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Shamans, Wives, Families: An Isoleño Case Considered Using Turner on Kayapo *Dominance and Beauty*

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Introduction

Anthropological treatments of lowland South American shamanism appearing since the late twentieth century have consistently been keyed to history and power, starting with the important works of Pierre Clastres (1974) and Hélène Clastres (1975). Pierre Clastres' rebel prophets, Taussig's wild man, Viveiros de Castro's philosophers, Fausto's predators—all are accounts of men battling it out with other men. For all their late modernity, a rather old-fashioned feature of these interpretations is that most conjure up clashes of male titans. There are important exceptions, however. Hélène Clastres (1975) writes of marriage rules, Peter Gow (1996) of nurture and family formation in the context of shamanism, and Suzanne Oakdale (2005) of cross-generational and cross-gender identification within shamanic ritual. For my own part, I followed the leads of the former set of guides in my first forays into the field in the late 1990s, focusing on two male shamans of renown in Isoso, a Guaraní-speaking community in the Bolivian Chaco where I have carried out almost all of my fieldwork. Both of these shamans have since died. When I go back to my fieldsite the people to whom I return are their families and their friends, who are mostly women. How I understand shamanism in Isoso is now informed by the humble dynamics of domestic life that are neglected in much other writing on lowland South American shamanism.

In certain respects what I have to say here is a belated realization that I ought to have been more heedful of an admonition long available, that “from the viewpoint of many anthropologists, shamans . . . are much more exciting prospects than people preparing communal meals or training and caring for children Because we perceive as trivial many matters of daily life, we end up actually refusing to see them” (Overing and Passes 2000:9–10). My midcareer (and midlife) reinterpretation of shamanism in Isoso has also, however, prompted me to return to the work of my late teacher, Terence Turner, and particularly his powerful explanatory accounts of Kayapo lived worlds to understand the dynamics I have been seeing unfold as I have returned to the field over two decades. What once seemed like disparate ethnographic facts about marriage and household settlement, about landscape and ethnicity, about wilderness and society, about trust and doubt, about gentleness and power, and about the lived experiences of women and of men, now seem to me to be systematically connected in ways that illuminate aspects of everyday life in Isoso and Isoleño history. In making this more holistic interpretation, I draw upon Terry's work and especially his discussions of dominance and beauty in Kayapo society. I am sorry that it is only after Terry's death that I am able to articulate what his work helped me to understand about many years of ongoing relationship with two Isoleño shamans and their families—and particularly, their wives—across their life courses and also my own.

In what follows, I describe what I have seen elapse in the lives and deaths of two different Isoleño shamans and their respective wives. I propose—though of course I cannot prove—that what I witnessed was personally idiosyncratic but also structurally constitutive in a way that relates to long-standing patterns of society-making and history-making in Isoso. These shamans' two different kinds of shamanic practice, their two different sorts of marriage, and the two different life-trajectories of their wives resonate with the dual nature of Isoso itself and its historical constitution. The settlement of Isoso, an arid region unevenly amenable to the irrigated agriculture that is nevertheless practiced there, was the product of pre-Columbian dynamics. In retreat from the far more fertile Andean foothills was a portion

of a hierarchically organized Arawakan society, one in which elite women were very often politically powerful, reacting to successive incursions by Guarani warriors with a sort of martial-egalitarian (that is to say, egalitarian for men) ethos. The reproduction of a hierarchical Arawakan way of life through feminine submission to an “egalitarianism” of masculine dominance has been, I suspect, a dynamic of long standing in Isoso with significant corollaries for the personal biographical trajectories of that persistent fraction of Isoleño women who end up as elite grandmothers. Time is important here: historical time, of course, but also the unfolding of individual lives across years and the sequelae of individual deaths. It seems appropriate to offer an anthropological consideration of these in Terry’s memory.

Isoso

Isoso is home to some twelve thousand people divided among about twenty-five villages (Figure 1). Erratically successful colonization schemes to establish new villages closer to a national park territory have made this number fluctuate over the past decade. The villages are strung along the lower reaches of the Parapetí River in southeastern Bolivia. The Parapetí begins in the Andean foothills and ends in swamps on the arable northwestern margins of the South American Chaco (the interior of which is far too arid for cultivation).

Everyone in Isoso speaks Guarani, the overwhelming majority as a first language. Some speak Spanish at home in the few villages that are shared with the descendants of white settlers who began arriving at the end of the nineteenth century. One village, San Silvestre, is majority *karai* (white) and three other villages have significant *karai* minorities. Isoso means “water that goes” in Guarani and these lower reaches of the Parapetí are seasonal, running only when swollen by Andean snowmelt. During half the year the riverbed is a dry ribbon of sand. Agriculture here depends on elaborate systems of irrigation canals to capture the seasonally available river water and distribute it to fields growing maize, manioc, sweet potatoes, and (in recent decades) rice. Irrigated agriculture has been practiced by Isoleño people for hundreds of years. Since the early twentieth century, Isoleño people have supplemented their seasonal agriculture with seasonal migrations for wage labor at the sugar cane harvest—first on plantations in Argentina (still called in Guarani *Mbaaporenda* [place of work]) and more recently on plantations established in Bolivia near the lowland city of Santa Cruz de la Sierra, *Karairenta* (place of white people). White settlers came to Isoso not as farmers but as cattlemen, bringing cows and horses. More affluent Guarani families may own significant herds, but most Guarani families’ pastoral resources are limited to goats, which travel the roads and villages in vast numbers. Many men hunt small game (armadillo, various birds) recreationally, but only a few men are serious and accomplished hunters who go on extended outings to bag peccary, brocket deer, and (rarely) tapir. Consequently, though much enjoyed, game meat is not a significant portion of the everyday diet. During two portions of the year (when the river waters arrive and when they recede), fishing provides an important and much anticipated culinary resource. February through May is warm and green, the most pleasant months in Isoso. June and July are often cold, at this time the river “leaves” and later in August the winds begin. September and October are windy and increasingly dry, with stinging sand blowing everywhere. November and December are suffocatingly hot, with occasional rain. Later, in December and January, heavier rain comes in earnest and the river “returns,” fed mostly by runoff from the Andes.

Karai families tend to be marginally more affluent than Guarani ones, but on the whole white settler descendants have not been prosperous here and have adopted the Guarani way of life with modest modifications (Spanish as a first language, more cattle, more Catholicism). Isoso was not missionized during the colonial nor early Republic era. Its first evangelical encounter was with Anglican missionaries who arrived in the 1920s, just prior to the Chaco War between Bolivia and Paraguay (1930–1935). While Catholicism made some inroads in the middle of the twentieth century, many more Isoleño people today are evangelical Protestants (belonging to several, often rival, sects [see Hirsch and Zarzycki 1993]). Since the 1980s, every Isoleño village has a state-supported primary school. At this time, one village gained a boarding high school, and two more have acquired one since then. Though still in the minority, a growing number of Isoleño young people are completing secondary education. Also during the 1980s, a small hospital was built in Isoso’s central village. The hospi-

tal should theoretically be staffed at all times by a young Bolivian resident but in practice is staffed only erratically. Three other villages have health posts, and one village hosts a military outpost staffed by four or five soldiers, usually local boys completing their year of mandatory service.

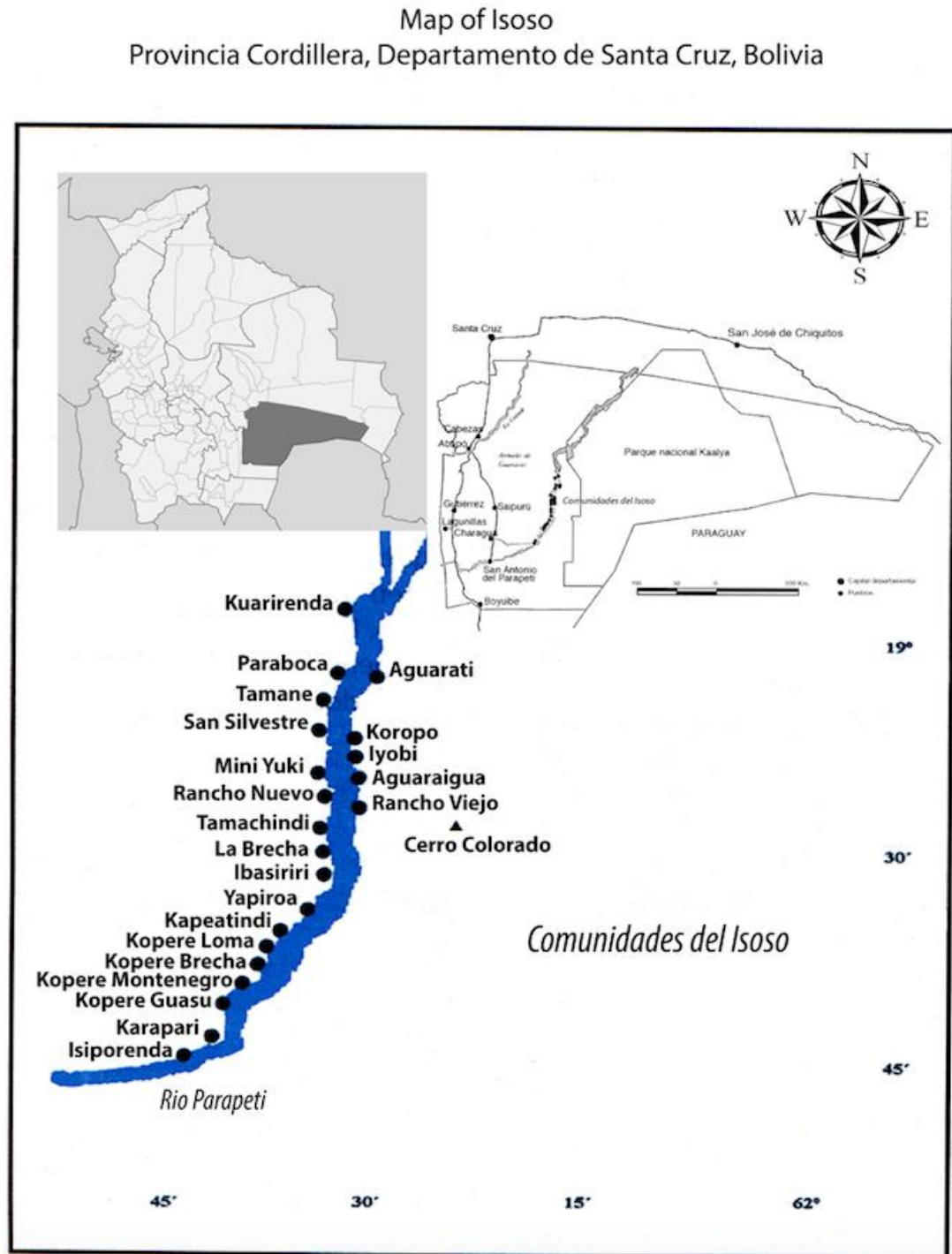


Figure 1. Isoso

(Map by Author & Lauren Alston Bridges, after Wildlife Conservation Society–Bolivia)

The sixty thousand Bolivian Guarani comprise a number of distinct groups. The vast majority, some forty thousand, belong to a group known in older accounts as *Chiriguano*. Isoleño people were known in historical accounts as *Chané*, defined in part by their subservient relationship to the Chiriguano. Chiriguano, who call themselves “*Ava*” (men), used to call the Isoleño people “*Tapüi*” (the strikethrough indicates nasalization). Isoleño people will sometimes explain that this referred to a special sort of small house they traditionally built in

their agricultural fields to be occupied when their crops were particularly vulnerable to birds and needed watching. Ava people (and the historical literature), in contrast, define this term as “slave.” One of the leading elite families in Isoso across several nineteenth and early twentieth century generations carried the surname *Iyambae*, which means “without owner” (Lowrey 2003; Combès 2005; Combès and Lowrey 2006).

