Living with Other:
Mastanawa Engagements with Alterity

Giancarlo C. Rolando Betancourt
Lima, Peru

MA, Anthropology, University of Virginia, 2013
Licentiate, Anthropology, Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, 2010
B.Soc.Sci., Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, 2010

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Abstract

This dissertation deals with what many would regard as a fundamental human concern, the issue of the Other: How, from an Amerindian perspective, it is constructed, what is the basis upon which these constructions are built, and what do they entail in the everyday lives of people. In particular, this dissertation deals with the way in which the Mastanawa People understand and experience their relation with multiple others, taking as a starting point, the Mastanawa ontology of the person and the social. Several anthropologists of the South American Lowlands argue that indigenous models of personhood fit within the model of the dividual person (Strathern 1990). Since the publication of Seeger, da Matta, and Viveiros de Castro's (1979) article on the construction of the person among Brazilian Indigenous societies, the body has occupied a central role in regional debates on the topic of personhood. To name a few examples, this issue has been written about in connection with the importance of eating together (Siskind 1973), the avoidance and incorporation of shamanic substances (from plant, animal, mineral or human origins) (Echeverri and Enokakuiodo 2013; Fausto 2007, 2012; Harner 1984), the use of body adornments (Erikson 1996; Mentore 2005; Turner 1980), and the incorporation of names and knowledge (Kensinger 1995; McCallum 2001). In addition, engaging with the Other has been recognized as an essential component of the process by which Amazonians achieve personhood (Erikson, 1986; Fausto 2012; Vilaça 2002). However, this debate has – for the most part – neglected to incorporate Amazonian's engagements with non-indigenous others.

Following the Mastanawa attitude towards the Other, this dissertation builds on the notion of constitutive alterity proposed by Philippe Erikson (1986, 1996). Mastanawa, as well as the Matis studied by Erikson, define themselves through the Other instead of in opposition to the Other. This seemingly paradoxical feature of personal and collective identity, reported throughout Amazonian societies, has been predominantly explained in terms of cosmic relations organized under a system of generalized predation, where humans – and other-than-humans – compete for a fixed amount of vitality available in the cosmos. A main theme in studies that follow this approach is that of exocannibalism – whether real or symbolic – as a means to "capture" vitalities for the reproduction of society. Mastanawa sociality, from the point of view of my dissertation, shows that predation is not the only way of relating with the Other and, furthermore, that conviviality represents better the Mastanawa agenda of encompassing – and simultaneously being encompassed by – the Other.

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Introduction

During my earliest introduction to the social sciences as an elementary school student I was taught that my country, Peru, had three natural regions: Pacific Coast, Andes, and Amazon Jungle. I do not remember the teacher at my elementary school explaining much about the people who lived in these three natural regions, but I certainly remember that the book had three drawn images representing three persons corresponding to each of these natural regions: a light-skinned kid dressed with a white poncho and a straw hat - like a *criollo*[1] horse rider- for the coast, a second dark-skinned kid wearing a colorful poncho and a *chullo* hat for the Andes, and a third kid wearing colorful feathers on his head, red face-paint, and a loincloth for the Amazon. At about that same time, I learned that those feather-adorned scantly clothed people who live in the jungle beyond the Andes are called *chunchos*. I took some anthropology classes in college to learn that *chuncho* is an ethnic slur of Quechua origin used to refer to the inhabitants of the rainforest West of the Andes, which was later adopted by the rest of Peruvians to refer to the same people. As an eight years old boy I knew that *chuncho* was not a good thing to be, as my mother admonished me several times "don't be a *chuncho*!" when my social behavior was not adequate. *Chuncho* was also the name and the theme of one of the huts you could rent at *El Rancho,* a popular venue for children's birthday parties when I was an elementary schoolboy in Lima. The *chuncho* hut was a triangle-shaped longhouse, adorned with exotic animals and a drawing portraying the face of a jungle-boy wearing a headband. This playground *chuncho* highlighted a different set of qualities of those

[1] *Criollo* in the Peruvian context is used to refer to the descendants of the Spanish,

associated to this category. The playground *chuncho* was a fun one, a master of the jungle who I imagined engaged in incredible adventures in a lavish forest populated by all sorts of amazing animals. These images shaped my imagination of who these mysterious peoples beyond the Andes were throughout my childhood. During the rest of my basic education I was not offered much more information about my fellow Peruvian citizens who occupied a region that represents roughly two thirds of Peru's national territory. Popular culture and mass media did not teach me much about these peoples either.

The Amazon region -and Amazonians- is usually absent from the way in which most Peruvians imagine Peruvian national identity, and when it is present it occupies a peripheral place. Most Peruvians imagine their nation in terms of the Andes-Coast dichotomy (Greene 2006, Varese 1972) and this is reflected not only in the absence of the Amazon -and its inhabitants- in the basic education curricula, but also from other areas of social and cultural life. The Peruvian idiom *el que no tiene de inca, tiene de mandinga* (that one who doesn't have Inca in them, has Mandinga) is illustrative of this. In addition to the Spanish component, Peruvian mestizos understand themselves as the result of the intermixing of Andean Indigenous Peoples (Inca) and West African slaves (Mandinga), the former associated to the Andean highlands and the latter to the Pacific Coast. This absence of the Amazon from the national imaginary reaches its maximum expression in the myth of the Amazon as an empty space (Santos Granero and Barclay 2002), crystalized in the political ideology of -twice president- Fernando Belaúnde Terry. This myth is clearly outlined in his book *La Conquista del Perú por los Peruanos* (The Conquer of Peru by Peruvians). It was not that Belaúnde ignored that the Peruvian

Amazon was inhabited by settlers and Indigenous peoples, as he was an avid traveler, and he personally ordered Air Force pilots to bomb Matses[2] longhouses with napalm in 1964 after the Matses attacked loggers who invaded their territory. The problem was that Amazonian Indigenous Peoples had no place in Belaúnde's vision of Peru, they either had to be physically eliminated to make room for the real Peruvians to take over, or they had to transform themselves into Peruvians by abandoning their "savage" manners to give way for "civilization".

Even though Belaúnde died in 2002, the year I graduated high school, his vision was still very much alive during my time as college student, three decades after his second term as president of Peru. His ideas were notably brought back to the mainstream by, then president, Alan García Perez. In October 28th of 2007, El Comercio, the most important Peruvian newspaper, published an opinion piece by García titled "*El síndrome del perro del hortelano"* (The gardener's dog syndrome). In this article, García develops an argument in favor of neoliberal development strategies through – among other things – the commodification of natural resources, the individualization of collective land ownership titles, the privatization of common goods, and large infrastructure projects[3]. Against his neoliberal utopia, García constructs an enemy who suffers from the "gardener's dog syndrome", a dog that does not eat and does not let others eat the garden's products. According to García, the gardener's dog would be embodied in reality by environmentalists, who he identifies as old communists, and Indigenous Peoples who

[2] At the time known as Mayoruna.
[3] He also denies the existence of Indigenous Peoples in Voluntary Isolation, whom he suggests are an invention of radical environmentalists/communists/anti-capitalists to prevent the development of oil extraction projects in the Amazon Basin.

hold the anachronistic believe that the land, waterfalls, and mountains are sacred. García's article resonated with the ideas of many Peruvians who think of the Amazon as a vacant space, rich in natural resources, waiting to be conquered by Peruvians for the benefit of the nation.

A few months after the publication of his article, García's administration issued a legislative package that came to be known as "*la ley de la selva*" (the law of the jungle) that followed the program announced in his writing. These laws were issued as part of a larger package of laws aimed at satisfying conditions set by a free-trade agreement signed by the governments of Peru and the United States of America. Amazonian Indigenous federations had been paying close attention to the process, and many Amazonian Peoples had taken offense at being labeled gardener's dogs. The issuing of these laws resulted in an unprecedented multi-ethnic Amazonian uprising that was remarkably silenced by the media. Roads and rivers were blocked throughout the Peruvian Amazon for several weeks. Likewise, oil extraction centers were occupied, and federation leaders went to the city demanding to be heard and have the laws overturned. Tension grew over several months, and in June of 2009 the Awajun People and the Peruvian government's repressive forces clashed violently when the latter tried to break a road blockage by the former which had been going on for 45 days. This confrontation resulted in 34 confirmed deaths between Awajun protestors and policemen. This tragic event was a dramatic reminder that the jungle was not empty, that Amazonian Indigenous Peoples were vigorously alive, and that they had opinions on how to manage their territories which were at odds with those held by other Peruvians. It was in this context, during my senior

year in college that, along with many of my co-nationals, I discovered an urgent need to understand who these peoples are.

The Anthropology Department at the Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú was very active during the months of the Amazonian protest of 2009. Students organized discussion forums, public talks, and demonstrated against García's legislative package. During these events I met Etsa, a brilliant young Awajun man from the Marañon River who was attending college in Lima double-majoring in political science and philosophy. We immediately became friends and, with all due respect to Professor Oscar Espinosa who first introduced me to Amazonian ethnography, Etsa started unveiling a whole new world to me. Etsa passionately -and patiently- talked to me about the stories he learned from his grandfather, the beautiful teachings from Ajútap that come in the form of *natem* visions in the *ayamtai*, the *anent* songs that do not only bring lovers back but also make gardens grow Nugkui's plants, and his true passion, the "Awajún university" that is the *waimat.* He was truly a *waimaku*, a man with vision. Unfortunately, my friend Etsa passed away before our dreams of collaboration could be materialized. I lost an amazing friend and teacher, but the curiosity he awakened in me to discover that world which he started unveiling before my eyes only kept on growing.

When the moment came to conduct the required fieldwork to obtain my bachelor's degree in anthropology, I was determined to conduct fieldwork in the Peruvian Amazon. This was only a few months after the Amazonian protests and the conflict between the Awajún and the police forces. Therefore, going to Awajún country was not an option due

to the tense aftermath to the clash with the police. During the protest months, I also befriended a group of Shipibo activists and community-radio hosts. It was through these Shipibo leaders that I made arrangements to conduct three months of fieldwork in the Ucayali Region. The goal of this fieldwork project was to study the quotidian experience of the State in a Shipibo community. In order to do this, I studied the images of the Other held by schoolteachers and Shipibo *comuneros*[4], and how they manifested in everyday interactions. This initial fieldwork experience revealed to me how little did I know about this area of my country, which looked nothing like the coastal desert where I was born and raised. In consequence, I returned to Lima with more questions than I had before my trip, and the conviction that I needed to conduct further research aimed at understanding the relationship between Indigenous Peoples and their multiple others.

A year after my first fieldwork with the Shipibo, I was hired by an environmentalist organization that was working in coordination to the Peruvian Ministry of Environment to go to the Upper Purus River as a fieldwork researcher for the elaboration of the masterplans of two protected areas: the Alto Purus National Park and the Purus Communal Reserve. My job was to survey a number of Cashinahua, Mastanawa/Chaninawa, Asháninka, and Culina communities. It was in this context that I met the Mastanawa, and visited their villages, for the first time. This was also the first time I was warned by the Peruvian settlers of Puerto Esperanza about the savage unruliness of the Mastanawa. What I found in this first brief visit to Mastanawa country

[4] *Comunero* is the legal category that designates the members of a Comunidad Nativa (Native Community). In Peru, Comunidad Nativa is a legal category of land ownership designed for Indigenous collectivities, it can also be used to refer to the group of *comuneros* that collectively own and manage that territory.

was the most delightful unruly people I have ever met. Rather than answering the nonsensical questionnaire I was given by the organization that hired me, they were more interested in asking me to join a game of soccer or volleyball, have a drink with them, eat some "real food", and leisurely chat from hammock to hammock. I was immediately seduced by the lack of interest this delightful, unruly people had for my very important and official business. They knew very well who were the powers that had sent me to their villages, and they could not help but either laugh at or be puzzled by the ridiculous questions I had been sent to ask. Who keeps track of the number of minutes it takes to find game in the forest?! This initial encounter with the Mastanawa was a confirmation of the need to study how do people like the Mastanawa understand and experience their relation with the encompassing society.

Ucayali and the Purus Province

The Mastanawa I lived with and write about in this dissertation were located at the time of fieldwork in the Upper Purus River Region, on the border between the Brazilian State of Acre and the Peruvian Region of Ucayali. At the beginning of my fieldwork, in the summer of 2014, they were mainly located in six villages distributed along the Purus River: Bola de Oro, Progreso, Catay, Tres Bolas Sinaí, Naranjal, and Tabanal. The first five located in the Peruvian side of the border, and the last one in Brazil. Bola de Oro, and Progreso fused into one village during the course of my fieldwork. There was also a small number of Mastanawa living in the Brazilian town of Santa Rosa do Purus, and the Peruvian town of Puerto Esperanza, as well as even fewer Mastanawa living in the regional capitals, Rio Branco (Acre) and Pucallpa (Ucayali). According to my hosts in


PERU
ECUADOR
COLOMBIA
BRAZIL
BOLIVIA
CHILE
PACIFIC OCEAN
Quito
Azogues
Tumbes
Loja
Talara
Sullana
Piura
Chiclayo
Cajamarca
San Pedro de Lloc
Trujillo
Chimbote
Casma
Huaraz
Huarmey
Barranca
Huacho
Callao
Lima
Chorrillos
San Vicente de Cañete
Chincha Alta
Pisco
Ica
Nazca
Palpa
Chala
Caraveli
Camana
Mollendo
Moquegua
Tacna
Arica
Flor de Agosto
Iquitos
Caballococha
Nauta
Requena
Yurimaguas
Moyobamba
Tarapoto
Bagua
Chachapoyas
Contamana
Pucallpa
Tingo Maria
Puerto Inca
Huanuco
Cerro de Pasco
La Oroya
Huancayo
Huancavelica
Ayacucho
Abancay
Cusco
Quillabamba
Puerto Maldonado
Manu
Inapari
Macusani
Azangaro
Juliaca
Puno
Arequipa
Coracora
Cotahuasi
La Paz
LORETO
AMAZONAS
PIURA
LAMBAYEQUE
CAJAMARCA
LA LIBERTAD
ANCASH
HUANUCO
PASCO
UCAYALI
LIMA
JUNIN
MADRE DE DIOS
CUSCO
AYACUCHO
APURIMAC
ICA
AREQUIPA
MOQUEGUA
TACNA
PUNO
National capital
Departmental capital
Town
Major airport
International boundary
Departmental boundary
Pan American Highway
Road
Railroad
0 100 200 300 km
0 100 200 mi
Callao has the status of a Department
The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

Map 1

the Upper Purus River, there are also Mastanawa living in other places, these Mastanawa would live in places where they co-reside with peoples legally recognized as Jaminawa (Purus, and Iaco Rivers in Brazil) or Yaminahua (Jurua River, and Sepahua in Peru), Sharanahua/Marinahua (Upper Purus River in Peru). My informants also admitted that it is possible that there were persons who can call themselves Mastanawa living autonomously from the State in the protected areas located at the headwaters of the Envira, Jurua, Curanja, and Purus Rivers. However, it was explained to me that if this was the case they lived with groups which were not predominantly Mastanawa. I visited all of the above-mentioned villages, as well as Puerto Esperanza and Santa Rosa do Purus. In sum, at the time of my fieldwork the vast majority of the Mastanawa lived in the Peruvian Purus province, which is also the only place where they are officially recognized by that name. Nonetheless, it is important to mention that they cross the Brazilian-Peruvian border frequently, have relatives on both sides of the border, and many of them hold dual citizenship.

The Purus Province is part of the larger political-administrative jurisdiction that is the Ucayali Region, located in the Central Peruvian Amazon between the regions of Loreto and Madre de Dios. For most of Peruvian history Ucayali belonged to the Loreto region, these two regions occupy an area slightly larger than the size of Sweden. Ucayali receives its name from the Ucayali River which is a major tributary of the Amazon River. This river starts at the confluence of the Urubamba and Tambo Rivers, and runs from the south of the Ucayali region into Loreto where it meets the Marañón River to form the Amazon River. Pucallpa, the capital of the Ucayali region, is located on the shore of the Ucayali

River and it has a population of approximately 300 000 inhabitants. Pucallpa and the Ucayali Basin are familiar to many readers of Amazonian scholarship, as this area is home to the Shipibo-Conibo and the Kukama-Kukamiria peoples. The Shipibo-Conibo (Pano) are well known in the ethnographic literature due to their shamanic system and highly elaborated geometric designs, as well as the archaeological work of Lathrap (1970) and his students DeBoer (1981, 1986), Myers (1974, 1990), and Roe (1982). The Kukama-Kukamiria, the westernmost Tupi-Guarani-speaking people, are perhaps the best documented Indigenous people of Western Amazonia in terms of the historical records available about them. This is due to the fact that they dominated significant segments of the major Amazonian rivers reached by Spanish explorers during their first incursions to the region, namely the Marañon, Ucayali, and Amazon Rivers.

The Treaty of Tordesillas signed between Portugal and Spain in 1494, under the auspices of the Pope, sanctioned the territories on Ucayali and Purus Basins as belonging to the Spanish crown. Even though Europeans had not reached the Amazon Basin yet, and most of the American geography was unknown to Europeans. The attempts to conquer the area conducted by Spanish conquistadores in the XVI century were extremely chaotic and unsuccessful. The first challenge they encountered was the geography itself, the Spanish were by no means prepared to perform under the conditions that the tropical rainforest supposed. Likewise, the relations with the peoples of the tropical rainforest constituted a major challenge for the explorers, as most of the times the initial Amerindian hospitality – or diplomatic relations – turned into overt hostility. Evidence from the chronicles of these early expeditions seem to suggest that the source of the Amerindian rage was the

lack of reciprocity displayed by the Spanish, who gladly received the hospitality, and gifts from their Amerindian hosts. Taking into consideration that the Spanish were traveling through the same rivers that were part of established commercial routes, and that many of the peoples of these rivers were experienced traders themselves; it is not extremely risky to assume that the Amazonians tried to relate with the Spanish in the same fashion as they used to do with their older commercial partners.

The lack of reciprocity and violent attitude of the Spanish explorers rapidly convinced Amazonians of their difference with their previous commercial allies, unveiling their intentions of conquest and subjugation. Western Amazonians used two strategies to resist Spanish advances over their territory: open direct violence, and scorched earth. This mix of open violence and the destruction of their own villages and gardens, even before the arrival of the Spanish explorers to the native settlements, resulted in the decimation of the exploring parties and their ultimate failure, as well as the collapse of the precarious settlements the Spanish tried to establish in the area. The events that took place in the Jivaro territory during these early decades of Spanish colonialism constitute a good example of the Spanish failure to exploit Western Amazonians under the model of the *encomienda* they successfully enforced elsewhere. Having discovered the existence of gold in Jivaro country during the decade of 1560, the Spanish established a number of settlements throughout Jivaro territory and put them to work extracting gold at their service. The different Jivaro peoples of the area resisted the Spanish presence since its beginnings, by raiding the Spanish settlements with larger armies each time until they effectively expelled most of the Spanish settlers from their territory in the great Jivaro

uprising of 1599 (Taylor and Descola 1981). In light of these continuous failures, and probably also by influence of the de las Casas' ideas, Viceroy Toledo decided to drastically reduce the amount of military expeditions into the area. From that moment on, most of the attempts to "tame" and conquer the Amazonians would be performed by members of the religious orders approved by the Spanish Crown to catechize Amerindians.

The area where the Mastanawa live was disputed by Franciscan and Jesuit missionaries. The Jesuit missionaries found their way to the Upper Ucayali by navigating upriver from the Marañon River. The Franciscans did it from the central Peruvian Andes. The dispute between these two Catholic orders was probably related to the Mountain of Salt, *Cerro de la Sal*, a salt mine about which Stefano Varese (2004) has written extensively. This salt mine was exploited by at least the following peoples: Piro (Yine), Campa (Ashaninka), Campa (Asheninka), Campa (Nomatsiguenga), Conibo, and Amuesha (Yanesha). This was a place where peoples that would otherwise engage in violent relations with each other suspended their bellicose activities. The Catholic missionaries who attempted to establish missions in the area were continuously resisted by the local peoples until the great multiethnic uprising lead by Juan Santos Atahualpa between 1742 and 1752. Santos Atahualpa and his interethnic military confederation succesfully expelled Europeans from the Peruvian central Amazon. After this event, the area remained mostly free of foreign presence until the rubber boom in the late 1800s.

The first three decades of the xix century witnessed the independence of the South American Spanish colonies. These young countries had plans for their Amazonian territories, which were crystallized in laws, and declarations, but due to their precarious economic situation after the independence wars, most of these projects were never realized, or were realized in such a reduced scale that they did not have a greater impact in the region. Consequently, until the last decades of the xix century most of Western Amazonia maintained a high degree of autonomy from the national governments of South America. The fact that the borders between Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru were not definitely settled until well advanced the xx century tells us about the little dominion these countries had over their Amazonian territories. It was not until the rubber boom that started in the decade of 1870 that the former Spanish colonies started to assert a somewhat effective dominion of what they considered to be their Amazonian territories.

The most valuable resource in the rubber extraction business was the labor force itself. The process of extraction was relatively simple, and, at least initially, the plants from which the latex was obtained were abundant. In contrast, according to Santos Granero and Barclay (2002), qualified labor force was a scarce resource in the region. Initially, most of the workers in the rubber business were poor *mestizos* and catechized Amerindians, descendants of the peoples that were brought into Catholic missions during the colonial period. The autonomous Amerindians mostly avoided contact with the white, and *mestizo* population, and were not easily incorporated into the dynamics of the rubber exploitation, as they were not used to receive orders nor to the notion of working permanently on the same task. The Mastanawa fall within the latter category. These

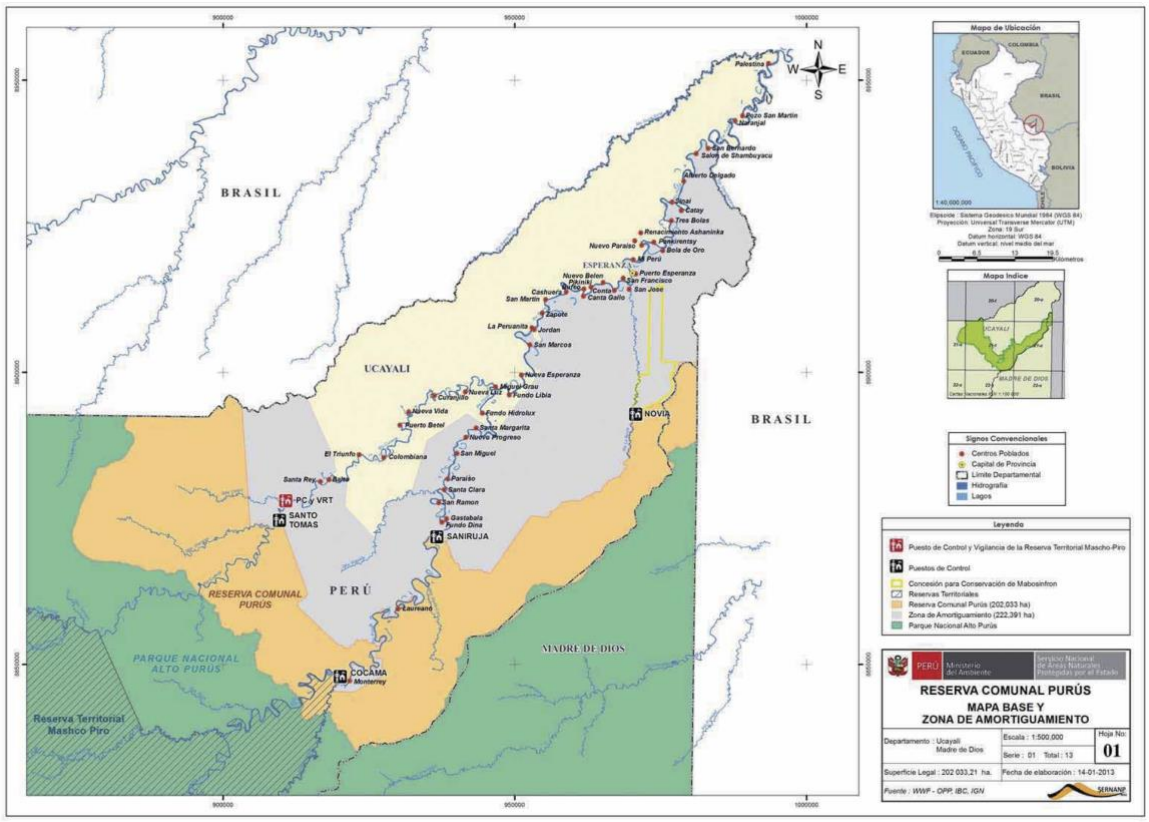
autonomous peoples related to the rubber producers in two ways: by raiding their camps and stealing their manufactured products (Fuentes 1906: 305); and by agreeing to work for them until they obtained the goods they wanted to finally go back to the forest (Stiglich 1904: 399).

Even though the Mastanawa were not actively involved in the rubber economy, the era known as the rubber boom is important to understand the contemporary configuration of the region where they live. It was at this time, at the turn of the century, that the contemporary Brazilian state of Acre was transferred from Bolivia to Brazil, and that Brazil and Peru reached an agreement to settle their international border. The nationality of the territories was usually determined by the nationality of the rubber bosses present in the area. Due to this reason, the headwaters of the Purus and Jurua River, east of the headwaters of the Ucayali River, were recognized as Peruvian territory. The best-known rubber bosses of the area were the Peruvian Scharff brothers. Most of the longtime Peruvian *mestizo* residents of the Purus province descend from the rubber workers that arrived during this time. Likewise, the contemporary location of many of the Indigenous peoples of the area is to a certain degree explained by their relation with the rubber economy. It is likely that those peoples labeled as Indigenous Peoples in Voluntary Isolation, whose autonomous lifestyles and territories are legally protected by national and international legislation, settled the remote areas where they live now as a strategy to avoid the rubber bosses. Likewise, some peoples like the Ashaninka of the Jurua River settled the area as workers of the rubber industry. After the decline of the rubber economy, a majority of the Peruvian settlers left the region. Catay, an old military

outpost, was the precarious local center of Peruvian power and San Juan and Puerto Esperanza were minor *mestizo* settlements. In 1950, the military outpost was abandoned, contributing to the Peruvian exodus of the region towards better integrated areas of the Peruvian Amazon, and Puerto Esperanza overtime consolidated itself as the local center of power.

The Purus watershed flows eastward into Brazil from a small Amazonian mountain range located east of the Upper Ucayali River. For this reason, communication with the rest of Peru has been a constant challenge in the history of the region. Likewise, traveling from the Peruvian Purus to Rio Branco, the capital of Acre, takes several days if done by river and road. The Peruvian population that arrived to the region during the rubber boom relied on old Indigenous routes between the headwaters of the Purus and Ucayali Basins. These routes are locally known as *varaderos* and are those places where the distance between two watersheds is the shortest. Traveling from the Purus province to the Upper Ucayali River, and then downriver to Pucallpa was considered by many *mestizo* settlers a dangerous enterprise due to the harsh conditions of the trip, as well as the presence of those who they considered savage Indians. This history is familiar to most of the *mestizo* settlements that remained after the end of the rubber boom. The Peruvian government cognizant of the vacuum of intra-colonial power created after the rubber bosses left turned to the church for help in administering this territory and its inhabitants. In this fashion, Catholic and Evangelical missionaries from the Summer Institute of Linguistics replaced the rubber bosses as representatives of the Peruvian State colonizing – and civilizatory – project in its Amazonian region. This resulted in an important presence of

Spanish Dominican missionaries and North American missionaries from the Summer Institute of Linguistics in the Purus province during the mid XX century.

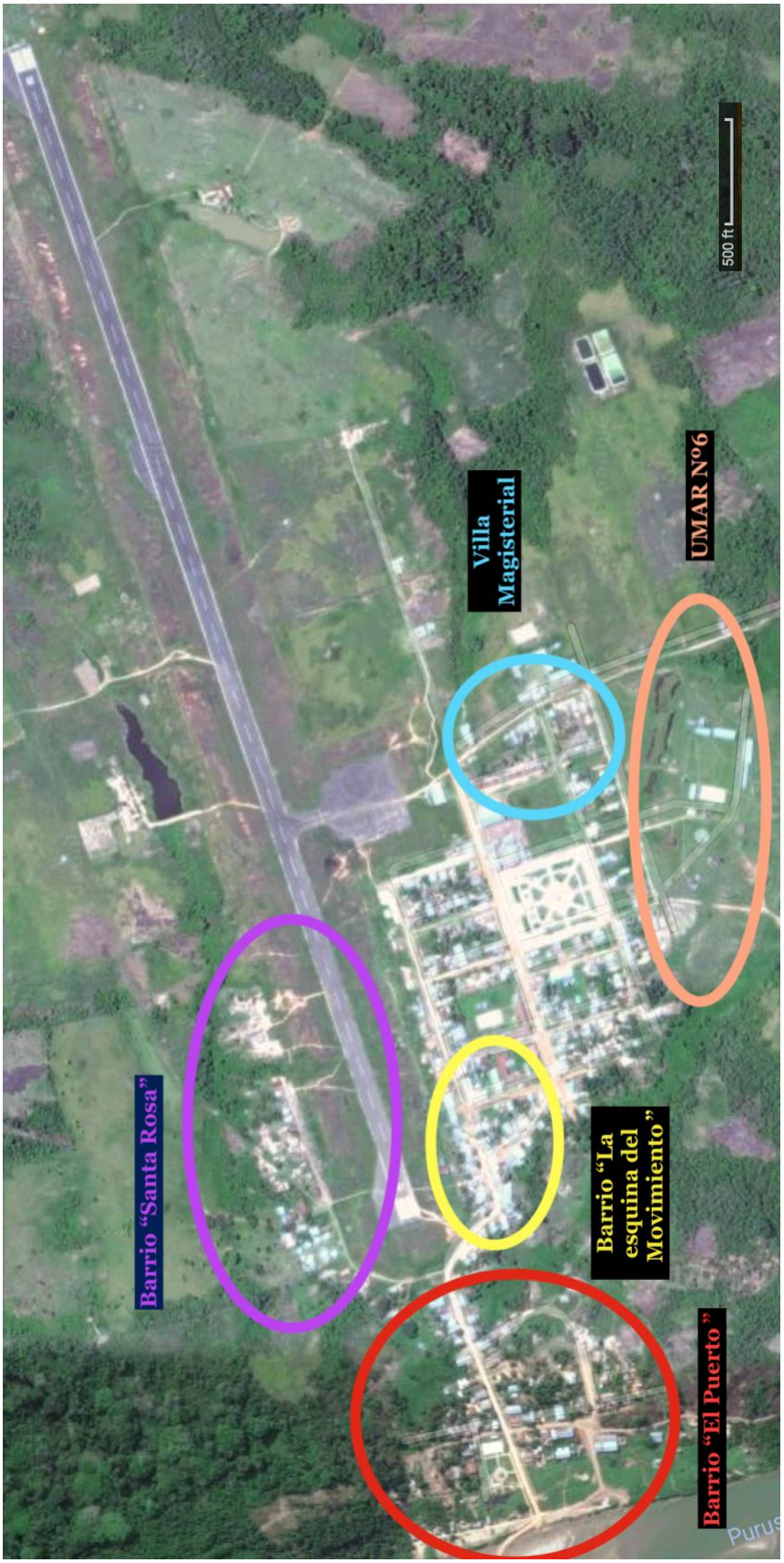


Map 2 (taken from SERNANP 2012)

Both the Catholic and Evangelical missionaries cleared landing strips throughout the Purus province. Even though most of these landing strips have been reclaimed by the forest, the landing strip in Puerto Esperanza remains the main connection between the province and the rest of Peru. Furthermore, after the creation of the Alto Purus National Park in 2004, traveling through the *varaderos* has been rendered illegal. At the time of my fieldwork, the two ways people in the Purus province had to go to other places in Peru were flying by airplane to Pucallpa or navigating downriver until the Brazilian town

Manoel Urbano to then catch a regional road to Rio Branco, and finally catching the interoceanic highway from Rio Branco back into Peru. Using the average means of transportation available to most people in Purus, the latter option would take several days of travel. An additional problem with taking this route is that it leads to the Madre de Dios region, so if the purpose of the trip is related to bureaucratic endeavors, there is still the issue of getting to Pucallpa which is the administrative center from which Purus depends. For this reason, the preferred means of transportation is by air. At the time of my fieldwork, the Peruvian Air Force flew from Pucallpa twice every other week into the province. The airplanes used by the Air Force were Antonov An-32 cargo planes. These flights were considered a civic service, and in consequence the local municipality had the right to send a number of passengers in need to be evacuated for free and the rest of the passengers paid the equivalent of 15 US dollars for a one-way ticket. Due to the low frequency of these flights and their reduced cost, seats on them were always on high demand. A second option was offered by a private airline which operated – on average – two flights a week subsidized by the Ucayali Region government, the price for these was 70 US dollars for a one-way ticket. The airplane used by this carrier was usually a Cessna Caravan 208 that seats 12 passengers. Finally, a third option was offered by the same carrier at unregulated prices and could cost anything from 100 US dollars to 200 US dollars for a one-way ticket.

