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Along the Banks of the Amazon: Ethnicity and Crosscultural Imaging in Jules Verne’s *La Jangada*

Rudyard Alcocer

In what ways can a lesser-known novel by a prominent 19th-century French writer have any bearing on contemporary discussions of colonial and post-colonial ideologies in Latin America? Jules Verne (1828-1905) remains well known, especially in science fiction circles, on account of his narratives about extraordinary voyages, narratives that have held nearly the entire globe and the heavens alike as an artistic canvas. As such, in his writings he often blurred the line that separates the known world from the unknown. One of his more fascinating voyages into the unknown is his novel, *La Jangada: Huit cents lieues sur l’amazone*, first published in two installments in the *Magasin d’Éducation et de Récréation* (June and November of 1881. Its English translation, *The Giant Raft*, appeared the following year. Hollywood film versions of the novel appeared in 1958 and in 2000).

What distinguishes this novel from others by Verne, including *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea* and *Journey to the Center of the Earth*, is that *La Jangada* explores terrain already inhabited by actual people, namely Luso-Americans as well as tribes indigenous to the Amazon. *La Jangada* is of further interest, particularly to scholars working with issues of ideology and visual culture in colonial Latin America, because it serves as a poignant example of how European writers and illustrators imagined or understood (from afar) issues of ethnicity and ethnic relations in Latin America during the late 1800’s. Simply stated, this “imagining” or understanding can be characterized in the novel by the presence of European and/or criollo (i.e. of direct European descent) characters in positions of prominence, with indigenous and afro-brazilian people occupying the sidelines; what is more, the novel is ways I shall explore in this essay an exercise in the scientific positivism fashionable during Verne’s era, a conceptual tool strongly associated, as Mary Louise Pratt and others have shown, with European expansion: in the words of the novel’s cryptographer, Judge Jarriquez, who aids in the task of deciphering the cryptogram at the heart of the story, “let us proceed with method…no method, no logic; no logic, no success” (Verne, *Eight Hundred Leagues on the Amazon* [La Jangada, Verne 1952 p. 322], further citations to *La Jangada* will be to this edition).

The events in *La Jangada* take place in 1852 in Brazil and in Peru and involve a giant raft (*la jangada* in Portuguese) that descends the most important river in Latin America, the Amazon. The novel opens in Peru, where the father of a young woman decides to take his entire family down the Amazon to its delta in Brazil, eight hundred leagues away. Joam, the father, has a double motive. The first is evident to all the characters: the family of his daughter’s fiancé lives in Brazil, and they do not have the resources to travel to Peru for the wedding. Joam’s second motive is covert: twenty three years earlier he had been arrested, judged and condemned for murder, a crime which he did not commit. Sentenced to death, Joam instead decided to break from his Brazilian prison. Having

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1 This is not to say that these discourses and representations are phenomena entirely of the nineteenth century. As recently as the mid-twentieth century, for instance, Allan Holmberg, an American anthropologist conducting fieldwork in Bolivia on the Sirionó ethnic group, gave rise to what has come to be known as “Holmberg’s Mistake”: According to Charles Mann, Holmberg believed that the Sirionó “had existed almost without change in a landscape unmarked by their presence. Then they encountered European society and for the first time their history acquired a narrative flow” (Mann 2005, p. 8). Although to say that Holmberg’s Mistake is still being made today would be an understatement, my present focus will be elsewhere.
begun his life anew in Peru (under a pseudonym), he married and succeeded financially: he had become in every way a well-respected member of society. Twenty three years later, he takes advantage of his family’s voyage down the Amazon in an attempt to exonerate himself officially of the crime, remembering that the judge in Brazil, at least, believed in his innocence. During the voyage, however, a mysterious passenger also aboard the jangada knowledgeable of Joam’s past accuses him publicly of the old crime after initially failing to blackmail him. Arrested once more, two unfortunate events transpire: he learns that the judge in Brazil has just died and that his son has killed Torrès, the mysterious passenger, even though the latter is the only one who knew the code to a cryptogram that absolved Joam of the crime. In effect, the death of Torrès equates the imprisonment and probable execution of Joam.

