

Made by Artful Practice

HEALTH, REPRODUCTION AND THE PERINATAL PERIOD AMONG XIÉ RIVER DWELLERS OF NORTH-WESTERN AMAZONIA

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Abstract

This thesis is an ethnographic study of a little documented indigenous group, the Warekena people, who live on the Xié River in north-western Amazonia. Examining the mythic histories of the animate riverscape, my work offers an overview of the emergence of riverside dwelling: starting with a macro view of Xié river lifestyles, I explain how seasonal and distinguishing historic-mythic narratives tie in to wider idioms, and to experiences of social reproduction. I focus on reproductive processes and the perinatal period, highlighting methods used by Xié dwellers to nurture healthy, quality-conscious lifestyles, and I examine Xié aetiologies and pathologies. Mindfulness, or awareness, is viewed as a key component of good health. In this context, healthy childbirth is for the birthing mother an art form, a practice for which her total life experience has prepared her. Childbirth is ranked with such other painful experiences as snakebite, and both childbirth and snakebite are opportunities for personal growth. Infant care is seen through the lens of specific, hands-on techniques that promote mindful states in both the carer and the cared for. Mindfulness emerges as a heuristic device that allows us to scrutinize the Amerindian soul and body, also elucidating soul-loss in the ‘animist’ lived world. I argue that mindfulness is a core characteristic of the ‘cool’ hydrocentric and status-conscious lifestyles of Xié river dwellers, and that it defines what it means to be a person, the Xié way.

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Notes on language

Words in the Portuguese, Spanish, French and Latin languages appear in *Italics*.

Words in *lingua Géral (Nheengatú)* appear in ***italics bold***. Words in *lingua Géral* conform to the orthnological conventions established by Aline de Cruz (2011).

Words in other indigenous languages appear in **bold**.

Words in in Warekena appear in ***italics bold underlined***.

List of acronyms

ACIRX	<i>Associação das Comunidades Indígenas do Rio Xié</i>
AIS	<i>Agente Indígena de Saúde</i>
CASAI	<i>Casa de Saúde Indígena</i>
CEP	<i>O Comitê de Ética (de UFAM)</i>
CNPq	<i>O Conselho Nacional de Desenvolvimento Científico e Tecnológico</i>
CONEP	<i>Comissão Nacional de Ética em Pesquisa</i>
DSEI	<i>Distrito Sanitário Especial Indígena</i>
FUNAI	<i>Fundação Nacional do Índio</i>
FUNASA	<i>Fundação Nacional de Saúde</i>
FOIRN	<i>Federação das Organizações Indígenas do Rio Negro</i>
ISA	<i>Instituto Socio-Ambiental</i>
PRS	Probationer Research Student
UFAM	<i>Universidade Federal do Amazonas</i>

Introduction

Fieldwork

Preparing for fieldwork

The emphasis on reproduction and childbirth that forms the core of this thesis is borne largely from my own perinatal experiences. Furthermore, childbirth and reproduction have become areas of increasing biomedical activism (Hardee et al. 1999) and, when I launched my research project, the relationships converging around the provision of health care looked to be a topic of growing anthropological interest. Developments in medical anthropology also promised to shed light on Amazonian reproductive experiences and, just as important, cast them within a comparative framework.¹ One of the project's main objectives came to be the articulation of Amazonian ethnography within the wider sub-discipline of medical anthropology.²

Early studies of medical practices in indigenous Amazonia were pioneered among Carib speaking groups by British anthropologist Butt-Colson (1976; Butt-Colson and de Armellada 1983), who provided formidable evidence supporting a humoral tradition that was indigenous, rather than of Hispanic origin, imported and diffused through colonialism (Foster 1979). Based on her work among the Guianan Akawaio and northern Pemon, Butt-Colson and de Armellada (1983) identified similarities between indigenous and *cobocolo* or 'creole' groups hot-cold classification, suggesting these tendencies were the motive for the further adoption or integration of Hispanic humoral theory. Focusing on the harmonious balance of (hot-cold) states, a prologue to this was her early work on binary oppositions and their mediation during shamanic healing (Butt-Colson 1977).

In addition to this, Butt-Colson also broached the topic of 'taling', that is, (tobacco smoke) blowing and chants for curing (1956) among the Akawaio, producing the only detailed ethnographic work on blowing praxis of its kind. Other topics include childbirth and the *couvade*, for which she provided a detailed description (1976). Butt-Colson and

¹See Bergham's edited series from the Fertility and Reproduction Studies Group (FRSG).

²I set out to consider childbirth and reproductive health in the light of on-going state and NGO initiatives in indigenous South America (Sypher et al. 2002; Miranda and Yamin 2004). Amazonian ethnography and theory had interested me since my undergraduate studies; and biomedical notions of health and sickness had formed the focus of my undergraduate thesis. It was only in Oxford that I became actively engaged with medical anthropology.

de Armellada (1983:1240) observed that ‘...all medicine is ultimately social medicine, in cosmopolitan as in tribal societies and cultures. In the latter case, medical problems very rapidly enter the arena of political relations and relate to the order and conduct of members and groups in social contexts, in the course of the shamanic séance in which both the personified, physical environmental and human, social, forces assemble for the uncovering, thrashing out and ultimate resolution of all the problematic interrelationships involved.’

In Brazil, Langdon and Follér (2012) have discussed how the cross-disciplinary ‘anthropology of health’ emerged as part of a distinctively Brazilian political and historical project. The authors define this as drawn from a ‘radical culturalism’ (Durate 1993) that is based on an explicitly non-biological understanding of the person (cf. Seeger et al. 1979, further references to follow). This project remains particular to a Brazilian academic ethos that includes both distinctive writing and networking styles and the use of the Portuguese language. This often unfolds at the periphery of Euro-American ‘world anthropologies’.³ Further, in Brazil anthropologists are frequently active in policy making at a national level and this is especially true with regard to the provision of indigenous healthcare in this growing multiethnic nation-state (Langdon 2004).

In indigenous contexts, Brazilian (references to follow) and North American scholars working in Brazil were some of the first to employ classical medical anthropological paradigms to produce insightful studies into therapeutic itineraries and medical pluralism (Buchillet 1991a; 1991b; Santos and Coimbra 1994). Conklin (1994) detailed Warí ethno-physiology as well as the incorporation and indigenisation of biomedicines and examined how these coincided with Warí ideas of penetration and potency. Pollock’s (1994; 1996) work among the Kulina investigated the diagnosis of illness in-so-far as this reflected a social rupture questioning social integrity and describing shifting relations between groups. Pollock (1996: 333) here described sickness as a sign of a ‘deep social relational disorder within a community’. However, rather than integrating the study of Amazonian ethnography with the sub-discipline of medical anthropology, this later emphasis on socio-personal aspects of sickness made Amazonian anthropology fold back

³Langdon and Follér (2012) provide a critique of the multidisciplinary emergence of the study of health within hegemonic discourses dominated by British and North American scholars. The authors also highlight the influence of French sociology in Brazilian anthropology. The article provides an excellent review of developments in the anthropology of health at an institutional level.

upon itself: for the forte of Amazonian anthropology had long been its emphasis on persons within the wider Amerindian socio-cosmos.

Beginning with a decisive move away from the predominant anthropological idioms of kinship and stressing the importance of co-residence in its constructed constitution (Overing Kaplan 1975), the regional shift to a person-based approach was made firm with Seeger et al's. (1979; also see Seeger 1981: 121) seminal paper and the notion of 'communities of substance'. In this, personhood became a notion that moved beyond individual bodies, since the physical body was recognised as 'not the whole body; and neither...the body as a reflection of whole person' (Seeger et al. 1979: 13, my translation). Fine ethnographies of the processual-relational fabrication of persons ensued (Conklin and Morgan 1996; Overing and Passes 2000). McCallum's (1996) highly insightful article on 'the body that knows', drew on Cashinahua ethnography to highlight the indigenous concept of **dau**, a transformational idiom used to describe shifts in bodily knowledge. This revealed **dau** as an ambivalent concept not restricted to medicine or cure. In so doing, she incorporated a latent critique questioning the need to separate the 'medical' from the ethnographic context and a wider anthropological analysis.

With increasingly sophisticated literature on the mutual articulation of bodies, persons and souls (Taylor 1996; 2002; Rival 2005), the onus came increasingly to explicate the construction of persons within the particularly predatory animism of lowland South America (Viveiros de Castro 1992). This focus encompassed the treatment of sickness, where the topic supported larger theses of 'other-becoming'. And this was also true of the study of neonates and early infancy, since the particular human form was carved out of a plethora of animist others into which it could dangerously transform as a result of predatory attacks (Vilaça 2002, 2005; Fausto 2007; also discussed in Chapter Four).

Relative difference and alterity became important to understanding health in multi-ethnic and hierarchical contexts. Employing a concentric model of social space, studies in north-western Amazonia considered local aetiologies and the category of white illness and medicine in terms of socio-cosmic distance (Garnelo and Wright 2001; on 'white' illnesses, see Conklin 1994). Garnelo (2003) employed a multifocal approach that considered biomedical provision in the light of pragmatism, hierarchy and power among the north-western Baniwa. Wiik (2001) also provided an equally holistic analysis of the experience of AIDS among the Xokleng of Santa Catarina. Scrutinizing the triadic

themes of corporality, sociality and colonial history, Wiik reveals how infected individuals were subject to a dual diagnosis as victims of both a ‘chronic’ and a ‘white’ illness which they had themselves provoked. Both involve the irreversible course of ‘other-becoming’ and the gradual process of soul loss.

Becoming-white was a thesis that emerged in Kelly’s (2001; 2003; 2004; 2011) comprehensive study of relations converging around the Venezuelan health system, the first monograph-length regional study of its kind. Kelly implicated the body in his insightful socio-cosmological analysis of white alterity from the Yanomami perspective. Elsewhere, among the Peruvian Aguaruna, Greene’s (1998) ‘intermedicality’ proved a potent paradigm through which to consider contemporary shamanic interventions in the light of politics and history within the hyper-conscious and pragmatic process of curing. The same term has been applied to discuss indigenous, biomedically trained health agents in Brazil (Follér 2004). Elsewhere in Peru, Knipper (2006) has documented the pragmatics of co-authored biomedical and shamanic cure-healing practices, which he terms ‘bi-cultural’.

Mindful of this literature, this present study set out to describe perinatal health and well-being in general, from an integrated and indigenous perspective and to do so in the light of emergent paradigms in the sub-discipline of medical anthropology. In recent years, medical anthropology has taken seriously the question and problem of evaluating the efficacy of indigenous cure-healing (e.g. Waldram 2000). These questions of efficacy have also been applied to preventative and protective ritualised practice (e.g. Hsu 2012). They thus complement a concern, known from applied medical anthropology, for promoting healthy practices. This emphasis on the indigenous practice has perhaps been especially true in the study of indigenous childbirth praxis (e.g. Jordan [1974] 1983; MacCormack 1994).

The Amazonian literature on the body provides a rich archive of ethnographic and theoretical paradigms to understand corporality in the Amazonian context. However the same sophisticated understanding of the body has not been applied to develop paradigms addressing ill-health.⁴ Whilst sophisticated paradigms of chronic corporeal instability (i.e. Vilaça 2005; Rival 2005; see also Rivière 1994; Taylor 1996) touch tangentially on

⁴One notable exception is McCallum’s (1996) aforementioned article.

sickness in support of their theses; wider elucidations of sickness (which often implicate the body), appear to have lacked any dialogue with the notion of personal and corporal instability. Rather, the issue of sickness remains trapped in cosmo-sociological, symbolic or functional-structuralist approaches (Pollock 1996; Hill 1993) that are insightful, but which distort local epistemologies and fail to explain the self-asserted potential and efficacy of traditional practice.

Thus there appears to be an inconsistency between the extensive literature on person-making and bodily epistemologies (which very accurately reflect the native point of view), and the overly symbolic or metaparadigmatic (i.e. perspectivist) analysis of practices explicitly orientated towards a pragmatic understanding of health and sickness. Given that indigenous Amerindians attest to the efficacy of their caring-for practice, this praxis leaves room for further investigation and invites dialogue with studies addressing these questions within the growing field of medical anthropology.

Emergent paradigms within the sub-discipline of medical anthropology incorporate sensory idioms to offer a phenomenologically thick description (Roseman 1988; 1991; Csordas 1993; 2002; Desjarlais 1996; Roseman and Laderman 1996) that implicates ethnobotany (Barbira-Freedman 2002; Geissler and Price 2010; Hsu and Harris 2010); and ethnomusicology (Bahr and Haefer 1978; Thram 2002; Jankowsky 2007) as well as ecology and climate (Hsu 2007; Hsu 2011) to produce rich, historicized perspectives of health, healing and sickness. These approaches promise to offer more integrated and indigenous perspectives of health and sickness, as well as discussing their role in efficacious interventions. This literature peppers my account and analysis of healthful Xié practice, and references to this body of work are found later in the introduction and throughout the thesis.

Finding a field location

I began the search for an appropriate fieldwork site by considering areas in which NGOs had been only recently active. This, I hypothesised, would allow me to consider immediate responses to biomedical healthcare provision. Contact was made with various NGOs principally in Peru, but these ultimately bore no fruit. Brazil on the other hand, presented a particularly interesting picture: health reforms in *O Distrito Sanitário Especial Indígena* (DSEI), a healthcare system introduced in 1999, and its effect on

indigenous lives, had drawn the attention of Brazilian scholars (Langdon 2004; Langdon et al.2006; Langdon 2007; Follér 2004). The DSEI of north-western Amazonia and the large multi-ethnic indigenous population of the region of the *cabeça de cahorro* (see figure 1 and Chapter One, figure 3, p.42), had attracted significant attention and varied provisions of health care providers (FUNASA-DSEI; *Associação Saúde Sem Limites* and the *Universidade Federal do Amazonas*, UFAM) and recent initiatives in reproductive health, pioneered by FUNASA I and FUNASA II, appeared promising.

I began a series of exchanges with Brazilian anthropologist Dr. Luiza Garnelo, working as part of the national *Fundação Oswaldo Cruz*, at the University of Manaus. A medical doctor and trained anthropologist, Luiza Garnelo had conducted research among the Içana-dwelling Baniwa and produced a Portuguese language monograph entitled *Power, Hierarchy and Health* (2003, my translation). Our dialogue and further investigation suggested the Xié River, and its Warekena⁵ population, would be fertile ground for research. Little was known about the Xié-dwelling population, offering the possibility that further research would make a significant contribution to the region and further the project's relevance for Amazonian anthropology.

Establishing an institutional affiliation with the University of Manaus, I was nearing the end of my first year of doctoral research, as a Probationer Research Student (PRS), when I began the process of securing permission to enter my field site. Luiza Garnelo was instrumental in facilitating this and the project then entered the long process of obtaining authorization to conduct research in Brazil, beginning with Oxford's own ethical committee; then soliciting the interest of indigenous leaders along the Xié river and at *Federação das Organizações Indígenas do Rio Negro* (henceforth, FOIRN); followed by institutional and ethical approval from the University of Manaus (CEP); the national bureau for scientific and technological development (CNPq) and the national Brazilian ethnical committee (CONEP); and finally *Fundação Nacional do Índio* (henceforth, FUNAI), which in light of approvals by these institutions, was able to grant me access to indigenous territories of the upper Rio Negro and Xié river (February 2010). These documents are attached to this thesis.

⁵For the purpose for this thesis, I have chosen to use the ethnomym Warekena, as this is the consensual and most frequently occurring name in the recent literature (Ñanez 2005a; 2005b; Aline de Cruz 2011).



Figure 1: The Amazon, crossing into the nation-states of Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador, Colombia, Venezuela, British Guyana, French Guyana (unlabelled), Surinam (unlabelled) and Brazil. The Rio Negro, is highlighted in pink and the border area (Brazil, Colombia and Venezuela) of the Xié river, my field site, is circled in a generous circumference in green (and indicated with an arrow).⁶

Xié dwellers and the Warekena

The Warekena mostly live near the Venezuela-Brazil border; with a large percentage of the relatively unknown Brazilian Warekena dwelling along the Xié River. Portuguese-language authors working with the Warekena,⁷ discuss inter-ethnic exchanges and the creation of historic macro polities (Vidal 2002a; 2002b, 2002c, also described in Chapter

⁶<http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/e/e5/Negroamazonrivermap.png>, accessed 31/07/2013.

⁷Also known as the Aerekena, Aeroquena, Arequena, Ariguane, Arikíena, Ariquena, Garekena, Guarequena, Uarakena, Uariquena, Uerecuna, Uerequema, Warekena, Warikyána Werikena, Verikena.

One); linguistics and ethnicity (Amorim 1992; Aline da Cruz 2011) and engagement in extraction economies (Meira 1994; 1996; Coimbra 2007).

On the basis of Tariana myths and 18th century archives, Aikhenvald (1998) has suggested that the Warekena lived on the Vaupés river, where they worked for the Tariana. They later dispersed, and formed communities along the Xié and further up the Rio Negro-Guiana. In Guiana (Venezuela and Colombia), they are thought to have abandoned the Warekena language, becoming conversant in Baníwa de Guiana, also known as the Baníwa of Maroa. Because this language is now identified with the people who speak it, both by other residents of the Rio Negro and by linguists (Aikhenvald 1998) including Aline da Cruz (2011) who recently conducted work along the Xié, Içana and upper Rio Negro, Warekena seems to be its appropriate name.⁸

In Venezuela, the Warekena along the Rio Guiana in the community of Gusman Blanco had formed the basis for Ñanez' (1980) monograph *Mitología Guarequena*. A volume in two parts, the first provided a theoretical framework, while the second presented a selection of myths transcribed chiefly in the local Spanish idiom, along with others in the Warekena language. Later, following his linguistic research, Ñanez (2005b) disputed the entrenched notion of the Xié river as the 'proto-home' of the Warekena (Aikhenvald 1998: 229; 1995: 39; Koch-Grünberg 1995 [1911]; Nimuendajú 1982: 176; Galvão 1979: 146). He suggested that the Xié river was the site of cyclical migrations rather than an ancestral homeland. Ñanez (2005b) has also suggested that the Warekena ethnonym may have previously referred to Wáalikénai; 'grandchildren of the picture', a large phratry that broke off from the Wakuénai and Curripacos, together with other phratries (i.e. Baré and Tariana). In support of this thesis of Baníwa domination of the river, he has also flagged the original toponym for the Xié river as 'Wenêsri' which means 'foam' in Baníwa, then translated as 'Xié' in the Géral language today used by Xié dwellers. For Ñanez, this provided evidence that the Xié formed part of Baníwa, and not Warekena, homelands.

At the time of my field work, the Xié population consisted of approximately 845 individuals, belonging to roughly 156 families, residing in twelve communities (*comunidades*) and four manioc-garden residences (*sitios*). Increasingly, and especially over the past 20 years, Xié dwelling has come to be associated with village *comunidades*,

⁸Furthermore, Aikhenvald (1998: 225) has suggested that even along the Xié, some dwellers speak what has been identified as Baníwa de Maroa, and others speak real Warekena.

rather than the *sítios*. Constant movement along the Xié between Colombia, Venezuela and São Gabriel translates into a fluctuating demography, with perhaps ten percent of the population absent at any given time (either for work purposes or because they are in the city visiting relatives and collecting resources). The Xié is home to the Warekena, Baré, Baniwa, Tukano, Tariano, Curipaco and Wereke, but increasingly residents describe themselves as Warekena, regardless of their ethnic origin. More recent migrants tend to be drawn to the larger Xié river communities of up-river Anamoin,⁹ mid-river Cumatí, and lower-river Vila Nova.

Following a conversion campaign in the 1960s, the Xié has also experienced a religious divide between down-river Protestant and up-river Catholic communities. The Cumatí rapids provide a geographical marker of religious division along the river: with the exception of São Marcelino, those living above Cumatí are Catholics, whilst those below and including Cumatí are mostly Evangelical Protestants (*Tribos Novos*). Religious affiliations are community based and marked by the topographic landmark of the Cumatí rapids. My fieldwork found that physical proximity and co-residence in the village community was important for reckoning relatedness. However, in these hierarchical systems and among more established groups, sometimes distant agnatic relatives retain their importance. Here, descent defines exogamous marriages between clans who display a preference for cross-cousin marriages and rank endogamy.

Based in their relatively accessible riverside settlements, or in the aforementioned *comunidades*, people live in high-ceilinged, palm-thatched, wood and mud communally constructed structures, belonging for the most part to nuclear-family homes (see figure 5, p. 18). They draw their livelihood from fishing, hunting, horticulture and the collection of forest fruits. The exchange of foodstuffs and the production of artisanal utensils and canoes are especially common between groups of classificatory affines.

⁹During the construction of the airstrip at Anamoin and in conjunction with the growing merchant presence, the *rabeta* 5.5 Hp (motor-boat propeller) also became a desirable asset of the more well to do. Cândido Jaurmare, the grandson of Quinto (Cândido de Oliveira's first born), was the first to obtain a *rabeta* which he acquired in the early 1990's at the exchange rate of 1500 kilos of piassava. In order to procure the gasoline for these motors, most people made a five-day return trip to Venezuela where the fuel was purchased at a fraction of the price in Brazil. The trips themselves were made using the *rabeta* motor fixed to the rear of a large canoe (*igara*), with a smaller canoe in tow for navigation along smaller streams and then dismounting for a day-long trek along forest paths. On the return trip, they carry 50-litres of gasoline on their backs, along the forest paths. Despite the cost of purchasing and running the *rabeta*, today it is considered an essential possession of every Xié family and gasoline continues, in some instances, to be obtained across the border.

Farinha (labour-intensive produced manioc flour) produced from the otherwise highly cyanogenic *manihot esculenta* Crantz variety, together with extractive forest products, including piassava palm (*Leopoldinia piassaba*) and the vine, *cipó* (*Heteropsis flexuosa*) are exchanged with merchants (*commerciantes* or *regatões*¹⁰) for industrialised goods (e.g. machetes, fishing hooks, rifles, motors, pots and pans) and food staples (salt, sugar, coffee, powdered milk, rice, beans, canned meat etc.) Such exchanges typically involve an extremely poor return for the indigenous population, a lingering holdover from the system of debt patronage established during the late colonial period and now widespread throughout the region. Remunerative state benefits for pensioners and those with families are also available to those with the necessary paperwork in place. Some individuals also claim fishermen's subsidies, which bring in an average monthly income of around 400 Brazilian Reis (around £115 at the time of writing - the approximate cost of the gasoline for a return trip from mid-river Tunu Cachoeira to the city of São Gabriel). A few community members have jobs as state employed teachers and community 'nurses' (*Agente Indígena de Saúde*, AIS) and a handful of individuals are trained in malaria microscopy (*microscopista*).

Comunidades started out as administrative and fiscal units during the early 1990s. Their role as part of the national state of Brazil is marked by the community *capitão* (captain), elected via democratic vote. During the 19th century, 'principals' - a title created by 'white' agents - were powerful headmen who colluded with national agents. This was often for the purpose of enslaving other ethnicities, and these people are today still known by the *Géral* word *tuisha* (headman, leader). The captain of a community is aided by other officials: the vice-captain, the school teacher, a Catholic catechist or Evangelical preacher and, since the year 2000, the AIS (indigenous health agent). This group collectively became known as the leaders (*lideranças*) and acts as a conduit linking the needs of the village community with the benefits of the Brazilian nation-state, including government subsidies, schooling, foodstuffs and pharmaceuticals. It allows access to the benefits of powerful and distant affines (the whites), and as such it is considered the most

¹⁰Both are merchants, the difference being exchanging with *commerciantes* based in the city (for a better return due to competition) or with, sometimes the same, community-visiting *regatões* (for a lower price). The choice depends on access: for Indians, it is access to gasoline that will allow them to travel to the city of São Gabriel; and for *commerciantes*, given their heavy cargo, it is the high-water summer season that is preferable, especially for headwater areas, as they do not then have to disembark at seasonally exposed waterfalls and rapids.

modern and civilised form of co-residence for Xié dwellers today. All Xié residents speak *lingua Géral* which, aside from when the older generation speak among themselves, has entirely replaced the Warekena language.

Finally, in spite of the marked religious affinities and the sense of mutual exclusivity between up-river and down-river groups, the Xié has a river-wide association, the association of Xié river communities (*Associação das Comunidades Indígenas do Rio Xié*, ACIRX). The group is designed to be the voice of Xié dwellers in their dealings with other institutions and organisations, including the pan-indigenous organisation FOIRN, and also collects funds for river-wide projects. During my fieldwork, however, it was a non-functioning entity.

As Garnelo (2003) has documented, and as I myself observed, traditional lifestyles and esoteric knowledge and practice constantly compete with these new forms of prestige and authority. High-ranking individuals may attain salaried positions, and continue to dwell locally as teachers or health agents, but they must strike a balance between prestige and personal benefit and the sharing and distribution of goods, knowledge and services. Those anxious to preserve their ethnic identity and continue residing in their home communities must carefully negotiate these boundaries, to thwart the process of ‘turning white’ (see also Garnelo 2003; and Lasmar 2005). The nuances of this balancing act have shifted over time and with them a growing consciousness of the place of Indian ethnicity - and all that it means- within the Brazilian nation-state.

Fieldwork with my family

I entered the field with my family: my husband, Carlos and our son Sasha, who turned five in May 2010, during my field work. My pre-field work research suggested that the Rio Xié was a significantly under researched region, making my study an important contribution to the region’s ethnography. While hard to reach, the location was near enough - for myself and family- to the relatively well-serviced municipal capital of São Gabriel. We planned to spend 12 months along the Rio Xié and three months in São Gabriel da Cacheira, which offered access to indigenous health care professionals, indigenous organisations, city-dwelling Warekena and information resources.

Introduction

After obtaining my research permit at the FUNAI headquarters in Brasilia, we flew to Manaus and began our hunt for a boat to take us on the 1000 km river journey to São Gabriel. At the height of the dry season the river water was too low for boats to make the week-long trip, and finding a scheduled river boat service to take us there proved to be a complicated affair. We eventually discovered a speedier but more costly alternative: travelling by overnight passenger speed-boat. When we arrived in São Gabriel, we booked into the local hotel and I began to meet local officials whom until then I had only known via email or telephone. I met with the leaders of the indigenous organisation, the indigenous federation for the Rio Negro (FOIRN) and its director, Luis Brasão and the former director Abrão, and with staff at the National Indian Foundation (FUNAI). I also met with Sully, the administrator of the socio-environmental institute (*Instituto socio-ambiental*, henceforth ISA) and the nurses and administrative staff for the provision of differentiated indigenous healthcare (DSEI). With their combined insight, we began to look for a suitable location.

Eventually we identified the mid-upper river island community of Tunu as a possibility, not least because the Catholic community on this small island was thought to be more traditional. Furthermore, Tunu occupied a strategic mid-river location, from which I could visit other communities. Tunu was also the first established riverfront community along the Xié, marking it as an historic place of convergence with other ethnicities, both white and Indian. The community was also said to be more open to outsiders than others, and the local census revealed that they had a community of children of around my son's age.

Weighing the possibilities of travel to the Xié, and the cost of travelling in a chauffeured motorized boat, we decided instead to establish radio contact with the community of Tunu and to ask if they could take us back with them on their next city trip. We offered a generous payment to a Tunu resident, Jaime Cândido, who was willing to collect us in his canoe from the city. Early on in my fieldwork, Jaime became the community captain. Meeting for the first time at the FUNAI headquarters, Jaime and I were able to discuss my intentions and fieldwork together. A few days later he collected us together with his father, Tunu elder and former captain, Luís Cândido. With the 5.5. hp outboard motor (*rabeta*) attached to Jaime's canoe, travelling nearly non-stop, we made the trip in just three days, while on later trips, this was a four-day journey (figure 2).



Figure 2: Sitting in the canoe, docked here in the Daburu district of São Gabriel, on the lower Rio Negro, just prior to our 3-day up-river journey. Depicted are our son Sasha, left, and me in the canoe.

In early March - the dry season - the river's boulders and rocks protruded above the powerful whirling currents. While Jaime navigated, Luís kept us in light conversation for most of the journey, although it was difficult to hear him above the roar of the motor. We made two overnight stops, one at the Rio Negro island community of Açai and another at the lower-Xié river community of Santa Rosa where Luís and Jaime rapidly made a fire and cooked the chicken we had bought for them. We had trouble lighting our own fire and so they suggested I ask if I could share the hearth of a woman in Santa Rosa. I took my pan-full of the Argentinian herbal tea (*maté*) to warm on the fire of the Captain's wife, where she was also preparing breakfast. We were then invited to the communal breakfast, to which we took our *maté* and engaged in an animated conversation with the resident community's teachers and the community Captain. Shortly after breakfast, we continued our trip up-river to Tunu, only disembarking to cross the vast rapids of Cumatí Cachoeira (figure 3).



Figure 3: The Cumati rapids during late summer. Our canoe, husband and helpers (far left), tubs of gasoline in the foreground and son Sasha, far right.

Two days after arriving in the village of Tunu, I gave a speech explaining our purpose and my intended period of research. We planned to stay for a year. I would be investigating how people looked after their health during the perinatal period, and their more general experiences of health, sickness and access to biomedical care. I wanted to get to know them, to live as they did and learn as much as I could. I argued that this would greatly aid my fieldwork and could also help them, explaining that in collaboration with the DSEI my knowledge and feedback could lead to better and more sensitive healthcare programmes for Xié communities. I also explained that I would be writing a book so that people elsewhere would know of the Xié river and the people who lived there. I offered my support to write and present projects for Xié dwellers and promised to aid them in soliciting resources for their own projects. I also suggested that my presence would increase their profile and aid future Xié development initiatives. I made it clear that our presence was entirely at their discretion and that we could leave at any time if

they desired. Even so, if this did transpire, I stated that I would still continue to pursue projects on their behalf.

The Tunu community welcomed us with generosity and we spent the greater part of my fieldwork there. We also made trips both up and downriver and these were timed around the due dates of expectant mothers. We tried to make most of these trips as a family, which was preferable from the Tunu villagers' perspective since it was unusual for a woman to travel alone. We could not afford the cost of river travel in a motor boat, nor did we have the skills to negotiate the river and its rapids in a canoe without help from someone with more knowledge of the river. Mostly we hitched lifts from other Xié dwellers or Tunu residents, whom we reimbursed with gasoline we had brought with us for this purpose. When I travelled alone, I rode in the passing canoes of Xié dwellers, and hitched free rides with river merchants and the DSEI health team.

The DSEI gave me access to some of their statistical records for the Upper Rio Negro, sharing their observations during both formal and informal interviews. I also accessed hard-to-get library resources held by the *Instituto Socioambiental* (ISA) in São Gabriel.

My field work was mainly based on participant-observation. I joined in daily life, engaged in pigeon *lingua Geral*, held casual conversations in Portuguese and later committed the content to paper. I observed daily life, and paid special attention to pregnancy, birthing and post-birth families. I also closely accompanied two live births and tracked the pregnancies of eight women and five post-partum families. During the observation of the two live births, I was continuously present (over a 48 hour period) and continued frequent visits in the weeks that followed. During this period I also conducted semi-structured interviews. Open-ended questions were used to solicit further information. Mythic narratives were aired at the discretion of the person telling them. It was often preferable to tell myths at dusk. Many of these longer, solicited conversations I recorded with a digital audio recorder. I asked permission to do this, and I also took photographs, many of which became gifts for the featured participants. In some cases, I also used photos to elicit further information.

I hosted two discussion groups in the community centres of Tunu and Umaritiuba respectively and gave a special focus to perinatal sicknesses. The first was facilitated by Emilio, the AIS for Tunu, and by the local supply teacher, Barbosa, who helped me transcribe some of the discussions that took place in *lingua Geral*. I also discussed the

work and professional development of several indigenous Xié dwelling, biomedically trained nurses (AIS) along the Xié as part of a region-wide scheme pioneered by Dr. Garnelo. They often asked me for help in completing their assignments. My husband, Carlos, also told me things he had seen and done and of what people had said, when he felt that this would not jeopardise the privacy of others. This provided insight from a male perspective. As stated, I also brought my son of 5 years to the field with me and I gave birth to my second child in the field. I frequently observed their interactions in the communities in which we stayed. We all spoke in either Portuguese, which Tunu dwellers were keen to have the opportunity to practice, or in broken *lingua Geral*.

I entered the field approximately 14 weeks pregnant and our baby was due at the end of June. As we prepared for me to give birth in the village of Tunu, we decided to avoid travel around this date. At the beginning of June 2011 a group of military personnel mapping the region arrived at our community of Tunu. They were well equipped with a satellite internet connection and I used their services to check my emails. Following an application I had made to the Emslie Horniman Anthropological Scholarship Fund, I received an email from the Royal Anthropological Institute inviting me for a telephone interview in support of my application. With rapidly depleting finances, I consulted with Tunu dwellers about when they would make their next trip to the city. Coinciding with a planned trip by Tunu's indigenous health agent, Emilio, we decided to make the trip to São Gabriel for the interview on June 8. We arrived in São Gabriel on Sunday June 6, and in the morning of the following Tuesday, our baby Sofia was delivered by my husband using the methods I had seen in Tunu and that had thus far been described to me during my fieldwork (for a detailed description of these, see Chapter Four). Two hours later, in a state of post-partum euphoria, I made my way for the telephone interview via the precarious connection of the Social-environmental Institute (ISA). This was perhaps not the best moment for the interview, in which I was ultimately unsuccessful.

Introduction

To avoid any further complications, we stayed in São Gabriel for the month of June. At the end of the month, Tunu's captain Jaime and his wife visited us in the city. We arranged to travel back to Tunu with Jaime's father, Tunu elder Luís and his wife when they were making their return journey from the city (see figure 4). When we arrived in Tunu we received a very warm welcome and found that a separate dwelling had been built for us to live in. The community were pleased that we had returned and were delighted to have a new baby in their midst. During the first week of our return, a communal work party was organised by the captain to finish off the palm-thatched walls of our house (figure 5).



Figure 4: Doña. Evangelista with Sofia travelling back from São Gabriel to Tunu.



Figure 5: Carlos with the Tunu men thatching the walls of our house.

In terms of my research, being pregnant in the field and having our baby there had considerable merit. Since it is generally very hard to ask questions in the abstract, the pregnant and post-partum state facilitated certain information into perinatal experiences to which I probably would not otherwise had access. It also helped us to be accepted and be seen as real people, with the same vulnerabilities as those with whom we lived. Pregnancy and post-partum states also came with certain local restrictions, some of which I followed, while ignoring others. A pregnant woman would not normally attend other births for fear that the complications one might observe would negatively affect her own pregnancy and birth. I did not follow this guideline. Further, since I had already truthfully explained that the birth of our first son had been very rapid, my presence at childbirth was understood to be positive for the birthing woman herself. After seeing the healthy state of our own baby, with her rippling fat and, as many people remarked ‘strong blood’ (*sangue forte*), other mothers sought her out for contact with their own children who they claimed would also acquire these characteristics. Other aspects of daily life were off limits, including many men’s activities. It was seen as particularly strange for a woman during the perinatal period to inquire about sicknesses and shamanic cures. Even



Figure 6: Sasha (right) with his friends, the children of the Tukano supply teacher, Jose in our kitchen in the community of Tunu.

talking about such things is understood to provoke sickness, and the esoteric knowledge that constitutes shamanism is subject to a host of restrictions, the first of which would be the perinatal state.

My husband worked with the men during communal work parties (*wayuri*), and fetched logs from the forest with other men to make canoes. But he did not hunt or fish, for he took on child-caring responsibilities far in excess of any other Xié dwelling man, and apart from small fish, maintained a vegetarian

diet. This Carlos explained as a ‘promise’ he had made, and as we discovered during the course of my fieldwork, this was common practice/payment, or thanks-giving, for a life that has been spared; and mimics the dietary proscriptions of initiates or shamans during their training.

Carlos offered his services to the community: he made a mud-brick oven in the house of a prominent family in Campinas during communal men’s work as well as a stove with a chimney for our first host, Magdalena. Both families were delighted with these cooking facilities, expedited by the prestigious skilled-labour of a resident ‘big white-man’ (*kariwa oso*). Carlos developed an excellent rapport with the community, and participated in all festivities, some which involved alcohol, which I, as a pregnant and post-partum mother with a small baby, could only do to a limited extent.

Sasha enjoyed living along the Xié river. He played around our village island, and often came home telling me of his adventures with snakes, fires, fruits and insects he had encountered. A resident Tukano teacher and his children, who were also outsiders, provided welcome play mates for Sasha and he spent much of his time with them (figure 6). On one occasion, Sasha told me how he and his friend had found a snake that had come out of its hole and stuck its tongue out at them. His friend had hit the snake with a stick, and Sasha had then killed it with a knife he had taken from our kitchen.

Sasha also enjoyed riverside adventures with his father, diving for crystals and gold around the island's beaches. The hardest aspect of life for Sasha were his fleeting friendships with other village children, who periodically teased and discriminated against a child who was already so very different from them. The other limiting factor was adjusting to a different and restricted diet of the beans, rice and pasta we had brought with us; and the manioc, fish stews and game he had never before seen. We were grateful that other families invited Sasha to visit them and also fed him.

Because we were seen as an independent economic unit, food was in short supply. While the community shared generously with us, especially at communal meals to which we also brought pasta or beans, it was difficult to establish an exchange relationship that would get us often scarce cultivated fruit, vegetables, fish and meat. While I waited for grants to come through and I was successful in securing smaller university funds, these were not sufficient for us to live well in the community and our diet, more often than not, afforded nutritional levels below that of the rest of the community. Luckily our health was not seriously affected by this.

During and after my field research, I assumed responsibility for facilitating projects and securing resources for the Xié river and its dwellers. One such project arose from a call for proposals for culture-promoting initiatives by the Brazilian Ministry of Culture. I devised a project, which I submitted under the auspices of FORIN, focusing on the revitalisation of the Warekena language in the context of flute traditions and traditional basketry. The project, entitled *Maestres de Saberes* (masters of knowledge) was planned to finance a two-week workshop led by Xié elders, providing food, audio-recording equipment, transport and gasoline for its duration. It would culminate in the production of

an illustrated booklet and audio CD for Xié schools thereby also incorporating some of the objectives of Xié school teachers (figure 7).¹¹



Figure 7: Photo from the workshop, 'Masters of knowledge', sent to me by the director of FOIRN, Luis Brasão 18/10/2011.



Figure 8: Baby Sofia and Sasha (far right) in the community of Tunu.

¹¹Out of over a dozen projects submitted via FORIN, this was the only one approved for funding but, despite my best efforts, by the end of my field work we were still awaiting the allocation of resources to make the project a reality. It was over eight months after completing my fieldwork that I finally received notice that the funds had been transferred and that the project, at least in part, had been undertaken.

We left the Xié a month earlier than planned, in February 2012. By now we were beginning to feel the strain of fieldwork. Although the Xié river proved an otherwise ideal place to raise a baby, Sofia who was evaluated by our community as ‘white’ (*branca*), ‘fat’ (*gorda*) and ‘beautiful’ (*puranga*), was also the subject of jealousy from infertile couples, and I was warned that she could become a victim of witchcraft. I think that this attitude was due to the fact that, much to the chagrin of some Xié dwellers, we were not able to visit all the communities along the Xié and Tunu had been our privileged locale. We had entered the world of Xié dwellers for whom assault sorcery is a special concern during the perinatal period and to which our Tukano neighbours, the teacher’s family, had already fallen victim: their second child’s legs had swollen and they had sought the help of the Umarituba shaman, Jesus, to undo the curse inflicted on them. While his intervention was successful, the Tukano teacher then left for holidays with his children, and these were Sasha’s only friends. This set of circumstances, and the fact that Sasha, while bathing with some other children, was almost drowned when being carried downriver by a fierce current from which he was most fortuitously saved, convinced me it was time to leave.

We then spent a further two months in the city of São Gabriel. This allowed me to follow up on the projects I had written about and discussed with the techno-agricultural university in São Gabriel. I also launched the project of researching and compiling information on traditional illnesses, which was a project Dra. Luiza Garnelo had asked me to undertake. Through the University of Manaus, this formed part of a larger healthcare initiative aimed at recognising traditional notions of sickness. It included the production of handbooks outlining these customs for each river community. The handbooks were to be distributed to the indigenous health agents and health teams working in the Rio Negro, and I was commissioned to write the Xié component of the project.

Being in São Gabriel I took the opportunity to meet recently arrived city-dwelling Warekena. I also received Xié dwellers coming to the city to collect resources, state benefits or receive healthcare. From São Gabriel, I made some further inquiries into biomedical health care provisions, conducting interviews with health-professionals and providers at the indigenous convalescence suite, the *Casa de Saúde Índígena* (CASAÍ).

Our time along the Xié river was both challenging and illuminating. The people of Tunu, Umarituba and Campinas were kind, tolerant and accepting of us. I fulfilled my obligation of writing and submitting projects for Xié dwellers, and while many never took shape, at least one has now materialized. As promised, I made a portion of my research available via the manual I wrote on traditional illnesses (Rahman, *in press*). This enables the DSEI to develop additional holistic medical training programmes and offer more sensitive health care. Furthermore, I plan to return to the Xié for further research and to pursue projects I submitted on behalf of Xié dwellers, and investigate new ways of helping the communities with whom I worked, perhaps in a more direct capacity.

In terms of my research, over the course of my fieldwork I found that my initial interest in the cross-over between customary and biomedical techniques and facilities, while still of interest, had diminished after what I had experienced during fieldwork itself. I was impressed by the way in which people's perspective on reproductive health formed part of a wider repertoire of skills to which persons were generally attentive. Xié dwellers were highly perceptive about their own and others' engagements and how they impacted on their health. They were also artfully attentive to the details of their daily life, and how various interactions affected their general health, wellbeing and that of their kin. All this helped us to experience the quiet contentment, stealth, stamina and strength, of living in a subsistence economy. And it also led me to redevelop the main thesis of this doctoral research project.

Writing up

For Xié dwellers, proper growth and good health stem from seeking to live in a way that promotes harmony between oneself, one's family, co-residents and other agents, all of whom are responsible for the constitution of the 'self'. There is an extensive code of good practice, which forms part of, as Xié dwellers say, 'what one should do'. These include conventions on how, when and where one should bathe, wash, cook and 'work', and what one should eat. This is especially emphasised regarding important productive and reproductive events. While I describe some of these techniques as far as they pertain to perinatal care, the major concern of my thesis is how these guidelines involve the exercise of specific body rites, typified by rhythmic and repetitive routines and uniform caring techniques, including that of splash-washing neonates (Chapter Six). The thesis

suggests that these rites describe the aesthetic embodiment of moral and bodily attitudes and dispositions which may actually promote good health. I argue that these practices develop an ‘awareness-of-experience’ (Smith 2011) characterised by particularly mindful ways of carrying out routine activities. These are characterised by a wide range of often unspoken aesthetic devices that shape bodily techniques (Mauss 2002 [1934]). The analysis of these techniques cannot be limited to purely symbolic (e.g. Douglas 1966; 1970; Hertz 1960 [1881-1915]) and political (Foucault 1976; 1977) approaches, nor to a biomedical functionalism that views bodily praxis through the lens of our Cartesian legacy. Rather, these techniques are non-linguistic phenomena which, I suggest, are often indexical of an intimate entwinement with the environment (Peirce 2000 [1885]). They are also normative modes of action, relevant to proper morality (on embodied morality, see Londoño Sulkin 2010), and are considered requisite for proper human growth and development.

Focusing on the minutiae of perinatal practices, I suggest that Xié aetiologies are orientated around the active cultivation of mindfulness: Xié dwellers wakefully attend to their own and others’ activities. Proper bodily practice and shared intersubjective bodily experiences are a fundamental way of making and becoming kin. The way, manner or mode in which people attend to one another and to their surroundings, is also the chief means by which Xié residents assess other people. This bodily consciousness could be described as mindfulness and is akin to the process of paying close attention to moment-to-moment experience in daily life (Kabat-Zinn 2003, also see Kabat-Zinn 1990). This latter, more precise biomedically informed definition of mindfulness I use to elucidate a wide range of hands-on techniques and bodily practices surrounding perinatal practice and/or employed on a daily basis in the Xié context. The concept of mindfulness both fits with and describes Xié dwellers aetiologies and pathological experiences and is closely related to Xié dwellers’ *lingua Géral* expressions of personal potency (*kirimbawa*) and their ability to live well (*kua katu*) and beautifully (*a-kua-katu puranga*).

Mindfulness has been described as ‘a state-like phenomenon that is evoked and maintained by regulating attention’ (Bishop et al. 2004: 237). Recent research into mindful capacities as defined in the biomedical sciences (Kabat-Zin 2003; Bishop et al. 2004; Williams 2008) points towards the unification of intention and action, detailing the ability of mindful practice to positively affect interpersonal relationships; to cultivate the ability to withstand pain; encourage physical and mental endurance and develop

responsiveness. All this also has a positive impact on the immune system. This expanding research provides a useful practice-based approach to comprehending indigenous lived worlds in terms closest to indigenous understandings of health and well-being. Seen from an anthropological perspective, mindfulness effectively is a kind of ‘somatic mode of attention’ (Csordas 1993). It helps us think about the arena of mundane experience, that is, periods in which nothing of major significance occurs and people are simply busy living well (cf. Gow 2000). What is more, this thesis points to specific techniques -relevant to the specific milieu- that demonstrate mindfulness as a learned skill in infancy, and even prior to this in foetal dwelling by examining the interrelation between embodied moral capacities and their gradual acquisition in infancy. I argue that early infant experience forms a potent basis from which to prepare socially and physically adept and cool-minded persons, able to suppress sensations such as pain in later life (i.e. during childbirth and in the case of snakebites for men). This accompanies childbirth and perinatal practice, but also provides a rich perspective on preventative healthcare. Xié dwellers’ ‘good life’ (cf. Descola 1994; Belunde 2001b; Gow 2000; Ewart 2013; and in specific regard to infancy, Rival 2007: 172) may actually produce a bodily-felt efficacy intrinsically linked to convivial lifestyles.

The thesis describes the ethnographic basis for the practice and development of mindful techniques surrounding childbirth, articulated specifically in regard to the wider social and physical, seasonally changing, environment. In so doing, it adds an emplaced ecological understanding to the unfolding of mindful states, suggesting that for Xié dwellers such states are activated through dialogue with the surrounding environment and its particular micro-ecologies. Engaging with these ecological agents as persons, I suggest, indicates a special type of wider perceptual awareness that has in the Amerindian literature been understood as the animist ‘eco-cosmology’ (Århem 1996).

Animist ecologies have recently been brought to the foreground of Amazonian anthropology, especially through Vivieros de Castro’s (1998) powerful paradigm of perspectivism that explains the especially predatory milieu in which Amerindians live. The value of the perspectivist paradigm is that it locates points of view in the particular, often transformational, body of each agent (animal, human or other). This thesis aims to shed special light on the way that Amerindians perceive the environment: joined in one ‘cosmic nature’ (Århem 1996), sharing the culture of Amerindians themselves and with differences between agents existing only in their mutable bodily form. The research

thesis proposes that Xié dwellers *l'ouverture a l'autre* (openness to others, Lévi-Strauss 1963 [1958]; Viveiros de Castro 2002) and their perceptive engagement, over time and in various historical circumstances, play an important part in the animist experience and the narratives it produces. I go one step further by suggesting that it is precisely this, mindful, perception of the environment that enables animist discourses.

In the sections that follow, I describe mindfulness by considering complementary approaches that expand, explicitly or implicitly, on this concept. Firstly, I consider how the term 'mindful' has been employed by Amerindianists to describe processes of intentional bodily fabrication. In 'more on mindfulness' I seek further clarification for the term by drawing on the biomedical literature on mindfulness and linking this to emergent paradigms in medical anthropology. Exploring further and expanding the concept of mindfulness, I turn to consider the mind, history and the environment as elaborated by Toren (1999), Ingold (2000) and Hsu (2007). These authors provide mutually complementary perspectives that positively inform the broad concept of mindfulness as employed in this thesis. Finally Hsu's (2007) work, while incorporating history and the environment, also brings forth the perspective of mindfulness as intimately entwined with the lifestyles of the status-conscious.

Mindful Amerindians

Many anthropologists were confounded by Amerindian populations that were simultaneously stereotyped by early travellers as both hard-working and lazy. The great naturalist Alfred Wallace ([1853] 2006: 118) summed up the general sentiment that Amerindians 'almost always seem at work, but have very little to show for it'. In the anthropological literature, the problems surrounding this observation were addressed by Overing (1989b), who based her fieldwork among the Piaroa, and described the great amount of time dedicated towards an 'artful style of living'.

After Clastres (1977), and drawn from the Piaroa term **Ta'kwakomena**, which she translated as the 'wizardry to live tranquilly', Overing (1989a; also see 1989b¹²) sought to describe just how a convivial sense of community (*sensus communis*) could be achieved in daily life. In an edited volume dedicated to the aesthetics of daily life, Overing and

¹²This is her comparative piece based on Goldman's (1963) work with the Cubeo.

Passes (2000: 19) comment that the notion that there is ‘...an aesthetics involved in belonging to a community of relations that conjoins body, thought and affect is widespread in Amazonia’. In these contexts, ‘mindful’ was a term that came to be used to describe a good life ‘which is engendered through the artful practices and skills of those who personally and intimately interact in everyday life’ (Overing and Passes 2000: 4). Amazonianist authors have extensively investigated the intentional nature of Amerindian person-making practices (e.g. Conklin and Morgan 1996; McCallum 2001; Ewart 2013) and the great amount of time and effort invested in the personalized fabrication of bodies. This wizardry to live well meant that other-worldly forces were part of, and not separate from, bodily process and techniques (Crocker 1985).

Descola (1992) first described the concept of the ‘good life’, and discussed the Amerindian capacity to achieve this aim. Amerindian societies, orientated towards a high standard of emotional comfort and subsistence without excess, were periodically able to achieve amicable reciprocity in their communities (Rivière 2000; Santos-Granero 2000). Therefore, part of the good life involved the link between abundance and their means of subsistence and the local ecologies they lived in. These latter, ecological, relations were described by Descola (1994) as animist. However, in subsequent literature on-going affective kin relations and the de-affinization of the other fell into the remit of ‘constructivist’ (Santos-Granero 2012) person-making approaches; while the latter relations with animist agents came to be increasingly defined by the idiom of predation and alterity (Vivieros de Castro 1998; Vilaça 2002; 2005; Fausto 1999; 2007). This was in spite of ethnography suggesting that positive animist relations could promote the self (Overing 1989a; Descola and Pálsson 1996).

Through dialogue with ethnobotany, more recent work has pointed towards a rejoinder of ‘constructivist’ and perspectivist approaches (Santos-Granero 2012). In the light of multifaceted human and non-human relations, the notion of mindful engagement may then equally be extended to the animist environment. This is especially true since health and well-being emerge as relational states that implicate the whole person in his lived environment. Finally, I make mindfulness an emplaced lived experience unfolding within local ecologies. In so doing, I speak to a wider Amerindian humoral tradition, first noted by Butt-Colson and de Armellada (1983) that seeks to establish harmonious and balanced states of being.

More on Mindfulness

My use of mindfulness differs from the way the term has been employed by Scheper-Hughes and Lock (1987) in their seminal article 'The mindful body'. Scheper-Hughes' and Lock's three-bodies approach, considered the individual body, the social body and the body politic as three distinctive yet overlapping experiences and perceptions of the body, drawn from the varied foci of anthropological analysis. Their critically interpretative approach aimed to dislodge overly biomedical and Cartesian mind-body distinctions that continue to plague the sub-discipline medical anthropology. In contrast, my use of the term mindful reflects recent research in biomedicine into mindfulness. This term, as I have already discussed, appears in the Amerindian literature, but lacks the precise definition afforded by biomedicine and its corollary insights into health and well-being. This is despite its place within a biomedical discourse still limited by Cartesian distinctions.

Mindfulness is a concept that describes meditative practices deriving from ancient Buddhist traditions that continue to be practiced today (Raffone et. al 2010). More recently mindfulness has become a specific catchword of psychology and psychiatry. These studies provide a biomedical basis for the far-reaching psychological effects of mindful practice.

In clinical applications, mindfulness has been introduced for the management of chronic pain (Kabat-Zinn et. al 1985), and has drawn most attention as part of Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MSBR) due to its potential to reduce depression associated with chronic illnesses and emotional distress. More recently in perinatal care, mindful practice has been employed to prepare pregnant women for childbirth and to enhance neonatal interactions, with potential benefits for both mother and child (Hughes et al. 2009). Departing then only somewhat from its original Buddhist objective of the cessation of personal suffering (Silananda 1990), an emergent literature has considered some of the implications of mindfulness as a secular practice (Vandenberghe and Costa Prado 2009; Baer 2011).

While there has been a tacit understanding of the concept, a working clinical definition has eluded many practitioners (see Bishop et al. 2004). Mindfulness has been described as a trait-like phenomenon and thus a given attribute of an individual's make-up. Others

define it as a 'state'. More preferable still is its more recent definition as a 'mode', since it thereby describes 'the manner or way in which a thing is done' (Simpson and Weiner 1989; cited as an accurate definition for mindfulness in Bishop et al. 2004: 234) and hence as a skill developed with practice and one that is constantly brought into being, rather than a latent state.¹³

In terms of health benefits of the practice of mindfulness, neuroscientific discoveries are at the forefront of some of these physiological short-term autonomic and cardiovascular merits. Work in the neuroscience of mindfulness affords some of the most useful descriptions of the practice and indicates some important consequences of mindful modes of thought. Neuroscience has identified two states of mind and related these to particular areas of brain activity: in the first instance, narrative self-focus (NF) of mind employed when planning, ruminating or day-dreaming, engages the regions of the medial prefrontal cortex and the hippocampus. In contrast, the mindfulness modes of focus (MF), identified in the Farb et al. (2007) study are that of direct and attentive experience (i.e. non-distraction), that activate the insula region (related also to bodily sensations) and the anterior cingulate cortex. The two circuits of mind have been shown to be habitually coupled, with periodic unmediated and unconscious switching between somatic attention in MF and NF; and they have also been shown to be negatively correlated: that is, NF inhibits a mindful focus and vice versa. This is because 'NF calls for cognitive elaboration on any one mental event in favour of broadly attending to more temporally proximal sensory objects...In contrast, experiential focus (EF) calls for the inhibition of

¹³Psychological definitions and descriptions of the phenomenon also suggest inconsistencies. This can be seen in the epitome of mindful practice: breathing. The basic approach pays attention to the somatic sensation of breathing. The practitioner aims to observe only the breathing with a 'beginner's mind' that does not bring preconceptions, ruminative thoughts or allow distractions to the practice of breathing. When the mind wanders and one does not pay attention to the breathing, the mindfulness practitioner makes a conscious effort to bring the attention back to observing the breath. In so doing, internal stimuli (thoughts) are neutralised so that external situations can be perceived as they are, and so, mindful practice allows for 'acceptance...defined as being experientially open to the reality of the present moment (Bishop et al. 2004: 233). In this neutral and perceptive state, the mind has the capacity to observe and separate itself from the apparently automated somatic function of breathing.

The distinction between internal thought and an external directly (unmediated) perceivable reality allows the mind to be conceptualised as a processor which can be controlled to switch off, calm down and limit processes (i.e. without rumination) and thereby facilitate a pure, unmediated phenomenological experience. This explains the onus on observation, rather than engagement, as part of mindfulness training. However, a parallel literature also describes the physiological importance of mindful states with a special focus on how, by the very fact of observing breathing, breathing is also modified, deepened or prolonged. The practice of using the 'breath as an anchor' indicates somatic and cognitive experience working in tandem to affect a complete personal transformation (i.e. of body and mind), blurring the boundaries between perception and its cognition. Pure observation, without action becomes impossible.

cognitive elaboration' (Farb et al. 2007: 314). Narrative self-focus has been called the 'default mode' since participants in these studies have tended to lapse into this state of narrative-generating mind wandering (Mason et al. 2007) with more, unconscious, frequency. In contrast, persons trained in mindfulness have a better ability to differentiate between the two modes of mind and are more conscious of them. Mindfulness practitioners can 'switch' between the two modes of mind as the situation demands and are more aware of their own switches.

Over time, mindfulness practices have been shown to alter the actual structures of the brain, whereby mindfulness practitioners, including meditating monks, become physically different from those of non-practicing individuals. Michael Baime (2011) summarises: 'This shows that meditation doesn't just affect our mind - it changes the way that the brain works.' Further studies suggest that mindful modes of thought reduce vulnerability to illness (Segal et al. 2006) and that mindfulness modes may represent a critical aspect of human wellbeing (Davidson 2004). Finally, the studies suggest some profound and positive somatic effects on the short term health of on-going practitioners. In contrast to some applications in psychology, neuroscience focuses on a 'broad attentional focus' of all available stimuli including one's body. Neuroscience has integrated interceptive physiological and exteroceptive somatic conditions of the body and an overall corporal awareness with 'a global visceral awareness' (Farb et al. 2007: 319). In so doing, neuroscience breaks down Cartesian distinctions.

These findings in neuroscience support parallel and pioneering research in the sub-discipline of medical anthropology. Under the heading of 'somatic modes of attention' (Csordas 1993), a tendency towards 'presence' (de Martino 1972 [1988]; Desjarlais 1992; 1996), 'hereness' and 'sensory attentiveness' (Desjarlais 1996); 'co-respondance' (Ingold 2000) and 'resonance' (Hsu 2011)¹⁴ and a 'full-bodied alertness' to the 'immense presence' (Abram 2010: 124, 127), all describe mindful states in a range of ethnographic contexts and practices. 'Presence' has also been identified as an important part of traditional cure-healing practices. Research in medical anthropology suggests the bodily-felt efficacy of traditional techniques, including those intentionally inflicting acute pain (Hsu 2005; and Hsu's work on sensory experience in therapeutics), are at least in part due

¹⁴On 'ganying'-resonance- as a concept useful for cross-cultural anthropological description, see Chau (2008) and Hsu (2009).

to their ability to effectively orientate persons to the present moment. This work in particular highlights the importance of promoting presence-inducing states in traditional societies, even suggesting that this may be done by developing an intense repertoire of sensory techniques that stimulate this mode of attention.¹⁵ In so doing, and in light of biomedical sciences, mindfulness may be a practice that can help explain the efficacy of a wide range of traditional practices. These are orientated towards both preventative and curative healthcare and blur the boundaries between the two.

When linked to its potential benefits, the biomedical elaboration of mindfulness displays the most potential as a paradigm for describing mindful faculties as a cross-cultural phenomenon used to promote health and well-being. However, in its biomedical guise, the concept of mindfulness is far from exhaustive. Perhaps one of the main problems with the psychological concept and description of mindfulness, when applied to anthropological contexts, is the very concept of mind, an issue to which I shortly return. For this reason the neuroscience of mindfulness, with its focus on the somatic aspects of brain activity, overcomes Cartesian dualisms, and even articulates these within the wider environment. However, due to its clinical applications, this research has focused on meditative and contemplative activities, rather than active, concentrated engagement during skilled activities, some of which may also be fast-paced. This is in spite of mindfulness, as a mode of mind promoted and practiced by nothing more than paying close attention to the present moment, being practiced in a wide array of circumstances. Ethnographic work in Asia suggests the potential for a cross-cultural analysis of the particularities of mindful life-styles as they unravel in distinct social and physical contexts as well as in divergent ecological and historical environments (Hsu 2007; 2011).

The mind, autopoiesis and 'the direction of attention'

The notion of mind as an embodied, historicized and continually emergent product has led the research of Toren. Based on her field work in Fiji, Toren (2002: 12) urges us to rethink classical disciplinary divisions, forwarding a new paradigm in which 'mind is a function of the whole person constituted over time in intersubjective relations with others in the environing world.' People develop in particular environments thanks to their

¹⁵Stimulating this mode of attention, may also be understood as the 'education of attention' (Gibson 1979: 254; also see Ingold 2001).

solicited dialogues with the others with whom they live, making each person both the product of and the continual realisation of his or her history. This makes mind ‘the emergent product of a continual process of becoming’. Concordant with work in neurobiology (Maturana and Varela 1980 [1972]), Toren (1999: 6) makes the assertion that ‘the environment we visually perceive is determined largely by the activity in which we are currently engaged’ and that meaning-making is a constant, autopoietic, process. Drawing on Piaget’s (1962 [1946]; 1971 [1968]; 1969 [1966]) work with children, Toren (2001: 11) suggests that the mind is ‘a self-regulating transformational system’, in which ‘behaviours become differentiated through functioning’ and through a process of continual ‘accommodation to the world’. Toren (2001: 156) argues that in this project of ethnographically thick descriptions that help us understand the mind, ‘...it becomes clear that the biological, the psychological and the sociocultural are not discrete functional domains but fused aspects of a unitary phenomenon – the phenomenon of human autopoiesis’.¹⁶ In this context, autopoiesis means a process of self-crafting that necessarily and continuously unfolds in an intersubjective environment of others.

By shedding light on the concept of mind, not only does Toren’s project dispense with crude disciplinary divisions that inhibit anthropological understanding, it also suggests that the mind need not be an ahistorical, decontextualized entity. Building on Hallowell’s (1942; 1976) work on Ojibwa ontology, Ingold (2000: 108) also makes this point when he states: ‘Mind, then, is not added onto life but is immanent in the intentional engagement, in perception and action, of living beings with the constituents of their environments.’

By the same token, this notion of mind can be extended to the concept of mindfulness, which need not be limited to the cerebral (cf. Bateson 1973), and which may be rearticulated in the wider intersubjective, social and physical environment in which people live.

Reflecting on the importance of the environment for processes of growth and development, Ingold (2001: 121) tells us that:

..the actual characteristics of organisms are neither innate nor acquired, but are products of the interaction, throughout the life-cycle, between endogenous, genetic causes and

¹⁶Toren (ibid.: 159) goes on to state that ‘...the biological and the social are aspects of one another or, to put it another way, that as humans it is given in us to require the other if we are to achieve our respective poeses.’

exogenous environmental ones...In every case, the particular capacities of perception and action constituting the motor skill are developmentally embodied into the *modus operandi* of the human organism through practice and training, under guidance of already accomplished practitioners, in an environment characterised by its own textures and topography, and littered with products of previous human activity.

To this end, Ingold (ibid.) describes the importance of ‘attention-directing gestures’ which give learners the ability to perceive affordances, - possibilities for action- latent in the greater environment and thereby acquire skills in craftsmanship (cf. Gibson 1979: 245). The coupling of perception and action or movement, Ingold (2000; 2006a: 76) defines as *enskilment*, a term denoting the fluent, rhythmic performance of the skilled practitioner. These styles of rhythmic performance entail co-respondance between people and objects in the world, whereby ‘the essence of dexterity lies not in bodily movements themselves but in the tuning of the movements to an emergent task’ (Ingold 2001: 136). The paradigm of *enskilment* pays attention to place, whereby the environment is treated as an enabling rather than as the usual ‘limiting’ factor. Ingold focuses on the plasticity of biological and environmental structures which are in a mutually affecting dialogue. *Enskilment* describes the co-responding transformation of peoples, and places, as a result of engaged human activity in the world.

I have now applied the notion of mindfulness to skilled practices as they unfold in a particular time and place and as part of a ‘full-bodied alertness’ (Abram 2010: 124). In the section that follows, I consider how the correspondences between psycho-social and environmental states are allied to support social hierarchies and the life-styles of dominant classes.¹⁷ This also takes history into account.

Resonance (and rhythm)

With a focus on the relationship between health and one’s style of life, Hsu (2007) undertook to examine how Chinese ecological precepts are extended to the body. Inspired by the work of Zimmerman (1987), through the ‘body ecologic’, Hsu (2007) expounds the classic Chinese concern with moderation (for preventative health and techniques of longevity) as an emergent lifestyle compounded by far wider social, moral

¹⁷For more on social stratification and its relation to the habitus, see Bourdieu (1979).

and political concerns of different dynasties and time periods. In Chinese medicine, Hsu notes that the five rubrics of wood, fire, earth, metal and water normally ‘correspond’ to the 5 organs. However, Hsu suggests that historically this ‘medicine of correspondences’ arose from an ecological concern with the body and the environment in which people lived.

The Han dynasty (206 BC to AD 220) government administration had a statistics-based concern with ‘the politics of prognostication’, Hsu (2011) argues in a later article, a concern that led them to predict the seasonal prevalence of certain illnesses (like a cough in winter and diarrhoea in summer). In the Tang dynasty Chinese medicine gained status producing classical medical texts (like *The Suwen*) which are today acknowledged as the basis for preventative health practice. Thus, *The Suwen* expounds the cultivation of moderate (or carefully mediated) life-styles particular to a status-conscious elite. It was prestigious to engage with mindful preventative practices.

Although I worked in a small-scale society, it too is stratified and the body ecologic is a paradigm that affords specific insights into the Amerindian cosmos, constituted by a richly diverse ecological and socio-political reality in which Amerindian persons are intimately engaged. Seasonal rhythms, co-substantiality between human beings and the environment, and the mindful lifestyle as a prestigious practice, are all themes that hold their own weight in Amerindian contexts. In a recent move towards considering certain aspects of this phenomenon, Santos-Granero (2012) has drawn on ethnobotany to reflect on properties of plants transferred onto persons. These include desirable properties of lightness, strength, hardness, endurance and placidness, which are qualities acquired through the careful application of plant remedies. In the light of the body ecologic, and the cosmic-ecologies of indigenous Amazonia, such qualities appear as cosmically universal rubrics that have the potential to permeate all beings and which may not be limited to plants.

Discussion

The ‘artefactual anatomies’ (Santos-Granero 2012) of healthful Amerindian persons may be resonant with wider ecological rubrics which are also capable of transferring these desirable properties. Through a phenomenological approach which includes emplaced

experiences in the wider environment, the Amerindian macrocosm and its rubrics, may be brought to bear on the body itself. On this, David Abram (1997 [1996]: 63-4) writes:

For these other shapes and species have coevolved, like ourselves, with the rest of the shifting earth; their rhythms and forms are composed of layers upon layers of earlier rhythms, and in engaging them our own senses are led into an inexhaustible depth that echoes that of our own flesh. The patterns on the streams surface as it ripples over the rocks, or on the bark of an elm tree, or in a cluster of weeds, are all composed of repetitive figures that *never exactly repeat themselves*, of iterated shapes to which our sense may attune themselves even while the gradual drift and metamorphosis of those shapes draws our own awareness in unexpected and unpredictable directions.

For Abram (2010: 127), ‘the fluid field of experience that we call “mind” is simply the place of this open, improvisational relationship - experienced separately by each individual body, experienced all at once by the animate Earth itself.’ Informed by the works of these authors and taking its cue from Hsu’s ecological rubrics, this thesis makes particular reference to the polyrhythmic pulse of Xié river’s hydroecology.

A tributary of Rio Negro, the Xié River extends from its mouth, just after São Marcelino (figure 9), north toward its source over the Colombian border (figure 10). Fluctuating river levels, a result of rainfall and waters brought from upstream, mean that the river’s water levels are in constant flux, incorporating major and minor dry and wet seasons. The river levels are at their lowest during the long dry season (October to March) and at their highest in the long rainy season (April to September). During the dry season, waterfall rapids are exposed and other previously submerged rocks and boulders come into plain sight. This forms part of a hydroecology that exposes a seasonally prevalent mythscape.