As it can be seen on the map, Puerto Esperanza has five main neighborhoods, plus the Unidad Militar the Asentamiento Rural Nº6 (Military Unit of Rural Settlement Nº6) locally known as the UMAR 6. These neighborhoods are from East to West: El Puerto


Barrio "Santa Rosa"
Villa Magisterial
UMAR N°6
Barrio "La esquina del Movimiento"
Barrio "El Puerto"
500 ft

Map 3

(The Port), La Esquina del Movimiento (The Movement Corner), Santa Rosa, El Centro (Downtown), and La Villa Magisterial (Teachers' Village). The first one, El Puerto, hosts on its Western half a mix of Peruvian, Brazilian, and Culina families, a few shops and an Evangelical Church. El Puerto's South Eastern quarter has a majority Sharanahua/Marinahua population. La Esquina del Movimiento, as its name suggests is where most of the town's commerce takes place, it consists of a mix of shops and houses plus the provincial health center, most of this neighborhood's population is *mestizo*. Barrio Santa Rosa is an almost exclusively Indigenous neighborhood, its Western half is predominantly Cashinahua and its Eastern half is predominantly Mastanawa/Chaninawa. In the middle of the Barrio Santa Rosa, the local Catholic parish has a house where the priest lives which is next to the Instituto Superior Tecnológico Público Purús, a technical education center ran by the Italian-Argentine priest Miguel Piovesan who was also in charge of the local parish. Downton, the unmarked area on the map, has a majority *mestizo* population with a few Mastanawa and Cashinahua families living by the landing strip, this neighborhood is also where most of the public institutions are located: the Municipality, the National Bank (Banco de la Nación), the Police Station, the School District Office, the Customs Office, etc. Likewise, there are a number of shops and restaurants. The UMAR 6 is a military barracks established by the Peruvian government under the local development ideology of *fronteras viva*s (living borders) which had as it main tenet he idea that if Peruvian settlers did not populate the borders of the Nation, foreign countries could occupy and steal portions of the national territory. Indigenous peoples were not considered Peruvian or Peruvian enough to secure the national identity of the territory. The last neighborhood, the Villa Magisterial, is a housing project

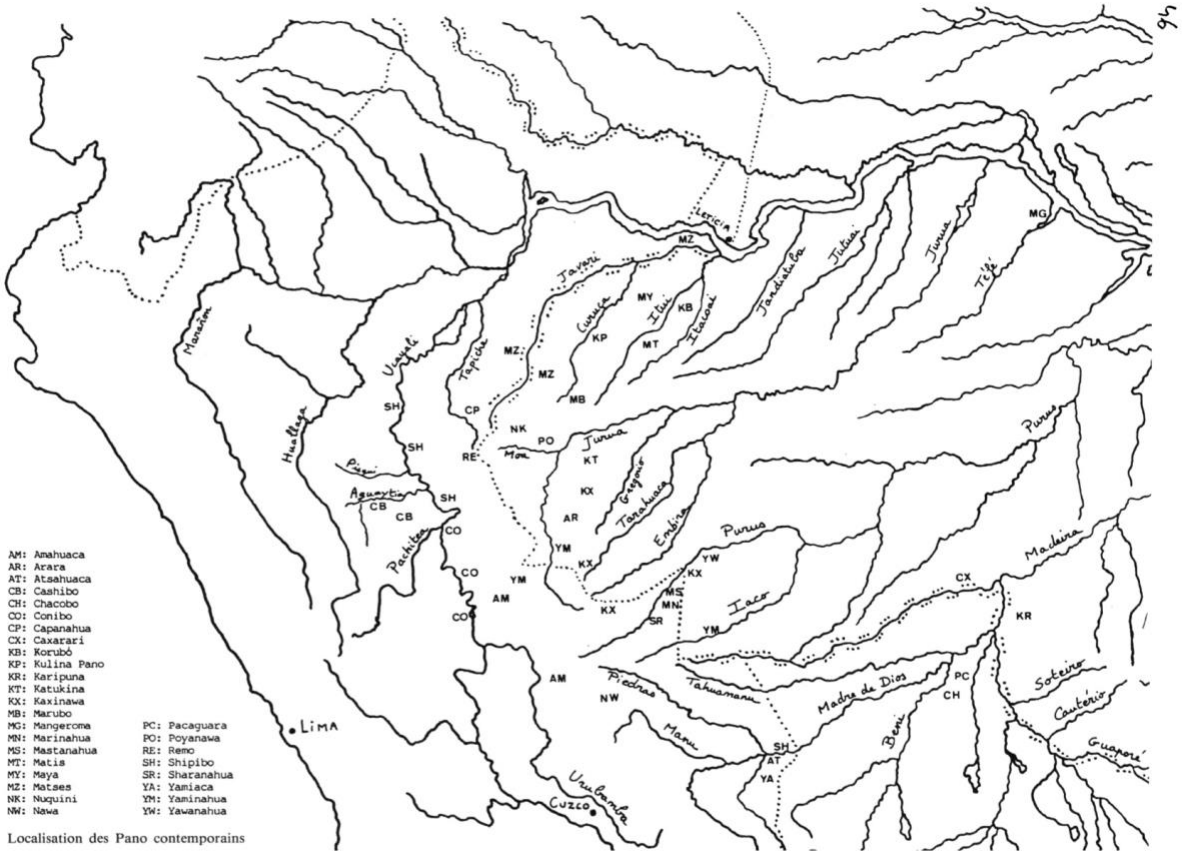
developed in benefit of school teachers. The need for this housing project came from the fact that most school teachers in the province are originally from other parts of the country and the limited availability of places to live in town. Puerto Esperanza has approximately 1500 inhabitants, a large portion of them public servants that, as a general rule, only stay in the province for the duration of their appointments.

Puerto Esperanza is used by the local population as a geographical reference that divides the Peruvian Purus River in three segments. Puerto Esperanza and the comunidades nativas in its vicinity are known as the Medio Purús (Middle Purus). Downriver from the Medio Purus is the Bajo Purús (Lower Purús), and upriver the Alto Purús (Upper Purus). The other river of local importance in the Province is the Curanja River, a tributary of the Purus River. All the comunidades nativas in the Curanja River belong to the Cashinahua people. The headwaters of this river are home to an unknown number of peoples living in voluntary isolation, presumably Pano-speakers, locally known as *Curanjeños.* Three of them, a man locally known as Epa (father) and his two wives have established permanent relations with the Cashinahua and have established permanent residence in the vicinity of the furthest upriver Cashinahua community on the Curanja River. The furthest upriver comunidad nativa on the Purus River during my fieldwork was a Yine (Piro) community, which was settled by fundamentalist Evangelical Christians who belong to the Pioneer Mission and had as their main agenda to contact the Mashcho-Piro. The Mashco-Piro, known to the Mastanawa as Kapesochinawa (alligator chest people), are a people living in voluntary isolation who speak an Arawak language of the Piro branch. The information I was given about this village was that their enterprise of contacting the Mashco-Piro was

a failure, as the Mashco-Piro avoided them at all costs. The next comunidad nativa was Laureano, the only Amahuaca community in the province. Downriver from Laureano, is Sharanahua/Marinahua territory. The Medio Purús – upriver from Puerto Esperanza – is mostly Cashinahua territory, with the exception of Zapote, a Culina community who migrated from the Upper Envira River in Brazil and is not related to the other Culina in the province. Downriver from Puerto Esperanza, the Medio Purús is Ashaninka and Mastanawa/Chaninawa territory. The Ashaninka are the most recent settlers in the province, they immigrated from their traditional territory fleeing the political violence that took over many areas of Peru during the 1980s and 1990s. The Bajo Purús is Mastanawa/Chaninawa and Culina territory. In addition to Puerto Esperanza, there are two other significant mestizo settlements in the Province, San Juan located in the Medio Purús and Palestina which is located in the Bajo Purús in the easternmost point of the province. San Juan is mostly inhabited by the descendants of families who arrived to the province during the rubber boom. Palestina is inhabited by immigrants who have arrived to the region more recently, many of them of Andean origin.

The Cashinahua are the most numerous ethnic group in the province and dominate the local Indigenous politics. After them, the most numerous people are the Sharanhua/Marinahua who at the time of my fieldwork were starting to have access to positions of power within the local Indigenous federation, FECONAPU. These two peoples are not only the most numerous but are also the ones who have the higher number of individuals with formal education beyond secondary school, such as school teachers and nurses. For this reason, most of the jobs available to Indigenous persons in

the local institutions are usually given to Cashinahua and Sharanahua individuals. This situation is a continuous source of tension in local Indigenous politics. During the time of my fieldwork, the Ashaninka, Culina, and Mastanawa tried to establish a new federation. However, the new federation project quickly failed as – among other things – they lacked financial resources and political connections outside of the province. The Indigenous peoples of the Purus Province belong to three different ethnolinguistic families: Arawak (Ashaninka, Mashco-Piro, and Yine), Arawa (Culina), and Pano (Amahuaca, Cashinahua, Curanjeños, Mastanawa/Chaninawa, and Sharanahua/Marinahua).



Map 4 (taken from Erikson 1986)

The Mastanawa in the Pano Nebulous

Unlike most ethnolinguistic families from the South American Lowland and the Caribbean which are scattered over large areas of the continent, the Pano-speaking peoples are located in an almost continuous territory. All of them are located in Western Amazonia in a territory that includes the Ucayali Basin, the Javari valley on the Brazilian-Peruvian border, the Jurua-Purus watershed also on the Brazilian-Peruvian border, and smaller territorial pockets in the Southern Peruvian Amazon and Northern Bolivia, on the Madre de Dios Basin. Lathrap (1970), Townsley (1988), and D'ans (1973) proposed a model that divided Pano-speakers into three broad categories: Cashibo, Ucayali Pano, and Southeastern Pano. This classification system relies heavily on the distinction between riverine and interfluvial groups. The category of Ucayali Pano corresponds to the riverine Pano-speakers known as the Shipibo-Conibo-Xetebo, and the other two would correspond to the interfluvial Pano speakers. The Cashibo on the west of the Ucayali River, and the Southeastern Pano on the opposite cardinal direction. According to this typology applied not only to the Pano but throughout Amazonia (Meggers 1971), riverine peoples would show higher degrees of complexity and sophistication in comparison to their interfluvial counterparts. The argument followed by this theory was primarily built upon an ecological determinism, the main idea was that the fertile Amazonian floodplains, such as the Ucayali, would allow for the development of more densely populated settlements and complex societies in comparison to the less fertile soil of the interfluvial areas.

More recent scholarship on Pano ethnolinguistic classification questions the tripartite scheme initially proposed by Lathrap. The main criticism to this model is that fails to account for cultural, social, and linguistic similarities and differences within the Pano family that do not always correspond to the boundaries set by the interfluvial-riverine dichotomy. In Particular, Erikson (1999) proposes an alternative classification system that takes linguistic and geographical location as its main variables. The clusters recognized in Erikson system are summarized in the table below.

Cluster	Peoples
Shipibo-Conibo	Shipibo, Conibo, Xetebo, and Pisquibo
Southern Pano	Chacobo, Pacaguara, Karipuna, and Kaxarari
Purus Pano	Yaminawa, Sharanahua, Marinahua, Mastanawa, Chaninawa, Murunawa, Chitonawa, Parquenahua, and Nawa
Amahuaca	Amahuaca
Cashinahua	Cashinahua
Cashibo/Uni	Cashibo-Kakataibo
Middle Pano	Marubo, Capanahua, Katukina, Remo, and Poyanawa
Mayoruna	Matis, and Matses

The differences between the peoples included in the different clusters are mainly linguistic and geographic, though these are not the only differences between these peoples. However, rather than the differences between the peoples included within the clusters listed above, I wish to call attention to the similarities between them. Erikson (1993, 1999) argues that despite the numerous collectivities counted within the eight clusters he identifies, there is a high degree of homogeneity between these peoples. First, he emphasizes a certain linguistic homogeneity that allows for communication between most of the speakers of the different Pano languages, especially those who live in the same area. The second feature, is a seemingly contradictory openness to the Other that coexists with a tendency to social atomization. In terms of their cultural similarities, Erikson mentions the following elements: residence in large communal houses; having yucca and plantains as their staple vegetables, and rituals associated with corn; the keeping of jaws as hunting trophies (and in the past as war trophies); the practice of funerary endocannibalism; an internal war plays an important role; an asymmetric dualism symbolized through sexual dimorphism, and a theory of knowledge and shamanic power based on the opposition of sweet and bitter; the use of tobacco more than ayahuasca as shamanic hallucinogenic, and the use of the *kampo* toad's venom as cynegetic stimulant; the use of masks made from gourds; the use of *kene* (geometric designs) to decorate objects and bodies; and a system of true names, that usually are linked to marriage sections in a Kariera-style system (Erikson 1993: 48).

The Mastanawa belong to the Purus Pano category. The peoples included in this cluster occupy the interfluvial areas on the headwaters of the Jurua, Purus and Ucayali

watersheds. In addition, there is a small group of Yaminahua who live in northwestern Bolivia. The multiplicity of names that designate different collectivities within this cluster can be deceiving. This is a highly homogenous cluster in terms of culture, social organization, and language. All of the Purus Pano peoples speak the same language with small dialectical variations, which they usually seek to homogenize when conversing with a person from a different group. They all tell the same *shidipafo* (stories from the old ones) and have – or at one time had – a shamanic initiation system based on the incorporation of venoms from wasps, and other stinging insects. Likewise, all Purus Pano sing a genre of songs called *yama yama* which usually recount memories of the singer or express longing for distant kin. Finally, they all have – or had – a moiety system which moieties also corresponds to classes of beings and objects that exist in the universe. The names of these moieties are *Roa Adifo* and *nawa*.

Methodology

This dissertation is based on data gathered during the summers of 2012 and 2013, and a longer period of fieldwork from July of 2014 to October of 2015. As I mention above, I visited all the Mastanawa villages on the Upper Purus River, as well as Santa Rosa do Purus and Puerto Esperanza. However, the Mastanawa I came to know better were those who lived in Catay and Sinai at the time of my fieldwork. The reason for this is that I resided in Catay for the entire duration of my fieldwork. However, it is important to mention that we frequently made trips to other Mastanawa villages as well as Puerto Esperanza and Santa Rosa. I chose Catay as my base because of its central location in the Mastanawa territory. Most Mastanawa speak – with varying degrees of mastery –

Spanish and Portuguese in addition to their own language, which is spoken by the whole Mastanawa population. Even though I devoted great energy to learning the Mastanawa language, I did not achieve a complete mastery of the language. For this reason, I used the assistance of a translator when I interviewed older people about their memories of the "contact" process. Likewise, I used the assistance of translator in the process of transcription and translation of all the audio recordings I made in Mastanawa. I have transcribed and translated all the interviews I recorded in Mastanawa, as well as all the *shidipafo*. I still have recordings from ayahuasca drinking sessions which need to be translated. Translating *rabi* (ayahuasca songs) and *koshoiti* (sorcery songs) is an extremely time-consuming exercise as the lyrics to these songs are usually coded in metaphors that refer to mythical themes, and also demand a higher linguistic skill than most Mastanawa have, due to the fact that these songs are sung in a special register of the language.

My first months of fieldwork were devoted to learning basic social etiquette, studying the language, and mapping the social relationships of my hosts. In order to do the latter, I collected data on kinship relations, places of birth and residence, *mestizo* and Mastanawa names[5]. This allowed me to have a better understanding of how the different Mastanawa were related to each other. However most of the data discussed in this dissertation comes from ethnographic participant observation of Mastanawa life. I participated in daily

[5] Most Mastanawa have at least two names: their legal name which is usually of Spanish or Portugues origin, and their *adekoi* (really their name) which is received from a relative two generations older than ego. This system of recycling names creates a relation between grandchildren and grandparent namesakes, in which the first is referred as the *funa* (new one) of the second, who is the *shedi* (old one) of the grandchild.

activities in the village, according to my age and gender. This mainly meant going hunting and fishing with other men and playing soccer in our leisure time. Though most of the time I spent with the Mastanawa I was – as they say – swinging on my hammock having conversations and joking from hammock to hammock. This is also what the Mastanawa do with most of their time. Trips to either Puerto Esperanza or Santa Rosa were made frequently, about once a week or once every other week. Likewise, visits to other villages were made frequently. In particular to Sinai which is almost across the river from Catay and to Tres Bolas which is connected to Catay through a path in the jungle that takes about two hours to walk. These visits did not always have an express purpose beyond the intention of visiting relatives and spending a good time together.

Theoretical Framework

This dissertation deals with a fundamental human concern, the issue of the Other, how it is constructed, what is the basis upon which these constructions are built, and what do they entail in the everyday lives of people, as seen from an Amerindian perspective. In particular, it deals with the way in which the Mastanawa People understand and experience their relation with their multiple others taking as a starting point the Mastanawa ontology of the person and the social. Alterity, or the Other, has traditionally been treated in the social sciences and the humanities as the polar opposite of identity (and/or community). According to this view, society would be defined by sameness and, therefore, be constituted in opposition to alterity or difference. This dissertation builds on an alternative tradition which "recognizes otherness as an integral, central feature of social bonds" (Stasch 2009: 11). In the anthropology of the South American Lowlands,

this alternative tradition has its best-known expression in Viveiros de Castro's (1998, 2004) perspectivist ontology model. Perspectivist anthropology contends that predation is the main principle upon which relationships of alterity are built and experienced in the region. However, a careful examination of Mastanawa sociality necessarily forces us to reconsider the emphasis that perspectivist anthropology puts on predation. For this reason, I propose that conviviality achieved through – among other things – relations of commensality plays a more prominent role in the ways in which Amerindians experience and think of social relations when compared to that of predatory relationships.

On the introduction to his book Society of Others, Rupert Stasch introduces the notion of *Gemeinschaft* (2009: 7-14) as one of two possible ways of understanding social relations. In Stasch's discussion of the topic, the *Gemeinschaft* tradition corresponds to all of those sociological models in which social relations are defined exclusively as relations of pure identification or sameness. He contends that this is an intellectual tradition that can trace its origins to "German romanticism's philosophic and aesthetic revolt against forms of human alienation entailed in economic and technological modernity" (idem 11). This view of social relations has been dominant in the social sciences, and particularly in anthropology where the traditional foci of ethnographic research, this is small-scale, close-knit societies, were assumed to be places of isomorphic unity. This tendency would be particularly evident in kinship studies. Stasch (idem 8) offers the following examples: Fortes (1969) notion of "amity" as the axiomatic moral orientation of kin towards each other, Sahlins (1972) association between sharing, kinship, and residential proximity, Schneider's (1980) "love" understood as "enduring, diffuse, solidarity" as the principal

symbol of North American kinship, and Carsten's (2004a) notion of kinship as "shared experience". However, it is important to mention that the *Gemeinschaft* was neither exclusive to anthropology nor to kinship studies.

According to Stasch, the alternative Western academic tradition, that which puts otherness at the center of society and social relations, would also be of – mostly – German origin. This is an academic tradition built upon various strains of phenomenologically oriented philosophy where the issue of sociality – and society – is usually thought of as consequence of the recognition or acknowledgement of the presence of the Other, as presence that interpellates the self. In this sense, from this perspective alterity would be at the core of human experience and social relations. Furthermore, the role played by alterity would be a constitutive one rather than an oppositional or destabilizing one. During the last three decades, anthropologists have started producing ethnographic works that distance themselves from the *Gemeinschaft* tradition, putting otherness or alterity at the center of their theorizations of identity, and social relations. A large majority of these works refer to Amazonian, Indonesian, and Melanesian peoples.

In the case of Amazonian anthropology, Viveiros de Castro's perspectivist anthropology is the best-known socio-cosmological model that presents otherness as a central element of social relations. Perspectivism is built upon the inversion of nature as given and culture as constructed as posited by Western -multicultural- naturalist ontology. Perspectivist ontologies imagine "a universe peopled by different types of subjective agencies, human as well as nonhuman, each endowed with the same generic type of soul"

(Viveiros de Castro 2004: 6). Therefore, all living forms endowed with a spiritual vitality would experience the same sociocultural life, albeit from a different perspective given by their particular bodies. In consequence, culture would be given and universal, while nature -and bodies- would be constructed and particular. There is enough ethnographic evidence from the South American Lowlands – and the rest of the Americas – to support this fundamental claim of perspectivist anthropology. This ethnographic evidence belongs to diverse areas of socio-cultural life in the region but is particularly notable in anthropological studies of myth and shamanism, as well as in the great deal of attention Lowland South Americans pay to the productions of bodies.

Several anthropologists of the South American Lowlands argue that indigenous models of personhood fit within the model of the dividual person (Strathern 1990). Since the publication of Seeger, da Matta, and Viveiros de Castro's (1979) article on the construction of the person among Brazilian Indigenous societies, the body has occupied a central role in regional debates on the topic of personhood. To name a few examples, this issue has been written about in connection with the importance of eating together (Siskind 1973), the avoidance and incorporation of shamanic substances (from plant, animal, mineral or human origins) (Echeverri and Enokakuiodo 2013; Fausto 2007, 2012; Harner 1984), the use of body adornments (Erikson 1996; Mentore 2005; Turner 1980), and the incorporation of names and knowledge (Kensinger 1995; McCallum 2001). In addition, engaging with the Other has been recognized as an essential component of the process by which Amazonians achieve personhood (Vilaça 2002). However, this debate

has – for the most – neglected to incorporate Amazonian's engagements with non-indigenous others.

Following the Mastanawa attitude towards the Other, this dissertation builds on the notion of constitutive alterity proposed by Erikson (1986, 1996) as a feature of Pano socialities. Mastanawa, as well as the Matis studied by Erikson, define themselves through the Other instead of doing it in opposition to it. This seemingly paradoxical feature of personal and collective identity, reported throughout Amazonian societies, has been predominantly explained in terms of cosmic relations organized under a system of generalized predation, where humans – and other-than-humans – compete for a fixed amount of vitality available in the cosmos. A main theme in studies that follow this approach is that of exocannibalism – whether real or symbolic – as a mean to capture vitalities for the reproduction of society. Mastanawa sociality shows that predation is not the only way of relating with the Other and, furthermore, that conviviality represents better the Mastanawa agenda of encompassing – and simultaneously being encompassed by – the Other.

Erikson's notion of constitutive alterity did for the anthropology of the Pano speaking peoples in 1986 what much of perspectivist anthropology did for the South American Lowlands as a whole during the last two decades. Firstly, it allowed for the possibility of anthropological analysis where alterity was not assumed – a priori – to be the opposite of identity. They offered models where otherness is central for the internal social dynamic of the group, as well as the ways in which the people understand themselves, are persons

are made. Secondly, they offer the idea of predation as the principle that organizes social relations between human, as well as other-than-human, persons. For this reason, alterity and interethnic contact in Amazonia have been notably discussed in terms of dichotomies such as prey-predator (Fausto 1999, 2012; Rival 2002; Viveiros de Castro 1998), master-slave (Grotti and Brightman 2016; Santos-Granero 2009, 2016), patron-client (Bonilla 2005, 2016; Walker 2012), and other similar ones. As a general rule, these dichotomies imply a hierarchical relation between the peoples involved, expressed in the idiom of familiarizing predation (Fausto 2012) in a context of generalized predation (Viveiros de Castro 2002). In other words, from this perspective, relationships of otherness would be predatory relations between bodies enmeshed in a zero-sum game of cosmic proportions that compete for the capture of spiritual vitalities from the Other for the nurture, reproduction, and/or expansion of the group.

Even though perspectivist anthropology announces itself to be a decolonizing movement within anthropology that seeks to indigenize the discipline, when put to careful examination, the emphasis on predation and theories like familiarizing predation appear more similar to political economy than to ideas belonging to any Amerindian philosophical tradition. For this reason, without negating the important contributions perspectivist anthropology has made to the discipline, nor the existence of predatory relationships in Amazonia, this dissertation privileges conviviality understood as the permanent quest for the production of the good/beautiful life as a better way to understand the lived experience of Amazonians in general (Mentore 2009, Overing and Passes 2000), and the Mastanawa in particular. I contend that rather than a predatory

drive, relationships of compassion, empathy, mutual care, and nurture explain better Amazonian socialities, even when dealing with issues like war. The ethnographic material discussed in the following pages shows how the Mastanawa privilege conviviality as a means to engage with the Other, rather than predation. Hence, their emphasis in explaining their relationships with Brazilians and Peruvians in terms of commensal relations. This ethnography of the Mastanawa people of Western Amazonia shows how a people can encompass – and be encompassed by – the Other through convivial rather than predatory means.

Overview of the dissertation argument

The dissertation's first chapter describes and analyses the process by which the Mastanawa left the headwaters of the Jurua and Curanja Rivers, where they hid from strangers (nawa) and sustained sporadic violent relations with Brazilian loggers, in order to establish contact with Peruvian traders and Christian missionaries. The Mastanawa explain that through this process, mediated by the consumption of salt, sugar, and alcohol as well as wearing Western clothes, they stopped being wandering *bravos* (fierce / savages) and became *civilizados* (civilized). I focus on what becoming civilizado, as opposed to bravo, means from a Mastanawa perspective. I argue that these categories do not refer to evolutionary stages but to the status of their relations with Brazilians and Peruvians. When they say that they were bravos and killed Peruvians and Brazilians without even eating them, they are not saying that they were savage killers or wasteful cannibals; on the contrary, this is a statement of the type of relations they had with those others at the time. Mastanawa were bravos to the Peruvians and Brazilians, as they were

bravos to the Mastanawa. The Mastanawa then are not talking about a previous state of savagery but were alluding to a previous state of affairs in which the status of their relations with Peruvians and Brazilians, the nawa, was one of war.

During the last fifty years, the Mastanawa have encountered a number of what they consider to be different peoples. The second chapter of my dissertation presents the different categories of people the Mastanawa recognize and the criteria they use to group them together. This shows how the Mastanawa ontology of the social is deeply rooted in commensality and other practices surrounding the management of the alchemical body described by Rahman and Echeverri (2015). The Peruvians the Mastanawa found in the 1960s are categorized by them *as Peruanos legítimos* (legitimate Peruvians): generous bosses who ate with them and taught them how to wear clothes and drink alcohol. These legitimate Peruvians – the Mastanawa say – are different from the *serranos* (highlanders) that have replaced them in recent times. *Serranos* differ from *peruanos legítimos* on their eating habits. Instead of eating yucca and plantains *serranos* are labeled as *comepapas* (potato-eaters). Furthermore, *serranos* are considered to be extremely stingy and linked to terrorist groups. Brazilians are called *cariú* and are also recognizable for their particular eating habits: they eat *farinha* (manioc flour), more beef than Peruvians, and drink cachaça. Additionally, like *peruanos legitimos*, they are seen as better bosses than the *serranos*. I also examine the categories of gringos and padres (priests).

The third chapter of the dissertation offers an ethnographic example of how the mechanics of this sociology, based on an alchemy of the body, work. Bodies are always

on the making, and as a consequence so are sociological groupings. It was explained to me that when a recruit wears the military uniform, he becomes "a son of the State" and the high-ranking officers of the post become "the fathers" of the recruit. Furthermore, repetitive acts of commensality, eating together in large dining halls products that come from the same pot, make the recruit "accustomed" to his new family. This "accustoming" is said *fëyafai* (lit. to make accustomed) in Mastanawa, and it also means: to domesticate, to tame, to train, and to teach to obey. To be *fëyaiba* is to not be accustomed or to be a stranger, in other words to not be "accustomed" to be among us. A person who is *fëyaiba* has a body that is still too different from those of the group, and because of this reason shows a different behavior and moral code. In consequence, wearing the clothes of the State and eating its food produces a transformation on the body of the recruit that carries within it social and moral consequences. This chapter analyzes how this transformative process is understood and experimented in connection to the system of three dichotomic oppositions the Mastanawa use to mark the limits of the group. Likewise, my analysis of the Mastanawa experience of the military service suggests that enrollment in the military service has replaced the old male rite of passage of the warrior expedition.

In the fourth chapter, I examine the reactions the international public, local Brazilians and Peruvians, and the Mastanawa had to two videos that show excerpts of the interactions between Brazilian government officials and a group of young "uncontacted Indians", who speak the same language as the Mastanawa, after they "came out" of the forest at an Asháninka village. The different reactions of these groups reveal how do they think about these peoples, as well as the different agendas they think should be implemented in

relation to them. These agendas are based upon different understandings of sociality and ethical praxis, and therefore do not coincide neither in the goals to be achieved nor in the means to achieve them. The international public thought they should be "left alone"; local Brazilians and Peruvians thought that these "wild Indians" should be Christianized; and Mastanawa wanted to bring them over to their villages to start their accustoming process by teaching them how to eat sugar and salt, drink alcohol, and wear Western clothes. Finally, the testimony of a Mastanawa elder who was taken to the area to serve as an intermediary between the newly contacted group and the Brazilian officials serves as clear example of the fundamentally different basis upon which Amerindians understand and experience ethics, and in consequence how do they practice and experience politics, as well as the challenges and failings of intercultural communication and the State's policy.

The fifth chapter of the dissertation begins with an analysis of the myth of Yoashi (lit. stingy man), a myth shared by all the Peoples of the Pano linguistic family of which the Mastanawa are a part. According to the myth, all the cultural knowledge and practices that made the Mastanawa *onikoi* (really human) had to be stolen from a stingy foreigner who used to live among them in the time of myth. Yoashi is also the nickname Mastanawa use to refer to a serrano missionary who has tried unsuccessfully to Christianize them. The origin of cultural knowledge and goods outside the margins of the group is a common trope in Amerindian mythologies and will serve as motivation for a final commentary on the role and nature of alterity in Amerindian sociologies and ethical systems.

In sum, this dissertation contributes to our understanding of how different ways of experiencing, and thinking about, what a person is and how sociality operates shape ethical systems and play a role in the relation between Amerindians and their encompassing societies, offering an alternative avenue to interpret these relations. Likewise, it provides an account of the State from the perspective of a traditionally stateless society. My analysis of the Mastanawa experience of contact with the Peruvian-Brazilian border society, explained by them in terms of the consumption of salt, sugar and alcohol, as well as the use of Western style clothes, shows that their understanding of both national states has little or nothing to do with the philosophical tradition of social contract and, on the contrary, is rooted in a praxis where the management and production of the body occupy a central place. Likewise, their understanding of ethics is not based upon the liberal principles that shape contemporary democracies but on a praxis centered on living in proximity with each other and the production of similarity, and difference, through operations in the body. This praxis by which persons and collectivities are produced can be described as an alchemical one, where bodies are carefully crafted through the incorporation and/or avoidance of substances. This alchemy of the body outlines and enables the relations that both individuals and collectivities can have with the rest of the cosmos.

Chapter one: Our Old Men Were Fierce

This phrase is commonly uttered by Mastanawa when discussing their recent history, specifically the process by which they left the headwaters of the Jurua and Curanja Rivers, where they hid from strangers and sustained sporadic and violent relations with Brazilian loggers, in order to establish contact with Peruvian traders and Catholic and Evangelical missionaries. They explain that through this process, mediated by the consumption of salt, sugar, and alcohol as well as wearing Western clothes, they stopped being wandering *bravos* (fierce / savages) or *calatos* (naked) and became *civilizados* (civilized). In this chapter, I will focus on what becoming *civilizado*, as opposed to *bravo*, means from a Mastanawa perspective. I will argue that when Mastanawa use these categories they are not referring to evolutionary stages but to a certain state of affairs vis-à-vis Brazilians and Peruvians. When they say that they were *bravos*, and killed Peruvians and Brazilians without even eating them, Mastanawa are not saying that they were savage killers or wasteful cannibals; on the contrary, they are making a very specific statement of the type of relations they had with those "others" at the time. Mastanawa were *bravos* to the Peruvians and Brazilians, as they were *bravos* to the Mastanawa. The Mastanawa then are not talking about a previous state of savagery, but of a previous state of affairs in which the status of their relations with Peruvians and Brazilians, the *nawa*, was one of war.

Unlike Peruvians who tell a story about luring the Mastanawa into contact and taming them down, the Mastanawa tell a story of how they decided to move to the big river in

order to be closer to their Peruvian neighbors, putting the emphasis on their own agency. Similarly, while the goal was to establish relations with the Peruvians, the Sharanahua/Marinahua play a key role in the Mastanawa narrative. From the Mastanawa perspective, the role the Sharanahua/Marinahua played in the process by which the Mastanawa moved downriver and settled by the shores of the Purus river is at least of equal, if not more, weight to those of the Catholic and Evangelical missionaries or the Peruvian frontiersmen. In consequence, in order to understand the Mastanawa's transit from *bravos* to *civilizados* and, more importantly, their accustoming process, it is of vital importance to pay close attention to the exchange relations between the Mastanawa and the Sharanahua, their alliances and conflicts as well as the emotions and sentiments that both bring them together and keep them apart. As it will be explained, the role the Sharanahua played in the Mastanawa's recent history is similar to many others in which Amerindians have served as intermediaries in the contact process of other peoples. However, a particularly interesting aspect of the Mastanawa-Sharanahua case is how acquisition of certain cultural elements that the Mastanawa believe contributed to their "Peruvianization" were delivered to them via the Sharanahua and are, in some cases, more associated to what outsiders would consider Amerindian rather than mainstream Peruvian or Brazilian cultural traits. Thus, the Mastanawa-Sharanahua case resembles in many ways that of the Yaminahua of the Mapuya River (Perez Gil 2011).

Coming Out of the Forest

Up until the end of xix century the area composed of the headwaters of the Jurua and Purus Rivers, where the Mastanawa and other peoples known collectively as the Purus

Pano live, was largely unexplored by foreigners. Likewise, the international boundaries between Peru and Brazil were not clearly defined and were in the process of being established definitely, many times by virtue of the nationality of the rubber tapers present or the existence of precarious military posts. It is precisely at the turn of the century that waves of fortune seekers in search of rubber trees and indigenous labor and, in fewer numbers, scientific explorers find their way to the headwaters of the Envira and Tarauacá Rivers, where the Mastanawa declare they used to live. However, mentions of the Mastanawa are absent from the writings of the few explorers who visited the area during that time. Nonetheless, Felix Stegelmann (Reich, Stegelmann, and v. d. Steinen 1903) reported the presence of the Chaninawa[6] on the headwaters of the Envira River in 1903. This likely means that the Mastanawa were also on the area of the Upper Envira River at the time of Stegelmann's expedition, as, according to Mastanawa elders, the Mastanawa built their longhouses on hills neighboring those where the Chaninawa built theirs. Likewise, the Mastanawa explain that it was their custom to migrate together with the Chaninawa, with whom they would frequently marry and have as guests in celebratory as well as mourning occasions. The symbiotic relation of these two collectivities was still in full force during the time of my fieldwork. It was not uncommon to hear Mastanawa declare "we and the Chaninawa are the same, we are all family" and vice versa.

