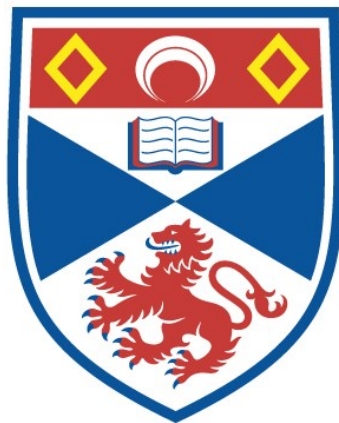


EMERGING PEOPLES : MARUBO MYTH-CHANTS

Guilherme Werlang da Fonseca Costa Couto

**A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD
at the
University of St Andrews**



2001

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Emerging Peoples

Marubo Myth-Chants

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To Tonton...

...and to Ruth and Maria Elisa Werlang da Fonseca Costa Couto, who would I be without you? To Miranda minha princesa, bolinho de carne, and to Christina Baum, what I could do I could not have done. To Chicca bella, lacrime d'oro, oasis and desert storm, and to Attilio and Giuliana Cesàro, Anna Lisa and Ruggi: tra la merda e la fame... è molto meglio stare da voi! Grazie a tutti per tutto.

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Trieste, June 2001.

Declarations

(i) I, **Guilherme Werlang da Fonseca Costa do Couto**, hereby certify that this thesis, which is approximately **140,000** words in length, has been written by me, that it is the record of work carried out by me and that it has not been submitted in any previous application for a higher degree.

date **7 June 2001** signature of candidate

(ii) I was admitted as a research student in **October 1995** and as a candidate for the degree of **PhD** in **October 1995**; the higher study for which this is a record was carried out in the University of St Andrews between **October 1995** and **June 1997**.

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(iii) I hereby certify that the candidate has fulfilled the conditions of the Resolution and Regulations appropriate for the degree of **PhD** in the University of St Andrews and that the candidate is qualified to submit this thesis in application for that degree.

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Abstract

This thesis explores the ontological grounds of the interrelations between music and myth among the Marubo, one of the several native peoples of the Pano linguistic family who live not far from the adventitious border between Brazil and Peru, in South Western Amazonia. The thesis lies within the disciplinary boundaries of social anthropology but, inasmuch as it focuses on myth and music, its theoretical and methodological limits overlap any discipline that may relate to these two themes. In brief, it portrays the Marubo as they express themselves and are themselves expressed in their *saiti* festivals and myth-chants. In their native language, *saiti* designates a specific festival where myths are performed in a specific musical and choreographic form, the form that establishes the ontological origins of these peoples and those of the world where they live.

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Foreword

“...myths are not entirely true unless they live in the proper ambience of their truth — religion — and substantially attached to the proper form of their existence — ritual action. Without the religious element and dissociated from the dramatic form in which it lives and exists, in its proper life and existence, myth is a discourse about ‘gods, demigods, devils, heroes, and those who live in Hades’ [cf. Plato] and, as such, becomes prey to allegorical exegesis, converted into the representative image of a cosmological, anthropological, or theological theory. But once myth is back to its origin, it becomes clear that mythology does not come out from any urge to explain the World, Humanity or Divinity: it is the pure expression of the encounter between humans and gods, in a world that, at each of these encounters, is the scenario wherein each encounter unfolds.”¹

This thesis is an ethnographic description of the *saiti* myth-chants of the Marubo peoples of South Western Amazonia. It lies within the disciplinary boundaries of social anthropology but, inasmuch as it focuses on myth and music, its theoretical and methodological limits overlap any discipline that may relate to these two themes.

The original aim of the project that culminates in this thesis has been to explore the ontological grounds of the interrelations between music and myth, history and cosmos in Amazonia. Such an enquiry found ample scope for development in the form of dissertation among the Marubo, one of the several native peoples of the Pano linguistic family who live not far from the adventitious border between Brazil and Peru. In brief, this thesis portrays the Marubo as they express themselves and are themselves expressed in their *saiti* festivals and myth-

¹ Sousa 1973: 118, my translation.

chants. In their native language, *saiti* designates a specific festival where myths are performed in a specific musical and choreographic form, the form that establishes the origins of these peoples and those of the world where they live.

“Marubo” is an exogenous ethnonym; but if it is a somewhat loose denomination for those to whom it applies in the context of contact, it also nominates, with some consistency, certain indigenous peoples whose self-assigned ethnonyms often end with a common root, *-nawa*. At present, the Marubo comprise an indigenous group of not much less than 1,000 individuals, settled in longhouse communities in the heart of large tracts of virgin forest. The denomination of “Marubo” is a nation-state construct dating back to the second half of the nineteenth century; it accounts for some of those native *-nawa* peoples whose historical references are sporadic and scarce. In their *saiti* myth-chants, these peoples do indeed emerge from the earth with several different ethnonyms ending with the suffix *-nawa*; but this is a word that in isolation means “foreigner” for them. This is one first indication that the Marubo constitute one of the most fascinating groups of the Pano family, which totals a little less than 40,000 speakers situated in the westernmost territories of the Amazonian Lowlands².

The relative representativeness of the Marubo peoples within the Pano context is understudied. Their ethnic-geographic setting, right at the centre of Pano territory, at the tributary waters of the Javari Valley, turns their situation into a strategic circumstance for fieldwork. The Marubo are an iconic amalgamation of several minor unknown or extinct populations within that whole area, a

² For wider-ranging details on the ethnographic bibliography of Pano-speaking peoples, see Erikson et al. 1994.

homogeneous cultural complex with variable constituent parts stretching from the foothills of the Peruvian *montaña*, through the Ucayali Valley, toward the Brazilian *várzea* plains of the Javari and the Juruá Valleys and beyond. Panoans constitute one of the most ethnically fragmented and geographically continuous families in Amazonia, which makes the ethnic delimitation and the definition of ethnicity itself a very difficult task³.

Still another aspect calls the ethnographer's attention. Pano music is one of the least known ethnographic areas in the musicology of the South American Lowlands. Music has been long neglected as a topic of anthropological research, and Amerindian studies are no exception. The growing number of musical monographs does not dissipate this impression: we suspect, and shall demonstrate in due course, that the marginalisation of music within the discipline is due to an epistemological bias on the part of ethnographers. Such quantitative and qualitative neglect should be enough to justify a comparative project on the music of Pano peoples. Their particular geographical condition just enhances their musical attractiveness, in the transition between the Amazonian rainforest and the Andean mountains: Pano peoples would present a potential pivotal case in a wide-range ethnographic panorama of music in South America.

Our thesis shall give weight to this hypothesis: the Marubo add mythical layers to Pano history in the formal intricacies of their *saiti* music, which appears to encapsulate the lives of these self-denominated *-nawa* peoples, emblems of pivotal populations, a societal icon of their cultural area. The intense interaction

³ Cf. Townsley 1988 and Erikson 1993 and 1996 on the theme.

that Panoans have maintained through history with other Amazonian linguistic families, such as the Arawak and the Tupi, should have left its mark in their musics. A comparative endeavour would benefit from musicological work done among these other two families, e.g. among the Wayāpí, Kayabí, Kamayurá (Tupi), and among the Wauja, Kulina, Wakuénai, Amuesha (Arawak), not to mention research on other native musics from North Western and Central Brazil, as among the Ye'pâ-masa (Tukano), the Kalapalo (Carib), the Shavante and Suyá (Gê), and the Bororo (Macro-Gê). A comparative musicology of Pano peoples could well lead to the formulation of a continuum from lowlands toward highlands, enabling a wider musical horizon for indigenous Amazonia⁴.

However, the approach taken in this thesis concerns less the comparison among the musics of Pano-speakers or Amazonian peoples at large than the theoretical problem that such a comparison would entail: commensurability. How do we reconcile the mysterious history of a given ethnic identity — at once unitary and multiple, self-contained and other-oriented, in our case-study — with the musical-mythical account of its origins? Now the problem that this research proposal poses for itself is above all about methods: what are the epistemological premises upon which a mythical-musical praxis can relate to its ethnographic context? What is the epistemological stance that the relation drawn between a

⁴ To my knowledge, Pano music has not been studied at all, excepting for Lucas' work among the Shipibo. I could not get hold of his doctoral thesis (Lucas 1970), but reviewers do not provide an encouraging account: according to Erikson et al. (1994), he does not deal with first-hand musical data and makes "funny comments on the wording, which are classified as 'old', 'very old' and 'very very old'". Otherwise, the aforementioned ethnography of Amazonian musics comprises the respective works of Beudet 1997 and Fucks 1989 (Wayāpí), Travassos 1984 (Kayabí), Menezes Bastos 1999a [1978] and 1989 (Kamayurá), Mello 1999 (Wauja), Silva 1997 (Kulina), Hill 1993 (Wakuénai), Smith 1977 (Amuesha), Piedade 1997 (Ye'pâ-masa), Basso 1985 (Kalapalo), Aytai 1985 (Shavante),

historical-mythical account and its ritual-musical enactment requires? In sum, what are the epistemological parameters that the research on myth-music calls into question? In fact, more than a prerequisite to any comparative study, these questions seem to condition any enquiry into either the myth or the music of the Marubo.

This thesis offers a few negative answers to these questions, within its own limited horizon. Among the Marubo, no historical ethnography is possible without a firm grounding in the native synthesis of music and myth, and no mythological analysis is sustainable without regard to indigenous music. Neither are Marubo myths reducible to an inventory of musical practices — scales, instruments, or genres —, nor are those myths mere messages that the social-communicative medium of music transmits. Thus, Marubo music does not “fit into” society in the fulfilment a semiotic function; music is not just a formal feature of a mythical content, just as myth is not a mere residual repository of social history.

The positive outcome of this thesis, if tentative, is that *saiti* myth-chants are the ritualisation of native mythology in the form of a musical poetics, and the poetical form of such music is the mythical matrix of native history. Still our conclusions concern research methods rather than theoretical hypotheses. The social grounds of our historical-ethnographic perspective on music is the *a priori* and all-inclusive ontological synthesis which natives present, the mythical-musical expression of a cosmological encounter between humanity and divinity rather than an *a posteriori* explanation of native history and ethnicity, a mythical matrix rather

Seeger 1980, 1986 and 1987 (Suyá), and Canzio 1992 (Bororo).

than an epistemological tool which an exclusive analysis, be it musicological or mythological, should verify.

This thesis is therefore epistemologically based on the native theory and practice of the *saiti*. Our main objective is to express in a monograph the relationship between these mythical-musical embodiments of the cosmos and the native knowledge that at once grounds in and leads to the very worldview that these myth-chants express. Above all, this enquiry aims at conferring the proper importance to music in its “total” or “synthetic” context, avoiding the analytical separation between musical semantics and social meaning. The sheer significance of the word *saiti* gives us every reason not to believe in the validity and efficacy of such a compartmentation. The means to overcome this “semantic gap”, which disciplinary boundaries tend to enforce and the extant ethnography marks too often — and which is but an epistemological fallacy that western academia espouses at large — must be coterminous with the study of an indigenous ontology of which the myth-chants are an expression and a reification at once. We find, therefore, the necessity to research the place of music within a worldview, or rather the form whereby music reifies and expresses such a worldview. We begin with the hypothesis that both myth and music, in Amazonia in general and among the Marubo in particular, have this ontological importance. Epistemological access to such an indigenous worldview is therefore dependent on the achievement of the knowledge that pertains to mythical-musical expression. But how exactly?

A research methodology compatible with such epistemological needs is not an obvious given available to students of music in western conservatories. The justification for that hypothetical mythical-musical ontology in Amazonia is found

in academic ethnographies rather than in conservatory classes. In the west, musical knowledge is understood as transcendental to the intellect, but at the same time epistemologically inferior; music is thought, or “felt” to be immanent in sense-perception. This is to say that western scientific epistemology is anti-musical: it negates knowledge in music and of it. Western epistemology underrates the amenability of music as an object of science and underrates the musician, qua musician, as a knowing subject. Anthropological studies in Amazonia suggest us the working hypothesis that indigenous music would embody and constitute a native ontology: such a musicality would be the embodiment of a worldview. Still the social-anthropological, western-scientific regard upon the “ethnographic other” emphasises the “societal” character of native music and falls short of the “musical” character of indigenous society. Now although it has a conservatory background, this research is an academic one; but its inspiration has always been an ethnography-supported musical-ontological intuition. Still the disciplinary dichotomy that diverges from the common-ground which, in order to maintain some coherence between musical intuitions and research studies, I had to find between musicology and anthropology, entails a paradox at both an epistemological and an institutional level. To overcome the institutional-epistemological paradox that such “conservatory” studies in academia entail, one has to stick to the ontological common-ground that pervades both music and society, and take it seriously.

This research project became thus a matter of writing anthropology as a commentary to music, rather than listening to music as a social commentary. Its widest scope has been to give a contribution to both musicology and social

anthropology, in the form of a methodology that goes beyond the western bias which takes away from the sense-perceptible musical sound its verbal intelligibility. Even if Amazonian ethnography attests that indigenous ontology grants epistemological density to music, there will remain the methodological question of where and how to research into such musical semantics in an epistemologically rarefying academic context.

I came across this unavoidable difficulty at some point in my thesis writing. After the extensive editing of field notes, and on the way through a method of study that would be epistemologically consistent with a comprehensive mythical-musical account, the research fell in a crossroads. At the outset, the road that led toward the final dissertation forked into two directions. Would it be best to illustrate some of the instances of myth-chants in the course of the thesis, or should the focus of analysis be on one single *saiti*, attempting to synthesise therein the issues dealt with elsewhere?

The first choice seemed to be the safest, for space exiguity could always be an excuse to avert in-depth studies. It must be admitted: profundity is something one does not feel comfortable with after one-year fieldwork. Still this thesis proposal was itself a strong statement against the disciplinary dilemma that music research presents within the confines of a western-institutional epistemology. Epistemological scruples aside, the mythical-musical material could not be a mere illustration of the exegesis; the former had to be the basis of the latter, and some soundness of method and precision of scope had to compensate for any inevitable incompleteness of data and occasional theoretical inconsistency. That was the one major issue of the research: how to deal with music in the ethnographic context —

both in the field and in academia, both in data collection and in the compilation of notes in thesis form. The path the research should take appeared here and there, in bits and pieces scattered through the bibliography: the key issue of musicological enquiry is ontology, and the ontological grounds of indigenous epistemology are widely diverse from the grounds upon which an epistemological visual-verbal bias has been socio-historically constructed in the west. The academic ethnography suggested that research on music should be diverted toward the musical conservatory; but both western academia and conservatory left the methodological issue unsolved. Our own solution does not fit into this foreword and shall find scope along this dissertation. Now we just show the route of our trajectory.

The thesis starts with a wide historical and geographic mapping of the land where the peoples among whom we find the *saiti* myth-chants live. This initial exposition is divided into the four initial chapters. The first chapter (past and present) provides an overview of the Pano-speaking mosaic, in which the Marubo peoples are a central piece, revolving around central thematic axes that account for unity and multiplicity in the area: ethnonyms and ethnicity vis-à-vis some local ethnography and historiography. The second chapter (stories and histories) relies on some archival data and general features of the historical records of contact between natives and nationals. The third chapter (some sketches) presents the unofficial counterpart of such histories, assembling indigenous stories that enforce a general historical trait: the access to and isolation of the area is a direct function of the native initiative and necessity of contact with the outside, with locals, nation-state and mission. The fourth chapter (bitter and wild) analyses how natives formulate their own historicity through a cryptic-synthetic formula that entitles one

of the myth-chants, the *saiti* on which this study shall concentrate its focus: the Marubo are *mokanawa*, bitter-peoples, and their human constitution and that of their world is *Mokanawa Wenia*, their emergence.

The following four chapters, still in the first part of the thesis, are a gradual exposition of the mythical-musical scenario of *saiti* performance. Chapter five (intoned language) categorises Marubo vocal genres, their formalised styles of word intonation. This is complemented in chapter six (shamans and healers) by a description of some shamanic categories that have a direct relation with some chant forms, which are presented here in a more detailed account. The seventh chapter (space and time) sets the spatial scene where the Marubo live, where the *saiti* festivals are held and where the homonymous myth-chants are performed. Finally, chapter eight (myth and music) summarises some essential features of the *saiti* myth-chants, highlighting the aspect that shall establish the link between myth-music and ontology: the temporality of the ritual-performative form.

Another set of four chapters concludes this first part. These initial twelve chapters that comprise it are a linguistic-conceptual framework for the mytho-musicological study to be carried out next; the four chapters that conclude it just expand on this native-categorical repertoire, pointing at the true core of the thesis. Even though these chapters might not constitute its most original section, they are a methodological bond, the cosmological and psychophysiological hinge that shall allow for the construal of a parallel between Marubo history and eschatology, reinforcing the temporal link between their myth-music and their ontology. This connection starts to build up in chapter nine (persons and peoples) with the native distinctions between “person” and “people”, “human being” and “human nature”,

“individual” and “collectivity”, western glosses that have no univocal correspondence with the native terms *yora* and *nawa*. The following chapter, number ten, comprises an account of the soul-anatomic constituents of human bodies and their being and becoming in death and disease, a temporal transformation that myth-music reifies. Chapter eleven extends these native theories to the realm of the ontological relations between human bodies and the cosmological entities that humans associate with and transform into along their lives, always with reference to the mythical-musical reification of the psychophysiological structure of humanity. The twelfth chapter (more dualities) concludes this first part, the most extensive of the whole dissertation: its final aim, as this conclusion summarises after all, is to draw all those cosmological and psychophysiological theorisations together and delineate their ontological meaning with a comparison between their respective native-categorical, linguistic-conceptual dualities and some pairs of concepts that are quite familiar to our western metaphysics.

The second part of the thesis is a response to our previous exhortation toward an alternative method that does not divest music from its musicality, while reconciling it with its social reality. The narrower scope of this second part is an attempt to compensate for the generality of the first twelve chapters: it is an exegetical description of one single myth-chant, *Mokanawa Wenia*, “the emergence of wild-bitter peoples”. All prior allusions to other *saiti* but *Mokanawa Wenia* are cursory ones, mere references that raise the issues touched upon in the exegesis of this myth-chant, the most intense focus of the dissertation. Were the thesis to account for all *saiti* recordings, or samples of each, or even just a few of

the translations and transcriptions carried out in the field, its documentary side should be quite satisfactory. Nevertheless, the thesis would not have been faithful to the original and ever-present, humble and still ambitious obsession of this research proposal: a musicological approach to anthropology, a musical methodology to be counterpoised against the strong “socio-centred” bias of most western studies on music⁵.

This second part starts with three initial chapters that tend to correspond to the threefold subdivision that the first one presents above. This initial set of chapters first comprises the *dramatis personae* of the events that surround the performance of one particular *saiti*; second, the mythical-musical study of its structures; and third, the conceptual references it brings about with respect to the entire thesis. Chapter thirteen (singers and listeners) is a contextual description of that which will be under exegesis in the subsequent chapters: here we set the performative scene once again, but now with a condensation of its historical aspects in biographic narratives that relate the performers’ lives to their live performance of the myth-chant, relating their personal stories to the histories that pervade their mythical-musical account. Next, chapter fourteen (sound structures) studies a score transcription of *Mokanawa Wenia*; the description here is already exegetical and methodologically paradigmatic, defining the *saiti* musical structure as an actual reification of the temporal tenor of Marubo ontology, an ontological framework that draws from the linguistic categories outlined in the first part. In the following fifteenth chapter (emerging words), some of these native categories are

⁵ Contrast with the “musical anthropology” that Seeger 1987 proposes, whereby music is the object of a socio-anthropological epistemology, and therefore does not sound too different

subject to further linguistic speculations and conceptual comparisons; here we forget for a while the particularities of *saiti* form and prepare a general introduction to the near conclusion of this brief exegesis.

The final three chapters conclude this second part with a statistic summary of the recurrent mythical lines that *Mokanawa Wenia* presents in musical form. These chapters go again beyond a mere description: first, through a systematisation of all the non-human principles which the emerging humans confront in the course of the myth-chant; second, through an exegesis on the phrasing of this confrontation in its poetical formulae; and third, in a study of the interrelation between such a verbal poetics and its musical structure. Chapter sixteen (mutual domestication), as the title says, defines the relationships that the mythical-musical humanity develops with non-humanity as one of original “mutual domestication”: human beings become humans in their intercourse with animals and plants and their respective substances and elements, in movements that allow for the humanisation of alchemic-chthonic creation toward environmental occupation. The seventeenth chapter (poetical formulae) will contextualise such a systematic “mutual domestication” within the poetical structures of the myth-chant, in the verbal formulae that allow for an exegesis of these original movements between human earth-emergence and the world of humanisation. The final eighteenth chapter (circles and lines) will bring this second part to a close with the most comprehensive and extensive task that the whole thesis proposes: to highlight the sonic form that associate those recurrent mythical lines, qua visual representations, with their temporal-structural form, the true musical poetics of the myth-chant. Our

than it does from the perspective of an “anthropology of music”.

concern in the conclusion to this brief exegesis is even wider than the linguistic interpretation of *saiti*; here the relation between the mythical words and its musical structures is at stake.

Likewise, the third and last part of the dissertation is more than a conclusion of a mythical-musical study: it is a methodological statement. It lists a series of descriptive propositions that result from our methods, details their theoretical implications, and proposes some interpretative corollaries of our exegetical description of the *saiti*. Our research methods are both a retrospective abstract of this thesis and a prospective agenda for future work, a response to the ontological premises that natives sing in mythical-musical form and a reaffirmation of the assumptions that base our approach. Much as the formal expression of these premises lie in the words and notes of native myth-music, we sum up our consequent method in terms and equations that are both descriptive generalities and prescriptive guidelines. Here the allusions to particular myth-chants become otherwise illustrative of this general proposal, the positive outcome of an initial refusal against the epistemological shortcomings of music studies in western academia. Much like a structuralist analysis, but still beyond its traditional meanings, the political significance of our methodological synthesis lies in a constructive critique that envisages a sensible rationale in that which our tradition regards as irrational impressionism.

I will indulge in speculation: all the diversions presented in this dissertation will require patience from the reader. This is a high-altitude flight with unsafe wings but, if the reader survives through these unwieldy writings, I shall not lose sight of native ground in return. By keeping close track to the ethnography of *saiti*,

I shall spare you from the first person singular; it will be impossible to avoid ourselves when personal matters are concerned, though.

I. The Marubo

I.1 past and present

In its westernmost limits, the right bank of the Amazon basin is crossed by the mouths of the parallel valleys of three of its major tributaries: from left to right, the Ucayali, the Javari and the Juruá Rivers. The Javari River, known in its upper course as Jaquirana, is central in that which is one of the largest wildlife territories in Amazonia. It marks a long stretch of the contemporary borders between Peru and Brazil, two of the largest Amazonian nation-states.

The Ucayali, the Javari and the Juruá Rivers have been three of the major waterways along which the frontiers of contact between western and native peoples have been moving in the Amazonian Southwest. As is well known, this has not been a peaceful process. Waves of rebellions followed one another throughout colonial history along the Ucayali River. The territory of the Juruá became increasingly a participant of this history when rubber-tappers moved upstream some hundred years ago, dissolving into, disturbing, or destroying the indigenous peoples who were formerly independent from and formally opposed to the intrusion of the Peruvian and Brazilian nation-states. The Javari, however, is barely mentioned by the authors of the corresponding area section in the *Handbook of South American Indians*, the standard historical reference for the local

ethnography. Here the violent outcome of interethnic contact during colonial history in large part accounts for the lack of extensive ethnographic testimonies⁶.

Between the Ucayali and the Juruá basins, the middle tracts of the Javari River runs just a few days walk from the headwaters of the Curuçá and Ituí Rivers, two of its major low-course tributaries. Most waterways in the Javari basin, be they primary or secondary, run more or less in parallel from the Southwest to the Northeast, while the sources of its right-bank tributaries converge not too far from the Juruá River. In the official history of the local nation-states, this has been no-man's land: little-known peoples lived and still live round about these waters. There, the so-called Marubo had neither been missionised nor had any known settlers, traders, or explorers penetrated their territory up until the second half of the nineteenth century, when the Juruá was taken over by colonisers and the more frequent expeditions up the Javari took on a significant economic purpose. Instead of the traditional tropical drugs — such as sarsaparilla — that used to motivate no more than local adventurers against the dangers of the uncharted peoples who dwelt in the headwater regions, a new wild vegetable gold brought then the Parisian fin-de-siècle and its lustful riches to Amazonia, luring vast contingents of migrants to the remotest corners of the jungle. This newfound wealth was the renowned latex from the fallen trunk of the *caucho* tree (*Castilloa ullei*) and the even more precious, better-quality *seringa* latex, a perennial tree-sap made to exude regularly from superficial cuts on the bark of the arboreal genus *Hevea*.

Hitherto, then and some time thereafter, the Marubo peoples were generally

⁶ In the Ucayali River alone, Steward & Métraux (1948: 513) mention generalised aboriginal resistance to intruders in 1686, 1695, 1704, 1742, 1767... and “as late as 1921”.

taken by westerners as neither more nor less than *índios bravos*, “wild ones”, acknowledged to be akin to the so-called Mayoruna, Indians who peopled both the upper and lower reaches of the Javari River. Native peoples became generalised under generic western denominations. As time went by, those Javarian peoples who eventually and gradually met Peruvians or Brazilians in headwater streams, farther away from neo-national settlements, were included under the generic denomination of “Marubo”. Their assigned name and assumed traits were then generalised further back to their non-contacted neighbours, regardless of their cultural proximity to or distance from these neighbouring cultures. “Marubo” is no self-denomination. It was, until not long ago, a name for all known and unknown hinterland groups of peoples in and around the tributaries of the Javari.

The etymology of this name is not of much help in tracing its origins: while *-bo* is a suffix that indicates plurality, *maru* has no known significance for the present-day Marubo. In related languages, however, this term is constantly associated with the asocial other — very distant, thus, from a self-designation. Among the Matis for example — a Mayoruna sub-group that neighbours those who are called Marubo today —, the word *maru* means “bald” and constitutes the name of a mythical character who, ludicrously enough, has no anus. Among the peoples who speak languages similar to those of the so-called Marubo and Mayoruna — languages known as “Pano” —, the hairless, unadorned *maru* spirits and its collective form *marubo* are associated with warfare and, by and large, with

enmity⁷.

The past and sparse accounts of colonisers, travellers and missionaries might indeed have led to intuitions that these populations generically named as “Marubo” and “Mayoruna” were related. Indeed, the languages of those who are known today as such are branches of one and the same linguistic trunk: they are Panoans, and these are peoples whose ethnonyms tend, with some consistency, to end with the suffixes *-nawa* and *-bo*. Pano languages constitute a minor linguistic family in the Amerindian Lowlands, if considered in relation to the more widely known Tupi, Gê, Arawakan and Carib trunks. Among the Panoans, hinterland populations such as those still known as “Mayoruna” and “Marubo” were once thought to be a transitional joint, the remains of a speculative original continuum. They were, for instance, the lost link counteracting an “Arawakan split” that Julian Steward, as essayed in his *Handbook of South American Indians*, believed to have caused Southern and Northern Pano-speaking branches to diverge from a common “proto-trunk”.

If historical evidence is still lacking, contemporary linguistic data provides greater accuracy to the ethnic-demographic picture of the Pano family, together with some recent scientific scrutiny on the cultures of inter-riverine societies. In addition to missionary material, researchers were sent to Marubo land in the mid-1970s on an assignment for the Brazilian Government, through the offices of the

⁷ Philippe Erikson, personal communication. More specifically, the author points out:

“De là à postuler une association étroite entre les notions d’ennemis, de *maru*, d’invisibilité et d’absence d’ornements, il n’y a donc qu’un pas qui sera franchi avec d’autant moins de réticence qu’une thématique similaire se rencontre chez d’autres Pano.” (1996: 58)

national agency for indigenous affairs, FUNAI (an acronym for *Fundação Nacional do Índio*). A couple of anthropologists, Julio Cezar Melatti and Delvair Montagner Melatti, produced several reports and articles then, leading to an unusually extensive ethnographic corpus on these hinterland Panoans. Later, the ethnography of those purportedly “transitional” peoples and comparative studies among Panoans at large received the addition of Philippe Erikson’s important work on the Matis; but still in his own words, Pano peoples remain as “the most enigmatic of native Amazonians”⁸.

Let us keep in mind, meanwhile, that in the past Pano peoples dwelling within the Ucayali, Javari and Juruá basins and surrounding areas have understandably been subjected to classificatory confusion in the written sources, and that those who were closer to the smaller tributaries of these three major waterways fell into a very wide categorisation. “Marubo” is one of these wide-ranging names.

One of the first written accounts of “Marubo” as an ethnonym appears in 1862 in the writings of Antonio Raimondi. There the name is consistently associated with other blanket categories such as “Mayoruna”. From the Peruvian town of Iquitos, on the Upper Amazon banks of the Marañón River, the savant Raimondi could hardly have had a very precise idea about indigenous self-denominations. From an Iquitos perspective, where over a hundred years later one

⁸ Cf. Erikson 1996: 17. Romanoff 1984 studies the Matsés, another Mayoruna-related, hinterland Pano group. See Erikson 1992 for more data on demography and for a “Pano ethno-history”, with a specific emphasis on Mayoruna-related Panoans in Erikson 1994 and 1996. For Marubo ethnography, see Montagner Melatti & Melatti 1975a and 1975b, Melatti 1977, 1985a, 1985b, 1986 and Montagner Melatti 1985. See still Melatti, ed. 1981 for an overview on the indigenous peoples of the Javari Valley, most of them inter-riverine Pano-

can find bronze statues labelled “Marubo” and “Mayoruna” on public sidewalks, accurate naming could not be the concern. Nonetheless there seemed to be already in the nineteenth century more than an intuition about the relation between those names: an even earlier explorer, the North American navy officer William Herndon, attests in 1853 the same classificatory relationship between “Marubo” and “Mayoruna”. In fact there was some good reason why those two blanket denominations and the peoples whom they denominated should be associated: this association meant that both were names that, regardless of their sources, referred to unfamiliar “others”, those that inhabited upriver, peoples who lived farther away from zones of wider interethnic contact⁹.

In sum, being in the centre of the whole area comprised by the immense fluvial complex of those three major Upper Amazon right-bank tributaries, the Javari Valley has been on the margins of official western history for too long. Still such marginality itself will not explain the mystery surrounding local indigenous populations, the inter-riverine ones in particular. The obscure sources of the past, the still scanty present ethnography, and the sparse missionary bibliography on the Pano-speaking peoples in the region of the Ucayali, Javari and Juruá basins and their surrounds offer us an intriguing riddle. The majority of their denominations have in common an onomastic composition constituted of “non-human” substances

speakers.

⁹ In 1948 Steward & Métraux quote an ethnonymic profusion from Raimondi’s *Apuntes sobre la provincia litoral de Loreto*:

“The village of Maucallacta, also on the Amazon, was once occupied by 100 Marubo [Maroba], a Mayoruna [Maxuruna, Majuruna, Mayiruna, Maxirona, Mayuzuna] subdivision.” (1948: 552)

Erikson (1996: 57) in turn quotes in turn Herndon’s *Explorations of the Valley of the Amazon*, which situates the Marubo “much upriver in the Javari”.

or attributes affixed to a “human” or “plural” morpheme: Pano ethnonyms follow respectively the *x-nawa* or *x-bo* formula, i.e. “people of so-and-so” or simply the “so-and-sos”. Further, these names of animals, plants, or other things ending with *-bo* or *-nawa*, pluralising and humanising suffixes, are mutually assigned both to external ethnic groups and to the several kin sections that are internal to those Pano-speaking *-nawa* and *-bo* peoples.

In use, this entails a process of never-ending naming, the classificatory urgency of a particular kinship form and an unbounded ethnicity, and peculiar conceptualisations of social exteriority and interiority. Besides their similar-sounding names, these seem to be the typical traits of the indigenous peoples affiliated to the Pano linguistic family. The rationale of these traits among the Marubo we will see in the course of the next chapters. For the moment, they mean that not only has “Marubo” been a generic denomination for those little-known native populations who were thought to share some sort of common ground in the past, but this common ground is also cracked in pieces. While both their linguistic commonality and their *-nawa* and *-bo* denominations identify them with the Panoans of the Amazonian Southwest, their onomastic self-identification is fragmentary. The contradiction between their unitary language and their multiple ethnonyms is an intra-cultural and inter-social icon of these mysterious peoples, a complex ethnic kaleidoscope that we-others know simply as “Marubo”¹⁰.

¹⁰ The qualification “kaleidoscopic” abounds in Townsley 1988, there with reference to the Yaminawa and other neighbouring Pano-speakers that the author labels generically “Purus Panoans”, after the linguistic classification of d’Ans 1973. This implies the historical hypothesis that these peoples, who now have different denominations and speak distinguishable dialects, once diverged from an original common-ground between the Juruá and the Purus Rivers. Here instead, the language is one and the same for peoples who also

Thus, if “Marubo” is apparently a foreign ethnonym, an exogenous denomination, its eventual misuse is not only a matter of a lack of precise information. The hinterland natives of Eastern Peru and Western Brazil, within the transition between Andes and Amazonia, have not helped much toward the achievement of a clear-cut ethnographic labelling. Both the indigenous and western classifications have been confusing. Better said, confusion reigned regardless of the classifying perspective, both in the accounts of early Spanish conquistadors, and in those of the competing Franciscan, Jesuit, Carmelite and secular missionaries; both among their Portuguese enslaving rivals (ancestors of local Brazilians, speakers of *língua geral*), and still among the late Quechua-speaking settlers (a Peruvian *lingua franca*). For all sorts of newcomers, Pano ethnonyms tended to be transformations of a native onomastics that already operated through transformational viewpoints of self and other. This means that the ethnic grouping through ethnonyms is determined from the outside point-of-view, outsiders in relation to newcomers and natives alike, in written accounts and word-of-mouth, in history and myth. And this seems to be the case among Panoans at large, but we should reserve judgements on generalities. As far as the Marubo

now deserve the qualification “kaleidoscopic”, but beyond historical contingencies. The Marubo language, self-nominated as *yorañ vana*, has been professionally described in Costa 1992, after preliminary missionary work (Boutle 1964 and Kennel Jr. 1976). The spelling of indigenous words employed in this thesis is identical to the one in use today in bilingual missionary schools (cf. MNTB 1996), except for the case of vowel nasalisations. Missionaries favour the use of tildes, whenever the sound intended would be the equivalent to the vowel followed by “ng”, in English; and since the use of tildes may be difficult in word processing, all significant nasalisations are noted here with a *-ñ* following the nasal vowel, instead of the tilde on the top. Nasalisations are quite usual, but idiosyncratic and apparently dialectal among the Marubo, at least for untrained ears. This means that missionaries and literate native-speakers adopt tildes profusely, but since such use is not always consistent, our spelling does not indicate all of them: we notate nasalisations just when they seem to have semantic relevance. For the sake of linguistic consistency, if not of the ethnographic terminology, the same spelling is used here for other Pano ethnonyms, even when they do not coincide with those of the Marubo kinship sections.

are concerned, ethnonymic inaccuracy is understandable from two different out-centred angles. For onomastic fragmentation counteracted the generalised linguistic homogeneity of both indigenous and incoming peoples: while the subdivision of the native inside accounted for its ethnic multiplicity, all exogenous outsiders, be they White or Panoan alike, constituted the homogenous whole counteracting such a fragmented ethnicity¹¹.

Before going on to explain such paradoxical statements in detail, this and the next few chapters will present some historical recapitulation. The Marubo, like the Mayoruna, are here and there situated among the native populations along the present Brazilian-Peruvian border who, in the past, had maintained occasional contact without permanent intercourse with westerners until the latex-boom of about one hundred years ago. Before that, and for a variable number of decades thereafter, the enveloping modern states have faced the fierce resistance of this “wild” *índio bravo* who, aside from their generic ethnonyms, were vaguely known with reference to their threatening weapons, as “club-wielders” or “archers”, *caceteiros* or *flecheiros*, for instance. For hundreds of years and up to this date, these remote peoples filled a conceptual-geographic gap that entitled them to such vague geo-conceptualisations as “Marubo”. These names fit in well, if contradictorily, with the unity behind their multifaceted ethnicity; in consequence,

¹¹ If the term “Mayoruna” is thought of as of Quechua extraction, at least since the 18th century (meaning “people of the river”, cf. Erikson 1996: 54), Steward & Métraux (1948: 512-513) attest that such was the *lingua franca* among the Spanish, the equivalent to the Tupi-related *língua geral* of the Portuguese. All that exogenous homogeneity produces indigenous multiplicity as it meets that which Erikson phrases more generically as “a scheme of ultimately well-defined limits”:

“...l’ontologie des Pano reflète leur fractionnement et contribue sans doute... à l’instaurer. Le contact avec l’Occident n’a pu qu’amplifier le phénomène...” (1996: 47)

“Marubo” is designated in plural in this thesis. In short, the Marubo peoples and other unknown groups, marginal to the borders of neo-national settlements, are the heirs of native populations isolated from and named after western generic denominations, which betray at one time both their ethnonymic multiplicity and their ethnic homogeneity¹².

Of course our confusion in the face of what could be called redundantly as “ethno-ethnic” classification is nothing but the reflection of a surface appearance, more a mere mirror of our ignorance than any apparent classificatory failure of theirs. Although ambiguous and circumstantial, their “ethno-ethnonyms” follow native notions of ethnicity and onomastics, and both are in turn subjected to an indigenous ontology, one that is not amenable to our familiar syllogisms. It is our task to decipher such unfamiliarity, something that in fact requires much more strength than our own forces can cope with. The magnitude of such a task is as deep as its historical depth, stemming back from both our own western conceptualisations of ethnicity, and our own way of dealing with names, and with words in general, both in onomastics and linguistically.

Our point is that neither are the *-nawa* and *-bo* suffixes members of a subject / predicate relationship manifested in ethnonyms, nor are these ethnonyms akin to taxonomies of clan-totemic classes, despite their appearance of so being. The explication here proposed shall require us to probe the native conceptualisations related to ethnicity (such as *nawa*), the corresponding native notion of plurality (expressed as *bo*), and the substances and attributes affixed to the *-nawa* and *-bo*

¹² Erikson 1993 and 1996 presents wider generalisations on this, which is taken to be a typical Pano paradox.

suffixes in the composition of ethnonyms. This shall mean, in this thesis, a historical in-depth enquiry into the mythical-musical context and form in which such words are uttered. One of the ultimate aims of the project of which this thesis is part is to relate native words, their context and form, to the western meaning of “words”, “context” and “form”. Already from the start, we can ascertain that at least at this stage we shall not be strong enough to break away from the fetters of western academics. We lack the appropriate means of language to do what has been an enormous endeavour even for thinkers of incomparable stature¹³.

The measure of the task that the language of the Marubo peoples and other Pano-speakers, those who are linguistically related to them, impose on our thought is exactly commensurate to the confusion that their intra- and inter-cultural names have afforded the ethnography through history. Pano ethnonyms cannot be regarded as a classificatory grid through which groups of people are reduced to mutually exclusive ethnic, kinship or linguistic categories. Instead, the nominative suffixes *-nawa* and *-bo* are the linguistic operators of a native out-centred logic that entails an ethnonymic proliferation.

With regard to the logic of “ethno-ethnicity” here at stake, any preconceptions of what “ethnic” means will necessarily be prejudicial; therefore, “ethnonyms” are not quite the best translation to *-nawa* names. The Marubo logic of nomination operates in accordance with the diametrically opposed meanings of

¹³ See Heidegger 1992 [1982] on a critique to western logic, for example:

“...erroneous ideas, reigning supreme in linguistics even today, originate in the circumstance that the first reflection on language, Greek grammar, was developed under the guiding line of ‘logic’, i.e., the theory of declarative assertions, propositional theory. Accordingly, propositions are composed out of words, and the latter denote ‘concepts’. These indicate what is represented ‘in general’ in the word.”

the word *nawa* as found in Pano languages. This word serves, in fact, as a prime classificatory operator of humanity — but not of humanity par excellence: the meaning of *nawa* is essentially plural. The lexical meaning of *nawa* as an isolated word is in contrast to the syntactical one, to that of *-nawa* as attached affix; that is, the gloss “foreigner” in the first case contrasts with the second, syntactical sense, when the word stands for a matrilineal section, a “kin group” and / or a “people”. At least for the Marubo, *nawa* gains yet new significance in the mythical-musical context, in the chanted myths, as “large” or “prototypical” and, last, *-nawa* can be part of a proper personal name among these peoples (e.g. *Keniñnawa*), in which case the word may be glossed as “person” (in this example a “*keniñ* man”, a “bearded” one). In further chapters, our focus will be on the relations between those meanings, the semantic layers afforded by this single word. As well as epitomising a model of socialisation among Panoans, one that entails a specific social dialectics governing ethnicity, the understanding of *nawa* shall afford us insight into Marubo notions of personhood and humanity itself¹⁴.

Among the Marubo — and, if we are to rely on the extant ethnography, among other Panoans as well — both *-nawa* names and the alternatively suffixed *-bo* ones are not to be understood as universal categories, substantive nouns that gain attributive specificity, adjective function when “inhuman” prefixes are attached to them. *Nawa* is instead a functional substantiation of exteriority, a

(1992 [1982]: 21)

¹⁴ Even if reduced to the realm of its narrower “societal meaning”, the semantics of *nawa* is of course a favourite theme in wider comparative Pano studies, and not less so in Erikson 1996, where it is regarded as a marker of the “assimilation of the exterior” (1996: 78), whereby “...we are another... and the other is in us... [as much as] a good deal of our neighbours is...” (1996:72).

contextual one, which contradicts the exclusivity of attributes of humanity to the social interior and simultaneously gives rise to contradictory and inclusive classifications among human societies. Such classifications correspond to the alternate conflicting identities, alternating in accordance to which kinds of humanity the *-nawa* name is referring — to an outsider or an insider —, while extra-human things or beings are made prototypically human when qualified as such in myth-chants. If a *nawa* thing is meant as “originally large and exterior” in myth, the historical contextualisation of persons or peoples qualified as such makes them also to stand along the alterity and identity divide — to mean, contextually, either foreigner or kith and kin.

We mean to say that such human substantiation in the form of ethnonyms and personal names, the interiorisation of the exterior, is carried out, contradictorily enough, by means of the qualification of an “inhuman” thing as *nawa*. The combinatory means for ethnonyms to vary in the process of defining human identity vis-à-vis the social interior — defined as that of ours and that of theirs, that of Marubo, Panoan, or White — is the articulation of the “non-human” qualifier with the “*nawa*-exteriority”. The contrast among humans that these names create — the one based on the isolated meaning of *nawa* and on the prefixed substantial attributions affixed to the *-nawa* suffix, based on a “extra-human” diversity vis-à-vis the general “human” unity —, contradictorily enough, does not negate their humanity. It is as if *nawa*-foreignness cancelled non-humanity. This is because, among the Marubo, the everyday meaning of *nawa*, “foreign person”, is but a hypostasis of an all-pervading, on-going analogy between outsider and affine, the exogenous humans which in fact define Marubo

humanity — and Pano humanity at large — in some essential or “prototypical” fashion, ontologically and, furthermore, not simply in names. The implications of this seem to extend to the entire Pano-speaking family, accounting for an ethnographic ground that we have no space to cover. We shall come back instead to the Marubo *nawa* later, at the expense of more comparative views of other Pano conceptualisations of humanity¹⁵.

In all events, after considering all that, the confusion between an ontological-onomastic *nawa* terminology and the vocative terms in the mutual assignment of Pano ethnonyms starts to make more sense. It becomes easier to understand the extent to which kinship denominations and native linguistic conceptualisations at large have been taken as or mistaken for ethnonyms in the literature. One becomes definitely aware of multiple perspectives, categories cut in unclear ways vis-à-vis ethnographic paradigms, as one hears that many of the local peoples’ names of the area are intelligible in Marubo language: taking account of its accent, their names would be spelt *Kachinawa*, *Iskonawa* (*Iskovakevo*), *Shanenawa*, *Marinawa*, *Pakanawa*, *Koñtanawa*, *Yawanawa* (*Yawavo*), *Shawañnawa*, *Kamañnawa*, *Waniñnawa*. These names, mere examples of the onomastic maze that ethnographers find among Panoans, would be respectively translated by the Marubo as “peoples of the Bat, of the *Japu*-bird, of the Blue Bird, the Agouti, the *Taboca*-cane, the *Jarina*-palm, the Peccary, the Macaw, the Jaguar, the *Pupunha*-palm”. The reasons for classificatory confusion are further hinted at by the fact that some of these *-nawa* peoples, these “-people” denominations are

¹⁵ Presented in Townsley 1988, Erikson 1996 and Lagrou 1998 for instance, the latter in a wider-ranging statement of perspectival dialectics of self and other, focused on the

actual Marubo kinship sections. Conversely, one can even find wider categorial words used as ethnonyms among other mysterious Pano peoples, like the legendary *Nawa*, the “people” people of the Upper Juruá, and the *Yora*, also known as Amahuaca, whose name literally means “person” in Marubo. These two ethnonyms are now but a few examples of the ethnographic prodigality and slight levity in giving names to little-known peoples, when social fragmentation is erroneously translated into ethnic heterogeneity. But further still, such fragmentation is not based on a totemic-classificatory logic; rather, it is substantially implicit in each of those names¹⁶.

Some scarce ethnography on the Amahuaca provides a good instance of the arrogant ignorance with which indigenous names and denominations have been dealt in the ethnography within our scope, if we are not audacious enough to generalise the statement to other Amazonian and South American studies. Here it is not just a case of ethnographic inaccuracy: our compulsion to impinge ethnic

Kachinawa.

¹⁶ Erikson gives weight to the hypothesis of a more general unity behind apparent multiplicity among all Panoans:

“... les Pano utilisent fréquemment de noms de moitié ou de section en guise de vocatifs... [i]l est... vraisemblable qu’à l’instar des autres Pano, les anciens Mayoruna se répartissaient en nombreuses d’unités, chacune s’auto qualifiant de *x-nawa*.” (1996: 66-67)

For other “mutually intelligible” Pano ethnonyms, see Steward & Métraux 1948. Kensinger 1983 questions the validity of the many *-nawa* denominations mentioned there and elsewhere:

“I am inclined to believe that many of the approximately one hundred [Panoan] groups listed ...[in the *Handbook of South American Indians*] have never existed as autonomous linguistic and cultural entities.” (1983: 849, my translation)

Among these, *Iskonawa* is both a Marubo section and a separate group that is thought to live among the Shipibo, a Pano-speaking people of the Ucayali (Kensinger 1983: 857). It is worth noting that their alternative denomination *Iskovakevo* is very similar to the syntagma *Isko vake nawavo* — literally “the peoples of the *japu* bird’s children” —, a Marubo section denomination in the musical language of their myth-chants. We will come back to

boundaries by means of ethnonyms is too often at odds with the local conceptualisations on ethnicity, which are inseparable from a indigenous construal of humanity, expressed and manifested through onomastics or otherwise. And this does not seem to be the case for the Marubo only. Within our limited scope, we must acknowledge that the local ethnography suggests many potential parallels among Pano-speakers. By and large, the ethnography suggests a similarity beyond onomastics in the Pano area, which is still to be researched among some of the small hinterland Panoans — the Amahuaca, *Yora*, and the like — who inhabit the area in between the headwaters of the three major basins mentioned above. Here we should find another potential hint: our data could confirm that the Marubo are at once a prototypical and generic icon of inter-riverine Panoans in that major threefold fluvial complex and adjacent territories.

Let us take the Amahuaca example a bit further. If the Amahuaca are *Yora*, *yora* is the word for “body” among the Marubo, but only insofar as such “body” is at once opposed to and constituted of other entities, which will be tentatively glossed further below as “souls”, “spirits”, and “doubles” — *yochiñ*, *yové*, *vaká* and others. It has been cursorily registered in the ethnography that the Amahuaca also seem to have what would be the equivalent to the Marubo entities *yochiñ* (*yoshi*) and *yové* (*yowii*). Meanwhile negative, mission-like statements pervade the ethnographic register: these Indians are portrayed without gods, with no rulers, no names, no shamanic entities, being instead full of “ill-defined”, almost satanic malevolence. Even more dubious is the assignment of *yora* as an ethnonym to these peoples. It is dubious, but is not too surprising: we shall see that, among the

that particular form of designation later on.

Marubo, the ethnonymic meaning of *yora* spans across semantic extremes as much as *nawa* does. The meaning of the Marubo *yora* is ascertainable in its adjectival, possessive function in its genitive form — e.g. *yorañ vana* for “our language” — or it is otherwise an generalising term altogether — e.g. *yora yama*, “there is nobody”. Among these peoples, and in typical Amazonian fashion, there is indeed a somewhat pronominal quality to this word, which echoes its conceptual and linguistic variations in other Pano languages, such as the Yaminawa *yora* and the Kachinawa *yuda*. The Kachinawa seem to employ the term in an analogous way to the Marubo and, among the former, it seems to act even less like an ethnonym as such¹⁷.

But as in the Marubo case, one of the Amahuaca words that seem to be closest to a self-denomination is *yora*. Thus, *yora* and *nawa* might be taken as the indigenous logical concept-analogues of exogenous umbrella-denominations such as “Mayoruna” and “Marubo”. However, the understanding of native words related to terms such as “person”, “people”, and “body” requires an even closer

¹⁷ Cf. Lagrou 1998:

“... *yuda* means the individual as well as the collective ‘social body’ of close kin with whom one shares the substances of daily life.” (1998: 35)

While Townsley 1988, on the Yaminawa, puts it in a more limited fashion:

“The circle of kin created around any ego by th[e] idea of a shared blood is referred to as the *yora* (“body”)... This term is in fact used flexibly in different contexts to distinguish “our people” from “others” but is always carries this connotation of real biological kinship...” (Townsley 1988: 54-55)

Meanwhile, Viveiros de Castro attempts a general explication for what he describes as a typical Amazonian phenomenon concerning ethnonyms, among peoples and ethnographers alike:

“Far from manifesting a semantic shift from a common name into a proper name (taking the word for ‘people’ as the name of the tribe), such words [Amazonian ethnonyms] point to the opposite direction, from substantives to perspectives (whereby ‘people’ is taken as the collective pronoun ‘[we] the people’)... Apparently these ethnonyms are frozen artefacts produced in the context of interaction with the

ethnographic attention to the contextual and formal logic underlying those conceptualisations, as they are translated into our own concepts. Our western concepts cannot be taken for granted; they cannot be more than mere translation tools in the study of native words pertaining to “humanity”, like *yora* and *nawa*, as well as of those concerning related notions, like the conceptualisations of the “extra-human” entities that share the world where these “persons”, “peoples” and “bodies” live. The indigenous words, notions, and conceptualisations that are related to indigenous self-reference conform to a systematic complex of experience of humanity and the human world, to the context and form of a native ontology that we suspect to say something different about “persons”, “peoples”, and “bodies”. This thesis is nothing but initial steps, however ambitious ones, toward an ethnographic representation of such an original-ontological context and form. We hypothesise that the Marubo themselves represent it in their myth-music: their ontological notions and conceptualisations are expressed thoroughly in the mythical-musical, original context and form in which they utter their words. The conceptual logic to be focused in ethnographic translation subsists in the native utterance itself. Therefore, whenever the existing ethnography is less inspiring than the Marubo utterances, this should suffice as a reason to send it to the footnotes.

We shall devote our attention soon to such native conceptualisations, to the words that the Marubo utter, and the context and form in which these peoples utter these words. As regards the notions that we have already mentioned in passing, for the time being we shall only state that *nawa* has an extrovert societal reality,

ethnographer.” (Viveiros de Castro 1996: 125. my translation)

whereas *yora* has an introvert cosmo-physiological meaning, though that “societal reality” is the expression of this equally social cosmo-physiology. To say more about these and other native words will require both the elaboration of the next chapters and a further narrowing of the exegetical scope of this thesis onto that which the Marubo call *saiti* and we translate, however unsatisfactorily, as “myth-chants”.

This shall consume the patience of the reader for the rest of the monograph, to an extent to which we might be accused of scholarly negligence. However, to consider the ultimate lack of respect that has traditionally been demonstrated toward native acts and utterances, as well as to the way they are performed and proffered, we feel that ample space should be opened up for those acts and utterances and for the peoples who act and utter, first and foremost. These peoples have been ethnonymically and ethnically misconstrued precisely through the non-recognition of the literal value of these acts and utterances of theirs, at the levels of both form and content. This is not to undervalue, however, the indebtedness of this work toward earlier Marubo ethnography, as well as the insights of some of the Pano studies, the later ones in particular¹⁸.

Indeed, such richer ethnographic material alone allows for ambitious generalisations, which are in fact much beyond our ambitions. Those

¹⁸ As for instance the work of Erikson, Lagrou, Townsley, Calavia and McCallum. Contrarily, see Carneiro 1964 on the Amahuaca and his characterisation of their *yoshi* spirits, yielding unsuspected but remarkable similarities with the Marubo, briefly but typically:

“The Amahuaca have a Tropical Forest type of culture, but *of a rather rudimentary sort...* social and ceremonial organisation is *exceedingly simple*; even head-men and shamans are *absent...* the system of supernatural beliefs is similarly *not very elaborate...*” (Carneiro 1964: 6, my emphases)

generalisations would provide more detail to the picture that presents the present-day Marubo as pivotal, as in Erikson's latest attempts toward a comparative summa of Pano studies, a fundamental revision of Steward's *Handbook* which has undeniable value. If anything, generalisations would allow for comparison: in the Pano historical-cartographic setting, the Marubo can be visualised as not too linguistically distant from their Westward neighbours, those who were dwelling in the Ucayali River when the first European colonisers arrived, and whose descendants are in all probability the relatively well-known Shipibo-Conibo-Shetebo. As one descends the Peruvian piedmont from the Ucayali toward the Javari Valley, the hinterland Kapanawa are found, the "squirrel people" as the Marubo would translate their name, as the language of the former is quite close to that of the latter. Further to the South, toward the upper course of the Juruá River in the Brazilian State of Acre live the Katukina, in the old days active rubber-labourers, who are nearly "Marubo" in their language and history, both from student and local perspectives. Deep upriver in Acre, back across Southern international borders, one finds the highest Pano diversity along the headwaters of the Juruá and Purus Rivers and their tributaries. Accordingly, recent political and economic Marubo connections tend to stretch toward the South rather than to the West, to a less missionised, less slavery-ridden area that had however received the full impact of the late nineteenth-century rubber boom. Not surprisingly, contemporary Pano ethnography has also focused on these Southern Panoans, the Kachinawa and Yaminawa above all. All these groups scatter further back to Peru and to Bolivia¹⁹.

¹⁹ The New Tribes' missionary *John Jansma* attests the linguistic similarities between

To summarise a spatial viewpoint, the Marubo and the other Pano peoples of the Javari Valley neighbour these more widely known Panoans of the Acrean rivers on the Southern side — e.g. the Juruá, Purus, and their tributaries, which flow from Peru and Bolivia through Brazil into the Amazon, far to the North. Looking to the West, one sees the also relatively well-known Ucayali Valley Panoans. But now it is time to start narrowing our focus. Within the Javari Valley Indigenous Land, the geographic limits of Marubo territory in the Upper Ituí area are the lands of the Matis to the North, while in the opposite direction it is marked by a *varador*, a walkway connecting its headwaters with the Juruá banks, around the local Brazilian community of Boa Fé. This thesis is based on fieldwork carried out with the Marubo peoples in the Upper Ituí, notably in the community of Vida Nova, between February 1998 and January 1999. To them it is indebted and to them it mainly relates²⁰.

Marubo and Kapanawa, after some thirty years working in the area. For the Katukina, see Coffaci de Lima 1994. A representative sample of the ethnography in the Acrean and other close-neighbouring Pano areas would include Kensinger 1995, Deshayes & Keifenheim 1982, McCallum 1989, Lagrou 1998 (for the Kachinawa), Townsley 1988 and Calavia Saez 1995 (for the Yaminawa).

²⁰ A census taken along the banks of the Upper Ituí, concluded on 6th June 1997 by missionaries *John* and *Diana Jansma* and *Jerrard* and *Donna Brown* (the latter two now gone from the area), computed 356 Marubo individuals distributed among 14 longhouses. Those that lived close to the New Tribes Mission, by Vida Nova, gathered the highest numbers: 159. Fieldwork was also carried out actively in the community of Alegria, with two longhouses further down the river, summing up 62 peoples. Furthermore, some visits were paid up the river to Liberdade (two longhouses, 39 peoples). In turn, we had regular visits of peoples from even further upriver, from the households of *Memeñpa* (Paulino) and *Cheroñpapa* (Armando Paiva), for instance, which were composed 36 and 18 peoples each. Finally, in addition to occasional visits from other longhouses on the limits of native territory in the Upper Ituí, we had the more sporadic presence of individuals and families from other communities in the three additional Marubo settlements (Maronal, Rio Novo, and São Sebastião). One of the latter visits, although limited to a short stay, was decisive for this thesis research, as we shall see later: it was *Ivañpa*, western name *Vicente*.

I.2 stories and histories

Before any further focus, we must magnify some recent time-depth. We are in the Amazonian Southwest, regarded by westerners as an inexhaustible and mysterious source of valuables. There, in the expanding economic boom at the turn of the nineteenth century, Peruvian and Brazilian rubber-tappers — *caucheros* and *seringueiros* —, and subsequently skin-poachers and loggers established successive, gradual contact with the natives of terra firma. These peoples were the generically named “Marubo” of the Javari Valley.