This ‘hydrocentricity’ (a term coined by Hill 2011 in his discussion of the Wakúwenai) of Arawakan groups has recently become the focus of studies into emergent and dominating markers of pan or multi-ethnic identity. In north-western Amazonian, riverine life-styles have been noted as an important marker of status-conscious Arawakan and Tukanoan groups. Hydrocentricity is marked by the mythscape and a ‘sacred geography’ composed of riverine topograms, also known as ‘mythic motifs’; both in north-western Amazonia and beyond (Santos-Granero 1998; Hill 2009; Hill 2002; Ñanez et al. 2007; Wright 2013, see Chapters One and Two). Among its other features, the mythscape describes territorial

access and interal ranking involved for those cognisant of the men’s cult of Kuwai (also known as the *jurupari* and the Amado) described in further detail in Chapter One.¹⁸



Figure 9: The hot summer sun and low river levels expose the mid-river boulder which is normally submerged in the winter months. The caption reads (my translation) ‘Napiruli came to a place called Mabani [Adjacent to present day Vila Nova], which means fruit tree.’

Figure 10: At the seasonal cross over (April), savannah plains are flooded and trapped fish provide an important recourse for subsistence life-styles. The caption reads (my translation) ‘He came to a plain [savannah] and gave the name of *ewitami* which means field. From there he returned because the river was very narrow. [A place for seasonally abundant *aracu* fishing]. These pictures were solicited by Campinas teacher and produced by students of this lower river community school. The pictures sequentially describe Napiruli’s up-river journey along the Xié and these two pictures respectively form one of the first and the last of over 50 pictures in the series.

The Xié river’s seasonally exposed rapids, rocks and boulders, provide a landscape of ancestral creation: many localities, including some of the river’s most striking topographic features emerge as the torrential aftermath of mythic Xié dweller Napiruli and his up-river pursuit of the great-snake (*Buya wasu*). The snake periodically stops to face him, and their antagonistic encounter is said to have carved out the river bed in which the Xié flows today. As one Xié river resident explained to me, it was the snake’s great body that ‘made the map’ of the region.

For Xié dwellers, I found hydrocentricity to be a lived, seasonal experience that informed both animist experiences and historic and mythic narratives. As I describe in Chapter One and Two, this history describes distinct ecological environments and the types of people who inhabit them. Xié dwellers’ riverine lifestyles are in contrast to forest dwelling groups and as such, hydrocentricity is marked by a lifestyle of riverside dwelling. Floodplains influence access to the means of subsistence (fishing and hunting)

¹⁸The geographic emplacement of myth has also been described in terms of an ‘ethnoecological blueprint of residence, subsistence and territoriality patterns’ (Wilbert 1979).

and the availability of forest resources for the manufacture of artisanal utensils, also encompassing access to other peoples travelling the waterways in general. As I suggest in Chapter One, Xié lifestyles and techniques, are distinct from those of lower-ranking, forest dwelling Makú groups. Thus the division between forest and river people may suggest the particular variety of mindful activity that arises in multi-ethnic, status-conscious sub-region of north-western Amazonia. This takes us once again back to the body ecologic and describes an indigenous life-style of moderation. As I will argue, it testifies to a humoral tradition, in so far as it seems to have arisen in stratified rather than egalitarian contexts, as defined by Hsu (2012a).

Thesis organisation

The thesis is divided into seven chapters (followed by a short conclusion) and begins with macro-historical approaches, gradually moving to consider the micro-practices of perinatal and infant care. The first chapter describes the Lévi-Straussian openness to others (*l'ouverture à l'autre*) as a historic regional fact, typifying the extensive ethnic movement throughout the Rio Negro and between other Amazonian regions. This chapter provides an overview of the regional ethnicities and movements outlined in subsequent chapters. Chapter Two then considers the particular history of the Xié River. It describes waves of migrations to the Xié river area; discusses engagement in extractive economies and the wider apparatus of the Brazilian nation-state and the formation of village communities. The affinal idiom is discussed with reference to the wider hydro-centric ecology of the river and its non-human population. Chapter Three takes a 'body ecological' approach to seasonal and atmospheric climates and describes history and climate through the bodily idioms of Xié dwellers. The chapter considers menstruation as a transformative process associated with the sadness of winter, and looks at the mediation of hot and cold states within the riverine environment and with reference to production and reproductive labour.

Chapter Four is centred on the perinatal period. This chapter considers healthy pregnancies, good birthing and post-birth practice, including the *iyumi* post-birth ritual. It also examines how childbirth, when properly managed, emerges as a rite of passage for birthing mothers.

Chapter Five takes a closer look at births complicated by assault sorcery. I consider the acute pain experienced during the solitary events of childbirth and snakebite, and what determines the need for intervention. I also discuss who may appropriately intervene. I examine a series of structural and somatic equivalences between snakebite and childbirth as mutually exclusive and gender specific informal rituals (which are perhaps more prevalent today, given the decline in formal rituals). I also detail biomedical intervention during both these events.

Chapter Six considers early infant care and the techniques of splash-washing and hammocking. I highlight the importance of mindful caring techniques and the mutual composition involved when persons care and are being cared for. I specifically consider how infants are taught to avoid emotional climaxes in their interactions, and how they are taught to mediate a constant attentive stance. In this chapter, I argue that these processes not only 'enskill' (in the Ingoldian sense, 2000) but actively 'instil' and 'distil' the body-mind and as such are requisites for good health and mindful dwelling to seasonal resonances. This chapter reveals skill as intentionally linking body to self.

Finally, with a focus on commensality, Chapter Seven considers the emergent relationship between the body and the soul. I consider how, through weaning, human subjects are created. I also examine the formation of non-human forms of kinship, epitomised through eating food in the company of animal spirits. Finally I consider how neglect may startle an infant, distance its soul and cause it to eat with others. This chapter conjoins previous chapters and builds on the literature of bodily knowledge to suggest that mindfulness is a useful heuristic device to describe the ensoulment of human subjects.

Over all, the thesis demonstrates how societal structures, and their histories, relate to the corporal structure of persons who are in flux. This is especially the case during reproductive processes, among infants, and when sick, for this is when bodily states and processes become dangerously fluid. For this reason, Xié lifestyles are premised on mindful engagement with the others with whom they live. Through guided intersubjective relations, people become mindful. Mindfulness is a basic tenet of their own and others' well-being and this is what it means to be a person, the Xié way.

Chapter One

Mythic histories of the Upper Rio Negro and of the minor tributary of the Xié River

Introduction

Chapter One introduces the Upper Rio Negro region and the people who live there. It examines how various ethno-linguistic groups fit together and comprise what has become known as the Upper Rio Negro's 'culture area' (Steward 1948). The chapter discusses how socio-ecological differences between groups are used to express difference and to justify the ascendancy and incorporation of certain groups by others. This process hinges on the dialectical interface between forest and river people, with the former being periodically subsumed by the latter.

Taking a historical perspective, I consider how river people's *l'ouverture à l'autre* ('openness to others', Lévi-Strauss 1963 [1958]; 1991: 16; also see Viveiros de Castro 2001: 30; 2002) allows them to engage with others and, through varied means, incorporate new peoples into a tiered schema. Bringing with them a civilizing and centrifugal logic that depends on the outside world and on Otherness, their particular techniques of incorporation appear to be part of the defining ethos of Arawakan¹⁹ peoples.

I then more closely consider how these macrosocial processes have played out along one particular tributary of the Rio Negro: the Rio Xié, which is the locale of the field research for this doctoral thesis. Here I introduce the river, and some of its inhabitants, by framing them within the rich regional scholarship of the area and its emergent idioms.

The Brazilian Upper Rio Negro

The region known as the Upper (Alto) Rio Negro refers to the dense north-western Amazonian expanse of tropical forest, floodplains and waterways defined by the upper course of the Rio Guiana-Negro and its effluents.²⁰ It is home to a vast Caboclo and

¹⁹Those belonging to the Arawakan linguistic group.

²⁰In its upper courses in Venezuela, this river is called the Rio Guiana, but along its lower Brazilian course it bears the name Rio Negro.

Chapter One: Mythic histories of the Upper Rio Negro and of the minor tributary of the Xié River indigenous population, which resides both in small riverfront settlements and in cities. The Upper Rio Negro flows through the nation-states of Brazil, Colombia and Venezuela: it encompasses the mid-western Colombian state of Vaúpes;²¹ the lands surrounding the Rio Guiania which marks the border with the Venezuelan state of Amazonas; and the north-western tip of the Brazilian state of Amazonas where it dominates the entire municipality of São Gabriel da Cachoeira.

The Brazilian municipality of São Gabriel do Cachoeira, where this research is based, constitutes what has become known as the *cabeça do cachorro* (the dog's head), a term denoting this region's peculiar shape on the map (see figure 3). Its limits are marked by the south-eastern municipality of Santa Isabel and the southern municipality of Japura. The municipality's international frontiers with Venezuela and Colombia make the *cabeça do cachorro* a significant geo-political backwater borderland, subject to the heavy presence of the Brazilian military.

The public face of the municipality comprises the socio-environmental NGO (ISA) together with the pan-Indian organisation (FOIRN). These two organisations represent, and facilitate research with, the disparate indigenous Indians living in this vast tropical forest. Through the combined efforts of ISA, FOIRN, the national Indian agency (FUNAI), the local groups whom they represent and anthropologists who have worked with them, these lands were officially recognised as national Indian reserves in 1995. Shortly after the title was awarded, these institutions crafted the regional map displayed on page 42. As it suggests, residence in indigenous territory (here the Alto and Medio Rio Negro 1) typically involves living in an administratively recognised settlement or *comunidade*,²² of which there are 430, home to some 35,000 indigenous peoples (ISA). Today, access to this expanse of indigenous territories by *brancos* (whites) - foreign or otherwise - is jointly mediated by FOIRN and FUNAI's head office in Brasilia.

The municipality's capital, the city of São Gabriel (figure 1), lies outside official Indian territory and as such is home to the military, mineral prospectors, merchants and entrepreneurs along with, as Lasmar (2005) has documented, an ever growing Indian

²¹This later toponym refers to the Vaúpes River which flows in from Colombia to meet the Rio Negro.

²²*Comunidade* is the typical appellation for riverine dwellings since the end of the 1960's when Salesian missionaries instigated the *Comunidades Eclesiais de Base* (Oliveira 1981: 31; 1995: 150 cited in Lasmar 2005)

Chapter One: Mythic histories of the Upper Rio Negro and of the minor tributary of the Xié River population. As the different websites explain, indigenous Indian ethnicities constitute 90 percent of the local population and here ‘Indio’ is a local and indigenously recognised pan-ethnic category for the inclusive ‘we’ of indigenist politics (see Garnelo 2003; Oakdale 2004; Warren and Jackson 2002).

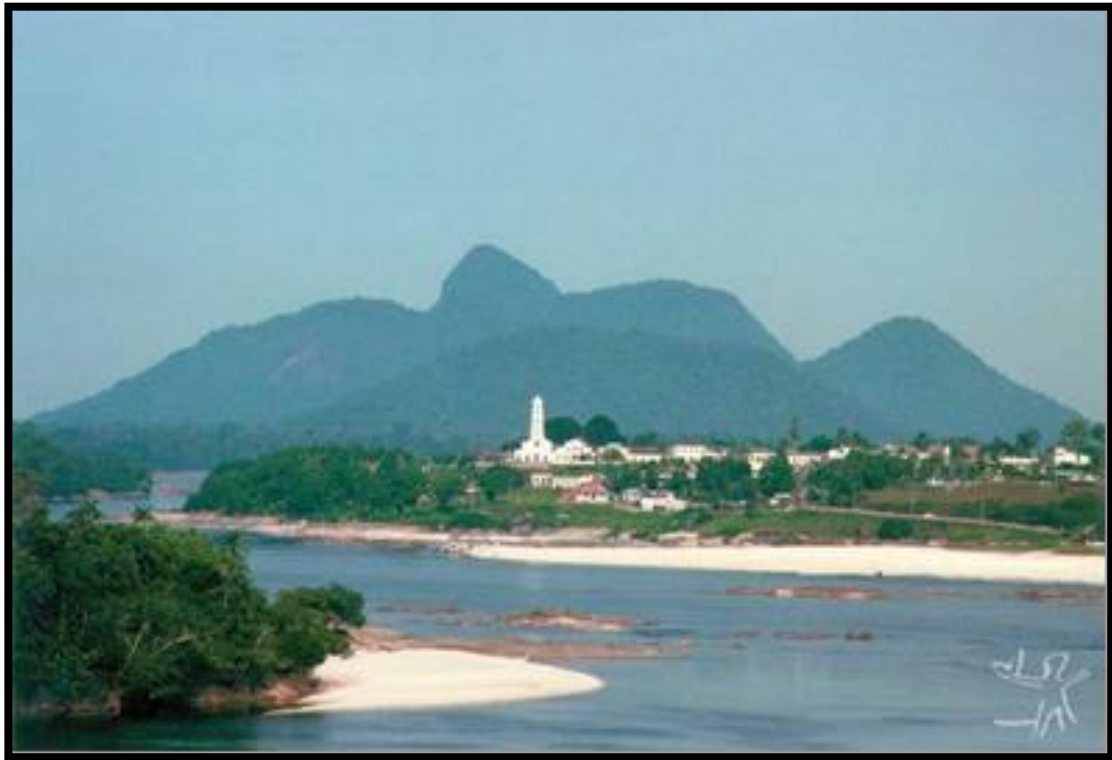


Figure 1: The city of São Gabriel da Cachoeira, on the upper Rio Negro, Amazaonas State, Brazil. Photo by Beto Ricardo, 1998, ISA.



Figure 2: The Rio Negro, below the city of São Gabriel da Cachoeira. Photo by Beto Ricardo, 1996, ISA.

Chapter One: Mythic histories of the Upper Rio Negro and of the minor tributary of the Xié River



Figure 3: Map of indigenous territories and groups residing in the Upper and middle Rio Negro. Instituto socio-ambiental 1998.

Ethnic landscapes of the Upper Rio Negro

The ethnic groups that populate the main river courses and interfluvial areas are largely associated with portions of the rivers, or territories that separate them. The map of the *cabeça do cachorro* shows 18 of the 27 distinct ethnicities,²³ and across the Upper Rio Negro region there are almost as many languages. The map reveals a tidy picture of ethno-linguistic diversity, indicative of territorially discrete pockets of peoples. ISA²⁴ and a review of the regional literature (e.g. S. Hugh-Jones 1979; Garnelo 2003; Athias 2003; Lasmar 2005) provide us with a broad and converging overview of the identified ethno-linguistic groups.

The main course of the Upper Rio Negro, from just below the city of São Gabriel to its northernmost limits, where it takes in the minor tributary of the Xié River,²⁵ is home to 3,276 persons of the Baré and Warekena ethnicity. Baré are also present in Venezuela and Colombia, and demographically they represent a sizable component of Arawak speakers, one of three major linguistic groups found in the region: The Wakúwenai, a neighbouring Arawakan group, are found just across the Venezuelan border at Cucui the southernmost area of their home today (Hill 2009a). Past São Gabriel, the Rio Negro forks to the left and flows into the Vaúpes river, (population of 9,290 in Brazil) and its tributaries the Tiquie and Papuri, whose sources are in Colombia. On these rivers, the Tukano linguistic group dominates and Tukano has become a lingua franca.²⁶ Forking off from the Rio Negro further upstream from the Vaúpes is the Içana river, home to the Baniwa (Brazil pop. 5,141), an additional Arawakan group in the area, who also live along the Içanan tributaries of the Cuiari and Aiairi. Finally, people affiliated with the Makú linguistic grouping (Hupda, Yuhupde, Dow, Nadöb) are found within the area known as the *cabeça do cachorro*, (the Kakwa and Nukak reside across the border in Colombia). Makú groups tend to reside in small transitory interfluvial (or forest) settlements, between Rio Guaviare in Colombia (the last two aforementioned ethnicities) and in Jaupurá, Brazil.

²³22 of which reside in Brazilian national territory.

²⁴<http://www.socioambiental.org/pt-br/o-isa/programas/rio-negro>

²⁵Given the latter's minor population and size, the Rio Negro and Xié river are consistently grouped together for administrative purposes.

²⁶Here live the ethnicities (and languages) of Tukano (Tukano is just one of the languages belonging to the Tukano linguistic group), Desana, Kubeo, Wanana, Tuyuca, Pira-tapuya, Miriti-tapuya, Arapaso, Karapanã, Kotiria, Bara, Siriano, Makúna, Barasana, Taiwano and Tariana (Papuri river); whilst the Tatuyo, Tauwabi and Yuruti are found principally over the Colombian border.

The Rio Negro culture area

The demographic mapping of the region offers a veritable mosaic of ethnicities and languages. Nonetheless, socio-cultural commonalities among the dominant ethnicities of the region were observed by early explorers, including the naturalist Alfred Wallace ([1853] 2006: 118).²⁷ Among the shared features was the prominence of the *juruparí* (also **Yuruparí**) cult. *Juruparí* cultism has been discussed by Ermanno Stradelli (1993 [1896]) in his work on this '*leggenda*', and by Theodor Koch-Grünberg (1995 [1911]) and Curt Nimuendajú (1950 [1927]). They were among the first ethnologists to document the cult's prevalence within Tukanoan, Arawakan and even, Makuan ethno-linguistic groups. One key shared feature of the region's Tukanoan and Arawakan-speaking peoples include fluency in their own ethnic language, while also speaking Tukano or *língua Géral*²⁸, Portuguese, or Spanish. This multi-lingualism is often reinforced by linguistic exogamy, encompassing dialects, as well as distinct tongues. In the afterword to Goldman's (2004) book S. Hugh-Jones (2004: 410) writes that '...the notion of discrete Tukanoan "languages" is problematic'; that 'outsiders' ethnonyms lead to confusion' in which rules should best be understood as ideals. Also shared are a loose tracing of agnatic descent and a high degree of rank endogamy in marriage, as well as the hierarchical organisation of phratries and patrisibs (see Goldman 2004; Hill 1996; Wright 1998) especially in ritual contexts. A fairly uniform attire of male ceremonial dress and bodily ornamentation has also been identified as an important pan-regional feature (S. Hugh-Jones 2013)

The notion of area commonalities intrigued ethnographers, and it gained analytical weight when Stephen Hugh-Jones (1979: 241) suggested that Rio Negrian ethnicities be understood 'as forming an open-ended regional system... [where]...cultural differentiates are seen as variations on a common theme'. This led S. Hugh-Jones to talk of the Vaúpes-Içana region, explaining the importance and shared roles of Tukanoan and Arawakan groups.²⁹

²⁷For some linguists the relative integrity of languages would also suggest their respective confinement and isolation (Dixon and Aikhenvald 1999: 16-19).

²⁸Nheengatu, Ñengatú, Géral or Yeral in Colombia and Venezuela, is a simplified form of the ancient Tupi and trading language, and official language of the municipality.

²⁹There is a high degree of interethnic exchange, primarily between Arawakan Baniwa and Tukano Cubeo and Uanano, such that authors have come to speak of the Tukanisation of Arawakan groups along the Içana and conversely, the Arawakisisation of Tukano groups along the Vaúpes (Hill 2009a: 12-13).

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The *juruparí legenda* emerges as one of the most salient features of Içana-Vaúpes groups. The cult is a conduit for socio-religious life, comprising rich, dynamic mythological heritages that involve both ritual life and shamanic activity. Despite its regional prevalence, the cult's manifestations have been described in different ways. Focusing on the importance of agnatic descent for the Tukanoan Cubeo Héhenewa, Goldman (1963) has described the intrasib **kúwaiwa** as an ancestor cult (the import of agnatic descent is described in Chapter Five) which complements the **upáiweteno** exchange (the Xié equivilant is described in Chapter Three). Hill (1993), writing on Arawakan Wakúwenai, has similarly spoken of the Kuwai cult as a vehicle for both agnatic initiation rites (through **malikai** singing and chanting for the purification of the sacred food called **karidzamai**) and ceremonial exchanges (**pudái**). Further, Stephen Hugh-Jones (1979) in his discussion of the Barasana suggested that initiation (**hee wii**) and ceremonial exchanges (**bare ekaria wii**) are diminished versions of each other. Among the Tukano Makuna, Århem (2001) has taken an historical perspective to examine how exclusive in-rites and inter-affinal out-rites change over time, in response to their role within wider social transformations (an issue I examine further in Chapter Two). More recently, the edited volumes of Hill and Santos-Granero (2002) and Hornborg and Hill (2011a) have described *juruparí* cultism in general as a key rite of ethnic incorporation for the Arawakans, an issue to which I shortly return.

The *juruparí* cult has been linked to extensive mnemonic cartographic knowledge which describes the 'sacred landscape' (Santos-Granero 1998; Hill 2002; Wright 2013; and which, among the Warekena, includes petroglyphs, Ñanez 1980). Here, special features of the landscape are known as 'mythic motifs', since they correspond to significant occurrences narrated in myths and often expound the misadventures of key figures, including the *juruparí*. For the Baníwa, this mythscape is described as the traces of their ancestors (**hlinaapia**, Wright 2013). The Arawakan mythscaping praxis also comprises an important part of both male and female initiation rites. Hill (1993) describes this when he explains the oral elucidation and dissemination of salient topographic features as part of **malikai** initiation chants (also see Wright 1993).

The mythscape describes territorial access and the hierarchical organisation of those who are familiar with the cult.³⁰ The mythscape also describes its own centre. The Hipana (Jipana) Falls located along the Rio Aiary, in present-day Baníwa territory, is one such allegedly pan-ethnic, mythic centre (figure 4). As Hill and Wright (1988) explain, it is from a hole in these rapids that the Baníwa say their ancestor Napiruli (or Iñápirrikuli, father of the aforementioned Kuwai, also known pan-ethnically as the *juruparí*) pulled out the sibs and other ethnic groups, according to their rank. Today, high-ranking Baníwa Hohodene phratry live closest to this location. Mythscaping practice is thus a significant manifestation of ‘hydrocentricity’ (a term coined by Hill 2011 in his discussion of the Wakúwenai) of Arawakan groups.

Hydrocentricity is manifest in riverside dwelling and the seasonally informed lifestyles within the Amazon Basin’s flood plain. Such lifestyles are intertwined with the reckoning of rank and status, territoriality and high-intensity landscape management (Hill 2009b: 33) and estuarine agriculture (Lathrap 1977: 713-50). This is especially the case for those indigenous Arawakan groups living on the geologically-ancient nutrient-poor soils of sandy black water rivers, such as the Atabapo, upper Casiquauiare, the Negro and Xié.³¹



Figure 4: The Hipana rapids, Rio Aiari.¹

³⁰The geographic emplacement of myth has also been described in terms of an ‘ethnoecological blueprint of residence, subsistence and territoriality patterns’ (Wilbert 1979).

³¹These ecosystems are so acidic that they inhibit mosquito breeding, leaving the region’s black water dwellers relatively free of mosquito borne diseases including malaria, yellow fever and dengue.

Both riverine Arawakan and Tukanoan groups have periodic contact with the forest-dwelling Makú. The Makú are ‘professional hunters’ (Silverwood-Cope 1972: 103), providing game to Tukanoans in exchange for a range of industrialised tools, foods and utensils (Lasmar 2005: 28). The Makú diet consists chiefly of game, rather than fish, and hence they have less sophisticated fishing technology. They also display a more rudimentary material and ritual culture and significantly, do not have well-established horticultural practices. This has created a perception among other groups that the Makú are uncivilized,³² an opinion reinforced by their disregard for what Tukanoans and Arawakans view as proper dietary and marriage restrictions. Silverwood-Cope (1972: 176) working with the Bará-Makú, cites a Tukanoan man who likens Makú marriage practice to a relationship between animals, random and incestuous, taking place among a small group that shares the same language and/or dialect (also see Athias 1998). Taken together, these factors form the basis of Makú social inferiority, conspicuously manifested in their widespread role as heavy labourers, typically working for a Tukanoan group.³³

The division between forest dweller and the riverside inhabitant, and the accompanying dialectic of wild (Makú) versus civilized (Arawakans and Tukanoans), informs discourses of ethnic difference, and they do so by commenting on very concrete defining ecological environments that shape lifestyles, perspectives and experiences of the world. Riverine lifestyles - ritual observances, skilled fishing and the production of canoes, the acquisition of prestige items - stand in sharp contrast to that of the marginalised forest-dwellers, in their inaccessible and more rudimentary forest dwellings. These riverine groups thus define - almost exclusively - what is termed the Rio Negro’s ‘culture area’. Hydrocentricity is seen as central to these defining traits.

³²Based on her research with Tukano-Bará, Jackson (1983 :149) succinctly clarifies the issue: ‘The term Makú is generic...and like several other terms...can at times designate nothing more precise than the ‘wild’ Indians of a given region – those least contacted, least clothed, and who are alleged to practice no farming, have no houses, and lead a totally nomadic existence.’ This internally generated disparity between ‘wild’ not-entirely-people on the one hand; and ‘civilized’ ‘true people’ (Jackson *ibid.*: 159) on the other, would appear to be an important feature of indigenous classification throughout Lowland South America (Gow 1993; in central Brazil, also see Ewart, 2013).

³³ In the past these relationships may have been more decidedly subservient, such as to include relations of slavery (see Santos-Granero 2009a).

Historical geopolitics and mythscaping praxis

The emergence of the Rio Negro as a culture area reflects this powerful logic of subordination and incorporation, whereby weak (Makú) groups are dominated and taken over by more powerful others. Silverwood-Cope (1972: 104) noted that Makú people have periodically been subsumed (through marriage) by more ‘civilized’ groups. In the case he describes, steps were taken by both groups to remove the taint of Makú ancestry. Santos-Granero (2009a: 210-232) has suggested that the Arawakan category of Makú represents the structural possibility of incorporating lower-ranking peoples. In his account of slavery and the assimilation of subordinate groups in pre and post-colonial Amazonia, he describes how the category of Makú is also applied to lower-ranking sibs, and as such it represents a structural opening that facilitates ethnic integration and the assimilation of other peoples. Recent studies suggest this structural opening is an overflow of the hydrocentric logistics of Arawakan groups.

Two volumes, one on Arawakan histories (Hill and Santos-Granero 2002a), the second a multi-disciplinary volume on Ancient Amazonia (Hill and Hornborg 2011a), examine archived colonial and post-colonial correspondence and indigenous oral narratives involving extensive cartographic knowledge found in mythscapes. Together with archaeological and linguistic research, these studies bear testament to a complex range of movements in pre-Colombian lowland South America. Among these are the diaspora of an ancient Arawakan population and the existence of larger, more sedentarized communities in Amazonia proper. This recent research was given significant momentum by the discovery of hydroglifs and anthropogenic black earth (*terra preta*) in Amazonia (Bruno and Jago 2012; Balée 1989; Kämpf et al. 1993). This find illustrates the early, widespread human modification of an Amazonian forest we sometimes assume was always pristine, and shows that there was large, complex societal stratification throughout the Amazonian lowlands (Romero 2012).

The notion of an Arawakan expansion was formulated by the Jesuit missionary and linguist Filippo Salvatore Gilij (1965 [1782]) who noted the cultural and linguistic similarities between geographically disperse populations, and classified the group as ‘Arawakan’. Debate continues as to whether this diaspora stemmed from a mass migration (Lathrop 1970) or, more likely, the ‘diffusion’ of an Arawakan identity (see

Chapter One: Mythic histories of the Upper Rio Negro and of the minor tributary of the Xié River Hornborg and Hill's discussion, 2011b³⁴). Either way, the socio-linguistic matrix significantly enhanced discussion and the tracing of the defining features of the Arawakan culture's defining features.³⁵

Hill and Santos-Granero's (2002a) comparative Arawakan histories documents those 'sedimented practices' (Heckenberger 2002: 100) that facilitated the dissemination of an Arawakan culture. These include supra-ethnic solidarity within a ritually inclusive system, and familiarity with a proto-Arawakan language or lingua franca.³⁶ Knowledge of a distinctive material culture including artisanal utensils and sacred flutes is another distinction (Hill and Santos-Granero 2002a). Audio-visual arts and crafts, including complex basketry designs and the production of ritual items, a tripartite corpus of *jurupari*-orientated narratives, myths, stories, orations, chants and songs, all form part of the sophisticated 'high culture' (Lathrap 1970; Steward 1948) of the Arawakans. Articulated alongside the politico-religiously enacted mythscape, the manioc horticulture (see Lathrap 1970), the suppression of endo-warfare and the unsystematic adherence to linguistic endogamy, are thought to have been the engine in what has been described as the dissemination of the Arawakan culture. This matrix has been described by Santos-Granero (2002: 44) as the 'Arawakan ethos'.

The ancestral homelands of the Wakúwenai and the aforementioned Hipana rapids are believed to have been at the centre of the vast Arawakan diaspora. Hill (2009b) has proposed that the ancestors of the contemporary Wakúwenai, Baníwa, Curipaco, Baré, Piapoco and Warekena defined an extensive regional topography dating back to pre-Colombian times. This theory is based on oral narratives that display an extensive and ancient knowledge of the 'kuwai routes' which extend from the Andes to coastal Guáiana

³⁴ A suggestion originating from Schmit (1917), not cited here as the work is in German and inaccessible to the author.

³⁵ The debate surrounding the prevalence of Arawakan culture is one hedged around whether this contemporary fact is the result of diaspora of a distinctive ethnic group or simply the dissemination of their defining characteristics. The essential difference between the two positions is that the former is posited on an ethnic (genetic) essence; while the latter suggests a more diffuse relationship. Since inter-marriage was a common practice in forming new alliances, the current clusters of Arawakan groups must be the combined product of both diaspora and dissemination and as such the question is one of degree.

³⁶ The term Makú is itself of Arawakan origin, meaning 'without our language' (ma – without; aku – language). Signifying 'serf' or 'savage,' this term is rejected by Makú groups due to its pejorative connotation.

Chapter One: Mythic histories of the Upper Rio Negro and of the minor tributary of the Xié River and beyond (Hill 2009a; 2011).³⁷ When these topograms are placed together, they form a topography that, in its totality, describes homelands and migratory routes. Wakúwenai myths and narratives elucidate the aforementioned Hipana rapids as the centre, and more specifically as ‘the navel of the world’ (**nhliépule-kwá dzálare**, Hill and Wright 1988: 85), and a place of creative genesis. These narratives describe the rapids as the place where the world expands and is transformed from its original miniature size to the one in which we live. From here, the Wakúwenai were well positioned to engage in cyclical exchange, intermarriage and trade with other ethnicities (Hill 2009a: 12). Intra and interregional travel drew on these routes, which extended to the Orinoco and beyond, facilitating exchange with Carib, Tukanoan and Saliba groups.

Juruparí cultism in particular has been identified as integral to the Arawakan expansion into new lands or ‘eco-niches’ (Zucchi 2002). Zucchi (ibid.: 199) draws on evidence suggesting an Arawakan expansion into new ‘eco-niches’ and argues that the migration involved the geographic fragmentation of phratries and the re-creation and re-distribution of land, transforming it all into new sib territories. Zucchi (2002: 203-204) explains the role of shamanic prowess, whereby the shamanic leader of the new migrants performs the role of the mythic Kuwai, embodying his power and re-enacting the distribution of lands among his group according to mythic principles.³⁸ Here, the descendants of the mythic Kuwai embody and assume the role of this charismatic figure, providing new, competing or coinciding toponyms from an extensive range of ‘mythic motifs’. Thanks to these potent individuals, myth and previously endowed topographic markers could be transferred wholesale to a ‘cosmographic model’ (ibid.: 205), allowing groups to confer both mythic narratives and history, or memories, into the landscape. This further explains how mythscapes are (re) generated in ritual contexts, such as during initiation rites described by Hill (2009a) during which ritual specialists create cosmo-genic realities. Kuwai, (aka, the *juruparí*) and his own proto-historic voyages are also alluded to in initiation chants as well as in oral histories. Here Kuwai becomes a maker of new

³⁷Such that there are Quecha-Arawak linguistic groupings in the Andean foothills (Aikhenvald and Dixon 1998).

³⁸This is consistent with Hugh-Jones’ (1988: 151): ‘Wäribi is the prototype shaman and his story forms the basis of all shamanism today. Modern-day shamans are identified with him and in their activities they re-enact aspects of his myth.’ Hugh-Jones (ibid.) later remarks that myths ‘provide a store of alternative ideas, interpretations and courses of action with potential application to the present.’

Chapter One: Mythic histories of the Upper Rio Negro and of the minor tributary of the Xié River worlds³⁹ *par excellence*. Finally the cult's hierarchical system is understood to have allowed for the incorporation of divergent peoples; their newly acquired membership placed them according to rank.

Flute playing, collective music-making and dance were also part of the mythscaping praxis, cited as key practices in fostering the sociality that spurred diffusion of this transethnic identity (Hornborg and Hill 2011b: 17). In the same volume, Basso (2011: 157) in particular supports this idea, stating: '...micro-political communicative rituals are thus central to any consideration of ritual communication as the locus of macro-political and multi-ethnic genesis'. In totality, these rites are widely believed to have promoted inter-ethnic solidarity and cross-ethnic alliances.

In ancient Amazonia, pan-ethnic solidarity enhanced political potency and the formation of multi-ethnic and multi-lingual macropolities, whose rise and fall has been documented by Vidal (2002a; 2002b; 2002c). Based on records sourced from the early colonial period Vidal (2002: 248) traces the forefathers of contemporary Arawak, Tucano and Makuan speaking peoples in forming Manoa and Oniguayal macropolities. These politico-religious entities were involved in extensive regional trade throughout north-western Amazonia and beyond. Whitehead (1994: 39) describes these macropolities as based on a 'theocratic-genealogical' style of leadership, rooted in the shaman's charisma, knowledge, power and trading skills. Edmundson (1904) cites archive material from the early 1600's attesting to extensive trading relations between the Dutch and the Arawak-led Manao macropolity.

Inter-ethnic alliances encompass not only ethnolinguistic groups within the region (Arawakan, Tukanoan and Makuan speaking), but also further-flung neighbours including Carib groups such as the Ye'kuana (also known as the Makiritare, Ñanez 1980, and my own field notes - *Maciritari*). For the Ye'kuana, Guss (1986) details a similarly extensive cartographic knowledge, enhanced during the early colonial period by peaceful trading relations with the Dutch. Extensive trade and exchange partnerships and the concomitant alignment of ethnic groups bear witness to relationships that are at once Upper Rio Negran and pan-regional as well as pre-colonial.

³⁹In reference to Overing's (1990) article on the forming of an image of the hidden world.

During the early colonial period these macro-polities were also profoundly affected by the advent of slavery. Meira (1996: 128) discovered in his research that slavery records in the Rio Negro date back to 1657, when an expedition of soldiers travelled up the Rio Negro in search of captives. There are also records attesting to the mobilization of macropolities after 1669, when the Portuguese and Baré polities began overrunning Dutch and British strongholds, along with Jesuit missions, across what is now Brazil. Indigenous colluders were known as ‘principals’. Whitehead (1994: 39) argues that during this period leadership shifted to a ‘trading-military style’, in which charismatic shaman-warrior chiefs spearheaded missions of trading and slavery. Cartographic knowledge expanded considerably as this process unfolded (Hill and Wright 1988).

Examining the collusion between missions and slavers during the 18th century, Wright (1991; 2005) relates a complex ethno-history that suggests a period of extensive migrations throughout the region. While some Indian groups fought to protect their sacred sites and their lands, others fought to gain control of strategic alliances and expand theirs. This caused a series of rebellions in the Middle and Upper Rio Negro and Orinoco (Vidal 2002a: 261), including the Vaupes and Xié (Wright 2005: 27). During this time alliances formed to oversee the trading of lower-ranking people as slaves (i.e. Makuan groups). Eventually, however, Arawakan slave trade middle-men themselves became the objects of slavery.

As documented by Vidal and Zucchi (1999), after the 1750s the colonial powers began to intensify their political and economic presence, closely demarcating their various overseas possessions. As part of this process, intruders and competitors were forcefully expelled and Indian groups were amalgamated and relocated in different locations and for diverse enterprises. Wright (1981) recounts how between 1745 and 1755, some 20,000 people were moved to work on plantations in southern Pará and Maranhão. Vidal (2002a) documents how during this period the Guaipunavi and the Warekena were allied with the Spanish, while the Baré colluded with the Portuguese. Arawakan-led confederacies formed to promote the interests of certain indigenous people, which stirred fear among the colonialists and led to tighter controls. To help pacify Indian groups, the Portuguese formed alliances with key indigenous chiefs, eventually resulting in a large pan and inter-ethnic battle at São Gabriel Falls in 1757. As Santos-Granero (2009a) explains, the political economy of ancient Amazonia was based on asymmetrical

Chapter One: Mythic histories of the Upper Rio Negro and of the minor tributary of the Xié River relationships marked by flows of people ('slaves', i.e. Makú groups) and prestigious items such as headdresses. The Arawakan ethos promoted alliances with other indigenous groups, usually defensive ones. Within the context of indigenous slaving, however, pre-existent power discrepancies were amplified. Movements and migrations as a result of forced (slaving) displacements involved the extension of cartographic knowledge, so new mythic landscapes arose incorporating the ethnotopography of distinctive ethnic groups and including Spanish and Portuguese place names (Hill and Wright 1988).

The influence of the mythscape tends to ripple out to its periphery, and this proved to be especially the case in north-western Amazonia.⁴⁰ Tracing specific ethnohistories, we know for instance that in the early 19th century, '...the Hohodene [phrater] traded rights to use garden lands in their homelands along the upper Aiary in exchange for the right to hunt and fish within Waríperidakena territory along the lower Aiary and Isana' (Hill and Wright 1988: 81). As Wright (2013) has explained elsewhere, we also know that when lands are occupied for extended periods of time and when migration becomes more permanent, overlaps occur in mythscapes. In one such case, drawn from the research of Ruelle (1998)⁴¹ presented by Zucchi (2002: 207), we find two different cosmographies on the Aki river, one for the more recently migrating Curripaco, who perceive themselves as on the periphery, and another for the Baniwa, who see themselves as living in the heart of their homelands.

However, other than Zucchi's (ibid.) hypothesis of eco-niche exploration and mythic embodiment, comparatively little has been written on the processes through which new lands are inhabited. And we still know little about how people engage with and interact with new lands and the persons inhabiting them. This is in contrast to a comparatively rich literature on societal processes of fraction and fission that cause the creation of new communities (e.g. Århem 2001; Rivière 2000; Santos-Granero 2000), but which do not describe the cosmo-logistics and micro-social processes of relocation in specific locales. The latter part of this chapter is an attempt to redress this dearth of analysis.

⁴⁰Mythscape appear to have been particularly common for those of Colombian and Maipurian descent, including the Curripaco, Baniwa, Wakúwenai and (Venezuelan) Warekena, Piapoco and Baré among others.

⁴¹Original work inaccessible to author.

The Xié River: history, myth and legend

Within the ethnic hierarchy of north-western Amazonia, the Warekena and Xié river dwellers generally figure low on the regional ranking of status. Their lack of prestige is evinced by a Baniwa myth in which they are said to be the last of all the phratries to have emerged from the Hipana rapids.⁴² In part, this inferior status reflects the lack of socio-political and religious unity along the river, one consequence of the great diversity of migrants who call the river home today. As part of this history of ethnic incorporation, the dialectics between forest and river; civilized and uncivilized practices surface in relation to geopolitical understandings of the landscape. Here, the *jurupari* and mythic figure Napiruli link the ritual practices of *kariumã* initiation and *dabukuri* ceremonial exchange to specific topograms by inaugurating specific locales as sites of civilized practice. These topograms form part of the Xié river's mythscape.

Midway through my fieldwork I took a lift in the canoe of Simão Cândido, a resident of Anamoin, who was making a trip downriver to the city of São Gabriel. He was travelling with his family and he docked to collect me from the community of Tukano, which I had been visiting, to take me back to my 'home' community of Tunu. Through several generations of inhabitancy and the weight of collective knowledge, he knew the upper-Xié river well and during our trip he pointed out a number of its topograms, eventually providing me with a veritable itinerary of the 'sacred sites' dotting the river's course. With this I gained a glimpse into the myriad stories that accompany these sites: tales of *cachaça*-drinking guitar-players playing music from on top of the rocks, surrounded by rapids and tukano bird-omens, a sign of imminent death (*mauwari*). Other sites were the homes of elders whose bodies were said to have petrified into boulders, and of spirit animal ancestors (*maiwa*). These were places to be respected and avoided. Simão was one of the many people knowledgeable of the river's '*lugares sacrados*' (sacred sites). His knowledge, he emphasized, was specific to the upper-river regions where he lived.

One of the most powerful recent migrants to the lower Xié river is a faction of the Jurupari sib, who arrived from the lower Içana river during the 1950s. They took wives from the descendants of the original forest-dwelling population and established communities with their spouses and their in-law relatives. These migrants brought with

⁴²I was so informed by a Baniwa resident in Tunu, who also told me that this was recorded in a volume on Baniwa mythology held by FOIRN.

Chapter One: Mythic histories of the Upper Rio Negro and of the minor tributary of the Xié River them their dominating, narrative logic that details the adventures of the mythic *jurupari*'s father, their culture hero, Napiruli. This, far from being a consensual pan-river narration details the exploration of the Rio Xié through the up-river journey of Napiruli. This narration surfaced in a project pioneered at the Xié river school in Campinas, where the Xié-dwelling Jurupari sib dominate.

In the state school of Campinas, the Tukanoan supply teacher brought together a group of adolescent students from the communities of Vila Nova, Tunu and Campinas. The group also included some of Campinas' adult population. Each student produced different pages of material that were then bound together in a single booklet, entitled 'map of the Warekena's evolution'. Built around the story of their cultural hero's up-river journey in pursuit of the great snake, they comprised a portrait narrative of the Xié's sacred landscape.⁴³ The booklet's narrative starts with Napiruli blowing a dart through his *zarabitana* (figure 7). In the accounts of some members of the Jurupari sib, the poisoned arrow becomes the great-snake that travels up the river (cf. Garnelo 2007: 195). The narrative then takes its audience up the river and shows Napiruli blowing away the clouds, inaugurating the summer. As the sun shines, the water levels recede and expose the river's topographic features lying just below their surface (see figure 9, in the Introduction).⁴⁴



Figure 5: The caption reads 'This is the man who made the Xié River, tributary of the Rio Negro. His name is Napiruli'.

The next image depicts Napiruli in his capacity as a ritual specialist and blesser (*benzedor*) on a beach that appears just outside the modern-day village community of Vila Nova during the low-river season (figure 6). It shows him blessing the foods of

⁴³The teacher's project drew its impetus from a nation-wide interest in the provision of specialized schooling, which involves the teaching of literacy and mathematics through culturally tailored education initiatives (for more on this, see Alves da Silva 2000). The images, captions and references below incorporate the original descriptions of this journey.

⁴⁴'Making the map' is a repetitive seasonal relationship that I describe in greater detail in Chapter Three.

Chapter One: Mythic histories of the Upper Rio Negro and of the minor tributary of the Xié River initiates during *kariumã* rituals, preparing them for their reintegration as adults. During *kariumã* initiates are told of the importance of this site and others along the river, and of the respectful composure to assume when passing them by. Later in the narrative, further up-river sites describe the first female initiation sites, including the vagina stone. Napiruli then proceeds to inscribe petroglyphs on a rock, a place today remembered as one of his former homes (figure 7).

As he continues up-river, he is again confronted by the great-snake (figure 8). Obstructing his path are rocks which today emerge as the petrified remains of the snake's journey. Napiruli continues up-river, meeting ancestor spirit-animals (*maiwa*), racing with them (figure 9), pacifying and in some instances, turning them to stone. Many of these relationships are playfully antagonistic. Napiruli also pauses to consecrate cultivated fructiferous trees (e.g. figure 10) and other wild species (e.g. figure 11). In doing so, he transforms these sites into sacred meeting places (for ceremonial exchange, *dabukuri* sites). The visual narrative continues through more than 50 sacred sites. Most are potent locales, generally to be avoided and always treated with caution and reverence. The Cumati rapids, for instance, are a place where children become frightened by petrified animals and cry (see Chapter Seven, p. 258). The Cumati rapids also mark an important geo-political divide between the down-river, Evangelical, and the up-river, Catholic communities.

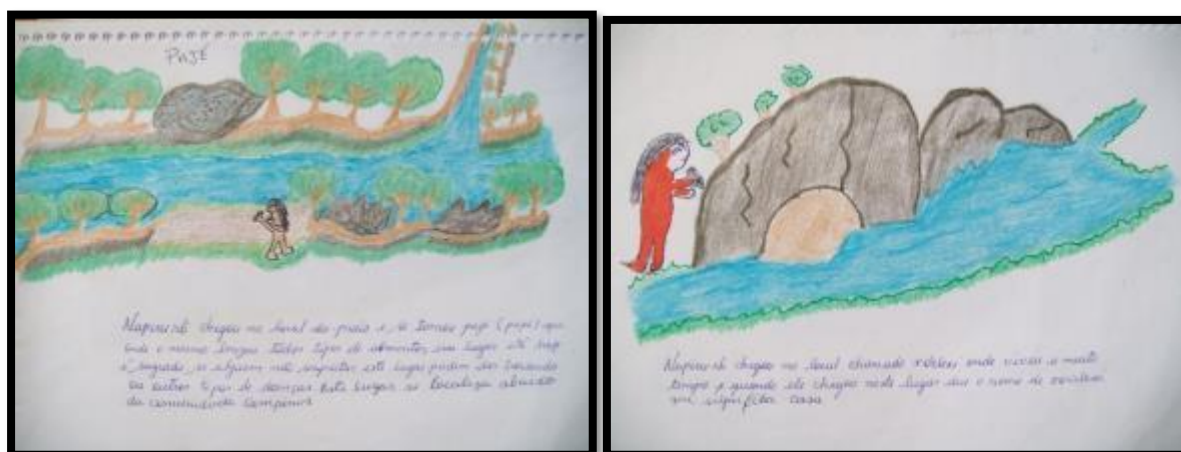


Figure 6: The caption reads, ‘Napiruli arrived at a beach and became a *pajé*. This is where he blessed all our foods. This place is still sacred, and if someone does not respect it, it can cause lightning and other types of illnesses’. This place is also known as la lavandeira. Xié dwellers use the Portuguese word ‘*doenças*’ to describe misfortunes that include illness and being struck by lightning.

Figure 7: The caption reads, ‘Napiruli came to a place called Xerlexi, where he lived for a long time. When he arrived he gave it the name of Xerlexi, which means house/home’.



Figure 8: The caption reads, ‘After a long time, Napiruli saw his enemy Napiruli pass. He was a snake in the form of a big lake. He came towards Napiruli so that he couldn't get passed’. The caption here is confusing. This may be due to the fact that there is a consistent ambiguity between Napiruli, and his son, the Amado or the *jurupari*, (also noted by Wright 2009). Depending on the context, for Xié dwellers Napiruli is also interchangeable with the great-snake and the *kurupira*.

Figure 9: The caption reads: ‘Kute is the place where Napiruli stopped to give its name. Kute means fast’. It is here that Napiruli is said to have played games and raced with the *maiwa*.



Figure 10: The caption reads, ‘Napiruli arrived at Yuku, which means an orchard of Ukuki trees’. This is the dabukuri site.

Figure 11: The caption reads, ‘On this island Napiruli made the first 'Dabukuri' [festivity] of Waku fruit’. This is the mid to upper river Island of Tunu Cachoeira, on which I spent the greater part of my fieldwork. The inauguration of this dabukuri site I will describe.

The narrative discourse is one of exploratory-creative genesis. Firstly, the river is created through the dialectical relationship between Napiruli and his enemy, the great-snake. During Napiruli’s up-river journey he pacifies the great-snake and penetrates the territory he is exploring. The journey begins during the winter and continues on the cusp of summer, when the river’s waters are low enough to expose its topography. He then both ‘finds’ and ‘puts’, that is, he both imbues and creates, names and tames, the riverine agents (*maiwa*) that he finds. The inauguration and creative-generation of bountiful places include the homes of animal owners -*maiwa* sites- as well as fruit trees. These

Chapter One: Mythic histories of the Upper Rio Negro and of the minor tributary of the Xié River sites become the locales for *dabukurí*, again marking abundance as a seasonal relationship.

In sum, the river emerges as the result of a dialectical relationship. Through this dialectic, it is described as being a bountiful, abundant and, above all, a civilized locale in which to live. In particular, the existence of *kariumã* initiation sites and *dabukurí* ceremonial exchange spots mark the river as a locale that can both create human beings, and facilitate peaceful engagement with other humans. The two rituals complement one another. For men, *kariumã* marks the acquisition of civilized practices such as basketry. This practice is also mnemonically recorded at other sites, described as the locales where Napiruli made the first basket in which to carry his son, The Amado (who later becomes the *juruparí*). Furthermore, as Hill and Wright (1988) recount, among the Wakúwenai and Baníwa, initiation is the time when the mythscape is recited and revitalised with maalikai chants, evoking the homelands and other, more distant places. Accordingly, the first initiation site is at the beginning of the Xié mythscape, a place also known as the Lavandeira.

The emergent perception is that the riverscape reflects the civilized status of the people who dwell there. Many Xié dwellers recognise these sites but the narrative organisation proposed in the booklet highlights the dominance of its more recent migrants. Thus, these recent migrants describe the Xié as a highly civilized place in which to live, but they do not perceive themselves as the river's autochthones. Nor do they describe themselves as emerging from any site along the Xié river itself. This view is shared by the Basimulari clan, who migrated to the Xié during the early 1900s and whose presence on the river was strengthened after they were joined by new immigrants fleeing Venezuela's civil war.

When I spoke to Basimulari Joaquim from the up-river community of Umarituba, he also recognised the *kariumã* site that Napiruli had inaugurated along the lower Xié. Joaquim's late father was a ritual specialist, fluent in Baré. For both Joaquim and Jurupari Irineu, this beach is also the locale named Lavanderia. It is the place where Napiruli was swallowed by the snake. From inside the snake's stomach, he then cuts his way out, emerging as a white man.⁴⁵ For these two clans, this locale is an important place

⁴⁵The myth is not dissimilar to the Barasana's mythopoetic submarine myth recounted by S. Hugh-Jones (1988: 148).

Chapter One: Mythic histories of the Upper Rio Negro and of the minor tributary of the Xié River of transformation but not ethnogenesis or origin. Similarly, both Joaquim and Irenu's historical narratives of the river are limited to their time of arrival along the Xié and when I enquired into the river's history, they referred me to their co-residents (the Warli 2) and other upper-river dwellers.

The elders of the past and the taming of the early Xié

In casual conversation, many individuals recognise the locales illustrated in the student's booklet of the Xié mythscape, and the narrative of Napiruli's up-river voyage. In contrast to the Juruparis and the Basimulari however, they can also relate historical narratives and tell myths that recognise the Xié as a place of genesis, rather than of explorative transformation. This early history of the river I tell below. This account is based on a series of narratives recounted to me by the father and son of the fairly prestigious Warli (1) sib: the recently appointed community captain of the mid-up-river community of Tunu Cachoeira, Jurez Cândido and his father, Luís Cândido, who had been an earlier captain of Tunu. They provided me with the following account:

In the early 18th century there was a large village, the remains of which lie along the minor tributary (*igarapé*) named Úwiné (near Cumati cachoeira). It was headed by a chief known as Meru or Monoribu, and was surrounded by smaller settlements.⁴⁶

Darikawana,⁴⁷ Meru's cousin, lived a good distance above Cuece (and Umarituba), in the *igarapé*. These formed the ancestral lands and the village of Seabú, where today the story's narrator, Luís, has his former manioc garden (*kukuera*) Cajú Ponta. From the account, it would appear that Darikawana, the grand chief (chefe, *tusha enda* or *erendawa*), had political sway in the area of the Xié's headwaters, including Caruru and Cewabú *igarapé* and the headwaters of Anamoim *igarapé* and beyond the mountain ranges that lie there and which today bear his name. Their respective territories are

⁴⁶These settlements were in the minor waterway or stream (*igarapé*) of Meruwé (just above the present day community of Campinas); and above, at the headwaters of Baruri (lying between Cumati and Tunu) and (above Tunu) in the *igarapé* of Cuece (near present day Umarituba).

⁴⁷Darikawana is a Xié ancestor known by all of Cândido's descendants who form the Warli agnatic line and belong to this clan (*mirasa*). Today, these individuals live in the Upper-Xié communities of Anamoim, in Tunu and others who have migrated from upper-river communities to the city of São Gabriel as well as across the border to Colombia. One of his earliest descendants founded the up-river manioc garden site of Yarrayapi, just above that of Luís in Cajú Ponta.

Chapter One: Mythic histories of the Upper Rio Negro and of the minor tributary of the Xié River outlined on the map below and can also be cross-referenced with specific locations in the mythscape.

The narrative tells of how these two groups were engaged in the then-typical warfare practices of ‘the ancient elders’ (*kuxima*). Relations between these two groups of affines became embittered as a result of the slave trade. Darikawana, and then Meru, capture each other’s family and sell them off into slavery. In return for these slaves they are said to have received firearms. The story reaches its climax when Meru attempts to take revenge on Darikawana, but in a final confrontation Darikawana defeats him. Darikawana kills most of Meru’s allies and those still alive fall under his rule. Darikawana is a historical figure who is mentioned in Stradelli’s (2009 [1890]) account of the region. Here, Darikawana is named as a renegade leader and troublemaker, unwilling to conform to state rule. After this, Luís and Jurez recount the arrival of a newcomer to the Xié.

The second part of the legend of Darikwana tells of the taming of the Xié’s fierce forest-dwelling population who were largely domesticated through contact with immigrants to the Xié. Luís told me how during this time, in the mid to late nineteenth century, an unnamed ancestor migrated upriver, along the Xié. He had come from the lower Rio Negro, seeking the river’s seasonally abundant fish, and then made the Xié his permanent home. At the time the Xié’s river banks were still deserted, while the Xié-surrounding population, as Jurez described them to me, were forest-dwelling and being ‘like game’ (*como caça*) animals. This is a common trait among many Amerindian groups: even as they apply the category of person (or humanity) to non-human fauna, they radically dismiss other ethnic groups as ‘animals’ (Vivieros de Castro 2004: 477).⁴⁸

At the time of their ancestors arrival, the Xié river-surrounding people are said to have been like game animals because they lived in secluded forest locations rather than riverine settlements, and fled from interethnic contact (like contemporary Makú). Being like game entailed eating wild fruits rather than engaging in horticulture, eating game rather than fishing, having a very crude material culture and possessing no canoes.

⁴⁸For Viveiros de Castro has been criticised for his emphasis on animals, and not fish, plants or stones (see Santos-Granero 2009c: 4-5). This chapter, and later chapters, provide further evidence as to perspectival shifts in plants and according to the seasons.

Unprotected and uncivilized, a further feature of being like a game animal is that of political impotence and thus without claim to the land or those who live there.

Luís and Jurez described to me how through a series of encounters, Luís' nameless great, grand-father, lured the game-like population to the riverfront and became their master. When the nameless goes to meet him, he calls Darikawana his brother-in-law (**wawashi**) and over time establishes an affable exchange relationship. There is a well-known ambiguity in the brother-in-law relationship: building on the observations of several regional scholars, including Overing Kaplan (1975) and Rivière (1984), Viveiros de Castro (2001) specified how the brother-in-law could be a dangerous outsider, but as an insider would be an important ally. Using a concentric model, Viveiros de Castro (2001) described the centrifugal tendency of de-affinizing the non-consanguine and making him kin as the sociological axis of Amerindian societies.⁴⁹ The opening of this axis appears to have facilitated this outsider's integration.⁵⁰

At first Luis' ancestors offered this population salt, then soap and later hooks for fishing. The forest-dwelling population is described as having a rudimentary material culture with little knowledge of fishing techniques, to which they are introduced. Over time, kin relations are established and the nameless' son, Cândido de Oliveira, marries one of Darikawana's daughters. Luís describes how they acquire other features of civilized society, including the technology to make canoes and travel long distances for the purpose of facilitating trade. Eventually, Darikawana makes a series of journeys to Manaus during the depths of winter in order to buy industrialised products.

By the end of this narrative, Darikawana is described as having been a powerful figure who resisted the authority of agents of the nation-state. Finally, the 'police' come to take him away and Darikawana is remembered for dodging their efforts to capture him. Darikawana's legendary status resembles that of the Baniwa prophet Kamico (Hill and Wright 1988), who also assumed many of the qualities associated with the heroes of early mythology.

⁴⁹See Vilaça (2002); on bringing otherness to the centre, also see Ewart, 2013.

⁵⁰According to one of Aline da Cruz's (2011:22-23) informants, Lina, born in the 1920's and interviewed in 2007, Anamoin (which once lay within Darikawana's territory) was 'opened' (*abrir*, which da Cruz translates as founded, '*fundar*'), before her and her family arrived. At this time, it was 'pure Warekena territory', but then these people left and the land at Anamoin was 'closing', so they came to re-open it.

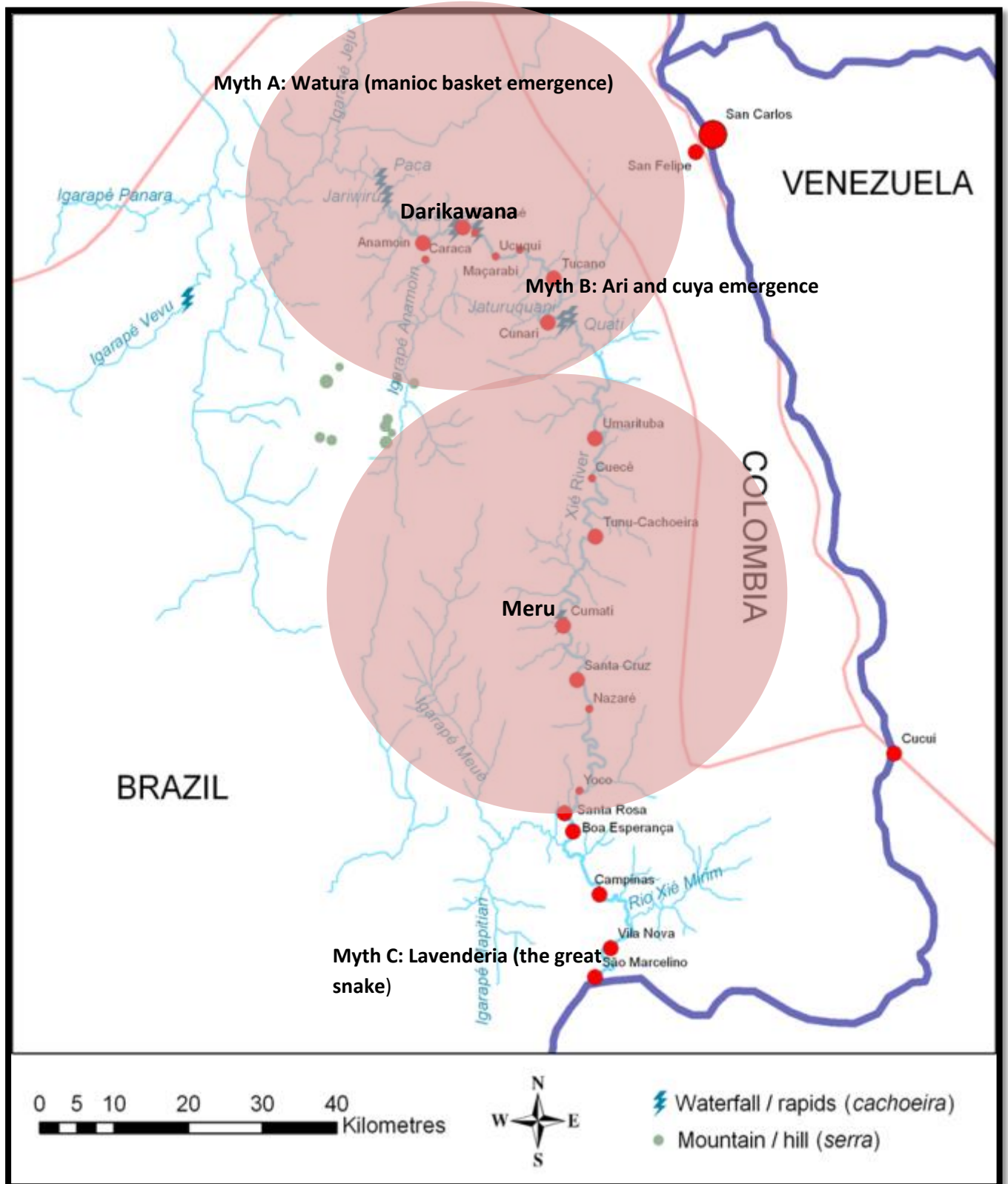


Figure 15: Map of Xié river showing the occupation of territories by the two headmen, Meru and Darikawana during the early 18th Century.

Darikawana is associated with the time of ‘the elders of old’, but he is also said to be the direct descendant of the mythological figure Wasaburiwani, the younger brother of Napiruli. The myth describes Wasaburiwani’s emergence during a ‘time before God’, where he and his brother emerge from an overturned plant gourd (*cuya*), an event that takes place on a waterway separating Meru and Darikawana’s territories. This event appears on the map as Myth B. However, Darikawana is also at the threshold of the recent history of ‘now, now’ (*agora, agora*) time. He appears at a moment in the river’s history when there is a temporal black hole, during which the Xié’s relatively uncivilized population comes to acquire civilized status and the skills associated with it (e.g. canoe-making). During this time Xié dwellers are said to have had no knowledge of contemporary civilized practice, and to have lacked the ritual and material culture that defines these groups today. From the Warli 1 perspective, the cataclysmic relationship between Darikawana and Luís’ and Jurez’ ancestor, suggests a time of radical transformation and civilization.

Shortly after the advent of their ancestor, the Warli 1 sib, which Luís belongs to, split to produce one, high-ranking body of river owners - Luís Warli 1 - and the agnatic descendants of the incoming ancestor, now traced to his son, Cândido de Oliveira; and the subordinate Warli 2, who were mostly agnatically descended from the forest-dwelling population.⁵¹

Cândido de Oliveira appears to have made only one strategic marriage alliance before separating the Warli sib into two. After the division of this sib, they maintained their mutual exclusivity, (with the Warli 2 marrying with the aforementioned down-river Jurupari; whilst the Warli 1 maintained alliances with Parli). What is interesting however is that mythology lays bare the agnatic differences between these two groups, for, unlike the Warli I, Warli 2 relate a different myth and a divergent place of emergence: Campinas resident Floriano, identified for me by Jurupari Ireniu as one of these early Warekena, explained to me how the Warekena ethnicity emerged from a woman in an over-turned manioc basket at a forest-dwelling location along the Upper Xié river. This is a different

⁵¹ Much like Goldman’s ‘authentic’ Hehénewa 1 (father’s brothers children) and Hehénewa 2, ‘newcomers’ (Goldman 2004: 65). However in this case, the Warli 1 prestige overrides the fact that they are the newcomers.

Chapter One: Mythic histories of the Upper Rio Negro and of the minor tributary of the Xié River myth from that told by Warli 1 and occurs in a different locale, as can be seen on the map Myth A, figure 15, p. 62). Furthermore, these Warli 2 have not heard of Darikawana who remains an elusive historical figure.

Darikawana is an ambivalent figure who, when described in his stories by members of the Warli 1 sib, actually appears to have the characteristics of Carib or Siliba leaders. He is the headman of an uxori-local residence, surrounded by satellite communities. Furthermore, like the Carib Ye'kuana (Guss 1989), he is associated with headwaters and up-river mountain ranges, such as the mountain which today bears his name. These are described as ancestral places of power, rather than the mouths of rivers, as is the case for most Tukanoan groups (e.g. Carsten and S. Hugh-Jones 1995: 35). Further evidence for such a theory emerges when we compare a set of regional myths. During early creation, a period of chaos and turbulence (Wright 1998) is, (according to Wright's, 2009 sources), brought to its end with the felling of the great anadenanthera tree of Kaali, **kaali-ka thidzapa**, whose large petrified stump is to be found on the Uaracapory falls along the upper Vaúpes river. For the Venezuelan Warekena of the upper Guiana, this tree lies on the serra Autana at the Sipapo headwaters; Xié dwellers say it sits in a tributary of the Orinoco; the Manapiare, in current day Piaroa (Siliba) territory. For some, the Baniwa myth is testament to former Arawakan dwelling along the Vaupes.⁵² The same might then be said in the mixed origins of contemporary Xié dwellers in their recognition of the Orinoco. Perhaps then Darikawana was a Siliba leader later superseded by a powerful Arawakan newcomer.

Earlier in this chapter, I introduced Zucchi's (2002) hypothesis that the occupation of new lands was facilitated by the embodiment of mythical ancestors who mythscaped new territories, in much the same way that cultural heroes were described in oral narratives. Darikawana appears as one of these charismatic individuals capable of transforming a population and leading them into civilized status. The interface between Luís' ancestor and Darikawana set off a chain of events in which *kariumã* and *dabukuri* become rituals that form these types of hydrocentrically orientated persons. Importantly here, affinal exchange between non co-residents (*dabukuri*) marks amicable rather than hostile relationships with affines and not the type of fierce struggles that Meru and Darikawana

⁵² For the Baniwa, the great tree of Kaali (Wright 1981), source of cultivated plants, is found northwest of the Baniwa's current territories.

Chapter One: Mythic histories of the Upper Rio Negro and of the minor tributary of the Xié River engaged in. Furthermore, as I go onto relate, we also know how Darikawana's son-in-law, Cândido de Oliveira, son of the unnamed migrant who married one of Darikawana's daughters, came to actually inaugurate *dabukuri* sites during the early history of the river. Thus, while Wasiburiwani figures in the early mythology at a time when the land is still forming, Darikawana marks a point where the land is still opening up. Luís described *dabukuri* to me, explaining how participants arrive from their distant locations playing the *japurutu* flute, its haunting sound resonating along the river, opening up or blowing open the paths to conviviality very much like the blowpipe first blew open the river itself.

I have described the Xié river as the site of two places of emergence (mythic locales A and B) and one place of transformation, when Napiruli cuts his way out of the anaconda's stomach (C, see these on map, p. 61). These locales roughly correspond to the ancestry of groups that have lived along and migrated to the Xié river and the dialectics between them. Although the precise age of the first location is not known, it indicates an ancient population along the upper Xié. The second site describes the division of the Warli sib during the late 18th century. It is also possible that the sib name emerged at this time and was soon appropriated. Finally, the third site corresponds to the arrival of more recent migrants, the Basimulari and the Jurupari in the mid-20th century.

Luís' ancestor and his great grandfather Cândido de Oliveira, whose own, unnamed father migrated to the Xié, witnessed an important period in the taming and civilizing of the wild forest-dwellers inhabiting surrounding lands. After Darikawana, Cândido de Oliveira continued to open up access to the river, and he began by inaugurating an important *dabukuri* site in the middle of the Xié, the island community of Tunu Cachoeira, said by residents to be older than São Gabriel, which at the time had only a few houses and a mission.

Opening up the river: the taming of Tunu

Once Darikawana was arrested, the river is said to have been given over to the custodianship of Cândido de Oliveira. To expedite profitable manioc exploitation, Cândido de Olivera encouraged Meru and Darikawana's descendants to move away from

Chapter One: Mythic histories of the Upper Rio Negro and of the minor tributary of the Xié River their remote up-river locations.⁵³ He brought many of them to live in the more southerly stream (*igarapés*) of Cuece and later to the small, mid-river island of Tunu Cachoeira. This location was said to have been rich in seasonal fishing, and like other abundant sites, offered itself up for *dabukuri*.

Lying at the river's mid-point, Tunu Island is about half the size of a football pitch, nestled amid a mass of rocky rapids, roughly 40 and 80 meters from the Xié's two river banks during the high-water season. The island takes its name from its owner, Tunu (crab-man), the petrified rock-shaped crab that sits at the northern end of the Island. Tunu is the crab and turtle spirit ancestor. The whole island and its surrounding waters are overseen ('kept') by the enchanted crab-rock. During the river's history (mid-19th century), turtles are said to have been plentiful here, sometimes spotted diving under the rapids to report unsolicited (human) intrusions and other more general misdemeanours to their crab-master. These days, Tunu appears to be impassive. In former times, however, he, like other potent (and contemporary) *maiwa* homes, became a kind of deep-water magnet that would draw people down to the river's depths and to his subterranean world.