The Shaman and his Laboratory

In 1997, I first visited Isoso and presented my research proposal at a community-wide *ñem-boati guasu* (grand assembly [see Lowrey 2007 and 2011 for more on this feature of Guaraní political life]). There I met the shaman Don Miguel Cuellar Vaca,¹ next to whose home an ethnobotanical “laboratory” was being built with funds from the French government and technical cooperation from the Bolivian Universidad Mayor de San Andrés (UMSA). My connection to the project emerged from a meeting in La Paz in 1996 with a Bolivian biochemist, Alberto Giménez, who had returned home after earning a doctorate from an Australian university. Working within the constraints of scarce research funding and limited laboratory infrastructure, Professor Giménez was eager to expand investigative laboratory science in Bolivia and to do good at the same time. He hoped to both train ambitious students and provide social benefits to the population at large. Ethnopharmaceutical research seemed to offer the perfect vehicle to this end. Collecting and assays were not particularly expensive but provided ample training opportunities and international funding was available to support research into low cost alternative medicine. The social benefits were potentially enormous. As Giménez liked to joke, if he and his team found a cure for AIDS or cancer that was great, but they were specifically interested in developing treatments for diseases that plagued poor rural Bolivians: Chagas disease and leishmaniasis, in particular, scourges that did not interest commercial pharmaceutical giants at all. An assay of *guirakillo* (*Solanum lentzii*) carried out by his team suggested the plant had powerful antifungal properties, although it was not traditionally used medicinally but was occasionally eaten as a food in Isoso. The aim of the laboratory was to locally produce a humble remedy for athlete’s foot and jock itch and to generate some income from its sales. The (eventual) profits were to be split between the community and reinvestment in the larger project of assaying Bolivia’s ethnobotanical resources for potential drug development (Universidad Mayor de San Andrés et al. 1996). Unfortunately, as I have written elsewhere at length, the project was exactly the sort of big-eyed puppy one wishes to see lead a happy life on a bucolic farm but which readers will probably not be surprised to learn will be squashed by a truck in a subsequent reel (Lowrey 2003, 2008a).

Aguarati-mi

On the same 1997 visit to Isoso at which I obtained permission from the Capitanía del Alto y Bajo Isoso and from Don Miguel himself to come back in 1998 to do fieldwork, after receiving those permissions I arranged transport in a four wheel drive vehicle owned by APCOB, a non-governmental organization (NGO).² My destination was the remote village, Aguarati (White Fox), outside of which Don Miguel and his household lived in a small settlement called Aguarati-mi (Little Aguarati) where the laboratory was being built. Twenty years on, it remains the most uncomfortable twenty-four hours of my life. Don Miguel and his family knew I was coming. Communication between villages was via ham radio then (it remains so to a great extent even now, when each village has a telephone installed that is only erratically powered by solar panels). I arrived at night, with foreboding building as the sun sank below the horizon. The truck in which I was riding passed village after village that appeared suddenly from, and then disappeared again into, the monotonous border of thorny brush that lined the dirt road on which we were traveling. It was the sandy start of Isoso’s most unpleasant season—the windy one.

It was dark when we arrived in Aguarati-mi, an isolated homestead on the eastern and less populous bank of the Parapetí in the far northern reaches of Isoso, almost two kilometers outside of Aguarati.³ My natural sense of direction is poor and my ability to navigate in Isoso has never become well developed. This nocturnal first arrival felt like being deposited in an inky void. The security of the NGO truck, its European owner, its Spanish language conversation, departed all too quickly. I was housed in the laboratory itself and slept bal-

anced on an examining table in my sleeping bag. The next morning I walked over to Don Miguel's household some hundred meters away and saw that the family had recently butchered a cow. The bloody hide hung suspended and drying near the main house, attracting thirsty bees. Bees were everywhere, competing with your every sip from a hand-held cup of water and occasionally stinging you right on the mouth—the kind of sting that hurts just enough to make your eyes water but not enough to allow yourself to cry because you are a grownup after all. In those twenty-four hours I am sure that I have never been spoken to less while in the company of other human beings. The shaman's very young, whip thin, never still wife Neli coaxed a bit of money out of me despite the importance of not giving having been sternly impressed upon me by one of APCOB's employees before my arrival. A female patient my own age, Lourdes, was deputized to deal with me (I supposed, wrongly as it turned out, that she was the only person in the household who spoke Spanish well) and did so, exuding impenetrable somberness all the while. All the men seemed weather-worn, obviously competent at mysterious rural outdoor things, and intimidating. The numerous small children looked upon me as a sort of comic monster, best gazed at from a safe distance. Don Miguel evinced no interest in my presence at all. Everything struck me as wickedly, exaggeratedly sinister. I departed with a feeling of liquid fear, a boneless dread and horror, such that witchcraft seemed not only logically possible but surely present.

Planning for my fieldwork the following year, I decided that perhaps I would not, after all, begin my fieldwork at the home of the shaman and his laboratory. Beforehand it would be important, I decided, to know a bit more about Isoso in general. In short, I leapt flying at an offer from APCOB to live at their house in central Isoso in a village called Ibasiriri for a few months at the start of my fieldwork in 1998, thus avoiding a return to Aguarati-mi. After all, there was a shaman in Ibasiriri, too.

Ibasiriri

Ibasiriri is in Alto Isoso, the upriver portion of Isoso, closer to where the foothills of the Andes begin and to the outside world. It takes about six hours by bus and a little less by four-wheel drive vehicle to get from Ibasiriri to Charagua, the nearest Bolivian town. En route, you pass first through the other villages of Alto Isoso, then a series of Mennonite settlements. Charagua is surrounded by low hills and has a small military post and a railway station. The military post is a relic of the Chaco War. Most Isoleño young men perform their mandatory year of military service here in company of Ava young men and commanded by karai and *kolla* (Andean) officers. Charagua is the entry point for two other societies: the white lowland Bolivian and the larger Bolivian Guaraní world dominated by Ava Guaraní people.

With time, I began to establish relationships. At a village *ñemboati* (assembly; “(reflexive) to gather”) I asked for a Guaraní tutor and a kind middle-aged woman, Doña Beatriz, stepped forward to volunteer. As is common in anthropological networking, she turned out to be more multiply connected in and outside the community than I realized at first. She is also one of the relatively few actively practicing Catholics in Isoso and looks after the Catholic chapel in Ibasiriri that had been built in the 1980s. Mass was only held very occasionally, led by a now-deceased Jesuit priest from Spain who had lived for many years in Ava Guaraní territory and who spoke excellent Guaraní. An accomplished weaver and seamstress, Doña Beatriz at the time worked with a nun based in Charagua to run a women's weaving cooperative that was an alternative to a much more successful one based in Isoso's central village, La Brecha. She speaks Spanish well and can read and write, which is unusual for an Isoleño woman of her generation. Immediately, she declared the Guaraní language text by Farré (1991) I brought with me to be “all wrong.”⁴ This discouraging judgment put me off studying it for a couple of months, until I had learned enough Guaraní to realize why she so strongly objected: it used the orthography and colloquial vocabulary of Ava Guaraní. The departures from Isoleño Guaraní are very minor from the perspective of a second language learner but central to Isoleño and Ava notions of their respective identities, particularly because Guaraní language itself is so constitutive of that identity (Schaden 1954; Meliá 1993).

With time, I learned Doña Beatriz's family history. Her father had been an unusually accomplished hunter, who on several occasions narrowly escaped being lured forever by the wife he had among the *iyareta* (owners of the forest and its game animals) whom he visited

in dreams. He was murdered by another Ibasiriri man, an evangelical pastor whom I also came to know well. The pastor denounced Doña Beatriz's father as an *mbaekuaa* (witch), ambushed him, and shot him about a decade before I began my fieldwork.

Doña Beatriz's husband, Don Felipe, is a skilled and hardworking carpenter who suffers from headaches and malaise brought about by witchcraft persecution. He had recently stepped into the role of principal advisor to Don Jorge Romero, the shaman who lived in Ibasiriri. About five years before, Don Jorge's advisor of many years had died suddenly. He had been struck down by witchcraft. That man's son told me Don Jorge himself had confirmed this about the cause of death: "there is something," he had said.

Visiting

Over time Doña Beatriz gradually became relaxed and chatty. I also invented for myself a task, carrying out a household survey of medicinal plant use, which turned out to be rather more interesting than I had anticipated. By some decision-making process to which I was not privy, a young woman named Marta was deputized to help. She translated for me and guided me to each of the households in Ibasiriri. These were tucked away down meandering paths spreading out in several directions from an inexact, irregularly shaped central "plaza": a sort of long oval clearing with raggedy edges. A few tall trees, useful for providing shade for meetings, stood about in this clearing, and the village itself was essentially forested. Smaller trees located near individual households doubled as storage, with all kinds of useful items hanging from lower branches. I would get lost constantly. Following up invitations on my own was particularly excruciating. People would tell me to come by, and I could never remember how to get to their homes. Sometimes, after a visit, I would have the very embarrassing experience of traveling in a meandering forested circle back to the very house I had left ten minutes previously. Because people found their own village layout with its kin-based districts and family groupings so clear, very often it did not occur to them that I had been lost (usually within a five minute radius from the village center that was obscured from me by trees and houses but obvious to everyone else). They would look friendly but nonplussed by my unanticipated return.

My pattern was to spend half of the day with Marta doing the survey and the other half paying follow-up thank you visits on my own, delivering a package of sugar and one of yerba mate to each home where we had done an interview. Because I performed surveys during the day, the interviewees were almost always women, though occasionally elderly husbands or fathers were also present. Most younger men were busy doing the heavy work preparing irrigation canals and agricultural fields and fishing when the river began to "arrive."

Marta, a high school graduate, was then in her early twenties and unmarried. Because both of her parents had passed away, she lived with a married older brother. She has a sort of horsey, sporty friendliness that made her unusually outgoing for an Isoseño woman her age. Marta evidently enjoyed the survey work quite a lot. I later learned that her family had been ostracized for several years because of witchcraft accusations. Her parents' deaths were sometimes attributed to their own witchery "falling back" upon them. Although I wondered if, under the circumstances, it were wise for her to accompany an outsider with an unseemly interest in health-related information, she seemed merely pleased to have an opportunity for so much sociability. Her views on the matter were, in the long run, correct. In 2013 during my last visit to Isoso, Marta had been elected "women's captain" of the village and was quite securely enfolded in Ibasiriri's social life.