These peoples remain to this day on the mysterious fulcrum of their linguistic territory, in a geographic centre — but today marginal to the jungle *centro* where for centuries they have resisted the encroaching coloniser, up on the streamlet headwaters, far away from the main waterways. Their progressive movement from the small tributaries to these secondary mainstreams of the Javari basin, the Curuçá and the Ituí Rivers in particular, have followed a pattern that is revealed as cyclical in their *saiti* myth-chants. Now we want to make sense of the structure performed in musical-mythical time through a historical angle, before we move on to a structural study of the cyclical character of the myth-chants themselves. Against the official history of nation-state “contact”, which maintains that these indigenous peoples have been “attracted” from the isolated hinterlands to the western world on the banks of the larger Amazonian rivers, we aim at presenting other versions or native “stories”. We shall do this here and in the next chapter, before we expose how the Marubo chant the mythical fundamentals of their historical cycles. This chapter deals with foreign reports on the area. The next shall deal with local perceptions related to these reports, supported by sketches of

native history. Both chapters describe the cyclical temporality of the native space as the fruits of indigenous historical decisions, in which the successive state of relations with foreigners has always been at stake.

We start from the more recently documented accounts, those that portray the political-economic advancement of the nation-state in the Javari Valley. The territory is still rather unknown, since for a long time nation-state territorial assignments had no meaning whatsoever. This is not to mean that those indigenous peoples were unaware of a massive foreign world surrounding them; much to the contrary, the sheer location of their settlements, either deep in the forests or closer to the main rivers, is a consequence of decisive attitudes taken against exogenous penetration. The foreigner has been present as a warrior or enslaver, as rubber-tapper or logger, official or missionary, as a national symbol impersonated by absent state-authorities or by the hardly present, but still threatening national army. For the Marubo, these outsiders have always been *nawa*. For the incoming nation-state, the area is still marginal, and the native peoples little known. The political borders were not consolidated before the economic period of latex extraction was over in the early 1930s and, in consequence, most of the local disputes involving rubber-tappers were partially settled, clashes involving mostly emigrants from the Brazilian Northeast and Peruvians infiltrating through the Western forest. By that time, a medical doctor of an international frontier-delimiting expedition published, in a respected ethnological institution in Brazil, a brief survey on the indigenous peoples inhabiting the Javari Valley. His account locates the “Marubius” (*sic*) by the Jaquirana, i.e. the Upper Javari, “from the mouth of the Galvez River to its

headwaters”²¹.

As late as in the 1940s, little is known in written sources about the Javari Valley, not to mention about its inhabitants. This is illustrated in an ethnographic essay produced by a Capuchin friar in 1943, after eighteen years of missionary work in the banks of the Solimões River, another name for the Amazon in its upper reaches. In his essay, which also appears in a Brazilian periodical, there is surprisingly scant knowledge of the peoples known as “Marubas” (*sic*). This can be accounted for by the fact that the period in which the Capuchin lived in that tract of land, adjacent to the Javari Valley, was marked by a stagnation of the local market-economy — i.e. of extractive activities with wider commercial ends — and, not coincidentally, also by a general suspension of contact between indigenous and national populations. Still at that time, those hinterland aborigines were portrayed as quite mysterious in the “Montaña and Bolivian East Andes” section of Steward’s *Handbook*, dated 1948²².

²¹ Carvalho provides an enlightening geographic overview, an account that is worth reproducing for its documentary value, if abridged:

“Four are the tribes that inhabit the Javari basin: the *Mayus*, the *Capanauas*, the *Marubius* and the *Remus*. The *Mayus* live in the Curuçá River and in the Lower Javari, stretching toward the Galvez, the Tapiche and the Rio Branco; the latter two are tributaries of the Ucayale (*sic*). The *Capanauas* dwell in the Igarapé dos Lobos and along the right bank of the Javari, from the mouth of the Galvez until Lontananza... The *Remus*... had, up to not too long ago, a large settlement by the Bathan (*sic*)... and are today reduced to a small nucleus in Contas, a couple in San Pablo and some families in the lands that separate the Javari from the Ypixuna River (*sic*).” (1931: 252, my translation)

²² The capuchin Fidelis de Alviano reports on the “Marubius”:

“This tribe lives in the Upper Curuçá, in the Ituí, Itaquai, Arrojo, Rio das Pedras. These Indians are enemies of the *caucheiros* [rubber-tappers], and have little contact with the Whites... [they speak] a dialect of the... Pano [linguistic] family.” (1943: 5-6, my translation)

Whereas Steward & Métraux:

“Although the tribes along the main waterways are now largely acculturated or

The history of contact between Indians and Whites in the Javari Valley dates back to the days of Spanish and Portuguese missionaries and “tropical drug-collectors”, but consistent accounts are rare until the more recent histories of conflict. These histories are fresh enough to be within the still living recollection of those who experienced the last moments of rubber extraction and the more short-lived times of tree felling, those who saw the influx of North American missionaries from the New Tribes Mission and of Brazilian officials from governmental agencies. The crucial historical mark is indeed in the 1940s, when the first parties of logs drifted down from the small waterways to the larger tributaries of the Javari. By then, the Marubo were already familiar with Brazilian settlers and had vivid memories of Peruvian exploiters, those who were respectively known as *seringueiros* (after *seringa*, the latex from the most renowned *Hevea* rubber tree) and *caucheros* (from *caucho*, that which is extracted from the genus *Castilloa*). Westerners had already suffered and inflicted death upon peoples of whom we know little.

In relative terms, the ensuing timber exploitation reached much further deep into the forest than latex-exploitation, up to the *colocações* at the heart of the native territory, the tree-felling sites near the tiny streamlet headwaters. In consequence logging had a stronger socio-economic impact in the indigenous politics, even though the immediacy of such impact was less conspicuously aggressive. Old Marubo stories testify to the much more violent, previous pressure from rubber-exploiters several decades earlier than timber times, both along the

assimilated, those in the hinterland of the rivers retain more aboriginal culture than is found among most South American Indians... [having] escaped continuous mission influence and best survived White settlement” (1948: 509)

streams of the Javari Valley and right across the watershed between the Javari and the Juruá basins. Changing in different ways, the exploitative pattern did not alter dramatically from rubber to timber exploitation, at some point in the second quarter of the twentieth century. While chronological precision is difficult, the first logging parties in the area are dated from at least 1945 when, for lack of local industry, the drifting wood had to be transported along the rivers to sawmills as far away as Manaus, hundreds of miles downriver in the Amazon, on its confluence with the Negro River. At least one written account of these logging teams is dated back from 1950²³.

Continuities aside, we must note that some changes were effected by then. From the early 1950s on, progressively, neighbouring White settlers would have in effect more or less limited access to the land: since logging is seasonal, it did not require a permanent settler. Still, the most important characteristics of labour relations were not concomitant to these events. Work on rubber and timber was now based on a transformed, native-biased exploitative pattern that modelled the earlier regional exploitation of rubber, which linked Indian labour to their White *patrão* boss through the chained links of *aviamento*, the debt-peonage system that had already been introduced among the Marubo themselves at the turn of the century. One interesting indigenous adaptation to these relations was the establishment of Marubo patron-bosses, steering boats and managing storehouses.

²³ Based on Benjamin Constant, the main logging centre in the Javari Valley, a zoologist from the *Museu Nacional* of Rio de Janeiro wrote an entry in his field diary dated 18th May 1950, reporting a logging party which had just arrived from upstream in the Ituí River. He reports on the main products of the area, timber and rubber, noting the decadence of the local villages after the decline of the latex-boom (cf. Mello Carvalho 1955: 28, 30). See also Melatti, ed. 1981 for other important Indian and White testimonies on the earlier history of the Javari Valley.

These native “bosses” would normally be longhouse owners in their own native villages, holding credit with westerners in the nearest town the form of western goods. Still more importantly, the Marubo clients of these new local patron-bosses would be their younger kinsmen, with whom there were already pre-existent hierarchical relationships²⁴.

The impact of logging, although unprecedented, was following then that earlier, distinguishable pattern after which the interaction between indigenous peoples and exogenous exploiters was modelled. We saw in the first chapter that, since early colonial times, speciated distinctions within the wide categories of “Indian” or “Marubo” melted beyond the borders of wilderness, in the face of the eyes of missionaries and adventurers who went up those rivers in search of whatever glittered like gold, of both souls and riches from the forests. It is not necessary to say that these vague impressions were stereotypes. Besides identity complexities, the aforementioned generalising and confusing tendencies in ethnic classification stem from the exploitative greed of the eyes that turned their regard onto the jungle, as late as in the times of rubber-latex barons such as the powerful manager of the Peruvian Amazon Rubber Company, the legendary Júlio Cesar Arana. We do not mention his name by chance: his areas of jurisdiction were not too far from the Javari Valley. Contrariwise, if the eyes of these intruders did not discriminate much among the generic “wild peoples” they encountered, the latter would regard the former as *nawa*, generic foreigners. The difference between the

²⁴ For the Marubo-White commercial relations see Melatti, ed. 1981, which presents a summary description, placing the local debt-peonage labour system within the more general Amazonian framework. Melatti 1985a provides an account of the impact of such *aviamento* system — as it is known in Brazil — on previously given indigenous socio-cultural forms.

two perspectives was that the distant regard of a high-rank trader in the debt-peonage chain could easily ignore that a reciprocal relationship, in which different interpretations of labour interpenetrated, had been developed. It is true that the interface of these economic relations was interethnic violence, and it is not at all impossible that the influence of those high-rank debt-peonage bosses in Peru, despite the territorial division established with Brazilian *patrões*, was felt deep down in the tributary waters of the Javari River to the Southeast. Nonetheless, the local relationship between boss (*patrão*) and debtor (*aviado*) would be modelled after an indigenous hierarchy of kinship²⁵.

These relationships preceded and survived the rubber-boom. In fact, they became even stronger when the highest demographic pressure due to western invasion into Marubo territory came a little after the second world-war, when national borders between Peru and Brazil were definitely consolidated. The booming rubber times were over, although the *seringa* latex was still tapped from trees and commercialised; now the motor-power of nation-wide economic relations became the exploitation of valuable timber from the headwaters of the Javari tributaries. This is when indigenous attempts to establish permanent connections with the market economy date from. As timber trade gained momentum, the

²⁵ Taussig 1987 is a vivid historical account of violent debt-peonage in the forests across the Colombian-Peruvian border. His description is indeed very similar to Marubo histories in a great many respects, from the form of exploitation to its agents, the national-local exploiters and the exploited native peoples. The beauty of Taussig's narrative, in addition to his sophisticated style and refined references, lies in the way he portrays indigenous actions — shamanic perspectives — as counter-reactions against the imperialistic encroachment of political-economic violence. Still, Taussig focuses his study on what is today Colombia, ignoring thus its generalising potency, the possibility of a longer reach to his studies in Amazonia. It is not entirely impossible that such ignorance is due to an invisible and still conspicuous cultural divide between Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking territories in South America, one that colonisers have always made a contentious point of, while native peoples

movement from native headwaters to national riverine settlements established river-linked connections along an axis parallel to the Ituí and the Curuçá Rivers. In a mythical past, re-enacted in the ethnographic present in myth-chants — as we shall describe later on —, the Marubo alternated their settlements between large rivers and hinterland hillocks, moving along a riverine axis. This performed mythical chronology gains historical contour in the native sketches presented in the next chapter: in the nearly contemporary times of logging, the spatial alternation of Marubo longhouses took a downriver direction. This was in opposition to the earlier historical cycle that, otherwise, similarly drew the Marubo from upstream to riverbank: the initial movement of regained contact with westerners in the 1940s had taken place toward the Juruá basin.

Up to now, the White neighbours who are closest to the Marubo live along the banks of the Juruá River. The scattered Brazilian population that is currently settled there, around the Southern borders of Marubo territory, is mostly composed of the remnants of former *seringais*, rubber-tapping settlements. It was there that the Marubo first re-established post-war contact with the nation-state by turning up in one of those communities, namely in the *seringal* Boa Fé, in search of a regular supply of western goods to be exchanged for forest products, after the incidents that had broken up relations with rubber-tappers during the rubber-boom. Such rubber-motivated proximity contrasts with the later long-term journey that wood had to go through down the river, unable to cross the watershed in the South. If riverine distance mediated the sociocultural impact of timber trade with indigenous labour, the historical movement of rubber and wood had homologous directions, if

unsuspectingly re-elaborate it.

in opposite senses, from headwaters to large riverbanks. And these days, although rubber-balls *não têm preço* (they “no longer have a price”), the strongest contrast to native lifestyles, and the consequently highest epidemic impact on these Javarian peoples still comes across watersheds, from the banks of the Juruá River.

The conjuncture that conforms to contact is contemporary, but it is not new. Not only is transit from streamlets to riverbanks familiar to the Marubo, in rubber and timber times, but the violence that intermediates the two historical-geographic settings is too. The intermittent violence throughout the local histories contributes to the continued mystery surrounding the Javarian forests, a constant of contact. As we said before, up until not long ago, “Marubo” might have just been a missionary or exploitative name assigned to many peoples in the most central and isolated part of Pano territory, irrespective of linguistic considerations; it has been one of the local synonyms for “Javarian Indian”. We learn from the first ethnographic reports of the Melatti couple to FUNAI (the aforementioned national agency for indigenous affairs) that, as late as that (1975), even governmental technicians used to label all Javarian peoples who refrained from regular relations with neo-nationals as “Marubo”. Isolated peoples from the Javari were named after contacted ones. Still today, “Marubo” is a flexible construct to be used in very specific cross-cultural contexts, and usually it is the explosive context of contact.

Contact through the twentieth century was not an altogether new phenomenon in the Javari Valley; neither has contact always and solely been an exogenous initiative. The consolidation of foreign relations was not immediate after the Indians first manifested a good willingness to trade with the White settler around the 1950s. Governmental and missionary intervention ensued but, even if

their presence contributed to put an end to times of murderous conflict, peace was not a straight result of their activities. If national and international conjunctures impinged on local histories, history was just as much the gradual result of indigenous agency. It is obvious that the increment of intensive contact and potential confrontation between White and Indian occurring in the 50s and 60s can be seen as the outcome of the expansion of the Brazilian national frontier within the area, under the auspices of timber and still some surviving rubber exploitation. Yet this outcome could not occur before the Marubo moved definitely to more navigable waters in early 1960s, seeking an easier outlet from the jungle, with the enthusiastic help of the North American New Tribes missionary who lived among them at the time²⁶.

Governmental officials visited the area about ten years after the first New Tribes missionary appeared among the Marubo in 1952, and started to persuade the Brazilian settlers to leave. Official actions such as this were as influential as missionary activities, but both served the purpose, as regards indigenous decisions about their destinies, of facilitating and establishing mediation with the western world. When local timbermen started moving up the Javari, assistance from the nation-state was a vague idea, an extraneous one if existing at all. The nearest governmental office in the network of Javarian waterways draining out from the Valley was by the Solimões River, i.e. the Upper Amazon on the Brazilian side of the threefold international border nearby. Officials gave sparse notice about little-known Indians, who in turn would be soon keen on attracting the White's attention

²⁶ *João Americano*, who was still around during fieldwork in what is today the settlement of Vida Nova. For a historical account of indigenous contact with the missionaries, see

to their needs, diverting the focus of interethnic contact from the Southern watershed, from the Juruá basin, to the mouth of the Javari in the North.

Another ten years after that first official contact in the early 1960s, the Brazilian Government, through the offices of FUNAI, inaugurated research in the area with the “anthropological mission” undertaken by the two Melatti’s, aiming at providing a more specific “ethnic profile” of the peoples of the area. The mentions of these pioneering ethnographies to other Javarian groups apart from the Marubo “proper”, which were under the same denomination at the time, include an “enemy” group situated by a stream called Igarapé Lobo, a tributary of the Javari. This was the first official attempt to recognise the difference between the Upper Curuçá and Ituí peoples, “properly denominated” ones, and the other Indians of the Javari, “incorrectly” named “Marubo”. Native names suffered a semantic shift: “Marubo” now would refer not to the “isolated” but to the “contacted” ones, that is, to those peoples who entertained regular relations with the nation-state. The official compulsion was now for ethnic definition²⁷.

It is not accidental that this “identity compulsion” was concurrent with certain projected plans to the area. Governmental action in the Javari Valley is a factor associated, of course, with the national political-economic agenda. Brazil

Montagner Melatti & Melatti 1975 and Melatti, ed. 1981.

²⁷ Having travelled along the Curuçá and the Ituí Rivers, Melatti & Montagner Melatti stated thus in a first, preliminary official report released in 1975:

“The Marubo in question have been in contact with civilised peoples since the beginning of this century. When rubber prices reached the lowest levels around 1932, the civilised (Peruvian *caucheros*) left the area and the Marubo went back to the hinterland. In 1952 the Marubo began to show up in the Juruá River.” (1975a: 12, my translation)

The “enemy group” identified in the same report was probably Mayoruna, one of those who are currently known as Matsés; cf. Garcia Paula 1979.

underwent a dramatic gross income increase between the late 1960s and early 1970s, ironically at the height of the military dictatorship that plagued the country for thirty years. In exchange for a totalitarian regime, the military promoted the short-lived period of infrastructural growth that became known as the “Brazilian Miracle”. One of the concurrent monumental-scale infrastructure projects was the construction of the *Rodovia Perimetral Norte*, a motorway that would cross the entire indigenous territory of the Javari Valley, running parallel with the Brazilian-Peruvian border. To the relief of the native populations the plan was abandoned on each end after some hundreds of miles were opened, near the cities of Cruzeiro do Sul and Benjamin Constant. Another governmental project dating from the same period was oil prospecting, which provoked unexpected contact with native forest peoples downriver from the Curuçá and Ituí headwaters in the exploratory expeditions led by PETROBRAS (the Brazilian State Company). Again, the failure of their expectations was all to the good for the native populations, especially the remotest ones. Oil prospectors were less violent than local rubber or timber exploiters but still aggressive, fishing with bombs in indigenous territory and approaching isolated villages without previous negotiation with those unknown peoples. As usual, lack of knowledge and ethnonymic generalisation was the rule: in a rather coarse manner, White explorers called the Indians *pica amarrada*, “tied penis”, after the way they wore their genital garments. Here history repeated itself, in several senses: this is the way the Marubo themselves used to dress in the old days²⁸.

²⁸ These are facts documented by NGOs such as ISA (*Instituto Socioambiental*, former CEDI), and personally confirmed to me by PETROBRAS engineer Pedro Maciel.

All these failed attempts to integrate the area in a national political-economic programme meant that the local relations were still to be pretty much in the hands of indigenous agents. While the area had been overcrowded with the settling and passing newcomers since the mid-1950s, this did not prevent the Marubo from making use of their ability to negotiate in equal terms with westerners — through debt-peonage, in their relations with the state officials, and with the missionaries. Among these incoming partners, the latter were to be assigned a privileged role as interlocutors and intermediaries in foreign negotiations. The presence of North American missionaries is indeed associated with, if not indirectly caused by, the new arrivals to the area: rubber-tappers, poachers, loggers, settlers and traders. The more that official barriers were created between the Indians and the White, the more power that was informally assigned to the missionaries, both by natives and by the national government. The New Tribes Mission used to work — and still does, to a lesser extent — as an extra-official, non-appointed local authority, as far as other intruders are concerned, serving as some sort of fake presence of the nation-state within the indigenous area. The absence of state coercion led to the ascription of doubtful powers to missionaries, in what was considered as generic land, a no-place of time-immemorial forests and rivers, animals and peoples. Still these native peoples had the power to choose their favourite partners.

Hence, we can say that the Marubo elected the Brazilian Government – and the New Tribes Mission, in its absence — as substitutes for the former *patrões*, the rubber- and timber-patrons. All these newly established peaceful relations were a means for these peoples to move from the tributary headwaters, where they had

kept to in times of warfare. These westerners are now seen as a means of access to the large riverbanks, to undertake the crucial settling movement down from the mythical headwaters' hillocks, which is narrated and predicted in the chant-myths of the Marubo, regardless of historical contingencies. If only circumstantially and partially, these exterior connections were diverted from the Southern Juruá to the Northern Solimões in parallel with the economic shift from rubber to timber. The first governmental endeavours toward assistance have to be seen within this wider context of economic change; but also here the initiative was indigenous, as is testified in 1963 by the events surrounding the creation of an official *Posto de Atração* ("Attraction Post") in the Curuçá River. For the nation-state officials, these were the first stages toward "normalising" the situation, that is, toward a more regular contact. Still the "abnormal" situation, from the western viewpoint, was the sheer presence of "wild people" in an urban environment: the Marubo went as far down the river as to the nearest national cities to attract governmental attention. The further official attempts of "attraction", triggered by indigenous action, were to be consolidated with the creation of a *Posto Indígena* ("Indigenous Post"), and these were the foundations of what is today the Marubo community of São Sebastião, in the Middle Curuçá.

The documentary source of that official story is an earlier governmental post on the banks of the Upper Solimões, near the city of Benjamin Constant. A list of reports from the *Posto Indígena Ticunas*, all dated from 1963, gives us a quite precise idea of the agencies involved in the series of episodes leading to contact with a Marubo subgroup up the Curuçá River. These peoples were further downriver from and unrelated to those Marubo who had already been missionised

in the upper headwaters since the early 1950s. One official report mentions two Marubo men who had come down from the headwaters of a tributary of the Lower Curuçá earlier, spending two years in the *Ticunas* Indigenous Post. Their original homeland was quite far from the Curuçá River proper and miles away from the *Posto Indígena* in Benjamin Constant: indeed, they came from halfway between the Solimões and the Juruá Rivers. Shortly after their prolonged stay, the two Indians went back to their home village with some officials. There were common plans to establish an “Attraction Post” on the banks of the Curuçá. Initially, however, all longhouses remained in the headwaters of small tributaries, standing apart from the dozens of rubber-tappers and loggers who used to live and travel along the main course of the Curuçá, and from the feared “expeditions of adventurers”, which featured in the official discourse but that also frightened the Marubo.

The reciprocal, widespread fear of wild *índios bravos* was part of the generic attitude that generalised the jungle as a foreign domain, much in the same way as hinterland perspectives placed the *nawa* foreigner on riverine land. It is not surprising then that links between foreign outlaws in general and forest peoples were suspected. Indeed, such connections are drawn in reports of conflicts among *seringa* tappers in late 1965, when two Brazilian settlers were killed in the Ituí River. The national army took immediate action and an expedition was sent, spending the night in a Marubo longhouse. The reports of SPI (*Serviço de Proteção aos Índios*), the governmental office that was at the time designed for indigenous affairs (later renamed FUNAI), mentioned that “Peruvians” settled in the Curuçá among the Indians, trading pelts to the Juruá, were to be held

responsible. This included a certain João Barbosa Guimarães who, interestingly enough, had a much more Portuguese-sounding name than a Spanish one. The recurrent image is still that of the Peruvian wrongdoer mixing up with the Indian through wayward routes, speaking their language and “influencing” them against the Brazilian. Evil comes from abroad, keeping official trade and settlement of the nation-state at bay. Meanwhile, the indigenous peoples were keen on settling and trading on riverine land, something that presumed a necessary contact with the outside²⁹.

In conformity with the SPI, and later FUNAI, the procedures for governmental action stated that an “Attraction Post” should normally precede the establishment of a *Posto Indígena*, an “Indigenous” one. Those official attempts in the Curuçá River took a very long time to be effected, even with the efforts of the “contacted” Marubo to make contact and attract the White. The Government, through SPI, did not do much more than taking a few measures at that time. In fact, the governmental bureaucracy did not much more than measuring the population: in 1965-1966, the Marubo under SPI assistance amounted to 185 peoples. By 1967, all activities had come to a halt due to a typically alleged “absolute lack of financial resources and personnel”. Governmental support for establishing relations with natives was very timid; thus, for a long period, the Marubo had to rely entirely on their own efforts for contact. And until fairly recently, in 1972, the picture of the situation was not too dissimilar to the one preserved in brighter

²⁹ The explicit Brazilian-official views manifested in the discourse of the SPI attributes the causation of all reported deaths in the area to “foreign elements, notably Peruvians (bandoleers, adventurers, etc.) [who] live among the Indians, with full command of their patois [*gíria*, as opposed to “proper language”], instigating them...”. All SPI documents are kept in microfilms in *Museu do Índio*, Rio de Janeiro.

colours in Marubo memories of earlier times of warfare, when they lived upstream, in the middle of the jungle. An important Brazilian anthropologist describes then the local raids that historically impinged slavery and death on indigenous peoples as a contemporary phenomenon: the so-called *correrias* were still “cleaning up” the area for exploitation. This testimony testifies that the temporal cycles in the Javari Valley are not homogeneous, but fragmentary: the warlike atmosphere that ceased to involve the Upper Ituí after the Marubo established relations with missionaries in that river was rife in the Curuçá up to the early 1970s³⁰.

The New Tribes Mission gave a prompter response to the indigenous needs of maintaining peaceful relations with the *nawa* outside, and did it more consistently than the Brazilian Government. This also helps to explain why official support has been given to the somewhat controlled missionary activities: it was a means to secure official sovereignty in the area, especially in times of national security paranoia during the military dictatorship. Some sort of an informal alliance was sealed between missionaries and the constituted powers. Conversely, it is true that the New Tribes Mission has been rather tolerated by governmental authorities, which have set out an ambiguous position on the issue. Certain pressure against missionaries in indigenous areas can be felt in some documentation from the SPI archives, clearly conditioning their stay to the absence of the nation-state. The anthropological consultancy once provided recommended

³⁰ Roberto Cardoso de Oliveira states:

“Now the directors of the SPI must be persuaded to undertake an expedition along the Itacoá River (*sic*) up to the Curuçá headwaters, where the Marubo longhouses stand. It is uncertain whether some Marubo raid parties or local groups are involved in these *correrias*. This is not too unlikely, since many of these Indians suffer from the direst exploitation and are dependent on groups of loggers working in the surroundings of their longhouses.” (Cardoso de Oliveira 1972: 39, my translation)

that, based on “constitutional provisions” (!), the missionaries should be allowed only in permanent contact areas, where the native peoples “have already been integrated” into neo-national life. However, the technical report states, missionary settlements should not be allowed within the indigenous areas. Missionaries were regarded as mere substitutes for official action — and it is likely that the Marubo shared this view. Notwithstanding alleged hostilities from the governmental authorities, the indigenous approval and the increasing number of Brazilian missionaries tended to diminish the official restrictions on their profession. The continuous renewal of their permits is well documented: six missionary names in Marubo area are listed in 1973³¹.

The missionaries’ enclave met all interests, by responding to the Marubo tendencies to move downstream and, eventually, by relying on the complicity of some governmental authorities. This New Tribes branch established its first headquarters in indigenous land in the Javari Valley up on the headwaters of the Ituí. While the missionaries settled in the area for good, the intermittent official assistance consolidated only with the foundation of two “Indigenous Posts” in the middle courses of the Curuçá and Ituí Rivers, through which FUNAI at last managed to assert its presence in 1974. The latter Post is still active and now

³¹ The first North American evangelical who settled among the Marubo, Robert Allen, was granted an individual authorisation to stay in indigenous area in 1952. The signature is of a Col. José Luis Guedes from SPI, an organ that had had a certain military ascendancy over the administration ever since its foundation, its founding father being the venerable Marshall Rondon. In 23 June 1958 SPI official Tubal Fialho Vianna, based in Cruzeiro do Sul, manifests his discomfort with missionary activities at large, and recommends that Robert Allen’s application for extension of stay be denied. Later on in 1958, the anthropologist Mário Ferreira Simões, also from SPI, wrote up the aforementioned report, concerning the New Tribes Mission and missionaries in general, in which proselytising is condemned. Copies of the permits, as well as all the aforementioned documentation, are also in the library of *Museu do Índio*, Rio de Janeiro.

known as Rio Novo, although it was initially named *Posto Indígena Marubo*. This does not mean that it has at any time supplied any substantial assistance to the Marubo “proper”. At least initially, both posts were mere poles of attraction for those native peoples who were already in regular contact with westerners and moved from the tributary headwaters of both the Curuçá and Ituí to new riverine settlements. The Government gave no more than a focus to the indigenous inflection toward the larger rivers, a spatial tendency that had already been set in motion in accordance with an internal logic, as we shall see later. But FUNAI’s assistance disappointed the needs of these Marubo peoples: the main consequence of the governmental intervention was the re-establishment of their settlements a bit further downstream.

From a foreign perspective however, the aim of these two posts was to satisfy the need for clear-cut ethnic boundaries, no matter how purely instrumental ethnonyms may be in contact situations in the Javari Valley. The measures of FUNAI aimed more at unknown, unnamed peoples than at those Marubo who were in fact “attracting” the Government. Thus the main achievement of the “Marubo” Indigenous Post, for instance, was to favour the later settling, on the banks of the Ituí, of a people hitherto unheard of: the Matis. Regardless of their vicinity to Marubo land, this people are linguistically closer to the Northern Panoans, the Mayoruna. “Marubo” becomes a more restricted designation as an ethnic diversity came to the fore, and again when the *caceteiros* “club-wielders” were re-nominated as “Korubo” after a Matis denomination, to whom they are reckoned to be related. Still, regardless of its increasing specificity, “Marubo” is a construct of contact.

Regular relations between the Marubo and FUNAI are now restricted to Rio Novo — the Indigenous Post that, in spite of its original name, prioritises the assistance to the Matis in the Middle Ituí — and to the sporadic visits of natives to Atalaia do Norte. And as always, histories repeat themselves in the Javari Valley. Governmental presence is now conspicuous in the impermanent contact attempts with the Korubo: FUNAI has recently created a “Contact Front” (*Frente de Contato*) at the mouth of Ituí River, assuming the responsibility for an inter-ethnic situation that by definition surpasses its sphere of influence. Permanence in the contact area is strictly forbidden: non-Marubo, non-Matis and other unwelcome newcomers are not allowed to trespass. The *Frente de Contato* functions as a patrol station, as a means to control that which is uncontrollable, for contact is not solely an official initiative. All contributes to enhance the mist of mystery upon the region and to stir the conflictive atmosphere, and yet the conflict that is inherent to the situation is no reason to give exclusive credit of contact to governmental attempts. Ladário, the first neo-national community to the North of the indigenous area is an informal front of contact, and locals testify that this is something that the Korubo are certainly keen on. A group of natives regularly visits and is visited in both official and unofficial fronts, while these two are understandably always at odds with each other over the issues of land and native rights. Formerly sharing large extensions of indigenous riverbanks, lakes and forests, the local Brazilians from Ladário are now lacking their game, fishing and logging grounds. FUNAI in turn fears undesired, uncontrolled violence and urges for a one-sided, lawful initiative. Still White officials fail to acknowledge the situation from the indigenous perspective. If the Marubo paradigm is to be followed in the case of these isolated Panoans, the native looks on the radical *nawa* outside as one generic

totality, just as the isolated “Indian” is a generalising western category³².

Aloof from official patrolling and one-sided perspectives, the Marubo travel increasingly wide across the borders between the Indian and the White worlds. Today, their communities concentrate in four nuclei that represent different levels and modes of interaction with the outside, distinct relationships that nevertheless share a common ground: the native desire of access to riverbanks. The oldest among present-day Marubo settlements are there where the New Tribes missionaries conquered their two posts on the Upper Ituí and Upper Curuçá, respectively and successively. The two air-assisted Missions are named after the two respective oldest communities, Vida Nova and Maronal. Unlike those who gather together around the two communities now called São Sebastião and Rio Novo, in the Middle Curuçá and Middle Ituí — originated from the governmental *Postos Indígenas* mentioned above —, the two main Marubo populations in the upper-course of the two rivers are now provided with missionaries. These belong today to the same branch of MNTB (*Missão Novas Tribos do Brasil*), a missionary organisation congregating several Protestant denominations and nationalities. MNTB stem from New Tribes Mission and from its first efforts in Brazil, in the Javari Valley and elsewhere. As we mentioned before, the governmental lack of trust in these missions, partially grounded on their foreign origin, has not yet been

³² FUNAI contact agent *Paulo* says, on the mouth of the Ituí:

“This land is interdicted. Ask for *Sydney* [*Possuelo*, head of FUNAI’s contact department] if you want to come in. It is at his discretion. Nobody knows what Indians dwell in these forests.”

This is true. The *flecheiros*, the “arrow people”, are still incognito.

an obstacle to their permanence on indigenous land³³.

Indeed, if the first missionaries to settle among the Marubo were North Americans, so are the two foreign couples that live now in their lands, *John and Diana Jansma* and *Paul and Sheril Rich*. These four are based in Vida Nova, on the Upper Ituí. A third couple, Brazilians *Wanderlei and Solange Pina*, shares with the latter the facilities of the local mission: a school, the occasional site of the local version of the evangelic cult, and an adjoining infirmary. It is curious, as we will soon see, that the Marubo call the cult, as it is translated to their language, as *koká iki*, a locution standing for all foreign music. If once itinerant cults were held in the longhouses, now they are carried out in one sole site along the entire Ituí, the Vida Nova Mission. The missionaries' quarters are next to a number of indigenous settlements, among which is the largest longhouse of the whole river. The Vida Nova longhouses were my fieldwork home and a favourite working place for eight months in the course of one and a half year, during which long periods were spent in neighbouring towns and riverine settlements, as well as in journeys within the indigenous area³⁴.

³³ The Memorandum N° 46/CENDOC/MI/85 in the archives of FUNAI/Ministry of Interior, dated 13 September 1985, is the outcome of another consultancy assignment set to anthropologists Maria Elizabeth Monteiro and Jussara Gomes. Its aims were to raise information about MNTB activities. These are passages selected and translated by me:

“It seems that the justification for missionary activities in indigenous areas lies in the ‘symbolic value’ of the work of these entities among non-western cultures, i.e. among ‘non-reached peoples’... Paul W. Fleming created the New Tribes Mission in 1942, in the United States. In 1946, it started to work among Indians in Brazil, where it is now established among 20 different peoples. The majority of missionaries are North Americans with no more than secondary education. The training courses are run by the religious congregations themselves and are full of common stereotypes about Indians and prejudice against the indigenous cultures. They receive no more than some notions of linguistics, applied to Biblical translation.”

³⁴ More precisely, fieldwork in Vida Nova took place between February and May 1998, July and September 1998, and October 1998 and January 1999. The heavy logistics involved in

At a small distance up and down the Ituí River from Vida Nova, there stand other Marubo longhouses in communities known as Alegria, Praia, Liberdade, Paraná, and Água Branca. These and other dispersed settlements are identified in Portuguese as above or by the name of the longhouse owner, e.g. *maloca do Pedro Cruz* and *maloca do Paulino* — in Marubo language, *Rao Mayañpañ shovo* and *Memañpañ shovo*. Brazilian names are used internally for persons and places whenever the interlocutor is external, as in radio communication, for example. The meanings of these names are not immediate reminiscences of regional characters or toponyms. They often originate, nonetheless, from those neo-western riverine settlements once called *seringais*, the rubber-tapping sites whose local economic activity ceased altogether in the 1980s after a severe and definite downfall in international prices and an increasing intra-national competition. Once again, if indirectly, the Marubo peoples model themselves after the *nawa* other.

Today — one speaks as of 1998 —, when great economic exploits have receded to the background, the Javari Valley Indigenous Land (*Terra Indígena Vale do Javari*) has been included in the PPTAL programme (Integrated Project of Protection to Indigenous Populations and Lands in Legal Amazonia). This is a joint association of the Brazilian and German Governments, through the respective efforts of GTZ (*Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit*) and FUNAI, which now seek the involvement of local indigenous leaderships in the area, currently under Marubo hegemony. The process is already at a quite advanced stage in the long juridical course of claims for native land rights. In the

fieldwork with the Marubo — travel, bureaucracy, and general arrangements — can be assessed by the proportion between quotidian time spent in the actual native villages and my overall stay in Brazil: roughly 1 : 2.

same year of 1998, the Ministry of Justice signed the law delimiting the indigenous lands in the Javari Valley, the second largest demarcated area in Brazil, encompassing the peoples known as Marubo, Matis, Mayoruna (Matsés), Kanamari and several otherwise unknown native groups. Wherever streams do not delimit the land, footpaths marking the boundaries are to be opened with native labour and supervision, supported by the technical and logistic assistance of FUNAI and GTZ.

As the indigenous peoples are officially recognised as active actors in the local politics, nowadays it is not too difficult to reach and locate their settlements, with missionary aeroplanes and the helicopters and GPS equipment that the PPTAL personnel use. We see that if, nevertheless, up to now the Marubo peoples have no easy access to neo-national territory, this is the result of their own historical choices, which favoured a mediated contact with the outside world. Their choice is to travel either through rugged footpaths, several-days walk across the Javari-Juruá watershed, or hundreds of miles down the river to the first riverine community outside the indigenous area. The local situation has not changed much from the first written accounts about the Javari Valley: the Ituí and the Curuçá Rivers still traverse dense forests, peopled by unaccounted-for peoples, whose account of contact has been long overlooked. Marubo histories run from the Juruá basin, flowing almost in parallel with the Javari River, and meeting its waters not far from its mouth into the Amazon; they move up and down along tributary streams and large rivers, as the Marubo myth-chants shall show. Their historical alternatives are and have been deep into the “wild” — *mokaka*, “bitterly” as they phrase it, mythically and musically.

I.3 some sketches

Marubo histories stretch back and forth in a spatial rhythm, along waterways and watersheds. The brief glimpses that Marubo memories catch of the times of rubber-tapping take their place in their present. Present relations with the foreign world are a transposed reflection of past realities, of the state of external and internal affairs when *caucho* latex was extracted from felled rubber-trees, and later on when the *seringueira* tree yielded its perennial rubbery sap.

The oldest living memories are from the turn of the century, when the Peruvian rubber-tappers navigated up the waters of the Javari basin on forays in search of rubber, lonely men in search of women, in search of slaves. One or two generations above the current middle-aged longhouse owners, more than a few Marubo children had been kidnapped to be taken down the Javari and brought up in riverine Amazon towns, both on the Brazilian and Peruvian sides of the border. These neo-national stepchildren — or slaves outright, according to the definition — would go back to their native motherland afterward and become leaders and pidgin traders among their own kin, intermediaries between the two worlds. Without difficulty, they could construe the many foreign lands surrounding the Javari Valley as one single whole. If most of the Amazonian Brazilians who could be found at the mouth of the basin were recent arrivals by then, Peruvians had long before traversed Western Amazonia and settled down on the slopes of the Eastern Andes, facing the Javarian waters from a distance. These former mission-based, farming or trading Peruvians were mestizos who had been long acquainted with the Panoans from the Ucayali River, and had not much regard for indistinct national and ethnic borders. They crossed the jungle and found their way into the

Brazilian lowlands along the Javarian waterways, deep within the indigenous valleys, notably during the first rubber-boom expansions³⁵.

The exploitation of *caucho* is nomadic, rotational. Often, *caucheros* left in single-man parties to be based in a provisional shanty, a *barracão* in the middle of nowhere, in the *centro* of the jungle. The *caucho* is contingent to the temporary availability of tree and tree-tapper, and *caucheros* departed for the headwaters where these two were available. Today the first of these *caucheros*, possibly Quechua-speakers, are remembered in native memories as virtual equals, potential partners: in their exploratory search of *caucho*, they encountered the warlike Marubo on the upper banks of the small tributaries of the Javari basin, along the *igarapés*, tiny streamlets that curl up to the heart of the forest. Peruvians are regarded as transient peoples, who were reckoned less for their exploitative ends than for their predatory means and paradoxical familial demeanour. This mingled well within the native kin-related struggles that were typical of those times. These Peruvians were *caucheros* in an accidental way; they became actual partners in the exchange of goods and in the mutual raids among Panoans. As such, Peruvians were ethnic middle-steps in a White-Indian gradient; above all, they were all competitors for Marubo women. These were truly *nawa* peoples: these Peruvians of the Javari, one could well imagine, are nearly “Marubo”, while the Marubo, conversely, could almost be called “Peruvians”, the generic foreigners in the official imagery, as the reports quoted above demonstrate.

Now it must be noted that, as much as “Marubo” is an imprecise ethnonym,

³⁵ Cf. Steward & Métraux 1948: 513.

“Peruvian” cannot be taken here as a designation of state-national identity, but rather as an idiosyncratic local category. As a conceptual tool it is for sure as tentative as the indigenous *nawa*; hence we shall not manipulate it here with too much dexterity.

Here we just report on discourses heard in the field, as that of *Paniñpa*, a middle-aged Marubo leader in the community of Alegria. His father was both a *romeya* “shaman” and a *shovoñ ivo* “longhouse owner”, who had a commanding lead within his household. Marubo authority is both a function of the warlike environment, as we shall see below, and of roles assumed within the external world at large. *Paniñpa* himself holds a reputation of strictness in his community, but his position of leadership is less due to warfare than to his capacity to command large labour parties among his kin in foreign transactions. He is known to Brazilians as *Lauro Brasil*, and used to trade and organise his own logging teams before the governmental interdict of timber extraction a few years ago. He tells us in diffident Portuguese how, when he was a child, much before the arrival of the Protestant missionaries, the Marubo were “tamed” (*amansados*) by the Peruvians, learning trading and exploitative skills, wavering between war and trade. Here in his voice being “tamed” is interestingly equated to wearing western clothes: “my father and all men went about just with an *envira* [bark fibre] around the waist to tie the foreskin of their penises, when they met the Peruvian”³⁶.

³⁶ Be they associated with a state of warfare or not, *Paniñpa*’s reminiscences of his father as a leader are somewhat similar to some early notes taken on the Kachinawa:

“At dawn, the chief speaks loudly while still on the hammock, assigning the daily tasks to everyone. Later on he wakes up and gives the orders once more in front of each hammock.” (Carvalho 1931: 228, my translation)

Clothes are not only a marker of “domestication” in the encounter with the Peruvian; in fact, they are part of the ontological constitution of the Marubo self. The cosmo-anthropogenic importance of clothes — designed as body ornaments — will be stressed more clearly later on, when the myth-chants come under our focus: as these myth-chants further attest, the Marubo are born in sequence with their clothes-ornaments. Indeed, besides the glans-protecting tie, in pre-contact times men could also wear what they call *shañpati*, a native cotton-woven loincloth. These days such attires have been substituted by ordinary western clothes, metonymically known as *oñpo* (“cloth”), whereas the female *vatxi*, a tubular piece of woven cotton worn as a skirt (or a word translatable simply as “egg”), maintains the original form, but now in industrial textile material. Regardless of the material, daily practices related to former garments remain alive: men hold their penises upright or stick them underneath their crotch when bathing, while women squat in the river to take off and wash their skirts³⁷.

Those we call the present-day Marubo are the outcome of this past interaction with Peruvians, as much as these peoples acquire their clothes as they spring from earth in their myth-music. “Peruvians” here are *nawa* par excellence, close-others, while this word refers to the specific native image of humanity that we come across in the Marubo myth-chants. Now we leave myth-chants aside for the moment to go back to the images of the Peruvians in everyday memories, here

³⁷ From descriptions, those Marubo garments look quite the same as those portrayed in old photographs of Uitoto Indians in the Middle Caquetá (Northwest Amazon), shown in Taussig 1987. Accordingly, Steward & Métraux generalise:

“Nakedness in men had a high correlation throughout the montaña with some method of tying up the genitals... [some] bound up the foreskin of the penis with a thread, whereas [others] fastened it up with a string of *Astrocaryum* passed around the waist” (1948: 571)

in the domestic realm of the household. These Peruvians did not differ from the Marubo in that they fancied neighbouring women and children; however, they caught them not only for family, but for slavery too. If violence was then usual among longhouses, it certainly remained constant in inter-ethnic contact, and both violence and contact across the land determined the pattern of longhouse settling. The Indian communities migrated up and down the streams in reply to a belligerent or peaceful environment. Peace drew peoples together, whereas longhouses were several days apart from each other in times of warfare. Peaceable visiting in between longhouses was as much usual as it is today, but in ancient times this peace alternated with feud, fission, and war raids that dispersed the settlements over wide distances.

The first evangelic missionaries to penetrate the area in the 1950s would hear even more vivid reminiscences of those “Peruvians” as part of the warlike atmosphere of contact: early native accounts would make evident the violence that their intrusion and “mutual domestication” entailed. For decades after the *caucheros* had vanished, it is said that one could still see the remains of a sunken boat down the Ituí River, where the whole crew aboard had killed each other in a fight. Meanwhile, it must be born in mind that such violent intrusion was parallel both to the struggling state of affairs between longhouses and to an expressive opening of the Marubo toward the exterior. Before Peruvians eventually disappeared from these rivers, after much feud and fission, they had traded for a long time with natives, penetrating and building shanty-deposits (“*barracões*”) up

to the Ituí and Curuçá headwaters³⁸.

As some place names in the Upper Ituí now evoke old *seringais* and the Brazilian rubber-tappers who lived there, so were the first western names given to the Marubo by and after the Peruvian *caucheros*. This explains why, after the breakdown of relations between Indians and Whites in the 1930s, by the time that contact was resumed in the 1940s-1950s, now toward the Juruá basin, longhouse owners were already known as *Aurelio, Carlo(s) Vargas, Dionisio, Ernesto, Domingo, Paulo, Julio, and Francisco Cruz*, for instance. Despite the violence, or maybe precisely through it, Peruvians could relate to and be considered as related by the Marubo. Parallel to violence, there was the exchange of goods, conviviality and, in consequence, mutual domestication. This was however shattered from time to time by political plots and mutual raids that involved as much rubber exploitation as it revolved around the domestic axis of struggling gender relations: the competition for women, *briga por causa de mulher*, as the Marubo say.

These days, one of the few non-Marubo living as an Indian in the Upper Ituí holds a laconic version of the local history. *João Branco* — “John, the White” — is a native Kulina, an Arawakan-speaker whose pale looks differ dramatically from the Marubo. He is an ex-soldier from the Brazilian Army who married in and lives among the longhouses of Vida Nova, remaining on that ethnic borderline that *nawa*-ness signifies for the Marubo. Being long experienced in the life of towns and battalions, throughout several forest landscapes and across international and

³⁸ Veteran missionary *João Americano* — *John Jansma*, “the American” — says:

“These Peruvians were evil, and evil remained in this land for a long time. *Roberto* [Robert Allen, that first missionary to settle among the Marubo] found with the Indians a debit slip dated from 1912!”

inter-ethnic boundaries, he is able to explain in synthetic words the chain of political-economic dominance that ensnared Amazonian peoples at the turn of the century. The Kulina Indian summarises all those events that are analysed by so many ethnographers: Colombians killed; Brazilians traded; and, like middlemen, Peruvians killed and traded, that is, they domesticated “with” the Marubo. While historians stress how localised strife was inserted into the political realm of global economic relations, local histories are only explainable after distinctions have been drawn on the specific modes of indigenous interaction with the exterior, at the internal, intrinsically gender-biased level of native politics³⁹.

The “identifying” mode of interaction between *caucheros* and natives implied that those Peruvians took sides within internal Marubo friction. Eventually many were killed, when external circumstances finished off the great rubber boom in the 1930s, after an economic decline of some twenty years motivated by competition in the world-market. In the environs of the Javari Valley, international violence revolved around the control over latex production, whereas indigenous warfare had women as its target of greed. This was the violence-triggering factor, both in intra- and inter-ethnic relations, and when the boom was over, the exploitation of rubber was brought to an end because of gender-related strife. If low prices stopped Peruvians from coming back the search of rubber, the Marubo say that were expelled for good in order to settle disputes over women.

³⁹ Cf. Melatti, ed. 1981 and Taussig 1987. Meanwhile, *João Branco*, in more detail:

“The English who managed the rubber business and the Colombian hired by them killed Indians at a distance. They didn’t even talk. Their rifles didn’t let anyone mess about with their business... the Indians were shot as they were seen from a turn of the river, lying on the beach. Afterwards the Peruvian came and domesticated, married, had children, mixed up, traded, worked in the forest with their help, but also killed many of us. Then the Brazilian came and we made peace.”

If the rubber boom had raised the issue of state-national border demarcation, its decline diverted governmental attention from the area. In the meantime inter-ethnic interaction, with the alternation of peace and violence in the jungle, was coterminous with the consolidation of international boundaries. The subsequent neglect of clear limits meant both the permeability of frontiers and the “Peruvian” lingering even more as a vague category of Indian-ness than as an indicator of nationality. Such a category included then all those who had close unofficial contact with Indians and carried out unknown and uncertain trade. In those years of White oblivion of the forests (c. 1930s-1940s), of unclear ethnic and national boundaries, Brazilian suspicions of ongoing deals involving Indians and “Peruvians” were as consistent as the generally assigned, vague category of “Marubo”. The “Marubo” domain was there where “Peruvians”, “bandoleers and adventurers” or otherwise nameless traders, carried out their suspicious affairs. Eventually, the purported certainty that such illegal, “international” contact was being carried out among the isolated, indigenous populations of the upper tributary courses of the Javari Valley became the moving motor for governmental action to be taken in the area. Hence, the affirmation of a definite “ethnicity” to the term “Marubo” meant a declaration of Brazilian sovereignty; and this in turn meant that, more than an international initiative, the consolidation of frontiers was dependent on indigenous collaboration. Insofar as the Marubo felt compelled to establish peaceful relations with westerners, the borders between Peru and Brazil were to be established clearly. If this was an historical movement toward the definition of identities, it has been both native and national.

In the past, those “Peruvians” have not always been from Peru, we state it

now and again. These days this “category” vanished visually from Marubo life, if not conceptually. In the Upper Ituí, the sole surviving presence of a Peruvian past is *Mário Peruano*, a fascinating character who, not surprisingly, is the only non-native living now as a true longhouse owner. If older Marubo still salute you Peruvian-style — *compadre, paisano* —, this will be little more than a survival of that original *nawa* identity-with-difference that, on the surface at least, defined the native vis-à-vis the foreigner. Contrariwise, the life stories *Mário* and his family, like those of his now deceased uncle *Faustino* and his younger cousin *Sebastião*, conform well to the intertwined and self-constituting genealogy of the Marubo-Peruvian relations. *Sebastião* is the one surviving son of *Faustino*, a mestizo who, after being brought up by his Marubo mother and her relatives in the longhouse, was taken to lead a life in the borderline between the Indian and the White world, as a half-Brazilian, half-Peruvian — in short, as an Amazonian native.

In line with the flexibility of these ethnic-national categories, *Sebastião* and *Mário*, the two living reminiscences of the Peruvian in Marubo life, have never ever in their lives been to Peru. Indeed, *Mário Peruano* has a stronger social grounding in the Upper Ituí than *João Branco*. Contrary to the “marginal” Kulina Indian, large part of *Mário*’s past has been spent in between Marubo longhouses, along the contorted meanders of his Amazonian life. This qualified him to a “Marubo” status, which was eventually cemented when the now deceased community leader *Francisco Cruz* played the matchmaker between himself and *Mayañewa*, an older widow. As the head of a native family, *Mário* was then able to establish kin connections that entitled him to the “ownership” of a longhouse. As a living embodiment of Marubo history, it was not without reason that *Mário*

— “Mario, the Peruvian” — would tell us one day in the usual local idiom, but embellished by a unusually protesting tone: “I am a child of Brazil!” Then again, this was stated while he would trace Peruvian-mestizo origins up to just two generations before; *Mário Peruano* has always being prodigal of stories from his past.

Mário’s maternal grandfather was a *cauchero* called *Comapa*. As many within that profession of the old times, he used to take part in *correrias*, literal “forays” intended to enslave and massacre entire populations for the benefit of invaders. These incursions cleared the land out of those Indians who were reluctant to join in or tolerate rubber-tapping parties. Yet indigenous complicity to the violence could be found, inasmuch as these forays were as well vengeful raids against previous attacks between longhouses, and served for capturing slaves in the native sense of the word: prisoners were seized not so much for enforced labour, but rather for domestic extension, to be forced wives and children. *Mário*’s grandmother became part of one of these “enslaved families”, and this was not a misfortune for the victims of exogenous raids in the Javari. She was spared from massacre and married her captor in the indigenous fashion, had children, and later traversed the jungle from Peru to the Brazilian side of the border. In *Mário*’s words: “when that young Indian was captured in a *correria*, my grandfather *Comapa* shouted: ‘don’t kill her!’ and took her for his wife, naming her *Ramona*”⁴⁰.

Such “Peruvians” as *Mário*’s family — nomadic settlers, intermingling

⁴⁰ See the definitions of *correria* as they vary according to the agent’s perspective in Taussig 1987.

mestizos — became part of the migratory waves of *caucheros* who left their homelands after the decadence of the rubber exploitation. From Peru, these peoples came across the Javari toward the Juruá basin, where they found some casual work as labourers in *seringais*, the western settlements where tracts of sparse *Hevea* trees were still tapped for latex long after the boom was over. Some of the life stories in *Mario*'s family are well documented in the official archives of SPI, for his uncle *Faustino* was to be the protagonist of episodes that emblematised the “Peruvian” in both Marubo and Brazilian imageries: half-Indian, half-White.

So in 1933 the *Comapa* family is reported to have arrived from Peru in the Brazilian *seringal* of Boa Fé, in the confluence of the Juruá River with the tributary waters of the Ipixuna. The whole family was converted into *seringueiros*, settled rubber-tappers, but only four of them survived the adaptation to the arduous job, remaining on the spot with *Ramona*, the Javarian Indian matriarch. After a while, the aged *Ramona* was the only one who had survived the local adversities along with two of her grandchildren — *Mário* and his sister — and her son *Faustino*, who led by then an unstable life as the local *regatão*, a peddling retailer visiting the neighbouring communities on his boat. The *Comapa* family had a different vocation from the other, Brazilian emigrants: more than the nationals of any specific country or members of a determined ethnic denomination, they were Amazonians, children of the jungle. This lack of definition accounted for their reasonable capacity of adaptation to different nation-states and ethnic groups; but their case was not entirely exceptional, either among neo-nationals or native peoples, in that which is a transitional territory par excellence. Their “Peruvian” affinity with the Marubo was by no means coincidental: their ethnic-national

“coincidence” was historical-geographic.

At about the same time, another Marubo story parallels *Mário Peruano*'s account of his family. It refers to a particular instance of the historical construction of the prototypical *nawa*, the mythical other-figure upon which the Marubo self is constructed. *Mário*'s uncle *Faustino* fits into this role later, as his fate intermeshes with that of the Marubo. The stories of their unifying constitution based on such *nawa*-otherness is not unrelated to the encounter with the “Peruvian”, to the *correria* raids, just as the longhouse massacres with the kidnapping of children and women were not just an exogenous invention or, if they were, they have been deeply ingrained in the indigenous self-identity. The following historical sketches instance this statement with almost mythical, i.e. abbreviated and generalising overtones.

Possibly in the early 1930s, a dispute between the leaders of two Marubo longhouses provoked the destruction of a native community. The massacred community was led by *Shawañ* (literally “Red Macaw”, the *-nawa* name of a current kinship section), a man who unduly claimed rights of marriage, rights of sororal polygyny to which he considered to be himself entitled. The situation was tense: intrigue involving violent reputations, suspicions of sorcery and poisoning — two interconnected semantic realms that are themselves related through myth-music. The whole story resulted in public insults, as when a youth sent as a messenger for a party invitation had his glans exposed, utter offences that led to retaliation in the form of the concerted executions. The offending longhouse leaders, *Shawañ* and his brothers, were ambushed. Only one of the defeated leader's brothers fled in desperation, managing to escape certain death by coming

across a group of incoming rubber-tappers near where the community of Vida Nova stands nowadays, on the banks of the Upper Ituí. He was taken down the river to live in small neo-national villages working as an occasional *mateiro* — a forester, an expert in jungle-survival, a common occupation among “tamed” Indians. In turn, White people had his casual help in expeditions into Indian land. The exile acquired thus a White name: *Ramon*.

Meanwhile, the Marubo warring leaders who had planned his and his family’s death achieved hegemony over the other longhouses. *Aurelio* was how Brazilians called the longhouse owner who had triggered open conflict and killed *Ramon*’s brother *Shawañ*. Under his leadership, the Marubo expelled all the Peruvians from their lands. *Aurelio*’s leadership was, as it happened within and among their longhouses, a function of friction: indigenous ascendance was based on the initiative to decimate the exogenous opponent. The gap has consequently been widened between the two worlds, except for one link: *Ramon*, as the one Indian who lived among the White people, was to be aware of the local issues of power. The connection between the two worlds that the Marubo were by then keen to eliminate was activated but once, through that personal link, and that was enough to detonate the fragile balance of contingent authority in the hands of one longhouse leader: *Aurelio*.

At some point *Ramon* took part in an expedition of loggers and poachers: the Brazilian were impelled upstream by the new exploitative possibilities to be opened in the headwaters of the Curuçá. More aware of the dangers of the adventurous expedition, he lagged behind in his canoe while the others went up ahead along the stream. The Marubo were living then by the smaller streamlets

away from the route of the newcomers and, following the lead of the belligerent *Aurelio*, and after a convoluted and disruptive past in external and internal politics, were prompt in keeping the main waterways free of invaders. Expectedly, *Aurelio* led a foray to attack the approaching canoes. He was the first to shoot with his bow, for his companions would not dare: they would rather talk. Yet since virtuous oratory and predation are more complementary than exclusive for these peoples, in the warlike chief his followers could recognise the legitimacy of both values, no matter how temerarious he was. *Aurelio*'s speech and action had a challenging and predatory tone: he shot one, and then two of the incoming men. One of the injured two managed to reach the riverbank and, agonising in pain, he heard his murderer intoning the "jaguar's groan": *Aurelio* spoke *inoñ vana* to him, the predatory speech par excellence, repeating ascending intervals of a fifth, shouting loud in the utmost Marubo expression of verbal anger: "why have you invaded our land?"

