different groupings and

societies, and the global flow of people, ideas, experiences means that the assumption that “culture as an everyday lived experience and its territorial location...are necessarily linked can no longer be taken for granted.” (Robinson 2000;196).

Maccu Picchu, near Cuzco, built by the Inca civilisation who once ruled Peru, is for many tourists, the main purpose of their visit to Peru. It is here that has highlighted concerns for tourist traffic, as the number of visitors puts the survival of the site in danger. It is one of 611 Unesco World Heritage Sites, among which are included Angkor Wat temples in Cambodia, The Taj Mahal, the Alhambra in Spain, and the Forbidden City in China, “29 of which are considered at serious risk”. (Bennet 2005; 2) Wear and tear and development that attracts and accommodates tourists, while inviting much needed revenue for locals and for conservation also puts such important and outstanding monuments in a dangerous place, which says Denyer (international council on Monuments and Sites), is a “major problem. Given cheaper air travel and greater mobility, people can now see these sites. One cant blame them for it”. (Denyer cited in Bennet 2005; 2). Conservation of these cultural rarities is a major issue, but it isn't just buildings and areas in such places that are at risk, it is of course also people, their ancient customs and ways of life that are also greatly affected by an influx of tourists, who are appealed to by the promotion of their cultural diversity. The introduction of the Lonely Planet Guide to Peru includes the following description, describing a sense of a place that would seem enticing to a tourist.

“Peru fires the imagination like few other places. A land of magnificent lost cities, rich cultural heritage and dizzying historic upheavals, it has long drawn treasure-hunters and travellers alike, united in their search to uncover the secrets and wealth of remarkable, sometimes remote civilisations.” (Rachowiecki & Beech; 2004)

It is a fear that indigenous communities, as they have and will increasingly come into contact with tourists, will lose the unique sense of identity and community belonging which drives their culture and practises. Will tourist interest in crafts, religious practises, customs and festivals lead to the commodification of their beliefs? Will the values and philosophy, a whole way of life be turned into a product for sale? Religious practises turned into tourist entertainment? Visual Culture applied to cheap misunderstood gifts? Promoted for financial gain, the interest in contemporary indigenous people “has become a major source of revenue for regions which support it” as developing nations “often benefit by showcasing indigenous societies as part of a cultural tourism strategy” (cited in Lumsdon and Swift 2001 128). This is an issue that is highlighted (idib.; 130) in the Economist, which in 1989 records that “Fifty years ago, Aldous Huxley’s ‘Brave New World’ drew a grisly picture of the Pueblo Indians’ sacred dances on the way to becoming a tourist sight. He set the scene some centuries into the future. He was too kind; it was true by the 1950’s”.

There are still about 300 million people who retain their identity as a member of an indigenous culture, (Davis 1994; 64) In Peru, it is about 45% of the population that would call themselves “indigenas”. Nations with a defined indigenous population to use this to their advantage in attracting tourists from overseas who are looking to find an “authentic ethnic tourism experience”(Robinson 2000; 145). It is an interest in knowing the “exotic other, the indigenous person” that inspires such a marketing opportunity.

The use of terms such as ‘other’, ‘exotic’ are complicated and involve assumptions that the subject is different, inferring a mainstream view point of a peripheral group who stands outside. As Edwards Said asks,

“What is another culture? Is the notion of a distinct culture (or race, or religion, or civilisation) a useful one, or does it always get involved in either self-congratulation (when one discusses one’s own) or hostility and aggression (when one discusses the “other”)?” (Said, 2003; 325)

His discussion of Orientalism considers the feelings of superiority of Europeans, as opposed to the ‘others’ who aren’t. To think this is to decide that the spread of western consumables is the same as the great imperial expansion of European powers in the seventeenth century, as part of the same “domination as that which characterised the actual colonisation of much of the rest of the world by the west”, to suggest an “unchallengeable cultural model for all of humanity”. (Tomlinson cited in Allen & Skelton 2000 ;25) The study of humans,

anthropology, in its formative stages at least, displayed an assumption by the west of the exclusive rights to the “interrogation’ of foreign cultures, “other cultures...there. like the flora and fauna of the natural world, to be catalogued and observed... (without) thought that they could ever themselves engage in the practice – they were categorised as ‘if not inert, no more than a “subject” of enquiry” (Tomlinson cited in Allen & Skelton; 27).

Graburn, defines “native peoples whose lands fall within the national boundaries and techno-bureaucratic administrations of the countries of their own, peoples who are usually in the minority” as members of the fourth world, and continues in his definition to include that they are “without the power to direct the course of their collective lives”, as “dependent-part societies”. (Graburn 1976 :1) This goes along the lines of wholeheartedly assimilating what would explain the view of global homogeonisation, which is to take what in itself is a rather imperialistic point of view – it is to automatically assume that media and the goods of the west are irresistible and irrepressible, and is to take for granted that the cultural practises of those peripheral cultures would be subordinated. This suggestion is too narrow-minded, being a sort of “ethnocentrism” (Hannerz cited in King 1991), it doesn’t justify the situation. “It represents ‘others’ as passive objects of development, trapped in their own poverty and lack of knowledge and understanding, constrained by traditions and cultural practises, fixed in time and needy of ‘help’ to develop and emulate the ‘successful’ west.

