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## Ethnology and Indigenism in the Brazilian Northwest Amazon

Robin M. Wright

University of Florida, rowrightrobin@yahoo.com

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## Ethnology and Indigenism in the Brazilian Northwest Amazon

*De Volta ao Lago de Leite*. Lasmar, Cristiane. Sao Paulo: Edusp/ISA/NuTI. 2005. 285 pp., illustrations, maps, references. RS37,00 (paper). ISBN 85-7139-621-3. [www.editoraunesp.com.br]. *Cidade do Indio*. Andreello, Geraldo, Sao Paulo: Edusp/ISA/NuTI 2006.445 pp., illustrations, map, tables, references, R\$54,00. (paper) ISBN: 85-7139-659-0.[www.editoraunesp.com.br]

**ROBIN M. WRIGHT**

University of Florida

rowrightrobin@yahoo.com

I would like to start with a few introductory remarks to contextualize the two books under review. The two monographs under consideration are the first productions of a new series of ethnographies about the peoples and cultures of the Brazilian Northwest Amazon region (also known as the Alto Rio Negro) being launched through the partnership of the NuTI (Núcleo de Transformações Indígenas, Nucleus for [the study of] Indigenous Transformations), coordinated by Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, the Rio Negro Program of the ISA (Socio-environmental Institute) coordinated by Carlos Alberto Ricardo – these two being important centers of ethnological production and indigenist praxis in Brazil – and the publishing-house Edusp. Since ISA's first entries into the Northwest Amazon in the mid-1980s, it has co-published a series of maps, introductory texts on the peoples and cultures of the Northwest Amazon of use mostly for the indigenist movement, technical documents related to its 'sustainable development' projects undertaken in collaboration with the Indigenous Organization of the Rio Negro (FOIRN), and a variety of other productions both of a scientific nature as well as of the traditional knowledge of the indigenous peoples.

Their alliance with the NuTI is a sign of a recent shift in the production of ethnographies on the history and peoples of the Northwest Amazon. Up until the 1970s, there was very little ethnography published on the upper Rio Negro valley. The classic works by Irving Goldman, Christine

and Stephen Hugh-Jones, Jean Jackson, and Peter Silverwood-Cope circulating in the 1970s, all based on ethnographic fieldwork among Tukanoan and Makuan peoples of Colombia, introduced new models, mainly structuralist, for understanding social structure, cosmology and ceremonialism of the Tukanoans. Silverwood-Cope's ethnography was – and still is to a large degree – the most complete work on a hunter-forager population until the present day.

In that context, a new generation of ethnologists followed these predecessors but on the Brazilian side of the border. My ethnographic work focused on the Baniwa of the Aiary River but the larger question I addressed was a history of contact over the long-range and within that larger context, how prophetic traditions developed among both Tukanoan and Baniwa peoples. My thesis was the first history to present the indigenous peoples not as passive recipients of an external political economy, but, rather, as actors in a drama of many acts, who deployed the concepts and weapons at their disposal to decipher and adapt to the presence of the White Man. For at least a decade, it was the only regional history that existed.

At the same time as my fieldwork, in the late 1970s-early 1980s, a series of other ethnographers worked in other parts of the Brazilian Uaupés region, Janet Chernela studying social structure and economy amongst the Wanano; Dominique Buchillet, Desana medicinal practices and shamanism; Ana Gita de Oliveira, interethnic relations among the Tariana of the mission of Jauareté; Berta Ribeiro (Darcy Ribeiro's ex-wife), the art of weaving among different peoples throughout the region; and, on the Venezuelan side, Jonathan Hill, ecology, ethnomusicology and mythology of the Wakuenai Indians, kin of the Baniwa; and, finally, Nicolas Journet, social structure, politics and economy of the Kuripako, also kin of the Wakuenai and Baniwa in Colombia. Buchillet's and Chernela's were the only works on Eastern Tukanoan peoples at the time. Chernela, who subsequently worked on history and language use, pioneered studies of indigenous ethnology, local knowledge, as well as manioc and fishing technologies on the middle Uaupés region. With all of these works, and many others, a much fuller picture was shaping up of the ethnography of the Northwest Amazon. When each of us began advising students, we indicated places in the Northwest where research could be done. My own students included: Marcio Meira among the Werekena of the Xié; Luiza Garnelo, among the Baniwa of the Içana; Yara Costa, traditional dance festivals of the Baniwa; Denise Adrião, on Barcellos; and Juan Carlos Penha, on the city of Mitu, Colombia.