A Gentle Man

Eventually I carried out the same medicinal plant usage survey in each of the three villages in which I lived in Isoso. The results were roughly the same in each (Lowrey 2003). People named an average of three or four medicinal plants, with a high degree of replication between households; a vast pharmacopeia was not in play. Although Isoso is a community of settled agriculturalists rather than hunter-gatherers, Isoseño people have lived there for hundreds of years and probably inhabited the larger region for thousands of years. Presumably they have had ample opportunity to become familiar with local medicinal plant possibilities. My results flew in the face of many claims made about indigenous plant knowledge which underpinned the establishment of the laboratory of traditional medicine in Isoso (Gallo Toro

1996; Universidad Mayor de San Andrés et al. 1996). One unexpected outcome of the survey was the startling frequency with which people mentioned wild animal fats as having curative properties, especially jaguar, but also lizard and fox.⁵ Needless to say, these sorts of observations never made it into the “healing forest” discourse associated with ethnobiological lore I encountered before starting fieldwork.

Just as time in Ibasiriri allowed me to avoid Aguarati-mi, time doing survey work with Marta and practicing Guarani with Doña Beatriz allowed me to avoid visiting Don Jorge, Ibasiriri’s shaman. Don Jorge accepted my visits to his home because I had been officially approved the year before as somebody “studying shamanism” at the meeting attended by Don Miguel. He evinced no rivalry toward Don Miguel and invariably deferred to him in settings where both were present. Jorge was also involved, in a minor capacity, in the laboratory project. He was supposed to supply samples of guirakillo and other medicinal plants for on-going assays by researchers affiliated with the La Paz-based Bolivian Universidad Mayor de San Andrés along with some French ethnobotanists. These researchers reported that, although he was not confrontational about it, for the most part, he did not do so. He just agreed to do it and, as time went along, contributed less and less carefully sorted material. Eventually he began handing over sacks of what appeared to be random leaves and sticks and, still later, stopped contributing anything at all.

When I first began visiting Don Jorge, it was usually in the company of Don Felipe and the elected village capitán, Don Anselmo. The latter, like Jorge himself, settled in Ibasiriri because he had married an Ibasiriri woman but was originally from another village in Isoso. These visits were excruciating. There was no menace or unfriendliness, just mild and patient silence. I would try to prepare questions, at first in Spanish, and later carefully practiced ahead of time in Guarani. Jorge would answer amiably, with at most a sentence. Neither of the other two men would contribute. We would sit for a bit, and I would trot out another question. A visit that lasted 30 minutes was, in my view, a triumph of willpower achieved by ignoring every social instinct I possessed about not being intrusive and leaving people alone who wanted to be let alone. After several days or a week had gone by, I’d do it again. Taken during one of these visits, figure 2 attests to our convivial jollity.



Figure 2. (L-R) Shaman’s advisor, shaman Don Jorge Romero, and village capitán, 1998 (Photo by Author)

This was fieldwork, at first. But something changed after I had made the rounds of many other households in Ibasiriri and particularly as I began to pay regular (sometimes even invited!) social visits to several women in Isoso. What changed was that Jorge’s wife Apolonia began to play hostess during my visits (Figure 3). Their daughters and grandchildren and kin and other visitors would join the circle, people would cross-talk, and sweetest of all, Don Jorge would begin to crack little jokes. Never for my benefit—these were obviously gambits

aimed at getting Doña Apolonia to laugh. He played to her audience of one, though anyone else around was welcome to enjoy the performance.



Figure 3. Jorge with wife and granddaughter (Photo by Author)

He was transformed by her presence, which from my perspective worked a kind of magic on everything. The household opened up, and sometime after this, Don Jorge invited me to observe several curing sessions. But these were uncomfortably intimate, being held inside the house, while social visits happened outside. The method of treatment was familiar, in the sense that I had read about it: he sucked the illness-causing *mbaeruvi* (bug or creature; *bicho* in Spanish)⁶ out of his patients' bodies with his mouth. But the whole time I was inside during these sessions, I wished I were outside again with Apolonia and everyone else, laughing and talking. When Don Jorge talked about the hardships of being a shaman, I suspect that one of those hardships might have been that he often found himself wishing the same thing.

Two Kinds of Shamanism

Don Jorge was younger than Don Miguel, which could have explained Jorge's deference to Miguel, but a more important reason was probably the respective sources of their shamanic powers. Unlike Don Miguel, who had inherited his *paye*⁷ directly from another shaman, via a long apprenticeship, Don Jorge's *paye* was derived extrasocially. As a young man, around the time he was doing his military service, Don Jorge disappeared in the forest for several days. He returned in a weak and disoriented state. He had been taken by the *kaaiyaareta* (owners of the forest). As he gradually recovered, it emerged that he now had new powers and was possessed of a *paye*. He never told me the story himself, but in versions told to me by others this was a far from welcome gift. The experience was traumatic, and being a shy and retiring man, he was quite a reluctant shaman. Nevertheless, by the time I arrived in Isoso (many decades later), he had a well-established reputation within Isoso and had on several occasions also collaborated with outsiders. Collaborators included a program run by the Swiss Red Cross during the 1980s that attempted to combine conventional with traditional medicinal practice, the ethnobotanical research program described in this article, and myself. With respect to outsiders, he always positioned himself as the junior partner to Don Miguel and another very elderly shaman in Isoso's most upriver village, Kuarirenda, who died while I was doing my fieldwork and with whom I never spoke directly. At the one multivillage meeting I saw Jorge attend in Don Miguel's company, he did not speak publically and deferred to Don Miguel when shamanic opinion was called for (regarding a complicated case of potential witchcraft [see Lowrey 2007]). In village meetings in Ibasiriri, he rarely spoke up. Occasionally he made quiet asides that caused the men sitting immediately around him to laugh, but I never heard what he said (and if I had, my Guarani, even at its best, was far from equal to slantwise repartee, so I probably would not have understood anyway).

In his gentle, soft-spoken persona Don Jorge did not resemble the "canonical" Tupi-Guarani *paye* assembled from the ethnohistorical evidence in Helene Clastre's famous 1995 book. Nor were his domestic arrangements canonical, since he resided uxorilocally. In Isoso this is the most common pattern, followed in frequency by neolocality and virilocality. All forms, however, are present and none was ever supremely valorized in my hearing. Don

Jorge settled in Ibasiriri as a young man to live with Apolonia's family but had been born and raised in a downriver village, Tamachindi. Jorge and Apolonia's own daughters, in turn, raised their children in and nearby their parents' household with their mother's oversight. Don Jorge indicated at one point that he planned to transmit his paye to a favorite grandson. I will learn in years to come if this came off. From what I know from Don Miguel's forays into finding an heir, such plans have a way of falling by the wayside as children become adults.

Jorge did not mention his plans for his grandson when last I visited him in 2013. It had been four years since my last visit, my longest stretch of time away from Isoso. On my way to Isoso in April 2013, I heard in Charagua of Doña Apolonia's death in May of the previous year. When I got to Ibasiriri I found Jorge was still living in the home he had shared with Apolonia and with their daughters and grandchildren, which had been expanded and to which two outbuildings had been added over the years (Figure 4). Without Apolonia, our visit was in the "original" fashion. Once I had offered my condolences, we sat in painful near-silence. He told the story (which others had conveyed to me as well) of the horrible final days, of taking her to Santa Cruz for treatment where she had died, and having to arrange to bring her body back on a bus for burial. We talked about how good and kind she had been. As I got ready to leave, I said I hoped to return in 2015. Jorge told me that he did not see a reason to go on without Apolonia and did not think he would live to see me again. Despite my sincere condolences on that April visit, I did not pay this too much mind. I knew well that Jorge was prone to moroseness when Apolonia was not around for him to perform for and play to. That October, I got word by email from a young Isoleño man that Don Jorge had passed away earlier in the week.



Figure 4. Don Jorge and his wife (Photo by Author)

A Powerful Man

Just as Don Jorge never evinced rivalry toward Don Miguel, Don Miguel always spoke fondly and well of Don Jorge. On the two occasions I saw them together, they seemed to take a kind of quiet comfort in one another's companionship. Their manner at village meetings and social gatherings was quite similar. They offered no oratory, just soft, laughter-provoking asides to the senior men of their respective villages who were always their immediate companions.

After Don Miguel's death in 2005, his widow Neli sought treatment from Jorge when she was ill and she also sent her daughter to him after the daughter had lost a baby. Neli deeply mourned the death of Jorge's wife, Apolonia. The two women had not met often. But just as their husbands seemed to recognize in one another a sort of shared burden, the two women obviously felt for one another as wives-of-shamans. Apolonia was very sorry for Neli after Miguel's death, and I suspect that when Neli went for treatment at Jorge's it was as much to see Apolonia as to see Apolonia's husband. When they knew I was travelling between their two far-flung villages, each inevitably asked me to convey her greetings to the other and each asked after the other when I would return.

Apolonia's and Neli's marriages, though, were very different. Neli was four decades younger than Don Miguel and the last in a long series of wives. Don Miguel's many wives and many children were famous elements of his persona, less for what he said about himself than in the stories others told about him. He was supposed to have married more than a dozen women during his life, and by his own account he had fathered more than thirty children, all of whom remained within his circle of relationships. Never the source of condemnation, these stories were told and retold with a mix of hilarity and marvel by Isoleño and non-Isoleño alike. Another aspect of his unique kinship history was not known to most outsiders, although it was well known to people in Aguarati and treated with much head-shaking. Neli's aunt had been Don Miguel's wife before her. Neli had arrived in his household in her early teens as a caretaker for her young cousins who had been left motherless by the death of her aunt. She ended up staying on as the last of Miguel's wives.

The kinship situation in Aguarati-mi was rather more convoluted than this, however. With the establishment of the laboratory project Don Miguel had moved his household to Aguarati-mi from a site still yet further removed from Aguarati proper. Sometime later, one of Don Miguel's adult daughters, Victoria, had moved from Aguarati with her husband to establish a home adjacent to Don Miguel's new home and laboratory. She brought along her own mother, another former wife of Don Miguel, who in a previous marriage had given birth to Don Miguel's deceased wife and was therefore grandmother to Neli, Don Miguel's current wife. Two of Neli's sisters were married to two of Miguel's sons (by different mothers). One of these sons was also the brother of Victoria's husband (they had the same mother, but different fathers) and was married to one of Neli's sisters. When that marriage faltered, the son alternated between the house of his father, Don Miguel, and the house of his half-sister Victoria and her husband, who was his half-brother. A few years later another son of Don Miguel brought his wife, another of Neli's sisters, to establish a home near Aguarati-mi. Shortly before Don Miguel died, one of his recently married younger sons (a son by Neli's deceased aunt) also brought his young wife to live at Aguarati-mi. She was not happy in this little universe—she was from a village upriver where she had met her young husband when they were at a boarding high school together—and soon departed, before bearing a child.