Several features of the novel strike me as important: first, the voyage itself, a voyage that allows its readers to penetrate the natural mysteries of the river as well as the people that inhabit its shores. Also prominent in the novel are the obstacles that present themselves to the travelers on the jangada: the life of a man, for instance, hinges on the travelers’ ability to successfully decipher a cryptogram. Although they decipher it by novel’s end, along the way, all the events in the story rest on the hidden meaning of this cryptogram: a quest to decipher with whose tenor readers of the recent The Da Vinci Code may be familiar. Unraveling the meaning of the cryptogram becomes a contest between good and evil, with the “evil” characters seeking to destroy or steal the cryptogram, or to use it somehow for nefarious purposes. Which characters in the novel, the reader is invited to guess, represent which side? Moreover, the first edition of the novel contains not only written text but also illustrations (by Léon Benett). How do these illustrations contribute to the novel’s mission of rendering known the unknown? Are they also a type of language that needs deciphering?

The objective of this essay is an ideological analysis of the rapport in La Jangada between Verne’s text and Benett’s illustrations; in other words, a “multimodal analysis,” following Inger Lassen’s definition (Lassen 2006, p. vii). By “ideology” I am using Bill Nichols’s very basic description of the term in his study, Ideology and the Image: “Ideology uses the fabrication of images and the processes of representation to persuade us that how things are is how they ought to be and that the place provided for us is the place we ought to have” (Nichols, p. 7). Of additional importance to the present study is an engagement with what Lassen describes as the multiplication of meaning afforded by the combination of textual and visual discourses in a specific arena (Lassen 2006, p. ix).

It is worth observing that Verne’s novel (the recent minor Hollywood film version notwithstanding) has been nearly forgotten and never enjoyed critical acclaim. Furthermore, Benett has long been designated as lacking artistic talent. Nonetheless, the analysis I propose approaches this novel from a different direction: despite Verne’s reputation as the father of science fiction and as having progressive ideas with regard to cultural difference, his novel reveals a different agenda. This agenda – one that addresses the role of the non-Westerner (Amazonian tribes, to be specific) in modernization – is not readily evident in the novel: in the pages that follow, I intend to make this agenda visible through an analysis of La Jangada’s text/image rapport. Before embarking on this analysis, I shall contextualize the novel by considering some conceptions of the “unknown” in French literature, while also focusing on Verne himself as well as the little we know about Benett.

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2 The novel’s initial reviews were unfavorable. In The New York Times, for example, a reviewer lamented that “Verne has got into such a mechanical system of composition that what little brightness existed in his former work seems to have evaporated.” The New York Times, October 1st, 1882 (found in Taves and Michaluk 1996, p. 163). The recent Hollywood film, similarly, enjoyed little critical or commercial acclaim.
La Jangada was not the first novel or even the first French novel that attempted to describe an unknown world. Paul et Virginie (1788), for instance, by Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, offered a biting criticism of 18th-century French society by transporting its readers to the Île-de-France in the Pacific Ocean (presently Mauritius). In this novel, Bernardin endeavors to paint a sun and landscape unlike those of Europe. Our poets have too often placed their lovers along the banks of streams, in the prairies and under the leaves of beech trees. I have sought to sit along the shores of the sea, at the foot of boulders, in the shade of flowering coconut, banana and citrus trees.” (Bernardin de Saint-Pierre 1992, Avant-Propos; translations are my own unless otherwise cited)

On this island, harmony reigned supreme among nature and men (including both masters and slaves) until the dawn of modernization.

Les Mystères de Paris (1842-43), by Eugène Sue, describes worlds equally unknown to its European readers. In essence, Sue attempts “to place before the eyes of readers some episodes in the life of barbarians as far outside civilization as the savage peoples so well painted by [James Fenimore] Cooper” (Sue 1989, p. 31). While reading the novel, however, we quickly notice that these “savage peoples” comprise both the lowest and highest social strata of Paris. It is worth noting that both Bernardin’s and Sue’s novels included illustrations that also attempted to show their readers the savage and the exotic. In effect, the 19th-century French novel, particularly during the latter half of the century, was characterized by novels that also contained illustrations reproduced from woodcuts, La Jangada being no exception.

Verne’s fame rests largely on his novelistic descriptions of voyages to the unknown, perhaps in ways related to the technological advances that were capturing the public imagination at the time. According to Gilette Ziegler, Verne’s observation that “Everything a man is able to imagine, other men will be able to achieve” best summarizes and explains the latter’s literary project (Ziegler 1978, p. 13). In addition, Verne often aspired to an objective, even encyclopedic, knowledge of his subject matter. In La Jangada we read, for example, that a monkey, “also known in Brazil as the barbado, was of large size. The suppleness and stoutness of his limbs proclaimed him a powerful creature, as fit to fight on the ground as to leap from branch to branch at the tops of the giants of the forest” (Verne 1952, p. 12). This detail, which in no way advances the plot of the novel, is meant primarily to educate the French reader about the Amazonian fauna; in doing so, it asserts the kind of authority it will extend to other arenas of life on the Amazon.