The Mastanawa use two phrases to refer to the places where they lived before moving to the shores of the Purus River: *bachi* (lit. hill) and *dii mera* (lit. inside the forest). The latter marks a contrast with their current location on the shores of the big river, outside

[6] Spelled Schahnindaua in Stegelmann's report.

the forest, different from inside the forest where their "isolated" distant kin still live autonomously from the laws of the nation state. On the other hand, *bachi* refers to the specific places where they used to build their longhouses, at the top of the hills, preferably on top of a cliff by a water stream in order to have easy access to water and fish. The geographical deixis used by the Mastanawa to narrate their process of contact with the encompassing society is remarkably similar to that of the Capanahua as described by Krokoszyński (2016). In Krokoszyńki's analysis, the use of the phrase "to come out of the forest" (*salir del monte*) to refer to the process by which the Capanahua not only established permanent relations with mestizos, but became mestizos themselves, reflects an ideal of sociality built upon the notion of visibility, or being visible to others. In this sense, the outside, whether it is the surface of the body, the communal village patio or the edge of the forest, would be the social space par excellence from a Pano perspective. The fact that they can be immediately known is what would make these outsides the place of sociality, in contrast to what is inside which is by definition hidden by its container. This condition of invisibility would make the inside dangerous to the outside observer who can never be sure of its contents, hence this is the place where sorcery and other antisocial behaviors are said to come from. Likewise, this would be the reason why the ideal psychological state is that in which one is not thinking/feeling of anything (*shinaiba)*. This order of things proposed by Krokoszyński is of a fractal nature; it can be used at the micro-level to look at interpersonal relations and intra-village politics, as well as at the macro-level to analyze intertribal relations and politics. From this perspective, the use of the phrase "to come out" would signal a process by which the Mastanawa decided to make themselves visible to the Peruvians, and by which their

previous outside, that is their social space located in the clearings where they used to build their longhouses, became a place inside the forest through their movement towards the shores of the Purus River, thus becoming a dangerous place beyond the social sphere of their newly acquired Peruvian sociality.

Life on the headwaters

The older living Mastanawa during the time of my fieldwork were probably born between the second half of the 1930s and the 1940s[7]. The narrative that will be presented is a condensation of the stories and memories shared by six members of this generation, four men and two women. These men and women report having been born either on the headwaters of the Envira and Tarauacá Rivers or by the headwaters of the smaller streams that feed the Curanja River. According to them, their parents and grandparents never worked for the rubber extracting economy, as did some of the other peoples of the area[8]. They explain that, during that time, if they wanted to have access to manufactured Western goods they would either have to go look for them at the abandoned campsites of loggers and rubber tappers or obtain them by conducting violent raids against Brazilian

[7] The Mastanawa started having a record of birth years after establishing permanent contact with the encompassing society. However, many Mastanawa still pay little attention to chronological age and some will acknowledge that the dates recorded on their birth certificates are not accurate. Likewise, their memory and/or calculation of the calendar years when specific events happened is often inaccurate. In contrast, their memories of the time of the year in which something happened tend to be very accurate, many people are able to tell what plants were blooming or carrying fruit at the time of specific events. It is possible to estimate the dates of the events told by the Mastanawa, with a relatively small error margin, by crossing the information given by them with the dates in which certain missionaries were present in the region or the production of certain official documents. For example, the Catholic Mission at the mouth of the Curanja River was active between 1958 and 1967, and Catay, the first Mastanawa *comunidad nativa*, was titled in 1975.

[8] However, this does not necessarily mean that no Mastanawa was involved in the rubber economy, as it is possible for Mastanawa individuals living among other peoples to have been in contact with rubber bosses on either side of the Peruvian-Brazilian border.

frontiersmen or the villages of Indigenous peoples that sustained economic exchange relations with foreigners. They explain that they did these things as they were particularly interested in obtaining metal tools such as machetes and axes to work in their gardens.

Aside from a chronic scarcity of metal tools for which they had to fight or painfully rummage through the remains of abandoned campsites, the Mastanawa explain that life on the hills was happy and plentiful. This previous abundance, they say, was due to the large size of their gardens in which they used to grow a larger variety of crops than they grow now[9] and where corn was the most abundant product[10]. Likewise, they explain, game was abundant and their hunting skills superb. Due to this abundance, the Mastanawa elders explain that they would frequently blow horns made of armadillo tails (*kedati*) in order to call their neighbors to come visit from their houses on top of the neighboring hills. They explain that they would usually invite their neighbors to feast, sing and dance together, but also to drink ayahuasca and see the spirits come down and dance around them, and to mourn the death of their loved ones. The Chaninawa are the most prominent among the different Peoples the Mastanawa remember as companions during their life on the hills. Unlike the other Peoples mentioned by the Mastanawa, they say about the Chaninawa that they always moved together with them and built their houses in proximity to each other. Likewise, marriage between the two groups was common and still is to the point that both Mastanawa and Chaninawa usually do not

[9] At the time of my fieldwork yucca and plantain were the most abundant products in the Mastanawa gardens. Other products such as banana, coconut, corn, lemon, lime, mango, papaya, peanut, sweet potato, sugar cane, watermelon, and yam were grown on Mastanawa gardens on a significant lower scale.

[10] Corn is also the domesticated plant mentioned most often in Mastanawa myth.

hesitate to affirm "Mastanawa and Chaninawa we are the same, we are the same people, we are not different from each other". Hence it is possible to affirm that the Mastanawa and Chaninawa form a sociological unit and that this alliance has been in place for as long as the Mastanawa and Chaninawa can remember[11].

Photography 1. Shimo Mastanawa woman (by Adolfo Torralba, date unknown)

However, not all the interactions the Mastanawa had with their neighbors were peaceful. As it was mentioned above, the Mastanawa raided other peoples in order to obtain metal tools and these peoples would frequently retaliate the Mastanawa's attack. The

[11] Some of the other Purus Pano Peoples the Mastanawa mention they interacted with on the *terra firme* between the headwaters of the Tarauacá, Envira, and Curanja Rivers are: Bashonahua (Jaguar people), Chitonahua (People with no tail), Choshonahua, Kapesochinahua (Cayman chest people), Nainahua (Sky people), Nishinahua (Vine people), Pachonahua (Ear people), Shaonahua (Bone people), Shewatinahua (Basket people), Shipinahua (Tamarin monkey people) and Yawanahua (White-lipped peccary people).

Mastanawa remember having particularly violent relations with Brazilian loggers, Cashinahua, and Culina neighbors. The Mastanawa claim that Cashinahuas and Culinas attacked them fiercely with the intention of eliminating them, and did not make any concessions regarding sex or age when choosing their victims in the heat of the battle. However, the skirmishes between the Mastanawa and other Indigenous Peoples seem to have followed the same logic seen in other parts of the Amazon, that is the raiding of villages in order to capture objects and people, women and children, and pay revenge from previous raids. Evidence of this is the Cashinahua's affirmation that they would capture people when raiding the Yaminahua[12] and eventually incorporate them into their families and mourn their death without eating their flesh as they say Yaminahua flesh "had a jaguar smell" (Camargo and Villar: 2013). Likewise, in one of the last fights the Culina had with the Mastanawa they captured three Mastanawa brothers who were later adopted into Culina families. As will be explained, these three captured brothers played a crucial role during the Mastanawa's early years of permanent contact with Peruvian society.

Unlike their skirmishes with other indigenous peoples, the ones in which they faced those who the Mastanawa declare were Brazilian loggers seem to actually have had the purpose of mutual annihilation. Unlike the Culina or Cashinahua, the Brazilians did not share the Mastanawa's code of war. The Brazilians took no prisoners and were not after the Mastanawa's possessions either. As it has happened in several other areas of the Amazon

[12] Yaminahua is the name the Cashinahua use to refer to any of the Purus Pano speakers that speak the same language as the Mastanawa, this includes all the Panoan peoples with names ending in –nahua with the exception of the Isconahua, who belong to a different branch of the Pano linguistic family, and the Cashinahua themselves.

basin, the loggers were trying to eliminate what, we can safely assume, they saw as a disturbance to their economic activity. The Mastanawa, on the other hand, were retaliating what they declare were fierce attacks conducted by extremely cruel foreigners who killed them for no good reasons, "leaving the flesh of the killed ones to rot out in the open". This extremely cruel way of fighting is declared by the Mastanawa as the main reason they had to abandon the headwaters of the Envira River to go further up on the watershed, eventually establishing contact with the Peruvian frontiersmen and the foreign Catholic and Evangelical missionaries settled by the confluence of the Curanja and Purus Rivers.

The Mastanawa explain that during the time they lived "inside the forest" they were constantly on the move. This happened for several reasons. The three main reasons declared by the Mastanawa to abandon a settlement and start a new one were: preventing retaliatory attacks from others, having found a better place to locate the longhouse, and the deaths of people, particularly prominent members of the longhouse. The two last were still common reasons for the movement of entire Mastanawa villages at the time of my fieldwork. The Mastanawa explained to me that when either the leader of a village, a prominent member of the community, or too many people have died at one place, that settlement has to be abandoned. The need to do this, they explain, is related to two problems. The first one is that if they were to stay in a such a place they would be haunted by the *diafaka*[13] of the deceased ones. The second reason is the pain that they

[13] The *diafaka* is one of the vitalities that inhabit the Mastanawa body. Unlike the *fero yoshi* (lit. eye spirit) that follows the trajectory of the river and then climbs up to heaven, the *diafaka* is said to remain wandering around the places where it used to transit while alive. Likewise, the *diafaka* is said to be a mirror image of the person and to be defined by the same personal traits. Thus, the

experience when transiting through those places filled with the memories of their departed kin. The Mastanawa, like many other Amerindians (Conklin 2001. McCallum 1999), go to extreme lengths to get rid of all the material remains that remember them of their dead relatives and therefore cause pain to the living that got left behind. Likewise, it is said that in order for the *fero yoshi* to ascend to heaven all the deceased's possessions must be destroyed; nowadays this includes photographs of the person.

In order to start a new settlement, a group of people would scout the area to find a suitable location. Having found an appropriate place, a vanguard team would go to the agreed place to start gardens and clear an area for the new longhouse. Clearing the area for the new house and gardens was the most difficult and time-consuming part of the process, given the kind of tools the Mastanawa had available at the time. According to their testimonies, the Mastanawa would break the machetes they had into smaller pieces so that everybody could have a piece to work with. Once the gardens started to yield edible products and the new house was built, the new settlement was ready to receive its occupants. Nonetheless, the gardens and even the *purmas*[14] left behind were still used after the change of residence. The Mastanawa explain that during their time on the *terra firme* between the Curanja and Envira Rivers they were moving constantly "clearing gardens everywhere and carrying baskets full of plantains from one place to another". They argue that this was done because of a constant fear of being attacked by others.

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diafaka shows the same behavior that the person had when alive, this is why the Mastanawa take extreme precautions after the death of particularly violent or irascible persons.

[14] Purma is a regional Peruvian term used to refer to the secondary forest that grows over previously cultivated land. *Nafe* in Mastanawa.

Meeting the Peruvians: the Sharanahua/Marinahua[15] connection

The Mastanawa report that during the last phase of this period of constant movement along the *terra firme* they started finding objects hanging from ropes tied between trees, presumably left there by Peruvians who had the intention of luring them. The gift Mastanawa elders remembered the most was mirrors, which they joked about saying that neither them nor their parents wanted to pick up because they thought it was an ugly thing to look at. The Mastanawa declare that while they were curious about who the people that had left those hanging objects might have been, that did not provide enough motivation to go and look for them downriver. The reason for their hesitation to go look for them was most likely based on their previous violent relations with Brazilians, as they state that they did not know who the Peruvians or the Catholic and Evangelical missionaries on the Upper Purus watershed were.

During this time, the rubber boom was long gone and Puerto Esperanza, the main Peruvian settlement on the Upper Purus, had stopped being the booming commercial town described by Friar Pio Aza O.P. at the turn of the twentieth century (Torralba 1978). Torralba, a Spanish Catholic missionary who worked in the area in the 1960s, reports that an exodus occurred on the Purus province after the decline of the rubber economy. He explains that during the 1920s most of the *mestizo* population left the Purus River due to the harsh living conditions and sparse economic opportunities afforded by such a remote area. According to the missionary, the vast majority of those who did not leave stayed in the area because they were either physically unable to make the trip from the Upper

[15] The Sharanahua and the Marinahua form a sociological unit in the same way as the Mastanawa and the Chaninawa do.

Purus to the Ucayali Basin or because of fear of being attacked by the hostile indigenous peoples who inhabited the small mountain system that separates the Ucayali and Purus watersheds. After this Peruvian exodus, the *mestizo* population was concentrated in three settlements: Catay, Puerto Esperanza, and San Juan. Catay, which was the seat of a small Peruvian military outpost was abandoned in 1950, when most of its population left the Upper Purus River in order to settle on areas with better communication with the rest of Peru. Torralba affirms that a majority of them moved to Sepahua. Over time Puerto Esperanza emerged as the local center of power. In 1943 the Purus district was created with Puerto Esperanza as its capital and in 1982 the Purus district was elevated to the category of province. San Juan still exists as a small rural community in the vicinity of Puerto Esperanza.

The Mastanawa elders are all in agreement when they declare that "they used to run away from Peruvians". They consistently explain that they did not know who these people were and that they were afraid of them and the thunderous sound of their shotguns. Likewise, they agree in saying that their first direct encounter with the Peruvians took place on a day when everybody had left the longhouse in order to work on a new peanut garden at a small tributary of the Curanja River called Cha'aya, where they were also building a new house. Only one person remained behind at the longhouse, an older woman named Bete who had a disability that prevented her from joining the rest of group. The Mastanawa tell that after a number of unsuccessful attempts to reach them, a Peruvian man they call Mañuco was able to find their longhouse with the assistance of three Sharanahua men: Zacarías, Shafáchai, and Toéai, though some also mentioned the presence of a

Yaminahua man named Masheroa. Previously to this encounter, the Mastanawa explain, the Cashinahua from Balta used to spy on them and occasionally fought with them, for this reason they presume that it was the Cashinahua who alerted the Sharanahua to their presence on the headwaters of the Curanja River. According to the Mastanawa, the Sharanahua burned perfume, beads, mirrors, diseases, and other powerful smelling substances in order to get them sick. This explanation to the first epidemic diseases they suffered is consistent with that given by the Sharanahua to Torralba (1986) and the vigorous request made to me by my hosts in Catay to stop my actions when they saw me throw my used tissues into the fire after blowing my nose[16].

Bete, the old woman who had stayed in the longhouse, is said to have been spinning cotton accompanied by her dog Kaiopaodi when Mañuco and the Sharanahua men reached the longhouse. Having been left alone, Bete was afraid that something could happen to her without anybody been able to defend her and had closed all the entrances to the longhouse. Mañuco and the three Sharanahua men are said to have peeked into the house and decided to go inside when they saw Bete spinning cotton by herself. The Sharanahua, who speak a dialect of the same language the Mastanawa speak, talked to Bete and asked her where her relatives were. Bete told the men where her relatives were and, after raping her, the group left to look for the rest of the Mastanawa who were on a different tributary of the Curanja River. Following the directions provided by Bete, Mañuco and his Sharanahua companions reached the stream where the Mastanawa were working and chaos ensued. The Mastanawa, surprised by the presence of the strangers

[16] This is also reminiscent of Yanomami experiences and understandings of diseases caused by *shawara* spiritis associated to white people (Kopenawa and Bruce 2013, and Jokic 2015)

who were approaching them, started dispersing, some of them yelling “Don’t kill me! Don’t kill me”, others dispersed while considering whether they should attack the foreigners or not, and others started blowing horns with the intention to summon their kin and allies from different longhouses that lived on the top of nearby hills to come to their aid. During these chaotic moments, the Mastanawa say, Mañuco looked at them laughing.

After the initial fear and chaos, and having been assured by the strangers that they had no intention of killing them “leaving their flesh to waste”, a conversation started between Mañuco and the Mastanawa with the Sharanahua men serving as translators. The Mastanawa explain that Mañuco asked them if they were always in need of machetes, while showing them what the Mastanawa describe as very big machetes. Afterwards, they were warned by the visiting group who told them that they “had already brought a strong flu with them” and that soon all of them would fall ill, explaining to them that because of this reason they should not eat any sweet fruits. The words of the visitors became a reality and soon the Mastanawa experienced a devastating flu epidemic, the first one of a series of epidemic outbreaks to come in the following years. Nonetheless, they decided to respond to the foreigners’ call and shortly after they moved to another stream named Taraya. In Taraya the Mastanawa started working for the Sharanahua gathering rubber. However, the Mastanawa agree in saying that they did not stay there for a long time as they found life there unpleasant.

After their short stay by the Taraya stream, a group of Mastanawa men went to visit the Curanja River accompanying a group of Sharanahua who had come to see them, joining

them on their way back home to the Curanja River. As a result of this exploratory trip the Mastanawa decided to move to the big river, a process that ended up with them settling on the Catholic mission that Spanish Dominican missionaries had established on the mouth of the Curanja River in 1958. During their transit downriver from the smaller streams on the headwaters of the Curanja River, the Mastanawa met Cecil Hawkins, a missionary from the Summer Institute of Linguistics. The Mastanawa do not remember much about Cecil Hawkins, however, they all describe him as a very tall, ugly, and hairy man, and also agree in saying that he visited their house where they all "danced naked while he took photographs of us". Likewise, the Mastanawa point out that, unlike other missionaries from the Summer Institute of Linguistics that followed him, Cecil Hawkins had a very short tenure on the Purus province, did not bring his family with him, and did not learn their language.

According to the Mastanawa, the Sharanahua were stingy bosses that took advantage of their initial ignorance, a Mastanawa elder explains:

> *They made us gather rubber, they made us work and gave us nothing in return. They would only give us a plate and one match, listen! Matches, fishing hooks, just that… Look! They were like that! They would give us those things and tell us to work for them, listen! When the Marinahua gave us those things, we were happy. We did that in several places to the benefit of those chai*[17].

Another Mastanawa elder tells of the same period:

[17] Male cross cousins for a male ego.

> *Even though I gathered rubber I had no shirt. I used a penis strap and the rubber would cover me, making me dirty. I was dirty with rubber all the time! Miguel yabashta[18] gave me an old shirt and I would wear that, he also gave me an old mosquito net. Mosquitos bit me all the time! That is how I lived.*

Likewise, they explain coresidence with the Sharanahua/Marinahua was difficult due to the constant fights that would break between them. The Mastanawa mention that they constantly had problems with a man named Conshico who was the leader of the Marinahua:

> *When we drunk yucca beer, we fought. Nobody would be fighting and then Conshico would hit us badly/ugly. He would hit us with pieces of lead fishing sinkers and make us bleed, shoooojjjj! That is what Conshico used to do to us, for that reason he never came downriver, thinking that we would take revenge. He would always hit us, not letting us to be in peace.*
>
> *(…) Nobody responded, they just rubbed their heads in pain. They just rubbed their heads, that is how José, father Noé, and my uncles were… they all got hit and they just rubbed their heads! The blood of the yabashta dripped and spread. My father and Belizario arrived, those two arrived. We responded, we were not sad anymore, we took revenge.*

[18] Yabashta is a word that serves multiple purposes. The literal translation of this word would be "little nothing" or "dear nothing". The most common use of this word is as a way to refer to the death without uttering their names, thus respecting the taboo on saying the names of the dead and still be able to talk about them. When the word is used in this way the speaker will usually use it in conjunction with a kinship term in order to make it clear who are they talking about, i.e. *chichi* (maternal grandmother) *yabashta*. A second use of this word is to refer to those who have been on the verge of dying, which includes everybody who has had any serious accidents, illness, or has passed through an operating room. Finally, *yabashta* can also be used to address and refer to those social relations who are not kin, however, this last use falling out of fashion and is rarely practiced by younger Mastanawa.

Photography 2. Conshico making working on a bow (by Adolfo Torralba, date unknown)

Photography 3. Besha, Mastanawa woman who was married to Conshico (by Adolfo Torralba, date unknown)

The mission at the Mouth of the Curanja River

Unlike their memories of each other, the Mastanawa and Sharanahua who lived in the mission at the mouth of the Curanja River remember the priests as generous coresidents. They remember father Adolfo Torralba with particular affection. In many informal conversations I had with older Mastanawa and Sharanahua they broke into tears and sang/cried about their dear "*padre yabashta*" in the same fashion as they do when memories of their deceased relatives are brought to mind. The Mastanawa describe their first years of residence on the shores of the big river as a time of suffering because of the impossibility of communicating with their new neighbors due to their ignorance of the Spanish language[19], the multiple epidemic disease outbreaks they survived, a limited access to manufactured goods, and a tense coresidence with the Sharanahua/Marinahua. However, they explain, the Catholic and Evangelical missionaries made life better for them and helped them endure these difficult times. The missionaries did this in multiple ways. It was them rather than the national health service that took care of the Mastanawa when they were attacked by epidemic diseases. Likewise, they say that the missionaries gave them generous gifts of clothes, salt and sugar, as well as other manufactured goods. It was also in the mission that the Mastanawa started learning Spanish and to read and write, the few Mastanawa adults at the time of my fieldwork who knew how to read and write had learned at the mission. Finally, it was the missionaries who taught them how fistfight in order to respond to the abusive behavior of the Marinahua[20].

[19] This description of the impossibility of communication with the Other as a source of suffering is remarkably similar to the Cashinahua experience (Camargo and Villar 2013).
[20] The Mastanawa explain that before living in the mission they did not know how to fistfight (*setena*). The way in which they fought with each other, within the group, was by pulling the opponent's hair and scratching their face with their fingernails (*achina*).

The missionaries are not only remembered by the Mastanawa in a positive way because of the multiple ways in which they helped them ease their suffering. Missionaries are also well regarded because of the fact that, unlike other foreigners, they lived side by side with the indigenous peoples they worked with. Likewise, unlike other foreigners, missionaries arrived to the area as families in the case of the Summer Institute of Linguistics Evangelicals or as teams composed of priests and nuns in the case of the Catholics. The Mastanawa usually refer to the nuns in the Catholic mission as the priests' women. Furthermore, the missionaries of both Christian denominations made efforts to learn the languages of their hosts, became involved in the quotidian activities of their villages and in some cases in their ritual life too. In this sense, the Mastanawa have fond memories of hunting expeditions with the missionaries, as well as of parties in which they played games and danced together and nights in which they drank *shori*[21] and sang *rabi*[22] songs while seeing beautiful visions together. It is interesting that similarly to the Piro (Gow 2006), the Mastanawa memory of their time living "side by side with the missionaries" has nothing to do with conversion into the Christian faith and the emphasis is put on how during this epoch they learned how to live with the new set of foreigners that they found in the Purus Province or, as the Mastanawa would put it, how they got accustomed (*acostumbrado* in Spanish, *fëya* in Mastanawa) to living with those who call themselves Christians and/or civilized.

[21] Ayahuasca.
[22] Ayahuasca songs. For a more detailed explanation see Deléage (2009).

Photography 4. Playing with ishanga at the Dominican Mission on the Curanja River (by Adolfo Torralba, date unknown)

It was also during their time living at the mission that the Mastanawa started engaging with their Peruvian neighbors in more intense and frequent ways. The rubber boom was long gone, but a new local boom had replaced it as new mobilizer of the small local economy. The forest product that *patrones* started demanding from their indigenous *habilitados* changed from rubber to animal furs, however, the system remained the same. A *patrón* would habilitate (*habilitar*) an indigenous worker, or a number of them, by paying in advancement a portion of the product to be received from the *habilitado*, usually in the form of manufactured goods valued at a much higher price than their market value. In many instances, this pre-payment includes the tools the *habilitado* needs

in order to obtain the products desired by the *patrón*. At a later date, the *habilitado* and *patrón* would meet to conclude the transaction by having the *patrón* receive the products, in this case animal furs, obtained by the indigenous *habilitado* in the forest, a portion of which would pay back the debt acquired by the *habilitado* leaving a surplus to be paid either in manufactured goods or cash. Typically, the *patrón* offers different types of arguments about the quality, size or other characteristics of the forest products brought by the *habilitado* in order to value them at a much lower price than the standard rate thus making it impossible for the *habilitado* to pay back the debt and forcing them to increase their debt by accepting a new *habilitación*. In this manner, the debt keeps on growing as the process described above is repeated successively, allowing both the *habilitado* and the *patrón* to obtain the products each part desires through the mediation of an ever-growing debt that is always in favor of the *patrón*. This system of debt peonage is still very much alive in the Upper Purus River.

About this topic, a Mastanawa elder explains:

> *The nahua gave us things for the first time, strong/hard things. They gave us shotguns. We worked, we hunted jaguars, we also gathered rubber. We first gathered rubber for Gamboa, Gamboa would give us shotguns for rubber. The late Iroma asked me: why did you get only one shotgun? You should have asked for more! Jaguar skins are the most valuable ones! Look! I got two shotguns! He asked me this while showing me two shotguns – Nobody warned you, for that reason you only received one shotgun, look that's what you got! – We started*

> *getting things in this fashion. This is how we got things, working for the nahua, working for them.*

During this time, the Mastanawa also made sporadic visits to Puerto Esperanza, where they found work as day laborers. About this experience, a Mastanawa man comments:

> *In (Puerto) Esperanza we worked on the landing strip, we got shirts there. We have worked at the landing strip. We cut grass, sirirririri! On Saturday, they would call us – come to receive (things)! Come to receive (things)!" – I would stand looking at them, let them receive first, when they get rid of those things we will get them, that is what I did. What did we get? I saw a pile of things for us to get, we crowded together. In this manner, we gave two to our maternal grandmother. We worked again and received a pair of pants and a shirt. This time I did not receive a shirt but a piece of cloth. I got a really long piece of cloth, it had red and blue strips. This is how I did, this is how we got things, this is how I got my shirt. We did not wear shirts before, we were/lived naked.*

Moving downriver

The increasing rate at which the Mastanawa started working with Peruvian *patrones*, instead of working for the Sharanahua/Marinahua, became a source of tension between the two groups. The Mastanawa explain that their previous indigenous bosses, angry at the fact that the Mastanawa would not work for them anymore, would start fights for no apparent reason other than their discontent at not being able to exploit their labor anymore. Despite these tensions, during their conflictive coresidence at the mouth of the

Curanja River the Mastanawa and Sharanahua/Marinahua became tied by multiple marriages that still link them together. From that early encounter and time of coresidence on, Mastanawa/Chaninawa and Sharanahua/Marinahua marriages became a common practice that was still very vital during the time of my fieldwork. Nevertheless, once the Dominican missionaries left the area in 1970, the Mastanawa/Chaninawa abandoned the mission post, leaving the Sharanahua/Marinahua behind, arguing that their coresidence with the Sharanahua/Marinahua was not viable due to the constant fights. The social dynamic between the Mastanawa and Sharanahua marked by fighting and marrying each other reproduces a pattern observed by Calavia (2001) among the Yaminahua, this pattern consists of fighting among coresidents which results in the fragmentation of villages that will in turn create a social distance between the members of the resulting villages which will make it acceptable for them to marry each other, as the marriage practice among these peoples[23] seems to follow a pattern of linguistic endogamy and village exogamy.

The Mastanawa moved downriver from the Mouth of the Curanja River to a place located a few river bends upriver from Puerto Esperanza, close to where the Cashinahua settlement called Pikiniki was located at the time of my fieldwork. However, that location seems to still have been too close to the Sharanahua/Marinahua and had an additional issue. The new location was also near a tributary of the Purus River called Chushpe from where a group of Culina who lived on the headwaters of that stream organized war expeditions against the Mastanawa. The solution to their problems came from another

[23] The Purus Pano speakers.

group of Culina that had settled further downriver at a village called San Bernardo on 1962[24]. San Bernardo was home to three Mastanawa brothers, Joaquín, Pedro and Siará, who had been captured as children by the Culina during a war raid and overtime were incorporated into Culina society. These Mastanawa siblings adopted by the Culina communicated to their Mastanawa kin that there was a good place for them to settle a few river bends upriver from San Bernardo. The place was an abandoned Peruvian military outpost named Catay[25]. The Mastanawa thought this was a good idea and decided to move downriver to live in proximity to their long lost, turned Culina, kin and settled over the remains of the abandoned military post[26].

Catay was registered by the Peruvian state as a *Comunidad Nativa*[27] in 1975 and legally established as one in 1978. From this time until the second half of the 1980s decade, Catay remained the sole predominantly Mastanawa settlement[28]. During this time, different kinship groups split from Catay and new Mastanawa communities were settled. Not all of these new settlements have been granted legal recognition as *Comunidades Nativas*. There is also, as a result of this process of fission, a Mastanawa settlement in

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[24] The settling of San Bernardo was the result of efforts conducted by missionaries from the Summer Institute of Linguistics in order to facilitate their linguistic and missional labor

[25] Catay was established by the Peruvian government in 1902 as a military outpost in order to ensure Peruvian territorial claims to the province. During this time, the international border was still being disputed and this was a territory rich in the two main species of rubber producing plants: *hevea brasiliensis*, locally known as siringa and preferred by the Brazilian rubber tappers and *castilla ulei*, the species Peruvian tappers knew better.

[26] Some Mastanawa elders have also spent time residing in San Bernardo which is evidenced by their knowledge of the Culina language and culture. Nevertheless, unlike with the Sharanahua, there were no marriages between Mastanawa and Culina at the time of my fieldwork, with the exception of the three brothers who were captured by the Culina as children.

[27] Legal name of the territories granted to indigenous collectivities by the Peruvian State.

[28] Even though there were Mastanawa living in Sharanahua/Marinahua and Yaminahua communities, both in Peru and Brazil, and it is likely that there were members of the Mastanawa people among the Purus Pano speaking groups that still live autonomously from the State.

Brazil which has not been given formal legal rights over the land they occupy but nonetheless receive services from the Brazilian government. The Mastanawa give two main explanations for this process of scattering along the Upper Purus River. The first, and most common one, is that the President, Alan García, had promised money to be given to the boards of the different *Comunidades Nativas* in the context of a meeting that he had with the presidents of a large number of the *Comunidades Nativas* in Pucallpa[29]. This was probably a misunderstanding of a promise made by García in the context of this meeting, as he promised that resources would be allocated in order to support the conformation of cooperative business at the *Comunidad Nativa* level and credit programs for market oriented agricultural production at the family level. The second explanation the Mastanawa offer for the fragmentation of Catay into smaller settlements is that the village was already too big. The large size of the village created a number of problems: conflict between families, and the fact that gardens had to be cleared too far away from the village are the two most frequently mentioned ones.

At the moment of my fieldwork there were Mastanawa settlements on the Peruvian and Brazilian Upper Purus River. On the Peruvian side of the border there were six settlements located in four *Comunidades Nativas*: Bola de Oro which had one *anexo*[30]

[29] Starting in 1986, the year after he took office, president Alan García held several massive meetings called *Rimanakuy* in different cities with a large portion of the presidents of the *Comunidades Campesinas* and *Comunidades Nativas* of the country.

[30] *Anexo* is a settlement within the territory of a *comunidad nativa* different from the main one that is usually named after the same name of the whole *comunidad nativa.* A *comunidad nativa* can have more than one *anexo*. *Anexos* are commonly the result of a process of fission that results in a group leaving the main settlement to start a new one, this can occur for several reasons. The relationship between *anexos* and the main settlements can be tense because of the property system that the *comunidad nativa* supposes, in which the whole territory is owned collectively and the resources are to be managed by the assembly of *comuneros* (full right members of the *comunidad*

called Progreso, both settlements are mostly composed of Chaninawa, Catay which had one *anexo* called Tres Bolas, Sinaí, which was the newest one and was still in the process of obtaining its legal title, and Naranjal. In Brazil, there were two settlements: Tabanal[31] and San Francisco, none of which is located on land recognized by the Brazilian government as indigenous territory. However, they do receive services from the Brazilian state and are in contact with the Brazilian state agency in charge of indigenous policy, FUNAI. None of these settlements had more than ten houses at the time of my fieldwork, and whenever I arrived to a Mastanawa settlement, at least one of the families was away either visiting relatives elsewhere, buying or selling something, or just *oikaa* (lit. gone to see). The Mastanawa frequently embark on trips "just to go see". Additionally, there are persons that identify as Mastanawa, or have kinship links that tie them to the Mastanawa, living in Sharanahua and Yaminahua *comunidades nativas* in Peru, as well as in Jaminawá *terras indigenas* in Brasil. Likewise, on the Peruvian side of the border, there are Mastanawa who have settled on Puerto Esperanza and Palestina, a village composed mostly of Andean migrants; on the Brazilian side, there are Mastanawa living on border town of Santa Rosa do Purus and, in smaller numbers, on the Brazilian towns of Manoel Urbano and Sena Madureira. There is also a small number of Mastanawa who have migrated to Rio Branco, the capital of the Brazilian State of Acre, and Pucallpa, the capital of the Peruvian region of Ucayali. Finally, it is likely that there are Mastanawa

nativa). Likewise, the law requires for a single board to represent the whole *comunidad nativa*, which can be problematic if the different *anexos* are not represented within the board or if assemblies in which important decisions are made are held without the representatives of all the *anexos* or in a way that systematically dismisses their positions or opinions.

[31] The people of Tabanal were trying to change the name of their settlement because of its meaning in Spanish. Tabanal means place with many horseflies. In consequence, they were trying to change the name of the settlement to one not related to the annoying bloodsucking insect. The new chosen name was Estirão, a long straight portion of river.

among the voluntarily isolated peoples that roam the headwaters of the Curanja, Envira and Jurua Rivers[32].

What does it mean to be civilized?

My Mastanawa interlocutors often referred to this process of "coming out of the forest" as a process by which they became civilized. The words *civilizado* (civilized) and *calato* (naked wild Indians), the polar opposite of the civilized, are commonly used by *Purusinos* to discuss all things indigenous. However Indigenous Peoples and non-Indians do not mean the same thing when they utter these words. Peter Gow (1991, 1993) has discussed these categories at length in relation to a number of Indigenous Peoples from the Central and Northern Peruvian Amazon[33]. Gow contends that the concept of *gente civilizada* (civilized people) refers, from an Indigenous perspective, to a position on a continuum between two poles: 'wild Indians' and 'gringos'. According to this author, the term 'wild Indian' is used to refer to various peoples whose defining characteristics would be that they "do not wear clothes, they do not eat salt, and they live off there in the forest" (1993: 331). On the other hand, it is said of 'gringos' that they "have great knowledge but are physically weak" (1993: 335) qualities that are seen as reverse to those of 'wild Indians' who "are physically strong but ignorant" (1993:335).

[32] Mastanawa elders affirm that when they moved downriver to live by the big river all the Mastanawa "came out". However, this refers to everybody who was living among the Mastanawa majority longhouses. In consequence, it is likely that Mastanawa who married into other Purus Pano speaking longhouses remained on the headwaters when the rest of their relatives decided to leave.