It is true that indigenous, fourth world cultures have suffered relentless economic pressure to conform to a more westernised approach to life; economic migration, schooling and education, tourism and the resonance of the mass media all taking their effect. It is, however, by no means a sufficient conclusion that we are on a one way road to cultural domination. Indigenous, 'outsider' culture is dynamic; undeniably changing, but is that the westernisation thesis "underestimates the cultural resilience and dynamism of non-Western cultures, their capacity to 'indigenise' Western imports" (Tomlinson 2000: 24) There is a need to look at the resonance of, historically, textiles and art has played within Indigenous communities in Peru, and to compare this to the form that textiles takes in contemporary society, and see how significant their visual culture remains. When removed from society the symbolism of the art object changes. Will foreign interest in these 'exotic' arts mean that the textiles produced will be controlled solely by outside forces, or is there a different direction in which indigenous populations represent themselves through their continuing and developing traditions? Is their demonstration that people are not solely the subjects of uncontrollable forces, and have their own drive and determination? By comparing the key themes that inform the importance of textiles in the past, and textiles today, it will be possible to recognise the critical concerns regarding the future of textile practise in Peru.

Chapter 2

Indigenous Peruvian Culture and Identity As Expressed Through Textile Traditions.

Textiles within an Andean community provide the chief mode of artistic expression. Employing the wool of alpaca and llama, which they raise and farm, and a rich array of colours which are combined to make textiles of technical excellence and elaborate aesthetic quality. Primary examples of textiles have been excavated and dated up to four thousand years old. To the present day the extension of the traditions that inspired these incredible pieces continue so that, as I have seen while in Peru, both women and men in some Andean communities still dress in the costume that so clearly marks them out as part of a long-standing and historic culture.

Figure 5



Weave, knit and embroidery techniques are all utilised in the creation of brightly coloured, and complexly patterned aesthetically desirable textile pieces that go far beyond the obvious practical clothing functions that have developed over thousands of years. While economic, social and cultural conditions alter and change, the traditional systems of textiles have adapted and remained an integral part of life. They provide the chief mode of artistic expression, employing the wool of hand-raised alpaca and llama. A rich array of colours are constructed to make textiles of technical excellence, which as far back as the 16th century, impressed upon the arriving Spanish colonisers superior artistic abilities, employing every weaving technique known today.

The importance of textiles is pivotally demonstrated via their use in every ritual or festive occasion. The appropriate gift for the celebration of birth, the passing of puberty, and marriage was cloth, the mark maker of identity and status, and a central offering of sacrifice. Festival dress to this day is highly ornate and complicated, painstakingly encrusted with finest embroidery and adorned with decorative feathers. Figure Six shows men in festival attire on Tacquile Island.



Perhaps the most revealing ritualistic use is in the funeral, whereby the dead would be buried in new woven clothing, with layers of cloth wrapped around the bodies. This assignment of cloth was no mean feat, an example measurement from Paracas, Peru, demonstrated that the cotton used to make the shroud of one mummy amounted to that which it would take about two acres of planted cotton, and 300 sq yards of weaving to produce. (Schevill 1986) Time and energy devoted to textile production in the Andean world far outweighs that of other civilisations and must underline the importance with which this produce was endowed.

It is with textiles that the ties that hold together the Andean Community are built. Young girls first learn to spin together while tending hillside animals, and finally dedicate themselves to the tutelage of an older woman (allwi mass –

weaving partner) with whom she will not just learn the incredible weaving skills but also form a lifelong bond whilst gaining a kind of “apprenticeship in Andean womanhood” within the women’s groups in which the” essence of Andean Identity is formed”. (Franquemont 1997 :34)

Clothing communicates a whole host of information concerning age, gender, social class and wealth to the interpreter. The wearer selects an array of symbols through which to build an identity for others to read, a kind of “human plumage, intentionally constructed or chosen by the user”. By wearing traditional garments, the indigenous wearer marks themselves out as a member of a distinct cultural group.

Traditionally, garments styles were four-selvedge textiles, made without cut or shape, so the way that the fabric sits on the body would display the composition as it was woven on the loom, as a two-dimensional image. This allows for the “composition in relation to how it appeared on the loom (to be) never lost” (Conklin 2004 ;102). It is as a painter would want, a work of art to be displayed as intended. A comparison to painting is made also by Schevill, when illustrating the communicative potential of costume, describing textiles as art that becomes functional, and in return, functional art that becomes decorative. “It is art moved out of the gallery onto the street. It moves the man or woman into a painting. The walls of the gallery are replaced by men and women”. (Westphal cited in Schevill 1986: 1)

Clothing in the Andes can signal ethnicity to someone who can understand the coded colours, techniques and iconography, defining

communities, and also subgroups within those communities. To this day textiles are “still the principle means of designating ethnic identity (Oakland Rodman1997: 27)’ remaining a ‘vital, adaptable, constantly changing, and clearly identifiable tradition”. The knitted caps worn in Q’ero, a village near Cuzco, feature emblems of their daily life, including a llama, cross, plow, and bird, and the dark black or brown colour broken by a red or orange grid is a distinctive signifier of belonging to the village. (Rowe and Cohen 2002: 70). On visiting Tacquile island, it was explained to me that the men on the island wore different coloured knitted caps to signify marital status and additional colours may signify social status within the community. Figure Seven pictures a Tacquilian man wearing such a symbolic cap.

