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# Analogic Alterity: The Dialogics of Life of Amazonian Kichwa Mythology in Comparison with Tupi Guaraní (Mbyá) Creation Stories

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In this article, I seek to introduce and explicate complexities of symbolic configurations (Kohn 2013; Taylor 1999, 2007; Whitten 2008, 2011; Uzendoski and Calapucha 2012) of relationships that define Amazonian Quechua-Quichua (or Amazonian Kichwa, AK herein). Since the time of Lévi-Strauss (1983, 1995) and the *Handbook of South American Indians* (Steward 1948), Amazonian Kichwa people have been associated with the Andes and the Inkas (Oberem 1980), *pachacuti* mythological orientation (Uzendoski 2005; Whitten 2003), and as subscribers to a linear, historical structure linked to Christianization and missionary activities (Hudleson 1981; Taylor 1999: 238; Bustamante and Wasserstrom 2013). While these relations may be present, other relations involved in AK cultural systems have been ignored or discounted, mainly due to the overshadowing of the poetic texts of Amazonian Kichwa peoples by colonial sources and historical accounts.

Amazonian Kichwa mythological practice is defined by obviative non-linear relations of power and metamorphosis, also shared by other Amazonian peoples, and in Kichwa these principles are expressed through the glosses of *yachay* (knowledge), *ushay* (power), and *tukuna* (transformation). The Napo Kichwa Twins mythology engenders a perspectival emphasis on human-animal relatedness and transformation (Viveiros de Castro 2012), but is also intertextual with the themes, structures, and ways of speaking of other Amazonian groups, and most dramatically with the Twins stories of the Guaraní peoples<sup>1</sup> - groups that occupy the southern cone of South America, including parts of Argentina, Paraguay, Brazil and Uruguay (Adriana Queiroz Testa, personal communication, September 23, 2013). While technically, the Guaraní are not geographically located within Amazonia, Amazonia itself is not discrete, and the symbolic configurations found in Amazonia flow through and from other regions.

I do not pretend to make a linear association between Amazonian Kichwa and the Guaraní. By contrast, my position is even more radical: Amazonian Kichwa mythological practice is intertextual with the patterns of Guaraní creation myths under study here, because all Amazonian mythology is intertextual and oriented towards alterity (Levi-Strauss 1983).<sup>2</sup> For example, the Mbyá Guaraní myths about the orphan Pa'i and his younger brother are the central comparative figures of this current essay. These narratives resonate powerfully with Amazonian Kichwa people's mythological consciousness of how the forest was *also* transformed by orphaned brothers—in the Kichwa world known as Cuillur and Dociru, sometimes glossed as “twins.” While the myths are not identical, they have features, forms, and dialogue that are analogous in their alterity.

The similarities among Amazonian Kichwa and Mbyá Guaraní mythological expressions go beyond the structural relations discernable in the structural method pioneered by Lévi-Strauss (1983, 1995), which has become an implicit and indispensable tool for analyzing myths. The relations on which I focus are pragmatic and performative (Tedlock 1983, 2012; Tedlock and Mannheim 1995); they involve features as the dialogue of characters, how characters speak, irony, and structural conventions of narrative expression such as parallelism, repetition, and pause. The Amazonian Kichwa tradition of storytelling is very rich with gesture, a kind of textuality created by the body (Uzendoski and Calapucha 2012), but I cannot make any argument about comparative gestures. The relations, I contend, are evidence of a shared storytelling “competence” (Hymes 2003: 81, 156, 248), the notion that storytellers embody social and communicative knowledge of poetic form and performance, and that

these practices are generative of Amazonian cosmological realities and the ontologies of experience (Kohn 2013; Silverstein 1993; Uzendoski 2012).

It should be obvious that Amazonian Kichwa peoples participate in a vast and diverse network of Amazonian storytelling that engenders a metapragmatics of cosmology as dialogue, perspective, and interspecies social action (Uzendoski 2012; Uzendoski and Calapucha 2012). As a whole, Amazonian mythological practices rival European literature, philosophy, and arts in their aesthetic, social, and metaphysical complexity. The main difference between Amazonian mythological practices and European literature is that the Europeans defined literature by the “book” and divorced narrative from experience (Uzendoski 2012). By contrast, Amazonian peoples have developed narrative traditions that are infused by experience so that texts are lived realities of meaning and movement, and storytelling is part of the process by which life and kinship are created and defined. As I argue below, as a whole, Amazonian mythology as a whole is a non-linear meshwork (Ingold 2010) of complex interrelated themes, characters, philosophies, and communicative competencies, all of which refract cosmological themes of immanent alterity and the dialogical constructedness of reality.

Why ethnopoetics? Paul Friedrich (1996) has argued that the poetics of people provide a privileged window into identity and the forms by which people define themselves. Maynard (2008: 66), writing on Friedrich’s insights, states that, poetry “provides a privileged access into particular cultures, and helps us to think about what culture is. Because a poem can sum up or resonate so powerfully with our emotional experience and sense of identity, it allows us to see the fundamental bases of a culture.” Following this perspective, the answer to the question of who Amazonian Kichwa speakers are arises: they are plural, fractal, and non-linear peoples who express who they are through story, song, memory, and movement. They are peoples who speak different dialects of Kichwa, live in varied rain-forest environments, and have complex histories with Christianity, the Andes, and other Amazonian and Lowland South American groups. Their storytelling traditions are intermeshed with those of other Amazonian peoples and the Guaraní. Future research can explore the poetic dynamics of Lowland dialogics in more detail, as this is only a beginning study.