In those days, Tunu was said to be powerful enough not to let people pass him, and Luís recounted that 'he had to be conquered [or quieted]'. Since the river lacked any individuals who were up to the task, Cândido secured the ritual services of a potent (Baniwa) *pajé* from the Içana. Using psychoactive snuff (*parika*, or *paravera*) that bestowed on him the ability to know Tunu, he pacified and 'blessed' Tunu, the crab-owner and secured permission for human occupancy of the area. With the crab-owner now pacified, Cândido was able to encourage his cohort to engage in *wayuri* (communal work party, most frequently at the seasonal cross-overs, especially into summer) and clear the forested area of the island. Once completed, Cândido, the Baniwa *pajé* and the Xié river dwellers inaugurated the island as a residence by celebrating with a *jurupurutu* flute- and harvest-led ceremonial exchange (*dabucuri*). Tunu thus became the first civilized locale along the river. This opened up the mid-river location and shortly after, leaders of the Warli clan built the first houses, which were for staying in during *dabukuri*, rather than permanent residences.

⁵³Meru's descendants appear to have belonged to a different sib, or to lack a sib name. Luís described them as being from the diminutive Mirimi sib, reflecting their relative status.

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Tunu's historicity as a *dabukuri* site is also manifest in what are described as the petrified remains of two elders, turned into stone and now forming the rocky rapids adjacent to Tunu, on the upper-river sides of the island. The petrified remains are explained by the following story: Having drunk too much during the *dabukuri* festivities, the two elders began brawling between themselves, and as they approached the river, their disorderly behaviour severely displeased Tunu, who berated them and turned them into two large boulders, extending out from the island. Visible during the low river season, the rocks are said to offer a permanent reminder of the importance of remaining composed – even during festivities -, and the tale also has historical significance: the inauguration of Tunu as a *dabukuri* site, making the first accessible event-location in which the riverside community along the Xié welcomed new human dwellers to the river.

The inauguration of *dabukuri* sites along the Xié riverfront presided over the incorporation of outsiders and established affable relationships of exchange. As Luís recounted to me, this periodic riverfront residence also meant that they could trade more easily with others including river merchants who then began to enter the Xié. This exposes exchange relations as linked to the seasonal appearance of topographs.

Summative observations

The social processes I have described for the Xié river often match those described in regional histories of Arawakan groups. This is typified by diverse ethnic interactions and is oriented by their macro, centrifugal logic of riverine mythscapes. Authors who have traced these ethnohistories (for the Baniwa, Wright 1991 ;Wakúenai, Hill 2002; and for the Yanésa, Santos-Granero 1998), have done so by focusing on correspondences between the locales mentioned in mythscaping narrative on the one hand, together with the events recorded in the archives of contemporary missions, colonial and post-colonial governments, on the other.

Because the Rio Xié incorporates a relatively shallow history of migrations, I have diverged from previous approaches by using Xié dwellers' own chronological narratives, which link the Xié mythscape to a period of historical opening-up of the river. I have suggested that the process of mythscaping and mythscaping narratives themselves describe the development of new, dialectical relationships with powerful affines as part of Xié dwellers recent history of enlarged inter-ethnic engagements. In these narratives and

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oral accounts, the dominant theme is the taming and domestication of both human and ecological agents (e.g. Tunu) of the river.

In these histories, the ancient dwellers of the Xié are described as being no less fierce than the riverine agents that also occupied the river at this time. In the context of mythscaping, both human riverine dwellers and animate beings have to be tamed and domesticated. The taming, civilizing logic that dominates here can be viewed as micro-social processes of familiarisation, such as that described by Fausto (1999) as a dynamic visible in both human and non-human relations. Thus, topographic features are not only made to be mnemonic, nor are they limited to ecological knowledge and hence, mnemonic (Ñanez 1980), but rather are also perceived as persons who share part of the ecoscosmos (Århem 1990; 1996) in which Xié dwellers live. When occupying new lands and inaugurating civilized praxis, the new masters must engage in asymmetrical and dominating relationships in order to assume affable access and control of agents who live there. This is a logic that extends to both human and non-human relations. In the case of the latter these beings will also ultimately afford the means of subsistence for these newcomers.

I have suggested that the dialectic between Napiruli and the great snake and the appearance of *dabukuri* and *kariumã* sites afford a perspective of the environment at a time when such practices were omnipresent in forming civilized, co-residing subjects. This historicized view of the landscape reflects a time when the river was perceived to be still radically opening up and when ancient Xié persons were only in the beginnings of pacification. It then explains how this population went onto acquire the rudimentary customs of civilized ‘real’ people via access to *kariumã* and *dabukuri* sites and the practices associated with them.

Together, the narrative of Napiruli’s up-river journey, as retold by recent migrants to the Xié migrants, and the dialectic between Napiruli and the snake, underscore the continuing precariousness of affinal relationships as they have evolved along the Xié. For those who recall the early history of the river, the domestication of the fiery dwellers of the Xié was a process that began with the migration of human others and then became a precursor to latter-day riverfront dwelling. In the next chapter I describe how *dabukuri* and *kariumã* came to evolve in the context of a series of riverfront dwellings, known as the village *comunidades*.

Chapter Two

A history of relations along the Xié River

Introduction

The Xié River is the abode of many different types of beings, the locale of disparate events and a marker of proper ritual practice. Principal protagonists include mythically potent beings, the proto-man Napiruli as well as the great-snake-person (*Buya wasu*, also known as Norato, the anaconda-person), who first gave rise to the river. The *Buya wasu* seasonally manifests itself in the abundant and overflowing waters of the winter's riverscape, when the river is said to become the great snake himself. The serpentine river also affords access to its micro-ecologies; and specific spirit-‘animal’ owners (*maiwa*)⁵⁴ that mediate access to the abundance of fish, riparian species and forest dwelling ones.

Thanks to the actions of these ancient, primordial river dwellers (proto-humans, the great snake and animal ancestors, *maiwa*), the Xié river and its surrounding lands today have emerged as a site fit for humans to live well: there are numerous, well-remembered *dabukuri* (ceremonial exchange) sites, which mark ecologically abundant areas and indicate a long tradition of open, affable relations with human groups living along and visiting the Xié. Furthermore, *kariamã* (initiation) rites are also visually described in the landscape and mark the Xié as a place capable of forming young persons who may participate in and acquire the civilized practices of their elders. Thus, the river's topography helps define past and present relations between a host of human and non-human agents. The river is also the site where relations continue to unfold today.

Little more than a hundred years ago, however, the Xié River was a sparsely occupied place. According to contemporary Xié dwellers who now inhabit the river's main course, it was then the home of fierce Warekena Indians along with just as dangerous *maiwa* (spirit animal owners) who, in Xié mythologies, once preyed on people. Over time, these unruly agents were tamed and pacified: incomers gained access to important areas of ecological abundance to which the *maiwa* laid claim by forging a relationship in which these beings became affably subordinate. It was through the simultaneous pacification of

⁵⁴These are known as the image (*imagem*) of ‘*bichos*’ – a term used to refer to all mammals and fish.

both fierce forest-dwellers and potent riverine *maiwa* that new migrants came to peacefully dwell along the main course of the Xié River. Many of these migrants became involved in the extraction of piassava palm (*leopoldinia piassaba*, *pisasa*) fibre and their relationship with it was just one of the many ways in which the *maiwa* changed as a result. This chapter explores the processes through which the river has been transformed into the self-perceived locale in which pacific, civilized, modern, community-dwelling ‘Warekena Indians’ can reside and be well and healthy (*katu*).⁵⁵ This includes the recent transformation of *kariamã* and *dabukuri* rituals that have been reformulated in the context of these community villages.

In this chapter I argue that Xié dwellers have achieved an enhanced social network in which the radical alterity of others has been significantly reduced. In describing this transformation it is my contention that while riverine dwelling promotes inter-ethnic, supra-sib relationships and the emergence of larger sedentarized, inter-sib communities that industriously produce and exchange with others, it also describes the gradual decline in affable relations with localised *maiwa* (ancestral animal owners), who previously gave abundant access to their local ecologies.

To this purpose, rather than framing my analysis within arguments of ecological scarcity; or viewing the lack of intimacy in larger communities as an obstacle to trusting relationships that permit the fair distribution of foods; or even by considering how the link between these factors causes inter-communal tensions and community factionalism (e.g. Rivière 1970)⁵⁶, this chapter examines how the historical shift to sedentarized, often supra-sib, village-community living is understood in terms of the cosmic-society that includes animist agents that have also been affected by the river’s greater population and

⁵⁵Despite the varied ethnic constitution of the river, when representing themselves to outsiders such as the DSEI or FUNAI, individuals consistently identify themselves as Warekena. This is true even for the men of the Juruparí sib (presiding in Campinas village), whose father, a Baníwa man from the lower Içana, ‘became’ Warekena when he moved to the river. This group’s in-marrying women are mainly Baré and recognise themselves as such.

⁵⁶Rivière’s work among the Guianan Trio describes how the ideal and desire for a large network of amicus and generous relations is never actually achieved because discretion in meat giving (due to lack of resources) and in personalised relations of dependence and intimacy, for accusations of neglect and gives rise to anger and violence which fracture and disperse the community. However, in the past, this ideal of an enlarged community was achieved temporarily during the dance festival. Here, outsiders (non-residents and affines) join the community and are momentarily treated as one. This intensified sociality, or conviviality, gives rise to the experience of *sesame* – a feeling of belonging and contentment (Rivière 2000:254). Since this is only a temporary occurrence, post and pre-festivity extra-communal relations continue to be typified by fear and hostility; and an ever-present potential for the ‘fierceness’ of affinal sorcery to manifest itself through illness.

its sedentarized dwellings. Because these animist agents (*maiwa*) interact and sometimes even collude with some humans against others, I begin in this chapter to demonstrate how history emerges as a directly experienced relationship with these agents today.

Xié dwellers say that they suffer far more illnesses today than they did in the past when they lived in their *sitios*. In their *sitios* they say they enjoyed better health and say they suffered less during menstruation, pregnancy and childbirth. They also say that one of the main causes of illness, both reproductive and otherwise, are malevolent *maiwa* who attack people. The other is sorcery. In this chapter I demonstrate that while the circumference of marriageable others has extended outwards, the abundance of local ecologies was reduced and relationships with animist others was gradually degraded over time as people respected them less and suffered more as a result.

The following analysis is twofold. In the first instance, based on the narratives of Tunu elder Luís and his son, Jurez, as well as the observations of other Xié dwellers, I describe the significant growth in the riverside population. I consider the momentum behind the creation of village communities and how these relate to the transformation of *kariamã* and *dabukuri* rituals that now take place in these village communities. This builds on Chapter One, where I describe how these rituals became instituted during the early history of the river and how they were then important markers of civilized status. The chapter then moves on to describe how village communities on the one hand and Protestantism on the other afforded the possibility of achieving a state of reduced affinity for Xié dwellers, which also brought a range of material and non-material benefits.

In the second half of the chapter I consider how the larger, sedentarized, often supra-sib villages have affected animist relations. These include direct and indirect consequences, constituted by now malevolent *maiwa* and the threat of assault sorcery (*praga*) that also motivates the *maiwa*. Finally I focus on one pan-*maiwa* agent associated with the piassava palm and here I describe in detail how one particular animist relation has been affected as a result of engagement in extractive economies, which have been so essential to river dwellers' incorporation in regional economies. But what does the village community look like?

The village community

Whilst some Arawakan groups prefer to live in isolated nuclear family residences, such as those described by Killick (2009) among the Ashanika, many Xié river dwellers favour the inter-familial village community. This shift is relatively recent and as community dwellers of Tunu - the oldest settlement site along the river - say, one of the main reasons for their now permanent co-residence was access to education. Schooling became a possibility in the early 1990s and one of the key motives for permanent settlement was that Xié dwellers wanted their children to be educated. This, argue many fathers (for it is mainly fathers), was so that their children would be able to deal with river merchants on equal terms.

Another shared reflection on village life is that it allows more people to help with work. Furthermore, despite bad luck in fishing or hunting, people say they will ultimately always be fed. 'Here people never go hungry', village members often said. Village households take turns in providing the main meal, ensuring that there is always something to eat at collective early morning and evening meals (*chibé*, named after the manioc flour drink) at the communal house (*casa comunitaria*). Here, some of the more prestigious members of the clan⁵⁷, those who lead by example, would consistently take something of substance to the *chibé*, preferably some peppered fish stew (*kinhāpira*). Community life also means participating, or being the subject of, village-wide circles and networks of gossip outside the more formal context of communal house gatherings. These afford an important informal mechanism to vent grievances, ensure consensus and retain a generous and convivial spirit between village members.

Tunu residents, asked about their reasons for living in the village, talked about the intense conviviality they have experienced. Older women would tell me that it was *puranga* (beautiful and good) to be able to go to their neighbour's house to watch television. The electricity needed to run the television has been available since the Catholic priest, Padre Vidal, exchanged thirty-five 50-litre tins of manioc flour for a gasoline-powered generator, three years prior to my arrival. The gas is used to power the TV rather than the manioc grinder (see figure 5), and women grate the manioc by hand. Younger parents, who also remember living in manioc garden sites, say that it is also *puranga* to be able to

⁵⁷I use clan and sib interchangeably here, but in opting for the latter, the reader is reminded that I did not identify the use of phrateries (formed of sibs) along the Xié.

play football regularly (see figures 3 and 5). Often organised by the school teacher and sponsored by the community, who provide refreshments and snacks, football matches are played at least twice weekly to the beat of loud popular Brazilian music.

Participation in community festivities, at Easter, Christmas, New Year's (figure 1), St. John's day, independence day (see figure 2), the national day of the Indian, mother's day (figure 7), father's day, children's day, community birthday parties, and then the inter-communal patron saint festivals and school graduations, were all – aside from the religious activities - events organised by the well-informed Tukano supply teacher. For Xié dwellers, this formed an important means by which to communicate with Brazilian national society. These festivities also reportedly allowed them to live well and maintain community morale (*'ficar animado e alegre'*). This, I was told, was the principal task of community leaders such as the teacher. Further, the solar powered radio services operated by the indigenous health agent (*Agentes Indígena de Saúde*, AIS), allowed for news, requests and invitations to be passed, albeit sporadically, to other communities and to and from the city of São Gabriel. Speaking of community villages, one Tunu resident, Mercilia, said that in retrospect, it would be too boring and sad (*sasiara*, literally sickening) to live in their manioc garden sites now that they were accustomed to living well together in such a spirited (*'animado'*) community. This was despite her inability to join in many community events, because, she said, her crying children needed constant attention. Now that the youngest of her four children was three, she could get more involved.

Of course, village communities also offer access to a range of services, including pharmaceuticals and a radio service run by the AIS, and allow for extended social and economic networks from which all Tunu village residents benefit in one form or another. Among the benefits are facilitated trade with river merchants, who can dock their larger vessels at riverfront communities more easily and with greater likelihood of finding someone at home, than when Xié dwellers lived in smaller, more isolated, family residences. Furthermore, during the period of my fieldwork, Tunu's captain, Jaime, came to act as a middle man for village residents and had a store of commercial foods (e.g. rice, coffee, sugar and salt) that he would exchange for their locally sourced *cipó* vine (*heteropsis flexuosa*). The *cipó* he amassed was later exchanged with the river merchant. Trade with river merchants is an important means of obtaining goods, including fishing

hooks, flashlights, batteries and outboard motors. Manioc flour, a production process dominated by women, is the main item traded. Second are forest extracted products, including piassava palm fibre.

Village communities arose from a combination of changes, including land titles, development and access to goods and services, all possibilities created by the burgeoning Brazilian nation-state. Many of the key factors involved in forming indigenous *comunidades* across Amazonia have been outlined by Århem (2001) in Colombia and by Gow (1991) and Santos-Granero (2000) in Peru, among others. These authors, rather than perceiving the village community as an imposition of the state, have emphasised how village communities became ('beautiful', Gow *ibid.*: 70) emergent possibilities for the people who live in them. Villages, as the sites of converging interests, became powerful fiscal and administrative units, the foci of inter-ethnic exchanges and the epitome of indigenous Amazonian conceptions of 'the good life'. The process through which this has become possible is particularly clear in the ethnographic case of the Tukano Makuna of the Pirá-Panará and Apaporis rivers (Århem 2001).



Figure 1: Making carima for the New Year festivities.



Figure 2: National day of independence.



Figure 3: Men's football on Tunu Island.

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Figure 4: The DSEI health team visits Tunu.



Figure 5: Watching football matches in the village of Tunu.





Figure 6: Grating manioc, ready to pay the debt of a visiting river merchant.



Figure 7: Mother's day in Tunu village.

For the Makuna, Århem (2001) described and analysed how historical transformations in the nation-state allowed for emergence of an enhanced consanguised view of society and a village-based convivial experience, which was a structural possibility already latent in Makuna society. He highlighted the transformation of two rituals, the *juruparí* male initiation (**He tire**) and the food-giving (**Wai büare**) ritual. These new forms closely parallel similar rituals along the Xié and possibly elsewhere in north-western Amazonia. What is interesting in the case of the Xié, is that these two rituals (*kariamã* and *dabukuri* for Xié dwellers) mnemonically associated with specific locales in the mythscape described in Chapter One, have since been rearticulated in the village community: today, some previous *dabukuri* sites are now the locales of village communities.

Xié river migrants and the formation of the village community

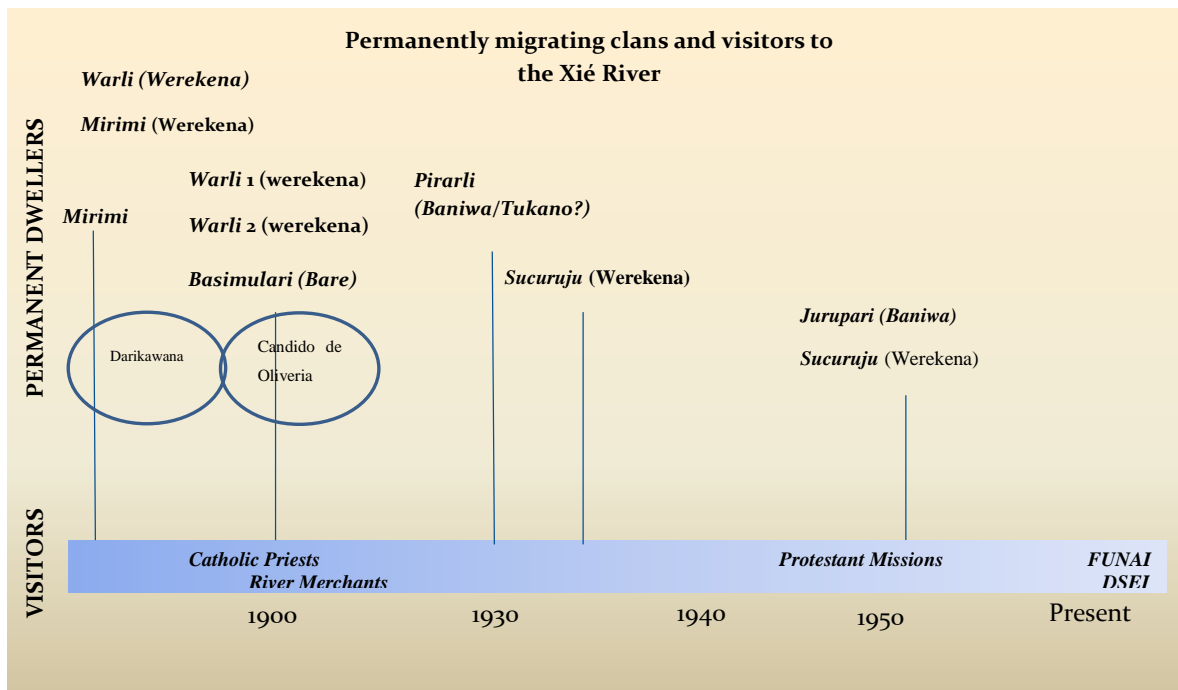
The relocation from remote *sitios* (manioc gardens) to *comunidades* began at the beginning of the 20th century. Both Catholic priests and Protestant pastors had encouraged the move to sedentarization, viewed as a means by which brotherly riverine co-residents could come together in the most civilised form of conviviality: the settlement village. Merchants also encouraged the creation of fixed, riverside dwellings, which would facilitate debt-patronage relationships, a development the river's residents welcomed as their perceived need for merchant commodities increased. The influx of outsiders also lent momentum to the move, creating a climate in which land-owners and land-users became more marked, hastening the establishment of permanent residences that would also be able to reflect claims to the land.

Drawn by the river's ecological abundance of both consumable species (i.e. fish) and commercially exploitable ones (i.e. piassava palm *-leopoldinia piassaba-*, *pisasa* and *cipó* vine), many families stayed for short periods and then established longer term homes along the Xié itself. Still more migrants arrived fleeing civil war in Venezuela, and other families leaving Venezuela and Colombia, also moved to the Xié River; the demographic changes are outlined in the table and chronogram below (figure 8).

As these migrants permanently relocated to the Xié, they settled principally near their affines. Long-term affines, the Pirili from the mid-Içana moved to the minor upper-river tributary (*igarapé*) of Anamoin where some families of the Warli 1 sib had already

settled. Immigrant families from unnamed sibs also moved to the vicinity of Anamoin, where the Xié population was already forming community-like settlements as early as the 1920s (Aline da Cruz 2011: 22-23). As one Xié dweller described it, they reoccupied or literally ‘reopened’ an ancestral upper-river settlement. Converging around the mid to upper Xié, the Basimularis, further affines of the Warli 1, moved to Umarituba *igarapé*. During this time, some families of the Warli 1 sib settled in and around the mid-river island of Tunu, a *dabukuri* site described at the end of Chapter One, p. 66-68.

Figure 8: Chronogram of important permanently migrating clans and visitors to the Xié river.



Together these groups formed a highly endogamous localized cluster for the upper Xié, reinforced by near-exclusive marriage arrangements.⁵⁸ This can be seen from the shaded circles on the map (see figure 9, p.89). The two upper most circles on the map broadly correspond to two overlapping and intermarrying polities, which form the focus of this first part of the Chapter. Below these is one large lower-river Evangelical polity, which I will describe in further detail. Together, these can be compared to the map in Chapter One (figure 15, p.62). It can be seen that the ancestral territories of Meru and

⁵⁸Writing on Guianese marriage, Rivière (1969: 198-208) described two types of affinal relations: those whom one marries and to whom one is also related by descent and co-residence; and those related by marriage only and hence were relative strangers. For the latter, Rivière described the strict avoidance of in-laws with whom the relationship was potentially ‘painful (*kutuma*)’. The word **Kutuma** was also used to describe a thorn in the foot, a headache or fever, sadness as well as something that was potentially painful.

Darikawana have been divided to reflect the newly enhanced population. The numbered arrows on the map indicate the chronology of flows of people into the Xié River region and correspond to the table below. The table also indicates shifts in affinal alliances over time.

Along the mid and upper Xié River, one Warli headman, the charismatic Vilerato who was active during the mid-20th century, is also said to have encouraged manioc gardens to be planted in riverfront locations. This process had already begun over 100 years earlier, with the inauguration of *dabukuri* sites like that of Tunu itself. However, these were not permanent sites, and until the 1960s manioc garden sites continued to flourish in interfluvial areas. Vilerato's son, the Tunu elder Luís, told me that through his father's persuasive incentive of offering easier access to the outside world, manioc garden sites appeared along the main river. He said his father and his uncles were among the first to make this adjustment. In his description, the first of these sites referred to longhouses (*malocas*) led by an important agnate or headman. Subsequent dwellings of less powerful, nuclear families were described as manioc garden sites (*sitios*). As already discussed, some of these *sitios* were grouped in close proximity to other affines.

The concentration of manioc garden sites around the tributary of Anamoin increased with the construction of a military-built airstrip during the late 1980s. As part of the wider development project *Projeto Calha Norte* (see Hemming 2003), the airstrip's construction brought with it a massive influx of outsiders, including biomedical staff and emergency helicopter services. As a result, Anamoin became the name of a riverfront community that conjoined Xié dwellers and various work migrants, some of whom eventually became more permanent residents. Further, with the new influx of outsiders who created a single sedentary base, Anamoin had enough people to house a school.

The inauguration of Anamoin roughly coincided with the early attempts to demarcate indigenous territories and the creation of the pan-Indian organisation, FOIRN in 1987. As part of a nationwide initiative to educate indigenous populations, the state provided school buildings and salaried teachers to any (sufficiently active) community with at least 10 school-age children. This gave the community significant leverage to solicit schooling, which was something the Xié dwellers actively campaigned for. As Tunu's health agent (AIS) explained to me, with the aid of the local river merchant Germino Gonçalves and the decisive effort of the town hall (*prefectura*, in particular a man named Cisero) the first

school was established in 1989, capping a four-year effort. Because of a shortage of qualified local teachers, other educators were brought in from other rivers or from São Gabriel itself and in some cases they became permanent residents. The teachers were principally of Baré or Tukano ethnicity. The school enhanced the status of Anamoin which became an official *comunidade*, with a range of radio and health services and visits from the military. By the time of my fieldwork, 20 years later, the airstrip had fallen into disuse but the community continued to house newcomers, including three teachers and the Xié's river-wide school representative.

Five years after the inauguration of Anamoin's school, the river's second state school was opened in the community of Tunu Cachoeira. For the first time in its history, Tunu became a place of (semi) permanent residence during the school year (March-December). As Tunu health agent Emilio poignantly reflected, with the provision of schooling 'there was no way we could stay in our [remote] manioc garden residences'. This gave rise to the formation of other larger, riverfront settlements, which, on the basis of their sedentary demographic, also campaigned for a school. The school formed an important site in which new knowledge and inter-ethnic relations converged and incorporated a powerful outsider - the teacher, who in some cases married and settled down along the Xié. Such marriages brought new sources of prestige to Xié dwellers.

In the past people dwelled in interfluvial *sitios* where they lived in extended, *maloca*-type arrangements of agnatic kin. Here, young agnates and their in-marrying wives and children would also initially reside. Along the Xié they also included other disparate individuals such as widowers. These settlements were loosely based on the principle of patrilineal descent. Over time, affines came to live in closer vicinity. *Dabukuri* was an important way to maintain these in-between relationships with these still distant others. Initially the move to riverfront dwelling naturally brought these affines into even closer vicinity, but it was not until the village community was formed that relations were reconfigured on a more permanent basis. As we shall see, this also altered relationships with non-human beings inhabiting the riverscape.

Relations and rituals of the village community

Having considered how migrants lent momentum to the move to village living, the following section explores how rituals now practiced in the village context reconfigured life for its inhabitants. This is a tale of three villages that have established marriage relations amongst themselves. The first is Umarituba, dominated by the Basimuliarni sib. The second, Anamoin, is dominated by the Pirili sib; and the third, my host community of Tunu, is where the Wari clan is dominant. Together, key families from these villages form part of a prestigiously endogamous local group, clustered in the upper stretch of the Xié river.

As village *comunidades* formed, resident groups were primarily composed of groups of agnates and in-marrying wives, thereby maintaining clan identity and in some instances enhancing it by conjoining adult agnates who, after a period of bride service, marriage and two children, had in the past broken away from these *maloca*-type communities. Residence continued to be based on the descent model, and as one Tunu resident explained to me, ‘Another community, another *mirasa* [clan]’. This was the case for the community of Umarituba which maintained a descent group (Basimuliarni), centred on three brothers and their large and extended families (their sons’ in-marrying wives). Umarituba now maintains an exclusive agnatic, clan-based identity, with preferred marriages in Tunu, Anamoin and, in some instances a tentative opening to alliances with lower Rio Negro river communities. As such, their village remains an exogamous unit.

In contrast, the community of Anamoin hosted a range of kin and affines who came to co-reside in the village community. Often this included relatively unrelated and unknown affines (also evinced by the diverse surnames appearing in the census) who became incorporated due to the particular dynamics converging around the construction of the airstrip. In terms of its internal composition, it is less like a descent unit than any of the other village communities. In fact, Anamoin is home to over four groups of co-residing affines. For many other river groups, the marriage of co-resident affines was not considered appropriate and Tunu resident Mercilia disapprovingly reflected that ‘in Anamoin they marry their relatives; here it is not like that’. Rather than breaching a norm of (cross) cousin marriage, which was in some cases maintained, Mercilia’s principal concern was residence, since many of these families constituted alliances with new, now co-residing affines. As a result Anamoin is known for its periodically departing residents,

and by other Xié dwellers as the village community where one is likely to suffer sorcery from other co-residents - challenging the reckoning of the village as 'a sorcery free unit' (Rivière 1970). This fact is also reflected in divided political alliances, and unlike any other community, Anamoin has three community captains.⁵⁹

Further, fractions between agnatic kin meant that, in order to fulfil the demographic requirements for the school, other non-agnates were also included. Thus the next logical possibility was conjoining affines who had already been drawn into an ever smaller circumference of residence. Affines were pulled in by the centrifugal force of the village community. Tunu village itself principally conjoined agnates from the dominant Warli patrilineage, individuals who had, since its inauguration as a *dabukuri* site, acted as captains to then surrounding manioc village sites. Now as a village community, Tunu had included two, less prestigious, affinal families and Luís' childless married daughter and her co-resident husband for over the past ten years. In addition, it has come to include the family of two sisters who married two different Warli affines in Tunu. This family previously lived in Umarituba, but because of disputes with maternal kin moved to Tunu, coming to live with two sets of in-laws. Since there was not the customary distance between mothers-in-law, the in-laws avoided each other as much as possible in daily village life.

Such living arrangements caused descent-orientated settlements to accuse Tunu of inappropriate affinal proximity. Residents of Umarituba for example, assert that such co-residence of affines -on one football-pitch sized island - is an improper practice. Tunu residents in turn accuse Anamoin residents of conducting even more inappropriate relations. Thus, for the Tunu Warli 1, the status quo represents a foothold in the local village group (which now includes less dangerous affines); and another steadily within the customary affinal dissent with upper-river residents. The emphasis of any one model then, displays distinctive perspectives between Basimularni (Umarituba) and Warli 1 clan (Tunu) and perhaps also underlines the fact that *kariamã-juruparí* practice is shared with non-agnates and that *dabukuri* is now a village-based practice.

⁵⁹The most prestigious clan in Anamoin, the Pirili, continued to maintain an appropriate distance from some of their preferred Warli 1 affines in Tunu. Since other Warli 1 families were also resident in Anamoin, some Pirili split to form their own, adjacent community in the upper-river village of São José.

Tunu elder Luís told me that when he was a boy, early communities of migrants practiced frequent *dabukuri* during which they would travel in their canoes to adjacent *malocas* for feasts and formal exchanges of basketry, fruits and fish. Luís told me that this used to happen on a monthly basis, at the full moon, and that it was an important part of living well with his affines. Writing of the neighbouring Wakúwenai, Hill (1987; 2002) describes these festivities as an important way to ensure access to the abundance of diverse eco-niches in which affines reside and also to ensure access to food and goods, including prestige items (see also Hill and Santos-Granero 2002a). One of the sites at which *dabucuri* was performed along the Xié is the island of Tunu Cachoeira. Luís' late father, Vilerato, also performed the *kariamã* initiation ritual on Tunu island. For men, the rite has the clear objective of ensuring that no harm will come to them, when hunting, fishing, or entering the forest to collect materials for the artisanal production of utensils. The male initiation that focuses on the *juruparí* and his instruments and which is performed with women and children excluded, has been described as an important rite for consolidating agnatic ties and perpetuating the descent line based on and around the *juruparí* (Århem 2001). It is an important rite for the development of young males, and, among the Wakúwenai, this is also the time when the mythscape is intoned (Hill 1993). I had no direct experience of this during my own fieldwork, but I was told by Luís that his father, Vilerato, brought together his sons from their various upper-river manioc garden sites in order to perform the ritual at Tunu. Luís told me that *kariamã* was practiced with more frequency during that period, and that, as described by Father Nilton (Cezar de Paula 2005) in his master's dissertation, Vilerato continued to bring his grandsons together for *kariamã* in the early 1980s.⁶⁰

In the context of the riverfront village community, these festivities which once marked agnatic and affinal relationships, (*kariamã* and *dabukuri* respectively), were significantly altered. As Århem (2001) has argued for the Makuna, the food-giving ritual has lost its meaning as a celebration of affinal solidarity and was replaced by apparently secular, public events, including, along the Xié, graduation and patron-saint festivals. In this context, *dabukuri* died down but recently reappeared, transformed into a performance for state officials, military or other outsiders providing services and goods to the community. In the case of Campinas, this included the regional Secretary of Education who was

⁶⁰The community of Tunu were also planning a male *kariumã* at the time of my fieldwork.

thanked by the community for building the new school with a performance of *dabukuri*. Further, in Tunu, a group of military personnel who visited whilst mapping the region helped Tunu dwellers gather felled timber by transporting the wood in their speedboat. They were also thanked with a generous offering of manioc flour during the performance of *dabukuri* (see photo of elders practicing for the *dabukuri*, figure 11, p.96). In the village community, *dabukuri* has now become a rite for an altogether more distant and virtual affine: the state and the ‘*kariwa*’⁶¹ in general. This ‘person’ fills the place of the affine-other, who need not be a marriageable other (on real and virtual affinity, see Vivieros de Castro, 2001).

Conversely, *kariamã* still occurs today but in the context of the village community. In the past this was an exclusive in-rite for agnatic kin who developed solidarity between often non-co-residing agnates based on the mythic ancestry of the *juruparí*. In the context of the village community this has become a more inclusive community-wide in-rite for the entire village. By virtue of their co-residence and irrespective of agnatic affiliation, *kariamã* practices were now conferred to village members including non-agnatic male members of the community. The transfer of an agnatic-type solidarity to village members is reinforced by the fact that further festivities, including the celebration of Easter and weekly Sunday mass, are also important community-wide events that conjoin all villagers. After Århem (2001), this has strengthened horizontal, village ties, rather than solely agnatic patrilineal ones.

Århem (2001) argued that contemporary villages have become an expanded, scattered *maloca* in which the ‘Descent House’ of the *juruparí* is incorporated by, what he terms, the inclusive ‘Cosanguinal House’, that prioritises alliances with affines. In sum, he states (ibid.: 151) ‘...in the *maloca*, the descent model and the agnatic identity of its male members hierarchically encompassed the consanguineal model, the situation in the village setting is reversed.’ Patron-saint festivals, village meetings and feasts which, when compounded with its fiscal and administrative features, establish the village as both a corporate and consanguineal (i.e. co-resident, kin-like) community. The village becomes the means through which new identities are formed and these are based on the inclusion of other groups within the wider affinal package afforded by villages. He even suggested that in the village context, affines became like agnates.

⁶¹For more on the term ‘*karaiba*’, see Vivieros de Castro 2002; 2011: 23-29.

In closing the comparison with other regions in Northwestern Amazonia, it is worth reflecting on gendered perspectives of society, as detailed by Århem (2001) and S. Hugh-Jones (1995). The agnatic model, both argue, affords a quintessentially male view epitomised by *jurupari* festivities, whilst the female perspective emphasises a consanguine-type relation based on marriage, the locale (*maloca*) as the procreative unit and reproductive social body, expressed through *dabukuri* rituals. The latter perspective hinges on the ‘inclusive “we”, a corporeal, commensal identity dissolving essential distinctions and categorical boundaries’ (Århem 2001: 127). This thesis may also be embellished in the context of increasing female sources of power (the enhanced value of manioc flour as a trade item), women’s access to government subventions (*bolsa familia*) and the fact that women are increasingly adopting positions of power, both within communities (as sports representatives and teachers) and outside them (i.e. FOIRN’s former Director). These indicate that the ‘female’ and more inclusive (human) affinal view of society is expanding, and more affines are being turned into kin (Vilaça 2002). The female alliance-based perspective plays an increasingly important model for the articulation of these village-based societies and is an important manifestation of the wider sense of reduced affinity, or the enhancement of affable others, across the river as a whole.

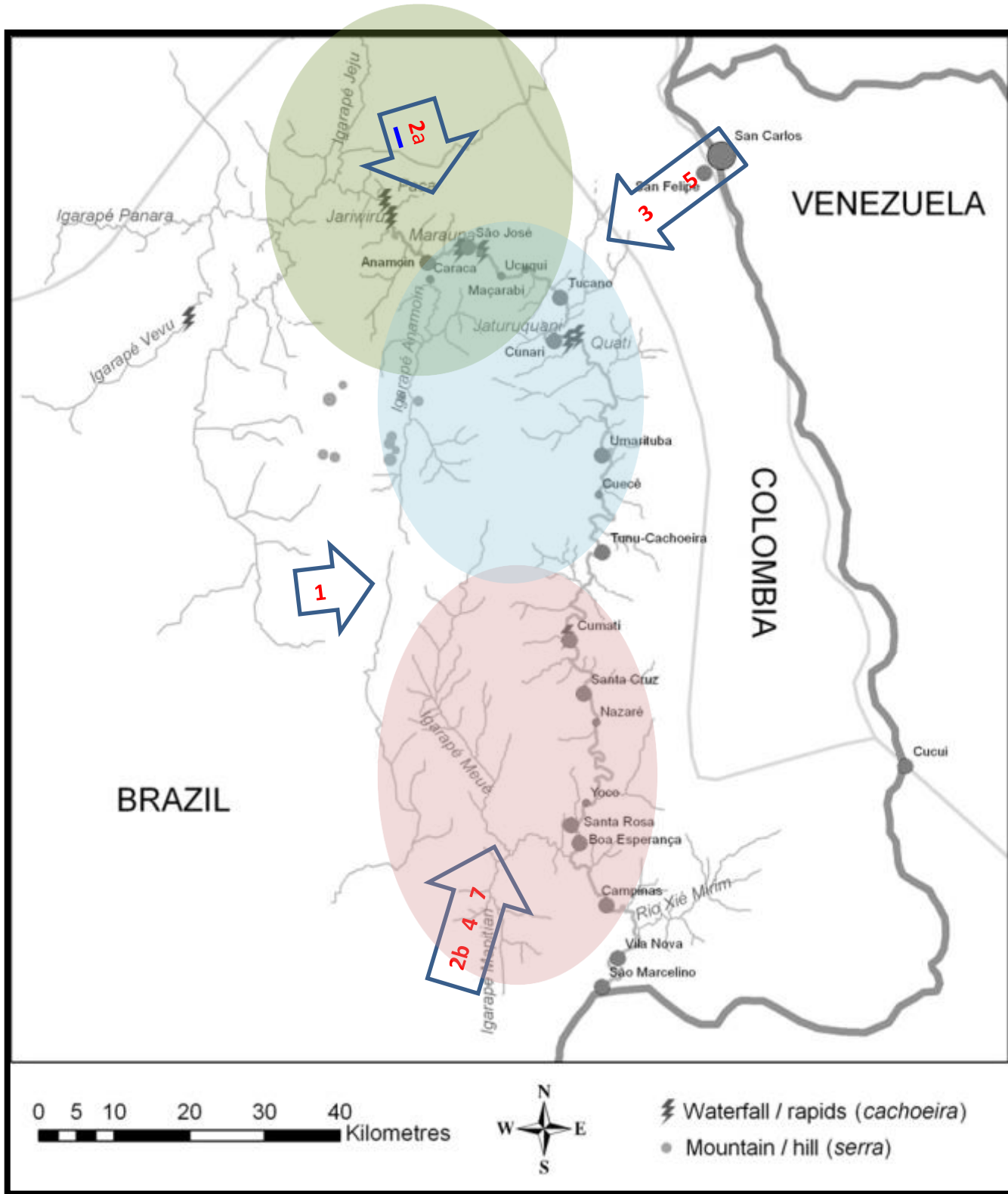


Figure 9: Movements, migrations and territorial occupations in and around the Xié river over the past 150 years. (Arrows indicate incoming peoples and numbers correspond to the table; coloured areas indicate clustered allegiances).

Chapter Two: A history of relations along the Xié River

Mirasa (clan)	Date of entry to the Xié River	Family name (patriarch)	Preferred affines (male perspective) over time
1. Mirimi (Warekena?)	?	Meru? – Antonio?	Warli - /yawarete (Venezuela)
2. Warli (Warekena) (Warli 1 – Narciso) (Warli 2 – Cândido) Two separate Warli sibs formed post-Cândido. Difference is now indicated by surname. (cf. Goldman 2004: 65 on the two hierarchically ranked Hewhena clans that split and bear the same name).	prior to 1890	Darikawana (later Narciso) → Cândido	Cândido (dominating line) Mirimi → Basimulari → Pirarli Narciso (subordinate line) Mirimi – Yawarete -
3. Basimularni (Baré)	1900	Jaurumare	Warli 1 (Cândido) → S ucuruju / Warli 2 (Narciso)
4. Pirarli (Baníwa/Tukano?)	1930	Tomas	Warli 1
5. Sucuruju (Warekena)	1940's	Bautizar	Warli 2 (Narciso) / sucruiju
6. Yawarete (Warekena from Venezuela)	19	Guruya or Waroya	
7. Jurupari (Baníwa from the lower Icana)	1950's	Martin	Yawarete → Baré's of the upper Rio Negro

Figure 10: Table showing clan and family names, and affinal preferences.

Extended religious affinities

Parallel to the formation of village communities, the option of extending supportive networks and reducing the radical and often dangerous alterity of others came with the Protestant missions. In the 1950s the American Evangelist Sophie Muller began her mission in north-western Amazonia, leaving a legacy well documented in the regional literature (see Wright 1999; Becerra 2007). Her presence is also remembered by Xié dwellers: Tunu resident Luís remembers how his elder brother, the late Francisco, collected her from down-river São Marcelino and took her to visit Xié settlements as far away as current day Anamoin and beyond. Luís describes her arrival and the subsequent years as a time of conversion, and for upper Xié dwellers, later reconversion to Catholicism.

The mission movement brought with it a family of the Jurupari sib from the lower Içana, who initially migrated, like other regional groups, in order to extract piassava palm and trade it in river-wide networks of debt-patronage exchange. With American missionaries, the Jurupari sib established themselves at the river's headwaters, forming the first lower riverfront village community. As Wright (1998) has also documented for the Baniwa, this group of 'younger brothers' also held significant sway along the Içana. Their move to the Xié made for an important shift in the river's demography.

In the first instance, the Juruparis made marriage alliances with the Warli 2 who had already been displaced from their lower river interfluival residences with the ascendancy of the Warli 1 and the generalised influx of affines to the upper Xié. In addition to this, the Juruparis co-opted the support of further affines, the Sucuruju from Venezuela, who also came to be co-residents along the lower Xié. This created an interesting dynamic in which the powerful newcomers (Jurupari) and the politically impotent ancestral Xié population (Sucuruju), their customary affines (Yawarete) and the few remaining members of the pre-Cândido Warli-2 *mirasa* became Protestants; whilst the upper-river, relatively empowered and now quintessential Warekena population -the Pirali, (Cândido) Warli-1 and Basimularni's-remained Catholic. The upper-river communities appropriated Warekena ethnicity and traditions, while those considered to be part of the autochthonous Xié population abandoned much of their customary practice under the influence of the Jurupari clan and its Protestant religion.

Conversion spoke to emergent and ancestral divisions between groups, and offered an opportunity to consolidate these tensions and make a radical break from ancestral customs

and their trappings. In some instances however, the option to convert offered an outlet for circumventing inter-village tensions and a means by which to rearticulate alliances.⁶² Upper-river communities above mid-river Cumatí Cachoeira, that had traditionally intermarried with their kin in and around the Colombian settlement of San Carlos, and along the Xié itself, remained Catholic, whilst the lower river's more recent immigrants and the subordinated lower Xié autochthones converted to Protestantism. The combined conversion of these migrants and autochthones to Protestantism made them sever relations with non-evangelical communities, who became fundamentally different types of people.

Evangelical Christian missions, with their modernising and civilizing agenda, educated the adult and child population by promoting literacy and encouraging lifestyles more akin to the national norm. Campinas resident Irenieu from the prestigious Juruparí sib, explained to me that 'Ancient person's practices', particularly shamanism and community-wide and inter-village rituals including *dabukuri* and *kariamã*, were demonised and that his uncle had been told to throw his shamanic paraphernalia into the river. Shamanic curing, ritual chanting, traditional dance, tobacco-smoking and drink were prohibited by the Protestant pastors who said they were inappropriate practices for the modern and civilized Protestant persons that they were becoming. Addressing concerns about the existence of ineffective or malicious shamans that jeopardise their affinal relations, shaman converts and ritual specialists stopped practicing altogether.

As Wright (2008) has also described among the neighbouring Baníwa, the Protestant rhetoric of fraternalism spoke to an ancient and wider moral ideal of peaceful affinal relations, unmarred by the danger of assault sorcery (*marecaimbara*, or *praga*, also see Chapter Five). Sorcerous malpractice was linked to ancient people's practices that were thought to be improper for the modern and fraternal Protestant, and evangelical communities cite poisoning and potent witchcraft as typical of an ancient and non-Protestant (i.e. Catholic) praxis⁶³. Conversion offered a means through which to control outbreaks of warfare and assault sorcery. Irenieu described how for Protestants, this became a moralising discourse: 'God doesn't allow you to kill your relatives [affines]', a point I will shortly return to.

⁶²This was the case in the Catholic community of Cuece (established in the 1950's, see map), which split to create two new evangelical communities of Yoco and Nazaré. The latter I detail below.

⁶³As FOIRN's representatives have succinctly observed, the Vaúpes is the locale of *sopro* (sorcerous shamanic breath), the Içana the place of *envenameinto* (poison), and Xié is primarily a place of *praga* and *marecaimbara* (a ruinous curse, or witchcraft). The latter suggests the antiquity of Catholicism and its importance for Xié river dwellers.

Spurred on by the fraternal rhetoric, the Protestant missions' practice of monthly pan-ethnic Evangelical conferences (*conferencias*) and weekly inter-village holy meals (*santa cena*) were welcomed by converts and offered an important means for building the Protestant community. Protestant converts extended the general radius of their inter-ethnic relationships and the conferences themselves offered a forum in which to ease customarily tense relations between more distant affines. This was all at the expense of relationships with the Catholic communities, with whom marriage was now abolished. In this context, the alliances forged were only those with other Protestants, and since there were none along the upper Xié, this included more distant peoples.⁶⁴

Conferencias facilitated the articulation of these emergent affinities and, by offering a means to forge alliances and maintain them, as well as to access foreign goods, foods and services, often facilitated by the Pastors, they effectively replaced *dabukuri*. Some of these affines were then incorporated into the village community.

Protestant villages continued to be dominated by agnatic groups, who represented the community's authority despite the election of captains from lower-ranking sibs. In the case of Campinas, affines were incorporated, but power remained in the hands of the savvy and powerful Juruparis. Solidarity between diverse community members was forged by daily prayer and by the enhanced purpose of the school, which offered a means of emancipation from the exploitation and disproportionate exchange rates to which they had been subjected, and of which they were becoming increasingly aware.

Discussing some of the motives for conversion among the Baníwa, Wright (2009) has suggested that, unlike Catholic priests who had often colluded with river merchants by using Indian labour to their own ends, Protestant Christians actively supported Indian autonomy and promoted their integration into regional and national markets. Protestants had greater access to industrialised goods, improved rates of exchange and better opportunities for education. Here the Protestant ethic found its own special niche (*ibid.*).

Conversion to evangelical Christianity, and the adoption of its reforms, denoted a wider affiliation to the missionaries and the converts' alignment with the modern, capitalist

⁶⁴The Jurupari *mirasa* perhaps only marginally extended relations in which they had previously engaged (now with the benefit of re-established virilocal post-marital residence); while their Miramiri, Yawarete and Sucuruju co-residents began to articulate new alliances with both down-river and upper-river Rio Negro dwellers.

objectives. It also marked their place within a wider social network. Writing among the Wari and Paumari respectively, Vilaça (2009) and Bonilla (2009) have suggested that in accepting the benevolent paternalism of the Protestant missionaries, converts were also afforded the more peaceful protectionism of this growing group of powerful others. Conversion represented a step along the continuum of the master: owner dialectics and the cyclical shifts between more dominant and subservient groups. In the context of increasing inter-ethnic convergences, and the converts own opening up to the outside, Protestantism offered the potential to realise an increased affinal amicability by reducing affinity and the once radical alterity of the whites (Vilaça 2009: 153; 1996; 2002). In a dogmatic assertion of their moral superiority and peace-loving disposition, evangelical communities along the Xié championed their quest for more harmonious affinal relationships and a greater supra-*mirasa* fraternity than their Catholic counterparts espoused.

The expansion of the Protestant brotherhood and its associated rhetoric of affable relations offered these Evangelical village communities the chance to achieve the long-desired goal of amiable affinal relations free of witchcraft. Region-wide conferences and weekly intercommunal holy meals (*santa cena*), enhanced their reduced affinity far beyond the Catholic communities and effectively replaced *dabukuri*. Conferences afforded the possibility of reducing affinity and establishing greater connections with agents of national society and marked the adoption of a new emergent set of norms.⁶⁵ Today, *dabukuri* is only resurfacing thanks to the incorporation of Catholic school-goers who have retained and transmitted knowledge of *jurupurutu* flute-playing and asked their parents to perform this in the lower-river Campinas school which they attend. This relaxation in Protestant fundamentalism, by the members of Campinas village, has meant that in the past few years they have had access to some traditional sources of prestige and have been afforded the possibility of more amicable alliances with upper-river Catholics.

The abundances of village communities

A corporate unit and administrative base, the village community affords certain types of alliances and access to a range of goods, services and new types of festivities and community

⁶⁵While I observed this, the topic of these palpable differences between Evangelical and Catholic communities is beyond the scope of this thesis.

events as well as new sources of prestige. While in the past exchange relations converged at *dabukuri* sites, and offered the opportunity to display hunting, artisanal or fishing prowess, now the abundances displayed by permanent villages allow for alternative sources of prestige which directly correlate to the nation-state and especially the school.

The perception of the school as a source of periodic abundance is a suggestion forwarded by Rival (2002: 173-174). Rival (ibid.) proposes that the attitude with which the Ecuadorian Huaorani access provisional and impermanent schools, which spring up and wither away, is akin to the seasonal availability of chonta palms, which the Huaorani also gather. Schools are temporary establishments dependent on a steady flow of teachers and students, and from which people disperse and return to their hunting grounds in the same way that they have done when accessing chonta palms. Along the Xié, schools and airstrips such as that at Anamoin, are perceived as centres of wealth that can be periodically tapped into to gain manufactured goods.

For Xié dwellers, this perception has been compounded by the fact that sedentarized communities often emerge on or near customary *dabukuri* sites that were (formerly) places of seasonal abundance. As indicated in the mythscape and in the oral narratives of Xié dwellers, *dabukuri* sites were characterised by periodic ecological abundance. Enhanced amicability between affines, and conviviality itself was, at times of *dabukuri*, also in abundance. Turning these *dabukuri* sites into permanent villages provided a continuous flow of abundances of a rather different nature. Village communities with a school, football pitch, church, radio and a communal house, allow for frequent access to abundances and include periodic ones correlated with the calendar year: patron-saint festivals and graduation ceremonies afford a way to demonstrate the abundances of one community with another. Thus, in addition to the enhanced access to resources that are captured by village communities and often redistributed amongst its members, other festivities have also taken the place of *dabukuri*. In this context, the village itself has become a site of abundance in the way that *dabukuri* sites once were.

This shift is interesting in itself. *Dabukuri* sites were chosen for their seasonal abundances, such that Tunu offered itself up as a site because of its richness in seasonal fishing (*pirasema*). Other sites abounded in fruits or other types of fish. As people met at these locales, bringing themselves and their gifts with them, this appeared as convergence of

ecological and human abundances, such that the social opening up of people, the blowing of their sounded flutes and the bounties at these sites were all closely synchronised.

This becomes clear when we consider how *dabukuri* is not an exclusively human practice. In the same way that humans do, some types of fish practice *dabukuri* when they migrate and converge at seasonal rapids for spawning (cf. Garnelo 2007; also see Chapter Three). However, rather than being mutually exclusive, human and fish *dabukuri* are understood to mutually depend on one another and were often caused to coincide. Thus, humans played *jurupurutu* flutes during the ritual to mimic the movements of the fish in the water and these were understood to enhance the fish population and protect their eggs. Fish, meanwhile, provided food for human *dabukuri*.



Figure 11: Preparing for *dabukuri* in the village of Tunu cachoeira, flutes in hand.

Dabukuri sites perhaps once also the place of larger longhouses (*malocas*), thus become village sites. In the past, the opening was both to other species and human others, the affines. With the arrival of schools, the abundances they bring, and in the context of co-residing affines, a new affine emerges. This affine is no longer the *maiwa*, but is rather a white

person, who controls access to abundance in the same way that *maiwa* once did. Now certain individuals, those familiar with the ways of the modern state, can tap into these abundances (state benefits, healthcare and other goods and services) better than others. As a result, certain ecological abundances no longer represent a synchronic relationship to human ones and *dabukuri* is now a festival accorded to another entity that more appropriately fills the place of distant and dangerous affine: the whites.

In addition to this, the occupation of the river front itself was a significant move. Chernela (1989) has written that among neighbouring Tukano, inaccessible and interfluvial - rather than riverside manioc garden sites - are part of an ecological adaptive strategy for the notably nutrient-poor black water rivers: interfluvial manioc sites in primary forest maintain nutrient-rich riparian (riverside) debris for fish to feed on, when they enter the forest during the high-water season. Riverfront sites were therefore avoided because they entailed the clearing of this important fish food. From an ecological perspective, Chernela's (1989) proposition makes sense, but from the point of view of Xié dwellers, the riverfront was littered with sites that were avoided because they were the homes of the potent *maiwa*, and this necessarily caused Xié dwellers to make their manioc garden sites at interfluvial areas. Their shift to living at large, riverfront sites is understood, I argue, in terms of their relationships with ecologist 'owners', the *maiwa*, who live there.

We know that the pillars of Amerindian sociality encompass ecological agents perceived to be as engaged in the same sorts of festivities and daily life as their human counterparts. Perhaps one of the most important principles is respect for the autonomy and dependence of co-residents as has been expounded by Overing (1983-4; 1989a; 1989b). However, we also know that relationships of taming, domestication and benevolent domination are also common (Fausto 1999). Extending this logic to the cosmic societies, I suggest that the creation of riverfront village communities affected the very autonomy and dependence, or trust, between ecological beings, their *maiwa* owners and the humans who live nearby. Human relations with *maiwa* necessarily altered when village sites became more permanent locales, because they affected the beings living at these locales, who, from a Xié perspective, were not accorded their sufficient autonomy and, to use a phrase of Fausto's (1999), were 'familiarised' over and above the type of amiable relationship that previously helped define Xié dwellers' subsistence. For Xié dwellers, the creation of larger, more accessible, village communities, and the promise of blessings by Catholic priests and Protestants, combined with

both religions' disregard for what were perceived as pagan superstitions, caused a shift in their animist relations away from trustful autonomy and dependence to a state of subjection. For this reason I argue that ecological abundances and the abundances of the nation-state, afforded by larger more permanent communities, are inversely correlated.

Mobilized maiwa: eco-cosmic relations in the context of village communities

I have explained how the Xié River is home to a diverse population who experience an enhanced conviviality made possible in the context of an influx of migrants and the Protestant conversion drive. In the second half of this chapter, I demonstrate how this view of the increased recognition of the humanity of other peoples (reduced human affinity) closely corresponds to a generalised decline in affable ecological relations. In so doing I examine other ways in which sociological transformations, including shifting alliances, enhanced experiences of conviviality, and the apparent reduction in dangerous human others, are experienced from the perspective of the Xié dwellers. I argue that this explains why relations with eco-animist agents, related to but not limited to sorcery, have increased in the context of the village society.

Dabukuri, village community sites and non-human relations

In Chapter One, I suggest that through a series of pacifying interventions, the Xié River was opened up and that this facilitated the incorporation of others. In the early 20th Century, part of the process through which this was possible were the practices of *dabukuri* and *kariamã*, rites that became markers of the civilized status of early Xié dwellers and these facilitated amicable relations with migrants to the river. In this chapter I have indicated that *dabukuri* has become a village event and that a wide range of festivities has enhanced amicability and alliances between human groups. But this, I contend, has negatively affected animist agents who lived at these locales and has had a noticeable effect on Xié dwellers as a result.

In part this relates to the fact that periodically abundant *dabukuri* sites are now permanent residences that support far wider communities. In the case of the village of Tunu Cachoeira people say that, since his pacification by an Içanan *pajé*, together with the blessings of Catholic priests, the Tunu crab-owner is no longer as powerful as he used to be. However, they also note that the crabs that were once plentiful here have been rounded up by their crab-

owner and taken into their subterranean home from which they no longer emerge. Tunu residents also complain that the fruit trees on the island no longer bear fruit and that they must travel further to find good manioc sites; the same applies to catching fish and hunting meat. The chief complaints involve increased journey times, often during some of the hottest hours of the day. These village-based logistics make it difficult to follow the prescriptions for living well. As a result, people find it harder to avoid drinking fluids in the manioc garden, as they have customarily done to avoid the wrath of the *maiwa*. Instead, they take fluids when hot and sweaty, or are often too thirsty and tired to wait until they have bathed, and as such suffer the aches and pains or worse affects of the now malignant *maiwa*. This I discuss in further detail in Chapter Three.

Other sites that became riverfront village communities were simply potent *maiwa* locations best avoided. For instance, on the previously shunned *maiwa* site of Buya Kuara (which also appears in the mythscape), the Evangelical community of Nazaré was founded. This site became habitable when an evangelical pastor from São Gabriel encouraged the construction of housing for what he envisaged as a large, convivial community. At the time of my fieldwork the site was deserted. This was just another example of how, as Campinas resident evangelical Irineu commented: ‘For them [evangelical missions] the sacred [i.e. enchanted stones and shamanic paraphernalia], were held in low esteem.’ The inauguration of sites such as Buya Kuara was accompanied by the decreasing availability of appropriate riverfront sites for occupation.

A further community site was established on a *marauna* site. Unlike *maiwa* sites, *marauna* sites are places for the periodic arrival of omens that signal the forthcoming death of a relative. A minority of elders from the larger Anamoin came to establish São Jose on this potent *marauna* site, asking a Catholic priest to bless the place for them. In the opinion of many Xié dwellers, it was unwise to inaugurate a community at this site and these blessings were insufficient to secure the place for permanent residency. Tunu residents’ explained to me that the declining health of the residents of São Jose is a direct result of their living on this potent *marauna* site.

Finally, the mid-river community of Cumati Cachoeira remains a potent *maiwa* site, home to the petrified remains of an old woman, a frog, a summer-season fish trap (*matapí*) and a tapir. These *maiwa* periodically frighten children and are also ‘activated’ and ‘start to pursue’ vulnerable adults who fall victim to the sorcerous actions of their envious affines.

Unsuspecting individuals may fall prey to *maiwa* due to their own neglect of customary guidelines for living well, or they may have sufficiently enraged an affine to become the victim of sorcery. Many types of sorcery will prompt the *maiwa* to attack. Through their hazardous seasonality and the incumbent, hidden dangers of the mythologies that have grown up around them, the Cumati rapids form a topographic reminder of how to behave. The rapids also reinforce the near-mutual endogamy of upper-river and down-river communities; and they mark a geographic and political schism between the down-river Protestants and the up-river Catholics.

The creation of more sedenterized village community sites has meant that people complain about the declining abundance of their ecologies and the cumbersome logistics of a sedentary life that entail travelling several kilometres in order to perform simple daily work in gardens. As a consequence, they are more likely to suffer the wrath of *maiwa*, who become particularly active when one has become the victim of sorcery, a point I consider in greater detail below. These observations do not constitute a singular, narrative rationale that systematically links potent local ecologies and malignant *maiwa* to the recent creation of village communities. However, taken in sum, they are direct and frequent observations as to how riverfront occupation has affected the health and well-being of village residents.

River-wide affinity and sorcery

The competitive equality of status-conscious peoples now living in larger, agnatic and supra-sib communities often gives rise to greed, envy and jealousy. Such sentiments are all the more likely to surface in these larger and closer communities of co-residence. In the small mid-river island village of Tunu, people found daily respite from both intense convivial atmosphere and grievance by travelling the distance to their manioc gardens; by going on long hunting and fishing trips; by frequently visiting kin in other communities; as well as by regular trips to the city. Further, for the benefit of their adopted grandchildren, one Tunu family resided in the village community during the school year, but left the village on every other possible occasion. Another family made frequent, extended trips to neighbouring communities, often docking there for periods in excess of a month (the length of patron-saint festivities). Our neighbour, who frequently intoxicated himself with industrial alcohol, left the community with his wife and stayed in their manioc garden for several weeks before returning to the community following one particularly marked drinking episode. It is quite

possible that his departure was to mitigate mounting village tension about his behaviour when drunk. Such informal mechanisms, which Santos-Granero (2000: 272) described as ‘controlled sociality’, provide an important respite to the intense conviviality of living in relatively open, visible and easily accessed dwellings in the village community.

Despite ‘controlled sociality’, accusations of grievous wrong-doings escalate in the context of co-residing affines and, as a result, the largest community of Anamoin has become a site particularly feared for both inter- and intra-community sorcery. This is most often manifested in childbirth complications and deadly cases of snakebite. This is also the case with distant Tunu residents who have long-term affines in Anamoin. These sometimes tenuous relations have been known to be deadly, costing lives of several Tunu daughters.

While malignant acts of sorcery are considered immoral, and this is especially true amongst dogmatically anti-sorcerous evangelical Christians, (also see Wright 2004: 103), witchcraft and sorcery continue to taint the lives of lower-river evangelical Christian Xié dwellers. Despite the Protestant rhetoric of a fraternal brotherhood, the smouldering flames of affinal dissension have been too easily reignited. Parallel to the Baníwa grievances described by Wright (1999), along the Xié many individuals fell victim to sorcerous poisoning during or shortly after the evangelical conferences themselves, leading to a series of revenge attacks. In conversation with Campinas dwellers about the source of their afflictions, many of them cite neutral biomedical diagnoses that are ‘part of life’ rather than socio-politically and historically laden indigenous aetiologies alluding to sorcery and the *maiwa*. Redefining afflictions according to biomedical aetiologies, sorcerous attacks appear to have become reduced. Protestants claim that nevertheless, some of their co-residents continue to recognise sorcery, but when asked these individuals say they do not. Catholic communities, by contrast, say that sorcery is still commonplace.

Affines are necessary for the reproduction of society, but more distant affines can be the source of fatal afflictions. While this is not true of affines who have an established relationship, such as between two, non-co-residing high-ranking clans like the Parli and the Warli, or indeed the lower-ranking Evangelical Surucuju and the Warli 2, it does describe experiences with more distant or new affinal alliances and especially those with whom a marital relationship fails to flourish. When sentiments between the two families subsequently turn sour, these offended potential affines become dangerous people who provoke acute pain or hurt, (*sasi*) in the form of sorcerous attacks (known as *praga* in Portuguese or *desova*).

Praga often manifests in gender-specific ways: during childbirth, where it causes haemorrhaging (*tui kunha sui* or *no wepa bamia meashi*) and the sudden death of the mother,⁶⁶ or, through a lethal snakebite to a powerful village leader (these themes I consider in further detail in Chapter Five). Relationships with more distant affines have been known to be potentially difficult (Viveiros de Castro 2001); elsewhere the affines are understood as a ‘necessary evil’ (Vilaça 1997).

Whitehead (2001) has argued that the apparent violence of sorcery need not be considered dysfunctional or pathological, but rather as central components in the reproduction of small-scale societies: the threat of sorcery serves as an effective deterrent against a wide range of communal malpractices. Both benevolent ‘white’ shamans who cure, and malignant dark sorcerers who harm, have elsewhere been discussed as an important dialectic and integral mechanism in the generation of Amerindian societies (see Viveiros de Castro 2001; Whitehead and Wright 2004). Shamanic warfare is understood as part of the balancing act between light and dark shamans, who must co-exist in Amerindian ontology and reproduce social life itself (Whitehead and Wright 2004). This is true, even if as Whitehead (2004) has highlighted, it involves, in Foucauldian body political fashion, destroying the very bodies that constitute it.

Xié dwellers today contend that sorcery is uncommon in their vicinity. However, just below the surface lies a litany of sorcerous accusations, and confirmed attacks, many of which continue to be cited as the mortal consequences of affinal sorcery and their mobilization of localised ecological agents, the *maiwa*. In the past, as Rivière argued for the Guianan Trio, feelings and sentiments of disharmony had a direct relationship to the size, composition and distribution of settlements. However, in the context of the creation of village communities, such norms are outweighed by other benefits and in some instances, co-residing affines also commit sorcery. Even where this is not the case, sorcery acts as an important force in the social life of Xié dwellers, which oscillates around the logic of the alter-affine.

I have considered how porr health relates to *maiwa* sites and to sorcerous attacks, but there is a further agent that affects the health of Xié dwellers. In the following section, I take a closer look at how engagement in economies of forest extraction has also affected the well-being of those living along the Xié.

⁶⁶For the Baniwa, these misfortunes fall into the category of female reproductive ailments and illnesses known as *hiuiathi*, caused by sorcery to provoke a woman’s ‘ruin’ (see Wright 2004: 88-89).

Piassava and the *kurupira*: extractive economies and increased sickness

The role of indigenous people in extractive economies, including that of rubber, latex, hardwoods, nuts and plant fibres, is documented by a number of ethnologists who emphasise the general upheaval, abuse and dislocation for those communities involved in the extraction process. Meira (1996) details how extractive activity was spurred by waves of *commerciantes* or *regatões* (merchants) migrating to the region between 1830 and 1850. These traders and their (indigenous) intermediaries often made first contact and brought with them numerous infectious diseases, while encouraging the excessive consumption of alcohol as a way to financially exploit Indians. Sexual abuse was common and children were removed as captive slaves (Garnelo 2003). In the early 1900's, this led to the forced migration of residents of the Vaúpes, Içana and Xié to work in the extraction of *latex*, *cacão* (coco) and *piçava* palm (Meira 1996). Exchanging merchandise for forest-derived and other local products, these relations gave rise to the system of debt patronage still common throughout Amazonia today. As an enlargement of their own civilizing agenda, Vidal and Zucchi (1999: 124) describe Arawakan groups and their polities as some of the first to become heavily involved in these capitalist economies.

Xié dwellers and the Warekena ethnicity in particular are known for their historic involvement in piassava fibre extraction (Meira 1996; Coimbra 2007). This began with the advent of Tunu dweller Luís' grandfather, Cândido de Oliveira, described in Chapter One, who maintained trade relations with various river merchants. It was he who encouraged the ancestral Xié populations, the descendants of Darikawana and Meru, to move from Uriapi *igarapé* (above Anamoin) further down-stream to make their manioc farms there, near to present day Vila Nova in order to facilitate trade. Tunu resident Jurez Cândido explained that because they were so indebted to the river merchant, the only way to repay him was through extractive migration. A river merchant from Barcelos finally encouraged a large group of lower-river residing Warekena, along trails and by canoe, to migrate to Panawiri (Colombia) to cultivate piassava. This group of migrants to Colombia contracted a serious strain of malaria and as Jurez explained, that 'finished off the local population'.