But to *Aurelio*'s fate, the hat of the second White man he shot had fallen unnoticed on the water, floating downstream. The Indian *Ramon* saw it drifting, and asked his partners to wait, while he jumped on land and carried on behind the trees. *Aurelio*'s companions then saw their former kin-enemy approaching and warned their leader, in vain... the killer would not listen, deafened by his own *inoñ vana*, his jaguar-like shouts. *Ramon* shot. *Aurelio* fell and, half-dead, he had to hear the rejoinder of his own murderer's groaning jaguar (*inoñ*) words (*vana*): "you killed my family, now you have your lot!" *Ramon* returned to his half-urban life among the White people, never to recover fully his Indian identity again. Still *Aurelio* had died and this would change Marubo life dramatically, affecting their self-identity as well as that of the surrounding national communities: his story

entailed future consequences for all parties involved in a past of local friction.

Now the two stories intermingle, those of *Ramon* and of *Mário's* family, as these characters move in different directions — in and out their native territory, from South to North. Their successive trajectories flow along the course of the Javarian rivers, as all Marubo histories do. *Mário Peruano*, the one who was to end up marrying no one less than *Aurelio's* daughter *Mayañewa*, had not yet been born when his parents moved from the banks of the Javari River to the *seringal* settlement of Boa Fé, near the mouth of the Ipixuna, a left-bank tributary of the Juruá. As in those days the situation had grown too difficult in their original Peruvian homeland, they settled there in the hope of finding work in more stable surrounds. We stopped our story when the whole *Comapa* family was working hard with *seringa* latex, all children dead or married and gone in search of fortune elsewhere, except for *Faustino*, the youngest son who had arrived on the Brazilian riverbanks in his late teenage years. His youngest sister was *Mário's* mother, who died from childbirth soon after the death of her husband. *Ramona* and *Faustino*, the old Indian grandmother and the uncle of the two little orphan siblings, were raising *Mário* and his sister on their own when the news arrived of signs of the Marubo on the banks of the Ipixuna River.

Aurelio's death resulted in a dilemma for his peoples. It was not a question of leading power or lack thereof. Rather, among these peoples, the state of outbound relations has ontological precedence over the inward status of a leader — and the qualification of such priority is no exaggeration. For the Marubo, the connection with the external world was the historical factor in question, the issue that had to be decided on, and the internal affairs of authority were a mere

consequence of it. After all those years of rubber-boom contact, with the resulting interchange of women and children, some of the longhouse owners who outlived *Aurelio*'s aggressive leadership had, besides western names, also some command of the language of westerners, especially *Carlos Vargas* and *Dionisio*, and were therefore best qualified to reopen the channels between the Marubo and the world abroad.

Both these two young Marubo men went to the *seringal* Boa Fé, at that time a suitably located retail emporium by the banks of the Juruá, to look for someone to provide western-manufactured goods in exchange for forest products. They sought a *patrão*, a debt-peonage boss and, to some extent, a sort of godfather too, in the local jargon. The White *seringueiros* rubber-tappers were frightened at the Indians and fled; and it was only through the old matriarch *Ramona*, an obviously Marubo-related Javarian, that *Mário*'s kin could relate to the peoples who emerged on the riverbanks. Instigated by his mother, *Faustino* went alone after his presumed relatives in the forest. They met, and all of a sudden *Ramona* died; but *Faustino* still managed to take *Mário*, his sister and a cousin to the Marubo longhouses, which at the time were still concentrated on the Upper Curuçá, near where the dead chief *Aurelio* had had his peoples congregated. The local surviving *Comapa* kin, three children and their uncle, arrived to stay there in the year of 1946. *Faustino* immediately responded to the demands of the Marubo and qualified himself as a *regatão*, an intermediary retailer for natives, a *patrão*, their "patron-boss".

Faustino's tragic story then proceeds, raising the many controversies that survive his death to this day and illustrate the contradictory dynamics of mutual

identity and difference between Peruvians and Brazilians, Indians and Whites. Out of the many intertwined stories that constitute our field notes, we selected his as an icon toward making explicit the shifting complexities of local identities. *Faustino* juggled with those identities and managed to impersonate each in different stages of his tragedy. He took high risk for a grand fate, that of becoming both a “White” cattle landowner and an “Indian” longhouse leader — and lost. He was doomed to suffer from the internal competition of such Marubo leaders as *Carlos Vargas* and *Dionisio* on one side, and the coercion tactics of *Thomaz Maia*, the Brazilian-Portuguese patron-boss on the other.

Thomaz Maia was the former patron of the *seringueiros* tappers in Boa Fé, the father of *Nilo Maia*, the present-day *patrão* — or, in modern terms, the current “administrator” of the old rubber-tapping settlement. His father *Thomaz* was the patriarch of the *Maia*, the Portuguese family which crossed the Atlantic in search of the new riches of the never-exhausting Brazilian ex-colony. When *Thomaz Maia* landed in the riverine *seringal* of Boa Fé, *Faustino* was already trading with the Marubo who, being all too eager for the western goods of which they had been deprived during *Aurelio*’s reign, had become too hardworking in exchange for too little. *Thomaz Maia*, a typical *coronel de barranco*, a “riverbank colonel”, a former informal impersonation of the state authority, dislodged *Faustino*, claiming legal ownership over the land and the post-colonial, “real” monopoly in indigenous dealings. *Faustino*, as Indian-Peruvian, was to be sent out from Brazilian-Portuguese lands. *Thomaz* sided with the constituted powers and arrested *Faustino* under the usual accusation of debt: the former was the *patrão* lender, the latter the indebted *aviado*, the weak side of debt-peonage, the *aviamento* system.

Under threat of death, the common consequence of a grave infringement to the *aviamento* chain of debt-peonage that ran from indigenous lands downriver toward greater and larger urban centres, *Faustino* headed to Cruzeiro do Sul, the nearest jural authority, determined to take a strategic political position. It was already the year of 1951. Threatened by *Thomaz*, the Portuguese White, *Faustino* countermoved with his impersonation of the Brazilian Indian before the state-authorities: to the city judge he protested against uncivilised persecution, and to the Federal Government, through the offices of the SPI, he requested goods under the pretext of due material assistance to “his” peoples. To Brazilians he was the Indian *tuxaua*, “indigenous leader”; to the Marubo however, he was the White *patrão* or, rather, a “Peruvian”. This ambiguity was expressed in the city, where he would circulate adorned with feathers and weapons with his otherwise duly Indian co-workers, among whom he was of course the only one to be fluent in Portuguese and Spanish. This same ambiguity was inverted in the jungle, where *Faustino* would exploit his co-residents in the White fashion, with wages that were far too discrepant with the amount of rubber and animals pelts they would tap and poach for him.

These ambiguous positions were in themselves difficult to sustain, and became in effect unsustainable where their two loci of enactment touched each other. The dire downfall of *Faustino* in all fronts is a univocal reflection of the equivocal insertion of neighbouring Peruvian mestizos in Brazil after the rubber-boom, and of his uncertain position as a *nawa*-foreigner among the Marubo. It followed his facing the dual opposition of White and Indian male authority, positions that, even though implying different semantic stresses, were both

competing for scarce resources: while one emphasised the procurement of produce from the jungle, the other put emphasis on women, and *Faustino* competed for both. *Faustino* displeased both the riverine *patrão* boss and the longhouse leaders, especially *Carlos* and *Dionisio*, who had greater mastery of the western ways among their peers. Intimidated himself, *Faustino* intimidated both Indian and White, pitting one against the other; but he could not cope with a third party affecting the conjuncture.

This new factor came into play in the following year of 1952, making the political-economic situation increasingly complex. Hearing the news of native newcomers nearing neo-national settlers, the North American New Tribes Mission sent its first evangelists to the area. These were Jose Moreno, the scout, and Robert Allen, the first missionary pioneer to settle with a family among the Marubo, a few years later, staying from 1955 to 1957. The incoming missionaries, for obvious reasons, sided with the local powers and the state-constituted authorities.

The diversion here on the New Tribes missionaries is necessary in order to set the scene of contact from the Marubo point-of-view. All too often, ethnographies adopt the inadvertent, one-sided rhetoric of evangelists, which fails to appreciate the indigenous historical strategies. Rather than active agents in their own history, indigenous peoples are too often regarded as the “non-reached” ones, the ones who are passive containers. In fact, the choice of whether to maintain continuous relations with westerners or not has always been in their hands, constituting a dilemma that rose to a climax with the introduction of the New Tribes Mission. Peace among Marubo longhouses was achieved at the expense of many deaths, of the indigenous leaders and the *nawa* foreigner alike. It was not a

mere question of whether to resume contact with foreigners or not; the movement toward large rivers is a mythical given. The issue then at stake was what would be the basis of such new foreign contact, and what were the risks worth being taken. The Marubo opted then for a constant and measured, however controlled and mediated access to the large riverbanks, initially dealing with rubber-tapping settlers in the Juruá River, and eventually adopting the missionaries as their main intermediaries. Nonetheless, this choice entailed some sort of symbiosis with the latter, as much as previous choices had led to an identity between “Peruvian” and “Marubo”. If the contentious issues in past times of war were women, the basis of the contract with missionaries entailed problems of another order. Indigenous moral precepts state that one should never ever be stingy (*wachika*) or aggressive (*onika*) towards one’s neighbours, even when living in quarters apart, as is the case between missionaries and natives in Vida Nova. These values are incompatible with proximity: for the Marubo, stinginess is contagious through bodily fluids, and aggressiveness is an ethical affection to be reserved for your enemies or for ritual, extraordinary occasions — as in *Aurelio*’s instance above, with the *inoñ vana* intonations, when such affective tone is manifested at a supra-personal level.

The Marubo put up with such immoral behaviour of evangelicals because they understand that such White-Indian vicinity was forced upon them by their history — not by the westerners themselves. Such foreign presence was allowed to happen out of native necessity itself, and the resulting, conflictive morality of contact has always been under negotiation. The acceptance of missionaries close to their longhouses, although conflictive, results from a strategy toward finding suitable mediators with the western world. The establishment of the evangelic

mission still follows political movements highly controlled by the indigenous peoples: indeed, its permission for permanence has always been questioned and under debate during fieldwork. Some old Marubo longhouse owners, on the one hand, may have good memories from the missionary *Roberto*, like *Txomañpa* (*Abel Dionisio*) who, while being actively engaged and keen on shamanic knowledge and practices, in festivals and curing sessions, was sympathetic to missionary activities. Yet, on the other hand, the memories of *Roberto* are those of a failed experience, foils for critical remarks against the stinginess and aggressiveness of some missionaries who are still active in Marubo land. These are complaints that reach a consensus among the Marubo and find agreement today even among some of the evangelicals themselves.

The first New Tribes bastion among Javarian Indians, established by missionary *Roberto*, ended up being removed indeed. The missionaries give uncertain reasons for the temporary abandonment of their project: it might have been due to governmental pressure or to hard working conditions, since New Tribes says that the pioneering missionary left the Mission altogether soon after his acknowledged failure among the Marubo. After contact in 1952, their first failed attempt to settle between 1955 and 1957 was followed by repeated applications for official permits of stay in indigenous land. Permission was granted in 1959, but the missionary project did not gain new momentum before 1962, with the arrival of an ascetic North American voluntary who was prepared to spend a few years in the forest without a permanent house nor a family of his own, as his predecessor had had. He wandered along in between longhouses, in a semi-nomadic existence, until his Marubo co-residents were prepared to settle for good

on the banks of the Upper Ituí, where their communities stand up to these days.

In fact, natives have a more precise version of the permanent contact with westerners that resulted from the insertion of New Tribes in their lives. In spite of the current dissatisfaction with missionaries, bringing nostalgic memories of their initial arrival, the tape-recorded testimonies of older, now-deceased longhouse leaders attest that the pioneering evangelicals were in fact expelled out of a native fear against the illnesses that were brought along with their recurrent transit to and from foreign lands. The rationale of this follows the recurrent indigenous image of the exogenous *nawa* aetiology of all diseases, as we shall see later. Old *Raimundão*, one of the recorded voices, is precisely one of those leaders who first accepted the missionary permanence in their second attempt to settle in the early 1960s. He was the first leader to build a longhouse on the banks of the Upper Ituí at that time, in Vida Nova, always asserting his authority over the presence or absence of the *nawa* foreigner among them. *Raimundão* conditioned the missionary activity to a satisfactory health and educational assistance, precisely to counteract the predicaments of contact. The lack of success of the first missionaries is also claimed to have been due to their own unsatisfactory conduct, to their inadequacy to stand up to an indigenous ethos. Up to now, in a political-economic conjuncture in which missionary mediation is still important, the recurrent native threat against their current permanence has never been actualised. Still it has always been conditioned upon what medicine and knowledge they have to offer: “when we know how to speak, we’ll send the *Americano* away”,

Raimundão used to say⁴¹.

Thus if one pays heed to Marubo voices, it becomes clear that the initiative for the re-establishment of relations with westerners was theirs. As the outline above suggests, the regained contact that followed an interruption of some ten years, between the 1930s and the 1940s, was in effect following a cyclical pattern that typifies Marubo history. Initially, isolation had become the result of the two interrelated processes of internal strife and the expulsion of *nawa* newcomers. Further contact became then a necessity, insofar as the *nawa* foreigner is a necessary element in Marubo identity, and it took place along a discontinuous chronological scale, until the permanent arrival of missionaries. The year of 1952 represents a landmark, when the New Tribes Mission and the Indian met for the first time in the Javari Valley: afterward, missionary families settled for good and airstrips were opened. Yet in a sense this was the re-enactment of an existing experience rather than a series of groundbreaking events: with the aid of missionary assistance, mainly medical, the natives were only able to re-establish continuous commercial links with the world abroad.

The year of 1952 is even more remarkable because it marks the downfall of *Faustino*, whose story we can now again proceed with. Back in those days, the usual surface route that the Marubo took to reach trading posts was even lengthier than it is today, running upriver toward the *varadores*, the footpaths across the watershed between the Javarian headwaters and the banks of the Juruá. Moreover, this itinerary became rather difficult for *Faustino* as his political position

⁴¹ The voice of *Raimundão* is in cassette-tape and tape transcription, always in the library of *Museu do Índio*, Rio de Janeiro (FUNAI 1988).

deteriorated. Limited in his movements and threatened by *Thomaz Maia*'s guardsmen and other bullies from Boa Fé, in 1955 he resorted again to the judge of Cruzeiro do Sul. This was to be of no avail, in spite of the patriotic zeal of the judge, who reiterated his sympathy toward *Faustino* as the latter portrayed himself as the poor Brazilian Indian, the Amazonian native wronged by powerful foreign forces. This time *Faustino* also complained against the missionary *Roberto*, who had sealed an alliance with *Thomaz*, as his son *Nilo* today testifies. Too bad for *Faustino*: rather than a "Brazilian Indian", his paradoxical figure was too easily identifiable with that of an indigenous foreigner. *Faustino* was himself the mirror image of the foreign alliance he had to face; in Marubo language, he was too much of a *nawa*⁴².

As a power to be reckoned with, the patron-boss *Thomaz Maia* had control over the police and armed forces. This helped him to try and assume, if only once, the mediating role *Faustino* had assigned himself with regard to the Marubo. *Thomaz* confiscated all the goods *Faustino* had requested from the SPI four years before as an Indian transvestite, and distributed them among the Marubo longhouse owners themselves, gaining for himself recognition and more local power. *Thomaz* had even gained the sympathy of the local governmental authorities of SPI. *Faustino*'s complaints back in 1951 had led to an official enquiry, in response to the exhortations of the judge who had paid heed to the "Brazilian Indian". This had resulted in a report produced by a SPI inspector in

⁴² The judge of Cruzeiro do Sul had an obviously inaccurate picture of the situation. This shows well when he refers to the Marubo as "Coringa" and to *Faustino*'s surname as "Mapes" in a telegram to the Governor of the State of Amazonas dated from 24th May of 1955, found in the archives of the late SPI in the *Museu do Índio*, Rio de Janeiro.

1952, which nevertheless looked with clear favour on the legal owners of Boa Fé and pictured *Faustino* as a misbehaving impostor: a Peruvian in carnivalesque disguise, who exploited his “genuine” labour force and spent his money boisterously in local taverns. While this picture is not likely to be too incorrect, it still may be not entirely true, given the subtleties of local identities: for the Marubo, *Faustino* was the most genuine *nawa*, a foreigner utterly close to themselves. But the inspection did not report on native subtleties: after the investigations, SPI assigned an official post to *Thomaz*’s cousin *Antonio Maia*, nominated now “Delegate of Indians in Boa Fé”, in order to “normalise that region”, and this sealed *Faustino*’s fate⁴³.

Faustino’s sad fate, murdered by his Marubo employees who had already been unhappy about his exploitative conduct, was at last motivated by a sexual misdemeanour. In committing adultery and willing to marry his classificatory daughter, he became ultimately responsible for a pivotal continuity between two moments in Marubo history: *Faustino* impersonated the transition between the Peruvian *cauchero* and the North American missionary, two indigenous personifications of *nawa* foreignness, two forms of western-native mediation at the limits of Marubo self-identity. His death was a landmark of the White insertion in the Marubo landscape, by connecting the indigenous past, when gender-centred homicide was ever imminent among scattered communities, and the concentrated conjunction of present-day longhouses with exogenous agents. *Faustino*, ambiguous mediator and ambitious maverick, not only combined several shifting

⁴³ The correspondence involving Caio Valadares Filho, the judge of Cruzeiro do Sul, and the SPI director Alipio Edmundo Lage, as well as the inspection report signed by the

identities, but through his dual ambiguities and ambitions — those of “Peruvian” and *nawa* — he got involved in fatal political issues that were in force both within the indigenous territory and among the surrounding westerners. *Faustino*’s fate still today haunts the delicate politics between Indians and Whites in the Marubo world.

Faustino was outlived by the two children he had his Marubo wife *Vasiñewa*. She is still alive as well, now married to *Pekoñpa* (Felipe Ermeino), an important longhouse owner in the community of Liberdade, who duly stepfathered the surviving offspring of *Faustino*. Their daughter now lives as a fully-fledged Marubo in the community of Maronal, in the Upper Curuçá. Here gender marks a decisive difference in the destinies of *Faustino*’s daughter and her brother *Sebastião*. He was raised as a native and received the name of *Shapoñpa*, but his attempts to constitute a proper Marubo family were in vain. Later in life, his cousin *Mário Peruano* took him to town and the big world. *Mário* today declares to “have taught *Sebastião* the [Protestant] creed” by the time he was himself a Pentecostal, and now, between the Juruá and the Javari, the two cousins share with the missionaries the widening avenues to the western universe. *Mário* bought a boat in society with some Marubo elders to go regularly to Cruzeiro do Sul and get the little social benefit indigenous peoples are now entitled. He charges a small fee from each for “administrative expenses”. *Sebastião*, after much personality-juggling, married a Brazilian evangelical in town and works there for the incoming missionaries from New Tribes. He might be soon qualifying as the first indigenous convert: *Sebastião* is the only “full Protestant” as far as some missionaries’

official Alfredo José da Silva, are also available in the SPI archives.

understandings are concerned, and although some natives do not view him as a “full Marubo”. It is no wonder that he spends less time among the longhouses than his own “Peruvian” cousin. *Sebastião* has outdone his deceased father: he is the one figure who shifts among identities best.

As implied in the narratives above, the coincidence of *Faustino*’s death with the arrival of missionaries is not arbitrary. The common ground between the two events was constructed by the Marubo themselves and their historical agency. The coincidental events were a turning point in the progressive inclusion of westerners in the native world, from Peruvians to North Americans. While the struggle among longhouses was effectively reduced in the transition from one period to the other, the historical-geographic move did not put an end to the conflictive landscape of those lands, at least as a mythical-cyclical potential. While *nawa* foreignness is constitutive of indigenous identities, permanent intercourse with the exogenous *nawa* — *caucheros* or missionaries, *seringueiros* or loggers, FUNAI or NGOs — is the simultaneous precondition and consequence of an ethnic construct, the “Marubo”, a unitary contingency. Conversely, this contingent unity is an ongoing paradox vis-à-vis the fragmentary character of these peoples. To come to terms with the western-*nawa* world, these -*nawa* peoples gathered and, somehow circumstantially, isolated themselves together; and still the engagement with westerners is an ontological-recurrent necessity for those many peoples who are now called Marubo. These -*nawa* peoples are themselves *nawa*-others; to maintain their fragmentation within a peaceful environment is their great historical challenge, their mythical compulsion.

I.4 bitter and wild

After much controversial naming through history, as discussed above, we come back to Marubo meanings of selfhood that, for obvious and not-so-obvious reasons, entail their signification of otherness; that is, their own definition of human being “of a kind” implies their particular conception of generic alterity. “Humankind” has been the other, the anti-self for these peoples, ever since their social organisation was conceived. Those who were henceforth called the Marubo “proper”, in the Upper and Middle Ituí and Curuçá, disguise their plurality under this fortuitous “umbrella-denomination”. For those who live in the aforementioned community nuclei on the banks of these rivers are one people in plural: they are *yora*, “persons” comprised of several kinship sections, *-nawa* “peoples” who stand in complementary opposition to the foreign *nawa*⁴⁴.

These are the descendants of those little-known, “fierce” *índios bravos* who came across foreigners in the successive guises of enslaver, rubber-tapper, missionary, logger or riverine trader. As we have seen, the progressive mutual acknowledgement with the nation-state happened from the rubber-boom in the end of last century until the post-war period and the advent of the missionary expansion from North America, with the intermittent intervention from the Brazilian Government. As we repeat so often, this has been no smooth process,

⁴⁴ We lack precise numbers for those community nuclei besides the one in the Upper Ituí. Informally however, we know that more than 200 individuals live in the Maronal community in the Upper Curuçá, in several longhouse clusters or settlements gathered close together. The overall Marubo or Marubo-speaking population is otherwise estimated as something between 900 and 1000 individuals, including the smaller communities of the middle courses of the Ituí and Curuçá, and a few persons and families settled in the neighbouring Brazilian cities and villages.

with isolation and trade, war and peace alternating throughout the twentieth century. It was only one generation ago, when commercial, labour, and cultural interchange made the official historical change no longer reversible, that the higher visibility of these peoples vis-à-vis the nation-state gave ethnic specificity and new significance to the long-used, worn-out denomination “Marubo”.

In contrast to other Pano peoples as the neighbouring Mayoruna-related Matis who, possibly due to their small numbers, display an apparent physical homogeneity, the present looks of the Marubo hint at past of genealogical turmoil, in spite of their large degree of shared culture. It is as if the Matis and other unknown peoples of the Javari Valley were what those who are now “Marubo” used to be in the past. All those who, within the diffused Pano universe, now concentrate among the hinterland fractions that have had recent contact with the nation-state, would have been themselves “fearsome savages” at one time. In the public view of governmental officials for instance, “savage” or “indomitable” are those who still today remain in the very middle of terra firma forest and resist the western siege. Still the Marubo peoples cannot help but admit, if only in private and in their own language, that they are themselves *mokanawa* — “bitter people”, a native qualification that constitutes an indefinite but definitional aspect of those inter-riverine Panoans who, in the centuries of colonisation, had more ephemeral relations with non-indigenous populations.

One brief episode in the field illustrates this well. It featured *Raoñewa*, a widow, the unusual female longhouse owner in Vida Nova, a circumstance caused by the frequent absences of her twenty-something year-old son *Mapi* among the Brazilians in the vicinity. There was no permanent male presence in her longhouse,

with the exception of the regular visits of her neighbouring son-in-law to her daughter. Her son *Mapi* was at the time living through a period of life-style schizophrenia, typical of his age-group: Marubo adolescents live right on the vertex between intensive missionising and shamanising, between the jungle- and city-spaces, half-way between the isolated longhouse communities and the promiscuous urban stress, engaging in wage labour in the western world from time to time. Youngsters leave their homeland both to experience a wider horizon and as a means to achieve prestige once back with their kin. Unless they have an unstable familial situation, caused by, say, the premature death of a father or the very rarely carefree attitude of stepfathers, all tend to come back home at times, and eventually for good. While away, their main urban destinies are, in decreasing order of importance, the Brazilian cities of Cruzeiro do Sul, Guajará, Atalaia do Norte, Benjamin Constant and Tabatinga. In terms of size, Cruzeiro do Sul is the second largest city in the State of Acre with about sixty thousand inhabitants in the ethnographic present (1998), in contrast with the actual frontier between the Marubo and White-land, where there are no more than small rural settlements like Boa Fé. All the other cities neighbouring the indigenous territory are smallish, with the exception of Tabatinga, which forms a urban continuum with the Colombian free-trading Amazonian port of Leticia, opening a window to a wider world for native teenagers — at least before they reach maturity and create their own families.

The situation of age-related mobility tends to change slightly with the recent governmental policies of conceding a special pension for native elders who can prove their status. With this, most of the Marubo get more familiar with western

ways. *Raoñewa* is in one such situation of incremented mobility. Further, her lad *Mapi* is well familiar with the Portuguese language and quite at home in those favourite Brazilian destinations for those who travel toward the banks of the Juruá River. He seems to be far more at ease in transit than at his actual home. Before leaving his kin for extended periods, *Mapi* had been old and strong enough to build a beautiful small longhouse for *Raoñewa*, who now lives there with her older daughter, married to *Pekoñpapa* (*Cristiano Dionisio*), a leader of the community of Vida Nova, in the Upper Ituí. Still *Mapi* could not assume the functions of a longhouse owner, a status predicated upon being the father (*epa*) of an extended family like *Pekoñpapa*, who has dozens of children with his two wives. It was only during my last fieldwork stint that he married and had his name changed to *Masheñpa*, a teknonym and sign of adulthood, indicating his readiness to take a spouse and have children.

Meanwhile, his mother had taken the lead. *Raoñewa* was respected not only for her senior status in Vida Nova and as an exceptional elder — a female longhouse owner without a large family —, but she had special attributes. *Raoñewa* was above all knowledgeable in herbal medicine and had a keen interest in other shamanic knowledge: she used to come to ask and listen most intently to the myth-chants that were tape-recorded. She could not speak Portuguese, and yet we would understand each other. With hindsight, it looks as though we were always juggling with our differences, linguistic or otherwise. She had privileged access to the western world, both as a pensioner and thanks to the connections of her two sons — besides *Mapi*, the eldest *Rao* was a born traveller, roaming from Baghdad to Macapá in an oil-tanker, sending her news from the Persian Gulf to the

Amazon Mouth. The foreign realm was less alien than usual to her. Yet *Raoñewa* had no doubts in choosing among contrasting identities: more than an exceptional case among her kin, she was a hyperbolic Marubo. For her, as for all the peoples she lived with, “Marubo” was not a definite denomination, but rather a “no-identity”; both for herself and for the collectivity, its significance was “we’re not like someone else”. It was just in our “game of differences”, that is, it was against the *nawa* anthropologist that *Raoñewa* would posit a positive statement of sameness, her meaning of “being of a kind”. She would measure the distance between my temples with the hands and then compare it to hers, much narrower and more angled, while saying: *ea moka nawa*, “I’m a wild one!”

That statement was not just meant to be a conclusion taken from the comparison of our temples. Nor was she saying that she was “wild” in contrast to me, a *nawa* “foreigner”, as if *moka*-wildness were a negative particle in the definition of a human identity. She did not identify herself as Indian “in opposition” to the White people; rather, *Raoñewa* defined herself as one among peoples who unite themselves through multiplicity. She is *moka*, a qualification that means “wild”, “bitter”, and metonymically “poison” — the attributes that qualify “Marubo” as a plural construct. Her particular human, *nawa*-essence is multiple because it means foreignness... and that which conflates humanity and foreignness in the Marubo case is essentially *moka*, the “bitter and wild” incorporation of *nawa*-otherness into selfhood. Notwithstanding her present reputation and past respectability as the widow of *Francisco Cruz*, a well-known and long-deceased longhouse owner, *Raoñewa* was defining her “wild and bitter”, *moka* identity against her own co-resident relatives. She belonged to those who

place the linguistic root that denotes humanity, *nawa*, in the semantic domain of otherness: for them, that which defines sameness is not definitive similitude, but bitter-wild estrangement among themselves. *Raoñewa* was stating how *moka*-strangeness made her a *-nawa* person, and made her own kin strangers: these are the Marubo peoples.

More than an ethnic *-nawa* labelling, her statement of *moka*-ness had specific historical intent, and with strong moral connotations: it concerned the betrayal, ambush and execution of *Shawañ*, her own father. The last chapter showed us that the historical construction of the indigenous identity is coterminous with the violence of exogenous encounters, as those that featured in the story of *Shawañ* and *Aurelio*. The concerted effort that united the other Marubo and sealed the sentence of *Shawañ* characterised both victims and assassins as “wild” and “bitter”, as betrayed and treacherous *moka*. Later, the political changes that followed the subsequent death of *Aurelio* would put and end to a past of wild-bitter warfare, contrasting with the present peace with westerners. The *moka* character of *Raoñewa* could not be interpreted as just an idiosyncratic inheritance from her father: if after his murder she was captured, and in practice adopted, “domesticated” by his murderers, still up to these days some of the other Marubo would not only confirm her self-judgement (*ea mowanawa*) but apply it to themselves. *Raoñewa* saw herself as a bitter-wild person, but this did not make her an absolute foreigner, and not even less of a Marubo. Much to the contrary.

As the story narrated above summarises, the massacre of most of her family in pre-permanent-contact times was deliberated and decided by a council of belligerent longhouse leaders. The adoption and marriage of the surviving children

of *Shawañ*, the integration of *Raoñewa* into families that had massacred their own followed a recurrent pattern among the Marubo. Following an equally common association between warfare and residential alliance, perhaps a typical Panoan pattern, the Marubo leaders gathered closer together into the forest both in preparation and in consequence to the execution. The distance between the communal residences decreased after the whole episode, only to increase again when *Aurelio* was killed in that frustrated ambush to an invading logging party in the early 1950s, in that momentous event that made possible permanent transactions between natives and neo-nationals. The ensuing peace with western foreigners would eventually draw longhouses together again. Thus we are driven back to the historical themes broached in the first chapter: more than representing a linguistic hyperbole, the Marubo affinal-sectional kin are named *-nawa* peoples in relation to each other because they are indeed mutual foreigners, potential enemies historically brought into a contingent communality, into an adventitious, domestic, filial-marital conviviality. If the spatial organisation of longhouses is a temporal arrangement, it also manifests the historicity of their society: as earlier studies demonstrate, locality is a reflection, however faint, of the sectional character of Marubo kinship. We shall come back to this⁴⁵.

Even if the congruency that the Marubo experience between local history and kinship-residential pattern may not be so ethnographically widespread, the ambivalent attitude of these peoples toward similar others sounds like a local, Pano

⁴⁵ For a fuller account of the Marubo-Kariera matrilineal-sectional system see Melatti 1977, which gives more details on their relation to other similar systems in Amazonia, a seemingly Pano generality. Kensinger 1995 provides a wider modelling statement, regarding Pano kinship as a structural whole. Erikson, in turn, summarises what seems to be a principle of Pano identity in a brief locution: “constituent alterity” (1986: 189, 1996: 81).

variation of a recurrent theme in Amazonia, akin to either the exo-cannibalism of the Tupi or to the concentric endogamy found in the Guyanas. In the extreme fashion of Amazonian kinship systems as processes of consanguinisation of affinity, through teknonymy or otherwise, contiguous Marubo generations belong to and identify themselves as distinct kin sections or different *-nawa* “peoples” altogether. The Marubo and their alternate-generation *-nawa* sections are radical operators of a positive arithmetic: here alterity is not equated to cannibalistic predation or negated through teknonymy, but is instead added to the most intimate realm of sameness, where identity is divisible and multiple: the nuclear family⁴⁶.

We saw how one important element of the expansive movement that split and rearranged these originally *moka* “wild”, *-nawa* peoples through history were male war parties. This indigenous movement ran in parallel with those exogenous forays that at once plagued and at last defined these *-nawa* peoples as one single whole, unifying those whose descendants now receive the general denomination of “Marubo”. The pivot of these integrating and disintegrating historical forces that kept separate and after all united men through war and peace were women and, consequently, their children. Women were historically decisive for the simultaneous cultural unity and social fragmentation of these *nawa*-sectioned peoples. If the matrilineal and sororal-polygynous family is the current centre of constitution of the household, in the past it constituted the focus of longhouse dispersion as well. Under the prevailing warlike ethos of pre-contact times, raids were moved by competition for women, who were the axis of the politics of

⁴⁶ See of course Overing 1975 for a pioneering study of the process of consanguinisation as the internalisation of the exterior, and on the assimilation of difference in Amazonian

hostility and alliance. In contrast, women of today transmit the names of their fathers' sections to their children — they connect alternating matrilineal generations: your section is the same as that of your mother's mother's siblings. Women attach themselves to their children and to their children's names both by means of teknonymy ("mother of..."), and through the kinship system of alternate-generation sections: there is a correspondence between personal onomastics and kin-sectional membership, both of which are transmitted matrilineally. Women are the key agents of *nawa*-sectional cohesion and of *nawa*-foreign fragmentation; they have always been a central axis of attractive however poisonous *moka*-ness, combining these peoples as a fragmented whole. If the Marubo *-nawa* sections once used to fight for women — and still do, if more peacefully —, they ever since relate to each other through them.

The Marubo of the Upper Ituí do not reason these socio-historical patterns out of mere words. Rather, they sing their rationale in myth, in musical sounds and in verbal poetics. Indeed, one of the chanted myths known as *saiti* — *Teté Teka saiti* — traces the origin of the "bitter" *moka* blowgun poison to an old woman, the sectional namesake par excellence: myth-chants symbolise female elders like *Raoñewa* as the personification of the Marubo-Kariera matrilineal, alternate-generation kinship system. The *Teté Teka* myth-chant narrates how, in the origins of humanity, one such elder woman is sent by her male grandchildren to procure the *moka*-poison that is needed to kill the *teté* hawk. This is in effect a giant predator, called *txai tivo* in the verses of the *saiti*, literally the "enormous affine", the beastly bird of prey that lays predatory siege to those original humans to

kinship and marriage.

whom, as a bait, it had initially claimed consanguinity. In the mythical-musical narrative, the *teté* hawk stands up on the top of the large *samaúma* tree, the largest of the forest, awaiting the early nomadic peoples who wandered along their original forking paths of primordial times. The monster persuades these early humans to take the road that leads to its home-tree, and makes them believe that it is in fact a relative of theirs and, thus, their potential co-resident.

Indeed, if *txai tivo* is a phrase whose literal meaning denotes affinity, the nickname of the *teté* hawk means otherwise “large longhouse” in mythical-musical language. But if the mythical-musical designation of the *txai tivo* hawk primarily means affinal residence, its secondary denotation is monstrous, cannibal. The *saiti* myth-chant narrates that, as soon as the wandering peoples settle around its prototypically giant tree, the *teté* hawk starts preying on them to feed its own fledglings. Original affinity entails the sedentary settlement of kin-related peoples, but celebrates their sacrifice to the cannibal co-resident as well. It is not meaningless then that the old grandmother, the personification of consanguinity and kin-convivial co-residence in the historical present, will be responsible for the murder of the monstrous-affinal hawk-longhouse in a mythical past and, as a consequence, bring on the subsequent sociocultural achievements entailed by its death — namely, a new residential configuration. In its own nickname, *txai tivo*, the monstrous *teté* hawk embodies the prototypical contract that settles the original contradiction between affinity and a stationary state: *-nawa* multi-sectional, human conviviality within the longhouse requires the reciprocal sacrifice of the divine longhouse-monster itself. And this is the reason why, toward the end of the myth-chant, from the dead body of the bird of prey all utensils related to a sedentary

dwelling will yield.

The death of the titanic animal is the birth of a new human world, enacting the transition from nomadic movement to settled residence, from cannibalistic affinity to *moka*-bitter, *-nawa* consanguinity. It is, in sum, the enactment of the paradoxical *-nawa* sociality, that which complies with a mythical-musical logic of “domestic *moka*-wildness”. Given the contemporary kin-residential configuration of the Marubo, a historical given, this transition had to be effected by an old female protagonist in the myth-chant. Her male grand-kin are helpless: after several ludicrous attempts to kill the monster, including the use of arrowheads imbued in their penises’ smegma, the peoples under siege must resort to their prototypical grandmother. As expected, they send her to a *nawa*-foreign land where she finds the incantation-chanted *moka*-poison, the “wild bitterness” that is usually used to kill monkeys. In effect, the other Panoans who neighbour the present-day Marubo are recognised as monkey-eaters: the Mayoruna-Matis in particular are specialists on the art of hunting with poisonous blowgun darts, and are suitably regarded as *mokanawa* peoples. The consanguineous, alternate-generation old woman symbolises the Pano-*nawa* section-system that constitutes the Marubo themselves insofar as she brings the (Pano) *moka*-poison that kills monstrous, cannibal affinity within (Marubo) society. The myth-chant in turn creates sedentary-settled sociality by founding the longhouse settlement, the symbolic embodiment of the social-segmented body of these peoples.

We shall reserve further judgement on the *saiti* myth-chants for the moment, waiting for the opportunity to study their poetical meaning in closer connection with their musical form, to follow in the second part of this thesis. Let it suffice for

now to underline the female semantic inflection of *moka*-ness, side by side with the consanguinisation of affinity that is encapsulated in the meaning of *nawa*-ness introduced above — which is also something to be expanded in another chapter. Before further consideration, let us look at the gender-related implications of both *nawa* and *moka*, as these conceptualisations reflect a native paradox between selfhood and alterity, between “domestication” and “wildness”. We have seen that *Raoñewa*, an old Marubo woman, at some point defined herself as *mokanawa*. However, under socially situated, “societal” conditions, *nawa* has a gender-counterpart: it is a male term in contradistinction to *shavo*. That is, the matrilineal-sectional denominations into which Marubo men and women are grouped as several “peoples”, and in accordance to which these persons are named, do not end with *-nawa* only. In effect, these “inner”, “societal” ethnonyms end respectively with the gender-markers *-nawa* and *-shavo*, and male and female personal names occasionally have these respective suffixes as well. In contrast, when it is a matter of giving a positive definition of Indian-ness in relation to the outer world — e.g. in the use of the expression *mokanawa* —, the gendered character of *nawa* is irrelevant, inasmuch as *nawa*-foreignness refers to the absolute foreigner, irrespective of gender.

This contrast between the specifically “societal”, internally-appropriate gender-suffixed forms on one side, and the externally-relevant generic *nawa* on another will make more sense under the light of some peculiar phrasing chanted in the verses of *Mokanawa Wenia saiti*, the mythical-musical form of Marubo-ness to be studied in part two below. There, we will see that the *moka*-bitter *nawa*-peoples emerge from earth seconded by their *shavo*-sisters. Now, gender-related mythical-

musical meanings aside, we just point up the relevance of the gendered quality of the sectional and personal suffix (*-nawa* for men, *-shavo* for women); in other words, the onomastic distinction between female and male in “societal” terms is consequent. On the one hand, it signifies a further estrangement between the distinct sections that separate adjacent generations among these *moka* peoples, beyond the significance of “foreignness” that is already intrinsic to the word *nawa*; in sum, it reinforces the fragmentary character of Marubo society. On the other hand, the opposition between the a-gendered *nawa*-foreign domain and the gendered section- and personal-name assignments (*-nawa* and *-shavo*) within this matrilineal society highlights the fact that the maternal link provided by the *-shavo* woman is that which connects the alternate generations, male *-nawa* sections; that is, women coalesce Marubo sociality. Through the *shavo*-female link, both consanguineous-sectional homonyms and sectionally unrelated in-laws are socially associated.

In simpler words, the Marubo situate themselves in society through women, through whom men belong in each section and relate to the other social-constituent sections. Marubo women hold together the kinship-onomastic-marriage network in sectional-differentiated, female-fragmented form: if you belong in your mother’s mother’s section, your name is that of one of the different-section consanguines of your mother, while you marry into that affinal section whose different-section maternal kin marries your different-section maternal kin. This makes these “sectional-peoples”, these co-residential affines and consanguineous kin one single people of a “maternal” kind, vis-à-vis the system as a whole, which distinguishes these different gender-marked, matrilineally-differentiated *-nawa* and *-shavo*

sections — or, as the Marubo themselves say, these several “people-races”, *raças de gente*.

The bizarre gloss that natives assign to their own matrilineal sections is not as absurd as it may seem. On the one hand, if it is true that these sectional sets of “other-peoples” regard themselves as similar selves who are matrilineally unified under the name of “Marubo”, there will be little sense in saying “races”. Yet on the other the Marubo do treat the *-nawa* and *-shavo* gendered sections as independent entities altogether. Deep underneath, as *Raoñewa* stated clearly, the Marubo have a common female societal axis that is *moka*, “bitterly wild”, and this is not a mere social-binding centre: it accounts for fragmentation too. Although these peoples share a common language, culture and sociality at large, the several sections still hold more sway as “ethnic” unities, in use and meaning, than the generalised ethnonym “Marubo”: from the native viewpoint, the gender-marked sectional denominations are decisively definitional of humanity, and are above all separative. If gender-marked sections do not mark ethnic-belonging in the strict, western sense of the word “ethnic”, the gendered ethnonym is instead a decisive marker of human-identity definition, for genderless, foreign *nawa*-ness means absolute difference. If the *nawa*-human is the exogenous foreigner, the indigenous-*nawa* is *moka*, and that “bitter” humanity stands for the sectional amalgamation that the umbrella-denomination “Marubo” likewise designates. The present sociocultural commonality and the past linguistic differences that typify the fragmentary unity of the Marubo are expressed through the idiom of *mokanawa*-ness. As my host *Keniñnawa* stated: “...the [Marubo] races spoke different languages and fought among themselves, each living on its own; nowadays we live

together in peace and speak the language of the *Chaiñnawa* [“Bird people”], who do not exist anymore”.

Nawa is the extra-societal force opposed to the *shavo*-feminine *moka* axis, the bitter fulcrum of the gender-marked sociality that attracts foreign enmity sympathetically, and thus transforms the generic foreigner into a matrilineal section. For these peoples, the cultural definition of ethnicity is *nawa*-foreignness transformed into *shavo*-gendered sociality through *moka* alchemy. This axiom assumes, however, that the gender-dichotomies pertaining to the “public” and the “private” have no fixed reality among the Marubo: in short, they are historically conditioned. The absolute assumption that war is an outward, social-subversive male activity opposed to the inward, domestic-tied female realm are as inadequate as the view that, under any historical circumstance, fission is masculine while fusion is feminine.

Such indigenous gender-dichotomies can only be admitted if the cyclical dynamics of peace and war in indigenous history is neglected and an exogenous viewpoint is taken, that is, if one takes the one-sided point-of-view of the exogenous *nawa*. The foreigner-warrior, *nawa*-subject was traditionally male, but the subject-matter of *moka* warfare has always been female; men might disrupt societal life but, by incorporating women into society, created sociality as well. A westerner marrying into the community would potentiate this male perspective, as much as previous wars among natives used to actualise it. The *nawa* outsider triggers indeed the alternate cycles of war and peace that revolve around relations of kinship, and that lie within a gendered framework where women are placed at the kin-focused centre against alternating, centripetal-centrifugal male forces. The

gendered nuances of the nucleus of indigenous sociality vary in consequence, in accordance with the state of affairs with the exogenous intruder. Therefore, with reference to native society at least, the balance between women as a centre of integration and men as a force of disintegration is contingent to the circumstantial context of warfare⁴⁷.

Still in the peaceful present, the mobile significance of gender in the definitions of social identity and difference holds as much sway as in a more predatory past, though in a variant form. At a local level, i.e. among the neighbouring longhouses, present-day male kin gather for the preparation of hunting expeditions, congregating for a foray into the jungle just in the same fashion as war parties used to do in the past. These days, wives and children even brandish a machete or a club in the occasional pursuit of a peccary, seconding their husbands and fathers, who are otherwise the actual leaders of the collective hunt. Conversely, women of today actualise kin links within a wider territory, between more distant communities. This becomes apparent whenever a supplement of garden produce is needed for the household, when women visit their female kin in faraway longhouses to help in harvesting or just share the crop. The decisive link of consanguineous solidarity in such situations is female: if men say they were visiting their own male affines, this will be a euphemism. Even if farming fields or processing the harvest may require men to assist with labour, the primordial tie to

⁴⁷ This should layer the gender-assignments to sameness and otherness within Pano kinship systems, as proposed by Erikson:

“Les Matis détonnent toutefois en ce qu’ils associent l’intérieur et la masculinité..., tandis que la plupart... des autres Pano procèdent exactement à l’inverse: en règle générale, les *nawa*, (et/ou *inca*), les jaguars, le maïs, et les chamanes relèveraient par essence de la moitié masculine et extravertie, tandis que le pôle du soi, de la chefferie, et de la féminité ressortissent évidemment de l’autre moitié.” (1996: 105)

favour cooperation is that in which women are the pivots: it is sisters who share the food, while husbands give a hand in their in-laws' gardens.

In the past, the warlike actualisation of a female-focal interior and a male-oriented exterior dissolved any communal cooperation beyond the household, and left leadership as an embryonic potential; whereas while truce deconstructed such a gender-based binary opposition, it favoured the alliance of longhouses and the extension of authority over larger communities. The opposing gender-related states of political affairs were complementary: the story of *Aurelio* in the previous chapter illustrates how supra-local chieftainship has been the counterpart of latent warfare. In brief, either in peace or war, native power has been a matter of “wild” or “bitter” *moka*-ness. Now chieftainship as a general function gains another meaning in the present times of little actual violence, times of less “wild-bitter”, but still *moka* peace. Now *moka*-ness comes to refer instead to the ascendance of older over younger kin, irrespective of locality. This peaceful authority concerns counselling rather than coercion: elders advise and admonish, induce and exhort rather than prohibit and punish. Their supra-local strength is not the power to exclude, but an ability to intone the supra-personal voice that shamans are able to embody from the *yové*, the canorous spirit-helper. Peaceful authority — and all such authority is, in one sense or another, shamanic — is to be infused by the *yové*-spiritual intoned speech, in fact a gift from a certain spirit-bird *mawa*, another theme to be pursued below due to its mythical-musical depth and possible comparative resonance⁴⁸.

⁴⁸ For the increasing politics-laden role of Yaminawa shamans in recent history, see Townsley 1988. Meanwhile, as a basis for a more general, historical statement concerning

To contrast with the vivid and visible egalitarian character of present societal relations, the Marubo insist on the higher authority of the warlord status of longhouse owners of old. The price of present peace was the loss of much capacity for concerted communal efforts, which were concomitant with unending mutual invitations for festivals and the consequent conservation of a neat network of connecting footpaths between longhouses in the past. It is as if warfare potentially separated but simultaneously drew the community closer together, by means of the assignment of a certain coercive significance to chieftainship, or by the sheer strategies for self-defence and mutual reliability for planned aggression that comprises their art of war. The “poisonous bitterness” of *moka*-wildness was then a source of coercive-communal power.

Not only have the historical changes after permanent contact and settlement on riverbanks had consequences for gendered relationships, but also the warlike past contrasts with the state of native age-group relations in the present times of peace. Contemporary community leaders remember a past of health and higher familial morale under the auspices of a social morality based on the harmonious ascendance of the elder over the youngster. An interior, disciplined harmony overrode constant strife among longhouses and with the exterior at large. These are not one-sided lamentations of conservative elders, although the verbal content of statements of this sort may sound quite nostalgic when they are intoned — when these longhouse leaders, while hosting their festival audiences, address their

“shamanic birds” among Pano-speaking peoples:

“The Panoan shaman obtained help from a bird... spirit helpers... are probably widespread.” (Steward & Métraux 1948: 531)

While *mawa* means “to die” for the Pano Kachinawa (Lagrou 1998).

public, guests and younger kin alike. These statements have a counterpart in history and a bearing on the present: they invoke a *moka* past of violence that legitimates and constitutes, in a transformed form, the authority of their shamanic discourses. It is an indirect invocation: the violence inherent to the historical discourse of a mythical golden age that inspires contemporary sociality is expressed not in mere words, but it is conspicuously symbolised in the sound of these ritual intonations of shamans. These shamanic intonations are themselves *inoñ vana* addresses, the embittered expressions of aggressiveness that brings *moka*-ness from a past of warfare to the peaceful present.

Moka-ness used to be about “fighting for women”, as Marubo men will say today. The literal significance of *moka* wild-bitterness in the past is the figurative one in the present. Under the gender-political logic of past *moka*-ness, the multiplication of longhouses was a movement triggered by sexual strife. War ceased and peace was resumed, but *moka*-ness still resounds in the air in the present form of advisory addresses. Contrary to those violent days when the warrant of truce was a supra-local chief, now authority lies in the milder realm of convivial kinship. While peace now reopens the communicating channels between longhouses, and men and women maintain them by continuous visiting and partying, the range of leadership relies not in belligerent coercion but in a supra-personal, sonic-verbal domain. If *moka*-shamanic intoned speech is parallel to present-day peace, the ritual advice of longhouse leaders outlines gender distinctions just like warfare did. However, the gender-dichotomies determined by this vocal form of bitter-wild, *moka* aggression are now transformed. The shamanic advisor of today is male, as the warrior of yesterday also was;

nevertheless, the admonishing advice of contemporary leaders is but a vocal echo of the predatory threat and command of old chiefs like *Aurelio*, of their jaguar's voice, *inoñ vana*. If the shaman's voice possesses an authoritative tone, now it has not the authoritarian connotation of a warrior's intonation, and not even of that of a man: his voice is gender-equivocal, *yové*-spiritual.

The feminine viewpoint is hidden when quarrelsome dispute for women is at stake ("men fight for them"), as it is when the masculine intonation of the advisory word is performed. However, much as gendered positions in society were transformed when mutual predation changed into peace, the changeable viewpoints of mythical-musical performance will reveal the importance of the female audition and ritual repetition vis-à-vis the leading shamanic-male vocals. Also in this gender-transformative sense, certain equivalence can be traced between the mythical intonations of shamans and the historical dynamics of war and peace: the shamanic voice of advice is sublimated warfare. "Sublimation" here means the transferral of *moka*-agency from personal predation in warfare to the supra-personal performance in the form of *moka*-shamanic intonations. The human-gendered voices that repeat the shamanic intonations are in fact reproducing a spiritualised voice, and the implications of that we shall see later.

The difference between past and present historical contexts concerns politics: if *moka*-violence in disputes between several longhouses once revolved around gender, now shamanic-vocal *moka*-ness entails no more than the gendered opposition in ritual performance, within one single longhouse. It is as if now, when the Marubo have a less violent outlook onto their surrounds, the aggressiveness of their world converges within the longhouse. The correspondence between both

historical situations is the ever-present commutability of gender-perspectives, in past warlike authority or in shamanic vocalisation: the “interiority” of women and the “exteriority” of men were as mutable then as the gender-status of “performer” and “listener” is now. This is somehow suggestive of the ambivalence of gendered roles in Marubo marriage, in which wives have veiled sexual access to brothers-in-law while husbands marry sisters. From the mythical past to the historical present, sisters enjoy sexual commonality with their common husband at polygynous homes, while men search sex somewhat in secrecy with their sister-in-law at their co-resident brothers’. On the whole, conspicuousness is the main gender diacritic, either in the politics of war or in the shamanic vocalisations, both in myth-chants and in everyday sexuality: men are visible, while the female point-of-view tends to be subliminal. Moreover, this gender generality might be not so peculiar to the Marubo: the ethnography suggests a correspondence between the “informal polyandry” tolerated by these and other Panoans — even approved of in one Matis case — and the kinship system of matrilineal sections found among these related peoples⁴⁹.

Now we touch again on future themes. In line with the commutability of gendered perspectives in warfare and ritual vocalisations, in both mythical-musical and daily life, *moka*-aggressiveness is overall above gender, inasmuch as it is above human persons. The *mawa* bird, the feather-adorned *yové*-spirit that endows the shamanic voice of advice to the longhouse leader, symbolises always more than camouflaged predation in ritual; much to the contrary, those spirits are in a

⁴⁹ Cf. Erikson (1996: 129):

“La notion selon laquelle la totalité d’une fratrie participerait à l’engendrement de ses

wider cosmological order than predatory hypostases — the *yochiñ* “animal-doubles” or otherwise. Contrary to *yové* bird-spirits, predation is rather earthly, or transiently unearthly at most; it is somehow encompassed by spiritual speech and song, in the *saiti* festival and in this dissertation, as our focus is brought onto the *saiti* myth-chants. Let us be patient.

For now we just say that the oppositions among performers and between the performer and the audience in native vocal music — or in any form of stylised speech, any “intoned word” that is ritually legitimated — is no dialogue in the purely linguistic sense. Even though the gendered opposition between musical interlocutors may be socially relevant, Marubo music and rhetoric at large entails repetition, silence, or still signals of attentiveness from both performers and audience. It does not exclude the interlocutors, but rather their agency in their personal voices: at the end of the day, both listeners and the singers-speakers themselves are absent in order to give way to the *yové*-spiritual voice. There is little room for contradiction; the counteraction of the shamanic word is its reaffirmation in the form of silent or vocal repetition. Otherwise, one is accused of deafness — *miñ niñkama*, “you don’t listen / understand!” — a threatening verdict, tantamount and concomitant to that of stupidity and utterly improper behaviour. The shaman himself is susceptible to such an accusation, for the elocutionist par excellence is more-than-human: it is *yové*-spiritual. If in the past war was concomitant to talk, today conviviality is determined by it, but in accordance with a specific set of musical-dialogical, vocal forms that are more than mere discourses: they respond to a native logic, a dialectical onto-epistemology that

fiis s'accorde d'ailleurs remarquablement bien avec une logique sectionnelle...”

relates animals to spirits, linear elocution to circular reiteration, animality to divinity through humanity⁵⁰.

Marubo accounts do not draw a radical opposition between violence and speech, between blind, mute rage and rational, soothing conversation. Between words and acts, war and peace, a spiritual-sonorous inter-mediation reveals the mythical rationale underlying all native history. Vocal musicality is the medium of all affections, of all ethic dispositions. For example, the aforementioned aggressive, spiritualised speech of advice that the Marubo *shovoñ ivo*, the native “longhouse owners” address to visitors is characterised as *inoñ vana*, “the word of the jaguar”, and is formally called *tsai iki*. Meanwhile, we have seen how such *inoñ vana* intonations were used in the context of warfare itself, in the stories of *Aurelio* and *Ramon*. These were old days; the same jaguar-groaning speech, those threatening, repeated ascending-fifth intervals are intoned now in a special ritual context, in the *saiti* festivals. In addition, in such festival context another “aggressive” intonation introduces the action: the *sai* shouts that are delivered by the participants in the sonic form of a preliminary falsetto, of high-toned vocalisations on *il*. These vocalisations are present before and after the *saiti* myth-chants, and figure among its chanted words as well. There, the word *sai* is translated as the onomatopoeia of the jaguar’s roar, the predatory language *inoñ vana*. The *sai* is both a badge and the linguistic root of *saiti*, of both the festival and the myth-chant. There is otherwise no apparent linguistic connection between *sai* or *inoñ* and the ordinary word for “jaguar”, *kamañ*: the *vana* of *ino*, i.e. the

⁵⁰ While equally opposed to mere verbal dialogues, linguistic interaction may assume a silent form among other Amazonian peoples, such as the Arawakan-speaking Pa’ikwené;

“jaguar’s language” mentioned here is at another semantic level, the realm of spirits and shamans that comes to the fore in the *saiti*, in festivals and myth-chants.

Inoñ vana, the word of *sai* “roars”, or its intonation *tsai iki* is the generic “spiritual language”, *yové vana* for the Marubo, and so is all native music. While the host shouts his spiritual *inoñ* jaguar-like address in ascending scales, the guests retaliate by shouting high-pitched *sai* cries and, at times, by actually destroying the longhouse and its surroundings. Such aggression is the typical prolegomenon of a fully-fledged *saiti* festival, followed then by the congregational music and dance, eating and drinking. Festive references to warfare and affinity abound: the same vocal-dialogical, ambiguous and aggressive *moka* ethos that is expressed in ritually intoned forms during the festival is sometimes performed already on the visitors’ arrival to the path leading to the inviting longhouses. There the hosts anticipate the reception to the guests: each of the former welcome the latter by choosing an affine, holding him with the arms around his legs, and lifting and carrying him for a short distance, in the direction of the longhouse festival.

The *saiti* festival is the compromise between peace and war, the intoned speech of authority and the ritual-representational enactment of fighting. *Saiti* partying, in the traditional sense, is *moka* to the extent that it is *sai iki*, “the verbalisation the jaguar’s groan”. As a syntactical function, the lexeme *iki* verbalises the noun — in which case the native expression for “partying” could be literally translated as “to do *sai*”. At the same time, as a rhetorical device *iki* attributes speech agency to the subject — i.e. it can be translated as “*sai*, [he, she

and there as well, silence does not mean plain passivity (cf. Passes n.d.).

or they] said”. The double meaning of *iki* points to the act and to the word, as well as to their subjective-objective agency; in the case of *saiti*, it points to those third-person acts and words, and to the agencies that are related to the expressions *inoñ* and *yové vana*, a spiritual and jaguar-like language, a supra-personal one. If the suffix *-ti* in turn nominalises the action, the verb *sai iki* becomes thus *sai iti* or, more colloquially, *saiti*, the myth-chant and its ritual performance, the musical-mythical form and festival where one “does *sai*” — where *moka*-bitter, wild “jaguar-roaring” takes place.