The stories I compare here are defining creation stories involving twins/brothers. I compare the AK creation cycle involving the hero twins Cuillur and Dociru to the Mbyá story of creation that involves Pa’i Rete Kuaray, a divine being who later creates his “twin” brother, the moon. Because the issue of twinship/brotherhood is somewhat complex, especially for the Mbyá, twinship itself must be considered an area of transformation involving both difference and similarity. Both the Amazonian Kichwa and the Mbyá reject the notion of “identical” twins and subscribe to a notion of twinship in which there are differences of age, character, and identity among the brothers (Lévi-Strauss 1995). These differences are more highly developed in the Mbyá stories whereby the main characters are “brothers” rather than “twins.” Also, in Amazonian Kichwa the notion of “twinship” is ambiguous, as narrators describe the Twins as *wankiguna* (brothers), *mellizos* (Spanish twins) or *gemelos* (Spanish identical twins), so the notion of “twins” is a gloss for a more complex and nuanced set of relations congealing around brotherhood when stories are told without Spanish loanwords.

My sources for AK mythology are Orr and Hudleson (1971), Comunidad Sarayaku, (2003) and Uzendoski and Calapucha (2012), and I compare these with León Cadogan’s (1965) classic text on “Literatura Mbyá” from the book, “La Literatura de Los Guaranies,” as well as Ethnologue.com (n.d.). Despite the relative inadequacy of Cadogan’s texts for purposes of an experiential, linguistic approach (Basso 1995), it is still possible to extract dialogical and intertextual patterns from the translations, even if data from the original language performance is not present (Hymes 2003: 99).

The Napo Runa version of this story, by contrast, was experienced by the author firsthand as a speech event, then transcribed and translated with more consideration of performative dynamics and the original language. This story is only a small part of almost twenty years of experiential, ethnographic research involving stories and their complex meanings among Napo Runa peoples (Uzendoski 2005, 2010, 2012; Uzendoski and Calapucha 2012), as well as documentation of the Napo dialect through collaboration with local institutions and indigenous intellectual, teachers, and leaders. The text I am working with is available in full transcription and translation in Uzendoski and Calapucha (2012: 100-134), and a digital

audio recording of the story is also available online through *The Ecology of the Spoken Word Companion Website*, Chapter 5 (<http://spokenworddecology.com>), as well as through the Archive of Indigenous Languages of Latin America.

### Summary of the Myths Considered: Twins/Brothers and Jaguars

As a student of myth and apprentice storyteller, I engage in a type of mythological “wayfaring” (Ingold 2012: xii) in which anthropologists draw on experience, writing, and drawing to better understand other cultural realities. As Ingold writes, the anthropologist as wayfarer can draw as well as write, and in drawing is breaking “a path through a terrain and leaving a trace, at once in the imagination as on the ground, in a manner very similar to what happens as one walks along in a world of earth and sky.” Following this methodology, for the Napo Runa mythology at least, I include not only the stories but also illustrations that were created during 2008-2010 when I was an affiliated researcher and teacher at the Intercultural Bilingual School of Pano (Kichwa-Spanish). During this time, my daughter attended the school, and I taught English to 1 – 5<sup>th</sup> grades, and created a mythology storytime during the school day where the students and I shared myths and drew images of them. In this space, we co-produced hundreds of drawings of Napo Runa and other mythologies. As we talked, drew, and experienced these mythologies together, the children and their parents taught me to see mythology as a pragmatic process of creating and imagining oneself as moving along the lines of the stories and texts created by a community. The community, as well, was in constant and aesthetic dialogue with their environment (earth and sky) and leaving intermeshed traces within it.

The myths that I compare here appear after initial creation of the world and the repopulation of the world after a great flood. Both sets of myths involve divine celestial beings who help humanity fight off predators; the savage jaguars in this case. The transformations of mythology allow humans to establish themselves via the actions of the creators.

In the Amazonian Kichwa mythology, we begin with a young woman who is impregnated by Moon Man, her brother. Once discovered, he ascends to heaven; she cannot follow and turns into a nocturnal bird (named “Iluku”) who sings at the moon (common *potoo*). The woman gets lost on the trail and ends up at jaguar house. In the Sarayaku version of the AK mythology, the woman gets lost on the trail because she scolds her children in her belly and they refuse to tell her the correct path, a detail I have not found in the Napo versions (see below). Once the woman ends up at the jaguar house, the jaguar grandmother tries to save her by hiding her in a basket or on a ledge that is high up in the roof (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Mother hides.



Figure 2. Mother becomes food.

One jaguar detects the woman and kills her (because a drop of spit falls down). The jaguar “sons” devour the woman but her entrails, which contain two babies, are given to the grandmother (Figure 2). The grandmother puts the babies in a pot and they are “born.”

Later, the babies grow up and help the grandmother, who adopts them, with chores and hunting (Figure 3). They are named as Cuillur and Dociru, and they are “twins” but not identical. The Twins finally discover that the jaguars killed their mom and decide to kill the jaguars. They decide to kill the jaguar sons by making an elaborate bridge that is a trap. When the jaguars are in the middle of the bridge, the Twins untie it, and all the jaguars, except one female who escapes, fall and “die.” As they fall, the Twins shout “stone, stone, stone, stone, stone” (Figures 4 and 5), a kind of shamanic discourse that cause the jaguars to turn into stones. From the escaped female, the jaguars survived and reproduced. It is said that on judgment day (*izhu punzha*) the jaguars will revive and devour humanity.