All of this is to say that since the 1970s, there has been a relatively

unbroken flow of ethnology about the Northwest Amazon, with a strong tendency to include history as a fundamental part of the analysis. It was never the kind of one-sided history which isolates political or economic 'causes' for processes and events, but rather, to the extent possible, history written from the point of view of the native peoples. Both Janet Chernela and I, and later Jonathan Hill and Nicolas Journet, have understood whatever we were studying in historical terms. Also important to point out is that our work was deeply informed by political necessities of the time and the rights of indigenous peoples of the region.

Both books under review were doctoral theses one of which (Andrello) I had the pleasure of participating on the defense committee and assisting in writing his history chapter. One other monograph on Tuyuka Social Organization, by Aloisio Cabalzar, has been published (2008) in the Edusp/ISA/NuTI series. The Northwest Amazon thus continues to be, along with the upper Xingu, among the best researched indigenous areas of Lowland South America.

The two monographs reviewed here offer fresh perspectives on questions and areas that have either received little attention in the Northwest Amazon literature, or were in need of a different treatment. How are we to understand the constant movement of indigenous peoples from their communities on the Uaupés to take up residence in an urban context (the municipal capital of São Gabriel da Cachoeira)? As a movement towards a direct relation with the world of the Whites? How are we to understand the transformation of a once fair-sized mission which was established near an important indigenous longhouse into what is now a small city, as though foreshadowing what São Gabriel went through generations ago but with important new actors? And how do the indigenous people of this second urban situation compare, in their conceptions of and relations to the Whites, with the first situation? I shall first provide a synopsis of each of these works followed by my comments on various aspects which struck my attention.

Lasmar's monograph is dedicated to thinking through the transformations that occur in the way of life of the Indians of the Uaupés river (predominantly Tukanoan-speaking peoples) who leave their communities of origin, generally located near the riverbanks, and take up residence in the city of São Gabriel. On moving to the city, the indigenous population move down the Uaupés and onto the middle Rio Negro, a movement which historically has been associated with such processes as slavery, forced relocation, or labor migration. Lasmar argues that a reflection on this movement to the city has to take into account,

on the one hand, its implications for social relations and on the other, the cosmological conceptions that inform the image that the Indians have of themselves and of the whites.

Lasmar's field research amounted to 8 months, seven of which were in the city of São Gabriel, and one in the mission village of Taraquá. In São Gabriel she focused her study on Tukanoan and Tariana (Arawak-speaking) communities, a small portion of the actual ethnic composition in the city. Her analysis is developed in two main sections of the book: "There One Lives Like Brother/Sister," and "Becoming White, But Not Completely." At the end of each section, there is a collection of drawings by the Desana artist Feliciano Lana appropriately illustrating "Scenes from a Marriage" and "The Fish-People."

Lasmar's theoretical approach is highly influenced by the works of Peter Gow and Eduardo Viveiros de Castro. After summarizing the history of contact in the region, she affirms that an analysis based only on the events of history would not be enough to understand why the indigenous peoples have been progressively moving in the direction of the whites, at least on the Uaupés river (quite different from the Içana River, I would add). Rather, it is through the concepts that the Indians have of their contact situation, gender relations and their reshaping in the context of contact that we can better approach the question. Actually this approach is already very much present in my and Chernela's published works.

Traditionally the communities of the Uaupés practice linguistic exogamy and are comprised of hierarchically ordered, agnatic and virilocal sibs. Generally speaking, groups located to the East (downriver) are considered superior to groups located in the West (upriver), given that the former were the first ancestors to emerge from the Ancestral anaconda which brought all Tukanoan peoples into the region in primordial times. Hierarchy is also expressed in kinship terminology that differentiates younger brother from older brother groups, and by the attribution of ceremonial functions to each group. While ceremonial functions and differences in prestige are determined in large part by mythology, it is possible to use the resources from the world of the whites to enhance a community's productive capacity and hence its prestige in the eyes of other communities. All of this, again, is based on the ethnographies of the 1970s and 1980s (e.g. Chernela's foundational article published in the *Anuário Antropológico* in 1982). The ideology of patrilineal descent coupled with marital practice contribute to the formation of an image of women as the "other," those who do not belong to their community of birth but who leave on marrying out, and those who come from other communities

who represent the potentially dangerous power of alterity which has come within a community of agnatic siblings. Marital relations are the prototype of a kind of sociability where differences between the inside and outside are gradually blurred through consanguinization, a consequence of co-residence and commensality. Relevant to this, Chernela has published some ten articles on the poetry of women and their language as Others (see in particular Chernela and Leed, 2002).