For Xié dwellers, the fatal consequences of extractive migration and their continued extraction of the palm fibre today, redefined their previous relationship with the piassava palm. Traditionally, piassava palm leaves are used for roofing, to construct temporary bags for forest-fruit transportation and were once made into mats (*tupé*) that women sat on when menstruating. The palm's longevity was transferred onto menstruating women. The fibre on the other hand, known as the '*cabellos de piaçava*' (the piassava's hair), is used for broom heads and oven brushes (*tapichá*). Despite its many uses, piassava had never been subject to the level of industrious labour and the extensive extraction required for its profitable commercial exploitation in regional and national markets (see Coimbra 2007). In contrast to the capitalist spirit that drove the extensive exploitation of the palm by river merchants (*comerciantes*), for Xié dwellers, this was not simply another fibre to be exploited. Rather, extracting piassava-derived materials was only one of the myriad types of relationship that Xié dwellers maintained with piassava in its various manifestations.



Figure 12: 'Carrying the Piassava palm fibre'. Photo by Paulo Santos/Interfoto, 2000, ISA.

Piassava is remembered in the up-river mythscape at a site named Tewapuri, where it is described, along with gold, as being one of the children of the Xié's mythic ancestors, Napiruli. Today, gold and plant are described as 'animals', evidence that even today piassava

palm does not perpetually exist in its plant form. A number of Xié dwellers explained to me that sometimes the palm will manifest itself as a mobile and extraordinarily potent being known as the *kurupira*. The *kurupira* takes the form of a small dwarf about the height of a child, with back-to-front feet, and a long and beautiful mane that is formed of the piassava fibre itself (see figure 12, overleaf). As a forest-dweller, the *kurupira* is renowned for his remarkable physical strength, his knowledge of forest remedies and of the mountain locations of (precious) crystals and minerals. He is even fluent in several indigenous and non-indigenous languages. He is principally cited as a type of custodian of the forest, or forest owner, who will occasionally attempt exchange interactions with those he encounters. However, he will often change his form, becoming a piassava palm or an anteater (*tamanduá*, *beyuri* or *churi*).

Multi-morphic by nature, the intrinsic elusiveness of outward forms or shapes and appearance is part of piassava's shape-shifting.⁶⁷ While these variable manifestations (piassava, *tamanduá*, and *kurupira*) are understood as practically synonymous, the divergent use of the three names illustrates the way in which one comes to engage with the piassava. Shifting appearances are linked by the seasonality of their common ecological environment, and their sensuous characteristics: piassava grows in groves (*piaçababa*) of periodically flooded sand patches in the watershed and is home to ants, spiders and other 'animals' thought to 'suck blood'. During the low-river season when the palm fibre is collected, the *tamanduá*, a tabooed game animal, also appears. The *tamanduá* is said to smell strongly of ants like those that inhabit the piassava, and is infrequently hunted. Equally the *kurupira* visually resembles the piassava palm and is often mistaken for it. In his benign form, used for everyday artefacts, the *kurupira* is the piassava palm; at other times though, he is the rarely hunted anteater. Manifest in his malignant and also in his occasionally instructive capacity, he appears as the dwarf *kurupira*. It is while working the piassava palm that people have encountered the *kurupira*.

Baniwa migrant Irineu recounted how his brother and nephew were working piassava in Colombia. The nephew was carrying piassava on his shoulder, and the brother followed him thinking that he was going back to the fields. However, after walking deeper into the forest he realised that the person in front of him was not actually his nephew. Instead, he had mistaken the piassava for the bundle that his relative was carrying and, to his shock, he realised that it

⁶⁷ For more on shape-shifting, see Rivière (1994), among others.

was in fact the hair of the *kurupira*. He was following the *kurupira* into the jungle. He stopped, turned around and went to call his brother, Irineu (who related this event to me). Telling him ‘I saw a “person”’. Irineu asked, ‘where is he?’ and off they went to find him, tracing the trail of footsteps in the mole hill of ‘*bosta de mijoca*’ in which the *kurupira* had stepped. That is how they know it was true that the *kurupira* walks backwards: he walks in that mud, leaving behind his reversed footprint. That is why, Irineu explained, when you find a trail of the *kurupira*, in order to avoid him, it is best to walk where he has walked, because if you follow the trail (backwards), you will find that he is still there. The *kurupira* is a form of spirit animal owner (*maiwa*), typifying the nomadic forest-based equivalent of riverine *maiwa* who have fixed river-based homes. An example of this is the previously mentioned home of Tunu crab-owner, but also includes many other fixed localities along the river’s course. Recently however, the *kurupira* appears (or has become) more personable and historical and contemporary sightings and encounters with him abound. In these encounters, he nearly always makes an extortionate exchange demand (for a person or child), in exchange for plant knowledge or simply as penance for having laid eyes on him and becomes violent and malicious if his requests are not promptly met. In his malign capacity, he may provoke death or (sometimes fatally) cause hunters to lose their way in the forest. People are constantly falling prey to this potent forest-dweller. He is especially prevalent in the piassava grove. These sightings of the *kurupira* appear to stem from thwarted reciprocated relationships with ancestral animal-plant-spirits inhabiting the forest itself. The *kurupira* helps keep those entering the forest alert, deterring people from getting lost and warning against the over farming of the piassava. Today, due to the over-sourcing of forest beings (or products), the *kurupira*, also known as the ‘owner of the forest’, is said to be far less benevolent to those he encounters. He is feared by Xié dwellers.

River merchants effectively coerced Xié residents into assuming more exploitative relations with the piassava palm. This allowed for the emergence of new types of relationship with piassava, the relationship of an uncaring master who overly exploits the surrounding environment. It is possible, or even probable, that this happened in the past, in the context of larger civilizations where it may have been an important motive for the Arawakan expansion into diverse eco-niches (see Chapter One, p.50-53, also see p.85). I have argued here that the contemporary emergence of this relationship was possible in the context of the formation of village community. Furthermore, today Xié dwellers feel the consequences of their thwarted relationship with the palm: in previous piassava groves, especially along the lower regions of

the Xié, piassava roofing is harder to source. Further, this thwarted relationship with the palm continues to have consequences during forest encounters and in other circumstances discussed in Chapter Three. In spite of this, relationships with river merchants and experience in trade has also afforded the means to buy expensive tin roofing, thereby offering an alternative to the traditional use of piassava leaves for roofing. Gradually extending affable relations with the merchants also gave access to an assortment of white-made goods and other benefits (also see Meira 1996).

What is particularly interesting about this is its relationship to the mythscape and the ancestral past. In Baníwa mythologies, the *kurupira* is one of many mythic beings who inflicts illnesses on the population, but for the Warekena, including the most recent Baníwa migrants, the Xié dwelling Juruparí, Napiruli is said to morph into the *kurupira* himself. It appears that because of their disregard for Napiruli's guidelines for good living, and in light of their overuse of the palm which is now a depleting resource, this mythic ancestor has turned against them.

In the context of the Amerindian eco-cosmos, Århem (1996) suggested that the cosmic society is based on a perception of the environment that restricts the over-use of ecological resources to just the short-returns of subsistence needs. However, in many cases, such as along the Xié, mastery by other human groups has led Xié dwellers to mishandle customarily affable relationships with ecological agents. While previous relationships with plants have been based on their ownership and mastery by Xié dwellers, I argue that these relationships became more abusive when Xié dwellers were themselves the subject of mastery by powerful others. This shift in relationships was driven by engagement in extractive economies that depended on the demand of debt-patronage 'masters' who historically coerced Indians to drive forest extraction beyond subsistence and for a profitable return. Thus the asymmetrical relation between piassava merchants and the Warekena in turn altered Xié dwellers' relationships with ecological agents. These include those with the most heavily extracted piassava palm itself, taking the form of the *kurupira*. But associated movements towards sedentarisation also altered relationships with other forms of *maiwa* located at riverine sites and ultimately, I have suggested, even the relationship with their 'culture hero', Napiruli.

Chapter Three

Seasonal flows and the cosmic Anaconda

Introduction

A series of seasonally placed myths describe how the anatomies of the ancient ancestors were gradually opened up and the orifices of today-time people were formed. When this happened, substances and sounds produced by orifices leaked out into the environment and the orifices themselves also threatened to ravenously consume the persons, foods, fruits and the very earth that they found around them. The myths indicate how these states of potent but vulnerable aperture (*saruã*, *úta*) - now periodically normative states for human persons - can be channelled to human benefit. From this perspective, the mediation of human aperture (*saruã*) - through mindful intervention- becomes a state required for today's conditions of subsistence (including winter-time fishing in the flooded forest, *igapó*) and reproduction (birth). Both these projects are undertaken in the context of a seasonal riverine environment.

In the following I will explore the seasonal ecological changes and how they are related to people's mindful practice, their skills and the mediation of their moods. The chapter is roughly structured according to the seasonal rotations, moving from the rising waters of late March, to the cool spell of June, into the high water season and finally, the low river dry season of November. The chapter begins by considering one particular life-cycle opening and *saruã* state: menstruation (explained in myth). With a focus on psycho-physical states, the chapter considers how the menstrual cycle's pattern informs and is informed by seasonal and cyclical transitions.

I then focus on one particular piece of *kariumã* ritual advice that accompanies menstruation and daily life: river bathing. I consider how the micropractice of bathing provides a comprehensive outline of riverine ecological and cosmic rubrics that affect the mind-body. This allows for a closer consideration of seasonal hydrocentric flows and climatic shifts and their accompanying activities and tasks, all linked to the riverine environment. Moving from the cool, humid and hydrocentric winter into the hot, dry, abundant and labour intensive summer, the seasonal rotation of dwelling practices is, I argue, carefully orchestrated to afford harmony for the mind-body. Such ecological understandings are reflected in both the hot and dry actions that constitute productive labour and the cool closure that animates them.

The chapter considers how bodies are opened and their openness mediated in dialogue with the wider riverine environment.

Kirimbawa (strength and potency) and pitua (weakness and impotency)

It is through emplaced mind-body mediation that ancient ancestors and contemporary Xié dwellers become *kirimbawa*, that is, strong and potent individuals who engage in everyday activities effortlessly (e.g. manioc production/processing and hunting and fishing). This effortless action extends to both seasonal (e.g. communal work – *wayuri* - and canoe-production) and periodic (childbirth, house-building and customary warfare) ‘work’. The state of *kirimbawa* is manifested in vitality, swiftness, industriousness, deftness, serenity, the absence of gossip and the healthy functioning and integrity of orifices. In respect to the latter, eating moderately, periodically fasting and having a healthy digestive tract (i.e. not having diarrhoea) are the observed attributes of person who is *kirimbawa*. The state of *kirimbawa* is also evident through not sweating profusely, not panting from breathlessness, and by assuming upright bodily postures of protruding chests (and breasts *kambi*, for women) and stomachs (*marika*, for men) which are incorporated or constitute their ‘artefactual anatomies’ (Santos-Granero 2012).

The opposite of *kirimbawa* is *pitua*, impotency. A term also used to describe the slow revolution of a 5mp (*rabetta*) motor (when compared to a 15 or 50 watt motor), *pitua* denotes both laziness and impotence. While the sound ‘*o-e*’, expressed through a rapid, guttural exhalation of breath, is understood as normal fatigue ‘when the forest is far’ and a consequence of intense physical labour, *pitua* is a state brought on by laziness. People who needlessly gossip, spend long hours in their hammock and fail to engage in productive work, resulting in poor posture and attitude are described as being *pitua*. Such a state may be caused by and also cause *sasiara* (sadness/sickness). This state of self-induced closure is deemed highly undesirable.

These two psycho-physical states, *kirimbawa* and *pitua*, are very similar to the Panará states of **Suakiin** (availability) and **Suangka** (unavailability), described in detail by Ewart (2000; 2013). Ewart (2005; 2013) documents how these two states are important in the constitution of Panará people who strive to be consistently available (**Suakiin**), through their joyous and engaged action, to those with whom they live. This is also true for Xié dwellers, but in this

context *Kirimbawa* more directly correlates to psycho-physical strength, and *pitua* may also be a normal state to be in during recovery from illness or after childbirth.

The Opening of the birth canal

Mythology tells of a time of warfare between two affinal tribes (also see Chapters One and Two). Napiruli's enemies use malicious sorcery to impregnate his wife, Amaru. Amaru's abdomen grows as the day of birth draws near, but she has no vagina or birth canal since her nether regions were still closed shut. Napiruli sees her silently suffering, with the Amado impounded in her womb. As the days pass, Napiruli decides to help his wife and he leads her into the flooded winter forest. Here, he closes off a portion of the flooded forest (*igapó*) and Amaru goes to sit in the middle of the lake.⁶⁸ Napiruli then fills the lake with leaves and chants a special blessing (*kalizamí*) which causes the leaves to turn into fish. He then co-opts the assistance of all *igapó* fish (e.g. piranhas) to help 'open up', free and facilitate the birth of the Amado (or Wámunda) trapped in her womb.

As the fish attempt one by one to perforate an opening, it is the *jancudá* (a fish whose upper half is red) that finally manages to penetrate all the way up, forming the birth canal. This provokes the healthy underwater birth of the Amado, who shoots out into the water's depths unseen by his mother. Napiruli retaliates against the sorcerous impregnation of his wife, with the same impregnating assault on his enemy's wife. However, they are unable to secure a safe passage and opening for birth to take place, and the enemy woman dies. The myth describes why women have a birth canal, why they bleed vaginally and how babies are to be born today. Both these states (menstruation and post-birth) are characterised by vaginal bleeding, understood as a necessary requirement for human reproduction (for more on conception see Chapter Four, p. 167-172). This is because in early Xié mythology babies emerged from under their father's armpits – an opening, but one which was neither leaky, bloody nor painful.

Effectively mediated through mindful interventions and blessings (*kalizamí* and *kariamã*), *saruã* aperture can be channelled towards human benefit (i.e. leafs can transform into fish, ensuring fish-catching; and healthful fish-consumption can be had without negative

⁶⁸As one might observe, like the little lake of fluids produced post-birth.

consequence). On the other hand, excessive closure prevents reproduction and is inherently antisocial: the first malignant act of sorcery (impregnating Amaru) brings retaliation but the enemy sorcerer lacks deftness in facilitating her opening to ensure a healthy birth. As a result, enemy others, - including the neonatal fish-like other- are closed and antisocial (like snakes, also see Chapters Two and Five).

As a result of Amaru's experience, to ensure foetal and maternal well-being, birth rites are established to secure the health and reproduction of the 'culture hero', the Amado, and the health of subsequent births. Birth rites include the post-birth river bathing, a practice also elucidated by mythic motifs of Mukui cachoeira, and Taina cachoeira, salient topographs of the upper Xié river. As I go on to discuss, this myth establishes both female initiation (*kariamã*, also see Chapter Four) and post-birth rites (*iyumi*, also see Chapter Six, p.224-226).

In Umarituba, home of potent shaman Jesus, I was given the following explanation of female menstruation, which further illustrates other Xié dwellers' descriptions of this phenomenon: post-birth, piranhas⁶⁹ (closely associated with the *jacundá*), stayed in the first woman's (here, cited as Cuwema, possibly a Baré version of Amaru) abdomen, where they periodically grew ravenous and bit at the sides of the abdomen, causing blood to flow and leak out as well as causing pain. Today this is the cause of bleeding and pain for all women and the motive for the avoidance of all those dark scaled fish that live in the flooded forest and are caught during the rainy season, (including *jacundá* and *piranha*).⁷⁰ Their consumption, especially during the menstrual cycle, is understood to cause prolonged bleeding and heighten the pain of the menstrual flow. When this is accentuated by the further consumption of opening agents (ravenous fish, already present in menstruating women), the combination is painful and dangerous. In a further version of the piranha story, attracted by 'the special smell' of menstrual blood, the piranhas enter, together with the man's penis as he penetrates his wife. Here the piranhas stay, causing the monthly cycle.

Like other *saruã*-states, women during the menstrual period fast, ingesting only round tablets of *beijú* (manioc bread) at which they nibble and taking *karibé* (manioc bread drink). Women feel sad and sick (*sasiara*) and weak (*pitua*) when menstruating and they stay at

⁶⁹It is for this reason that the *piranha caá*, a potent leaf used in malicious sorcery, gains its name as it induces haemorrhaging.

⁷⁰Only men and pre-menstrual women should eat these fish from flooded forests.

home, and in the past they sat on the *piassava* palm leaves of the *tupé* mat, engaging in light conversation. Today, women prefer to buy sanitary pads from river merchants, but they still stay at home ‘so as not to get *majuba* in their manioc gardens’: the open flow of menstrual blood in the garden context would awaken enchanted spirits, the *majuba*, who are attracted by the smell of menstrual blood (also see Garnelo 2003: 46; McCallum 2001: 53) and jeopardise a woman’s well-being. In the village they also avoid potent enchanted ancestor homes (*majuba*, *maiwa* sites) and, by staying inside the homestead they are protected from strong winds to which they are particularly susceptible. Requiring a certain degree of self-discipline, these measures are considered an imposition (‘a drag’) for women as they especially miss eating fish, but are nonetheless seen as effective precautions against *majuba* and other sicknesses.⁷¹ These proscriptions will be followed throughout a woman’s reproductive life.

During menstruation, bad dreams are more common. Our neighbour in Tunu, Devina, told me about a disturbing nightmare she had, in which she dreamed that there was a frog inside her, at the mouth of her vagina, and she had to pull it out. She was wearing an absorbent pad, and half-asleep, she ripped it off thinking it was the frog. She also felt a jaguar pouncing at her back, and biting her through her hammock. Devina explained to me that the *majuba* are close by while a woman is menstruating. As such, this periodic (monthly) aperture requires an avoidance of activities that make one overly open (*saruã*) on a daily basis (see later subsection on the heat of productive labour).

A girl’s first menstruation is more exceptional: she is understood to enter a new, reproductive, life-cycle phase and this transition from unproductive to productive, requires further precautions. The girl’s mother will prepare a herbal infusion that should be taken daily and fasting ‘is the condition for the remedy to work’. The remedy is said to ‘affect one’s body’ and ‘to protect’. The remedy⁷² does this by controlling the length of the menstrual period so that it will not last more than three days and hence the vaginal passage, as Campinas resident José explained, will ‘close early’. José, trained as a malaria microscopist, explained that Western doctors couldn’t understand why indigenous women only bled for two

⁷¹Pregnancy, although it also brings its own precautions, ‘stops [literally cuts] menstruation’ and is, in this respect, particularly welcome.

⁷²Unless spontaneously volunteered to me, I did not enquire into ethnobotanical knowledge myself. This was a decision I made before beginning fieldwork in light of strict laws enforced in Brazil regarding indigenous plant knowledge and the threat of biopiracy.

to three days, and considered this abnormal. He told me that the menstrual period is carefully controlled '*para cortar mas cedo*' (to stop it earlier, literally, to cut it earlier), and is precisely taken, from the indigenous perspective, 'to be normal' (i.e. have a 2-3 day menstrual period).⁷³

As has been observed elsewhere in Amazonia, menstruation is not considered to be an automatic biological function of the female body, but rather, is brought about by intervention, human or otherwise and carefully regulated (e.g. among the Cashinuhua, McCallum 2001: 17; on menarche herbs among the Kayapó, see Posey and Plenderleith 2002).⁷⁴ Writing about the Airo-Pai, Belaunde (2001a) recounts, three days post-birth, baby girls have their vaginal lips scraped with a shell and their hymen broken. 'Cutting the black skin' is a delicate operation intended to expedite future menstruation and without which, a woman is 'like a man' (Belaunde *ibid.*: 51).

Importantly for Xié dwellers, a girl's menarche (*ikaximafu*) should be accompanied by the *kariamã* ritual. This communal event has the aim of actively forming women during their first menstruation. *Kariamã* guidance is considered an essential means through which to mediate the menstrual state of *saruã* and is necessary for the production of healthful young women: it is associated with the ability to properly cultivate one's strength and endurance (*força*) and to become personally potent (*kirimbawa*), and hence avoid (re) productive impotency and incompetence (*pitua*).⁷⁵

The *kariamã* ritual is ideally and typically held at the seasonal cross-over (most commonly from summer to winter, around March, but also from winter to summer, around October), regardless of the precise moment of menarche. Although the connection was not explicitly

⁷³Some mothers will increase the doses and/or add a further remedy to these herbal infusions for daughters who they are said to especially cherish (in many cases, this will be their last intended female offspring). This remedy will prevent conception, and the motives for giving it are varied. Younger women reflect that other people's mothers do this because they like their daughter and don't want to see her suffer and others say the remedy is given so that they will have someone (of confidence) to accompany them in the manioc gardens. That is, since this daughter, undesirable since barren, will stay at home with her mother with whom she will inevitably work in the manioc garden (see Chapter Seven). Women who already have children may take this remedy when their menstrual flow returns post-birth, in order to effectively space the birth of children in order to foster an environment of proper care for each child (see chapter Seven).

⁷⁴Conversely, among the Parakanã, Fausto (1999: 175) notes that women may take herbs to retard the menstruation, but they do not provoke it, and he suggests it be seen as a natural event that 'just happens to them'. This he contrasted to the way that Parakanã men do 'make breast[s]' for women through their vaginal penetration.

⁷⁵Among Tukano Indians, the equivalent *He* ritual is performed so that she will not be 'stopped up', and the baby unable to emerge from her womb (S. Hugh-Jones 1979: 199). Along the Xié, women who block the birth of their children are said to '*sorvina de abrir*' (be unwilling to open) and this is has moral implications (also see Chapter Four on inappropriate responses to childbirth pain, p. 180-185).

stated to me, I believe that the seasonal cross-over to the rainy season is the apt time for the ritual; the open flow associated with menstrual weakness parallels the loss of productivity associated with the celestial flow of winter rains.

The celestial flow (i.e. rain, *yasiwara ara amana*),⁷⁶ is paralleled by young female initiates' own menstrual flow (*yawasa amana*) and it is interesting to note that in both instances neither blood (*miayi, tui*) nor water (*wemi*) is individually identified, as people simply refer to the flow – '*amana*'. Further comparative ethnography from the neighbouring Içana-dwellers, with whom the Warekena have on-going interrelations, supports this suggestion: Wright (2013b: 191), writing on the Baniwa, with whom there are many similarities when it comes to myth, notes that 'The Mother of Kuwai [Amado], Amaru, is remembered in the narratives as the source of all flowing river water in the world which was produced from her menstrual blood.' Along the Xié, Amaru refers to the deep water dwelling and 'bloodsucking' stingray; whereas for the Wakúwenai (Venezuelan Baniwa), the word denotes a lake (Hill 2009). Both words associate women with water and water dwelling (on water-dwelling plants as female, also see Barbira-Freedman, 2010). As I go on to detail when I discuss the rainy spell of Aru, this association appears to involve a relationship between menstruation and the rainy reason. Both are states of open flow and are perceived as times of *sasiara* (denoting sickness and sadness).

The menstrual flow and the cacuri fish trap

The seasonal cross-over to winter brings further restrictions for menstruating women: the avoidance of the *cacuri* fish trap and its construction (at the seasonal cross-over). The *cacuri* trap is a fishing device found at various points along the Xié River's main course and along the minor waterways of *igarapés*. The traps are usually assembled at river locations that have rock bottoms and where there is a strong river current and constant flow. These sites are often located near enchanted ancestral home owners, (see figure 1 of the trap at Cumati). The trap is built with the hollow trunks/stalks of *paxiúba* palm (also used for flutes), and tied with

⁷⁶Rain as the celestial (menstrual) flow, was not explicitly stated to me during fieldwork, but as indicated in the main text, other regional ethnographies explicitly suggest this connection.

cipó to create a V-shaped fish trap which catches fish as they head up stream and into the flooded forest for the winter.⁷⁷



Figure 1: The cacuri fish trap, exposed in the summer season.

When its construction is complete, to prevent the *cacuri* fish trap from remaining *saruã* (dangerously open), a blessing is performed rendering it effective and productive. As the river waters rise, fish are caught in the trap, where they are selected and killed with a spear. The species of fish trapped varies according to the time of year (and fluctuating river levels, see Leme da Silva, 2011: 154). At other times, different fishing techniques are used that do not depend on the *cacuri* fish trap and even during winter, these techniques complement *cacuri* fishing.

The *cacuri* fish trap is always avoided by menstruating and post-partum women while they are still bleeding (normally a week post-birth). The motive for *cacuri* avoidance is explained

⁷⁷ Shelled animals such as toad head turtles—*cabeçudos*— are also caught using the *cacuri*, although here the traps are smaller and constructed near sandbanks in shallower waters.

in terms of the *cacuri*'s inability to trap fish. But this is where the explanation ends. I suggest further analysis reveals the workings of greater rubrics governing proper sociality – and social distance - with animist others and the environment.

Firstly, since blood is a source of heat and vitality, women who are bleeding vaginally are understood to leak potent heat. Their cool state compounded by what people say are the cool flowing waters of winter, produces a radically cold combination. As Butt-Colson and de Armellada (1983: 1237) also observed for the Akawaio, 'heat added to an already too hot condition, or cold added to too cold a condition, causes imbalances which may lead to sickness. Excess must therefore be avoided, for the basis of good health is a balanced norm, free of sudden contraries.'

In addition to this, the woman's vaginal passage, like the V-opening of the *cacuri* fish trap through which the fish pass with the current, is in an exceptional state of open flow. The co-presence of these two states of open flow exceeds that required for proper productive action. The combined openness of inlets and orifices, together with the cool state of both the female body and water produces a radically compounded, dangerously open state. As a consequence, the presence of *saruã*-menstrual openness renders the *cacuri* fish trap ineffective.

Xié dwellers demonstrate a sophisticated knowledge of fluctuating river levels and seasonal fish migrations which may be effectively manipulated for human benefit (on equivalent knowledge elsewhere in the Amazon, see Harris 2005). Human bodies may also be rendered productive by their effective mediation, and this is especially the case for the woman's regular, monthly, menstrual flow - the source of reproductive capacities. Only when carefully channelled through prescriptive behaviours, can female menstruation effectively produce healthful bodies. The same can be said of the *cacuri* fishing technique.

The *cacuri* fish trap, which normally requires a blessing in order to become effective, parallels the female menstrual flow, which, when effectively mediated by the *kariamã* blessing, renders a woman both industriously productive while ensuring her reproductive capacities. This parallel, I further suggest, is what makes the *cacuri* fish trap a sentient or animate object.

The mutual exclusivity of beings (women and artefacts) in open states of flow, and the blessings and ritual restrictions required to mediate them, display a complex, symbiotic

synergy between people and their environment, and one that requires active mediation to ensure resonance and fruitful production (also see Rival 2002; 2005). Such an understanding is also premised on the mutual dependence and respect for the fruits of gendered (re)productive capacities, and this understanding is respectively extended to all proximate cross-gendered co-residents.

Menstrual periods and states of flow necessitate a blessing, as do specific individuals (a girl at her menarche) and objects (a newly constructed *cacuri* fish trap). As such, the quintessential initiation blessing, carefully orchestrated to occur at the seasonal cross-over (regardless of the actual time of first menstruation), appears to be as much a generalised blessing (of the animist environment and all of its human and non-human inhabitants) as a blessing of specific persons at specific moments in their lifecycle. In sum, periods of open flow are inherently potent and potentially dangerous, and prescriptions, precautions and special observations, including blessings, influence that flow.

Menstruation, transformation and affinity

For Xié dwellers, the menstrual flow emerges as a carefully controlled occurrence mediated by a series of proscriptions and observances met by females and those with whom they are in contact. These proscriptions have been described elsewhere as part of the polluting properties of menstrual blood. Belaunde (2001a) states that the Airo-Pai describe menstrual blood as dirty (*sitsio*). Women avoid contact with men and their objects, and abstain from daily chores and bathing. As part of these practices I similarly observed how along the Xié, men contaminated by the blood of menstruating women suffer from headaches to which aspirin (paracetamol along the Xié) is an adequate remedy. In more serious cases of ‘contamination’, Belaunde (2001a: 53) also notes that ‘men menstruate through their nose’ and must seek the services of a shaman when affected by this ‘dirt illness’. For the Airo-Pai, Belaunde (2001a: 51) also notes that menstruation is seen as purging impurities and that this is why it is understood, along with other leaky and dirty fluids, to be so potent.⁷⁸

The notion of menstrual blood as dirt and ‘matter out of place’ came to forefront of anthropological thinking with Douglas’ (1966) work on the sociological and symbolic

⁷⁸As with other blood-letting practices, menstruation is also a female purifying and purging action (see Kuper 1947: 107, on the Swazi).

classification of polluting substances. Douglas argued that unclassifiable substances became tabooed pollutants, since their anomalous status threatened the social order. As a result, substances such as the limitless blood of menstruation, were subject to extensive controls. She also suggested that this control was especially prevalent in societies where there were significant socio-structural ambiguities regarding a woman's relative status and power. This ambiguity for the Warekena rests upon the necessary but dangerous position women play vis-à-vis the establishment of affinal relations, which are seen as inherently and ambiguously transformational.

However potentially hazardous a woman's menses may be, it also lends her transformative qualities that enable her, through sex, to generate new life. As a case in point, McCallum (2001: 17) notes that the Cashinahua use the word '**dami va**', to denote the way people are transformed in myth, or how men do so during their visions, and also to describe the transformative, substance-shaping work of sex. Shamanic qualities are part of reproductive processes. Biology and physiology cannot be separated from otherworldly forces, but rather, are part of them (Crocker 1985).

In his discussion of shamanism and the use of blood and tobacco, Fausto (2004) finds a series of menstrual analogies that draw our attention to the blood-shedding of warfare and male initiation. Commenting on the work of Taylor (1994: 82) who observed how bird's blood was sprinkled on a killer's inner thighs, Fausto suggests that warfare and head-hunting were akin to a male menarche. Furthermore, Fausto (1999: 166) suggests that both blood and tobacco are two potent substance-mediums that 'cause the necessary bodily and psychic dispositions to meet others'. Blood and tobacco are dialectically opposed 'outward substances' that facilitate encounters with others and are imbued with potent transformational qualities'. Menstrual blood however, he deems dangerously potent, rather than enabling.

Menstruation, and the transgression of bodily boundaries, highlights the role of women as enablers of relationships with others. This is also evinced in Wright's (2013b) recent article detailing Amaru as a proto-woman and dangerous other. He asserts: 'From the beginning of the universe, women have exercised a vital role as agents of change, intermediaries who frequently are from affinal tribes and are spouses of Nhiaperikuli [Napiruli] and his younger brother. Their connections with other, often enemy tribes, place them in an intensely ambivalent position.' They are positioned at the river's receding edge, for this is the place where new peoples come to visit. Here, the river is the conduit of ambiguous, but ideally,

affable affines. Winter is the ambivalent time in which otherness predominates. The fatness and fullness of women, like that of the flood plain in winter, turns winter into a season of transformation. A woman's menstrual flow of blood may be fertilized by semen. Fertility and affinity go hand in hand, and as I shortly discuss, during winter people are plunged into the brimming ambiguity of affinity, a state also reflected by the seasonal floodplain.⁷⁹

Kariamã: guidance for a good life

Another myth describes the Amado after a period of unusually rapid growth when he appears as a young man: he has no mouth.⁸⁰ As he signals with his hands and feet, people make an opening in his face so that he might speak. They found a *pajé*— 'the one who knows' and he said it would be a good idea to cut open the mouth, but before doing this, all those present should fast. Then the *pajé* made a special blessing and they cut the Amado's mouth open. First his mouth was slit vertically, but this proved unsatisfactory (leaving the cleft). Then it was cut horizontally, as humans mouths are today (with the reminder of the former vertical cut, the cleft). However, following the crude surgery that created his mouth, out came a potent sound – a sound that would later go onto to 'open up' and expand the world (also see Chapters One and Two). He sang so that others might believe in his potency ('*vou cantar para voce acreditar em mim*') and this sound was so potent and dangerous that it deafened those around him. This myth describes the opening of the mouth and the sonic power of the human voice.

Now with men's open mouths and women's vaginas, the Amado comes to instigate norms to mediate human aperture, he tells them 'now you have made my mouth, but I am not going to be here long'. He takes a group of young boys to be initiated in these norms (*kariamã*), instructing them to control their oral intake and ingestion by fasting. However, the boys lack self-control and discipline and go in secret to roast and eat fish. The smell of the roasted fish reaches the Amado and cognizant of their misdemeanour he grows wrathful. He causes the skies to open and rain to fall, and then opens his mouth wide enough to create a cavernous

⁷⁹In his analogy between blood, both menstrual and that of victim of warfare, Fausto (2004: 169) also makes this suggestion when he states: '...blood odour expresses an abstract notion in a sensible code; that to kill is to establish a special rapport with the victim, a rapport that implies fertility'.

⁸⁰In other versions of the story, this is Napiruli, not the Amado, both of whom as I mentioned in Chapter Two are interchangeable, see p. 57, caption to figure 8. In this instance, the myth would come before the Amaru myth, but their exact order is inconsequential.

shelter. The boys seek cover in what they think is a cave. He then devours them and returns to his celestial dwelling.

Later the initiates' parents call them back down to earth by playing their flutes. The Amado descends and vomits up the initiates' remains. Finally, the initiates' parents come to take their revenge and make a fire in which to burn the Amado. With the hot flames of a fire, the Amado (Wâmunda or *jurupari*) ascends to the heavens bellowing thunderously on his ascent and creating a celestial opening and rain. This myth describes how a lack of control over orifices (i.e. the mouth and a rapacious appetite) can provoke further states of aperture: overly potent sounds, ravenous appetites, as well as celestial opening with rain and thunder. The consequences can be deadly.⁸¹

Establishing the proper human condition for aperture requires proper mediation if it is to lead to positive outcomes (i.e. human reproduction and sociality). Ineffectively mediated, human aperture becomes dangerous (causing the thunder and a celestial opening, i.e. winter and the rainy season). Otherwise, as is clearly described by the myths of Amaru's childbirth and later, the Amado's growth, anti-social states of overly potent and piercing sounds, angry outbursts and ravenous persons with leaky vaginas and anuses would only lead to anarchy and death.

Kariamã blessings were put in place by ancient Xié dwellers, Napiruli, Wasaburiwani and the Amado. They came into the world to teach people how to live (their current lifestyle, including rituals). *Kariamã* guides people on how to use their aperture for mutual human benefit. Closely synchronised with a woman's first menstruation and her transition to periodic openness, *kariamã* is understood to form a young person's mind-body when she or he is at their most open, receptive state.⁸²

In the Xié's Catholic communities, *kariamã* is deemed essential for the transition into the newly open state of womanhood. It effectively mediates her *saruã* open vulnerability state and has the explicit objective of preventing the '*majuba não encostar en ela*' (literally, so that the enchanted ones do not dock on her [the initiate]). Properly performed, the *kariamã* blessing will accompany a woman through life, affording her protection from the *maiwa* (or *majúba*) and securing her well-being.

⁸¹cf. S. Hugh-Jones (1979: 201) for a similar account of *jurupari* 'opening' among the Barasana.

⁸²While I have detailed descriptions of the ritual, space restrictions prevent me from relating these here.

But *kariamã* is more than a preventative ritual, as it also ensures, as former Tunu captain Jurez explained, that women are competent in their work. Jurez explained that Napiruli came to tell/show people ‘*como fazer*’ (how to), that is, give them know-how, then adding, ‘*para ficar esperto*’ (to be skilful-in-means).⁸³ Alongside the practice of manioc gardening, hunting, fishing and living well with one another, he taught them how to cultivate their own personal potency (*força*, ‘*potencia*’ *kirimbawa*) in order to attain a good life (*kua katu* or *vivir bem*). The main focus for women is ‘how to work [in the garden], at home, and advice on how to live with one’s in-laws’.

For men, *kariamã* is also associated with the acquisition of *força*, but here it is also related to the acquisition of the strength, stamina, and deftness needed to become a productive young adult and a desirable bachelor. One of its objectives - directly related to seasonal and often solitary subsistence activities -, is to control fear in dangerous situations. The ritual is said to prevent young men from behaving mindlessly (like a provocative clown -*moleque*-, or being over-confident -*teimoso*-, or behaving without purpose or good reason -*a tóa*-). What is more, these terms characterise descriptions of ruinous and deadly encounters with the *mauwari* and I detail these throughout the chapter as seasonally appropriate. For both men and women *kariamã* is considered indispensable if people are to know how to behave appropriately, ‘like real people’. Knowing how to live is, as I demonstrate in this chapter, knowing how to make closed things open and open things that are closed.

Neglecting the *kariamã* ritual is associated with the inability to properly cultivate one’s *força* and become *kirimbawa*, causing impotence and incompetence (*pitua*). Such a state would manifest in one’s failure to adequately engage in proper (re)productive practice and in a disinclination to attend to the needs of others. Neglecting to perform the *kariamã* is, for women, closely associated with later life symptoms connected to the menopause (when a woman *opitwa* –‘stops’) and old age: casually enquiring into menopausal symptoms and cause of aches and pains in older women, I found that women would consistently cite dizziness, headache, senility (*tontera*), etc. with a failure to perform the *kariamã* or to follow the guidelines that accompany the aforementioned menstrual cycle (as well as, to a lesser extent, post-birth rituals). *Kariamã* is also necessary to prevent one from becoming

⁸³As Luís explained, ‘When you still don’t know how to do anything like a real person, he will come to you.’ To be skilful in means refers here to the mindfulness concept of ‘skill-in-means; (upāya-ksuśālya, rather than cunning or shrewd, see Sharma, 1990),

dangerously open and vulnerable (*saruã*, or worse, *saruã-sa*) and also overly sad-sick (*sasiara*). Such states provoke and leave one unprepared for the sometimes deadly attacks of the enchanted ancestors, the *mauwari* (a type of *maiwa*, *majuba*).

In spite of a close synchronisation to the menarche (in the case of women), personal accounts and the ethnographic notes of Padre Nilton (Cezar de Paula 2005) who visited the Xié in 1989 and 2004, (in the first instance witnessing and the second participating in the *kariamã* ritual), show that these rituals have tended to take place at the seasonal cross-over, either just prior to the rainy season, or just prior to the dry season in November. This corresponds with Stephen-Hugh Jones' (1979) observations that *inga* fruiting (which takes place bi-annually at the seasonal cross-overs and along the Xié at the end of April) acts as a barometric indicator of ritual dates. As I suggested previously, this preference appears to be related to the close link between human aperture and celestial aperture, hence the preference for the ritual to take place at the onset of the rainy season. This does not, however, make *kariamã* rituals bi-annual or even annual events, rather they are carried out on a needs and means basis, and this is especially true of the male *kariamã*.

The male initiation ritual is not so closely tied to corporeal changes. In our home community of Tunu, some young males had never undergone the ritual; and still other young males, such as Jurez's youngest, had undergone it at a prematurely young age. That several adult males have not undergone *kariamã* is due to the fact that it is not an annual event. Further, for men, the ritual blesser needs to be more potent than that for women and, as such, is harder to source. During the end of my fieldwork, in February of 2011, the residents of Tunu Cachoiera began discussing the need for the community to commission a *kariamã* specifically for the young men. No one along the Xié itself was deemed to have sufficient expertise to lead the ritual. Both Emilio and Jurez, with sons in their late teens, were interested in commissioning the ritual and began to consider inviting a potent ritual leader from the Içana. However, other adult and married men resident in Tunu had never undergone the ritual: Erlande, married with two young daughters, had never undertaken *kariamã*. Coming from a less prestigious and unknown *mirasa*, this was perhaps a reflection of his inferior status. Even for Erlande, this seasonal cross-over was still considered an appropriate time at which to acquire skills associated with *kariamã*, like basket-weaving and the complicated manufacture of the manioc press (*tipiti*) that is used for extracting the juice from the grated manioc mass.

It is in this last respect that we might consider one of the most important aspects of *kariamã* to be its seasonality and, as Umarituba resident Jesus suggested, the community games that occur at the end of the ritual. In the absence of *kariamã*, community games are considered essential to ‘disperse malicious wizards’ and these and the related ritual burning of sweet-smelling plant resins, take place on an annual basis. Coinciding with the seasonal transition of *kariamã* dates, these now accompany Easter festivities (marking the onset of winter, rather than the onset of spring).⁸⁴ On the one hand these games offer important ways to reinforce community ties between co-residents, offering a time to demonstrate trust, coordination and solidarity between participants; on the other, men are able to display their skills while exhibiting the necessary state of mind to engage in such activities. Such games form an important part of community rituals, they enhance morale and in doing so, protect the community from the coming *sasiara* (sadness) associated with the coming cold winter winds of June. These underline the importance of a jovial and convivial spirit, and while this is cultivated on a daily basis among close kin (also see Wright 2004: 91), its extension to all village members only happens at community events or rituals.

⁸⁴The Easter festivities in which my family and I participated in April of 2010, offer an intense moment of convivial relations, where all Tunu residents forgo sleep and eat frugally. This is a community-based celebration and culminates on Easter Friday when a wide repertoire of games are played. Just prior to this, the maraca is sounded to take away the bad spirits in the community and within each homestead. A frugal dinner was served at the community centre to be immediately followed by the first game, ‘the cock and chickens’. A game of both sexes, each person tightly grips the other around the waist and the line is headed by the hen, who must protect the chicks in trail. Facing the hen, the cock proclaims that he wants to eat chicken, and the hen answers that she is not going to let him. As the hen runs around, all the chicks follow suit, swinging violently from one side to another, like the writhing body of a snake.

The *kururu* is another cross-gender game in which the first will hold tightly onto a mast in the community gathering area and each participant sits on the floor behind them, swaddled by their legs and in tight and intimate embrace. One person attempts to loosen the last frogs, by tickling them and making loud frog noises. Everyone must participate. These two games were interspersed with the games of *jabuti* and *santo, santo, santo*, which involved only male participants. In *jabuti*, two men make the round form of the *jabuti* turtle by conjoining hands with the others feet, and their concave bodies then roll around the surface of the community plaza imitating the *jabuti*. This takes considerable skill and coordination of the part of the participants.

Santo, santo, santo appears a skill of remaining unperturbed during meditative practice.. Here, one person assumes the role of the *joroba*, a humpback with painted black teeth, disguised and deformed, who walks on four feet, coughing and spluttering. He is said to have the illness of *pito* that his penis hurts and he sprays water through a tube over those present. The *joroba* goes to the person nominated to be saint (*santo*), saying he is ill and asking for help. The *santo* cannot speak, but stays still and impassive, and a mediator announces that the saint cannot attend the *joroba* now. The *joroba* then goes out of his way to bother the appointed *santo*, and somehow distract him, or make him laugh or otherwise desist. Each male participant displayed his deftness at not being distracted by the *joroba*.

Beyond kariumã: the time, the place and the practice of healthful bathing

The *kariumã* ritual provides an experimental condensation of rites observed in daily life. One of these is bathing. Wright (2013b) has recently suggested that the ritual atonement of the mythscape is closely linked to the specific localities of riverine mythic motifs and their fortifying properties. However, rather than this being restricted to the ritual context, bathing is a norm that is observed before the ingestion of all fluids and foods and is considered an important vital and preventative rite outside of the more formal (*kariumã*) ritual contexts where it is also considered essential (Wright 2013b; S. Hugh-Jones 1975).

Adult men and women along the Xié bathe early in the morning before sunrise, at sunset and throughout the day in tandem with river-based tasks (e.g. women, preparing meat and fish, or when washing) and when hot and sweaty (e.g. men, after communal work and football) and at other opportune moments during the day. Xié dwellers' appetite for river bathing, as I now explain, is more than a preoccupation with cleanliness or hygiene (Garnelo 2003) and the time and place of bathing varies according to seasonal shifts and personal circumstances, such as menstruation and sickness as well as according to age.

Bathing usually takes place in designated areas close to the river bank, where the mother and her children will bathe together as well as wash their utensils and clothes. Since most Xié dwellers live in *comunidades*, most bathing takes place in public view near the homestead. Adolescent women, girls and older women tend to bathe together and side-by-side engage in light conversation. In the early morning, this is done in the nude, but later in the day, people bathe with their clothes on. Outside the nuclear family context, it is rare to see men and women bathing together. Women who are menstruating tend to be accompanied by their husbands for fear of seduction by a river dolphin (*boto*), a form of *maiwa* (animal ancestor spirit), who tends to appear at sunset disguised as the woman's husband (cf. Barbira-Freedman 2010: 149). If this is not possible, and at other times of the day, they will bathe alone and away from others to mitigate contamination and will also avoid enchanted ancestor sites. I noted several families observing these norms during the menstrual cycle. In evangelical communities however, young menstruating women today are, in some cases, considered imprudent since they do not take the necessary precautions, and elder men cite this as cause of sciatica and other bodily aches in the community in general. This is because they bathe when in the open (*saruã*) state.

Evening bathing is especially rigorous and a thick body lather will be worked up to remove the dirt of the day, requiring a specific technique. This was really brought home to me on a visit from Tunu to the down-river Evangelical community of Campinas, where I went to bathe adjacent to their floating port:

I went down to the port...and showed Jose's wife the spotty rash that had appeared under my breasts. I said it itches. She said that it was *kuruba*⁸⁵ and I said I thought it was too. I then jumped in the water and heaved myself out at the floating port and began to soap myself head to toe, rubbing up a lather that covered my head, hair, face and whole body down to foot scrubbing. Jose's wife looked up at me, watching me while she washed the clothes and said 'You are like us'. 'How many years have you been here [living along the Xié] now?' (field notes 29/11/2010)

Xié dwellers have observed that other *brancos* – the health team for instance - do not usually bathe in this manner, and this is a fundamental difference for Xié and indeed most regional and rural dwellers. This type of lathered bathing takes place particularly following strenuous physical activity or after having prepared meat or fish, is invariably done at the river's edge and is deemed necessary to remove the *epitchou* of fish when in its raw state (*piché*). Encountered in riverside areas, the *epitchou* smell, is a warning of danger lingering nearby. Remaining in a site where the *epitchou* smell is particularly pungent is to ask for danger and to provoke a snake-attack. When I was enquiring into becoming *saruã* (open), people would emphatically explain that 'it is good to get rid of all that fish-smell'.

This temporary *saruã* state will cause diarrhoea. Generally, when it is only mild, diarrhoea is known as 'an illness of the world' to be cured by *waracú mira* or otter bark (*yawaka mira*). Children are often the victims of this type of *saruã* because when their father arrives from fishing with the *cacuri* and leaves the fish in the canoe, children will often get hold of them when they go down to the port to bathe.

A prerequisite for the ingestion of fluids, lathered bathing is a preventative measure that cleans the body of dirt, and in particular the *epitchou* fish smell (for women who prepare fish) and the smell of sweat (for men and women after intense physical activity). Children attending the morning or evening *chibé* (second and communal breakfast/dining⁸⁶) must also

⁸⁵*Kuruba* is a frog-illness.

⁸⁶Those attending the communal breakfast have normally already had some breakfast at home.

have bathed and bad tempers are attributed to a lack of bathing, inciting the rhetorical ‘*aputare yasu azucar*’ (do you want to have a wash?). Since meal times are communal affairs, bathing is understood to cool down body and mind and enhance social interaction. In this last instance river bathing is the cited source of the personal strength (*kirimbawa*) that prevents impotency (*pitua*).

Lastly, bathing is also understood to have direct physiological consequences. River bathing nourishes the body, making it fuller and healthier and preventing it from becoming ‘dry’, emaciated and brittle (also see discussion of neonatal bathing in Chapter Six). A source of preventative health, a vitality-enhancing and nourishing practice, river bathing makes people strong, forms the body and keeps the *majuba* at bay.

Not bathing produces the opposite of *kirimbawa* and persons become weak, feeble and antisocial, eventually enter a state of dangerous openness. For this reason, ‘*yasu yayasuca kirimbawa yande*’ (go and have a wash and make yourself strong) is an imperative directed at young children and makes clear the connection between bathing and vital strength. Children, who are still acquiring these norms, are reminded of them on a daily basis. In early childhood and youth, parents oblige their children to bathe⁸⁷ ‘otherwise one can easily contract an illness’, since the *majuba* ‘are activated’.

A Campinas resident made the link between bathing and sickness even clearer to me when he stated that his mother always said ‘bathe before all consumption, otherwise you’ll get ill’. Sickness may however manifest itself in physical form, and Irineu recounted to me one such narrative illustrating the point:

A mother and father decided to go to their manioc garden and work, while the eldest daughter, 18 years old, stayed home to look after the younger children. The father said, ‘Look after the children properly while I am at the manioc garden (*roça*). If the children cry, pick them up, take them to bathe and then offer them something to eat.’ This was important as, in the past, there were a lot more [enchanted and potent, forest-dwelling] *kurupira*. The parents went off to their manioc garden. One of the children, 2 years old, went to sleep and woke up crying. The elder sister said, don’t cry, I am going to climb up the *inga* tree for you.

⁸⁷Perhaps in some instances, children are really obliged, but I never observed this: ‘My son didn’t want to bathe, but Eli and her mother in law tried to pull Sasha into the water – but they only pulled once, i.e. didn’t drag, they said come on and then left him laughing and he walked away 5 minutes later.’ I did however see one little girl who was pushed over by her mother and fell flat in the mud, since she was having a bathing-related tantrum.

There were a lot of *inga* in that tree. She took the child to the foot of the *inga* tree and up the tree she went to get the *inga*. The other child also collected *inga* and gave it to the crying child...Shortly afterward, the elder sister heard that the *kurupira* was on his way. She quickly came down the tree, got the children and went to the port. There was no canoe there to cross the river. What now? Well, the river wasn't so deep and the cataracts could be crossed by walking. She got the children and the sleeping two year old and went walking through the water. They just reached the other side and the *kurupira* arrived at the port. There he was, about four meters tall...This animal doesn't know how to swim properly, so he couldn't cross. He started to suck the water and dry up the river so as to cross the waterfall. He stayed there a long time until he gave up as there was too much water. Then the father returned home to see all the children on the other side of the river. 'How is it that that animal nearly ate you all? He asked'. The eldest daughter explained how she had gone to get the *inga* from the tree to eat.

Shamans advise that people must bathe before taking the wine of *patúa* or *bacába* wine and especially the fruit of *piaçava* palm also known as 'fruit of the *kurupira*' and any other fluid or substance. Failure to bathe may provoke attacks by the *maiwa*, the spirit animal ancestors, causing physical degeneration and mental disquietude (*pitua*). As the story illustrates, potentially of greater gravity is that a failure to follow bathing norms will provoke an attack by a forest-dwelling *kurupira* itself. People bathe, especially during the cross-over from winter to summer as the river is drying, because 'they are afraid of the *kurupira*'. Aside from appearing, he may also 'cause toothache' and a number of other ailments. Ancestral guidelines warn against this and state how such negligence may also produce a dangerous lightning strike, caused by the *kurupira* or Napiruli.

Locations change, however, according to interfluvial variation and during the winter bathing is a less frequent affair. When the waters overflow into the forest and the fish population radically decreases, water activities and children's pastimes become less common. When the river is high, the influvial zone and cold forest springs merge with the main river's rising waters and lend a coolness to the entire river. For Xié dwellers, this is the time when the river becomes the *Buya wasu*, the greedy anaconda who has devoured the river's fish. People avoid excessive contact with this primordially cool character (and affinal 'other'), and this is especially true of children whose bodies are described as *pira miri* (literally, little body, nearly identical to little fish, *pirá miri*) whom the cosmic anaconda will eat. The *tempo de Aru*, with its fine cool drizzle and wind in June, occurring at the seasonal cross-over, which I shortly go on to detail, is especially a time in which to reduce bathing activities.

In the summer, when the water levels are lower, people complain that even frequent bathing in Xié waters is insufficient to stay cool. *Igarapés*, small tributaries as well as springs and fresh water pools usually found on paths to the manioc garden, are the only near-constant source of water during the summer. The *igarapés* are often used to soak manioc in, to facilitate later peeling, while also cooling off those carrying heavily loaded head baskets. During the day and especially during the hot summer season, children like to bathe together, especially groups of boys and young adolescent men. While little girls accompany their mothers in their daily round, sitting in shallow waters while their mothers wash clothes and utensils; little boys will spend hours playing in the river currents and appear as deft at navigating their bodies through the flow as the fish themselves. Like fish, their whole bodies head to toe form a single hydrodynamic unit mingling with the currents. Children in this way parallel the *pirá miri*, the little fish caught at the seasonal cross-over in the rapids. The children have their own *pira miri* and mitigate the heat (of their youth) in the cool, rapid flowing currents.

While bathing has its time and place and requires a specific technique, it is also a practice that must be carefully managed. Children, who bathe carelessly to enjoy the coolness and play afforded by the river, are especially vulnerable. Mercilla, Tunu resident and mother of five, explained to me that this is because they bathe when the sun is very hot and also during the summer rains. These times are considered too radically divergent from one's own state. Thus, while parents ensure that their child 'is not dry', (i.e. unnourished by the water, since the water is understood to constitute and quantify bodily fluids), bathing can also be taken to excess and cause colds, coughs and flu. These states leave the nasal passage leaking and hamper the passage of air through the nose. They are unmediated states of openness. When one has fever, bathing is also avoided, as it is considered too radical a shock, especially for children. Even for men however, certain intensely heated moments, during the artisanal production of canoes for instance, - at the moment of the canoe-wood opening, which I shortly describe - are considered inappropriate moments for bathing, and with negative consequences for the canoe itself. There are other more serious states of *saruã* when bathing is avoided, including snakebite and other potent sickness (understood as hot states), as well as at key moments in one's lifecycle, such as post birth for mothers.

This complex eupraxis of how, when, where and with whom such basic acts of eating, drinking and bathing take place, shows how the minutiae of life are linked to the intimate

experience of the animist environment, informed by Xié cosmology, myth and narrative. Xié dwellers know the river to be the place of human emergence (see Chapter One), home to exploits of ancient ancestors, most pertinently evinced by Napiruli's own ancestral mid-river home and the homes of petrified animal remains (stones) found at rapids and on the banks of the river itself. Babies and children whose bodies are still forming are described as *pira miri* and the river, in which they spend so much time playing, is the most appropriate location for the fish-formed bodies. As people develop from having a *pira miri* to a *yane pira* (literally, our body, and when I asked for further clarification, I was told *corpo humano* - human body), they emerge from the water to the land. Whilst the *yane pira* is the appropriate form for those living adjacent to waterways, having emerged from the water, their riverine origins are not forgotten and a happy and seasonal medium is sought between the hydrocentricity of persons and the hydrocentric environment.

People may achieve humanity through mutual symbiosis. The artful practice and attention to the minutiae of techniques such as bathing, become moments in which one is at once attentive to present action. This type of attention involves an extended perceptual awareness of the cosmos and the mythic past.

Ancient advice that goes well beyond what is recalled during the *kariamã* is complex and speaks to skill, aptitude, dexterity, tact and attitude that move well beyond a simple understanding of a given task. Together these complex sets, which may best be understood as the equanimity of both action and inaction, ensure a safe passage during one's carefully mediated life path.

The rising waters of winter (when the river is the *Buya wasu*, the giant anaconda) infringe on village boundaries, and the pervasive dampness means that bathing is less frequent. Further, ingesting small dried and smoked fish (*piaba*) and firm forest-dwelling meat also lend people a valued hot and dry counterbalance to this waterlogged season. Seasonal diets and seasonal bathing nourish the *yane pira* and maintain one's position as human. The vitality of the human condition is most obviously achieved during the summer months, when the low and warm waters of summer require increased bathing and the consumption of larger and juicier fish.

Winter, the rainy spell of the mythic frog Aru and the prevalent state of seasonal sadness

In the heart of winter (*maura*), around mid-April, comes a cool drizzle of the ‘*friagem*’, the *nhaã inverno miri* (literally, little winter). This brings a fine, cold rain, a cool breeze and a dense and humid fog which opaquely obscures the surface of the river’s waters and the surrounding forest. This time is known as the *tempo de Aru* (also see S. Hugh-Jones 1979: 196). Aru is the name of the frog who emerges with these rains and who will come and occupy new planted manioc gardens. In the past, however, the Aru were people. The Aru came from far away and travelled throughout the region, always journeying up-river with (creating) the season’s wind. When they travelled, they caused the rain to fall. Complaining about her inability to do anything productive during the Aru rains, and noting that she would get ill if she stayed in her home, Magdalena, my host in Tunu Cachoeira, told me that her grandfather had told her Aru was a ‘fiery’ (*bravo*) white man (*branco*), who travelled in a speedboat. He would stop around midday, docking at the river bank, to take his lunch. When he stopped, the fine rains also stopped and when he again took his up-river journey, the rains began again.

During the Aru rains people complain of the cold and the cool wind blowing in their eyes as they travel in their canoes, which they find painful (*doi olho; sasi esa*). When these rains fall, people cannot work properly outdoors and are relatively village bound. These rains fall and we recall their origin. Campinas resident Irineu, offered me this extended version of the Aru story:

In the past, the Aru were people. They came exploring the whole area. All the rivers. Today we know that Aru is a frog. But in the past, the ancient people said, they were human. They came from another place.

During their up-river travels, the Aru once came to visit the Xié river. A whole team of Aru, - such a lot of them. They brought with them all types of merchandise in order to buy the objects of the Indians [of the Xié]. They say that at the manioc farm of one elder, it began raining -that light rain and there was that [typical cold] wind, but the elder didn’t know where it was coming from. The Aru docked, [at the manioc garden settlement], in order to make and have their lunch. They say the elder went down to receive them. They looked like normal people, like people, but they weren’t, they were Aru. The elder went and presented himself to the Aru. Those white [other] people said, ‘we are called Aru’. ‘Well, you are well received’ [the elder replied]. Then Aru asked, ‘Can we stop and have lunch here with you?’ and the

elder agreed. Then they say, that Aru said, ‘Ok, we are going to stay here for an hour’. At that moment, the sun came out, the rain passed, the wind stopped...because the Aru were resting. That lasted an hour. After an hour, he said to the elder, ‘now we are going to travel up-river’. The Aru gave the elder two *popeca* [a meat ball] for their lunch. The Aru explained how he should eat them, you have to eat them like this, you have to cook it....Only the elder didn’t obey. When he got that food, he ate it just like that, without heating it, he didn’t want to listen to the Aru’s advice. He ate the food with his wife. That is it. So, the Aru continued travelling upriver. It started to get dark, the rain fell, and the wind again returned. It was cold again. So those two, the elder and his wife, felt the ‘*pressão*’ (change in weather pressure) that cold, it was even colder than before. Before, it was normal, one could put up with it, and a fire was enough to warm up again. But after the food that they ate, the fire was no longer enough [to keep them warm]. At each instant, it felt colder and colder. Until they say, the elder said to his wife, ‘I am going to sit on top of the fire, otherwise like this I am not getting any warmer. It is very cold.’ He sat on the fire, and his wife next to him. And that is where they died.

So that is why, when they are travelling, Aru’s journey always makes us cold. At midday they stop, and at that time the sky opens and the sun comes out for an hour. Then, when they leave again, the cold comes back. That is the story of Aru, from the olden times. Today, they don’t look like people any more. Only we can feel their coldness. Then, [those Aru] they left a lot of their artefacts here.... artefacts that we find in the depths of the river. But they are another type of artisanal work. It is not like ours. We have already found their fish traps (*matapi*), even their rowing oar we have kept. Once we found it right in the depths over there. My grandfather said, that is not one of ours that is Aru’s...it is different, it is longer [and thinner] (see figure 4).

When the Aru rains began to fall, Luís came to talk to me. He explained that with these rains ‘*as pessoas ficam doente*’ (people become ill). In lingua Géral, the Portuguese word for ill – *doente* – is most frequently translated as *sasiara*. *Sasiara* denotes both sadness and sickness and their symptoms (extended periods in the hammock) are understood to be simultaneously experienced states. When I asked why this was a period of sicknesses (*doenças*), Luís began by explaining that people were particularly vulnerable to snakebite: the rains were falling, the island’s surface area was decreasing and the river and its serpentine inhabitants were coming to infringe on the boundaries of our small island village. It was in fact during the Aru rains that I saw several venomous snakes, both in Tunu and in neighbouring Umarituba. In Umarituba, the former captain Joaquin, killed the deadly *jararaca*, explained that one should

avoid becoming *saruã* during this time, as snakes are particularly prevalent. When we returned to Tunu, our neighbour Arcindo also came to tell my husband that this was a time for flu and illness.

Luís explained that this was also a time of *doenças* in general (cold and coughs, *guariba catarro*), and snakebite, like other sicknesses and as *saruã* denotes, are brought on by one's own vulnerability to becoming sick. In reflection, I could understand why people were *sasiara* and hence vulnerable, since they couldn't carry out their normal activities. Further, managing one's mood becomes fundamentally difficult during Aru, since unlike other times of year, when you may have infringed on some fundamental imbalance and explicitly made yourself vulnerable, during the time of Aru the whole community becomes more vulnerable, since everybody tends to be in a state of sadness normally only associated with menstruation and sickness. This sadness is derived from people's inability to engage in any productive work due to the light rain, and they are confined to the village.

Remaining in the village for extended periods of time and not being able to leave is associated with the state of *sasiara*. The village is a place of early morning and late afternoon dwelling, but is not a place you would want to remain day after day (unless menstruating, post-partum or infirm). Aru rains limit people's movement and women complain that they cannot work in their manioc garden, although, knowing that Aru frogs are in their newly planted manioc gardens, is a positive sign of growth for the gardens themselves.⁸⁸ Women sit and repair clothes, and men also engage in more village based activities, such as basket-making. During this time real sustaining food, food capable 'of giving us strength [*força*]' - *farinha*, *beijú*, fish and meat, in sum, the traditional diet - is in short supply, as are the opportunities (due to the rain) to procure it, enhancing the state of *sasiara* (which is why, among neighbouring Tukanos, the rainy month of May is called the month of the sloth, S. Hugh-Jones 1979a: 196). S. Hugh-Jones (1979a) also suggests that this is not only a wet, but also a dark time, since the Aru's paddle 'blot[s] out the sun and it becomes quite literally dark'.

In some instances, and for those families who have sufficiently laboured or can otherwise afford it, foodstuffs may be traded with river merchants. At the end of May, I went to help

⁸⁸See Stradelli (1991 [1889]: 380), where Aru transforms into a frog and visits Mother of Manioc fertilizing her with his fine rain.

our neighbours in their manioc production, only to find they had drastically stepped up their work cycle since their river merchant (*patron*) had arrived and they were urgently toasting manioc. They were preparing great tins of manioc flour to be exchanged for tinned meat – the ‘white’ equivalent of seasonally available game.



Figure 2: Doña Evangelista peeling manioc.



Figure 3: Preparing manioc mass for the tipiti.

The seasonal presence of merchants during the Aru rains, and the fact that Aru himself was said to be a white man, led me to consider the fact that the high water levels and seasonal winds indicated both a time for seasonal visits as well as historic and periodic ones. The periodic appearance of merchants who came (and come) to collect their debt is a time of stress and increased, out-of-season, productivity. Historically river merchants would have also physically abused their clients at this time to increase their productivity as part of their debt-enslaving relationship. Further, these merchants and other visitors would have brought with them coughs and colds, as well as other illness that we associate with European contact.⁸⁹

⁸⁹I say, ‘we associate with European contact’, as unlike other ethnographic contexts of Amerindia (e.g. Garnelo 2003; Conklin 1994), I did not find the category of ‘white’ illnesses to be locally employed. This suggests that for Xié dwellers these illnesses are associated with contact of a general kind (i.e. the Aru-other kind) rather than solely European contact and as such is not linked to any particular ethnic group.

As such, Aru may have been a significant idiom to simultaneously reflect on ecological,



Figure 4: Irineu stands with the Aru's rowing oar.

historic and periodic occurrences, and physical exploitation of river dwellers and their subsequent exploitation of the environment beyond what was considered healthy and harmonious ecological interchange (see Chapter Two). Such experiences may have been continuous with pre-colonial asymmetric relations between groups (i.e Maku vis-à-vis Arawak and Tukano groups), since the region's inhabitants also put to work lower-ranking ethnicities for the benefit of higher-ranking clans (Santos-Granero 2009).

Artisanal artefacts belonging to Aru are found today by contemporary Xié dwellers during the low-river season, lying on the river bed. Consistently, these items do not conform to those used by contemporary Xié dwellers: their fishing traps (*matapí*) are smaller; and their rowing oars – imbued with a potency that is said to attract the wind when in motion- are thinner, finer and more elaborately decorated (see figure 4). What is more, they are made from different materials, (hard wood that sinks, rather than the contemporary soft woods that float. All these artefacts attest to an ancient occupation of the area by unknown others: brought by the trade winds, and mytho-historically migrating up-river, the Aru are said to have discarded or lost these basic artisanal utensils and other objects during their travels.

Further (affinal) 'others' have been known to periodically visit the area: the Venezuelan *Maciritari* (Ye'kuana, see Chapters One and Two) Irineu recounted one story in which he casually linked the appearance of *Maciritari* to the winter season:

At that time, we could hear people that shout over there during the night. My late father told me that was the *Maciritari*. He is not frightened of us because he was a person. You know. He can't stand dogs. He can kill them close to their owners [without them realising]. He is coming. My late grandfather said that they have their manioc gardens in the middle of the forest. At that time, the *Maciritari* were going upriver. My grandfather said, 'I am going to harvest our fruit [early], I don't know if they had been poisoned...our pineapples....'

Irineu recounted a further tale of *Maciritari* who were observed donning their jaguar suits: a relative of Irineu was suspicious that the jaguar he was hunting was in fact *Maciritari*. Following him deep into the forest, he hid to watch what the jaguar would do. He saw he was joined by a group of his kin, and he then took his jaguar suit off and hung it on the branch of a tree so that they could lunch together in the middle of the forest. The man he was following turned out to be their captain. They had come to steal casks of *umari* fruit that Xié dwellers had stored in the forest-garden in order to make a special type of manioc bread (*curutá*). The *Maciritari* had canoes, and Irineu's relative followed the captain down to the bank where his canoe was docked, and there he killed him.

Even without the benefit of this direct visual observation, hunters can differentiate *Maciritari* jaguars from regular jaguar: when this predator is itself hunted as a favoured Xié dweller food, his jaguar-kin can be heard crying after the killing.⁹⁰

From Irineu's account, the periodic visits of the *Maciritari* bear the characteristics of the typical (sub or super) human malicious witch, known as the *machí* poisoner. The *machí* poisoner was borne of mythic times, but anyone who has attained and uses their comprehensive plant knowledge for the purposes of witchcraft can become a *machí* poisoner. The *machí* poisoner is however almost never a co-resident, but rather comes from a distant (and affinal) community. For the Baniwa, the *machí* ('*matiára*') is the *manhene iminali*, the "one [who] does not know" (Wright 2004: 86; Garnelo 2003: 54)

As was recounted to me in several *machí*-related instances of poisoning, he makes the most of the high water levels to navigate through the flooded forest. He is associated with the inhospitably steep ravines of the Içana's headwaters, which are said to be an ideal place for him to procure (*giri giri* bark for example which he grates) and prepare his poisonous concoctions (which he boils over a fire in these locations). The *machí* poisoner is associated

⁹⁰For more on how large predatory animals are forced to assume the position of prey, see Lima 1999.

with the Xié headwaters (like the Carib *Maciritari*), but *machís* are also known to visit from the Içana. Headwater resident Tomas Aniso gave me the following account of his residence in a mountain range that bears his name, the '*machíara* mountain': 'at the end of that mountain range...he will leave his *maracambara* (poisonous concoction), so that he can heat it up. If we go fishing there, we would be sure to find that *machíara* at the end of that mountain range...heating up his poison...that is why we call it the mountain of the *machíara*. That is what our father told us.'