Figure Seven



Zoomorphic emblems are commonly used; a description of life, and appreciation of things important to the community. Often featured from the natural world “stylized birds, felines, llamas, fishes, snakes and foxes, plus egg or seed-like symbols” (Lecount cited in Demary, et al 2005: 154) while typical geometric shapes would include “triangular stairsteps, interlocking waves, stars, zig-zag-edged triangles, and diamonds”. Emblems vary between communities however, some are ornamental and pleasing reflections on life, while some are more emphatically symbolic, as, for example in Choquechanca, Cuzco, where the “condor, feline, and serpent or toad motifs share the characteristics of ancient sky, earth, and water” (Seibold cited in Meisch 1997) Typical of the Andean ability to move and continue, with the arrival of the Spanish, new emblems were incorporated, involving “lions, eagles, and the distinctive eight-pointed Spanish Burgos Star” (Lecount cited in Demary et al 2005: 154) Under Inca rule, traditional peasant clothing was obligatory; preserved for its inherent communication of ethnic identity, which via clothing, headdress and hairstyle was seen as a tool for identification and control. The weaving of cloth played a larger part in state service as the working of state lands – an acknowledgment of the fundamental importance assigned to the production of cloth. Textile production proved to be central to the running of the Inca state, based on reciprocal agreements whereby cloth played its part as the central item of exchange for both internal and external relations. “There is nothing strange”, Murra comments “in the political use of prestige objects; the novelty consists in

discovering that, in the Andean area, the artefact of greatest prestige and thus the most useful in power relations, was cloth". (1995:67)

Expression developed through the spoken word is undoubtedly an insight into the status assigned to clothing. The Quechuan expression 'q'ara' for white man, devoid of the ethnically defining indigenous costume translates as "naked, uncultured, and uncivilised" (Mannheim, cited in Meisch, 1997: 9) Similarly a young indigenous man, is deemed to be inappropriately dressed I lacking a poncho and hat, and may be called 'skinned' or 'naked', "Iluchu" by old men in the parish. (Weistmantel cited in Meisch: 1997:9) In southern areas of Peru, textiles or cloth is anthropomorphised, giving for example the centre strip the name heart and the side warps, mouth. This is especially consequential when it is considered that in many of the Andean cultures there is grammatical differentiation between the living and the inanimate, so "giving textiles human characteristic elevates the cloth to the statue of a living being"(Meisch 1997: 9). The importance of dress is underlined when it is considered that while signifying personal characteristics and group membership, it is also a mark of distinction from none *indigenas*, which would often provoke a reaction of prejudice and discrimination. Dress to "outside observers is emblematic of the wearer's separate – and to many – inferior identity as Indians" (Zorn 2004; 65). So the choice to wear these clothes is a statement, a sign of pride and also bravery.

The foundations on which one of the most advanced and mesmerising civilisations of the era developed involved none of those; the wheel, the arch, written language, considered to be so pivotal to western society. Instead,

“Ancient Andean people used the textile medium as the underlying matrix of one of the largest and most successful civilisations of the pre-industrial world; the wisdom and understandings of this great civilisation coded not in language and written numbers, but in cloth”. (Franquement 1997: 33)

In the threads used, colours and patterns employed, in the very method and structure of the cloth itself there was a basis for a whole society, a culture based on this ‘ethnic code’, by the layers and meaning and understanding woven.

“Multiple meanings” are “conveyed by the structure of the cloth and the process of weaving itself” (Conklin cited in Franquement 1986: 83). It is going further that we can conceive that ‘the textiles themselves can explore and embody abstract ideas about the physical and social world that are impossible to explore in a linear medium such as language’ (Franquemont 1997: 33)

Whereas a painting maybe judged through visual symbols, to appreciate a textile piece it is rarely enough to simply look, as to hold and feel is almost as important. Franquement claims that contemporary weavers in Cusco are challenged when being asked to recognise their own textiles in high quality photographs, but could recognised balls of wool unravelled from their textiles – this is “clearly a different way of experiencing cloth from that which is generally supposed by literate cultures” (ibid.) This is something that it is difficult for weavers to explain, being that their education is not ‘literate’ in the western manner. Weaving is learned through repetitive physical practise, a process of internalising skills that does not equate to verbal explanation. Zorn found that

weavers of Taquile island, a relatively isolated island with persisting traditions, rarely spoke about the “codes” they weave, feeling that language is not something necessary for them to communicate or think about in terms of their textile practise, having absorbed long ago such meanings as to make them instinctual (Zorn, E 2004: 97). Learning these traditions observes is “a matter of practising life as they live it” (Rowe & Cohen 2002:97).

It is not unique to Andean art that there is an alternative form of visual communication to the usual written and iconographic forms. Comparisons could, for example be made with the visual language of Ancient Islamic civilisations, who didn't, for religious reasons use iconographic symbols imagery commonly used by other civilisations to communicate but instead used a system of complex use of patterns and adornment, such as that that can be seen in the Alhambra, in Spain. They did however, also use written language that, as mentioned, never existed in Ancient Andean culture.

Zorn's ethnographical discussion is interesting because she invites comparison to linguistic and written methods that to an outside observer are the most natural communicative manner. She notes that trying to describe the Andean code of textiles as something to replace written language is deceptive, that as “a replacement graphic system to writing” this description is lacking, and that cloth to the Andeans is more comparative to language, “parallel to speech” Zorn, E (2004) While this discussion may be interesting to us, its not so relevant to the Quechua weaver who knows that cloth “communicates cultural metaphors, myths, and beliefs”. (Heckmann 2003: 36)

Cloth can carry magical religious connotations, identification symbols, and a deeper level of communication and meaning, which, by its active use can be transmitted but, should the piece be “separated from the idea or metaphor that it communicates for the people who understand the system of communication being used...its becomes only a decorative object.” (ibid.) This is critical in consideration of the future of Peruvian textiles; recognising such a unique and significant part of life to then be so changed when removed, the natural context of the piece is lost and the social, cultural framework of shared values and beliefs that interpret it subtracted.

Chapter three

Contemporary textile practise among indigenous communities in Peru.

