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A Story of Two Videos Plus Coda: Perspectives on “Contact” in Western Amazonia

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Introduction

In June 2014, an interfluvial Purus Pano-speaking group¹ “came out” of the forest by the Xinane stream in the Brazilian state of Acre, and the news surrounding this event “went viral” after two videos depicting scenes of the Xinane people’s² “first contact” were uploaded to YouTube. Noticing that the language the young men in the videos spoke was the same as that spoken by the Mastanawa, I made copies of the videos and took them with me to the upper Purus River in July 2014. During the following months multiple people asked me to see the events captured in these videos. In this article, I discuss the contents of the videos and the reactions of the Mastanawa, local non-Indigenous Brazilians and Peruvians, and commenters in international online newspapers. Both videos were filmed by employees of the Brazilian National Indian Foundation (Fundação Nacional do Índio or Funai), the agency charged with overseeing indigenous affairs in that nation. For this reason, off-camera comments by Funai workers form a ubiquitous backdrop to the action documented in the videos. After describing the contents of the videos in question, I show how different understandings of alterity and the role of the Other in sociality inform the reactions of the different audiences and their position toward the issue of contact with the Xinane. As a follow up to this analysis this article presents a coda based on the testimony of Osho Rodo,³ a Mastanawa elder taken to the upper Envira to serve as cultural mediator with the Xinane. The coda offers us a glimpse of how a contact protocol based on an Amerindian social philosophy might look. In this sense, this article responds to calls for anthropological understandings of the role that otherness can play as an internal rather than external component of society.

Recent literature on lowland South America (Erikson 1986; High 2013; Rolando 2018; Viveiros de Castro 2001) and Melanesia (Stasch 2009) has called attention to the role alterity can play as an integral part of sociality and as a constitutive element of identity. These Amerindian and Melanesian ways of understanding difference challenge Western and modernist common sense that views society as a place of sameness. In the following sections, I show how this tension manifests in the different reactions to the news about the Xinane. I also analyze the Xinane’s exchanges with the Funai representatives they encountered in the Asháninka village of Simpatia, whose inhabitants speak an Arawakan language that is unintelligible to the Xinane. While the international public thought the Xinane People should be “left alone,” local Brazilians and Peruvians believed these “wild Indians” should be civilized and Christianized. Conversely, the Mastanawa wanted to bring the Xinane to their villages to start their “accustoming” process by teaching them how to eat sugar and salt, drink alcohol, and wear Western clothes. The analysis of these reactions illustrates the ways in which Amazonian understandings of alterity, and the praxis that goes with them, challenge conceptions of isolated peoples held by others, as well as the policies national governments put in place with the intention of protecting isolated peoples. Rather than assuming that the only two possible ways of dealing with people like the Xinane are isolation or eliminating them through ethnocide or acculturation, for the Mastanawa relations already existed with the Xinane people that only needed to be re-actualized.

The issues of alterity and interethnic contact in Amazonia have been notably discussed in terms of dichotomies such as prey–predator (Fausto 1999, 2012; Rival 2002; Viveiros de Castro 1998), master–slave (Grotti and Brightman 2016; Santos-Granero 2009, 2016), patron–client (Bonilla 2005, 2016; Walker 2012), among others. As a general rule, these dichotomies imply a hierarchical relation between the peoples involved, expressed through the idiom of

familiarizing predation (Fausto 2012) in a context of *generalized predation* (Viveiros de Castro 2002). I argue that the Mastanawa reaction to news concerning the emergence from the forest of a people who speak their language forces us to reconsider the view that these dichotomies are the only way in which interethnic relations are experienced in Amazonia. I propose that the Mastanawa desire to have the Xinane people move in with them in order to get them “accustomed” to living on the Brazilian-Peruvian border offers an alternative model of interethnic contact. This alternative model is based on an agenda of mutual nonhierarchical incorporation, which implies encompassing and being encompassed at the same time, rather than on one of incorporation based on capture and unilateral familiarizing predation.

The First Video⁴

The “first contact” took place on June 13, 2014. Four young men entered Simpatia, an Asháninka village located on the shore of the Envira River in the Brazilian state of Acre, not far from the Peruvian-Brazilian border. The headwaters of the Envira River are home to an undetermined number of interfluvial Pano-speaking peoples who live autonomously apart from the Brazilian and Peruvian nation-states, and both governments have created territorial reserves to protect their right to live in “isolation” and comply with the standards created by the international human rights system. Even though Funai had been keeping track of the movements of this specific group captured on video at least since 2008 (Pringle 2015), this unexpected visit caught them off guard.⁵

During the first few seconds of the approximately eight-minute video (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cnJjGmljUmw>), a shaky, handheld camera zooms in to show the opposite shore of the narrow upper Envira River. While the camera zooms in to show the viewers the presence of three Xinane men, we hear an off-camera voice scream, “*Shara nokona ¡katawe! Owe, pive yoa. Shara nokona*” (“We are good, go away! Come here to eat yucca. We are good”). In the interaction that follows, the Xinane men express their hunger, and the off-camera voice continues to give them contradictory commands: “Go away! Come here!” Subsequently, the three Xinane men start singing *Yama Yama* songs.⁶ There is a pause in the filming, and in the next shot four young men have already crossed the river, three of them carrying bows and arrows. They rub their hands against their armpits before putting their hands in front of their mouths and blowing in the direction of the camera, the Asháninka villagers, and Brazilian officials, as one is supposed to do when facing potentially dangerous beings. After another gap in the action we see the four Xinane young men now facing three Brazilian officials, a Yaminahua interpreter, and an Asháninka teenage boy. Presents lie on the floor: coconuts, bananas, and a t-shirt. The teenage boy approaches the pile of gifts and drops something there, presumably another present, and one of the Xinane men touches his arm and conveys his happiness and appreciation by saying, “*Ichi, ichi, ichi, ichi, ichi.*” Immediately after this interaction, the Brazilian officials try to stop the flow of gifts by addressing the Xinane in Portuguese, saying, “He cannot give you his t-shirt, that’s his only one.”