Isoso's villages are small, but the degree of in-marriage found at Aguarati-mi is unheard of elsewhere, and the iterative pattern of marriage settlement is also unusual: married sons and married daughters alike gravitated back into the orbit of their father, Don Miguel. The image of a planetary system was brought home to me very powerfully one evening not too long after I'd finally come to live at Aguarati-mi (Figure 5).

Don Miguel, who in addition to being a shaman was an accomplished violin player, brought out his fiddle one evening after dinner. In the days before evangelical Christianity had made so many inroads and there were more dancing parties in Isoso, he had played quite often, but by the time I arrived in the field it was rather rare for him to do so. It was a lovely evening. In the sort of good weather we were then enjoying, the solar panels attached to the laboratory supplied enough power to send current to a light suspended from a tree limb by the shaman's house. Neli's (then) five children stayed up, even tiny toddler Dionisia, with the baby Fabricio in Neli's arms. Three of the children by Neli's deceased aunt were also there. The oldest girl, in her late teens, had married recently but the younger teenage sister and brother (around twelve) were still living at the house. Victoria, her husband, and their four small children, along with Victoria's mother were also in attendance. Lourdes (the patient my own age) and I sat together on a bench. In the center of the circle of light, playing *chacareras* (a genre of folk music endogenous to the Chaco), Don Miguel sat in a metal lawn chair with

comfortable, stretchy plastic webbing—the chair of honour in any Isoleño home—with small children and grandchildren dancing happy orbits around him, delighted by the impromptu party. He was Aguarati-mi’s sun.

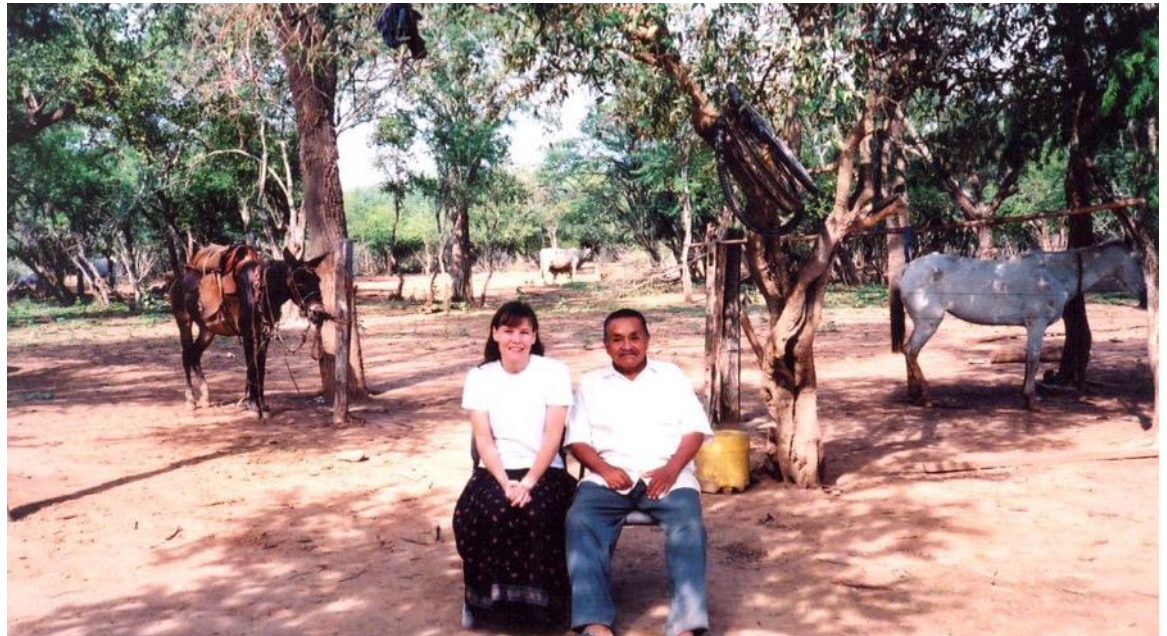


Figure 5. Author with Don Miguel Cuellar, 2000 (Photo by Author)

Power and Suspicion

As noted above, the Bolivian Guarani term for shaman is *paye*. In Paraguayan Guarani *pai* means Catholic priest and in much older Tupi-Guarani literature *pai* or *paye* appears paired with another term, *karai*, meaning something extraordinary and used to distinguish exceptional prophets from ordinary shamans: “The great shamans were those carrying the title of karai. . . . All paje did not enjoy a similar prestige” (Clastres 1995:27). In Bolivian Guarani usage, karai now means “white” in a very ordinary manner. The word has been stripped of its supernatural connotations, though these connotations of strange power are undoubtedly why it became attached to whites in the first place. Clastres emphasizes that karai were “outside of that which precisely constitutes a community, that is, the network of kinship,” and she stresses that karai are “exterior to kinship” (Clastres 1995:32). This, almost certainly, is among the reasons the term karai came to be applied to strange, powerful, and utterly exterior or whites.

The physical apartness of Don Miguel’s home in Aguarati-mi from the village proper of Aguarati is reminiscent of Hélène Clastres’ famous description of pre-Columbian Tupi-Guarani shaman-prophets: “It is known of course that the karai lived in seclusion, apart from villages . . . Self-chosen isolation . . . was a way of indicating that the karai had a different status, that in effect they did not really belong to a community, that they were from nowhere” (1995:30–31). This highlighting of “apartness” aligns in interesting ways with Don Miguel’s “exteriority” to normal kinship rules. As mentioned above, Isoleño households are most often uxorilocal or neolocal. In Aguarati-mi, by contrast, Don Miguel was the paternal sun around which a planetary system of closely related kin revolved. He was an ambivalent figure who comprised in his person the suspended tensions of being exaggeratedly beyond society—literally in his living far beyond the boundaries of his own village at the far northeasterly limits of all Isoso—while also attracting a minivillage of close relations to live around him. This was similar to the flouting of convention that was the particular privilege of the messianic prophets who inspired Tupi-Guarani migrations across the South American interior for hundreds of years during the pre- and post-Columbian period (see Villar and Combès 2013 for a critical recent treatment of the anthropological handling of that history).

Pierre and Hélène Clastres famously developed a theory of Tupi-Guarani society as a “society against the state,” one in which these disruptive messages and the migrations they inspired precluded the development of state structures in lowland South America (Pierre

Clastres 1977). Breaking kinship rules was one of the ways these prophets were supposed to have prevented the consolidation of power. Hélène Clastres (1995:37) quotes a passage from the Jesuit missionary Manuel da Nóbrega's 1549 account of the message of these "sorcerers": "as for their daughters, they can give them to whomever they wish." Her interpretation is that through this advice to "turn up their noses at the rules of marriage . . . the entire social order is questioned" (1995:38). Recent archaeological findings have begun to suggest that in fact larger polities existed in lowland South America than either of the Clastres imagined (Heckenberger et al. 2008; Erickson 2010). But my field research nevertheless offers evidence that the Clastres' argument that power itself was suspect and seen negatively in the lowland South American context remains apposite.

Though *paye* no longer contrasts with *karai* in Tupi-Guarani society, in contemporary Isoso it has come to contrast with *mbaekuaa* (witch). *Mbaekuaa* means "thing-knower" or "knowledge-thing" and, as with *paye*, signifies both the person and the magical object inside the person that is the source of his power (Lowrey 2007). In older accounts, *mbaekuaa* was not necessarily pejorative. It was used as often as "paye" to translate "shaman" (likewise, the Spanish "*brujo*" (witch) was often used for persons who contextually seem to have been viewed as shamans). Even in contemporary Isoso people speak of feared and respected *mbaekuaareta* of long ago.⁸ They were known to be able to kill, and held in high regard for it, especially when they used their powers against collective enemies. In contemporary parlance, however, to call someone a "mbaekuaa" is to make an accusation, while to call someone a "paye" is a sign of respect.

While the term *mbaekuaa* is now almost exclusively pejorative, the role of *paye* is ambivalent in two ways. First, there is the issue of simple fraud. People in Isoso had different opinions about which *payereta* were truly effective and which were *payejanga* (an unreal "reflection" or "image" of a *paye*). Don Miguel and Don Jorge were the most widely acknowledged shamans, but there were several others in Isoso (some called also *payerai* [little *paye*]). In difficult cases it was not uncommon for Isoseno people to seek treatment from several *payereta* in sequence. Don Miguel was usually the *paye* of last resort. While I never heard Miguel or Jorge disparage one another, they both disparaged other *payerai* on occasion as "payejanga," as did some other Isoseno people in my hearing.

It was impossible for me to collect unbiased data about Jorge and Miguel, as everyone in Isoso knew that I was studying shamanism, took them seriously, and spoke to them often during my fieldwork (in fact, I lived with Don Miguel's family for several months). I do not know, then, whether these two men were sometimes disparaged as "payejanga" themselves. I suppose it unlikely that no one in Isoso ever doubted their powers, though the only people who directly expressed such doubts to me were *karai* Isoseno (who did so in Spanish and didn't use the term "payejanga"). It was nevertheless impossible to remain unaware that Don Miguel, in particular, was both publically respected as a *paye* and quietly feared by many people as a *mbaekuaa*. I never heard such talk about Don Jorge.

In fearing Don Miguel as a potential *mbaekuaa*, people were attributing to him a kind of occult super-efficacy. People hope and expect that eventually witchcraft will "fall back on" the witch, killing him or her. There are cannibalistic rituals—more spoken of than performed, I suspect—that are supposed to bring this about. They entail a shaman being called in by the family to eat a tiny part of a witchcraft victim's corpse. The witch, who has through sorcery "eaten up" the victim, finds him or herself then being magically "eaten up" instead (Lowrey 2007). If all shamans are supposed to be able to make this happen (even if, as I suppose, this ceremony is never really performed), they are all potentially intentional causers of magical death. So why was Jorge, unlike Miguel, to my knowledge, never suspected by anyone of being a malevolent witch? Here I think we must consider the sources and natures of their respective *ipayereta* (possessive plural of *paye*).

Gentleness and Power, Beauty and Dominance

Jorge's *paye* was extrasocial in origin and visited upon him privately in an ordeal that took place in the wilderness. Miguel's was inherited from the previous generation in a social process that culminated with a public ceremony in his village. After I had lived at Aguarati-mi for several months, Don Miguel invited me to copy a small notebook that contained his "biography." It is not, as readers will see, his own biography so much as it is that of his *paye*.