Figure 3. The Brothers/Twins adopted by jaguar grandmother

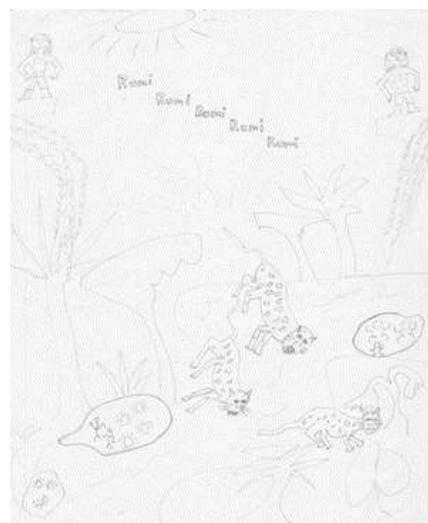
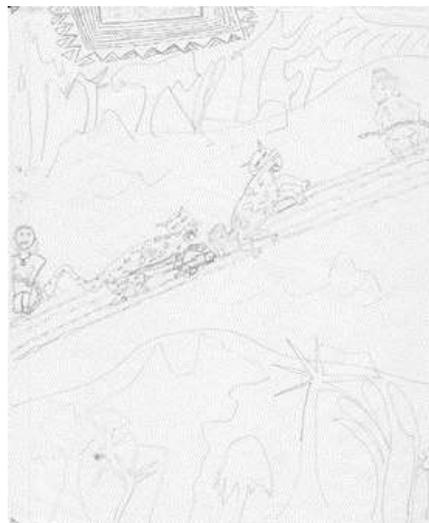


Figure 4. Brothers/twins lure the jaguars.

Figure 5. Brothers/twins shouting “rumi/stone”.

In the Mbyá mythology, the creator Pa-pa Mirí turns into an owl (*lechuzza*) and impregnates a young girl. Pa-pa Mirí leaves for paradise and asks her to follow but she refuses. The woman is pregnant with Pa’i, the father of the Mbyá. She then follows the trail to paradise so Pa’i can meet his father. Pa’i guides her from her belly but gets angry when she, after being stung, reprimands him. The woman gets lost and ends up at the house of the “primitive beings,” who are jaguar people.

The woman arrives and is greeted by the grandmother who hides her in a big pot. Her sons come home and one smells the woman and kills her and eats her. They try to roast the baby, Pa’i, who was in her belly, but he won’t cook. They dry the baby out in the sun and it comes alive and starts hunting for the grandmother.

Pa'i then hunts and provides food for his grandmother. Lonely for companionship, he creates his younger brother, Moon, out of a leaf. The brothers then go to the forbidden mount and a parrot tells them the primitive beings killed their mother. Angry, they come back from the hunt empty handed on purpose. Pa'i decides to make a trap for the primitive beings and kill them. He then makes a river full of boas and otters and puts a bridge over it. He sends his brother to the other side of the bridge. When the primitive beings are in the middle, he turns the bridge over and they all fall in the water. They all die and Pa'i expresses fury. One female escapes and repopulates her species as jaguars. After more adventures, the brothers finally ascend into sky being Sun (Pa'i) and Moon.<sup>3</sup>

### Similarities, Differences, and Transformations

Both of these myths follow a similar pattern or basic scheme, and both come after the initial creation and the great flood in both traditions. Both may be considered “versions” of the widespread Twin Heroes stories found among many Amazonian groups, including several groups within the large families of Carib, Tupi-Guaraní, and Arawak (Métraux 1946). Carneiro adds to this list the Amahuaca (Panoan) and Kuikuru (Carneiro 1989). Alfred Métraux (1946: 119) summarizes the main features of this myth as follows: “the wife of the Creator or Culture Hero is killed by jaguars that find twins in her womb. The jaguar mother brings up the twins. Later they learn from some animal that the jaguars, among whom they are living, are the murderers of their mother. They take revenge and then, after performing several miraculous deeds, climb to the sky by means of a chain of arrows and become Sun and Moon.”<sup>4</sup> Carneiro (1989) takes a “laundry list” approach, however, that ignores the social and symbolic complexities of mythology as generative of thought and culture, and Métraux’s (1946) analysis, while broadly comparative, is mainly thematic. None of these approaches, however, look at myth dialogically.

In analyzing the stories, I rely on the tools of structuralism but also combine them with ethnopoetics to consider the structures and patterns within language and ways of speaking. Ethnopoetics, like the structural study of myth, draws on the insights of structural linguistics and looks for patterns that emerge in analysis of *how* as well as *what* is said. The point is to make narrative relations visible, features that otherwise would be lost in a conventional transcription or translation. For example, the storyteller’s art is that of creating images and complex meanings using words, sounds, pause, grammar, repetition, parallelism, and the voice. The storyteller also “reads” while telling a story, in that (s)he elicits and invokes inscribed meanings on the landscape and from local ecology (Uzendoski and Calapucha 2012). The “lines” of a story move in and through people, the larger community, the land, and the ancestors.