Voyages in Verne’s oeuvre, La Jangada being no exception, serve as a metaphor for the acquisition of knowledge: “Let us be off to the library,” a character urges her brothers before the voyage, “Let us get hold of every book and every map that we can find which will tell us anything about this magnificent river system! Don’t let us travel like blind folks! I want to see everything and know everything about this king of the rivers of the earth” (Verne, p. 47). Moreover, the voyage of the jangada in a way also allows the reader to descend the river in comfort: we “would like it to be as though our house at the fazenda went with us on the journey, so as to make you fancy that we had never left” home (Verne 1952, p. 91).

It is worth contextualizing La Jangada also in terms of other discourses gaining in importance at the time. At around the time Verne was writing La Jangada, geography as a discipline was experiencing unprecedented growth: “It so happens that geography was at the time in full expansion (attested by the success of the Société de Géographie), and this gave a coherence to the colonial voyages, explorations, and expeditions that characterized the imperialism of European nations” (Gauthier 1978, p. 138). Geography is of utmost importance in the novel given that the third-person narrator is – like Verne – highly interested in the Amazon rainforest’s flora and fauna, and is very
careful about charting the raft’s progress along the river; in this respect, the narrative is reminiscent of Humboldt or Darwin; many editions of the novel have also included maps of the Amazonian region.

The idea of rendering known the unknown has further implications. Verne, in orientalist fashion, aspired to an authorial expertise on Latin America; indeed, one of his first stories concerns this region (“Amérique du Sud, les Premiers navires de la marine mexicaine” 1851). This would be so, however, even though he never visited it. As such, what is important is that the Amazon region, at least, like the moon and the center of the earth, be unknown (both to him and to his readership). The mystery the region held for him clearly attracted him to it; in this regard, the titles he gave some of his novels (e.g., The Mysterious Island, The Antarctic Mystery, etc.) should come as no surprise. At one moment in La Jangada, for instance, the characters find themselves “in the midst of these superb forests of the Upper Amazon, some of whose secrets remained after so many centuries still unsolved by man’” (Verne 1952, p. 35).

Indeed, for the characters in the novel, this river’s charm lay in its mystery, in the very fact that it still awaited modern exploration, unlike North America’s Mississippi River: in a conversation regarding the Amazon’s many islands, Joam’s sons critique how North American navigators have numbered the islands on the Mississippi and express their disdain “for that numerical system; it conveys nothing to the imagination” (Verne 1952, p. 110). Although the desire in the novel for knowledge arrived through reason and method runs counter to an opposite desire for knowledge to remain hidden and mysterious, these dual thrusts have a unique narrative logic, predicated on the need for mystery to justify exploration. This is so, apparently, despite the fact that the Amazon’s islands had already been named, although by namers of apparently little significance, given that they belonged to Amazonian tribes: Joam’s son asks, “What can be the use of remembering the hundreds of names in the ‘Tupi’ dialect with which these islands are dressed out?” (Verne 1952, p. 110).

The air of mystery surrounding the Amazon can also be linked to the use Verne makes of cryptography in the novel. The opening lines of the text, for example, are incomprehensible (“Phyjslyddqfdzxg…”), and the “combinations which they lead to can be counted by millions, and no calculator’s life would suffice to express them” (Verne 1952, p. 2). La Jangada and Verne’s other novels were not the first to delve into the unknown, and neither were they the first to make use of cryptography; in fact, there is mention in La Jangada of Edgar Allan Poe’s short story, “The Gold Bug,” which also involves a cryptogram. “Who has not read ‘The Gold Bug?’” asks the third-person narrator; according to this narrator, in Poe’s story, “a cryptogram, composed of ciphers, letters, algebraic signs, asterisks, full-stops, and commas, is submitted to a truly mathematical analysis, and is deciphered under extraordinary conditions, which the admirers of that strange genius [Poe] can never forget” (Verne 1952, p. 327). Then, perhaps in an effort to differentiate his work from Poe’s, Verne writes: “On the reading of the American document depended only a treasure, while on that of this one depended a man’s life. Its solution was consequently all the more interesting” (Verne 1952, p. 327).