I.5 intoned language

The Marubo peoples reached sociocultural and linguistic commonality after long historical vicissitudes, as illustrated in the testimony of *Keniñnawa*: he attributes what is today known as *yorañ vana*, the common language, to one of their formerly constituent matrilineal sections. That the *Chaiñnawavo* are claimed to be the original native speakers of the language spoken now by all Marubo sections and peoples is not devoid of significance, nor is the fact that this “people” is claimed to be an extinct section. *Chai* means “generic bird” in their ordinary language, and that birds in general are language-givers in their chanted myths is consistent with the placement of their linguistic origins in a remote historical past. As far as linguistic identity is concerned, mythical and historical time coincide: the alleged past source of what the Marubo take to be their lingua franca reinforces the present-day contention that these peoples have a composite and fragmented origin. According to that, their kinship sections would be a political arrangement binding together the varied remnants of scattered *-nawa* communities who spoke related

languages: the Marubo would be survivors of war, abduction, enslavement, and other forms of sociocultural fragmentation. If this contention could be held without much speculation for a great many of the hinterland Panoans, the Marubo would provide some evidence to it⁵¹.

In the daily language of these peoples, *yorañ vana*, there is thus a cultural reference to birds as a foundation of human sociality. This reference unfolds into two points. First, in characterising the aforementioned section as “extinct” the Marubo assume it to have been decimated after much *moka* warfare. Following our reasoning from the last chapter, the *moka* bitter-poison does not mean pure and simple “wildness”, but is instead a distinctive character of the history of Marubo society: the language of the *Chaiñnawa* “Birds” stands not only for present ethnic commonality, but also for the warlike past they make reference to. Secondly, the mythical-musical “bird” epitomises some “spirituality” in the guise of *mawa yové*, the “spirit bird” that we mentioned above so as to elaborate later. The association of birds with the *yové*-spiritual world, i.e. with the ritualised speech, is to be ever-reiterated in this thesis; now we shall move on to the diacritical dimension of the bird-like *yové*-voice, its musical intonation.

It must be remarked at this point that if the commonalities that allow for the ethnic unity of the peoples now called “Marubo” go beyond the foreign vague generalisations of past written sources, they also stand before the culture and nature they share — their present-day kinship and their environment, their

⁵¹ Melatti, ed. 1981 equally addresses the notion of the *Chaiñnawavo* as a linguistic paradigm, which is consistent with an early collected information:

“More than one indigenous informant seems to admit that they themselves result from

language and their settlements, and so forth. “Marubo” is now more than just a vague ascription. The ethnic unity that these peoples share is archetypal, that is, it is mythical-musical: it concerns cosmic and human origins, and hence is myth, and hence it is music. Our testimony becomes the *saiti* myth-chants, for the notion of “Marubo” is an “intoned” one. Their “intoned” words have thus more importance in common use and communal practice than their ordinary language, which in turn recognises those “word-intonations” as several sociocultural categories. Among all of their intoned forms, we single out in this thesis the *saiti* myth-chants: it is the one form that traces the shared origin of these peoples at the outset of their mythical journey, that which unfolds their historical time and is reiterated in music, notably in the *saiti* festivals where they are performed. This, and all the other intoned forms of sociocultural construction of their own indigenous origins, is what we call “native music” so as to distinguish from the exogenous forms of word-intonation. These, which we would call otherwise “western music”, the Marubo categorise instead together with all “sonic things” that mediate their contact with the foreign world: the native locution *koká iki* includes the missionary cult and indicates the anthropologist’s recording apparatus.

“Intonation” here means what we westerners would call as “musical notes”, or its scientific-terminological variations: measurable pitches, discrete frequencies that are visualisable in a spectrometer, like the linguistic “tones” of western phonetics. Nonetheless, the argument of this thesis is that such intonations are not only “etic” but also, and above all, “emic”. In other words, intoned words are sounds that are as much audible to our ears as they are perceivable to native

the re-union of remnants of several tribal groups.” (Melatti 1977: 93, my translation)

thought and, conversely, the sounds of intoned words are intelligible categories to us as much as they are meaningful to the Marubo. Otherwise, if their musical and spoken language makes no distinction between words in music and in ritual speech, and if native-ritualised intonations synthesise conceptual meanings and verbal sounds, then the western-distinctive concepts of “language” and “music” that the expression “word-intonation” implies are nothing but made-up tools, analytical ones.

The translation of their notion of *koká iki* as “western word-intonations” depends less on the verbal language in which these words are intoned than on the attitudes and attributes that the Marubo attach to their “sonic form”. *Koká iki* means the intonations to which the Marubo passively listen and dance to, and the mechanisms that reproduce them. These are sounds that the Marubo do not actively produce, sounds that the White *nawa*, the “prototypical foreigners” would call their own “music”. It would include anything from disco music, when the occasional youngsters’ party turns the longhouse into a dancehall, to the evangelical hymns sung in the mission headquarters of their Upper Ituí, which adapt native language to North American tunes. This is not to mention the omnipresent *forró*, a quite popular dance-party genre brought to the surrounding area by immigrants from the Brazilian Northeast; and by extension, *koká iki* means any instrumental music coming from the non-native world, such as Colombian *salsa* and Andean musical styles. All such *nawa*-music that reproduces foreign contexts is *koká iki*. In turn, *kokati* is the word for “radio” and “tape-recorder”, the means through which this music comes into native life (*-ti* is here, again, the nominalising suffix). That which is “indigenous music”, an exogenous category

hereby defined to the exclusion of *koká iki*, is thus the word intoned by natives. Again, here “intoned” would mean a “musical” quality to our ears: tones, pitches and pulses.

For the Marubo, the voice is the only sound-producing device that is commensurate with the several native categories of “intonation”: there are no “musical instruments” as such among them. The foreign observer might object to this by mentioning the *ako*, a large excavated log that produces a hollow sound. The *ako*-drum is known as *trocano* among neo-nationals, and is hung within the longhouse behind and parallel to the parallel seats *kenañ*, by its front entrance. It is sounded during or in the preliminaries of the *saiti* festival, in a peculiar, distinct and invariable way. It is said that there used to be many performing styles or rhythmic patterns in the past, but today there is one single form of playing it, which is widespread: two men stand upright on the parallel *kenañ* seat and perform counter-pointing four-beat equal figures, following a musical dynamic pattern of strong-weak-weak-weak.

This shows that, if the *ako*-drum performance is not designated by any current category of “intoned discourse”, it is nonetheless formalised. The one player on the left hits the *ako* with a long pole, producing a more intense sound. The other man on the right holds two smaller sticks playing together a similar rhythm, halving the beat and filling the upbeats of the former rhythmic pattern. Therefore, the strong beats of players do not always coincide: each produces a constant and ever-changing polyphonic pattern. Rhythmic contradiction is the rule, although the two lateral players are stable at each round of *ako* performance. Contrariwise, those who gather around, always men, alternatively substitute the

middle person. These mobile middle players play the same fourfold regular pattern with a long pole (strong-weak-weak-weak), following the same pulse as the player on the left, but again his strong beat is invariably out of phase with the others. While all sticks and poles are hit vertically, each player's upbeat is stressed in turns, creating the general counter-pointing effect: the overall movement is a male-dialectical activity.

The *ako*-drum is a powerful means of inter-village communication: the simultaneous sounds it produces can travel many miles, since it is attached to the ground through supporting beams and pillars. The *ako* is used to announce that a pack of wild pigs is approaching the vicinity, for example, attracting the attention of the neighbouring longhouses for an imminent collective hunt. Not coincidentally, these hunts can either precede a subsequent festival or not, or else playing the *ako* may be just a formal invitation to it, with no direct relation to game whatsoever, but with an indirect relation to myth-chants instead: the performance of the *ako*-drum is mandatory during the *saiti*. The *saiti* festivals are the situation in which the middle *ako*-players will be the guests, taking turns at playing sessions that are repeated day and night. But not much else seems to be meaningfully related to *ako* playing, as far as the native categories of "intonation" are concerned, or at least as far as we could probe into local musical meanings. It might have been different in the past, when the repertoire of rhythmic patterns is said to have been more varied, conforming thus to a code; but now its sounds are mere badges of the vocal styles that are called here "intoned words". This is so in spite of the instrumental capability of the *ako*-drum as a communicatory device, and of its contextual connection with the *saiti* festival and the corresponding myth-

chants; and since those “word-intonations” define the sum of all native categories that are invested with a self-contained “sonic” meaning, the *ako*-drum cannot be called a “musical instrument”. What the Marubo say in musical tones cannot be said in plain words; but it has to be vocal, and their language emphasises that.

Our insistence on the native musical classification is a means to introduce the sonorous meaning of their intoned words. Here a distinction between emic and etic, “native” and “musical” categories is cogent only insofar as the contrast and similarity between the indigenous and western categorisations is emphasised. Such seemingly tautological proposition is in effect functional: like the western category of “music”, the invented pigeon-hole category “intoned word” is useful just to the extent that it encompasses several well-defined indigenous conceptualisations that have something in common. If the natives themselves make this commonality explicit, such explicitness is not amenable to neat categorising, and therefore we invent the categorial compromise of “musical intonation”. The meaning of the commonality that allows for such blanket categorising is ineffable as regards verbal categories, and still it is the foremost inspiration of our research. For Marubo language effectively negates the concept of “music” or, better said, it negates our categorial syllogisms, taxonomies and axionomies: there is no indigenous term for “music” as an essential category, for a start, because these Indians are not familiar with the Grecian Muses. This is not to say that these two universes are incommensurate: this is an open question inevitably posited to those who are somehow familiar with both ancient Greece and its contemporaneity to the western world, and with the present-day Marubo and their traditional myth-chants. More than a scholastic issue, this is a confrontational situation between two

universes, and between past and present, one that is forced by the contact between the Indian and the White trader, government, missionary, anthropologist or otherwise.

Although the explicit object of our project is but a small fraction of the proposed wide-range category of “Marubo music”, or their so-called “musical categories”, we shall argue in the course of this thesis that there is in effect a semantic essence behind these sweeping glosses. Furthermore, we shall argue that the pseudo-anthropological negation of this essence essentialises the “Other”: it negates the possibility of a non-western “Music”. We argue for the opening up and stretching out of the category of “Music”, to encompass something that westerners have long forgotten, ever since the times of the actual “Muses”. We argue for its plurality, “musics”, if such qualification will please some readers; but we argue in particular for its unity as a qualified whole, “Marubo music”, without subscribing to a universal essence. Its usefulness is coterminous with any other all-encompassing cross-cultural category we may use, such as, say, “Marubo peoples”. These are categories that, if not originally indigenous, are among those that Indians are keen on using in a much less “relativistic”, and still contextual fashion — more so than many White anthropologists are prone to seeing. The interface that natives present to our “music” might not be formulated in one single native word; its categorial unity is nevertheless elaborated in and through many words in their language. The contention that several native discourses and practices, that many of their describable and translatable sonorous phenomena demand a synthesis is not a theoretical *a priori*.

Therefore, if indigenous music is defined to the exclusion of the *koká iki*

sounds, it is positively rendered by and into various native words and styles of word-intonation. We start from our shorter descriptions: first of all, *wai iki*, “to wail” (where, inexplicably, *wai* means “garden” too), i.e. vocally lamenting for a death or the return of close kin who had been considered as dead. The Marubo shed profuse tears to the point of exuding catarrh in a demonstration of profound emotion for those who have just died, and for those who arrive from a presumed deadly journey, especially one that entails a bodily transformation — someone coming back from hospital, for instance. The relatives of the dead, or of the person whose body has been likewise “transformed”, repeat single words (like *vake, vake*, “child, child”...) that are intoned in descending patterns: it is the semantic-structural opposite from the aggressive, repeated ascending fifths that are characteristic of a type of *inoñ vana*, the “jaguar’s language” mentioned above. Here the opposition between ascending and descending intonations has an ethic-affective, musical sense: the wail *wai iki* descends toward co-resident / consanguines, while the aggressive advice *tsai iki* ascends toward enemy / affines.

So there is, secondly, the aforementioned *tsai iki* (literally “to break”), a form of *inoñ vana*, of “jaguar’s word” or “language”. We have seen how the qualification of *inoñ vana* is not restricted to longhouse owners’ intonations in festivals: it includes the same *tsai iki* declamations of warriors and the *sai* shouts. This lack of restriction is meaningful to the extent that such “jaguar’s language” is included in the realm of *yové*-spirituality, which comes to the fore in *saiti* festivals and other shamanic performances. Shamans and shamanic language relate predators to birds. We mentioned that the *yové*-spiritual voice is characterised by its super-human, supra-personal character, and hence its musical expression means

something other than daily language. This differential semantics refers both to the intoned character of the *yové* bird-like voice and, to a lesser extent, to its lexicon. Effectively, while some birds are prototypical *yové*-spirits, *ino* stands for “jaguar” just when it is an intoned word — i.e. in the mythical-musical vocabulary of *saiti* chants — or when it is a prefix comprising a proper name for a matrilineal section or person (*Inonawa*, “Jaguar people”, *Ino*, “Jaguar”, *Inoñpa*, “Jaguar’s father”, *Inoñewa*, “Jaguar’s mother”). The ordinary word for “jaguar” is *kamañ*; that is, the “jaguar’s language” that *inoñ vana* denotes already implies a distinct vocabulary, a differentiation between “vocal music” and “non-musicalised speech”, the meaningful tone and its absence in the ordinarily uttered word. The “spiritual language” is not only “musical”: intoned words, those of *inoñ*-jaguars and *yové*-birds, have several standard affixes (such as *-ki*) attached to commonly used ones and, at times, an altogether alternative lexicon is used in these intonations. Nevertheless, although we shall see that the use of “figures of speech” in chant language is in some sense extensive, the vocabulary is entirely recognisable for a native speaker⁵².

And it is still the case that, like any form of *yové*-spiritual language, the jaguar-*inoñ* language is composed of several layers of meaning added to the ordinary speech used in daily conversation, the *yorañ vana* “word of body”. As a genre of intoned word, *inoñ vana* conforms to a musical semantics and entails a multi-layered vocabulary that is non-reducible to mere metaphorical play. This and the next three chapters concern the performance structure of vocal-intoned genres,

⁵² This seems to contrast with the use of circumlocutions that Townsley 1988 reports in Yaminawa vocal music, a specialist code that still is shared by shamans.

an aspect of their ritual form that is as structured as their musical character and distinct verbal lexicon. *Inoñ vana*, for instance, is addressed to the guests qua affines during festivals, and to affines qua enemies in warfare. Instances of the former situation abounded in the field, at the beginning of several *saiti* festivals — the *sai* “roaring” shouts, the *tsai iki* “breaking” addresses of longhouse owners —, whereas *Aurelio*’s performance in stories of warfare features the latter. These three characters, guests, affines and enemies, are key figures in both of those two alternative contexts, festivals and wars. Conversely, these two situations stand in complementary contrast in the recent and decisive historical vicissitudes of the Marubo: both in *saiti* festivals and in warfare, those three figures are passive receptacles or audiences for *tsai iki*, the *inoñ vana* jaguar-like declamatory genre. In both situations, the *inoñ*-jaguar’s language is uttered by host or aggressor but, above all and above them, by the *yové*-spiritualised human voice. Guests, affines and enemies are or historically used to be commutable figures, three possible interlocutors of the supra-personal *yové*-spirituality that is voiced by longhouse owners, shamans and warriors.

The daily speech *yorañ vana* connotes conviviality, whereas all intoned language is directed to foreign affairs, cosmic or earthly. If the addressees of vocal genres like curing intonations and myth-chants are spirits and animal-doubles — intoned words and themes that we shall pursue below —, the native term for the prototypical affinal / inimical figure who partakes in *saiti* festivals is *txai*. Contrary to the ambiguity of the *nawa*-other, as a term that takes part in native self-denominations, the meaning of *txai* is univocal: it is a marriageable kinship category in contemporary use, whose everyday, familial usage is a diminutive

form, i.e. *txaitxo*. In this diminutive fashion, the term stands for “male cross cousin”; it loses thus any direct inimical connotation and gains a weakened affinal denotation, being used as a friendly address to unclassifiable strangers, be they White or Indian. To call someone *txaitxo* implies a certain familiarity, being thus very different from saying simply *nawa*, a “foreigner”. *Nawa* is a term that is not used as a vocative unless a slight aggressiveness is meant. But calling someone as *txai*, without the diminutive suffix, is unambiguous: it is tantamount to considering the person as an enemy⁵³.

The “jaguar’s language” may not be addressed to “enemies”, but it denotes the same definite disposition toward “outsiders”. Although the *sai* manifestations of *inoñ vana* are shouted more or less at random, its *tsai iki* form is well structured in verbal sentences intoned in ascending patterns. It has an explicit message: *tsai iki* expresses ordinarily restrained anger or just strong statements, those words that cannot be said in normal inter-relations among co-residents. They are descriptive instructions, relating actions that should or have been taken in the past, and prescriptive-instructive actions for the future. They are advice and aggressive reprimands to the enemy and nostalgic complaints to kin and guests. No answer for these words is admissible: a silent and reiterative, either agonising or attentive audience is required. Such is the awe to be inspired by this sort of *inoñ*-jaguar intonation: it transcends the sheer aggressiveness of the leader’s loud shouts inasmuch as it comprises the authoritative tones of the *yové*-spirit. *Tsai iki* is a sort of inverted wail. Ferocious groans and lamenting wails do indeed sound

⁵³ An interesting semantic variation of *txai*, with the same exogenous core-connotation, is found among the Kachinawa. There, *txai* are the members of NGOs who come to work with

symmetrical and complementary, each expressing an alternative ethos: death or rebirth, affective memory or immediate affection, anger or love. Accordingly, both *wai iki* and *tsai iki*, both melodious utterances are segmented in equal cells and go in opposite, regular directions, upward or downward.

Ini iki, *shoñ iki* and *sai iki* are the three extant native categories that constitute the overall meta-category of “Marubo music”, their vocal forms or intoned words. All these three, together with the two previous categories of native vocal intonations *tsai iki* and *wai iki*, are likewise constituted of repeated cells or rhythmic-melodic patterns. In essence, all share a super-human or supra-personal quality of *yové*-spiritual endowment. All five categories are at once “vocal” and “spiritual”, and all equally “words of spirits”: they are all the intoned words of the perfect, perfumed, beautiful, wise and ever-renewing *yové*-spiritual entities. These *yové* beings embody an ethical paradigm, for their voice proffers the ultimate moral statement for the peoples who utter it, and their adorned bodies are the embodiments of Marubo paradigmatic ethnicity. We qualify such a voice provisionally as “spiritual”, to stand for *yové*-ness, in the absence of a better gloss and following Marubo understandings of the Portuguese word *espírito*. In any case such *yové* beings are to be understood both in opposition and complementariness to the native *yora*, the native conceptualisation of “human person” or “human body”, in whose anatomy they take part in an equally symmetrical conceptual configuration. This is to be outlined in the concluding chapters of this first part, which our circumlocutions shall render much larger than the actual musical-poetical exegesis of native intoned words to follow next.

the indigenous peoples, according to Lagrou (pers. comm.).

Our ambitions are to be blamed. This study not only proposes that the various types of vocalisations described above and below share a musical-semantic common ground. It also claims that, through an extrapolation based on a single example taken from one of those native musical categories — a *saiti* myth-chant —, the tones of these intoned words are meaningfully organised in structural sequences and hierarchies. To understand these meanings some ethnographic background on the Marubo peoples is needed; in turn, that single mythical-musical example — *Mokanawa Wenia saiti* — will give substantial significance to three points that we shall have outlined more clearly by the end of this preliminary part of the thesis. The initial point is the relation between myth and history in the spatial arrangements of these peoples, which is concurrent with their alternative socio-political configurations through time. The other point is the relation obtained between “bird” and “jaguar” in the expressions *yové vana* and *inoñ vana*, the two qualifiers of intoned “word” or “language” that entail simultaneous spirituality and predation — and as a corollary, the “supra-corporeality” or “super-humanness” of their native styles and of the *saiti* myth-chants in particular. This leads us then to our last point, the composite character of native personhood. Here humanity is arranged into a peculiar conceptual conjuncture, a mythical-musical one: bodies are combinations of souls; humans are soul-like beings who are bodily becoming.

I.6 shamans and healers

We must proceed with the description of the native categories of word-intonation, however. If the reader will forgive a complication of the picture at this stage, we shall divert a bit further by introducing another indigenous distinction,

while keeping in mind the points outlined above. Marubo language distinguishes between *romeya* and *keñchiñtxo*, an opposition that can be transposed to English as “shaman” vs. “healer” through the Brazilian-mediated glosses of *pajé* and *curador*. To a certain, mediated extent these are the indigenous glosses provided by informants; still, in a literal sense the two native words mean respectively “the one with *rome*” and “small chameleon”. *Rome* in turn is a common phenomenon in Amazonia: it means either “tobacco” or the magical “dart” or “stone” found within the shaman or in the ailing body, the shamanic hypostasis of illness and predation as well as of his curing powers.

Although most ordinary, normal healthy people are devoid of *rome*, almost all mature Marubo men — generally longhouse owners (*shovoñ ivo*) — know how to *shoñ iki*, how to sing in order to heal: they are *keñchiñtxo* healers. Being a *keñchiñtxo* is said to be one of the fundamental attributes of an extended family leader, i.e. a longhouse owner; he must be able to cure his kin, especially his children, from all usual ailments. Therefore, in principle if not in fact, all men are entitled to acquire such *keñchiñtxo*-shamanic curing capabilities through a long initiation process, one to which women are said to have also had access in the past. *Keñchiñtxo* abilities are here called “shamanic” both to distance it from plant-curing knowledge — which is a gender-generic attribute of the aged —, and because these capabilities approximate such a healer to the *romeya*-shaman proper. The knowledge of the latter is neither diametrically nor symmetrically opposed, neither contrasting nor complementary, but rather concentric to that of the former. The *romeya* is said to be like a clone of the *yové*-spirit, for their similitude is corporeal. A *romeya*-shaman is always adorned with bright white snail-shell bead

necklaces, plus arm-, wrist-, ankle-bands and garters (made of *novo* shells, a river mollusc also known in the region as *aruá*): his body is a spiritual-paradigmatic *yové*.

The fact is that if human shamans share certain capabilities with spirits, they lack the total capacity for regeneration of the *yové*-spiritual bodies. That partial identity or “human-spiritual character” is not a privilege of a few, but is inherent to most native knowledge, which is shamanic and musical par excellence. Even though the *romeya*-shaman is the most powerful singer among mortals, the ordeals of his musical, “spiritualised body” are a heavy burden through initiation and throughout life. In the acquisition and as a possessor of the powerful *rome* tobacco-dart, he is as if constantly ill. His death is otherwise an easy one. It is as though his life-long learning were a preparation for corporeal renovation in the afterlife, when his embodied knowledge will show him the way to a wise, happy and good eschatological destiny. His living body is fragile and he dies not too long after his formal apprenticeship with other shamans / healers is completed. The *romeya*-shaman knows when death is coming — some other sort of shamanic knowledge. It is said that the spirit or “essence” of the ayahuasca vine and of the native tobacco (known as the *shañko* or “core”, the “sprouting stem” of *oni* and *rome*, respectively) guide the dead souls of those who maintained living intercourse with these substances and their hypostases, that is, paradigmatically, the souls of the *romeya*-shaman. If the *yové*-spirit is the desirable soul-becoming of human bodies, the *romeya* indeed becomes his own renewing destiny while still among mortals. The bodily souls of the *romeya*-shaman start their spirit-aimed eschatological journey in life, and therefore his “ensouled” body is in a constant

liminal state. Hence as living he dies: by and large, body and soul and spirit are each complementary folds of a unity comprising Marubo personhood, only to be fully unravelled at the death of normal people, but made manifest in the life of the *romeya*-shaman.

It must be admitted that some of the data on shamanic knowledge here presented are second-hand, relying much on material forthcoming from passed-away *romeya*-shamans. Nevertheless, contemporary native informants elaborate most of these data in a very straightforward and creative fashion: here we do not rely just upon the living memories of a deceased reality. Although no recognised mighty shaman was still alive during fieldwork, there was at least one active apprentice among us. This is not to mention the many “latent” ones, those young men who had interrupted their apprenticeship for some reason; but whatever reason it was, it would not be for the mere absence of a *romeya*. Different from western craftsmanship, such shamanic knowledge is not a skill to be learned with other shamans: it is a call from the *yové*-spirits that reaches the would-be *romeya*-shaman, while awake or asleep, through a predatory mediator — a huge anaconda for example. This is hardly surprising, given the analogy between birds and predators that we have already found associated in native vocal forms. By the time that such an extraordinary encounter with a predator takes place, borders of consciousness become hazy for the apprentice; and while the initiate is in such a propitious state as to entertain closer bonds with *yové*-spirits, no more than the role of guidance is assigned to the shamanic initiator, who may or may not be a *romeya*-shaman himself. Because the shamanic domain is larger than the personal knowledge of any *romeya*-shaman or *keñchiñtxo*-healer, apprenticeship is not

entirely dependent on their presence. The native shamanic reality will survive the death of all shamans, insofar as the Marubo world does survive as a living sociocultural complex as well⁵⁴.

Similar to chant-healing and other shamanic rituals I witnessed, the performance of a *rome*-shaman, according to accounts, is preceded by much tobacco (*rome*) snuffing and *oni* drinking. *Oni* is a vine of the genus *Banisteria*, which the literature on the theme popularised as “ayahuasca” or “yagé”. However, *oni* is not exactly like the hallucinogenic substances that are often found in the ethnography of indigenous Amazonia. Beverages like the ayahuasca-drink consumed by other native Amazonians and the followers of certain local religions based in this part of Brazil (e.g. *Santo Daime* or *União do Vegetal*) tend to be concocted with other plants, such as the species *Psychotria*. The Marubo recognise that, when ayahuasca is brewed and occasionally mixed up with other ingredients, it can indeed produce hallucinations; still they normally take infusions that contain no more than the pure *oni* vine and, even when other substances such as *rome* tobacco-snuff are added, the effect is never expected to be hallucinogenic. This did not prevent them from asking now and then to the novice-anthropologist: “did you have any *visagem*”? Why would the Marubo ask repeatedly whether taking their

⁵⁴ Cf. Townsley 1988 on the less fortuitous, more propitiatory role of the Yaminawa shaman — who, not coincidentally, is known as *yowen* — in an otherwise familiar process of shamanic initiation:

“Men become shamans through personal choice... dieting run concurrently with absolute sexual abstinence... [and] a series of extremely painful ordeals. These are encounters, supervised by the shaman who is initiating him, with the spirits of animals and plants... becoming or being a shaman is not considered merely a question of acquiring knowledge or learning... it is a question of being transformed in a substantive way... the common feature of all initiation procedures is the taking into the body of substances of other creatures and plants... [however] the spirits of these things choose the person as much as he chooses them... neither the initiate nor the initiator determines the process. They merely create the conditions in which it can

oni gave me any “visions”, just after having acknowledged the visionary “strength” of “foreign”, *nawa-ayahuasca*?

It is not easy to make sense of these contradictory statements. Would ayahuasca consumption be just the measure of the distance between the White world and that of the Marubo? Still they say that ayahuasca “visions” include scenes from the *nawa* world. In this case, would they be saying that *oni* opens a window into an expanded “natural” world, rather than into a “supernatural” one, away from common experience? Would these peoples experience the openness of their own world toward the “world of the other” through *oni-ayahuasca*? All these rhetoric questions make sense, even if we consider that *visagem* in the regional Brazilian Portuguese is not just an unusual vision, but that it has an otherworldly connotation: it is an omen of sorts. Perhaps the *visagem* of *oni* that the Marubo kept asking me about had to do with the fact that, contrary to the *keñchiñtxo*-healer, the *romeya*-shaman needs an involuntary and extraordinary call to be initiated as such. The “hallucinatory” or “real”, but always spontaneous “vision” or dream that prompts the would-be *romeya* is “otherworldly” insofar as it deadly: it is sometimes concurrent with a serious threat to his self, such as a sickness accompanied by the dreams or visions. If *oni-ayahuasca* is understood to facilitate contact with *yové*-spirits and to enhance the spiritual-vocal capacities of shamanic singing, it also opens another possibility of a visual encounter with the aforementioned predatory, however “propitiatory” entity⁵⁵.

happen...” (Townsley 1988: 132-133)

⁵⁵ Contrast now with Townsley 1988, whose account of a Yaminawa “shamanic level of consciousness” would be more in line with the familiar opposition between nature and supernature:

The association between *yové*-spirit and predator, between spiritual voice and predatory vision is a subtle one: it reflects the ambivalence of the shamanic capacities, powerful and still dangerous. Still, this association conceals a hierarchy: shamanic visions are a secondary preamble to spiritual audition, and therefore the daily consumption of ayahuasca of most men is marginal to a proper *romeya* performance. *Oni*-ayahuasca is present in any sort of shamanic practice, be it that of the *keñchiñtxo*, of the *romeya*-shaman, of the *yoya*-singer or otherwise. The *keñchiñtxo*-healer seats on the longhouse frontal benches (*kenañ*) with other men to “draw a picture” of the illness, and squats on the central patio near the lying patient, his singing always interspersed with much *oni* drinking. But the *romeya*-shaman does less and yet more: he lies alone on his hammock half-asleep, murmurs as if dreaming, ready for the arriving *yové*, and then sings. The *yové*-word is song, and the *romeya*-shamanic singing would be the most supra-personal and still most embodied voice among all vocal sub-categories that native language presents — those musical genres that constitute the spiritual realm of the “intoned words”.

The singing of the *romeya*-shaman is called *ini iki*. *Romeya*-singing teaches the *keñchiñtxo*-healers and other mortals the art of healing and, in general, all super-human, supra-personal musical capabilities. Expressed always in repeated cells, the voice and the self of the *romeya* state his simultaneous corporeal identification with and personal absence from the *yové*-spirit. As the *romeya* is not only like a spirit in bodily form, but also its preferential partner, the *yové* is in fact

“Shori [ayahuasca] gives the initiate the power of the vision and is the *sine qua non* of shamanic practice... opening out the world of spirits to human intervention.” (1988: 134)

intoning the words through the mouth of the shaman without being within his body as such. Instead, the body of the *romeya*-shaman is the *yové*-spirit; he embodies its spiritual voice. *Ini iki* is then a vocal-auditory means for spiritual communication and at the same time the human-embodiment of the otherworldly *yové*. The aesthetic objectivity of spiritual truth is neither subjective nor ideal: it is material qua audible sound, and thus is subject to objective ethic judgements. The *romeya*-shaman is said to be like a “recorder”, a more or less trustworthy one. This is a most surprising analogy to be given by a Marubo informant, since elsewhere in Amazonia natives say that shamans (*pajés*) are “radios”; and hence it is suggestive of a comparative scope for Amazonian music, notably what we might call “shamanic intonations”⁵⁶.

It is by means of *ini iki* chants that the selected audience of the shamanic sessions — the *keñchiñtxo*-healers, including the *romeya*-shaman himself — learns how to *shoñ iki*, how to sing the *shoñti* “curing songs”. Effectively, healing is an attribute of either *keñchiñtxo* or *romeya*, since one function does not exclude, but instead encompasses the other. One “shamanic function” distinguishes itself against the other in accordance with the span of its respective musical specialisation, the styles that correspond to each vocal repertoire and reflect a different degree of bodily identification with the *yové*-spirits. Still the shamanic relationship of human apprenticeship entertained with these spirits is always the same: both *keñchiñtxo*-healers and *romeya*-shamans are listeners.

⁵⁶ In a prospective approximation to the singing of the Tupi-speaking Araweté shaman for instance, who is said to be “like a radio” (Viveiros de Castro 1986: 543) or, as Stolze Lima describes among the also Tupi Juruna, to be “nothing more than a spokesman” (1999: 119).

As we shall see shortly, this is analogous to the pedagogy of *sai iki*, of myth singing, when a more general audience learns the *saiti* myth-chants by repetition. Shamanic chants are not “possessed” by the shamanic healer or chant-leader, although each performance assumes an idiosyncratic musical form according to the “supra-personal personality” of the performer. Marubo music is non-individual; indeed, it is structurally divisible, both at the level of synthetic performance and in its analytical transcription, both in its musical-choreographic form and in its visual-verbal representation. Although the exegesis of musical transcriptions and verbal translations shall be focused on the *saiti* myth-chants, these assertions are equally true for all shamanic singing, including the *shoñ iki* “chant-healing” of *keñchiñtxo*-healers. In other words — perhaps too evangelical-sounding ones —, the healer sings the *shoñti* chants, but the *yové*-spiritual voice cures. As much as it is in a shamanic sense “impersonal”, or rather not “individually owned”, the cure-singing of *shoñ iki* tends also not to be a speciality: it is part of the current knowledge of virtually every longhouse owner. The *yové*-voice is in principle “free and for all”: all native adults are knowledgeable in one or another vocal form, the many parts of the entire musical corpus of spiritually intoned wisdom⁵⁷.

As all *yové*-intoned voice, the musical form of the *shoñti* curing chants is cellular. By this we mean that all native word-intonation is divided into repeated,

⁵⁷ At first sight this might contrast with Townsley’s account of Yaminawa curing chants:

“The idea of possession is a key one in relation to *koshuiti* [shamanic songs] because there is a sense in which they are regarded very much as objects.” (1988: 139)

But a further qualification of this statement shall draw it closer to Marubo music, even though the author remains faithful to a linguistic bias on music, and thus to a “concept of language” as the concrete reification of an abstraction, an “essential power”:

“...the words and metaphors are the vehicle for the powers which constitute the essence of the song... [and] the origin of these powers was not really the shaman who

more or less equal musical cells. The *shoñti* chants are even more “monotonous” than the other formally structured intonations of Marubo words. This is consistent with the constant contention that the healing chant is a derivation of the *ini iki* singing of the *romeya*-shaman, and that it is somehow derived from the *saiti* myths as well. At least shamanic healers always claimed that the knowledge of chant healing and other musical forms, such as the *saiti* myth-chants, “is all one and the same”. It is perhaps more admissible to say that *shoñti* and *saiti* sound like slight musical variations on a single verbal-lexical theme, and this might eventually account for the alleged “sonic unity of meaning” that is the intuition and subliminal working hypothesis of this thesis. This unity is a theorisation of the truth-statement that there is a single *yové*-spiritual source for all vocal forms of intoned words, for all the musical practices of the Marubo. In line with the *keñchiñtxo*-healer’s argument, we note again that often those who sing *shoñti* to cure are the same performers who sing in *saiti* festivals, and that the different contexts, vocal styles and participating audiences involved in these musical activities are comparable. Still there is room for performing preferences, if not for a slight specialisation of some longhouse leaders in one or other vocal form, as a rule among elderly men who live in the same community⁵⁸.

At all events, in every Marubo longhouse there must be someone to cure the household, at least in the case of minor ailments. There must be a *keñchiñtxo*-

passed them on but the spirits themselves” (1988: 139)

⁵⁸ Townsley 1988 seems to envisage an even closer identity between cure-chanting and myth-telling, but at the verbal level only, as usual:

“...the shaman carefully enumerates the qualities and characteristics of the things he sees, including their mythic references, as if wishing to exhaustively describe and identify them...” (1988:149)

healer to *shoñ iki*, to sing the curing chants that are intoned to the patients who lie on the hammock, around and on them. *Shoñ iki* can be otherwise applied to an especially prepared, remedial food (*shoñka* — normally banana puree) or to a special resin (*señpa*), to be consumed or painted on the ailing bodies. The curing chant potentiates the sick body, the nutritional medicine or the resinous paint that is graphically body-designed on its skin. However, while the *shoñti* chants are directed to ailing bodies or to the medicinal substances that are to be dispensed to it, their addressees are both the *yochiñ* animal-doubles that cause the diseases and the *yové*-like spirit-helpers that shall assist with their cure. Both are the actual recipients of the verbal-musical message that charts the disease origins: if the animal-doubles are the disease-agents, the healing-helpers are the spirit-like entities that are invoked in order to fight and re-order the disturbed body. The indigenous cure is focused on the exogenous cause of the disease: its geography stretches from the farthest foreign land, the *nawa* origin of all illness, to the very patient's anatomy, converted into the arena of a multi-dimensional struggle. The healer is the one who knows about the layers of action and agency interfering with the person's health. He cures through identification: "I know where you come from, disease" or "warmth, come and cure" are some of the intoned messages of the *keñchiñtxo*-healer⁵⁹.

These messages are not improvised, and still variable. Inasmuch as the *ini iki* shamanic chants of the *romeya*-shaman are musical teachings for chant-healing,

⁵⁹ The similarity of this with a description of Yaminawa curing chants in Townsley 1988 is as remarkable as it was unintentional:

"...[it] seems to be concerned with an absolute and powerful identification of the spirit to which it is sung and seems to say '...I know everything about you ...so I will banish

the “verbal content” of the *shoñti* curing chants requires some formulaic prolegomena. Before the singing and during its interludes, the more experienced healers recite the origin of the ailment in little-intoned verbal formulae. Through these recitations, the healer describes its aetiology and mythical aetiogony, its spatial and causal origins, both exogenous and exo-social. The disease generally comes from other, foreign peoples, from the riverine *nawa*-rat in the case of a collected example; and in most cases, if not in all, the particular disease-agent is a *yochiñ* animal-double that has been offended by socio-ecological transgression — a hunted monkey that is exposed to the hunter’s mockery, in another chant. Following the preliminary recitations, the disease diagnosis is unfolded into a prognosis throughout the healing chant; there, parts of the soul, parts of the body, sickening and curing agents are named and connected to symptoms.

To be sure, as native healers always stated, there is no clear-cut semantic separation of verbal or musical content between *shoñti* curing songs and the *saiti* myth-chants. Besides the formal diacritics of each, at the musical and verbal-thematic levels, the most apparent difference lies in their performance contexts: the former takes place in the quiet domestic atmosphere, while the latter is intoned in feasts. This study will suffer from its narrow focus in that it is concentrated on myth-chants, and among the latter it scrutinises only one; our limits allow for no more than brief comments upon *shoñ iki* cure-chanting. Still, besides the fact that the form and performance of curing and myth-chanting justify our brevity — since the *saiti* and the *shoñti* are similar vocal forms sung in variable ways —, our focus is meant to contribute in some way to the understanding of all shamanic

you, call on your power or do whatever I want to do with you.” (1988: 144)

knowledge. The omnipresence of cosmologically important characters such as *mawa* or *isá* in several *saiti* and *shoñti*, for instance, corresponds to a semantic continuity that goes beyond the variability and similitude of musical context and form. That such continuity is expressed in native exegesis only reinforces our adoption of the meta-category “intoned word”, to include all shamanic singing in the same semantic domain, and justifies our scope of study.

The specificities of cure-singing and other forms of vocalisation cannot be an objection against the methodological choice of favouring the *saiti* myth-chants, if only because the mythical origins of human diseases are a fundamental issue in the intoned words of the *shoñti* chant. Mythical-musical awareness is subliminal when shaman-healers treat a disruption of bodily equilibrium as an issue of the wider relations of the person with the environment and within the cosmos, and inasmuch as such relations are placed in a temporal framework of both personal stories and disease histories. And if every symptom and curing agent is materialised into *yochiñ-* and *yové-*related beings, if every such being has a particular original source, this is once more due to the mutual basis of the singing of both the *keñchiñtxo*-healer and the *romeya*-shaman, of both *shoñ iki* and *ini iki*. These and all other native musical forms — the symmetrical intonations of *wai iki* and *inoñ vana*, and the *saiti* myth-chants to be introduced next and at last — are cellular narratives; and all the musical-narrative structures refer to the original ontogeny of ailing and curing agents, or doubles and spirits, or humans and human attributes. The relation of cosmological context with such a formal, structural character of these intoned words shall provide us with the key to the unifying code underlying their shamanic semantics: their musical-cellular structure, their verbal-

poetical form are not the “arbitrary signs” of structural linguistics.

In line with such underlying-unifying cosmological considerations, the “mythical” character of *saiti* music is one that underlines ontological origins. Again, this topic is related to Marubo history and to their spatial displacement along time; to that predatory qualification of *sai iki*, “to do *sai*” — where *sai* is a jaguar-roar onomatopoeia —, which is further associated with its spiritual character of *yové vana*, “bird-language”; and finally to the multiple bodily and soul-like composition of these peoples. With all its attributable associations, one of those *saiti* myth-chants constitutes the focus upon which these themes shall converge with the main subject-matter of this thesis: a brief musical-poetical exegesis.

I.7 space and time

Then, before moving on to the more detailed description and extensive exegesis of the *saiti* in part two below, we have to expand on the three topics that are associated with their ontological-original character: their historical spatiality, the relation between animal and spiritual ethos in their mythical-musical language, and the soul-anatomic structures of these peoples. This chapter provides a few details on the temporal dimension of the spatial setting of longhouse residence, while we approach the two other points toward the end of this first part.

We should not surprise the reader if we say that, in the upper courses of the Ituí and Curuçá, where most Marubo now live, there is a marked geographic contrast between the headwaters of tributary streams, where they hunt and collect

in the dry season, and the high banks of these rivers, where their present-day longhouses are located. For this dynamic contrast is an instantaneous schematic translation of ample historical cycles of migrations, which occurred back and forth between the streamlets in the tributaries' headwaters and the larger rivers. However, through history, the migratory span of the Marubo covered a much wider distance between riverine and hinterland than the abbreviated area where their contemporary seasonal movement takes place. The current cyclical movement of these peoples along the Ituí and Curuçá Rivers, between the two geographic poles of riverbank and headwater, is a reduced projection of a larger temporal scale: present-day locality is both a spatial instant in diachrony and a synchronic projection of movements that have occurred through their history. Each historical conjuncture of the Marubo corresponds to varied configurations of an ever-moving spatial polarisation between fragmented isolation and concentrated population, between riverbank and headwater. The relation between past movements and present locality is a dynamic one; and rather than a mere result of causal events, their spatiality conforms to a temporal logic of cyclical poles and recurrent linear directions. Yet this historical rationale is not model-like. The constant relations that we find among those settlement poles and migratory directions do not imply any deterministic mechanism, for if places and movements are cyclical and recurrent, their sociocultural meaning is changeable inasmuch as they are temporal performances: the Marubo perform their history, rather than being its passive pawns.

In recent times, this spatiotemporal principle is exemplified in the experience of slavery and warfare of these peoples. We have seen how they

suffered the exogenous slave-raiding parties that came up the major rivers and met the context of their own indigenous wars. In contrast to the current location of longhouses, the instantaneous representation of that historical moment were more widely sparse streamlet settlements, a meaningful reaction to an aggressive atmosphere: riverine Panoans would ambush terra firma longhouses and scatter them deep into the bush, inasmuch as hinterland peoples would raid among their own and disperse through a large area. The old native custom of burning the longhouse and abandoning its surrounds as a sign of bereavement contributed to amplify the direct proportion between violence and dispersal. The resulting movement was centrifugal and outbound: kidnapping drained women and children away from community nuclei, and eventually from the tributaries' headwaters up to the Amazonian town trader.

War entailed fragmentation, and enforced a migratory pattern of the same design as the later movement that latex- and timber-trade re-signified. The logic unfolded in the precedent chapters prevails: if such movements were a function of the entire exterior world, they have been first conditioned by the interior state of affairs that gave particular historical significance to them. If the later engagement of natives in the extraction of rubber and wood came to be a means to relate more or less peacefully with the foreigner and concentrate their settlements on the riverbanks, the movement of dispersal incited by incoming warriors was most of all the outcome of the local-fragmented spatiality of earlier times. The flux of both warfare and trade have been patterned in an outward direction, from remote longhouse to riverine settlement, being moved by the alternation between turmoil and tranquillity within those isolated areas where the purposeful enslaver or trader

would not reach⁶⁰.

External and internal contexts intertwine thus in the history of these peoples. Marubo raid parties captured wives and stepchildren, whereas sheer slavery was the object of foreign attacks. Women and their children were like a middle-ground, the object of raids as potential families or slaves, subjects who were subjected to the all-encompassing warlike environment. The historical change of gendered statuses in the transition from war to peace, which we verified in a previous chapter, was dependent on the changing state of affairs with the *nawa*-foreigner; and after all, it did not alter the spatial dynamics between longhouse and foreign, *nawa*-land. That is, the outbound movement from hinterland to larger riverbanks survived the partial substitution of the human-directed purpose of both indigenous and exogenous belligerent exchange with the subsequent extraction of rubber-balls and huge logs from the headwaters to be taken down to the large rivers. In the later rubber and logging times longhouses gathered closer together and moved downriver, while women and children extended the now centripetal household into an expanded communal interior; and still then a male-oriented vector toward the exterior, similar to the one that had been generated by warfare and slavery, continued to point from the streamlets to the mainstreams. Longhouse locality is a spatial expression of history; nevertheless, as much as the transformed forms of exchange with the outside are reiterated through time with variable objectives and agents, the native micro-geography, viz. the local environment surrounding the existing longhouses on the riverbanks, is very much the same as the surrounds of

⁶⁰ Cf. Steward & Métraux 1948: 515, 528, 555 for historical accounts of inter-tribal warfare in a wider but still regional context.

the old, abandoned settlements on the streamlet headwaters. Residence construction and residential courses are constant, even if the native social ethos moves from belligerence to peace: structures remain, significances change.

This changeable constancy is what we may claim to be the mythical matrix of Marubo history. The residential arrangement of longhouses is but a spatial aspect of temporal conceptualisations that these peoples make visible, or rather audible in the performance of their *saiti* myth-chants. Their settlements are but one example: the two polar residential arrangements of the Marubo have always, historically and mythically, been built on stretches of high ground that the Brazilians call *cabeças-de-terra* (in native language *mato*), low hillocks situated either on the riverside or a bit further inland, either on high banks or high mounds. With equal constancy, very small intermittent streams crisscross in between these two favourite dwelling places; and yet these are not the most constant connection among them.

Let us keep this word, *mato*, for further mythical-musical reference, together with the one characteristic of Marubo land that allows for spatiotemporal continuity: the paths that invariably connect their changing settlements, which are themselves comprised of clusters of interconnected longhouses. Paths cut across the hilltops and ascend toward other cosmic levels beyond the limits of this earthly biosphere, as the *nawañ vai* rainbow (the “foreigner’s, *nawa*-prototypical way”), or the eastern *nai tae* “foot of the sky”. The Marubo call *nai taeri* the “East” (whereby *-ri* is a directional suffix): even the cardinal directions of Marubo space are paths. The most important among these spatial connections for eschatological theories and shamanic practices is the *vei vai*, the “dangerous path” or “way of

transformations” that leaves the upper limits of the forest canopy toward the *yové*-spiritual paradise of post-mortem renovation, *shoko nai shavaya*. The *vei vai* is circular, or rather a spiral path, beginning and ending in the two cosmic dwellings (*shavaya*) of the *yové*-spirits: the arboreal *tama shavaya* and the celestial *shoko nai shavaya*. Its *yové*-spiritual end is its very beginning; the only diacritical difference between both extremes of the *vei vai* path is human temporality, the dangerous course of Marubo life and death. The dead start their afterlife journey on the borderline of human existence, where the living interact with the tree-spirits *yové*, and proceed to the super-human level of body-renewing *yové*-spirituality.

With a temporal-transformative, mythical-musical constancy, both terrestrial and cosmic paths provide intercommunication linkages, winding up and down through the undulating, arboreal landscape: the gardens are grown down the hill slopes, on the way between earthly settlements, while the forest canopy is peopled by semi-divine, semi-human *yové* beings on the way from earth to their spiritual paradise. The respective meanings of these paths are diverse but equivalent: they are all dangerous means of communication. The event of death and the shamanic seance are both central operators establishing the ontological connections between divinity and humanity, whereas the deadly friction among living humans has always been an expanding force, extending away the trodden ways of conviviality that connected the longhouses even in the bitterest times of *moka* warfare. Even in peace, natives think of themselves as fragmentary peoples connected through a vast territory, and conceive humanity in a celestial-terrestrial universe crisscrossed by inter-communicating footpaths. Paths are on the divide between sociability and hostility, humans and spirits, life and death; in this sense, they are at least as

significant in myth as the waterways along which their history takes place. Indeed, although their environment is typical of the Amazonian Lowlands, the Marubo settlements in the Javarian tributaries are ordered through firm land rather than by streams, be their territory regarded as a farming, hunting, logging, rubber-tapping, or yet as a shamanic space: in mythical-musical time, shamans transform the horizontal plane of socio-terrestrial organisation into a vertical, cosmic one.

Thus longhouses and gardens are the nodes of a framework of jungle paths, even when such a network takes on a fluvial axis, as it is transposed upstream and downstream through historical events. The spatial structure among settlements is similar regardless of their location, and always ordered through terrestrial trails, whatever is the distance between longhouses. The Marubo have never been known for their artistry in canoe-building: their old canoes are claimed to have been no more than rudimentary troughs made out of the excavated trunk of the *paxiúba* palm-tree (*Iriarteia ventricosa*). Their longhouses are understood to have always been connected across land, just as dead-end foot-roads would lead to lumber and rubber trees at different stages in their history. Likewise, cosmic paths depart the earth toward the ulterior limits of this world in their ever-recurrent myths and shamanic sessions. Marubo topology, both cosmic and earthly, is squared into a grid of circular and linear paths, and so are the temporal structures represented in native vocal music, in the *saiti* myth-chants most of all. We shall see that these paths have directionality, not only within the dwelling space and native cosmos but in musical time too⁶¹.

⁶¹ Townsley 1988 quotes the testimony of a Yaminawa shaman on his own shamanic songs, one that is likely to find support among neighbouring peoples in the Amazonian South

Otherwise, the example that the main entrance of the Marubo longhouses gives is significant: as in those of the Matis, it is normally positioned toward the headwaters. And it is not only the case that natives give a special significance to certain cardinal directions. The meaning of this and other instances of native directionality are as fluid as the flux of the rivers: the direction is less important than the dialectics that gives impulse to movement along time, the circular and linear temporal motions that are a recurrent occurrence in their history and in the *saiti* myth-chants⁶².

The Marubo longhouse (*shovo*), standing on a slight elevation within a forest clearance, provides definition to an otherwise little-distinguishable surround. It is an important orientation even for those who are well used to the jungle-space as their own native habitat. Longhouses, then, define the native space itself, as the units of the clusters of settlements that constitute the nodes of a network of paths, both earthly and otherworldly. Their structure and attributes are to be understood in this context, insofar as here sociology is subsumed to cosmology. For the *shovo* longhouse is designed to encompass living quarters and to form a meeting point, while both these spatial functions are gender-marked; but these and other significant markers of the dwelling structure make more sense when the social space is envisaged as a ceremonial one.

West:

“With my song I cut a path — walking along it I look this way and that — I see many things — but the path should be straight and I don’t stop.” (1988: 141)

⁶² Compare with Erikson on the socio-spatial organisation of the Matis longhouse, also facing upstream, and his “panological” generalisations, to which the Marubo example might add some time-depth:

“L’amont représente, pour les Pano en général, et pour les Matis en particulier, la direction de l’avenir et de la progression... les aînés naissent en aval des cadets,

Within the *shovo*, the highest pillars that support the roof — the *kaya natiñ* posts — coincide with the functional boundaries that the Marubo draw between the central *kaya naki* longhouse patio, where much ritual choreography is performed, and the squared *chaneñ*, the peripheral “domestic hearths”. These are the sleeping quarters of the nuclear families, delimited by beams and posts only, with no visual privacy except during the night, when the whole longhouse is filled with deep darkness punctuated by the faint glow of fire embers underneath the hammocks of each *chaneñ*. In each *chaneñ* square, close kin hang their hammocks and store their smaller and everyday personal belongings.

Excluded from this space are the larger agricultural utensils, the new aluminium pans, western clothes and shoes, and the much-treasured *txakiri*, the fine glass-beads that come from the Czech Republic through the hands of the riverine trader. All these precious items are kept elsewhere: the indigenous longhouse is not built for the storage of exogenous things. Indeed, the residential communality that festivals bring to light stand out against the dim atmosphere found within the four square walls of another kind of building present in the village. All that which the Marubo obtain from their trade with White people is locked in one of the family-owned, regional-style shanties built on stilts with the same *paxiúba* wood that their ancestors excavated for canoes. The Marubo call these shanties *tapo*, and build them in line around the longhouse, in a larger ellipse bordering the village and the surrounding forest, gardens and rivers. There, each nucleated family manages its own set of western possessions. From there, and quite aptly, negotiation with the foreign *nawa* world takes place fragmentarily:

comme si la société remontait le fleuve.” (1996: 83)

each family, or family-fragment in the case of polygynous households, negotiates their acquisitions on its own. The western shanty is an entrepôt, an exit to the outside rather than an entrance to the inside; it is an appropriation from and a concession to the exterior, rather than an acculturated architectural alternative⁶³.

The situation within the *shovo* longhouse is different. Its spatial structure is as elliptical as the line of surrounding shanties; but in the inside, the ellipse that it forms concentrically with walls and familial hearths, supporting pillars and internal patio subtly encompasses some linearity, which appears in the form of an axial corridor. This longhouse “line” runs across the centre, between the posts and the squared *chaneñ* that are aligned along the proximal periphery, attached to both sides of the oval contour. The corridor is a connection between the distal extremities of the oblong longhouse, where there stand the two opposite entrances, sometimes closed with panels of woven straw or wooden-plank doors.

Male visitors usually use the main entrance, as all do during the *saiti* festivals, irrespective of gender or place of residence. Next to it, placed along both sides of the entranceway, there are the two low and parallel *kenañ* “benches”. The *ako* log-drum is hung on very thick vine trees just behind one of them, toward the walls and parallel to the parallel benches, sometimes one on each side. We noted before that, despite the obvious signal-communicative function of the *ako*, its placement in its context of performance — the *saiti* festivals — is our main concern here. Now we can situate it a bit better: it is placed near the main entrance,

⁶³ The Matis call their neo-regional huts that also surround their longhouses more directly: they are the *nawan shobo* (“foreigner’s house”). From Erikson’s account, the spatial organisation of the Matis sounds similar to that of the Marubo, if somehow more socio-centric, for there these “western shanties” would “respond to an inveterate necessity to put

a diacritic of its masculinity, since *ako*-players are always men. Further, the specific position of the *ako*-drum within the longhouse forces players to stand on the equally male *kenañ* bench, to hit it with long poles and make it sound with its characteristic deep, far-reaching tones. The polyrhythmic, doubly-male *ako*-playing that we called “dialectic” before is thus in clear contrast, and not only at a performative but a gendered level, with the singing of myth-chants in *saiti* festivals: while the former is deeply gender-marked, the latter is above distinctions of gender. This defines *saiti*-singing as *yové*-spiritual as much as the intoned character of its words, the tonal code of its “musicality” does.

Still the gender distinctions mark the longhouse in *saiti* festivals and at all times. If the parallel *kenañ* benches and the *ako* constitute the functional space of men, of male fabrication and use, at the other extremity of the longhouse lies the opposite, female entrance. It is known as *ama*, a word that is less associated with a “feminine” connotation than with *amari*, i.e. “opposite half” (following the etymology of the suffix *-ri*). It is there that women carry out a great deal of their domestic tasks such as weaving, grinding flour and fabricating *novo* beads, minuscule snail-shell disks for ornaments. Women prefer to work in their *ama*, “opposite” side but, in the case of the leading longhouse family, sometimes also by the main male entrance, close to which it has its *chaneñ* hearth. Both entrances are, in fact, a middle-ground between the day luminosity and the dim shadows inside the longhouse, affording partial protection against the biting bugs. The gendered character of each is not more important than their respective spatial situation in relation to the foreign domain, outside of the longhouse — a status specification

in quarantine all that comes from the outside” (1996: 174).

that the leader's *chaneñ*, the *kenañ* benches and the *ako*-drum assign to the "male" side, but assigning thus a higher emphasis on foreignness than on gender. The presence of men marks the main entrance less than the movement of visitors, either cosmic or terrestrial, in the *saiti* festivals and in shamanic sessions at large⁶⁴.

The *kaya naki*, the internal central patio of the oblong longhouse, lies midway between both the proximal *chaneñ* family hearths and the distal male and female entrances. While *naki* ordinarily means "inside" or "middle", *kaya* means "high", indicating the height of the longhouse at its centre. Women and children sit down there in circles for communal meals, whereas men eat on the *kenañ* benches whenever labour- or hunting-parties congregate, joining their commensal families at other times. Incoming visitors make gender distinctions even clearer in the longhouse space: men go to the male *kenañ* area and women to the female *ama* entrance, while children gather to eat with their mothers in the *naki* internal patio, near the *chaneñ* precincts. Otherwise, the divisions within the *shovo* longhouse are to be understood as a gender-generic whole just in the context of the shamanic seance. If the names of several constructional sections reveal an entire metaphorical anatomy, whereby each name corresponds to a constituent part of the body (the *kaya* centre also means "trunk", for instance), these ordinary linguistic analogies are clear references to the shamanic body. The *romeya*-shaman is said to be the "host" of the visiting *yové*-spirits when the latter are invited to the earthy

⁶⁴ In connection with Montagner Melatti & Melatti 1986, Erikson emphasises and amplifies this male / female spatial opposition in an amazing semantic scale, with particular reference to the Matis longhouse:

"...deux axes imaginaires coexistent et conjoignent leurs effets, opposant, pour le premier un amont masculin et aîné à un aval féminin et cadet; pour le second, une droite prestigieuse, consanguine et masculine, à une gauche assujettie, affine et féminine." (1996: 185)

session, in the same fashion as longhouse owners invite their neighbours for *saiti* festivals. The longhouse is the shaman's body, a meeting point for visiting households and a middle-ground between humanity and divinity. Shamanic performances transform the spatial gender-order of the *shovo* longhouse into a cosmological one, redefining the oppositions between male and female extremities, periphery and centre as oppositions between humans, spirits, and doubles⁶⁵.