Both stories contain three “Acts,” which are the broadest possible units of a story.<sup>5</sup> Act I begins with the woman getting pregnant until she is eaten by the jaguars/primitive beings. Act II details the time the boys live with the grandmother jaguar and hunt for her but also become strong beings. Act III begins when the Twins, now fully grown, realize that the jaguars killed their mother. They then lay traps for the jaguars and kill them. In both stories, the boys kill the jaguars by making a bridge trap over water.

The scenes in the stories differ while being similar. Act I of both versions contains five scenes. Both have an initial introductory scene that sets the stage, but the Napo version of the AK myth does not have any scenes on the “trail”<sup>6</sup> leading to the jaguar house, while the Mbyá version has two, as well as a previous scene where the father of the elder brother ascends to the sky.<sup>7</sup> The AK myth has more dialogue between the Twins’ mother, the grandmother jaguar, and her sons, and these three scenes end with the jaguars eating the woman.

The Mbyá myth has only one scene that takes us from the arrival of the pregnant woman to her death. Both stories are “episodes” or parts of a much longer narrative involving creation and then the coming of the Twins and the transformations they enact on the earth for the benefit of humans.

Now let us look at some specific dialogue in the scenes. First, let us consider, in both stories, the dialogue that occurs when the woman arrives at the jaguar house. The words of the grandmother jaguar are put in italics. I will first present the AK version.

**AK (from scene ii)**

and so being  
when she [the mother] entered that crowded jaguar house  
a grandmother jaguar mama lived there they say  
a grandmother  
that jaguar mama said  
*“my sons aren’t here”*  
*“if they were here they would have eaten you long ago”*  
*“why did you come?”* when she [grandmother] asked  
*“I came here for a quick death grandmother”* she spoke  
they say

and so being [grandmother] said *“no”*  
putting up a ladder [to the attic in the house, she said]  
*“climb”*  
*“lie down there”*  
*“if not, in no time dzas they [her sons] will kill you”* saying  
putting the ladder up top  
she made her climb up there they say  
that pregnant woman.

**Mbyá (from scene v)**

In that place  
the grandmother of the Primitive Beings spoke  
*“go back where you came from*  
*as my boys are very perverse.”*

But  
although she said this  
the woman did not go  
so the grandmother covered her with a big pot

Here we can see that the rhetorical meanings of the exchange between the woman and the jaguar grandmother are basically the same, allowing for variation of detail, length, and word choice. The jaguar grandmother is not only surprised to see a human woman arrive at her house, but also gives her a verbal warning about the dangerous nature of her sons. The AK grandmother is more verbose; she asks why the woman came, warns her, and instructs her to hide. The Mbyá grandmother warns her to leave and informs her about her “perverse” sons. Then she hides the woman before her sons come home (in the top of the house or under a big pot). Despite these differences, the scenes are basically identical in terms of the characters and their communicative actions.

Let us now move onto to the next series of events and dialogue in the two stories. This next scene is where the sons come home, speak with their grandmother, find the woman, and kill her. The words of the jaguar sons are put in bold while the words of the grandmother jaguar are put in italics.

**AK (from scene iii)**

coming  
they went through the whole house smelling they say  
*“mama what do you have?”* [said the sons]  
*“it smells so yummmie!”*  
they went smelling the house they say

“*what could there be?*” [responded grandmother]  
 “*you are only smelling my farts*” saying  
 said that mama they say

### **Mbyá (from scene v)**

soon her grandchildren arrived from the forest and exclaimed:

“*Uh, my grandmother has hunted!*”

seeing this the grandmother replied,

“*what do you think that I hunted?*”

“*ay of me, didn't you all travel the whole forest and you didn't hunt anything?*”

The reader can see that these two exchanges are not only similar in terms of content and meaning but also as dialogical acts. Both scenes involve the jaguar sons detecting the presence of the woman by way of their sense of smell. Smell is explicit in the AK version but implicit in the Mbyá version, as the jaguar sons cannot see the woman inside the pot but still sense her. Furthermore, in both versions, the sons speak first, and ask grandmother what “food” she has. Both versions involve questions. The grandmother, in both versions, rebukes her sons and denies having food. In the AK version she uses humor to refer to her “farts.” In the Mbyá version she uses irony to cover up the presence of the woman. Structurally, these two exchanges are also very similar. They are made up of two verses.

After his scene the jaguars kill the woman and find a baby or babies in her womb. In the AK version they take out the Twins and give them to the grandmother to eat. She then hides the boys under a pot and decides to raise them when they are born. In the Mbyá version, only Pa'i is present in the womb, and the jaguars try to roast him but he won't cook. They then give him to the grandmother who decides to keep him. In both versions the Twins are not “cooked” and do not become “food” but rather kin. Both sets of actions take us to Act II.

In both versions, Act II details the lives and actions of the “Twins” while they are living with the jaguars. The main themes here are coming of age and providing for the grandmother. In the AK version the Twins, who also drink jaguar breast-milk when they are babies, hunt and bring food (birds) back for the grandmother. They also teach the jaguars how to make traps. In the Mbyá version, Pa'i also hunts birds for grandmother, and then he creates his brother, the Moon.