In the next scene, it is unclear whether the actions taking place happened immediately after those of the previous scene, but we can see the Yaminahua interpreter brought by Funai crossing the river in order to hand two banana bunches to the Xinane located on the other bank. While the interpreter is handing out the banana bunches to two young Xinane men who are crossing the river in order to meet him, the camera moves to show a third young Xinane man holding a rifle. The bananas are received, and the two Xinane men ask the Yaminahua interpreter to not get close to them, adding “*¡Kario chaka!*” (“Bad/ugly Brazilians!”), before narrating what seems to be a scene from a recent skirmish, probably the one where they got the rifle the third man holds. A tense conversation ensues between the two young men and the Funai interpreter, with the former repeatedly telling the interpreter not to get too close to them as they begin to eat the bananas they have just received. Finally, an off-camera voice screams in Portuguese: “*¡vem comer, porra!*” (“Come to eat, dammit!”). The filming pauses again and then shows one of the Xinane men walking around the Asháninka’s houses, holding a long wooden pole on his hand. A second one walks around holding a machete, and both of them do a careful visual inspection of their surroundings before picking up clothes, an axe, and a knife. The off-camera voice of the Brazilian official regrets the incident and yells “*¡No, no, no, no!*” in Portuguese, and then proceeds with the only words the Funai officials seem to know of the local Panoan language, “*¡Shara, shara! ¡Katawe, katawe, katawe, katawe!*”

("Good/beautiful! good/beautiful! Go away! go away, go away, go away!"). The two young men repeat that they are content as they go away and walk toward the river to rejoin their people, who are waiting for them hidden inside the forest on the other shore.

The Second Video

The second video (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ETVN14_IzHY) shows events that took place later on the same day. It is longer than the first, running over nineteen minutes. As in the first video, this one begins with a shaky handheld camera, only this time the Xinane men are on the same side of the river as Funai officials. The camera pans along the sandy beach that separates the Asháninka village from the Envira River. On the shore, one Xinane man inspects the boats while the other two walk in the direction of the village; off-camera voices comment nervously on the presence of the three Xinane young men. They are afraid the "isolated Indians" will take another tour around the Asháninka's houses and take away more tools and clothes. A young Funai official yells "*¡Katawe, katawe!*" ("Go away, go away!"), as he and his colleagues start running toward the access to the village where the young Xinane men are already waiting for them, talking with the interpreter. As the Brazilian officials get closer, the three young Xinane men ask themselves whether they are dealing with spirits. They then begin addressing their interlocutors, asking who owns the houses they see nearby, and inquiring about their relatives and their whereabouts. Shortly thereafter, one of the Xinane points to a place behind the camera and tells the one standing next to him to go have sex with a woman. He does not try to do that, and the conversation continues with the young men demanding to know who their interlocutors are. When no comprehensible reply is forthcoming they comment: "These people are bad/ugly." With no clear answers to their questions the Xinane men's frustration continues to grow. One of them interjects: "You say you are good, listen to us, you dirty people!"

After trying unsuccessfully to determine who their interlocutors are, the Xinane men explain that they were attacked by strangers, and that they fought back, but many were killed. The Funai officials reply, in Portuguese, that they are there to protect them, although nobody translates this to the Xinane men. The apparently mutually incomprehensible exchange continues with Xinane men claiming that somebody has harmed them with sorcery and that as a result they have bad stomachaches and cannot eat. They ask if there is anyone in the party that knows/has *kosboiti* healing songs.⁷ As the Xinane men continue explaining the details of their fight, including the way in which the strangers attacked them with firearms, they use the Portuguese word *espingarda* (shotgun) to refer to these and the onomatopoeia *ipapa* for the gunshots. Finally, they comment that the Shipinahua, presumably another Purus Pano-speaking people, also live close to them, and that they are good people and do not fight with them. Throughout this exchange, the young Xinane men, again, receive no reasonable answers to their questions.

Next, one of the young men comments on one of the Asháninka's shirts, saying "*¡Kamisa shara!*" ("Good/beautiful shirt!"), and the Asháninka man immediately takes it off and hands it to his interlocutor. The young men then proceed to ask for firearms, and the Funai officials immediately react, saying "*¡Espingarda, não! ¡Papapa não!*" to which the translator adds, "*nokona shara*" ("We are good/beautiful people"). This spurs a discussion between the Xinane men over which of these persons could be a good one. One of the Funai officials mentions the ethnonym Chitonahua, and the young men immediately react; they say the Chitonahua have done something with them—though it is not immediately obvious what—and then point in the direction that the Chitonahua live. Finally, they ask again if anybody knows/has *kosboiti*. Once again, they do not receive an answer. The Xinane men begin to lose their patience and tell the translator to keep his distance. They then warn their interlocutors that if they should be harmed they can fight back with their bows and arrows. The translator says again "*Nokona shara,*" so the young men demand that someone bring them a firearm that they can exchange for their bows and arrows. The Funai agents rejoin the dialogue to make it clear that no firearms will be given to them. The young Xinane men insist on their request with no success.

The young Xinane men then start asking, "*¡Ra'imé mi mulber?*" ("Where are your women/wives?"), using the Portuguese word for woman. They receive no answer, so they keep on asking, "Is that one your wife?" Once again no reasonable responses are forthcoming. The young man that appears to be the leader of the group says, "I am sick and I have come to

meet you,” and again explains that somebody has harmed him through sorcery and as a result he has a stomachache. As if on cue one of the young men starts singing a *Yama Yama* song. According to some of the Mastanawa who saw the video, the Xinane are telling their interlocutors through the songs that they are not children to be fooled and that they are happy to have found them. The video continues in this fashion, with the three Xinane young men demanding to know the identities of their interlocutors, as well as those of their relatives and wives. They also continue to ask for firearms, food, and a solution to their sickness. Likewise, the Brazilian officials and Asháninka continue to not provide answers, firearms, food, or *koshoiti* to undo the harm. As the sun goes down, the three Xinane young men sing their *Yama Yama* songs and the Brazilian officials sing a verse of an indigenous song they have heard elsewhere. The three Xinane’s reactions range from confusion, to anger, to laughter. Finally, they scream “*¡Ari, ari, ari!*” to signal their current pain and hunger. The Brazilian officials once again fail to understand the message and try to explain to the Xinane men that the men who attacked them were Peruvians—though they cannot possibly know the identity of the assailants—while they themselves are Brazilian. The video ends as the three young Xinane men start teaching the others animal calls. The sun has set and the screen is pitch-black.