Any mention of the longhouse centre has metonymic ceremonial reference, in the *saiti* intoned words or even in everyday talk: the *kaya naki* is the central space where most festival performances are carried out. It is where the circles of “dancers” or “travellers” respond to the chant-leader intoning the *saiti* myth-chants from the entrance benches, and this responsory along time is the most crucial spatial opposition that the Marubo create within the longhouse. Natives designate the shamanic chant-leader as *yoya*, literally the “one who leads”, and call the responding *saiti* performers as “dancers” or “travellers” in figurative glosses.

Their “dancing” could be understood as something close to our meaning of “choreographic movement”; but the appropriateness of “travelling” is difficult to understand unless we contextualise the *saiti* performance within a wider cosmographic context. At first glance, those responding performers do nothing but walk in pairs or triads one after the other, going round in ever-repeating circular steps along the line bordering the central *naki* interior and the exterior *chaneñ* periphery. It is in their performance, however, that the contradictory spatiality of

⁶⁵ Cf. Montagner Melatti 1985, and specifically Montagner Melatti & Melatti 1986 for more details on the longhouse's anatomic morphology.

the Marubo cosmos becomes imprinted on the surface of the earth. It is then that the design of the *shovo* is envisaged as the confrontation of two spatiotemporal values. The longhouse becomes visualisable and definable as a linear corridor between the two entrances, whose main extreme is focal for the festival but still situated in the longhouse periphery; and as a circular patio, which is marginal to the myth-music but central in the *saiti* choreography⁶⁶.

In this thesis, the exegesis of the very mythical-musical discourse of the *yoya* chant-leader shall paraphrase the ontological message of the sonic-choreographic movement that he himself and his responding responsory perform during the *saiti* festival. The *saiti* performance represents and reproduces the *shovo* longhouse as the humanised world par excellence, within both the earthly and cosmic spheres — not as an “ideal” construction, but as a universe that is constructed inasmuch as it is performed along time. The *saiti* performers construe this world in its barest temporal framework, that is, as the well-journeyed paths that traverse the earth and the whole cosmos along time, along which the *yora*-bodies, the *yové*-spirits and the *yochiñ*-doubles “travel”.

The diversity of directions and meanings of these movements, on earth and through the cosmos, shall help us to characterise these entities at a later stage; now we just leave a few hints. The *yové*-paradisiacal world is the cosmo-focal dwelling of recurrent renovation. *Yové*-spirits inhabit the celestial *shoko nai shavaya*, where

⁶⁶ Compare with Erikson 1996: contrary to the Marubo longhouse, in the morphologically related Matis *shobo* the middle patio is reduced to a minimum, and virtually transformed into a corridor. Meanwhile, Matis men congregate on small, individual benches within the longhouse centre (*nantan*) to form a circle, in a stark contrast against the linear, parallel, collective and peripheral *kenañ* benches of the Marubo. The Matis merge in one what is well separated and dual among the Marubo: the central circle and the peripheral centre.

dead human souls shed their skin at the end of their journey in the afterlife, and in so doing signal the end of the dangerous path of transformations that runs along the margins of earth and sky, the *vei vai*. Meanwhile, human death liberates the *yochiñ* animal-doubles that wander along past lifelines on earth or along the same *vei vai*, the transitory limbo that is the future of all living humans. The *vai* “path” is called *vei*, “dangerous”, because it traverses a marginal space, where the *yochiñ*-doubles bar the *yové* spirit-becoming way of the deceased souls; and if this attribute of danger indicates “transformation” as well, this is meant to be an eschatological one, standing for the transience between life and death. If the skin-shedding, circular-renovating movement of the *yové*-spirit is the distal destination of the dead humans, the transit of the *yochiñ*-double in the margins of life and afterlife is their proximal passage. The *yora*-body embodies the dangers of soul-transformation, the potentials of animal-doubling or spiritual-transmutation of the *vei vai* itself, and living humans enact this in *saiti* festivals. If both the *yochiñ* and the *yové* may occupy alternative niches near the ways of the living *yora*-humans, on earth or on treetops respectively, at death this opposition is reproduced in the *vei vai*, the interstitial trail that, although infested with earthly *yochiñ* double-ness, conducts to the sky of *yové*-spiritual renovation. The *saiti* myth-chant and its choreography, in turn, effect a countering spatiotemporal transposition of the movement from earth to sky that occurs after one’s lifetime. For *yora*-bodies, the *vei vai* path stands thus for a decisive journey of dangerous transformations that reflects human life on this earth and performs its post-mortem potentiality.

The spatiotemporal structures that are actualised as shamanic performance in the *shovo* longhouse during *saiti* festivals have historical-geographic

repercussions insofar as they have a logical counterpart in the residential structure as well. If the male longhouse entrance is central in the mythical-musical performance, the female *ama* on the opposite extreme is peripheral qua “entrance”, i.e. as regards the relation between the domestic interior and the external world. Visitors always approach the male side, while those who are going away follow the path between the two entrances across the longhouse, leaving through the *ama* extreme as a farewell gesture. The female entrance is in effect an “exit”, with reference to the movement of peoples in between communities, as much as the mythical-musical periphery in *saiti* choreography is the circular movement that represents the eschatological destination of soul-skin renewal. Moreover, the upriver direction of the main entrance suggests that visits come and follow the actual flow of the streams. Given that the unanimous location of the *nawa*-foreign land is on the larger banks downriver, would visitors be “affine-becoming kin” then, while affinal conviviality is a prior stage to the *yové*-spiritual becoming of souls? Is the longhouse on the way of a process of “*nawa*-estrangement” and “*yové*-spiritualisation”, equal to humanisation for peoples whose historical directions run in parallel with the water flow?

Much as human corporeality and the spiritual voice are confounded in mythical-musical performance, the social statuses of kin and affine, of women and men, are indeed in a state of flux within the nodal longhouse. This is not perceived in the domestic sphere only: Marubo kinship is phrased in terms of gender relations, but these relations are situated in the cosmic context that comes to the fore in shamanic ceremonies. The hearth of the longhouse owner is to be found on the male side, behind the *kenañ* parallel benches and the *ako*-drum, and this

confers to its occupant the condition of “leader” (*kakaya*). This part of the longhouse, the *repañ* corner, deprives of spatial centrality the socio-cosmic centre that it represents; and as regards daily affairs, it is utterly peripheral indeed. Even though the longhouse owner (*shovoñ ivo*) is locally known as *kakaya*, “leader” or “chief” — with probable morphemic links with the central *kaya* —, the male space he occupies in the distal extreme of the longhouse is its peripheral focus, the “ex-centric centre” of native society and of this whole cosmos. Again, this becomes clear in the *saiti* festival: it is from the male entrance that the *yoya* chant-leader vocally leads the singers who move in circles in the internal patio. If the longhouse centre *kaya naki* is spatially central but musically marginal, it contrasts with the male extremity, from which the *romeya*-shaman departs to cosmic journeys in order to invite his *yové*-spiritual guests from their celestial or arboreal longhouses to the earthly shamanic session. It is still on the *kenañ* benches, at this focal periphery that the *keñchiñtxo*-healer starts the performance of his cures, by means of *shoñ iki* singing upon remedies or by reciting the verbally traced origins of the disease.

Therefore, if the male side of the longhouse is the magnetic focus of socio-cosmic transactions, the line that links it to the *ama* back entrance is an axis of dispersion. In this sense, even though households are now gathered centripetally in community nuclei, the centrifugal characterisation of the “feminine direction” within the longhouse is consistent with the pivotal meaning of femininity in native history. Marubo women constitute the paradoxical opposite pole of warlike or socio-cosmic forces; if the male warrior or shaman can be characterised as “foreign” or “ex-centric”, their direction is female. Women are a simultaneous

motor of socio-cosmic binding and dispersal, both now and before; but native socio-cosmology inverts the relation female : interior :: male : exterior, an equation that functioned under certain historical conditions. We have already seen that, in those past movements permeated by alternating peace and warfare, women tended toward the “foreign interior” of society. And from the ever-present shamanic regard, a mythical-musical and eschatological one, the feminine is instead placed at the level of *yové*-spiritual circularity, in the cosmic exterior — although this exteriority is perceived from an ex-centric perspective, that of the shaman. In stories of the past, both the pole of human congregation and the motive of social disintegration were female: women were both the core of sociality and the currency of warfare. Now from a shamanic perspective we may realise that, if the agents in transactions with extra-human entities are men, the direction of the deceased becoming of all human beings is feminine. Indeed, the *romeya*-shamans of the past used to be adorned with ornaments of *novo* snail-shells and *txakiri* glass-beads as profusely as most living Marubo women do, and as some of the present-day *keñchiñtxo*-healers still dress themselves. The shamanic attire is a *yové*-spiritual guise, which is a feminine state of recurrent renewal. Marubo men, indeed, describe the *yové*-sky of post-mortem renewal *shoko nai shavaya* as womanly, sensual and attractive.

This is the socio-cosmic scene of the mythical-musical performance of *saiti*, with its spatiotemporal implications. Now we move on to a characterisation of the *saiti* myth-chants proper; but after setting this historical background of the myth-chants, and before we delineate its formal generalities in the next chapter, this one shall conclude with some words on the predatory character of its “public

performance”. This was already pointed it out, in part, as the second of the three aspects of *saiti* that its exegesis requires as a prerequisite to its further development: the agencies involved in its performance. Neither this nor its generic description, and not even the associated topic of soul-bodily personhood that shall follow soon exhaust the study of *saiti*: all that is just a preparation of its semantic ground. Of all manifestations and expressions of Marubo vocal-musical practices, the *saiti* is the most conspicuous, and therefore it is the last one to be presented in detail. Still, these details are just preparatory notes for its exegesis.

Here we linger a bit further on the term *saiti* itself: the suggestion that it can be derived from the verb *sai iki*, “to do *sai*”, is not so discrepant with its usual meanings of “festival” and “myth-chant”. In all *saiti* festivals, the ritual performance of the *saiti* myth-chants is concluded by several *sai*, the high-pitched falsetto shouts emitted by the *yoya* song-leader. These *sai* high-falsettos are to be repeated then by all dancers, or they may occasionally shout them first, in between each of the final verses / cells on which the *saiti* myth-chants are structured. They indicate that the performance has finished, or anticipate the *yoya* song-leader as an indication that the responding singers are tired and look forward to an end being put to it all. As we have noted before, guests also shout *sai* in the first stages of the *saiti* ceremony, when they “invade” the host’s longhouse and patio, jumping and trotting and holding each other’s arms in several groups. Such shouting is sometimes accompanied by the partial destruction of the host’s assets in some festivals, those to which less intimate-related peoples had been invited. All these attitudes stand in opposition, and still are analogous, to the walking hand in hand, in pairs and triads, of the responding chorus during the music and choreography of

the *saiti* myth-chant in its proper festival rendering. This is how shamanic performance in *saiti* festivals sublimates warfare: the overall atmosphere is festive, but besides the occasional ritualised vandalism of guests, the aggressive character of the *sai* cries is both manifested throughout the ceremony and counteracted by the mythical-musical voice, in the responsorial or mute dialectics of the myth-chants and in the host's ritual address. For at the end of the day, the *yové*-spiritual *saiti* myth-singing of the *yoya* chant-leader is as *inoñ*, as “jaguar-like” as the *sai* high-pitch shouting, or as the ascending tones of the *tsai iki vana* that longhouse leaders intone in the prolegomena of *sai iki*.

I.8 myth and music

We know already that the everyday speech of the Marubo is *yorañ vana*, that which they call “our language” or “word of body”. But these two expressions are nothing but tentative indications toward the meaning of *vana* and *yora*, some of the linguistic categories related to their identity and to the general theme focused upon in this thesis, to wit the mythical-musical emergence of these peoples — in relation both to their history and to their world as a cosmological configuration. But the convergence of this focus, the emergence of these peoples and in their world and along their history, is not manifested in this ordinary verbal language, *yorañ vana*: it is ritually rendered by shamans and represented by everyone in extraordinary occasions such as the *saiti* festivals and myth-music. This means that, while a mere linguistic analysis would be insufficient to render indigenous identities clear, it would not suffice to account for the *saiti* synthesis, the mythical-musical form of native history and cosmos either. We cannot content ourselves

with the interpretation of a set of concepts. Beyond a visual-verbal study of translations and transcriptions we are in need of musical-poetical exegesis, if only because the main medium in which the Marubo articulate their verbal conceptualisations on such themes like identity, history, and cosmology is a formalised language, words in intoned form. For these peoples, this musical-poetical form is the sonic axis along which humanity and the world are temporally structured; and this is the intoned language of the *saiti*, their “myth-chants”.

This first part, and this chapter in particular, aim at a broad characterisation of those myth-chants, providing the elements for the exegetical commentary that the thesis as a whole concentrates on one such *saiti*, the myth-chant of *Mokanawa Wenia*. This myth-chant shall be brought into focus in the second part because of its pedagogical character, both for the anthropologist in the field and, within and around the large communal longhouses, for the young audience who repeats *saiti* verbal verses / musical cells in response to the chant-leading elder, the *yoya*. More specifically, *saiti* can be defined as a vocal genre performed by the *yoya* chant-leaders and the responding circling-dancers, in festivals that bear the same name *saiti*, whereby mythical narratives are intoned. In short, *saiti* are mythical discourses told and repeated in musical form, and the word further designates the context in which such oral narratives are performed in choreography. Among the Marubo and through the Marubo, *saiti* are myths in music: they are structures performed in time.

“Myth” is here understood in line with the rather commonsensical definition of a narrative of origins of the world, and of every possible being in it. This definition is at once too broad and too narrow, however. First, it is a broad and

vague definition because every single instance of *saiti* myth-chant is encoded in verbal narratives that give specific meaning to what is intended as “original” in it. Origins in the Marubo myth-chants entail humour and history, eschatology and physiology, cosmological and cosmographic references, and all this beyond the strict sense of original creation — of what they call *wenia*, “emergence”, the past and ever-present event that some of the longest among these musical-mythical narratives denote. Secondly and above all, the commonsensical formula is too narrow and simple a definition because the *saiti* myth-chant is always more than a verbal narrative, at any rate when it is performed and heard. The *saiti* is more than spoken words precisely because it is codified as musical poetics, in a ritualised form. It is not in mere speech, but through the expressive means of these chanted words that the historical emergence of the Marubo themselves and of the world of these peoples take place; or, as they say, *wenia* occurs in *saiti*-singing⁶⁷.

The verbal meanings of *saiti* are often cryptic, and in such cases they hardly make any sense at all without their ritualised form. The musical poetics of the myth-chants of *wenia*-emergence, for instance, is the temporal-ontological configuration in which the being of all things in the world materialises as primordial substances that combine in pristine earth, emerging (*weni*) as humanity and *nawa*-humanising it. Earth becomes world as the ground is cleared as an archetypal dwelling (*shavaya*) in the human-becoming of all “creative things”. But if such movement from earth to world and from things to humanity is ontological,

⁶⁷ Melatti 1986 focuses on *Wenia*, a longer version of the *saiti* in question here. It is an enlarged version of *Mokanawa Wenia saiti*, the prototypical “mythological origin of the Marubo culture”, as the author calls it. His detailed description envisages the myth as a written representation, i.e. from a univocal visual-verbal perspective.

i.e. it is as anthropogenic as it is cosmogonic, it takes place in musical-poetical rather than in linear, mere chronological time. In those *saiti* myth-chants, all things and entities that are related to and constitutive of humanity and the human world come into life in a musical articulation between recurrence and progress, reiteration and succession, circularity and linearity. These binary structures, rather than constituting a universal intelligibility that sits outside of space and time, are instead sensible temporal articulations performed in musical and spatial movement: these are indigenous utterances that the present ethnographic sketches intend to render more intelligible for those sensibilities who have not lived and experienced the *saiti* festivals and myth-chanting among the Amazonian Marubo.

We insist on this point because the transcription, translation, and subsequent study of the *saiti* myth-chants in this ethnographic exercise do entail several methodological problems that are related to nothing less than the disciplinary relationship between musicology and anthropology. Our aspiration is to surpass a western ontological given, which requires the refusal of the epistemological separation between myth and music, and between their form and their mythical-musical meaning. This almost iconoclastic attitude may limit the possible dialogue of this work with other ethnography, and prevent its engagement in any discussion circumscribed to one single discipline. The existing ethnography devoted to our themes is predisposed to present the monographic reduction of mythology or musicology to anthropology, and this implies the usual search of mythical-musical meaning in an implicit social model. We aim at the temporal meaning of sociality instead of a topological analysis, at the ontology that is made explicit in native synthetic structures and there only, at that which the Marubo mean when they sing

their *saiti* myth-chants — and that they do so because they could not do it otherwise.

In this connection, it is impossible for us not to lament here the fateful fortune of the dearest of metaphors in the structuralist myth: music is reduced there to a Kantian representation, a squalid bi-dimensional musical score mythically frozen in the void. The structuralist structure that is supposed to be metaphorically modelled after music in fact ignores its temporal character and, in consequence, ignores the ritual context of myth as well, failing to account for its form and neglecting thus all the indigenous agencies involved in its performance. If the structuralist myth is regarded as visualisable language, one does not hear its words, and therefore it cannot be music unless when the latter is pictured as written notes. Conversely, it is only under the guise of this visual, a-temporal representation that musical harmony can be conceived as mere synchrony, the instantaneous moment of chord-verticality, and fugal counterpoint be seen as plain diachrony, the horizontal succession of melody-lines. Time is then opposed to a-temporal instants, its negation, and its positive definition is reduced to no more than progressive linearity, in an opposition that is homologous to the positivist definition of truth as eternal and abstract and of knowledge as evolutionary and concrete. The topological transformations that structuralism unfolds in its “science of mythology”, in actual fact an unfoldment of its own western-metaphysical myth, are duly limited to this visually-eternal, ideal reduction of temporality⁶⁸.

⁶⁸ The structuralist project proves itself to be “symbolic inefficacious” in the study of myth and music at the very inception of its all too ambitious project, as it is monumentally announced in the out-of-date overture of an equivocal late-romantic symphony:

“The search for a middle way between aesthetic perception and the exercise of logical

The “original sin” of the structuralist study of myth has roots in these ancient western biases on time-ontology and in correlated epistemological dichotomisations that the Marubo would challenge, like the anatomical dissection of the human soul into the bodily concrete sense-perception and the eternally abstract intellect. These peoples, we shall see, divide their bodies into left and right “souls”, and each has different sensible-intelligible, time-related attributions. The structuralist homology found between myth and music, the “middle-way” between sensibility and intelligibility that structuralism proposes as a solution for its own metaphysical dilemmas is fallacious only because it deprives both myth and music, both sense-perception and thought from the one factor that relates the western “universals” indicated in those words to their native “particulars”: time. Time only fills the western-metaphysical gap between words visualised as a-temporal and a-spatial “ideal concepts” and their audible performance. If our insertion in western academia constrains us to use metaphysical terms, even when speaking of indigenous word-intonations, we shall say that the *saiti* myth-chants are a “reified metaphysics”; but it shall be so just to the extent that it is myth heard as music and thought made perceptible, that is, just because the Marubo perform it along time.

Although temporally formalised in a musical-poetical, choreographic-festival form, the chanted words of *saiti* are not fundamentally different from the everyday verbal language of these peoples, those words they call *yorañ vana*. Our fundamental aim of reconciling the uttered words with their intoned form, with

thought should find inspiration in music” (Lévi-Strauss 1994 [1964]: 14)

See Hymes 1981 for a not so musical, but still poetics-based ethnographic response to such

that which characterises them musically and poetically, results from this “linguistic neutrality” of ritual language. If our aim is not achievable in a monograph, this is because we write it in academe: here the word is limited to printed characters, to its a-temporal and a-spatial, virtually visual form, and “ideas” and “concepts” are at stake. In Amazonia instead, the Marubo perform their sensible-intelligible affections in mythical-musical form, as an ontological comment on and along time. Our words are thus bound to be simple indications of the sonic meaning of the musical-poetical articulation of *saiti* myths. Even if the chanted words recorded in the field do reveal a wider use of tropes and vocalised melismas than the everyday language, the intonation of those words as a meaningful diacritic cannot be just taken for granted: it is at once a social and cultural emphasis among the Marubo. This did not go unnoticed in the previous accounts of their music and myth, which forms a respectable ethnographic corpus devoting minute attention to the “spiritual”, socio-cosmological context in which the shamanic cures and myth-chants are performed. However, we must emphasise that what makes shamanic language “spiritual” is its poetical musicality and, vice-versa, it is thanks to native cosmology that such language means “music” and “poetry” for the Marubo. The Marubo conceive the world that constitutes the cosmological context of cure and myth as populated by “bodies” and “spirits”, “doubles” and “souls” and other entities; conversely, all these *yora*, *yové*, *yochiñ*, *vaká* — all these native words and other ontological conceptualisations present in their everyday language are meaningful just inasmuch as they have a musical-poetical reality⁶⁹.

cold structural reductionism.

⁶⁹ Within Marubo ethnography special mention must be made to Montagner Melatti 1985,

The native point-of-view draws the most striking distinction between the spiritual *yové vana* words that are chanted in the *saiti* myth-chants and in other shamanic intonations on one side, and the common *yorañ vana* language on the other. Further still, it stresses that such a distinction lies less in the lexicon than at their concrete sonic level — the musical-poetical form. Our point throughout this thesis is that the verbal-visual, abstract dimension of “ideal concepts” is insufficient as an account of *saiti*, and of the Marubo at large; and in this sense, this study goes beyond linguistics, and is closer to an approach to the “performing arts”. Such an approach is nonetheless all about words, chanted and everyday words, native ones and those used to translate them. After the trajectory that brought us at last to a broad characterisation of *saiti* and its historical and cosmological import, the methodological implications of our mythical-musical study shall require us to expand on a number of native verbal conceptualisations, which will acquire a material meaning later, in the form of myth-chant exegesis. Our methodology is being built by means of verbal-visual description, aiming however at the significance of *saiti* that is in the sound of their pronunciation, beyond the visualising capacity of written words. These methods can only be made comprehensive in our conclusions, as they are part of a much wider project than this monograph. Our project with the cultural logic of myth and music is one that goes beyond anthropology. But even so, it is a methodological response to a rather

an extensive account of the native “spiritual world” specifically devoted to the curing chants. The author duly registers:

“In thinking of Marubo society, one immediately associates it to music, since their culture is based on vocal sonorities. To be able to sing and to be a good singer are highly valued attributes among these peoples. Social or religious relations manifest themselves by means of chants...: children are lulled with cradle songs; myths are sung during collective rites or can be heard occasionally at sunset; shamanic chants establish bonds between humans and the *yové*-spirits; and curing chants are sung to

traditional anthropological issue: the non-verbal grounds of social action⁷⁰.

I.9 persons and peoples

The Marubo are *yora*, we often suggested above, at least as far as linguistic self-denominations are concerned. Now after the description of their intoned linguistic forms, it becomes necessary to delineate better the meaning of *yora* and of other linguistic categories, to deepen our insight onto the original-ontological relations between the Marubo peoples and persons and their myth-chants. We suggested that *yora* is the way these peoples refer to “the Marubo”, as the inclusive third person, someone among themselves. However, the direct designation of *yora* is that of their “body”, a specific form of humanity. Not only are *yora* “bodies” different from *nawa*, that human category that designates foreigners and at the same time constitutes the names of these persons and peoples, but they are also set in ontological opposition against a whole range of forms of beings, like *yové* “spirits” and *yochiñ* “doubles”. There are still less circumscribed renderings to *yora* such as in *yora wetsa*, for instance, which means “other indigenous peoples” (literally “other body”) and, when pronounced *yorañ*, the genitive designation in its broader sense, the word means “of the Marubo peoples”, “ours”. *Yora* is an indeterminate subject that includes the first person: “we, the people”, humanity in

heal.” (1985: 591, my translation)

⁷⁰ An issue that is not unrelated to Evans-Pritchard’s comments on Zande divinary seances, for instance:

its most restricted meaning.

But who are the peoples to which the *yora* “we” refer? Their words provide indications. *Yorañ vana* is nowadays virtually the one language that all the Marubo peoples living in the Upper and Middle Ituí and Curuçá Rivers speak among themselves. That is, the *Varinawa*, *Shanenawa*, *Inonawa* (the “peoples of the Sun”, of the “Blue Bird”, the “Jaguar”), and all other *-nawa* “peoples” or kinship sections into which the *yora*, the Marubo kinsfolk are matrilineally interrelated and subdivided, speak the same language. Still, although current as a designation for “person”, *yora* does not stand as a specific ethnonym for those mutually intelligible peoples. But the only ethnonymic alternative otherwise available to them is “Marubo”, and this term is used as an ethnic definition just when foreign affairs are concerned, as in representations regarding indigenous and governmental organisations.

This means that, contrary to “Marubo”, *yora* is not a qualitatively distinguishable designation to “White people”. Apart from being an inclusive self-reference, *yora* is not different in kind from *nawa*, the generic “people” and “prototypical foreigner”; but instead of partaking of a taxonomy for humanity, it is a cosmo-topological operator, situating these “body-peoples” in their universe. In this sense, *yora* also does not differ in kind from “Marubo”, but rather in semantic location: each term is at a different level of self-identification, respectively

“An observer who recorded only questions put to the witch-doctors and the replies which they gave would leave out the whole mechanism by which the answers are obtained, and even the answers themselves. A witch-doctor ‘dances the questions’.”
(1976 [1937]: 89)

The Marubo sing their myths.

regarding either “humanity” or “indigenesness”. While both designations refer to the same “people”, they have different meanings and are used in different contexts. In a telling illustration of this, one day the old *Txomañpa* suddenly laid down on the bench where I sat at the longhouse entrance and, resting his head on my lap, stroked me and said: “you Marubo!”. He would never say “you *yora*”, even if he referred to me as an obvious “human body”. To be a “Marubo” might mean to be a *nawa* “like them” and not a generic, White *nawa*, but it did not necessarily mean to be part of their cosmological configuration, as *yora* would indicate. More than indicating bodily similitude, being a *yora*-body means to partake of a cosmos populated by *yochiñ*-doubles and *yové*-spirits.

“Marubo” means instead the same as “Indian”, the simple contrary of “White”. It stands for indigenous identity insofar as it is an exogenous designation. As another example, the employment of the qualitative vocative of “Marubo”, i.e. “not-White”, gained this “negative” meaning in another situation, an inversion of the domestic encounter with *Txomañpa* on the entrance bench. This occurred in a somewhat westernised *saiti* festival in *Paniñpañ shovo* (the longhouse of *Lauro Brasil*), in the Upper Ituí community of Alegria. In this as in other festivals, the Marubo are well aware of the disruptive effects of imported white spirit among teenagers, in most cases an excited state of consciousness wherein Indians emulate White cultural reactions and social ways. For fear of undesirable consequences, the middle-aged *Tamañpa* (*Simão Cruz*) addressed the youngsters dancing to Brazilian *fórró* music: “Marubo! Keep cool and don’t fight, or we’ll be in trouble with CIVAJA [the city-based indigenous organisation]”. “Marubo” was here defined in contradistinction to the “White”; it did not have the positive value of

yora. Both *Txomañpa* and *Tamañpa* used thus the term to distinguish among contradictory identities: in the latter case, in relation to the ambiguous exogenous-indigenous organisation and to exclude foreignness; and in the former case, in relation to myself, to include a foreigner who lived in the village ambiguously, “like one of them” but without pertaining to the same world.

The contextual uses of “ethnonymic” designations such as Marubo and *yora* do more than indicate the diverse contexts of identity and difference experienced in the field. These episodes are indications that the “Marubo”, these *yora* “bodies” are *nawa* peoples too, in the most ambiguous sense of this ethnic-definitional term. Let us recall what was already advanced in the first chapter. Present in most Pano languages, *nawa* is both an indigenous word for “foreigner as such” — or, more precisely, for the “non-indigenous” other —, and a linguistic marker for “people”, and in this sense a self-reference as well. In the Marubo case, as an isolated word *nawa* denotes the “White” in contrast to the “Indian”; and as a suffix it designates their several alternate-generation kinship sections *Varinawa*, *Shanenawa*, *Inonawa*, etc. Also, and this stresses even more the ambiguity of the category, *nawa* takes part in the composition of their personal names. The kinship terminology that is expressed in their chants, sung narratives, stories, hint at a composite origin of both persons and peoples — or “races”, as my friend *Keniñnawa* would call their alternate-generation matrilineal sections that, in sociological terms, are constitutive of “an Australian kinship system in Amazonia”⁷¹.

⁷¹ This is more or less the title of Melatti 1977, the first description of the Kariera-type organisation of Marubo kinship and of such sectional system among a Pano people.

This word *nawa* is a subject-matter of high elaboration in Marubo discourse, both in myth-chants and in their daily speech, and is a well-recorded phenomenon in the ethnography of other Pano peoples. We have mentioned in passing that the foremost meaning of *nawa* in chanted language, as a single word, is “prototypically, superlatively large”. This meaning is supposedly obtained also in certain phrasal constructions of common use such as *nawañ vai*, “rainbow”; and at the same time, the main isolated meaning of *nawa* in ordinary talk, “non-indigenous” or “foreigner”, creates a fascinating *double entendre*. The association between these senses is not self-evident, though; to explain it, we must examine in detail the paradoxical character of *nawa*-ness in the onomastic use of this word. The paradox that the Marubo have in common with other Panoans lies in the fact that, while *nawa* is employed in the composition of most Pano “ethnonyms”, it is present in their own “sectional names” as well. The peculiarity of the Marubo paradox is that while *nawa* on its own defines maximal, “prototypical alterity”, *-nawa* names are brought to a minimal social distance in the denominations of their matrilineal sections⁷².

As the Marubo typify, *nawa* is a suffix in kinship section terminology as well as in certain pre-teknonymic names, i.e. those under which unmarried men are known before having children. We must say “under which” because one does not

Townsley 1988 identifies the sectional inflection in an otherwise Dravidian description of Yaminawa kinship. And Erikson 1996 generalises in turn a Dravidian inflection in the kinship systems of all Panoans, which may thus not be free from traits in common with the generalised Amazonian model formulated in Viveiros de Castro 1993.

⁷² While this paradoxical peculiarity takes the form of the *dawa* moiety among the Yaminawa, according to Townsley 1988. For a more focused treatment on *nawa* as a key classifying category among the also Pano Shipibo and the Kachinawa see Keifenheim 1990, which draws a comparison based on this identity-marker.

“possess” such names as a permanent personal qualification: pre-marital names are always a transitory designation that the name-bearer avoids after marriage. After the teknonym is adopted, these names are a motive for shame, of a negative onomastic value that runs parallel to these peoples’ attitudes towards those who are no more: as among many other Amazonian peoples, there is a taboo interdiction against the pronunciation of a dead person’s name. The *-nawa* name is a “detachable” part of the self, the foreign “otherness” with which one becomes intimate through life while keeping it at a distance. At death, the same distance is maintained: the apparent free reference to dead persons using their “Brazilian” names masks the onomastic prohibition in the afterlife. And while they may say the *finado* so-and-so in Portuguese, the “deceased” such-and-such, the truly euphemistic expression in native language is *oiñmase*, “[the one who] does not see [or is not seen] any longer at all”. Here the personal name of the deceased is definitely negated, and the reference to them is a negative syntagma: the dead “have no eyes”. If post-pubertal onomastics is deprived of *nawa*-ness, at death it is a matter of depriving the dead of names altogether, and of the capacity to see or be seen at once. Or rather, the Marubo are phenomenologists: since aural intelligibility (*saiti*, spiritual language) is attached to visual sense-perception (*visagem*, shamanic vision), those who cannot see or be seen cannot have their names pronounced or be named at all. Similarly, the “visibility”, the *nawa*-ness of childhood is erased from adolescent life when child names are no longer said. This shall prove to be a good clue to Marubo perceptual cognition or “patho-logy”: images and names are not immutable in time but transient, for they appear and

change as fleeting sounds, signs of human existence, of *nawa*-creation⁷³.

The same onomastic inconstancy is evident in the contradictory significance of *-nawa* names in Marubo life. Let us take the fact that some pre-teknonymic names may end with *-nawa* (i.e. “man”, e.g. *Kenin̄nawa*), or *-shavo* (i.e. “woman”, e.g. *Tamashavo*). These two examples of personal names are not teknonyms inasmuch as they do not end with *-pa*, *-papa* (“father of”) or *-ewa* (“mother of”). Instead of designating the same social standing of teknonymic inclusiveness, *-nawa* and *-shavo* personal names operate beyond the limits of the local group, which is contradictorily constituted of *-nawa* and *-shavo* sections as well. Sectional sameness is still expressed in terms of alterity, even after teknonyms eliminate *nawa*-ness from names. All works quite as if personal and sectional names ending with *-nawa* had an original, complementary significance that surpassed the limits of sociality. Still, this significance would be at the very origins of persons and sections, at their emerging beginnings in myth-chants and in social life, and would be thus coterminous with it. Human society would be generated out of genderless, foreign humanity, as the diverse gendered forms of *nawa* subtly

⁷³ Townsley 1988 identifies Yaminawa names with the “social person” that perishes at death with the “physical body”, which in turn is his translation for *yora*. Following this rather familiar interpretative-metaphysical equation nature : culture :: bodies : names, that author maintains that such identity would constitute the so-called “natural realism” of “primitive mentalities” that he “imagine[s] to be true of most Amazonian cultures” (1988: 150). Without such primitivist overtones, Erikson 1996 generalises indeed the onomastic taboo to other Panoans, with the important exception of a certain “liberality” about personal names among the Matis, the case-study there in question. Resuming Townsley’s rather essentialist overtones, Viveiros de Castro 1996 takes Amazonian name interdiction to a level of generality that the Marubo would recognise, but without being so strict as to follow it at all times, i.e. without abstracting the temporal dimension from it:

“... names are not pronounced by their bearers, or in their presence; to name is to externalise, to separate (from) the subject.” (1996: 126, my translation)

The Marubo “externalise” their own interior and “foreign” *nawa*-ness in their names.

suggest. On the one hand it is true that, unlike its non-gendered, generic meaning of “foreigner”, in personal names *-nawa* is a gender-suffix paired off with *-shavo*, “woman”, just as when it is applied to their matrilineal sections (e.g. *Varinawa*, *Shanenawa*, *Inonawa* correspond to *Varishavo*, *Shaneshavo*, *Inoshavo*). Yet on the other, *nawa* has also an equivalent counterpart when used in the mythical-musical sense of “prototypically large” or “original”, which is not *shavo* but *ewañ*. The referential significance of *ewañ* is both real and classificatory “mother”, *ewa*, a word that points at the matrilineal origins of society twice: it is a tekonymic suffix and its variations are vocative terms for close female kin in all adjacent generations.

All the functional applications of *nawa* — giant and foreigner, section and person — are semantically interconnected under one and the same broad lexical and categorial umbrella, that of humanity in its origins, prototypically, intra-culturally and extra-ethnically at once. *Nawa* is the most inclusive category of humanity, and this is indicated in the sheer fact that its own female counterpart is multi-lexemic, that is, that Marubo language renders the gender-equivalent of *nawa* in two different words, *ewañ* and *shavo*. Unlike *nawa*, both words have a kin-related meaning in everyday usage: *shavo* is used on its own for “wife”, but in sectional and personal names it stands for “woman”, while *ewañ* refers to a kinship realm that is wider than that of “real mothers”. *Shavo* stands for affinity as *ewañ* does for consanguinity, while *nawa* includes affinity at the same level as consanguinity, as a designation of the human “other” who is “self”, foreign and kin in one go. That *nawa* is an ethnic-ecumenical term would already suggest that its core connotation is that of genderless “ancestral peoples”, while its gendered

forms *shavo* and *ewañ* are markers of little semantic weight at this “original” level of meaning — as if *nawa* were a neutral category. Still *-nawa* is a foremost classificatory device, applicable to the social-contextual, and hence gendered circumstance, when it is opposed to *-shavo*. Here it has its most direct denotation, a historically constructed one, that of “personal name and kinship section suffix”. However, given that it means the “prototypical foreigner” first, *nawa* is here a marker of sameness and difference at once. Both its synchronic-classificatory, gendered denotation and that of genderless “foreigner” are based upon the gender-neutral core connotation of *nawa*, a chant-mediated, mythical-musical designation that is diachronic, or at best originative: “large”, “originator”, the equivalent of which is *ewañ*, “motherly”.

Both the “contextual” and the “prototypical” senses of *nawa* are conflated at the learned level of shamanic knowledge, that of the *saiti* myth-chants, and at this level it is a “foreign”, “gender-neutral” term. This is expressed in the usual association between ancestral peoples or things and *nawa*-foreignness in the myth-chants, the ethnonymic alchemy between the prototypical origins of humanity and the realm of the extra-human, animals, plants and other *-nawa* things. Here in the *saiti*, the qualifications of “synchronic” and “diachronic” are not equated respectively with static and successive temporality, with the absence and presence of time. The *saiti* are a present mythical-musical enactment of history, an ontological account of humanity and the world which living people carry out as an interpretative performance, with an ever-recurrent chronology that goes beyond transient life on this earth, but without negating earthly temporality. The *saiti* myth-chants re-enact, re-present past origins and future eschatology at one time,

conceptualising and combining different temporalities. In mythical-musical histories, the prototypical emergence of *nawa* humanity is circular, diachronically describing the linear development of the synchronic ethnic-kinship construction of Marubo society and the soul-body becoming of these peoples.

Among the Marubo, kin-communality determines the social-communal meaning of *nawa*, and common to this all its attributive senses — “gigantic” or “foreign”, “sectional ethnonym” or “personal name” — is the fact that all these meanings denote exogenous denominations: they are markers of alterity. We know that many Pano ethnonyms like “Marubo” are likely to be derogatory designations or fictions with little factual meaning among the peoples who are actual *-nawa* namesakes, i.e. those who share some ethnic identity. Ethnonyms ending with *-nawa*, or with *-bo*, are nonetheless Pano names par excellence. In general, Panoans have no self-names but rather “exonyms”, “other-names”, which seems to be a familiar trait in indigenous Amazonia. The peculiarity of the Pano *nawa* is that it is a self-attributed, ontological otherness; any essential Amazonian “Other” taken as a whole would be reductive of this quintessential quality of the Marubo *nawa*. These peoples have a particular history of self-identification that allows for an identity-conflation with the other — a “generic other” that takes part of the conflated self —, and hence for the “pluri-ethnic unity” that emerges to life in their

myth-music⁷⁴.

Here the transcendent other is a most immanent feature of familial bonds, but this does not blur the bonds and boundaries of social identity, nor projects its indifference with internal definition onto the outsider, as if the other were a defining “template” of the Marubo self. It is rather a matter of defining the different other as an undifferentiated unity to be multiplied into a differentiated self-identity. This is not expressed in the idiom of *nawa*-ness only. If other indigenous peoples (*yora wetsa*) are “we-others”, close kin are called “others-not” (*wetsama*), whereas old kin are “ancient-others” (*sheniwetsa*). These *wetsa*-other designations are obviously in line with the fact that the affix that denotes contextual belonging — sectional or personal — is *nawa*, the simultaneous marker of ethnic identity and alterity for the Marubo or, better saying, a sign of the “estrangement” that humanity means for these peoples. *Nawa* always contextualises the named object and subject as external; the internal context to which it belongs is referred as a composition of both. *Nawa* is the self’s other; hence if the Marubo self is a negative construct, the positive value of their identity is the conflation of difference, its composite character⁷⁵.

⁷⁴ This diverts from Erikson’s generalisations for all Panoans:

“...la plupart, sinon la totalité, des ethnonymes utilisés... so[nt] des “exonymes”, imposés de l’extérieur... chaque ethnie Pano semble... très réticente à délimiter linguistiquement ses propres circonscriptions... il s’agit... en utilisent des termes extrêmement inclusifs, d’exprimer la perméabilité conceptuelle des frontières ethniques” (1993: 50)

And even more so from the generalising formulation of Viveiros de Castro, which aims at an even larger Amazonian perspective:

“Ethnonymic objectification applies primordially to others, not to those who are in a subject-position. Ethnonyms are third-party names.” (1996: 125, my translation)

⁷⁵ This gives a specific significance to the similar logic of identity and difference that

To be Marubo is to be “other”, to be *wetsa* as our *sheni* elders, as the sectional or homonymic identity among different alternate generations confirms. It is to be the *wetsa*-other while our co-resident kin is *wetsama*, the “others-not”. To be Marubo means, in consequence, to be *yora*-bodies similar to those of other Panoans, *yora wetsa*, but still be “other” than them. Marubo otherness affirms selfhood while it construes the social identity of the interior not as its subtraction, but as an additional particularisation of the exterior whole. The human innermost is “exteriorised” in various semantic layers of *nawa*-ness, which otherwise refer to concentric levels of social inclusiveness: the *-nawa*-named person and the nuclear family; local kin and the *-nawa* sections; *-nawa* peoples and the foreign *nawa*. Let us rephrase it. The most internal and intimate pre-marital *-nawa* name draws a distinction in the passage between the prepubescent and the teknonymically-named married person. Then the matrilineal *-nawa* sections distinguish kinship categories with reference to ego and kindred, grouping persons either as those from equal and odd generations, affines and potential in-laws, or as those from even generations, consanguine and domestic in-mates. Finally, the Marubo qua Pano-speaking, *-nawa*-named Indians are distinguished from the *nawa* Whites. The social-creative operation of onomastic multiplication ceases only at death: as the dead lose their names, *nawa*-sociality ends.

After all, the epistemological relevance of the homology between the composite and exogenous structure of their onomastics and the original

Erikson extrapolates from the Matis:

“Chez les Pano, la définition du soi transiterait donc obligatoirement par des notions (celle d’*utsi* et de *nawa*) dont la forme brute (la quintessence) s’incarne avant tout dans la figure des ‘Autres’.” (1996: 81)

conceptualisation of indigenous humanity is as simple as that: their life in society is composed in the prototypical *-nawa* names and other intoned words of their *saiti* myth-chants. Encoded in onomastics, their dialectics of selfhood and otherness, the interplay between “us” and “them” that these peoples find and express in myth-chants is an ontological statement and, as such, it is alien to the cognitive hypotheses of primitive “modes of thought”, of a “totemic” or “animic” cognition, of nature following a cultural template or of culture mirroring a natural one. These *-nawa* peoples are unfamiliar with the antinomies of culture vs. nature or subject vs. object, or rather combine such opposing terms in the terms of their own mythical-musical conceptualisation of self and other, of humanity and divinity, without subscribing to an age-old epistemological dilemma embedded in western-metaphysical dichotomies. With reference to such dualistic dichotomies, the two “forms of cognition” are not even tangential; the ancestral *-nawa* Indian and the modern White *nawa* live in different planets altogether. The western separation of relative or cultural subjects from absolute or natural objects, and the consequent extrapolation of multiple “native epistemologies” from a one-sided “antinomic ontology” are not without an illustrious ancestry; but no scholastic wisdom, no presumptuous scientificism can assume that native origins are combinatory permutations of its own. No form of knowledge, anthropological or otherwise, is in a position to compare logical relations using the same ethnocentric logic and terms for all “ethno-peripheral” equations⁷⁶.

⁷⁶ This happens to be the ambition of the “rationalistic tradition” in which Descola 1992 is trapped, in a proud tribute to structuralism. Native “epistemological equations” seem to hang over the structural dichotomies that separate multiple “societies from nature” or one “nature from society”, rather than configuring an “orthogonal” ontology in relation to them, to use Viveiros de Castro’s term (1996: 115).

In Marubo *-nawa* onomastics — in the personal names or ethnonyms used in the everyday, like those listed in the myth-chants of creation —, natural objects at large (things, birds, and animals, such the *Vari* Sun, the *Shane* Blue Bird, and the *Ino* Jaguar) come into being as cultural, *nawa*-subjects in the names of humans. *Nawa*-humanisation is a nomination process that occurs along Marubo lifetime, from childhood to adolescence and throughout all of their generations, onomastically alternated through matrilineal sections. Although dual and classificatory, the indigenous onomastics that entails the *nawa*-suffixed nomination of persons and of sectional denominations is a construct of *-nawa* Indians that presupposes the existence of the White *nawa*, and the consequent conceptualisation of *-nawa* names as structured objectifications of subjectivities conflating self and other. *Nawa*-identity never designates a solipsistic humanity, an indivisible entity standing outside the world, but rather a *nawa* “outsider” who is fused with it. If both *nawa*-exteriority, i.e. the superlative-prototypical foreigner, and things, birds, or animals constitute the names of the interior self, that of the *yora*-bodily person, then the human self-centre is projected onto the peripheral, humanised other, i.e. onto those things, birds, or animals that partake of *-nawa* onomastics. In the Marubo sectional and pre-teknonymic personal names that are conspicuous in their *saiti* myth-chants and among sections, children and adolescents, those animals and birds, those “other” things are immanent to the *-nawa* human person precisely because they transcend humanity. Therefore, *-nawa* humanity is identified with — without being identical to — the extra-human object: the human person transcends the subject insofar as is immanent to that object, while being still a *nawa*-stranger. For these *-nawa* peoples, humanity is more than cultural-formal attributes or natural-substantial materiality; it is more

than the solipsistic body or the indivisible individual.

In short, if it were possible to translate in a sentence the meaning of *nawa*, such a sentence would be a long one. *Nawa* could be rendered as a superlative, collective, augmentative and prototypical human person, the anti-self that constitutes the self expanding beyond its *yora*-corporeal subjectivity, beyond the Marubo individual and Marubo society, towards the “foreign” objectivity of the extra-corporeal world. While *nawa* is an emblem of an extra-*yora*, “expanded” personhood for these *-nawa* peoples, the *yora*-body is objectified as the name that embodies the social subject, the collective first person envisaged from a third-person perspective (“we, the people”). While *nawa* is an interior emblem of humans either qua *-nawa*-named persons or qua members of ethnic or kin *-nawa* groups (e.g. those of the *Vari* Sun, the *Shane* Blue Bird, the *Ino* Jaguar), the exterior marker *nawa* — qua “foreigner”, prototypically “large” — classifies the Marubo as humanised others, as external things beyond the *yora*-body, e.g. as birds, animals, “other” peoples. This “immanent transcendence” of a subjective constitution of the internal human self toward an external object — animal, bird or otherwise — could hardly characterise *nawa* as an essentially Amazonian “selfhood-cum-otherness”; nonetheless, its Marubo translation may bear a strange, beautiful resonance elsewhere in Amazonia⁷⁷.

The corollary of such *-nawa* ontology is that if, in practice, in everyday

⁷⁷ As among the Southern Amazonian Juruna, paraphrased in Stolze Lima 1999:

“We have to produce [human] characteristics in ourselves, in the body... human reproduction and socialisation are based on interventions that neutralise an animal affection (aggressiveness / fear), bar volition, and capture capabilities and strength from animals... and plants.” (1999: 113)

speech, *yora* points at a “social-inclusive” referent (“we, the native / kin”), in theory the word means no strict distinction as regards the ethnic status or humanity of a people, their specific identity against generic alterity, their culture against nature. *Yora* is instead the distinctive corporeal trait of *-nawa* humans, the object of human subjectivity, of an estranged belonging to the world: “we” in this case is *wetsa*, “the other”. The subjective agency as an objectified, *-nawa*-named status, either as a personal name or as a peoples’ ethnonym, does not oppose humans to non-human beings, drawing thereby an irreconcilable split between a self-centred person or people and an other-like peripheral world, or between individuality and sociality. On the contrary, the native distinction which is made explicit in onomastics does structure the ontological equation of a *nawa*, “foreign” type of human-worldliness. The Marubo define themselves not simply as others but above all through others, naming persons and peoples after animals, birds and things. And they do so under an external conceptual perspective, *nawa*, one that is analogous to the cosmo-topological “ex-centric” situation of the shaman, one that defines the subject at one with the object, equating the non-human part to the human whole. Those *yora*-bodies, these *-nawa*-named peoples and persons pronounce themselves, *nawa* designating such elocution, with a far from ethnocentric, anthropocentric, or egocentric accent. They pronounce themselves with the intonation of a chanted, mythical-musical creation which is far beyond, but still deep within humanity.

Thus, if the ethnonym “Marubo” is an exogenous denomination — possibly a word derived from an unknown Pano language for those hinterland Panoans —, their sectional and personal names seem to be onomastic variations on an

ontological theme that proclaims an “plural-alteristic” humanity and ethnicity. This is because such sectional and personal names are most often suffixed *-nawa*, like a great deal of Pano ethnonyms; and, just as these ethnic designations occasionally end with the plural marker *-bo*, elliptically, some denominations of Maru-*bo* matrilineal sections employ the *-vo* suffix (their *v* is similar to a *b*, pronounced as a sonorous bilabial fricative). Also for the Marubo, *-vo* denotes plurality in their everyday words, and in their case a human and ethnic plurality in its onomastic, mythical-musical sense. Be it *-nawa* or *-vo*, Marubo and Pano denominations are fragmenting and fragmentary: they designate ethnic fragments that are held together as one whole precisely by means of a particular kind of sociocultural fragmentation. Such fragmented humanity and ethnicity is created in the *saiti* myth-chants that trace their diverse origins along time to different animals, birds and other things, origins that are reinforced by oral stories and bibliographical accounts of a history of multiple, mixing populations. And notwithstanding their plural onomastics and origins, the Marubo peoples present a high degree of linguistic, territorial and cultural homogeneity, based on this “plural-alteristic” logic that seems to be a Pano “family trait”, most clearly manifested in the *-nawa* and *-vo* configuration of their names⁷⁸.

In the effort to understand Marubo vocal-musical ways, we were brought to the layered translations of some of the native conceptualisations that are

⁷⁸ See Melatti 1977 and Montagner Melatti 1985 for an historiographic register of the consolidation of an ethnically fragmented past into the “Marubo” ethnic unity, and Erikson 1992 for the characterisation of the unitary fragments of the Pano “macro-ensemble” as a “compact nebula”. Erikson 1996 also provides a similar rationale for Pano ethnicity: internal diffuseness and external definition, semantic stress on a radical alterity to constitute their self-identity.

constitutive of these peoples, as these are expressed in native names, in indigenous words. Further elaboration will be still necessary for us to situate these *yora*-bodies and *-nawa* peoples in their world, before we turn to the way in which this world and its entities are created as they are chanted in myth, acquiring proper performative, mythical-musical meaning as chanted names and words in the *saiti* myth-chants. For the moment, we stress the relation between the semantic ambivalence of the various linguistic occurrences of *nawa*— in the names of kinship sections, peoples, persons — and the ethnic diffuseness of the words “Marubo” and “*yora*-body”. In short, the composite character of these indigenous humans has to be clearly stated: hence the plural form when referring to the Marubo peoples is consistent with the plural quality of themselves and their named selves, as if they were the multiple offspring of one *nawa*-exogenous common-ground. This is what the *saiti* sings. While the sectional suffix *-nawa* can be replaced in common usage by the plural marker *-vo* (e.g. *Waniñvo*), in their intoned speech, in musical language, a fully-fledged ethnic onomastics, a composite compromise is reached. Instead of the ordinary section-designations said in *yorañ vana*, in “bodily language”, in the *yové*-spiritual language of the *saiti* myth-chants one sings the formulae *Variñ vake nawavo*, *Shaneñ vake nawavo*, etc.: “the children of the (plural) peoples of the Sun, of the Blue Bird”...

I.10 spirits and doubles

On our way to the “bitter emergence” of the Marubo peoples, through the transcription and translation of the *saiti* myth-chant of *Mokanawa Wenia*, we are now compelled to divert even more. We inquired into *moka* “bitter”, *nawa*

“people”, *yora* “person” and other words, but these are still not enough to make us well familiar with those mythical intonations and their peculiar lexicon.

Lying on our hammocks under the Amazonian heat, after writing down many instances of *saiti* lines containing the expression *vake nawavo*, this peculiar chanted way of designating the present-day Marubo kinship sections, I asked: “but why *vake*”? Why children? The answer to this was not difficult, if tentative: if persons are named after their children through teknonymy, why would these same peoples not be named after their “sectional infants”? Well, if these *vake*-children are those after whom the Marubo are named, they will as well be their ancestral *-nawa*. But how could “children” be “ancestors”? Then we could well have evoked the alternate-generation sectional logic of Marubo kinship. But to that, our main informant *Keniñnawa* simply answered: “because they are *miúdos*”.

Miúdo in current Portuguese is the opposite of *graúdo*, “large”; however *miúdos* is meant here more in the sense of “little ones”, i.e. young, newborn people, than in that of size. These *vake nawavo* peoples, these current alternate-generation matrilineal sections are the Marubo ancestors, but in their mythical-historical youth. Further, the notion of *vake*, “children of” suggests more proximity, more consanguinity than merely “people of”. The ancestors of present sections are understood as close kin who were themselves closely related to the animals, plants and other things that affix sectional ethnonyms: they are the original *Vari, Shane, Ino, Kana, Shawañ... vake nawavo*. These mythical ancestors of the Marubo are children of the Sun, the Blue Bird, the Jaguar, the Yellow and the Red Macaw, and so forth; they are not these things themselves, but the young peoples who established this fundamental form of humanity in the world, in a

contractual-onomastic, cosmological configuration. Here such sectional affixes must be taken neither too literally nor too structural-linguistically: a “totemic” ancestry has never been expressly confirmed in their language — the Marubo do not claim kinship to parrots —, and there is no literal reference to animals, plants and other things giving birth to people in myth! The syntagma ...*vake nawavo* reads literally “the peoples of the children of...”, and this discloses an indirect, twisted contract between humans and those “other things” which constitute sectional ethnonyms — a *nawa*-mediated one.

As *Mokanawa Wenia saiti* shall describe below, the origins of these *-nawa* peoples are reckoned to rely on animal and vegetable substances like sap and blood, combined in a tectonic and sonic alchemy within earthy spaces such as *shoi*, rumbling holes within the earth. The fact that many section-namesakes are not plants nor other things, but either birds or predatory animals shall encourage some further speculation, in line with the previous suggestion of a semantic connection between the *vana* “language” of the musical *yové*-spirit and the mythical *inoñ-jaguar*. But here let us just mark the original, shamanic similitude of animals, spirits and humans, which is best expressed in a soul-anatomic structure: the *yové* vs. *yochiñ* antinomy. The dual onomastics outlined above, where those animals, together with plants and other things, are named as *-nawa* humans and so constitute sectional ethnonyms and personal names, is as constitutive of ethnicity and personhood as the soul-duality of native anatomy.

The physio-cosmological conceptualisations here presented amount to no more than sketches from fieldwork. No *romeya* could assist us in the research of shamanic matters, since there was no such shaman still alive in the Upper Ituí

during fieldwork. However, it has already been pointed out that every longhouse leader is a virtual *keñchiñtxo* shamanic-healer, someone who as a rule is as knowledgeable, as capable and entitled to sing myth-chants in *saiti* festivals, as *romeya*-shamans would have been in the past. This work was based on the largest Marubo community of those riverbanks, Vida Nova, the home-village of the not long-departed *João Pajé*, one of the most renowned shamans of late who, curiously enough, had his longhouse not too far from the quarters of the evangelic mission. He is still remembered as someone who always dressed up like a *yové*-spirit, good-looking and larger-than-life, an assured shamanic practitioner. At his death, he recommended that his “children” kin, all those who called him “father” (either real and classificatory: *epañ* is a generalised vocative term that most co-residents employ to address their leader) should stay where they were, going against the ancient custom of burning old dwellings and abandoning the sites where important deaths had occurred. My housemates were his close associates; thus, these ethnographic sketches derive from issues raised in the field with those who were well initiated into shamanic knowledge and had known *João Pajé* well, having the daily usufruct and challenge of the missionary evangelicals just across the river⁷⁹.

In any case we must stress that it is very difficult to use definite glosses for most indigenous terms related to such shamanic knowledge, especially those notions related to “spirits” and “doubles”, “bodies” and “souls”, even when

⁷⁹ Extant extensive studies on Marubo mythology and cosmology are also extremely helpful and reliable, having had the late shaman as a privileged source. Melatti 1985b and 1986 are articles on the myth-chants of *Shoma Wetsa* and *Wenia*, for instance, and Montagner Melatti 1985 is a more extensive monograph. Still much of this and other data is amenable to and awaiting development.

bilingual informants translated them and their translation was further sanctioned in the ethnography. A variety of glosses are employed here as a partial means to indicate the lack of a one-to-one correspondence between indigenous notions and western concepts. The following summarised list outlines some features of the juxtaposition of some of the actual “souls”, potential “spirits” and “doubles” within Marubo persons and their “bodies”. As we shall see, the precise numbers of such souls is less relevant than the fact that they are variations on the contrasting themes of *yové*-spirituality and *yochiñ* double-ness:

- *veroñ yochiñ* = “the soul-double of the eye”
- *chinañ nato* = “the core of the breath” or “the soul of thought”⁸⁰
- *mechmirí vaká* = “left-side soul”
- *mekirí vaká* = “right-side soul”
- *isoñ yochiñ* = “the soul or animal-double of urine”
- *poiñ yochiñ* = “the soul or animal-double of excrement”

It would in any way be vain to attempt a clear-cut, dissecting classification separating those souls as independent entities. The entities that “animate” the human body are hardly countable. Their sensible attributes — anatomic locations, musical representations, scents and images — are associated in such a way, exotic

⁸⁰ Compare with Montagner Melatti 1985, that renders *chinañ nato* as “the soul of the heart”. This gloss sounds figurative however, given that the Marubo designate the “heart”, the physiological organ, as *oiñti* (supposedly from *oiñ*, “to see” + *ti*, nominalising suffix). The centrality of *chinañ* within the human body is indeed more important than its identification with a specific organ, as Erikson’s Amazonian generalisation suggests:

“[le] cœur [a] une position centrale... [il] est] perçu par les Matis (entre autres)

to us but familiar to natives, that is both immanent and transcendent to a living human, a *yora*-body. A *yora* “body” without these “souls” is no proper living being, while the latter survive the former in analogical form, as future *yové* “spirits” or *yochiñ* “doubles”: they surpass both bodily life and death through dispersal and transformation. The semantic fields occupied by each of the soul-entities glossed above overlap each other, and are therefore hard to assess in the form of encyclopaedic entries: they are more than “animic”, more than just “soul-like”. Conversely, they are all anatomically localised within the *yora*-body, but cannot be regarded as Cartesian parts of a whole. Souls are less, and still more, than the Marubo body, and make themselves perceptible, we shall argue, in musical form. Let us examine them one by one⁸¹.