In highland areas, textile production continues to be an “integral component in indigenous life ... still the principal means of designating ethnic identity... Andean highland textiles today continue as a vital, adaptable, constantly changing and clearly identifiable tradition” (Oakland Rodman 1997:27). It remains in ceremonial use, as a visual source of information and plays many of the key functions mentioned earlier as it has done for hundreds of years. The textiles of highland Andes remain “recognized as among the most splendid and enduring world traditions” (Oakland Rodman 1997:27). These traditions are inevitably a source of great interest to the tourist. Speaking of the weekly market in Pisac, situated in what is known as the Sacred Valley, Peru, the Lonely Planet (Beech & Rachowiecki 2004: 197) describes a

“bustling spectacle (that) attracts traditionally dressed locals from miles around, and, despite also drawing tourists from the world over, still retains a traditional side. The selling and bartering of everyday produce goes on alongside the hordes of colourful craft stalls”.

As a visitor to Peru, I was among the many others who visit the market in Pisac, a major attraction for the tourist who wishes to wander amongst locals in their traditional get-up, to observe signs of their culture; their diverse and colourful

dress, and to look at and purchase items of art and craft that historically played such an integral part in the indigenous way of life.

Pisac is a popular tourist market with many tours from the nearby bustling tourist mecca of Cuzco including a stop by. Cafes with European influence, serving coffees, juices and continental sandwich selections ring the outside of the market place behind local food stalls and their piles of steaming potato dishes and Quinoa soups. Wandering around the extensive stalls a tourist can become lost among lines of brightly coloured woven fabric, in innumerable varied patterns and styles, of various qualities and prices, aimed at different buyers. (Figure Eight).

There are more antique looking pieces; samples of older textiles, more finely woven or knitted, worn, torn looking but carrying a fantastic sense of faded beauty, passing time and tradition. More garish and roughly woven cheaper fabrics are sold, and also intricately and finely embroidered clothing. Other commodities include bags of various sizes, knitted caps, ponchos, gloves, sweaters, socks, purses; some alpaca, some wool; carrying traditional and non-traditional symbols and patterns. There are woven and embroidered hanging textiles picturing local scenes and people, and ceramic and stone figurines of stylised animals. Also to be seen are rows and rows of jewellery, ranging from silver and stone to strings of beads and hand-crafted knotted pieces that are individually designed. These are items that reflect the traditional skills of the locals, but also what they see in the tourists who they wish to sell to.

Commenting on pottery sold at Pisac market, Henrici explains that the repeated designs painted on ceramics “reproduce certain stereotypic, and conventional images regarding themselves and their visitors.” (1996; 165). The makers paint what they expect tourists see as stereotypically authentic and traditional and they stereotype what it is that they think tourists to want to see as something typical. Anything that is made therefore, for the ethnic art market is “at once a statement about the identity of the artists and a commentary on the audience for which it is produced” (Jules-Rosette cited in Demaray Keim-Shenk, Littrell 2005:142)



The most prominent way that the forces of globalisation and capitalism, particularly the tourist industry affect indigenous crafts is by the makers' awareness and acknowledgement of their potential to raise capital.

Concentrating on the changes to textile production, which as previously discussed is central to Andean cultural life, highlights the attraction of substituting a lowly agricultural income. The demands of increasingly modern life mean that highly skilled Andean weavers, aware of the value of their product as a saleable commodity, work their magic for a product, an article of trade for sale to those whose understanding of cloth differs so vastly from their own. Weavers frequently concentrate on making the weavings that can be produced most simply and are the least time consuming, and just as the majority of tourists cannot tell the difference anyway, the final product is ultimately dictated by the price that a tourist will pay for a souvenir that, having taken hours and hours to produce, may sell for around the same as a piece of mass manufactured high street clothing, considered cheap in Europe. In Cusco, Franquemont records, it has become so that weavers "focus almost exclusively on belts that sell at prices that most tourists are willing to pay for a memento of their trip" (1997: 36).

Emphasis is on quantity rather than quality, a contributing factor, which leads to a truncation of traditional skills. Mediators are often involved in the sales process, and sales are not only local and national, but sold internationally, through galleries and foreign retailers, increasingly on the web. This will frequently alter the nature of an item, as whereas previously colour, pattern, style etc. would be decided entirely by the maker, the mediator will encourage the producer to make

something they predict will sell the greater amount. This may mean that an item that the maker would consider to be traditional may be rejected, or at least altered in favour of one that the mediator, in the interest of the foreign consumer, regards as traditional (Demaray et al 2005). Symbolic meanings of the elements of design may be altered, and as an example. Femenias describes the actions of a consumer who, while knowing that “black” meant “mourning” in the Colca Valley [Peru], having observed its Good Friday ritual use only the day before, she also saw black as a United States wardrobe basic” (Femenias 2005:93).

It is important to recognise that tourism is cause for only part of the exposure to the outside world, and that change and development within minority cultures is a multi-faceted phenomenon. Changes impressed on textile traditions are reiterated by the pressure to develop that encompass the lives of younger generations, pressures that come from various angles. Exposure to more developed economies and cultures lead to a desire for change from inside and out of the community. Factors such as an awareness of capitalist, western values and schooling consume time previously spent weaving, and spread the feeling that textile activity offers little power over the forces in a developing economy (Franquemont; 1997). Time that is spent in school is time that isn't spent weaving, and there is a significant number of indigenous people that find that weaving traditions are impossible to keep up with. It is usual practise that it is necessary for school to wear a non-distinctive uniform, and also for the wider world of employment, and so it is that traditional dress doesn't work outside the

community, and the previous “long, lazy days on the hillside” where textiles skills would have been shared and learnt amongst peers, are replaced by the formality of schooling, which allow only for “small snatches in the evening hour” so that “girls learn an abbreviated version of their textile traditions, and the bonding that later supports women’s groups is severely compromised” (ibid.:36).