When he comes, he may poison food that a whole community of co-residents will consume, but it is only those who are the target of his malice that become ill. This reveals the *machí* as not only a poisoner, but also a dangerous witch. He uses his extensive plant knowledge to change into other animals, typically bats. A variety of plant infusions, administered as eye-drops, facilitate such transformations. Normally however, he is said to have 'the body of one of us', albeit with a degraded appearance. Mindful of the *machí* poisoner, women collect their clothes hanging to dry before sunset, to avoid them being poisoned. He will put his venom on clothes at night; in people's hammocks, or even in their food and drink or directly in one's garden produce. Thus as the hunting season begins, and men venture into the forest at night, one may personally encounter the *machí* poisoner (on his malicious rounds). This was the case with Irineu, who came face to face with a *machí* and connected the encounter to serious poisoning that eventually killed his young daughter:

Irineu had gone to hunt agouti in the forest at night, taking his canoe through the winter season's flooded forest. He came upon a man and he stopped to speak with him and asked what he was doing (since he was not far from Irineu's manioc garden). The man said he was also hunting agouti, but Irineu commented to me that unlike him, this man had no torch. What's more the man had old, ragged clothes, an unkempt appearance and no flip-flops. He also had no gun and an old and tiny canoe. Irineu was disturbed by the encounter.

A few days later Irineu went to harvest pineapples from his manioc garden with his wife. His children all enjoyed the pineapples, but shortly afterward his youngest, four-year old, daughter began to have blood in her stools and then began vomiting. As the illness continued for several days she became emaciated and died. Irineu told me that the man he had encountered was a *machí* poisoner and that he had maliciously poisoned his pineapples and caused his daughter to die.

From the point of view of the average Xié dweller, the *machí* poisoner attacks those who have worked hard to attain (education, clothes, salaried work) what they have and he wishes to have the same without the same investment. The main reason for attack is jealousy. Given the wide socio-economic and political divides within and between communities of the Xié, some families do indeed have great wealth (bountiful manioc garden and fine hunting skills, fine clothes, a variety of pots and pans, and more markedly, a personal generator/motor, a radio/television, and tin roofing) when compared to neighbours who have the bare necessities. A myth recounted to me by the shaman Jesus relates the origin of this poison owner:

Yuetouete, the small eagle, worked in the manioc garden. There was a *cauwama* [unidentified bird] who was *machiara*, that is, he was envious and liked to take things from others – left over food, manioc bread and flour. One day Yuetouete, the small eagle, didn't work properly and was also taking things from others. Cauwama didn't like it and he gave Yuetouete poison, by putting it in the left-over food he was going to eat. Yuetouete died. Now the *machiara* is anyone who had learnt to do this [use poison to kill others].

The *machí* poisoner is typically a solitary agent, but in rare instances *machí* travel in groups and this is when they engage in more direct warfare and are then known collectively as the *camachí*. I was told about one instance when the *camachí* disguised themselves as river dolphins as they travelled along the Içana River. An elder on the Içana told Irineu the story during an Evangelical conference and during my fieldwork, he recounted it to my husband and me: the Baníwa elder had spotted them, in the form of river dolphins, and went to follow and spy on them. They hid their canoe under an old trunk, from which huge vine (*cipó*) steps ascended to their tree-house. There were three '*machí*' and one guard to watch over the blowgun. An elder who had been spying in a tree jumped down to confront the watchman. However, the watchman was known to him and was from a nearby community, and the elder exclaimed 'So, it is you who wants to kill us!' 'No,' the man replied 'I am only the guard here, and cook for these dolphin-men.' So the elder let him go but gave him a warning: he cut his mouth. The man returned to his community and his wife asked what had happened, but he couldn't speak. He later died from bleeding. Here again we see the connection of the *machí* to the winter months, since the river dolphin is spotted most often when the river is at its highest. The burning of plant resins (*chicantá*) during festive communal gatherings prior to the winter season (and *kariamã* initiation ritual), Jesus explained, was especially efficacious for 'dispersing the *machí*'. Village confinement reflects a prudent vigilance

especially for the *machí*, who is particularly active during the hungry winter season and descends from his up-river and mountainous dwellings just before and after the Aru rains.

The atmospheric and climatic phenomenon of Aru, and the appearance of the *Maciritari* and the *machí*, turn the winter into a time of *sasiara* (sickness and sadness), most conspicuously during June and July. Since both male and female subsistence activities are largely inhibited by the rains brought by Aru, and since rains are like the menstrual flow (see prior discussion), the Aru rains are a time when one is in a seasonally enforced rest, waiting in the village for river merchants who come to collect their debts. The Aru rains are typically defined as a time of *sasiara* (sickness and sadness) and remind people of the ancestral past (ancestors are corporeally cold, cool-minded and distant). Unlike the convivial heat produced through co-residents and close kin during *kariamã* and Easter festivities, river merchants and other outsiders are people with whom one has perpetually cold relations. What is more, this may have historically been the time at which white illnesses were first introduced (cough, colds and flu) and today these illnesses are common during this time and especially in children. Finally, the *machí*, with his heated envy and ‘hot’ poisons, producing ‘hot’ fevers and often haemorrhaging, nose bleeds and the vomiting of blood, prevails during the winter as a destructive agent.

Simon Harrison (2004) has forwarded a similar thesis in his discussion of the SAD syndrome in *Emotional Climates*. Through comparative ethnographic literature, Harrison identifies SAD as a culture-bound and European phenomenon that links ‘autumn, melancholy, darkness, old age and death’ (ibid.: 594), and as such, exhibits the case of ‘a culturally specific metaphorical association between light and mood...constructed [into] a biomedical, causal one’ (ibid.: 595). SAD arises, he suggests, from the contemporary lack of synchronisation between seasonal states and community rituals. Seasonality, geographical latitude and climate, Harrison argues, combine to produce culturally-specific memories and moods that describe the careful synchronization of social, natural and corporal rhythms. In one example Harrison (2004) cites the Papua New Guinean Avatip season of haze-heat in regard to nostalgic memories of the dead. This inversely corresponds to Rio Negrian seasonally linked psychosocial stressors that connect the sad, wet period of Aru to a collective anniversary of productive domination.

The fine rains, winds and fog of Aru, together with the more generalised seasonal prevalence of seasonal sorcery and the *machí*, cannot, as Hsu (2007: 2) argued in her genealogical

approach to cultural geographies, be understood as simply a symbolic system, but rather as a phenomenological and an ontological one. The contiguous understanding of politics, health and history is an example of how ‘ecological, climatic and seasonal realities... [are]...initially understood and later systematised’. The idiom of Aru combines these atmospheric, climatic, historical and periodic experiences and links them to the woman’s monthly menses. The times and rhythms of nature and bodily states are carefully synchronised to be mutually intelligible and receptive.

Rising waters: the Tatu wasu and the greedy anaconda

‘It is mid-morning but there is the most deafening thunder and bright lightning.’

Field notes, 6th August 2010



Figure 5: Monkey caught by former Tunu captain.

The hard rains that fall along the Xié cause the river to rise and become the giant cosmic anaconda, the (celestial and mystic) *Buya wasu*. At this time, the *Buya wasu*'s presence is seen in the giant twisting and turning river itself, now in high-flow. Like his terrestrial snake children who only come out during the rains to feed, the cosmic anaconda now descends to feed himself on the river's fish population. It is now that the *Buya wasu* is said to devour all the fish in the river, leaving the river's human inhabitants hungry, as Wallace ([1853] 2006) also observed some 100 years

earlier. Xié residents rely on the *macurá*, a small game animal that is also the name for winter, and other game animals including agouti, and monkeys (see figure 5), a favoured food typically caught just after the Aru rains.

The winter is also the time of the forest-dwelling *kurupira*, the forest keeper who becomes a malicious agent for times when forest norms are not respected. He changes into the piassava palm and the anteater, can speak various languages and possesses gold teeth.

While the majority of encounters with the *kurupira* are ruinous or lethal, since he likes to trick hunters and cause them to lose their way, he is also the source of medicinal knowledge. Irineu recounted one story in which a relative of his came face to face with the mythically potent forest-dweller, the *kurupira*, who demanded the man make an exchange with him. Explaining that men take bees wax with them when they enter the forest, he recounted:

The *kurupira* became angry and was about to attack the man, but the man held the bees wax in front on him and the *kurupira* immediately fell to the floor and couldn't get up. He began shouting and the man saw all his gold teeth. The man returned to his community and after a week (he waited as he was still shocked from the encounter) he told people what had happened, and together a group of men decided to return in order to extract the gold teeth. The *kurupira* was still there, but now had a *kupĩ* (termite nest) nest on his head. The men started to take the *kupĩ* nest off with their machetes and could then see the *kurupira's* face. They then started hammering away at his jaw, to remove the gold teeth. At this, the *kurupira* woke up and gave them thanks for waking him otherwise he would have stayed there sleeping. He asked for their hand to pull him up off the floor [since the *kurupira* is like the anteater and has trouble getting up, see Chapter Two] and as an offering of thanks he shows them a wide range of medicinal plants.

During the month of October, the Xié river and the Rio Negro in general, experience storms of a most terrifying kind. These radical changes in climate are linked to Napriuli's son, the Amado. It is the Amado who causes the thunderous roars and lightning that, for fear of death, make people stay indoors and avoid the approach of the river storm. As was told to us in the community of Campinas which we visited during this time, three reckless Juruti residents (whose female kin have married into the community of Campinas) were engaged in a football match just prior to a large storm, only to be struck, by lightning.⁹¹ Storms such as these are greeted by cries from the male co-residents, and each person swiftly collects manioc bread and clothes left to dry and to check children are inside.

⁹¹This could also be a comment on their immoral practice of failing to bathe before ingesting fluids, such as manioc flour drink (*chibé*). This is increasingly the case at football matches, but this is still considered improper.

Since the water levels fluctuate according to the rains, both in the Xié and through upriver inlets, land erosion is particularly marked during this time. In the small island village of Tunu, many people commented on how they had witnessed, over the long history of the occupation of this site, the shrinking size of its surface area due to heavy erosion. I observed the residents of Tunu fortifying the small surface of the Island-home with compound earth. Elsewhere, river banks crumble into the river itself, pitching small vegetation and palm trunks into the water. Although the link was not explicitly made for me in this context, erosion for Xié dwellers, like many of the phenomenon that we call natural, is due to the ancestral riparian dweller, the *Tatu wasu*.

The *Tatu wasu*, a giant version of the commonly encountered armadillo, takes advantage of rising river levels to dig and hence ‘erode’ the banks of the river. Anamoin resident Anisio Tomas (son of the deceased Quintino), whom I encountered during a trip to the city of São Gabriel, recounted to me his understanding of the way the *Tatu wasu* works:

He digs to make the earth fall. No one can see him. I have never seen him. I can see the time when he is digging, you know. I can perceive it, you know. Because I have already killed a type of *tatu* canasta we call him, that big *tatu*, I have heard the noise he makes when he is digging. But this *tatu*, that lives in the water, he is stronger, and makes a racket when he is digging. He makes a lot of mess (dirt) until the earth falls. That is it. He stops digging. I think he lives deep in the depths. We have never seen him. Nor the ancient people. He doesn’t show himself...people say he is a type of enchanted ancestral spirit (*maiwa*, or *majbua*). We imagine because he sounds just like a *tatu*. He makes a racket, we can hear when he is digging.

He doesn’t dig any odd time. He only digs when the river is rising, then he makes the most of it and digs. Sometimes. Not all the time. In the *igarapés* you have a lot of those. In Mewe, you know. There were a lot there. All around there you can see where he is digging. They say that the *majuba* is there.

The power of the *Tatu wasu* is seasonal and periodic and so too, therefore, are the times and locations when he must be avoided. During the periods of his digging, when he is also heard to ‘howl’ (*zoar*), people avoid the *Tatu wasu* and the areas he is understood to frequent. People do not wish to bother the Tatu, since he is known to maliciously attack those who do, causing a ‘shock’ and sometimes sudden death. However, the *Tatu wasu* has powers beyond his immediate parameters and his wrath is provoked not only by physical encroachments, but also other careless acts, such as inattentive cooking, that do not directly impinge on his area

of influence. Lightning may strike the careless individual, or at least advise him of his misdemeanour. The conscience of Xié dwellers is always alert to how their own comportment may provoke such attacks and cause misfortune.

When the waters are rising, people avoid the areas associated with the tatu, in the same way that people expect animist agents and animal(esque) others to avoid their own areas of productivity, unless provoked.

The coolness of winter: weaving baskets and cooking

During the time of *Buya wasu*, the river infringes on the village community. Men venture into the forest to procure forest-dwelling game (principally *agouti* and monkey meat), as well as material for artisan work and flute-preparation. These forest derived products furnish the community with the material for living during the winter. These are all tasks that men carry



Figure 6: Lino, Tunu's pajé, with his sieve.

out when fasting on a strict diet of manioc flour drink (*chibé*) and manioc bread (*beijú*). Women should never see forest-dwelling game; and they themselves only fast during their menstrual cycles. These are all activities that require coolness and one especially afforded by these cooler hydrocentric months, from May to October.

Bodies become cool, not only due to the seasonal change, but also due to their limited diet and diminished consumption. The winter months are the ideal time for quiet and cool reflection. Given the lack of fish and cultivated fruits, the diet is considered deficient and the entire community enters a period of fasting. This

is a time when the community depends more on forest-dwelling game. Prior to entering the forest to hunt, men fast. Men will also fast when basket-weaving and when making flutes, all

activities that prevail during the winter season. For women, fasting will continue with each menstrual period. For both genders fasting will continue at important life-cycle changes such as the transition into parenthood. There are periodic fasts during periods of sickness as well as seasonal ones, such as the rainy spell of June. This dries and closes the body-mind.

A restricted diet is understood to be particularly conducive to the performance of cool-minded activities, including hunting, and hence the seasonal restriction on foodstuffs offers the opportunity to undertake further tasks that require single-minded focus, such as basketry. As well as village-based and applied activities allow for prudent vigilance, necessary precautions since the cool winter months are inherently a time of the cold primordial other – the *Buya wasu*- and a period which sees an increase of malicious sorcery (by the *machí* poisoner). These, like the mythic time of the frog, are cold times of reflection during which one's cooler capacities may be nurtured.



Figure 7: Floriano making a manioc sieve to prepare *beijú*. This sieve is a gift presented during *dabukuri* or sold or otherwise exchanged with more distant groups.

The work that people engage in during this period, such as basket weaving, is done sitting on stools. Drawing on the work of Århem et al. (2004: 184, 200, 205, 215), S. Hugh-Jones (2009: 47-48) has noted the importance of the stool elsewhere in Northwestern Amazonia. In detailing the relationship between artefacts and body parts he notes: 'For the Tukanoans, a "stool" is not just an object or part of the anatomy but also an abstract notion of a support, base, foundation, location, and comportment.' He goes onto to write that sitting is '...an

activity described as cooling, relaxing, and peaceful- [that it] is synonymous with learning,

contemplation, and meditation and has connotations of stability, rootedness, and fixity. A wise person has a “cool seat”, an irritable person a “hot seat”, and a thoughtless or flighty person “does not know how to sit”. A person’s stool is thus an aspect of his or her character’ (ibid.).

The low stools used by Xié dwellers when engaging in such activities require a person to adjust the weight of the body in order to attain the upright posture required of basket weaving. For this reason, there is not one sitting posture, but a constant adjustment and readjustment during the long periods of work at basketry: a man will widely cross his legs, extend one or both of them, or open his legs wide. While all Xié dwellers may make a basic manioc head basket (*watura*) for their wives to carry manioc, and a manioc basin (*urutu*) to collect the manioc mass and flour, not all objects produced are evaluated as good/beautiful (*puranga*). Many are self-evaluated, especially by young men and those of lower status (who customarily sat on lower and smaller stools), as ‘*feio*’ (ugly) and these individuals state that they do not know how to make baskets. These objects, like the palm bags spontaneously made to carry fruits, or carry washed clothes, are understood as purely utilitarian and are made in the forest-setting and not on stools.

The attention and self-discipline required of basketry, especially in the manufacture of highly valued objects such as the manioc basin and sieves, produce great workmanship. While I could not grasp the inner workings of an individual when engaged in this task, my husband, who learned, practiced and continues to engage in Xié arts of basketry, explained to me how hours can pass in engaged contemplation and prolonged concentration on basket-making. Not only did this cultivate his patience and basket practice, the basketry patterns also visited his dreams. On waking, this provides new inspiration for visualised basket forms and patterns. Conceivably, for Xié dwellers, the skill of basketry is also one pregnant with cosmic understanding, to borrow Guss’ (1989) term, it is a practice that ‘weaves the world’.

Writing among the Warao, Wilbert (1975: 82 - 83) reflects on this multifaceted nature of basket weaving:

Yet another motivating force of great importance relates to the mental culture of the Warao...basket making, far from being only of technological and socio-economic consequence, is also of transcendental relevance. It elevates the artisan above the secular realm into one of eschatological import. The basket maker, by virtue of practising his art, is transformed into a shamanic craftsman, fully endowed with the power of an ordinary (white

[i.e. benevolent]) shaman. In complying with the Irititi Spirit's original intent, he produces 'many useful things' from the serpent-spirit's nimble body. By doing so he validates the spirit's noble deed of metamorphosis and, in return, expects to be recognized by the spirit. **Anuasi** [craftsman] is believed to go forth after death to reside in the presence of the Creator Bird of the Dawn.

.....It is remarkable that a craftsman should acquire shamanic attributes for reasons other than practicing shamanism. Like the Warao canoe maker, basket makers acquire shamanic power strictly for personal advancement, reinforcing their social status by attributes pertaining to shamanism without accepting the role of a religious practitioner.

It seems clear, then, that along with the more pragmatic socio-economic factors and associated positive identities that motivate the production of basketry, we must not underestimate the importance of ideational dimensions as dynamic forces in this respect. Uasi craftsmen, going quietly about their business, may have their minds on the Otherworld more often than on 'stylistic patterns,' subtly and invisibly weaving dreams and visions into their baskets.

Sitting for prolonged periods on stools and engaged in basketry, Xié dwellers produce objects for home use, sale and trade,⁹² and simultaneously gain prestige associated with cool concentration and deftly executed skill. Many elder Xié dwellers also use the latter stages of basket making as a time to recount the myths that opened this chapter. Only those individuals who expertly weave designs into their baskets (such as that of the agouti, the agouti's tooth, or that of the cut manioc bread), and extend their art to the fabrication of other utensils, including sieves, small basins for manioc mass, oven fans and the manioc bread-flipper, are understood to make 'beautiful' artisanal utensils. Tunu *pajé*, Lino, was one of these individuals (see figure 6, p.141), and Campinas based Floriano was another (see figure 7, p.144). These individuals were older, had practiced their sitting skill for longer, and had physiological aptitudes that would have been an impossibility for those who have not mastered this technique through a corporeal (neuromuscular) cultivation. Thus the toe technique for stripping a vine used to make these baskets (*arumã*) is no mean feat, but a carefully acquired physiological skill, together with the hours spent balancing the body on the stool. Here the body itself is indeed a refined tool and uses techniques that lend structure to the mind-body while also producing beautiful things. Sitting on stools to produce good-

⁹²People produce baskets all year-round, but are especially industrious during the winter months when they also produce these objects for exchange of foodstuffs.

beautiful (*puranga*) basketry requires and produces both a structured physiology and a well-structured mind.

Basketry is closely associated with proper conduct, as Wilbert (*ibid.*: 6) observed among the Warao. His observations hold equally true for the Warekena:

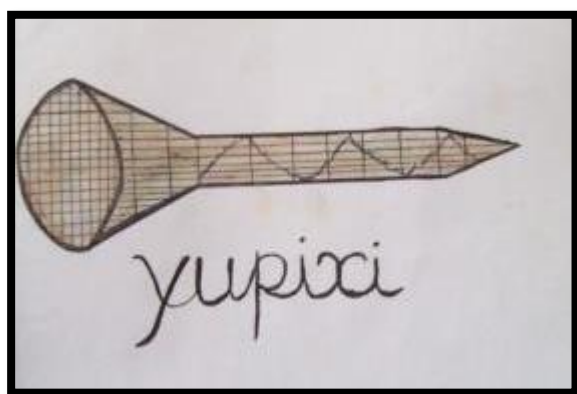
One basic rule of this professional code demands that the craftsman treat **itiriti** with due respect. The craftsman will never just dump the remains of **itiriti** stems after peeling off the surface material. The ophidian master spirit of **itiriti** is provoked by people who carelessly step on these scraps, or worse still, burn them. Offenders will be smitten with boils in the anal or pubic regions or else punished with an excruciating toothache.....Neatness and conduct are the most characteristic features of the **itiriti** people and, therefore, the trademark of the basket maker's profession.

Sitting on the stool is an essentially male activity as women and children sit on the floor or the compressed earth of the homestead. However, there are certain moments when women also sit on stools: when cooking and when giving birth. For women, cooking is also understood as an art in self-cultivation. Cooking is an activity that requires compound resources: a place to cook (e.g. in one's house or adjacent kitchen), firewood or manufactured coal, a receptacle in which to cook and of course, something to eat, ideally some game or fish. When cooking, women are sure to have all the materials they require at hand, as the fire is to be constantly watched (-and the gruel for breakfast frequently stirred-), removing, adding or adjusting sticks to regulate the temperature and blowing to re-ignite or spread the fire. In the cool early hours of the morning and evening, women pay great attention to how they cook.

Given the cool winter season, and the relative lack of foodstuffs, this is a time to be especially attentive to cooking practice. When singeing the hairs of the seasonally available monkey (whose hairs must be burnt prior to cooking), individuals take care not to wet the still warm, singed hair of the monkey in the cool river water. If the food boils over from the pot, this food should not be consumed, but thrown away, otherwise the seasonal and cosmic giant armadillo (*Tatu wasu*) will cause instant death (see forthcoming discussion). Over-boiling foods incites the wrath of the forest-dwelling *kurupira*, who is attracted by the foul smell. The *kurupira* is also attracted by the aroma of barbecued fish and meat from men who pause to eat in the forest. This kind of cooking does not require the seated labour of a woman to

produce food. When women menstruate, men will often prepare and cook food for themselves and their children. Otherwise cooking is a woman's affair and requires skill.

A still more characteristic example of a woman's strength (*kirimbawa*) and cool-minded skill is childbirth. Women tend to sit on stools to give birth, and this is a time when they show their seated capacities. 'Knowing how to sit' is a quality of women who are able to have rapid and relatively pain-free births, as well as produce healthful infants. Women sit on stools to give birth and women who 'do not know how to sit', prolong their births and injure their babies sometimes causing death (see Chapter Four). For women, this is thus a monthly and menstrual (though not on a stool) and cyclically periodic affair; whereas for men, who are denser and cooler than women, this is a time that relates to their own productive activities. For both however, stool sitting, as a neurophysiological accomplishment, is known to cultivate and structure the body-mind: 'humans create their cognitive powers by creating environments in which they exercise these powers' (Ingold 2001: 133). As a closed, centred practice, 'patience' is understood as a great virtue and cultivated skill typified by winter arts. The winter becomes a time for personal transformation, very much like the giant river anaconda (*Buya wasu*), now forming the river's waters but soon to return to his celestial dwelling in the sky.



*Dry season: the Emergent topography
(mauwari) of the celestial snake*⁹³

'Offering an object before a journey
[fishing]...is healthful'

Irineu in Campinas, field notes 27/04/2010

Figure 8: The *yupixi* or *matapí* is used for fishing during the summer months. Image taken from a picture-dictionary made by the Campinas school students.

⁹³The annual cycles starts here, with the rising of the *Buya wasu* constellation. Compare Ribeiro and Kenhiri (1989: 98), who states 'The year begins in October', (where the authors confusingly refer us to the table which begins with January), with the 'pit viper illumination'.

By August the *Buya wasu* has risen into the sky and brings hard bouts of rain punctuated by strong sun. Water levels are rapidly dropping and petrified ancestral homes of their own and animal ancestors now emerge in the shape of exposed rocks, boulders and beaches (the mythscape of Chapter Two, see photo of Tunu rapids, figure 9)⁹⁴ and are described as ‘*bonito*’ (beautiful). The favoured diet of fish, initially the small fish *pirá miri* caught in traps (*matapí*, see figure 8) at newly exposed rapids and later larger fish are now available in abundance; and the fruits of cultivated and wild palms may now be collected. This is also a time to prepare and work manioc gardens, the defining feature of contemporary civilized and modern people.

Summer is the time of Xié vitality. The low water levels are indicative of the season’s ecological abundance that emerges together with the Xié cosmos in the form of the mythscape. The two are intricately intertwined since the *pirá miri* that emerge at the rapids recall human emergence from the water to the land and the riverine location of ancestors along the Xié reinforce such an understanding. Unlike the high-water of the *buya wasu* river, which is the time of primordial other (and others in general), summer is the time of vital human emergence, people show themselves to be potent and strong (*kirimbawa*) in productive activities. The beauty, then, attributed to this season is a combined aesthetic, moral and ecological evaluation of cosmic abundance.



Figure 9: Son Sasha, at Tunu rapids at low-water, during the dry season.

⁹⁴If turtles are present, as they were historically in Tunu, this is also when they may be observed burrowing and laying their eggs in the sand.

The Xié mythscape also exposes animal ancestors with whom Xié dwellers engage. Newly revealed enchanted riverine and riparian dwellers are both seen and seeing; and ecological abundance is mediated by the ever watchful gaze of animal owners. Those passing these sites, when fishing for example, make an offering and perform a blessing that offer a means to ‘closing the *majuba*’s eyes’ and thus avoid injury, hardship or other adversities. Seasonal engagement for subsistence fishing is premised on both appropriate respect for these owner-sites, through appropriate comportment; and discretion in the quantity of their ‘children’, (fish and game), that will be removed.

‘There are a lot of streams that have owners here’, Campinas resident Irineu explained to me. The ancient ancestral camp of Xié ancestor Meru, along Mewe stream (*igarapés*), is one such area rife with enchanted ancestor homes of *maiwa* and the *mauwari*. Living near the *igarapés* itself, Irineu knew many of the enchanted sites here and their origins.

During a more formalised conversation in the community house, he recounted to me the search for *wermi* -the place where the animals dwell- which is said to lie at the end of the *igarapé* itself.

...There is another stone there. We call it *tapira* (tapir). This was what people call ‘*anta*’, it is a stone. It is the figure of..., the image [also used to refer to soul or essence] of the *anta*. It has a head, a spinal column, [etc.]...only is stone. It is a big stone. That stone is well respected. If you pass that stone it is better not to bother it at all. After that you have another stone ‘Chima’, the ‘father of the fish’, where the fish are born. That place, well, no one should be near there. If people wash their utensils there after eating, well these stones don’t like it. My late grandfather [reached] Weremi, -this place where all the animals live. My late grandfather got there. It is like a mountain range. From far away they say you can hear the cries of the animals who live there: game. When they reached there, there were lots of monkeys, tapirs, birds, everything. The people arrived there and could see the monkeys, who came up to see you, in that well-cleared forested area. We want to go there, only we can’t reach it. It is right at the headwaters. My late grandfather got there. The family of the father of Enivaldo from Cumatí, he said he has already seen this place. That is where the animals live. A lot of them. We call it Weremi.

One of these stories detailed the petrified remains of two elder stones found together along the *igarapé* and explained the motives for their petrification:

A long time ago, there is a story about two people there. One day, they thought about going to another place. This place is called Weremi. In Weremi [it was told] there was a lot of game, a lot of birds, all types of game. This was a place of plenty, in ancient times. So...the husband said to his wife, 'let's go there, to this place called Weremi, to see if all this game is there.' So they left in haste the next morning. Before they left however, they had eaten [in haste] cold food. Since this *igarapés* is the '*igarapé* de plenty', in order to enter you must fast...[but] they just went there. After they entered, 'let's eat again' [he said] 'because we are hungry'. So they stopped at a place where there was a little beach. They ate the food without bothering to warm it up. Then they were being followed [by the *maiwa*]. Until they reached this place, and sat there, a type of magnet attracting them. And they sank. At that same moment, these old people transformed into stones – his wife was also turned to stone. Until this day, those elders are still there. That is the story. So, this old man and old woman are well respected and he can be seen in the middle of the *igarapé*, and his wife on the riverbank. They are there, until this day when we pass this place, you can talk with them. You can say 'Elder, I am going down this *igarapé*, but don't let anything happen to me. No rain or anything'. So, if you take something with you, you can offer it, like *beijú* [manioc bread]. Give it to them. Because they are like guards. It is like this until now.

The couple in the story are careless and unmindful. First, they were overly curious in wanting to find the place of plenty. Their curiosity was compounded by their insatiable lack of self-discipline, since they neither dieted, nor bothered to reheat the foods they did eat. Their uncouth behaviour activated the *majuba*, opening the *majuba's* eyes and leading the elders to be actively pursued. Today, like the magnet that dispatched them to their death, many encounters with the *majuba* (as a result of heedless behaviour) are evinced by the (seasonal) appearance of whirlpools, and *majuba* sites themselves are characterised by uncommon ecological observances, such as the unwillingness of certain animals (mainly birds) to frequent these areas. For these elders, their unmindful acts had literally petrifying consequences and when telling me this story, Irineu was reminded of a more recent personal encounter he had had with these elders during a fishing trip with his younger cousin:

What I am going to tell you now happened more recently. They make rain come if you don't respect them. All of a sudden and immediately. Once, I went up there. Me with my cousin. I said to my cousin, 'Cousin, that stone is sacred. We shouldn't bother it. If we pass it, we should talk with them so that nothing happens to us. My cousin, he is *teimoso* (fearful/fearless). He got a stick of wood and he threw it at the stone. That's it. We left immediately [up-stream]. Now, this was summer time. It was very sunny during that time.

But when we were going up stream we saw that the water was rising, the river was becoming fuller. So, we didn't manage to get anything [fish]. So, we only got a few fish, and we came back. When we got there [to the rock-elders], my cousin is *teimoso*...you know. He hit the stones again with a stick and he said 'you stone...I don't know what you are...i am going to hit you again because you won't let us catch any fish'. And he threw the stick again. So, returning downstream our gasoline dried up. I said 'I think I am going so that our fish doesn't go off. You bring the canoes back slowly. Ok, he said. I put the fish in the little canoe so I could get back earlier. He stayed there. Shortly, the sky became dark and it was going to rain. Then it rained. All that time he was coming back, slowly, rowing. It is far away from here. It rained during his whole journey home. I said to him, 'can you see what that elder is doing'. That is the way, it is better to respect those elder stones. That is how it works. That works [is animated, does his job]. That is it. Until this day, it is better not to bother them. Pass there calmly.

In the past it was like this: we offered things to him. That is it, then we could go on in peace. But today it is different. If we go to give him *beiju*, it could still rain. He won't let us fish. Better you go by like that [silently, without bothering them], and offer nothing to them. I don't know if rain is good for them. I don't know.

Success, well-being and safety when accessing fishing sites is premised on following strict guidelines such as fasting and active, steadfast wakefulness during fishing itself. Enchanted 'edler' stones are also awakened when someone fails to show proper conduct and respect for the site itself. Thus these sites are not intrinsically hazardous: the enchanted ancestor homes (*maiwa*) become active and pursue people, producing unseasonal climate changes, only when an individual exposes himself to their injurious presence by evoking it through his own misdeeds. Other encounters may be more dangerous.

Jurez, who became Captain of Tunu during my fieldwork, explained that while carrying out their daily activities, one's respect for these sites should remain intact. He specifically cited the *camuchi pozo*, where a group of men had gone in a communal work party (*wayuri*) to procure canoe wood. One man's bad overly playful manner led him to suffer immediate consequences of near paralysis and Jurez's brother, Jaime, had to bring him back. 'he became sick – he nearly died', Jurez added, 'don't mess around' in enchanted ancestor locations. In short, context and experience, rather than categorical division between inert and animate topographs, affirms the animacy of certain stones as more dangerously potent than others (cf. Hallowell 1960: 24; Ingold 2000).

Knowing when, where and whom to respect, and how to do so, shows that discernment and prudence are virtues cultivated in the context of deep eco-cosmic knowledge (Reichel-Dolmatoff 1976; Århem 1996) and experience. When Magdalena, our host in Tunu, was casually telling me about her husband's search for crabs as fish bait, she described how her husband stopped because it 'spoke in his heart' that there were enough crabs for him to fish. Mindfulness becomes a truly holistic and emplaced cultivated art, whose sense and logic is all the more obvious when ecological and esoteric knowledge are combined towards beautiful

and bountiful yet inexcessive ends.



Figure 10: Franci enjoying the exposed banks of Tunu Island in the summer and the seasonal butterflies.

Since summer is a time when Xié dwellers can effectively engage in manioc cultivation, both late winter and summer are the time when productive labour abounds, and engaged labour brings its own ailments. Some of the season's hazards can lead to death, especially those linked to the ancestral sites. Others, like the Aru rains, are not serious but rather common ailments and complaints: the hot air is related to the flapping wings of the seasonally prevalent yellow butterflies. On sandy beaches where women wash, these

butterflies sit on dirty clothes and are said to cause the coughs of the

community's children who play with them (see figure 10).⁹⁵

⁹⁵For further observations of the relationships between coughs and butterflies see Goldman (2004:341)

The heat of production and communal work of wayuri

On a daily basis a person becomes openly potent (*saruã*) when engaging in productive activities. Production (tasks related to subsistence), is itself defined by sweaty, heated, hard, piercing and loud activities/actions and potent smells and/or general aperture (also true of reproduction, Chapter Four).⁹⁶ To avoid the latter, people cool and close themselves off by bathing, an appropriate technique to remove the crude fish-smell (*epitchou*) because ‘it is good to avoid *saruã*’. Eating cold foods or failing to reheat foods also causes *saruã*. All consumption requires that open states of *saruã* be regulated by the cooling technique of river bathing. In this last instance, people become *saruã* when they fail to mediate hot-cold states appropriately: whilst cold bodies are prepared to ingest hot foods, hot bodies should not consume cold foods.

During the summer productive work increases and a great deal of time is spent in the manioc garden. Families set out early to travel by canoe to their gardens, and walk briskly along forest paths (on average a half-hour trip). While the gardens were planted just before the Aru rains, summer is a time for cultivation and increased garden activity: planting, weeding and general maintenance and cultivation.

In their manioc gardens however, women who get hot and sweaty during their work, avoid taking any fluids during work (without first bathing, - which would mark the end of the task) for fear of an attack by invisible darts (*warama*). ‘Having *chibé* in the sun’, typically in the midday heat, a person becomes dangerously open *saruã* and the *warama*’s arrow is ready and waiting. Shot by a forest-bird, these invisible darts are a cited form of *mauwari*. **Warama**, made of invisible *patua* palm spines or Brazil wood, often hit the waist, knees and elbows, but can affect the whole body. The invisible darts of the forest-dwelling *kurupira* directly hit one’s tooth, causing both toothache and headache. The heat of the summer season causes women - who carry their manioc baskets suspended by a strap across the forehead - to suffer headaches⁹⁷. Women also complain that their hands ache from grating manioc. Leaving the garden women carry heavy loads of manioc baskets on their head basket, back along the paths with the same lightness of step that characterised their load-free journey to the garden.

⁹⁶In the case of potent smells, the *epitchou* crude-fish smell (also associated with snakes) should be avoided. When uncooked fish accidentally ingested through improper cooking, this makes one open, vulnerable and limp like the fish, leading to more excessive states of openness (here, specifically orifices, the anal and to a lesser extent the oral passages), such as diarrhoea, mucus (*moco*) in the diarrhoea or worse, bloody diarrhoea and vomiting.

⁹⁷The cord used to carry the basket was customarily used to start fires, causing the hot head?

Warama refers both to the pathogenic darts and to the illness that it causes, akin to the Baniwán **walama** that Garnelo (2003: 50) has also described along the neighbouring Içana and Aiary rivers. The Baniwa however, distinguish between different types of **walama**, that are linked by the type of pointed pain that they cause and by their cosmic classification. **Walama** is caused by spirit beings and ‘astro-celestial’ (ibid.) ones residing in the air and from thunder.

Simão Aniso of Anamoin explained to me that the *warama* was borne of mythic times. At midday, two shamans broke the Brazil wood and the *patua* palm spine respectively and on breaking these were shot directly into anybody found to be drinking without first bathing. The knowledge of how to procure and shoot invisible darts was passed onto forest-dwelling birds and they are the ones taught by the ancestral spirits to shoot careless individuals.

Along the Xié, despite its association with forest birds shooting the darts, *warama* is also used to describe smooth and slippery rocks found along minor waterways encountered on the way to the manioc garden or when fishing. These are places where men are similarly afflicted by darting pains in the lumbar regions and shoulders and by sciatica, which is conceivably linked to the special type of footwork required to manage these riverside stones, differing from that called for on forest paths, in fruit-bearing trees, in the canoe or in the village. Ingold (1993: 166) states: ‘Through the exercises of descending and climbing, and their different muscular entailments, the contours of the landscape are not so much measured as *felt* – they are directly incorporated into our bodily experience.’ Only a shaman who knows how to cure by snuffing (psychoactive snuff) *pariká* can help cure *warama*.

A man’s principal task is the cutting and burning of prospective manioc garden sites. These are by definition ‘hot’ tasks: the cutting of hard woods and the loud sounds they make, especially today when those who can afford it use a chain-saw,⁹⁸ fire-burning, and again cutting the remaining trees are all understood as mutually informed hot, hard and dry tasks. As such men cool themselves, by fasting, before preparing manioc gardens. It was with respect that Jurez recounted to me how in Xié antiquity, Darikawana achieved great efficacy in felling manioc sites because of his ability to maintain a strict diet which allowed him to continue his labour until its end. In the past, this task was a communal one (*wayuri*), however

⁹⁸In a joke related to me by my husband when undertaking *wayuri*, the chain-saw was likened to a woman, both of which like hard sticks. The joke also alludes to the parallel between hard and hot productive and reproductive labour.

more recently and in the context of villages and increasing economic differentials based on manioc production, it has become more of a nuclear family task that also forms part of the bride-service.

Men engage in physical labour, becoming hot and sweaty, when they undertake the communal work of *wayuri*. *Wayuri* is an ancient indigenous institution based on mutual cooperation and assistance oriented towards a particular task and characterised by a convivial atmosphere. *Wayuri* tasks vary from clearing forested areas to creating new settlements, in house-making and during the production of larger canoes. Today, with schooling and the adoption of the calendar year and in context of *comunidades*, *wayuri* has become a formalised Friday affair. As such, this is also a day for occasional repairs in the community infrastructure, including the communal house (mainly a forum for male speech, but also co-gendered parties), the school and the church (however, this appears to be more the case in Evangelical communities). While *wayuri* takes place throughout the year, its practice is more intense during (late) winter, in September and October (and in summer is less frequent). The voluntary nature of *wayuri* is highlighted in work invitations, normally made by the captain, who keenly co-opts and entices the help of young strong men; but also asks those not truly committed to the task to forgo participation, lest they injure themselves and the community will have to care for them.

House-building is an important *wayuri* event. After the wooden structure of the house has been built, the roof is expertly tied and coved with piassava palm or *karanã* palm (*Mauritia carana*, See figure 5 in the introduction of this thesis). A family may dwell in this structure for some time before the walls are plastered with mud. Plastered mud is prepared by the men who churn the earth in specially prepared mud-holes (see figure 11). This mud is then rolled into balls and transported to the house onto which it is thrown and plastered flat to fill the gaps in the wood, providing a smooth and fine finish. Although dominated by men, this last phase is open to males and females of all ages, as early as one can walk.

A further occasion for *wayuri* is in the procuring of large and heavy trunks to make canoes. Under the direction of Tunu elder Luís, my husband volunteered to help with one such task together with a group of healthful young men. On their return he described to me how, what had initially been a 10 minute forest walk to the felled trunk, turned into a two and a half-hour expedition hauling the trunk to the river's edge. As Luís helped and gave verbal instructions, Carlos was impressed by the convivial and joyful atmosphere when hauling the

trunk through the forest towards the river. Carlos' participation allowed him to be covertly evaluated as *kirimbawa*,⁹⁹ while other youths were sweating and puffing, and were, to their great shame, described as 'not tired, but dead'.

Figure 11: Mud preparation for house building during *wayuri*.



At certain moments during the production of the canoe itself, especially larger canoes, other men will be called upon to aid its production. This is particularly the case during the delicate burning out phase of a canoe's production. During this phase a fire is lit under the canoe, to facilitate the wood-opening:

⁹⁹Such an evaluation is always covert, never a direct congratulatory appreciation.



Figure 12: Firing a dug-out canoe to widen its berth. Only men, prepubescent girls and post-menopausal women attend

Carlos [my husband] went to help with the fire burning of the canoe and was about to wash in the river when Luís called him back. He can't wash until the canoe is finished opening, he was told, or it will break. This was also when Luís divulged to Carlos why he didn't call us on our earlier request to be present during the burning out phase at the beginning [of fieldwork], when I was pregnant' (see figure 12 on a separate instance of canoe-burning procedure).

The heat of my pregnant state was a joint affair (of husband and wife), and combined with the heat of canoe burning it was understood to make the canoe crack.

Finally, given the Xié interest in bread, my husband proposed to make a bread-oven, causing Campinas leader Jose to call a two-day communal *wayuri* to assist in its construction. The blocks were made with compressed blocks of mud to form a circular oven. At the drying out burning phase of the oven's production (see figure 13), the oven cracked slightly and the men stated that it was the fault of pregnant women who had remained overly close, observing (due

to their curiosity) during the process. The women's heat, compounded with the heat of burning, was in excess of that for proper production.



Figure 13: Firing the oven in José's kitchen.

Men having bad dreams become overly open (*saruã*) and avoid *wayuri* and other tasks. Campinas resident Irineu also recounted to me one dream in which he playfully chased a woman who appeared to him in the forest. The woman took off her underpants and threw them at him and off they went running through the forest, him chasing her. Luckily, as Irineu recounts, he threw away the underpants in his dream and decided not to follow the woman.

When he woke the next day, he was glad he had not pursued the enchanted woman (who was a form of *majuba*), else he may not have returned/awoken. The following day he did not venture into the forest to hunt.¹⁰⁰ People tend to heed the warning of seeing *majuba* in their dreams by taking precautions typical of those *saruã*, including cooling the body by bathing,

¹⁰⁰Unlike predictive dreaming in which one can interpret dreams such that killing a person will allow one to find large game, or killing various people indicates one will encounter a band of monkeys; dreams which are dominated by the unknown women and those from the city are dangerous, are of an essentially different nature and in women the *majuba* can impregnate them with a 'child of the *majuba*'.

and not engaging in hot productive tasks, and avoiding piercing sounds and potent smells (i.e. cutting *cipó* vine to make the *tipiti* manioc press; hunting with guns; and fishing with a spear or bow and arrow; also see Butt-Colson and de Armellada, 1983: 1234 on the avoidance of hot things during the cool state of menstruation). Accordingly, one should avoid routine daily tasks since one will ‘*dar força para morrer*’ (exert yourself needlessly and die). This understanding of apertures moves beyond orifices to include all heated activities that make one sweaty and the body porous, including pregnancy, birth and all potentially painful experiences, which are essentially understood as transformational states.

Hill and Wright state (ibid.: 93) that: ‘The category of Amaru spirits is used to name all the ‘hot things’ (**tsimukani**) introduced by the white man, including the powerful but useful steel tools the Wakúenai use in their gardening, fishing, hunting, house building, and other activities’ and Hill (2003: 57), later states that hot things are ‘not only powerful but unequivocally harmful and destructive’, and includes the ‘names of all exogenous diseases brought to the region by the white man’, a thesis further elucidated by Garnelo (2003). Garnelo (ibid.: 68) defines these as primarily chickenpox, flu, measles, as well as witchcraft-related tuberculosis and malaria, whose classification indicates that these illnesses are quintessentially foreign, resulting from dangerous interactions with radical alters (colonists) historically foreign to the region. However, as I have already suggested, ‘white’ illnesses are not a meaningful sickness category for the Warekena.¹⁰¹

Discussion

Through illustrating the general principle that ‘indigenous socio-logics is based on physiologics’ (Seeger et al. 1979: 13, my translation), this chapter examines how shifting corporeal and psycho-social states are, 1) linked to the life-cycle, 2) carefully orchestrated to reflect seasonal changes, and 3) employ synchronous idioms to comment upon significant shifts in historical and socio-political engagements.

Firstly I discuss the meaning of *kirimbawa* (potency) and *pitua* (impotency). I then detail how the birth canal is opened, and how vaginal bleeding is regulated to ensure good health. I

¹⁰¹My questioning here was particularly led by an ethnographic enquiry into traditional illnesses as part of an initiative led by Luiza Garnelo (2009-2011) for the professional development of AIS. Led by her experience with the Baníwa of the Içana river, the category of ‘white illnesses’ was ‘revitalised’ along the Xié, where they perhaps learnt what (should be considered) a white illness, rather than identifying categories already employed.

then describe how menstruation is linked to the recursive fluctuation of river levels, and to relationships with others, and as such is subject to regulation. The initiation ritual, *kariumã*, is closely synchronised to the changing of the seasons. I take a closer look at different ways of assisting and adjusting one's equilibrium through the act of bathing. The rising waters I describe in terms of *Tatu wasu*, who excavates the riverbanks. The coolness of winter I liken to the calming, cool-minded techniques of weaving and cooking. Finally, in examining the emergent topography exposed by the low water levels, along with the intense agricultural labour required during the dry season, I explain how Xié people constantly strive to maintain their disciplined, cool-minded composure.

An examination of psycho-corporal shifts shows that the person is perceived as a microcosm of ecologically-informed rubrics and as a component of a larger socio-physical (or animate) environment. In a quest for good health, a balanced resonance is therefore sought between the individual human's thermic and hydrometric states – hot or cold, dry or moist, rigid or limp- and those that exist in the wider socio-physical (or animate) environment. Such an understanding is based on the interconnectedness of all living things (their mutually affecting aperture), and on the careful regulation of substances, as they flow in and out of topographic or manmade inlets or human orifices. This focus on the relationship between corporeal, life-cycle, seasonal and cyclical patterns provides a holistic overview of how Xié river dwellers manage and regulate their health and well-being in their daily lives. These practices are specific to the riverine and Arawakan life-style along the Xié, and the 'cosmic society' (Århem 1996) in which its inhabitants live.

In my discussion of the seasonal cycle, I have also examined how a successful human disposition is cultivated through being closely attuned to the changing of seasons. I describe an intimate, symbiotic relationship between personal-proprioceptive states; states of co-residence (community states) and seasonal and environment states. The interplay between these different levels of existence, I contend, is both a consequence and cause of living in an animist environment.

In the literature that addresses the concept of being in the moment and attending to the present, mindfulness is generally understood to mean paying attention to the task at hand. It is also thought to prevent clumsiness, accidents and increasingly, to thwart illness and aid the healing process. I suggest that mindfulness in the Xié context is successfully utilised and maintained because it forms part of Xié aetiologies and pathologies. Indigenous

understanding of sickness is closely linked to seasonality and animist agents, and I argue that mindfulness can in the final analysis be viewed as an enlarged, attuned awareness of the environment that surrounds a person. Conscious, carefully orchestrated actions, practiced within the context of family and a host of others, I suggest, allows for the animist perception to emerge.

Amazonianist writers have produced detailed accounts of animism, a term revived in Descola's work on the 'society of nature', considerably embellished by Århem's (1996) 'cosmic society'; by Viveiros de Castro's (1996; 1998) perspectivist thesis; and in work on embodied perspectives (Londoño Sulkin 2005; 2010). Elsewhere, reflecting on animist relationality and drawing upon her work among the Nayaka of India, Bird-David (1999: 333-334) sums up the general sentiment: 'The local sense of personhood predicates engagement with others: whoever engages with others responsively and responsibly is a 'person' in their terms, regardless of gender, age, race and even body-form and humanity'. Amid the wealth of animist literature, there are functionalist explanations that detail its positive effects on local eco-systems (Reichel-Dolmatoff 1976; Århem 1996). But for the most part we still have little idea how people come to perceive the world as animate. In my description of the Xié environment I propose that animism stems from the acute perceptive skills of these deeply empirically minded riverside dwellers.

Elsewhere, notions of 'magical-animism' have been discussed within the Buddhist context, in which notions of consciousness and enlightenment –first emerging some 2,000 years ago– have disseminated into Western biomedical discourse. Buddhism and animism form a single religious tradition, as Obeyesekere (1963) initially observed with respect to Sinhalese Buddhism. 'Magical-animism' and Buddhism co-exist, inform and mutually permeate each other to comprise a single social field, as Tambiah (1970) observed in Thailand. Later studies also emphasise the place of animism in 'popular' Buddhism, encompassing reflections on monastic life that take 'a frankly animistic form' (Chouléan 1988: 39; De Silva 2006).

The animist engagements of practicing Buddhists, including monks, have been obscured in the biomedical literature on mindfulness, which draws almost entirely from the canonical, priestly 'great tradition' and its associated texts. In this context, mindfulness finds its source in the monastery. The criteria commonly used to evaluate mindfulness in the West, has meant that mindful dispositions can be traced back to the monastery and even reassessed

(Christopher et al. 2009). Here, however, the question of animism is entirely absent. As to why, part of the explanation may lie in the fact that for many people animism remains a ‘schemata of praxis’ (Descola and Pálsson 1996: 87), a model applied to the world, rather than an active way of engaging within it (Ingold 2000: 107).

Descola (1992; 1994; Descola and Pálsson 1996) is perhaps the most prominent writer in the contemporary field of animist studies. Descola revived the term as part of his challenge to the notion that nature and culture are universal categories. Descola presented four ideal types: animism, totemism, analogism, and naturalism. Each system configures its own relationships between humans and non-humans, and the differences can be evaluated through the distinction Descola draws between interiority (intentionality, subjectivity and mind-soul) and physicality (body-form, substance). While each of these systems may be combined, in the animist cosmos all living things possess souls, manifest in a shared interiority and divergent physicality. This is not a separation between society and the cosmos, but rather a *Society of Nature* (Descola 1994) in which the natural world is integral to human sociality. These are points to which I return in Chapter Seven; here I reflect on Descola’s ‘schemata of praxis’. Construed as a mental construct or potential operation of the mind (Descola 1992: 114), this notion of animism has been successful in illustrating the complex, rather than primitive, nature of thought. Unwittingly, however, not only does such a description reduce animism to the realm of cognition (a mental model), it also construes animism as (mistaken) ‘belief’, rather than as knowledge of the world (on the use of the verb to believe, see Needham 1972).¹⁰² Early on, Tylor (1881: 338) argued that primitive peoples relied on ‘analogy or reasoning by resemblance’. For Frazer (1922 [1981]), such ‘reasoning by resemblance’ accounted for the belief in magic. Robertson Smith (1894: 274) agreed that for the primitive mind there was ‘no sharp line between the metaphorical and the literal,’ and he blamed the ‘unbounded use of analogy characteristic of pre-scientific thought,’ which produced ‘confusion between the several orders of natural and supernatural beings’. ‘Magical’ or ‘associative’ thinking (Tylor 1958 [1871]), ‘sympathetic’ or ‘contagious’ magic (Frazer 1922 [1981]) and ‘mystical participation’ (Lévy-Bruhl 1922), were part of a ‘primitive mentality’, that wrongly perceives humanlike attributes (intentionality) in nonhuman or inanimate phenomena, and thus failed to separate the natural from the supernatural.

¹⁰²For an interesting discussion on notions of faith, belief and dogma, see Viveiros de Castro (2011: 39): ‘...they neither believe, nor refuse to believe’.

Evans-Pritchard (1967: 145) said of Azande witchcraft that: ‘A Zande cannot get out its meshes because it is the only world he knows...they reason excellently in the idiom of their beliefs, but they cannot reason outside or against their beliefs.’ For the Azande, ‘nothing could be more natural’ (1965: 109) than witchcraft. And notwithstanding these efforts to rationalise the logic of animist ideas, animism remained just that, in this view: an idea or belief, formed and nurtured inside the Azande people’s heads and then projected onto the environment around them. Animism from this perspective remains a mistaken method of interpreting an otherwise empirical, objectively perceived ‘real’ world that is constantly being illuminated by the findings of science. An alternative is offered by Ingold (2006b: 10):

‘Animism is not ‘a way of believing *about* the world’ but rather, the ‘condition of being *in* it.’ Ingold (2000: 15) suggests the observer is, ‘an active participant in the environment rather than a passive recipient of stimuli’. From this perspective, ‘vision penetrates the world rather than holding up a mirror to it’ (ibid.), and thus is a necessarily selective and subjective process. This understanding of the phenomenology of perception was a project instigated by Merleau-Ponty (1962 [1945]) who emphasised the reciprocity between the perceiver and the perceived. The bodily subject is entirely immersed in the world it perceives, and this highly embodied and embedded mode of perception causes a mutual reverberation ‘in the entire field of relations in which beings of all kinds, more or less person-like or thing-like, continually and reciprocally bring one another into existence’ (Ingold 2006b: 10).

Perceptive engagement extends to artefacts, encompassing what Ingold (2000: 345) describes as the ‘crystallisation of activity within a relational field, [with] its regularities of form embodying the regularities of movements that gave rise to it.’ The production of objects is an intimate and inalienable venture that plays an important part in producing animate artefacts. This is evinced by Santos-Granero (2009) and other contributors to his volume, who describe craftsmanship and craft-care as instrumental in the production of (animate) subjects, and hence, as ensouling. A similar analogy may be applied to the landscape, which is not an idle substrate –matter upon which other forms take shape, but rather the result of the ‘condensation or crystalizations of activity...’ (Ingold 2011: 45). This ties with my description of the mythscape as being animate and relational, rather than merely an oral artefact of history or a function of territoriality (Santos-Granero 1998; Hill and Wright 1988).

Of course, Ingold does not articulate the authors’ work which he draws upon in terms of mindfulness, nor does he present any thesis on mindfulness per se. He does, however,

discuss how the proper coupling of perception and action, at the right time and place, can allow ability and skill to flourish. Ingold's (2011) notion of life, and of being alive to the task at hand, most closely approaches what I describe here as mindfulness. This can be defined as the condition of 'being alive to the world, [an openness] characterised by a heightened sensitivity and responsiveness in perception and action, to an environment that is always in flux....' (Ingold 2006b: 10). Rather than emanating from a mental blueprint for action, animist perception emerges as part of this lived practice. Mindfulness forms part of the 'poetics of dwelling' (Ingold 2000: 110) and effectively describes the detailed aesthetics of skilled practice.

For Xié dwellers, the consequences of mindlessness are evident in the actions and interventions of animist agents, and it is to these non-human persons that one also attends in one's daily life. This is another facet of how 'behaviour affords behaviour' (Gibson 1979: 135; cf. Bird-David 1999). For the animist perceiver, ecological 'affordances' (Gibson 1979) act back in personable ways and inform appropriate composure. For this reason, to state - as our accounts of mindfulness in Euro-America do - that a lack of mindful interaction has consequences on one's ability to perform tasks skilfully offers a poor reflection of Xié dwellers' understanding of healthy intersubjective engagement. Rather, human interaction within the animist environment is premised on an understanding of non-human beings and their behaviour and how they can affect the health of humans with whom they live. Rather than solely a cosmology, animist perception is an emergent part of our 'mammalian intelligence' (Abram 2010) and is part and parcel of mindful and 'relational' (Bird-David 1999) epistemologies as they unfold through active engagement in local ecologies.

Chapter Four

The perinatal period

Introduction

The entire perinatal period vividly exemplifies the composite nature of Amerindian persons, made from a compound of tangible and intangible substances which undergo a gradual accumulation and condensation to form babies. Ethnographic insights afforded by C. Hugh-Jones' (1979) work among the North-western Desana, detailing the prolonged consubstantiality required of human growth, specifically in conception and pregnancy, exposed perinatal practice as a fertile ground for further anthropological enquiry. Since then and throughout Amazonia, perinatal practices have served as a platform on which to demonstrate this essentially 'processual-relational' (Conklin and Morgan 1996) and intentionally 'made' quality of the human body and person.¹⁰³ On-going processes of bodily fabrication are most intensive during early human life, in which perinatal care aims at the production of a specific human type of corporality.

The nurture required by infant humans has been likened to the nurturing process that secures optimal plant growth (on manioc, C. Hugh-Jones 1979a; 1979b; Descola 1994; Gow 2000; on manioc and other plants, Rival 1993). In central Brazil, Ewart (2005) has discussed a series of equivalences between the stages of planting, cultivation and collection of peanuts, and the perinatal states of pregnancy, birth and post-birth. The importance of socio-personal states for both productive and reproductive processes highlights Panará concepts of **suakiin** (availability/sociability) and **suangka** (laziness, unsociability/availability (Ewart 2000; 2013) and the necessity of the former for proper growth in both plants and infants. Ewart establishes that for the Panará, open and joyful dispositions relate directly to the abundance and size, or quality, of the (re)produced subject.

Reflecting on the intensity of nurturing practices required for foetal and neonatal growth, Amerindian authors point to the necessity of making the neonatal other into kin. Writing on the Arawakan Piro, Gow (2000: 47) has noted that birth is a definitive moment in which to

¹⁰³Conklin and Morgan (1996: 672; also see Conklin 1996; 2001) describe how, among the Warí, personhood is not given automatically at birth with a body, but is acquired incrementally, via the sharing of bodily substances with kin and through their on-going acts of sharing and caring, so that babies 'are still being made' up to six weeks post-birth.

assess the potential humanity of the child: ‘Is it human (yineru)?’ Piro ask, or has it succumbed to predatory agents and assumed the form of a fish, tortoise or ‘an animal nobody had ever seen’. Given the animistic potential for non-human sociality and both human and non-human kinship, body manipulations used in neonatal care can help babies assume their proper human form. From a plethora of potential beings, fetuses and neonates must be made to assume and develop the essential human form and way of being that will then define them as real persons (Vilaça 2002).¹⁰⁴ In a similar vein, Fausto (2007: 505) notes ‘the postpartum period is crucial to defining the baby’s species: father, mother and kindred all strive to fabricate it as a human and as kin’.

Within this frame of reference, post-partum prescriptions, known as the *couvade*, and birth rituals including infant naming, have been the subject of keen anthropological attention (S. Hugh-Jones 1979; C. Hugh-Jones 1979a; Hill 2002: 20). The *couvade* details the many complex activities, foods and behaviours imposed on new parents, and the ones best avoided because they make people sick. The focus was initially on male post-partum practice (Rivière 1974: 425). However as Rival (1998: 292) has established, the *couvade* appears rather as a marker of co-parenthood whereby both parents assume the role of ‘host’ to their neonatal ‘guest’, who, lacking full humanity, will gradually be incorporated into convivial relations and the Huaorani community of substance. Observance of *couvade* restrictions publicly links the child to its caretakers (Rival 1998: 625) and fosters an environment of care and well-being for both the parents and neonate (see also, Belaunde 2001b: 138).

Thus far, the focus has been on post-birth rituals which serve the social function of inserting new lives into existing webs of caring relations (Clastres 1972: 2 [1988]; Hill 1985: 4), and also speak to the continuous ‘transformation-fabrication’ (Fausto 2007: 505) of the infant human being, a process ‘not interrupted by birth’. The analytical kudos has been on prohibitive rather than on prescriptive actions that form persons. However, the transformation of a baby into a person involves the expert execution, by one’s kin, of a wide range of bodily practices, the object of which is the creation of a particular kind of person: a healthy and autonomously dependent person with whom others will want to live.

¹⁰⁴ Attention in active bodily forming through baby massage, tweaking of ears, teeth and eyes, has been documented throughout Amerindia (Ewart 2000: 287-288), where neonates must come to imitate or replicate kin, rather than unknown others. Thus Gow (2000: 49) notes ‘...the Piro core idiom of kinship stresses the multiplication of identical entities’ and Lagrou (2000: 160), comments on the transfer of kin’s facial features accorded through the intimate action of massage (cf. Taylor 1996: 206).

Conception and pregnancy

There is no single moment of conception; rather, foetuses are gradually given their form through repeated sexual intercourse. This is because conception is not the romance of the meeting of sperm and egg (Martin 1991), but rather the processual gathering, through frequent intercourse, of sperm and menstrual blood in the womb (Conklin and Morgan 1996: 670). These ideas appear common throughout lowland South America, where, as Gow (1991: 152) has noted among the Arawakan Piro, the practice of repeated intercourse is jokingly likened ‘to the pounding together of white manioc and red sweet potato in the making of manioc beer’. S. Hugh Jones’ (1979: 115) work in Northwest Amazonia states that the pregnant woman and the expectant father are called ‘mother and father of the (belly) filling’ – emphasising their joint responsibility for the foetus and its production. Pregnancy then is a state induced by the accumulation of both male and female substances, which complement each other and extend to both productive and reproductive processes (on male and female belly swelling, Conklin 2001: 160-163). This fact has caused Rival (1998: 290) to describe biological reproduction as ‘bisexual by nature and androgynous by definition’.

New bodies (babies) presuppose an existing and on-going relationship between a man and woman. Belaunde’s (2000a; 2001b: 134; 1994: 103) work demonstrates how pregnancy can be seen as the culmination of a loving and caring relationship in bodily form, where it becomes a state desired by the couple in the affirmation of their relationship. Along the Xié, it may be true that an affectionate and loving relationship is a precursor to childbearing, however marriage is the consequence of, rather than the precondition, of childbearing.¹⁰⁵ Thus pregnancy often provokes the mutual bestowal of care, but a loving and caring marital relationship among Xié dwellers tends to truly establish itself after birth. In the absence of such a relationship, babies are not considered to have the capacity to become real persons and are aborted, abandoned, killed or buried alive (C. Hugh-Jones 1975; Belaunde 2001b: 136; Gow 2000).

Sex, among Xié dwellers, is required for the baby’s proper growth, where female and male productive potency, blood (*tui*, *miayi*) and semen respectively, combine to ‘help the baby grow’. Men are described as giving the bones (*kāwera*) and women the blood (*tui*). During the first trimester, foetuses are described as a ‘fist full of blood’; a fact Magdalena told me

¹⁰⁵Thus as Conklin and Morgan (1996) have also noted, physical transformations are necessary requisites for socio-personal identities.

she had observed during spontaneous miscarriage. Furthermore, I was told that at five months, the foetus has assumed a human form, but cannot survive outside of the womb; whereas at seven months the baby has developed its sexual organs and can live.

Sex usually takes place in hammocks during the night, ideally when the children are asleep. Banana leaves placed on the ground in a cleared area of the manioc garden are another favoured spot during the day. Riverside encounters in secluded spots, on the way to the manioc garden, also offer themselves for moments of intimacy (cf. Barbira-Freedman 2010: 162). Campinas' health agent Irineu explained to me that 'Indians will have sex anywhere', but unknowingly passing a site where sexual intercourse has taken place can cause an eye



tumour (an illness known as *mebushi*). My good friend Sueli explained to me that sex should involve the man on top, otherwise it is corporeally immoral and 'like dogs'. Frequent sex is described as 'like food for the baby' - accompanied by fingers-to-the-mouth, food eating gestures. Early on during pregnancy 'there is still of a lot of sex to be had', which was the tongue-in-cheek advice I was given when I entered the field pregnant. Sex is required until the last month(s) of pregnancy, when women describe it as being uncomfortable.¹⁰⁶

Figure1: Doña Marquita.

New relationships are often instigated by a pregnancy. Sueli, the maternal sister-in-law of Lucilda, commented to me how Lucilda became pregnant with the child of Tunu resident Branco. The couple did not, however, come to reside in the same community and Lucilda lost the child (possibly aborted). The following year she again became pregnant and in mid-pregnancy the couple began living together in an affirmation of their relationship and

¹⁰⁶Perhaps the most significant feature of sex is the intimacy it affords in mutual bodily discovery. From this perspective, it forms part of a wide range of bodily loving and caring activities which involve sensual pleasure and allow people to happily inhabit a common dwelling (Rival 2007). In the words of Rival (2007: 174): 'To caress is to know intimately the shape and texture of a foreign body, and to begin to understand how it works.'

willingness to become parents. The couple went on to conceive three children, one of whom died after a week of life. This pattern is typical of Xié marriage relationships, which are generally consummated by the production of children.

Xié dwellers note that babies grow faster when a woman is married and engages in frequent sex, while the pregnancies of unmarried women produce sickly and underweight babies. Doña Mariquita (see figure 1), a midwife from a lower-Xié protestant community describing herself to me as ‘a midwife among evangelists’, explained that ‘a woman, who becomes pregnant without a husband, will have a child who develops very slowly. The children of women with a husband grow quickly’. As a case in point she indicated her fatherless grandson. In similar circumstances Joaquim from upstream Umarituba, described to me how his unmarried niece had become pregnant (*tuya wemi*). In late pregnancy she ‘lost’ the baby, who apparently slipped out of her womb and was quickly taken away with the current while she was washing clothes at the river’s edge. It was with an attitude of disapproval that her paternal uncle went on to describe the visiting priest’s dismay and disbelief at her actions. At the time of fieldwork, still unmarried, she had since given birth to a second child. According to the (probably accurate) suspicions of a former Umarituba resident, these pregnancies were the result of incestuous relations with her father, the infamous Jesus, prolific father of 12, shaman (*pajé*) and captain of the Umarituba community (for more on Jesus, see Chapter Five, p.202-203).

In the lower Xié community of Campinas, José, community leader and eldest son of the community’s founder, spoke to my husband about ‘white’ pregnancy practice. He expressed his bewilderment at the excitement couples showed on news of their pregnancy, which should be the most natural and obvious consequence of their relationship. His observations were probably in response to a popular Brazilian sitcom I had viewed in his house, in which a couple went to have an ultrasound at the hospital and where the machine was passed across the woman’s flat abdomen to identify, the otherwise unapparent, foetus dwelling in the womb. The excitement of the parents to-be, together with a lack of an appropriate corporeal transformation (belly swelling) is what, I believe, made this scene particularly striking to José. As Conklin (2001: 145) observed for the Warí, ‘the development of new or transformed social relationships and the development of bodily capacities occur in tandem and are inseparable’.

According to Rival (1998: 625; 632) ‘the moment of birth is not the beginning of life per se, but rather the transfer from one dwelling (the womb) to another (the longhouse)’ and depends upon ‘its insertion into a web of relations’. If marriage, as a manifestation of proper working relations, is a frequent precursor to foetal growth, so too are proper relations between the foetus and other beings while the baby is in the womb. During the second trimester, the fact of (foetal) dwelling in the womb indicates the initiation of a new relationship, primarily between the foetus and its mother-to-be. Beginning new relationships precludes a personal/physical transformation (i.e. development or growth) not just in the foetus, but in the mother herself (Conklin 2001: 145); and involves the careful mediation of substances, influences and essences which control the nature and degree of consubstantiality in order to promote optimum personal growth. This process then is based on the mother’s (and to a lesser degree, the father’s) ability and willingness to deal with other agents and her own wants, for her personal health and that of her baby. As Belaunde (2001b: 127-128) has also shown, the observance of proper codes of practice are not restricted to post-birth, but begin during pregnancy.



Figure 2: Expectant mothers together with their paternal ‘*machira*’ nephew (right.) and one of the mother’s daughters (front left).

The mother's diet is known to affect both foetal development and the ease of a woman's delivery. Dietary restrictions centre on the *jeito* or 'way of being' of animals: based on moral and physical evaluation, a decision may be made to negate the possibility of consubstantiality with this animal, by avoiding either contact or consumption.¹⁰⁷ Thus, to ensure a smooth delivery, a woman must avoid the most potent predators, defined as large game, including night monkey (*wakari*), jaguar (*yawara*), and all 'fish with spores'. These foods accentuate labour pains (*sasi marika*, which are not differentiated from other types of abdominal pain), and cause prolonged bleeding. Those animals that 'live in a hole', including caiman (*yacaré*) and *paca* (a common rodent), should be avoided lest the baby is 'locked in' during childbirth. In reflection of its meagre body mass, the caiman should not be eaten during pregnancy, for its consumption is noted to produce overly thin babies. All animals that have a 'an ugly way of being/moving' should be avoided so as not to contaminate the baby causing child deformation and disability (known as *machira*, or *deficiente*). Further complications arise from the consumption of undercooked meat or fish, which causes a person to enter a dangerous open and vulnerable state, known as *saruã* (also see previous chapter). *Saruã*, often the result of '*epitchou*' –a stomach turning fish smell-, may cause the baby to become a fish, rather than a baby, or may induce miscarriage. The consumption of uncooked manioc mass, still hot on the clay oven top, can also cause infant deformity (cf. C. Hugh-Jones 1979b¹⁰⁸).