The brothers become kin with the jaguars. Their kinship is not reflected in some abstract opposition of relations— it is that the brothers spend time exchanging food, residence, life, and words together in a community. Here their point of view has changed, from that of prey to predator—under the watchful eye of the jaguars. When the brothers reach a certain age they realize that the jaguars killed their mother and decide to take revenge. The Mbyá story has an additional scene where the brothers go hunting on a forbidden hill and are unable to shoot a specific bird. The arrows just keep going astray. The bird then tells them the jaguars killed their mother.

Now we come to Act III. In the AK version, the first scene of Act III is a transition from Act II. It involves a clear break from Act II, in that a rhetorical time phrase (“now later” or *ña washaga*) sets off this section as new temporal unit. Here, the Twins are informed by the “humans” that the jaguars killed their mother and the Twins are “named.” They decide to kill the jaguars. The Mbyá version also has a transition in the first scene of Act III. Here Pa'i leans on his bow and “cries,” and then decides to kill the “Primitive Beings.”

In both stories, the brothers build a bridge trap for the jaguars and kill them when the bridge is purposely made to fall into a river. There is considerable variation here on the details and the emphasis, but in both versions the jaguars are transformed in death as they hit the water. In the AK version, they are turned into “stone,” and the narrator states that they will rise up again on judgment day or *izhu punzha*. In the Mbyá tale, the jaguar are devoured by “snakes” and “otters” created by Pa'i; they become “food” for others.

The Mbyá tale features Pa'i making a fruit tree to deceive the “Primitive Beings” to go to the place where he will make the river and the bridge. The AK version has a lot more detail



**Mbyá (scenes ii and iii)**

he made that the moon cross the river in order to fasten the end of the bridge

*“When they are all in the middle of the river*

*turn the trunks over and over*

*and so in the middle,*

*I will wrinkle the nose [gesture or give a signal]*

*so then you will turn it”*

he said to his brother.

later

and before they all were in the center of the rapids

of pure pleasure our father Pa’i did a gesture

where he frowned and made a nose

his brother turned the bridge over before it was time

making it able for one pregnant Mba’e Ypy able to jump

to the edge of the river and save herself

upon seeing this, our father Pa’i said

*“be horrible. . .*

*submerge yourself in sleep and wake up!*

*let it be that you make the rivers and coasts of the rivers horrible*

*submerge yourself in sleep and wake up!”*

*“and here your son was a male”*

they say

*“that is why he fornicated with his mother and procreated*

*extending [his progeny] all over the earth.”*

Here, the similarities of these two scenes are also striking. Both sets of brothers wait until the jaguars are “half-way” or in the “center” of the river as they are crossing the bridge. Then they give a special signal. The Cuillurguna whistle while Pa’i makes a gesture with his nose. Also, each brother is situated on either side of the bridge so as to either untie it (AK) or flip it over (Mbyá). As the jaguars are falling, the Cuillurguna as well as Pa’i say magical incantations (rhetorical phrases) that effect metamorphosis. The Cuillurguna speak “stone” five times—it is implicit that the jaguars turn into stone, some becoming petroglyphs (Uzendoski and Calapucha 2012). They will rise up again on the day of *izhu* or judgment. Pa’i exclaims, “submerge yourself in sleep and wake up,” a phrase that conveys the transformation of death, “going to sleep” but “waking up” in another state of existence. In both stories, the river is synonymous with the transformation of death, a journey to the next world. In the water, being submerged and transformed into some other state of being, the jaguars lose their point of view and their master predator status.

Pa’i also reiterates his power to procreate over the earth. Also, in both stories, a pregnant female escapes by swimming to the edge of the river. It is said, in both tales that from this escaped female the jaguars were able to repopulate.

The narrator of the AK stories stops after this episode and picks up his stories about the Twins on another day. In other stories, for example, the Twins trap the grandfather jaguar in the mountain Galeras (Uzendoski and Calapucha 2012), then go on to kill the mythological human-eating “hawks” (Uzendoski and Calapucha 2012) the anaconda, and cut down the tree of game to provide food for humans (Uzendoski 2012). The last episode is when the Twins ascend to the sky and turn into the morning/evening “star” Venus (Uzendoski and Calapucha 2012). It is said that on “judgment day” they will return to help people repopulate the earth.

The Mbyá story continues on. After Pa’i and his brother kill the jaguars, they then try to revive their mother from her bones (unsuccessfully) and have encounters with a dark being named Charia (enemy of Pa’i), who causes Moon (younger brother) to disappear and reappear during the month by catching him and eating him as a fish. Pa’i resurrects him from the bones. Also, Pa’i teaches his younger brother about all of the fruits of the surrounding forest. Pa’i instructs Moon to make a ladder out of arrows and ascend to the sky. He does so.

Moon gets spots on his face when he tries to sleep with his maternal aunt, who rubs “resin” on his face. Moon makes it rain to try and wash the spots off.

Pa’i then has children. Charia kills one of Pa’i’s sons, Pa’i gets angry, and they fight a long battle to a stalemate, which explains solar eclipses. Pa’i finally kills Charia but when he dies the ashes from his burning crown become mosquitos and biting flies, and from his exploding intestines are created a bird, and his soul becomes the father of the *Tupá Rekoé* (agents of destruction). Pa’i’s daughter watches Charia die and the consequence is her own death. It is said she was the first one to die by the “mbogua” or sols of telluric origin. These events, however, are happenings after the jaguar story.