[33] The specific peoples Gow deals with in his paper are: the Canelos Quichua, the Lamista Quechua, the Cocama-Cocamilla, and the Indigenous People of the Lower Urubamba River (a mix of Yine, Ashaninka, and Machiguenga).

According to the system proposed by Gow, being civilized would be defined by the achievement of a certain equilibrium between the absolute lack of civilization of the wild India' and the excessive hyper-civilization of the gringo. In this sense, from the perspective of the Lower Urubamba Indigenous People they would be a truly civilized people as they embody the right balance of qualities. Gringos possess the knowledge of "the factory" but know nothing about the forest, and wild Indians master the knowledge of the forest but know nothing (or close to nothing) about manufactured goods. The Indigenous People of the Lower Urubamba know their way around the forest, although not as well as wild Indians do, and know how to obtain manufactured goods, even though they do not possess the knowledge of "the factory". The achievement of this position of civilized people would have been brought about through a process of generational transformation initiated by their wild ancestors who engaged with powerful outsiders in frequently abusive relations, which in turn allowed for the next generation to escape these abusive relations while maintaining their capacity to obtain manufactured goods. This is also a process brought about by the establishment of marriage alliances between the particular Indigenous Peoples of the Lower Urubamba (Piro, Asháninka, and Machiguenga) and local *mestizos*[34]. In consequence, Gow affirms that "this is a thematic variation on the safe mixing of sameness and difference which Overing Kaplan (1981) has identified as a central feature of much of indigenous Amazonian social philosophy" (1993: 336).

[34] The *mestizo* of the Peruvian Amazon, also known as *ribereño*, is frequently the Hispanicized descendent of Indigenous Peoples who despite not speaking an Indigenous language still shows a great cultural similarity to the Indigenous Peoples of the area. Likewise, their economic activities are frequently the same as those of the Indigenous Peoples of the area. In some cases, as it seems to be case among the Kukama-Kukamiria, the use of the label *mestizo* seems to have been a strategy used to prevent being negatively judged by racist outsiders.

Similarly, to the people of the Lower Urubamba, when the Mastanawa talk about "becoming civilized" they are referring to a historic process brought about through a process of moving from "inside the forest", towards the non-navigable waters of the small streams located at headwaters of the watershed, towards the shore of the big river, in this case the Purus River, where the *mestizos*, civilized Indians, *padres* (priests), and gringos (Summer Institute of Linguistics missionaries) lived. What this geographical, but also social, movement allowed for was the insertion of the Mastanawa into a larger network of exchange and social relations. Mastanawa explain that their elders decided to leave the now distant headwaters of the Purus watershed because "they wanted to eat salt and sugar, and they wanted to wear clothes". Their argument follows a circular logic, they wanted to "become civilized" because they desired to eat salt and sugar, and wear clothes, and they became civilized precisely because they "grew accustomed" (*fëya*) to eating salt and sugar, and wearing clothes. Thus, the process of becoming civilized is both achieved through and signaled by the aforementioned practices.

It is worth mentioning that even though the Mastanawa recognize that Peruvian traders and Christian missionaries had been trying to establish contact with them with the help of Sharanahua and Yaminahua men, they invariably maintain that it was their decision to abandon the headwaters of the Curanja and follow the foreigners downriver. In this sense, the Mastanawa do not see themselves as passive victims of history, but as active agents of their recent historical process. They are always in control of their movements. This obviously departs from the stereotypical European narrative of taming the savages and

bringing them into the fold of civilization. The Mastanawa narrative shows a deliberate agenda, which is to accustom (*fëyafai* in Mastanawa, *acostumbrar* in Spanish) themselves to live in proximity to this multiplicity of others and to accustom these others to live in proximity to themselves. This two-way process of simultaneous accustoming to the Other is achieved through the circulation of words, objects, people, and, sometimes, violence.

Photography 5. Tao, Chaninawa man (by Adolfo Torralba, date unknown)

This concept of accustoming is central to understanding how Mastanawa sociality operates and thus how do they experience and understand their relations with the Other. The Mastanawa verbal root *fëya-* means to grow accustomed, if the suffix *–fai* is added to form the word *fëyafai* it becomes a transitive verb that can be loosely translated as to make something or someone accustomed. The word *fëyafai* has multiple meanings: to tame down, to domesticate, to teach something, to cause someone to become accustomed,

to make the strange familiar. In this sense, the word *fëyafai* can be used to describe the process by which children incorporate those habits that will make them proper Mastanawa adults in the future, as well as the process by which dogs become useful hunting companions or captured baby monkeys become well behaved pets. Likewise, it can be used to describe the process by which two previously unrelated peoples find each other and learn how to live harmoniously. Someone who is *fëyaiba*, the suffix *–ba* indicates negation, is not only not accustomed but is also a stranger, meaning someone that has not yet adapted adequately to the group. A person who is *fëyaiba* has a body that is still too different from those of the group, and for this reason exhibits a different behavior and moral code. In consequence, the process of becoming accustomed implicates necessarily the reduction of the difference that keeps the previously unaccustomed parties apart and incapable of communication. The reduction of these differences is achieved through operations in and on the body and is not limited to humans, a hunting dog will go through similar bodily regimes as a human hunter. Likewise, wild animals and anthropologists are domesticated through the same means. The difference is one of degree not kind, while the animal will be fed the same food that humans eat, it will not be incorporated into a human eating circle like the anthropologist. A few months into my stay in the Upper Purus River, the Mastanawa began to joke with me by telling me that now that I had been with them for so long, and consequently had become part of their male eating circle, I had gotten accustomed to live and eat with them and therefore I was like a Mastanawa and would not be able to return to my family in Lima or the university in the United States. These statements by the Mastanawa about the importance of what and how do you eat, who do you eat with, and the transformative

capacities of these acts of feeding and caring resonate with the findings of ethnographers of the region (Overing and Passes 2000, Walker 2013) and beyond (Bashkow 2006, Carsten 2004).

In consequence, from a Mastanawa perspective, to become civilized is not to climb up on the evolutionary ladder, it is a change on the type of social relations they maintain with those who call themselves civilized. There is, nonetheless, a certain moral judgement implied in the notion of *civilizado*. This moral judgement becomes evident when people talk about *calatos* as people who do not know how to live in peace "they kill just because, they are fierce" (*ellos matan por gusto, son bravos*). The *calato* is judged negatively because one cannot establish productive relationships with them, or at least not by peaceful means as long they stay in their current shape. As it will be seen in chapter four, in order for *calatos* to be suitable marriage partners they have to be accustomed first. In this sense, unlike other peoples of the region (Gow 1993, Hewlett 2013, Krokoszyński 2016), the Mastanawa seem to have a more nuanced view of those encompassed under the category of *calato*. This issue will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter, for now it will suffice to point out that the Mastanawa recognize two main types of *calato*: the Arawak speaking Mashco Piro and the Pano speakers locally known as *Curanjeños* because they live on the headwaters of the Curanja River. These two different types of *calato* are thought of as remarkably different and judged differently in terms of their moral qualities and ability to be social. The fact that the Mastanawa recognize multiple types of *calatos* and evaluate them differently is probably related to three facts: that they recognize that they were *calatos* themselves until not too long ago, that these peoples

visit the shores of the Upper Purus and the Curanja Rivers every year to gather turtle eggs, and that until ten years ago the Mastanawa used to visit their territory on hunting expeditions where they crossed paths with them in more than one occasion.

In summary, this chapter has shown that when the Mastanawa talk about "becoming civilized" they are referring to a change in their social relations with those who call themselves civilized. This change in their social relations supposed an ontological transformation operated mainly, but not exclusively, through changes in their diet, clothing, and body adornments, as well as living in proximity to the peoples that comprise the Peruvian-Brazilian border society. This transit from *bravo* to *civilizado* was initially mediated by the Sharanahua who were the Mastanawa's first *patrones*. However, this initial arrangement between the Sharanahua and Mastanawa was doomed to fail from the beginning, as the Sharanahua cannot be good *patrones* as they suffered from the same chronic scarcity of manufactured good as the Mastanawa, even though they had been active in the *habilitación* system for a few decades by the time the Mastanawa "came out". It was just a matter of time for the Mastanawa to realize that Peruvians, priests, and the gringos from the SIL could play the role of manufactured good-givers with much greater generosity than the Sharanahua. This enhanced access to manufactured goods, as well as coresidence with the Catholic missionaries, and increasingly frequent visits to the Peruvian and Brazilian settlements allowed for the Mastanawa to become accustomed to live among the *civilizados* and thus become *civilizados* themselves.

The other day I pulverized your nail and put it in my drink. I wonder why I want to steal all the time now?!

Purus Indigenous joke

Chapter Two: A world of chai[35], a world of nawa

The scene I am about to describe was a recurrent one during my initial months of fieldwork. After a long and busy night of fishing at one of the lakes located near the village, or a particularly abundant hunt, we would travel four hours upriver to Puerto Esperanza with the intention of selling the surplus fish or meat. The usual declared purpose of the commercial enterprise was to get enough cash in order to be able to buy some essential products like rice, noodles, cooking oil, salt, sugar, soap, or shotgun shells, and if the gains from the sell allowed to also buy new clothes or perfume. An additional purpose was, of course, to go party at Pandisho, a local nightclub. These trips to the provincial capital were rather frequent. During the time I spent living in Catay, there was almost always someone who was gone in Puerto Esperanza or Santa Rosa do Purus. Likewise, every time I arrived to a Mastanawa settlement there was at least one family gone to either town, with the exception of visits I made to these villages during celebratory occasions such as village anniversaries.

[35] Male cross-cousin for a male ego.

The trip upriver from Catay to Puerto Esperanza is slow due to the low potency of the motors typically used by the Mastanawa, long-tail shallow-water outboard motors locally known as *peque-peque* due to their characteristic sound. The duration of the trip was usually further increased by the frequent stops we would make along the way. Our first stop would usually be Sinaí, just fifteen minutes upriver from Catay. There was always something or someone to pick up from – or leave at – Sinaí. Likewise, depending on the time of the day and the availability of food and drink we would either be invited to get off the boat and walk up to the village to eat and drink or not. Similar stops could take place, or not, at any of the following three Mastanawa/Chaninawa settlements between Sinaí and Puerto Esperanza in existence at the time of my fieldwork research. Depending on the composition of the traveling party, we were more likely to stop in one village or the other as the Mastanawa always prefer to stop in those villages where they have closer kin.

Upon arrival to Puerto Esperanza's port, the first order of business was to find a secure place to tie the canoe, a place safe not only from the potential increase of the river water level but also the possibility of the canoe being taken away by other people. "Puerto Esperanza is place where you cannot trust people!" was a phrase frequently uttered by my travel companions. The usual solution to this issue was to leave the canoe and outboard motor under the surveillance of a Culina man and his family who live right in front of the port. Their security services are offered for approximately thirty US Dollar cents a day per canoe. The alternative was to tie the canoe well, take the outboard motor to the house of the relative where its owner was going to spend the night, and hope for the best. On the occasions we opted for this option we were left many times stranded in Puerto Esperanza

with an outboard motor but no canoe to put it on. Eventually, somebody coming from upriver or downriver would alert us of the location of the canoe and we would go pick it up from where it had been spotted last.

After having decided what to do with the canoe and outboard motor, the next move usually was to find a *motocar*, a three-passenger vehicle pulled by a motorcycle, onto which we would load the canoe's cargo, usually composed of: plantains, yucca, raw fish and/or game meat, papayas, pots containing cooked food, clothes, mosquito nets, machetes, a plastic gasoline container and, occasionally, a shotgun, a fishing net or a cast net. Here an extra US Dollar and fifty cents go away. As my Mastanawa friends frequently say: "Everything costs money in Esperanza! Even water or *masato*[36]! In this town you cannot live without money". After having carefully arranged all their belongings into the *motocar*, if there is any room left, those who fit will take a place on the passenger seat or stand up on the rear end of the vehicle holding themselves firmly to its frame. In this fashion, a number of members of the travel party find their way to their relative's house by foot while the rest does it by *motocar*.

On many occasions, while walking up the streets from El Puerto to Downtown, where my most frequent travel companion, Faustino, used to stay at his sister-in-law's house, we walked by a group of his relatives from Bola de Oro[37] gathered at La Esquina del Movimiento (see map in the introduction). They would usually be gathered around a bottle of 61, a cheap Brazilian cachaça bottled in reused beer bottles, drinking on the side

[36] Regional Spanish word for yucca beer, *pëte* in Mastanawa.
[37] Bola de Oro is the closest Mastanawa/Chaninawa village to Puerto Esperanza.

of the street under the shadow of a tree or a shop that had not opened that day. During our first trips, Faustino would warn me "do not look at them, the drunks will call us and get annoying". Almost every time they saw us arriving to town, our friends from Bola the Oro called us to join them and drink cachaça, invitation that we would usually politely reject explaining that we had to leave our things where we were going to spend the night first. It was not that Faustino did not enjoy a good shot of cachaça, it was, as he would usually say, that his *chai* from Bola de Oro "did not know how to drink well".

After unloading the *motocar* and paying its driver, typically the next order of business was to find buyers for the product we had brought to sell. The first doors to knock were those of shopkeepers who owned the larger shops in town, which usually have a restaurant next-door to the shop. If there is no luck with the shopkeepers/restaurant owners, the next doors to knock would be those belonging to the *mestizos* the Mastanawa know because they have either worked for them logging, clearing their gardens, harvesting their cash crops, or in some other capacity, or simply because they are one of the few longtime non-indigenous residents of the province. The prices paid for fish, game meat, and other agricultural and forest products are established by a handful of shopkeepers who dominate the provincial commerce, for this reason they are the same everywhere in Puerto Esperanza.

Many Indigenous persons have what they call a *cuenta* (tab) or *crédito* with these shopkeepers, particularly those who have a regular income or are, officially or unofficially, recognized leaders within their Comunidad Nativa. What this means is that

they have access to credit from the shopkeepers, who keep a tab of the products bought by their clients to be paid at a later date when the client receives income, be it from a salary or conducting business in town. Products bought under this system are not sold at the regular local market prices, which are already very elevated, but are sold at much higher prices. Likewise, even though I cannot attest to the truthfulness of this, it is commonly said that shopkeepers cheat their clients by adding to their tabs products which they have not bought in order to further increase their financial gains. At the time of my fieldwork most of the Indigenous persons, Mastanawa and not, who had a *cuenta* had a regular source of income through a job in the provincial municipality, the public education system, or the public health system. This means that their salaries were paid directly to their checking accounts at the Banco de la Nación, Peru's national bank and the only bank in the Purus province. In order to make sure that their customers pay their debts, shopkeepers demand from them their debit cards, with their pin codes, and sometimes also their national identification documents, which are kept under their custody. In this fashion, every payday the shopkeepers will take their pile of debit cards and IDs to the bank teller and withdraw their clients' salaries. After doing this, they will keep a portion to themselves in order to pay a portion of the client's tab and will give them the remaining quantity of cash so they can take care of their personal expenses. Depending on the particular relationship between the shopkeeper and its client, the amount of money the shopkeeper keeps can be negotiated. Non-Indigenous persons also keep tabs with the same shopkeepers, however they almost never leave their documents or debit cards as guaranty that the debt will be paid. Likewise, none of the shopkeepers and restaurant owners with which I kept tabs during my time in the Purus Province

charged me the increased price they charged their Indigenous customers for the same products.

After selling the meat or fish brought to town for that purpose, if the products brought to town were obtained through a collective effort, the money will be equally distributed between the men who contributed towards that goal. Immediately afterwards, the men will buy some essential products such as salt, sugar, cooking oil, and shotgun shells, then give a portion of the money to their wives and keep the rest for themselves. A significant portion of the money kept by the men will be spent that night at Pandisho, a nightclub which caters to a predominantly Indigenous clientele, by comparison to the other nightclub existing at the time of my fieldwork, known as Karaoke, where Indigenous people rarely go, and when they do they happen to be school teachers, nurses, or political leaders. Unlike single Mastanawa women, married Mastanawa women rarely go to Pandisho. Most men go to the nightclub regardless of their marital status.

The nightclub is owned by Pepito Jaguar the local one-man orchestra of the province who is responsible for the entertainment of almost every celebration in the province, whether it takes place in the most remote *Comunidad Nativa* or in the capital Puerto Esperanza. The club consists of a central dancefloor, located at the feet of a stage, and surrounded by small tables with stools around them. The bar is at the opposite end of the stage and next to the only door in the building. There is a U-shaped internal balcony that surrounds the dancefloor and allows for additional tables and stools. Everything is painted in bright neon colors: pink, electric blue, yellow, and green dominate the wall art. Most of

Pandisho's clientele cannot afford to buy beer and prefer to buy a pink, highly alcoholic, house drink called *coquito*. This drink is sold in reused water bottles and given to the customer with one plastic shot-sized cup. Local drinking custom mandates for the bottle to move around a drinking circle, with the bottle moving ahead of the cup. Immediately after the person pours a shot, the bottle will go to the person standing next to the one holding the cup, a *¡salud!* will be said and the shot of alcohol quickly consumed so the cup can follow the bottle around the drinking group. If the group is small enough for there to be drink remaining once the bottle returns to the buyer, he decides when to start the next round of shots. Most men go exclusively to drink and keep to their group usually composed of kin relations. Younger men usually do not only drink but also look for potential dance and romantic partners and mingle with other youths from other ethnicities. Pandisho is a multiethnic space, in the sense that it is a space where people of the different ethnicities present in the Purus Province converge. The nightclub is frequently the site of late night, alcohol-fueled brawls, usually between men of different ethnicities, more often than not Mastanawa and Sharanahua.

Most Mastanawa will visit Puerto Esperanza for a few days and then go back to their villages. Visits to the provincial capital can also be prompted by a message from a relative transmitted through the only FM radio station in the province, or through shortwave radio if the village has one. Another reason that frequently brings Mastanawa to the capital is the return of a relative to the province in one of *vuelos de acción cívica* (civic action flights) that the Peruvian Air Force offers, usually twice a month. Even in these occasions, Mastanawa try to bring something to sell because, as they say,

"otherwise they will have to eat sand" and they are no *carachama* (armored catfish, *pseudorinelepis genibaris*)[38]. However, more often than not, the Mastanawa say when they are embarking on a trip to either Puerto Esperanza or Santa Rosa that they are "*nawa oikai"* ("going to see the *nawa*"). In the following pages I will explain who these *nawa* are and discuss the different categories the Mastanawa use to express sameness and difference.

Thee Three Basic Oppositions

Mastanawa sociology is built upon three basic dichotomies that express three different ways of classifying who belongs to the sphere of the us and who belongs to the sphere of the Other. These three dichotomies are: *noko kaifo* (our kaifo) – *kaifo fëtsa* (other kaifo); *noko yora* (our body/people) – *yora fëtsa* (other body/people); and *onikoi* (really people) – *nawa* (stranger). The boundaries delineated by this system of three oppositions are highly elastic and porous, thus the confines of identity, and alterity, can be conveniently expanded or reduced. As it will be shown, this system of three dichotomies is consistent with those described for other speakers of Pano languages. Likewise, it will be explained how these categories relate to the body as the locus of personhood and sociality.

Noko Kaifo and Kaifo Fëtsa

The first opposition, *noko kaifo* (our kaifo)[39] – *kaifo fëtsa* (other kaifo) is, according to my Mastanawa informants, the least negotiable one. Most ethnographies of Pano-speaking peoples associate the term *kaifo* with the verbal root *kain-* which can be

[38] According to the Mastanawa, *carachama* (*ipo* in Mastanawa) feed on mud and sand.
[39] *Ewe kaifo* (my *kaifo*) in singular.

translated in most Pano languages as ‘to be born’, ‘to come out/emerge’, and ‘to grow’. For this reason, most ethnographies that deal with this category assume that the *kaifo* is composed of those who have been born in the same place and have grown up together, whether it is the Amahuaca *kaiwo* (Dole 1998, Hewlett 2013) the Mayoruna *kaibo* (Fields 1970), the Sharanahua *kaifo* (Torralba 1985), or the Yaminahua *kaihu* (Carid 2007, Perez 2006, Townsley 1988). However, the Mastanawa seem to understand the category *kaifo* in terms of descent, similarly to the way in which the Capanahua use the category *kaibu* as described by Krokoszyński (2016) and the Yaminawa use the category *kaio* as described by Calavia (2006). A difference between the use of this category among the Capanahua and Yaminawa, and the Mastanawa is that among the former peoples it only corresponds to patrilineal descent, while among the Mastanawa it seems to follow bilateral descent[40]. These theories of descent correspond in turn to different theories of conception. According to Krokoszyński, Capanahua theories of conception consider the mother a vessel whose “role in conception and procreation concentrate on containing, quite explicitly comparable to a ‘nest’” (Krokoszyński 2016: 160). Another fitting image would be that of the mother as the soil that receives the seed implanted by the father through sexual intercourse. In contrast, the Mastanawa explained to me that the act of conception is achieved through the mix of masculine and feminine substances, namely semen (*o’o*) and blood (*ibi*) [41], brought about through repeated sexual encounters, which

[40] Nonetheless, it is worth noting that a considerable number of Mastanawa would sometimes affirm that the *kaifo* of a person is transmitted through the patriline that they belong too. This opinion seemed to be less common among younger people, for this reason I follow the argument that the *kaifo* a person belongs to is inherited bilaterally as this seems to be the direction towards which the system is moving.

[41] Mastanawa theories of conception are remarkably similar to those reported among the Cashinahua (McCallum 2001) and the Yaminahua (Pérez 2006, Townsley 1988).

allows for the possibility of partible paternity as reported for other peoples of the South American Lowlands[42].

Most *kaifo* have a name composed of the name of an animal or object followed by the suffix *-nawa*, for example: Bashonawa (jaguar people), Nishinawa (rope/vine people), Shaonawa (bone people), Shewatinawa (basket people), Shimanawa (fish people), Shipinawa (tamarin monkey people), or Yawanawa (white-lipped peccary people). The names of these *kaifo* probably correspond to sections of the Kariera-style marriage section system that has been reported for all Pano-speaking peoples with the exception of the Shipibo. However, most Mastanawa at the time of my fieldwork were not familiar with the moiety system anymore and therefore were not able to relate these names to the marriage section system of the old days. An additional difficulty to decipher which names correspond to the old marriage sections, and which correspond to other sociological units, emerges from the fact that these names have the same structure of names that, at least during the last fifty years, have been used to refer to larger conglomerates of people that anthropologists, linguists, and government agencies have defined as ethnicities[43].

Even though it has been reported for other Purus-Pano speakers that a person only belongs to the *kaifo* of their father, when I asked the Mastanawa, the general agreement was that a person belongs to all of the *kaifo* of their mother and father(s). In practice, this creates a number of named collectivities with which a person can recognize a kinship

[42] For more on the issue of partible paternity in Lowland South America consult de volume edited by Stephen Beckerman and Paul Valentine (2002).
[43] For more information on these names and their possible meaings consult Calavia (2006) and Carid (2016).

relationship by virtue of a recognized shared ancestry. After the Mastanawa established permanent peaceful relationships with the peoples of the Brazilian-Peruvian society, the number of these collectivities grew to incorporate not only those of the Sharanahua/Marinahua and Jaminawa, but also Brazilians and Peruvians as marriages with these started taking place[44]. This does not mean that all Sharanahua will be considered members of the *kaifo* of those Mastanawa who have a Sharanahua parent, but only those particular Sharanahua with which an ego understands to share ancestry. The same applies to Brazilians and Peruvians. In this sense, the limits of the *kaifo* for a Mastanawa person can reach beyond the collectivity named Mastanawa. Likewise, the *kaifo* different Mastanawa belong to will not always be the same as they are ego-centered and depend on the particular *kaifo* of their parents, and because of the issue of multiple paternity even the set of *kaifo* siblings belong to can be different if they have different socially recognized sets of fathers who belong to different sets of *kaifo*. In sum, *ewe kaifo* encompasses everybody with whom an ego recognizes kinship relationships based upon the descent principle, and *kaifo fëtsa* are all the other collectivities of this type with which ego does not recognize a relationship based on descent.

Noko Yora and Yora Fëtsa

According to my Mastanawa informants, this dichotomy (*noko yora / yora fëtsa*) is related to relationships of coresidence and commensality. As the name hints, the *noko yora* (*ewe yora* in singular, lit. my body) category refers to a shared embodied condition

[44] Similarly, Carid reports in relation to the Yaminahua of the Mapuya River that they have added the ethnonyms of their Asháninka and Yine (Arawak speaking) neighbors to the list of collectivities that compose their group.

brought about precisely by living in proximity to others and sharing meals. The Mastanawa categories of *noko yora / yora fëtsa* have corresponding categories amongst most Pano speaking peoples: the *yora / yoratza* of the Amahuaca (Dole 1998, Hewlett 2013), and the *noko yora / yora futsa* of the Sharanahua and Yaminahua (Siskind 1973, Torralba 1986, Townsley 1987). The term *yora* and its cognates in all of the other Pano languages can be translated as 'living human body' or 'living human person'. The fact that the category *yora* is exclusive to humans is yet another expression of what seems to be a panamazonian feature of identifying the locus of humanity, personhood, and human sociality with the body (Seeger, da Matta, and Viveiros de Castro 1979, Viveiros de Castro 1998).

When I asked Faustino why we would usually avoid drinking with his *chai* from Bola de Oro, he would explain something like "they are our kin, but they are different from us (the people from Catay)". By this he meant that unlike his co-residents who were, of course, good people, the *chai* from Bola de Oro were prone to violence, theft, and other immoral conducts. On those occasions in which I found myself sharing drinks with my friends from Bola de Oro, particularly in the context of large celebrations, I received similar warnings from them targeted at avoiding people from other localities. The idea was always the same: those others who live elsewhere (*yora fetsa*) cannot be trusted, unlike the coresidential group, the *noko yora*. This dynamic corresponds to the most reduced expression of the *noko yora* category, the group of coresidents. Nonetheless, the residents of Catay and those of Bola de Oro are tied not only through kinship relationships but also relations of commensality. When traveling upriver, people from

Catay will frequently stop to visit and be fed by their kin in Bola de Oro, and the people from Bola de Oro will do the same at Catay when traveling downriver towards Brazil. Likewise, they recognize each other as keepers of the same bodily practices. Because of these reasons, a more generous use of the *noko yora* category from the perspective of the people from Catay, would necessarily include their kin from Bola de Oro.

On the multiple occasions that I questioned Mastanawa persons on how were they any different from other people and, in particular, from people as culturally similar to them as the Sharanahua, they would invariably answer "we always eat together and feed each other". Sometimes, my coresidents at Catay would add a comment along the lines of: "now that you are here with us, we will always call you to eat with us. Had you chosen to live elsewhere with other people, they would probably not feed you well". What my Mastanawa hosts were pointing out to me by this affirmation was the principle by which similar bodies are produced and one comes to be an integral part of that social body which is the *noko yora.* My Mastanawa hosts would tell me half-jokingly, half-seriously, that these continuous and repeated acts of commensality were making me "*Mastanawa keskara"* (like a Mastanawa) and that after having lived for so long with them, eating Mastanawa food, I was not going to be able to go back to my relatives in Lima or my university studies in the United States. Furthermore, by presenting themselves to me as generous coresidents who feed and take care of each other my Mastanawa hosts were presenting themselves to me as truly moral persons.

Real food or a proper Mastanawa meal is composed of at least two basic elements: a vegetal from the garden which can be corn (*xi'i*), plantains (*mania*), or yucca (*yoa*), and game meat from the forest (*nami*) or river fish (*shima*). Any combination of these two types of food is *nawi*, things that are eaten together and complement each other[45]. In this sense, the production of a proper meal requires the cooperation of masculine and feminine agencies in order for its elements to arrive at the family's eating circle. Corn, plantains, and yucca grow in gardens which are tended by women, however, women cannot have gardens without husbands to slash and burn patches of forest for them. Likewise, fish and game are fished and hunted by men but men cannot eat them without wives to skin the animals and cut, distribute, and cook the meat for them[46]. In this sense, it is possible to affirm that a meal cannot be called a proper Mastanawa meal, and

[45] The same concept has been reported for other Pano languages: Amahuaca (*náihî*) (Hyde 1980), Cashinahua (*naikiki*) (Montag 2008), and Sharanahua (*nahui*) (Scott 2004).

[46] This productive gender complementarity reaches its maximum social expression in hunting or fishing communal parties called *maridi*. A *maridi* may be celebrated at any given day. Once a date is set, the women will start producing large quantities of yucca and/or corn beer, and the men will get ready for the communal hunting or fishing expedition. On the agreed day, the men will leave the village together to then disperse themselves, individually or in couples, throughout the forest. In turn, the women will stay in the village painting their bodies with designs and setting everything up to cook the game meat the men are going to bring back, and the following celebration. Before returning to the village the men will regroup in the hunting trail, in order to return together and make sure that every one of them returns with some game meat to offer to the expectant women. When at short distance from the village, the men will shout loudly in order to announce their return; and the women will stand in a line, side by side to each other, each of them holding a small bowl of yucca or corn beer. Once the men enter the village they will stand in a parallel line in front of the women, who will choose who to offer their beer to. In exchange for the beer the women will take the game meat brought by the person who they previously offered their beer and cook it. While the women cook the meat brought by the men, the latter will bathe and adorn themselves with their best attire and designs. Once the food is ready, the village will gather to eat together. Once they have eaten enough to satisfy themselves, the older women will start singing songs that usually mock the genitals of their sons-in-law, or their hunting skills, and the sons-in-law will respond in a similar manner with songs that mock their mothers-in-law's genitalia, or their fertility. Finally, a number of other games that entail a competition between the genders, as well as a high sexual charge, will take place. As the night advances, the level of inebriation grows and the competitive games give place to a dancing circle, and furtive sexual encounters in the adjacent gardens.

therefore it cannot nurture proper Mastanawa bodies, if it does not contain proper female and masculine Mastanawa substances. This need for the complimentary agency of the genders in the production of proper meals or real food is a theme that runs throughout the ethnographic record of the South American Lowlands (Gow 1991, McCallum 2001).

Likewise, a proper Mastanawa meal requires to be eaten in proper Mastanawa fashion. Eating is most of the time a village activity, unless there is a scarcity in the availability of game meat or fish. Whenever a man returns from hunting or fishing he will nonchalantly drop his kill next to his house and then proceed to take a bath to clean himself. His wife will pick up the game or fish and take care of it. From the moment when forest products are brought into the space of the village they become the province of females. In the case of game, the hunter's wife will skin and butcher the kill and then use her children to distribute uncooked meat to the women on the other houses. If there is a surplus of meat or fish, she will keep it for later. Once the raw meat has been distributed around the village, the cooking immediately begins in every household. The first woman to finish cooking will have her husband call everybody to eat at their house. This invitation usually consists of the phrase "come here, let's eat together." I was told that in the past they also used a horn made of an armadillo's tail (*kedati*) to invite others to eat, particularly those who were further away than shouting distance. The invitation to eat will prompt everybody in the village to get together; the men will arrive first, and after them their wives, each of them carrying cooked meat and plantains or yucca. Two eating circles will form in front of the house of the person who called everybody to gather to eat, a male and a female one, each of them with their own piles of meat and vegetables. In

addition to the food piles, there will usually be a small pile of salt and a branch filled with small, very hot peppers (*yochi*) for each eating circle. As people arrive, they will join the corresponding eating circle and start pulling off pieces of meat from the larger chunks of meat that compose the pile, to then add salt and hot pepper. The atmosphere at these daily gatherings is usually jovial, with people joking and teasing each other, as well as having lighthearted conversations about recently past and upcoming events. Children are commonly teased by adults who joke about them being gluttons. A typical joke would say something like: "look at that little boy, he can eat a whole tapir by himself!" Sometimes children feel ashamed by these jokes and do not respond, but more frequently than not they will reply something like "you can drink twenty gallons of *masato!*". In addition to the food piles that correspond to the two human eating circles, it is common for a third set of food piles to be laid on the floor at a certain distance from the human ones for the dogs. As people's hunger is satisfied, and the food piles decrease in size to eventually disappear, the commensals stop eating one by one, and soon after go back home to rest or get ready to work.

I also witnessed a different way of sharing food. This was usually done early in the morning. As in the previous example, it is initiated with a shouted invitation to eat at one of the houses in the village. This invitation usually consists of the phrase "come here, there is meat (or fish or yucca) to eat". In the mornings, this invitation typically came from the chief's house. Unlike the previous case, it is ordinarily only men and a few children that respond to this call. In this fashion, most mornings started with the group of adult males gathered in front of the chief's house, sharing food and discussing their plans

for the day. It was common for this initial call to eat at the chief's house to be followed by a call from another house, usually but not necessarily inviting the men to eat a different food from what was offered at the previous house. Once they had eaten at every house in the village, or at all the houses that had something to offer that morning, the members of the commensal party would go back to their own houses and prepare for their daily activities. The last meal of the day is usually the smallest one, and it may or may not be a communal event. These two ways of eating are very similar if not identical to the way in which the rest of Purus Pano speakers ate at the time of my fieldwork or claimed to have eaten like in the past.

The process of becoming part of a collective *yora* corresponds to the notion of accustoming (*fëyafái*) described in chapter one. It is a process through which difference is reduced and similarity is enhanced through operations in and on the body. In the past, this process was not only achieved through dietary and commensality practices but also through body modifications such as tattoos, piercings, and cliterodoctomy. Tattoos, piercings, feathers, and other body adornments are not thought of as prosthesis, but as integral part of the body. In this sense, the use and gradual incorporation of body adornments was not just an external sign of belonging to a particular collectivity but also constituted the process by which a person's body was made into a properly human one. This alchemical process (Rahman and Echeverri 2015) through which the *yora* is produced also includes the incorporation of vegetal and animal substances such as insect poisons, frog poisons, and tree bark concoctions. Body adornments, body modifications, dietary practices, and the incorporation of animal and vegetable substances are related to

the management and balancing of a series of gendered knowledges and qualities, distributed throughout the body, and associated to the dichotomy *bu'a* (bitter) / *fata* (sweet). This alchemical process is immediately comprehensible for all the Indigenous people of the Purus River. This is the reason why the joke at the beginning of this chapter works across the different Indigenous peoples of the Purus River.