Education is a complicated issue with a troubled background. Those that have endeavoured to provide it have not necessarily had interests that are in tune with those of the indigenous groups. Education in Peru is compulsory for six years, but this is often not adhered to in Quechua groups, as fitting education in with other rural tasks is difficult and schooling is not considered as relevant as traditional practises such as weaving. Whereas children may learn only Quechua at home, after one year that may be taught in Quechua, the rest of the formal teaching will be in Spanish. This is important for integration within Peruvian society and the wider-world but doesn’t include sufficient teaching that relates a respect for culture and history and respect of their own traditions. This is something that leads Gloria Tamayo, a Quechua instructor, to describe that

“The rural schools are a disaster. The teachers do not explain concepts in Quechua, for instance to explain these ideas to a Quechua child. The laws for education come from Lima and they do not understand highland ways of thinking.” (cited in Heckman 2003:166).

Clearly there is a need to marry the benefits of literacy and education in Spanish without losing the concepts and appreciation so important to unique indigenous groups. It is a concern expressed by Amiotte

“Can what was originally communicated through the oral tradition be converted to the the printed word, without losing the nuances and vitality of the spoken world, in light of the gradual passing of the older generation? Can succeeding generations continue the oral tradition in spite of having been greatly affected by the printed word and electronic media? What will be the impact of the fact that educated natives must read about their own traditions from the academic perspectives of anthropology, sociology, literature and religion?” (cited in Heckman 2003:166)

It is on Lake Titicaca that the islands of Taquile, Amantani, and Flotantes are, among others situated. The islands are inhabited by different groups of indigenous people who, living on islands that are relatively isolated, sitting many miles from the mainland retained strong cultural links to the past. Tourism arrived later to these islands than to mainland Peru, the first arriving on Taquile, which until relatively recently remained a day and nights sailing away. It is a central attraction of tourists to Peru. It is promoted as being a particularly stunning area, described in one of the most popular tourist guidebooks romantically as being “where the air is unusually clear, and the luminescent quality of the sunlight suffuses the highland altiplano and sparkles on the deep

waters of the lake. Horizons here seem limitless.” Beech & Rachowiecki 2004: 143). This graphic description continues to describe

“the opportunity to explore the unique intermingling of ancient and colonial cultures. This can be seen in remote and peaceful lakeshore communities where Aymara and Quechua are still the first languages, and to witness their traditions celebrated through wild and colourful folkloric festivals for which the region is world famous.”

By visiting this area I joined a continued stream of tourists who, have a profound effect on the lives of the inhabitants of the island, as they gravitate towards an area described in such gushing terms. Walking around Puno, the nearest mainland town and set off point for exploration of the Lake, it seemed that almost every other building in the centre of the nearest mainland town, Puno contained a tourist office who would offer most frequently the same basic tour, which was the one that I took: two days involving an overnight stay on Amantani island with a local family, a stop over of an hour or so on the floating islands – Isla flotantes, and a few hours on Lake Taquile. Offices are competitive, and tours are cheap. Varied arrangements and amounts are given to the family hosts who once a week will await on the dock to greet a group of tourists who they will take into their homes, feed and provide lodgings for them (Figure Nine)

Figure Nine Hosts on Amantani Island, Peru, await to greet tourists.



For the few hours that the tourists spend on the Isla Flotantes, revenue is gained from providing transport on their floating reed boats, and from the sale of textiles, which after a short educative talk given usually by a tour guide will be offered for sale. (Figure Ten) Similarly on Taquile Island, money is made by the selling of textiles and from the few restaurants scattered around the island.

Depending on the way it is conducted, a home stay on an Island encourages interaction between tourists and host families in a way different to a fleeting day

visit. It allows for exchange between groups and a better understanding of each other. Although most often only lasting for one day, providing only a small glimpse, it as Zorn (2004:162) describes in relation to Taquilean islanders “has profound implications for tourists’ ideas about Indianness but, more importantly for the Taquileans’ own imaginings of Indianness”.

Figure Ten
Isla Flotantes



The Taquile islanders have been the subject of in depth study by Zorn who has lived on the island and assessed the development of tourist activities on the island over the past thirty years. She found that the islanders were able to use “their strong communal organisational skills to obtain benefits from tourism, and that “Taquile’s growing tourist industry has been and remains strikingly equitable.” (136: 2004). Outsiders are not allowed to purchase land and therefore develop property on the island. Tours are run with the permission of community members and revenue from restaurants and textile sales is directed towards community members. Textile prices are fixed on the island, it is one area where, unlike most others, vendors will not bargain prices with consumers. It is accepted that, though for tourists these prices are higher than average, the produce is of higher quality, more finely crafted and labelled so as to indicate the maker of the piece, so that a tourist can be sure of who they are buying from and where the money will go. The textiles of the island are famed and highly acclaimed with a reputation for fine craftsmanship and innovative design all over Peru, where they have been awarded prizes and sold in a wide range of outlets. Certainly, looking around the tourist market on the island, and seeing the clothing of the islanders, it was clear that the work is of very high quality, very finely made and with a sense of innovation that is more apparent than in other areas. Markets (figure six) are held as part of a special festival, which is staged specifically for tourists in the high season winter months, and locals demonstrate festival dances in the central plaza. A prominent member of the community, Francisco Huatta, was awarded the 1996 Peruvian Award as Grand Master of Peruvian crafts. The

award signified recognition of Taquile Island as outstanding in Peru and “demonstrates official awareness that crafts are important to the nation, economically and symbolically, as they help attract foreign visitors and currency”. (Zorn 2005).