### Comparison: the “Sons of the Moon” Story, Pastaza Kichwa of Sarayaku

The book, “Hijos de la Luna: Killa Churiuna,” published by the Community of Sarayaku (2003) contains a different but similar version of the Napo story about the Twins. The Sarayaku community is located in the Province of Pastaza and the people of Sarayaku speak the Pastaza dialect of Amazonian Kichwa. This dialect is similar but different from Napo, and the two groups are similar but also culturally different. However, the dialects and cultural patterns are similar, and intermarriage and intershamanic exchanges are common among the Napo and Pastaza Kichwa speaking peoples (see Uzendoski 2005, 2010; Whitten and Whitten 2008, 2011).

The “Hijos de la Luna” book is a complete narrative that begins with the mother of the Twins becoming pregnant by Moon, and it ends with the Twins converting into stars at the end. The book in all is 35 pages and contains illustrations on each page. The main story in the book, however, is the same “twin hero story” involving the jaguars, the mother of the Twins, the Twins, and the jaguar grandmother (8 – 27). The Twins story is basically the same as the Napo version. However, Act II, the raising of the Twins and their adoption by the grandmother jaguar is not much developed. There are only a few lines talking about how grandmother adopted them and they grew quickly. Acts I and II have more detail but there is also less discussion of the different bridges and the detailed scene on the bridge featured in the Napo story.

Act I contains an early scene of the mother getting lost on the trail. These details of how mother gets lost are lacking in the Napo version yet developed in the Mbyá story. The scene involves the baby or babies in the woman’s stomach guiding her on the trail. They/He keep(s) asking mother to grab a flower. When she gets stung by an insect (bee/wasp), she gets angry. Then the Twins/Pa’i become silent out of anger. The woman takes the wrong trail and ends up at the jaguar house (Figure 6).



Figure 6. Mother lost on the trail.

Here are the compared scenes in translated form. The woman's speech is in bold and the speech of the Twins/Pa'i in italics.

**Pastaza Kichwa (Sarayaku version from a scene in the book "Hijos de Luna")**

*"children, help me  
I can't find the way."*

curiously, the children guided her  
during the walk  
from inside the womb  
they asked her to pick some flowers

upon wanting to reach for the flowers  
the wasps stung her on the face

*¡Ay Ay Ay!  
"it is your fault that they stung me!"*  
angrily  
she hit her stomach

when she again asked [the way to go]  
the babies did not respond

she was alone  
and lost in the forest

without realizing it  
she picked the wrong trail  
that to the jaguar house

**Mbyá (from scene iv)**

Pa'i saw a flower of an iris

upon seeing it he said:  
*"grab that flower  
so that I can play with it  
when we get to the outskirts of my father's paradise."*

later  
he saw another.  
*"grab that flower again  
so I can play with it when we get to the outskirts of my the paradise of Pa-pa."*

while getting the next flower  
a big bee stung his mother  
and his mother got angry about it and said

*"only after you are out among people should you ask for toys  
then we want to play."*

his mother then asked about the trail that father had followed  
but the baby did not answer

to him she had followed the best of all possible trails  
arriving

coincidentally  
at the house of the Primitive Beings

The scenes and dialogue here are a Guaraní version of the story, with the Twins/Pa'i guiding his mother from the stomach and wanting flowers instead of the Twins. When the mother gets stung she reprimands/punishes the Twins/Pa'i. So the unborn Twins/Pa'i get angry and allow their mother to end up at the jaguar house. This scene sets in motion the death of the mother and the "birth" of the culture heroes. Here, we can see the immaturity of the Twins/Pa'i causing transformations to occur (the death of their mother).

### Metamorphosis in the Two Stories

When the woman arrives at the house of the jaguars, the opposition of jaguars=humans as predator=prey is most salient. In the following scene, those ideas are developed. Here, the grandmother hides the woman hiding in a pot or up above in the house, and more details of the "humanity" of the jaguars are revealed. The jaguars not only live in "houses" but they also speak and have fire. But they have other "animal" or "jaguar-like" qualities, such as a keen sense of smell, deadly hunting skills, and the desire to eat human flesh. The relations are that of jaguar dominance, a particular form of "humanity": jaguar = human / predator=prey / dominant =subordinate.

The opposition is not nature/culture, but rather a *superculture* that dominates human culture by way of its "supernatural" as well as "cultural" characteristics. The jaguars are super-powerful beings by their nature, which is not opposed to culture but rather synergistic with it. This non-opposition of culture to nature is why jaguars talk and have fire; they are fully "human" yet with different qualities, different kinds of bodies, different "natures." This leitmotif reaches its apex when the jaguars devour the woman as only a big cat can devour its prey. But these are not "animals." They talk and have culture.

Then the relations begin to transform by way of the culture heroes, who then realize that they must kill the mythological jaguars and liberate humanity from their oppression. The twins are revealed to be superheroes and to have "supernatural" characteristics that are superior to those of the jaguars. The greatest of their powers is intelligence and their ability to deceive and set traps, as well as to work together. In the Napo version, the brothers use shamanism to lure the jaguars on the bridge, while Pa'i is almost all-powerful and has the ability to create rivers, predators, and trees. In both versions, the two brothers are necessary for the trap to work. When the older brother gives a signal, they work together to undo the bridge. The jaguars fall and metamorphosize; they cross over into another realm of existence but they are not "lost" completely.