The author then analyzes the sexual identity and relations among spouses, particularly as these are played out in productive activities. This discussion is well-known from the previous works of Christine Hugh-Jones on the Barasana, Chernela on the Wanano, and other ethnographers, especially with regard to the rituals involving the sacred flutes. An important point here is that women in these rituals should not be seen as 'excluded,' as they often are portrayed. Rather, they mark the extremely important position of Alterity, which encompasses the identity of the consanguineal group. This is a theme that was originally taken up in Christine Hugh-Jones' monograph and, later, by Chernela in a series of articles over the past 30 years. Chernela was also instrumental in founding a home for indigenous women from the Upper Rio Negro in Manaus. It is the earliest and longest-lived indigenous association from the Upper Rio Negro. It is very evident that Chernela's work with women and her publications about women were a strong influence on Lasmar's book, although they are barely acknowledged.

In the second part of the book, Lasmar seeks to present the way of life of women in the city. Unfortunately, there is little continuity between the discussions of prestige, hierarchy, and women's symbolic role in the communities and in the urban contexts, where the parameters of 'other' indigenous and non-indigenous people, political associations, market relations, and so on are more pronounced. Nevertheless, she presents with great sensitivity a portrait of life in the city from the women's points of view, and in the different neighborhoods, those of recent occupation and those of more long-standing occupation. The length of time a family or individual has lived in the city is directly related to their access to a variety of resources. Differentiation is made between women of the older neighborhoods and those of the newer; the latter are more often recent arrivals from the communities who are more vulnerable to sexual violence and blamed more for their supposedly active role in these episodes.

The author then develops an interesting analysis of the perspectives of women in different generations in relation to community and city life. She presents the life histories of three women of the same family but in three

generations showing their trajectories from the community to the city. The garden is an outstanding reference that defines feminine identity over the generations. The eldest grandmother, who first moved to the city, maintains the most solid connections with work in her gardens; her daughters who have grown up in the city recall life in the communities but they spend little time in the gardens. Nevertheless, they attribute great value to the products resulting from their labor. The youngest generation sees the garden as little more than a place for recreation and never as a place for work since from the time they were born, their lives have been oriented to the city. Even though they consider themselves indigenous, they refer to Indians as 'others' whose lives are defined by different references – mythology, the community, traditional social organization.

Why, in the end, do Tukanoans move in the direction of the whites? Lasmar argues that the white man is associated with the powerful 'fish-people' (*wai masa*), who are those ancestors who did not want to leave the ancestral anaconda canoe when, in primordial times, it journeyed from the Milk River to the Uaupés, depositing the ancestors in specific places. The 'fish-people' remained as such; today, they are feared for their great transformative power deriving from the 'force of their speech' (*uuro*), like the shamans' speech. According to the emergence myths, the Whites stayed inside the ancestral Anaconda with the fish-people and thus have many of the same powers to attack and destroy the indigenous peoples. Whites are also 'fish-people' and have intense power and much wealth which is manifest in numerous ways. This is why the Whites are considered immune from the 'fish-peoples' sicknesses, and their artifacts are charged with both destructive and regenerative powers. Women thus have an important role in the process of appropriating prestigious attributes of the Whites both in the context of the city and in community life.

Several other aspects of Lasmar's ethnography merit further consideration. First of all, her selection of Tukanoan and Tariana populations for her research left out peoples such as the Baniwa, Maku and Baré Indians, who are from two of the three main ethnic blocs in the Northwest Amazon region and who, for many generations, have both frequented the city of São Gabriel and have built houses there, alternating their occupation between villages upriver, and the city during the school vacation. Nor is there any mention of movement of women downriver at the instigation of the Catholic Church, a fact which was denounced by a Tukanoan representative to the Fourth Russell Tribunal on the Rights of Indians of the Americas. Clearly, every ethnographer makes his/her choices of which communities to focus on, and hers was overwhelmingly

oriented to Tukanoan-speaking people. Had she done more work in the neighborhoods of Dabaru or Areal, where recent migrants are more likely to be, she would have learned more from the Baniwa population about *their* views of the White Man which are not exactly the same as the Tukanoans. Similarly, her analysis leaves unanswered the question of why the Maku of the nearby Serra do Cabori continue to visit the city despite the extremely negative effects these visits have on their health and self-image not to mention the brutal discrimination they suffer from the local population.