The original text (which I did not see) was in Guaraní. The voicing of the text is unclear. Miguel, who did not read or write, had asked Lourdes, who had finished high school, to translate it into Spanish. She did not tell me (perhaps she did not know) who had written the Guaraní original (for the Spanish version see Lowrey 2003, Appendix D). My English translation, with some place names that would be confusing to non-Isoseño readers excised, is as follows:

The life of Miguel Cuellar, that is to say his story when he was titled as a paye in the year 1956, 26th of November. The paye that titled him was Piñoa Lopez. He who was most concerned that Miguel C. become a paye was Apiyare, he had great friendship with this paye Piñoa, at every opportunity he would say to the paye Piñoa that he give his title to him so that he could cure already, and it was in this way that this man always insisted with him, until the day arrived when he said, “very well, make corn beer, but well-made corn beer,” thus he directed, and “that it be rich with oil, in this way the task will turn out well,” he told them. And it passed Saturday 26 November of 1956 we assembled to await the paye Piñoa at midday. He issued his question. “And so it is that you all desire that I tittle Miguelito?” he asked in a loud voice. The people replied, ‘we want for you to tittle him well, in order that he cure us. We don’t want him to be a payejanga. He answered in this way, “I am going to return him to you when he is well; he is going to walk with me until I see that he cures well.” When he finished he said, “now there is one part, but it is lacking, after the rest period, that is to say within 15 days you are going to take him to me,” he said to Apiyare, “to my house,” but he directed them to take him at night, so that no one would see him, but “it is jealous” he said “for this reason” he said to them “you must take him to me at night.” And so it was that Apiyare took him. They arrived there by night and he spoke to them and came out and said “I was already awaiting you.” And so it was that Miguel stayed with him in his house, he was there with him for 10 months, his instruction was quite long that is to say orations. Every three days he would ask him if he already knew them. That was Miguel’s task, after the 10 months he knew all those orations and also already went out with him to practice. Thus with him, wherever people took this paye to do curing he would go also, he would do it for him and when Miguel couldn’t, he would show him how, and thus he went along training him, until one day there was a boy who was ill, there he made him work and he worked well and he said, “now I have fulfilled that which I told you all I would, that I had to return him well and I am going to give him advice: that he be good to his kin, that he take care of his people, that he not be proud, that he not be lazy about going where they seek him, that he be of good heart.” This advice Piñoa gave to Miguel when he completed curing the boy, thus he delivered him, since that year Miguel was titled, from the year 1957 on.

I don’t want to attempt to parse this text too closely, though I have many times puzzled over the “jealousy” and the “titling” in particular. What it makes obvious is that Don Miguel’s becoming a shaman was an eminently social process, though it is clear that the forces harnessed in that process are not entirely sociable. Don Jorge’s process was markedly asocial on the other hand. I suspect it is not at all accidental that I only had stories of Jorge’s receipt of his paye as a consequence of that shamanic seizure in the wilderness at second hand but never from Jorge himself. In marked contrast, Don Miguel participated in the creation and dissemination of a canonical version of his paye in Guaraní, in Spanish, and now in English, too. Turning to the fact that the sources of Jorge’s and Miguel’s respective powers were the wilderness (kaaiyaareta) in one case and, in the other, society (a negotiated inheritance and a public investiture), a rather faraway Amazonian case seems closely relevant here.

In a series of texts, Terence Turner has argued for there being two supreme forms of value for the Kayapo of the Brazilian Amazon: beauty and dominance (sometimes this latter is called “power” [Turner 1980, 2003b]). The origin of beauty is thought by Kayapo people to be ultimately external to society. *Beautiful names*, for example, which function as an important form of Kayapo wealth and which are bestowed on particular individuals via elaborate collective rituals, are supposed to have originally been gifted to Kayapo by natural, extrasocial beings. Now, there is certainly a status ranking involved in determining which Kayapo obtain beautiful names and associated wealth that is in some sense produced collectively (because these names cannot be bestowed except in rituals in which everyone must participate, but from which only a few individuals receive status-enhancing benefits). Nevertheless, beauty is a more accessible quality, even for “commoner” Kayapo, than is dominance, or power. Everyone can participate in collective occasions of beauty, and the participation of all is, in fact, a prerequisite for ritual success. Ritual and festive occasions of costuming, dancing, and singing simultaneously produce, express, and enable the consumption of beauty by everyone present, even if unequally so. What is more, beautiful costumes and associated paraphernalia, dances, and songs all pertain to and imitate (or animate) extrasocial beings, like anteaters, birds, and supernatural entities.

Dominance, by contrast, is reserved for a small subset of senior men, accomplished at ceremonial oratory, who embody the supreme expression of a fully successful Kayapo life. The means by which one becomes a dominant senior male are entirely social, and involve strategic accomplishments in the field of marriage, reproduction, and—most crucially—father-in-lawhood. A dominant senior man (and not all men achieve such dominance) controls his daughters and, through them, his daughters’ husbands and their children. Hypernucleating kin is essential to power in Kayapo society.

To return to the case of the two Isoleño shamans, Don Jorge’s variety would in Kayapo terms express the “beauty” mode of value, Don Miguel the “dominance” mode. What is even more interesting about this for comparative purposes with the Isoleño case I treat here is that in the Kayapo case, beauty involves less doubt than does dominance. Vanessa Lea (1995, 2001) has documented that there is quite a bit of contestation around the bestowal of beautiful names (which can be bequeathed to both male and female children) but no one seems to claim that one or another name isn’t “really” beautiful. While one supposes a specific ritual or festival can be judged as having come off rather better or worse than another, all are equally occasions of collective beauty. There is not, it would seem, a lively discourse of sham or “pseudo” beauty. On the other hand, judging by the evidence Turner has presented over many articles over many years, there is a tremendous amount of doubt and talk of duplicity and puffery attached to one or another claim by Kayapo men to power or dominance (1984, 1991, 1993, 1996, 2003a).

We can conclude that while beauty is an important social value, its font is ultimately extrasocial. It is relatively generally accessible, and it is not hedged about with talk of humbug. Dominance is an important social value and its font lies entirely within the field of social relations. It is exclusionary of access, and it is constantly hedged about with talk of sinister humbug. These dynamics are also strongly gendered: dominance is ostensibly the field of struggle of men alone (for all that they rely in these struggles on kinship networks recruited through women); beauty, on the other hand, involves both men and women in its production and circulation. Dominance is center stage (literally so, when one thinks of the location of the traditional Kayapo men’s house in the village center) while beauty is all around (literally so, when one thinks of the great circling collective dances that produce it). In one of those isomorphisms that are never coincidental, although he wrote extensively on Kayapo forms of beauty the male anthropologist Terence Turner’s best-known writing about the Kayapo concerns dominance struggles between different generations of Kayapo men, while the female anthropologist Vanessa Lea has produced excellent (but less famous) analyses of the politics of Kayapo beauty and the steady role played by female-centered networks of kin in its production and reproduction.

Turning back to Isoso, all of this fits the conjoined case of Jorge and Miguel, the sources of their shamanic power, their relative potency, their relative menace, and their very different societal/kinship situations extraordinarily well. Social hierarchy is itself a much-remarked feature of Isoleño social life, by visitors and inhabitants alike. There are ordinary Isoleño,

and then there are the *tuicha vae reta* (those who are big [or great]). To this day I am learning of new ways that the people and families whom I knew best there turn out to be kin to one another in relationships that span far flung villages but which appear again and again in the ethnohistorical record. But not everyone in Isoso participates in producing the dominance of the *tuicha vae reta* consistently. In this zone that seems to have been settled by refugees, much of the time Isoleño people tolerate the airs of the *tuicha vae reta* but “vote with their feet” when they find them intolerable. Dissent in village meetings called by the *tuicha vae reta*, for example, usually takes the form of simply not turning up, rather than confrontation (Lowrey 2007, 2008b).⁹ I’ll return to the relevance of this to the case of Jorge and Miguel further on, but recall that when the less powerful Jorge became disillusioned with the laboratory project he did not protest it. He simply stopped contributing.

My own experience of Isoso has been that it comprises two kinds of societies in one, a naïve feeling that is confirmed by ethnohistorical evidence. Had the *kaaíyaareta* (owners of the forest) not seized upon Don Jorge, I am not sure as an outsider that I ever would have come to know him and his family well, if at all. While I did of course meet many “ordinary” Isoleño families during the course of my fieldwork, they were not the families with whom I became close (an experience shared by Erland Nordenskiöld [2002:146 {orig. 1912}] during his time in Isoso).

Anarchy, Hierarchy, Grandmothers

Tupi-Guarani social structure is famously astructural, as exemplified, for example, in Pierre Clastres’ argument in *Society Against the State* about Guarani “anarchy.” Certainly the very layout of Isoleño villages is meandering. Higgledy-piggledy paths connect homes, clusters of homes or pairs of homes. Village centers are less geographically central than customarily so. Unlike the groomed circles of some Amazonian societies, or the paired moieties of some Andean ones, indigenous Chacoan settlements are invisibly tucked away into the brush. Lacking the stonework of the Andes or the earthworks of the Amazon, they have left few traces for archaeologists to study, at least by methods presently available.

As Eduardo Viveiros de Castro (1992: 5) has written in an apposite discussion of social architectonics, “[c]ompared to the crystalline properties of Gê societies, the Tupi-Guarani evoke images of amorphous bodies—clouds or smoke—in their weak and casual social organization.”

However, the original inhabitants of Isoso were not Guarani, nor were they culturally related to any of the groups of the Chaco interior (Zamucoan, Guaycuruan, and so on). The Andean foothills of Bolivia were first settled by Arawakan Chané, that were later conquered in the pre- and early post-Columbian period by Guarani invaders from the east (Métraux 1946). Isoso’s population descends from Arawakan Chané driven off more fertile agricultural land in the Andean valleys to the north and west from whence they pushed into the Chaco along the fluctuating waterway of the Parapetí. Chané was still spoken in part of Isoso in the first years of the 20th century (Nordenskiöld 2002:147).

In the ethnographic literature, Arawakan societies are noted for their hierarchy and complex systems of irrigation (Hill and Santos-Granero 2002). The latter is certainly present in Isoso. Cultivating the periphery of the Chaco proper would be impossible without an elaborately maintained system of canals. The arid interior of the Chaco cannot support agriculture, and the feat of using a river that is only seasonally present is no small accomplishment (recall that Isoso means “water that goes”).