Although Verne sought, with La Jangada, to surpass the story by Poe he so admired, actually doing so met with some difficulty. Judge Jarriquez explains, for example, that in attempting to decipher the cryptogram, he “sought to obtain the meaning by following the precepts of our

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3 Verne indicates in a footnote (p. 151 of the Hetzel edition) that the Amazon had been recently studied by an unnamed but “sage” British geographer.

4 In a newspaper article, Verne asserted that this story by Poe “was the most remarkable of these extraordinary stories, in which we find the best example of a literary genre that we might as well call the ‘Poe’ genre” (Baudou [year unlisted] p. 324).
immortal analyst, Edgar Poe. Well, what succeeded with him collapsed with me” (Verne 1952, p. 333). There is a correlation between the setting of each text and the corresponding cryptogram, specifically as relates to the increased difficulty of the cryptogram in *La Jangada*. After all, the Amazon rain forest is undoubtedly more “mysterious” than Sullivans Island off the South Carolina Coast (where “The Gold Bug” is set). In this sense, *La Jangada* would be not only geographically but also cryptographically more challenging than Poe’s story. Even industrial technology would prove unhelpful before the cryptogram in *La Jangada*, as its publication in the “Diario d’o Grand Para” had given, although without success, the general public “an opportunity of deciphering its incomprehensible contents” (Verne 1952, p. 357). The cryptogram, at story’s end, was deciphered by dumb luck.

It was not a matter of luck or coincidence that united Verne and his illustrator, Léon Benett, in the publication of *La Jangada*; their encounter was made possible, rather, by technical advances that facilitated the incorporation of illustrations into novels. Verne, in fact, was a playwright before becoming a novelist and, as such, was always interested in how his novels would translate to a visual medium. Indeed, his stories were often published alongside the works of his many illustrators. The illustrations accompanying Verne’s novels had a powerful impact on their readership, especially at the moment in visual culture during which *La Jangada* appeared. According to Daniel Compère, a large portion of Verne’s readers felt that the illustrations enhanced the experience of reading the stories by inspiring their imagination (Compère 1983, p. 55). Guy Gauthier argues that the modern reader of Verne’s novels in particular and of nineteenth-century novels in general, is – on account of being “undoubtedly conditioned by cinema” – at a loss for how to respond to the interplay of written text and illustrations “erratically positioned” every few pages (Gauthier 1978, p. 138). In sum, the illustrations in *La Jangada* and in other texts by Verne were of crucial importance to the meanings at which readers arrived; as Compère explains, “the exactitude of the descriptions and the ensemble of the illustrations allow the reader to see” (Compère 1983, p. 70).

Verne collaborated with six illustrators besides Benett. The latter, however, seems to have held a special position in Verne’s estimation; Pierre Sichel argues that the fact that the two were friends suggests Verne’s admiration for Benett’s artistry, even if he was not highly regarded by art critics (Sichel 1978, p. 59). Benett (né Benet, 1839-1917), in fact, would illustrate 26 of Verne’s “extraordinary” voyages. Although we know that Benett spent time in Indochina and in the South Pacific, we know little about his worldview and ideas on cultural identity and difference; in effect, what we know is limited to whatever we can glean from his illustrations. Our knowledge of Verne’s ideologies and positions on cross-cultural contact is greater but also more ambivalent: Julian Garavito argues that Verne had positions on culture that “were typically European, especially at the end of the 19th century: anti-crossbreeding [métis] on the one hand and inclined to consider indigenous populations as objects of study, almost like beautiful beasts” (Garavito 1978, p. 143). Jean Chesneaux concurs: The Extraordinary Voyages were written in the last third of the 19th century, while the

great voyages of world discovery were being made. Much of the unknown world is quickly becoming part of the known world. Jules Verne, like the French bourgeoisie of his time...when seeking to define remote societies with respect to his own, does so in terms of ‘noble savages’ and ‘wicked savages.’” (Chesneaux 1971, p. 100)

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5 Verne’s opposition to miscegenation is particularly important to my analysis.
Verne’s manner of distinguishing among varieties of “savages” can be linked, according to Taves and Michaluk, to the rise of the British Empire: “as British imperial dominion spread around the world, admirable Englishmen began to disappear from Verne’s novels. He preferred the sympathetic treatment of the plight of the oppressed, white or native, in such books as…La Jangada…” (Taves and Michaluk 1996, p. 6).