While the most reduced expression of the *noko yora* category is the residential group, its most generous use would include all of those with whom an ego recognizes a kinship relationship. This does not deny the principle of commensality as the basic criteria for determining who belongs in this category. Mastanawa frequently visit each other's villages, whether it is to celebrate a village party, play soccer, enjoy the products of a successful hunt, as a stop in their way to Puerto Esperanza or Santa Rosa do Purus, or as the Mastanawa frequently say "just to see/visit". These visits almost always suppose the sharing of food, and if not food at least drink. Therefore, it is fair to say that all Mastanawa share – to a certain degree – a commensality relationship. Furthermore, they recognize that they all follow the same dietary practices, that their hunters use the same frog poison to improve their cynegetic abilities, that in the past they painted the same designs on their bodies, etc. In other words, they recognize that they all manage their bodies in the same way and that they do it in cooperation with each other, and therefore, to a certain extent, share the same human condition.

Onikoi (Yora) and Nawa

The category *yora* (people/body) is used without a modifier to refer to all of those who live a similar lifestyle to that of the Mastanawa, including those who are *yora fetsa*. This category seems to have originally been restricted to only those peoples who speak a Pano language, wore the same face tattoos as most Pano peoples once did, and used the types of piercings and other body adornments Pano peoples became known for. In other words, originally the category *yora* seem to have been previously reduced to the compact nebulous described by Erikson (1993) when referring to the Pano ethnolinguistic family. However, the category is now used sometimes to refer to all the peoples the Mastanawa consider as similar to them because of the types of food they eat, how they eat it, and how they go about obtaining said food. For example, a Mastanawa friend who had traveled to Brazil for an evangelical event a few years before my visit, shared with me that during this trip he had met people from other areas of the Amazon, who spoke languages he had never heard before and used body adornments different from any adornment he had seen before. However, he explained to me that he could tell that these peoples were also *yora* because they too grew gardens and ate meals composed by the *nawi* combination, garden products (corn, plantain or yucca) accompanied by meat or fish, together with their relatives. Thus, the category *yora* could theoretically include all Amazonian Indigenous peoples, as well as Brazilian *caboclos* and Western Amazonian *ribereños*, as all of these collectivities grow at least one the three Mastanawa garden staples and consume them in combination with game meat or fish. In this sense, the Purus Pano notion of *yora* shows a great similarity to the Urubamba Piro use of the word *gente* (Gow 1991, 1993). The main difference between the Urubamba Piro *gente* and the Purus Pano *yora* would be the emphasis the Piro put on the existence of marriage alliances for a collectivity to be

considered *gente*. Used this way, *yora* is a category equivalent to another one also found in most Pano languages, that of *onikoi* (really people).

The contemporary expansion of the category *yora / onikoi*, or the possibility of expanding it if it is needed – without being dishonest – to include almost the totality of the Amazon Basin's population is related to an ontological transformation operated through the consumption of products which are considered *fata,* in detriment of the "pre-contact" tradition that privileged the production of bodies that tended towards the *bu'a* polarity rather than the *fata*. The three substances that Mastanawa associate the most with their accustoming process to life in the Brazilian-Peruvian border – salt, sugar, and alcohol – are classified by them as *fata*. Likewise, it seems to be the case that the use of the traditional body adornments was also associated to the accumulation of *bu'a* inside the body. Perez (2006) states the same for the process of shamanic initiation, which she affirms was performed by all Yaminahua males in the past. The frequent and abundant consumption of these products, and the abandonment of pre-contact bodily practices, would thus not only explain the contemporary absence of Mastanawa shamans but also the dramatic expansion of their social word.

The word *onikoi*, and its multiple cognates in other Pano languages, is conventionally translated as 'real people'. However, I consider that 'really people' is a better translation as it is closer to the original meaning in the Pano languages. The word *oni*, and its cognate *joni*, means 'human' or 'person'. The suffix *koi*, or *kuin* in other Pano languages, does not mean real. The purpose of this suffix is to emphasize whatever word it is

following. In this sense, if I say that something is *sharakoi*, *shara* meaning good/beautiful, I would be saying that the object in question is really good/beautiful to me, not the real good/beautiful as if the object in question was the Sun in Plato's Allegory of the Cave. Furthermore, it would be evident to any Pano speaker that the object in question is beautiful/good to me given my specifically situated positionality towards it. The emphasis provided by this suffix is not an absolute property but a property of my particular relationship to it. In consequence, the concept of *onikoi* refers to those who are really human from the perspective of a particular speaker and for this reason it does not constitute an absolute declaration but a relative one, as it is evident that from the perspective of the Other the speaker could be beyond the limits of the *oniokoi* category. Hence, the translation of *onikoi* as 'real people' would provide this category with a radically ethnocentric content it does not have.

Nawa is that one who is beyond the sphere of proper human sociality. In this sense, we can say that the *nawa* is the radical other. The use of this category usually encompasses a moral judgement, as *nawa* are the stereotypical cannibalistic other. When I arrived at villages where people had not met me before, and were unaware of the fact that I could understand their language, mothers would keep their children's behavior in line with the threat "the *nawa* is going to eat you!". Similar stories in which foreigners are associated with cannibalistic practices exist throughout the Western Amazon. Santos Granero and Barclay (2010) describe a number of monstrous figures for the Peruvian Amazon, all of these foreigners who would be part of a larger plot to eradicate Indigenous people from the surface of the earth. The monsters described by Santos Granero and Barclay are said

to look like flying gringos and a variety of representatives of state-run welfare programs. These monsters are always equipped with highly developed technological devices that allow them to either kill their human pray, insert pathogens into their bodies, or steal their organs, all of this to the benefit of the people who live in the great urban centers of the country and/or the countries of the Global North. In this sense, the stories reported by Santos Granero and Barclay are obvious variations on the old myth of the *pishtaco, nakaq* (beheader), or *pelacaras* (face-peeler), and its monstrous kindred, widely distributed throughout Western South America.

If the *nawa* is the radical other, a fierce savage who seeks the total annihilation of the *onikoi*, why are collective names that end in *nawa* so common among Pano speakers? And why are these names accepted without much protest by those collectivities? Erikson proposes an explanation that will be presented here briefly, and which will be discussed in further detail in the last chapter of this dissertation. This is the notion of constituting alterity which Erikson describes in the following terms:

> Traditionally, thanks to this logic of the alter-ego pushed to the extreme, the definition of "self" is quickly reabsorbed by that of the "other" and vice versa. Ascribing a "body" to the neighbors, even (or especially) if it is cataloged as "other", does not exclude difference or identity sharing because this is an "other" that is the same, a sort of social double which functions as the psychologists' "identificatory double" (cf. Nathan et al. 1984) at the collective level. Put differently, Pano identity is not only unthinkable apart from alterity (which is a truism), but it even is interchangeable -even consubstantial- with it. Pano alterity is constitutive at every level. (Erikson 1986: 189)[47]

[47] My own translation. The French original reads: "Traditionnellement, grâce à cette logique de l'alter ego poussée à l'extrême, la définition du « soi » est donc vite résorbée par celle de l' «autre» et viceversa. Attribuer aux voisins un «corps», même (voire surtout) si on le qualifie d' «autre» n'exclut ni la différenciation ni le partage d'identité car il s'agit ici d'un « autre » qui est le même, sorte de double social fonctionnant au niveau collectif comme fonctionne au niveau individuel le « double identificatoire » des psychologues (cf. Nathan et al. 1984). En d'autres termes, l'identité

This concept of constitutive alterity is further developed by Erikson in a later text:

> Among the Pano, the definition of the self will necessarily imply categories (*utsi* and *nawa*), the raw form (the quintessence) of which is embodied, above all, in the figure of the "Others". This is true at the social level, as well as at the individual level, where one of the spiritual components (the *bëro yoshin*, the 'eye spirit') is formed through the reflection of others reflected in the iris. (Tell me what you see, and I will tell you who you are).
> Ultimately, alterity (including the most radical) does not appear only as ideologically indispensable for the perpetuation of the self; paradoxically, it is even perceived as consubstantial with it. Pano identity, not content with defining itself vis-à-vis alterity (which is a truism), goes as far as to symbolically edify itself through what I have called the principle of constitutive alterity (Erikson, 1986: 189). Not just the 'other' groups (*utsi, futsa*, etc.), but even the *nawa*, are found among the pieces that play a part in the composition of Pano identity, and it could even be said that it is their exoticism that confers those *nawa* their extreme value as dispensers of identity. (Erikson 1996: 81)[48]

This Pano characteristic of putting the *nawa* at the center of their identity, instead of the more conventional way of locating alterity as the polar opposite of identity, is particularly salient in the moiety system that has been described for all Purus Pano speakers.

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pano est non seulement impensable en dehors de l'altérité (ce qui est un truisme), mais encore interchangeable — voire consubstantielle — avec celle-ci. A tous les niveaux, l'altérité pano est donc constituante."

[48] My own translation. The French original reads: "Chez les Pano, la définition du soi transiterait donc obligatoirement par des notions (celle d'*utsi* et de *nawa*) dont la forme brute (la quintessence) s'incarne avant tout dans la figure des "Autres". Il en va pour les sociétés, comme pour les individus, dont une des composantes spirituelles (le *bëro yoshin*, l''espirit de l'œil') se forme à partir du reflet d'autrui réfléchi dans l'iris. (Dis moi qui tu regardes, et je te dirais qui tu es).
En fin de compte, l'altérité (y compris la plus radicale) n'apparaît pas seulement comme idéologiquement indispensable à la perpétuation du soi; elle en est encore paradoxalement perçue comme consubstantielle. L'identité pano, non contente de se définir vis-à-vis de l'altérité (ce qui est un truisme), va jusqu'à s'édifier symboliquement à travers ce qu'on a appelé le principe d'altérité constituante (Erikson, 1986: 189). Non seulement les groupes 'autres' (*utsi, futsa*, etc.) mais encore les *nawa* comptent parmi les ingrédients entrant dans la composition de l'identité pano, et l'on pourrait dire que c'est leur exotisme même qui confère aux *nawa* leur valorisation extrême comme dispensateurs d'identité.'

According to the model described by Townsley, the two moieties of the Yaminahua are named *roa andiwo* and *dawa* (Townsley 1988: 100). The *roa andiwo* would be the internal half, associated with the figure of the chief, femininity, childhood and old age, and the consanguine. On the other hand, as signaled by its name, the *dawa* would be the external half, associated with shamans, masculinity, young adulthood, and the affinal. The moiety system, thus, already announces the idea of exteriority as an integral part of interiority. Even though at the time of my fieldwork the moiety system seemed to be but a vague memory of the past, and not many people I discussed the topic with were able to determine which half they belonged to, this logic of a unity composed by a core group associated with an external half composed of "others" was very much present in the Mastanawa residence pattern. Every Mastanawa village is organized around a set of siblings or an older man who has been able to claim his sons back from uxorilocal residence and attract others to live with them.

The Mastanawa's Nawa

During one of our frequent trips to Puerto Esperanza, I invited my Mastanawa travel companions to have breakfast at one of the restaurants in town. Immediately after they saw me pour three generous teaspoons of instant coffee and no sugar, Luciano said "I knew it! You are not Peruvian, you are a gringo!". Someone, then commented that Luciano was right because he had been to the national headquarters of the Summer Institute of Linguistics in Yarinacocha and had seen the gringos drink black coffee just like I had done. I took out my wallet, and from it I pulled out my Peruvian national ID, but this was not enough proof of my Peruvianness. To their eyes, I was still a gringo.

Without doubting it, I proceeded and took out my Peruvian driver's license. I had two solid evidences of my Peruvianness. That should be enough to convince them! However, my claim of being Peruvian was royally ignored, and I had no evidence that could proof that I was a Peruvian and not a gringo. I ate like a gringo, therefore I must be a gringo regardless of what my documents said. Up to that point, the discussion about my identity had mostly happened behind my back, and to the best of my knowledge it had been about whether I was a regular Peruvian, a *peruano legítimo,* or a gringo. Apparently, the two last hypothesis were the most popular ones.

Nawas and Carius

The Mastanawa's two main *nawa,* that is their quotidian *nawa,* are the Peruvian and Brazilian to whom they also refer to as *nawa* and *cariu*. While originally the unmarked *nawa* category seems to have encompassed all of the non-Pano peoples, at the time of my fieldwork the unmarked *nawa* was the Peruvian. As I mentioned above, other Indigenous people seem to have been incorporated into the *yora* category, though always as *yora fëtsa*. *Cariu* is not a word of Pano origin. However, the Mastanawa elders I discussed the term with affirmed that they had referred to Brazilians as *cariu* as far back in the past as they could remember. It is likely that this word was introduced to the Mastanawa vocabulary during an earlier contact with Brazilians that has been forgotten, as this is a word used by Indigenous peoples throughout the Upper Purus/Upper Jurua watershed in the Brazilian state of Acre to refer to local non-Indigenous Brazilians[49] (McCallum

[49] Another possibility is that Mastanawa were involved in the past in exchange networks that linked them to the Brazilians through intermediation of other trading peoples such as the Piro. There are a number of other words in the Mastanawa vocabulary that are evident borrowings from the dialect of Portuguese spoken in Acre. For example, the Mastanawa call metal pots

1997). I did not encounter a person who could explain to me what the word *cariu* means, beyond the fact that it serves to refer to the particular kind of *nawa* that the Brazilians are insofar as they are different from Peruvians. In this sense, the use of the word *cariu* to refer to Brazilians does not mean that they are not considered *nawa*, or that they are a type of *nawa* more proximate to the sphere of the *yora/onikoi*.

The first difference Mastanawa usually mention when discussing how Brazilians and Peruvians are different is that *cariu* and Peruvians eat different things. Another difference usually noted is the fact that they speak different languages. Later in my fieldwork, I would also find out that *cariu* are also considered to behave differently from Peruvians. According to my Mastanawa friends an important difference in the diet of Brazilians and Peruvians, was the amount of *farinha* (cassava flour) eaten by each collectivity. They would say that *cariu* always eat cassava flour while Peruvians would rarely do so. Likewise, because of the fact that Mastanawa go both to Puerto Esperanza and Santa Rosa do Purus to sell fish, they know that Peruvians and Brazilians eat different fish species, which makes perfect sense as they know very well that different types of *yora* (body) are produced through different types diet. Likewise, they assure that while Brazilians mostly eat chicken and beef and rarely eat game meat, the opposite is true for Peruvians. Finally, they also know how Brazilians prefer to drink coffee prepared in a pot while Peruvians drink instant coffee.

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panera (*panela* in Portuguese) and usually affirm that this is a Mastanawa word and not a Portuguese one.

All of the above-mentioned differences in diet, and therefore the composition of Brazilian and Peruvian bodies, manifest themselves in the different behaviors shown by Brazilians and Peruvians. As a general rule, Mastanawa are of the opinion that Brazilians are more violent than Peruvians. The Mastanawa I discussed this issue with would frequently comment on the quickness at which you could get stabbed or shot if you get into a street brawl in one of the Brazilian towns further downriver from Santa Rosa do Purus, or even worse in Rio Branco the capital of the state of Acre. This difference is also noticeable in the way Mastanawa think of the Brazilian and Peruvian police forces. Mastanawa have little respect for Peruvian police officers and have – on more than one occasion – taken over the chronically understaffed and underequipped police station of Puerto Esperanza. I was witness to how after a Mastanawa teenager was captured by the police and detained in the police station at Puerto Esperanza, the next morning a significant number of his relatives arrived into town in order to rescue their captured kinsman. Knowing that this would happen, the policemen offered the Mastanawa teenage boy to leave the station because they feared a violent encounter with the people that they knew was coming upriver from the villages. However, the boy refused to leave the police station. The tension grew when the Mastanawa organized themselves to prevent airplanes from landing to take their kinsman to be locked away in a juvenile detention center in Pucallpa. The women made their own chemical weapons by smashing chili peppers in water, which they carried around town looking for the accuser to see "how did he like chili peppers up his ass". Men got ready for violent confrontation with the police, the boy's father was wearing war paint on his face and held a wooden rifle for lack of a real one. After surrounding every flank of the police station, when they were ready to take it over, the

accused teenage boy came to the door and explain to his brothers and father that he did not want to be rescued, he wanted to go away and see Pucallpa with his own eyes. The men desisted from their plan to take over the police station, since the captive did not want to be rescued. After a couple days, and an airplane's attempt to land in Purus successfully prevented by the Mastanawa taking over the landing strip, the day for the Air Force's biweekly flight arrived. The soldiers of the local army post went out of the barracks carrying their service rifles in order to make sure that the plane was able to land without problems. They also were ready to escort the detained Mastanawa and the police from the police station to the landing strip to board the airplane. The Mastanawa, however, were still ready to fight and once the Air Force's plane landed they went to the police station and asked the captured teenager if he really wanted to go Pucallpa, he said yes. From that moment, the men desisted from taking any action against the police or the soldiers, with the exception of the boy's face-painted father who was chewing tobacco and chili peppers while poking the policemen and soldiers with his wooden rifle, challenging the repressive apparatus of the state all by himself. The boy went to see Pucallpa and returned home to Puerto Esperanza a few weeks later.

The Mastanawa would never dream of displaying this sort of bellicosity towards the Brazilian police, or at least that is what they said to me multiple times. They explained that the members of the Brazilian Federal Police were ruthlessly violent if confronted. If they would get in trouble with the law in Brazil, they knew very well that the solution to their problems was not going to come from taking over the police station but from another *cariu* institution, FUNAI. At least this is what I was explained by a man who told

me he had been caught smuggling cocaine into Brazil. The strategy, he explained, consists in letting the *cariu* authorities know that you are neither *cariu* nor Peruvian, regardless of what your documents might suggest, but that you are an Indian and therefore ignorant. In other words, the strategy is to exploit the stereotype of the ignorant and naïve Indian to the advantage of the arrested person. If you did this successfully, he said, then FUNAI will come to your aid and your problems with the law will be solved.

Another important difference between the behavior of Peruvians and Brazilians has to do with the way in which they conduct business. Pedro, one of the adult men from Catay, acquired a chainsaw during my fieldwork. He has worked for loggers on the Purus province on several occasions and had learnt there how to transform fallen trees into beams. The men from Catay decided to take advantage of Pedro's acquisition and make some money by selling some cedar wood. After a short conversation, it was decided that since they already had the chainsaw the best course of action was to borrow money from the anthropologist to buy the gasoline and lubricant necessary to run the chainsaw, in this way they could avoid getting into an *habilitación* type of deal. Even shorter than that discussion, was the one about where to sell the timber. The answer was in Brazil, because *cariu* do not cheat when measuring the volume of timber to be paid, pay the agreed price, and pay at the very moment the wood is delivered. This *cariu* modus operandi is the exact opposite of that of Peruvian *patrones* who are said to always cheat while calculatng the volume of timber, always come up with an excuse to pay a lower rate -usually that the timber is not of the expected quality- and never pay on time. Likewise, they explained to me, Peruvians usually try to pay you with products from their shop at an extremely

overpriced rate. My hosts prediction of how business with the *cariu* was going to occur was absolutely correct, the money I loaned to the cause was immediately returned with an additional sum corresponding to my rights to profit from the logging enterprise. Every man received an equal share of the gains, regardless of their particular labor or capital input.

This difference in the way *cariu* and Peruvian businessmen treat the Mastanawa is read as part of a larger pattern which identifies *cariu* as more generous than their Peruvian counterparts. From the perspective of my Mastanawa hosts, the easiest way to proof this was by comparing the welfare and social programs available to them on both sides of the border. Both Brazil and Peru have universal non-contributive pensions. However, the Brazilian pension (300 US$) is more than three times the Peruvian one (90 US$). Likewise, Brazil has a larger set of welfare and social programs that people like the Mastanawa can have access to. For this reason, many Mastanawa have procured and obtained Brazilian documents with the help of their Brazilian relatives who are recognized by the Brazilian state as Jaminawa. Another way in which *cariu* demonstrated their generosity was through their gifts of pre-owned clothes. After spending a few weeks visiting their relatives in Brazil, Luciano and Maria, his wife, returned to Catay bringing three large sacks filled with pre-owned clothed besides the usual products, sugar, salt, soap, rice, etc. The clothes were immediately distributed to all the houses in the village through the women and the generosity of the *cariu* celebrated.

However, the Mastanawa explain that this was not always the case, that in the past Peruvians were different. The first Peruvians the Mastanawa met are described as *peruanos legítimos* (really/real/legitimate Peruvian) and are opposed to contemporary Peruvians who are said to be – in part – *serranos* (Andean highlanders). When Mastanawa talk about *peruanos legítimos* they refer to those Peruvians they met in the 1960s, during their first years of permanent contact with the encompassing society. Most of these *peruanos legítimos* were the descendants of frontiersmen who settled the area during the rubber boom and, unlike most rubber workers, stayed in the province after the boom was over. For this reason, it is safe to assume that these people labeled as *peruanos legítimos* by the Mastanawa were what most Peruvians would call a *charapa*, in reference to the Amazonian river turtle (*podocnemis expansa*). Also known as *ribereños*, these are people who consider themselves *mestizo* (mix-raced) because of their use of Spanish as their mother tongue, their Christianism, and their involvement with the market economy and national society. However, this type of Amazonia *mestizo* is still in many respects similar to its Indigenous neighbors. Many of them practice the art of shamanism or, if necessary, recur to shamans. Likewise, a significant portion of them practice a type of subsistence agriculture similar to that of Indigenous Amazonians, which is supplemented with fish and game meat, and, to a lesser extent, farm animals. For this reason, their diet, and other aspects of their culture were not as foreign to the Mastanawa as one might have expected them to be. The Mastanawa invariably say that these *peruanos legítimos* were generous bosses, and that it was thanks to them that they were able to rid themselves of the abusive relationship they had with the Sharanahua. Presumably, it was because of these shared Amazonian origins that this type of *nawa* understood the importance of

displaying generosity in the Indigenous diplomacy of the region. The Mastanawa explain that it was through these *nawa* that they really started having access to salt, sugar, alcohol, and clothes.

It is a consensus among the Mastanawa that the days of *peruanos legítimos* are gone. They seem to have been replaced by another kind of Peruvian, the *serrano* (highlander). *Serranos* are most easily distinguishable, according to the Mastanawa, because they are *compepapas* (potato-eaters) and are very stingy people. As it will be seen in the next chapter, this type of Peruvian is not always recognized by the Mastanawa as "truly Peruvian" (*peruano legítimo*) and is frequently identified with the figure of the terrorist, a potato-eating terrorist. These *serranos* are admired for their work ethic and capacity to accumulate wealth. However, the Mastanawa consider them almost subhuman in their moral qualities due to what they perceive as extreme stinginess. There is a number of small shops in town that belong to *serranos*. Additionally, many of the regional and provincial public servants are of *serrano* extraction. At the time of my fieldwork there was an evangelical missionary from Cusco trying – unsuccessfully – to convert the Mastanawa into evangelical Christianity. Unlike the North American missionaries from the SIL, this *serrano* missionary never flew into the province in his own plane loaded with presents. Also, instead of establishing residence in one of the Mastanawa villages he did it in Puerto Esperanza and never learned how to eat like a Mastanawa. On the contrary, my Mastanawa friends frequently commented that the missionary insisted on telling them that their way of eating was dirty and that they should start eating like the *mestizo* do, sitting at a table and using silverware. Mastanawa call him *yoashi* (stingy),

the worst insult you can give in Mastanawa, and consider he is *yoashi* because of his *serrano* origin.

Gringos and Padres

Both *gringos* and *padres* (Catholic priests) were an important presence during the Mastanawa's early years of permanent contact with Peruvian society, and they are thought of in very similar terms. They come from remote countries, speak languages different to those of the Mastanawa quotidian *nawa*, and even if their mother tongue is Spanish, as in the case of Spanish priests, the way in which they speak it is very different to that of local Peruvians. In sum, they are the most radical kind of *nawa*. This radical alterity manifests itself in how they think their bodies are fed and made, and in the social behavior these different bodies exhibit. After the initial months of fieldwork, when people started feeling freer to discuss with me their ideas about foreigners, people started asking me questions about the alimentary habits of *gringos*. The first questions were seemingly shy or innocent questions about vitamin pills. I was asked if it was true that *gringos* could stop eating for long periods of time and feed themselves only with vitamin pills. The real question started manifesting afterwards, first in the shape of jokes. A typical joke would be "Hey Gian, I think I cannot go to the United States with you. You might transform me into a sausage, or maybe canned tuna!" The joke, evidently, points at the idea that *gringos* are cannibals who eat Indians. It is significant that the three types of food that were used to construct this type of joke were sausages, sliced ham, and canned tuna, food products that are readily available in the local shops but look nothing like the food the Mastanawa produce, and are not produced anywhere near their territory. Shortly

after, the jokes gave way to open questions about whether *gringos* ate other human beings or not.

As far as I know, no Mastanawa has ever seen a *gringo* engage in an act of cannibalism. On the contrary, they have noticed that gringos eat a large quantity of vegetables which most Mastanawa find very unappetizing. It is a consensus amongst Mastanawa, and other Purus Indigenous peoples, that salads are *gringo* food. Another food that is associated with *gringos*, and also Brazilians and Peruvians, is beef. Most Mastanawa consider beef-eating perhaps the most disgusting of these peoples' eating habits. Cattle is considered a dirty animal. I heard many times jokes related to the massive size of cattle turds, their constant farting, and overall dirtiness. However, the most unappealing characteristic of cattle seems to be the fact that it feeds on grass. Most Mastanawa seem to prefer to eat animals that they consider feed on mud, leaves, flowers, and fruit. The problem with cattle eating grass seems to be the fact that grass is usually infested by a bloodsucking parasite locally known as *isango* (*trombiculidae sp*.). Hence, if cattle feed on grass it also feeds on the bloodsucking parasites that live in it. Blood is commonly linked to *yoshi;* the more blood an animal has the more dangerous its consumption. Cows do not only have a lot of bloof but they also feed on it. Most Mastanawa consider that eating beef will make them sick, and that the consumption of this meat can also cause baldness.

Another characteristic *gringos* have is their immense wealth. Unlike Brazilians, Peruvians, and Indians, *gringos* move around in their own light airplanes at their will. This capacity to accumulate wealth allows them to be generous towards Indians. Unlike

Brazilians and Peruvians who sell manufactured products, *gringos* just give them away freely. To most Mastanawa it is a mystery how do they have access to such wealth, some suspect it has to do with the bank. However, some Indians, as well as local Brazilians and Peruvians, have bank accounts and access to loans and they yet have to be seen flying in their own light airplanes. It also possible, for there to be sinister theories for the origin of this unnatural wealth that they were not willing to share with me, given that the theory that I was a *gringo* was never entirely abandoned. Even though they were very quick to tell people who were meeting me for the first time that I was not a *gringo*. In this sense, the figure of the *gringo* resembles that of a mythic figure present in most Pano mythologies, the Inka, a powerful foreigner who shows both positive and negative features. While the Mastanawa do not tell stories about Inka, the stories told about Inka by other Pano peoples are present in the Mastanawa mythic corpus as stories about *nawa.* I will return to this topic on the fifth chapter of this dissertation.

Final Comment

As it has been shown, food habits play a crucial role in the way Mastanawa classify people. These eating habits seem to be related to the social and moral characteristics these different types of people exhibit. From this perspective, morality and sociality are therefore qualities associated to the body: a potato-eater is likely a to be a terrorist or a stingy shopkeeper, a beef-eater a cannibalistic foreigner that exhibits ambivalent features. Mastanawa pay great attention to what others eat and how they behave. My incorporation into their male eating circle, and the fact that I gladly took part of it, was openly celebrated and contrasted with the missionary's attitude towards the way the Mastanawa

eat. It was not only celebrated, but it was announced when we arrived to visit their relatives who had not met me yet. A regular introduction was “this is Gian, he is not a gringo, he is not a stingy man, he lives with us”. This introduction, was usually followed by a statement a few minutes later affirming that “he knows how to eat” once the women of the house were getting ready to bring us food. This “he knows how to eat” translated in the action of me being served food to share from the same plate with the other men present, rather than what is usually done on the rare occasions non-Indians show up in the village and are offered food. This is being served in individual plates with silverware.

Culinary and commensality practices are the main indicator Mastanawa use to classify people. However, these practices are by no means the only ones they associate with the production of bodies. As it has been mentioned, clothing and body adornment also play a part, as well as the incorporation of other substances of animal and vegetal origins. Even though the Mastanawa have abandoned the use of tattoos, piercings, and other body adornments, as well as the shamanic initiation process, which had as its main component the incorporation of insect poisons, all of them practices which are identified as producing bitter bodies, the Mastanawa are still very careful in the balance of bitter and sweet as well as the incorporation of particular qualities associated to different plant and animal species into their bodies. This is particularly important in the case of pregnant couples, babies, and children. The older a person gets the more relaxed the food prohibitions and prescriptions. On the contrary, pregnant couples and couples with young children have to be very careful about what they eat not only to have their baby incorporate characteristics which are desirable in a human being, but also to prevent the

baby from being captured by an animal with a strong *yoshi*. Likewise, children are fed particular animals, and parts of animals, so they can incorporate the characteristics of those animals to the benefit of the group. They are also given bark concoctions and other plant preparations for them to incorporate desirable qualities such as strength and industriousness. The next two chapters will provide two examples of how this sociology based on an alchemy of the body manifests in the relationship with the *nawa* described above.

Chapter Three: Wearing the Clothes of the State: War and military service

During the time I spent with the Mastanawa, I heard many boys and teenagers say: 'When I grow up I want to enroll in the military service and go to the VRAEM[50] to kill *terrucos comepapas* (potato-eater terrorists)'. These courageous declarations were commonly met with chuckles from the older men, including the army veterans present, who would reply something like 'I want to see you there, where the brave men cry' or 'When you leave you will cry missing your mommy in the barracks'. These same boys and teenagers looked with admiration at the pictures their older relatives had brought back as tokens from their time in the army. In most of these pictures one can usually see young men dressed in full commando gear, sometimes by themselves and sometimes accompanied by fellow soldiers, automatic rifles in hand and military helicopter in the background. This chapter seeks to answer the question of why, as a general rule, young Mastanawa men and children declare such interest in enrolling in the military service.

In order to answer this question, this chapter start with analysis of the role that war plays in Mastanawa sociality to finally comment on the motivations that inspire young Mastanawa men to join the army, as well as their experiences once they enroll in the military service and then return home on the Purus River. I argue that the Mastanawa declared interest to enroll in the military service is the contemporary expression of an

[50] Valley of the Apurimac, Ene, and Mantaro Rivers. This area is known to be home to small pockets of active remnants of *Partido Comunista del Perú Sendero Luminoso* who are said to work as defense forces for the cocaine production industry. This valley is the largest producer of coca leaf in Peru; the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime estimates that 66,494 metric tons of dried coca leafs (69% of the Peruvian national production) were produced in this valley in 2015 (UNODC 2016).

older rite of passage, the war raid, by which young men established themselves as adults capable of protecting and taking care of their relatives. Through participation in the military service, this demonstration of the ability to care for and protect is not only aimed at the Mastanawa themselves but also at that collectivity composed of those who call themselves Peruvian. Likewise, through the discussion of the experiences Mastanawa recruits have in the military, I seek to offer an ethnographic account of how Mastanawa sociality, which I claim has an alchemical management of the body (Rahman and Echeverri 2015) at its core, works. Wearing the clothes of the State, repeated acts of eating together the products from the same pot, and living in close quarters with the other recruits transforms the body of the Mastanawa recruit by a process they refer to as "accustoming". This process creates a bond between those who serve together who from then on call each other *promoción*.

War

The myth of Kukushnahua will allow us to have a glimpse at the role war plays in Mastanawa sociality, and those of the other Purus Pano speakers, at the level of the individual as well as at the collective level. What follows is a myth shared by most Pano speakers of the Purus River.

Kukushnahua's myth[51]

This is how my father used to tell this story.

[51] Narrator: David Melendez. Myth collected by the author and translated by Yessica Turuza and the author.

An old man told his son: 'Do not touch that anymore because I will not live with you forever. I am having nightmares, that is how I am dreaming. If you see a little dog's footprint by my grave, run away. Listen to me! I could eat you. If things are different and you see small footprints, go away. Listen! I could eat you. I am going to turn into the monster *sherefo*[52]. If things are different and you raise a straw mat and see a little lizard, or if it is coiled inside its little hole, lift it and blow on its face. If you blow on the lizard's face you will see me transforming, and if you return on the next day you will see that I have transformed into an anaconda.'

He went to see his father the next day and noticed he was a young anaconda. The anaconda was not too small. His son held the anaconda on his arms saying '*aichora*[53] how pretty!' The anaconda stuck its little tongue out. The son blew tobacco on the anaconda's face; he was content.

He told his wife: 'Woman, your father-in-law has transformed into an anaconda.'

In this manner, he went to see his father again. The anaconda had grown big. He would say '*aicho!'* when the anaconda stuck its tongue out. He held the anaconda in his arms again and blew tobacco onto his face. The anaconda would wrap itself around the son's

[52] A monster that has a human face and spider monkey body. It is said to be very large and bipedal.
[53] Aicho/aichora are words used to expresses contentment.

leg and show its tongue. He kept on blowing tobacco onto the anaconda's face saying *aichora* every day and the anaconda kept on growing.

The man went to hunt in the forest and when he returned he could see that the anaconda had grown really big. When he first saw the anaconda, as he was arriving, he did not call him yet.

He went to see the anaconda and got scared. The anaconda said to him: 'Son, I am with you now, my son. I have finally transformed, like I always used to tell you. Listen, I am hungry, go hunt for me.' The man brought meat for the anaconda and the anaconda's daughter-in-law cooked the meat and took it to him.

Likewise, the grandson would go to see the anaconda and lie there. When he went back home he said: 'father, make arrows for me'. In this manner, he would go and shoot arrows at his grandfather –teeeeh!

The anaconda then told his grandson: 'You have gotten me really angry. I can do something to you, go and ask your father to make arrows for you. I will take you to shoot arrows at those whom I used to shoot arrows a long time ago.' In this way, the anaconda took his grandson away.

The next day, early in the morning, the anaconda's son went to hunt and the grandson went to see the anaconda and said: 'Look grandfather, my father has made arrows for me.'