There is a substantial income from tourism that has led to many improvements in the lives of the islanders, and for some required modernisation and development of the quality of life of the inhabitants. New buildings, a central paved plaza. Health and nutrition is improved. It has also meant, records Zorn, that “beyond increased income, benefits include the chance to learn Spanish, to become literate, to interact with outsiders, to travel nationally and internationally, as well as to acquire increased prestige, recognition and self-confidence.” (137)

Figure Eleven
Tourist Market held on Taquile
Island



The choice to produce work for sale to tourists has wider implications and as Cohen assesses “opens for members of the group [artisans] a new channel of communication . . . aesthetic or cultural or even political motives for the production of tourist arts thus tends to accompany the dominant economic ones” (cited in Demeray et al 2005: 149). Tourism, and the acknowledgements that accompany foreign appreciation for indigenous artwork has provided for a new level of freedom for indigenous community members in Peru. Previously persecuted, ridiculed and discriminated against, community members had found exchanges with outsiders as “heirarchical ...at best “unpleasant” (Zorn 2004: 48) and would cover the clothing that signified their indigenous identity when mixing beyond their community. It has contributed towards an increased ability to dress in pride as part of a respect and appreciation reflected on their culture by the power they hold in attracting tourists, and therefore revenue to the country. This results in political power and presence in Peruvian politics, a pride in identity and costume. As with other minority groups in Peru, Taquileans found that “relations with foreigners were sometimes perplexing but generally a pleasant relief from problems with many ‘mestizos’ [mixed race] and ‘blancos’ [whites]”. (ibid.) It is most common that outsiders come with an interest and desire to appreciate their new and different culture. Infact, it is so distinct that “Taquileans have become the poster children for successful Indians in Peru. Organisations on opposing sides of Peru’s political spectrum have used Taquile as a staging ground to try to gain political capital”. (ibid.: 140). It was this “clamouring for indigenous votes [that] brought the traditional highlanders into the modern world”, as schooling and

electricity followed the routes taken by the “political workers [who] headed to the highlands, where roads existed, and distributed pictures, painted names, symbols, and slogans on the walls, hung posters, and proclaimed the virtues of political parties and politicians on loudspeakers”. (Heckman 2003:164). Textiles have historically had a crucial part in life, and this continues to be so. Exchanged as a political bargain in Inca times, in the present day they continue to have resonance politically.

In a different realm, it may be considered that it is admiration for skill and tradition that may prove consequential to the continuing traditions. It is proposed by Franquemont (1997;37) that the museum collections of textiles are evidence of an “insistence that these traditions still course through the fingers of twentieth-century weavers”. But it is not to be taken for granted that museum collections, grouped together by those that admire and respect the traditions and skills of the artisans don't have any adverse affect on the progress of textile practise. We see here, at the other end of the scale, pressure from those outside who wish to preserve the long-standing tradition of the Andes textile Maker, but who may actually hinder the true course of their culture. It reflects a judgment of value based on the thought that the “value of indigenous art and culture is only limited to its primitivism and exoticism in relation to the western perspective and consequently subjected to this cultural dichotomy, indigenous societies are forced to remain genuine, traditional and stuck in the past” (Root 2005:249) Collectors and museum curators demand those textile pieces which fit into their pre-concieved notion of a ‘traditional’ textile piece, that which portrays the

distinctive character and history, but does not account for contemporary creativity and innovation. Higher value is often placed on a piece that is older, rather than a more recent, more finely produced work. Franquemont (1997; 37) Well appreciated by the Andeans, this encourages the production of 'fake' productions, rather than experimentation, innovation, a desire to express contemporary thought and feeling, which underlines, removed the tradition of the vitality necessary to promote experiments: within a practise that has "never been static" Franquemont (1997; 37). This is very important to the whole condition and future of indigenous textile practise, outsiders must not be allowed to dictate the future of the Peruvian Textiles, intentionally or not.

But, outside interest can excite innovation. Nash suggests that "in this post-modern world of amalgamated cultures and the search for identity through consumerism, the strange alliance of a politically conscious consuming elite and culturally rooted producing communities may continue to generate new and beautiful forms and textures in artisan products". (cited in Demaray et al 2005:149) In the Colca Valley, a region popular with tourists for beautiful scenery and indigenous communities with traditions of embroidered textiles. Femenias argues that embroidered dress has become more elaborate and "a more important component of local culture, in tandem with increased commercialisation of the valley's economy." (cited in Zorn 2004: 71). Weavers create work that is at the same time part of developing tradition but also innovative and new. Competition to sell encourages the development and extension of new ideas, and the employment of new colours and styles that

rather than putting a close to traditional creation encourage to development of it. The meaning and attachment to cloth is not lost, nor the skills but designing pieces which embody what the maker finds pleases their creative eye, and the market entails textiles that “both conform to and rupture cultural norms” (Zorn 2004: 84). An interesting example of something created specifically for the tourist market is the calendar belt which doesn’t have a place in past traditions but that is developed as something that to a tourist is a representation of those traditions. Developed on Taquile island, the woven design incorporates symbols and motifs that communicate ethnicity as it is understood by most tourists or museums, but that are originally used, with a different concept and format of design than would ever have been used before. However the symbols that are used argue that the calendar belt “remains as part of the Taquilean visual language” (Zorn 2004 :100). It is also interesting as it is often sold alongside a written explanation of the symbols included in its design this is important as it is a translation for those that do not understand the language inherent in the textile, it “offers a rare opportunity to explore the relationship between visual and textual “literacies”. (Zorn: 2004 97).