The “Western” Take: Drug Trafficking, Colonialism and the Wild Man

As mentioned at the beginning of this article, the videos described above “went viral.” Their initial diffusion took place through *YouTube*, but immediately afterwards specialized content-distribution platforms started spreading the news, and soon the videos were available to watch on the webpages of newspapers from all over the world. Two questions dominated the discussion about the events portrayed in the two videos: “Who are these people?” and “Why are they suddenly coming out of the forest?” These questions were asked and discussed in the media, on specialists’ email listservs, and in the comment sections of the online editions of newspapers and blogs. Lurking behind these questions lies the assumption that Amazonian peoples living autonomously from the State and who have been labeled as living in “voluntary isolation” should not want to break their current situation of “isolation” unless dark exterior powers force them to do so.

The questions Funai officials asked the Xinane men about their identity were expected to be met with a simple answer: an ethnonym. For the young men in the video, however, this was not a simple, straightforward question to ask or answer. While on the surface it may appear that both sides were asking the same question, it carries different implications when asked by the Funai agents as opposed to the Xinane. The different perspectives from which the Xinane and the Funai officials approach the issue of identity resemble the famous Antillean episode included in Lévi-Strauss’s essay “Race and History”:

In the Greater Antilles, a few years after the discovery of America, while the Spaniards were sending out Commissions of investigation to discover whether or not the natives had a soul, the latter spent their time drowning white prisoners in order to ascertain, by long observation, whether or not their bodies would decompose (Lévi-Strauss 1952:12).

While the Brazilian officials were trying to discover what kind of “souls” these young men had by looking for an ethnonym that would associate them with a larger linguistic family or tribal complex, the young men were asking the same question, but from a fundamentally different point of view. From the young men’s perspective, what was relevant was to figure out if their interlocutors had bodies similar enough to theirs in order to have a viable relation. In this sense, these different readings of the question come as a consequence of diverging notions regarding the locus of humanity and the nature of the relationship between bodies and souls, and consequently between nature and culture (Viveiros de Castro 1998). In contrast, from the perspective of the Funai agents and international audiences on the internet, the locus of humanity is found in the “soul” or, to phrase it in more contemporary terms, in the “mind” and its products which, of course, include culture.⁸ Therefore, in order to find out who these young men were, the Funai agents needed to figure out how they thought. In this regard they follow a similar logic to the sixteenth-century Spanish theologians invested in establishing whether Amerindians had souls or not and, if they did, the level of rationality they possessed (las Casas

1967[1536]; Acosta 1588; Sepúlveda 1941[1547]). On the other hand, the Xinane men, in a fashion similar to that of the sixteenth-century Antilleans, were more concerned with finding out what kind of bodies the FUNAI agents had and, consequently, what kind of relations they could establish with them. Thus, following Aparecida Vilaça (2000, 2010), I argue that in order to truly understand the questions involved in interethnic contact from the perspective of the Xinane we need to think “physiologically.” I will return again to this point in my discussion of the Mastanawa notion of “accustoming.”

These different concerns become evident from the very first moment of the encounter. When the young men rub their armpits before putting their hands in front of their mouths and blowing in the direction of the Brazilians and Asháninka, they are doing what one is supposed to do when dealing with potentially dangerous beings. This is one of the many techniques the Purus Pano speakers use to repel dangerous spirits, whether storm spirits, disembodied spirits, forest spirits, or any other type that could cause them harm. The short conversation that follows among the young men is aimed at finding out whether their interlocutors are spirits or humans. The dialog captured on video shows that they decided to find out by asking them directly.

When the young men begin questioning the Brazilian officials, they receive answers that do not correspond to their questions, or at least to their version of the questions. The Brazilians continue telling them: “We are Brazilians.” “We are *carin*” (the latter being the regional term used by most of the indigenous peoples of the area to refer to Brazilians).⁹ They also assert, “We are not Peruvians; we are in Brazil; Peru is over there.” The young Xinane men do not seem to care about the name with which their interlocutors identify themselves (that is, whether they are Peruvian or Brazilians), as they repeatedly rephrase their questions, asking them instead about their relatives, or their wives’ whereabouts. Likewise, they keep asking for signs of hospitality such as food or medicine, and the establishment of exchange relationships, that is, the things that those who are “really human” (*onikoi*) partake when in good relations with one another. This appears to be why the young men continue to be confused and angry at the Brazilian officials when the latter insist that they are good people (*nokona shara*) but immediately afterward order them to go away (*jkatavel*). The Brazilian officials state their goodness with words but there is a mismatch between their self-descriptions as good people and their actions. From an Amerindian perspective, the Brazilians’ refusal to exchange with, feed, and heal the Xinane men does not imply the negation of a relation between them and the Xinane people but the establishment of one to be mediated by what Marshall Sahlins (1972) labeled “negative reciprocity.” In other words, instead of placing themselves in the position of ally, or potential ally, the Brazilians behaved like enemies through their denial of the gift.

Following their own logic, the Brazilian officials identify themselves in a way obvious to them but not immediately understandable to their interlocutors. For lack of a “tribal name,” they communicate their demonym to the Xinane men, “Brazilians,” and they expect to hear a tribal name back. However, as I state above, the officials’ response does not follow Purus Pano protocols. When faced with strangers with whom they cannot establish a relationship based on known genealogical connections or their naming system, Purus Pano speakers usually address—and refer to—them as *chai* (cross-cousin/potential brother-in-law) or as *yabashta* (dear nothing). By addressing strangers with these terms, Purus Pano speakers create a place for the Other in their social system, even if it is as their “dear nothings.” While being someone’s *chai* or *yabashta* does not create major obligations, it does set the tone of the relation as one of potential affinity. Once they figure out what the word “Brazilian” means, the Xinane may or may not be interested in becoming Brazilian, but, if they are anything like the rest of the Purus Pano, it is safe to assume that they are interested in making potential affinal kin out of the Brazilians, even if their plans to actualize this potential relation are not to be found anywhere in the near future.