One's diet during pregnancy can also affect the behaviour of the child as s/he grows up, so that many foods, including that of the *zogizogi* monkey (species unknown), which are known for their erratic behaviour, are not eaten to prevent these qualities forming part of the child's personality.

Following dietary guidelines demonstrates an ability to develop self-control and the ability to resist personal desires and cravings for certain foods. In the case of *saruã*, the onus is on one's own attentiveness when cooking and preparing meat and fish, the lack of which would then negatively rebound on oneself and the being dwelling within. The relationship with the baby being grown in the womb is expressed through the careful avoidance of certain foods.

¹⁰⁷Dietary prescriptions are 'meant to accelerate the process of growth and encourage the right bodily composition', (Rival 1993: 639). Also see Rival's (ibid.: 650) footnote, 'taboos on certain meat are said to protect the foetus or the infant from diarrhoea, that is, from liquefaction, therefore securing the strengthening or "hardening" of the body.'

¹⁰⁸In her discussion of consubstantiality with manioc, it would appear that it is not manioc itself, but the heated quality of the manioc, an aspect that she does not explore.

The absence of this care and attention impacts negatively on foetal development. It may result in miscarriage, which among Xié dwellers can be understood as the result of absent-mindedness, which is, as explained above, seen as a moral defect.

These prohibitions are intensified in the third trimester, where continuing foetal growth displays the willingness and ability to live with others – proof of good relations and one’s capacity to ‘resonate’ which may extend out to other persons or things sensitised to the presence of the semi-human foetus. For this reason pregnancy involves further restrictions on activities for those becoming parents; these do not directly affect the foetus or parents, but rather other co-residents and/or anyone else considered to be a person. One of the most frequent prohibitions is the handling of baby pets, most commonly monkeys. Xié resident Everisto advised both my husband and I when pregnant in the field: ‘you are not going to touch the monkey, otherwise he will die, that’s what happens’. Baby monkeys (of the *barrigudo*) are an especially desired type of pet and thought to be ‘very similar to people’, but are known to be especially vulnerable to illness as pets and frequently die.¹⁰⁹ Their handling by pregnant couples is avoided to ensure the pet’s well-being. Pregnant couples may handle other people’s babies, but the baby is then known to lose its hair as a consequence. Essentially then, pregnant couples can affect and be affected by others.

Being pregnant

The culmination of menstrual blood compounded to form a foetus makes women (feel) ‘hot’ during pregnancy.¹¹⁰ Since the excessive culmination of blood and heat are known to produce both pain and counter(re)productive overheated physio-social states, including tension and hysteria, pregnant women avoid other hot persons and actions of excessive heat in daily life. Thus while the woman prepares manioc bread over a searing clay oven in preparation for the post-birth diet, this should not be excessive. Making canoes, neither husband nor wife should attend the burning out phase. Their presence would prevent the wood from withstanding the intense heat of fires and cause the canoe to crack. The presence of pregnant women during men’s work, such as when fishing with a poisoned vine used to

¹⁰⁹However, caught in the wild as game, these monkeys are considered a delicacy and much loved meat. For more on hunted food and kept pets, see Erikson (2000) and Fausto (1999).

¹¹⁰Viveiros de Castro’s (1992: 176) work among the Araweté notes that blood is required ‘in order to heat up and develop the foetus. However he claims that ‘menstrual blood is not thought to play any role.’

stun the fish (*timbo*), is also avoided, for their presence is known to affect the potency of the poison. (Although one group of men from an evangelical community described to me how they had tested this theory, bringing several pregnant women along for the purpose. They found that the poison still worked). Both poison, classified as hot, and the hot, bothered and sweaty states that men enter during communal work, (*wayuri*, also see Chapter Three) are avoided.

Pregnant women should also avoid attending the birth of others, since she may then have a painful birth herself, sharing in the pain of the other mother. Snakebite victims are also negatively affected by a pregnant woman's physical or auditory presence which will increase the pain experienced by the victim (see Chapter Five). Heated social and physical actions and conditions (such as the productive labour involved in raising pets) combine to create overheated socio-physiological states and only add to the heat of the pregnant woman, who should seek a cooling socio-physical environment.

The purpose of early morning bathing during pregnancy (when the water is coolest) is to cool down the mother, counteracting her heated condition. It also centres the mother and facilitates foetal growth: water penetrates the abdomen and adds substance to the foetus by producing fluids in the womb. This gives meaning to the Warekena term for a pregnant individual *tuya wemi* (literally, 'water woman').

Finally, if a pregnant woman becomes flaccid (*molhe*), meaning that she cannot carry out her daily chores, then she should not eat game caught by hunting dogs (her husband's or otherwise). If she does, the dog himself will not be able to hunt any more. Emilio the indigenous health agent explained to me 'it is not all women, just those who are flaccid'. Some women are known to suffer from morning sickness and will cringe from the potent smell of preparing certain fish and game. Such women cannot eat properly. They are 'turned off food' and feel nauseous and vomit. A midwife explained to me that this was all 'the baby's doing'; while a father of two said that some women seem to suffer from feeling 'angry with the fish'. He also suggested that when pregnant, women become lazy about gutting fish.



Figure 3: Using the pregnant body's weight to facilitate the extraction of liquid from the manioc mass.



Figure 4: Rosalia toasts manioc in preparation for the post-birth restrictions.

Exercising *força* (force/potency), a concept I defined and detailed in Chapter Three, is a demonstrated female quality required during pregnancy. Expectant mothers demonstrate their steadfastness by carrying out their tasks (including an increased production in manioc bread to sustain the post-birth diet) purposefully and resolutely, demonstrated through the rapid cleaning of utensils used for the production of manioc flour and including the prompt washing of the manioc press (*tipiti*) after the manioc mass has been expressed. Such diligent and decisive action, also evidenced by a mother-in-law's suggestion to avoid eating in the hammock and sitting in doorways,¹¹¹ is to do with the embodiment of these particular qualities that the mother herself requires for childbirth. These qualities will affect the ability of the child itself –its own early *força*- to wilfully facilitate an easy passage along the birth canal: in the first case babies are said to become crunched up in this position and in the second, babies, like their mothers, will be indecisive about either coming out or staying in (the womb) producing a drawn out labour. Over exertion of *força* can have negative effects on the child, causing the child to assume a breach position. This is because the baby can't hear, but can feel, and over exertion leads to *pusiwera* (a bad and ugly feeling) in the foetus itself. The vigorous exertion of *força* during female productive labour –working in their

¹¹¹These are inappropriate ways to sit, especially in preparation for childbirth. I have discussed sitting in Chapter Three (especially pages 142-147) and return to this in the context of learning how to sit, in Chapter Six, p. 231-235.

manioc garden (*kupixa*, *roça*), peeling and kneading manioc mass, and further instilled through early morning bathing, are essential in securing the *força* needed for delivery. This was described to me as ‘like a vaccine or vitamin supplement for childbirth’. Not only does the efficient execution of these activities lend vital force to the baby itself, it also helps develop essential skills for childbirth in the mother.

Late pregnancy should involve feeling the foetal presence. Sciatic pain in the leg, back and abdominal pain alert a mother to the child’s positive vital presence as it is the ‘child who does this’. These complaints are understood as ‘this is how it is’. Isaura, mother of eight and grandmother, explained for my benefit: ‘when you are in the last phases of pregnancy, you have pain in your leg, in your back – it is the baby that does this. That is how you know that it [the baby] will be ok, that the child is strong’. She went on to explain that ‘If the baby doesn’t move and you don’t feel pain, you’ve got a problem. You know the baby to be well when he moves about and you can feel it.’ Another midwife in Campinas explained that she had ‘pains in her leg, all night and swollen legs, which her husband massaged.’ Furthermore, pregnant bellies may itch, causing the mother to scratch and leaving stretch marks over her abdomen (also see Butt-Colson 1975: 293). Overall, unpleasant bodily sensations associated with late pregnancy are positive signs suggestive of foetal vitality and proper human growth.

Lastly, there are various anecdotal remedies taken in pregnancy that may be used to encourage a rapid delivery, including *cabeça de criança* (a root resembling the crown of a baby’s head) and *baya de araya* (the intestines of a species of river otter) which are taken and applied to the growing abdomen. During this last phase of pregnancy, male siblings were observed running to embrace their mother’s pregnant belly, inhaling as they do so, evidence of the production of a ‘sweet-smelling’, female person-to-be dwelling in the womb. I was also told that the sex of the child is determined by the mythic figure Napiruli. While the couple is having sex, he creates and projects an image of either a penis (*ichibi* or *sapia*)¹¹², for a boy; or a vagina (*puseta*), for a girl. Experienced midwife Doña Mariquita, also explained to me that plant-derived remedies can be used to help select the sex of a child (if for example, one had offspring of only one gender).

Pregnancy’s *rituna* (*dieta*, *Greek*) involves a range of practices aimed at paying attention to oneself and the potential other (the foetus) to facilitate his becoming as kin. These codes of

¹¹²Male testicles themselves are described as an empty shell (*coroso*).

practice explore appropriate behaviour among co-residents as positivist formers of self. Through a gradual process of ‘familiarisation’ (Fausto 1999), appropriate consubstantiality between co-residents is sought, for these relations resonate out into the world, as the foetus both affects and can be affected by a wide range of human and non-human others. The ability to live in the world, together with persons, non-persons and made things, requires resonance achieved through cool-minded strength (*kirimbawa, força*).

Labour pains and the moment of birth

During contractions, a first-time mother will inform close female kin and attempt to follow the advice and demeanour of more experienced mothers by not drawing attention to herself and continuing normal daily activities: peeling manioc, working in the garden, bathing etc. Women may bathe to ‘feel good’ (*sentir bonito*) and cool down, but as contractions become more frequent, it is heat and pain that are the known requirements of childbirth. When contractions become more intense, women will retire to the warmth and quiet of their kitchen or home, often alone if this is their second or subsequent birth, or else with close female kin.

The stool and the hammock are the basic household apparatus required for childbirth and are usually found in the corner of the darkened room. If the house comprises more than one room, all doors will be shut. All other household members should leave the house and only those intending to facilitate the birth, at the request of the mother, should be present. Siblings of the new-born or other children who have undesirable personal characteristics are to be especially avoided. Of prime concern are those with erratic and irregular behaviour or the chronically lazy. On one occasion, I was given the task of forcefully keeping out one mother’s wilful daughter, aged five, who was otherwise determined to enter the room. As she gradually desisted, the household assumed a silence characteristic of birthing, with all speech uttered in whispers. Silence as part of the woman’s demeanour, manifests her ‘cool’ capacities and those of her entourage (on post-birth silence, Clastres 1988 [1972]: 3). Childbirth silence helps a woman withstand pain and prevents other co-residents from an untimely notification of birth.

Almost universally along the Xié, for all home births and throughout all Xié communities, a woman sits on a stool and is supported by leaning back onto her hammock.¹¹³ Knowing how to sit and retain strength (*eremé força*) on a stool is an essential requirement for childbirth. Whilst women habitually sit on the ground, sitting on a stool during childbirth elicits the composure required during birth:¹¹⁴ birthing women should ‘sit properly’ and ‘stay still’. In response to the onset of childbirth pain, sitting still on a stool demonstrates one’s ability to centre oneself in order to both withstand the pain and to facilitate the birth of the baby-to-be. Labour pains, in Géral language, are not differentiated from other types of abdominal pains or cramps, such as those experienced when suffering flatulence, and fall under the blank term of ‘stomach ache’ (*sasi marika* or *awi nonene*)¹¹⁵. In the face of pain, sitting on the stool demonstrates the facility to remain both calm and cool.

Women may rest and assume a variety of sitting and straddling positions in the hammock during the last phase of contractions. Drawing closer to the moment of delivery, with the unopened hammock hung behind her back, the woman will intertwine her arms in order to support her suspended weight while she sits on the edge of a low stool in the corner of the house. Most commonly a birthing woman’s husband will also support her, his arms wrapped around the top of her torso and just above or holding her breasts. This position is also appropriate for Cashinahua childbirth (McCallum 2001: 19) and for the Akawaio (Butt-Colson 1975). This was the case in Cleocilda’s and Jonilson’s second birth in Campinas. However, not all men know how to accompany birthing women, as it is not uncommon for men to be ‘be scared’ and thus, their role as facilitator may be assumed by the woman’s father-in-law or other experienced, most often affinal, male kin. Jonilson, said that he had waited so long to have his second child (the first was now five) because he didn’t like to see his wife in pain. His wife however, wanted another child (and necessarily sex, as he jokingly insinuated to me) and he had no choice but to oblige.

¹¹³ Resident in a lower Xié community, a Baré woman informed me that traditionally on the Rio Negro women, as her mother herself had done, give birth supporting themselves by hanging from a branch of the *cajú* tree, much like the fruit itself.

¹¹⁴ Men, rather than women, habitually sit on stools and embody cool abilities required in the making of daily utensils/artefacts described in Chapter Three, p 142-147.

¹¹⁵ *Sasi* (pain), *markia* (abdomen) and *awi* (pain) *nonene* (abdomen).



Figure 5: Cleocilda's demonstrates a straddling position she assumed during contractions.



Figure 6: Cleocilda's and Jonison re-enact the birth of their child.

Men who do accompany women in this way talk of their own *força* required in sustaining the woman upright over long periods of time, and express their post-birth exhaustion at having done so. During this time, the mother-in-law will then sit on a stool close by the woman, elucidating her bodily sensations for her. In Cleocilda's case, Jonison's mother explained 'you are feeling full of water' as she drew closer to labour. During delivery, breaking water is a sign of a healthy birth. It demonstrates that the foetus has been properly cared for in the womb as a result of its mother's frequent bathing.¹¹⁶ In its absence the result is, as Cleocilda's mother-in-law and other midwives explain, 'dry' births, that is, mothers who fail to produce water in quantity before delivery. These women experience slow, drawn out births due to the lack of sufficient lubrication and their babies are also more likely to be born in a dangerous position (other than head-first).¹¹⁷

¹¹⁶ Like Xié dwellers, Panará also observe the contribution of male and female substances in the creation of foetuses, which in their earliest stage exist as water (Ewart 2000: 284). Similarly, Xié dwellers note that the foetus begins as a fish. S. Hugh-Jones (1979: 123) further notes that child development is understood as 'a process of emergence from water to land' among neighbouring Desana.

¹¹⁷ McCallum (1996: 352) has noted among the Cashinua that 'the womb is analogous to a cooking pot that transforms raw food to 'cooked'. The process of generating a child is also termed *ba-*, and the womb appears to heat the child, thus growing or 'cooking' it until it is ready to be born. At this point the waters break and the Cashinahua say that without the amniotic fluid there is a danger that the child will be overheated (**kui**).

Inappropriate responses to childbirth pain

Not all individuals experience a rapid and uneventful childbirth and manage pain so readily. For in spite of the advice of their mother-in-law or own mother, a large proportion of women fail to provide an adequate response to the on-set of childbirth pain. My field notes recount one such experience in greater detail:

...For although I had told them to come and fetch me as soon as Rosalia went into labour, Joaquin's wife came to fetch me when Rosalia 'had run out of strength' and was thinking about travelling down to the community of Tunu. It was about 3am and I woke with the shining of her flashlight in my eyes. I quickly dressed and walked to the back of the village to Rosalia's house – it was full of people. Rosalia was in a room at the back and her husband was holding her upright, arms crossed below the breasts. Both José and Joaquin (her father-in-law's brothers) were there and 4 grown women as well as 6 children, who were mostly in the doorway or in the front room. In Rosalia's room there was a stick fire made on the floor, it was hot and smoky and both José and Joaquin were also smoking. When I entered, they explained and appealed 'she has no strength left'. They said they wanted to take her to Tunu. I wanted to withhold opinion, but I could see that this would be difficult – being there I was expected to participate and people were looking to me for some kind of practical advice. I said that pain was normal and that this was her first birth and that she was probably pushing too early. She was obviously tired. I noted this, and they put her in the hammock. Advice followed from those present and from their expressions and attitudes I gathered the main gist: Rosalia should definitely not allow this 'white woman' (*kunhã kariwa*) to see her in this state and that she should buck up. José came to my side, smoking, and noted that she was 'little' (incapable) and everyone was talking about 'make strength'. Joaquin, Rosaline's brother-in-law, said he had never seen someone who was going to die drinking manioc bread drink (*karibé*) as Rosalia had done when she was apparently in mortal pain, and that he had tried to help but it was a lost cause. In a slow, steady voice and within the earshot of everyone in the house, she lay there repeating that she was going to die. Her kinswomen began to cry.

I didn't want to influence a decision here and said that they should go to Tunu if this was what she wanted. Shortly thereafter they got ready to go. They prepared a bag, untied the hammock with her in it and carried her to the canoe. I left to get ready, collected my hammock and books and returned quickly to say I would travel with them. It was a pitch black and moonless night and it was nearly impossible to see. Having left via the small stream at the back of the house, the childbirth party stopped to collect me at the main port. The canoe was full and I perched on the front end. Rosalia's hammock was swung in the middle of the canoe with her mother-in-law at her side and her own mother at the foot end of

the hammock with her back to it. Her mother had her youngest child sat on her lap, another to her side and next to her were other kinswomen, myself and Rosalia's father at the head of the canoe with a flashlight. At the other end sat her husband and the pilot (*motorista*) – for the canoe had a slow motor (*rabetta*). As we left Umarituba, Rosalia could be heard repeating the words 'I am going to die', women were crying and at 4 to 5 minute intervals Rosalia would shout out or scream in time with her contractions. There was a great deal of talk about *kariwas* [white people] by Rosalina's mother – perhaps they thought all this was my fault.

A cloth was put up in front of the hammock (to keep out the cold breeze) and scissors were passed down from Rosalia's father to her mother-in-law. We stopped at Cucue a little further downriver - I am not sure what or who was picked up there or why we stopped, but the stopping was slow paced and without any particular rush. We continued downriver. It was a dark, cloudy night and lightning struck periodically, illuminating the stretch of river we were on and the surrounding forest. On several occasions, we nearly collided with the river bank. Afterwards, I was told that during this time in the canoe, Rosalia's mother-in-law was helping by applying pressure to the belly in order to push the baby out; and that Rosalia's husband was praying 'Ave Maria' and other prayers in a calm and collected manner, at the tail end of the canoe.

It was damp and chilly when we arrived at the main port of Tunu. Some of the residents came out with torches that shone through the mist. One person got out to call Emilio. Standing on the slippery dock, I became a human anchor, holding onto the boat with one hand with all its passengers sitting tight. There was some movement in the guest house just beyond the port, which was usually used for the visiting priest. They were preparing this for her. Emilio's wife, Loudes, came on to the boat to talk to Rosalia. Since arriving in Tunu, Rosalia had been absolutely silent. She now talked calmly to Loudes in soft whispers. I went to relieve myself and on my return it became clear that Rosalia was refusing to get out of the canoe at the front port (in full view) and had asked to be taken around the back side of the Island in order to enter via Emilio's kitchen. As they took the canoe back around the little island, I went to Emilio's house where I found his daughter had already begun to prepare the kitchen and together with her mother she prepared some hot manioc bread drink (*karibé*).

Emilio then asked me what was happening and I said that it seemed like she was pushing too early, as it was her first child. 'Well, there we are', he replied. His wife had already told me that Rosalia 'wouldn't allow the baby to be born' and that she was 'very weak'.

Rosalia's mother and mother-in-law drew close to hold her legs open and shortly after the baby popped out in one go, crying, between her mother's legs, lying in the hammock.

Chapter Four: The perinatal period

Emilio's wife pushed down on Rosalia's tummy to make the placenta come out, which it did about 5 minutes later. The baby and placenta were placed on a towel on the floor and with urgency they called for bath water to be brought and scissors and string. The baby was wiped clean and the father, following Loudes' indications, tied the umbilical cord about 2cm from the navel. The father cut the cord, with scissors that had been wiped clean by Emilio and some blood spilled out. The placenta was taken to be buried and the bath full of river water was blessed by Emilio with a soft prayer. During this time Emilio's wife held the baby in a slumped sitting position on her knee, with a breeze coming through the door and the sun rising. Emilio's wife then put her flip-flopped foot in the bath water, sat the baby on top of it and washed the baby. She first washed behind the baby's ears, the baby cried, then she washed his head and entire body. The baby was then removed and placed in clean white cloths. The new mother drank hot *karibé* (manioc bread drink), fed to her by her mother. Loudes noted the little red face of the baby and everyone seemed pleased and the mood was lighter after all the drama.

Emilio's wife draws attention to some blood coming out the baby's umbilical cord, so the father returns to tie it up again with more string. The father finishes cleaning up all the blood with the cloths at hand. The mother has already been covered by the sides of the hammock and a blanket. Emilio's wife sits holding the baby in a slumped sitting position by the open door and there is silence and occasional gentle conversation. Perhaps an hour has passed since birth and the baby is then put in the hammock with his mother. A fire has been lit and kept burning. Now the father, mother, baby and mother's mother are all enclosed inside Emilio's tiny kitchen.

Post-birth, when I talked to Loudes about it, she mentioned to me that Rosalia's mother had also given birth in the hammock, which is not an appropriate position for births and she had also caused a fuss in the presence of Emilio and Loudes. It was quite normal then that her daughter should also do the same thing. Emilio went on to explain: 'Not every birth is like this; normally women know how to be strong'. Rosalia was not sufficiently skilled and 'did not 'know' [the art of] childbearing'. Later, both Rosalia's mother and her mother-in-law agreed that Rosalia simply wouldn't let the child be born and had Jesus (her father-in-law and the Captain and shaman of Umarituba) been there, there would have been no such problem.

The hammock itself is not considered an appropriate place for delivery. It is antithetical to positions of *força* required of birth – which explains its typical wrung out function in suspending the mother during birth practice, rather than the reclined position that Rosalia herself assumed. Being Rosalia's first birth, this is also significant as this will determine her

future birth experiences, which are said to follow the same pattern. What is more, Rosalia assumed the same position that her weak willed mother did during her own birth. This was also the case of Marlene, wife of an indigenous health agent in the community of Cumatí, who gave birth in the hammock during the period of my fieldwork. Forced to give birth without her husband, who was absent due to training in São Gabriel, Géraldina attended the birth and clarified her position by stating ‘I was a midwife because no one else was available’, ‘I know nothing’. She explained to me that Marlene’s birth was so difficult because she didn’t have her husband to support her physically (*assegurar*) and she became overtired. Further, all of Marlene’s births had been difficult and drawn out and in this most recent case, Géraldina had to push, massage and adjust or tactilely manipulate (*ajeitar*) the abdomen (*marika*) and put her hands into Marlene’s vagina to pull the baby out. Since birthing experiences are said to follow the same format, Marlene experienced the same complications as with the births of her other three children.

My husband Carlos, whom I had left behind with my son in Umarituba the previous night, returned to Tunu later the next day. When he got back, he told me about the conversations that had taken place earlier that morning, in Umarituba, during the communal breakfast (*chibé*, literally referring to the commonly taken manioc flour drink). Together with Carlos, the men had discussed the previous night’s events and Joaquin had said he had seen the baby’s head but that the mother had jerked the baby back up into her tummy. José had insisted to Carlos that ‘she [Rosalia] was very small and incapable (*muti*), and ‘weak’ (*pitua*) and Joaquim’s wife had shushed him. Others said that she should have listened to ‘Doctora Elizabete’ as ‘she should know’ (as after I had been asked, I suggested an all-fours position which I had been shown by a British midwife for my own forthcoming delivery). Others repeated that she was ‘very weak’ and ‘shameful’ (*muti*). They explained that surely she would have delivered the baby in Tunu with Emilio’s wife, as with her there would have been no other choice. ‘She is going to force her legs open whether she wants to or not’, they explained in reference to the authoritative forthrightness embodied by Loudes, Emilio’s wife. Many of the men said that, had they been Rosalia’s father they would have gone and forced her legs open and others suggested that she needed to be knocked into shape. The next day they couldn’t believe that she had said she was going to die and that the women were all crying – this was in spite of not yet having been informed of the positive outcome of the birth.

At the time, the main concern for the birth had arisen because delivery was taking too long. Her water had already broken and if delivery was delayed there was the risk of stillbirth as a result of insufficient lubrication. Furthermore, Rosalia's mother had signalled that this difficult delivery must be the result of *praga* (literally, a plague provoked through prayer) or *maiwa* (ancestral water or animal spirit); however it seemed that public opinion did not support this theory. Rather, it pointed to a lack of sufficient *força* (will and capacity) to deliver the child.

Rosalia's family come from Anamoin, a large and ethnically mixed community at the head of the Xié river. It is a place where 'white' behaviours, attitudes, values and goods abide and Anamoin residents are well known for violating certain traditional norms, making them more likely victims of the enchanted animal spirits (*maiwa*). Anamoin is also near the Xié headwaters and ancestral lands, where the landscape becomes more dangerous and where various types of *maiwa* and animal homes can be found. Further, Anamoin is well-known as a dangerous place of enchantment and sorcery. This reputation had recently been enhanced by the migration of several Tukano supply teachers, whose fathers were well-known *pajés* of the Vaúpes River. Given these circumstances, it becomes easy to assess from an indigenous perspective, the potential risk involved in Rosalia's birth. Drawing attention to herself whilst in labour, Rosalia brought these facts to the forefront of people's minds. They were reminded that Rosalia's family were from Anamoin, the place of feared, dangerous and different persons, and that she could easily be a potential victim of sorcery.

In the end, it turned out that there was no sorcery involved. Rosalia, like her mother before her, simply didn't know how to give birth properly and (despite having not been informed of the positive outcome of the birth) the community of Umarituba was disparaging of Rosalia's behaviour in the face of her pain. Attitudes in Tunu paralleled those of Umarituba: failure to follow normal childbirth etiquette demonstrated a basic lack of personal skill. Recently married and from a lower-ranking clan, she was a newcomer to Umarituba and her own affinal otherness was brought to the foreground during her birthing experience, in which it became all too apparent.

A person who 'doesn't sit down properly' and who 'won't let the baby be born' may perform abrupt actions that 'injure' the baby, creating a temporary deformation at birth, or worse. In the down-river community of Campinas, I was told of a birth in which the umbilical cord first appeared, followed by its arm, both of which had to be pushed back into the mother's vagina.

The mother was made to recline in a hammock where a skilled midwife turned the baby in the womb. The midwife later complained that it had been difficult to help the woman who would not listen and submit to the midwife's authority. She had, after all, been called to help. The baby was eventually stillborn, headfirst. Here, there was no reference to sorcery as it was clear to the other women that this mother had not followed the proper code of practice for childbirth. As co-resident Campinas resident Marlene retrospectively explained to me: 'She doesn't know how to be strong in order for the baby to be born, she shouts, gets up, walks – you have to sit down - a baby can't be born like that!'

The point when a woman can no longer stand the pain is the point when she 'has no more strength'. Some women may reach this point at an unacceptably early phase and be deemed 'little' (incapable), 'weak' and shamed. Erratic women display this comportment in their daily lives and during their pregnancy. So do those who go on to demonstrate their lack of child birthing skill. Self-inflicted childbirth complications become a potent exemplar of how such behaviours impede productive social and reproductive labour; and women who have failed to embody personal skill and demonstrate their resilience, call their own personhood into question.¹¹⁸ In these cases, the complications one experiences are in proportion to the strength and good conduct of the individual.¹¹⁹

Delivery

On delivery a baby turns (boys to the right and girls to the left) in order to exit the womb, followed by their stool/the placenta, the *taina banco* (*weperi irari*). Foetuses sit on their stool in the womb until they 'want to born' (*u-nasei-putai wã*), at which point they turn

¹¹⁸In other contexts, pain is understood as the self-inflicted consequence of one's own lack of attentiveness, coordination, or oblivious ambivalence of the dangers at hand. Slipping over, falling and cutting oneself with tools or implements (machetes, knives, splinters) and many other such injuries which cause pain and which we would classify as accidents are, for Xié residents, active displays of a lack of self-control and personal mastery. These include a lack of balance and a lack of knowledge in the use of implements required in everyday life. These accidents, which may cause pain, but which are not considered immediately life-threatening, are the source of amusement for the community and are met with hysterical laughter by women and with the rhetorical question 'Were you born yesterday?' Men have adopted this Portuguese expression into their everyday lingua Geral talk and it arises most often in the context of accidents during communal work parties (*wayuri*, see Chapter Three, p. 153-159). Work parties depend on a strong convivial morale, rather than being negatively affected by an individual's misdemeanours.

¹¹⁹When Santos-Granero (2009c: 8) states that, 'it is craftsmanship rather than childbearing that provides the model for creative acts', he appears to neglect the fact that birth is the craft of the mother and is not automatic.

down, headfirst, in order to exit before their stool.¹²⁰ No more than 5 minutes should elapse before the placenta is expelled. Exceeding this time, a plant remedy infusion (such as *tapabero*) may be given. Continued delay will cause the midwife to pull out the placenta, roping one hand above the other whilst tugging gently on the umbilical cord (*munde timana*, *murua* or *imorowa chama*). Whoever is present at the moment in which the baby leaves the womb has the capacity to affect capabilities and qualities of the child, and undesirable personal characteristics can be transferred to the child at the moment of birth (cf. Ewart 2000: 287, on the creation of ‘fierce’ children). The actions of those attending the birth, or their lack of them, can also affect neonatal behaviour, usually for the following 3-6 months of life. Thus, one child born in the Campinas community who was not properly secured upon delivery hit his head on the floor and began to cry. During fieldwork, the baby was then reported to cry every day at the same hour of his birth, a fact that was expected to continue throughout the first months of life. This is a mild form of fright, which I later discuss in more detail.

The person who cuts the umbilical cord is not always the father, but should be someone who is willing to follow post-birth restrictions together with the parents. In customary practice I am told that the umbilical cord was not cut, but rather was steadily tightened and finally severed by means of a piece of *tucu* (a cord from the fibre of the palm). The short end of the cord attached to the baby, approximately 3cm away, was then squeezed for several seconds until joining and this is how the umbilical cord was left. Previously -and when scissors (known as piranha’s teeth, *dente de piranha*)¹²¹ are not available - umbilical cords are also cut with a shard of broken glass or a machete. The practice of squeezing, rather than tying with thread still continues with some midwives. Once the umbilical cord has been cut, the placenta is spoken of as ‘part of the child’ and ‘should be treated properly’ and buried in the outside corner of the birth house. If the placenta is buried shallowly, a baby’s first teeth will arrive quickly, if it is buried too deeply, they will come late.¹²² Simply throwing the placenta away is considered ‘sinful’ (*pekadu*) and can make people sick. In the months post-birth, the profound depth of the baby’s navel, ideally immersed in belly fat, is greatly admired; while those with protruding umbilicus are in fragile states of health.

¹²⁰On the placental stool among the Anlo-Ewe, see Guerts (2002: 87)

¹²¹Aline da Cruz (2011: 41; 617) has suggested that this is derived from the Tupi *pi'rāya*, which literally means a fish with teeth or carnivorous fish, and therefore is a generic term.

¹²²On the intimate relationship between the child and his other, the placenta, see Gow (1991).

After the cord is cut, the baby is made to assume a sitting position and bath water is immediately prepared. The baby's bath water is blessed by blowing tobacco smoke over the water's surface, a measure which protects and 'fences off' both the parents and the baby from the gaze of the animal ancestors (*maiwa*). Blessed cigarettes that are specially prepared should be used to bless the baby's bath water. However, since there are few *pajés* (shamans) along the Xié, many fathers will seek to have the cigarette blessed well before the birth, in preparation. In some cases, especially in evangelical communities, simple prayers are used instead of the tobacco smoke oration. Emilio explained for my benefit that these days only elders bless with a cigarette.

Hospital birth

Visiting biomedical professionals are increasingly likely to advise people to seek hospital treatment as a matter of course, Xié dwellers find such recommendations dubious when they have no reason to suspect a sorcerous attack. When childbirth is routine and no complications ensue, it is believed, hospitals subvert the process of childbirth as a fortifying personal rite of passage.

One woman explained to me how the main reason she had gone to hospital was to be accompanied by a skilled practitioner. But the medical doctor would drift in and out of the emergency room, telling her that the baby was coming soon, but not continually attending to her. She explained that when a woman is horizontal on a hospital bed, a doctor cannot hold a woman from behind to support her in the position required for birth (cf. Belaunde 2000: 41). There was no stool and no way for her to practice her cool-mindedness (and be *kirimbawa*), nor was the doctor able to facilitate the birth. He had assured her 'the baby's coming, the baby's coming', but he did nothing in terms of hands-on, supporting, procedures to facilitate the birth. 'How is the baby to be born if I am to lie down?' this woman asked me rhetorically. The general consensus is that the hospital is a place where they 'do not know how to deliver babies'.

When I asked Emilio about hospital birth he cited the case of his son and his young wife, who had had their baby on a rock near the port of São Gabriel, where their canoe was docked. They had made the trip down-river from Tunu because a nurse had advised a hospital birth due to complications in pregnancy. The expectant mother was reluctant about going to hospital but made the trip down to São Gabriel in order to have help at hand if needed.

Thankfully, the birth was unproblematic, she gave birth in the canoe and Emilio explained that ‘sometimes they [the hospital staff] just don’t know’. He went on to explain that ‘the doctor does what he can while the woman is lying down’. Lying down, women are not understood to be able to be *kirimbawa*.

Furthermore, in hospital women may also be in the company of other women who don’t know how to give birth, and these women complain and sometimes scream during the birth; the hospital cares for indigenous women from distant communities, those living in the city and environs, as well as military (wives) or other ‘white’ or non-indigenous residents of São Gabriel. Obstetricians working in São Gabriel hospital reported that a major problem in cases of hospital births by indigenous women was that it was so hard to tell when a woman was going to give birth because these women were silent during the entire proceedings.

In addition to these complaints, Xié dwellers concur that hospital food is inappropriate and no ‘special diet is offered, such as bird or chicken soup and manioc bread drink (*karibé*)’. Women are instead offered rice and vegetable soup, which they dislike, and ice-cold drinks and large game to eat - both of which are normally avoided by Xié residents during the perinatal period. However, women accept this as part of biomedical care and they do not deem it to be detrimental to their health in the way that they do in the village setting. The lack of *karibé* however is considered particularly ‘ugly’ as this is understood essential for maternal and neonatal health and also for all persons in a state of *pitúa* (weak or convalescing). For this reason, many husbands or other relatives will smuggle *karibé* into the hospital to ensure the good health and speedy recovery of their loved ones.

Post-birth couvade

In Rosalia’s case, in which the baby was not born in her home community of Umarituba, but rather in the down-river community of Tunu, following the alimentary restrictions that form part of the post-partum *dieta* proved difficult. I spoke to Emilio about the couple and he said that a day and a half had passed since the baby was born and the couple had still not yet eaten. It was a bit late for them to eat, Emilio said, but no-one had given them anything to eat and he commented ‘let’s see how [well] we can look after them’. Emilio was reflecting on how this task normally falls into the domain of the new parent’s closest kin. They were far from home and, to make matters worse, Rosalia’s father had returned to his home in Anamoin. ‘The father should have looked after them’ Emilio remarked, he should have

stayed here or returned yesterday with food for them. The father of the new-born can't hunt and only a relative can get food for them – i.e. hunt a bird or chicken. Later, when the father of the neonate himself came to visit me, I offered him some crackers and rice. He said they could only have chicken and *karibé*. Can't you kill a bird, I asked, no he replied, the baby would become 'crazy', someone else should do it. I later found out that crackers were not considered a suitable post-birth food, and I made a saucepanful of hot oats with milk, which was accepted. Emilio explained they should have eaten earlier - a dangerous omission because the baby needed his mother's milk and for that the parents need to eat well too. Emilio went on to explain that he had blessed the salt and chicken that they ate and that he himself had killed for their benefit. He cooked it, put it on a little plate (*cariúma*)¹²³ and blessed it with a barely audible oration, so nothing bad would happen to the baby and parents.

Post-birth we witness an immediate shift from the force and heat of pregnancy/childbirth to the dangerously over-cool state of the post-birth mother. Having lost blood during delivery, the mother requires the heat of the fire and a high intake of hot fluids to restore her health. Milk production is instigated through the consumption of hot *karibé* (manioc bread drink), also an essential prerequisite for childbirth as a cited source of 'força' required of delivery. Hot *karibé* must then be consumed in quantity throughout the day and parents ensure that they have sufficient manioc bread pre-birth to sustain them in the post-birth diet. In terms of post-partum recovery and breast feeding, *karibé* is considered a type of super-food, a force and vitality replenishing substance that should be taken in abundance. The *caldo*/broth of mostly chicken and bird soup (*pirikita*) - but also small fish - together with *karibé*, should also be consumed frequently and in quantity to produce mother's milk; and the same term *caldo*/broth is used to describe a mother's rich and plentiful supply of milk. *Karibé*, which is not dissimilar in colour and consistency to milk, is considered essential for mother and infant health and the production of breast milk is impossible without it. Breastfeeding my two-month baby in the field, respected grandmother and our host Magdalena, would exclaim 'look at that broth!', when observing the continued suckling and swallowing of Sofia. Sofia's extremely chubby appearance reinforced Magdalena's impression. However, Magdalena was bewildered by the fact that I produced such a lot of milk but did not consume *karibé* and fish broth in quantity: 'for us, you shouldn't have this amount of milk'.

¹²³Also the name of the coming of age ritual for women, in which traditionally the same clay plates are used.

Rosalia's husband explained that they put a towel on top of the *karibé* as it was cooking, so the *karibé* steam would rise through the towel, which he could then place on the breast to initiate milk production and flow. Other mothers told me that hot *karibé* or manioc porridge (*mingão*) should be rubbed and massaged directly onto the breast to generate milk production. These techniques are also employed in the case of mastitis or *kunha perewa kambí*, to reduce hardened breasts and the fever they cause. The most important element of these remedies is the heat, caused by friction and the substance itself that increases the milk flow. Mother's breast may also be massaged and firmly stroked with a plastic hair comb to relieve hardened breasts.¹²⁴



Figure 7: Cleocilda taking *karibé* post-birth.

Neonates in their first week of life are known to suffer from colds and flu, affecting their ability to breastfeed and resulting in infant deaths. The inability to produce sufficient breast milk may require feeding by other mothers, or in the case of one underweight baby, being fed *capim santo* (similar to lemongrass) on a spoon, and then dissolved powdered milk. However, the relative fatness of a baby is not restricted to diet, but is also dependent on the frequency and intensity of post-birth bathing. I discuss this in some detail in Chapter Six.

¹²⁴Mastitis, the painful hard breast experienced by some mothers, and its treatment are discussed further on p. 253.

During first feeds from new mothers, the mother-in-law, or increasingly her own mother, will take the breast and carefully manoeuvre the nipple (*kambi chi miri*) in the baby's mouth, positioning the infant accordingly alongside the mother in the hammock. After this the newborn is returned to his own hammock. The baby is the sole focus during early breastfeeding, receiving the mother's all-consuming attention; which can be contrasted to later breastfeeding, from approximately sitting age onwards when infants more readily help themselves and mothers begin to occasionally engage in light conversation whilst feeding. All mothers appear markedly aloof to their new-borns and do not expect physical intimacy with the baby, who has become an affecting agent in his own right and is considered 'hot'. As I go on to explain, all hot things must be avoided by the baby.¹²⁵

Goldman's (2004: 146-149) work among the Northwestern Cubeo details classifications between 'hot' and 'cold' in specific regard to food. He notes that 'hot' foods are those that have blood, have strong tastes, are piquant and/or have been touched by the flame; while 'cool' foods are bland and have been boiled (in water). Moments of personal transformation, including those of delicate health, require 'cool' foods. Although I do not concur with his interpretation as to the ability of cool foods to 'reduce the community to a metaphoric level of childhood' (Goldman 2004: 147), the spiritual astuteness of the ancestors, which he links to their coolness, is an observation I am inclined to agree with. Insightfully, Goldman (2004: 147) states that Cubeo define cold as 'the temperature of clear running water from a deep section of the river'. He goes on to comment: 'Such cold water is also dangerous to persons in weakened states...perhaps because it represents an extreme condition.' He further notes that coolness is a given attribute of men, contrasted to homely and female warmth.

Post-birth practice focuses on the cultivation of the dual qualities of softness (as a tactile, visual and sonorous norm), warmth (as a thermal quality) and an increased avoidance of pungent smells and tastes and the avoidance of potent and powerful subjectivities.¹²⁶ Post-

¹²⁵In the Andes, nearly the inverse of this is described by Classen (2005: 149), who cites authors on the topic: 'At birth...men and women are deemed to be cold, possessing little innate heat. New-borns, consequently, are bathed in warm water...wrapped in blankets and ritually presented with 'hot' chilli peppers, in order to keep them warm until they have acquired enough heat to survive on their own.'

¹²⁶On the classification of smells among the central Brazilian Suyu, Seeger (1989: 196) has noted, 'Animals in the bland category may be eaten by both sexes of all ages unless they are under some kind of extreme restriction. Animals in the pungent category may be eaten by most people most of the time. Animals in the strong-smelling category either may not be eaten at all, as in the case of the jaguar, or may not be eaten by a large part of the population; the deer, for example, is prohibited to the parents of babies from the time they are

birth is then in contra-distinction to the heat and *força* required during both pregnancy and childbirth, which is true both of the parents and of the child. However, while women avoid bathing for at least the first two to three days post-birth, after which they bathe inside or behind their house to avoid excessive coolness (in one case, I witnessed the father lovingly sponge down his wife, although I am told this is not common practice); neonates have immediate post-birth contact with water (although this is not yet the coolest running water of the river) and engage in prolonged bathing episodes precisely because they are hot. In fact, other than lying while the umbilical is cut and being made to sit, a posture the infant also assumes for bathing, the action of bathing is the first interaction the child has with the wider environment. It is desirable for the child to continue his relationship with the water, initiated in the womb; and, as I will go on to demonstrate, bathing is considered essential for personal development and growth. In addition, the child, unlike its mother, is ‘hot’ and needs to ‘cool down’ in order to expedite the process (in chapter six, I look at this in detail). The parents however, having already engaged in intensive productive and reproductive labour, are now in a state of excessive coolness, further evidenced by their social reclusion and their abstention from productive activities and sex. This dichotomy perhaps explains why infants are not subject to extended periods of holding (or cuddling)¹²⁷, unless followed by bathing and why they do not sleep with their mother until 2 months of age; and further illustrates heat as a quality defining personal growth and development.¹²⁸ In Rosalia’s case, in which she had suffered a long and drawn out labour, a fire was also lit during labour (which began in a different location) and she took great quantities of hot *karibé* to add to and intensify the heat and thus increase the speed of her delivery.

Proper post-birth practice should begin immediately at birth. The pregnancy diet continues, but should now be more closely followed and is also shared by the father. The main diet consists of bland and less potent *pirá miri* (little fish) with manioc bread. Chili pepper, salt and fish, especially large fish with *esporros*, such as *mandi* and *zoribi*, must not be eaten by the parents. Forest pig (*tiyjitu*), a nocturnal animal, should be avoided because, even if

born until they can crawl.’ Classen (1993: 86) also notes ‘the most powerful animals also have the strongest odour.’

¹²⁷Babies are however massaged and moulded, with particular attention to forming a protruding nose and flattened ears.

¹²⁸It would appear that the cold mother and hot infant are incapable of equalizing each other’s states to produce a single unit of post-birth warmth. Rather, this radical differentiation between the cold state of mother and the hot child at birth are mutually hazardous and require a subtle, progressive mediation that takes place in dialogue with the surrounding milieu.

blessed, it will cause the baby to be wakeful. Fruits with ‘milk’, such as *cupucu*, are also to be avoided; otherwise they may cause ‘*jurupari beijú*’ (literally the manioc bread of the *jurupari*) also known as *zapiño*, a white frothing of the mouth in the baby. This period of fasting (*jejum*) is important; otherwise the *maiwa* (spirit animal ancestors) will ‘start moving – be activated’. Parents will seek to have these substances blessed by a respected *pajé* (shaman) to ensure their own and their infant’s health prior to their consumption a week post-birth.

In addition to these observations, I believe that the bird broth that characterises the post-birth diet stems not only from its high protein content, but is also suggestive of the importance of birds in Amerindian culture. Among neighbouring Cubeo, birds are seen as positive exemplars of sociality (Goldman 2007). Similarly, Rival (1993: 646) quotes Huaorani song: ‘We humans are like birds, like them we enjoy feasting to the last drop, and then we leave. Each goes on carrying out their own business. In this way lived our grandfathers, and so do we.’ Post-birth the parents are in a state of socio-physical reclusion and consuming these substances aids in transferring and restoring sociality and commensality.

A wide range of actions should be avoided post-birth and with the woman already confined to the home, the onus falls on the father. All strong actions, objects and sounds should be avoided, as should overly cool or radically heated social states. These include not hunting, hammering, hitting (dogs), or playing football (which is especially intensive among Xié dwellers) and the cutting *karanã* (used to make *tipiti*’s). It is also dangerous for fathers to blow into the fire as this will cause burning on the child’s skin, known as *cataporinha*, *bestega (forte)*, a common native illness similar to chickenpox, that assumes the same name as the more deadly form. Cutting the *sucuruju/karanã* plant will cause the baby’s umbilical to grow out, rather than inwards. Fathers should also avoid rain (or cover one’s head), to prevent overcooling, and *zapiño* in their new-born baby; and the father should avoid submerging in the water. Writing on Piro post-birth restrictions, Peter Gow (1989: 577) succinctly elucidates:

Performing these prohibited actions causes the activity to rebound on the child. The object of the action (the animal killed, the tree felled, the clothes washed) will communicate its essence to the child. Thus jaguars cause the child to cry constantly through the night, for jaguars have powerful nocturnal vision. The clothes cause the child to writhe in pain, just as they are wrung in washing. Sexual intercourse causes coughing, as the man's semen lodges in the

child's throat. Food eaten turns the child into that food, while sexual activity turns sexual fluids into the child's food.

The actions and activities of fathers absent and unaware of the birth, may also negatively rebound on the father, but much later in life. In one case, a Tukano teacher was working away from his wife in the Vila Nova Xié community when his second child was born. He took his students on a fishing trip (no doubt as an attempt to instigate the national differentiated education initiative for indigenous groups) and a few days later, arriving home to his wife and newborn, was dismayed at having done something so inappropriate during the immediate post-birth period. While at the time the child was in good health, four years later he begun to feel the consequences of his actions: a sciatic pain that would intensify in later life. Many of these instances that link ritual observance to reproductive cycles and good health, are discussed in the previous chapter.

For practical reasons, I began to use washable nappies in the field. One couple coming to exchange *tapioca* for rice, witnessed a nappy change. Although they were characteristically indirect in their observations, they were anxious to point out how uncomfortable nappies must be for a baby and there was particular alarm about the use of the nappy pin, which they observed me pushing into the dense fabric of the nappy (apparently very close to the baby's abdomen). In retrospect, I believe this practice must have appeared horrific to them – the nappies signified both heat (for the baby) and sharpness. Similarly, neonatal inoculations are met with mixed feelings.

Restrictions are loosened after the *iyumi* ritual,¹²⁹ performed when the umbilical cord falls off. This marks the transition from home to river bathing and includes a vast sensory repertoire which I explore in the next chapter. From this moment onwards, babies are open to public view, seen bathing in the river and carried around the village, but will continue to spend the majority of time in their hammock at home.

To conclude, perinatal practice demonstrates a willingness to engage in (re) constitutive, mutually reciprocal person-forming processes. Caring for others, as a personal capacity, constitutes oneself as much as it makes others (potential persons). Careful mediation of this relationship is based on discernment of the other's moral worth and mindful capacity, and its potential to positively affect personal growth. During childbirth, a mother is expected to

¹²⁹Described in Chapter Six, p. 225-227.

demonstrate a mindful response to pain that will allow her to channel this towards a healthful birth. In considering Xié elucidations of absent-minded perinatal practice and the resultant impact on personal growth, Conklin and Morgan's (1996: 664) analogy of Euro-American persons as bounded units and 'bumper cars' that randomly and unpredictably influence others, precisely represents the inverse of proper personal interaction among Xié dwellers. In addition, thermic cycles associated with life-cycle changes, help orientate appropriate actions and caring techniques. Such states are somatically sensed and very closely mediated, moving our understanding into a thoroughly somatic rather than symbolic analysis of socio-thermic personal development. Thus persons are neither categorically 'hot' nor 'cold', as a gendered differentiation expressed by Classen (2005: 149). Rather, they shift in and out of these states in dialogue with their surrounding environment and those with whom they interact.

Chapter Five

Assault sorcery in childbirth and snakebite

Introduction

The myth of Amaru, outlined in Chapter Three, summarises the ambivalence of the affinal other who is necessary for pregnancy, but who may also fatally jeopardise human reproduction and childbirth: the first human pregnancy is the consequence of a sorcerous attack, afflicted by Napiruli's unruly enemies. Once his affinal enemies impregnate Amaru through their sorcerous curse, mythic ancestor Napiruli is only able to save his wife -and deflect the attack - through his own sorcerous intervention. Furthermore, in response to the pain of childbirth which she 'nearly couldn't stand', Amaru maintains a seated and cool-minded disposition, facilitated by and reflected in the cool waters of the seasonal lake (*igapó*) in which she successfully gives birth to her snake-like child, the Amado. Conversely, Napiruli's enemies were unable to save their woman from the same sorcerous counter attack and suffered death as a consequence. After telling me the myth of Amaru's near fatal birth, Tunu elder Luís summarized: 'From the beginning it has been like this: those who can give [and save their own] life; and those that die [as a result of sorcery].'

In this chapter I take a closer look at malignant sorcerous interferences that have extremely painful and often fatal consequences for their victims. This is known in the literature as 'assault sorcery' (Wright and Whitehead 2004). Along the Xié River, assault sorcery - known as *estrago* or *praga* - has two prominent manifestations that are also gender specific: female victims of *praga* suffer an overly complicated childbirth that leads to death.¹³⁰ *Praga* for men however entails a sorcerous maligner provoking a fatal snake-attack. This is differentiated from more routine, non-sorcerous cases of snakebite. Sorcerous snakebite is, as far as I can tell, so far undocumented in the Amazonianist literature. In this chapter, I consider parallels between these gendered manifestations of *praga*, and reflect on how both these occurrences address the question of the necessary but dangerous other. Specifically, I examine childbirth and snakebite as moments of personal transformation, reflecting on how the threshold between a well-managed, uncomplicated birth or snakebite and a birth or bite

¹³⁰This appears similar to the female reproductive ailments and illnesses that fall under the category of **hiuiathi** for the Baniwa, and which are used to provoke a woman's 'ruin' (see Wright 2004: 88-89).

that leads to death, represents the difference between asserting one's personhood, or being overcome by death.

In a volume dedicated to the subject, Wright and Whitehead (2004) discuss the mutually informing role of the dark, malignant shaman and that of the benevolent shamanic practitioner. The authors suggest that the reciprocated attacks inflicted as part of shamanic warfare form a balancing act, from which emerges Amerindian sociality as we know it today. Elsewhere, Garnelo (2003) has emphasised the peripheral yet tenuous affine as the sorcerous maligner, who becomes the necessary other from which Baníwa society may reproduce itself. Further, Wright (2004: 86) describes a difference between witchcraft, associated with unknown 'poison owner' (**mahene iminali**), and shamanic sorcery proper, inflicted by an identifiable shaman (also see Garnelo 2003: 54). For Xié dwellers assault sorcery, (*estrago* or *praga*), may include poisoning, but it is also differentiated from the unidentifiable attacks of a *machí* poisoner, which I described in Chapter Three. This discrepancy between the poison-owner and the malignant shaman I shall return to consider at the end of this chapter.

Sorcerous afflictions in snakebite and childbirth, I argue, are intrinsically linked to the necessary but dangerous other, the affine, with whom a careful distance should be maintained. And, as I also suggest, Xié dwellers explain these afflictions in terms of alterity and their ever widening relations with others. For the Baníwa, snakebite appears as a singular type of illness which Garnelo (2003: 48-51) has categorised along with other illnesses arising from the mythical adulterous affair of Napiruli's wife, the first woman Amaru with the great snake¹³¹. For the Baníwa, Amaru is associated with alterity in general and 'white' people in particular. In a short paragraph devoted to snakebite, Garnelo (2003: 50, my translation) suggests that for the Baníwa this affliction is connected to primordial 'tenuous relations with alterity', where snakes fight with people over their earthly dominion.

For both the Baníwa and Warekena, childbirth and snakebite are associated with the river. The river in winter, as I have discussed in Chapters Two and Three, is the domain of the great snake (*buya wasu*) and the birth place of the first child, the ambivalent Amado who is himself both child and snake. A visual simile to this effect is apparent for the Baníwa: one

¹³¹These afflictions include **Walama**, the invisible poisoned darts which cause a pointed pain (also see Chapter Three, p. 110, for a discussion of perforating objects); **Whiókali**, which provokes diarrhoea such as that caused by the *pitchiu* –the smell of raw fish, also associated with snakes, that makes the stomach turn-, and causes degeneration (also see Chapter Three); and last of all, snakebite.

fishing technique involves the use of a **kaxadádali**, a large and porous jug -likevase shaped basket- which is filled with bait and submerged up to the neck in the river. Among the Baniwa, the term **kaxadádali** is also applied to pregnant women (see Beto 2001). As snakes are said to be the mothers of certain fish and representative of water spirits, the parallels between snakes and reproduction continue.

Personal growth, development and reproduction appear to be directly linked to societal expansion, with both processes viewed as a painful opening to the affines: pain is the necessary condition of today's world. In earlier mythic times, this was not the case, for then the world was a place free of (both productive and reproductive) labour, and did not require people to be strong (*kirimbawa*, see Chapter Three). The Baniwa recount how mythic hero Kuwai's second act of creation in which he enlarged this earth, caused the cosmos to split and left this place (our world) contaminated with poison and sickness. This world is contrasted to the 'other world' of Iaperikuli, a world free from pain¹³². This enlargement, as I have already suggested in Chapter Three, directly correlates to enlarged relations and both personal and societal growth, casting them in the same basket.

As a pregnant woman myself, I was warned on several occasions about snakes and the possibility of snakebite, and I was advised to avoid spending long periods in the manioc gardens for this reason. What would happen if I was bitten by a snake? I asked. I was told that the heated blood of pregnancy and the heat caused by the pain of snakebite would prove to be a lethal combination that would increase the circulation of venom through my veins and provoke sudden death. Pregnant women, 'full of blood', make the snakebite more painful, and also render remedies ineffective. I would then not be able to bear the pain. However, there were no instances of this having ever occurred. When I enquired further into snakebite, I found that a large portion of men had been bitten by snakes, but that no one recounted cases of snakebite among women, pregnant or otherwise. Perhaps one reason for this is that snakebite for women is rarely diagnosed as the result of sorcery, and by the same token, for them snakebite is rarely lethal. Snakebites in women are invariably considered to be of non-sorcerous origin, which is not true with men. This leads me to believe that for Xié dwellers, pregnancy and childbirth on the one hand, and snakebite on the other, are two dialectically

¹³²According to one of the explanations given by a powerful Baniwa shaman (Wright's 1998: 52), 'the pain place' (**kaiwikwe**) is the part of the tiered cosmos in which the Baniwa currently live.

opposed states precisely because they are gendered equivalents. And both are understood to be potentially transformational, albeit painful experiences.

Sorcery in childbirth

Pain is a part of daily life and a normal consequence of using one's personal strength and being *kirimbawa*, an indigenous idiom conveying personal potency which I defined in Chapter Three. Pain is understood as a hot, piercing and formative sensation that is the prerogative of all kinds of intense labour, including that of birthing women and productive workers (see Chapters Three and Four). Persons may experience pain (*sasi*) from grating manioc, from walking long distances, from headaches (*sasi akanga*) caused by carrying heavy loads of manioc in their head-baskets, and from sciatic pain during pregnancy. While they may remark on these everyday ailments, they minimize their importance and other more exceptional pains such as those experienced in childbirth, are actively played down.

Normal, 'hot', acute pain is an accepted requirement for the opening of the vaginal passage necessary for childbirth to take place. The ability to guide the abdominal pains of labour (*sasi marika*) to their reproductive end is part of a woman's cool-minded (and *kirimbawa*) capacities. I have discussed the capacity to respond appropriately at the onset of labour pains in reference to childbirth silence (Clastres 1988 [1972]: 3) and as part of a person's meditative, or mindful, qualities (Århem et al. 2004: 184, 200, 205, 215; S. Hugh-Jones 2009: 47-49) in Chapter Three. There I highlighted how important it is that the birthing woman knows how to 'sit properly', and is able to 'stay still' and not move around (in response to their pain). In this context, successful childbirth, in which babies emerge uninjured and healthy and where the mother retains her health, becomes the consequence of a skilfully executed birth. I have described this in Chapter Four as a mindful response, rather than a loud reaction, to acute pain. Such a response is a world apart from automatic, biomedical accounts of childbirth that recount childbirth as a universally painful and biological event. In these contexts, it becomes clear that pain is not simply a sensation (Zborowski 1952), but is a socially significant and encoded perception (Clastres 1973; 1977 [1974]; Santos-Granero 2005) that shows the experience of pain to be far from uniform, or universal. The mindful response of the birthing woman is important: in addition to helping women give birth, it serves as a means to fortify one's personal status within the community. As Tunu health

agent Emilio explained to me, people do not experience pain because ‘they turn it into strength’.

There are certain instances in which unbearable pain is suffered by women who are otherwise cool-minded (strong, *kirimbawa*) and collected individuals. This unbearable pain occurs during childbirth complications that can be traced to an often powerful, affinal other who harbours feelings of resentment, greed or envy against the pregnant woman and her family. A person wishing to inflict such a curse will either use his own esoteric expertise or solicit help from someone who does know, and sometimes combines these with plant-based poisonous concoctions (*marecaimbra*). If one suspects a ruinous curse, a solution may be found through knowledge of how to break the curse through counter sorcery. In sorcerous cases of childbirth, the pain women experience is deemed severe and almost unmanageable. Vaginal haemorrhaging is also a hallmark of *praga*. Intervention from others will be sought in order to secure a successful delivery.

My good friend Sueli told me that for each of her two most recent pregnancies, she had solicited frequent blessings throughout the pregnancy. This was because she had nearly married a man from the down-river village of Campinas, a community which she had gone to ‘visit’ at the time. After a month in the village, she decided not to commit to this man, and on returning up-river, she feared that she would become the victim of assault sorcery. So it was that when she later found a husband and became pregnant in Umarituba, where she lived with her father-in-law’s family, she sought the preventative chant-blower’s blessing to protect her. She told me that this was why her two subsequent pregnancies and births were so successful. She also told me, on a different occasion, that she had ‘lost’ one of her pregnancies, although I am not sure whether the pregnancy was around the time of her stay in Campinas. Seeking a chant-blower’s blessings is generally considered a prudent preventative measure during pregnancy.

Bete, the daughter of Tunu resident Jurez, became a target and victim of assault sorcery following her union to a newcomer to the Xié. Bete became pregnant and married the well-respected Tukano teacher who was posted at the school in Anamoin. The teacher had already fathered a young child in Anamoin but did not wish to marry and he was now leaving this woman to form a new relationship with Jurez’s daughter. Fearing assault sorcery, Bete decided to travel down-river and give birth in her father’s home community of Tunu. Following her drawn out labour, Tunu’s health agent Emilio explained to me that Bete had

been the victim of witchcraft because of jealousy from the family of her husband's first liaison that produced their illegitimate child.

Since it was a complicated birth, many had been called to attend and each explained their role in the successful delivery. A mother of eight children, Isaura, was present and explained that, when the crown of the head was showing, Loudes (Emilio's wife) had tried to pull the baby out by its hair. Instead, Isaura insisted the baby should be pulled out by its chin. She said that Loudes had 'damaged the child's head', and the child did in fact have a large wound on his scalp. Emilio explained to me that his wife (Loudes), who had hands small and slender enough for such a job, had in fact inserted her hands into Bete's vagina to guide the baby out. The baby then took a long time to get its bottom out. Ultimately, Emilio explained, part of the success of the birth was due to the fact that Bete's father had made a '*promesa*' to God. The *promesa* is an oath sworn by the victim's parents, whereby they pledge to commission a church gathering led by elders chanting in Latin if their son or daughter is cured. Jurez completed the hour-long *promesa* in the village church two weeks after the birth. At that time, when I asked Jurez about the birth, he would concede only that 'she [his daughter, Bete] nearly didn't make it'. Following the post-birth restrictions, Bete's father didn't want her to return to Anamoin and neither did her husband. However, since Bete's husband held his teaching post there, they felt obliged to return. Sorcery will usually cause individual families to relocate and communities to fracture, but in the case of the village community and the benefits of salaried work, this does not always happen.

Maternal mortality in childbirth

Emilio also told me of the circumstances surrounding the childbirth of Amancio's daughter, which occurred two years prior to my fieldwork. Amancio's daughter travelled down from Anamoin with her husband and children as she was suffering from a long and painfully drawn-out labour. As they travelled downstream, they first docked at the community of São José, but no one there was able to assist them. They then travelled down to her father's community of Tunu. Shortly after her arrival, Amancio's daughter began haemorrhaging profusely and Emilio laid her down on the table while the community went to the forest in search of a plant remedy. They returned too late, however, and she died before they could administer this to her.

When discussing with me cases of vaginal haemorrhaging, midwife Doña Mariquita from the Community of Campinas explained that *piri piriaca* was the remedy she most often used. She differentiated between four varieties or preparations of *piri piriaca*, which she used for the post-birth expulsion of the placenta (see Chapter Four, p.186); for the general symptom of haemorrhaging; for abortion; and lastly for snakebite and other cases of poisoning.¹³³

Tunu resident, Alfredo, explained to my husband that Amancio's daughter's death was caused by witchcraft involving poison. Her husband's dog had killed a bird, (generic, *inambú*), in Masarabí, their manioc farm near up-river São José. She wanted to eat this bird, but her husband advised her not to, telling her he had caught other things for her to eat. This bird was not an appropriate food to eat during pregnancy. Despite this, she ate the *inambú* and just as she was finishing her meal she began to bleed, haemorrhaging from the vagina. Alfredo explained that the *estrago* (poison-curse) was in the bird, and that the curse had caused her to want to eat this otherwise avoided food. He went on to explain that when the indigenous Catholic priest arrived, he too had confirmed that this was indeed a case of sorcerous witchcraft.

One horrific case of *praga* killed the wife of Umarituba resident José. José and his wife travelled from Umarituba to Tunu in order to find some solution to what was becoming an overly complicated and drawn out labour. Already a mother of four, the woman had decided to travel down-river for this, her fifth pregnancy, since unlike with her other births she had begun to feel 'ugly-awful' and sick (*puxuera*). She travelled to Tunu accompanied by her husband and her husband's brother Jesus, resident shaman to Umarituba (see figure 1). They arrived in Tunu in the middle of the night. Emilio and his wife Loudes, who normally attend births, were absent when they arrived, 'otherwise, we would have seen what we could have done', Emilio later explained to me. By the time she arrived in the community, the baby's arm was hanging out of the mother's vagina. Divinal and Cristina, the parents of five married children, and twice as many grandchildren, tried to help, but they couldn't. I was told that the mother felt so *puxuera* (ugly/awful) that she asked her brother-in-law Jesus, to do something about it. Leaning against the thatched walls of Cristina's house, I was told Cristina kept her cool but pleaded with Jesus to 'do something, before I die. Cut the baby's arm off', she

¹³³In the last instance, the remedy is grated, left in cold water and allowed to sit. After this the jelly is separated from the liquid and the latter is taken by the patient. This appears to correlate to Yawar piri piri, a female water plant used by Quecha speakers of the Peruvian upper Amazon, to treat a range of female reproductive disorders, during childbirth and as an abortive (Babira-Freedman 2010).

instructed him. In the end Jesus did exactly that. He severed the arm of the baby as it hung out of her vagina. The mother was said to have suffered greatly and as the ordeal continued in the night, she finally died with the rest of the baby still trapped inside her womb. The final moment of her suffering, Emilio explained, must have been after the baby's arm had been cut, for this caused the mother's blood to be contaminated by that of the baby's (cf. Wari ideas of blood contamination, Conklin 2001). The mother was buried in the Tunu cemetery and the baby's arm was buried in a separate adjacent grave (see cemetery, figure 2, p.205).



Figure 1: The shaman Jesus (left) and the elder Luís (right) chatting in Tunu village during the Christmas 2010 festivities.

When I asked her about the incident, my friend Sueli explained that Jesus' intervention was entirely wrong. For, 'nobody would do that – cut a baby's arm like that of a wild animal'. She went on to describe the removal of a limb in such a situation as unchristian and morally wrong. She said: 'I think he is sinful, I think the devil entered him –he must have a lot of sin'. She then told me of how Jesus had also slept with his eldest daughter, who had had two pregnancies out of wedlock, the first of which she aborted.¹³⁴ Sueli affirmed the general

¹³⁴(See Chapter Four, p.169). She now had a second child, but no husband. The spirit of incestuous persons and bad, malicious *pajés*, are said to linger in the forest as lights or reincarnate as forest animals. These are known as

consensus that Jesus' intervention was wholly inappropriate, and that it had aggravated the terrible symptoms suffered by the woman as a result of the powerful sorcery with which she had been cursed.

I asked Emilio the appropriate technique in such a situation would have been. He said the woman should be suspended in the hammock, head down with her legs in the air, and that they would try to push the baby back inside the mother. Through massage, they would then try to turn the baby inside the womb in order for its head to emerge first. Luckily, he said, he had never had to do this. I also had this procedure explained to me by several childbirth attendants who described it as a successful technique. Emilio then went on to explain why the mother had become a target for sorcery.

José's son had taken as his wife a woman from the community Pira piraca down on the lower Rio Negro. The woman went to live in Umarituba but relations turned sour when her clan kinswomen discovered she was not sufficiently hard-working. Her mother-in-law told her that her work was not acceptable and began giving her instructions on how to perform her tasks with more diligence. José's daughter-in-law was unhappy with the situation and in the end she called for her father, who came up from the lower Rio Negro in order to take her back home. Using a particularly strong type of sorcerous witchcraft, people say that this girl and her family had caused the overly complicated birth and ultimate death of Jose's wife.

I was never able to ask Jesus or José (the woman's husband) what had happened. However, for a shaman, this type of socially ambivalent action is part and parcel of the trade. During the Christmas festivities when the entire Umarituba community came to visit Tunu, the *pajé* Jesus lit a huge cigar in the community centre and sitting next to my husband, he divulged some of his knowledge to him. One of the trademarks of shamanic knowledge, Jesus explained, was that the rights and wrongs of everyday social life are irrelevant to the big picture. This was not the opinion of his neighbouring Tunu residents however.

In inter-community gatherings and festivities, Jesus would hear the loud, mocking comments of Tunu's bolder female residents, who publicly questioned his position as the Umarituba captain, ridiculed his small stature and remarked on his lack of skilled oratory. The women's non-authoritative voices permitted public criticism without conflict or the fearful

labajuna. Members of the community know if the person was bad because game animals gather around his grave, and this is said to bring shame to the man's family.

consequences of one of his potential sorcerous attacks (also see Garnelo 2003: 47). Jesus' skills in divination using psycho-active snuff (*pariká*) were called upon by other, up-river communities, namely Tunu's other affines in Anamoin, and even our own Tukano teacher resident in Tunu. Other Tunu's residents, however, doubted his abilities and questioned his intentions.