The absorption of western methods of clothing production into Andean culture does not exclude the old ones. In many cases where manufactured clothing is worn in highland communities, it tends to be that it is in ethnically specific styles. Figure Twelve shows women dressed in manufactured clothing. Though their clothes are factory made they remain a reflection of traditional styles of clothing-

full layered skirts, knitted tights, hats with distinctive folds, and hair worn long and pleated. Ackerman records that it is possible however, for manufactured items to take on the role that hand-produced and woven items once had, arguing that “social and ritual roles” are fulfilled “formerly held by their handwoven counterparts”. (cited in Zorn 2004: 91). It seems, Zorn accounts, that “new elements of dress are continually defined” with reference to the findings of Meisch, as part of “‘traje tipico’ (traditional costume) so that there is always a distinct costume that identifies the group” (cited in Zorn 2004; 91)

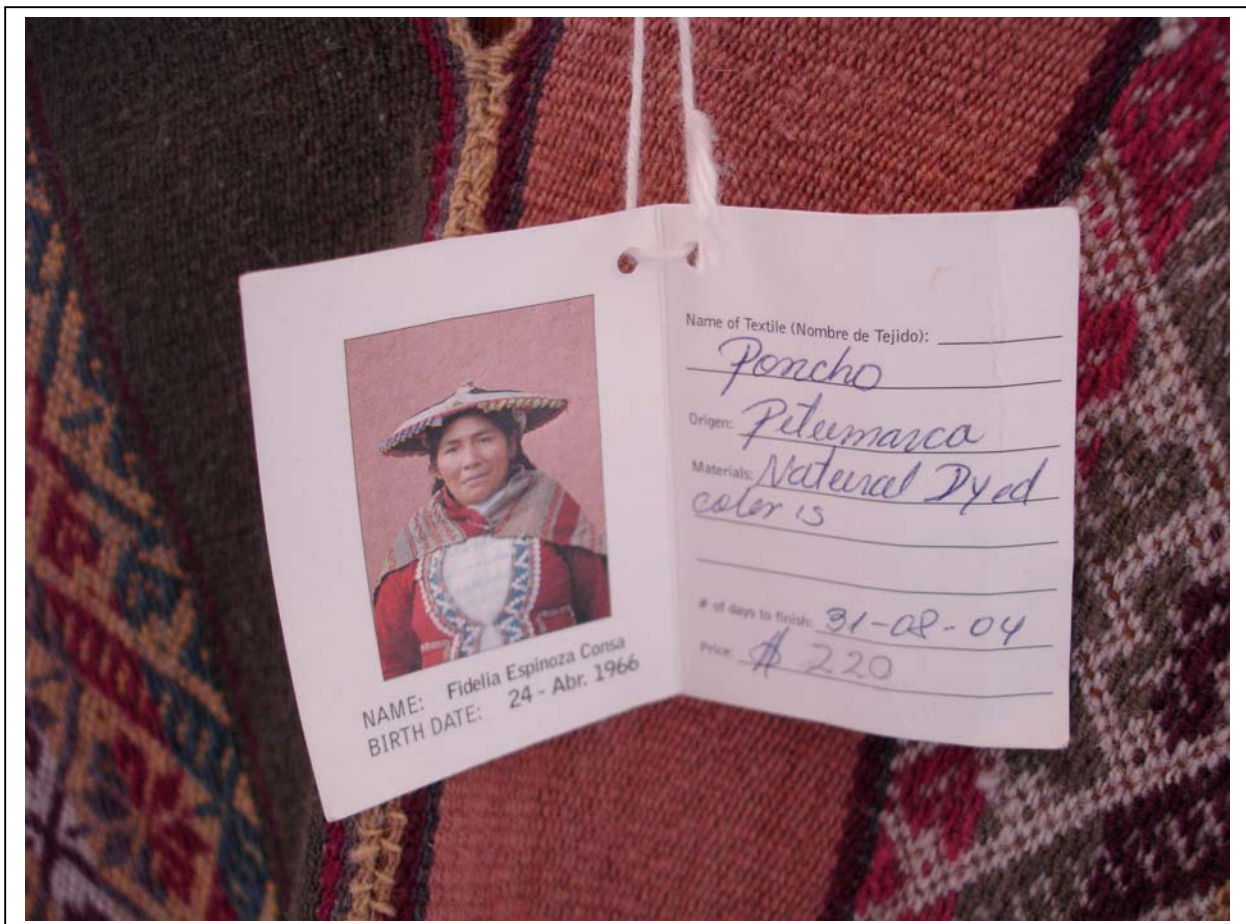
Figure Twelve



Concerns of loss of skill and knowledge has incited the setting up of the Cuzco Centre for Traditional Textiles (CTTC), which set up by a weaver from Chinchero, in the sacred valley near textile, aims to enable and encourage the practise and education of the young in the skills and traditions of their predecesors. Visiting this centre I was able to see that centred around a workshop in Cuzco, textiles are sold much higher prices than could or would be asked for at market. The prices are fixed and the revenues go directly to the producers. Pieces of high quality textiles and costumes sold, labelled with a photograph of and the name of the producer. (Figure Thirteen) Weaving demonstrations are held in the workshop and there is a museum with items and information that raise awareness of the traditions from which these time-consuming and carefully produced pieces have come from. Interest and pride is renewed by this revitalisation programme (Heckman 2003: 168), and infact has encouraged textile production to an extent by which “this group of over fifty weavers has evolved technically, and is now creating textiles of sixteen intricate parts, thereby pushing themselves beyond what their ancestors achieved”. (Heckman 2003: 168) Indigenous weavers and artists are continuing to push boundaries and extend possibilities, they “like any artists, are faced with ethical and artistic considerations as to why they are artists. Art is a process of expression of worldview and in this case, it collides with the aesthetic systems of outsiders’ cultures”. (Heckman 2003:172) Continuing to develop objects based on the values important to themselves is something that the CTTC as an example, allows weavers to do notwithstanding economic considerations. This is most

significant to the continuation of the art of textiles as an inherent part of the Indigenous Andean Community.