The anaconda replied: 'Let's go, I will take you to kill where I used to kill a long time ago.' In this fashion, the anaconda took his grandson through the stream. They left early. When they noticed that their son had not returned, his mother went to look for him. When his father returned after hunting, he found his wife crying. 'My son has been swallowed by his grandfather.'

Having said this, someone left the house and found the anaconda's and his grandson's footprints.

'Eeeeee, my friend, you already said that your son was swallowed by his grandfather. I have seen your son's footprints over there. They left that way, going downriver by the beach. He was taken away in this manner.'

'Grandfather, can we go that way?'

'No, we cannot go that way. We are going to kill the Kukushnahua, the people I used to kill a long time ago.'

He went with his grandfather in this fashion. The grandfather would tell him that they were going to reach the Kukushnahua the next day.

'Tomorrow we will find the Kukushnahua and kill them.'

They arrived to an area where some of the *nawa* were hunting, another one was sleeping with his wife.

'Grandfather I am going to kill him.'

'No, you cannot kill him here. Let's go and kill them in their house.'

They reached their house during the day and found the Kukushnahua sleeping with their wives when the sun was up.

Both, grandfather and grandson, started killing the Kukushnahua.

The grandfather said 'let's go, let's go, let's go' and they started their return home.

The anaconda got in the middle of some tangled vines inside a lake and told his grandson: 'Climb up that urucuri palm tree, climb up there.' The grandson did as the anaconda commanded. 'Do not sleep' said the anaconda. During the night, they heard the Kukushnahua that were passing by, looking for them.

The anaconda told his grandson at dawn: ‘Nobody is going to come to us seeking revenge anymore.’ This is how they left, this is how his grandfather made him return.

‘Teeeeee! Go and tell your father to take care of our affairs quickly, otherwise I could do something to him.’ The grandson went ahead.

He arrived saying ‘faaaaa, fiiiii, faaaa, fiiiiiii, faaaaaaa, fiiiii’.

‘Who is it?’

‘Friend, it is your son whom you said was swallowed by his grandfather.’

‘Father, mother, do not come close to me. Mother make a new clay pot for me. My grandfather has told me you have to feed me from that new pot.’ In this way, he was fed from this new pot.

‘Go to cook my grandfather’s food, I left him angry.’ The anaconda’s son went to give food to his father.

The anaconda was laying on the ground and said to his son: ‘Do not feed my grandson from an old pot.’ In this manner, the anaconda started talking to the young man and made him learn many things, he taught him about everything. In that place, he taught

him about plants, about ayahuasca; he taught him very well about ayahuasca. He taught him all the things.

This is what I was told habitually.

On war with the nawa and war with the onikoi

At the beginning of the myth we are presented with a situation in which a young man feels the urge to kill. In other versions, he is also having sex with a woman, showing an even clearer desire from the young man to become an adult of full right. In this sense, the war expedition on which grandson and grandfather embark together does not have as its main objective to retaliate a previous Kukushnahua attack but, on the contrary, the adventure starts due to the grandson's desire to kill. However, the anaconda grandfather does not let his grandson kill just anybody, he takes his grandson to kill those *nawa* he used to kill as a young man, a long time ago. The quest for the proper *nawa* to kill is more evident in the version of the myth collected by Pérez Gil (2006) among the Yaminawa of the Mapuya River, in which the anaconda grandfather explains to his grandson why the different peoples that they come across in their journey towards the Kukushnahua are not suitable enemies. There are practical reasons why grandson and grandfather decide to kill the Kukushnahua. They are easier prey than the rest as they sleep during the day and walk around during the night, and have more desirable objects than the rest. However, the crucial reason that makes the Kukushnahua good enemies is that the Kukushnahua and the mythical ancestors of the Mastanawa were already in a

warring relation: they are the people that the anaconda grandfather used to fight in his youth.

This quest for an enemy worth killing is a characteristic feature of Purus Pano war practices, which is in many ways analogous to their marriage practices. The purpose of war is not the enemy's total annihilation; war among these peoples seems to be, among other things, an avenue for exchange. Pursuing the total annihilation of the enemy would be counterproductive as, evidently, it is not possible to keep an exchange relationship with a partner that ceases to exist. This is evident in the Mastanawa relationship with the Sharanahua[54]. The Sharanahua are part of that highly culturally and linguistically homogenous block comprised of a myriad of peoples known by ethnonyms that end in –*nahua*[55] and are also the indigenous neighbors with which the Mastanawa interact the most. It was through the intermediation of the Sharanahua that the Mastanawa established permanent relations with the encompassing society in the mid-twentieth century, and since then their relationship has been marked by a continuous process of fighting and intermarrying. In this sense, Calavia's (2001: 80) affirmation, "the Yaminawa – we will allow ourselves a little of teleology – fight to break apart"[56] is valid also for the Mastanawa. However, the distance produced by this fighting is also the distance that allows them to marry each other. They break apart but do not move too far away from each other. In this sense, war within the *onikoi* has as an evident outcome the creation of

[54] The Sharanahua people is comprised by two main groups, the Sharanahua and the Marinahua. Likewise, the Mastanawa people is comprised by two main groups, the Mastanawa and the Chaninawa.
[55] With the exception of the Iskonawa and the Cashinahua.
[56] In the original Spanish: "Los Yaminawa – vamos a permitirnos un poco de teleología – riñen para separarse."

a productive difference among those who otherwise would be the same. The need for this production of difference within the *onikoi* sphere of the Purus Pano (Calavia 2001, 2002, 2006; Carid 2007) relates directly to their tendency to marry following a village exogamic and linguistic endogamic pattern in the absence of clear prescriptive marriage rules described for speakers of other Pano languages (Erikson 1996; Kensinger 1984, 1995, 1998; McCallum 200)

War, then, can become problematic when the enemy does not share the same code of war. That is, peoples who are not involved in the Purus Pano logic of fighting to break apart and then get together again through marital alliances. When discussing life at the headwaters of the Envira River before the establishment of permanent relations with Peruvian society, Mastanawa elders would consistently complain about their fights with people they say were Brazilian loggers. They would complain, saying 'Brazilians killed us for no good reason, not even to eat, leaving the flesh of the killed ones to rot out on the open'. Unlike the Cashinahua or Culina, with whom the Mastanawa claim to also have had frequent skirmishes, the Brazilians did not take captives, nor were they interested in the Mastanawa's possessions. The Mastanawa would retaliate the attacks in order to soothe their rage and console the mourners, but the loggers' violence was too extreme so they finally decided to leave the area in order to avoid them. In this sense, the Mastanawa experience of fighting against Brazilian frontiersmen is highly resembling of that of the Yanomami, as reported by Kopenawa and Albert (2013) in regard to the episode known as the Haximu massacre. The Yanomami, like the Mastanawa, were appalled at the idea of an enemy capable of killing women and children and who showed a clear intention of

eradicating the whole group. The genocidal cruelty of these frontiersmen is a clear indication that they do not even make good enemies.

In this sense, war seems to follow a different logic and produce different outcomes depending on whom the Mastanawa are fighting. When fighting with those they typically consider *onikoi* war breaks apart a unit that will subsequently maintain a proximate distance that will be sustained through the exchange of spouses and violence. In this case, the parties involved do not fight each other with the intention of reducing the other to nothing but, on the contrary, allow for the reproduction, and geographical expansion, of the group through the divisions that are caused by fighting. In the second case, when fighting *nawa* war apparently follows a more predatory logic. War is said to have been waged with the intention of eliminating the other. However, from the Mastanawa perspective it is always the other who has the initial desire to eliminate the Mastanawa. In consequence, the Mastanawa explain their past violence towards the Cashinahua and Culina as a reaction to the excessive violence exercised by these peoples towards their kinsfolk. Mastanawa elders would explain to me, 'we would fight them because they used to attack us too much'. With the exception of specific warlike persons, violence was always said to be initiated by the *nawa*. Despite this predatory association to war outside the margins of those typically considered *onikoi*, Mastanawa history attests that genocide was never the outcome of their clashes with the Culina or the Cashinahua. The emphasis on the predatory aspects of their violent encounters vis-à-vis the Culina and Cashinahua highlights the fact that, unlike with other Purus Pano speakers, war with these peoples was the result of foreign aggressions and did not produce relationships mediated through

other mediums such as marriage. Nevertheless, despite the aforementioned issues, war with the Cashinahua and Culina was still a worthwhile enterprise, most likely because they were also fighting under a similar understanding of what war is and how it should be waged, unlike Brazilian frontiersmen that were not worthy of fighting against. Davi Kopenawa's words on this topic are particularly illustrative of this issue:

> *"... our people only mistreated each other with hwëri sorcery plants and only fought each other using arrow canes from their gardens and curare arrow points from the forest. They did not burn multitudes of people with* ***rockets*** *and bombs. We are not a fierce people!"* (Kopenawa and Albert 2013: 364)

Up to this point war has been discussed in terms of its productive capacities at the societal level. In this sense, we have, thus far, developed an argument that to a certain extent follows a similar logic to Fausto's theory of familiarizing predation (Fausto 2012) or Santos-Granero's (2009) political economy of life. However, I propose that while these types of analysis are fruitful for anthropology and anthropologists in that they produce arguments that illuminate our understanding of the structural aspects of Amerindian societies, they tend to leave outside of the discussion what is at the core of war practices for Amerindians, that is the world of affects and lived experience. In this sense, my view of these approaches is similar to Wagner's (1974) critique of structural-functionalist anthropology's obsession with finding descent groups which resulted in texts that are more telling of British anthropologists' ideas about social life than what the people they studied were actually doing and thinking. It is true that war among the Purus Pano creates, and/or maintains, a productive difference that serves the reproduction of the

group. However, these violent episodes are usually triggered by accusations of stinginess or sorcery as well as the memory of previous episodes of violence. Thus, the Mastanawa do not engage in violence with other Purus Pano with the explicit intention of creating or maintaining a degree of difference between peoples that are recognized as integral parts of larger whole, or with strangers in order to better position themselves within a scheme of cosmic generalized predation, even though more often than not these can be outcomes of war.

I propose that from a Mastanawa perspective the use of violence and war constitute expressions of an ethics of care that is a fundamental component of what Overing and Passes (2000) labeled the aesthetics of conviviality in Native Amazonia. In order to support this hypothesis, I will discuss again the use of violence at the internal, among the *onikoi*, and external, against the *nawa*, levels. This analysis will demonstrate that from a Mastanawa point of view war at both levels operates under a similar logic. The Mastanawa fight 'to stop thinking/feeling' which can mean either in order not to be sad anymore or not to be angry anymore. In other words, the Mastanawa fight to console themselves and/or their suffering relatives. Happy endings in Mastanawa narratives are usually signaled by the phrase 'they were not thinking/feeling anything anymore'. Therefore, war is not fought with the primary intention of positioning oneself or one's group at the top of the trophic pyramid of a political economy of life where the accumulation of vitalities is achieved by means of familiarizing predation. This argument does not deny the fact that vitalities that contribute to the reproduction and well-being of the group are captured through the act of killing enemies, but it brings attention to the

main reason the Mastanawa themselves give for engaging in war, that is a desire to bring comfort to those in pain and/or anger elicited by sentiments of empathy and compassion towards suffering kin.

Every internal conflict I witnessed among the Mastanawa, whether it ended in violence or not, as well as every conflict of the past I was told about had its origins on either an accusation of stinginess or sorcery, the memory of previous episodes of violence, or a combination of these. The Mastanawa ideal of sociality, as that of many other peoples from the South American Lowlands, follows in many ways the model proposed by Overing (2000) under the concept of *conviviality*. The ideal Mastanawa village is one in which *aweskaiba* (nothing happens) and people *shinaiba* (are not thinking/feeling anything), where game is abundant and gardens are plentiful, and everybody eats together in communal meals. In order for this to be attainable generosity needs to be the norm; those who live together should not only eat together but also feed each other. Hence the great offense that Mastanawa take in what they perceive as acts of stinginess as evidenced in Siskind's (1973) discussion on the Sharanahua use of lies, for example denying to be in possession of meat on occasions when visitors arrive and there is not enough to feed them in addition to one's household. It is preferable to deny one has any meat than to admit to having only enough to feed oneself and refusing to share that. As Siskind writes, "Lying is an essential social grace at Marcos, while a direct refusal is insulting" (ibid.: 85). A direct refusal is insulting because it constitutes an unapologetic statement of unwillingness to care for the Other and therefore to live in harmony with the Other. It is the negation of the kind of bond that should the norm among those who they

call *noko yora*. As noted by Gow (1991, 2000) for the Piro case, the state of helplessness or suffering caused by hunger creates the conditions for empathetic acts of nurturance that not only reinforce the kinship relations of those who live together but constitute the core of the solidarity that binds native villages together. To deny the gift of food is to deny the relation and to not have relations is to be sentenced to death. This is the reason why perceived acts of stinginess generate so much anger among the Mastanawa and are frequently reported as the source of violence.

Numerous, usually younger, Mastanawa asked me if I had pictures of the time in which their people first established permanent relations with Peruvians. Likewise, many elders commented to me on the fact that different members of the Summer Institute of Linguistics as well as the Dominican Order mission at the mouth of the Curanja River had taken pictures of themselves, expressing that they were never able to see these pictures and that they did not know where were they. During one of my visits to the Centro Cultural Pio Aza in Lima, I was offered, at my request, digital copies of a large number of pictures taken by the Dominican missionary and anthropologist Adolfo Torralba during his tenure at the mission of the Curanja River. The reception of this pictures by my Mastanawa friends was mixed. Younger people were eager to see the pictures from a time they had all heard about but felt too distant in the past. Nevertheless, their curiosity for these pictures was impregnated by the guilty feeling that these pictures perhaps should not exist because of a number of reasons, one of them being that they would make their older relatives *shina ichapa* (think/feel too much) and cry. To think/feel too much is to be in distress, and to be in distress is dangerous because depending on the

source of the distress it can cause people's hearts to boil up in anger with the desire of causing harm to those that harmed their loved ones. In this sense, a person's suffering has a contagious quality, as the Mastanawa say that when in the presence of suffering kin they *ato shinai* (think/feel them), or as we would say, they feel empathy in the face of their kin's suffering. This identification with the suffering of one's kin creates the necessity to retaliate those who are identified as the perpetrators of the acts that brought suffering to the community. For this reason, several of the older Mastanawa made it clear to me that they did not want to see the pictures taken by the missionary whom they had lived with and loved so much. Additionally, if there happened to be portraits of their deceased kin, the viewing of these pictures could result in them crying and thinking/feeling too much with the dangers that this encompasses, namely, themselves or their kin taking action to soothe their anger and sorrow or, in words closer to those of the Mastanawa, to cool down their boiling hearts.

When dealing with *nawa* there was no expectation for generosity insofar as there is no obligation to share game meat with them. As explained previously, war with the *nawa* is usually attributed to an initial aggression on the side of the foreigners. In consequence, the killing of *nawa* is usually understood in terms of returning the pain initially caused by them so a collective feeling of rage can be soothed and calm be brought back to the group. Likewise, the mechanics of the conflict are similar to those of internal conflicts as violence is understood to have its origin in the impossibility of the Other to feel empathy for the aggravated part. This is evident in Mastanawa narrations of encounters with *nawa* where the usual first phrase uttered by the Mastanawa after finding the strangers is "don't

kill me, don't kill me". This plea for not being killed is a request for recognition in the face of the Other which evidently can be catered to or not[57]. The problem, as stated above, is when the negation of recognition reaches the extreme of considering genocide an option, when the *nawa* are not even good enemies. No enduring social relation is possible with those who fail to recognize the humanity within us, hence the only possibilities left are to move far away from them or annihilate them before they annihilate us.

War expedition as rite of passage

The fact that Kukushnahua's myth narrates a coming of age story is perhaps its most obvious characteristic. A crucial moment in the myth takes place once grandson and grandfather have returned from their warring expedition. They must sleep outside of the social space occupied by the rest of the family, eat little and differently from the rest and have their meals cooked in a new pot that has not been previously used and from which nobody else but the returned killer will eat. This fasting period is called *ibi saba* (blood fasting), and was performed both when warriors returned home and when women went through their first menses. As Laura Pérez Gil (2006) affirms, in both cases the fast serves analogous functions, the production of desirable bodies. In the case of the women, bodies that are capable of nurturing the group both through culinary as well as the production of babies. In the case of men, bodies that are capable of capturing vitalities to support the family, whether it is through hunting or war against others. In other words,

[57] In several Mastanawa myths this plea for not been killed is attained and followed by the establishment of social relations, with humans and other-than-human alike, through gift giving and/or acts of nurturance.

the goal of the *ibi saba* is to produce bodies/persons that are capable of protecting and taking care of their kin.

In consequence, we can say that the myth tells us the story of a war expedition that, among other things, is an initiation journey, through which the grandson asserts himself as an adult. Through this process, the young man does not only learn from his grandfather the art of wars fought with bows and arrows, but also of those fought with tobacco, blowing, and singing. The *ibi saba* does not only potentiate the warrior-qualities of the returning killer, but also make him a better hunter and thus a better provider for his family. The most common dangers associated with the breaking of the fasting have to do with the spoiling of the killer body that would make him lazy or without hunting luck. In more extreme cases it is said that the breaching of the prohibitions can result in the death of the infractor. Even though the ritual evidently contains a significant predatory component, the ultimate goal is that of producing bodies that will be able to contribute to the production of the beautiful village where game meat is abundant and all the co-residents are engaged in a network of mutual care and nurturance. In the old days, this process of bodily transformation not only took place through the alchemic process of avoidance and incorporation of substances into the body, but it was also sanctioned with body modifications, namely piercings on the face of the killer that are said to have been named after their victims.

Military service

In numerous conversations with my Mastanawa friends, the younger men shared with me their desire to enroll in the military service and, in the case of those that had served in the army, proudly shared their experiences of life in the military. Those young men that had not yet reached the age of enrollment declared that they wanted to do so in order to go to the VRAEM "to kill potato-eating highlander terrorists", learn how to use automatic weapons, and see the world. They give the same type of reasons that the young man of the myth had to kill the Kukushnahua. In a concrete context in which war expeditions are not as easy to conduct as when they lived autonomously from the State, the military service emerges as a possible route for the young Mastanawa men to demonstrate their courage as warriors, and therefore their capacity to look after their kin, and return home after a period of time without getting in trouble with the police or putting their residential group at risk of an easy retaliation due to the limited mobility that characterizes their contemporary state-sanctioned residence pattern. Furthermore, the military service provides the Mastanawa with an opportunity to demonstrate their willingness to engage in war to the benefit of their Peruvian allies.

It is no accident that the Mastanawa declare that they want to go serve in the most dangerous place they can. This is not only a declaration of bravery but most importantly it is a declaration of their willingness to go fight those who are causing their Peruvian allies to 'think/feel too much'. *Sendero Luminoso*, the terrorist group active in the VRAEM, is responsible for starting an unprecedentedly cruel and violent internal war in Peru that took almost seventy thousand lives in the last two decades of the twentieth century. For those that lived through that era, the terrorist tactics applied by *Sendero*

Luminoso in their quest to overthrow the Peruvian government are fresh memories that refuse to leave and the trauma caused by them is still an open wound in Peruvian society. Even though the terrorist group has been reduced to a miniscule presence entrenched in a single valley dominated by the cocaine industry, Peruvians live in constant fear of the possibility that this group will grow back, once again, into its former thanatic potency. This fear of the resurgence of *Sendero Luminoso's* terrorism is a matter of debate in every major Peruvian election, and is also present in the national news each time an attack is reported to have taken place at the VRAEM and is unquestionably tied to the feelings of sadness and anger caused by the deaths occasioned by this terrorist organization. In this sense, when the Mastanawa declare that they want to go to the VRAEM, they are doing what proper allies do. They are empathizing with their allies' suffering and offering their help to fight against those who are causing them to suffer.

When discussing the experience with those that have already served in the army, a recurrent theme is that of wearing the uniform. A friend of mine proudly told me about this topic, how after his long journey from the Purus River, to the regional capital, Pucallpa, and then the nation's capital, Lima, he arrived at the army barracks in the district of Chorrillos where he was going to serve as part of the military police. In the barracks his hair was cut, and then he received his uniform, which he described in great detail. Finally, after putting on the uniform he became a "son of the state" and the high-ranking officers of those barracks became his fathers. During the first few days he greatly missed his house, and more specifically he said he missed his mother; however, as days

passed by he started "forgetting" his relatives in the Upper Purus River and started getting accustomed to his new family in Chorrillos.

Most men admit that they had a hostile reception upon their arrival to their station. They mention having been beaten up, insulted, humiliated, and arbitrarily punished because of their indigeneity and/or lack of knowledge of urban life. However, these first traumatic encounters tend to be minimized in their narratives, with the emphasis being put instead on the comradery developed in the months that followed. In this sense, the regularity of the military routine, the large dining halls where all the soldiers eat together the products of the same pot, and the equally large sleeping quarters they shared with their soldier brethren, are all highlighted. Through this living together one is capable of "forgetting" one's family in the forest and getting "accustomed" to the new military family. This "accustoming" is said *fëyafai* (lit. to make accustomed) in Mastanawa, and it also means: to domesticate, to tame, to train, and to teach to obey; to be *fëyaa* is to be accustomed, and to be *fëyaiba* is to not be accustomed or to be a stranger, in other words to not be "accustomed" to be among us. The bodies of those who are *fëyaiba*, and in consequence their ways, are still too different from those of the group. Dogs and other pets are "accustomed" by being fed from the same pot from where the human family eats; they are brought into the group by eating the same food and a degree of difference is maintained by not admitting them into the human commensality circle. Likewise, the Mastanawa explain that they became "accustomed" to live among the Peruvians by eating salt and sugar, drinking alcohol, and using western clothes, "forgetting" in this manner the way of life of "the old ones".

This transformation of the body, and its manifestations, that the Mastanawa refer to as "accustoming" is evidenced in the tattoos with which all of them return home after having served in the army. Thus, they frequently showed me the tattoos they got during their time in the military while discussing their experiences, as well as the pictures in which they show up holding automatic weapons, usually next to helicopters or airplanes. Tattoos and pictures have replaced the piercings that warriors from the old days wore on their faces. These body modifications that express the Mastanawa soldiers' process of accustoming into the social world of Peruvians constitute also the expression of an alliance between them and Peruvians, an alliance which is hence written in and on their bodies. As in the case of the young man of the myth that goes to kill the Kukushnahua, the young Mastanawa declare their intention of killing the people they have heard the Peruvians are at war with.

Another outcome of the military service is the establishment of a specific type of relationship between those who serve together. As many rites of passage throughout the world do, the military service creates a certain type of bond between those who serve together. It is a common practice throughout Peru, and the Mastanawa are no exception, for those who serve in the military together to refer to each other as *promoción* (cohort). In the case of the Mastanawa, this means that once they return home they will have a number of close relations with people they previously did not and probably would never have had without coinciding in the military. These include relations with people from different Indigenous ethnicities as well as *mestizos*. People whose only relationship is that

they call each other *promoción* are not expected to show the same degree of generosity towards each other as they are expected to show to their coresidents. However, they are particularly expected to share alcohol and tobacco if drinking and/or smoking in public. Likewise, they usually joke with each other when they see each other in the street or play small pranks on the other when drinking together. These light relationships, safe from the heavier responsibilities that other kinship relations suppose, create the possibility for furthering the establishment of convivial relationships between people from different Indigenous ethnicities at a low cost, as those who are *promoción* frequently find each other, accompanied by their respective kin, when visiting the provincial capital Puerto Esperanza.

In sum, the military service from a Mastanawa perspective can serve at least two purposes. First, it replaces the old war expedition and emerges as the new great male rite of passage in contemporary Amazonia. Second, it is a means by which the Mastanawa express their empathy with the perceived suffering of Peruvians at the hands of those whom they assume to be potato-eater terrorists. By this means, the Mastanawa reinforce the alliance they have established with Peruvians through the production of the recruit's body, that is, through the consumption of food and wearing the clothes of the state the recruit becomes a son the state and brother of the other soldiers. In the case of the Mastanawa, the "accustoming" process initiated over fifty years ago through the consumption of salt, sugar and alcohol, and the use of western clothes is strengthened. Finally, the military service facilitates the establishment of social relationships between Mastanawa men and men from different ethnicities through the category of *promoción*,

which can serve as vehicles for their kin to establish social relationships with groups of people they would otherwise be unlikely to befriend.

The Mastanawa experience of the military service is yet another instance in which it is evident that even though they are enrolling into the ranks of an institution that belongs to the Peruvian National State apparatus, their decision to do so does not follow the same logic as that of the nation state. They do not enroll in the military to protect an abstract idea of the nation, to defend the rule of law vis-à-vis a terrorist group that seeks to overthrow it, or to safeguard national sovereignty from the threat of a foreign invader. Mastanawa enroll to protect and bring comfort to the relatives of the *peruanos legítimos* who showed empathy and compassion to their grandparents when they first "came out of the forest". They are returning the favor by showing empathy towards those Peruvians that 'think/feel too much' due to the violence inflicted to their kind by potato-eater terrorists who even though have the same type of documents as *peruanos legítimos* are not considered Peruvian by the Mastanawa. Theirs is a statement of the people they have become by "getting accustomed" to live among the Peruvians: a people whose bodies have grown in similarity to those of Peruvians and therefore are immersed in a continuous process of becoming Peruvian themselves, a process not exempt of ethical undertones.

Chapter Four: Story of two videos plus coda

In June 2014, an interfluvial Panoan speaking group[58] "came out" of the forest and the news surrounding this event "went viral". The "first contact" took place on June 13th of that year; four young men entered Simpatia, an Asháninka[59] village located on the shore of the Envira River in the Brazilian state of Acre, not far away from the Peruvian-Brazilian border. The headwaters of the Envira River are home to an undetermined number of interfluvial Panoan speaking peoples that live autonomously from the Brazilian and Peruvian Nation States, and both governments have created territorial reserves to protect their right to live in "isolation" and comply with the standards created by the international human rights system. Even though FUNAI, the Brazilian government agency in charge of indigenous affairs, had been keeping track of the movements of this specific group at least since 2008 (Pringle 2015), this unexpected visit caught them off guard[60].

The Asháninka alerted FUNAI of the events that took place on June 13th, prompting them to send a small team to Simpatia, which arrived on June 26th. Three days after the arrival of the FUNAI team, seven young men wearing penis straps and armed with bows and arrows approached Simpatia again. During the following days and weeks, representatives

[58] From here on the Xinane People, while a number of different ethnonyms have been assigned to them by anthropologists, government agencies and other indigenous peoples, I prefer to use the name Xinane People because it refers to the name of the stream that the group followed in order to arrive to the Envira River and find the Asháninka village Simpatia.
[59] The Asháninka speak an Arawakan language, therefore their language has no intelligibility with that of the Xinane People.
[60] FUNAI used to have an outpost on the Xinane stream area but it was closed in 2011 after it was attacked by presumed drug traffickers.

from the Brazilian government arrived in the area in order to manage the situation. FUNAI officials recorded, on video, different portions of the events that took place on June 29th. Some of the footage captured was edited into two videos and uploaded to the video-sharing webpage YouTube by one of the Brazilian officials that witnessed these events. FUNAI, local journalists and other parties interested in the topic of "voluntarily isolated indigenous peoples" also uploaded different editions of the videos to the same video-sharing platform. The videos caught a great deal of attention from the international press, indigenous rights non-governmental organizations, and academics. The diffusion of these videos took place shortly before the start of my fieldwork with the Mastanawa. When I first saw them, I immediately recognized that the "isolated" people in the video spoke the same language as the Mastanawa, and sung the same *Yama Yama* songs as they do, so I decided to take copies of the videos to the Upper Purus River.

In the following pages, I will discuss the reactions that different groups of people had to these videos. More specifically, this chapter explores the way in which the international public, local Brazilians and Peruvians, and the Mastanawa reacted to these videos. These different reactions tell of the different agendas these three groups think should be implemented in relation to these peoples. These different agendas are based upon different understandings of sociality, morality and ethical praxis, and therefore do not agree on the goals to be achieved nor on the means by which to achieve them. While the international public thought the Xinane People should be "left alone", local Brazilians and Peruvians thought that these "wild Indians" should be civilized and Christianized. Conversely, the Mastanawa wanted to bring them over to their villages to start their

accustoming process by teaching them how to eat sugar and salt, drink alcohol, and wear Western clothes. Finally, the testimony of a Mastanawa elder that was taken to the area to serve as an intermediary between the newly contacted group and the Brazilian state officials serves as clear example of the fundamentally different basis upon which Amerindians understand and experience ethics, and in consequence how do they practice and experience politics, as well as the challenges of intercultural communication. The analysis of these reactions is illustrative of the ways in which Amazonian understandings of alterity, and the praxis that goes with them, challenge the views on isolated peoples held by others as well as the policies put in place by national governments with the intention of protecting them. Rather than assuming that the only two possible ways of dealing with people like the Xinane are isolation or eliminating them through ethnocide and acculturation, for the Mastanawa there was a relationship already in place with the Xinane people which only needed to be re-actualized.

The first video

The first video that was uploaded to YouTube has a duration of eight minutes and thirteen seconds[61]. During the first few seconds of the video, a shaky handheld camera zooms into the opposite shore of the narrow Upper Envira River, while the camera zooms in to show the viewers the presence of three Xinane men we hear an off-camera voice scream: '*shara nokona ¡katawe! owe, piwe yoa, shara nokona'* (we are good, go away! Come here to eat yucca, we are good). In the interaction that follows, the Xinane men express their hunger and the off-camera voice continues to give them contradictory

[61] The video can be viewed at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cnJjGmljUmw (accessed May 13th, 2016).

commands – go away! Come here! Subsequently, the three Xinane men start singing *Yama Yama* songs[62]. There is a cut and in the next shot four young men have already crossed the river, three of them carrying bows and arrows, and we can see them rubbing their hands against their armpits to then put their hands in front of their mouths and blow in the direction of the camera, the Asháninka villagers, and Brazilian officials, as one is supposed to do when facing potentially dangerous spirits. Another cut is made, and in the following scene we can see the four Xinane young men now facing three Brazilian officials, a Yaminahua interpreter, and an Asháninka teenage boy. A number of presents lie on the floor: coconuts, bananas, and a t-shirt. The teenage boy approaches the presents pile and drops something there, presumably another present, and one of the Xinane men shows his appreciation by touching his arm and saying *'ichi, ichi, ichi, ichi, ichi'*, immediately after this the Brazilian officials try to stop the flow of gifts by saying 'he cannot give you his t-shirt, that's his only one' in Portuguese.

In the next scene, it is not clear whether the actions taking place on the video happened immediately after those of the previous scene or not, but we can see the Yaminahua interpreter brought by FUNAI crossing the river in order to hand two banana bunches to the Xinane located on the other shore. While the interpreter is handing out the banana

[62] The lyrics to *Yama Yama* songs are composed of formulaic verses, in metaphor, and in an archaic register of the language; all of these elements make the translation and interpretation of these songs a highly complex enterprise. However, according to the Mastanawa, these songs are usually sung when remembering past episodes of one's life, especially old love affairs, and when longing for the presence of faraway kin. Additionally, a Cashinahua man explained to me that there are *Yama Yama* songs that can be sung for a multiplicity of other purposes such as the attraction of game animals, put a baby to sleep, or the seduction of a potential lover. For a more detailed understanding of the *Yama Yama* songs among the Yaminahua of the Mapuya River consult Miguel Carid Naviera's doctoral dissertation (2007) *Yama Yama os sons da memoria: Afetos e parentesco entre os Yaminahua*. Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina

bunches to two young Xinane men who are crossing the river in order to meet him, the camera moves to show a third young Xinane man holding a rifle. The bananas are received, and the two Xinane men ask the Yaminahua interpreter to not get close to them, adding '*¡Kario chaka!'* (bad/ugly Brazilians!), before narrating what seems to be a scene from a recent skirmish, probably the one where they got the rifle the third man is holding. A tense conversation ensues between the two young men and the FUNAI interpreter, the former repeatedly telling the interpreter not to get too close to them as they begin to eat the bananas they have just received, while the latter returns towards the camera and the other Brazilian officials, who are commenting on the state of hunger of the young men. Finally, an off-camera voice screams in Portuguese '*¡vem comer, porra!*' (Come to eat, god dammit!). The camera cuts again, and the next scene shows one of the Xinane men walking around the Asháninka's houses, holding a long wood pole on his hand. A second one walks around holding a machete, and both of them do a careful visual inspection of their surroundings before picking up clothes, an axe, and a knife. The off-camera voice of the Brazilian official regrets the incident and yells '*¡No, no, no, no!'* in Portuguese, and then proceeds with the only words the FUNAI officials seem to know of the local Panoan language '*¡shara, shara! ¡katawe, katawe, katawe, katawe!'* (Good/beautiful! good/beautiful! go away! go away! go away! go away!). The two young men repeat that they are content as they go away, walking towards the river to rejoin their people who are waiting for them, hidden inside the forest on the other shore.

The second video

The second video is longer than the first one, it is nineteen minutes and seventeen seconds long, and it shows events that took place later on the same day as the first one[63]. Like the video described above, it begins with a shaky handheld camera, only this time the Xinane men are on the same side of the river as the FUNAI officials. The camera moves between the two ends of the sandy beach that separates the Asháninka village from the Envira River. On the shore, one Xinane man inspects the boats while the other two walk in the direction of the village; off-camera voices comment nervously on the presence of the tree Xinane young men. They are afraid the "isolated Indians" will take another tour around the Asháninka's houses and take away more tools and clothes. A young FUNAI official yells '*¡Katawe, katawe!'* (Go away, go away!), and then they start running towards the access to the village where the young Xinane men are already waiting for them, talking with the interpreter. As the Brazilian officials get closer, the three young men ask themselves whether they are dealing with spirits. They start asking who owns the houses they are seeing and who, and where, are the relatives of their interlocutors. Shortly after, one of the young men points to a place behind the camera and tells the one standing next to him to go have sex with a woman. He did not try to do that, and the conversation followed with the young men demanding to know who their interlocutors are, with no successful reply, to which they comment: 'these people are bad/ugly'. The frustration of the men who do not get a clear answer to their questions grows, one of them reacts saying: 'you say you are good, listen to us dirty people!'