How can the “plight of the oppressed” be characterized in La Jangada? On the one hand, the narrator finds similarities between (some) Europeans and the indigenous population along the Amazon:

At the bottom the same self-possession, the same knowledge of human weakness, the same description of threadbare witticisms, the same amusing dexterity, and, on the part of the natives, the same wide-mouth astonishment, the same curiosity, the same credulity as the simple folk of the civilized world. (Verne 1952, p. 141)

On the other hand, meanwhile, in La Jangada we are warned about the results of ethnic mixing. According to the novel’s narrator, miscegenation is frowned upon in Brazil, particularly by the white ruling class. While, for instance, Torrès chases a monkey that had stolen a case containing the cryptogram, he yells out a series of insults:

It would be impossible for us tell the series of invectives in which he indulged. Not only did he call him a half-breed, which is the greatest of insults in the mouth of a Brazilian of white descent, but ‘curiboca’ – that is to say, half-breed negro and Indian, and of all the insults that one man can hurl at another in this equatorial latitude ‘curiboca’ is the cruelest” (Verne 1952, p. 19).

Interestingly, the narrator seems to share Torrès’s attitude. We see this similarity most poignantly while he/she describes the irreversible progress taking place along the river, a process that has seen the original indigenous population yield to the “inferior” product of their unions with Europeans:

Of the ancient Manaos one can count but a wandering party or two. On the banks of the Rio Negro there are only a few half-breeds, Portuguese and natives, where a few years ago twenty-four different nations had their homes. Such is the law of progress. The Indians will disappear. (Verne 1952, pp. 56-7).

Later comes the description of a garrison along the river: “Here and there passed and repassed several soldiers on guard, while on the treshold of the barrack appeared a few children with their mothers of Ticuna blood, affording very poor specimens of the mixed race” (Verne 1952, pp. 138-39). In effect, the indigenous population is disappearing, to the chagrin of the narrator, and is being replaced by “half-breeds.” An irony to which the narrator seems oblivious (unlike a later traveler to the Amazon, Lévi-Strauss; see his Tristes Tropiques) is the possibility that voyages like the jangada’s may very well be contributing to modernization, cultural and biological miscegenation, and to the decline and “bastardization” of the indigenous population.

How do the illustrations in La Jangada figure into the preceding polemics? These illustrations appear in pairs, at intervals of eight pages; in effect, with very few exceptions, every fourth pair of pages is illustrated. The first illustration usually corresponds to the events of the preceding two or three pages, while the second illustration corresponds to events in the following two or three pages. As such, the text encourages its readers to make a constant rapport between the written text and the illustrations. While approaching the illustrated pages, readers can wonder how the events in the
written text will be illustrated; similarly, even though the second illustration corresponds to later events in the narrative, it sometimes does so in ambiguous and misleading ways.

In terms of the categories of images, there are six basic types: 1) the information image (FIGURE 1); this type of image does not purport to advance the narrative; it serves solely to illustrate and clarify information the narrative presents, perhaps involving the trajectory of the jangada or detailing features of the vessel. 2) The ambiance image (FIGURE 2); the primary function of these images is not to provide practical information or information that advances the narrative, but rather to attempt to create a certain tone in the novel (involving, for instance, the prohibitive density of the Amazon jungle). 3) The documentary image (FIGURE 3); this type of image follows the journey or progression of the characters over the setting of the story; in our case, the jangada over the Amazon. 4) The action image (FIGURE 4); this type of image contributes to the narrative, or at least, we see in the image characters acting and reacting in ways central to the plot. 5) In the portrait image (FIGURE 5) the characters “seem to pose for the illustrator” (Compère 1978, p. 56). The final image is one that combines elements of the portrait image and the action image; this type of image (FIGURE 6) can introduce a character, but in ways closely tied to the progression of the narrative.