Figure Thirteen Labelled garment for sale at the Centre for Traditional Textiles, Cuzco



Conclusion

Peruvian textiles are aesthetically startling and distinctive, carrying a wealth of symbolism, meaning and history. The creation of functional pieces was both visually enriching and an integral part of an ancient culture; a method of communication and a statement of identity. Peru has a rich cultural heritage and landscape, and is a major source of tourist attention centred on the famed ruins of its Inca Heritage. The income derived from tourism is a major influence and necessary part of contemporary indigenous life. As a developing country, of which many inhabitants live on the poverty line, the commoditisation of art and textiles provides a vital source of income. economic reality dictates that this income is too attractive to miss and so traditional practise is altered in notion and purpose and the textiles don't communicate what they used to. However, traditions in some areas still persist and remain as a strong representation of tightly bound communities where the making of textiles remains a prominent part of daily life. Their making practises may not always be such a primary focus, but they are nonetheless by no means forgotten.

Taquile Islanders, by setting prices and negotiating the terms on which they sell their textiles and to an extent, control tourism on their island, are an example of the way in which Indigenous Peruvians are working towards their own future. They are able to interact with tourists themselves in a way that wouldn't be possible if they didn't "operate boats, cook and serve meals, sell textiles, register

tourists” themselves. This isn’t enough, Zorn accounts as “they and other communities coping with mass tourism require [formal regulation] so as to realise economic benefits and also control the impact of tourism.” (Zorn 2004: 162) High among the problems encountered is that their own successful sale of their identity incites the requirement to freeze traditions for the appreciation of outsiders alongside the increasing attraction of outsiders who are determined to gain influence and control in their operations. A notion that Pratt expands

“What [indigenous] peoples are “struggling for now, as indeed in the earlier periods, is not the hope of remaining in pristine otherness. That is a western fantasy that gets projected on[to] indigenous people all the time. Rather [,] people are very clear that they are struggling for self-determination, that is [‘] significant control over the terms and conditions under which they will develop their relations with the nation-state, the global economy, the communication revolution, expansionist Christianity, and other historical processes. (cited in Heckmann 2003:157)

Studying the textiles of indigenous peoples is to study their lives, to interweave questions of social and culture with the fabrics through which so much is communicated. Studying peoples from afar as I have brings in questions itself. Things are not equal. Globalisation may be discussed in terms of standardisation and sharing; of knowledge, commodities, of cultures, but when talking about this global exchange there is a profound unevenness- while certain

countries may be enjoying choice exotic cuisine from around the world, it is unlikely that the same privilege is enjoyed in Calcutta. (King 1991: 33) While I have visited areas and peoples studied, it has been fleetingly, very much as a tourist, studying from a distance, with the barriers of language and personal cultural differences. Using academic sources are resources, I am aware that I am looking from a different angle, and that in the midst of academic study it is possible that “colonialism is (purportedly) distant enough to allow us to be anticolonialist even as we are reinventing it, all the time, even in the moment of analysis: (Lippard 1999 84).

Revitalization programmes such as the Centre for Traditional Textiles in Peru, are vital for educating foreigners about the value of cloth, about the work that goes into its production and to encourage recognition of its value. Through this, there is the chance that the artisans will be able to retain traditions and continue to produce quality work and to innovate and express new ideas, continuing to describe the world around them through their vital aesthetic traditions.

Programmes such as this “help to create external markets for traditional textile arts and enable weavers to better control the forms of their own creativity” (Heckman 2003: 167). Textiles will never be able to carry the same resonance when sold outside the community, but the key is to encourage understanding and recognition of this, gaining the awareness and appreciation of the art and skill that represents an entire philosophy of life. Zorn (2004: 160) argues that the key is to “break into the art market, or extremely high-ends craft market, and

persuade the buyers who pay tens of thousands of dollars for antique Andean textiles to buy contemporary masterpieces instead". The islanders of Tacquile and the Centre for Traditional Textiles are taking the initiative which is key of continued development, by taking their own control, not allowing themselves to be subjected and controlled by outsiders.

Perhaps it remains the most important thing to consider that indigenous crafts, artwork, and textiles the world over are, when housed in a museum, sold to tourists at market, or placed in a catalogue, removed from the social, cultural, anthropological environments which inform them. The Andean weavings that excite such interest are assigned a kind of 'fetishism' as defined by Marx, when referring to the "cultural attribution of a spiritual, even godlike quality to commodities, objects bought and sold on the market standing over their very producers" (Hendrickson cited in Howes 1996: 134) However, they do not define a culture but are an "imprint of Andean culture upon fibre". These pieces say only what has been put into them, which, whether it be four, or forty thousand years ago, communicate what the maker has to say about themselves and their place in a vibrant and progressive culture. While what may be considered to be 'larger', 'more sophisticated' cultures write about, admire, and enjoy such prolific textile practises, "some of the very finest weavers in the world make beds in Cusco hotels, sell soda pop in Bolivian train stations, or sit by dusty roads in Ecuador, wondering perhaps where, in the end, all this traffic will take them". (Franquemont 1997: 37)

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Appendix

Conference

Globalisation- G8SummataboutSummit: Manchester University, Saturday 23rd
April

Visits

Peru: six week research placement; 7th July to 14th August 2005; including visits
to:

Museo de la Nacion, Lima

Mercado del Indias, Lima

Centre for Traditional Textiles of Cusco, Cusco

Pisac Market, Sacred Valley

Isla Flotantes, Isla Taquile, Isla Amantani: Lake Titicaca