The scene of the jaguars being "trapped" on the bridge conveys all these relations of reversal whereby jaguar/human = predator/prey = dominant culture/subordinate culture becomes human/jaguar = prey/predator = dominant culture/subordinate culture. The twins are mediators and transformers (Lévi-Strauss 1995). They are heroes who use their supernatural bodies and powers to liberate human beings. This ability to transform the relations of the world is why the Mbyá regard Pa'i as their "father" while the Napo Runa refer to the Twins as "angels," who work "miracles." These emphases reflect the longstanding history and presence of Christian themes within AK cultures<sup>8</sup> and mythological stories; "God" himself is the original father who is the ultimate master. The transformations of human liberation are now dominant within the landscape and ecological relations. These relations, however, are only qualities particular to this *pacha* (world) or time-space continuum, one that will and can be reversed. The table below captures some of these similarities and differences.

	<b>Twinship emphasis</b>	<b>The Twins are:</b>	<b>The Eclipse represented by:</b>	<b>Christian Themes</b>
<b>AK</b>	Twinship	Stars(Venus)	absent	present/God is supreme “father”
<b>Mbyá</b>	Brotherhood (older/younger)	Sun/ Moon	Charia, master of chaos	absent

Although many theorists have agreed on the widespread nature of the Hero Twins mythology, few have ventured social interpretations of such mythology. Reeve, in her paper in this same series, has connected the Hero Twins stories to “trekking” and a social philosophy based on creating and transforming relationships with (dangerous) Others. More studies are needed which go beyond the structuralist exercise to address what and how it means to “be alive” in the Amazonian world (Ingold 2011). For example, mythology, music, and storytelling are rich arenas for the study of problems of voice, dialogue, and perspective (Nuckolls 2010).

The Twins/brothers ascend and become celestial beings. They do not stay on the earth and give out commands that must be obeyed, nor do they attempt to found anything like a state. They purposely transform and lose their “hero” point of view; a true act of heroism. The Twins/brothers are liberators; they liberate humanity so that it can live in kinship, movement, and processes within the Amazonian landscape, without being dominated or oppressed by others with more powerful bodies and natures, those that would destroy their ability to live in healthy communities. As we see them every day, we are reminded of their presence and their deeds, and their return during the next cataclysm.

## Conclusion

Through a methodology of anthropological wayfaring, I have tried to show that the forms defining AK identities and mythology are more complex than previously considered, and that the Amazonian Kichwa speakers are plural, fractal, and non-linear peoples who speak different dialects of Kichwa, live in varied rain-forest environments, and have complex histories with Christianity, the Andes, and other Amazonian and Lowland South American groups. They define themselves via the dialogical constructedness of reality that is a main feature of mythological practice and their consciousness of interspecies and human relations across varied distances and ecologies. I provide evidence for this position by comparing two versions of the “Twin Hero Complex” myth, a Tupi-Guaraní (Mbyá) story and an Amazonian Kichwa story. Both stories reveal a philosophy of narrative in which creation and transformation are both defined by a poetics of dialogical action. I conclude that the both Amazonian Kichwa and the Guaraní are intermeshed through an analogical flow of similar alterity. In storytelling as well as in cosmology, alterity is an imminent relation by which life and reality are produced, traces left, and cosmology produced as the poetic function of dialogical processes and storyteller competencies.

I have made the case for dialogue and perspective in how Amazonian peoples perceive and experience what it means to “be alive” as defined by their narrative practices and the metaphysical realities they create (Ingold 2011). For Amazonian peoples, I have argued elsewhere (Uzendoski 2012), the “text”—which is created by the body’s intersubjective movement in ecology—is not separable from life, and all living things; all living things, at one point, lose their point of view and become dissolved and remade into other composite life forms. The dialogics of mythological narrative reflect the various points of view taken by human, plant, animal, and spirit others—points of view that became transformed and continue transforming into different “bodies” and species (Nuckolls 2010). These are the dialogical processes of creation, predation, and the rebirth of life that occur as *samay* or soul-

substance moves through and congeals into different bodies, the landscape, subjectivities, and spirits.

The totality of relations within a story are multiple and dialogical, and voices, naming, and transformations are wrought through scenes, words, and actions. The stories studied here convey a particular pattern of human occupation of the earth—it is one whereby violence, predation, and killing are real but it is also a reality defined by kinship and predation/prey relations with various Others. Motherhood, adoption, and the struggle to maintain and reproduce kinship and kinship relations through intelligence, bravery, and humor are also Twin hero themes—relations that are brought to life through the dialogical processes of narrative. These relations resonate with Pierre Clastre's (1977; 1989: 65) position that kinship with Others is the basic unit of "tropical forest" social organization (see also Viveiros de Castro 2001; Sahlins 2011). Indeed, the Twins/Brothers are the founders of a civilization complex, but they do not stay on earth to create an order or the hierarchies of an emergent state. After they make the world safe for human habitation, they leave, and in so doing, create a space that must be filled by the multivocal and dialogical processes of immanent kinship with Others.