While the goal of the Xinane in this initial exchange is to make potential affines out of the Brazilians, with all the tensions and instability that this type of relation encompasses, the goal of the Brazilian officials is to make potential Brazilians out of the Xinane, to be ready should they need to be “pacified.” Therefore, the Funai officials need to start producing the relevant data and, from this perspective, the first piece of information they need is an ethnonym. This would be the initial step in a process of bureaucratization and reorganization of the Xinane aimed at making them intelligible to the government in Brasilia, which would be followed by eventual further steps aimed at making them conform to the parameters and goals that the

state has set for them (Fried 1975; Ferguson and Whitehead 1992; Whitehead 1992).¹⁰ In their own way, both the Xinane and the Brazilian officials are seeking to begin their dialogue by bringing the Other closer so as to reduce the threat inherent in its presence. The Xinane try to do so through the idiom of kinship, the Brazilian officials through a modernist bureaucratic logic. By this logic an ethnonym should provide the state with enough information to successfully locate the Xinane within the larger web of named indigenous collectivities already under the fold of the Funai. These names are assumed to be immutable and to point to an equally immutable collective soul that defines the identity of the group as such.

In contrast, the use of ethnonyms by the Purus Pano speakers follows a dynamic similar to what Barbara Arisi (2012) described for the Pano speakers of the Javari Valley. Rather than fixing boundaries, the contextual changing use of ethnonyms between specific persons and groups of persons seems to be pointing to a constant negotiation not of a boundary but of the type of existing social relation. The use of ethnonyms varies depending on context; thus sometimes it will be aimed at reducing social distance, and on other occasions it will be aimed at producing distance. Additionally, the use of different ethnonyms might be related to moral evaluations of the performance of specific individuals or groups of people.¹¹ If someone (or some group) behaves in an improper way, it must be because he or she is not a human being (*onikoi*) in the same way that the rest of the group that behaves properly clearly is *onikoi*.

In this sense, processes of alliance might eliminate, or put out of use, ethnonyms that could resurface if alliances are broken. In this case, unlike nationalist ideology, the issue would not be how to keep the Other at bay but rather the opposite. Consequently, the agenda is one of mutual nonhierarchical incorporation, not unilateral incorporation or segregation. This agenda of mutual nonhierarchical incorporation implies a transformation of all the parties involved: it is not about making the “other” conform to the “us” (incorporation), or making the “us” conform to the “other,” but on the contrary, is a process of mutual transformation by which both parties are affected in order to get rid of that which makes them different from each other and keeps them apart. In consequence, ethnonyms, from the Western perspective, signal not only a clearly delimited social boundary, but, most importantly, an immutable national spirit. In contrast, for Amerindians, ethnonyms signal a mutable status of relations between kinship groups and the immanent possibility for those groups to reduce their differences even to the point where involved parties may fuse into one or a single party may split into multiple parties.

This aspect of Amerindian sociologies is particularly salient among the Purus Pano, where an abundance of registered ethnonyms ending in *-nawa* has given headaches to more than one ethnographer. This situation is further aggravated by the realization that these names fall in and out of use throughout the historic record.¹² Even though the word *nawa* can be translated as “stranger,” “enemy,” or, in broader terms, “dangerous other,” usually the Purus Pano do not reject the ethnonyms ending in *-nawa* with which they have been labeled. Furthermore, knowledgeable elders can proudly enumerate a large number of ethnonyms of this type with which they can identify. The existence and acceptance of this multiplicity of names is illustrative of the constitutive role alterity plays in the production of Amerindian identities, where the continuous process of collective–self-making is driven by a permanent quest to encompass, and be encompassed by, the Other. Hence the paradoxical fact, discussed by Oscar Calavia Sáez (2002), that the Yaminawa’s tendency toward atomization and fragmentation, manifested in this multiplicity of ethnonyms, is essential to understanding the threads that hold the group together by continuously creating productive alterities within the group.

In sum, while the identity question for the Brazilians is about ethnic names and boundaries, for the young Xinane men it is primarily about what kind of beings their interlocutors are and therefore what kind of bodies they have. Secondly, they are concerned with whether they are a kind of people with whom they can engage in productive exchange relations through peaceful or bellicose means. For this reason, the dialogue between the Brazilian officials and the young Xinane men is unsuccessful. While the Brazilians are obsessed with ethnonyms and the fixation of boundaries, the young Xinane men are interested in the expansion or dilution of boundaries. Thus they must figure out if the people they have found will be “really human” (*onikoi*) to them or not. From the Brazilian perspective the ethnonym should allow them to categorize the Xinane People and develop an appropriate protocol for interaction. For the Xinane men the logical process is the inverse of the Brazilian’s approach: they need to establish

what kind of relationship they are going to have with the Brazilians before they can decide what to call them.

The second question repeatedly discussed by journalists, human rights activists, and indigenous peoples' rights organizations, as well as online newspaper forum commenters, was: "Why are these persons coming out of the forest?" As I mentioned previously, the base assumption was that they should not want to meet their Brazilian or Peruvian neighbors unless external pressures forced them to do so. The question sought to ascertain which one or combination of the usual culprits lay behind the Xinane's push to seek contact with the people of Simpatia. The possible reasons most commonly raised included the existence of drug-trafficking pathways inside the territorial reserves established for peoples living in voluntary isolation, environmental pressures from the encroachment of agro-industrial and logging expansion fronts in the area, climate change, and/or assumed demographic pressures on the existing reserves as a result of a presumed population growth amongst the "isolated peoples" underscoring the need for the Peruvian and Brazilian governments to expand the areas reserved for the peoples inhabiting them.

In this case, the presumptions of the journalists, online forum commentators, and activists do appear to have aligned with what happened to the group that showed up at the Asháninka village of Simpatia. The young men arrived in the village with a firearm they had taken away from a group of people they had fought, and it was known by the local population that a Portuguese drug trafficker was using the territorial reserves for isolated peoples as a safe path to smuggle cocaine across the border from Peru into Brazil.¹³ Likewise, they explained to the Brazilians that they had just had a violent encounter with some strangers that had resulted in several deaths, and that they would like to obtain firearms in order to fight them. Additionally, they asked for people that know/have the *koshoiti* that can undo the harm these strangers have presumably caused them. On their next visit, the group was already showing symptoms of contagious diseases they most likely contracted from the people they fought against or during their visit to the Asháninka village. Fortunately, in this case the Brazilian government was ready to treat the sick and immunize the rest of the group.