Figure 6. Overlooking Aguarati from a high sand dune on the bank of the Parapetí River. The village is hidden by tree cover. (Photo by Author)



Figure 7. Ibasiriri village center (Photo by Author)



Figure 8. Travelling between households within a village (Photo by Author)

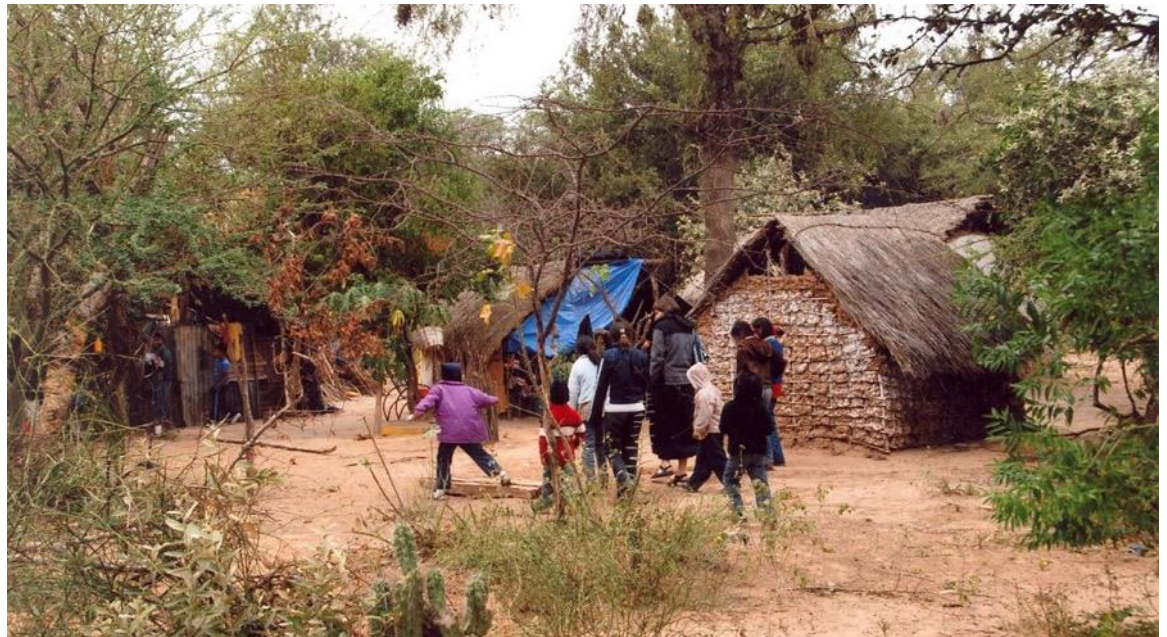


Figure 9. Isoleño homes, tucked away beneath the trees (Photo by Author)



Figure 10. Parapetí during the part of the year when it is a ribbon of sand (Photo by Author)



Figure 11. Hand-dug irrigation canals to farm fields, Isoso (Photo by Author)



Figure 12. Isoseño agriculture at its lushest season (Photo by Author)

What about social hierarchy? Beginning with my 2003 doctoral thesis I have written about the ironies of putatively egalitarian “Guaraniness” being held as the supreme expression of what looks in many respects like an Arawakan dominance hierarchy.¹⁰ This would seem to contravene the famous Guaraní ethos of anarchic egalitarianism. Evidence of stratification in Isoso includes differentials of material wealth, something like an aristocracy comprising the Iyambae family and related families, and a propensity on the part of elites to truck readily with high-status outsiders: Guaraní invaders followed by Spaniards, followed by Republican karai, and now NGOs.

The hybrid population of Guaraní speakers produced by the Guaraní invasion of Arawakan territories was once known by the now disdained ethnonym “Chiriguano.” Relatively more Guaraní Chiriguano called the relatively more Arawakan Chané of Isoso “Tapii” (slaves) as has already been noted. This ethnonym is now vigorously rejected in Isoso, and Ava Guaraní also avoid using it when they are being “politically correct” in contemporary lowland Bolivian indigenous politics. Doña Beatriz’s swift dismissal of my Ava Guaraní language book as “wrong” reveals the way the Chané/Chiriguano distinction continues to have resonance. However, as mentioned in the introductory portion of this article, a leading family in Isoso—prominent in the 19th and 20th century—is surnamed *Iyambae*, which means “without owner” in this community of people sometimes called “Tapii.”

As I first expressed it in my doctoral thesis: “Although Combès does not draw this conclusion, the evidence she has gathered is suggestive of the “Chane-ization” I have argued that Guaraní invaders’ ideologies underwent in Arawakan territory” (Lowrey 2003:122). Pre- and post-Columbian trade and martial expeditions into the Andean foothills by Guaraní from the east were predominantly male. These Guaraní men married into Arawakan families and the result is a society that is Guaraní speaking with an explicit ideology of male dominance and warrior ethos. These characteristics, as I discuss elsewhere, are ever more readily elicited in the contemporary context through the invocation of the defiant Chiriguano *kereimba* (male warrior) which is now also embraced by lowland white elites interested in “autonomy” from indigenous Andean Bolivia (Lowrey 2006).

The Arawakanness of complex irrigation, social stratification, and networks of female kin are less available as a conscious political resource. There are two reasons for this, which seem separate but may in fact be related. The first is that Guaraniness is explicitly valorized by Bolivian Guaraní people, to such an extent that at least one scholar, following the indignant lead of his Ava interlocutors, has made attempts to show that the Arawakan ancestry of present-day Bolivian people is merely an insulting colonial invention (Gustafson 2009 and personal communication). But the second may be that “Arawakan values” are not in modern fashion. Values that stress collectivity, relationality, and admit the dynamics of dependency are currently embarrassing. The possibility that there is a gender dimension to this is well worth exploring.

The people who ended up farming the marginally cultivatable region of Isoso were by all accounts the Chané underlings who fled Guaraní invasions of the fertile valleys; this process accelerated in the colonial period when the Spanish began “ransoming” Chané slaves from their Guaraní captors (Lowrey 2003; Saignes 1990). This convenient fiction allowed the Spanish to avoid papal edicts prohibiting the enslavement of Indians. Indians “ransomed” from other Indians (particularly those like the Chiriguano known to sometimes practice cannibalism) were not considered to have been purchased. This led to slave capture by proxy and long-standing relationships of dominance and subordination were channeled into raids and kidnapping. Chané ended up in Isoso as runaways headed ever more downriver, away from better agricultural lands in the foothills. They finally settled along the very last stretches of the Parapetí that allowed for agriculture, a thin stream of seasonal water flowing into the arid Chaco.¹¹

Ethnohistorically it is suggestive that Isoso itself was known to be progressively “more Chané” along the lowest reaches of the Parapetí while at the same time the very downriver-most portion of the river is explicitly labeled as feminine: the marshes into which the river ultimately disappears are called *Nānde Yari* (our grandmothers). The current, ecologically inflected explanation of this name is that it refers to the nurturing role of these marshes as a fish nursery. In Isoso the biannual fish run, when the river “comes” and again when it

“goes” is much anticipated as a time of feasting. However, the existence of the seasonal abundance of fish cannot account for the fact that along with *tapii*, *yari* is another Guaraní term for slave. *Grandmother*, *slave*, *Chané*: these sometimes synonyms would seem evidence for a rather dismal misogyny animating Chiriguano society. In fact, this view has been enthusiastically championed in some accounts based primarily on secondary literature (Sanabria Fernández 1972; Santos Granero 2016).

However, in those Bolivian Guaraní speaking communities designated “Chané” rather than “Chiriguano” the status of women could be high indeed—as long as the women in question were elite women. About his time in one such community in 1908, Nordenskiöld (2002:212) wrote “the true chief in the Itiyuro River region [a Bolivian Chané area] is a woman. I have visited the old lady Vuayruvi who received me with great dignity reclining in her hammock . . . I asked Vocaboy [his Chané guide] why Vuayruvi, being a woman, was the chief. ‘Her father [chief before her] taught her to speak’ answered Vocaboy . . . The individual village chiefs belong also to the lineage of [Vuayruvi’s father].”

A well-established tradition holds that a woman, Kaa Poti, was once *mburuvicha* (capitán or chief) in Isoso (Combés 1999:16). She is in fact the first named leader of Isoso, and is supposed to have brought her people to the present-day territory of Isoso to which they are described as having arrived after fleeing a series of (mostly supernatural) difficulties elsewhere. Her name appears, as it were, at the transition from myth to history: the legendary Kaa Poti, like the historical Vuayruvi, is said to have been the daughter of a previous (male) leader, but Kaa Poti’s father’s name is unknown and he died eaten by a monster. It is interesting that the origin story of Chané Isoso, founded in the last cultivable stretch of land between the Chiriguano foothills and the arid Chaco that ends in the swamps of “our grandmothers,” involves female power.¹²

Considered from the perspective of lived experience, the figuring of the essence of Guaraníness as prime-age masculine dominance might have a counterpart in the figuring of Chanéness as nurturing grandmotherliness. There is evidence for this in life as I have seen it lived in Isoso.¹³ I have described the dispiriting circumstances under which the woman patient close to my own age Lourdes and I first met in 1997. She was eventually to become my good friend. Originally from Alto Isoso, she had been under the care of Don Jorge before the seriousness of her case meant she moved on to Don Miguel. She knew both men well and was very fond of both of them. When I was in Bolivia in 2013, I spent a night in Charagua on my way to Isoso—Lourdes had moved there with her husband because of the better schooling opportunities for her seven year-old daughter. It was she who first told me about Doña Apolonia’s death. Lourdes commented to me that, quite aside from his grief, her absence made it difficult for Don Jorge to carry on his shamanic practice because Doña Apolonia had known so well “how to take care of people.”

Lourdes’ comment about the importance of Apolonia’s care work for Jorge’s shamanic practice made clear that what Apolonia had done for me was a familiar kind of work for her, not a one-off effort for a lonely foreigner. When patients seek out shamanic ministrations, they sometimes come from other villages, and so are relative strangers. It is also customary to plead one’s case in several visits before the shaman agrees to undertake care. The pleas are made very indirectly: relatives accompany the patient, the shaman’s advisors accompany the shaman, and relatives and advisors speak to one another in the silent presence of the shaman and would-be patient. I used to suppose that visiting patients and the families who happened to be visiting Don Jorge when I came by often looked so uncomfortable because of my presence. But in the same way that I was posing a large and awkward dependency request, so were they. They and I were both supplicants in a drama that necessitated slow familial deliberation, and we probably felt similarly ill at ease during its preliminary stages. When I returned to Ibasiriri in 2013, it was eleven months since Apolonia had died and people in the village were organizing a commemoration for her the following month. This commemoration was something to console Don Jorge, but also a recognition of the loss Apolonia represented to the community.

The route I took to Miguel the second time round, preceded by time spent with Jorge, and the much warmer reception there I received once I had done so, was also the “correct” pathway in Isoleño terms. Miguel was not to be appealed to directly. Lourdes has told me about the long process by which she resigned herself to needing to resort to him after visit-

ing both Bolivian doctors and other shamans in Isoso, and the delegations of kin that interceded on her behalf by going to visit Don Miguel and asking him to take on her difficult case. In retrospect, my dread and avoidance of Aguarati-mi at the start of my fieldwork seem to me to attest not to the ethnographer's magic so much as the magic of ethnography, the way local norms force you willy-nilly into correct ways of behaving.

Both Lourdes and I love and marvel at Neli, Miguel's widow. She is so energetic, good-natured, surprising. Lourdes had been there when the baby Fabricio had been born. She had taken over many household duties while Neli rested after the birth. "But I could not do it all so well as she could." When I was living at Aguarati-mi it was Lourdes who told me that, in fact, Neli knew how to read and write. Before Lourdes arrived as a patient, Neli had dealt with any paperwork that came Don Miguel's way. I knew Neli very effectively feigned ignorance of Spanish in the presence of foreign visitors when it suited her, but I had not guessed she was also literate.