Among these souls, the *chinañ nato* could at once be considered as the most far-reaching entity and the most precise soul-like notion, due to the morphological metaphor of the *nato* “core” and the ontological importance of the *chinañ* “breath-thought” in the mythical-musical creation and construction of a human being. This is so even though, for us, *chinañ* might be just another ambiguous, multi-semantic category: among the Marubo, the meaning of *chinañ* is both “thought” and “to think”, “breath” and “to breathe”. Still, in spite of its ambivalence and grammatical ambiguity, it indicates a specific spot on the body: the “pit of the stomach”. The location of *chinañ nato*, “the *chinañ* core” is central in the body: it is the innermost fulcrum of the breathing and thinking capabilities within humans. Missionaries,

comme le siège de l’‘intelligence / âme’.” (1996: 242)

⁸¹ The term “animic” is here employed with reference to all “soul-like” entities mentioned above, but with the explicit intention of not subscribing to the neoanimistic neologism, as coined in Descola 1992.

not without consistence, translate *chinañ* as “life”.

In contrast, “double” is but a partial and misleading translation for *yochiñ*. To err is part of the process in the translation of languages that we have so little experienced; so much so that semantic ambivalence might lead us to unexpected associations. “Double” here refers to visualisable bodily reproduction, as the reflection of one’s image in the eye’s pupil (*veroñ yochiñ*). Besides, it may refer to that which reproduces the whole body in a visual-metonymic form. In this particular fashion, of all *yochiñ* souls, those two that are associated with bodily waste are “body-doubling”: they are manipulated and chanted in “wrong songs”, that is, in predatory sorcery or hunting magic, to cause harm or chase game, for the ultimate pathogenic agent of all illness and predation is a *yochiñ*-double itself. *Yochiñ* is one of the most important ontological categories for the Marubo, both together with and in contrast to the *yové*-spirit⁸².

The *vaká* “souls” have an even more ambivalent meaning, at least potentially: the *mechmirí* “left-side” *vaká* is future *yochiñ*, while the *mekirí vaká*, the “right-side soul”, is potential *yové*. *Vaká* exists solely in living humans: the *vaká*-souls have existence as halves of *yora*-bodies, and this at the cosmo-

⁸² See in Townsley 1988 the Yaminawa “soul of the eye” *wëroyoshi* which, in spite of its physiological precision in the native designation, the author regards as a metaphor for an “aspect of the mind”, the “seat of perception”. Its characterisation diverges from the Marubo *yochiñ*; however, both share the same unequivocal “visuality”. Accordingly, see in Lagrou 1998 *yuxin* as a wide-range “cosmo-visual concept” among the Kachinawa. Further beyond and just beside the Pano-speaking world, we find a remarkable and inspiring similarity between the Marubo *yochiñ*-double and “the most general reason for human mortality” among the Piro people of the Lower Urubamba River, in the Westernmost stretches of the Amazonian lowlands. Cf. Gow n.d.:

“...food (more specifically game) leads to an accumulation of “filth” in the stomach... [this is] a negative transformation of feeding, but not a specific one... [it is]the “downside” of desire, for just as feeding generates life and kinship, so eating food generates death and loneliness.” (n.d.: 12-13)

topological level of this humanly lived daily life. Indeed, standing apart from these *vaká*-souls and the other “soul-like values” that have a visible presence in the *yora*-body in the form of bodily sites and substances, there is another crucial “spiritual” entity in Marubo cosmo-somatology: the *yové*.

Although “spirit” is too much of a semantically laden word in western vocabulary, any other better gloss could hardly be found for the *yové*-beings that populate the Marubo cosmos, these “spiritual” entities that entertain a vital environmental relationship with Marubo humanity. To make things simpler in *saiti* translation, *Kenĩñnawa* rendered *yové* as *pajé*, a Tupi-originated word that means “shaman” in Brazilian Portuguese. Then again, any Marubo would translate the word *pajé* back to their language as *romeya*, given that the last *romeya*-shaman who died lately was known among Brazilians as *João Pajé*. In fact, to translate both *romeya* and *yové* as *pajé* or even as “shaman” is unsatisfactory: the variable scope of these glosses is too wide in the ethnography, as much as that of the native categories themselves is.

In order to keep things simple but not simplistic, we concentrate more on native words and meanings than on literal glosses, highlighting the semantic connection between *yové* and *romeya*, “spirit” and “shaman”, or between *espírito* and *pajé*, as *Kenĩñnawa* would say. We are bound to deal with the simplifications forced by the attempt to translate an alien conceptual universe, not to mention the aforementioned limits of the written word in the monograph, frozen here in virtual space and time. Using the same simplifying procedure that rendered *yové* as *pajé*, to the anthropologist’s frustration *Kenĩñnawa* translated *yochiñ* in another *saiti* myth-chant as *alma* — as “soul”, an altogether incomplete gloss, as we shall see.

The scrutiny and translation of the cosmic entities *yochiñ* and *yové*, as well as of their human-corporeal counterpart *yora*, constitute one of the most complex issues to be raised among the Marubo, one to be still no more than partially dealt with within this thesis.

Yochiñ-doubles and *yové*-spirits are both intra- and extra-human. They precede and succeed the living *yora*-body of the Marubo and its living souls, its left and right hemispheres, its breath, eyes and excreta — the *mekirí vaká* and *mechmirí vaká*, the *chinañ nato*, and the other double-like souls — on a temporal scale. Here there is no concept of a temporal, “material” body against a non-temporal “double” or “spiritual” soul: corporeal matter, qua human, is already more than matter. *Yochiñ*-doubles and *yové*-spirits are not eternal, in a purported opposition to *yora*-bodies and their souls; the relationship between those entities and humans is based on the temporal alternatives of recurrence and succession in the vital cycles of humanity in the world. *Yochiñ*-doubles and *yové*-spirits are in free transit into and out of transient *yora*-bodies throughout their lives, and therefore their relations are irreducible to western-biased distinctions of subject and object, of culture and nature. All these *yo*-prefixed words are overarching categories that operate such distinctions not as metaphysical givens, but in the critical circumstances that the Marubo confront in their environment, such as predation, death, disease, and shamanic events at large.

Both *yové*-spirits and *yochiñ*-doubles are themselves embodied souls, animated bodies classifying both humanity and animality according to peculiar taxa that do not oppose, but rather conflate one to the other. Human bodies consist of “animal” souls akin to either *yové*-spirits or *yochiñ*-doubles: most terrestrial

animals are possible *yochiñ* — rather than possessors of double-ness —, whereas most birds are associated with the *yové*, as emblems of spirituality. Of course this is not to say that the *yochiñ*-double is solely identified with carnal creatures in opposition to the *yové*-spirit, its purely ethereal, “positive” equivalent. That would mean some sort of compromise with those missionaries who, while evangelising the Marubo in tireless, apocalyptic urgency, translate *yochiñ* as the Manichean “Beast”. Not to mention the incommensurability between the indigenous religion and Christianity or any sort of Manicheism, the predication of bestiality to the *yochiñ* and of spirituality to the *yové* is a gross mistake, if for anything because neither of the two can be subsumed to unitary entities reducible to either term of such an impinged opposition. *Yové*-spirits and *yochiñ*-doubles are not satisfactorily predicated by empirical entities, but by acts and agencies instead; they are both human and animal, comprising opposite potentials of humanity and taxonomic principles of animality at once.

While we translate *yové* always as “spirit” and at times *yochiñ* as “animal-soul”, these glosses make exclusive reference to palpable aspects of these entities. “Spirit” has to do with the unearthly chant or vocal-aerial character of the *yové*, whence its association with “bird” comes; and “animal” is also rather a diacritic than a literal predication to *yochiñ*, associating it with predation. Both entities are rather substantial than adjective abstractions. The western etymology of spirituality (*spirare*, “to breath”) evokes indeed the phono-aural, cyclical capacity of the *yové* and its supra-personal, super-human song; whereas for *yochiñ*, out of all possible translations that occurred in the field, “double” is preferable because it implies concrete human relatedness to the transience of life and of the environment

at large among and around the Marubo. In different ways, the “spirit” and the “double” are material projections of an environmental configuration of native humanity; not surprisingly, if the circular music-choreography of their myth-chants is *yové vana*, the passing shadows of their bodies also have *yochiñ* or, better said, the “animal-double” is also a shadow of the *yora*-body.

These soul-body, spirit-double configurations bring about a number of implications. Although related to predation and to predatory relations with animals, the *yochiñ*-soul fragments of the living body are no “natural” portions of human nature as opposed to its “cultural” side. Although the *yochiñ*-double perpetrates disease against humans, and in spite of the abandoned, solitary demeanour of the *yochiñ* “animal-souls” qua the doubles of dead corpses wandering through the jungle, the counterpoise of a *yochiñ*-animality against a purported native humanity has no meaning for these peoples. In addition, although the *yochiñ* animal-double is essentially human, it is even less an essential particularity of humanity, the universal purport of an anthropological tradition. On the contrary, the western culture vs. nature dichotomy is incommensurate to the oppositions of *yora*-bodies or *yové*-spirits against *yochiñ*-doubles. This is well illustrated in a field anecdote. When asked about the relevant discrepancies between their culture and that of others, a widely respected Marubo *keñchiñtxo*, the shamanic healer *Natoñpa*, refused to follow the assumptions behind such questions. His answer to the anthropologist’s exhortations in favour of the Marubo folkways is still a vivid recollection from the field: *kultura tanama*, “culture, [I] don’t understand”.

It has already been suggested that, for ethnographic purposes at least,

“Marubo” or some other sort of ethnonym cannot be avoided, by the implicit definition of our dialogical exercise. For the same reason it will not be brought into question here whether *yochiñ*-doubles and *yové*-spirits, these two native cosmological entities, are “authentically indigenous” or stem from native “dialogues” with missionaries. It is far more important not to ignore that, among the Marubo, not only do *yochiñ*-doubles and *yové*-spirits not belong exclusively to either something called “nature” or “culture”, but that they are instead the terms through which these peoples conceive humanity in relation to animality and spirituality — in their own terms. Missionary understandings, such as the western idea of an universal “nature” underlying all the particular “cultures”, of a single way to truth and form of life, would hinder our progress toward native conceptualisations if they were used as more than mere foils.

Hence, in order to avoid an overlapping of the respective attributes of *yové*-spirits and *yochiñ*-doubles, this antinomy has to be set against different grounds than those dictated by foreign preoccupations, which can bring forth nothing but metaphysical headaches. *Yochiñ* entities are not passive objects and, if still agential, they are nevertheless not subjects objectified by and commensurate with a projecting and opposing human subjectivity. If the coinage of new words is of any use at all, the *yochiñ* being will be the “entification” of the linear mutability of all living things — a term implying “agentiality” and “relationality”, in contrast to the much used and abused thing-like concept of “reification”, one that assumes an antagonism between idealism and materialism. Once thus defined, *yochiñ*-doubles stand in clear contrast to the recurrent vital circles of the *yové*-spirits. *Yové*-spirituality is a moral paradigm expressed, a phenomenon manifested in mythical-

musical movement, fully attainable by humans just as an aesthetically-pleasing destiny, as a desired ethics fulfilled as the final fate of death, the eschatological becoming wherein the repeated circle of *yové*-ness is momentarily set apart from the mundane *yochiñ*-line of the living and the post-living paths traversed by dead humans.

Broad generalisations about *yochiñ*-doubles and *yové*-spirits can only be drawn little by little, and not without awkwardness, from the several instances where they are made manifest in manifold forms, among which the myth-music is the model. These entities are more than “concepts” springing up from the native account of liminal events of human life in its environment, like death and disease, and even more than a “cultural response” to “natural phenomena”. *Yochiñ* and *yové* entities come onto the stage in this world in the acting out of *saiti* myth-chants, as well as in other types of shamanic-vocal performances such as *shoñti* healing incantations, rather than being ritual incarnations in *yora*-bodies. *Yochiñ*-doubles and *yové*-spirits are tautegorical representations in chant, rather than chants being allegorical representations of such “ideas”; and much as they are not ideal principles, they are neither soul-embodiments nor ghost-possession, and not even objective projections opposed to a human subjectivity.

This is what the *yorañ yochiñ* indicate, i.e. the “bodily doubles” *mechmirí vaká*, *veroñ yochiñ*, *isoñ yochiñ*, *poiñ yochiñ*, as listed above. Within the *yora*-body, these forms of *yochiñ* double-ness are always ambivalent, intrinsic and exogenous, latent and actual, entailing a number of temporal paradoxes concerning human life that are to be heard unambiguously just in music, a native manipulation of temporality. Whereas the transient *yochiñ*-latency is intrinsically attached to the

yora-body of humans as impalpable visual images, as its cast shadows and mirroring irises, the tangible *yochiñ*-actuality is bodily excretion, the remnants of past life or past ingestion. The *yochiñ*-doubles are ocular expressions of humans, either exuded from carcasses or released from the living, and shamans manipulate these emanations musically, as sounds, as a means to deal with disease and death.

Sound manipulation in the form of shamanic songs are a real necessity for these peoples, not only as means for health or predation, in healing and “wrong” songs, but because the *yochiñ*-transformed soul holds fast to the dead and wanders around the rotting corpse and all places that are evocative of its bygone memories. The formal disposal of the dead body and the interdictions for the surviving kin are based on the necessity to avoid the *yochiñ*-double, which is inevitably evoked in connection with the living recollections of the deceased. Mourning relatives usually cover their skin with a layer of red paint made from *urucu* seeds (*Bixa orellana*, also known in the literature as *achiote*) and cut their hair, while in ancient times they used to burn their dead altogether. Would the painted *urucu* and haircut be counter-evocations of the renovation of blood circulation and hair growth, set in explicit opposition to *yochiñ*-termination? If this metaphorical hypothesis is still to be verified, for the moment we may follow the native reasoning that inspired their old funerary rites. There, close kin would consume the ashes of the dead bones to incorporate the remnants of *yochiñ*-ness, recycling the deadly linearity to the living cycles of consumption and excretion, removing the *yochiñ*-doubles from the eschatological realm and replacing them on that of scatology.

Dead *yochiñ*-doubles and the close living relatives of the deceased still share

bodily substance, an exhumed persistence of kinship ties. Common substance is the rationale behind sexual, labour and alimentary interdictions to the kinsfolk after a relative's death. When a *yora*-body expires, such surviving commonality is made explicit and makes death contradictory to convivial life, for bodily *yora*-ness is the support of the actualisation of social ties in the form of kinship. Post-mortem *yochiñ*-doubles are impossible, incomplete survivals of the consubstantiality and conviviality that hold sway among *yora*-bodies along transient daily life; therefore, the *yochiñ* must be erased as the *yora* expires. The remaining dead *yochiñ*, the *yochiñrasiñ* (plural form) of the dead proper, endanger the living themselves so long as the latter still share memories of the deceased, as well as the same environment and some of the material artefacts they had when alive. These are the metonymical prolongations of the dead body: when a *yora*-body dies all that is corporeally attached to the deceased person has to be erased. This could include the whole settlement in the past: it is the reason why the longhouse used to be burned at the death of its owner, during a cremation ceremony that is supposed to be still in force among some present-day Panoans⁸³.

The *yochiñ*-double impregnates, “psycho-logically” so to speak, the habitat and all things around which the corresponding *yora*-body once inhabited, much as the excreta and other dead bodily matter of the living, like hair and nails, “materially” do. These bodily-doubling entities may be extra-corporeal strictly speaking, however not at all immaterial: beyond being a disease-agent by definition, the *yochiñ*-double can physically fecundate women in their sleep,

⁸³ The rationale of such past funerary rites among the Kachinawa is well described in Lagrou 1998. See Carvalho 1931 and Steward & Métraux 1948 for other historical

visiting their dreams when their *yochiñ vake*, the “children of doubles” are conceived. Nowadays the *yochiñ* intruding in women’s dreams are kept from introducing their double-seeds in female *yora*-bodies by means of the repellent action of western perfume, odours incompatible with the stench of animal-doubles who, once again, identify themselves as perceptual substances. The substantial outcome of a doubling-distorted *yochiñ* fertilisation would be either twins, as expected, or tailed, deformed children with unusual hunting capabilities. The usual ability to communicate with animals and prey on them, which every hunter achieves through magical powers — *yochiñ* incantations —, is enhanced in these exceptional animal-children. Thanks to their parental ties, which reinforce their community of substance with prey, they are able to hunt even barehanded, rushing through thick bush. *Keninñawa* recalled a tailed *yochiñ vake* who at a very early age would be capable of collecting turtles in the forest, and who, once an adult, would chase and grab deer with his own hands and feet, up to his final, mysterious disappearance one day in the jungle. *Yochiñ vake* are unwanted children indeed, near animals, the preferential victims of infanticide.

Both dead animal-doubles and those that live among humans are wandering contradictions. The life of a “double-child” *yochiñ vake* is paradoxical and problematic to the extent that any death, normal or abnormal, human or animal, entails the sociological problem of ontological continuity. The cycles of human *yora*-life put into the wider eschatological perspective, under the light of shamanic expertise, are envisaged as the *yové*-spiritual destiny of souls, which are meant to detach an all-encompassing circularity from the localised, temporally discrete

testimonies in the same linguistic-geographic territory.

event of bodily *yochiñ*-decay. The circular bodily renewal of *yové*-souls differs in essence from the progressive doubling of the corporeal *yochiñ*-excrement. Predation, both in hunting and that which death in general implicates, fleetingly liberates the *yochiñ*-double in the course of the human sojourn on earth: its permanence here is impossible, for its reproduction relies on putrefaction. Memories and corpses waste away together, and thus erase passed-away doubles from this earth for the benefit of its living-*yora* inhabitants, who try to evade their *yochiñ*-evanescence. The humanity of the living Marubo is embodied in their *yora*-bodies, which are to follow the conditions of life animation — the structure of souls outlined above — with a view to an eschatological destiny, that of becoming wider circular *yové*-ness counterbalancing linear *yochiñ*-ness. The decomposition of *yora*-bodies is the precise partition of their constitutive souls, the end-product of the terminal decline of the nurturing forces in one's life, the overcoming of *yochiñ*-being toward *yové*-becoming.

The *yochiñ*-double is internal to the *yora*-body; it is interpolated between humanity and divinity and, similar to the *yové*-divine spirit, it is an extrapolation of human anatomy throughout the external universe. Relations between humans and *yochiñ*-doubles are the rationale behind the control exerted over predation that is inflicted on animals: the preyed animal-*yochiñ* must be kept at bay by proper human conduct. Because *yochiñ*-doubles are the disease-causing agents par excellence, a decaying force that works against *yové*-immortality, *yora*-bodies endanger themselves with the *yochiñ*-ness of dead animals in predatory acts, with the death-contamination that may be triggered by immorality. Possibly all prophylactic and ritual action toward the end of healing *yora*-bodies, all

procedures revolving around the curing performance are aimed at expelling and repelling the actualisation of *yochiñ*-doubling potentialities within the sick person.

Yet the foreign *yochiñ*-double that causes illness is not the illness itself. *Yochiñ*-ness is a state epitomised by substances, the dark side of predation provoked by undue behaviour, both toward animals and toward humans. We notice now how every human death is either undue predation or due to predation. In the case of animals, bad hunters who outrage dead animals are haunted by *yochiñ*-doubles, or will have their children plagued with *yochiñ*-ness. For a mythical example, an old woman's arm penetrating the anus of a tapir motivates her predicament. In more everyday instances, a young man sticking his rifle into a monkey's vagina invokes some *yochiñ*-double of sorts, which stretches with its nimble hands the mouth and muscles of the victimised hunter's infant child into distorted grimaces; and misbehaving people who act like animals by committing incest become *yochiñ*-doubles themselves after death. *Yochiñ*-ness is the linear limit of humanity, the ascendant and declining constituent of the curve of human life that equalises it with animality. Beyond and before it lies *yové*-spiritual divinity, the transcendent circuit of human life-exchange that, under immanent mortal lenses, acquires the transitory parabolic shape of reiterated *yochiñ*-ness. *Yochiñ* linearity within *yové* circularity results into an undulating movement, the linear vs. circular dialectics that is the musical-temporal ontology of the Marubo. More specifically, it is that temporality which their *saiti* myth-chants instate in the form of music.

In an incorporeal, disembodied guise, the *yochiñrasiñ* (plural) are lost beings, erratic and solitary animals in the bush. They are associated with a

personal human past and with past settlements. Furthermore, it has to be emphasised that the potential “animal nature” of the left-handed *yora*-body, an embodied, future *yochiñ*-double, is equally equated to the transience of human life. Thus, as much as faeces and urine contain or are themselves *yochiñ*, the passing remnants of life, the once corporeal “left-hand side soul” *mechmirí vaká* ceases to be human and stays on earth when the living *yora*-body perishes at death. In the main it is the *yochiñ*-related, the left-side soul *mechmirí vaká* that leaves the consumed *yora*-body and transforms itself into a wandering animal that lingers around those sites where the deceased left their memories, like former dwelling places, living quarters, their lost neighbourhood. In due course, the *yochiñ*-transformed human soul also inflicts disease on the living. It is the memory of the person but not a person, a personal reflection and a bodily dejection: hence, again, its translation as “Beast” in missionary vocabulary is a distortion. A *yochiñ*-double is an all-too-human entity rather than a devilish pervert, although it may well be associated with animals and be a disease-causing agent. In this case, Marubo cosmo-aetiology seems to be closer to western science than to evangelical belief. The ill *yochiñ*-putrefaction lies where decayed human matter stands, in the burying grounds and encircling forest, on the earth, where the living lay their dead, and where they defecate and urinate.

Further still, *yochiñ*-doubles are the eyes’ pupil, the manikins that are seen therein, and all extant evanescent images that appear in the native world. *Yochiñ* is the name the Marubo give for a photograph, a film, and for sinister spectres at large. After the recent promotion of tourism and ethnographic filming among the beautiful and beautifully ornamented Matis, image-recording came to be seen with

more welcoming eyes by the Marubo, who even betray a certain jealousy of their well-rewarded, related neighbours. However, the danger that pertains to *yochiñ*-ness, since literally “imaginary”, i.e. pertaining to imagery, is also made manifest for these peoples in visible representations of humans such as photographs and films, just as the *yochiñ*-double is a dangerous, disease-causing image reflected and revealed in the outside in the form of spectre or excretion. *Keniñnawa* would refuse to look at the picture (which is itself *yochiñ*, in his language) to which he himself had posed, featuring him holding a huge poisonous snake in his hands. This is no wonder: both human portraits and snakes are motifs of *yochiñ*-ness.

Here another episode in the field gives concrete significance to this fear and, conversely, the visual-venomous connotation of the *yochiñ*-double might shed light on a mystery. Not long ago, an employee of FUNAI's *Frente de Contato*, the official post in charge of implementing “pacifying” policies in the isolated territory of the Korubo “club-wielders” at the mouth of the Ituí River, was killed in an incident with this also Pano-speaking, Matis-related group. This lamentable event marked the failure of a long and painstaking peace process: with persistent, bilateral efforts, the Korubo and FUNAI had just managed to establish an intermittent truce after the several murderous conflicts with local Brazilians. At least one indigenous community was showing regular signs of willingness to communicate, and officials were responding to it; after months of “mutual pacification”, peaceful contact seemed to have been achieved for good. This was not to last too long. A while later, a group of adolescent and young Indian males came to the riverbank across from FUNAI's “Contact Front”, and signalled for food, which had been the chief currency in these common conciliatory attempts. A

few White men from the governmental crew embarked on a canoe, moving toward the group. But one of the former, about to leave the base on leave, made an imprudent move as he approached the latter: the poor man had the unfortunate thought of taking some pictures to take home and show to his folk. His head was pitilessly smashed.

The ephemeral governmental contact had been established not long before the murder, in 1996, under the auspices of the FUNAI director Sidney Possuelo and with international support, publicity and acclaim. Numerous photographs and films were shot among the Korubo and exposed in the Internet, in the extensive “on-site” coverage of the contact-explorative expedition in which FUNAI personnel had the cooperation of National Geographic. I was in Paris when the first pictures of the “dreadful club-wielders” were exhibited there, in an almost “real time show”. Possuelo was often on-line at the same time as he conducted the expedition, answering with genuine passion the candid questions of North American college students and professors. A massive amount of the most ludicrous e-mail messages arrived to the jungle from the United States, at the very moment when the experienced Possuelo had to confront in person the most delicate stages of the gradual, negotiated encounter with the Korubo. Two years later, when we left the field in February 1998, the situation had visibly changed: the governmental Front was still well established at the mouth of the Ituí, but officials maintained, to say the least, a distant attitude toward passers-by like this anthropologist. Mistrust was in the air after the unexpected incident with the incautious official.

Now justice has to be made to natives: the last deadly episodes of contact must be kept within the historical perspective of mutual violence when, most of the

time, its range, initiative and intensity had been unbalanced, and usually at the expense of the Indian. This is the other side of the White rhetoric, that which gets credit for all attempts of establishing durable relationships with the indigenous peoples, glorifying itself with its own stupidity. The aforementioned murder was nothing but a strategic blunder of a person whose ethnographic information was scant, to say the least. It cannot be attributed to the unpredictability of wild natures, but rather to the ignorance of another's cultural practices. Even in societies in which one is well familiar with television and all the media apparatus, the registration of images has a tremendous power on peoples' life and death, so much so that its dangerous significance may provoke violence. Among the Marubo, who are not unrelated to the Korubo, picture taking and filming — *yochiñ aká* — are all the more risky, since they bear in themselves all the denotations of death and disease. Even *Voñchiñpa* (*Fernando Dionisio*), as a privileged informant for this work who is bilingual, literate and fluent in both universes, as someone who had lived, worked and mixed with western ways for most of his life as a frontier soldier, a ferryboat sailor and a boat-trader, even him would be reluctant to have his *yochiñ*-image registered in a *yochiñ*-photograph.

Further, the dangerous denotations of *yochiñ*-ness do in effect connote foreignness, as much as death and disease are originally associated with the prototypical White *nawa*, as native myth and history sustain. For these *-nawa* peoples, the *nawa* outside is ever-present, virtually or in reality, in inter- and intra-social relations. The *yochiñrasiñ* are illness-agents not only engaged in reciprocal shamanic raids among the Marubo, through human sorcery and in hunting magic: these animal-doubles are the prototypical exogenous source of any disease and

death. The *nawa yochiñ*, the “foreign animal-double” is not only a carrier of maladies, but also the ultimate foreign provenience of all malignity, which the healer fights with the aid of *yové*-related spirit-helpers. In curing seances, the *yochiñ*-illness is easily associated with all sorts of western substances and emblems, such as sugar, gasoline, domestic animals, wheels and engines.

At variance with the *yochiñrasiñ*, the *yovevo* (plural form) inhabit the top strata of the jungle-space, on the highest layer of the forest canopy. The Marubo call this favourite *yové*-dwelling *tama shavaya*, the “arboreal clearance”. A *yové* is a mediator between cosmic planes, a spiritual hybrid of nature and super-nature, if such a dichotomous categorisation is explanatory at all. To put it better, the *yovevo* are between an “ordinary” ground level of human daily life and an “inordinate” one that is literally above it, the also *yové*-spiritual world of the dead: they make death present in living existence. Inasmuch as their spiritual voice is collective, supra-personal, beyond the *yora*-body, the *yové*-spirits are themselves “super-human”. The *yovevo* are liminal entities inasmuch as, like the *yochiñ*-doubles, they traverse the limiting paths between two layers of existence; but while the animal-double draws the curve of human growth and decay, the movement between life and death itself, the *yové*-spirit lies in both its origins and ends, conjoining creation and destruction into a single circle. As represented in myth-music, *yové*-spirituality is the archaeology and teleology of humanity. The *yové*-spirit is liminal because it delimits and thus jointly constitutes earth and sky: it dwells both on the limits of the inner social world of the living, and close to the deadly, outer limits of the universe. On the one extreme of *yové*-agency, there is the “earthy” layer of the earthly *yora* inhabitants, *mai shavaya*, which literally corresponds to jungle

clearings, the high mounds (*mato*) where humans have lived since mythical-musical times: rather than “immemorial”, this is the original ground of the prototypical *yora*-human dwelling, the *shovo* longhouse, which is repeatedly remembered and re-actualised in chant. On the other extreme, there lies the *shoko nai shavaya*, the celestial, clear *yové*-spiritual destiny of *yora*-bodies in ever-renewing death. In the middle, on the borders of earth and sky, stands the near-terrestrial *yové*-clearance, the arboreal *tama shavaya*.

In the Marubo cosmos, the forest canopy is the horizon par excellence, the conflation between *nai* “sky” and *mai* “earth”. Within the *tama shavaya*, “arboreal dwelling” or “clearing”, stands out the *shono* tree (in botany *Ceiba pentantra*, in the ethnography *lupuna*, in Brazil *samaúma*). Whoever looks at it, it is hard to be missed; it is the largest tree of the forest, in volume at least, over-canopied with luscious radial branches towering up above. It is the huge tree upon which, as the reader will remember, the monstrous hawk devoured humans in their primordial settlements, in the myth-chant of *Teté Teká*. If, as seen above, the qualification of *nawa* is taken as “prototypically large”, the huge aerial roots, trunk and round foliage of the *shono* will account for its mythical status as *nawañ tama*, the prototypical tree of the *tama shavaya*. This top stratum of the forest is the intermediary cosmological layer between the earth of the living and the rejuvenating skies of transformed, peeled-off *yora*-bodies. Beyond it, the sun follows its paths, there where the overarching, supreme sky of clouds *koiñ nai* envelops the whole Marubo cosmos. The land of the living lies down below it. Within the *tama shavaya*, the *shono* tree is the favourite dwelling of the *yové*-spirits, those entities of soul-becoming, spirit-helpers in healing, those who stay on

the safe side of the native eschatological destiny. It is in that arboreal, transitional and prototypically *nawa* position that the *yora*-bodies, now fragmented into soul-persons — some *yové*-like, others *yochiñ*-like —, face for the first time the transformative *vei vai* dangers of immediate after-death, and in sequence fulfil their fate in accordance with the moral integrity or corruption of their lives before⁸⁴.

Tama is a generic *saiti* denomination for trees. It is an extraordinary word, taken from the mythical-musical lexicon, from the *keñchiñtxo*'s talk, from the shamanic repertoire. The ordinary, common word for “tree” is *iwi*; contrariwise, the semantic stress of the *tama shavaya* is on something that is not of everyday experience, for it refers to the transition between life and death. It is in the *tama shavaya* that the dangerous *vei vai*, the eschatological path of souls begins. The transience that the *tama shavaya*, as a cosmic layer, signifies for *yora*-human lives is in contradiction to its being a permanent living for the *yovevo*, that which the spiritual destination of bodily death, the skin-renewing *shoko nai shavaya* also is. Still these spirits are themselves singing contradictions, expressing in their intoned voice the ambivalence of life and death. They are a recurrent permanency to be achieved at the end of the deadly *vei vai* road, where *yové*-spiritual benevolence will help the morally good human souls to overcome transient *yochiñ*-ness, a recurrence that humans already experience in life as shamanic song, if transitorily.

This arboreal *yové*-liminal habitat is also a clue to the paradox of the shaman's voice: the vocal association between the *yovevo* and birds does not

⁸⁴ Cf. Lagrou 1998 for an account of other cosmic-semantic emphases on the *samaúma* tree among the Kachinawa (“a mediator par excellence”).

exclude predation from its spirituality, but incorporates instead the former to the latter within the singing *yora*-body. *Yové*-spirits are associated with singing through the *mawa* — the *sabiá* or “prototypical *yové*-bird” —, and still shamanic song is *inoñ*, jaguar-like, as seen in previous chapters. Now the *yové*-spiritual destination of dead humans is further away from death, and from the eschatological dangers of the predatory *yochiñ*, just like the supernal *shoko nai shavaya* is beyond the abode of the birds in the *tama* trees. Thus the identification of the dead human souls that reach the “celestial dwelling of renovation” with the *yové*-spirit is more significant than the bird-like or predatory capacities that the shamanic-spiritualised voice anticipates on earth. The resurrected life for the good human souls is quintessentially *yové*-like: they are evermore young since skin-unpeeled, forever wise since old, shamanic and white-haired. These souls are renewing bodies, and their death means a life of all-day-round feasting and bounteous revelry, which only their spiritual state of musical wisdom may allow for. Shamanic music is an anticipatory audition of the spirit-becoming of humans, being reborn anew in *yové*-cycles, ever and ever inflecting the predatory lines of growth and decay into spiritual circles.

In contrast to this transcending, vocal-eschatological *yové*-spirituality, the *yochiñ*-double is intrinsically immanent to the human sojourn on earth: it is connected to decay through its putrid growth from corpses. All excreta have *yochiñ*, the result of past alimentation, the cause of present illness and, eventually, of future death too. Excrement is used in sorcery to cause harm to your opponents, and in order to prey more generally, since sorcery includes the hunting incantations that are sung over the faeces of large game. Sorcerers and hunters

chant over waste with the aim of invoking the *yochiñ*-double of the human or animal prey, whose predatory action will turn against their source, war enemies and game alike. The *yochiñ*-double both conspires for and stems from the expiration of the body: it is both a precondition and an outcome of predation. It is a dialectical force against the *yové*-spirit, and such dialectics encapsulates all native temporal paradoxes of linearity and circularity, of life and health, death and disease. This is the primary message of *saiti* myth-music: the *yové*, as the entity that counterpoises the *yochiñ*, constitutes the regenerative, mythical-musical realm that encircles faulty existence. Humans strive in vain toward this paradigmatic perfection throughout their terrestrial lives, for here it cannot be more than a pre-requisite for a celestial balance to be attained in full at death only.

Successful human lives are those that pave the way for such a blessed predestination. The dangerous *vei vai* path to the *shoko nai shavaya* heaven is the dissolving solution of the soul-constitution that is constructed within *yora*-bodies on earth. Proper life is that where the untamed *yochiñ*-double has been duly surmounted, where the domestication of humanity has overcome its own animal misfortune, surpassing the constant contradiction that works against the person's ultimate environmental equilibrium, shaken by the mutability of all vital things. A living *yora*-body is a theatre of paradoxes that must be staged in life, represented in the musical dialectics of myth or otherwise. Life is a contradictory performance that living humans manage to sort out at their own end only, and native myth-music is the re-presentation of the paradoxical truism that there is no *yové*-vitality and environmental balance if *yochiñ*-decay does not entail a *yora* death.

Even after death, it takes a while before such paradoxes of life are totally

solved, both by the deceased themselves and among those who are left behind on this earth of ours, those who enact them on a social, mythical-musical basis. After passing away, the individual *yora*-body divides itself into soul-parts: human bodies decompose into *yové*-becoming “souls” that ascend to the skies on the one hand, and the earth-lingering *yochiñ*-doubles on the other. But even though the *tama shavaya yovevo* — those *yové*-spirits that live on the top of the forest, notably upon the *samaúma*, the *shono* tree’s foliage — and the spirit-like essences of shamanic substances will make all efforts to support the journey of their deceased soul-mates, in the meantime all sorts of eschatological *yochiñrasiñ*, the counterparts of the earth-lingering *yochiñ*-souls, will hinder their course. The dangerous eschatology belongs to the *yochiñ*; their transience is the passing memory of life that belongs to the post-mortem, *vei vai* path.

Now before we advance in the study of these soul-entities in their lived existence within the human *yora*-bodies, it must be advanced that one should not find much direct significance in the few nominal references to *yochiñ*-doubles and *yové*-spirits that are present in some *saiti* myth-chants. Nor with regard to other soul-like entities, for the significance of these doubles and spirits, as of all *saiti*-mythical words, is within their musical-temporal form. The importance of the ethnographic translation of linguistic conceptualisations presented in this and other chapters is a function of their relevance for their own mythical-musical understanding; and if the *saiti* sing the origins of human life, here we had to understand beforehand what Marubo death means. For these peoples, death is not the negative outcome of an ailing *yora*-body; it is not a sheer nothingness, a celestial negation of earthly life. Instead, death is the actualisation of the intrinsic

and exogenous *yové*-spiritual and animal-*yochiñ* agencies that have a potential counterpart within humans in their own original constitution as such, as *yora*-human bodies. The *yora*-bodies of *-nawa* peoples are the carnal alloy of a primordial sonic alchemy, an intricacy of substances, all of which have an exogenous chthonic genesis. The *saiti* myth-chants are the main reagent in this alchemic constitution.

I.11 embodied voices

So more than being a mere construct, the mythical-musical agency of *saiti* performance constitutes the human body within the Marubo world. The *saiti* myth-chants are more than narratives of origins because, under the temporal ontology instated there, the representation of this world exceeds verbal discourses. Such shamanic music is beyond encyclopaedic explications of the cosmos, constituting it instead as the scenario of the mythical history of human anatomy. With a view to elucidate the musical soul-constitution of the *yora*-body of these *-nawa* peoples, let us recapitulate and expand on a few points mentioned in brief in the chapter above.

In contradistinction to *yochiñ* disease-triggers, the *yovevo* are spirit-helpers. They are at once healing-agents and health-providers that expel alien *yochiñ*-doubles, the afflictive dispositions of patients. They are also guiding, good-willing shepherds who conduct the *yové*-compatible souls of the extinct body through the dangerous *vei vai* path of immediate eschatological existence, which is a transitory human state, an unstable temporal space on the limit between two layers, spanning

from the borders of earth toward the human other, post-mortem celestial dwelling. To become a *yové*-spirit is the destiny of the rising soul-like human beings that succeed in their upward journey toward the sky of renovation. These non-*yochiñ*, non-double-like human souls fall into a categorial amalgamation that is projected onto the presently lived future, including the *mekirí vaká* and the *chinañ nato*, i.e. the “soul of the right-hand side” and the “thought-breath centre” of the *yora*-body.

Both in a human lifetime and on a vertical cosmological axis, a *yové*-spirit is a hyper-human, whereas the *yochiñ*-soul is some sort of hypo-humanity. *Yové* and *yochiñ* are the respective not-yet and still-not-anymore of *yora*-bodies, their temporal affections. Both the two entities are *yora*-humans, transforming bodies, becoming and being. Further, the ontological distinction between humans and animals exists more or less in the very symmetrical form of the soul-arrangement of the human body. The *yochiñ* animal-double is potential predation on its left-side *mechmirí vaká*, while the *yové*-spirit is the rightful bird-like song latent on the *mekirí vaká* side; in contrast, the soul-constituted *yora*-body is the transitory and comprehensive, conjunctive category that idiosyncratically characterises and literally embodies humanity. The *yora*-body is the arena where and when, especially at life’s bodily disjunction — death —, the potential opposition of the *yové*-spirit versus the *yochiñ*-double is projected onto specific spatial forms, an anatomic-hemispheric and cosmic-stratospheric one.

However, death is an “othering” experience; and as such, it is something that the living must live by projecting the soul-disjunctive destiny of the dead into bodily activity, as much as their self-projection is a product of *nawa*-foreignness. The spatial, cosmic-anatomic projections that are actualised at human death are a

function of human life and, as such, they are not amenable to metaphysical-topological modelling, for native time is neither univocal nor continuous, and modelled structures are not eternal ideas here. At best, the structural reality of body and cosmos that eschatology explicates is mythical and musical, equivocal and ambiguous, since natives envisage it as a lived performance that is at once finite and recurrent: the *saiti* chant and choreography.

Likewise, humans and the world are not to be equated to inner and outer realms, to individual, mindful and sensible subjects opposed to multiple, mindless and senseless objects. The misleading characterisations of the terrestrial *yochiñ* as “temporary-double” and the celestial *yové* as “eternal-spirit”, and of both as soul-attributes of a body-substance, might lead one into the deception of an absolute relationship of animality or nature versus divinity or culture, or a nature against a super-nature, a physics against a metaphysics, etc. Such western oppositions could only be transpositions of a deceptive antinomy opposing the “perishable” and the “perennial”. First it must be argued: as concerns Marubo humanity, even in its “spiritual” or “double-like” dimension, the concept of “eternity” is erroneous: by paying heed to *saiti* myth-chants, one realises that their history is not a-temporally “cold”, but rather constantly re-enacted inasmuch as their chanted myths are linearly circular, circularly linear, viz. temporal. Second, both entities, the *yochiñ*-double and the *yové*-spirit, are counterbalancing affective substances whose dynamic dialectics differ in life and in death, in health and in illness, in the emerging genesis of humans and in their final fate. Human body-souls are not transient, material particulars moving toward immutable, universal forms; the mythical-musical movement of bodies sets motion to their souls, i.e. bodily parts,

thus constituting cosmic wholes along time.

Both the *yové* and the *yochiñ* change in the course of human life and afterlife, when time is both progressive and regressive, linear and circular, but not sempiternal: time is never annulled in omnipresence. Strictly saying, there is no such a thing as an eternal entity in the Marubo pantheon, and cosmological “things” are themselves hardly seen in their everyday as visualisable entities. The *yové*-spirit is constant to the extent that it means temporal renewal, and this presupposes the growth and decay entailed by *yochiñ*-doubles. Strictly speaking, these are not entities, but felt dispositions. A *yochiñ* is the double of a human and still an animal, imperfect corporeality, longing for a lost sociality: it is both disease and decomposition. Paradoxically, or rather dialectically, the *yochiñ*-negation of *yora* social-corporeality results into the *yové*-spiritual paradigm of human society and body. Both paradoxically and dialectically, the *yové*-spirit is also as much an animal — as a “prototypical bird” — as it is a human being, epitomised in its vocal capabilities. *Yové*-spirits are moral perfection, festivity, harmony and health: it is a musical form, that of the *saiti* myths or otherwise, which incorporates — or “embodies”, in the shape of human *yora*-bodies — its own *yochiñ*-negation. None of these “spiritual” or “double” beings are dings-an-sich, a-temporal and a-spatial reified “things” as such; they are cosmic potentialities of human beings to become, made palpable and manipulable in the shamanic music that informs, that imparts form to the bodies of humans.

As the Marubo intone the cosmic realm of human anatomy, its origins and destinies, these *-nawa* peoples become impersonal, a permanent circle, or rather the permanent impermanence of a circular movement. In shamanic music, actual

yora-bodies become what they actually are in their potential ethical and aesthetic capabilities, that is, *yové* and *yové vana*, spirit and spiritual language. The *yové* and its language are song, a temporal-auditory representation performed in kinetic circles in sound and space. During shamanic sessions and dreams, the *yové* asserts the primacy of its voice: it is rather heard than seen, and this is no surprise, given its essentially temporal character. Actualised in chants, the *yové*-spirit presents itself and is presented by and through the shaman to the audience; thus, all shamanic music is presented with supra-personal, super-human wisdom.

The Marubo are great listeners, a fundamental cognitive trait that, although related to the temporal-ontological constitution of their humanity and cosmos, proves to be very annoying to missionary schoolteachers. Missionaries often complain about the indigenous manifestations of “silent respect” toward their evangelical teachings, whose pedagogical results are nonetheless null. This is not surprising either: neither agreement nor lack thereof, or perhaps both, are masked under the intent silence of natives. The Marubo literally “let it be” when they listen, since the truth of their form of being, and their knowledge of it, is a mythical-musical, temporal phenomenon. When listening, the Marubo do not interrupt speakers, but rather punctuate their delivery with words and sounds meant to display attentiveness. Marubo speakers are better defined as “orators” or “oral performers”, since their speeches are monologues that people listen to in the same way as they repeat their myth-chants in responsory⁸⁵.

⁸⁵ *Aví* is a common interjection when a Marubo is listening to a narrative or while being taught a curing chant. Sonically speaking, *aví* is pronounced one note to a syllable, i.e. two notes in an approximate tonal interval of ascending perfect fifth, the first note longer than the second (“*a-ví*”). The similitude of this with the *inoñ vana* “jaguar’s roar”, the *tsai iki*

This means that Marubo reasoning would be lost in verbal dialogue as such, and is in turn extremely telling of the native “concept of speech”, if such conceptualisations can be at all abstracted from its performance. All Marubo metaphysics is *a posteriori*... their acts and enacted intentions, their *chinañ*-breaths always precede the categorisation of their *chinañ*-thoughts in spoken words. In other words, the “speech acts” of these peoples, their shamanic discourses (*inoñ vana*, “word of jaguar” and *yové vana*, the “spiritual language”) are, in the main, extempore intonations that address a silent or interpolative audience. They are statements that follow a unilateral, musical logic; and they are a collective heritage that nevertheless gains significance and form, in one go, in the vocal performance of contextual actors. The semantic and formal source of these statements is neither personal nor at all “subjective”; and yet they have an objective origin, which is spiritual but still not “ideally conceptual”. If the *sai iki* “jaguar-like roaring” can be conceived as a musical-dialogical discourse, an onomatopoeic verbalisation, it follows a “responsorial” rationale rather than a question-answer structure; and if the chorus-response of *saiti* myth-chants to the *yoya* chant-leader, the leading *saiti* actor, is no more than verbal repetition, it is still much more than the materialisation of a “concept”. It is an active ritual re-production and re-presentation of a cosmological message that does not exist in the abstract or, even when conceptualised as such, is not expressible without its concrete enactment.

Ritualised song, *saiti* expression, and formal speech at large are “spiritual phenomena”, in the absence of a better qualification. This is not to mean that there

intonations, is more than mere curiosity. It is truly curiously, moreover, that the colloquial Marubo interjection be just like the religious-laden Latin salutation in the hailing opening theme of Josquin’s motet *Ave Maris Stella*.

is an ethereal “spirit” ontologically antecedent to the musical performance. It has been explained elsewhere how every verbal or musical genre, and all ritualised speech in general, requires the establishment of a personal relationship between the subjective *yora*-speaker and the *yové*-world. The shamanic voice is an unearthly gift and command, a carnal, bodily result of the spiritual intercourse that is initiated in mythical origins and reinstated in initiation ritual, re-occurring in song at every musical performance. The spiritual language *yové vana* is the objective thought and intention epitomised by the *mawa* bird, a mythical-musical character that makes its disguised appearance precisely in *saiti*, mentioned in mythical-musical words under an explicit human guise. At the level of *saiti* performance, the form of the spiritual bird could not be other but human: the *yové*-epitome is exactly the vocal capabilities of a music-making and music-made humanity.

The *mawa* bird is a quintessential *yové*-spirit to the extent that it is the singer par excellence, the one that gradually endows its singing, i.e. the formal musical-speaking capabilities to initiates in shamanic *keñchiñtxo*-healing, and eventually endows all musical knowledge to natives at large. In this sense, if the *yové*-spirit and its language are song in general, the spiritual *mawa* is the capacity to sing irrespective of the singing speciality. As suggested above, the native distinction between the *keñchiñtxo* (the *curador* or “healer”) and the *romeya* (the *pajé* or “shaman”) is a matter of degree, not so much of quality. Further still, there is no hierarchical gradation between the two shamanic categories: *yové*-ness is not an amount to be measured. The difference between *keñchiñtxo* and *romeya* lies on the degree of personal independence that each manifests, the ability to disengage

from one's volitional individuality in face of the *yové*-spirit: one can choose to be a healer, but a shaman proper is "chosen", when "spiritual calls" — paradoxically, *yochiñ*-predatory events, dreams or visions — "erase" the personality of the initiate, as it were. The similarities between *keñchiñtxo*-healer and *romeya*-shaman remain stronger, though: no matter how each identifies with the spirit, the shamanic-musical capabilities never abandon their *yové*-bird source. The shamanic voice is not totally "given away" to the singer, to the extent that it maintains an inter-subjective, supra-personal character, no matter who intones it: healer, shaman, longhouse owner, community leader, or *saiti* performer. All these social personae amount to interchangeable and equivalent positions vis-à-vis *yové*-spirituality. No matter the social function, the average Marubo is someone who always partakes a commonality of body and soul with the *yové*-world.

The *mawa yové*-spirits guide the heart-mind of the morally good, the shamanically powerful: it orients their *chinañ* "breathing-thoughts". The *mawa* bird is the *yové*-spiritual beacon of the path for the *chinañ*-soul among the *yochiñ*-dangers of death, and for the quests for bodily and cosmic, *yové*-spiritual knowledge as well. If there is any major diacritical mark differentiating the shamanic healer from the shaman proper, the *keñchiñtxo* from the *romeya*, it will be the differential capacity of detachment of the *chinañ* "breathing-thoughts" from their *nato* "core", their bodily site. The mindful-breath of the *romeya*-shaman is that part of his which, during shamanic seances, leaves his *yora*-body behind and goes on a cosmic journey. It is the shamanic breathing and thoughtful *chinañ*-soul that parallels the customary attitude of earthly longhouse leaders, those who visit in person their near neighbours to make invitations for festivals: it fetches the *yové*

from their spiritual-arboreal dwellings, calling the spirits to descend and enjoy the hospitable conviviality of humans, the friendly homeliness of *yora*-bodies. Along life and in the afterlife, the *yové*-spirits repay this token of reciprocity with their guidance, in the shaman's seances and in his eschatology.

Moreover, the shamanic seance, on earth and in heaven, is always a musical feast, taking the travelling breathing-thoughts quite far. They may get as far as to the spiritual sky of renovation, and at this point the shamanic trip leads to such an ecstatic enthusiasm that *romeya*-shamans, i.e. their *chinañ* breath-thoughts, end up having to be entreated by their *yové*-spiritual hosts to return to earth, to the society of their own living co-residents, at the conclusion of all sessions. All too often, once back to their own longhouses, *romeya*-shamans will miss their dead: in their *chinañ* journeys, they have the opportunity to see again their deceased relatives in a *yové*-transformed state, in enthusiastic ecstasy, partaking of celestial company in their revelling *shoko nai shavaya* paradise. Then a substantial divide, a bodily one, has to be drawn then between the living humanity and the spiritual-renewed dead, even though the shamanic song and seance and substance in general, ayahuasca brew and tobacco snuff, are the very means for opening the paths that unite and separate the two worlds. The border line between sky and earth becomes the potential sharing of food of the shamanic *chinañ* with the *yové*-rejuvenated dead, a celestial commensality that may go beyond the liquid and powdery drugs and all substances that both *keñchiñtxo* and *romeya*, all healers and shamans share with spirits on an almost daily basis. If, during the shamanic seance and the simultaneous communal feasts that take place in *yové*-dwellings, the visiting *chinañ*-soul of the *romeya*-shaman partakes of the food of spirits, it should be

bound in the spiritual-celestial realm forever. And should his *chinañ* remain in its new heavenly home, the empty, now irreparably deconstructed *yora*-body of the shaman would languish and die, following the already-realised destiny of its youth-renewed breath-soul⁸⁶.

In fact, if the *yové*-like souls of both the *romeya* and of the *keñchiñtxo* do not face strong *yochiñ*-resistance in the ascension to the heavens, notably at death, this is because their *yora*-bodies are already “spiritualised” on earth. Marubo shamans have already been saturated with vine-brews and snuff-powders throughout life, with all sorts of shamanic ingredients, and thus can rely on the help of the tutelary entities of these spirit-related stuffs. Life is already composed of a cyclical renewal for them, which but foreshadows their future post-mortem, renewing-circular state. Along the same lines, the archetypal *mawa* bird-spirit endows the initiate shaman with the capabilities of the *yové*-chanted word. Through initiation, it conveys the *kene moñti*, the decorated *taboca*-cane segment, the graphically designed mortar made from the section of a certain large species of bamboo. It is usually used to grind tobacco leaves and ashes into a thin powder — a powerful ingredient in healing — and, in ancient times, it functioned as a quiver to store poisoned blowgun darts; but in shamanic words, the *moñti*-mortar is the larynx itself covered with *kene*-design, an art that seems to be a distinct Pano cosmological feature and skilful practice. Marubo design is a womanly parameter of excellence, used mostly in festivals. Still their body-painting is gender-complementary, insofar as it is an overall shamanic art. Both sexes have their *yora*-

⁸⁶ See Montagner Melatti 1985 for a description of *romeya*-shamanic seances. The library at *Museu do Índio* in Rio de Janeiro contains some beautiful recordings of *João Pajé*'s

bodies covered with beautiful geometrical patterns that women draw with a resinous black paint from the fruit of the *jenipapo* tree (*Genipa americana*). Meanwhile, men sing upon this resin (*señpa*), providing spiritual protection against diseases: shamanic excellence in the arts of design is achieved through musicianship⁸⁷.

To witness the chronic, lengthy, non-ceremonial, rather inconspicuous shamanic initiation for healing capabilities would require years of fieldwork and much attention. Such shamanic initiation goes on surreptitiously, despite the moral persecution and blackmail of missionaries. The thorough acquisition and consolidation of the designed metaphorical larynx, the epitome of the shamanic vocal powers, demands several years of apprenticeship and sexual-alimentary restrictions, especially from the most gifted candidates. Initiation is claimed to strengthen the voice and knowledge that is realised in formal elocution, in curing chants and elsewhere⁸⁸.

In some sense however, such shamanic capabilities are an innate gift from a *yové* bird-helper, which initiation only substantiates. The *yové*-spirit that maintains a conspicuous association with the initiate, the aforementioned *mawa* or *mawa isá* bird, is humanly so long as it characterises a *yora*-bodily potential that is

powerful *yové*-endowed voice singing, *ini iki*, his *romeya* chants.

⁸⁷ Lagrou 1998 and Keifenheim 1996 develop the hermeneutic potential of the similar graphic designs found among the Kachinawa of Acre. With reference to the also Pano-speaking Shipibo-Conibo of the Ucayali, Gebhart-Sayer 1985 attests the synaesthetic relation between singing and drawing within the context of ritual healing and elsewhere.

⁸⁸ Shamanic initiation among the Marubo is more fully described in Montagner Melatti 1985. The data available seem to “substantiate the substantiality” of the initiation process which Townsley 1988 describes among the Yaminawa. Still, with all limitations, the Marubo data does not reproduce the “gruesome” aspect of the Yaminawa description, not with the same intensity at least.

attributable to any human, or rather to any *-nawa* section: to wit, the persistent vocal knowledge and power that counteracts disease symptoms. The *yové*-bird is a remedy for all maladies, an antidote for all symptoms just because it “sharpens the ears” and “clears the brain”, doing exactly what is required not only to cure, but to sing well first of all. Most of all, it is a social bequest, a birthmark, rather than being just an elusive capacity that one learns from scratch: *mawa*, *mawa isá*, or still simply *isá* are specifically related to sectional ethnonyms (e.g. *Rane isá*, *Kana isá*, etc.). Such ethnonymic marker appears both in the context of curing songs and in that of myth-chants: *Rane Isá* in *saiti* means the song-helping, speech-giving *yové*-spirit of the *Ranenawavo*, for instance.

Keniñnawa, a lesser healer, supplied two conflicting literal translations for the *mawa* bird, applicable to the musical contexts of both myth and cure, which could be attributed to his low degree of either shamanic knowledge or literacy in Brazilian Portuguese, our lingua franca. The *yové*-bird would be the *sabiá*, a bird of the genus *Turdus*, or still more generically “the one bird that imitates other birds”. Now either *sabiá*, the common regional bird that other Marubo also pointed out as *mawa*, is an altogether inconsistent gloss — given that it sings nothing else than its distinctive song — or the spiritual *yové*-bird is closer to a general category. Much as the *yovevo* are generic spirits, their generic bird-like badge would be the very human vocal capability of mimesis, instead of having a specific musical or anatomic morphology⁸⁹.

⁸⁹ In this, the *mawa* bird is quite close to the *japiim* (*Cacicus cela*), another common bird of the region, occasional in Marubo diet as well as conspicuous in the *saiti* myth-chants. Verbosity is the most remarkable feature in the cosmological-mythical characterisation of the *japiim* among the Pano Kachinawa (cf. Lagrou 1998). In turn, this bird has the same

However innate, vocal capabilities have to be reinforced. It has to be emphasised that by “shamanic” we mean sensual-intellectual knowledge, musical capabilities at large, and that “initiation” is not reserved for a few elected only, but is instead something that virtually any healthy adult Marubo is entitled to. Among other procedures, shamanic initiation “embodies” the mimetic spirit-bird *mawa yové* in *yora*-bodies through the application of highly irritating substances on the tongues of initiates, provoking salivation. The initiating shaman-singer must have rubbed that which is to articulate myth-chants and curing songs in the future with a perforated parrot’s tongue soaked in hot pepper juice; the applying instrument comes therefore from another bird known for its ability to repeat and imitate verbal sounds, and is mimetically associated with the human organ where it is applied. After all, the whole initiation process is based on bodily aesthetic transformation: the knowledgeable competence of shamans has an extra-corporeal source that is incorporated as and embodied through a sound-producing device, namely the invisible larynx in your throat (*kene moñti*), the vocal cords especially decorated with beautiful *yové*-spiritual, graphic-geometrical patterns.