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

Like most of the Western world, local Peruvians and Brazilians imagine their autonomous Amerindian neighbors to be remnants of the primordial state of humankind, left behind by the course of history. Their condition of *calatos*, that is, their nakedness, as well as their high vulnerability vis-a-vis the diseases of the "civilized world," constitute proof of their purity and innocence. From this perspective, their lack of clothes would be symbolic of a larger set of deficiencies that corresponds to their child-like condition: lack of money, of knowledge, of technology, of religion, etc. This is by no means a new discourse regarding Amerindians. When Christopher Columbus "discovered" America he found himself confronted with an unfamiliar natural environment populated by persons he found to be even more exotic. Columbus's reaction to the initial Amerindian "generosity" led him to portray them as "good savages" who lacked clothing, law, government, private property, and social classes. Consequently, these "good savages" also lacked greed, evilness, and religion. This Amerindian was, for Columbus, a simple being, devoid of culture, an empty vessel ready to be filled, a true representative of humankind's childhood. They were simply waiting to be transformed into good Christians. Nevertheless, this first encounter was also the occasion for the first disagreement, as evidently Columbus was soon faced with the reality that his idealized Amerindians were also capable of stealing and committing violent acts. The unruly savage, the cannibal, was thus invented (Todorov 2010).

Whether the preferred stereotype was that of *calato* or *bravo*, the local Brazilian and Peruvian populations agreed on the need to bring these peoples into the fold of civilization. If

pristine and innocent *calatos*, they needed to be “civilized” in order to make them aware of the dangers and evils of the world and so they can discover the advantages of modern society. This view is paradoxical, as many of these Amerindian peoples are known for their keen interest in metal tools, firearms, lighters, clothes, and other industrially manufactured devices. Just like the Cashinahua of the Curanja River, who re-established contact with national society after their last metal tools got to a state in which they could not be used anymore (Camargo and Villar 2013; Kensinger 1995), most “isolated peoples” are fully aware of the advantages of certain industrially manufactured goods and actively seek them, either through raiding sedentary indigenous settlements, exchanging with other Amerindians, or through sporadic contact with missionaries or other foreign agents. If “isolated people” were considered *bravos*, they needed to be “civilized” so they can stop being unpredictable fierce peoples and a danger to the different segments of the national population of the area. Either way, the project is the same: to discipline them and convert them into good Christians, and modern, law-abiding citizens.

These two apparently very different approaches to the “problem” posed by the existence of Amerindians living autonomously from the apparatus of South American national states are more similar than they may initially appear. Their similarity lies in the infantilizing and paternalistic view of “isolated Indians” upon which they are built. Whether the proposal is to “contact” them or to “leave them alone,” both ignore the agency of autonomous Amerindians and assume it is solely up to the members of the nation-state to decide the possible outcome of these encounters. Both the regional and global audiences that commented on the events that took place on Simpatia, as well as other similar events, assume that the only reasons why “isolated Indians” might leave their territorial reservations are related to external pressures on their lifestyles and/or livelihoods incoming from the encompassing society. However, while this element is usually present in the equation, it is not the only one. The Mastanawa’s narratives of “first contact,” as well as those of many other Amazonians, reveal that in many cases they took an active role in seeking to establish productive relations with their encompassing societies for reasons as diverse as these peoples and their specific sociopolitical contexts.

The Mastanawa Reaction: They Should Come Live with Us!

When I arrived at the upper Purus River area, a few weeks after the events that took place in Simpatia, the Mastanawa, Sharanahua, and Cashinahua were fully aware that some people who spoke a Pano language had “come out” of the forest on the headwaters of the Envira River. The Cashinahua wondered if this was the same people who occasionally take metal tools and crops from their villages on the upper Curanja River. The Sharanahua and Mastanawa were curious to know if this was one of the many “similar to them” peoples they had heard their parents and grandparents talk about. Finally, the Mastanawa wanted to know if these persons were long-lost relatives or if they were related to *Sboni*, a man called by most *Epa* (father), who established residence with his two wives a little upriver from the last Cashinahua community on the Curanja River and speaks the same Purus Pano dialect as the Mastanawa and on occasion immerses himself in the forest to visit his still-autonomous relatives living on the *terru firme* between the Curanja and upper Envira Rivers. In consequence, when they heard I had brought copies of the videos showing some of the events that took place in Simpatia, I was asked constantly to show them to curious groups looking for answers to the aforementioned questions. As will be discussed, the younger Mastanawa, born after the establishment of permanent relations with the settlers of the Peruvian-Brazilian border, had a different initial reaction to the videos than their older relatives born during “pre-contact” days. However, the final reaction was the same for both groups: “They are our relatives! Bring them over so they can live with us!”

Invariably, the first reaction the younger Mastanawa had to the videos was to make humorous comments about the nakedness of the young men on the videos like: “How am I not there?! I would flick them right on the balls!”; “How can they walk carrying those machetes on their penis straps without cutting their buttocks?!”; or “Don’t they feel ashamed when they climb up a tree and everybody can see their anuses open up and close down from below?!” All of these comments were not only made with the intention of making other people laugh but more importantly to signal that they are no longer like those “shameless, naked peoples.” The jokes had the purpose of communicating their belonging to the Peruvian-Brazilian border

society by making it clear that now that they use clothes, they are more similar to the local Peruvians and Brazilians than they are to their calato relatives.

After the initial jokes subsided, however, they usually made comments such as: "We were like that;" "My mother/father was like that;" or "Look, son/daughter, this is how your grandparents used to be." Even though they could not recognize themselves anymore as being the same kind of people as those portrayed in the video, their language was still the same, as were their songs, their way of dealing with potentially dangerous beings, and their need for *koshoiti*. The moving images of these persons reminded them of stories their parents and grandparents had told them, their suffering due to not being able to communicate with the Peruvians when they first "came out," and their history of running away from violent *nawa* (strangers) on the terra firme between the Envira and Curanja Rivers before finally finding *nawa* they could live with in relative peace. When Mastanawa viewers noticed these similarities to their parents' stories, they frequently asked themselves whether the people shown in the videos were related to them or to their people's former allies who remained on the terra firme once their parents or grandparents decided to settle on the shores of the big river and live in proximity to the Peruvians and Brazilians. However, for the Mastanawa watching the video, that they now wore clothes and ate salt and sugar were differences that made a difference.¹⁴

Every time I showed the video to my Mastanawa friends, regardless of their age, they asked me why the Brazilians were so stingy toward the young men. Why, even though they were trying to explain to them by all possible means that they were suffering and had been attacked by men armed with firearms, did the Brazilians refuse to help them? Why did they refuse to feed them and give them clothes and other industrially manufactured objects? As has been noted by Janet Siskind (1973), generosity is central to the ethical systems of the Purus Pano. Displays of generosity and food sharing are at the basis of their sociality—whether it is to reaffirm positive social relations or create new ones. The Mastanawa will commonly make moral evaluations about persons and social groups based on whether they consider them generous or stingy with their food, money, knowledge, or other possessions. These evaluations are usually illustrative of the state of their relationships with persons and social groups. *Yoashi* (stingy) is the worst insult in the Mastanawa language and that is how they described the Funai agents on the video who not only did not cater to the young men's requests but also prevented the Asháninka villagers from doing so.