This is important because the ethnology of the Northwest Amazon has been and still is associated with the Tukanoans, leaving out the Arawakans and Makuans or considering them to be a world apart which they never in fact have been. Baniwa myths of the White Man's origin are *not* all the same as those of the Tukanoans; and Tukanoan views of the Baniwa and the Maku are an integral part of their Identity/Alterity discourse. A follow-up project would be to focus on these other perspectives. In my interpretations of the 19th Century millenarian movements of the Upper Rio Negro, I demonstrated that the Tukanoan movements were quite different in their objectives from the Baniwa, the contrast focusing on questions of the usurpation of White power versus autonomy from the Whites.

In numerous publications (Wright 1981, 2002f, 2005a), I have shown that Baniwa myths of the White Man do include the bath in the river which gave rise to different skin-colors, but the White Man is also associated with several dangerous and powerful beings related to shamanism (the jaguar and the anaconda). The primordial Baniwa woman, Amaru, gave birth to the ancestors of the historical Spaniards and the Portuguese; Amaru is a powerful shaman who taught the whites industrial (*fábrica*) knowledge, the female equivalent to the more 'spiritual' knowledge of the sacred flutes and trumpets, a male domain; she is said to have pots of different metals, from which clouds of poisonous vapor arise and are blown over the indigenous areas leaving the Indians with respiratory ailments and other "sicknesses of the Whites." Chernela's publications likewise have drawn considerable attention to Tukanoan womens' perspectives. Every volume of the *Serie de Narradores Indigenas* published by the FOIRN ALSO contains a myth about the white man's bath; it is not unique to the Tukanoans.

Lasmar's criticism of the "existing historiography of the Upper rio Negro" (p. 39) that it "does not allow us to understand what led the Indians to realize this collective movement in the direction of the White peoples, nor the trajectory that... would have significant transformations in their lives" (40) is incorrect. It is surprising that, in her bibliography, there are



no references to my doctoral thesis (1981) or my books (1998, 2005a), nor to Chernela's 1988 article on "Righting History," or some ten other articles by her on women, half of them on history (Chernela, 1988, 1996a, 1996b, 1998, 2001b, 2005). Nor is there mention of both our articles in the Albert and Ramos 2002 collection (Chernela and Leed, in Albert & Ramos, 2002; Wright, in Albert & Ramos, 2002)— all of which have as their objectives to understand the Baniwa and Wanano views of the historical whites, and their relations to merchandise, among other things. Historiography *cannot be reduced to political/ economic analysis*, which I clearly stated in my 1981 thesis and 2005 book on the history of the Upper Rio Negro; rather, it should be seen as complementary to interpretations of key myths and informal discourse about the white man.

Another point: even if the author's intention was not to write an historiographical account of the growth of São Gabriel, existing archival materials have much to say about the nature of ethnic relations that could have been used to support her arguments. Richard Spruce's (Wallace and Spruce 1908) published travelogue from the mid-19th Century, for example, refers to an imminent armed rebellion of the Barés against the white people at the time of his visit. In the Public Archives in Manaus there are several books of correspondence from local authorities in São Gabriel including police reports, demographic data, and information on the prophetic movements of the 1850s which clearly link indigenous rebellions with the theme of the usurpation of the power of the Whites. Documents from the earliest Portuguese explorers on Corocovi (the indigenous name for São Gabriel da Cachoeira) cited in my doctoral thesis refer to the Baré malocas and the alliances that were made between Baré and the Spaniards in obtaining indigenous slaves (one reason why the Baré are considered more on the side of "white people" in the ethnic gradient from indigenous to whites). With the new perspective the author brings to the ethnographic material, she might find such an exercise on historical materials valuable.

Finally, I cannot agree with her use of Gow's comparison between the learning of the white man's knowledge through schools, and the shaman's use of his knowledge of "wild" powers of the forest and rivers to benefit kinship. Only on a very abstract level can one accept such a comparison, for any ethnographer who has experience of shamanic knowledge knows that it is obtained at a great risk of the shaman's life and that it is not merely knowledge that is learned through books but rather through direct contact with the spirit-world which is altogether another level of experienced knowledge.