The spirit-bird *mawa yové* is a language-giver expressly mentioned in more than one *saiti*; and, more than an agent of transformation and spiritual bestowal for initiates, healers at large invoke the spirit-bird alongside with other *yové*-related curing agents in order to restore convalescents. The *saiti* evocations occur precisely by means of the vocal faculties that humans share with the *yové*-spirits,

designation both among the Kachinawa and among the Marubo, *txana*, which for the latter is also a male prepubescent personal name. It should not be coincidental that the Marubo *mawa isá* or *mawa yové*, the quintessential *yové*-spirit among birds, is characterised by verbosity too, “borrowing” this character from the Kachinawa *txana*.

the *mawa* bird-capacity to intone words. The shamanic-spiritual, intoned voice of the healer invokes in turn the several other *yové*-like entities that are directed to each *yochiñ*-symptom and sensible pathology: difficult breathing, impure blood, pains, visual impairment. These *yové*-agents of cure are themselves perceptible sensibilities: heat (*shana*) and cold (*matsi*), bitter (*moka*) and sweet (*vata*). Like in ancient Greece, where the Homeric Asclepius ascribed the rationale of health and disease to a sensible balance between “substantial attributes” within the body, Marubo healers evoke *yové*-percepts in order to counteract the dangerous *yochiñ*-related dispositions⁹⁰.

Here it cannot be more than perfunctory explained how their musical curing arts are a matter of the perceptual manipulation of the palate, among other sensations. *Vata*, for example, corresponds to our perceptions of both “sweet” and “salted”. In the words of *saiti* myth-chants, it seems to be best translated as “flavourful”, even though it ordinarily refers to plain cultigens such as bananas, or to the pungent wild honey; whereas *katxi*, a word that stands for “salt”, in certain cases may connote “sour” for us. The explicit denotation of *katxi* is the coarse salt that natives use now to preserve and sell their game-meat to neo-nationals. The most important semantic associations that shamans make in effect do not derive from the way those words extend beyond our categories of taste, but from their manipulative perception of these. In shamanic semantics, the sharp flavour of *katxi* or *vata* is associated either with straight foreignness, in the first case, or in the

⁹⁰ More details regarding Marubo and other Pano healing, on the “theories of sensations” or “pathologies” of both sickness and cosmic entities, can be found elsewhere in the extant ethnography: see especially Montagner Melatti 1985 among the Marubo, Lagrou 1998 among the Kachinawa for further elaboration, not to mention the inspiring accounts on healing synaesthesia in Gebhart-Sayer 1985.

second with the extra-alimentary, *yové*-spiritual meaning of *nañko*, to which the “sweetness” mentioned in healing chants is closer. *Nañko* is the specific sweetness of the prototypical plants of original anthropogeny, one of the creative substances from which humans *weni*-emerge in the “chthonic sprouting” that is narrated in the *saiti* myth-chants of creation, like the one to be studied shortly. There, more than anywhere else, adjectival tastes are substantial, and semantically laden: if the original *moka*-bitterness of native humanity is associated with the wild and aggressive forest, with endogenous origins, then it is not incoherent that *katxi*-saltiness or *vata*-sweetness be icons of western-related diseases, originally exogenous. The original ambiguity of the Marubo is bittersweet indeed: if their originality is their *nawa* creation from the outside, the origins of their diseases are equally out-centred⁹¹.

The association between the healing agent and the chanted cure is expressed both in names of substances (as *asho*, a tree-sap that renews the bark and protects the patient’s skin against relapses) or in the naming of the aforementioned perceptible entities (as *matsi*-coldness, a counteractive relief to the corresponding bodily affection of high temperature). Still, both substances and percepts, that is, the substantive curing agent or entity and the adjective perception that cures — *asho* “renewing sap” and renewal, or *matsi* “coldness” and cooling, for example — are in one single semantic field of intoned elocutions. In shamanic song, matter and attribute, form and content are one: the meaning of *yové*-spirit and *yochiñ*-double qua substantial perceptions of health and disease is chanted, and as such it

⁹¹ This seems to be an inversion of Erikson 1996 on the Matis, whereby “bitterness” is to “sweetness” as “poison” is to “antidote”. According to the author, the Matis see both poison

exists in sounds rather than being just the imaginary reifications of therapeutic or malign properties into remedial or pathogenic things. Therefore, the “symbolic efficacy” of the healing chant is not analogical, and its words are no “figures of speech”: for the Marubo, the musicality of the word is the agency that cures⁹².

Both in myth- and cure-chanting, the same relation between words and sounds obtains. Much in the same way as, in the mythical-musical evocations of *saiti*, the emergence (*wenia*) of the *-nawa* peoples from earth is the outcome of a combination of material substances and perceptible attributes of plant or animal (e.g. the *nañko*-sweetness of plants, the *chinañ*-thoughts of animals, etc.), the curing chants invoke substantial percepts to treat opposing symptoms, affected *yora*-bodies. Much as the conflation of human identity and alterity, that is, the dual composition of the sectional and personal names of the *-nawa* peoples created in myth-music, is a substantial transformation of the sensual percepts of animals, plants and other things (*chinañ*, *nañko*, etc.) into humans, all substances of cure and disease are transformational sense-perceptions constituting *yora*-bodies. And this constitution is not “conceptual” to the extent that it occurs dynamically, in potentiality and in act, in musical performance; and here, the body-perceptual, substantial constituents we refer to are the *yochiñ*-double and the *yové*-spirit, of course.

We have been repeating that, although *nawa* is the Marubo prototype of otherness, the mythical relevance of *nawa*-ness for the Marubo self is

and disease as endogenous, as opposed to the “sweet outside” (1996: 195, 206).

⁹² Contrary to what is sustained in the much-quoted Lévi-Strauss 1963, and also to that which some of his critics maintain (e.g. Townsley 1988, among panologists).

“prototypically large”, both in their coming to life and in their departure to death. In view of this fact, that these peoples are *-nawa* outsiders in a strong mythical-onomastic sense, it is no wonder that their illnesses are to be identified with foreign *nawa* agents, i.e. with animals, plants and things whose provenience is as well exterior. What needs to be further stressed is that this *nawa*-exteriority is a chanted event, that which relates these peoples to their world, which establishes the pact between humanity and divinity, and hence that which constitutes their *yora*-bodies as a relation between *yochiñ*-ness and *yové*-ness, these two cosmic-temporal anatomic constituents. For this reason, while their myth and history, past and present, and in some sense the possible, decisive alternatives of their future are confounded in the *saiti*, such mythical-musical knowledge and their curing capabilities in general are commensurate and proportional epistemological fields. This is what *Pekoñpa*, a longhouse leader in the community of Liberdade, was asserting when he exhorted me to learn how to cure (*shoñ iki*): curing chants “are of the same knowable stuff” as that which forms the corpus of the *saiti* myth-chants⁹³.

Due to our limits, the issues relating to *shoñ iki* and *shoñti*, “to sing healing songs” and “curing chants”, are relevant here just to the extent that they relate to *sai iki* and to its nominal form *saiti*. In both cases, *iki* is a verbalising morpheme, whereas *-ti* is a nominalising affix: therefore, the relation between the two musical forms is summed up in the semantic association between the roots *shoñ* and *sai*.

⁹³ Among the Shipibo, another Pano-speaking people, Illius 1992 provides some data on shamanic healing that is quite amenable to a convergent comparison with the Marubo. See Townsley 1988 again, also, for the relation between myth and cure in Yaminawa shamanic singing.

For the purposes of the present description, it is worth emphasising that when healers stop singing upon a patient or upon medicine (e.g. *shoñka* or *señpa*, prayed food or resin used in body-painting), they repeatedly release a whistled blow, two or three times. The analogy is obvious with *sai*, i.e. with the shouts produced in the *saiti* festival, during, before and after the mythical-musical performance. *Sai iki* means literally “to do *sai*”, that is, to emit loud, high-pitched, falsetto-like cries, just as much as *shoñ iki* means “to whistle”, “to do *shoñ*”, to exhale forcefully blown, noisy breaths. Primacy in curing and myth-chanting is given to sound, to song and the singing breath. The shaman sings and blows, and it is still the *yové* voice that cures and chants myths — not the voice of the *yové* as such, but its words and intonations as a spiritual endowment of the bird-like canorous capacity, something that is as human as *chinañ*-breathing is⁹⁴.

The *yové* spirit-bird has a powerful human voice indeed. It is *vanaya*: “verbose”, an adjective derived from the ordinary meaning of *vana*, “word” or “language”. *Vanaya* is the function attributed to the *yové* qua *saiti*-mythical character: the spirit-bird is talkative, not in a bad sense altogether, in line with the way the Marubo regard verbal and, beyond that, aural capabilities in general. To be loquacious is to be wise; it is an original potency. As sung in *saiti* song, the *isá* of myth-chants is the bird-*yové* endowing language to, and thus denominating, all

⁹⁴ Townsley’s account of Yaminawa musical cure is quite close to what seems to be true for the Marubo, except that his compulsion to see invisible ideas and patterns — or “meaning and power”— behind and beyond, and instead of indigenous representations also seem to determine his interpretation of similar such blowing:

“His [the shaman’s] singing will be intermittently accompanied by the blowing of tobacco smoke on the patient or a more rapid, vigorous and staccato blowing... but the effective healing power is thought to originate in the song. The blowing effects a sort of physical transfer of the meaning and power of the song into the patient.” (1988: 138)

the matrilineal sections that emerge from “tellurian chaos”.

It is in this *yové*-song of the emergence of *-nawa* peoples that not only an ethnic, human-bodily construct is onomastically composed: the whole Marubo world is. In myth-chants, sectional names correspond to rivers and animals and other things in the world, which are named after the ethnonymic markers *Shane*, *Kana*, *Shawañ*... for instance, the worldly entities are called the river or animal of the Blue Bird, of this or that Macaw. It is as if each matrilineal section, each “race of people” belonged to one level of reality, to an autonomous universe. Things in the world are marked with human-belonging through birds, since these are name-givers as long as they identify *-nawa* sectional ethnonyms in the myth-chants of creation. Conversely, the spiritual bird is identified with worldly things through the vocal capacity endowed to humans: belonging to the world is a musical-linguistic competence whose essential meaning is the *yové*-spirituality of the *-nawa*-named peoples, whose specific denominations conflate all creatures with human-*nawa* estrangement. Like the human body, the humanised world is a *nawa*-alchemic alloy, and its spiritual catalyst is loquacity, musicality, melodiousness, beauty in chants and in the visual guise of graphic body-painting and designed patterns, in pleasant scents and profuse ornamentation; it is all that and also the consequent, quintessentially *yové*-like attribute of wisdom. Here wisdom is “sensual”, “perceptual”, an assortment of anti-metaphysical attributes: not ideal, not conceptual, not syllogistic.

Hence, regardless of their undeniable expertise, the “analogical larynx” of shamans, the vocal organ identified with a designed bamboo-segment (*kene moñti*) is not the only human throat whose singing faculties are spiritually gifted. By and

large, all *-nawa* peoples have a *yové*-voice insofar as they speak and sing, inasmuch as they are humans. But still, among these *-nawa* humans, the *yoya* chant-leader and every performer of the *saiti* myth-chants are all the more spirit-endowed, for they are humanity par excellence. There, as in any shamanic throat, instead of occupying the bodily space left vacant by a wandering soul, the *mawa yové* replaces the vocal cords of its human repository with the *kene moñti*, the decorated mortar for tobacco leaves, a spiritual gift to the singer that is ingrained in the flesh. The shamanic singer is a borrower of *yové*-animal plastic parts: in this substantial way, the designed human larynx is supportive of a spiritual voice.

As such, the singing voice is an adaptive response to a divine encounter, an environmental endowment that is rather a human diacritic than a metaphorical support for a metaphysical musical expression. Even though it originates from the bird-spirit, the spiritual song just exists in humans, and to the extent that the body-soul dynamics of transformation informs its musical temporality with growth and decay. Shamanic music is assigned to the singer from a *yové*-spiritual source that is related to the origins and destination of humanity; and its bodily form, the *kene moñti* larynx, performs the trajectory of all human souls throughout the *yochiñ*-vicissitudes between these two spatiotemporal poles. This is the collective sense in which the voice that intones it is personal only in a weak, non-individual way. Lay-singers who listen and repeat the *saiti* myth-chants are performing a basic pedagogical, socialising and socialised task: to learn them is both to develop your auditory capabilities, and to identify your vocal capabilities with a third party, so to speak. The responding chorus utters as much a supra-personal discourse as that of the leading voice, insofar as the intra-personal and super-human counterparts of

souls are themselves identified to the bodily performers. *Saiti* myth-chants are Marubo music inasmuch as these *-nawa* peoples are therein supra-personally represented, and inasmuch as their *yora*-bodies partake of the potentialities of the *yochiñ*-double and the *yové*-spirit.

Like the *-nawa* onomastics outlined above, or the anatomic structure elaborated here, *saiti* myth-chants are an objectification or the partaking of multiple subjectivities. That is, *saiti* music is an objective artistic representation that presupposes an identification of inter-subjective perspectives codified in a specific vocabulary, different from ordinary talk, and in a musical, meta-verbal grammar. *Saiti* myth-chants, we argue, configure a musical-verbal code, the temporal codification of the dynamics of a cosmological duality that is subliminal to the structure of soul-entities unified within the *yora*-body. *Yochiñ*-doubles and *yové*-spirits are both spatially localised on earth, in rivers and skies, and temporally refracted within the *yora*-person and in the mythical history of these *-nawa* peoples, temporally oscillating between cyclical repetition and discursive finiteness. Singers — and listeners — encode and decode these dual messages, by and large non-verbal ones, in the sympathetic conversation with these extraneous entities which is enacted through a non-dialogical vocal interaction. Shamanic singing such as *sai iki*, *shoñ iki*, etc. is non-dialogical because the *yochiñ* and the *yové* are not entities with a similar “individual” status to *yora*-bodies; and still doubles and spirits both condition and depend on humanity. Doubling and spiritual beings are the potential constituents of the *yora*-body. Thus to sing with, through and about such potentialities of souls, the *yové*-spirits and *yochiñ*-doubles, means for humans to “sing” their *yora*-bodies throughout time, and this ability determines

a good shamanic performance.

This refers back to the truth-value of shamanic linguistics. In analytical terms, i.e. from a verbal, visually a-temporal perspective, the shaman does perform figurative language, e.g. a “tree” in myth-chant is not a simple “tree”. However one should not go as far as to say that the Marubo posit an ontological distinction between the “apparent” or the “visible” and a shamanic or hallucinatory “reality”, between the “literal” and the “metaphorical” or, as some would put it, between “nature” and “super-nature”. The semantic distinction that shamans pose in music is temporal rather than ontological, and ironically so, as *Voñchiñpa*, *Keninawa*'s *koka* (maternal uncle), used to say during *saiti* translation, with reference to the entities chanted: “it’s not a tree, it’s people! The *keñchiñtxo* healer-singer is mocking us!” Notwithstanding all the irony, these *-nawa* peoples are indeed trees, animals and other things in their original, onomastic constitution. The difference between the shamanic and the ordinary perception is a cognitive one: the shaman perceives inordinate realities insofar as he sings the mythical-musical origins of all reality. The reality the Marubo share is one; in song, it just gains time-depth⁹⁵.

More than presenting a differential lexicon, curing or mythical language is at another temporal level with respect to the linear narrative: the shaman-singer shapes words in the form of a synthetic, no less literal vocabulary expressed in sounds that we, for lack of a better definition, may call “musical form”. In *saiti* myth-chants, linearity is a function of circularity, we shall argue. There is no

⁹⁵ Cf. Gow n.d. for the distinction between the ordinary visible and the hallucinatory vision for the Piro, the same physical vs. metaphysical distinction that Viveiros de Castro 1996 expands to Amazonia at large, and that Townsley 1988 uses to explicate Yaminawa shamanism in Tylorean, primitivist fashion.

narrative progression where discrete reiterative units are not construed. There is no myth without music. Giving voice to the temporal regime of dual bodily and cosmic entities, transforming or repeating vocal phrases, *saiti* music sets the scene for the conceptualisations of self and other performed in death and life among the Marubo, conceptualisations that, as *nawa* and *yora*, *yochiñ* and *yové*, *chinañ* and *vaká*, are no more than a second-order representation of their musical discourse.

The shaman's curing and mythical voice is a product of cosmic commerce; and through synaesthetic associations, it makes body-specific perceptions commensurate with visual design and spiritual scents, with musical cells and verbal verses, following a rationale that is prior to metaphor and metonym, to analogical cognition and to metaphysical concepts. Besides, if the right- and left-hand *vaká* sides are conceptually symmetrical, this conceptual symmetry is just a projection of the temporal soul-speciation of the human *yora*-body into respective *yové*-spirit and *yochiñ*-double, two musically performed conceptualisations. Marubo myth-music is a multifaceted anthropo-cosmic discourse that socialises and is socialised throughout the whole community in *saiti* festival performances; any intelligible native conceptualisation is empty without them. Among the Marubo, social life is produced under a cosmic arrangement, a musical one; and human culture is performed through the modalities of a supra-personal, super-human nature, which order the two temporal vectors that order the mythical history of *yora*-anatomy, viz. *yové*-circularity and *yochiñ*-linearity.

I.12 more dualities

A few of the issues raised in the course of the preceding chapters will be summarised in conclusion to this first part, with particular attention to the dual conformation they take with respect to native myth-music, a matter that conditions our stance toward indigenous thought. We have sketched histories, ritual performances and linguistic categories to introduce the context of understanding, the epistemological context of the *saiti* myth-chants. This is not enough: the issues that this introductory exercise raises at the historical, ritual and linguistic levels entail dualities that are more than structures taken as ends in themselves, the metaphysical outline of a “savage” cognition. Although tautological at first sight, these dualities will be a means to assess the meaning of native conceptualisations in musical practice. They conform to a performative structure that at the end of the day assigns practical value to their own dual relation and distinguishes them from alien concepts. Rather than entailing a system of thought that oscillates between the universal and the particular, these dualities are here no more than a systematic heuristic device. They are an aid in our exegetical commentary on Marubo mythical-musical meaning, and do not imply a dualistic nature in indigenous culture as structuralism might lead one to think. The structure of Marubo thought is real in their music. It is there that the structural-dualistic hypothesis can be taken to its tangible consequences, on condition that it distances itself from universal cognitive models and gets closer to particular forms of being. This is the sole significance of “structure” in our study of indigenous ontology⁹⁶.

⁹⁶ In this connection, see Clastres 1989 [1974] for some structuralist steps from indigenous

Rather than to proclaim ambitious cognitive generalities, such as this or that particular or universal dualism, engaging thus in the eternal spatiotemporal dilemma of Aristotelian-Platonic dualities, and instead of emphasising conceptual-linguistic analogies between dualistic notions, the aim of this concluding chapter is to carry on a bit further the questioning of each native conceptualisation through contrast. Moreover, we intend to do this through an enquiry on notions related to indigenous time. Marubo conceptual categories are inscribed onto temporality, and contrasts among these conceptualisations and their translations into our words can only take into account their unique temporal tenure if one heeds their musical reality, especially the metaphysical reification that they call *saiti*.

This chapter is both a conclusion to the thesis' first part and a bridge toward its core. The preceding chapters were necessary layers to be peeled away toward our main interest. Our methods and interests are idiosyncratic: the ethnographic testimony that this thesis so far presented, that of *saiti* as an "indigenous artefact", may be of greater importance to the anthropologist to the extent that it renders clear the self-other divide, the foundation of the discipline, the projection that opposes the "exotic" against a familiar metaphysics. For us, however, *saiti* is interesting only insofar as it is music, and as there is a musical meaning in the indigenous context that informs such an exotic metaphysics — if such a thing exists at all without its performative character, its formal expression. Our methodological claim is that the sphere of native thought can only be genuinely claimed to be outside the orbit of Plato and Aristotle if it is characterised as

discourse toward its underlying ontology, recently invoked and revived in Stolze Lima 1999.

performance and expressed in its own form.

Dual forms are instrumental in the study of native thought, but the performative emphasis, once committed to the task of translating indigenous categories, becomes cogent precisely when a critique of previous structuralist studies of myth and music is in view. The structural-dualistic stance toward the myth-chants is legitimate to the sole extent that there is a significant contrast between repetition and succession in the musical-linguistic performance of the *saiti*, which the natives themselves posit at a different level from ordinary language. Our relevant given is the performative structures that natives perform in mythical-musical form, where they posit a distinction between the circular repetition of musical and poetical units, of phrases and cells, of strophes and rhymes on the one hand, and the linear succession of the mythical narrative on the other. For our critical purpose, native thought is not the bi-dimensional projection of a musical-mythical structure, a score frozen under a visual-biased metaphysical regard. The score, the text, the metaphysical formal idea (*eidos*) is in manifest conflict with *saiti*, with myth in the form of music, much as, as we saw in the last chapter, an immutable picture of the native body is in conflict with its soul structure. The performative meaning of the myth-chants is temporal; hence, it entails more than the a-temporal structuralist regard on native cognition is prepared to recognise. The mythical-musical, sonic-structural aspects of *saiti* are not circumstantial, secondary addenda to a visual-verbal thought. More than an emphasis on the temporal character of myth, we emphasise the musical performance of myth as an ontological comment on time, and this distances our stance from structuralism's remit.

The historical weight of Platonic-Aristotelian metaphysics, the obvious biases manifested in structuralism and elsewhere in anthropology — sempiternal-omnipresent ontology, visual-verbal epistemology — are something that could be summarised as the “western myth”; and perhaps any manifesto statement against ethnocentrism should assess it outright as such. Structuralism is itself a variation on an invariable underlying structure that is no cognitive universal, but nothing but a particular socio-historical construct. The mythical past of our discipline is Platonic truth as the immovable ideal form, and Aristotelian time as spatial movement, and this alone took away any spatiotemporal dimension from the notion of structure. With respect to the *saiti* myth-chants, this resulted in nothing but nihilistic nothingness: it reduced the objective immanence of those who hear, those who are heard, and that which is to be heard, to a structure whose exclusive visual-verbal rationale lies at the level of a transcendental subject, an agent who just does not exist for the native. Such structuralism develops into the clearest form of ethnocentrism inasmuch as it is itself identifiable as a deceptive reflection of the bi-dimensional, dichotomising metaphysical icon that mirrors images of the west throughout western history: the idea of the ideas. This is the a-temporal, a-spatial truth that structuralism claims to have found in the empirical reality of cerebral structures, where the transcendental subject becomes immanent to solipsistic objects. Human thought becomes imprisoned in unconscious “logical chains” and “mandatory paths”, regardless of space and time⁹⁷.

⁹⁷ Of course, nobody phrases this better than Lévi-Strauss himself:

“... la pensée, relativement affranchie des contraintes du milieu, paraît avoir le champ libre, elle reste néanmoins soumise à des lois propres. La récurrence des mêmes problèmes d’interprétation, posés par des sociétés fort éloignées dans le temps et dans

From Plato and Aristotle, this recurrent west-centred myth has set successive guidelines for a state-sponsored, dominant view of being and becoming, space and time, body and soul, sensation and reason, which just reinforced the “we” versus “them” partition that has eventually underlain anthropological studies in the last centuries. Most visibly, these fundamentals of western metaphysics are inflections of a purported Grecian “visuality”. The structural-linguistic overtones that anthropological studies superimposed on non-western mythologies were nothing but the regional, twentieth-century version of a long western history that has been told once and forever in the allegorical myths that equate truth to vision or visualisable things, such as those of the Line, the Sun, and the Cave. But this is not to say that mainstream history has not left room for subversive counter-versions of those myths⁹⁸.

The anti-metaphysical claim is no novelty in the west or in anthropology, and still it comes with a certain note of urgency in our thematic field: the western *eidos* should not blind us to the inherent musical character of *saiti* myth. The Marubo insist on positing a conflation of myth and music that is at odds with the verbal tone-deafness of any a-temporal, visual representation of both. On the contrary, the mythical-musical conflation of *saiti* brings forward for the Marubo the differential mark that distinguishes *yové vana* from *yorañ vana*, spiritual from ordinary language, myth-music from common word: in sum, it features the

l'espace, vient donc appuyer l'hypothèse que des cadres logiques astreignent le pouvoir créateur de l'esprit à des cheminements obligés.” (1988: 13-14)

⁹⁸ See the Republic of the west being sketched in Cornford 1990 [1941]. To contrast, see Heidegger 1987 [1959] for an instance of the anti-metaphysical stance in broad outline, or Heidegger 1992 [1982] for a study of the anti-metaphysical character of the metaphysical myth, as it lurks in the epilogue of the very Platonic Republic.

different semantic layers of vocal intonation. The Marubo differentiate between the respective audible dimensions of “music” and “speech”, and not between the visual *langue* and the aural *parole*, nor between structure and performance⁹⁹.

Here we must highlight the political import of these statements. The Marubo peoples have undergone and still face all sorts of threats against their chanted world. Nevertheless, they still intone their word against the proselytes of evangelic tunes, hymns that the missionaries translate into the most farcical “native” lyrics. The words of natives with foreign meanings have no native meaning if they are set to the music of foreigner, since that which means first is the sound. From both a foreign and a native perspective, the intoned character of the spiritual *yové vana* language that is performed in *saiti*-mythical music is a cultural reality that cannot be ignored in any conceptualisation of indigenous nature: its metaphysics is a musical *physis*. The contrast between the words and sounds of the *saiti* myth-chant, i.e. between its verbal meaning and its musical-poetical structure, assigns semantic content to the intoned form itself. Still, the *saiti* is a semantic synthesis between these two contrasted analytical levels: they correspond rather than differ, identify rather than separate. Myth-chants configure units instead of dichotomies, whereby the “word” and the “tone” are performed as one single symbol in the complementary context of the symbolic *saiti* ritual-festival. The *saiti* musical symbols do not designate a given reality: these myth-chants are the given reality

⁹⁹ Here one cannot but bear again in mind the *Mythologies* as a foil (Lévi-Strauss 1994 [1964] and 1981 [1971] especially). To contrast, Menezes Bastos sheds light on “the phono-auditory universe” of the Kamayurá of Southern Amazonia, whose “conception of the world would constitute a ‘world hearing’ rather than a ‘world view’” (1999b: 3). Any representation of worlds like this should take into consideration their “audible” aspect first.

itself, creating and transforming it¹⁰⁰.

The words and tones of all Marubo music, its phonemes and pitches refer to a common ritual context. Both cure and myth are epistemological forms of the same ontological content, as Marubo shamans often reassert. The choice of the *saiti*, the myth-chants and their ritual performance as the focal point of this thesis, as our “total social fact” is somehow arbitrary; for all musical performance, all shamanic sessions have a similar meaning, since mythical, curing, and all other chants are the territory of Marubo shamans par excellence. There is an obvious homology underlying either the invocation of external agency when the *keñchiñtxo*-healer sings against a diseased body, or the ex-centricity of the *yoya* chant-leader standing in opposition to the dancing circles, or the exogenous origins of the *-nawa* humanity emerging from earth out of animals, plants, and other things in the ontogenetic *saiti* myth-chants. In the quiet and dark longhouse periphery, in the noisy and busy festival patio centre, and in the original grounds of myth-music, in all such situations and there fundamentally, the shamanic song distinguishes *yové*-spirits, human *yora*-bodies, animal *yochiñ*-doubles as temporal affections.

Therefore one cannot subsume *yové*-spirits, *yochiñ*-doubles, and *yora*-bodies to distinctions between soul and body, or between immaterial intelligibility and carnal sensibility inasmuch as, as already suggested, one cannot distinguish them

¹⁰⁰ Here, siding with Overing 1990 and definitely diverting from Lévi-Strauss and the structuralist and “symbolist” anthropology associated to him, we understand “symbol” after the Hellenist Eudoro de Sousa:

“It is not easy to say whatever might be worth saying of the ‘symbolic’ — of that which, in accordance with its etyma *symballein* or *symballesthai*, means the ‘co-thrower’, ‘united in a single delivery’ — in simple and univocal terms, since these are the terms that designate ‘things’ and not ‘symbols’... ‘Things’ are dispersed fragments of diabolically destroyed ‘symbols’. It is best not to take ‘symbol’ for ‘sign-qua-thing-

on the grounds of face-value glosses such as “spirituality”, “animality” and “humanity”. The indigenous logic underlying those *yo*-prefixed conceptualisations is based on a dual temporal ontology. The *yora* self-body, as a living entity, is inextricably linked to several different kinds of other-becoming beings, the soul-like constitutive fragments of humanity. Among the other aforementioned instances, the multifaceted *vaká*, the longitudinal “hemispheric souls”, and the innermost core *chinañ nato*, the breathing-thinking “central soul” of *yora*-bodies, are alternatively *yochiñ*-beings or *yové*-becoming, the “animal-doubling” or “spiritual” entities that in turn configure a multitude of forms within and without human existence.

Our metaphysics could sketch countless possible parallels to the dualities that the native conceptualisation of humanity entails; but most of these would not work smoothly, due to the metaphysical limitations of our own language. One can say that contrasts between *yochiñ*-doubles and *yové*-spirits always yield up more meaning than the ones between *yové*- and *yochiñ*-like souls against *yora*-bodies, since the native physiology is already a soul-antinomy. Still that anatomic antinomy is based on eschatological oppositions that are equally problematic to us, to the extent that the *yové* and the *yochiñ* do not correspond to a human or “cultural” principle versus an animal or “natural” one. Further, inasmuch as these peoples do not oppose spiritual “form” to animal “content”, the *yové* and the *yochiñ* cannot be understood as congruent with respective “outer” and “inner” realms, be it measured from an anthropo- or ethno-centred perspective. Both the *yové*-spirits and the *yochiñ*-doubles are in a sense beyond the *yora*-body, and even

representative-of-something-else’...” (Sousa 1988: 59, my translation)

from a human-anatomic perspective, they play within diverse semantic and spatiotemporal domains depending upon ethic and aesthetic balance or imbalance: they are a future prospective or a past retrospective, a destiny or a memory. They are quintessentially human and, as such, they are perceived as different bodily states; but both the *yochiñ* and the *yové* are in constant semantic traffic along the cosmic ways of space and time. Their migrant and recurrent dwelling within the human realm brings about opposing *ethoi* and *aisthesis*, intelligible forms of life and sensual-perceptual experiences. They are diametric, paradigmatic parameters, irreducible to expedient explications: now and again, we have to deal with plurality and incomplete renderings. Nonetheless, regardless of the limitations of linguistic translatability, the more detailed and interconnected each conceptual description is, the clearer these native conceptualisations will be.

In this connection, one has to admit that “soul” is a rather imperfect gloss for any of those entities that are immanent to the *yora*-body but transcend its sensible human carnality both in time and in space. The semantic overlap among spirits and doubles, centres and hemispheres is such that comprehensive paraphrases for any of them are always in danger of misrepresenting the constituent entities of the human *yora*-body. In the realms of physiology and eschatology, these soul-entities are so diametrically apart from each other, and still so intertwined in their bodily nature, that the definition of *yora* itself as “body” becomes problematic. Human bodies can only be understood as a spatiotemporal arrangements; the *yora*-body is an axis of opposing potentialities, those of recurrence and transience. The Marubo body comprises central breath-thoughts, proximal hemispheres and distal destinies, and also reflective images and ejective

refuse. In other words, these *yora*-humans are the regular *nato* essence of their *chinañ* breath-thoughts, situated in the pit of the stomach; their left or right half-body as the transient conjunction of *vaká*-souls, two extra-corporeal potentials; and the bodily *yochiñrasiñ*, the also transient anatomic signs, the doubling reflections of eyes or shadows, visual images, excreta, discharged vestiges of human life. Meanwhile, in this human-*yora* context the *yové* is scents, songs, the designs and adornments that stand for the regular renovation of the body skin. But the *yové*-spirit is not sheer benevolence, inasmuch as that would entail an inherent “malignity” to all *yora*-corporeal life. Its cyclical character is paradigmatic of human life, but ultimately incompatible with the linear *yochiñ*-transformations of all living humans.

Here the obvious has to be emphasised above all: if the dualities here translated are not Platonic-Aristotelian, they shall not be Christian, in spite of all that evangelisation over the past forty or fifty years in Marubo land. *Yové* and *yochiñ*, spiritual recurrence and doubled transience, are not expressions of an antinomy between animate spirituality and carnal materiality. *Yora*-anatomy is not dissection, for natives corpses are not soulless flesh. In fact, as mentioned before, the Marubo used to eat the ground ashes of their dead kin in endo-cannibalistic rites, after burning their bodies with and within the whole longhouse, with the personal belongings of the deceased. If all potential *yochiñ*-habitats and signs of doubling evocation were destroyed, this is because the actual influence of dead bodies and their appendixes upon the living used to be even more conspicuous than it is now. A living body is susceptible to association with death even before it dies because it is the latent spatial expression of a cosmo-temporal

duality, where minimal and linear growth and decay stands against maximal and circular, renewable age¹⁰¹.

In view of the absence of precise glosses in our language for *yochiñ* and *yové*, *chinañ* and *vaká*, and the awkwardness of our categories in tentative translations, any distinct definition of these souls and cosmic entities will have to be sweeping statements like this: they are the spiritual-animal seeds of personal and historical *-nawa* identity embodied in *yora*-bodies. What may sound vague and abstract in this has a concrete, palpable sonic reality in fact. It would be otherwise erroneous to attribute to human souls and animal-spiritual entities a formless common, pervasive and unitary essence, an eternal and ideal form spread among humans, animals and spirits, as much as this threefold ontology — that of humanity, animality and spirituality — does not entail exclusive conceptual realms among the Marubo.

This corroborates with the fact that it would be likewise erroneous to attribute to the *yora*-body the character of a container emptied at death. If a living soul-bodily *yora*-essence does exist, it will have to be subjective, multiple, changing, more than an objective materiality but no less perceptible than intelligible. *Yora*-ness is more than human, and it is perforce performed along time. If humans are not spatial continents of eternal souls, the animal-doubling and spiritual inflections constitute for their part the distinguishable ontological spaces

¹⁰¹ This is stark contrast to the “conceptual”, Christian-Cartesian account of Yaminawa psychophysiology in Townsley 1988:

“Flesh is always a potential vehicle for spirit and spirit powers. Although thought to be inextricably intermingled in reality, they are clearly distinguished conceptually, as *yora* and *wëroyoshi*...one could say that all ritual action is aimed at regulating this highly ambiguous and problematic relation between spirit and flesh...” (1988: 122)

that *yora*-anatomy defines as different cosmic temporalities. The right-*mekirí*, the left-*mechmirí vaká*, and the central-*chinañ nato* occupy distinct spatiotemporal provinces, as the several other signs of visual reflection and waste ejection — the bodily *yochiñ* of shadows, pupils, excreta. The temporal dimension is the ontologically determinant diacritic among these entities of a partitioned body. Thus, when *yora*-beings chant the mythical-musical origins and destinies of their bodies, their life and death, they become beyond all these temporal signposts: they are both surpassable animal-transience and forthcoming spirit-recurrence. Soul-embodied human beings are both *yochiñ* and *yové*; they are “animal” and “spiritual” at different times and spaces, for this dichotomy operates through a spatiotemporal logic that, although alien to structuralist-static oppositions of mind vs. matter, culture vs. nature, is quite amenable to structural formalisation in music.

Beyond any opposition between substantive and adjective qualities, the pervasive similarities of human bodies and spiritual and animal souls are based on substantial attributes. From the fact that these peoples do not have carnal carcasses sustaining or sustained by ethereal souls, it follows that the spatiality of *yora*-bodies is a temporal status, a disposable or renewable, animal or spiritual one. Corporeal elements and bodily fittings are soul-substances that fit into the bodily space as alternative temporal values: either the *yochiñ* of faeces and urine, shadows and pupils, all under the guise of doubling animality; or the *yové*-like ornaments, the beads and scents that are the badges reproducing an equally animal spirituality in humans.

Furthermore, the *yora*-body sets the opposition between *yochiñ* preying-

doubles and *yové* bird-spirits on another, moral-laden level, with reference to ill or good health. If the ayahuasca vine-brew and the tobacco snuff-powder are beneficial to *yora*-humans at all, enhancing the right-*mekirí vaká*-soul of the body, this is because the tutelary entities of those shamanic substances, their “essence” or “core” *oni shañko* and *rome shañko*, are in reality medical agents that are expected to bridge the gap between humans and *yové*-spirits. Still both ayahuasca and tobacco, in addition to their psychotropic properties, are expectorant and emetic, diuretic and laxative: their effect is bodily, conspicuously so, purging humans from their *yochiñ*-animality. The sense of body-purification of these substances is the same as the meanings of spiritual guidance and skin-renewal that the heavenly *yové*-spirits assume as ushers and hosts of souls in human eschatology. In contrast, the animal, left-side soul *mechmirí vaká* is the visual evanescence of the body and, as such, it is its consumptive conservation. The visual-waste excrescences of bodies conserves the evanescent consumption that goes on throughout life on the margins of terrestrial paths and on the edge of the celestial limbo, hovering on the way of the dead souls that travel toward the *yové*-spiritual paradise of rejuvenation. Meanwhile, as we suggested above, even if the *yochiñ*-related animal is equated to moral trespass and bodily decay, these doubles of humans and those *yové*-spiritual guiders and recyclers are not translatable into an opposition of “good” against “bad” ideals. Both *yochiñ* and *yové* are ethical dispositions set against the shifting temporal conditions of all *yora*-bodies. Both are inner by-products of the human *yora*-body and its outer corporeal representation in *saiti* myth-chant; they either pursue or lag behind on the transitory and ever-recurrent paths of death and life.

Now we are in a position to qualify the previous statement that the spatial references of the cosmos, both worldly and otherworldly, are paths that crisscross a vast network of forests and waterways: these cosmic routes and space-limits of the native universe are informed with and conformed to the peoples and principles, essences and entities that go along with them. Marubo souls and bodies are the “mundanisation” of humanity, insofar as *yora*-humans are *yochiñ* double-becoming and become *yové* spiritual-renewal in soul-corporeal form, a movement that has to be mythically and musically represented in order to acquire cosmic-temporal value. Still in their visual representations, as in figurative drawings — another construct of contact — all human souls are portrayed as manikins; and while doubles are depicted as animal-monster degeneration, the *yochiñ* of the *yové* are body-perfection — that is, the “pictures” that natives draw of *yové*-spirits (a form of representation that they call *yochiñ*) are attractive *yora*-bodies. Both in their actuality of left and right *vaká*, and in their potentialities of *yochiñ* and *yové*, human souls are *yora*-bodily representations; in brief, both souls and bodies are also the humanisation of the world. Natives are *yora*-humans as a plurality of persons: souls within and without bodies, a profusion of animal-double and spiritual forms. The Marubo represent humans as concentric to the environment but ex-centric to humanity, as several soul-subjects, dually diametric and beyond the single objective body¹⁰².

¹⁰² See Montagner Melatti 1985 for Marubo pictures representing the souls and bodies, doubles and spirits that populate their cosmos. Then compare this, that which we would rather call “mundanisation of humanity” and “humanisation of the world”, with Townsley’s phrasing of what seems to be a similar reality among the Yaminawa. His jargon is quite telling of a “mind-centred”, rather solipsistic approach to it:

“...Yaminawa thought ...holds no concept of ‘mind’ as the unique locus of sensory or

Now if such soul-like subjects are corporeal objects, both human and inhuman, what is then the being of this humanity, archaeologically and teleologically? What are its beginnings and ends, its origin and destination? Even though the previous chapters already suggest that the origins and destinations of native humanity are *yové*-spiritual, while the arc of its life and death is *yochiñ*-double, it might be methodologically sounder to hypothesise first “when” the Marubo are; and these *-nawa* peoples generate their human personality, their *yora*-bodies within and with the sounds of their *saiti* myth-chants. The mythical-musical movement is the moment whence these peoples *weni*-emerge within and with their world: a human, for the Marubo, comes into being in chthonic emergence and celestial becoming.

The translation of this mythical consonance between personhood and cosmology without its musical conformation, that is, its transposition into visual projections onto texts and transcriptions is of necessity problematic. Still it is of fundamental importance to face and voice this problem, because its epistemological interface is beyond the disciplinary limits of anthropology: as outlined above, it concerns western ontology itself. It is therefore both appropriate and redundant to be generous with inverted commas, so to stress the simultaneous unsuitability and inevitability of words such as “body” and “soul” in the understanding of *yora*, *yochiñ*, *yové* and other indigenous creations and creative entities. Marubo anatomy is a temporal construct, for the bodily *yora* whole comprises associative and dissociative soul-parts, *yochiñ*-like and *yové*-like souls.

cognitive events; it ‘spiritualises’ many of the things we would classify as mental events and places them out in the world... it posits a world of not only material and mechanical properties but also of animate, conscious and perceptual ones...” (1988:

Further, the agencies of animal-doubling and spiritual entities account for both environmental and vital elements, for a cosmic and somatic temporality. The centre of breath and thought *chinañ nato* is the linear regularity of bodily vitality, and is no less an epitome of a wider biological equilibrium. The doubles of *vero*-eyes, *poi*-excrement, *isoñ*-urine, in animal and human guise, as doubling vision, image, shadows and excreta are more than the transitory linearity of bodily parts: they stand for the transience of life in the whole world. Human life is the mythical-musical present between a *yochiñ*-double linear-parabolic past and a *yové*-spiritual circular future. *Vaká* polar halves are the partitioned transience of *yové*-recursive renovation within *yora*-bodies, recovering spirituality as they face *yochiñ*-finiteness at each death and in disease. Rather than metaphysical projections, all entities and beings of the cosmos, i.e. the body and its doubles, bodily souls and spirits akin, are manifested and expressed in a native temporal structure, along human lives and in musical rites.

Be they either related to *yochiñ*-doubles spirits or to *yové*-spirits, all these human “souls” are true “bodies”. The anatomy of the *yora*-body — its thought-breath, its projection-reflection, its left and right halves, its ejected excreta — is expressed as a soul-structure. Still, the structure of these souls is hardly distinguishable within the body *per se*. Beyond the spatial oppositions that an animic-anatomy capturing the body-locations of the various souls provides, it is impossible to establish the conceptual difference between them in an a-temporal, somatic dimension. The right-side soul (*mekirí vaká*) and the seat of breathing-thoughts (*chinañ nato*) are both related to spirits; still the former acquires spiritual

specificity just when it traverses the ways and limits between the terrestrial and celestial realms at death, while the latter literally voices *yové*-ness in live music sessions. For their part, the *yochiñ*-doubles of humans do not exist in their usual visual guise but in a body-exterior form, as reflective flashes, fleeting shadows, or as faecal and urinal matter. The left- and right-*vaká* sides of bodies and all similar inner souls are nothing but tautological distinctions that the body itself brings into play, either before or after death or disease, but always as music, that is, as temporal affections.

Eschatology provides the key for all soul-distinctions, in that it defines the spatiotemporal destiny of all human souls. Both the *chinañ*-centre and the right-*mekirí* souls follow the same after-death fate, leaving the left-side *mechmirí vaká*, the *yochiñ* double-soul with the remains of corpses, faeces, urine, the segregated and illusory images, the living shadows and refractive pupils, all still lingering on earth, wandering around along the lost paths of past existence. Afterward, both of those *yové*-like souls face their *yochiñ*-double counterparts in monstrous-animal guises, as snakes, hairy monkeys, and other spectres on the fringes of the dangerous eschatological ways, the *vei vai* path of transformations. Both such spiritual souls associate with the celestial *yovevo* in temporal terms, but their association is but a post-mortem potential: they have no practical purpose for human beings in their living bodily reality, apart from being entities to become in music. On this earth, their temporality makes sense in a cosmological space that myth-music, shamanic seances, sorcery and healing open, coming to life in all the ritual situations in which natives face the potentials of eventual death and renewal. Liminal situations that succeed one another in one's life and at death, in a more or

less unpredictable way, are the temporal markers of a cosmic topology and a human anatomy; and shamans need to signal them, making real the mythical homology between a multi-layered cosmos and the anatomic souls of humans. They bind the universe in their musical travelling through the spiritual-celestial home of renewal (*shoko nai shavaya*) and the spirit-bird abode on forest canopy (*tama shavaya*), just below the sky and above our habitat (*mai shavaya*), the earth-dwelling that we share with the wandering, living and dying *yochiñ*-doubles.

Now if cosmic space and the entities that constitute it are geared to temporal transformations that humans live through life and death, the linear recurrence of these is condensed in mythical-musical time. Its structure is determinant of such recurrent, transformative becoming of human beings, but as performance only. In dealing with human origins, *saiti* myth-chants are a condensation of uncountable lives and deaths, a retrospect and a prospect. *Saiti* myth-chants reify and refine the duality between double *yochiñ* and spiritual *yové* in dual musical structures, whose body-performed character is at odds with the structuralist, deterministic dualism of savage minds. Here is encoded the latent assimilation and differentiation of the *yochiñ* and *yové* to and from the *mechmirí vaká* and other bodily doubles, the *chinañ nato* and the *mekirí vaká* souls — which are, respectively, the sinister ejective and imageable animal side, the thoughtful central breath and the dextrous, spiritual-side projection of humans. For the purposes of this thesis, qua visual-verbal representation, the musical illustration of this duality will be a single *saiti* myth, a chant named *Mokanawa Wenia* to follow in the next part. It is there that the Marubo “emerge” (*wenia*) as “bitter peoples” (*mokanawa*) in mythical-musical shape.

The two *yové*-becoming souls are associated with vital pulses, while *yochiñ* ones associate with mortal growth and decay. But in *yora*-bodies these are just latencies, possible anatomic projections. The cyclical character that *saiti* musical cells inter-encode is the enactment of such latencies, the reiteration of regenerative *yové*-circles in a succession of *yochiñ*-lines. This reiteration is the highest drive of the thinking-breathing singers. Their *chinañ*-breaths are the thoughts that sing, volitional and intellectually creative, but perceptible, accessible to the senses as well. Breathing-thoughts are the reiterative *yové*-regeneration that demands concurrent growth and decay: they are, of course, the soul that is closest to the body-song, the singing larynx, and are at the same time the most bodily central one, between the two hemispheric potentialities of the *vaká*-souls.

However, the *chinañ* is central not only in a bodily sense: these musical thoughts are the breath of living creatures, and still they are neither exclusive to humans nor to animals, belonging to both supernatural culture and divinised nature. The breath-soul is precisely in-between, the intercommunication channel between humanity and divinity. It intermediates between bodily potentials and actual bodies, between successive spiritual-reiteration and circular animal-linearity, between terrestrial humanity and celestial divinity. The *chinañ* is the shamanic soul par excellence, that is, an environmental gauge between cosmic layers.

During fieldwork, no Marubo could speak in ordinary language about any soul-like embodiment of manifested animality save the contradictory expressions of *yochiñ* double-predation and *yové* bird-spirituality. Being a middle-ground between those contradictions, the singing shamanic breath is accordingly

ambiguous. Although the mythical-musical intelligibility that the breath-thoughts of humans sing is no doubt “spiritual”, the *saiti* myth-chant presented below portrays tapirs’ and vipers’ *chinañ* as a substantial basis for human *wenia*-creation, as perceptual animal-substances “thrown on earth” (*oso atoñsho*), out of which the *mokanawa* “bitter-humans” emerge. Myth-music is the sole linguistic realm where an animal breath-thought figures as a literal object, and not as the supra-personal human subjectivity that the *chinañ* in general means. Still if in *Mokanawa Wenia*, the myth-chant of “wild-people” creation, some of the seeds that generate humanity are the animal *chinañ*, the breath-thoughts of tapirs and vipers — which are themselves *yochiñ*-laden animals of prey and predation —, when it refers to humans, the stress is on the location of these central thoughts. It is in *yora*-bodies that the essential *nato*, the “core” of *chinañ* is located, a thinking-breathing site that relates to the *yové*-world qua musical voice in living existence. Humanity is a condition in which the *yora*-body, the pit of the stomach more precisely, is the perceptible repository of these breaths, where the human *chinañ*-breath is made intelligible notably during shamanic sessions.

In original *saiti* times, however, regardless of the animal qualification of *chinañ*, earth (*mai*) is the real home of thought-breath animation. Exogenous earth is the true creative repository of the *chinañ*-souls that will give rise to those *moka*-bitter, *-nawa* peoples. Earth, as the generative womb, is external to humans, and therefore *chinañ* is an animal-divine endowment to humanity in the same sense as the singing voice is spiritual-divinity endowed to the shaman. These chthonic, animal-spiritual breath-thoughts bring *wenia*-emerging human beings to life, and earth is the primordial environment that endows these emerging *-nawa* humans,

future *yora*-bodies, with their primordial *chinañ*-vitality in the form of pulse, cyclical circularity, the recurrence of *yové*-spiritual soul-becoming out of the linear transience of *yochiñ*-animal soul-beings. Shamanic music alone manifests this vital-environmental relationship, viz. the circular linearity that correlates humans, animals, and spirits in mythical anthropogeny. There, the chanted animal-*chinañ* becomes spiritual in order to be humanised, creating the ancestral humanity in *moka*-bitter form throughout *nawa*-genesis. There, those same breathing-thoughts are described as “terrifying” (*ratea*) in the sense of unpredictable, uncontrollable in their original chthonic form. The animal breath-thoughts out of which the original peoples *weni*-emerge are scary because they engender ambivalent humans, *mokanawa* “bitter-strange” ones, for whom the original *chinañ* of predation-related animals are the uncertain linear movement toward the circularity of a breathing and thinking, spiritualised humanity. Breath-thoughts are engendered as they are estranged from earth in animal form and, from the same earth, engendered humans are thus estranged, *nawa*-exteriorised toward the acquisition of language and ornamentation, the *yové*-attributes with which they settle and roam through the world at last. The human destiny is *saiti* myth-music, the alchemy of animality and spirituality that the exegesis of its sounds and words shall spell out in the second part of this thesis.

It has already been hinted that, in many senses, the Marubo ex-centric identities are grounded on *nawa*-estrangement. Their mythical-musical language unfolds the several semantic layers of the fundamental *nawa*-conceptualisation that founds their socio-onomastic organisation. In history, likewise, their Indian taxonomy classifies them as *-nawa* peoples in their encounters with *nawa*-

foreigners like the *nawa*-White, the category that is at the maximal level in their current gradient of alterity. Westerners represent in the ethnographic present the foreign *nawa* prototype, the stranger who, in return, names these peoples under one single denomination, Marubo. Still, it must be stated now and again that such a *nawa*-gradient is prior and parallel to any historical construction of Marubo humanity or White foreignness, which amounts to saying that these peoples are already *-nawa* beings, i.e. reflexive other-persons, before becoming *yora* self-bodies. Then it could be equally valid to say that the native *nawa*-metaphysics precedes its “corporeal” reality, were it not for the fact that their *saiti* mythical-musical fictions, its metaphysical arena, are a sonic and choreographic praxis with a bodily-pragmatic existence. This limits the predictability of such form of temporal enactment, of such mythical matrix. Before myth-chants become historical facts, Marubo history is a mythical fiction that, from a temporal viewpoint, has little determinant, causal direction, has neither beginning nor ending, or is rather both: the circular cells repeat the reiterated intonations of the verbal verses in every single *saiti*, but in a variable way.

Along the same lines, it is impossible to posit a native dialectics of alterity and identity in a univocal and continuous chronology, in our temporal terms of successive diachrony against static synchrony: the dynamics of chronological contradiction is foundational in mythical origins. Further, the temporal-dialectical construction of *-nawa* peoples as *nawa*-strangers is a prerequisite to that of their *yora*-bodies as a composition of *yochiñ*- and *yové*-like souls: it is mythically and historically circular, as opposed to the linear constitution of the human body along the vicissitudes of life and death. Those who come first, the original *-nawa*, the

moka-bitter peoples of the *saiti* myth-chants, are already strangers from the start inasmuch as they are more than *yora*-humanity and still less than a spiritual super-humanity, being yet a supra-personal composite, a divinity-becoming animality. It is this original “strangeness” that always allows for identification with the “stranger”. As *Voñchiñpa*, a capital informant and companion told me in few words, both brotherly and fatherly: “you and I, we are all *nawa*”. The *nawa*-conceptualisation does not refer only to the generic, nameless *nawa*-foreign. The Marubo identify themselves with others in the same way as these *-nawa*-named peoples define themselves as *yora*-bodies and, as such, as potential *yové*-spirits and *yochiñ*-doubles; but prior to being *yora*-humans they are *-nawa*, i.e. those who, in their myth-chants, become their emerging selves out of the substances of those same projective soul-destinies. Thus, any representation of identity construction for Marubo-ness has to be synchronically constituted in a circular diachrony that subsumes linearity, whereby the other has an ontological priority over the self rather than a chronological precedence. Marubo *nawa*-otherness is *yora*-embodied into its selfhood: the other becomes consubstantial with the self in anatomic-animic structures that are inscribed in mythical and musical, spatiotemporal ones.

The Marubo create the time of their sprouting emergence, for the creation of these peoples is a musical performance, a mythical fiction rather than a historical fact. History is subsumed here under the regular, cyclical enactment of musical myths in *saiti* chants: myth-music holds now and again the course of the past and the future, for it works in and on time. The primeval community of human self-soul substances in common with animals and spirits, with other things past in the world, mingled on primordial earth, has the same musical meaning and expression

of a *yochiñ* and *yové* future potential within and beyond human life, in disease and death. The constitution of their personhood recurs ever and ever in the *saiti* myth-chant, choreographed as a circular line with an ex-centric centre, viz. the chanting chorus against the *yoya* song-leader. Marubo persons are exterior re-presentations of reiterative circles, musical cells repeated along a linear verbal discourse that is narrated in the chanted verses. In myth, in death and life, the *yora*-body is ontologically composed of conflicting progressive and regressive pulsations: Marubo music and Marubo bodies are projective and retrospective, perfect and putrid, vivid and dreary, circular and linear cycles acted out along *saiti* cells. Conversely, the historical construction of their society, the emergence of these *-nawa* peoples, is based on momentous decisions after a delicate balance between these two poles, following an archetypal logic conveyed in the musicality of myth, or in mytho-musicology, if you like. Marubo myth-chants narrate in mythical-musical time whatever might have or still may happen in their history: *saiti* is but a temporal junction of ever-latent potentialities.

An eloquent example of the mythical tenure of native historical vicissitudes, spoken in ordinary *yorañ vana* and translated by *Keninawa*, is in the voices of two of his *koka* maternal uncles, the former leaders of Vida Nova *João Pajé* and *Raimundo Dionisio*. The testimonies of the two old, not long-dead longhouse owners are in the same 1987 tape-recording mentioned in the historical chapter above; it voiced a collective message that was to be sent to the President of the Republic of Brazil, a formal complaint against a problematic situation that has changed very little since then. They narrate the unstable equilibrium of relations between natives and the national government, which was locally represented by

FUNAI officials. The Marubo names of *João Pajé* and *Raimundo Dionisio*, these two important political figures in their recent history are lost, as well as those of all their dead who, as mentioned in passing before, are referred to through the native euphemism *oiñmase*, “[those who] do not see any longer”. Since visual — and transient — images of death are related to the *yochiñ*-double, they would be lacking precisely the visible epitome of life-transience, *yochiñ*-ness! Indeed, if their names are heard no longer, their faces cannot be seen anymore: the dead *yochiñrasiñ*-doubles of their eyes are now gone forever, and their *yové*-souls have certainly reached the sky of spiritual-synaesthetic renewal, judging from their renowned shamanic capabilities. However, the latent possibilities shown within their aural addresses are still an actuality. Their names are not pronounceable because *-nawa* nomination is a prerogative of the living *yora*; still, glimpses of their history and stories of their personal lives can be grasped through the recorded voices of these two dead leaders.

These were rather informal discourses, but with deep emotional tones that teem with anger, with mythical truth. *Raimundão* gives an autobiographical account, with special concern to native contact with the national society and, in this connection, to the establishment of relations with the transnational evangelic mission that settled within their territory in the early 1950s. His account underscores the historical conjunctures that were present at that crucial moment: old longhouse owners dying, enmities disappearing, but *yové*-paradigms shattered too. The Marubo had to reinvent the *nawa*-other, the foreigner who enables them to become their *yora*-selves but at the same time brings the inevitable *yochiñ*-diseases along. The only choice for the Marubo at that time was toward the large

rivers, the riverine *nawa*-land itself: the decision at stake was just about who such *nawa* would be. Nevertheless, as the narrative throughout the recording shows, the beacon of headwater ravines still kept shining, repelling the attractions of the large *nawanamañ*, the “foreign place” par excellence, and obfuscating thus the *nawa*-magnet that, paradoxically, is also the teleological mythical destiny of a musical onto-archaeology, the other-home of the *-nawa* selves who emerge from earth. Against that necessary *nawa* “domestication” of life, *Raimundão* and *João Pajé* would at times threaten to gather up their relatives in a sort of terrestrial version of the celestial *shavaya* clearing of the spiritual-dead, returning to a “home of renovation” situated somewhere upriver, in the “streamlet headwaters, like our ancestors” (*na cabeceira dos igarapés, como os antigos*). Here history reproduces eschatology: the fate of natives oscillates between the two poles of *yové*-recurrence and *yochiñ*-transience, a pendulous movement that the *nawa*-estrangement of their form of life, i.e. their peculiar conflation of selfhood and otherness entails.