Unlike the younger Mastanawa, whose first reaction was to make jokes about the nakedness of the men in the video, the older Mastanawa would immediately comment: "I was like that a long time ago, but I have grown accustomed to live with the *nawa*." The Mastanawa verbal root *fëya-* means "to grow accustomed." If the suffix *-fai* is added to form the word *fëyafäi* it becomes a transitive verb that can be loosely translated as "to make something or someone accustomed." *Fëyafäi* has multiple meanings: "to tame down," "to domesticate," "to teach something," "to cause someone to become accustomed," "to make the strange familiar." In this sense, *fëyafäi* can be used to describe the process by which children incorporate habits that will make them proper Mastanawa adults in the future, as well as the process by which dogs become useful hunting companions or captured baby monkeys become well-behaved pets. Likewise, it can be used to describe the process by which two previously unrelated peoples find each other and learn how to live together harmoniously. Someone who is *fëyaiba* (the suffix *-ba* indicating negation) is not only not "accustomed" but is also a stranger, meaning someone who has not yet adapted adequately to the group. A person who is *fëyaiba* has a body that is too different from those of the group and therefore exhibits a different behavior and moral code. In consequence, the process of becoming "accustomed" necessarily implies the reduction of the difference that keeps the previously "unaccustomed" parties apart and incapable of communication. The reduction of these differences is a consequence of operations in and on the body. For example, a hunting dog will go through a similar regime as a human hunter. Likewise, wild animals and anthropologists are domesticated through similar processes. The difference is merely one of degree, not kind; while the animal will be fed the same food that humans eat, it will not be incorporated into a human eating circle like the anthropologist. A few months into my stay on the upper Purus River, the Mastanawa began to joke with me by telling me that now that I had been with them for so long, and consequently had become part of their male eating circle, I had gotten "accustomed" to living and eating with them, and therefore I was like a Mastanawa and would not be able to return to my family in

Lima or the university in the United States. These statements about the importance of what and how you eat, who you eat with, and the transformative capacities of these acts of feeding and caring resonate with the findings of ethnographers of the region (Overing and Passes 2000; Walker 2013) and beyond (Bashkow 2006; Carsten 2004).

Even though it is tempting to interpret the Mastanawa notion of *fëyafäi* as yet another instance of what Carlos Fausto (1999) has called “familiarizing predation,” what the Mastanawa mean by this term differs in a significant way. The notion of familiarizing predation, as applied by Fausto and other authors to the analysis of diverse ethnographic settings in the South American lowlands, inevitably delineates hierarchical relations that mimic the master–pet dynamic (Fausto 2008; Brightman, Fausto, and Grotti 2016). Central to this type of analysis is the idea of capture that unfolds into a relation of mastery and subjugation that can either be maintained as such (Grotti and Brightman 2016) or over time be transformed into a more symmetrical relation (Santos-Granero 2009 2016). In this model, the incorporation of the captured, whether animal or human, is achieved through the captor’s acts of feeding. Feeding the animal or human captive places the feeder in a position of superiority vis-a-vis the one being fed (Costa 2016, Grotti and Brightman 2016). This is true of the word *fëyafäi* when referring to taming pets. This is not the case, however, when the word *fëyafäi* is used to refer to the process by which harmonious coresidence with human others is achieved. In the case of humans, this asymmetry is neither sought nor cultivated. The ideal village is not only one where everybody eats together but also one where everybody feeds each other “real” food.¹⁵ Feeding each other real food and eating it together are the principal actions that make coresidents fall into the category of *noko yora* (our body). This is a relation of kinship (Belaúnde 2001; Gow 1991; McCallum 2001), not one of domination or serfdom.

When presented with the videos, the Mastanawa’s final comment always was: “They should come to live with us, they are our relatives!” The Mastanawa thought that the group that visited Simpatia should go to the upper Purus River and establish residence with them so they could have larger and more beautiful villages than the ones they had at the time of my fieldwork. Their project was simple: bring them over, teach them how to wear clothes, eat salt and sugar, drink alcohol, and intermarry with them. In this sense, while Westerners and local Peruvians and Brazilians were concerned with figuring out whether the Yaminahua, Mastanawa, or any other Purus Pano-speaking group had genealogical connections with the group that showed up at Simpatia, for the Mastanawa this was a less relevant question. If the genealogical connection was absent they would still have a few options available to make it happen: through their naming system, through marriage, and/or through coresidence and participation in communal life. The relationship was a given; it was just a matter of finding out how they were (or were going to be) related and actualizing this virtual relation (Viveiros de Castro 2001).

It should be stressed that the Mastanawa’s reaction to the news about the Xinane does not represent the only possible manner of relating and differs from the reactions of another Pano people from the Peruvian Purus Province to the incursions of another autonomous people into their territory. Barbara Keifenheim (1997) describes a string of discussions that ensue from a series of Cashinahua encounters with a people they call the *Mashiku*.¹⁶ Both the Mastanawa and Cashinahua coincided in the opinion that it would be a good idea to “pacify” the bravos but differed in what this pacification should entail. In the Cashinahua-Mashiku case, the Cashinahua debate focused on whether they should make “slaves” or brothers-in-law out of the Mashiku. In both cases, Keifenheim explains, the Cashinahua foresee an asymmetrical relation with the Mashiku. As if they were to be made brothers-in-law, the plan only included marriages between Cashinahua men and Mashiku women. On the other hand, the Mastanawa never expressed to me any idea or plan that implied putting the Xinane in a subordinate position.

There are at least two possible sociological explanations for the different reactions of the Cashinahua and Mastanawa. Even though both the Mastanawa and Cashinahua are Pano peoples who have shared the same area of southwestern Amazonia for as long as they can remember, they show different degrees of openness toward their neighbors. This is very evident, for example, in their marriage practices. The Cashinahua are known for their strong tendency to marry within their own villages, which ideally include members of the two Cashinahua moieties (Deshayes and Keifenheim 2003; Kensinger 1995). In consequence, they are deeply invested in the continual reproduction of otherness at a hyperlocal level. On the other hand, the

Mastanawa, together with the rest of the Purus Pano peoples, as a general rule, show a preference for village exogamy and linguistic endogamy. Which brings us to the consideration of language.