Geraldo Andreello's (2006) monograph on the town of Jauareté and its indigenous population continues some of the same themes discussed by Lasmar, especially the meanings attributed by the Indians to the "civilization" of the Whites. How do the Tariana and Tukano of Jauareté understand the term "civilization" which is so heavily laden with both extremely negative experiences and yet with the tremendous potential for producing positive changes in the Indians' lives (medicine, literacy, technology to mention a few)?

Andreello structured his 2002 book in the following manner: Chapter 1 narrates the author's academic research and indigenist experiences in the region that led him to initially choose the theme of "development" as the focus of his doctoral thesis. He explains what led him to change the direction of his research both in terms of his theoretical sources as well as historiographical material. Ethnographic examples from his early fieldwork led him to construct an initial hypothesis regarding the meaning attributed by the Indians to the notion of "civilization."

In Chapter 2, Andreello's objective is to provide an historical panorama of the region. He bases this primarily on secondary sources (mostly my thesis) although he adds some primary material from mid-19th Century travelers' accounts. His concern is to show the corralling of indigenous labor throughout the colonial period, as well as to discuss the introduction of the debt system as a way of enlisting indigenous laborers. He raises the question of how much the colonial labor system weighed in on the shaping of indigenous ethnic identities that characterized the native social system of the Uaupés. Certain categories – such as Baré and Uaupés – used to designate the Indians of the Rio Negro and Uaupés, emerged in the earliest Jesuit reports as generic terms that referred to groups that were "civilized" or still beyond "civilization" ("upriver" peoples) respectively.

Chapter 3 begins with a recapitulation of the history of the Uaupés from the time the Salesians entered the region in 1914, the consolidation of Jauareté as a major mission center, until the closing of the boarding school in the 1980s which was the main factor that led to the beginning of a process of demographic concentration around the mission. Statistical data referring to the present situation of Jauareté allow the author to trace a profile of the town's ethnic configuration and the economy of its neighborhoods (*bairros*). Lastly, the author analyzes the political process that took place at the end of the 1980s with the creation of different indigenous organizations among distinct Tariana groups and with different political agendas (ranging from militaristic to the alternative indigenism of the Catholic Church). These differences had consequences

for the alternatives proposed for the demarcation of indigenous lands on the Upper Rio Negro.

Chapter 4 is a description of daily life in the communities of Jauareté. The constant effort on the part of the Indians is to reinforce the sense of community in the face of rapid demographic growth; this effort is the counterpart of the progressive transformation of the local communities into *bairros*. Two examples of this important growth are the circulation of money and merchandise in the process of the production of the community. To a certain degree, even monetarized commercial relations are made to adjust to a moral economy.

Andrello then goes on to explore the meanings of these items of the white man's civilization through an analogy with what the Indians consider as items of their wealth – that is, the names and the ritual objects stored in the sacred boxes of ceremonial equipment. In the final section of this chapter, Andrello examines the very recent tendency among high status Tukano and Tariano groups to re-evaluate the importance of “culture” in the context of urbanization. There are groups who are investing in a revitalization of their ancestral traditions as a way of dealing with the “new social problems” such as the lack of control over the youth and the difficulties in administering community problems. This strategy actually resulted in the author's recruitment in the production of manuscripts on their history and mythology during his fieldwork, as well as an excellent film on the meanings of the petroglyphs around the rapids of Jauareté, called “Rapids of the Jaguar.”

In Chapter 5, Andrello first presents a description of the actual distribution of Tariana sibs on the Uaupes River showing that the indigenous chiefs mentioned in the historical sources belonged to the powerful *Koivathe* sib, whose members still reside in Jauareté. This oral genealogical history allows him to show how they succeeded in assuming an important position in relation to the colonizers which they maintained throughout the 20th Century. For the *Koivathe*, however, myths serve as proof of their prerogatives as legitimate dwellers of the Uaupés. What connects them to Jauareté are stories of the primordial times of pre-humanity, a world populated by creator divinities who brought the rivers, the animals, the plants and true human beings into existence. According to the story, they emerged as real people from the rapids of Hipana on the Aiary River, north of the Uaupés, after which they moved south to the Uaupés where they carved out a niche for themselves following wars against enemy peoples or by incorporating new sibs into their number. The emergence of the Whites is not explicitly mentioned in this narrative, for the *Koivathe* concentrate mainly on detailing their relations with the

“civilized” people, when these return, so to speak, to the Uaupes in historical times. The differences between Indians and Whites and amongst Indian groups are thus focused more clearly in the Tukano myths which are the subject of Chapter 6.