Given that La Jangada is the tale of a voyage into the unknown accompanied by a series of illustrations, we can better perceive the links between the narrative structure, the illustrations, and the novel’s discourses on ethnicity, particularly as concerns the native Amazonians. If the travelers aboard the jangada were adventurous, dynamic, and inquisitive, the indigenous groups they encountered were the opposite. Some, according to the narrator,

had wandered to the mouth of [the] river. They were robust in build, of tall stature, with shaggy hair, and had their noses pierced with a rod of palm, and the lobes of their ears lengthened to their shoulders by the weight of heavy rings of precious wood. Some women were with them. None of them showed any intention of coming on board. (Verne 1952, p. 113) (FIGURE 7)

They wandered to the mouth of the river, apparently lacking any particular agenda or drive, and they showed no intention of coming on board. Furthermore, what might otherwise be considered weapons become in the image props or decorative items, given their restful position. In effect, as we progress along La Jangada, the contrast in the narrative and the illustrations between the movement of the jangada’s passengers and the stagnation of the people along the banks of the river gains clarity:

Many natives, with shaved heads, tattooed cheeks and foreheads, carrying plates of metal in the lobes of their ears, noses, and lower lips, appeared for an instant on the shore. They were armed with arrows and blow tubes, but made no use of them, and did not even attempt to communicate with the jangada (Verne 1952, p. 116).

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6 The images that follow are from the first, 1881 French edition of the novel published by J. Hetzel. The image categories sometimes overlap and are always provisional. In this categorization I am closely following Compère’s in his study of Verne’s La Maison à Vapeur (Compère 1978, pp. 56-58); however, I split in two one of his categories (image tableau becomes documentary image and portrait image); I also add two categories: the action/portrait image and the ambiance image.

7 The caption underneath Figure 7 states: “Quelques Indiens erraient à l’embouchure de ce cours d’eau.”
Further down the Amazon, the voyagers encounter yet another indigenous group. This group, “very fortunately...made no hostile demonstrations, although they entertain a profound
hatred toward the whites. They have, in truth, no longer the courage of their ancestors” (Verne 1952, p. 181). They have truly become the portrait of harmlessness (FIGURE 8). Sadly, the indigenous group’s stylized poses – as if on display for foreign observers – prefigures the modern tourism industry. Said portrait can be linked to the following observation made in the 1930’s by the British historian Arnold Toynbee:

When we Westerners call people “natives” we implicitly take the cultural colour of our perception of them. We see them as wild animals infesting the country in which we happen to come across them, as part of the local flora and fauna and not as men of like passions with ourselves. So long as we think of them as “natives” we may exterminate them or, as is more likely to-day, domesticate them and honestly (although perhaps not altogether

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8 The caption states: “Sur cette île apparut une troupe d’Indiens.”
mistakenly) believe that we are improving the breed, but we do not begin to understand them. (Toynbee 1946, p. 36)

Although Toynbee unwittingly reveals his own prejudices, his remarks are nonetheless on target insofar as their applicability to the cross-cultural assumptions Verne and Benett made in La Jangada.

This novel, both in its written and visual texts, attributes greater animation and motion to the Europeans traveling down the Amazon on their giant raft than to the indigenous groups on the banks of the river, who are in a state of suspended animation (static, on display, devoid of narrative agency, and perfectly available to the traveler’s gaze). In effect, it seems that Verne and Benett either do not wish to represent indigenous groups in dynamic fashion (in a sense, they are excluded from the voyage and from the adventure), or they unwittingly refrain from doing so on account of deep-seated cultural and ideological prejudices. Interestingly, it would be very difficult to to draw these conclusions by analyzing either one of the texts in isolation (i.e., either Verne’s narrative or Benett’s illustrations). In unison, however, they gain what I would describe as an interpretive synergy that is highly revealing of a particular ideology.
Ultimately, one could argue that on the one hand, for the indigenous groups in *La Jangada*, progress and modernization remain foreign. On the other hand, one could also argue that these groups are available and would cooperate to further European modernizing initiatives. This, moreover, is more than could be said of the populations of mixed ethnicity in the novel: they seemingly have fallen into a woeful degeneracy that is both unpredictable and potentially uncooperative, although the novel is emphatic about the biological unsustainability of mixed races; in other words, the coast (or the banks of the Amazon) is clear for the unthreatened imperial gaze of foreign visitors and for the political and economic agendas that may follow.

In conclusion, the novel’s text-image rapport yields insights about its attitude toward racialist categorizations as well as toward political agenda (related to European imperial expansion). It does so, finally, in ways that would remain elusive and potentially benign if one were to analyze the ideologies of Verne’s words and Bennet’s images separately: taken together, the words of the novel and their accompanying illustrations set the tone for crosscultural and inter-ethnic relations that have survived well beyond the time of *La Jangada’s* publication in the 1880s.
Figure 5.
Figure 6.
Figure 7.
Figure 8.

Sur cette île apparut une troupe d'Indiens. (Page 148.)
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New York: A.L. Burt Company. *The Giant Raft* has been another title for translations into English (including the first in 1882).