Even though Keifenheim does not discuss this issue, it is likely that the people the Cashinahua encountered were Arawak speakers, judging from the use of the Mashiku label, since the Cashinahua usually refer to the rest of Purus Pano speakers as Yaminawa. In the Mastanawa–Xinane case, both peoples are speakers of similar dialects of the same Purus Pano language. From the Mastanawa perspective this made the Xinane marriageable almost automatically and, as Osho Rodo hints in the following section, the Xinane felt the same way.

Coda: Osho Rodo's Helicopter Trip

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

Being a seasoned storyteller, Osho Rodo spared no details in his narrative of the trip: the time of the day at which they arrived to Simpatia, the number and type of motorboats they took to go upriver, the place where they stopped for lunch, and what they ate. Likewise, he remarked that as they got closer to the area where his alleged relatives where, the Funai officials, including Zé Correia, kept getting more nervous with each yard they advanced up the Envira River. When they finally arrived at the place where they were to meet his alleged relatives, Osho Rodo told me that the rest of the party, with the exception of his cousin Baya, were too scared to approach them. Consequently, the two of them were left to handle the conversation. According to Osho Rodo, the first thing that happened when the young Xinane men came out to meet them was that they jumped into the boats and started asking about him and Baya. When this happened, Osho Rodo says that the Funai officials ran away from the young men that came to meet them, leaving him and Baya alone to interact with them. Referring to Osho Rodo and Baya the young men said "We haven't met these men before." Addressing the pair they said "We are going to tell our father about you tonight." They then started dancing and escorted Baya and Osho Rodo off the boat. Once they were on the beach, Osho Rodo explained that the young men "spoke strongly" and started asking him who they were, where they came from, and why had they come to see them. Osho Rodo told them he was informed that his relatives had arrived in the area, so he decided to come and see for himself. The young men replied by demanding Osho Rodo prove they were relatives by saying the names of their dead, starting with their parents' generation. Most Pano-speaking peoples practice a *Kariera*-type kinship system, which means that names are recycled, skipping a generation, through lines of descent in correspondence to a moiety system. As a result, names have the capacity to place people in specific social relations according to their place within the name-transmission system, regardless of the existence of an actual genealogical connection. Osho Rodo then started telling them the names they requested. Immediately after he had pronounced a few names, the young men started crying, and one of the four men that had come to meet them covered Osho Rodo's mouth and asked him to stop talking for the Funai officials would learn too much. They then started referring to him and Baya as their "dear uncles" and called the rest of the group to come meet their dear long-lost uncles.

As soon as the young men called their relatives who had been hiding behind the tree line to meet their long-lost uncles, people came out of their hiding places and started greeting them with the words "*jaicho, aicho!*"—an expression that conveys joy and/or gratitude. "This is how

we wanted to be, we have finally found each other, and we will not leave each other anymore.” Whereupon they excused themselves for not bringing food, mentioned briefly how they arrived there after fighting against other people further upriver, and invited Osho Rodo and Baya to join them and share a meal at their camp. According to Osho Rodo, they were served a banquet consisting of turtle, quail, grey-winged trumpeter, tapir, wattled curassow, and tortoise and river turtle eggs. While they ate, the Xinane men explained to Osho Rodo and Baya that Zé Correia, the Yaminawa Funai agent, did not talk like them and that they thought that he might be a Shipinawa. Furthermore, they explained that they did not know Zé Correia very well and that, on the contrary, they now knew Osho Rodo and Baya very well. Having explained this, they told Osho Rodo that the next time the *nawa* (strangers) came, they were going to lie to them (and be lied to) because they are consistently being denied sugar by them, which they saw as evidence of stinginess. Osho Rodo continued explaining that the *nawa* told the Xinane people that they should not eat sugar because they had a cold. However, Osho Rodo described, many of the people were sick and asking for sugar and some of them were saying: “We are going to kill one of these men with our arrows because we want to eat sugar!” The sickest among them, suffering from fever, remained without moving or talking. Osho Rodo explained to me that they were all treated and administered injections by the Brazilian doctor, adding, “We were once like that.”

After having a lavish meal and discussing their complaints about the Brazilians’ stinginess, their newfound nephews offered women to Osho Rodo and Baya and joked about whether they would like them or not. Osho Rodo mentioned that there were some tensions between the members of the group because of an extramarital love affair that had gotten out of control and already produced episodes of violence between classificatory brothers. In relation to this matter, Osho Rodo said that the group did not have many women and that the ones he met were closely related to the males in the group. He commented that this was why they needed to find other people with whom they could intermarry.

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

Conclusion

The shared Mastanawa and Xinane agendas, that is, the dilution of social boundaries, the expansion of their social networks, and the formation of larger and more beautiful villages, as well as their diplomatic means to achieve it, contrasts greatly with the agenda and protocols of the Funai officials. The Mastanawa and the Xinane people are interested in deepening their social relations and doing this as fast as they can by growing accustomed to living with their newly found neighbors. However, the Funai officials have a different immediate goal in mind, which is the protection of the Xinane people from infectious diseases, potentially abusive relations with third parties, forced religious conversion, alcohol and substance abuse, and other perils of the outside world. The institutional mandate of Funai thus hinders their relations with the people whose security and wellbeing they are asked to ensure. As a consequence, the Xinane people see the Funai agents as blocking their initiative for establishing productive relations with their neighbors by preventing the flow of gifts, whether clothes, sugar, firearms, metal tools, or food. In contrast with the Funai, the Asháninka of Simpatia and the Mastanawa who visited the Xinane people, in typical Amerindian fashion, show their goodwill through offering gifts of food and clothing, positioning themselves as uncles (and therefore affinal kin), and sharing meals. Accordingly, from the Xinane people’s perspective it is the Mastanawa and Asháninka that are acting as *onikoi* toward them, while the Brazilian officials are acting like the quintessential villain of all Panoan mythologies, *Yoashi*, the immensely rich and powerful primordial stingy man depicted in myth.