Figure 2: All souls day at the graveyard in Tunu, where Tunu's victims of sorcery are buried.

A number of skilled individuals may be called upon to aid a complicated birth. Those who have experienced quick, easy births themselves are the first called and they are often the ones who become the most skilled attendants. One of the defining features of such a person is their calm and collected demeanour, and their own healthful and morally upright children and family. In the case of serious complications such as those arising from *praga*, these same individuals may try to aid the birth and this is especially true today where there are very few *pajés* thought to be sufficiently skilled to break strong curses and attend the complicated births provoked by *praga*. While the *pajé* Jesus may still do so in his own community when complications arise, there is now another option that has been successful in treating assault sorcery: the hospital procedure of caesarean section.

Hospital birth in cases of *praga*

In cases of *praga*, the hospital's caesarean section offers a means to counteract the powerful sorcery that traps infants in the womb, causes haemorrhaging and prevents a healthy birth. As a technical procedure, knowing how to cut open a woman's abdomen without causing death is an excellent solution to *praga* and is on a par with other locally performed surgical procedures, such as cutting out tumours in the mother's breast. Xié residents say that they lack the knowledge to carry out the caesarean section successfully. This specific part of 'white' knowledge, when deemed necessary and performed with success, is then highly valued as a cure to the symptoms of *praga* (intense pain and imminent death) and is considered *puranga* (great). Moreover, such a powerful intervention is in line with Xié residents' own analysis of the high risk associated with the pregnant victims of *praga*.

When a woman fears she may be at risk of *praga*, because she has been warned of it or a *pajé* has confirmed her suspicion, she may choose to move to the city a month or more prior to the birth. In one such case the eldest daughter of Tunu resident Everisto moved down from her home in Anamoin to the city of São Gabriel in order to have her baby there. On their return trip, they docked at Tunu where they stayed for a week and I took the opportunity to speak to her and her kinswomen about the birth. They explained that the *pajé* had warned her that she was going to have a difficult birth and this is why she decided to travel to São Gabriel and have a hospital birth. She went into labour at her aunt's house in the city, where light contractions started. It was only when the baby's arm emerged from her vagina that she started to feel pain, at which point she went to hospital. The same had happened with her first son - his arm first fell out of her vagina, but he was smaller and they managed to deliver the baby in her husband's home community of Anamoin. This one however was bigger, (three kilos) and in the end she had to have a caesarean section. She stayed in her aunt's house after surgery and she sought a powerful shaman who would bless her post-birth. She had received twelve stitches across her abdomen and explained that the doctor had told her to rest for six months. She went on to explain that for her this was not a major inconvenience because she had two teenage daughters to help her in the house and in her gardens. Her opinion was that the hospital was great (*puranga*), despite there being no manioc bread drink (*karibé*).

In cases of *praga*, where skilled *pajé* intervention is lacking, the caesarean section affords the possibility of childbirth and saves mothers from near certain death. Given the distance to the

city, anyone suspecting sorcery will move to São Gabriel well in advance so that they may have access to biomedical care if they require it. However, aside from the positive outcome of a caesarean section performed for cases of *praga*, a Xié assessment of risk would not normally coincide with biomedical assessments of risk (cf. Kaufert and O’Neil 1993). Only in sorcerous attacks can doctors help by cutting the mother open and taking the baby out.

Snakebite and assault sorcery

A complicated childbirth is not the only time at which one may feel the painful effects of *praga*. Men may also fall victim to both *estrago* and *praga* and the most common manifestation of this are in (near) death experiences provoked by snakebite. As with childbirth, snakebite is associated with swelling, a hot, piercing pain ‘like an injection’, and a thickening of the blood.¹³⁵



Figure 3: Joaquim holding a snake's tooth he had extracted

For Xié dwellers, snakebite is a fairly common occurrence, but it is not a generic or singular type of affliction, for there is a difference between a ‘normal’ snakebite and a complicated or lethal one. Neither does its diagnosis depend solely on the species of snake by which one has been bitten (e.g. *sucuruju*, *jaráracá*, *coral*), for it is often the case that identifying the attacking snake will not be possible. Diagnosis will depend upon the gravity of the psycho-physiological symptoms and associated pain, an assessment of the person’s general conduct and the reason for a snake attack. Individuals using sorcery may cause snakes to be in close proximity to their intended victims, putting them in their path through their manipulation of *maiwa* spirits and provoking the snake to inflict a mortal wound. Treatment and cures depend on a man’s ability to

¹³⁵Other symptoms include contraction of the throat and pain in the chest and this is especially true of the bite of the *jararaca*. This may, I was told, be treated by the *irira su* plant found in former manioc gardens (*kukuera*). If no such remedy can be found however, tobacco, because it is a cooling substance, may also be applied to the wound. Eating a snake’s tail is also a good preventative measure for snakebite, since it is said to repel snakes.

manage his heated state by maintaining his own cool minded comportment. As in cases of complicated childbirth, hospital intervention may also be appropriate.

Our neighbour Alfredo nearly died as a consequence of *praga*. Alfredo, who was once a skilled hunter, had become a target for sorcery due to his involvement in his cousin's liaison with the daughter of Alfredo's brother-in-law. Alfredo was working in his manioc garden when he felt a light piercing sensation in his leg. Initially he thought it was a splinter of wood that had perforated his skin, and he took no notice and continued working. When blood started seeping out he turned to his wife and said 'I think a snake has bitten me'.¹³⁶ He used a hooked piece of wood to pick up his machete, in case the snake had slithered over it leaving behind a malignant aura. He went to search for the plant remedy he needed. However, the medicine from the forest didn't work because as he explained, he didn't have faith (*acreditar*) in it. He decided to travel downriver in search of biomedical help and docked at the island community of Patuá on the Rio Negro. By this time he started to feel drunk as a result of the snake venom, and he wanted to do everything at once, smoke, drink, eat, and he instructed his wife to make a cigarette for him. Shortly after this, the medical team arrived (via speed boat), put him on a drip and gave him an injection. After that, he said he didn't feel any more pain. Later he got up and saw his arm was very badly inflamed and his skin was breaking open in some places. When he arrived in the hospital the doctors tried several types of anti-venom. When they administered these to him, his whole body started to go black and Alfredo said he began to worry. While black skin, caused by black blood, is a normal consequence of snakebite, its rapid acceleration as a result of the biomedical treatment was entirely unexpected by both himself and the doctor who administered it.¹³⁷

Two weeks later he was in the convalescence unit of CASI where he still felt a burning pain, even though he was generally recovering. Only his finger, however, remained black. The doctor said he would have to cut it off. 'For the doctor, black is bad, but for us, the black part comes off and the finger goes back to normal' Alfredo explained. He didn't want to have his finger cut off, but the doctor 'knew how to speak' and convinced him. They cut his finger and he could see his bone. Before this happened, Alfredo explained, he was very '*macho*': he had a big manioc garden and was a successful hunter, but now he doesn't even have enough

¹³⁶A man would not normally tell his wife for fear of an increased experience of the pain. However, Alfredo is in a privileged position since his wife is not reproductively active, they have no children and she is unlikely to ever have any after a bad experience she had in Manaus hospital.

¹³⁷For a fascinating account of 'blood pathologies', see Duden (2012).

ammunition for his gun. The first time he went fishing after the operation, he caught fish but he couldn't unhook them. 'I nearly cried' he lamented. 'They did this [*praga*], he said, 'so that I wouldn't eat anymore – I wouldn't be able to catch anything and would die of hunger.' As a result of his bite, Alfredo suffered greatly and was unable to work in his manioc garden, which produced a particularly bad crop that year.

All this made Alfredo suspect sorcery. And there was a motive for this. Jurez's niece, Bete, took as her boyfriend Alfredo's cousin from Umarituba. His cousin was keen to help his prospective parents-in-law and came to stay in Tunu in order to provide bride service. Alfredo advised however, that since Bete was not yet pregnant, it was premature to provide such extended services to his girlfriend's parents. While Alfredo's cousin was away, Barbosa, a teacher from the lower Rio Negro arrived in Tunu to resume his teaching position. Bete had an affair with the teacher. When her 'fiancé' in Umarituba found out, he no longer wanted to be with her. Bete then reproached Alfredo about her boyfriend's decision, and Alfredo pleaded ignorance.

Shortly after this he was bitten by a snake. The snake had bitten Alfredo because he didn't want to help Bete, he explained. According to him, Bete had solicited someone to put a curse on Alfredo. Both Divinal and Jurez, knowledgeable residents of Tunu, also suggested that this was indeed the case. Jurez explained that his high-ranking niece Bete had made a curse in the cathedral of São Gabriel in order for this to happen, and low-ranking Alfredo became the victim.

By contrast, when 40-year old Jaime, father of four and high-ranking captain of Tunu, was bitten by a snake he disappeared for a week and I thought he had travelled to São Gabriel. The snakebite had been kept secret until two weeks later when he decided to travel to São Gabriel to seek further medication. His father, the elder Luís, explained to me that his diligent son had gone out before sunrise to prepare his canoe for a day's work in the manioc garden with his wife. The snake was at the water's edge and Luís, Jaime's father, suggested that Jaime had done nothing to provoke the attack. Jaime had then retired to his mother's house where his father treated him with plant remedies and strict diet of *karibé*. After a week he re-emerged slightly debilitated but well. There was no reason for him to suspect sorcery, he did not die and recovered fairly quickly. Jaime did all the things a man is normally expected to do after snakebite.

Given the code of silent self-reliance, it is often hard to tell when someone has been bitten by a snake and what men are doing to treat it. Community leader of the lower Xié village Campinas, José Waroya, explained the proper procedure after a snakebite and various Xié dwellers from both upper-river and lower-river communities echoed his observations: a man will not publicise his bite and will attempt to stay in the forest alone and treat himself there. If bitten in the water, one should attempt to treat oneself in the water, as it is important to avoid temperature change. It is a man's business to know the remedy for snakebite, which forms part of his essential knowledge and he will seek out the plant he needs to cure himself. Not knowing the remedy means involving other people whose knowledge of the bite will increase the pain, which Xié dwellers say is especially true if there are pregnant women in the community. The presence of pregnant women enhances the potential for pain in the person bitten, viewed as being full of blood, and the combination intensifies the pain and possibility of death.

A man should then wait before quietly returning home and entering a period of reclusion. During this time, he should avoid eating meat and large fish as should his close kin. Reclusion in the company of close kin, who should also follow the restricted diet, is essential to ensure that food prohibitions are followed by everyone. Breaking any of them will cause the pain to increase.

When I spoke to indigenous health agent Emilio about snakebite, he told me that 'Even white people know that [these prescriptions should be followed]!' He disapprovingly cited an example of a case of snakebite during which relatives had visited the inflicted family. He emphasised that these relatives could not be trusted to follow the dietary prescriptions and that even the act of their staring at the victim could increase the pain.

Those who survive a potentially fatal snake attack, through their own actions have their status enhanced. They also often acquire the skills to aid in the bites or births of others. Evangelical Campinas resident Floriano explained that he had become skilled in treating the snake-spirit illness *cobrello*, after he became the victim of a snakebite. During a four-day post-bite period of self-discipline, Floriano told me how he was visited by an 'angel of God', who 'spoke to him over his shoulder' and told him how to treat snake-illnesses through prayer¹³⁸.

¹³⁸ This is in keeping with Rival's (2005) assertion that it is easier for men to detach themselves from their soul, and this forms part of their ability to generate embodied dispositions of other agents (animals, spirits, ancestors).

Cobrello, also known as *oomeni*, is an ‘ugly’ illness that arises from unwittingly crossing the path on which a snake has recently travelled. Often, there is no identifiable culprit, but a person makes ‘themselves’ vulnerable by failing to follow the guidelines for good living (see Chapter Three). The sickness causes itching, pain and the black and sometimes red marks that also typify actual snakebite. In Floriano’s experience and in contrast to some cases of snakebite, hospital remedies were ineffective at treating *cobrello*, which can only be cured using traditional methods.

Snakebite and childbirth arise as two complementary rites of personal growth for men and women respectively. Snakebite and the perinatal period cause men and women to be inflamed, full of blood, pain and heat, and afflicted by potent smells which may also affect other co-residents. The pain of both affiliations is associated with pierced and perforated skin, and a biting pain similar to that experienced during particularly painful menstrual flows. This is the type of pain associated with the bite of the piranha fish, the fish that also provokes a woman’s monthly menstruation, and equally, the blood and pain accompanying childbirth (see Chapter Three). Part of their equivalence is their emergence as parallel experiences of acute pain.

Discussion

Snakebite and childbirth are two common experiences for men and women respectively and as such serve as important, informal person-becoming rites. People are prepared for these rites over the course of their life-time by consistently diminishing the importance of pain in daily life. Along the Xié, many accidents and experiences of pain which are not considered life-threatening are dealt with in a matter of fact way and treated, unflinchingly, by oneself or a kinsperson. In Tunu, our neighbour Emilio was building his house when he slipped and fell, cutting his leg open and leaving a gouging wound. Without a word, Emilio gave himself eight stiches to the leg and rested until the following day. This kind of self-treatment is common, and in Emilio’s case, as the indigenous health agent (AIS), he has access to the specialized tools to do this. In the neighbouring community of Cumatí I also witnessed the injury of a five-year old boy who fell from a tree and neglected to tell his family about the incident for three days. Through the intervention of a health team who had come to visit his post-partum mother, we later discovered that the boy did in fact have a broken arm. Although the boy could not move his arm without flinching violently, he neither screamed

nor said anything while he was having his arm examined. During vaccination visits administered by biomedical nurses, children and adults will unflinchingly give up their arm for inoculation jabs and communities will reel with laughter should a child over the age of three be unwilling to suppress the unpleasant sensation which is part of this experience. ‘Did you cry?’ young boys ask each other after any such occasion, and they are scowled at if the response is anything but a firm negative. My son Sasha quickly picked this up when the dental team made their annual visit to extract the tooth of Sasha’s ‘brother’ with whom we lived and who had been complaining for several months about his toothache, (*sasi aranya*). After surgery, Sasha’s first response was to ask if his ‘brother’ had cried. Young boys are keen to diminish the importance of the painful experiences and to demonstrate their maturity and bravery by showing that they can withstand pain.

For women, childbirth etiquette involves demonstrating life-long skills representative of one’s personhood: discretion, autonomy, strength, physical and emotional control and the ability to contain the experience of pain and to perceive it as socially enhancing. Pain is also a sensation valued when actively suppressed through an ideology rooted in female power and autonomy, that is, when it is actively used to produce and promote convivial relationships. Pain becomes an experience used to articulate social identity and birthing reflects one’s acquired capacity for physical endurance, exertion, and self-reliance (also see Belaunde 2000: 42). These observations are equally true in cases of snakebite.

Pain, like childbirth, is one of those pan-cultural events in which personal somatic experience combines with a particular and intersubjective cultural-coding to create a dialogue that transforms lived experience. Since people lead by example, the ability to withstand pain directly correlates to one’s status. Victims of snakebite are commonly successful headmen, with large families, and from higher ranking sibs. Those who manage their own pain well can assist others, and enjoy enhanced social status. After a succession of uncomplicated births, women are able to attend and assist the births of other women.

Further, childbirth and snakebite become moments of which Xié dwellers are acutely aware and prepared for, and as such, these unexpected, apparently extemporaneous occurrences have become incorporated as informal rites of person-becoming. Such self-reliance is not particular to an Amazonian setting, and is evident in diverse ethnographic settings (Biesele 1997; Kaufert and O’Neil 1993; Sargent 1990). For the rite to be truly transformative, both

situations depend on the appropriate responses by the inflicted. In the context of sorcery however, pain becomes a marker of necessary, but dangerous, alterity.

Given the expansive tendency of affinal relations throughout the upper Rio Negro (Vidal 1993; Vidal and Zuchhi 1999; Vidal and Whitehead 2004: 57), pain becomes a necessary psycho-physiological experience of Arawakan opening. It is also a part of life transformation that may go wrong. In cases of *praga*, the identifiable culprit is nearly always an affine who interferes in the lives of successful men and reproductive women who have caused offence or incited envy or greed. Further, malignant shamans motivate ancestral animal spirits (*maiwa*), including snakes, who prey on these people. From the Xié dwellers perspective, the *maiwa* are themselves powerful alters, virtual affines (Vivieros de Castro 2001) only a stone's throw from the malignant affine himself. In this context, pain emerges as a latent and necessary characteristic of the affinal relation.

It is now worth finally considering that while *praga* is caused by an identifiable culprit, symptoms of blood loss may also suggest *machí* poisoning. Campinas resident Floriano explained that this was the case with his pregnant aunt, who died as a result of poisoning in the community of Nazaré. She was working in her manioc garden when she started to feel sick and began to vomit and have diarrhoea. Floriano explained that it must have been *marecaimbara*, and that someone had poisoned her food. She suffered abdominal pains and shortly afterward she died. The child she was carrying, it is said, remained trapped in her womb, where it also eventually died. In the context of increasing exposure to the outside world, and new, unfamiliar affines, one discussant observed that you may not know whether the cause is the unknown *machí* poisoner or an 'actual [known] person'. In addition, Umarituba resident Joaquim explained to me that it is sometimes hard to identify which are cases of witchcraft, *machí* poisoning or *praga* (witchcraft and sorcery respectively) because even people whom one knows may use snake venom as their poison, carrying it in an amulet around their neck and slipping it into their victim's food. This suggests that childbirth complications can derive from affinal relations both near and far: the only other deadly cause of haemorrhaging in childbirth after *praga* (and in which the culprit is identifiable), is *machí* poisoning, where the culprit is unknown. As such, childbirth complications appear as a natural consequence of ever expanding relations.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I present a series of equivalences between childbirth and snakebite. I discuss childbirth and snakebite as painful occurrences that require a mindful response. This parallel, is also based on somatic equivalences of pain and in treatment, for both require particularly marked periods of reclusion, behavioural restrictions and special diet. This parallel is also evinced by the myth of the first sorcerous impregnation of proto-woman, Amaru and the birth of her snake-like child. I have also suggested that these two occurrences are used to articulate and describe the affinal relationship. On the one hand, affines can be managed by a mindful response and the careful management of pain. When this response is not provided, a person experiences unbearable pain and enters ‘a position in which the prime characteristic is alterity’ (Fryman 1998). This explains the low tolerance for those who are not able to transform experiences of pain into strength. These individuals –by making themselves other in their open expression of pain- unnecessarily bring alterity into the everyday.

In the context of assault sorcery however, both snakebite and childbirth may become events that do not facilitate new life, but rather inhibit it. In both cases, the difference between common pain and uncommon pain is equivalent to the creation or the negation of one’s personhood and uncommon pain is a sign of mortal predation. This is the difference then between pain as an ‘individualising’ force (Scarry 1985) and pain as a source of intersubjective experience (Seremetiakis 1998; Hsu 2005). In cases of assault sorcery, affines also have the capacity to inhibit the reproduction of society. And so, the tenuous dialectic between self and other continues to form the dynamic from which sociality is brought into being.

Chapter Six

Masterful dwelling: hammocks, canoes and the art of splash-washing

Introduction

This chapter returns to the post-partum environment discussed at the end of Chapter Four, which contrasted post-partum maternal coolness with the heat of infancy. In this chapter, I focus specifically on techniques for cooling neonates. Such a separation between maternal and neonatal care is possible because although the mother spends considerable time caring for the infant and actively participates in the riverine environment, practices are actively orientated around the infant and not the mother. In the absence of the mother, other carers assume the same caring praxis to secure the infant's well-being and this does not require the mother's participation. Infant care is then orientated around bathing and hammocking, which form part of an infant's familiarisation with its immediate environment.

The intimate relationship between Amerindians and their environment has been most thoroughly explored by Rival (2002) who vividly demonstrates how Amazonian Huaorani 'cruise' and 'trek' through the forest, observing, commenting and delighting at plant and animal growth. In a key article, Rival (1993) details both correspondences and consubstantial relations between social and other organic life processes, which she argues form a single social field. Here, practical experience of forest growth informs human developmental processes. Noting differences between the growth, maturation, longevity and the reproduction of different tree species, she comments on how the Huaorani liken the most respected elders to the hardwooded canopy trees, whose characteristics Rival (1993: 638) illustrates: 'In addition to their longevity, these trees are also admired for their solitary character (they do not grow in groves, but are sparsely dispersed throughout the forest), as well as for their profuse entanglement. They are hosts to many plant and animal species, and a mass of lianas and climbers assists their growth, while helping them stand upright in the wind.'

These trees thus embody certain characteristics valued in people - they have a long life, are resilient and self-sufficient, yet are also engaged and enmeshed in relations that encourage the growth of others, and by the same token are also supported in their own growth. Despite their openness, as a necessary precursor to living (Vivieros de Castro 2002) or 'living well' (Ewart 2000), they are able to stand upright independently of other (canopy-tree) persons.

However, as Rival (1993: 638) notes, such fine development is dependent on certain conditions without which they will ‘remain young, immature trees’ - a fact which we may also consider in terms of human growth.

It is the conditions surrounding proper growth and development of human beings that form the focus of this chapter. Carers provide specific, environmentally situated, developmental conditions that are deemed requisites for proper human growth. In the Xié context, this arena of neonatal experience includes a considerable amount of time in the hammock (being rocked or laying still) or involves the infant in a vigorous bathing routine that typically dominates the first four months of its life. Hammock and river dwelling are the most commonly sought after situations for an infant. Combined with a carer’s specific skills, these provide for optimal development. This chapter describes such early infant experiences as facilitating a ‘light growth’ (*crecer ligeiro*) and the process of body ‘hardening’ (*duro, santa*). Taking these notions seriously, I then consider how infants acquire not only a particular type of body, imbued with specific and emplaced skills, but also a particular mode-of-being requisite to proper persons.

The importance of bathing and specifically baby bathing, is brought into sharp relief by the attitudes and verbal observations of health workers and especially nurses who reside temporarily in certain Xié villages. These professionals will comment on the danger of early morning bathing as a source of flu and pneumonia. This is particularly the case in neonatal river baths, which nurses associate with the high incidence of neonatal mortality. Of course, such comments are much at odds with customary praxis: casting our minds back to Chapter Four, early morning bathing for an expectant mother is described and equated with a *vacina* or *vitimina* i.e. like a preventative inoculation or a vitamin supplement, often prescribed during pregnancy (and post-partum) as an essential part of infant growth.

The technique of splash-washing

Along the Xié, when a baby cries, whimpers or is restless, the response is unanimous: ‘The baby wants to be bathed.’ Similarly, a newborn baby under three months, that has its eyes open – ‘*omayco*’ (*olhando*, looking) - for more than five minutes, is clearly asking to have a wash. An infant’s desire to be splash-washed is a signal that the child is tired, because wanting to wash is synonymous with wanting to sleep: ‘When the baby keeps waking up, it means he wants to be bathed.’ Babies are rarely heard crying and when they do, splash-

washing is the preferred remedy nine times out of ten. Splash-washing cools and relaxes the baby in preparation for the stillness of his hammock and rest. ‘He’s hot’ (*saku*) the mother will exclaim when her newborn writhes in the hammock. Washing is thought to cool the baby down, after which he returns to the warmth of his mother’s breast and then directly to his own hammock surrounded by a nest of blankets, ready for sleep. Xié dwellers recommend splash-washing as a way of encouraging babies to have long, drawn-out naps and helping develop continuous sleep patterns during the night. However, as became clear over the course of my fieldwork, the baby does not just want to be wetted, cleaned or cooled by the water, the baby wants to be *splash-washed*.

Newborn babies are not submerged or dunked in water, actions understood to cause the baby a serious shock.¹³⁹ Rather they are splash-washed, and splash-washing begins immediately post-birth in a basin at home. On the baby’s birth, river water is immediately fetched and transferred into the washing basin. Post-birth the baby has no direct contact with the mother: a female relative, often the mother-in-law, who supports the child one-handed, her right forearm and hand securing the baby across the chest in a forward-slumped seated position on her lap, will prepare to bathe the child. She places her foot in the basin full of water and transfers the baby (draped-over-forearm) onto her submerged foot. Resting on his or her grandmother’s foot, the baby’s buttocks are only half submerged by the shallow water. From this position the baby is ready to begin bathing.

With the free (right) hand, water is cupped-up from the basin and dribbled down the baby’s exposed back with increasing speed and frequency, changing from a delicately administered trickle down the washer’s fingertips to a vigorous hand-fully-cupped splash-washing, as water is splashed over the head and dribbles down the baby’s face, chest and legs. This technique is invariably accompanied by a brrrrin’ trumpeting noise – as the washer forcefully expels air out between her vibrating lips. If the baby whimpers, it is consoled with back-patting and the washing continues. As the splash-washing increases in vigour, the brrrrin’ sound becomes louder. Splash-washing continues for around fifteen minutes, with a few minutes taken to wash the areas the splash-washing has not reached, and a hand is passed over the child’s neck and genitals to clean away dirt and perspiration. The baby is then

¹³⁹And deprive them of the possibility of proper healthy growth and development, an issue discussed in Chapter Seven.

removed, dried with a cloth, breastfed (during the first month the baby has the sole and undivided attention of its mother when feeding) and laid to sleep in his hammock.

Home splash-washing continues throughout the first week of life, until the baby's umbilical cord falls off (four to five days after the birth) an indicator that the baby and mother are now ready to bathe in the river. This prompts the *iyumi* ritual, which I describe below. From here on the baby will be splash-washed in the river: seated either on the lap of the washer (mother, father, grandmother or other close female kin), who sits submerged on a rock in the water, or held against the washer's thigh as she stands. A variation of this technique is also used: the baby is held with the washer's right arm across its chest and the baby's buttocks are supported with the left hand. The lower body is then made to move rhythmically back and forth in the water. This technique is accompanied by the washer making a shwī, shwī sound. Sometimes both techniques will be used one after the other. The washer is almost always the mother, grandmother or older female kin, but I have also seen elder male siblings bathe a baby in this way, as well as the infant's father.

Splash-washing on the foot will continue at home, but only at night. When the baby wakes, he will be splash-washed in the basin, up to two to three times a night. Night washing will continue until the infant is about three months old, when it begins to sleep more contently. Regardless of their gender, babies are splash-washed up to five times a day, until they can sit upright, at about the age of six months old. Splash-washing is always accompanied by the brrrrin' noise, which later will be used to calm a baby or toddler as it is jiggled in the arms of the carer or swung in the hammock.

During neonatal splash-washing, the baby is the sole focus of attention and generally washers seek a place away from other bathers, sometimes in the midst of the strongly flowing waterfall rapids. This location is specified by the mythscape, the sacred landscape described in Chapter Two and Three. The mythscape mnemotechnically records splash-washing as an ancient person-forming technique that Napiruli – when he first explored the river - observed to be taking place at specific locales along its course (see figure 1). It also suggests that splash-washing is a practice whereby babies may acquire the durability of the river's boulders and the coolness of its waters, qualities associated with the ancestors.



Figure 1: The caption reads: 'the child's waterfall: where he [Napiruli] saw a woman bathing a baby, and gave the name "the child's waterfall".'



Figure 2: The girl holds her baby brother, waiting for the mother to finish her bath.



Figure 3: Cleocilda bathes her baby at home in a basin.



Figure 4: Cleocilda bathes the baby by a rock in the river.



Figure 5: Baby-bathing in the stream.



Figure 6: Splash-washing by a rock.

What the baby wants (or, why is the baby splash-washed)

The baby begins bathing while in the womb. Pregnant mothers bathe in the early morning to secure rapid and smooth births and ensure proper foetal development. Water in the womb is evidence of pre-birth baby bathing – something that the baby will want to continue, having ‘acclimatised to it’ (*acostombrarse*), so that it may grow post-birth. Bathing then is part of pre-natal or foetal education¹⁴⁰ and its continuation post-birth is considered essential for proper growth.

Babies are washed because they ‘want to be raised/grow/brought up’ (*querer criar se, re-yu-kirai*). The more frequently they are bathed, the quicker they will grow and the stronger (*kirimba*) they will become. This is especially true if the weather is warm, when there is concern the baby will become ‘dry’ (*seco*¹⁴¹) or ‘thin’ (*magro*, that is, hard –*duro, santa*- like

¹⁴⁰Such an idea is common in Euro-America and in India, where parents listen and observe how babies sleep better post-birth when they have been exposed to music in the womb (e.g. Arya et. al 2012).

¹⁴¹In contrast, Twigg (2000: 27) states how, in early modern England and France, bathing became seen as dangerous to the body, she specifies: ‘skin was regarded as porous; and water, especially hot water, was believed to penetrate the body and weaken its vital fluids. Young children were no longer bathed in water since its action would prolong the softness of a system that was already too moist; the process of growing up was seen

bone, rather than firm and full¹⁴²). Fatness – being ‘*gordo*’- is a desirable characteristic of babies (cf. Ewart 2000: 288) and is part of what makes the developing *pira miri* (*pira* = body/fish; *miri* = little) a source of delight and wonder. In the field, Tunu resident Magdalena noted the fatness and tranquillity of my own two month-old baby, and commented to me, ‘ah, so you do know how to raise children.’ Frequent bathing helps them ‘grow lightly/quickly (*creser ligero*)’¹⁴³ and babies that are splash-washed are observed to be chubby, contented and of mild temperament. Babies bathe in order to ‘to feel good.’ On teaching me this technique, one woman pointed to her four year-old son, and observed how ‘firm’ and ‘strong’ (*kirimbawa*) he was as he was bathed, and later bathed himself, with great frequency.

Human growth has been described by Amerindian groups as a process of becoming ‘hard’ (S. Hugh-Jones 1979). Ewart (2000: 284) observes that Panará neonates begin with ‘soft’ eyes, bones and ears; which gradually harden as the baby starts to see with its ‘hard eyes’ (**into tâti**) and to sit up, becoming ‘hard boned’ (**si tâti**). This gradual acquisition of hardened bodily features occurs in tandem with the development of social and moral qualities, nurturing physical strength, endurance, knowledge and appropriate behaviour. The embodied morality of hardened bodies, aesthetically evaluated by Panará as beautiful, are seen as the product of diligent human practice and the result of intense labour in the active cultivation of subjects. Like the Panará (Ewart 2013), Xié dwellers appear to be referring to a certain firmness of form, muscles and sinews, which develops in concert with socio-moral qualities and dispositions – the developing upright moral character of growing infants.

Learning to assume an upright position is also achieved through splash-washing. Newborn babies are nearly always secured, or carried, single-handedly, with the neck supported in the nape of the carer’s elbow, lolling from one side to the other when handled.¹⁴⁴ Splash-washing is the best way to firm up the neck muscles that will allow the baby to support its head and eventually to sit up. After this development has been observed, at around six months, babies are splash-washed with less vigour and frequency. Babies have

as a process of drying out.’ Accordingly, she notes a preference for ‘dry washing’, ‘rubbing down’ or ‘wiping down’ with the fortifying and strengthening properties of perfumes and spirits.

¹⁴²This distinction between hard and firm is made in the Chinese context by Hsu (2010: 30).

¹⁴³On lightness as a quality of vitality, see Santos-Granero (2012:192) and, elsewhere, Hsu (2012b: 161).

¹⁴⁴Here, the newborn baby’s floppy neck is compared to that of a (dead) bird.

developed/been taught a certain responsiveness – they can turn their head to look at things, a precursor to and sign of socio-physical awareness.

Splash-washing is thus seen as essential in an infant's development, and it is also part of a rhythmic chain of events as the baby is washed, fed, placed in the hammock and swung. The baby is bathed because it wants to sleep, and this becomes the rotating routine. On one occasion, while talking to the mother of a neonate, my two-month old baby kept on peeing, about four times in the course of an hour. The mother responded: 'For us, when a child does pee pee like that, she wants to be bathed.' Here, we begin to get a sense in which babies start associating the river with tasks that normally take place there such as urinating. Bathing is closely linked to knowledge of other water arts – fishing, canoe travel, fetching water, washing plates, preparing foods and defecating, which all depend on one's ability to spend prolonged periods in or around water. On one level then, bathing is to do with the control of bodily orifices, their somatic synchronisation to a certain time and place and the association of water arts with other river activities. The child then comes to associate the river with internal bowel and bladder movements, tying these to wider routines of cleanliness, playful reinvigoration and the tasks of river dwelling.

This synchronisation is also apparent in the work of Christine Hugh-Jones (1979a). In her discussion of post-natal care, she describes the body as a vessel whose orifices gradually come to be controlled. C. Hugh-Jones (1979a: 119) states that 'foods, excreta, smells, sounds, breath and visual images should all go in or out in a regular and controlled manner' – an issue I have discussed at some length with regard to mindful action in Chapter Three. It would then appear that in the Xié context, orifices are actively guided to take control. What is more, these riverine corporealities are linked to the acquisition of bodily specificity and personal qualities consubstantial with the qualities of cool river water. Negotiating this interface between those particularly open and vulnerable areas - the orifices - to acquire a regularity in their functioning, is premised on the execution of specific techniques.

At this stage then, babies may be acquiring specific skills, but they are also becoming used to the riverine environment. The notion of becoming used to something (*costume*) is accepted and cited in various contexts and individuals express great concern that a baby be bathed properly – with the splash-washing technique – in order not to 'get a shock', and become fearful of bathing. The process of becoming used to something is, however, one of 'mutual

adaptation and permeation’ (Geissler and Prince 2010: 194) in which bodies must become adapted to their environment and where the environment becomes adapted to and permeates the person. These are the embodied resonances that Ingold (2000: 200) has described as ‘historically incorporated into the enduring features of the landscape but also developmentally incorporated into our very constitution as human beings.’ Given the fragile and permeable biological frontiers and the ‘general principal that relations and processes outside of the body can be transferred to the body itself’ (i.e. S. Hugh-Jones 1979: 120; Barbara Freedman 2010), the porous epistemology of Amerindian bodies is considered both positive and dangerous. In a similar vein, S. Hugh-Jones (1979: 119) notes that ‘Permeability of the skin and opening of the orifices is good in as much as good things go in and bad things go out, but it is bad in as much as bad things go in and good things are lost.’ On these bodies then, contact with the water or the hammock are not solely acts of inscription; but are rather alchemical acts of incorporation that make bodies and persons. This type of embodied understanding of the landscape is what Ingold (2000) has referred to as ‘taskscape’.

Water is cool and refreshing and we begin to get a sense of how infants come to be imbued with its qualities, along with such attributes as persistence, endurance and perhaps most important, a flexible disposition in sync with its kin and its environment – an availability to the greater socio-physical milieu (cf. Ewart 2013).¹⁴⁵ In local terms, the nearest we approach this concept is in the firming up of the body, where qualities of firmness are not only physical, but are also associated with the cultivation of inner calmness. Water cools down infants in their heated states, producing calm-minded and cool-bodied persons. Hot emotions, including anger, are mitigated by bathing (as discussed in Chapter Three) and infants who are conspicuously unruly (see Chapter Four) become a particularly intense focus of systematic cooling. This orientation to the properties of the river is thus not automatic, but rather stems from a specific technique: splash-washing.

¹⁴⁵Conversely, the process of body hardening among the Cashinawa involves heating up or ‘cooking’ the child post-birth, so that the infant will be ‘washed in warm water and then placed in a hammock over a basin containing hot coals’ (McCallum 1996: 354). This indicates that these notions are specific to particular to distinct Amerindian groups and the ecological niches in which they live.

Neonatal home remedies

Many neonates suffer from flu and this is a concern for mothers and grandmothers in particular. As a remedy, babies will be bathed in a basin at home in warmed water infused with lemon and orange leaves, picked from one's own or neighbouring trees near to the homestead. I also observed the oral administration of popular, internationally marketed, mentholated topical cream, Vicks VaporRub, together with herbal infusions, for infants suffering from flu-like symptoms. This testifies to the power of potent smells normally avoided in infancy, but remedial in the case of illness. It is nearly always the grandmother who prepares these home remedies. In the past, I was told, neonates were bathed in *ta-chĩ*, a mixture of hundreds of tiny ants – 'fierce ants' - and the bark of the tree in which they lived. Brought to the boil in a pan, the mixture gives off 'a good and strong smell' (*um cheiro bom e forte*). Strong remedies are 'bitter' (*irawa*) and weak remedies are 'sweet' (*seẽ*). Babies bathed in this herbal bath were described to me as being 'vaccinated' (*vacinado*). This meant those babies might then 'get ill, but less seriously' (*pode ficar doente, mas não é grave*).

The herbal bathing is repeated every two to three hours for a week-long period after birth and a small amount of the potion was given to the baby to drink (cf. Geissler and Prince, 2010). These days, José, the respected Campinas leader told me, people just wash with soap and 'and that's it, ready' (*prontu!*). Herbal infusions are taken orally and also put in baby baths, exemplifying the permeability of bodily skin and the possibility of bodily absorption other than through the orifices.

Geissler and Prince (2010: 198), writing on Kenyan and Tanzanian Luo people, describe how baths establish 'a continuous relationship between...persons and places,' so that 'medical plants create or restore bodily bonds of shared substance...[as]...they are others with whom one engages, rather than objects one utilizes'; an observation equally true within the Xié context. Beyond their medicinal properties, herbal baths create permeability and resonance with one's environment, and the potential for transferring salient, beneficial characteristics and fortifying properties directly into one's own person.

Rival's (1993: 645) work among the Ecuadorian Huaorani makes this point well. In discussing connections between manioc and balsa, Rival notes 'When bundles of stalks are ready to be planted, they are beaten with large balsa leaves, a process aimed at vitalizing the stalks by transferring to them the balsa's fast-growth energy.' This transfer of substances can

also been seen in the use of a hard, slowly grown wood used to pierce the earlobes of male adolescents, which Rival (1993: 640) suggests symbolises the inculcation of the qualities of acceptance and conformity. Similarly, the Panará who used to pierce (**ti sapôpô**) the knees and ankles with jaguar teeth, or eagle claws, to make men strong and fast (Ewart 2000: 284). The notion of substances transforming the body, is also evident in McCallum's (1996) analysis of '**dau**', a Cashinaua term used to denote transformative qualities. McCallum (ibid.: 352) describes how, following birth, children are treated with medicines to help them develop socially, and the child's body will be bathed in plant infusions or steam/smoke baths or covered in ointments. Citing her field work informant, McCallum (ibid.: 354) notes:

At first his body, the child is born, the first day of life, the first year. Then the older ones-the mother, the father, the uncles, the grandfather-they have a preparation of native medicine [**dau**]. They give a lot of baths [with medicated water], they go along giving a lot of experience [P. *experiência*] with these baths. And there is medicine so as not to be angry, and medicine not to cry too much, and medicine to sleep well, to dream well. Medicine also so that a bad spirit won't come up against the child, so that it won't get an illness. So in this way the child gets harder....When it starts to sit, then it will taste meat, it will have another taste. That is how the human being begins to grow.....

Among Xié dwellers, 'medicines' were not talked about as frequently as splash-washing. For them, river water is an essential element used in the hardening of bodies.

The iyumi ritual and the transition from home to river bathing

The river is home to potent predators, to which babies are particularly vulnerable. Illnesses are often associated with certain rocks (**itá**) that are home to particular animal ancestor spirits (**maiwa**). These rocks are described as 'painted' (*pintada*, i.e. *pedra pintada*, **itá-pinima**), and the shape of the animal, mythic figure, ancestor or artefact can be seen in the contours of the rock. Babies sometimes cry when they encounter these sites on canoe journeys, and a blesser (*benzedor*) is sought afterward to soothe the infant and stop it crying. This is why the transition to river rather than home bathing, which the child begins after the first week of life, is a necessary but dangerous step required for infant growth: the child must now commence the process of gradual immersion in a constantly widening world of relationships.

The *iyumi* ritual begins in the hammock, marking a series of events that will come to dominate early infant life. Sitting perfectly still in the hammock, mother and child are immersed in the candied smoke of *brieo* (*chicantá* or *irichi*), a sweet smelling resin placed on brazil wood (*pau brasil*) that is burned beneath the hammock for five to ten minutes. It is important that both the hammock and the baby are exposed to the fumes, as they form a single unit. Simultaneously, a specially prepared cigarette will be lit. This cigarette needs to be blessed by a suitably qualified person, which in the case of Rosalia, was her visiting father-in-law Jesus. In the two post-birth rituals I observed, it was the father of the new-born who lit the cigarette. The father draws on this specially blessed tobacco cigarette, takes the smoke into his mouth, and blows it over the mother and child, focusing on the crowns of their heads. He then blows smoke over the rest of the body, slowly moving down the torso, finally directing the least powerful breaths toward the legs and feet. The couple and child then rise and make their way down to the river, the father leading, followed by the mother and child and grandmother (maternal and paternal respectively). The father continues smoking the cigarette as they make their way to the river, holding the burning plant resin, until they reach the river bank. The father will stub out the cigarette while the plant resin, placed on the ground, burns for another ten to fifteen minutes. The sweet-smelling fumes waft over the waters toward the grandmother and infant in the water. This is to protect them from the *choque* (shock) of the grandmother's splash-washing and to 'make the spirit animals disperse' (*espantar a majuba*). In Rosalia's case, the infant is truly a *taina piranga* (literally red child, but this is the general term used to refer to newborns and is suggestive of 'red hot') and still covered in post-birth *creme* (literally, cream - the waxy, cheese-like vernix caseosa) suggesting that he has not been scrubbed, but just washed. The mother swiftly returned to the home, fed the baby, and put him to sleep in his hammock. In the past, I was told a *pajé* (shaman) performed this ritual and it involved a lengthy oration (cf. S. Hugh-Jones 1979). It has since become more of a family affair.

The *chicantá* resin was procured from Isaura, former resident of Umarituba. Mother of eight, and grandmother to the same number, I am told she always keeps *chicantá* for the children's sake. In another community of Vila nova, I was told that grass (*capim*) was also used in combination 'to create more smoke' (*dar fumaça*). When the ritual was performed, the family sought a secluded part of the river at an hour when there were no other bathers present. On both occasions it took place at midday, because the early morning water –in

winter - was considered too cool.¹⁴⁶ This was to avoid scaring the child, already vulnerable to aquatic agents and potentially hostile animal spirits. The water, fumes and smoke accompany the transition from hammock to river, and then back again. It then becomes an intensive post-natal river bathing-breast-hammock routine, performed four to five times a day.

Babies who are not blessed are more at risk of attack by ancestral animal spirits (*maiwa* or *majuba*), which cause ‘the baby to be limp/ lifeless’ (*mole*). Forest animals and ‘every being of the water’ will make the baby cry. Parents who do not bless their child will also suffer the consequences years later, with bodily pains, notably spinal and sciatic ailments in men when they are fishing or hunting. Women will suffer *pitúa* (*fraqueca* and/or *preguiça*), that is weakness or laziness, as well as *puxuera* -an ugly feeling- and abdominal pains.

The *iyumi* ritual marks the infant’s awakening in the world, when it begins to open its eyes and senses, launching its initiation into a world of potent smells and sensations. The ritual itself is not usually accompanied by great pomp or ceremony, but rather is just one part of a complex repertoire of practices, all geared to infant and parental well-being.



Figure 7: Bathing as part of the *iyumi* ritual: Rosalia’s baby’s first river bath with husband, left and brother in the foreground. Rosalia’s mother is bathing the baby.

¹⁴⁶The water in the river may be a few degrees cooler than the water brought in gourds and distilled in the home.

The art of hammocking

The *taina makira* or baby hammock, is a place where infants spend much time, resting and sleeping. A month after birth a neonate begins to really awaken to the world ('*o mayco*, he's looking', they say). Calming movements and a series of sounds and songs are performed for the infant, designed to stimulate and engage, and provide balance to the multitude of other sensory stimuli – chiefly, the sounds and smells of the household and river. Thus, whilst newborns need not be rocked in a hammock, from about one month onward babies gradually start to be swung gently; babies more than a year old are often rocked vigorously. They keep their place in the hammock by pure momentum. The swinging action may be accompanied by a lullaby or a shaken maracá (*yamerú*), but is invariably complemented by the brrrrin' or shwī shwī sound, also used to calm an infant when bathing. I am also told that customarily the *chimatima* plant was gently batted across the baby's eyes to induce sleep, and then attached to the hammock itself.

Harry Walker (2009) has described the large inventory of (gendered) objects attached to a baby's hammock among the Peruvian Urarina, including bones, teeth, claws, beaks, razors, plastic spools and sewing kits. Considering the making of (human) subjects, Walker discusses how mutually constitutive but asymmetrical relations create enduring subjects considered as persons. The hammock acquires a gendered agency and builds an intimate, but subordinately dependent, relationship with the infant. The infant in turn absorbs the hammock's qualities through the acquisition of personal characteristics and skills. Walker describes the hammock as offering a prolongation of the intra-uterine environment, wherein the infant is insulated from some external forces and engaged with others. Walker (2009: 90) notes: 'The rapid swinging motion, in which the hammock ideally swings almost 180 degrees, subdues the child by resisting and ultimately overriding its tentative exercise of agency. As a baby in a hammock is rarely spoken to outside the lullaby, and in this subordinate, preferably sleeping, dependent state, it is best protected and most receptive to the formative messages which inaugurate it as person and subject.' Such also was my observation of Xié practice.

Two lullabies are particularly well-known along the Xié and the lyrics are said to spank 'the baby's bottom' and induce him to sleep *Jandu Jandu* refers to a spider man who had many

children to look after. The song calls out to this elder ‘Father of children’ (*O pai das crianças*) ‘to bring sleep to the child’ (*trazer sono*). The second is the *Marukututu* described as a *Deus* (God), known as the ‘father of sleep’ and the repetition of this song induces drowsiness. ‘If a child hears this music, he will soon be off to sleep.’ Employing the characteristics of lullaby, including a high pitch and slow tempo, the song’s rhythm, combined with that of the maraca, offer a synaesthetically integrated experience of movement, sound and rhythm. As Howes (2005: 181) notes, ‘motion can draw upon the kinaesthetic interplay of tactile, sonic and visual senses’. These days I am told that even popular Brazilian songs are sung to induce sleep.

Usually accompanied by the maraca, the brrrin’ sound (first initiated with and continually used when splash-washing) is said to pacify the baby and induce sleep, and is known to be ‘important for a child’ (*importante para a criança*). The brrrin’ sound alternates with maraca rattling that gets steadily louder. These are known as pacifying sounds, both for the baby and for any potentially hostile agents. Maracas are known for their soul-summoning capabilities during shamanic rituals and when deployed in infant care, they create a safe, protective environment where the baby may sleep peacefully¹⁴⁷. The hammock environment is one of consistent momentum and calming sounds and provides a cooling action; individuals often swing in hammocks to feel the breeze and cool themselves down. They do this because they are ‘hot’.

Baby hammocks are adapted from larger, imported hammocks and are hung low to the ground with bedding to secure the infant in place. Some of the most valued are bought in Colombia (where the weave is looser and the gaps are larger and the hammock therefore cooler). New hammocks may be bought for a new baby, but this is not essential and a mother of four commented how her newborn son had an ‘ugly’ (*feio, puxuera*), old and well-worn hammock. I am told that customarily the skull of the large blood-sucking bat (generically, *andirá*), that sometimes inhabits riverside dwellings, was attached to the head end of the baby’s hammock. These vampire bats have been known to attack children, who often fail to notice them during the night, sometimes with deadly results (cf. Descola 1992: 93). Caught

¹⁴⁷Maracas free up and unblock predatory attempts of spirit animals that would seriously jeopardise the health and well-being of an infant. This function is perhaps best illustrated by the communal use of the maraca during Easter (here a wooden spinning rattle, as the maraca denotes the sound rather than the object) used throughout the village prior to the main festivities. All houses are subjected to maraca cleansing, which is said to rid the space of evil spirits, described in Chapter Three, p. 123, footnote 85.

and dried in the fire, the bat's head would be wrapped in a piece of cloth and attached with *tucu* thread (a fibrous palm cord) to the hammock. This was well-known by the ancestors to be apotropaic. Other protective items were also prepared for the baby and blessed with tobacco by a village elder, so that 'the [spirit] animals do not disturb the baby' (*a majuba não molesta a criança*). Removing these objects would cause the baby to waken and cry. On long canoe journeys babies always travel in their own hammocks hung inside the canoe.

Staying balanced within the canoe is deemed an essential personal skill, nurturing familiarity with sensations of inertia and sure-footedness on uneven ground, and reducing the hazards of vertigo. Boys two years and older are encouraged to master balance in their tiny, notoriously unstable canoes and to learn to stand upright, braced against the canoe's narrow gunwales. Similar poise and agility is needed in the collection of high-hanging fruits growing on the riverbanks; both women and men expertly balance on the canoe's ledge to reach up and pick the fruit, or climb into the trees.

On long journeys children must spend a great deal of time sitting balanced in the canoe. My husband once witnessed the mother of a four-month-old baby crossing the rapids between Tunu Island and the other forested side in order to collect wood. The baby was seated between his mother's legs howling but perfectly balanced as she expertly paddled her way through the swift currents and between rocks. Of particular interest then is Walker's (2009: 86-87) inclusion of the hammock (canoe) lullaby. Although Walker does not comment on this association between hammocks and canoes, it appears that there is not only a semantic but a kinaesthetic and somatic union between hammock and canoe use, as both develop and exercise essential skills in kinaesthetics.

Guerts (2002), in her seminal monograph 'Culture and the Senses' based on fieldwork in Ghana, offers pertinent ethnographic evidence of an Anlo-Ewe sensorium that would include the faculty of balance and other introceptive senses (internal senses). Proprioception is both a sensation and a sense that is linguistically recognised among the Anlo-Ewe. Guerts (2002: 75) describes the close association between kinaesthetic sensations (bodily actions/movement) and dispositional sentiment (moral character): she describes how a young man, Kofi, was regarded as an unmarriageable partner not simply because he was 'a person who moved in a tarrying or dawdling fashion' but because he was 'not serious – an aimless irresponsible fellow' and thus described as **lugulugu**, a manner-denoting ideophone that

suggests a meandering type of behaviour had come to dominate his person. In her monograph Guerts (2002) examines the sense of balance as an essential personal skill, developed and inferred in infancy.



Figure 8: Cleocilda's two month old baby in the stillness of the hammock.



Figure 9: A two year old child having a snooze in his hammock.

More on balance: carrying, sitting and walking

Babies are often in bodily contact with their carers, and different carrying and sitting techniques are used to encourage the development of the child's own physiological capacities. While not exactly sat, as they are during bathing, (including immediately post-birth), babies are carried (to the river) using a semi-upright position with the nape of their neck snugly encompassed in the nape of the fore and upper arm of the mother. In this one-handed carrying position, the other arm is then free to steady a bucket of water carried on the head. After the first month of life, infants will be carried in a variety of outward-



Figure 10: Caring for the baby in the hammock.

facing seated positions. When visiting a neighbour for instance, the baby will be carried with its buttocks supported with the carrier's lower left arm, while the upper right arm crosses the baby's chest. This position is also assumed to jiggle a disgruntled baby up and down. These actions are accompanied by the brrring sound.

Babies who have gained head control and can look more or less where they please, are eagerly observed to be watching ('*o mayco*') all movements in their environment. Sitting upright and supported on their carer's lap, long periods are spent observing a baby as it observes a close-moving object and its sound: a chick chirping and hopping on the dusty earth, a dog running, an ant flying, all attract a baby's attention. Observing the baby's own observation, those surrounding the baby comment on 'his watching' which marks a significant developmental stage.

Shortly after the baby is observed to be watching, a baby's own responses are elicited by his carers. In the village context, these carers typically comprise groups of women who take turns interacting with a baby: within a 20 centimetre distance from the infant's face, a person eliciting a response from the infant will jerk her head forward and simultaneously accompany this with the '*achi*' – sound, repeated several times. Alternately, hands are clapped in the infant's face, from about the same distance. These vigorous interactions are acknowledged through the infant's eye-widening, or a full-body jerk of recognition.

As the baby gains control of its limbs, at around four months, it slowly becomes capable of reaching out to grasp things in its fist, both in and out of range. Watching this process, I saw older (female) siblings 'teasingly' bringing a child back and forth in motion towards an object in the home: a piece of rope securing a hammock, external overhanging strands of roofing (*karanã* or piassava palm) or bodily parts (i.e. ear lobe) provided ample objects towards which to orientate a baby's attention. In these interactions of 'guided rediscovery' (Ingold 2001: 138), the baby is always permitted to reach the object of its attention, after some teasing and pulling away, without becoming too frustrated; nor should it be congratulated at its achievement (cf. Mead and MacGregor 1951 on avoiding climax). When distress arose because the object remained out of reach, the baby's helplessness (*achi*) was noted, and it was then aided in its endeavour. In these and other interactions, *achi* is an idiom of compassion, that conveys the baby's helplessness and which along the Xié, is used exclusively to interact and also describe baby reactions as hopelessly cute (see Gow, 2000 on

the not dissimilar ‘**wamonuwata**’ idiom used among the Piro). As these interactions close, the baby should be passed back, hand to hand, in the reverse order in which it arrived. This attention and continuity of contact keeps the baby happy and prevents crying (see later discussion on fright).

Over longer distances, such as along garden paths, babies are carried in special slings (*makuru*) made from old hammocks. In these, infants assume an upright position, and older babies a sitting position, both of which allow for fluidity in the strenuous bending, leaning and lunging required for manioc cultivation. In this way, slings become ‘extra-somatic body parts’ (Erikson 2009: 187; cf. Mead and McGregor 1951: 142) since they temporarily become like limbs, not needing continuous attention. Babies of seven months or over who can sit up by themselves may also be carried in the *watura* (head-basket used to transport manioc, see figure 13 as an example), where both must maintain their balance on the average 40-minute trek along uneven forest paths, over log-crossings and across and between puddles. The most common method of carrying, however, is on the hip. This begins at four months of age in and around the village. Here babies learn to actively cling and respond to the movements of their carrier, who is often an agile elder sibling, thus gaining both leg and arm strength.



Figure 11: Visiting children carrying babies on their hip (Sofia, in arms, far left).



Figure 12: Rosa holding Sofia while she 'dances'



Figure13: Sofia hesitatingly sat in the watura with a child carrier.



Figure14: Sueli holding Sofia and making her stand.

From around three months babies are typically seated between the legs of their carers as they carry out their range of tasks. Their bodies move and respond to that of the carer who will deftly prevent the infant from falling while maintaining maximum maneuverability. I witnessed this vividly when ten year-old Rosa came to visit our house and play card games with my son and other village children. While I sat in the hammock, she took 3-month-old Sofia with her, (who could not yet sit unsupported) to sit on the floor between her legs while she organised the game-playing for the younger children, bending forward, sideways and backwards whilst handing out and collecting cards. This is also how older babies are seated when their mothers are peeling manioc, (during manioc-peeling, younger babies are

frequently handed off to available others, who will hold them or lie with them in a hammock so that ‘they are not in the dirt’, *-não estar na sujeira*). Finally, by about seven months, the baby may be seated in a purpose-built chair swing (also called *makuru* like the baby sling), often made by the mother’s father-in-law in whose house she resides. Thus, babies learn to sit not by staying still, but through the flexible, guided movements of their baby-sitter in their capacity as a responsive (back) support. Learning to stand is done in the same way.

From as early as two months babies are encouraged to stand and this forms part of their interactions with village members. Sitting on one carer’s lap, the infant’s torso is clasped and released in slow, rhythmic sequence. With another carer, the baby is kept in constant motion by jiggling the legs up and down. In the case of child-carers, they will keep the infant actively engaged through a rhythmic bouncing on the lap. Holding the baby’s torso and resting his feet on the lap, the baby strengthens leg muscles while focusing on the animated and contented encouragement of its carer (see figures 12 and 14). When young Rosa came to hold Sofia in this way she noted ‘she is dancing so she can stand’, and her mother added, ‘for us, it is good that a child is in all types of positions, that way he is strong’. Babies learn to walk early because their relatives have seized the opportunity to scratch their legs with the sharp feet of newly hatched chicks. When the surface flesh of a two or three month old baby is grazed in this way, the baby cries, but is quickly distracted. Now, the baby, like the chick, is induced to walk early (as chicks do immediately after hatching) and as such babies become potently strong (*kirimbawa*). Children eventually take their first steps when dragged about by their elder siblings (i.e. the youngest and shortest village-residents). I saw a group of three to six year olds take the arms of an eight-month old, propping him up like a drunk as they dragged him across the village, his feet and toes lagging as he managed the occasional step.

Children who achieve full control of their motor abilities, dexterity and strength and are able, by the age of two and a half, to fetch and carry a pail-full of water back to the home as well as periodically care for their younger co-resident siblings, constitute the norm of a healthy *kirimbawa* (potently strong) child. Within this norm, however, individual children display mannerisms or characteristics particular to themselves. The premature *pira miri* neonate fed on lemongrass, who was of a small and comparatively weak stature, earned the nickname of little fish; while the short and stout three-year-old son of Vila Nova resident Octavio was nicknamed after an equally small and stout yet strong monkey (*suue darú*). In contrast,

physically deformed and mentally retarded children are given the nickname *machíra*. Those with minor deficiencies, who may partially engage in daily life, dislike being called this: One girl grew angry with this name-calling, which mocked her lack of co-ordination when she spilled some water collected from the river. I then observed her mother dissuading her siblings from calling her *machíra*, a term linguistically similar to *machí*, the name given to the deadly and immoral *machí* poisoner who also suffers from a degraded appearance (see Chapter Four). Since beauty and uprightness of form are illustrative of inner moral strength and a child's *kirimbawa* state, those with disabilities are deemed both ugly and immoral, like the *machí* poisoner himself.

Babies are formed by their interactions with carers. This ranges from splash-washing to secure neck-hardening, to clinging, sitting and walking. Early gymnastic engagements define, as Guerts (2002: 74) notes, kinaesthesia as 'a sense located in the muscles and tendons and mediated by bodily movement'. Babies respond to their carers by performing the necessary clinging, holding and sitting postures in the different milieus in which their carers place them. These contexts are often those in which the child will develop further qualities and skills necessary of productive activities, such as on forest treks and when peeling manioc. Continuous, intersubjective encounters encourage the highly valued, rapid development of physiological capacities of sitting and walking, which mark increasing active participation in village life.

Further perspectives on techniques for infant growth and development

Based on her ethnographic enquiries into Fijian childhood, Christina Toren (2001: 156; 158) has convincingly written that the worldly condition of intersubjectivity 'entails that children socialise themselves: they engage those who care for them in the process of constituting their own understandings of the world'. Carers are consistently called upon to perform acts that the baby is explicitly understood to want. In this chapter I define infant care in terms of both casual extra-somatic attentiveness and orientated engagement. This includes a repertoire of an adult's own task-orientated interactions with the baby together with a range of baby-orientating techniques. In the latter, I have described how the infant's attention is directed toward the object he will grasp; to the legs with which he will walk and to the river in which to bathe- that is, toward all aspects of his socio-physical environment that help indicate his place within it.

Splash-washing is part of what makes an infant feel at home in its environment, and has to do with the creation of a particular type of body and its emplacement. As Bourdieu (1977: 90) reflected, ‘the “book” from which children learn their vision of the world is read with the body, in and through movements and displacements which make the space within which they are enacted as much as they are made by it’. Whilst body and place may be said to become ‘attuned’ (Ingold 2000) to one another, they also facilitate the acquisition of a particular type of corporeality, a corporeality which is intrinsically emplaced and inter-subjective. This kind of ‘knowledge bred of familiarity...does not give us a position in objective space’ (Merleau-Ponty 1962 [1945]: 144), but is rather a context-specific and relational understanding of the self. It is this embedded understanding of personhood that led Xié dwellers to comment that if I left the Xié, my daughter would be required to ‘exchange her flesh’ (*vai ter que trocar a carne dela*) or ‘change her flesh’ (*vai mudar a carne – **pirera** - dela*). The contrast between the Xié world and more distant milieus led some people to voice concern that my daughter would ‘not get used to the change, (*não acostuma mais*)’ and become ill if we left. In short, she would suffer a ‘displacement’ - the feeling that one is ‘disconnected from one’s physical and social environment’ (Guerts 2005: 7), a state that for Xié dwellers can provoke ill-health. Merleau-Ponty (1968: 248) described the importance of place when he spoke of ‘the flesh of the world’: ‘that means that my body is made of the same flesh as the world (it is perceived), and moreover that this flesh of my body is shared by the world, the world reflects it, encroaches upon it and it encroaches upon the world’.

Among Xié residents, the body is a surface receptive to the actions and environments in which, as a baby, it is situated and subjected. Through the material, momentum and enveloping caress of the hammock;¹⁴⁸ and with water repetitively splashed onto the body’s surface, the infant is actively manipulated and touched by purposeful agents. These interactions will form the basis of personal and physical growth, which are formative actions of personal development and depend on the increasing and mediated expansion of auditory, aromatic, tactile and sonorous movement rather than on infant restraint. Movement is thus used to induce stillness, (but its intensity is dependent on the infant’s age). Frequent and active exposure to prolonged washing in cold water, where the water is picked up and splashed over a slumped, seated baby engages the infant in its surroundings. It also

¹⁴⁸Rival (2007: 174) states in relation to human touch, it ‘is not simply a way of finding human warmth and comfort; it is also a way of learning about a new body and a new person.’

encourages physical and mental durability ('firmness') and cultivates character-building. The physiological and cognitive articulation of well-honed practices, such as splash-washing and hammock-ing, encourage a 'full-bodied alertness' (Abram 2010) - bodily states and attitudes of mindful interaction and self-control- for baby and carer alike. Embodied experience is thus key in the active articulation and cultivation of people who are attentive to their environment and the beings (kin, prey, predators or simply others) that inhabit it. What is more, these practices form part of a socio-physiological implicit pedagogy whereby Xié residents seek to instill certain qualities in the neonate.¹⁴⁹

Rather than acquiring solely identifiable 'skills' in the Ingoldian sense of the term, the execution of such fundamental techniques as splash-washing and hammocking would suggest early infant development of a 'skill-in-means', an embodied mindful state of awareness and attentiveness. Such an analysis of the development of mindfulness breaks down the apparent divide in Ingold's (2000: 86) work between 'growth' which requires being 'mothered, nurtured, assisted – generally cosseted or helped along' together with the provision of developmental conditions that enable a child to grow 'into social maturity rather than being trained into it' (Strathern 1980: 196); and 'enskilment' as the 'sophisticated perceptual awareness of the properties of his surroundings and of the possibilities they afford for action' (Ingold 2000: 37). Moving away from a task-orientated understanding of skill, the thesis I outline here is precisely the development of a skill-in-means, the mindful capacity embodied; and the most flexible, sublime and transferable 'skill' or demeanour.

¹⁴⁹Essentially then, the hammock and splash-washing involve both applied touch and restraint, the intensity of which is mediated by age and socio-physical development. This careful orientation and mediation of neonatal experience is, I believe, on a par with other 'impressed practices' such as swaddling. In an insightful study into the effects of techniques that 'involve a restriction of the movement of the body and limbs' Chisholm (2008) has identified what we may interpret as essentially mindful characteristics of infants, as a direct result of swaddling – an appropriate technique where both temperature and humidity are low. Chisholm (2008: 101, 102, 103, 107) notes that swaddling and the use of cradle boards 'calms babies and induces sleep'; 'reduced levels of motor activity in response to stimulation, fewer startles and low heart-rate variability' and is patently 'state reducing and alertness enhancing', inducing a 'quiet, alert state'. Thus, contrary to a swaddling hypothesis that asserted swaddling as inhibiting both motor (retarded attainment of motor milestones) and personality development (i.e. producing meek submissive states interspersed by moments of excessive expression of emotion), Chisholm's research actively demonstrates the opposite. Interestingly, he also suggests that the decline in swaddling practices in Europe was due to an increase in the use of pharmacological pacifiers; as well as being linked to ideas of personal liberty and freedom.

In defining this general and flexible mode of apprehending and responding to situations of a general sort, clarification can again be sought in the work of Merleau-Ponty (1962 [1945]:142): ‘...the learning process is systematic; the subject does not weld together individual moments and individual stimuli but acquires the general power to respond with a certain type of solution to situations of certain form.’ Rather than an ‘enskilment’, we witness a forming ‘instilment’ of this particular and fundamental personal quality distilled in the properly human bodily form. Fabricating this particular kind of person is part of creating kin with whom one will be able to live well with, work and engage in further processes of social and physical production. Through these practices, the development of mindful capacities encourages ‘soulful’ living, meaning the capacity to embody one’s soul, and is akin to what has been referred to as ‘ensoulment’ (in the case of artefacts, Walker 2009).¹⁵⁰ This is why failing to properly educate a neonate, through the active impressing of splash-washed bathing and hammocking, is unthinkable to the Xié dwellers, and would be viewed as the worst kind of negligence. These issues I discuss further in Chapter Seven.

¹⁵⁰In his discussion of mundane ritual, Jackson (2005: 107) notes ‘ritualization has to be approached not simply as a social phenomenon that reorders and reintegrates social relations, but existentially – as an ontologically ‘primitive’ mode of action that plays upon the emotions, manipulates the body and changes consciousness. One effect of such action is to transform subject-object relations, such that a person comes to experience himself or herself as an actor, and not just acted upon – as a “who” and not merely a “what”.’

Chapter Seven

Techniques of ensoulment¹⁵¹

Introduction

The relationship of the body to the soul or souls is a perennial theme within the Amerindian literature (e.g. Crocker 1985; Taylor 1996; Rival 2005). In animist cosmologies, the soul may be understood as the given aspect of anthropomorphic beings, with individual species differences being found in the bodies and biologies of beings (Descola 1994; Lima 1996; Viveiros de Castro 1998). The high degree of personal transformability documented in the Amerindian literature is based to a large extent on the detachability of the soul and the possibility of acquiring the soul-subjectivities of others (Taylor 1996; Vilaça 2002; Rival 2005).

For the Achuar, soul detachability is necessary for ‘secret vision quests’ (Taylor 2002: 464) which cultivate the incorporation of other perspectives and allow warriors to achieve a varied repertoire of ways of seeing. This acquired capacity to know other ways of seeing completes the warriors’ efficacy: Taylor (2002) notes that this new ‘sightedness’ enables other humans to be viewed as prey and positively alters their capacities as warriors (cf. Rival 2005). Subjectivities then often manifest themselves through bodily shapes and forms, a point well made by Conklin (1996; 2001; Conklin and Morgan 1996) among others.¹⁵² Shape-shifting and transformation depend on the detachability of the shaman’s soul and so, soul and body are continually juxtaposed in questions of shamanism, vision-quests, cannibalism, in illnesses and in the very constitution of self.

However, rather than opposing soul matter to bodily shape, Fausto (2007) proposes that most beings have a prey (inert, objectified) and a predator (animate or jaguar) part, held in different degrees and whose portions shift according to context. Fausto (2007: 513) summarises this as having ‘a positive potential to occupy the agent position and a negative potential to occupy the patient position in a predatory relation’. The advantage of the jaguar

¹⁵¹This term has been employed to describe the way in which objects become subjects (Santos-Granero 2009a). Given the ‘artefactual anatomies’ (ibid.), it is equally illuminating to extend this to the description of human persons.

¹⁵²On this, Viveiros de Castro (1998: 481) writes, ‘There is no “spiritual” change which is not a bodily transformation, a rendition of its affects and capacities.’

paradigm, as Fausto himself explains, is that it does away with divisions between the material (body) and immaterial (soul) by drawing on a ubiquitous Amerindian idiom for a potent, predatory, personal agent (the jaguar). Furthermore, it emphasises the dynamism of shifting power relations, in which the subject status (prey or predator) is constantly negotiated in dialogue with others in its presence. As a means of understanding the process of desubjectifying prey, Fausto's focus on the 'jaguar part' of persons sheds light on both anthropophagy and cannibalism. As such its emphasis on food and feasting offers an explanation for the apparent contradiction of eating game animals that are acknowledged to have anthropomorphic souls. However, as several commentators have also observed (among them Lagrou 2007; Willerslev 2007; Vaté 2007), Fausto still fails to fully scrutinize the relationship between soul and body. The emphasis on predation inevitably defines personal integrity in the negative.