It was only in 2013 that I began to consider Neli "anthropologically." When I was doing fieldwork, the person who fascinated me, of course, was her husband. As my terror of him faded, I was ever more charmed by him. He was both witty and sweet-natured (though by reputation he could have a dark temper, about which I heard stories but rarely witnessed). His youngest daughter adored him, and would sing out "*Papa ou! Papa ou! Papa ou!*" (Daddy's coming! Daddy's coming! Daddy's coming!) whenever he returned from even a short walk to the corral. He indulged his smallest children totally, and was beloved by his grown daughters. His relationships with his grown sons were more fraught. After he died, Neli told me, the last little boy born during his life asked after him and cried for months, "When is Daddy coming?" His final child, also a boy, was born posthumously.

Neli was born into a family already structured across two generations by Don Miguel's kinship rule-breaking. During my first fieldwork this masculine liberty seemed to be coiling itself ever more tightly around her life possibilities. She was surrounded by multiple layers of intermarriage, in-laws, stepchildren, an aunt, and even a grandmother that all orbited around Miguel. She, too, had many children by him. The first died very young, when she too was quite young, followed by seven more children that lived, including of course the one born shortly after Miguel's death. In the first years that I knew her, I often thought of her as someone inescapably trapped by circumstance. She seemed never to be at rest. Everyone came to Don Miguel's house for visits, for meals, for gossip, for treatment. Some patients came and stayed for weeks. Most of these were from Isoleño, but a few came from elsewhere in indigenous Bolivia. An Ava Guaraní man stayed for a while. Some Simba Guaraní visitors also remained for a bit, as did some Guaraní, and even a *kolla* (Andean) indigenous man. This last died and had to be buried at Aguarati-mi. Foreigners came, including me, a young American anthropologist who stayed for months on end. When I visited in 2013, Neli laughed as she told me her reaction when Miguel had announced to her I would be coming to live with them in 1999 for "six whole weeks" (which in the end became six months) and that she would have to prepare lots of "traditional foods" for me because that was the sort



Figure 13. Don Miguel's violin hung by his family on the wall in his laboratory, after his death (Photo by Author)

of thing I was interested in. “I thought, so long! Too long!” she recalled. But she never protested aloud. On days when her own mother and sisters visited, she would get a hand with food preparation. But she was still the one to pop up and down to keep the water for the maté heated, to provide chairs, and to soothe the childrens’ squabbles. After I proved reasonably useful during the rice harvest, Neli once took me with her to help dig manioc from their fields. This was extremely hard work, as manioc roots very firmly, and despite having a good six inches and forty pounds on Neli, I was useless. She hacked up root after root with cheery, slightly brutal rapidity. She was similarly quick and efficient when it came to picking a chicken and snapping its neck, butchering game, or slaughtering a cow or goat, for which she used a massive cleaver wielded with lithe agility. But she also minded which children were feverish, which sulky and why, which marriages tense, which adult feelings hurt, which household dogs were soon to whelp, and which pigs were likely to attempt eating the puppies if given half a chance. In incidental asides, she also minded the progress of a long-running love quadrangle between an imperious rooster, ruler of the household patio, a patiently cuckolded drake, an indignant old duck and, a lovely, much harassed, young duck. She possesses, in short, a lively sympathetic heart.



Figure 14. Don Miguel’s wife and her children, early 2000s (Photo by Author)

She surprises me now by remembering faintly embarrassing moments from the past, stories that I did not know she had heard through the grapevine. For example, there was the time visiting Bolivian workers, housed temporarily at the laboratory while sinking test wells for natural gas in Isoso, pursued me to a village to which I had moved at the end of my fieldwork. They brought beer in their jeep, supposing that once away from the watchful eye of Don Miguel (who startled them by referring to me as a daughter) I’d become more pliable.

In turn, I have been able to watch her transformation over the years from maid of all work to society matron. Despite her relative youth, when I returned in 2013 I found her respectfully referred to as *Doña* and *Tía* (Madam and Aunt) by men and women very close to her age. Once wiry, she has hints of softness now that bespeak more time sitting and being served rather than standing and serving. Her daughters have begun to have children of their own. Both they and her one grown son have spent periods of time working in the city and have brought back gifts to make her house finely furnished. I was surprised on my last visit to be served coffee from ceramic mugs—a gift from one of her daughters after a working sojourn in Santa Cruz—rather than the enameled tinware that is standard in Isoso. She is ably managing the herd of cattle and the several horses left to her by Miguel. She is a beloved grandmother who helps her daughters and counsels them on their maternal responsibilities: “*ndemembí oyaeo*” (your child is crying), is a regular admonishment. Meanwhile, Neli’s own smallest children—the posthumous child was six in 2013—bask contentedly in her experi-

enced mothering. The most poignant aspect of visiting now is the way the very small children treat me as a kind of talisman-like connection to the father they had barely known, or had not known at all. With the laboratory project abandoned, my foreignness and my return to his orbit are evidence of the power he once exercised and the way the world they live in had once been his world. Many visitors came when I was there in 2013. Miguel's adult daughter, Victoria, had passed away two years before he did, and Victoria's children are now becoming adults and bringing their own small babies to show off to me. Victoria's widower came with his new wife and their small baby, and everyone gathered round in Aguarati-mi like in the old days. But Neli was planning, she said, to move back into Aguarati proper. She did not like being so isolated and wanted to be near her mother and her sisters. She wanted to live comfortably in society, as a mother and grandmother.



Figure 15. Don Miguel's widow with kinswomen, 2013 (Photo by Author)

Cultural Work, Genuine and Spurious

I have written elsewhere (Lowrey 2006, Lowrey n. d.) about the ascendance in recent Bolivian Guarani politics of a certain hypermasculine version of "Chiriguano" cultural history as "Guarani" cultural history. The reasons for this have both shallow and deep historical roots. The erasure of the Chané "grandmothers" who formed families with those peripatetic Guaraní who arrived on the eastern flanks of the Andes and the Chaco in several waves, even in zones like Isoso where their historical presence had once been most remarked, poses a cultural-historical problem with fascinating implications for anthropologically-minded feminism. The Guarani migrants were overwhelmingly (perhaps exclusively) male. Their subjugation of the Chané involved quite a bit of family formation with Chané women, and it is not a stretch to suppose that polygyny involving women from different generations was one of the forms it might have taken. Alfred Métraux (1946:478) says as much in his entry on the "Chiriguano and Chané" in the *Handbook of South American Indians*.

Nevertheless, these kinds of families would have been in the minority, simply because Guarani men were in the minority in the Chané territories. They would have been powerful, but also viewed with quite a bit of reserve and suspicion and talk about humbug. To make a historical leap, Don Miguel's marriages were of a "traditional" but unusual type, while Don Jorge's of a "traditional" and common type. In the long run, a family of Don Miguel's type did not break society apart, but was folded back into it. After the deaths of their powerful husbands, the youngest Chané women in it emerged as grandmotherly pillars of the hybrid, hierarchical, social establishment. We do not have to choose between powerful shamans or gentle shamans or between models of family formation to decide which is "really" socially determinant (cf. Gow 2014). Understood as possibilities within the social field, all have been

present historically, though unique individual biographies are only ever lived once. Thinking specifically about shamanism, Pierre and Hélène Clastres' account of Tupi-Guarani shamanism as a kind of mechanism for preventing the emergence of the state is predicated on the existence of multiple possible configurations of a given social order. Which form dominates at what time is surely more contingent than their argument supposed, which is not the same as saying their argument is without explanatory power.

Soviet anthropological analyses of Siberian shamanism (with which Amerindian shamanism of course shares many commonalities) supposed shamanism itself to be an indicator of sharpening class antagonism. Unlike the Clastres, who proposed that shamanic visions and subsequent prophet-led migrations perpetually foiled incipient state-formation in lowland South American societies, Soviet ethnographers suggested that shamans in Siberia were analogous to kulaks in peasant agricultural societies: that is, an emergent class of parasites historically marking a transition from nomadism to more settled pastoralism (Hutton 2001:99; Znamenski 2007:117). In this interpretation, the powers shamans pretended to possess and use for healing were the alienated capacities of their supplicants, and their rituals were a primitive opiate of the people (Znamenski 2007:323). Without wishing to adopt the deterministic dialectics of these Soviet accounts, I find interesting their recognition and attempt to explain the evident relationship of shamanism to history, power, and inequality.¹⁴ My own field experience makes me wonder if everyone involved might not be a little bit right: shamans do have a special relationship to inequality, and some shamans are markedly, suspiciously powerful, while others are not. The Soviet anthropologists who thought they were bringing something new, clever, and world-historical to the scene by spotting humbug in the shamanic field were carting Marxist coals to a native Newcastle.

When outsiders hone in on hyper-Guarani, hypermasculine figures like Don Miguel as the most "authentic" bearers of Guarani culture, they are embracing a version of Chiriguano history that emphatically rejects any Arawakan element and in so doing are rendering a culturally-specific polarization in terms of a culturally-specific essence. When these ultra-Guarani are viewed with suspicion in their home communities in Isoso (as they inevitably are), outsiders who were attracted by their authenticity worry that they did not find the really real, *ne plus ultra* Guarani with whom to work; they come to believe they mistakenly stumbled on posers, phonies, or humbugs (something ruminated over at length by the outside collaborators in the laboratory project).

I would suggest, instead, that the bearers and proclaimers of masculine super-potency in Chiriguano society have always been viewed with suspicion. In fact this is their burden and role. Powerful humbugs are part of what makes the whole thing go. The arc from menace to charm, that I felt with respect to Miguel, is a stereotyped one. Most of the society works along unshowy lines, which are Arawakan and in many ways gendered as feminine. These aspects are hierarchical and relational, and not, as the "official" version of the Chiriguano character would have it, "proudly egalitarian and constantly declaring defiant independence." Jorge's marriage was one in which the distaff element was determinative, as was his variety of shamanism. People did not think he was Isoso's most powerful shaman, but they did treat him as an entirely trustworthy one. Jorge's kinship relations were quite unremarkable: one wife, with whom he spent his life, and whom he did not long outlive. Unlike Don Miguel, who lived apart in his own little minicosmos, Jorge lived the way most ordinary Isoleño men do. Like most men, he spent his adult life in his wife's village of Ibasiriri, tucked in among the cozy paths linking everyone to everyone else.

Like other outsiders, I did not (at first) go to Isoso to see Jorge, let alone Apolonia or Neli. I went to meet Don Miguel, the shaman who was so powerful, renowned, and charismatic that foreigners paid to build a laboratory next to his house. Anne-Christine Taylor (1996:210) writes of the attention paid by "jivarologists" to the *arutam* complex and the quest for a vision of a powerful ancestor,

[we] have tended to consider the *arutam* complex, because it is intellectually spectacular, and also because of its esoteric aspects, as the heart of Jivaroan culture . . . by positing that the *arutam* complex lies at the heart, rather than the boundaries, of Achuar culture, we have misrepresented not only the *arutam* complex itself but Jivaroan culture in general. . . . I suspect that a great

many of our ethnographic accounts are in fact based on a similar conflation between “culture” and “extreme states.

She’s quite right. The arutam complex is associated with superpotent hypermasculinity in Jivaroland, just as a certain kind of shamanism and the ethos of “independent egalitarian Guarani defiance” is in the Chiriguanía.