I have attempted to show that the study of mythology, and mythology in general, has much to gain by complementing structuralism with ethnopoetic analysis of the dialogical qualities of myth, and the relationship of these qualities to Amazonian notions of "textuality," ontology, and sociality. That large numbers of Amazonian groups define themselves through intertextual stories defined by non-linear and complex meshworks (Ingold 2010) of form (Kohn 2013) shows that we are dealing with a complex and expansive world-system that is based on its own principles and concepts, distinct from those of the West as well as the Andes (Reeve 1993; Hornborg 2005; Uzendoski 2004, 2010a). That tropical forest groups still exist as societies in their own right has generative roots in the dialogical and communicative qualities of mythological narratives, narratives that are defined by the heterogeneity, metamorphosis, intertextuality, and the multilinguism of voices. Poetry and experience, not "history," is the path towards postcolonial liberation, the means towards feeling and becoming, a mode of empathy with Amazonian perspectives of life, including their political and social struggles.

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### Notes

<sup>1</sup> This essay focuses on the Mbyá Guaraní stories but I have also found uncanny similarities of Amazonian Kichwa Twins stories with the Chiriguana Guaraní mythology as well, first documented by Métraux (1931) and more recently analyzed by Stella Longo (2001). Future research will explore these relations in more detail.

<sup>2</sup> As Viveiros de Castro (2010: 41) has argued [following the lead of Clastres (2010)], Amazonian peoples' are oriented towards the "cosmopraxis of immanent alterity," a socio-cosmological patterning that defines many peoples of the Americas, peoples who are socially defined more by kinship than the hierarchical forms and power relations of state social organization.

<sup>3</sup> Here there may be an interesting discussion to take up with the theme of the “devoured parent,” also featured in Arawak mythology through the creator figure of Nhiaperikuli, also an orphan like the “twins.”

<sup>4</sup> Both stories under consideration here fit within Métraux’s (1946: 119) broad delineation of Twin Hero mythology, although in the Amazonian Kichwa version, the Twins’ father is the Moon, and the Twins become the morning/evening “star” of Venus. Also, the second “Twin” in the Mbyá version is created by his brother rather than sex. These variations will be discussed later, but like all Twin Hero stories, there are multitudes of nuances among the traditions, and storytellers freely innovate and add and subtract details found (or not) in the narratives of other storytellers. Storytellers also develop their own style and adapt mythological narratives to the landscapes and social communities within which the storytelling reality is “lived” as well as practiced (Uzendoski 2012).

<sup>5</sup> These conventions follow the Hymesian style of “verse-analysis,” in which stories are transcribed according to lines, verses, stanzas, scenes, and acts (D. Hymes 2003), a methodology that I have used throughout my work (Uzendoski and Calapucha 2012). These conventions are tools to help readers better appreciate the complex and artful relations that move through different levels of a story, relations that involve everything from plot to structure to the aesthetics of grammar and sound. Lines are usually defined by predication, but they can also be defined by subordinate phrases, subjects, repetitions, ongoing actions, and pauses. Verses, which are indicated by indentation of all but the first line, are groupings of lines that share aesthetic “equivalence” (Jakobson 1960; D. Hymes 2003) in the sense of being an artful whole of similar but varied relations. Often things like grammatical parallelism, quotations, or repetition defines verses. Stanzas, which are indicated by capital letters (A, B, C, etc.) are larger aesthetic configurations that subsume verses. Stanzas can be detected by the use of time words or other “turns” of talk. After stanzas come scenes, which are indicated by lower-case Roman numerals (i, ii, iii, iv, etc.). Scenes involve action in the story and changes of location, action, or subjectivity. Lastly, long stories are divided into Acts (represented by capital Roman numerals I, II, III, etc.), broad themes that divide stories into two or three major parts. Readers who wish more information about verse-analysis should consult Hymes (2003) and Uzendoski and Calapucha (2012). The goal of verse-analysis is to create aesthetic translations that are accurate but not overburdened by technical information. The use of lines, verses, stanzas, scenes, and acts draws attention to relations that exist in the story but might otherwise escape attention without an explicit framework. While this process of identifying relations and naming them is interpretative, it is of the same class of operations practiced by the ethnographer when (s)he “invents” culture (Wagner 1991) or “shamanism,” or “myth.”

<sup>6</sup> The Sarayaku version of the AK myth features a scene on the trail. It is similar to the Mbyá version in that the mother angers her babies in the womb and they refuse to guide her on the trail. Because of their silence their mother takes the wrong path and ends up at the jaguar house. See Comunidad Sarayaku (2003), “Los Hijos de la Luna.”

<sup>7</sup> The moon ascending to the sky is actually another entire story in AK mythology. The mother cannot follow her man so she turns into the “Iluku” bird (common potoo). See Uzendoski and Calapucha (2012: 58-78).

<sup>8</sup> In the Upper Amazon, AK peoples were exposed to missions from a very early time in the colonial period, and many AK myths, rituals, and spiritual ideas draw upon, but are not defined by, Christian ideas (Taylor 1999, 2007). However, my experience with AK peoples has been that they see Christianity as part of their process of “liberation” from colonialism (Uzendoski 2003). They do not see themselves, nor their history, as one of becoming more “subservient” but rather as one of continued struggle against colonialism and the liberation of their society from oppression.

<sup>9</sup> Clastres (1987: 65) writes, “Kinship relationships already established and local exogamy combine their effects in order to draw each unit out of its singularity, by elaborating a system that transcends each of its elements... the function of local exogamy is not negative, to strengthen the incest taboo; but positive, to compel residents to contract marriage outside the community of origin. Or, in other words, the meaning of local exogamy lies in its function: it is the means for entering into political alliances.”

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