[63] The video can be viewed at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ETVNl4_IzHY (accessed May 13th, 2016)

After trying unsuccessfully to determine the identity of their interlocutors, the Xinane men explain that they got in a fight with strangers, and that they resisted but many were killed. The FUNAI officials reply, in Portuguese, that they are there to protect them, although nobody translated this to the Xinane men. Continuing, the Xinane men claim that somebody has harmed them with sorcery, complaining about stomachaches, and explain that they cannot eat. Therefore, they ask if there is someone that knows/has *koshoiti*[64] among them. The Xinane men continue explaining the details of their fight and the way in which the strangers attacked them with firearms, they use the Portuguese word *espingarda* to refer to these and the onomatopoeia *ipapa* for the gunshots. Finally, they comment that the Shipinahua, presumably another Purus Pano speaking people, also live close to them, that they are good people and do not fight with them. The young Xinane men, again, received no reasonable answer to their questions.

Next, one of the young men makes a comment on one of the Asháninka's shirts, saying '¡*kamisa shara!'*, and the Asháninka man immediately takes it off and hands it to his interlocutor. The young men then proceed to ask for firearms, and the FUNAI officials immediately react saying '¡*espingarda, no! ¡papapa no!'*, to which the translator adds "*nokona shara"* (we are good/beautiful people). This starts a discussion between the Xinane men over which of these persons could be a good one. One of the FUNAI officials mentions the ethnonym Chitonahua, and the young men immediately react, they say they have done something with them, though it is not immediately obvious what, and

[64] The *koshoiti* are songs used to heal or attack. The cure to an attack performed by means of a *koshoiti* song, is the same song that caused it. Those who can perform these songs with successful results are called *koshoitiya*, literally "in possession of *koshoiti*" or "with *koshoiti*".

then point in the direction where the Chitonahua live. Finally, they ask again if there is anybody that knows/have *koshoiti*. Once again, they do not receive an answer. The Xinane men begin to lose their patience and tell the translator to keep his distance. Immediately after, they warn them that if they cause them harm they have their bows and arrows to fight back. The translator says again *'nokona shara*', so the young men demand for someone to bring them a firearm that they can exchange for their bows and arrows. The FUNAI agents rejoin the dialogue to make it clear that no firearms will be given to them. After this, the young Xinane men insist on their request to no success.

The young Xinane men then start asking *'¿ra'imé mi mulher?'* (where are your women?), using the Portuguese word for woman. They receive no answer, so they keep on asking: '*is that one your wife?'* Again, there are no reasonable answers to their questions. The young man that appears to be the leader of the group says, "I am sick and I have come to meet you", and continues explaining what he said a few minutes before: that somebody has harmed him through sorcery and as a result he has a stomachache. Immediately after, one of the young men starts singing a *Yama Yama* song. According to some of the Mastanawa who saw the video, they are telling their interlocutors through the songs that they are not children to be fooled, and that they are happy to have found them. The video continues in this fashion, with the three Xinane young men demanding to know who their interlocutors are, who are their relatives, which ones are their wives, and asking for firearms, food, and a solution for their sickness, and the Brazilian officials and Asháninka not providing answers, firearms, food, or *koshoiti* to undo the harm. As the sun goes down, the three Xinane young men sing their *Yama Yama* songs and the Brazilian

officials sing a verse of an indigenous song they have heard elsewhere, the three young men range from confusion, to anger, to laughter, they scream *'¡ari, ari, ari!'* to signal their current pain and hunger. The Brazilian officials, once again, fail to understand the message, and try to explain that they are Brazilian, not Peruvian, that bad things happened to them at the hands of Peruvians on the Peruvian side of the border, even though they had no certainty of this. The three young men start teaching them animal calls, the sun has set and the screen is pitch-black, end of the video.

The "Western" take: Drug trafficking, colonialism and the wild man

As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, the videos described above "went viral". Their initial diffusion took place through YouTube, but immediately afterwards specialized content distribution platforms started spreading the news, and soon the videos were available to watch on the webpages of newspapers from all over the world. There were two questions that dominated the discussion about the events portrayed in the two videos: Who are these people that suddenly came out of the forest, and why are they coming out of the forest? These questions were asked and discussed in the media as well as on specialists' email listservs, such as the one from the Society for the Anthropology of Lowland South America, and in the comment sections of the online editions of newspapers and blogs. The premise behind these questions being that those Amazonian Peoples that live autonomously from the State and who have been labeled as Indigenous Peoples Living in Voluntary Isolation, should not want to break their current situation of "isolation" unless dark powers from the exterior force them to do so.

The question of who these people are was expected to be met with a simple answer, an ethnonym. However, for the young men on the video that was not a simple straightforward question to make or answer. As will be explained, the implications contained in the apparently same question being asked from both sides of the conversation resemble the famous episode included in Lévi-Strauss' (1973) essay "Race and History":

> *In the Greater Antilles, some years after the discovery of America, whilst the Spanish were dispatching inquisitional commissions to investigate whether the natives had a soul or not, these very natives were busy drowning the white people they had captured in order to find out, after lengthy observation, whether or not the corpses were subject to putrefaction.*

While the Brazilian officials were trying to discover what kind of "souls" these young men had, by looking for an ethnonym in order to be able to associate them with a larger linguistic family or tribal complex, the young men were asking a similar but different question. These different concerns become evident since the very first moment of the encounter, when the young men rub their armpits to then put their hands in front of their mouths and start blowing in the direction of the Brazilians and Asháninka, they are doing what one is supposed to do when dealing with potentially dangerous spirits. This is one of the many techniques the Purus Pano speakers use to repel said spirits, whether they are storm spirits, disembodied spirits, forest spirits, or any other type of spirit that could cause harm to them. The short conversation that follows among the young men is still

aimed at finding out whether their interlocutors are spirits or humans. Finally, they decided to find out by asking them directly who are they.

When the young men begin questioning the Brazilian officials, they receive answers that do not correspond to their questions, or at least to their version of the question. The Brazilians keep on telling them: 'We are Brazilians', 'we are *cariu*[65]', 'we are not Peruvians, we are in Brazil, Peru is over there'. The young Xinane men do not seem to care about the name with which their interlocutors identify themselves, that is whether they are Peruvian or Brazilians, as they repeatedly rephrase their questions, asking them who are their relatives, or where are their wives. Likewise, they keep on asking for signs of hospitality such as food or medicine, and the establishment of exchange relationships; all of these being the things that "proper humans" (*onikoi)* do when they are in good relations with one another. This is the reason why the young men constantly become confused and angry at the Brazilian officials who insist that they are good people (*nokona shara)* but immediately afterwards order them to go away (¡*katawe*!). The Brazilian officials state their goodness with their words, while at the same time contradicting their words with their actions, or rather lack of. From an Amerindian perspective, the Brazilians' refusal to exchange, feed and heal the Xinane men, does not imply the negation of a relation between them and the Xinane people, but the establishment of one to be mediated by what Marshall Sahlins (1972) labeled negative reciprocity. In other

[65] *Cariu* is a regional term used by most of the indigenous peoples of the area to refer to Brazilians. I have not been able to identify an etymology of the word or a meaning beyond that of Brazilian, as different from Peruvian, Bolivian, or *gringo*.

words, instead of placing themselves in the position of ally, or potential ally, the Brazilians behaved like enemies through the negation of the gift.

The use of ethnonyms by the Purus Pano speakers follows a dynamic similar to what Arisi (2012) describes for the Pano speakers of the Javari valley. Rather than fixing boundaries the contextual changing use of ethnonyms between specific persons and groups of persons seems to be pointing out at a constant negotiation not of a boundary but of the type of social relations people have with each other. Depending on the context the use of ethnonyms will vary, thus sometimes it will be aimed at reducing (or eliminating) the social distance, and on other occasions it will be aimed at producing a distance. Additionally, the use of different ethnonyms might be related to moral evaluations of the performance of specific individuals or groups of people. If someone (or some group) behaves in an improper way it has to be because he or she is not a proper/real human being (*onikoi*) as the rest of the group that behaves properly clearly is.

In this sense, processes of alliance might eliminate, or put out of use, ethnonyms that could resurface if the alliances are broken. Here, unlike with nationalist ideology, the issue would not be how to keep the Other at bay, but rather the opposite. Consequently, the agenda is the concorporation, not incorporation or segregation, of peoples. This notion of concorporation implies a transformation on all the parties involved, in the sense that it is not about making the "other" conform to the "us" (incorporation) or making the "us" conform to the "other", but on the contrary is a process of mutual transformation by which both parties are affected in order to get rid of that which makes them different

from each other (and keeps them apart). In consequence, while ethnonyms, from the Western perspective, signal not only a clearly delimited social boundary but most importantly an immutable national spirit; for Amerindians ethnonyms signal a mutable status of relations between kinship groups and the immanent possibility for those groups to reduce their differences even to the point where involved parties fuse into one or the absolute contrary.

This aspect of Amerindian sociologies is particularly salient among the Purus Pano, where an abundance of registered ethnonyms ending in *–nawa* has given headaches to more than one ethnographer, which are only aggravated by the realization that these names fall in and out of use throughout the historic record[66]. Even though the word *nawa* can be translated as stranger, enemy or, in broader terms, dangerous other, usually the Purus Pano do not reject the ethnonyms ending in *–nawa* they have been labeled with. Furthermore, knowledgeable elders are capable of proudly enumerating a large number of this type of ethnonyms they can identify themselves with and those in their kinship network. The existence and acceptance of this multiplicity of names is illustrative of the constitutive role alterity plays in the production of Amerindian identities, where the continuous process of collective-self-making is driven by a permanent quest to encompass, and be encompassed by, the Other. Hence the paradoxical fact, discussed by Calavia (2002), that the Yaminawa's tendency towards atomization and fragmentation,

[66] And new ones continue to be created as in the case of the Parquenahua, used to designate the people that lives within the boundaries of the Alto Purus National Park and the Murunahua Territorial Reserve for Voluntary Isolated Indians.

manifested in this multiplicity of ethnonyms, is essential to understanding the threads that holds the group together by continuously creating productive alterities within the group.

In sum, while the identity question for the Brazilians is about ethnic names and boundaries; for the young Xinane men it is about first whether their interlocutors are humans or spirits, and therefore what kind of bodies do they have; and second, once it has been established that they are not spirits, whether they are the kind of humans with which they can engage in productive exchange relations through peaceful means or not. Because of this reason, the dialogue between the Brazilian officials and the young Xinane men is an unsuccessful one, while the Brazilians are obsessed with ethnonyms and the fixation of boundaries, the young Xinane men are interested in their expansion, by trying to figure out if the people they have found will be "proper humans" (*onikoi*) to them or not. In this sense, while from the Brazilian perspective the ethnonym should allow them to categorize the Xinane People and develop an appropriate protocol for interaction; for the Xinane men the logical process is the inverse one; first they need to establish what kind of relationship are they going to have with the Brazilians before they can decide what to call them.

The second question that was repeatedly discussed by journalists, human rights and indigenous peoples' rights organizations, as well as online newspaper forum commenters was: 'Why are these persons coming out of the forest?' As I mentioned previously, the base assumption was that they should not want to go and meet their Brazilian or Peruvian neighbors unless external pressures are forcing them to do so. In this sense, as soon as the

videos appeared in the news, the usual suspects came to the minds of activists, journalists, and on-line newspaper forum commenters. The question for them was which one of them was the culprit or whether it was a combination of them that had pushed the Xinane to seek contact with the people of Simpatia. The reasons most commonly mentioned were: the existence of drug trafficking pathways inside the territorial reserves in favor of peoples living in voluntary isolation, environmental pressures incoming from the encroachment of agro-industrial and logging expansion fronts in the area, as well as climate change, or the need to expand the areas reserved for these peoples by the Peruvian and Brazilian governments due to assumed demographic pressures on the existing reserves as a result of a presumed population growth amongst the "isolated peoples" that inhabit them.

In this case, the presumptions of the journalists, online forum commentators and activists do appear to have aligned with what happened to the group that showed up at the Asháninka village of Simpatia. The young men arrived in the village with a firearm that they had taken away from a group of people they fought with, and it was known by the local population that a Portuguese drug trafficker was using the territorial reserves in favor of the isolated peoples as a safe path to smuggle cocaine from the Peruvian side of the border into the Brazilian one[67]. Likewise, they explained to the Brazilians that they just have had a violent encounter with some strangers, that have resulted in several deaths, and that they would like to obtain firearms in order to be able to fight with them.

[67] According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, UNODC, in 2014 Peru was the largest producer of cocaine in the world and Brazil was both a prominent consumer country, as well as an important transit country in the flow of cocaine from the Andean region to the ports on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean.

Additionally, they asked for people that know/have the *koshoiti* that can undo the harm that these strangers have presumably caused to them. On their next visit, the group was already showing symptoms of contagious diseases they most likely got from the people they fought against or during their visit to the Asháninka village. Fortunately, in this case the Brazilian government was ready to treat the sick and immunize the rest of the group.

The local Peruvian and Brazilian populations had a different reaction than that of the vast majority of journalists, online forum commentators and activists. The majority of them were of the opinion that the *bravos* as the Brazilians call them, or the *calatos* as the Peruvians do, should not be left alone, but be "civilized". The two words used to describe these peoples are very demonstrative of the stereotypes held by the locals about their "voluntary isolated" neighbors. The word *bravo* in Portuguese has several meanings: wild, savage, fierce, angry and choleric, among others. On the other hand, *calato*, the word used by the Peruvians, is a borrowing from the Quechua language that means naked. In this sense, the words used by the Peruvian-Brazilian border society to refer to the Xinane People are highly evocative of the contradictory ideas that shape the stereotypes they hold about their autonomous Amerindian neighbors.

As most of the Western world, local Peruvians and Brazilians imagine their autonomous Amerindian neighbors to be remnants of the primordial state of humankind, left behind by the course of history. Their condition of *calatos,* that is their nakedness, as well as their high vulnerability vis-à-vis the diseases of the "civilized world" would constitute proof of their purity and innocence. In this sense, their lack of clothes would be symbolic

of a larger set of deficiencies that corresponds to their child-like condition: lack of money, lack of knowledge, lack of technology, lack of religion, etc. This is by no means a new discourse on Amerindians, when Christopher Columbus "discovered" America he found himself confronted with an unfamiliar natural environment populated by persons he found to be even more exotic. Columbus' first reaction to the initial Amerindian "generosity" caused him to portray them as "good savages" who lacked clothing, law, government, private property, and social classes. Consequently, these "good savages" also lacked greed, evilness, and religion. This first impression Columbus has of the Amerindians almost takes us to the Garden of Eden. This Indian is, for Columbus, a simple being, devoid of culture, an empty vessel ready to be filled, a true representative of humankind's childhood. They were waiting to be transformed into good Christians. Nevertheless, this first encounter was also the occasion for the first disagreement, as evidently Columbus was soon faced with the reality that his idealized Amerindians were also capable of stealing and committing violent acts; the bad savage, the cannibal, was invented (Todorov 2010).

Nevertheless, regardless of the preferred stereotype, whether it is *calato* or *bravo*, the local Brazilian and Peruvian populations agree in the need to bring these peoples into the fold of the "civilized world". If they are naked, pristine and innocent, they need to be "civilized" in order to make them aware of the dangers and evils of the world. Likewise, they ought to be "civilized" so they can discover the advantages of the modern world, which is paradoxical as many of these peoples are known for their keen interest in metal tools, firearms, lighters, clothes, and other industrially manufactured devices.

Furthermore, just as the Cashinahua of the Curanja River who re-established contact with national society after their last metal tools got to a state in which they could not be used anymore (Camargo and Villar 2013, Kensinger 1995), most "isolated peoples" are fully aware of the advantages of certain industrially manufactured goods, and are very active in seeking their obtainment, either through raiding sedentary indigenous settlements, exchanging with other Amerindians, or sporadic contact with missionaries or other foreign agents. On the other hand, if they are *bravos*, they need to be "civilized" so they can stop being unpredictable fierce peoples, and therefore a danger to the different segments of the national population of the area. Either way, the project is the same: to discipline them and convert them into good Christians and modern law-abiding citizens.

In this sense, these two apparently very different approaches to the "problem" posed by the existence of Amerindians living autonomously from the apparatus of the South American National States are more similar than they may appear to be. Their similarity lies on the infantilizing and paternalistic view of "isolated Indians" they suppose. Whether the proposal is to "contact" them or to "leave them alone", both ignore the agency of the autonomous Amerindians, and assume it is only up to the members of the Nation State to decide the possible outcome of these encounters. In this sense, both the regional and global audiences that commented on the events that took place on Simpatia, as well as other similar events, assume that the only reasons why "isolated Indians" might leave their territorial reservations are related to external pressures over their lifestyles and/or livelihoods incoming from mainstream society; while this is usually an element present in the equation, it is not the only one. The Mastanawa's narratives of "first

contact", as well as those of many other Amazonians, reveal that in many cases they took an active role in seeking to establish productive relations with their encompassing societies for reasons as diverse as these peoples and their specific sociopolitical contexts.

The Mastanawa reaction: They should come live with us!

When I arrived to the Upper Purus River area, a few weeks after the events that took place in Simpatia, the Mastanawa, Sharanahua and Cashinahua were fully aware of the fact that some people that spoke a Panoan language had "come out" of the forest on the headwaters of the Envira River. The Cashinahua wondered if this was the same people who occasionally take metal tools and crops from their villages on the Upper Curanja River, the Sharanahua and Mastanawa were curious to know if this was one of the many "similar to them" peoples they have heard their parents and grandparents talk about. Finally, the Mastanawa wanted to know if these persons were long lost relatives or if they were related to *Shori*, a man called by most *Epa* (father) who established residence with his two wives a little upriver from the last Cashinahua community on the Curanja River, speaks the same Purus Pano dialect as the Mastanawa and who on occasions immerses himself into the forest to visit his still autonomous relatives living on the *terra firme* between the Curanja and Upper Envira Rivers. In consequence, when they heard that I had brought with me copies of the videos that showed some of the events that took place in Simpatia, I was asked constantly to show them to groups of curious eyes looking for answers to the aforementioned questions. In the following pages, I will discuss the reactions of the Mastanawa I showed the videos to. As it will be discussed, the younger generations, born after the establishment of permanent relations with the Peruvian-

Brazilian border society, had a different initial reaction to the videos when compared with their older relatives born during the "pre-contact" days. However, the final reaction was the same for both groups: "they are our relatives! Bring them over so they can live with us!"

Invariably, the first reaction the younger Mastanawa had to the videos was to make humorous comments about the nakedness of the young men on the videos like: 'how am I not there?! I would flick them right on the balls!', 'how can they walk carrying those machetes on their penis straps without cutting their buttocks?!' or 'don't they feel ashamed when they climb up a tree and everybody can see their anuses open up and close down from below?!' All of these comments are not only made with the intention of making other people laugh, but more importantly to signal that they are not like those "shameless, naked peoples" anymore. The joke has the purpose of communicating their belonging to the Peruvian-Brazilian border society by making it clear that now that they use clothes they are more similar to the local Peruvians and Brazilians than they are to their *calato* relatives.

However, after the initial jokes they tended to make comments such as: "we were like that", "my mother/father was like that" or "look son/daughter this is how your grandparents used to be". Even though, they could not recognize themselves anymore as exactly the same kind of people as those portrayed in the video, their language was still the same as were their songs, their way of dealing with potentially dangerous spirits, their need for *koshoiti*, etc. The moving image of these peoples reminded them of the stories

they had heard from their parents and grandparents, their suffering because of not being able to communicate with the Peruvians when they first "came out" and a history of running away from violent *nawa* (strangers) on the *terra firme* between the Envira and Curanja Rivers, to finally find *nawa* they could live with in relative peace. The realization of these issues commonly resulted in comments that pointed out that the people shown on the videos might be related to them, or to their people's former allies that remained on the *terra firme* once their parents or grandparents decided to settle on the shores of the big river and live in proximity to the Peruvians and Brazilians. However, for the Mastanawa watching the video, the fact that they now wore clothes and ate salt and sugar were differences that made a difference.

Every time I showed the video to my Mastanawa friends, regardless of their age, they asked me why the Brazilians were so stingy towards the young men; why, even though they were trying to explain to them by all means possible that they were suffering and had been attacked by men armed with firearms, did the Brazilians refuse to help them, and finally why did they refuse to feed them and give them clothes and other industrially manufactured objects. As it was noted by Siskind (1973) in her pioneering study of Sharanahua kinship, sociality, gender relations and food distribution practices, generosity is a central value in the ethical systems of the Purus Panoans. Likewise, displays of generosity and food sharing are at the basis of their sociality, whether it is to reaffirm positive social relations or create new ones. The Mastanawa will commonly pass moral evaluations on persons and social groups based on whether they consider them generous or stingy with their food, money, knowledge or other possessions; these evaluations are

usually illustrative of the state of these relationships. *Yoashi*, stingy, is the worst insult in the Mastanawa language and that is how they described the FUNAI agents on the video that not only did not cater to the young men's requests but also prevented the Asháninka villagers from doing so.

Unlike the younger Mastanawa whose first reaction was to make jokes about the nakedness of the men in the video, the older ones would immediately comment: "I was like that a long time ago, but I have grown accustomed to live with the *nawa*". This refers to the notion of *fëyafái* (accustoming) defined in chapter one. As it was explained, this word *fëyafai* can be used to describe the process by which children incorporate those habits that will make them proper Mastanawa adults in the future, as well as the process by which dogs become useful hunting companions or captured baby monkeys become well behaved pets. Likewise, it can be used to describe the process by which two previously unrelated peoples find each other and learn how to live harmoniously. In this sense, the process of accustoming is one of reducing similarity through the use of convivial techniques, in which alimentary regulations and commensality play a key role.

When presented with the video, the Mastanawa's final comment always was: "they should come to live with us, they are our relatives!" The Mastanhua were of the opinion that the group that visited Simpatia should go to the Upper Purus River and establish residence with them, so they could have larger and more beautiful villages than the ones they had at the time of my fieldwork. The project was a simple one: to bring them over, teach them how to wear clothes, eat salt and sugar, and drink alcohol, and intermarry with

them. In this sense, while Westerners and local Peruvians and Brazilians were concerned with figuring out whether the Yaminahua, Mastanawa, or other Purus Pano speaking group had genealogical connections with the group that showed up at Simpatia; for the Mastanawa this was a less relevant question, as if the genealogical connection was absent they would still have a few options available to make it happen: through the naming system, through marriage, and/or through coresidence and participation in communal life. The relationship was a given, it was just a matter of finding out how they were related.

Coda: Osho Rodo's helicopter trip

A year after the events that took place in Simpatia, I visited Osho Rodo at his house on the Brazilian side of the border. During this visit, he told me that about a year before FUNAI officials, including a Yaminawá man called Ze Correia, came looking for him and told him and his cousin Baya that their relatives had come out of the forest on the headwaters of the Envira River and that they wanted to take them to meet the Xinane people and talk with them. Osho Rodo and Baya were both born during the "pre-contact days" of the Mastanawa, therefore FUNAI, presumably, had a double objective in mind by inviting them to visit Simpatia: first to establish whether the Xinane people were related to the Mastanawa, and second to use them as cultural intermediaries, considering that Baya and Osho Rodo themselves had experienced the process of learning how to live in proximity to the Peruvians and Brazilians after living a life of actively avoiding or killing them on the headwaters of the Purus and Envira Rivers. Both Baya and Osho Rodo accepted the invitation and took the next available flight to the Acre state capital, Rio Branco, in company of the FUNAI officials. Next morning, they boarded a helicopter

that took them to Simpatia. This was for Osho Rodo, without doubt, the most exciting and interesting part of the trip. While I was trying to get him to tell me the part of the story in which he finally encountered his alleged relatives, Osho Rodo was really interested in telling me all about the helicopter: the way in which it takes off and lands without the need of landing strips, the amount of noise it makes, the number of people you can seat in one helicopter, how it compares to traveling by airplane, etc.

Being a seasoned storyteller, Osho Rodo spared no details in his narrative of the trip: the time of the day at which they arrived to Simpatia, the number and type of motorboats they took to go upriver, the place where they stopped for lunch and what did they have for lunch. Likewise, he remarked that as they got closer to the area were his alleged relatives were, the FUNAI officials, including Ze Correia, kept on getting more nervous with each yard they advanced up the Envira River. When they finally arrived to the place where they met his alleged relatives, Osho Rodo told me that the rest of the party, with the exception of Baya, were too scared to approach them, so they left it to both of them to handle the conversation.

According to Osho Rodo, the first thing that happened when the young Xinane men came out to meet them was that they jumped into the boats and started asking about him and Baya. When this happened, Osho Rodo tells that the FUNAI officials ran away from the young men that came to meet them, leaving him and Baya alone to interact with them. The young men started saying, about Osho Rodo and Baya, ‘we haven’t met these men before, we are going to tell our father about you tonight’. After saying these words, they

started dancing and escorted Baya and Osho Rodo out of the boat. Once they were on the beach, Osho Rodo explains that the young men 'spoke strongly' and started asking him who are they, where did they come from and why had they come to see them. Osho Rodo told them that he was informed that his relatives had arrived to the area, so he decided to come and see for himself. The young men replied to this statement by demanding Osho Rodo to proof whether they were actually relatives, or not, by telling the names of their dead, starting by their parents' generation. Most Pano speaking peoples practice a Kariera type kinship system, which means that names are recycled, skipping a generation, through lines of descent in correspondence to a moiety system. In consequence, names have the capacity to place people in specific social relations according to their place within the name transmission system, regardless of the existence of an actual genealogical connection or not. Osho Rodo then started telling them the names they requested to know. Immediately after he had pronounced a few names, the young men started crying and one of the four men that had come to meet them covered Osho Rodo's mouth and asked him to stop talking, otherwise the FUNAI officials would learn too much. Immediately after, they started referring to him and Baya as their dear uncles and called the rest of the group to come meet their dear long-lost uncles.

As soon as the young men called their relatives, who had been hiding behind the tree line, to meet their long-lost uncles, people came out of their hiding places and started greeting them with the words '*¡aicho, aicho!* This is how we wanted to be, we have finally found each other, and we will not leave each other anymore.' Immediately after that, they excused themselves for not bringing them food, mentioned briefly how they arrived there

after fighting against other people further upriver, and invited Osho Rodo and Baya to join them to share a meal at their camp. According to Osho Rodo they were served a banquet consisting of turtle, quail, grey-winged trumpeter, tapir, wattled curassow, and land and river turtle eggs. While the men ate, they explained to them that Ze Correia, the Yaminawá FUNAI agent, did not talk like them and that they thought that he might be a Shipinawa. Furthermore, they explained that they did not know Ze Correia very well and that, on the contrary, they now knew him (Osho Rodo) and Baya very well. Having explained this, they told Osho Rodo that the next time the *nawa* (strangers) came, they were going to lie to them (and be lied to) because they are consistently being denied sugar by them, which they saw as evidence of stinginess. Osho Rodo continued explaining, that the *nawa* told the Xinane people that they should not eat sugar because they had a cold. However, Osho Rodo described, many of the people were sick and asking for sugar and some of them were saying: 'we are going to kill one of these men with our arrows because we want to eat sugar!' Those that were feeling more ill because of the cold they had, did not move or talk while enduring the fever. Osho Rodo explained to me that they were all treated and administered injections by the Brazilian doctor, adding "we were once like that".

After having a lavish meal and discussing their complains about the Brazilians' stinginess, their newfound nephews offered women to Osho Rodo and Baya and joked about whether they would like them or not. Then Osho Rodo explained that there were some tensions between the members of the group because of an extra-matrimonial love affair that had gotten out of control and had already produced episodes of violence

between categorical brothers. In relation to this issue, Osho Rodo commented that the group did not have many women, and that the ones he met were closely related to the males in the group, and that because of this reason they needed to find other people with whom they could intermarry with.

Osho Rodo's principal reaction, as well as that of his relatives who saw the videos, was that these people he had met in the Upper Envira River should come live with them by the shores of the Upper Purus River because they were their relatives and, most importantly, they were good people. Furthermore, he thought that the small size of the group and their consequent need to find other people with whom they could intermarry was another powerful reason to have them join the Mastanawa villages in the Upper Purus River. In this sense, Osho Rodo and the rest of the Mastanawa's agenda was in line with that of the Xinane People, and the diplomatic strategy to achieve it was the same: displays of generosity and commensality.

The concurrence between the Mastanawa and the Xinane people in their agendas, that is the expansion of their social networks and the formation of larger and more beautiful villages, as well as their diplomatic means to achieve it, contrasts greatly with the agenda and protocols of the FUNAI officials. While the Mastanawa and the Xinane people are interested in deepening their social relations and doing this as fast as they can by growing accustomed to live with their newly found neighbors, the FUNAI officials have a different immediate goal in mind, this is the protection of the Xinane people from the perils of the outside world: infectious diseases, potentially abusive relations with third

parties, forced religious conversion, alcohol and substance abuse, etc. The institutional mandate of FUNAI thus hinders their relation with the people whose security and wellbeing they are asked to ensure. In consequence, the Xinane people see the FUNAI agents as those who are blocking their initiative of establishing productive relations with their neighbors by preventing the flow of gifts whether they are clothes, sugar, firearms, metal tools or food. On the contrary, the Asháninka of Simpatia and the Mastanawa who visited the Xinane people, in typical Amerindian fashion, show their goodwill to the Xinane people through gifts of food and clothing, positioning themselves as uncles, and therefore affinal kin, sharing meals, etc. Consequently, from the Xinane people's perspective it is the Mastanawa and Asháninka that are acting as *onikoi* towards them, while the Brazilians officials are acting as the quintessential villain of all Panoan mythologies, *Yoashi*, the immensely rich and powerful primordial stingy man.

These different ways of reacting to the presence of the Xinane people evidences different ways of conceiving the otherness represented by those labeled as living in "voluntary isolation". While very different in their practical propositions, keep them isolated or "civilize" them, the positions held by international audiences and local non-Indigenous persons stem from a similar understanding of who these "isolated Indians" are. This is a view that contends that they are "inseparable from certain threatened domains of Nature" (Bessire 2012: 468) and that they represent the last remnants of uncontaminated Amerindian culture. In this sense, these two possible ways of dealing with people like the Xinane are precisely the reactions to be expected from modernist subjects when faced with what is conceived of as a radical alterity that is understood to encompass pure

culture and pure nature at the same time (idem) and therefore represents a direct threat to the project of the modern nation state. In consequence, these two strategies are two sides of the same coin as they represent attempts to domesticate a wild presence that escapes the power of the state. One does it by taking away those elements which make these peoples a threat to the modernist project; the other by delimiting a space from where they are not supposed to leave, creating through this legal fiction a place for these peoples within the ranks of the citizens of the national state. Either way, a social relation beyond the possibilities of strict avoidance or elimination (through "civilization") is understood to be impossible and even undesirable.

On the other hand, the Mastanawa reaction to the events that took place in Simpatia force us to take seriously Stasch's call for an anthropology that "studies otherness as an internal feature of local social relations and local practices" and not only how "people's social lives are structured by non-local institutions and cultural influences" (Stasch 2009:9). From the Mastanawa perspective the relation with the Xinane people was already present, the issue was just to figure out how they are related. In Osho Rodo's narration this was achieved through the naming system, in other individual cases some Mastanawa claimed a genealogical connection to the people from the Xinane[68]. This way of conceiving the "isolated" as kin is similar to High's (2013) account of the Waorani, who after a violent encounter with the Taromenani found a way of relating to them as fellow victims of violence. In this sense, for the Mastanawa the Xinane and other "isolated peoples" would be kin because "they envision themselves as people who 'live each other's lives and die

[68] This notion of conceiving the Other as an internal component of social relations is true among the Purus Pano to the extent that one of their moieties receives the name of *nahua*, the Other.

each other's deaths' (Sahlins 2011:14)" (High 2013: 2014). In a model like this there would be no place for insurmountable difference as the Other would not be primarily defined by the boundary between us and them but by the possibility of closeness, whether it is through peaceful or violent means.

Chapter Five: The Myth of Nawa and the Nawa of Myth

This chapter will examine the role of other in Mastanawa sociality and sociology. It starts with a reflection on the place of the Other in an important Mastanawa myth. This is the myth of Yoashinawa, the primordial stingy man, a myth closely related to other myths about powerful *nawa* in the Pano mythical repertoire. The main point this chapter raises is that the relationship with the Other cannot be understood purely in terms of the prey/predator dichotomy suggested by perspectivist literature as the fundamental opposition upon which Amazonian cosmologies are built. I propose that compassion and conviviality play an equally important role in the ways in which the Mastanawa understand their relation with the Other. It is a balance between predation and conviviality, between difference and sameness, that allows for the reproduction of society. Finally, building upon Erikson's notion of constitutive alterity and Stasch's "society of others", I discuss the idea that the opposition between alterity and identity does not constitute the best model to understand Mastanawa sociality.

The Primordial Stingy Man

The myth of Yoashinawa, the primordial stingy man, is the Mastanawa version of a mythical character identified with the Inka in most Pano mythologies. As it will be shown, this myth announces the principles that govern the Mastanawa relationship with the Other, and in particular with those others they deal with in a regular basis.

Yoashinawa[69]

I am going to tell you the story of Yoashinawa (Stingy Foreigner).

Saying "We are going to visit our chief," they would go to see him. He only gave them charred corn; that was all he would give them.

"Eeeee, he is always doing this to us. How can we get corn?" They were always looking for a way to have corn.

Yoashi did not want to give them anything. He was stingy with his things. Yoashi was truly a miserly man.

Everybody left except one, the one who stole Yoashi's fire. He first went close to the fire.

"Watch out! Do not touch my fire", said Yoashi.

"I will not do anything."

While Yoashi was looking elsewhere, he hit the firewood to obtain some coal.

"Do not touch it! Do not touch it!"

The parrot *chere* grabbed a piece of burning coal and left saying "chere, chere, chere, chere, chere."

He, the parrot *chere*, then left the fire in the middle of a patio. They now had fire, they had fire and it was flaming. They now had fire and were very happy. Before having fire, they cooked with the sun, now they were happy because they could cook with fire.

Saying "I'm going to look around, I'm going to get something," they went looking for *conta*[70] fruits.

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[69] Narrator: David Melendez. Myth collected by the author and translated by Yessica Turuza and the author.

[70] Attalea tessmannii.

Saying “I’m going to look around, I’m going to look around,” they left again.