What We Learn From Our Teachers: In the Field, in the Classroom, in Books

As I began to think through my materials, not from the perspective of Miguel or even Jorge, but instead from that of Apolonia and Neli, I happened to reread (because I had assigned it in a course) Kathleen Gough’s (1971) perceptive restudy of Edward Evans-Pritchard’s landmark research on kinship and marriage among the Nuer. I first read it in Terry’s famous kinship course at Chicago. He treated Gough’s work (as he had Evans-Pritchard’s original) with the lucid explanatory thoroughness for which the course was deservedly renowned. One of my present colleagues refers to this course—which he laments not having taken—as “the secret knowledge”.¹⁵

Giving due credit to the excellence of Evans-Pritchard’s empirical work, which allowed her to critically reassess his interpretations using his own materials, Gough shows how Evans-Pritchard took the handling of aristocratic Nuer men (his principal informants) of “the agnatic principle” (not their term for it, of course) to indicate a real organizational principle, rather than an ideological ideal. As Gough (1971:113–114) points out,

For the aristocrats, and for those few lineages of stranger Nuer origin which have somehow managed to become dominant over a section of tribal territory and have acquired a certain depth, the agnatic principle is indeed strong.

However, since

non-aristocrats form the great majority of the population in any Nuer tribe, we must conclude that the agnatic principle is far from supreme in its operation among the Nuer although the ideal undoubtedly persists.

Nuer society shares with Chiriguano society a colonial-era history actively shaped by interethnic conquest and invasion. Nuer were pitted against closely related (and in many ways despised) Dinka, a dynamic intensified “in the nineteenth century . . . by Arab slave-raids and slave-trading.” One of the factors driving Chané-Chiriguano relations in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, resulting in the flight of many Chané to agriculturally inhospitable Isoso, was precisely the slave trade. Captive Chané were “ransomed” by the Spanish from the Chiriguano on the pretext that these cannibalistic savages would otherwise eat them. The dynamics of aggressively martial, masculine, polygamous dominance as a kind of supreme ideological principle absorbed into, and made use of, by a social field of stably reproduced hierarchical relations among networks of female kin, and including many unremarkable and unremarked “ordinary” marriages, might be something that is often present in the history of humanity. The presence of such a complex relational field would tend to be obscured in the anthropological literature because, as Gough (1971:115) puts it:

[I]t is sometimes argued by male anthropologists that relations with and between women are of only minor relevance to an analysis of the political aspects of kinship. This argument scarcely, however, holds good, at all events for a society where men are prohibited from cooking and so much attach themselves to some kinswoman’s hearth, where some women may own cattle and live, legally autonomous, where they choose, where women may provide men with their local and political affiliations.

All of these points hold true in Bolivian Guaraniland, including Isoso. Men are not actually prohibited from cooking, to my knowledge, and I suppose that those few men who are

such skilled hunters that they go on hunts lasting several days cook for themselves in the bush. But I have never seen a man tending an Isoleño hearth. The possibility is not so much forbidden as never even considered. In any event, the role of women in male-dominated structures or “masculinist” ideologies can never be one of simple absence. Returning to the problem of Amerindian shamanism generally and lowland South American shamanism in particular, it is striking that, for such an intensively studied anthropological problem, the legacy of kinship studies and the potential relevance of women and family to this famously manly practice has been so understudied.

To borrow—somewhat awkwardly—the old-fashioned divisions of Africanist anthropologists, shamanism has been more often treated in terms of the jural than the domestic sphere. In these accounts, shamanism does grand things and reflects history and power and colonialism or nature and culture and supernature. It’s a big manly deal, not a small homely womanish one. Taussig’s *Shamanism, Colonialism, and the Wild Man* (1986) is one example. Shamanism is cast as a cure for historical ailments and features only men. Eduardo Viveiros de Castro’s *From the Enemy’s Point of View* (1992) has shamans as ontological operators, literal axis mundi. Carlos Fausto (2012) and more recently, Fernando Santos de Granero (2016) align shamanism with hunting, warfare, and predation generally in a way that oddly leaves little light between their visions of lowland South American life and that of Napoleon Chagnon’s, making the generations-long showdown between their respective theoretical traditions look in many ways like drum solo variations beat out upon a single brawny chest.

As I slowly wrote up my own fieldwork, new work by scholars younger than me, like that of Harry Walker (2012) and most especially that of Oíara Bonilla (2005, 2013, 2016), have given me confidence that I am not the only person to notice what has gone under-remarked in lowland South American social worlds; and the work of Peter Gow (1991, 1996) and Suzanne Oakdale (1996, 2005) have long given me considerable inspiration. Finally, the work of one senior scholar, Anne-Christine Taylor (2014, 1996, 1993a, 1993b), seems to me to have gotten the importance of ambivalence all along.

None of this is to say that I do not get the lure and fascination of the macho version of shamanism myself. Even as over the years Don Jorge came to seem the sweeter man, I was infinitely more charmed by Don Miguel—an effect he clearly had on many people both in and outside of Isoso. Znamenski (2007:327) records the rather shame-faced admission of Vilmos Dîoszegi, a Hungarian anthropologist working in the Soviet tradition, about his first reaction to a shamanic chant in the late 1950s: “I have to confess rather embarrassedly, I was immediately impressed by it.” The Soviet anthropological tradition meant that this reaction—to have been impressed by the tricky stagecraft of the proto-kulak!—was one to relate as a confession. It was a reaction not about power relations, but about a sense of aesthetic, sentimental, and moral appeal. To put it another way, it was a reaction not to dominance, but to beauty.

As an anthropologist and feminist and a fond “daughter” of Terry’s scholarly family, this reaction resonates with me. Terry’s battles with Chagnon about sociobiology or Viveiros de Castro about ontology impressed me tremendously. At the same time, of course, they were so clearly clashes of male titans, and I know the critique to be made of these by heart: there is always something suspect about those kinds of clashes, isn’t there? What stays with me from Terry’s pedagogy does not concern worldly academic rivalries (to which Terry’s own relations were never conventionally ambitious) but instead his attention to Kayapo ritual, dance, body decoration; to Kayapo family life; to their social architectonics; to their performative genius and how it infused their everyday life; and the love of anthropology he conveyed in his teaching because he showed you how it was a way of truly noticing the world. In short: what I remember most about Terry is not the dominance, but the beauty.

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Notes

¹ The names of the two shamans discussed in this piece, Don Miguel Cuellar and Don Jorge Romero, are their real names as they have appeared in publications by others (notably Gallo Toro 1996). All other personal names of Isoleño people appearing in the text are pseudonyms. I do not use these pseudonyms in labelling photographs because, while I have permission to reprint photos and publish on my research, mislabeled photos are perturbing to Isoleño people to whom I show and describe my work, although personal pseudonymity in English language text is not.

² Apoyo Para el Campesino-Indígena del Oriente Boliviano (Support for the Peasant-Indigene of Eastern Bolivia), APCOB is headed by a German anthropologist, Jurgen Riester, who first visited Isoso in the early 1970s and who founded APCOB in 1980 (Riester 1985).

³ Readers interested in Isoso's unusual internal geography should consult Ortiz et al. 2008. The lead author is an Ava Bolivian man who showed great promise as a social scientist but died unexpectedly while still young.

⁴ The text had been produced by another Jesuit Spaniard, also fluent in Guaraní, and recommended to me by the American linguistic anthropologist Bret Gustafson who is renowned throughout Bolivian Guaraniland for his own fluency.

⁵ This was not a fluke of timing. Nordenskiöld (2002:200) during his 1908 sojourn among the “Chané of the Parapetí River” (the Isoleño) records several animal remedies: rhea, iguana, and chicken fat. Among the related “Chané of Itiyuro” (a group still extant in Argentina) he writes that stork, jaguar, and peccary fat, along with the beak of the toucan, are used in medicinal practice. He also writes that “although they also prepare remedies from certain plants” (he does not name any), they primarily use medicines of animal origin. According to him, this was not due to medical backwardness; in fact they surprised him by cleaning wounds with water that had been boiled—a much sounder method than that used by their criollo counterparts in the region.

⁶ See Lowrey 2003:183, fn. 11 for possible etymologies.

⁷ The *paye* is a thing one has and a thing one is; it is often written *ipaye* (his/her *paye*), which is more correct according to modern Guaraní orthography. I use “*paye*” because this accords better with daily use as I heard it and with most of the renderings in the historical literature. Although I have never seen the object in question myself, I have read and been told accounts of occasions upon which the *paye* is actually produced from the shaman's body (Lowrey 2003:184, fn. 14).

⁸ Nordenskiöld (2002:199) writes of the distinction reported to him by Chané and Chiriguano between *ipaye*, “who are good and annul bewitchments” and *ipayepotchi*, “who can annul bewitchments but can also bewitch.” Though he does not give the translation, the latter would simply mean “bad *paye*” (in the sense of ill-humored or malevolent).

⁹ Isabelle Combès and Diego Villar have since followed and elaborated upon my arguments in Combès 2005; Combès and Villar 2004, 2007; and Combès and Lowrey 2006.

¹⁰ For another parallelism to the Kayapo case, see Bamberger (1979) on exit, voice, and loyalty among the Kayapo.

¹¹ There is quite a bit of suggestive evidence that this replicative process continued right into the Chaco proper, producing for example the Guaraní speaking *Ñañaigua* (wilderness dwellers) or *Tapiete* (true or paradigmatic slaves—essentially the slaves of slaves, or subordinates to the *tapi*) who manifest the nomadic, hunter-gathering way of life of Zamucoan-speaking groups from the Chaco interior yet speak Guaraní (Combès 2008).

¹² At present, one village in Alto Isoso long had a woman as its *capitana*, including into the time of my own fieldwork. In more recent years, principally at the insistence of outside funding agencies, Isoleño villages have implemented a system of dual captainship: a *capitán*, alongside a women's *capitana*, each elected annually. My own impression is that this has in fact had some of the gender egalitarian impacts intended, but it is also the case that it has effectively abolished extant internal pathways to women holding “real” leadership positions in the way they occasionally were able to do previously in Isoso.

¹³ Another suggestive piece of evidence comes from a group usually considered the nearest proxies to the Chané, the Arawakan Mojos of the Bolivian Amazon. Renard-Casevitz writes of the matriuxorilocal settlement pattern among the Mojos and the scandalized remarks of at

least one early traveler about the way that Mojo “women do not recognize subjugation to their husbands” (Orellana [1687] cited in Renard-Casevitz 2002:137–138).

¹⁴ Znamenski (2007:340) relates a telling anecdote about a native Siberian trained as an ethnographer who stubbornly recorded that in his experience, in terms of their standing and relationship to their communities, not all shamans were, in fact, kulaks. His Soviet-era professors appended a skeptical note to this native account.

¹⁵ This phrase evokes in my mind the phrase of London cabbies: “the knowledge,” that is the exhaustive study of London’s city streets they have to make in order to pass the notoriously difficult taxi license test. Terry’s kinship course really did feel like a map of anthropology itself.

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