Andrello analyzes a Tukano myth of the origin of the world and humanity through a series of distinctions (logical oppositions?) that run through the narrative, beginning with the separation between the Tukano and Desano ancestors, and the first women who stole the sacred flutes. From there, differentiations are made between humans and animals, Indians and whites, and amongst Indian groups. The ancestor of the Whites has a great importance in the narrative as do all affinal relations. Andrello proposes that all relations of Alterity can be arranged along a more general structure, the “axis of affinity,” which is opposed to that which connects the creator deities to the ancestors of the Tukano (the “axis of consanguinity”). Differentiations that occur in the myth are accomplished through a series of operators which are the sacred flutes, skins, ornaments, weapons, merchandise, fermented beverages and psychoactive substances. All of these denote differential capacities that bring about the constitution of different subjectivities. The construction of the person and subjectivity are not processes that are separate from the acquisition of certain objects used in the very fabrication of the bodies of mythic beings. From there, the author returns to the theme of the meanings attributed by the Indians to “civilization” of the whites.

Having accompanied Andrello’s research in the Northwest Amazon from the very beginning, I can agree with his thesis advisor (Mauro Almeida) that his work is an important contribution on a topic and a people who for a long time had been overlooked by Brazilian ethnology. Andrello knew how to use the resources at his disposal quite well, and apply the ideas of his advisors in constructive and innovative ways. One major challenge remains is that of translating this work to English in order to make it available (and this goes for Lasmar’s monograph as well) to a larger interested public, not only of Northwest Amazon specialists, but also students of Lowland South American ethnology.

The problem of translation has been a long-standing issue in the Northwest Amazon ethnology. The writers in Portuguese become, to some extent, the interpreters of the English-language work for the Brazilian public, and, in many cases, serving as the interlocutors for this large body of ethnography and ethnology. At the same time, the Portuguese-language literature also deserves to be received and read by the international public that may be unable to read it in its original. These are two sides of the same academic coin: the limitation of funding for translation.

Both ethnographies cover gaping ‘holes’ in the literature where previous ethnographies had more restricted objectives. Neither São Gabriel nor Jauareté had been ethnographically described adequately and, with the exception of one published doctoral thesis (de Oliveira, 1995), there were no extended discussions of what “civilization” or the Whites means for the Indians of these towns, and how their lives were transforming in function of the “civilizing process.” Both ethnographies were written at critical times of transition when the indigenous societies of SGC and Jauareté had become effectively organized into political associations, including the all-important FOIRN, though this is not the object of study of either book.

Both combine an appreciation of historical analysis with ethnography of daily life seeking to understand how critical native categories operate to shape interethnic relations and praxis. Yet, both books have very little to say about the period of recent history before the arrival of the ISA. For over 70 years, the Salesian missions were a dominant force over indigenous cultures of the Uaupés until the early 1980s. Not all of their impact was negative if we remember the important precedents of the cooperativist movement and indigenous associations (such as UCIRT) instigated by the Salesian Father Antonio Scolaro. Oxfam Brasil was important in some of the early land tenure claims before the anthropologist Dominique Buchillet (1990) prepared the first comprehensive proposal for the creation of a single, continuous indigenous reserve in the Upper Rio Negro. For many years, Dominique Buchillet (1986, 1989, 1990, 1995) was the principal ethnologist working on the Brazilian Uaupés and its tributaries, mainly among the Desana. For various reasons, she left the area, unfortunately, to work on entirely different projects. One other ethnologist and historian who for many years had studied the Salesian missions, similarly left the area, changing his dissertation topic even, due to unfortunate misunderstandings with other researchers.

In any event, neither of the two ethnographies could have been written had there not been a solid basis of previous historical research. Thus, the contours of indigenous history, like many other aspects of the social and political system were well-known from previous works, as was the native social system and its relation to cosmological processes. It is just not true to say therefore that, with these works, the ethnology of the Northwest Amazon has “entered into contemporaneity,” as stated in the preface to Lasmar’s book. Both ethnographies owe a great deal to the works of Chernela, Buchillet, de Oliveira and Wright, all of whom worked in the 1970s and 1980s (without the conveniences that exist today), and continue to produce important work. Lasmar and Andrello have enriched Northwest Amazon ethnology with new perspectives, but it could only

have been done on paths previously cleared. All scholarship builds on what went before, and it is ethical, and scholarly, to acknowledge this.

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