These varying reactions to the presence of the Xinane people evidences different ways of conceiving the otherness represented by those labeled as living in “voluntary isolation.” While very different in their practical propositions—keep them isolated or “civilize” them—the positions held by international audiences and local non-indigenous persons stem from a similar understanding of who these “isolated Indians” are. This is a view that contends that they are “inseparable from certain threatened domains of Nature” (Bessire 2012:468) and that they represent the last remnants of uncontaminated Amerindian culture. In this sense, these two ways of dealing with people like the Xinane are precisely the reactions to be expected from modernist subjects when faced with a radical alterity understood to encompass pure culture and pure nature at the same time (ibid.) and to therefore represents a direct threat to the project of the modern nation-state. “Isolation” and “civilization” are two sides of the same state-centric strategy since they both represent attempts to domesticate a wild presence that escapes the power of the state. The latter approach eliminates a “wild” presence by stripping peoples of those elements that constitute a threat to the modernist project, while the former seeks to achieve a comparable result by delimiting a space within which peoples are supposedly contained, creating through this legal fiction a place for these peoples within the ranks of the nation-state’s citizens. Either way, social relations beyond the possibilities of strict avoidance or elimination (through “civilization”) are understood to be impossible and even undesirable.

On the other hand, the Mastanawa reaction to the events that took place in Simpatia force us to take seriously the call by Rupert Stasch (2009:9) for an anthropology that “studies otherness as an internal feature of local social relations and local practices,” and that goes beyond depicting how “people’s social lives are structured by non-local institutions and cultural influences.” From the Mastanawa perspective, the relation with the Xinane people was already present: the issue was to figure out how they were related. In Osho Rodo’s narration this was achieved through the naming system, while some Mastanawa individuals claimed a genealogical connection to the people from the Xinane.¹⁷ This way of conceiving of the “isolated” as kin is similar to Casey High’s (2013) account of the Waorani, who after a violent encounter with the Taromenani found a way of relating to them as fellow victims of violence. In this sense for the Mastanawa, the Xinane and other “isolated peoples” are kin because “they envision themselves as people who ‘live each other’s lives and die each other’s deaths’”(Sahlins 2011:14). In a model like this, there is be no place for insurmountable difference, since the “other” is not primarily defined by the boundary between “us” and “them” but by the possibility of closeness, whether it is through peaceful or violent means.

Notes

¹ Purus Pano is a sub-branch of the Pano linguistic family, which includes languages that show a high degree of mutual intelligibility. Purus Pano languages include Amawaka, Cashinahua and those in the Yaminawa cluster (Mastanawa, Sharanahua, Yaminawa, etc.).

² While a number of different ethnonyms have been assigned to them by anthropologists, government agencies, and other indigenous peoples, I prefer to refer to them as Xinane people because “Xinane” refers to the name of the stream that the group followed in order to arrive at the Envira River and find the Asháninka village Simpatia.

³ All the Mastanawa names used in this article are pseudonyms.

⁴ The translations from the videos were made by myself in collaboration with Mastanawa speakers who speak a dialectic of the language spoken by the Xinane.

⁵ The Funai used to have an outpost in the Xinane stream area, but it was closed in 2011 after an attack by presumed drug traffickers.

⁶ The lyrics to *Yama Yama* songs are composed of formulaic verses in metaphor and in an archaic register of the language. All of these elements make the translation and interpretation of these songs a highly complex enterprise. According to the Mastanawa, however, these songs are usually sung when remembering past episodes of one’s life, especially old love affairs, and when longing for the presence of faraway kin. Additionally, a Cashinahua man explained to me that *Yama Yama* songs can be sung for a multiplicity of other purposes, such as to attract game animals, to put a baby to sleep, or to seduce a potential lover. For a more detailed understanding of the *Yama Yama* songs among the Yaminahua of the Mapuya River, see Miguel Carid Naviera’s 2007 doctoral dissertation.

- ⁷ The *koshoiti* are songs used to heal or attack. The cure to an attack performed by means of a *koshoiti* song is the same song that caused it. Those who can perform these songs with successful results are called *koshoitiya*, literally “in possession of *koshoiti*” or “with *koshoiti*.”
- ⁸ This should come as no surprise, since this idea has deep roots in Judeo-Christian thought and scriptures. Furthermore, this notion has shaped scholarly understandings of human nature as evidenced, for example, in Émile Durkheim’s paper on the dualism of human nature (2005 [1914]) or Clifford Geertz’s essay on the role of culture in human nature (1973).
- ⁹ I have not been able to identify an etymology of the word *cariu* or a meaning beyond that of “Brazilian,” as distinct from Peruvian, Bolivian, or *gringo*.
- ¹⁰ The principles underlying this logic being the same as those behind the anthropologists’ interest in figuring out what linguistic family they belong to or, in the Funai agents’ interest, an ethnonym by which to identify the Xinane.
- ¹¹ For example, during my stay in the Purus River, my Mastanawa hosts would routinely refer to their coresidents as all being Mastanawa to them. Later, in private, however, they would mention that a specific person they were having an issue with was actually Chaninahua or Yaminawa.
- ¹² New ethnonyms continue to be created, such as Parquenahua, used to designate the people who live within the boundaries of the Alto Purus National Park and the Murunahua Territorial Reserve for Voluntary Isolated Indians.
- ¹³ According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), in 2014 Peru was the largest producer of cocaine in the world, and Brazil was both a prominent consumer country and an important transit country in the flow of cocaine from the Andean region to ports on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean.
- ¹⁴ This is reminiscent of the way in which the Piro understand what it means to be civilized, which they equate to “the consumption of fine things such as clothing and salt” (Gow 1993:333).
- ¹⁵ “Real food,” or a proper Mastanawa meal, is composed of at least two basic elements: a vegetable from the garden, which can be corn (*xi’i*), plantains (*mania*), or yucca (*yoa*), and game meat from the forest (*nami*) or river fish (*shima*). Any combination of these two types of food is *nami*, things that are eaten together and complement each other.
- ¹⁶ Possibly one of the Arawak-speaking peoples that live autonomously on the *terra firme* between the headwaters of the Purus, Jurua, Inuya, and Madre de Dios basins. In the Peruvian Purus province, people tend to distinguish between Mashco (Arawak) and Curanjeño (Pano) autonomous peoples.
- ¹⁷ This notion of conceiving of the Other as an internal component of social relations is true among the Purus Pano to the extent that one of their moieties receives the name of *nawa*.

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