“I’m coming to visit you, chief.”

There he gave them charred corn and they ate it. Yoashi had a large quantity of corn kernels.

“Do not touch anything, I am going to urinate. Do not touch anything!”

“I will not touch anything.”

Yoashi went to urinate and the man hid a corn kernel in the tip of his penis. After hiding the corn kernel there, he tied up his penis again.

Yoashi returned after urinating saying “I will count my corn kernels”

After counting the corn kernels, he asked “Where is this corn kernel’s couple? Open your mouth, let me see.”

“Look inside my mouth my friend.”

“Eeeeee, I will take a look, I will take look.” Saying this, Yoashi looked for the corn kernel everywhere. He even looked for it inside the man’s anus!

“You cannot look there! Only my love can see that!”

In this fashion, Yoashi looked for the corn kernel inside the man’s eyes and his nostrils. He looked everywhere without finding the corn kernel.

When Yoashi started telling the man that he was going to hit him, he left.

Immediately after he returned, the man planted his only corn kernel.

“I have planted my only seed, let’s see if it is going to die or not.”

He went to see his corn another day and noticed the little seed had started growing

“Aichora!” The man got very happy.

“This Yoashi is not going to give us anything, I cannot get anything from him.”

He then went to see his corn again, it had grown very big.

He went to see his corn once again, it now had an ear. The next time he went to see it, he noticed his corn had two large ears. He was very happy, “aicho!”

When the corn was getting hard he harvested it and planted it. He first planted a small garden and the next year planted a big one.

“Feed my two children, woman. We are not going to grow more corn than the quantity we already have. I did all of this with just one seed.”

He built a house to store corn at the place where he made his big garden, right on the place where he planted a lot of corn.

In this manner, he planted corn again. Having made a big garden, he said “I’m going to let the others know. My corn is hardening, my corn is good now.”

In this way, the man left walking.

“There he comes, there he comes!”

When he arrived, they fed him.

“Go ahead, ask me.”

“Friend, how are you?”

“Aaaaa, think, think.”

“Get me something.”

But he could not give him anything. “I cannot give you anything, I only have a little bit. Come and see what I have brought with me, only these two little things. Look.”

He left and came back carrying two big baskets full of corn.

They were all really happy “aicho! Aicho! Aicho!”

“Save this for me.”

"I will make this grow."

"Let your two wives eat this, let them eat. Do not be stingy with them, let them eat. Give them food, feed them."

Everybody left because they did not have anything to eat. He took everybody with him. When they arrived, they saw that there was a lot of corn.

"Have you prepared my corn beer?"

"I have prepared it."

"Have you cooked *humitas*[71]?"

When they arrived, he fed them *humitas* and offered them corn beer. They were really happy.

"Even though Yoashi refused to give me corn, I have made my corn grow."

They went to make a big garden and planted an immense quantity of corn.

"Yoashi always refuses to give us anything, he is always stingy to us. Let's go and kill that bad/ugly man." They spoke in this way, planning to kill Yoashi.

The *uru* bird and his mother left. Knowing that they were going to kill Yoashi, they left him behind and went away.

They left saying "let's go and kill him" and they killed Yoashi.

This is how my people told this story. This is what they did to that man they called Yoashi, they killed him. This is how they killed him. All of them got dirty with his blood. They rubbed Yoashi's head against their buttocks. The curassow went with them too.

[71] Dish in which corn dough is cooked wrapped inside a cornhusk. It is very similar to a tamal.

As I mentioned above, the Mastanawa story of Yoashinawa is a particular instance of a widespread mythical theme among the Pano. The co-resident stranger character is present in many Pano mythologies, particularly among the Western Pano, as the Inka (Calavia 2000). It is interesting that while in other Pano mythologies this figure of the powerful stranger who visits or co-resides with the ancestors is split in two, a benevolent/generous *nawa* and a stingy *nawa.* In the Mastanawa case, to the best of my knowledge, this mythical character only exists in its stingy version. In several myths it is ancestral spirit animals that act as generous *chai*[72] to the Mastanawa's ancestors. In all of these mythologies this character of the powerful and distant *nawa* fulfills the role of giver of cultural knowledge, even when, as in the Mastanawa version, this cultural knowledge has to be taken away from him by force rather than as the result of the *nawa's* generosity.

The story of Yoashinawa presents us with a complicated situation; the ancestors co-resided with an extremely rich and stingy foreigner, who was also a powerful shaman, and denied to them the most basic things despite their precarious situation. They were always looking for corn and had to cook using the sun's heat. Yoashi, as his name suggests it, is an extreme caricature of stinginess, to the extreme that even though he lives in the same village as the ancestors, he really lives alone. Yoashi has no wife or children, therefore he does not have affinal kin either. Unlike most creatures the Mastanawa ancestors deal with in their *shidipafo*, Yoashi is never referred to, or addressed, as *chai* by the men who deal with him. This announces that the alliance with Yoashi is an

[72] Potential brother-in-law or male cross-cousin for a male ego.

impossible alliance; there is no possible kinship with him, there is not even possible peaceful exchange with him. Yoashi is an aberrant co-resident and has to be killed. It is through the killing of this *nawa,* who lives side-by-side with the ancestors in an abnormal arrangement that the Mastanawa finally acquire all those cultural features that make them proper people (*onikoi*).

It is worth mentioning here the role of the animals who not only help the ancestors steal Yoashi's fire, but also participate in the killing of Yoashi. Animals in Mastanawa myth frequently present themselves as generous affinal kin, or potential affinal kin. Similarly to the character of Yoashi, animals are in many cases the source of important knowledge and objects. For example, it is the ancestral mouse spirit (Yapi Yoshifo) who teaches women how to give birth. It is said that during the time before women knew how to give birth, their husbands had to call a forest monster who would kill the parturient woman in order to take the baby out of her. Feeling empathy for a woman who started feeling the pain of labor, and being an experienced mother with many children herself, Yapi Yoshifo decided to teach the ancestral woman how to give birth. Yoashi lacks the empathy and compassion that Yapi Yoshifo shows for the parturient woman Likewise, Mastanawa myth frequently tells the story of ancestral humans who marry animals and abandon their relatives to live with their new animal affinal kin. Thus, animals in Mastanawa mythology seem to play a role analogous to that which exogamous social units play in their sociality. They are somewhat proximate others who allow for the reproduction of life, and who are also magnificent givers of knowledge, food and/or other goods.

However, as with any affinal relation these human-animal relationships are not free of dangers and complications.

The relationship the ancestors have with the mythical Yoashi, resonates with the dynamic of their relationship with their current Yoashi. As I mentioned in chapter two, at the time of my fieldwork there was a couple of evangelical missionaries who were trying to convert the Mastanawa into born-again Christians. Unlike the Yoashi from the myth, or the missionaries the Mastanawa met in the 1960s, their current Yoashi does not live with them. The missionary couple decided to set up shop in Puerto Esperanza, where they concentrated their efforts in learning the Mastanawa language, and, according to my Mastanawa informants, they had plans to build a church and a school for the Mastanawa. However, most of the Mastanawa I talked to were very skeptical about the likelihood of these projects becoming a reality. Yoashi was married to a Bolivian woman. People were quick to point that Yoashi's wife was Bolivian and not a *serrana*. From my perspective, this was an oxymoron as – I thought – everybody knows most of Bolivia is located on the Andean highlands and therefore most Bolivians are *serranos.* However, for my Mastanawa friends Bolivians were not *serranos* and this was evident in this woman's generosity. Her behavior was clearly not that of a *serrana*.

Many Mastanawa were convinced that the missionary was using them, and more precisely their name, in order to raise funds and goods from wealthier missionaries elsewhere. The problem, they thought, was that instead of sharing these resources with them, Yoashi was hoarding them for his own benefit. They continuously compared him

with the SIL missionaries or the Spanish Catholic priests who lived at the Mouth of the Curanja River; both these groups of people were remembered as extremely rich and extremely generous. Yoashi, of course, is neither of these. That is why Mastanawa frequently complain saying "what kind of missionary is this?! I have never seen a missionary like this one!" They expect a missionary to be someone who will have seemingly unlimited access to manufactured goods, and who is willing to either give them away for free or exchange them for seemingly worthless things like papayas. Yoashi did none of these things. Furthermore, he would sometimes bring back sacks full of shoes from his trips to Pucallpa or Lima and sold them – at a reduced price – instead of giving them away for free. This was for many Mastanaua and indisputable proof of Yoashi's stinginess and excessive greed that would drive him to mishandle the gifts sent by others with the intention of benefiting the Mastanawa.

The schoolteacher who worked in Catay during my first years of visiting the village was also described many times as *yoashi*. However, this was by no means his nickname. People usually referred to him by his last name, teacher Chota, and sometimes playfully called him teacher Amahuaca. Chota was not an Amahuaca man, and sometimes would protest the joke saying that he was a *mestizo* not an Amahuaca[73]. Everybody knew this. The funny element of the joke was that it pointed at the fact that he was more of a fisherman than a school teacher, which in addition to his social awkwardness made him more similar to the Amahuaca who live in a remote village upriver that borders the

[73] He was a migrant from the Lower Ucayali River, most likely of Kukama ancestry given his place of origin and last names. It is well reported that many Kukama-Kukamiria people prefer not to recognize themselves as Indigenous due to various social, economic, political, and historic reasons.

protected areas where the *indios bravos* live, rather than a mestizo school teacher. Chota was frequent victim of petty theft from the children he was supposed to be educating in the one-room house that served as the village's school. The shameless kids would ask him, without hiding their smiles, "teacher Chota, where did your sugar go?" or "teacher Chota, did you bring any crackers from Puerto Esperanza this time around? I would really like to eat one!" These were of course mocking questions, asked right after the children had feasted on the school teachers' food. The children's parents more often than not chuckled at their kids' mischievousness, rather than reprimand it, and when they did it, it was done without vigor, and with the intention of satisfying the teacher's expectations rather than to teach their children not to do it again. The reason for this is that the parents did not really think that their kids had done anything wrong; it was Chota who was at fault because he only brought food for himself. This was also the reason why Chota was usually not invited to participate in the collective meals.

The contrast became evident when Chota was removed from his position and was replaced by Freddy, a young Cashinahua who was in the last year of his training as a schoolteacher. When he arrived to the village for the first time he did so alone. We decided that the best thing would be for him to stay at my house for the moment. During one of our first conversations, he openly confessed to me that he was afraid to work in a Mastanawa village. All he had heard were negative things, and was curious about my experience as a foreigner also living among them. His relatives had warned him about the Mastanawa being a violent and disrespectful people that would mistreat him and steal from him. I told him that I had been working with the Mastanawa for more than four

years and I had never had anything stolen from me. He replied that not only his relatives, but also his *mestizo* schoolteacher colleagues had the same opinion about the Mastanawa. He was doubtful about my statements, and nervous about the fact that he now had to live among those who are considered – by everyone else in the province – the unruliest *bravo*s among the "civilized" Indians. However, the young Cashinahua man knew very well the importance of becoming a part of the collective body that is the local community, and the role that food and commensality play in it. After all, the Cashinahua eat in the exact same way as the Mastanawa and have a very similar system for classifying people and making persons. For this reason, he brought his wife with him on his next trip, something I never saw Chota do. A house that had been recently abandoned was given to the couple, and they quickly became active members of the village's food production, distribution, and consumption system. They did not have a garden of their own, but Freddy was an enthusiastic hunter and fisherman, and the other women allowed his wife to harvest from their gardens. I never heard about – or witnessed – the children stealing from Freddy and his wife.

On one occasion, the missionary brought with him a group of health practitioners that offered free basic medical services to the Mastanawa. They invited everyone to gather in one of the villages where the doctors were going to spend the day looking at patients to then return to spend the night in Puerto Esperanza. People in the village where I was staying were not eager to participate in this event. However, later that day I found out that a few people had gone to see what the doctors were up to. Upon their return, a couple of them asked me "hey what are these good for?" and showed me a bunch od pills, mostly

over-the-counter painkillers and antibiotics. Shortly after, they confessed to me with complicity that they had also stolen some toothpaste tubes from Yoashi and his doctors. The explanation to this petty theft was similar to that for the lack of real corrective measures for the kids' mischief in regard to Chota's crackers and sugar. The opinion that Yoashi was benefiting from his position as missionary to the Mastanawa, without sufficiently distributing the benefits among them, was a consensus among the Mastanawa that justified these acts of petty theft. Everybody assumed that more powerful and wealthy missionaries, either from the United States or Lima, were handsomely funding Yoashi's evangelical enterprise with goods and money that were supposed to be delivered to the Mastanawa or used for their benefit. Likewise, the opinion that Yoashi was improperly pocketing a significant amount of the foreign missionaries' resources was a consensus among the Mastanawa too.

Stealing, or taking away from stingy *nawa* by force, was also something that apparently some Mastanawa engaged in when visiting Puerto Esperanza. I never witnessed it or had anybody tell me that they did it. However, Mastanawa and non-Mastanawa alike assured to me that this was the case, and that their reputation as an unruly people partially came from this. Regardless of whether this is true or not, what is interesting is the explanation that many Mastanawa gave to me for this happening. Their explanation was: "they have taken advantage of us for a long time, now it is our turn to take advantage of them". Many would also add, "our parents did not know how to steal, we learned from the *mestizo*, it was them who taught us how to steal". The principle here is the same as in the previous case: there is a person, or a group of people, who has taken more than their fair

share and is not redistributing these excessive benefits. The *mestizos* are to be blamed for the theft they are being subjected to. Had they not been abusive bosses in the past, the Mastanawa would not be stealing from them today.

Finally, something similar occurs with those who have access to credit at the general stores in town. As I described in chapter two, Indigenous persons who have a regular income as municipal, education, or health workers obtain credit from shopkeepers by leaving the debit cards linked to the accounts where they receive their salaries as a security. Similarly to the *habilitación* system, this system of credit combined with extremely overpriced products results in debts that never cease to grow. Even though Indigenous salaried workers are extremely aware of the disadvantageous terms of the contract, they insist on entering into these types of agreements. In the case of the Upper Purus, the recurring engagement of Indigenous peoples into these kinds of arrangements cannot be explained as consequence of a lack of other options for Indigenous people to access industrially manufactured products. Entering into debt with Peruvians is not the only option available to the Mastanawa, as they could very well sell their forest products on the Brazilian side of the border where buyers pay immediately and in cash rather than in commodities and credit.

If it is not because of a lack of options to access industrially manufactured goods, what explanation can we give to the persistence with which the Mastanawa and the other Indigenous peoples from the Upper Purus engage in debt relations with Peruvian traders even though they recognize that they sell their products at outrageous prices and

frequently cheat them? The problem with the Brazilian way of doing things is that once products and cash change hands the relationship is over. The link between Mastanawa and *nawa* is an ephemeral one, restricted to a specific interaction. Regardless of their efforts to transform it into something else. On the other hand, the relationship between an Indigenous *habilitado* and his *patrón*, or debtor and creditor, is one that persists in time. This long-term relationship between the Indigenous client and *nawa patrón* allows for other exchanges that are not available in the case of the ephemeral trade relations Brazilians prefer. In other words, the relationship between an Indigenous client and its *patrón* serves as an insurance policy ready to be executed in times of extreme need. For example, Luciano, who was the chief of Catay during most of my stay in the Purus River, had a longstanding relationship with one of the shopkeepers in Puerto Esperanza. When his wife fell ill with unbearable abdominal pain, he decided to take her to Pucallpa in order for her to get proper medical treatment. In order to be able to cover his travel expenses, he asked for a loan from the shopkeeper, explaining to him the pressing circumstance that was taking him and his wife to Pucallpa. The shopkeeper had ties to Luciano both as logger *patrón* and shopkeeper creditor, and accepted Luciano's request for money. If a request like Luciano's was to be denied, most debtors would immediately go to the bank to report their debit card as lost and demand a new one which would be used to start a new relationship with a different shopkeeper. As in the cases of the missionary and the schoolteacher, the actions taken against the creditors are explained due to their lack of generosity or, put differently, their stinginess. Debtors are willing to accept that their creditors "take advantage" of them only insofar as they will be able to "take advantage" of the relation when their time of need comes.

Neither Entirely Prey nor Entirely Predators

Recent ethnographies of the region have characterized the relations between Indigenous peoples and foreigners, and their objects, in terms of the perspectivist tenet that the relationships that mediate between every living creature in the cosmos are organized upon the prey-predator scheme, placing every existing agent in a continuous trophic chain of cosmologic positions. These two possible positions within the prey-predator dyad would determine the way in which Amazonian peoples configure their hunting practices as well as other technologies used to relate to the outside world, including their relations with other human collectivities. Thus, there would only be two possible modes of understanding and experiencing the relation with the outside, whether as prey/victims or as predators/victimizers, and every society in the South American Lowlands should be able to be identified with either position as the one determining their experience of the Other in a consistent way. As a result, different Amazonian peoples have been identified as organizing their relationship with their others as either victims or predators in a consistent way. However, the Mastanawa resist being boxed into either category. They do not consider themselves victims within a hostile cosmos by any means, nor do they consider themselves to be natural predators in a world full of prey. This is evident in the ambiguity of their relationship with prey animals: what is good to eat might steal your baby[74]. Likewise, their relationship with the *nawa* seems to be understood more in terms of a pendular movement between two poles: a pole identified with empathy, generosity,

[74] I was told precisely this by a woman whose husband ate a nocturnal monkey called *riro* in Mastanawa (aotus sp.) and had her baby son start turning into a nocturnal monkey as a consequence.

nurturance, and egalitarian relations and a pole associated with predation, stinginess, violence, and hierarchical relations. That is, a pole associated with convivial relations and another one associated with predatory relations. Since these are two ideal poles, most relationships are not conceived as purely predatory or as entirely convivial. Equally, the prey can become the predator and vice versa if the conditions for this to happen are given.

The guidelines for the relationship with the Other are outlined in Yoashi's myth. The ancestors that lived with Yoashi first demanded empathy, generosity, and nurturance from him. It was only after the continuous refusal on the side of Yoashi to establish a relationship based on the aforementioned positive principles that the human – and animal – ancestors decide to steal his things and kill him. Contemporary Mastanawa do not usually kill their *nawa* anymore. However, their relationships with the *nawa* often follow a similar trajectory when the initial request for empathy and generosity is not met. If the missionary or the schoolteacher are not generous enough their possessions will be stolen. Likewise, as I mentioned in chapter three, narrations that deal with encounters with the Other often start with the Mastanawa asking to please not be killed, asking for their humanity to be recognized. This happens both in narrations about the mythical past, and in the testimonies of living Mastanawa. This is precisely what the Mastanawa say they told the party of Sharanahua men and the Peruvian trader who went looking for them when they were still living by the non-navigable streams at the headwaters of the Curanja River. If the *nawa* recognize the humanity within the Mastanawa and vice versa, the

interaction will follow a peaceful pattern. In several Mastanawa myths, these encounters are followed by the protagonist's adoption into the group of the Other.

The Mastanawa, and other Purus Pano, tell a *shidipafo* about a hunter who goes into the forest looking for white-lipped peccaries, the quintessential prey animal of the South American Lowlands. The hunter decides to spend the night in the forest in order to continue hunting the next morning, and while he is sleeping the peccaries pay him a visit. The hunter is woken up by the sound of a group of people talking, accusing him of having shot arrows at them earlier. The hunter replies to the accusations saying that he was hunting peccaries, not humans. After reaffirming to the hunter that it was them who he had been shooting arrows at earlier, the peccaries take the man to their village. Once the party arrives to the peccary village, the man is transformed into a peccary by shamanic means and by the consumption of peccary food with the peccaries. He also marries a peccary woman and has peccary children. Eventually, the hunter-turned-peccary is captured back by his human siblings and is turned into a human again. Every time his relatives feasted on peccary meat, he lamented at the possibility that his human relatives were eating his affinal peccary kin. His human wife, annoyed at this, insisted that he ate peccary meat. The man ate peccary meat and died.

The story of the hunter-turned-peccary is telling of the way in which the Mastanawa refuse to be boxed either as prey or predators even in the context of cynegetic practice. Furthermore, it shows how a relation typically mediated by a predatory logic can become one mediated through a convivial one, and not just any relation but the one between a

human hunter and the peccaries, the quintessential prey. The hunter is not killed and eaten by the peccaries, he is made into a peccary by means of coresidence and commensality. He becomes accustomed to life among the peccaries and, therefore, becomes a peccary himself. This contradicts Fausto's (2012: 176) affirmation that anthropologists who, following Overing, have defined conviviality as the main characteristic of Amazonian sociality, have arrived to this conclusion by paying attention to the close-knit relations held by coresident groups through analysis of quotidian life in the domestic sphere, rather than observing what happens in the spheres of ritual, shamanism, and intergroup relationships. According to this model, predation would explain Amazonian peoples' engagements with alterity and conviviality would explain identity. However, the examples of Mastanawa myth and relations with their others described above contradict Fausto's explanation for the different conclusions reached by those who propose the predatory model and those who propose the convivial one. This does not mean that the issue of predation is totally absent from the way in which the Mastanawa understand their relations with others. They are acutely aware of how *mestizo* shopkeepers and *patrones* try to take advantage of them in their transactions either as creditors or commercial partners. However, it is fair to say that predation is the logic that comes into play when conviviality is not an option, and, as I explained in chapter three, even seemingly purely predatory actions can be motivated by a convivial agenda. Furthermore, predation and seduction can be seen as two sides of the same coin. For example, when dealing with other people such as traders, potential lovers, and political authorities, the Mastanawa will sometimes use certain plants[75] in order to bring about

[75] Particularly fragrant plants. It seems to be the case that industrially manufactured perfumes are used under the same logic.

favorable dispositions towards themselves. In this sense, we could say that the relationship with the Other usually encompasses a mix of convivial and predatory qualities which are always in an unstable balance. This unstable balance explains the pattern followed by the Mastanawa and other Purus Pano speakers, who fight amongst themselves in order to split apart, just to get reunited after one or two generations before starting the same cycle again.

An Identity Oriented Towards the Exterior

The story of Yoashi brings up a central element of Mastanawa and, in more general terms, Pano socialities, which is the notion that that which is characteristic of the *onikoi* comes from elsewhere, and, more importantly, from somebody else. This is related to the idea of constitutive alterity proposed by Erikson (1986, 1996) I introduced in chapter two. This is perfectly illustrated by the fact that two quintessentially Mastanawa markers of culture, corn and fire, are acquired by the ancestors from Yoashi. This radical orientation of identity towards alterity among the Pano peoples has led to the discussion of Panoan ethnonyms as signaling a non-boundary (Arisi 2012) rather than an ethnic border, as these names can refer simultaneously to particular persons within the group, collectivities within the group, and collectivities beyond the limits of the group. In this sense, Arisi's analysis of the use of ethnonyms among the Matis shows how the Other is already part of us, rather than those who we are not. This is a significant departure from classic theories about identity that assume it to be the complementary opposite of alterity.

The principle of constitutive alterity then tells us that the essential aspect of identity is not that which is immutable but, on the contrary, its capacity to become something else. This is a significant departure from nationalist ideologies which are concerned with "boundedness, continuity, and homogeneity encompassing diversity" (Handler 1988: 6). The Mastanawa agenda is clearly not the preservation of purity behind an ethnic boundary, but the mixing of peoples and becoming something else in the process. This project, of course, has reached new heights during the last fifty years through the Mastanawa involvement with a series of previously unimaginable others. This is why during a hot afternoon in which I was sitting outside a bodega in Puerto Esperanza with Xiko, a Chaninawa elder, he asked me my opinion on a young woman who was passing by, and, before I could say anything, he continued by saying with a mix of pride and amazement, "That is my granddaughter! Look at her! She is just like a *nawa*!"

Conclusion

This dissertation shows how the Mastanawa understand and experience their relationships with their multiple neighbors and how this relates to the issue of personhood. In my analysis I pay particular attention to the Mastanawa's relationships with non-Indigenous peoples. I made this decision because, with notable exceptions, the relationship with the non-Indigenous Other is usually left out – or relegated to a marginal place – in the literature about personhood and identity in the region. This is paradoxical given the copious literature that describes the mechanics of identity and personhood in the region using terms such as fluidity (Oakdale and Course 2014), elasticity (Feather 2010), inconstancy (Viveiros de Castro 2011), and other similar ones. In this sense, even though Amazonian personhood and collective identities are usually theorized as open, in constant becoming, and oriented towards the Other, relations with non-Indigenous peoples are usually excluded from the analysis. Frequently, the exception to this tendency occurs in the shape of studies framed under the paradigm of acculturation, particularly during the first half of the twentieth century, or where a Marxist perspective on conflict is used to explain relations with non-Indigenous people.

The previous chapters of this dissertation show how in the Mastanawa case their relationship with a number of non-Indigenous others is essential to understand their collective identity as well as what does it mean to be *onikoi* at the beginning of the twenty-first century. In this sense, it is significant that the Mastanawa notion of *fëyafái* (to accustom) is a recurrent theme throughout this text. As I argue, this concept is deeply

tied to an alchemical model of the person (Rahman and Echeverri 2015). What happens when relationships with non-Indigenous others are incorporated into the analysis of interethnic relations is that substances that are associated with them become part of this alchemy of the body. For the Mastanawa these substances are salt, sugar, and alcohol. These are by no means the only substances the Mastanawa associate with Brazilians and Peruvians. However, they are the most relevant ones. An important feature of these foreign substances is that they have a tendency to be identified as *fata* (sweet) as opposed to *bu'a* (bitter). It seems to be the case that in the past most practices related to the production of persons, especially in the case of males, were centered on the accumulation of *bu'a* in the body. The shift represented by the consumption of these products is significant as it signals an important ontological transformation, which as we mentioned has very practical consequences such as the disappearance of the Mastanawa shamans known as *bu'aya* (lit. in possession of bitter or with bitter).

The process of 'coming out of the forest' described and analyzed in the first chapter of this dissertation sheds light on the most radical transformation the Mastanawa recognize in their recent history, that of becoming *civilizados*. To become a *civilizado* is not to climb up the evolutionary ladder from a lower stage of savagery or barbarism. Rather, to become a *civilizado* is to become accustomed (*feiya*) to live among those who call themselves civilized. In the case of the Brazilian-Peruvian border in the Upper Purus River, this means to eat salt and sugar and drink alcohol, but it also means – among other things – to wear manufactured clothes, to have access to welfare programs, and to learn how to speak in Portuguese and Spanish. This accustoming process has resulted in them

not being *bravos* anymore. I make the case that, rather than referring to evolutionary stages, these categories (*bravo* and civilizado) express the Mastanawa's status of their relations with Brazilians and Peruvians. When they say that they were bravos and killed Peruvians and Brazilians without even eating them, they are not saying that they were savage killers or wasteful cannibals; on the contrary, this is a statement of the type of relations they had with those others at the time. Mastanawa were bravos to the Peruvians and Brazilians, as they were bravos to the Mastanawa. The Mastanawa then are not talking about a previous state of savagery but were alluding to a previous state of affairs in which the status of their relations with Peruvians and Brazilians, the *nawa*, was one of war. To become *civilizado* though seems to be still an unfinished project, which is not exempt of dangers and sometimes problematic consequences.

Following this account – from a Mastanawa perspective – of the process by which they abandoned the headwaters of the Curanja River, and became *civilizados*, I present what a Mastanawa sociology of the Upper Purus River would look like. In particular, I showed how the Mastanawa ontology of the social is deeply rooted in commensality and other practices surrounding the management of the alchemical body. The Peruvians the Mastanawa found in the 1960s are categorized by them *as Peruanos legítimos* (legitimate Peruvians): generous bosses who ate with them and taught them how to wear clothes and drink alcohol. These legitimate Peruvians – the Mastanawa say – are different from the *serranos* (highlanders) that have replaced them in recent times. *Serranos* differ from *peruanos legítimos* on their eating habits. Instead of eating yucca and plantains *serranos* are labeled as *comepapas* (potato-eaters). Furthermore, *serranos* are considered to be

extremely stingy and linked to terrorist groups. Brazilians are called *cariú* and are also recognizable for their particular eating habits: they eat *farinha* (manioc flour), more beef than Peruvians, and drink cachaça. Additionally, like *peruanos legitimos*, they are seen as better bosses than the *serranos*. Finally, *gringos* and *padres* (priests) are also thought of as keepers of particular body regime that would explain their difference. All of these categories of people exhibit different behaviors which is a direct consequence of the fact that they all have different bodies.

The third and fourth chapters are devoted to the discussion of ethnographic material that explores how does this alchemical model of the person functions in two specific contexts: military service and the aftermath of a group, assumed to be related to the Mastanawa, 'coming out from the forest'. These two chapters offer empiric evidence of how the mechanics of this sociology, based on an alchemy of the body, work. In addition, they provide insight into the role of compassion and empathy in Mastanawa sociality. This is particularly important to bring nuance to a debate where the preeminence of predatory relationships has been over emphasized to the detriment of other aspects of Amazonian socialities. Those who propose that Amazonian socialities and cosmologies are based on predatory models contend that issues like empathy, compassion, hospitality, commensality, or conviviality are only useful to understand relations within the group. In consequence, they explain that those ethnographies that argue in favor of conviviality as the central aspect of Amazonian sociality arrive to that conclusion because they are built upon data concerned with the domestic space and the quotidian life of people. These being spaces evidently connected with consanguinity and cooperation – they assert –

would no doubt produce ethnographies were conviviality is a central aspect of social life. In contrast, they explain that those who hold predation as the pillar of Amazonian sociality arrive to this conclusion because they base their studies in ritual life, myth, and relationships with non-Indians or people from other ethnicities. However, I prove in chapter three that empathy and conviviality can motivate apparently predatory actions and feelings such as the desire to kill terrucos *serranos comepapas.*

The importance of empathy and conviviality becomes even more evident in the reactions of Mastanawa to the videos of the Xinane people, who speak the same language as the Mastanawa, after they "came out" of the forest at an Asháninka village. The different reactions of these groups reveal how do they think about these peoples, as well as the different agendas they think should be implemented in relation to them. These agendas are based upon different understandings of sociality and ethical praxis, and therefore coincide neither in the goals to be achieved nor in the means to achieve them. The international public thought they should be "left alone"; local Brazilians and Peruvians thought that these "wild Indians" should be Christianized; and Mastanawa wanted to bring them over to their villages to start their accustoming process by teaching them how to eat sugar and salt, drink alcohol, and wear Western clothes. Finally, the testimony of a Mastanawa elder who was taken to the area to serve as an intermediary between the newly contacted group and the Brazilian officials serves as clear example of the fundamentally different basis upon which Amerindians understand and experience ethics, and in consequence how do they practice and experience politics, as well as the challenges and failings of intercultural communication and the State's policy.

Finally, the last chapter of the dissertation discusses the role of alterity in Mastanawa sociality. Following Erikson's notion of constitutive alterity, I support the claim that Amazonians define themselves through the Other instead of doing it in opposition to it. However, I depart from Erikson and others who understand this to be achieved through the capturing of vitalities foreign to the group, in order to reproduce the group and make it grow. While violence is always an option, my ethnographic data suggests that convivial means to deal with the Other are usually preferred. Furthermore, even in those cases where others are physically captured and brought into the group by violent means, the ultimate objective is to get them accustomed into the *noko yora*, and to make kin out of them.

Final Comments

The way in which the Mastanawa understand and experience their relationship with the encompassing society forces us to recalibrate some of our understandings of intercultural contact in Amazonia. The Mastanawa, similarly to the Yaminawa described by Calavia (2006), are paradoxically seen by their non-Indigenous neighbors as simultaneously being the most acculturated people of the province and the least civilized – and most unruly – ones. Local Brazilians and Peruvians arrive to this conclusion because of the frequency at which they find the Mastanawa outside of their villages and the enthusiasm with which they have embraced the use of Western-style clothes and abandoned their traditional adornments and sartorial practices. However, a closer examination of this issue shows that this desire to, as the Mastanawa say, 'go to see the Peruvians (or

Brazilians)' and wear their clothes is nothing but the elaboration of a very Mastanawa way of dealing with the Other: encompassing and being encompassed by them. As paradoxical as it sounds, the Mastanawa wearing baseball caps, t-shirts, blue jeans, and sneakers, as they walk to party in the club drinking cachaça is the most Mastanawa thing they could do given their contemporary social context.

Finally, the fact that they understand their relation with the national societies of Brazil and Peru – both States of which they are citizens – in terms of bodily practices such as eating particular types of food or wearing certain types of clothes, forces us to revise our theories of the national state, at least in the Amazonian context. The logic through which the Mastanawa understand their place within, as well as their relation with, those entities called Brazil and Peru has nothing – or very little – to do with the tradition of the social contract present in the classic mythologies of the emergence of the modern Western nation states. Likewise, their feeling of belonging to the nation are not constituted and experienced along the lines of Benedict Anderson's (1983) imagined communities or nationalist ideology as defined by Handler (1988). On the contrary, the Mastanawa understanding and experience of these categories seems to be based on the principle of fractality that governs their kinship system, as well as their sociology as explained in chapter two.

These differing views on the state and nationalism suppose differing values that sometimes enter into conflict. During my fieldwork, almost every day I was in Puerto Esperanza I could see a group of people holding empty gasoline containers outside of the

provincial municipal office. These people were waiting to be received by the mayor, or one of his subordinates, in order to request a gift of gasoline. Most of them were waiting in line to request gasoline to be able to go back to their villages, another common reason to request gasoline was to go on a fishing trip. Depending on the availability of gasoline, and an evaluation of the requester's personal circumstances, how far away did they need to go, and their political affinity with the mayor, the mayor would either give them the requested gasoline or not. The mayor like a good village chief, the *gringo* missionaries, or the Yoashi from the myth, is expected to be a generous co-resident who will give away his things selflessly. Similar things are expected from other political authorities and holders of public offices. In consequence, they are judged by the local population in terms of a set of characteristics and standards that do not correspond with their official mandate, its legal regulations, or the means they have at their disposition. This is the paradox of a State that calls itself multicultural at the same time that its institutional design constrains it in such a way that prevents it from organizing itself and performing in ways that people like the Mastanawa would prefer. It is possible that, if we listen to them carefully enough, these peoples which Clastres defined as "societies against the state" can teach us something about how to organize and conduct politics in a way which is *onikoi,* really human.

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