Perhaps the clearest explanation of the soul's relation to the body comes via the notion of bodily knowledge (among the Cashinahua, see Kensinger (1995) and McCallum (1996). McCallum distinguishes three soul types and describes how their interaction dictates physical health: the true soul, the dream soul and the body soul(s). McCallum (1996: 362) explains that for the Cashinahua, knowledge acquired via the journeys of true souls and dream souls becomes incorporated into the body soul, which acts as a repository for knowledge. The correct balance – or 'working relationship'- of this dynamic bolsters the body-soul and creates healthy persons (ibid.: 362). Conversely, an imbalance exposes it to sickness, as it inhibits a person's ability to 'know' and to be mindful of one's person. Memory, which forms part of this accumulated knowledge, 'does not appear to have a separable existence outside the body, but rather is an intimate part of each developing body' (McCallum 1996: 355). The careful monitoring of knowledge appropriation creates knowledge-able persons, lauded as '*conscious*', healthy people (ibid.: 362, emphasis in the original).

In this chapter I consider ensoulment, or more specifically, how the subject position of a healthy human is assumed via the process of soulful distillation. Taking its cue from McCallum's (2001: 17, and Crocker's 1985) notion that 'other worldly power is an aspect of vital substances at play, not an addition to them', this chapter aims to shed further light on the soul-body dialectic by viewing mindfulness as bodily acquired knowledge. It is also intrinsically linked to substances. In this phenomenologically oriented approach to the question of ensoulment, I focus on the production and consumption of food, using three

examples from the perinatal period to illustrate mindfulness as the agent and catalyst that binds together body and soul and the medium through which full-body knowledge is formed. This alchemical approach to persons emphasises the deft, inter-connected movement of matter as it constantly intersects and shifts, creating persons at particular moments in time and space. This perspective also stresses the need to ‘ensoul’ or instill soul through acts of proper care.

Firstly, I look at the careful process of expanding an infant’s diet. Secondly, I examine childless people who manifest a desire to feed and help sustain other, non-human persons. Lastly, through a consideration of the fright that infants experience, I reflect on the consequences of eating the food of non-human others. I also discuss the extent of human complicity – and neglect - in provoking a potential disjuncture, or ruptured personal state, that leaves people vulnerable to illness. These examples examine how food is made, how a person is fed and by whom. In sum, the chapter describes how acts of compassionate care, which encourage people to feed others, are an important means of creating ensouled subjects. Such care creates people who have the know-how to live well *ukua katu* (*saber estar bem*) and to live beautifully, (*kua-katu puranga*, literally to know how to live well and with greatness). The point here is that mindfulness, as a heuristic device, allows us to detail a specific mode of interaction – a way of relating to the world- that is neither confined to a consideration of substances, nor exclusively relationships, but rather the space inbetween the two.

Soul, body-soul and body

The principal difficulty in speaking of the soul and the body is that the definitions of these terms in our ontology are radically different from what is understood by Amerindians. While the body is seen as an ecological given – physical matter in plain sight, the soul is thought of as being invisible, but nonetheless the wellspring and seat of human consciousness and endeavour. From this perspective, it is the soul that animates the inert matter of the body. Many regional elucidations of personhood, however, show matter to be infused with a spirit/soul from which it cannot be divorced: whether the viscous substance of blood (Conklin 2001), or within the breath (Crocker 1985), or the much more immaterial name (S. Hugh-

Jones 1979: 133-3; Wright 1993),¹⁵³ indigenous elucidations of soul substance break down these boundaries between substance:: spirit, the material:: immaterial, matter:: ether.

This discussion occurs within the animist context in which many different categories of personable beings also have souls. As discussed in Chapter Three, understanding the animate environment has largely been based on the question of why animists perceive truly inert nature or matter to have intentionality. Subsequent explanations sought to describe this mistaken belief in terms of animating matter. However Ingold (2006b: 10) clarifies that: ‘The animacy of the life-world...is not the result of an infusion of spiritual substance, or of agency into materiality, but is rather ontologically prior to their differentiation.’ Thinking through this problem, Viveiros de Castro (1998: 481) posited that ‘body and soul, just like nature and culture, do not correspond to substantives, self-subsistent entities or ontological provinces, but rather to pronouns or phenomenological perspectives’. Locating points of view in bodily form and affects, he described how ‘bodies “are” souls’ and ‘souls and spirits “are” bodies’ (2001: 42). Viveiros de Castro’s (2001) clearly illustrates this in the context of his description of the importance of affinity in the construction of Amerindian sociality (also see Chapter Two).

In his Chinese box configuration, Viveiros de Castro (2001) describes the shifting, temporal relationship – which also depends on one’s perspective - between ‘the *figure* and the *ground* of each other.’ Each dimension constitutes itself reciprocally, flipping back and forth between the sides of materiality and immateriality. This fractal, recursive scaling mechanism means that in Amerindian sociality ‘the invisible dimension of the invisible dimension is the visible one, the soul of the soul is the body, and so on.’ (2001: 42). The present chapter is an attempt to understand how a person comes to manifest as such.

¹⁵³In the womb and then at birth, the baby is made to proceed from a neonate (*tiana piranga*, *wepiri irani*, literally ‘red child’), to a more alert and aware infant who ‘has a name’ (*wiruberu*). Babies receive their names when ‘baptised and blessed’ by a visiting Catholic priest or provisionally by a co-residing evangelist. This occurs between the ages of one to four months, but increasingly takes place at the one month mark. In neighbouring Venezuela, Wakúenai chant owners search for a child’s tobacco spirit name at one week post-birth, using **málikai** chants, a time after which post-birth proscriptions are loosened (Hill 1985). For Xié dwellers, a Christian name differentiates them from mythic heroes Napiruli, Wasaburiwani and the *jurupari* who, unlike baptised moderns, are said to be ‘without names’, having ‘ugly’, ‘unknown’ or even ‘unreal’ names. When people ask ‘does he have a name’, they refer to the infant’s potentiality of achieving the fully modern human status that it may later share with its co-residents. However, naming was not described in the context of soul and seems to have diminished importance for the Warekena when compared to their neighbours.

Among Xié dwellers, babies and adults have different types of bodies. Babies display a still developing fish-body or '*pira miri*'; while adolescents and adults have a *pira yane* 'our body', fed alimented and nurtured by kin and covered by flesh (*pirera*). Flesh is understood to be weak and unfixed 'until a child has grown' –at around seven years. Babies and adults alike have two other core vital aspects, the *mira* and the *anga*. Referred to in Portuguese as *imagem*, *mira* roughly corresponds to translations of 'shadow', doppelgänger or 'double'¹⁵⁴, seen in dreams and part of a baby's evolving awareness. Like their *pira miri*, the *mira* is the body-image and is in the process of rapid transformation. Further, because the baby cannot distinguish between dreaming (*kiri*) and being awake (*paka*), dreamed incidents can have significant impact on the child's development. From birth a baby also has an *anga*, its soul, associated with the head (*kanga*). It may be translated as head-soul. The *anga* aspect of the person is the most formless, and may be understood as 'the person within the person' (Rivière 1999: 85).

The relationship that develops between soul (*anga*), the image of oneself (*mira*) and the *pira miri*, grows stronger with each day of proper care, and nurturing causes a person to become strong (*kirimbawa*) and hard. Bodily firmness is evidence of a healthy working relationship between a human being's different constituent parts (cf. Rivière 2001: 78). This process I have termed instillment, in the previous chapter. Just as a child's body is growing, until the age of about seven a child's body-soul and soul remain fluid, lacking solid form. A loose amalgamation of *anga* (soul) will also unsettle the *mira* (body-soul) and destabilise it from the body. As I go on to discuss, chronic instability (cf. Vilaça 2002) remains until puberty, and the performance of the *kariumã* initiation ritual, which customarily takes place for both sexes before marriage and child-raising. Strength and potency is also acquired from food, and acts of commensality – eating meals together - give substance to the soul.

Substance for the soul: breastfeeding, fasting and weaning

Commensality can be seen as an important way of 'making kin out of others', and this is especially so for Amerindian societies and their inverse logic whereby 'social relations

¹⁵⁴Among the Achaur, Taylor (1993: 206) has described *wakan*, 'image of a person' and translated as soul, as referring to the 'reflected image of a thing, the appearance of someone in a dream as well as the dream consciousness'.

determine substance' (Vilaça 2002: 6). From this perspective, satisfying a child's demand for food, is a way of affirming that the relationship is one of kin, literally giving it substance.

A newborn is fed when it cries for food, part of the daily routine of bathing, feeding and hammocking (as discussed in Chapter Six), which will continue until the baby can sit up (around 6 months). In the community of Campinas, José explained to me how his wife, after bathing, would siphon off the watery colostrum of breast milk and rub it over the baby's face, feeding the infant only the 'stock' of the thicker mid and hind milk. The infant's hunger is rarely sated unless he or she is also bathed; and together with breast-milk, bathing allows an infant to become plump and well-watered, rather than 'dry' and brittle (i.e. emaciated).

During the first month of breastfeeding, a woman may suffer mastitis (*kambi perewa*, literally, 'breast injury'). Such an ailment can often be traced back to a disregard for menstrual norms (see Chapter Three), specifically a bar on the eating of large fish 'with spurs', or any game animal, during the menstrual cycle. Mastitis is treated with a hot flannel that has been placed over a steaming pot of manioc bread drink (*karibé*); passing a stiff comb over the breast; and by extracting milk. The grated bark of the *cajú* tree may also be taken as an oral infusion and applied directly to the breast (see Chapter Five on neonatal feeding).¹⁵⁵

Mothers sometimes leave older babies at home, in the care of an older sister, when working in the manioc garden. Mother of five, Marlene of Campinas, said she preferred to work just a few hours in the early morning, usually with her husband, before returning home to care for the baby. Her brother-in-law, José, explained that when he accompanied his wife to the manioc garden, they would always know that when her breasts began leaking milk, it was time to return home.¹⁵⁶

During feeding, babies are initially held in the crook of the arm, but as they grow, they increasingly take an upright seated position on their mother's lap. The mother will assume a purposeful, upright posture to breast-feed her child, ensuring that her breasts are protruding and her shoulders are back. Once they are toddlers, young children will approach and freely access the breast, lifting up any clothing in their way. Children come and go as they please,

¹⁵⁵ A woman in the mid-river community of *Cumati* also told me how her father-in-law had cut out a hardened and painful tumour in her breast (an eventual consequence of chronic mastitis) that had grown so large she could not use her arm. The operation removed the tumour. The breast deflated, but no longer produced milk.

¹⁵⁶ Babies gurgle and blow bubbles with their saliva just as those fish that their breastfeeding mothers have consumed.

sitting, standing or otherwise hanging on and sucking their mothers' breast, while she continues whatever she was doing (e.g. the conversation, and filtering manioc mass, see Figure 1). In this setting – and at this age - the normal practice of bathing before feeding is hard to maintain. Incessant feeding - in this manner and in public – draws a stern rebuke from the child's mother. It is also true for mothers trying to wean their children off the breast altogether.

Weaning begins when the child is seen to be noticing other people who are eating. 'He's watching' (*O mayco*) a mother or her kin will observe, and in empathy may endeavour to feed the infant themselves¹⁵⁷. At two months old, our own little Sofia was '*o mayco*' (watching) when we took a trip from Tukano downriver back to Tunu with Anamoin resident Simão, in his canoe. Sofia, like all infants,¹⁵⁸ was given warm manioc bread drink (*karibé*), which Simão fed to her with a hollowed gourd (*cuyupi*). These gourds come in a range of sizes. The large ones are used by shamans to splash their adult patients with water, smaller ones are used for infants (see Figure 2). *Karibé* is a heavily processed drink enjoyed by all in the community and considered the ideal beverage for all infants, ritual initiates, convalescents, menstruating women and post-partum for both parents (see Chapter Four).

Karibé can be seen as a kind of super-food and appears as the most basic substrate of foods for binding soul to body, producing fleshy substance and fat at the most basic level of corporeal existence. Because the production of manioc derivatives is extremely labour intensive, manioc may be understood as an ensouling substance that has the capacity to shape and nurture human beings. Certainly this is the perspective of many Xié dwellers who, when enquiring into what kind of food people eat in my country, concluded that they would surely die without manioc, for which there is considered no substitute.

¹⁵⁷ Compare Bird-David (2008: 537) who makes a parallel observation when she noted 'immediacy, visibility and accessibility of things sustain the conditions in which the 'have nots' [are not passive recipients, but] make actual concrete demands (i.e. 'give me this', 'give me that'), not just vague, abstract demands.'

¹⁵⁸ On one occasion I was told about a baby who was so premature and tiny he could not latch onto the breast. From birth, he was spoon-fed 'a green and sweet-smelling tea' made from lemongrass (*capin santo*). He was later fed *karibé*. The healthy birth and growth of this child was somewhat of a miracle, as his small size and untimely birth was a result of a malicious and often fatal curse (*praga*).



Figure 1: Breastfeeding while her mother filters manioc in the community of Vila Nova.



Figure 2: Sofia taking an early infant food (tipiaca korea) with the plant gourd (cuyupi).

From around the time a baby reaches three months, a mother may feed it *karibé*. It should be made from the finest quality white manioc bread *beijú* (rather than the yellow manioc variety) and the child is fed from its own tiny *cuyupi*, (a hollowed plant shell). When I asked about feeding Sofia, I was instructed that babies should be fed first at midday and then again at sunset. While visiting medical teams recommend babies begin weaning at six months, Xié dwellers contend that outsiders simply don't know when the right time is and when their babies are hungry for food.

At about five months a baby may begin eating 'the child of tapioca' (*tipiaca korea*, see figure 2). Tiny tapioca balls, separated from the larger ones, are placed in a shallow pan of cold water, brought to the boil, removed from the heat, allowed to cool and then fed to the baby. Some babies will also take powdered milk and eat manioc bread (*beijú*) as early as three months. However, none of these substances are what adults regard as real food that makes a person potently strong (*kirimbawa*) and it is not until sitting (around six months) that babies begin to take on a properly human diet. At this point babies have visibly begun to develop, becoming more poised and more filled out.

Little fish (*pirá miri*), that have been boiled in river water are the first real food a baby will eat, at around 6 months, and the moment is often marked by a spell-blowing elder (*benzedor*). I witnessed one such blessing when Lino, my friend Sueli's husband's paternal uncle, took a tiny plateful of small fish (*daiquiri*) and muttered something unintelligible and then blew the spell over the food. This blessing is said to forestall attacks by ancestral spirit animals (*maiwa*), protecting the infant and his family from the *mira* (body-image) of the animal he is eating. Henceforth *daiquiri* is considered harmless for the infant to consume. This may shortly be followed by a lumpy wild chicken (*jacu*) broth, thickened with manioc bread and resembling *karibé* (manioc bread drink) in both colour and consistency. From around six months babies are said to sleep through the night because they have begun to eat proper food and are 'big'; prior to this, the baby's restless nights 'make his mother strong'.

At this age a child may also consume unprocessed foods from the manioc garden, including bananas (*patau*) and black potatoes (*cará*). (Even at this young age, however, children should not eat two bananas growing from the same stem. This is to avoid having twins in later life.)

Upon reaching seven months, the baby can be offered small game animals (*cutiwaya* or *paca*) to eat. The particular type of meat offered will depend on what the father has been able to catch. Larger fish, such as Zoribi, and all ‘fish with spores’ may also be introduced. At eight months it is considered appropriate to include hot chili peppers in the infant’s broth; and at ten months babies can start to eat larger game animals, such as monkeys, if the father catches them. Each new type of food must be blessed before consumption.

As their diet expands, young children continue to suckle and feed on the breast and there is no particular age or developmental marker at which a woman will stop breast-feeding a child. However, while mothers will readily feed another’s child, they avoid doing so when their own child has been weaned on to fish or game. Breastfeeding two children, one weaned onto real foods and the other still in early infancy, is understood to have a negative impact on the health of the eldest. At important developmental stages, when the baby is becoming ‘hard’ enough to sit, and sufficiently strong (*kirimbawa*) to crawl or walk, the baby will initiate a ‘fast’ (*kuaku*) and produce liquid faeces (*puruka*). My neighbour Mercilla explained to me that at these times the baby ‘will cry because he is hungry, but will not want to eat because he knows [he need not in order to grow]’. That is, the baby will decline food precisely because he is ‘fasting’.

In the same way that initiates, menstruating women, sick people and parents (post-birth) fast in order to facilitate their own transformation (see Chapter Four, in which artisanal production is perceived as a productive transformation requiring fasting) babies and children are understood to fast so as to help themselves grow and develop. This prevents displacing the vital aspects of self – the *anga*, *mira* and *pira miri* - when they are in a period of rapid realignment. The main intake of liquids during fasting, for babies and adults alike, is *karibé*; and at ten months and over, the less processed and cold beverage of manioc flour drink (*chibé*).

Breast-feeding usually ends with a mother’s subsequent pregnancy. She will stop breastfeeding a month or more prior to birth and begin leaving the baby in its own hammock (as she did immediately post-birth), rather than have it sleep with her (which begins around three months). This prevents feeding during the night. The subsequent pregnancy is often well-planned, since ideally a mother will not have another child until the previous one is at least three. As my friend Sueli explained to me, this is because ‘if you become pregnant while breastfeeding, the first child won’t grow’. To ensure there is sufficient time, attention

and breast-milk to secure a child's personal growth and development, parents space the birth of their children through sexual abstinence and plant remedies that thwart conception¹⁵⁹. Elders also tell parents that when the menses returns soon after birth, the woman is more likely to conceive.

With the last-born child (no subsequent pregnancy), women allow it to suckle at the breast for as long as it chooses, until it 'doesn't want to anymore'. In one admittedly extreme instance, the last female child of Tunu's former captain Marcelino was breastfed until the age of nine. By contrast, the last child of the current Tunu captain (community leader) was fed until two years of age. Lemon juice and chili peppers are sometimes applied to the nipple to discourage feeding, particularly when a mother wishes to wean her child, which is often because she wants to spend more time working in the manioc garden.

Eating real food that has been lovingly cultivated, harvested and processed by one's kin is seen as instrumental in the process of becoming a person, and in the evolution of the baby form (*pira miri*) into a proper human body (*pira yane*). The first foods offered to an infant are highly prized cultigens, the fruit of hard labour, by family members. They begin with mild and bland, proximate, cultivated, heavily processed, 'cool' foods. Other foods are gradually incorporated into the infant's diet to include the highly valued fish and game eaten by his kin. This increasing variety moves along a continuum toward a diet of the wilder, bloodier forest-dwelling animals, and hot piquant foods. Such items are subject to lengthy culinary preparation designed to remove any trace of the animal's blood, and with it, the animal's potency. The process of cooking itself should be a skilful endeavour (see Chapter Three), but cooking alone is not sufficient to overcome the potent personalities of larger predators.

Food shamanism is a moral responsibility for parents, and rarely does anyone forgo what is perceived as a sensible precaution. For some families, a good spell-blower (*benzador*) can bless one type of fish and this is sufficient for all other types of fish. If there is no powerful *benzador* available, however, each new food subtype is blessed before the child consumes it

¹⁵⁹ Individuals asked how it was that we had 'good' birth-spacing between my eldest son, who turned five in the field, and our youngest daughter who was born there. One woman in Campinas observed that, as a result of child spacing, my son now just came home to eat (as he should), but then went off again, and 'didn't give me work' now that I had another little one to care for. Such spacing was approved of in the more prestigious families. Closely spaced children however were understood to reflect the parent's 'vice', as were overly numerous children, such as the twelve-strong family of prolific *pajé*, Jesus. The often achieved ideal is four children, each with three years between them and often in the context of one or more infant or child deaths.

(e.g. small fish; small game; chili pepper; large fish from the seasonal *igapó* lakes; large game). In the presence of the child's mother, the blesser speaks a few quiet words over a small offering of food, and the food is then eaten by the child.

Fausto (2007) has argued that food shamanism is an important way of lessening the power of animal subjects, by reducing their bodies to mere flesh and blood. Removing the potent subjectivity or 'jaguar part' of the animal is a means of objectifying game as prey (rather than as a 'person') and allows for the consumption of the prey part of the victim without being negatively affected by its predator part (*ibid.*). According to Fausto then, what is consumed is pure flesh – food. It is this flesh that will constitute the body of the fully formed human being.

Two problems arise with this argument. The first is the notion of the 'jaguar part'. As other commentators have asked (Lagrou 2007; Karadimas 2007), how can something without agency – the jaguar part - aid in the development of a person? It is not just the fact of eating together that forges bonds and literally here, makes kin. What is eaten is also key. Certain foods make people strong while others make them weak, but neither are critical factors because potency also depends on one's own personal state (e.g. if one is an infant, is menstruating, has suffered snakebite or is sick), notwithstanding food shamanism. In addition is the fact – and this leads us back to the problem with substances - that certain foods are not consumed due to the form the animal takes, or its physical inclinations or other characteristics of their bodies (e.g. being hairy). This leaves a high degree of ambiguity – if we are to take Fausto's standpoint - as to exactly which part of the animal, if not its essence, is being removed. If we are to understand separating the flesh of its jaguar part as a kind of 'deagentivising', we have done no more than subtract the soul substance from the fleshy body. What is left then to constitute a person? If we regard food shamanism as the act of subordinating the other-agent in its entirety (potentially another reading of Fausto's article, but one which would not employ the jaguar part), the question still remains of how eating meat contributes to a person's personal development, above and beyond sustenance.

On the other hand, if the body is perceived as an integrated vessel through which things flow in and out, the way that it consumes foods is highly relevant. I have already mentioned how bathing is required to cool bodies in preparation for taking in any food or liquid (also see Chapters Three and Six). Foods are consumed in silence, from one communal plate or served into individual bowls. Fish bones are removed while eating, making everyone attentive to the

task of chewing and masticating. Mothers are careful to remove the bones from any fish dish their children eat. Carefully drinking the stock – so as not to spill any of it - is also considered fortifying. Fish, meat, and different fruit and vegetable varieties should not all be thoughtlessly eaten at the same time, lest the person suffer diarrhoea or blemished skin. Taking rapid scoops of manioc-based drinks with the *cuyupi* marks the end of the meal, and the word ‘jawe!’ is pronounced.

The etiquette displayed by Xié dwellers contrasts with that of their occasional (non-indigenous) guests, who range from health professionals to politicians and who, in the eyes of Xié dwellers, gobble down their meals, mixing up food types and not regulating properly the ingestion of liquids. From this perspective, food shamanism is a kind of compression and condensation of daily norms.

As I have demonstrated over the course of chapters Four and Six, the ability to properly care for children is considered both an acquired skill and an act of self-control. The fruit of the parent’s labour means that they will ‘have someone to talk with’, - a companion - without whom, ‘they will not want to eat’. For this reason, people without children of their own are given the children of others to care for. Having children and caring for them, spacing the births apart, feeding and nurturing them into adulthood and beyond, together these skills are seen as a basic marker of true Xié personhood.

Being consumed by the frog spirit

When I enquired about childlessness, Magdalena, (mother of four and permanent carer of her grandson) told me that ‘everyone wants to have children so as not to be *sasiara* [denoting both sickness and sadness]’. For some childless individuals, the desire to care for others becomes so strong that they will seek out and care for lizards, frogs and caterpillars. A woman who does so is called *mawego* and Campinas resident, Irineu, recounted to me the following tale of the childless *mawego*:

Long ago, there was a woman who was *mawego*....she didn’t have any children. She did, however, care for some frogs and other reptiles, including one that she had raised until ‘he’ was a young man of twenty. She began thinking that it was time to find a wife for her ‘son’, - the frog-man – *tapuru[ru]* - that’s what we call him. So, they say, she was looking for a wife for him, her ‘son’. She finally found a woman who accepted her invitation to marry her ‘son’.

When this woman arrived at her new ‘husband’s’ home, however, there was no man to be found. She spent days asking the old woman, ‘Where is this son of yours, I want to meet him’. They say that the old woman replied, ‘No, my son is almost never home. He is always hunting – goes for a week or so, that is how he likes to live. He is hardly at home. But one day you will meet him.’ She told her ‘daughter-in-law’, ‘Just prepare some gruel *-karibé-* and leave it there for when he returns from fishing.’ So the ‘wife’ stayed there without seeing her ‘husband’, although he was in fact at home, hiding himself because the so-called ‘man’ [is useless, he] doesn’t know how to fish – he’s an animal.

So the old woman is said to have told the prospective wife: ‘Let’s go to the manioc garden. You prepare *karibé* and leave it there for your husband and he will follow us, carrying the *mandioca* [to plant]’. So off they went [to the manioc garden]. On the way, the wife said she needed to have a pee...only she stayed there [in hiding] to wait to see that ‘man’ [her ‘husband’, coming along] on the path. She stayed while her mother-in-law went to the manioc farm. Shortly after that she heard her ‘husband’ coming along the path: he was whistling and singing to himself. The wife thought to herself, ‘Finally I am going to meet my husband’. She wanted to see him and could hear he was close, but she couldn’t see him. And then she saw him, dragging himself along the ground, it was the *taputuano* frog. A beautiful and particularly big one, they say –which in the past was typically found living at the bottom of the *bacaba* palm.

The ‘wife’ saw the *tapururu* on the path; she seized a stick and struck it hard. –POW- It exploded, and there inside the frog’s stomach was the *karibé* [she had prepared that morning for breakfast]. She had killed that old woman’s ‘son’. She proceeded onto the manioc farm. When she got there, the old woman was working, and her ‘mother-in-law’ said, ‘Come, let’s return as I think that your husband is not coming. Let’s go back.’ But that young bride knew she had killed this ‘man’. And when they got back, the old woman could no longer find her ‘son’ in her secret hiding place. That was it.

After that, months passed and the young woman became pregnant with the creature’s offspring, which was born human. [That is because] while the frog is alive, he eats women’s [foetus]....after that [the frog’s death], the young woman becomes normal again, she wasn’t childless [*mawego*] anymore.

The story, as it was recounted to me, explains why women today fail to complete gestation. The explanation given is that: ‘when the frog is alive, his spirit [*mira*] eats the inhuman foetus’, suggesting that the woman was gestating an undesirable non-human foetus’ while under the frog’s influence. Here, it is the image of the frog, the *mira* aspect that feeds on the

bodily aspect of the foetus. On the death of this frog, the woman finally conceives a human child, evincing a direct relationship between the body-image and the fleshy substance of the body itself.¹⁶⁰ Today, women cannot reproduce because the *taputuano* (*tapururu*) or the closely associated turtle's (*jabutí*) spirit is in the woman's abdomen eating the growing foetus and due to their influence, the foetus itself may not even be human.

During my fieldwork, two young couples who failed to conceive were diagnosed by Umarituba shaman Jesus as having *jabutí* turtles in their tummies that, like the *tapururu*, gnawed away at any emerging signs of life. I was told that once again, the *mira* aspect of the animal was preying on these women. Both couples sought shamanic intervention from Umarituba *pajé* Jesus and later also biomedical help in the city of São Gabriel, but without results at the time of my fieldwork.

These couples married before trying to conceive, which is increasingly the case among Evangelical Christians. In accordance with national custom and their religion, such couples want to maintain their marriage and have children, and are increasingly seeking biomedical help, with the aid of Evangelical Pastors. However, childless couples who only have to look after themselves, undermine the norms of the subsistence economy, because their situation allows them to produce in excess of their needs.¹⁶¹

Those with children, however, must carefully balance the care they give to their gardens and all the economic benefits they yield, with taking care of the children's needs as they evolve into fully formed human beings. Devina recounted one case of two neglected siblings, aged two and three, who were left in the village, day after day, while their mother went to work in the manioc garden. Children left in the village often do not eat until their parents return and prepare food, which may not be until the mid-afternoon. These two became ill, blood was found in their diarrhoea and it was thought they had been poisoned (*estrago*). When the

¹⁶⁰From the story it is unclear whether the woman conceived as a result of intercourse with the frog, which may have occurred while she was sleeping or as an (closely related) intimate encounter in a dream (I have heard this latter explanation given of other enchanted *-majuba-* pregnancies, where children of the *majuba* are born and cause sciatic-type pains to their mothers), and hence, the frog was eating his own off-spring; or whether the woman's pregnancy was the result of an 'extramarital' affair. However these explanations are irrelevant from the story-tellers point of view, since the story is recounted to explain the existence of *mawego* (childless) women.

¹⁶¹On the whole, childlessness is understood to be both unproductive and antisocial and is a cause of 'shame', particularly for women but also for men. In my field site, on the day after father's day celebrations (a festivity promoted by the school teacher), two married but childless men of the village in their late 30's both started a fight in the football grounds, and ex-Tunu captain, the eldest son of Luís, had to go running with a liana whip in his hand to separate them, telling them off like children. This was the only occasion on which I saw a fight.

children died, however, the blame was still placed on the mother who was deemed to have been working too hard. Instead, she should have listened to the advice of elders and either worked shorter hours or taken her children with her to the garden. Because of her intransigence (and her bloody-mindedness), the mother was said not ‘to care for them’ (*não quer cuidar deles*) and so ‘they were given back to God’ (*devoeu para Deus*).

The tension between manioc farming and child-care also arose when another co-resident in Tunu described her niece, who would periodically rise at 2 a.m. to grate her manioc, as she ‘liked grating manioc so much that she lost her finger’. This woman, when explaining an eight-year gap between her two children, complained to me that ‘children were a bore’, ‘because they are always getting ill’ and ‘don’t let people get on with their work (i.e. manioc farming and processing)’. Some mothers will also give their daughters a plant remedy that prevents conception. Many young women explain that this is so the daughter can continue working with their mother in the manioc garden. A further explanation was that these women would also forgo the pains of childbirth. Here we may recall Descola’s (1994: 206) example of blood-sucking manioc that menaces young Achuar infants, suggesting that a woman has two sets of offspring to care for, the manioc and her children, competing for her attention. Childlessness illuminates another facet of the relationship between horticulture and reproduction in the Amerindian literature (e.g. Descola 1994; C. Hugh-Jones 1979a; Rival 2001; Ewart 2005).

The *mawego* thus not only fails to produce children, she also feeds the reptiles that plague her manioc garden and destroy it. Through this antisocial act of caring, the *mawego* causes her own impotence and unwittingly renders her gardens unproductive. Further, no reptile, from the human perspective, is able to live a fully reproductive and morally upright social and productive life. Despite the woman feeding the animal *karibé*, a meal is not complete without fish or meat and thus *karibé* alone is insufficient to bring about the full transformation of the frog into a person. Although his ‘mother’ had come to see him as human, the frog was useless – as Irineu repeatedly told me - in productive terms, because he was unable to cut trees, burn and clear a garden site, and more importantly, lacked the bodily

knowledge – associated with the human form - that would allow him to fish or hunt. Despite sharing some human foods, in other words, the frog could not become a human being.¹⁶²

There is then a moral evaluation of the animality of the frog who is not ‘wrested from a universal human subjectivity’ (Londoño Sulkin 2005: 20). Not only does this challenge the idea of a common pool of anthropomorphic souls, but it also highlights that the soul itself has its own biography (Rosengren 2006), and one that is closely attached to the other constituent parts of a person. Xié dwellers, like the Colombian Muinane, ‘seem to take for granted a moral and ontological hierarchy, in which animals do see and sometimes think of themselves as Real People, but in which it is clear that they are not ultimately human’ (Londoño Sulkin2005: 23). Rather, there exists a ‘radical gap between the subjectivity of moral humanity and that of immoral animality’ (Londoño Sulkin2005: 20). There are limits then, to the extent to which substance can create subjectivities, for the frog is on the periphery of human society.

Finally, feeding a form of *maiwa*, as the *mawego* does, is nearly as bad as eating with the *maiwa* yourself. When adults are seduced by the *maiwa* and go to their subterranean houses, commensal acts transform them into the animals with which they live. Akin to the description provided by Lima 1999: 111), Umarituba resident Joaquim recounted to me how his cousin had fallen ill due to the seductive entrapment of the *maiwa*. During his *maiwa* illness he didn’t feel hungry, because, as Joaquim explained, he had already eaten and been satisfied by the *maiwa* food – which looked like *karibé* and fish to him, but which was in fact earth worms, fruit and berries. Eating the foods of these *maiwa*, in spite of their deceptive appearance as ‘food’, will cause an irrevocable transformation and the person will gradually become like those with whom he has shared food. His soul is separated, but so is his body-soul and soon his human body (*pira yane*) is at risk of wasting away as he begins to assume the bodily form of his commensals. Joaquim’s cousin recounted how he wished to stay with the *maiwa*, and become their leader. His kin encouraged him to take the *karibé* and other foods they had lovingly produced in order to bring him back to them.

¹⁶²The status of a full human adult woman is only truly confirmed with gestation, childbirth and later, caring and providing for children. Even these are, however, persons by degree, since women who have completed a gestation, but are still childless (since they have had still-born infants) are still thought of as mothers-who-have-cared-for; whereas women whose belly never swells to indicate proper care and the potential of giving birth to a human rather than frog child, are known as *mawego* (on gestation, see Chapter Four, p. 167-172).

Sickness indicates the dislodgement of soul, body-soul and body, provoking disorientation that incapacitates a person and causes his body to waste away. There is then a sense, conveyed in Chapter Six, that these aspects of self must be caused to settle in the environment in which they live. This distillation of self in the place-time milieu of proper human relations, means that disruptions upset and displace these aspects of self. This manifests as sickness.

Sudden loss of soul substance

Children may also eat with the *maiwa* when they become frightened by the lack of proper care they receive from their kin. In the same way that carelessness in pregnancy can lead to deformations in children (see Chapter Four), inattentiveness or absent-mindedness by carers can provoke ‘fright’ (*iyangasa*) in infants. The symptoms of fright include unsettled and listless states, fever and crying. Any frightening or abrupt interactions, including falls, being bathed inappropriately (i.e. not splash-washing), or loud animal or bird noises, can then all directly penetrate a child’s soul which then becomes ‘removed’ (*afastado*) or distant. The soul is then drawn to the ancestral animal spirits (*maiwa*). With the soul removed, the baby cries ‘because his soul is with the *majuba* [enchanted animal ancestors]’. Frequent shocks that cause fright will cause a child’s soul to have an unduly loose connection to its body, and the soul will permanently dwell with *maiwa*. In such circumstances, from the Xié human perspective, the soul, to borrow a term of Douglas’, is ‘matter out of place’.¹⁶³

The dangers of inappropriate care leads young carers to repeatedly be advised not to drop the baby and to hold it steadily with firm hands. Child carers are also reminded to direct the wandering attention of the baby (see Chapter Six) and not to play carelessly with it, particularly before it can crawl, lest ‘the *majuba* [ancestral animal spirits, *maiwa*] will take the child’s soul away’. Carers, children and adults alike, who unintentionally make a child cry are sometimes accused of ‘wanting to kill the baby’, with their own carelessness. Death by crying is an oft cited and a feared cause of infant mortality.

People may also prematurely expose children to dangers for which they are not yet prepared and I was told about such a case in which a boy was frightened by an unexpected animal

¹⁶³That is, the soul is not bound with other materialities in order to constitute self. Rather, soul substance has gone to constitute other persons and bind with their other bodies.

encounter: when Jurez's elder brother (the aforementioned former captain Marcelino) took his seven year old nephew on a fishing trip, inappropriate for a boy of age seven, the boy became startled by the piercing bird-sound of the *inambu* that his uncle had captured on the trip. As a result of the 'fright' he had suffered, his tooth began to ache, as did his stomach, and a high fever ensued. Jurez took his son to the Anamoin-based *pajé*, Tomas Angelo. The *pajé* diagnosed this as *nerangaraxa* (shock of the bird-shout) since a boy of this age would not normally be exposed to the dangerous encounters of fishing in a flooded forest (*igapós*), but should restrict his fishing activities to the main port. Tomás Angleo treated this with 'blowing to cure' (*umutawari*¹⁶⁴). This was followed by the proscribed commissioning of the *kariumã* initiation ritual in which, at this age, the boy would have not otherwise participated (see Chapter Four on such states of vulnerable openness, *saurã*).

Adults who have undergone *kariumã* may also experience mild 'fright' when they are in the forest. Hunters may become startled by a noise or unusual encounter (with the *kurupira* for instance, see Chapter Four). These experiences are understood to make the stomach turn and the heart beat fast. In a bad dream an individual may also relive the fright he has suffered. Fright may change the form of the body-soul-image (*mira*) in adults other than in dreams, and for the purpose of hunting and warfare, but adults will never lose their soul (*anga*) from fright like a child. Soul loss occurs only with frightened babies who are dependent on the care of others to responsibly handle their personal balance of *anga*, *mira* and *pira miri*. Infants are especially vulnerable especially prior to the *iyumi* ritual and its restrictions (see Chapter Six; cf. Hill 1985: 10; Lagrou 2000: 162), and even more so if they have failed to perform the ritual at all.

In the literature on fright, better known as *susto* in both indigenous and non-Indian communities, Rubel has suggested the sickness is a manifestation of 'role stress' (Rubel 1964). Rubel (1964: 280) suggests that: 'In Hispanic-American societies, the *susto* syndrome will appear when an individual is unable to meet the expectations of his own society. Klein (1978: 23; 24) suggests this stress is triggered by 'self-perceived social inadequacies' in adults, especially women (also see O'Neil and Selby 1968; Rubel 1964) and is a consequence of their 'helplessness and inability to act'. Among children, role stress is thought to stem from crises associated with particular developmental phases. For Klein, a maladaptive

¹⁶⁴cf. Wright 2004: 104 on *mutawari* 'chant-owner'.

psycho-physiological response to stress, including frightening experiences, is believed to give rise to the sickness. This led Klein (1978) to classify *susto* as a ‘disease of adaptation’. Examining some of these theories (i.e. Uzzell 1974, Klein 1978), Butt-Colson (1975: 300) concludes: ‘Clearly, among Akawaio and Pemon [of Guiana], it is the parent’s behaviour and their circumstances which are being questioned, not the child’s.’

In a footnote, Butt-Colson and de Armellada (1983: 1245) observe: ‘When a baby or child falls ill a frequent causation is said to be a nature spirit (**mawari**), or master of the species (**seún**), even a malevolent human, who has retaliated for some wrong done and punished the parents by stealing their child’s soul.’ Writing on the Bolivian Trinitario, Thomas et al. (2009) forward the thesis of *susto* as a ‘master of the animal species’ sickness, highlighting the way that spirit animals shock and frighten people who cross their paths. Similarly, Xié Infants affected by *nerangaraxa* (‘fright of the bird’) are under the influence of animal spirits (**maiwa**). Surrounded by predatory agents, the baby’s relatively unformed body and still faint sense of self, may cause the soul to detach itself and be captured (Vilaça 2002: 360). The term ‘soul loss’ reflects the Xié aetiology of mindless neglect, emphasising how adults caring for youngsters can through carelessness allow a child’s soul to become vulnerable to disintegration. This improper care awakens the **maiwa**, who then pursue the infant. As such, soul capture is best understood as a consequence of soul loss (cf. Fausto 2007).

A mother with a frightened baby will seek a spell-blower (*benzedor*) or, alternatively the *benzedor* will hear the baby crying and approach the mother. Our youngest child was twice frightened in the field. This happened once when I was holding Sofia and slipped on the muddy bank of the river when going to bathe; and before this, when we passed by the rapids at Cumati when Sofia was a month old and was affected by the potent, petrified remains of Cumati’s ancestral animal spirits. The day after we returned to Tunu Sofia was periodically crying, due to -as Tunu dwellers explained it- the fright she had had. Whilst my husband and I were arguing about how to quiet her, Tunu elder Luís, with whom we had travelled, arrived at our home. He asked if she had been crying more than usual and I confirmed that she had. He then blew tobacco smoke on Sofia’s head, slowly directing it toward the baby’s head and down her torso, muttering an inaudible blessing. He cupped one hand, as if to scoop off the negative influence, and continuing to blow on her crown. This lasted no more than a few minutes, and it brought peace. My husband and both children then settled down to a restful sleep.

This remedy for fright always entails a short blessing of five minutes or so, usually at either dusk or dawn and which may be repeated over subsequent days. Luís, his son Jurez and the health agent Emilio all blew spells for Sofia with noticeable effect. I was told that blessings are frequently sought to draw the frightened soul back and that ‘white’ (i.e. biomedical) remedies were known to be useless in cases of fright.

Indeed, these blessings to cure fright appear to work, possibly because they relate to the heightened sensorial experiences and ‘the quickening of the senses’, which Desjarlais (1994; 1996) has convincingly suggested invoke ‘presence’. In the context of Buddhist Sherpas, Desjarlais has argued that fright can be cured by a cacophony of actions, smells and sounds, which together comprise a repertoire designed to jump start a person’s physiology. Roseman (1988) has also paid special attention to the ‘pragmatic efficacy of aesthetic forms’, and the artful manipulation of sensory stimuli by ritual specialists in order to induce vitality. A range of gestures, movements, powerful smells and substances are carefully composed in order to anchor a person back to the here and now. This is true of food shamanism, during the treatment of fright, and in the *iyumi* ritual outlined in the previous chapter. These rites all draw special attention to moments of personal transformation or growth. We get a sense here of how sensory stimuli can be used to startle people into attentive life, to use a term of Abram’s (2010: 15), by a ‘more full-blooded magic’.

Aesthetic accomplishment thus lies at the heart of ‘ensoulment’, and within what has been described as Amazonian Indians’ ‘artefactual anatomies’ (Santo- Granero 2009). Alchemic soulful distillation, on closer examination, illustrates how these infant orientated rituals induce presence in both carers and the infants alike. This mindfulness is central to Xié aetiologies that emphasise the proper integration of soul, body-soul and body. This bears strong parallels to McCallum’s (1996: 359) description of the Cashinahua, where she describes sickness as a kind of divorce from one’s potential to become a real person: ‘A change in consciousness severely alters the way that a body knows, so that illness or death can be seen as epistemological state.’ As a gradual and incremental process, rather than an absolute state, mindfulness thus becomes ‘a skill that can be developed with practice’ (Bishop et al. 2004).

Conclusion

Persons are produced by the artful manipulation of substances, and this is done by relating with them in the appropriate -mindful- mode. I have argued that a mindful, conscious state of being allows a person's component parts to undergo a kind of distillation. Mindfulness is not separate from form, substance or kinaesthetic movement, but is rather part and parcel of them, serving as a binding agent. This is especially true in the case of infants who are very much in the process of soulful distillation. Through splash-washing and hammocking, sitting and walking, feeding and eating, the baby's body and soul steadily become integrated. These routines (of splash-washing and hammocking) are key in providing substance to the body, fixing the infant in the firm and more durable subject position of a well-cared for kinsperson. Babies participate by knowing when to fast, and this helps ensure personal development. In sum, these techniques of mindful care are both aesthetic (i.e. fattening, hardening and firming) and prophylactic, since over time the integration of *mira* and *anga* negates the possibility of fright.

As Rival (2005) has suggested, the baby's relatively unformed body and faint sense of self call for continuous, dedicated care. Caring for others is a desirable achievement, especially when it produces children's well-abled bodies, and a positive outlook toward the tasks of daily life. Living with others, and more precisely, knowing oneself through relationships with others, is fundamental to Amerindian sociality. Social-physical forces, lovingly overseen and supervised by one's kin, - and which through their own mindful action are persuaded into conviviality - are what allows children to live well and in good health.

Conclusions

In the search for new paradigms to understand the emergence of adept and healthful (*kirimbawa*) Xié persons, my ethnography focuses on historical, mythological and seasonally informed accounts of Warekena emergence, and looks at them with regard to reproductive processes and the perinatal period. I suggest that mindfulness is a useful heuristic device describing, ‘the condition of being alive to the world, characterised by a heightened sensitivity and responsiveness in perception and action, to an environment that is always in flux’ (Ingold 2006b: 10). Intimately rooted in aetiologies and pathologies, idioms of strength (*kirimbawa*) and openness (*saurã*) and the ability to live well (*kua katú*), suggest that such a state is so integral to what it means to be a Xié person that it virtually ‘goes without saying’.

My interest has been in describing mindfulness as a particular ‘somatic mode’ (Csordas 1993) of attention and to highlight its role in sustaining reproductive health. Mindfulness is best described as the ‘process of regulating attention in order to bring a quality of...awareness to current experience...within an orientation of curiosity, experiential openness and acceptance’ (Bishop et al. 2004: 234) to form part of a ‘full-bodied alertness’ (Abram 2010).

Thesis review: contributions to knowledge

Over the course of this thesis, I have argued that mindfulness forms part of the cool aesthetic of Xié dwellers, an aesthetic that is central to the raising of infants and permeates ideas of reproduction, health, well-being and sickness. I have argued that, 1) Mindfulness is a learned technique, intertwined with hands-on practices and is thus closely associated with the development of skills; 2) The ethnography further showed that cool (-minded) states may be induced - or be encouraged to emerge - during infancy through specific techniques during the perinatal period. 3) Mindful practice unfolds in a specific environment and can be understood as the reciprocated perception of that environment, such that mindful engagement feeds animate perception. 4) Finally, while mindfulness pertains to the present, it also brings forth the past. Mythic thought continuously reveals the past in the present, as part of the animate world and through intersubjective experiences in the mythscape. This makes mindfulness an evocation of the past, rather than the ahistorical venture depicted in the biomedical sciences.

Conclusions

The specifics of mindfulness for Xié dwellers emerge in direct relation to the hydrocentric niche in which they live. To this end, thesis chapters have progressed from a macro overview of Rio Negro society, to a micro view of the minutiae of person-making.

Paving the way for an understanding of mindfulness as part of a distinguishing hydrocentric lifestyle, Chapter One posited the forest and river as two opposing idioms that the people of the Rio Negro employ when speaking of sameness and difference. Seasonal flooding is used to understand the envelopment of forest groups by river ones, and Chapter One began by describing this as a general, regional practice and then as a specific, historical process unfolding along the Rio Xié itself. The opening up of the river to support a larger population was detailed in Chapter Two. Looking at the modern history of the river, the chapter described how ecological abundance came to be replaced by human excess, to create what is now considered to be the good life. Here I suggest that human relations have a correspondingly negative effect on the quality of animist relations, a thesis presented in a different context by Ingold (1980).

The focus shifts in Chapter Three, as I begin to translate this shift into something more closely resembling the lives of Xié dwellers. Taking a body ecological (Hsu 2007) approach, this chapter describes how history is a lived experience that reverberates through psycho-physiological, seasonal and cyclical transformations. In reference to necessary but dangerous states of openness (*saurã* and *saurã-sa*), I describe how women's bodily experiences are used to illuminate instances of contact between diverse peoples. Contrary to popular notions of menstrual pollution (since Douglas 1966), I emphasise menstruation as both a time of personal transformation and as an idiom of sociological expansion: menstruation is a key idiom used to articulate openness to the outside and the affines that lie therein. In describing the careful regulation of open states, for people and things alike, I cite mindfulness as part of Xié aetiologies and pathologies of good health. This chapter also describes animism as arising from a heightened awareness.

Narrowing the focus to the perinatal period, Chapter Four looks at how pregnancy and childbirth are managed through cool-minded deliberation. Detailing practical guidelines for perinatal health, I suggest this as an efficient means of managing pregnancy and childbirth, bringing Xié praxis on a par with contemporary Euro-American initiatives that promote mindfulness for perinatal well-being (Hughes et al. 2009). This chapter also details men's involvement and impact on perinatal health, complementing the literature on childbirth and

the female reproductive process (e.g. McCormack 1982; Davis-Floyd & Sargent 1997). This chapter builds on existing scholarship regarding human growth and development in the region (e.g. S. Hugh-Jones 1979; Conklin and Morgan 1996; McCallum 1996; Ewart 2013), but significantly recasts this by elucidating positive health outcomes.

In the context of assault sorcery, Chapter Five examines a series of structural and somatic parallels between snakebite and childbirth, and mindfulness is viewed as a key component in understanding the way in which people respond to the acute pain experienced during both events. Healthy childbirth is for the expectant mother an art form, a practice for which her entire life experience has prepared her. The same is true of a man's response to snakebite. Childbirth and snakebite both involve opening up in painful but inevitable way, reverberating at different levels of society and reinforced by mythic narrative. Taking gender complementarity to another level (McCallum 1996), the chapter shows how psycho-physiological experiences feed into prevalent structuring idioms. This account of snakebite experience makes a significant contribution to the field of symbolism and imagery surrounding the anaconda in Amazonian studies (e.g. Reichel-Dolmatoff 1999), but also points to work on mindfulness as a means of managing chronic pain (Kabat-Zinn 1982; 1987).

Describing techniques of engaging with babies, Chapter Six outlines how caring for another person strengthens both carer and recipient. Mindfulness is manifest in full-bodied awareness, into which hydrocentric techniques are introduced. Phenomenology allowed me to explain how growing infants develop a sense of their place in the world. A focus on motor skills, kinaesthetic awareness and proprioception show that mindfulness is not a grey matter of mind, but rather speaks to a synchronicity within and between the whole human being and the world in which he lives. As well, it outlines how mindfulness is a skill imparted through hands-on techniques in infancy. Rather than just being a state of mind, mindfulness underlies the importance of those specific techniques. The thesis builds on and expands the Amazonian literature on the making of persons (Seeger et al. 1979; Conklin and Morgan 1996; Ewart 2013), but also shows that idioms of growth need to be understood as idioms of hardening and cooling persons and controlling apertures.

Finally I use mindfulness in an effort to understand what it is to be a Xié person –in terms closest to Xié dwellers own understanding of person integrity. I do this by describing the various components of a Xié person (soul, body-soul and body) and suggest that they are

bound together to form a fully conscious self. This draws from pioneering work among the Cashinahua, for whom, ‘The body is “mind” in this compound sense, as the container of the working relationships between knowing organs and body soul, and between body soul and true soul.’ (McCallum 1996: 362) This emphasises mindfulness as both an aesthetic and preventative artful practice and I suggest that mindfulness – best here understood as ‘presence’ (Desjarlais 1994) - is an important part of therapeutic intervention.

A summary: saruã (utá) and saruã-sa (utá no wee)

People are born with their bodies open: they have mouths with which to speak and ingest; anuses from which to defecate; and women have a birth canal from which babies may be born and human society is reproduced. Similarly, the aperture of contemporary human persons, able to live well together, is the mark of a healthy society. But such open states require careful regulation, lest antisocial states arise, destroying life together. People can maintain their personal integrity and maintain their strength (*kirimbawa*) by controlling their bodily states, and manifesting openness, warmth and firmness, much in contrast to the behaviour of their rigid, overly cool and closed ancestors. At the other end of the ancestral spectrum, is the overly open (uncontrolled defecation and urination), hot-yet-supple vitality of babies, who have a potency so extreme and uncontrolled it is as powerful as it is vulnerable.

Saruã-related life-cycle changes, such as other social-personal and physiological transformations, necessitate an open receptiveness and are a prerequisite to the personal transformation of growing up, having children, and becoming a full member of the community. Being open, one releases one’s own potency (e.g. blood) and this affects others. Being excessively open, a person can relinquish potency, causing personal damage to oneself (e.g. haemorrhaging).

The consequences of an ill-managed *saruã* state include seasonally-specific encounters with the animal ancestors (*maiwa*), because the type of *maiwa* involved will depend on its seasonal prevalence: misdemeanours, such as disrespecting potent enchanted ancestral rock homes and their owners, occur during the low-water season when such sites are exposed. Others relate to the high-water season, such as fishing in the flooded forest (*igapós*). While these encounters are rarely fatal, they do have negative consequences. Being *saruã* can involve unfamiliar climatic changes – out of sync with the season. Here one’s own openness encourages a celestial opening (of rainfall), and creates a generalised state of over-openness

Conclusions

which is not conducive to living well (*kua katu*). Being *saruã* one would be prudent to increase personal vigilance, to exercise self-restraint and to become watchful.

The notion of aperture is also closely correlated to loud and piercing sounds (that open up the world); to piercing objects (that open up mouths and women, i.e. ravenous fish); and to rancorous and heated individuals who use malicious sorcery to provoke heated conditions (pregnancy, labour and pain). As I have seen, these are all understood as painful and/or dangerously potent states. These opening agents (heat and blood, water and ravenous fish, piercing objects and sounds) are effectively controlled by being in closed, cool environments (the wintertime flooded forest) and by exercising cool-minded behaviour (Amaru remains seated and composed, despite her pain, and Napiruli takes time to provide a deliberate and successful intervention). For this reason, all humans today have the potential to acquire shamanic qualities, through a blend of cool-minded deliberation and an astute understanding of the local environment.

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Glossary

Of terms in Portuguese:

<i>a tóa</i>	behaving without purpose or good reason
<i>acostombrarse</i>	to get used to / to become acclimatised to smthg
Acreditar, (e.g. <i>vou cantar para voce acreditar em mim</i> ')	to believe i.e. trust and have faith in smone
<i>afastado</i>	to become removed or distant
<i>ajeitar</i>	to adjust or tactilely manipulate
<i>anta</i>	Tapir
<i>assegurar</i>	support physically
<i>barrigudo</i>	unidentified monkey (eaten)
<i>baya (de araya)</i>	intestines (of the river otter)
<i>benzedor</i>	a spell-blower or blesser
<i>bonito</i>	Beautiful
<i>bosta (de mijoca)</i>	a pile of shit, that appears like a mole hill in the forest
<i>boto</i>	river dolphin
<i>branco</i>	whites - foreign or otherwise, i.e. a non-Indian person
<i>bravo</i>	fiery (of temperament)
<i>brieo (see also chicantá or irichi)</i>	a sweet smelling resin
<i>cabeça (de criança)</i>	head (of a child)
<i>cabellos de piaçava</i> '	hair (of the piassava palm, i.e. it fronds)
<i>cacão</i>	Coco
<i>caldo</i>	Broth
<i>capim</i>	Grass
<i>capim santo</i>	aromatic herb, similar to lemongrass
<i>cheiro</i>	smell, aroma
<i>choque</i>	a shock
<i>cobrello</i>	snake-spirit illness
<i>commerciantes</i>	a merchant (based in the city of São

Glossary

	Gabriel)
<i>comunidade</i>	the typical appellation for riverine dwellings since the end of the 1960's when Salesian missionaries instigated the <i>Comunidades Eclesiais de Base</i> (Oliveira 1981: 31; 1995: 150 cited in Lazmar 2005)
<i>coral</i>	coral snake (<i>Leptomicrurus, Micruroides, or Micrurus</i>)
<i>crecer</i>	to grow
<i>creme</i>	literally cream - the waxy, cheese-like <i>vernix caseosa</i> that covers newborns
<i>costume</i>	to get used to smthg
<i>deficiente</i>	deformation or disability
<i>dente (de piranha)</i>	teeth (of the piranha, i.e. scissors)
<i>Deus</i>	God
<i>doenças</i>	sickness
<i>doente</i>	To be sick
<i>doi (olho)</i>	pain (in the eye)
<i>duro</i>	hard, firm
<i>espantar (a majuba).</i>	to disperse, get rid of (the ancestral animals)
<i>Esparto ('para ficar esperto')</i>	to be skilful-in-means
<i>estrago</i>	a ruinous curse (to ruin/spoil something/someone)
<i>farinha</i>	(manioc) flour
<i>fazer</i>	to do
<i>feio</i>	ugly
<i>força</i>	personal strength, potency, endurance
<i>fraqueca</i>	weakness
<i>friagem</i>	a cold spell (in May-June)
<i>fumaça</i>	smoke

Glossary

<i>gordo</i>	fat
<i>imagem</i>	literally, ‘image’, used to refer to someone’s shadow or reflection, their body-image (see <i>mira</i>)
<i>jeito</i>	way/style of being/doing
<i>latex</i>	latex
<i>macho</i>	manly (fulfill the tasks expected on a man)
<i>magro</i>	thin
<i>majuba</i>	enchanted ancestral animal ‘spirits’ and owners (see <i>maiwa</i>)
<i>mandioca</i>	manioc
<i>molhe</i>	limp and lifeless
<i>moleque</i>	a provocative clown
<i>motorist</i>	pilot (of a boat)
<i>olhando</i>	looking
<i>olho</i>	eye
<i>paca</i>	<i>paca</i> (<i>Cuniculus</i>), a ground-dwelling small rodent
<i>patron</i>	boss, owner
<i>pau brasil</i>	brazilwood (<i>Caesalpinia echinata</i>)
<i>piaçababa</i>	a piassava grove
<i>piaçava</i>	piassava (<i>Leopoldinia piassaba</i>)
<i>pintada</i> (i.e. <i>pedra pintada</i>)	painted (i.e. a painted stone, one that is an enchanted ancestor, <i>majuba</i>)
<i>piranha</i>	piranha
<i>popeca</i>	a meat-ball
<i>pozo</i>	a hole
<i>praga</i>	an often-fatal sorcerous curse
<i>preguiça</i>	laziness
<i>pressão</i>	(climatic) pressure
<i>promesa</i>	a promise (to God), an oath

Glossary

<i>rabetta</i>	out-board motor attached to a canoe
<i>regatões</i>	river merchants
<i>roça</i>	manioc garden / farm
<i>seco</i>	dry
<i>sentir bonito</i>	to feel good
<i>susto</i>	to have a fright or suffer a shock
<i>tapioca</i>	tapioca
<i>teimoso</i>	to be over-confident, headstrong
<i>tempo de Aru</i>	the time of Aru the frog (a rainy spell)
<i>tontera</i>	senility
<i>vacinado</i>	vaccinated
<i>vacina</i>	vacine
<i>vitimina</i>	vitamin
<i>zoar</i>	to howl

Of terms in lingua Géral:

<i>agouti</i>	agouti
<i>aputare yasu azucar</i>	imperative: 'go and have a wash'
<i>amana</i>	flow (of liquids, i.e. rain water or blood when haemorrhaging)
<i>anga</i>	soul
<i>aranya</i>	teeth
<i>arumã</i>	(<i>Ischnosiphon spp.</i>) vine used for basketry, particularly for <i>urutu</i>
<i>azucar</i>	bathe
<i>beijú</i>	manioc bread
<i>bestega</i>	illness: a common (native?) illness, similar to chickenpox

Glossary

<i>Buya wasu</i>	the celestial and mythic ‘Great snake’, referring to the celestial anaconda’s constellation and also used to refer to the river when full in winter
<i>cacuri</i>	a seasonal fish trap, made using the <i>paxiúba</i> palm and <i>cipó</i> to create a v-shaped trap
<i>camachí</i>	group of powerful other-sorcerers (see <i>machí</i>)
<i>cará</i>	a variety of purple-black potatoes
<i>cariúma</i>	clay plates used for initiation
<i>cauwama</i>	unidentified bird
<i>chibé</i>	manioc flour drink
<i>chicantá</i>	a sweet-smelling plant resin, also referred to as breu (Portuguese)
<i>chimatima</i>	unidentified plant used to induce sleep in babies
<i>cipó</i>	(<i>heteropsis flexuosa</i>) liana
<i>cuyupi</i>	a hollowed plant gourd used as a cup
<i>dabucurí</i>	ceremonial exchange
<i>epitchou</i>	the smell of raw fish, and also associated with snakes, that marks impending danger and causes sickness
<i>ereme força</i>	‘to make strength’ or ‘to be strong’
<i>esa</i>	eye
<i>giri giri</i>	unidentified tree bark
<i>guariba catarro</i>	cold or cough
<i>igapó</i>	in-land lakes created by the seasonal flooded forest
<i>igarapé</i>	minor water-way (literally, way of the canoe)

Glossary

<i>igará</i>	canoe
<i>ikaximafu</i>	menarche
<i>inambú</i>	generic, bird
<i>irawa</i>	bitter
<i>irira su</i>	unidentified plant used for the treatment of snakebite
<i>itá</i>	stone
<i>itá-pinima</i>	literally, 'a painted stone', i.e. one that is an ancestral owner
<i>iyangasa</i>	fright
<i>Iyumi</i>	post-birth river bathing ritual (1 week post-birth)
<i>jabutí</i>	turtle
<i>jacu</i>	wild chicken
<i>jacundá</i>	predatory fish of the <i>igapó</i> , similar to piranha
<i>jarararca</i>	poisonous snake
<i>juruparí</i>	mythic ancestor and name of religious cult (Jurupari with a capital J, designates a Baníwa sib name)
<i>jurupurutu</i>	flute used during ceremonial exchanges (<i>dabucurí</i>)
<i>kalizamí</i>	generic word for a blessing (post-birth)
<i>kambi</i>	female breast
<i>kambi chi miri</i>	nipple
<i>kanga</i>	head
<i>karanã</i>	(<i>mauritia carana</i>) palm leaf used for roofing; stem for making tipiti
<i>kariumã</i>	initiation ritual

Glossary

<i>kariwa</i>	white person (powerful foreigner, e.g. <i>kariwa oso</i> (big white man). For more on the term ‘ <i>karaiba</i> ’, see Vivieros de Castro 2002; 2011: 23-29.
<i>katu</i>	well/good. e.g. live well – <i>kua katu</i>
<i>kāwera</i>	bone
<i>kinhāpira</i>	peppered fish stew
<i>kiri</i>	dreaming
<i>kirimba (kirimbawa)</i>	potent: physically strong and cool-minded
<i>kua katu</i>	to live well
<i>kuaku</i>	to fast
<i>kukuera</i>	former manioc garden site
<i>Kunhā</i>	woman
<i>kupī</i>	termites
<i>kupixa</i>	manioc garden
<i>kuruba</i>	frog-illness
<i>kurupira</i>	enchanted forest-dwelling dwarf
<i>kuxima</i>	ancient people (deceased elders)
<i>machí</i>	powerful poisoner (and sorcerer), collectively <i>camachí</i>
<i>machíra</i>	handicapped (deformed or disabled)
<i>maciritari</i>	the Ye’kuana as called by Xié dwellers
<i>macurá</i>	winter (also a small, unidentified, game animal)
<i>maiwa (majuba)</i>	enchanted ancestral animal ‘spirit’ and ‘owner’ of animal species
<i>makuru</i>	baby sling or purpose-built chair swing

Glossary

<i>marauna</i>	a sign of imminent death (similar to <i>mauwari</i>)
<i>marecaimbara</i>	assault sorcery
<i>marika</i>	stomach
<i>matapí</i>	summer-season small fish trap
<i>mauwari</i>	a sign of imminent death (similar to <i>marauna</i>)
<i>mawego</i>	a childless woman
<i>mebushi</i>	eye tumor
<i>mira</i>	body-image, refers to reflection and shadow
<i>mirasa</i>	sib-sign (clan)
<i>munde timana</i>	umbilical cord (<i>munde timana</i>)
<i>murua</i>	umbilical cord (<i>murua</i>)
<i>muĩ</i>	small, weak, incapable
<i>nerangaraxa</i>	shock of the bird-shout (fright caused by a loud bird cry)
<i>Nheengatú</i>	lingua Géral language (literally, the good tongue)
<i>omayco</i>	to be looking
<i>pajé</i>	shaman
<i>paka</i>	to be awake
<i>paravera</i>	psychoactive snuff (see <i>pariká</i>)
<i>pariká</i>	psychoactive snuff (<i>paravera</i>), made from the inner bark of <i>Virola theidora</i> and <i>Anandenanthera peregrina</i>
<i>patau</i>	bananas
<i>patua</i>	(<i>Jessenia bataua</i>) palm tree and name of its fruit

Glossary

<i>paxiúba</i>	palm tree, used for flutes and weirs
<i>pekadu</i>	sin (portuguese, <i>pecado</i>)
<i>perewa</i>	injury, hurt
<i>Piaba</i>	small dried and smoked fish
<i>piasa</i>	(<i>Leopoldinia piassaba</i>) piassava palm
<i>pirá miri</i>	small fish or small body (i.e. small fish-like body)
<i>piranha caá</i>	piranha leaf (unidentified)
<i>Pirasema</i>	seasonal fishing during swarming
<i>pirera</i>	flesh
<i>piri piriaca</i>	unidentified leaf used to expulse the placenta, treat haemorrhaging, for abortion, snakebite and cases of poisoning.
<i>pirikita</i>	bird (or fish) soup (post-birth diet)
<i>pitua</i>	weakness and impotency
<i>prontu</i>	ready (portuguese, <i>pronto</i>)
<i>puranga</i>	good/beautiful/great
<i>puseta</i>	vagina
<i>pusiwera</i>	a bad and ugly feeling
<i>re-yu-kirai</i>	to want to be brought up/raised
<i>rituna</i>	special diet (for sickness, post-birth, etc.)
<i>saku</i>	hot
<i>santa</i>	hard
<i>sapia</i>	testicles
<i>sasi</i>	pain
<i>sasiara</i>	to be sad and unwell (sick)

Glossary

<i>saurã</i>	a state of vulnerable openness
<i>saurã-sa</i>	an extreme state of vulnerable openness (from two compounded <i>saurã</i> states)
<i>sucuruju</i>	(<i>Eunectes murinus</i> ?) dangerous snake (Sucuruju with a capital S, designates clan name)
<i>suuedarú</i>	small, stout and strong unidentified monkey
<i>ta-chĩ</i>	unidentified fierce ants
<i>tamanduá</i>	anteater
<i>tapichá</i>	oven brush
<i>taputuano</i>	unidentified frog (<i>tapururu</i>)
<i>Tatu wasu</i>	the mythic great (giant) anteater (<i>tatu</i>)
<i>tiana piranga</i>	neonate, literally red child
<i>timbo</i>	fish poison
<i>tipiaca korea</i>	minature tapioca balls
<i>tipiti</i>	manioc press
<i>tiyjitu</i>	unidentified nocturnal forest pig
<i>tucu</i>	palm tree, name of fruit and thread used for rope and hammocks
<i>tui</i>	blood
<i>tupé</i>	piassava palm mat previously used when menstruating
<i>tusha enda</i>	leader or grand chief
<i>tui amana</i>	flow of blood
<i>tuya wemi</i>	pregnant woman (literally, water woman)
<i>umari</i>	(<i>Poraqueiba sericea</i>) palm fruit
<i>umutawari</i>	blowing to cure

Glossary

<i>wakari</i>	the night monkey (unidentified)
<i>waracú mira</i>	unidentified bark used for curing diarrhoea
<i>watura</i>	manioc head basket
<i>wayuri</i>	communal work party (men)
<i>yacaré</i>	caiman
<i>yamerú</i>	maraca
<i>yasiwara ara amana</i>	It's raining
<i>yawaka mira</i>	'otter bark' used for curing diarrhoea (unidentified)
<i>yawara</i>	jaguar
<i>zapiño</i>	a frog illness that causes white frothing in the mouth (babies)
<i>zarabitana</i>	blowpipe
<i>zogizogi</i>	erratic monkey (unidentified)

Of terms in Warekena:

<u><i>awi nonene</i></u>	pain in the abdomen (see <i>sasi marika</i>)
<u><i>beyuri (churi)</i></u>	anteater
<u><i>Ichibi</i></u>	penis
<u><i>imorowa chama</i></u>	umbilical cord
<u><i>irichi</i></u>	a sweet smelling resin
<u><i>ikaximafu</i></u>	menarche
<u><i>miayi</i></u>	blood
<u><i>oomeni</i></u>	snake illness (see <i>cobrello</i>)
<u><i>weperi irari</i></u>	placenta (see <i>taina banco</i>)
<u><i>Úta</i></u>	a vulnerable and open state (see <i>saurã</i>)