In short, if native history follows a mythical-musical matrix, this statement means to reinstate these peoples in their historical agency. The absolute contemporaneity of *saiti* festivals in the Upper Ituí, where the missionary bastion dates back to four or five decades ago, is not a relative survival. Myth-music is an assertion of agential authority, and the *saiti* is a symbol that constitutes it, rather than just standing for such authoritative identity. However, this shamanic form of power is not munitioned with depleted uranium, for it is not meant to defend native territorial property against invaders: it is neither objectively material nor subjectively individual. Such historical agency has nothing to do with the

“freewill” of some leaders or whoever. We stated before and shall again repeat that, strictly speaking, the *saiti* myth-chants are not “things” that pertain to so-and-so; they do not belong to anyone, not even to the shaman. It is an “other-word”, if we are to follow the logic thus far pursued. This is no analogical inference, no figurative statement. The spiritual-animal other is in all native hearts and minds, and this ill fits the Platonic-Aristotelian dichotomy of intellect and sentiment, for its epitome is literally situated onto one and the same bodily and conceptual locus: the stomachic *nato* core of the *chinañ* thought-breaths. Divine animality in humans is diaphragmatic reasoning, breathed thoughts combined in the state of synaesthesia that the shamanic singing triggers. The *yové*-spirit and the *yochiñ*-double cannot be regarded as separate entities from the *saiti*-singing *yora*-body because both are conflated in the shaman’s breath-thoughts, from which his bird-endowed, predation-sublimating voice sings.

This is in line with that peculiar dialogical-dialectical character of the *saiti* singing voice. *Saiti* myth-chants are dialogues that relate the festival performers in a musical dialectics that is as extra-corporeal as it is internal to the *yora*-body. That is, while Marubo music is dialogical qua performative responsory, i.e. at the formal-choreographic level of the performance, the song-leaders and the repeating choruses singing in response allow for no individual expression, but for the dialogue of their souls instead. Shamanic music is *yové vana*, a spiritual language intoned through the *kene moñti* throat, an endowment of the spirit-bird to the initiated singer, a voice that maintains a metaphysical independence from the body while physically constituting it: if the ontological source of shamanic singing is spiritual, its actuality is *yora*-bodily. The musical reality of such native intonations

is the contradictory compromise of a super-human expression of all-too-human bodies, of a supra-personal agency that singing persons actualise. In other words, the spiritual-intoned word of the *yové*-world makes the personalities of singers silent; but their human *yora*-corporeality is made of the animal soul-stuff that makes that same spiritual world real. The *saiti* musical dialogue expresses a dialectical opposition between these *-nawa* peoples' souls and their potentialities, within and from their *yora*-bodies. The souls of their bodies live and die in a structural dialectics of circles and lines that is neither Manichean nor mutually exclusive, which takes place in time rather than in space, when shamans translate it into music as mythical, curing, or other song, in the course of liminal ritual, in-between and along human life and death. The *yové*-voice sings divinised humanity through the bird-song that heals, and this spiritual music belongs to a post-mortem human destiny that itself constitutes the bodies of these humans, for the living *yora*-body is a thoughtful-breathing maze of animal-souls, a spirit-becoming animality.

Thus, while a superficial regard on the myth-chant of *Mokanawa Wenia* will read how it narrates humans originating from animal *chinañ* breath-thoughts or related vegetable substances, and acquiring ornamental-linguistic *yové*-attributes, its verbal translation will lose much meaning if these chanted words are taken at face-value. To take these mythical-musical words as literal statements without the formal context that informs them would be just as wide of the mark as to see them as structural-semiotic metaphors. The breathing-thinking movement from animal and vegetable substance toward linguistic-ornamentation unfolds the history of *-nawa* humanity and personal *yora*-stories too, from mythical origins to

eschatological destinations. It is a temporal movement; therefore, the historical fact and mythical fiction that human-selves and animals, plants and other things are *-nawa* namesakes is to be understood from a musical perspective, that is, from the very temporality of the reiterative succession of *saiti* cells and verses. In other words, all *saiti*-translation has to be layered by the temporal movement of concealment of human *yochiñ*-ness and disclosure of *yové* mythical-musicality. The main referents of native eschatology and physiology are also those of the history of native society. The meaning and value of these referents, viz. *nawa* and *yora*, *yové* and *yochiñ*, *vaká* and *chinañ*, as well as of other native conceptualisations and dialectical dualities, is to be analysed through the dual counterpoint that the voices singing *saiti* instate, which is none other than the bodily polyphony among souls and spirits and doubles along time. As already suggested, the Marubo ontological synthesis is song; in sound, divine humanity and human animality are confounded.

In short, *saiti* chants do more than narrate the origins and destinies of the human *nawa*-sections or “races”, to follow a native gloss or, to put it in brief, the mythical movement of humanity: their subject-matter, objectified in musical time, is the soul-composition and dissolution of human bodies. *Saiti* myth-music is about life and death, and death is separation, the dismemberment of an animated corporeality into a cosmic one: the destitution of human life constitutes corporeal animation in the form of *yochiñ* and *yové* manikins, the actual and equivocal fate of *yora*-humans. The Marubo say that, when they die, the mortal latency of spirituality and animality in their bodies is actualised on the dangerous *vei vai* path, where the animal *yochiñ*-doubles bar the way of the spirit-becoming, *yové*-

related souls. That the double previous-human soul hinders the *yové*-yearning side of the dead body means that the animal, predatory-terrestrial state is in conflict with celestial soul-becoming: earth (*mai*) and sky (*nai*) do not wish to separate in mortal ways. It takes death to disrupt the bodily equilibrium that sustains the Marubo cosmos; but death is also the temporal realisation of such a cosmology, a reality that is available to the living in the form of myth-music. Such “articles of faith”, “beliefs” or “truth propositions” are no less than mythical-musical performance.

Death is both separation and reunion: at the end of the transformative eschatology of the *vei vai*, the souls of each *-nawa* section follow their own ethnonymic-exclusive path to the home of their deceased kin. The *yora*-body dissolves at death, as left and right human souls follow distinct destinies, putrid or perfect fates; and this is simultaneous to the dissolution of the convivial social equilibrium among *-nawa* sections in their post-mortem actuality. The undeveloped putrefaction and perfection of living bodies unfurl at death together with the underlying foreignness of these *-nawa* peoples: *yochiñ* and *yové* are the temporal opposites of the eschatological route that starts with sectional *nawa*-ness and forks into a multiple *nawa*-crossroads at its end. Once the lateral anatomic distinction between right and left *vaká*-souls decomposes the *yora*-body, the *-nawa* sections that once composed the Marubo peoples disperse too. The ever-renewing sociality of the *yové*-spirits relies on kin sameness, which erases all *yochiñ* doubling-difference: only the human souls that endured the moral tests that the *yochiñ* impose on their way to *yové*-transmutation will find their own consanguineous-specific *nawa*-way. Because the ontology that holds human bodies

together and relates them to the world is the same arrangement that founds worldly society, the *nawa*-matrilineal sections cease to make sense when *yora*-humanity is transposed to another ontological dimension, that of celestial *yové*-divinity beyond terrestrial *yochiñ*-animality.

In effect, all traces of foreignness vanish from convivial life inasmuch as the *-nawa* sections are meant to live in total segregation after death. This explains why such an eschatological *nawa*-destiny includes the missionaries, who are said to play bandstand music on their way to meet their own kin in paradise! The Marubo tolerate co-residence with evangelic proselytes thanks to their own ecumenical eschatology. Christianity receives here an unexpected exegesis, as *Keniñnawa* recalls: *nawa*-conviviality against *yochiñ*-predation on earth, with a *yové*-ethics in the sky was the shamanic response that the deceased *João Pajé* used to give to missionary exhortations toward their one and only path, their truth and their life. The Marubo ways, bodily souls and deaths are multiple, as *João Pajé* told his consanguines, persuading them to remain in his longhouse even after his demise: the proximity of the evangelicals could not possibly threaten the reunion of their own *nawa*-kin in the afterlife.

Thus, it is through the refractive echoes of physiology and eschatology that the native notions of being and becoming will be perceptible and intelligible as myth-music, that that which configures a temporal ontology is to be made commensurate with their mythical-musical practices. This conclusion is significant as regards our research methods, since the purpose of this first part of the thesis is to propose a relationship between a tautological worldview and a sonorous tautology: the *saiti* chanted myths. These two levels are limited to a native

repertoire of conceptualisations presented above, and to another of sounds and vocal formulae to be presented next, in one single *saiti* instance. Both axiomatic accounts are limited in scope in order to allow for a concise exegesis: these two parallel descriptions go hand in hand while we bear in mind the overall aim of finding conceptual sense within the native sonic-formulaic vocalisations, in particular in the myth-chants that we call music and they call *saiti*. We argue that these myth-chants account for a unity of their sensible and intellectual world, providing a means of epistemological access to the native ontology: the ontological ground of the physiological and eschatological notions of these peoples will make coherent sense and be sensibly perceived in *saiti* performance. If natives conceptualise those theoretical notions in such terms as *nawa* and *yora*, *yové* and *yochiñ*, *chinañ* and *vaká*, these are to be unified within a shamanic-performative perspective. Any conceptual-analytical division of the *saiti* synthesis makes no sense unless regarded on a temporal scale, either through its mythical-musical performance or along human life and death, along which such performances are carried out and whereby the animic-anatomic partition of humans is projected onto the whole living cosmos. In the *saiti* myth-chants, one hears the vitality of native bodies and their environmental projections.

Through our limited focus, we have seen that the decomposition of the unitary *yora*-body is equivalent to the transformation of its multiple souls into animals, doubles, and spirits that undertake celestial journeys, disperse in the forest or haunt old abandoned dwellings. Meanwhile, the same *yochiñ* and *yové* reassemble, either as animal-diseases and doubles or as bird-spirits and other healing-helpers. The temporality of that wider cosmic cycle is the musical time of

which *sai iki*, the ritualisation of the *saiti* myth-chants, is the enactment; it is the form to which the narrative of the chanted myths of *wenia*-creation conforms, to which the performance of chthonic origins and original fates, of sound-transformative substances and forms corresponds. *Saiti* music translates the cosmic temporality of the post-mortem projections of humanity into the myths of human origins, expressing mythical time through musical word-intonations. The *yoya*, the shamanic chant-leader, sings cell after cell, verse after verse, repeating in rhythmic and melodic phrasal patterns the verbal lines that elders and youngsters, women and men walking in circles replicate at intervals. Speaking in terms of sounds, musicalised speech is successive reiteration, both as an unfolded narrative and as a repeated rhythm and melody. We shall have a closer look at these structures in the second part of this thesis: the verbal verses and lines of the *saiti* chant configure a maximal mythical cycle that sounds as transformative musical circles, rhythmic-melodic phrases encapsulated in a minimal cell, whose notation, simple and yet complex, is an ethnographic stenography.

Soon we shall stop short of considerations on *saiti* choreography; we are content to note that the circular succession of musical cells in alternate responsorial reiteration is commensurate with the movement of responding singers who walk in circles while repeating the successive verbal verses of the ex-centric chant-leader. To translate the choreography of the double- or triple-lined circles as “dance” is the usual native approximation; but *Voñchiñpa*, without a need for self-justification, used to refer to the movement as “travelling”. “Travelling” is the way his idiosyncratic gloss goes... travelling to nowhere and to everywhere. From the visual, partial, and foreign perspective that is available to us, those movements

suggest neither dance nor journey: they just walk in concentric circles! Still the circular segmentation of pairs or triads of singing dancers, walking hand in hand, one behind the next, substantiate instead the statement that *saiti* mythical-musical time is neither continuous nor univocal: its choreographic circles are homologous to the segmented circularity of the intonations of the *yoya* chant-leader and the reiterative chorus, to the repeated cells and verses, phrases and lines. One has to listen to the *saiti* myth-chant with closed eyes and unfettered soul-body to understand *Voñchiñpa*'s metaphor: his mythical "travelling" is based on a homology between musical time and spatial movement in his universe.

The immediate verbal-metaphorical sense for such musical "travelling" can be otherwise found in the identification between *saiti* performers and the mythical characters of some *saiti* chants, like the "Old Blue Bird Woman" *Shane Memi Yoñsha*, the "Wandering Women" *Pero Nanañ Shavovo* or still, of course, the very "Emerging Bitter-Peoples" who feature below in *Mokanawa Wenia*. There, the journeys of myth acquire historical contours, as we are told that the emergent *moka* peoples move their settlements along the banks of large rivers (*noa mai*) and to and from the forest mounds (*mai mato*): we saw how such reiterative mythical movements materialise throughout the history of the Marubo.

However, the *saiti* of *Vei Vai Yoya* might suggest an even closer, formal approximation between music and movement, "journeying" and "dancing". Here the myth-chant enacts the very musical-choreographic temporal path where the eschatological travellers move: by singing it, humans not only describe, but most of all perform the dangerous travels and entities of the *vei vai* way, a common space to both cosmic entity and human soul. The human anatomies that collapse at

death face the dangers of transformation on their way to the spiritual sky. Meanwhile, living *yora*-bodies have fewer difficulties to follow the *vei vai* route in festival performance, since they have proper guides on this earth: the *yoya* chant-leader and the *Yoya saiti* itself. The *saiti*-lead of *Vei Vai Yoya* is circular, or at best spiralling: this myth-chant presents a specific musical-choreographic representation of the ritual symbols of the after-death, of the *yové*-spirits and the *yochiñ*-doubles, of the travelling souls on their way through these dangerous transformations. This mythical-musical choreography is exceptional, for the chant-leader does not lead a responsory between ex-centric centre and moving circle as usual, leading instead a chanting queue meandering through the longhouse patio. In fact, the myth-chant itself is exceptional: in a fieldwork performance *Cheroñpapa*, the *yoya*-singer, instead of leading the alternate response of the chorus, punctuated the continuous equal *saiti* cells of the *vei vai* with a likewise unusual cell-concluding long note. The *Vei Vai Yoya* we performed in a festival in *Tekañpapa*'s longhouse was a sort of hybrid between myth-music and eschatology: *Cheroñpapa* intoned the *saiti* cells at the top his voice with a row of singers in Indian file, one holding the other with hands on the shoulders and facing each others' back, all singing in one with the *yoya*-leader. Our spiralling way and chant enacted the *vei vai* path, with all the dangerous meanders of this all-inclusive eschatological limbo.

Without much further elaboration, we shall turn at last to the myth-chant language or, rather, to the way in which this language is intoned in one such *saiti*, *Mokanawa Wenia*. By now, we expect it to be clear to the reader that these peoples intone their speeches in more significant ways than those of their everyday

conversations. Their aural universe, their sonic ontology is *chinañ vana, yové vana* — breathing-thoughtful, spiritual language —, far larger than that which constitutes and is comprised in their *yorañ* “word of the body”.

II. A Brief Exegesis

II.13 singers and listeners

The *saiti* of *Mokanawa Wenia* — literally, “the emergence of the wild-bitter peoples” — was performed by *Ivañpa* (Vicente) without the proper festival context, but still with the acknowledged purpose of recording it. We were sitting in a *tapo*-hut near the *shovo*-longhouse of *Txomañpa*, in the Upper Ituí community of Vida Nova, in a warm afternoon of April 1998.

After hearing, in the course of many festivals, many other *saiti* such as this one, it would become clear for an outside observer — even for a participant one, like a dancer or a singer — that, at the level of verbal and musical form and content, myth-chants do not vary widely according to context. The most striking difference between the “ritual” and the “non-ritual” performative situations is the repeating chorus-circle choreography responding in the patio centre to each musical cell / verbal verse that the *yoya* chant-leader intones in its periphery. It is the musical-choreographic form, the responsory between dancing circles and leading singer that constitutes the circumstance of their festival rendition — something that was topologically reproduced between the peripheral *tapo*-hut where we recorded *Mokanawa Wenia* and the central *shovo*-longhouse where everyday life went on in that afternoon.

Ivañpa, the singer in our recording, is unanimously reputed as one of the most knowledgeable *yoya* chant-leaders among the living Marubo. *Ivañpa* is fastidious: he is heard correcting others, the younger people, on the way they speak *yorañ vana*, their current language. *Ivañpa* is a shrewd joker, a both friendly and sarcastic middle-aged man who lives in the Maronal community in the Upper Curuçá River. His linguistic or dialectal diacritics are paradigmatic of the native language, the purported lingua franca whose origins are assigned to an ethnonymic paradigm, the aforementioned *Chaiñnawa*, spirit-laden “Birds”. The Upper Ituí Marubo say this and many other things about *Ivañpa*; to me, his curing capabilities and other shamanic capacities are just vivid aural impressions of more than three years ago, gathered in those warm afternoons in Vida Nova. His voice can still be heard on the tapes recorded on the occasion, laughing at the absurdity, the incommensurability between the myth-chants he sang and the Christian Word, between the Marubo worldview and the evangelical idiom: after one of his *saiti* recordings he suddenly shouts, “God be Praised!”¹⁰³

These recordings were made there where *Ivañpa* has some close kin, in *Txomañpa*’s longhouse and in Vida Nova at large, where the shamanic capabilities of Upper Curuçá elders are always respected and almost feared. I had the privilege of having the help of one of these close relatives of *Ivañpa*’s in the exegesis of *Mokanawa Wenia*, a matrilineal nephew who was just a little younger than himself: *Txomañpa*’s stepson *Voñchiñpa*, who in turn was also *Keniñnawa*’s

¹⁰³ *Graças a Deus* is a usual Brazilian expression, and one that evangelicals use often, although it tends to translate little religious circumspection in the regional Portuguese. I suspect *Ivañpa* was also making fun of me, as when during the same recordings he says, laughing: *nawa...* all sounds as if he meant: “how can this foreigner or those evangelicals ever expect to understand this?”

matrilineal uncle. The latter two served as chief *saiti* translators throughout the whole of my fieldwork; this thesis is as indebted to them as it is to the actual *saiti* performers who lent their voices to the tape-recorder.

These two men have been generous hosts to this anthropologist as well, to the extent that their kin would identify them as a respective “father” and “brother” to me. Still, the true consanguineous relations that *Voñchiñpa* and *Keniñnawa* entertained, both between each other and with *Ivañpa*, were at least as significant for this thesis as the kind of rapport we had in the field. Relations of apprenticeship and solidarity between *saiti* translators and performers have been strategic for our exegesis: the matrilineal uncle (*koka*) is highly value-laden, both in societal and mythical-musical terms. The importance of this kin category among the Marubo cannot be too emphasised: from him, one expects utter respect and simultaneous intimacy, material reciprocity and reliability. The maternal uncle is said to have been a preferential “godfather” or “assistant” in old puberty rites, and this has resonance in the sexual-initiatory and educational role performed by this kin category among other Pano-speaking peoples, such as the Matis. After all, in accordance with the Marubo-Kariera kinship reasoning, the maternal uncle belongs to the same *-nawa* matrilineal section that alternates at each generation with that of the nephew or niece — and some Pano societies, such as the Kachinawa, go as far as to conjoin pairs of alternated sections into moieties. In fact, the Marubo *kokavo* (plural) are preferential fathers-in-law and co-residents at once, since there is a slight tendency toward uxorilocality among these peoples; and at the same time, the matrilineal uncle is a potential affine in sexual initiation. Even though native initiatory rites have fallen into disuse, a pubescent girl will tend to have her first

sexual intercourse with either her sister's husband or her *koka*, both of whom are potential spouses as well. The *koka* relationship carries an avuncular-conjugal or initiatory meaning, and thus it has the same ambivalent kinship status that other Panoans corroborate, something in between consanguinity and affinity¹⁰⁴.

The *koka*-ship that connected in a cascade of hierarchical kin relations *Ivañpa*, the performer, and *Voñchiñpa* and *Keniñnawa*, the main informants, was appropriate to the sort of mythical-musical knowledge that was to be transmitted in recording, transcription and translation. If the *saiti* myth-lexicon is semantically ambiguous, its musical structure is segmented in alternating phrase-sections conjoined into cells, just in the same fashion as the matrilineal kinship sections to which these peoples belong. *Voñchiñpa* translated the *saiti* of *Mokanawa Wenia* in the same place as his uncle *Ivañpa* had recorded it, and was seconded later by his nephew *Keniñnawa*. It was a lengthy process, which shall be abridged here. In this thesis, we shall withhold the translation in its entirety and concentrate on the most invariant structural aspects of the rendition: the musical-cellular unit of this myth-chant, whose transcription provides its distinctive stamp, and the recurrent verbal lines and formulae that typify the translation of its narrative.

Ivañpa has a peculiar life story. *Keniñnawa* told it to me in a somewhat secret situation, during a fishing trip down the river, where no one could hear us. He did not ask for secrecy, though: it became clear that his tone was more a manifestation of the delicate character of the historical issues involved in the story

¹⁰⁴ Cf. Erikson, according to which a similar rapport is found with reference to the Matis *kuku*, a "true pivot of alliance and continuity" (1996: 145); and see Kensinger 1995, McCallum 1989 and Lagrou 1998 for a similar category in Kachinawa social organisation. Through Viveiros de Castro 1993, we can situate the *koka* avuncular ambiguity as a minor

of this man than a useless attempt to overcome the generalised gossip that is so usual in fieldwork, there and elsewhere.

Ivañpa was involved in a violent episode in the Curuçá area several years ago. “Because of women”, as the Marubo always explain violence, *Ivañpa* and another companion burnt the White poison — that of jaguar poachers, literal *nawañ moka* — in their native village. This episode fits into the classical situation of revenge for betrayal, adultery, envy, jealousy, the territory of *moka* affections. *Ivañpa* and his aggrieved and aggressive accomplice then left the land for several years. He enlisted as a soldier in the Brazilian frontier town of Tabatinga, in the Upper Amazon, not to be seen in Marubo villages for a long time thereafter; whereas his friend is now someone I met briefly in Cruzeiro do Sul, living in exile and with nostalgia for his homeland. Out of respect for his piteous condition, his name is omitted here.

Ivañpa fulfilled an opposite fate to that of his companion: he ended up returning to his kin, back from the neo-national towns on large rivers (*noa*) to his native villages on forest hillocks (*mato*), where now he lives and is vocal about his wisdom and happiness. Ironically enough, *Ivañpa* was to fetch back home his matrilineal nephew *Fernando Dionisio*, the same *Voñchiñpa* who translated *Mokanawa Wenia*, when the latter followed the footsteps of the former, leaving his relatives in his youth to join the Brazilian army in Tabatinga. Still not incidentally, *Keniñnawa* experienced a similar situation with another *koka* of his, his matrilineal uncle *Pekoñpapa*, who eventually brought him back from a temporary exile among

diversional generality in Amazonian-Dravidian kinship systems.

neo-nationals under the pretext of needing his help for lumber-logging in their native territory. Indeed, the *koka* relationship is often acted out through cooperation in labour, with ascendancy of uncle over nephew. As throughout Marubo history, here foreign elements conform to an inner pattern: outer political-economic relations constitute such a pattern just inasmuch as kin ties re-signify them in the formation of labour groups. Hence, this local variation of *aviamento*, the regional debt-peonage system, is more significant for the Marubo than its more general Amazonian context.

One typical case of the establishment of such a local variation on a kinship-relational theme features *Voñchiñpa* himself. Not only had he been a debt peonage *patrão*, a Marubo “boss”, but he was as well someone whose family had been enthusiastically engaged in logging, which implicated the same sort of kin cooperation found in other communal enterprises among natives. He and his family, his matrilineal kin, built together a longhouse further downstream from the other Upper Ituí settlements, and there they felled the logs that *Voñchiñpa* himself would commercialise with White traders. Still this has not been an isolated case: up until the recent governmental prohibition of timber trade in the native territory, most longhouse owners had *colocações* (“lumbering sites”) further down the river. These sites were occupied for logging during the dry season, when the dispersion of villages into small nuclear families camping away from the longhouse communities in the upper course of the river happens to be the tradition — in May-September typically, when more abundant chelonians, chelonian eggs, wild fruits and above all game are found in the less populated areas downriver. On a yearly basis, native society reproduces its own historical cycles of settlement dispersion.

Indeed, the historical pattern of longhouse migration outlined in the previous part of the thesis seems to follow from these seasonal displacements, through which new frontiers of settlements are established, as the recent move of longhouses from streamlet headwaters to the main course of the Ituí and Curuçá Rivers illustrates. The establishment of hunting sites is the first step toward the clearing of gardens, which in turn precedes the building of more permanent settlements. The ordinary and extraordinary designation of dwelling — *shavaya*, both in common language and myth-chant —, manifests the original semantic equivalence between clearing the forest and inhabiting the forest clearance, as the *saiti* of *Mokanawa Wenia* will render clearer below. Even though the present historical moment of the Marubo favours more well-settled settlements revolving around the local outposts of the non-indigenous, *nawa* world — missions, governmental posts, community radios and schools —, past lumbering sites are still frequented in hunting expeditions throughout the year. We repeat: innovative activities, once inserted in an exclusive native context, operate by means of inclusion in a conservative native logic.

The pervasiveness of the same temporal logic in native memories is illustrated in the life trajectory of *Ivañpa*. Having been once an Indian criminal and then a White soldier, he has borne through life the *nawa*-seal of *moka*-ness, that is, of virulence. At the same time, *Ivañpa* has performed that same longhouse cycle between headwaters and mainstreams, in the lesser period of a lifespan but on a wider geographic scale, from native to western land and back again. *Ivañpa*'s self-confident wit and cheerfulness does not contradict his peripatetic past: on the contrary, his story is one of dangerous "other-empowerment". He did in one life

what the Marubo take alternate generations to do, in progressive contact with the foreign realm. Today *Ivañpa*, once a *nawa*-foreigner, a *moka*-bitter person, is a most original Marubo: not only is he much respected among his kin, but he is also one of the few who has free transit between the two rivers where the native settlements are concentrated to this day, the Curuçá and Ituí. Behind his prestige as a *yoya* chant-leader, which crosses these settlement borders and, in doing so, overcomes the historical forces that separate the native communities across the watershed, there lies his *moka*-bitter, *nawa*-foreign past standing above the political opposition between the Upper Curuçá and the Upper Ituí. The Marubo communities in the two rivers are nothing but a spatial projection of the alternate diachrony that natives perform in history and myth, in kinship and music. The Marubo territory charts native history in the spatial key of a synchronic-geographic, socio-political antinomy; and at times, one's life story encompasses both history and territory, as in the case of *Ivañpa*. The Curuçá and the Ituí are opposed in the same way as dispersal is to concentration, as rarefied authority is to concentrated leadership, as riverbank (Vida Nova, Alegria, Liberdade, etc.) is opposed to headwater (Maronal). *Ivañpa* is above all those distinctions, for he has himself represented them along time.

Ivañpa is beyond everything because he had it all. *Voñchiñpa*'s household and his close relatives therein are not that which makes him exceptional: many Marubo have kin connections across the rivers. However, among all natives, *Ivañpa* is one of the few who can actualise these connections over such a distance, opening up an access from the Curuçá to the Upper Ituí. If this has not always been so, the contradictions of his tragic past are to be regarded as explanatory. *Ivañpa*'s

political range is now wider inasmuch as he was once a psychopath: years ago, he is reported in a psychotic mood, wandering without his clothes, his glans exposed — supreme shamelessness, sheer madness — while he intoxicated his Indian relatives and neighbours with the venomous exhalations of the *nawa* jaguar-poison that he and his accomplice had stolen from a White skin-poacher. “It was sad”, says *Keniñnawa*.

The measure of *Ivañpa*’s reputation is the fact that the three *saiti* he recorded — of which *Mokanawa Wenia* alone is brought into a closer focus here — were even disputed by informants. *Keniñnawa*, for example, was rather disappointed when he knew that *Voñchiñpa* and I had been working on those myth-chants during his absence, and became very keen on getting hold of the transcriptions. Knowledge is power... the Marubo requested *Ivañpa*’s tapes to be played back whenever a new visitor appeared in *Pekoñpapa*’s longhouse, my main dwelling site in the field, and that included both persons who lived from just a two-minute walk away and those who came from a considerable distance. The most assiduous of these curious visitors was without a doubt *Raoñewa*, that most loveable lady of a dignified ancestry that, significantly, included *mokanawa*, “wild and bitter” people generations ago. As mentioned elsewhere, this is something she would tell me but once and in whispering tones, making strong faces. Here again, this was no secret; but were there more people around us, she would never have mentioned it. In fact, few people would talk about the matter; but when they did, her good reputation was in dispute, which is telling of her progenitors’ story.

Raoñewa was remarkably dignified, notwithstanding the egalitarian standards of the Marubo. When her father and her whole family were killed ages

ago, *Raoñewa* became a *nawa*-other par excellence, the exogenous outsider who constitutes the indigenous societal inside and innermost self. As a typical *nawa*, *Raoñewa* is prototypically strong. In the absence of her deceased husband, and during the escapades of her son *Mapi* to the town of Cruzeiro do Sul, she used to fell trees and sow and harvest her own gardens. Tired and “starving for game meat”, she went to Cruzeiro do Sul once, always on her own — and with no more knowledge of Portuguese than a few words — and grabbed her son back from his wage-labour job. *Raoñewa* was somehow a gender-counterpart figure in relation to *Ivañpa*: she would cross the Ituí-Curuçá watershed with equal ease, although recent marital skirmishes between her daughter’s daughter and her in-laws from the other river would raise once again a barrier. She was strong, sparing no efforts to dissolve her granddaughter’s virilocal marriage and bring her back, while at the same time she had the reputation of a knowledgeable woman: her wisdom as an herbalist has always been well known, and her interest for other shamanic, mythical-musical knowledge was not fortuitous¹⁰⁵.

Either regardless of or precisely due to her origins, *Raoñewa* was known for her strong volition and independence. She was not an isolated case, inasmuch as

¹⁰⁵ *Raoñewa* would be a “classificatory mother” to me. This almost arbitrary adoption was definitely more than a matter of personal empathy, since she had a controversial *nawa*-foreign reputation. *Paniñpa* (Lauro Brasil) — whose stepbrother *Tekaiñpapa* (Antonio Brasil) was a well-reputed healer who, incidentally, was *Raoñewa*’s classificatory sibling too, another typical *nawa* — would tell me, always in veiled, semi-secret tones:

“Mind you this woman is no good. Nobody wanted her to marry that beautiful granddaughter of hers with that old man from the Curuçá River. She doesn’t listen. She took her on her own across the watershed, making things worse between ourselves and those peoples. ’Cause the girl disliked her elder husband and kicked him away [she would refuse sex with him]. Then *Raoñewa* takes her granddaughter back and they run away together to this Ituí River. We had to send the girl back to her husband to prevent his kin from sending sorcery to us [virtual warfare]. This woman is no good, she doesn’t listen to what she’s told.”

personal stories among these remarkable peoples are hardly historically casual. Strong and knowledgeable, *Raoñewa* is the female version of *nawa*-foreignness, that *moka*-power which entails fundamental Marubo knowledge — in the form of music, therapeutic plants (*ni pei rao*) or otherwise — but entails warfare as well. As our gender sketches suggest above, Marubo women have always counteracted past warfare and ever-present polygyny with volitional and independent decision-taking, in the form of informal polyandry and literal escapades. *Kenĩñnawa*'s mother is another such case. She fled a husband to whom she was no favourite wife and, sustaining the weight of her belongings and her two children hanging on her neck, fled through the jungle paths from the Curuçá, joining her brothers *Pekoñpapa*, *Natoñpa* and the now deceased *João Pajé* and *Raimundão* — the *kokavo* of *Kenĩñnawa*'s — on the Ituí banks. Such strength is nothing else but the physical counterpart of female volition, independence and knowledge, confirmed by the hypothetical contention that, in the past, there used to be women-shamans among the Marubo¹⁰⁶.

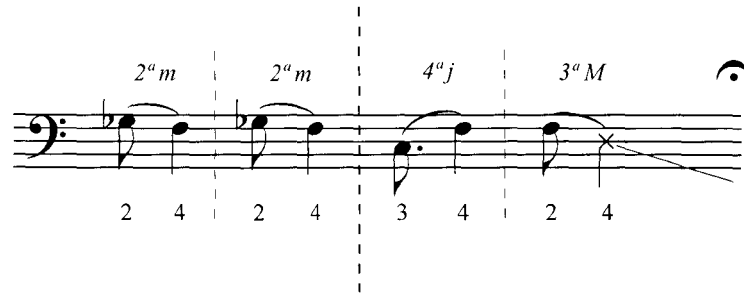
While *Raoñewa* is the female epitome of the generic strength, volition and independence that permeates native knowledge, being often consulted for herbal-therapeutic advice, for his part *Ivañpa* is as respected as a *yoya*-singer throughout the whole of the Ituí River as he has a powerful shamanic reputation among his closer co-resident kin in the Curuçá community of Maronal. His virtuosity can be measured by the length of his performances, the linearly longest mythical-musical deliveries intoned in the field and, at the same time, the most steadily repetitive,

¹⁰⁶ Cf. Montagner Melatti 1985, with native testimonies; I have not seen a single female chant-leader among the living Marubo, though.

circular sequences of musical cells and verbal verses, of strophes and rhymes, among all *saiti* I could ever register. *Ivañpa*, more than any *yoya*, is not simply telling a story through his myth-chants. His mytho-musicality is impeccably regular, his vocal support never fails; his thoughtful diaphragm (*chinañ nato*) is powerful, since the regularity of his breathing thoughts, viz. of his cell-intonations, is the native parameter of mythical-musical excellence. Conversely, the language he intones in *saiti* verses is the most figurative, less amenable to literal renderings and full of associative possibilities¹⁰⁷.

Ivañpa's singing talents are indeed remarkable, and his knowledge of *saiti* was coveted by all those who, like *Raoñewa*, came to my hut asking for his recordings now and again, as it was also by all those who wanted to help me with their transcription and translation later. *Voñchiñpa* kept in his own notebook all the words of the three *saiti* myth-chants that *Ivañpa* presented to us — *Teté Teka*, *Peroñ Nanañ Shavovo* and this *Mokanawa Wenia* — and cherished them as virtuous wisdom. I feel happy to be able to elaborate and write on this last chant from what I learned from *Ivañpa*, *Voñchiñpa*, *Keniñnawa* and all the Marubo. This is a simple and yet complex task; for in that hot afternoon at *Txomañpa*'s place, we heard in *Ivañpa*'s voice the three hundred and ninety verbal verses of *Mokanawa Wenia*, the *saiti* myth-chant of the “emergence of the wild-bitter peoples”, in one single musical cell:

¹⁰⁷ See Overing 1990 for a view on Amazonian shamanic language as indigenous epistemology.



saiti musical cell of *Moganawa Wenia*

II.14 sound structures

Such a score requires a brief sonic exegesis, a musical diversion that is meant to make sense out of the discussion in the previous part of the thesis, much as the personal stories of the preceding chapter endorse our initial sketches of native history. Further, besides bringing clarification and concrete expression to several statements presented above, this exegetical diversion will also lead to some preliminary concluding remarks to our dissertation, compensating for its rather abrupt and arbitrary conclusion. The score is itself a bridge as well.

First, a few remarks on the dyadic character of the musical cell, whose notes — i.e. its sounds understood both qua tonal pitches and qua temporal durations — are repeated *ipsis litteris* 390 times, at the intonation of each verbal verse. All verbal verses of *Moganawa Wenia* are chanted as a simplified summary of the entire *saiti*, that is, in an invariable musical cell subdivided in a fourfold, slightly irregular pulse, each marked by the constant presence of the F tone, and each presenting another note that occurs in variable temporal lengths and pitch intervals

in relation to that tonal pole. Such musical synopsis of the whole myth-chant can be summarily represented, both melodically and rhythmically, as four pulses or intervals of two notes each, whose durational values roughly follow the four unequal numerical proportions 2 : 4 / 2 : 4 / 3 : 4 / 2 : 4 (third pulse imprecise, last note elongated), and whose tonal values, $G_b \downarrow F / G_b \downarrow F / C \uparrow F / F \downarrow D$ (third interval imprecise, last note flattened), are accordingly configured in a slightly irregular interval pattern.

Secondly, it is worth remarking the total lack of arbitrariness of this musical artefact, that is, the overall coherence of a sonic logic expressed as a homologous symmetry between durational and tonal values. The successive durational values given in the four pulses are quaver and crotchet / quaver and crotchet / dotted quaver and crotchet (a somewhat indeterminate relation) / quaver and crotchet (this last note having a variable, very undetermined length, and preceding a fermata pause). Meanwhile, the corresponding tonal values entertain the respective intervallic relations of descendent minor second / descendent minor second / ascendant perfect fourth (here a somewhat indeterminate interval) / descendent minor third (an also very undetermined interval, slurring down in a glissando).

Such a tonal-durational homology means that, within the whole cell, the irregularities at the levels of duration and tone, that is, the irregularities that occur at the respective rhythmic and melodic levels, take place at the very same place and time. They are consistently matched on the slightly indeterminate durational and tonal relations present in the third pulse / interval: a rhythm of dotted quaver plus crotchet corresponds to a melody that consists of an ascendant fourth. Further, the two initial pulses / intervals of the cell are exactly equal and precise, whereas

the two concluding ones are irregular and undetermined, but in different degrees; in fact, their contrasting diacritic is not just a tonal-durational indeterminacy, but above all their mutually inverted, intervallic symmetry. The initial pulses feature small intervallic leaps, configuring a minimal repetition, whereas the intervals that conclude the cell are larger, symmetrically maximal. If the first cell-half is a generic mythical-musical symbol, as a segmented succession of minimal equal structures, the second half of the cell — its last two pulses and intervals, its four concluding notes — is in contrast diabolic: its interval-symmetric design is coterminous with the imprecise, irregular instability that constitutes the native *diabolus in musica*. The third pulse and interval starts to break the initial identical regularity within the cell with a slight indeterminacy, both length- and pitch-wise, disturbing the preceding rhythmic and melodic pattern; and this sonic event leads to an intervallic ascendance that, inasmuch as it is a drastic change of melodic direction, is even more disconcerting. Finally, the fourth and last pulse and interval complements such a rhythmic-melodic disturbance with an even larger lack of pitch and length determination, as the last note is longer and downward, ever changing until a brief, but again indeterminate silence ensues, in the transition to the next cell and verse intoned in the course of this myth-chant.

Thus, tone and duration are homologous codes that divide the musical cells into phrases and subdivide these phrases into intervals and pulses, into melodies and rhythms — in successive dyadic structures, in the case of *Mokanawa Wenia*. Indeed, if not all *saiti* are dyadic, this structuring function of tone and duration features constantly in all myth-chants, whereas the words that correspond to these musical notes, intervals / pulses and phrases are always structured into cellular

verses composed of successive verbal lines, through which the mythical narrative is told — poetically, with the employment of rhymes and strophes.

Now the employment of rhymes, strophes and other poetical devices means that the verbal level of the *saiti* myth-chants, that of the mythical narrative, follows a particular logic. Such a structural rationale goes beyond the mere progression of the discursive narrative, on the one hand; and on the other, it is rather independent from and freer, that is, less rigid and repetitive than the reiterative musical-cellular structure. Verbal and musical reiterations are not always in phase; the respective reiteration of verbal verses and musical cells do not always structurally coincide. Hence the division of the cell into two phrasal halves, which is the structure that *Mokanawa Wenia saiti* presents — a dyadic division of musical cells in two phrases that are themselves divided into two pulses of two notes each — is not only a tautological function of interval-tones and pulse-durations. The poetical devices that distribute verse lines along cellular phrases are, besides the musical structure *per se*, another foremost rationale of temporal delimitation within and across verses and cells. These structure-determinant devices come out either when clusters of several verses group their lines into strophic units larger than the dyadic cell; or when these strophes, or even poetical structures no larger than a verse, start in the middle of cells; or still when verses and cells are demarcated by a phrase without a line, by notes without words. More than pure verbalisms, all these poetical devices are part of the musical poetics of the myth-chant.

One example shall provide some illustrations. The strophic unit that occurs in verses 4-5-6, 71-72, 191-192 and elsewhere in *Mokanawa Wenia* is a poetical device whose meaning configures “ornamentation formulae”, that is, specific

sequential structures of verbal lines which figure along musical phrases as part of the mythical-musical narrative, sequences which describe the ornaments of the emergent humans, as we shall see soon. The final chapters of this thesis present the specific translations of these and other recurrent formulae, with the semantic implications of their respective musical-poetical configurations; here they just serve to illustrate how their generic fourfold strophic form demarcates the *saiti* cell in two phrases. Now just as a guideline, the strophic arrangement of four formulaic lines that constitutes our example always begin with the words *ato... / moka... / atoñ... / shavá...*, while the three dots in the tables below will correspond to a line that, although quoted between parenthesis as the others, does not belong to this strophe. Here the relevant detail is the variable mode of interaction between these formulaic lines and their respective cellular phrases in three instances of this strophe (in the verse-sequences 4-5-6, 71-72, 191-192), which we portray as follows:

		first cellular phrase	second cellular phrase
verse	4.	... (<i>nawa weni ini</i>)	first line (<i>ato aya weni</i>)
cell		G_b ↓ F / G_b ↓ F	C ↑ F / F ↓ D
verse	5.	second line (<i>moka shawañ ina</i>)	third line (<i>atoñ teneao</i>)
cell		G_b ↓ F / G_b ↓ F	C ↑ F / F ↓ D
verse	6.	fourth line (<i>shavá raka ini</i>)	... (<i>atoñ awe shavovo</i>)
cell		G_b ↓ F / G_b ↓ F	C ↑ F / F ↓ D

In this first instance, the strophe starts in the middle of verse 4 with the line *ato aya weni*, which delimits the two halves of the correspondent cell. But the second instance below demonstrates the structural independence that verses acquire with regard to the respective cells, as part of larger strophic units such as this one. For here, the same strophe starts with the same line, but in the first half-cell instead:

		first cellular phrase	second cellular phrase
verse	191.	first line (<i>ato aya weni</i>)	second line (<i>moka epe shañko</i>)
cell		G_b ↓ F / G_b ↓ F	C ↑ F / F ↓ D
verse	192.	third line (<i>atoñ init'ao</i>)	fourth line (<i>shavá rakaraka</i>)
cell		G_b ↓ F / G_b ↓ F	C ↑ F / F ↓ D

In turn, there will be the interpolation of a “blank” half-cell between the first and the second line of the strophe, in the third instance of this strophic unit, as the table below shows; in the respective cellular phrase, words give way to a vocalisation in *i*, here indicated just with a dash (-). This will have semantic consequences in the musical-poetical economy of the myth-chant; but for now, it just serves to illustrate how the changeable dialectics of line and phase that results from the strophic organisation of verses along cells corroborate their dyadic structure:

		first cellular phrase	second cellular phrase
verse	70.	first line (<i>ato aya weni</i>)	-
cell		G_b ↓ F / G_b ↓ F	C ↑ F / F ↓ D
verse	71.	second line (<i>moka kana ina</i>)	third line (<i>atoñ mait'ao</i>)
cell		G_b ↓ F / G_b ↓ F	C ↑ F / F ↓ D
verse	72.	fourth line (<i>shavá rakaraka</i>)	... (<i>nawa weni ini</i>)
cell		G_b ↓ F / G_b ↓ F	C ↑ F / F ↓ D

Therefore, such mythical-musical poetics is not a mere aspect of the verbal order that subverts the cellular regularity of the *saiti* structure through the discursive narrative: it in fact reinforces the irregular subversive germ that the dyadic cell already contains. The musical homology between tone and duration that gives a coherent dyadic structure to the cell develops into an overall cellular asymmetry, given either by its irregularity on the third interval / pulse, or by its consequent division in two opposite halves of two intervals / pulses each. Still, the distribution of formulaic lines and wordless vocalisations along the cellular phrases is that which renders such a dyadic asymmetry explicit along the entire

mythical-musical discourse.

In *Mokanawa Wenia saiti*, the first half-cell or musical phrase is neat and reiterative: its minimal unit is a precise interval, $G_b \downarrow F$, repeated twice. It represents circularity around the second note of each of its two constituent intervals (F), a longer, stressed gravitational centre, the downbeat around which the initial upbeat (G_b) of the two pulses revolves: the two tonal poles, weak (G_b) and strong (F), constitute a sinusoidal curve. That second, attractive note (F) will be the centre of gravity in the second half-cell as well, but now as the apex of a maximal parabolic curve, upward and downward, to and from a precise tone: $C \uparrow F / F \downarrow D$. This configures a linearly designed musical phrase ascending to and descending from that central tone which had already been affirmed in the previous first half, but which is here preceded and succeeded by lower, imprecise notes instead. Such *saiti* cell as a whole is *Mokanawa Wenia* in short: bitter-wild human emergence is alternatively circular and linear, it gravitates around a tonal centre that is neither its initial nor its final note, and still is invariant in the same regular F frequency, the absolute grounding along which the temporality of the myth-chant manifests itself. Cellular variation, that which takes place between its constituent phrases in its interior, is of a temporal order, one that determines an alternative circularity and linearity in pulse after pulse, interval after interval, changing the relative timing and positioning of the constant grounding space. *Wenia*-creation revolves and evolves on a sonorous, tonal ground; but this grounding is not stable, for revolution and evolution imply an irregular temporal disposition of that constant, central tone.

Thus, the conspicuous content of this *saiti*, viz. the human emergence

(*wenia*) in such a bitter-wild poison (*moka*) that results in these *-nawa-*denominated peoples, exists in the mythical-musical form as the opening up of open cells, in continuous repetition but in themselves discontinuous: Marubo tonality is fragmentary, and hence, although constant, it is an unstable terrain. Initially the attractive tone F is affirmed by circular reiteration in the first half of the cell. Then its tonal centrality is temporally questioned in the second half by means of a linear transition from low pitch back to low pitch, which negatively asserts this F centre through the imprecise lower provenience to which it is predestined. The double, tonal-durational indeterminacy of this negative questioning and reassertion — low and long, indeterminate notes — marks a linear character but still a higher lack of determination for the verbal lines sung to this second, rhythmically and melodically insecure phrase. Meanwhile, that first musical phrase, where F is positively asserted as a centre, as temporally cyclical — it comes always after and longer than G_b —, will present the more positive and circular assertions among the lines of all verbal verses chanted in succession along each reiterative musical cell, throughout the whole myth-chant.

However, no verbal content expressed in lines or verses in this *saiti* is amenable to the absolute sonorous assertiveness that the relative formal strength of a western tonal centre could give. The inconclusive character of the native tonal medium denies this to the mythical-musical message, and this for at least four discernible reasons. Besides the fact that all musical cells always end with the indeterminate long and low tones and timeless duration of the second phrase, i.e. of the concluding half-cell, the mobility of verbal lines across phrases, i.e. their alternate occurrence in opposite cellular halves, makes any affirmative character

that notes can lend to words changeable too. Furthermore, the assertive circularity of each cell repetition, which the initial phrase minimally reasserts, is questioned both by the linear story of creation that the successive verbal verses unfold — the mythical-musical discourse of creation is a progressive transformation —, and by the questioning and negative linearity that its minimally explicit in each of the rather inconclusive concluding halves. *Mokanawa Wenia* is maximally circular, maximally linear: the dubiety of cells, an ethical translation of the aesthetical irregularity of their third pulse / interval, entails a tonal sequence, that is, the cellular assertion of a ground that is central and still movable, since it includes its own questioning and reassertion by negation in each cell. The third pulse and interval disturbs the evenness of the twofold cell, but at the same time points at the overall unitary quality of the myth-chant: cyclical and still sequential.

In sum, each musical cell is the sum of two contrasting phrases, each one a succession of reiterative pulses / intervals, of durational and tonal relations, numerical and intervallic proportions that epitomise the temporal states which sustain native ontological statuses. Thus, and only thus, the Marubo express that which is otherwise verbally ineffable for them, the affective and intellective opposition between *yové*-circularity and *yochiñ*-linearity, and the core-equivocality of the *chinañ nato* breath-thoughts. These dual cosmological oppositions and psychophysiological middle-states are regularly present and recurrently central in variable mythical-musical configurations, configurations that, we may well say at this stage, some sketches of native history have already suggested in the course of this dissertation. Now, toward its end, it will be time to render clearer how the *saiti* are historical sketches themselves: what histories, in short, the mythical-musicality

of *Mokanawa Wenia* means throughout its long narrative.

Of all the myth-chants recorded in the field, here in *Mokanawa Wenia* musical phrases and verbal lines are the least distinguishable in degree of recurrence. What myth-chants tend to present as a stark discrepancy between musical repetition and verbal succession gains here a more balanced structure in the highly formulaic poetics of the chanted words: in the recurrent combinations of these lines along the reiterative phrases, verbal and musical meanings intertwine. Still the strongest and most visible hallmark of the interaction of these verbal verses and lines with their respective musical cells and phrases is the structural independence between word and note against the subliminal dyadic character of the myth-chant. This is predicated on the free displacement of verbal lines back and forth between first and second half of the double-phrased musical cell, from a circular proposition to a linear resolution. As often as not, a strophic combination of verses starts or finishes in the middle of the reiterative, dyadic cell, beginning in its final phrase or ending in the initial one, as the examples above illustrate. Thus the recurrent lines of the myth-chant end up as either assertive or indeterminate, either circular or linear, depending on different musical-poetical contexts: all results in an independent polyphony of pitch and syllable, of cells and verses, which is to acquire meaning with reference to the *saiti* poetics itself. Overall, most recurrent lines of *Mokanawa Wenia* follow a distinctive proportion favouring either phrasal assertiveness or the indeterminacy of question-negative tonal reassertion, i.e. either circularity or linearity, as we shall see in the conclusion to this part of this thesis. Suffice it to say now that the sonic expression of *saiti*, the cell studied and summarised above, is in itself a synoptic ethnography, a concise

statement, whose conciseness amounts to extreme repetitiveness in the whole *saiti*¹⁰⁸.

Soon we shall elaborate, with greater refinement and a more accurate terminology, on a selection of commentaries to the most recurrent verses and lines of the myth-chant. What follows along the next few chapters is an elaboration on mythical-musical time, an exegesis based on indigenous commentaries that revolve around the issues that we raised above in brief. The Marubo peoples and their cosmos, that is, the historical construction of the *nawa*-humankind and its ex-centric universe are both circular and linear in *saiti*, in the different combinations of such a temporal “synthetic symphony”. Among all *saiti*, that of *Mokanawa Wenia* is circularity to the uttermost, while the “emerging wild-bitter peoples” undertake a linear journey from their telluric origins to their tellurian dwelling, from undifferentiated earth — the home of the primordial substances of animals and plants, as we shall see below — to the becoming of humanised beings in the worldly human-made home. As far as this thesis is concerned, these contradictory temporal movements constitute the meaning of the myth-chant. Our analysis stands therefore in clear contrast, and with a critical stance, to most anthropological mythologies and to all studies found in the ethnographic bibliography that focus alone on the verbal-textual or visual-representational character of an immense corpus of myths. More than impossible to assess, myths become inaccessible due to this exegetical bias.

Out of the seemingly infinite repertoire of *saiti*, the outcome of our work

¹⁰⁸ See the whole myth-chant in the appendix herein attached.

with *Ivañpa*, *Voñchiñpa*, *Keniñnawa* and many others has been some three hundred pages of field manuscripts, of translations and transcriptions of recordings made in the Upper Ituí. Still, all these myth-chants are notated as fragments. The richness of detail, paired up with a melodic and verbal minimalism — crudely speaking, one might say “a monotonous repetition” — make one wonder if a complete version of any *saiti* would be feasible at all. All suggests, and the Marubo above all, that fragmentation is their nature, fragmentation bounded to minimal, repetitive units. In any case, by finding meaningful, kaleidoscopic variation within such reiterative monotony, we aim at making the restitution of the tonal character to the linguistics-biased mythologies, just in order to do justice to the word the Marubo intone. This is attempted here, however, through verbal and notational means, both of which are visual-graphic, and this despite the circumstantial limitations that do not allow for a full and detailed study of the whole translation and transcription of *Mokanawa Wenia*. But given our circumstances, to resign ourselves with the inherent limitations of sound notation — or with the rationalisation of sound expression —, and thus discard the descriptive representation of *saiti* music — or its verbalisation in critical commentary —, would mean more than the recognition of the visual-verbal limits of our epistemology vis-à-vis a native ontology that natives express as aural, as musical. To take the inappropriateness of our media as an excuse to omit the musical aspect of Marubo mythology, or the mythical aspect of Marubo musicology, is much worse than to enshrine their myth and music within the realm of the esoteric; it would be tantamount to ignore the cultural character of *saiti* as *yové vana*, as “spiritual language”.

Such character is an aspect of intoned language that cannot be restricted to an analysis of the lexical variations and ritualistic affixation of suffixes at the linguistic, ordinary *yorañ vana* level of the *saiti*. The mythical ritual in its synthetic form is music, the ritualised language par excellence — the *saiti* myth-chant. However, we repeat that our medium is a visual-verbal one. Once we are done with the musicality and the strict musical meanings of *Mokanawa Wenia* in this chapter, we will move back to words, while music moves to the background. It is still to be heard, however. We shall draw brief comments on selected instances of such a “language of spirits”, a label that gives a good account of the duality present in Marubo myth-chants and in Marubo life. Extrapolating, we reaffirm that one contrast, single, dual and plural, is drawn throughout this thesis: the one between the discursive verbal narrative and the reiterative melodic-rhythmic pattern; or the one between diachronic history against synchronic myth; or still the simple contrast between the performance of word and that of ritual, that is, the performance of the mythical-musical form of *saiti*.

II.15 emerging words

Before indulging in the linguistic commentary on a number of recurrent verbal lines present in *Mokanawa Wenia*, we should make one last short pause for some preliminary thoughts on certain words that we heard throughout in the field, through this and other myth-chants. We are now concerned with *wenia* words, those that relate to the *saiti* of “emergence-creation”, but still regardless of their actual pronunciation in these mythical-musical texts. In particular, we refer to the words that, like the aforementioned native conceptualisations *yochiñ* and *yové*,

chinañ and *vaká*, *nawa* and *yora*, relate to the mythical lexicon and to the musical structures that express them. Then our focus is on words but never quite on linguistics, for which competence would be lacking; even our etymologies are tentative, since we arrive at them not out of fluency in the native tongue but through some tiresome transcriptions and translations of several myth-chants, of which *Mokanawa Wenia* is just one example. We shall analyse this myth-related lexicon from a musical-synthetic viewpoint, since the pure linguistic side of the spiritual language *yové vana* is not too different from the ordinary one, i.e. *yorañ vana*, to which those words pertain first. Therefore, the terms that here define the morphemes of the native language, i.e. for the most part affixes, are not “technical” in the sense that they are not drawn from professional description, but from a rather speculative *bricolage* instead. We expect their respective meaning to be satisfactorily indicated from the perspective we propose, even though further research alone could allow for more semantic depth.

/Yo/ is an ever-present morpheme in mythical-musical discourse, as it appears as well in words like *yora*, *yové* and *yochiñ*, whose temporal significance we have seen before. Now we argue that the conceptualisations on native temporality that these words entail are in the semantic foundations of the *saiti* chants; and that it is precisely at the structural level of myth and music that Marubo ontology gains temporal significance. Hence, finding some semantic common-ground among these terms and similar ones might give new ontological insight on their mythical-musical expression.

Then we concentrate on */yo/*. The common root of those three terms also appears in everyday words like *yoi*, “to show, to indicate, to lead”, and in the

derivative *yoya*, “chant-leader”; in *yoñ*, “fire heat” and in *yotxi*, “pepper” (possibly from *yo* + *txi*, “fire”); in *yowañ*, “famous, spoken of” (apparently the passive voice of an archaic verb that should mean “to speak” or “to mention”). The radical /*yo*/ always precede morphemes that are as well quite usual in other contexts. In the instances above or elsewhere, it occurs in connection with the suffixes *-ya*, “substantial-adjectival”, that indicates the material possession of an attribute, among the Marubo and in other Pano languages; *-vé*, “pronominal-associative”; *-chiñ*, “innermost centre” (as in the central soul *chinañ*, “to breath-think”); *-ra*, “interrogative”; *-ñ*, “genitive”; or still *-wañ*, which might be an “exhortative” suffix or a possible verb inflection, something like a passive voice particle. Is it possible to deduce a figurative relationship among such variable semantic layers? What is the morpheme /*yo*/ originally, beyond its more obvious association with “indication” and “leadership” — given that the termination *-i* of *yoi* is a common verb suffix —, which is in itself a sign of its importance? If such a “family resemblance” among the meaning of these *yo*-words is justifiable at all — given that the morphological similarity is clear, although obscure and tentative —, to an ineffable or archaic radical /*yo*/ there must correspond the potential qualities of “pronominal association” or “interrogation” (*yové* and *yora*), and of “essential centrality” (*yochiñ*). Here we derive these meanings from the corresponding suffixes, which are found in other native words than those beginning with /*yo*/; and yet the semantic common-ground which this particle represents must concern the very meaning that it stands for in these words as well. Thus, such common-ground must be amenable to being qualified as “pertaining to fire” (*yoñ*), as well as “speakable”, something to be uttered in language (*yowañ*).

That the suffixes attached to the former three qualities are respective markers of “pronominal association”, “interrogation” and “centrality”, with reference to *lyol*, coheres both with their use in other contexts and with the layers of meaning that those three composite words — *yové*, *yora* and *yochiñ* — denote in native onto-temporality. First, the *yové*-spirit entertains an extraneous association with humans, which is made manifest precisely in sonic form, as a “pronominal voice”, a third supra-person who intones the *saiti* and other shamanic song. Second, the *yora*-body that embodies such a voice is a contradictory, temporary arrangement of such spiritual association with its temporal counterpart, the *yochiñ*-double. Third, this double counterpart is at the very centre of the human expression of the spiritual sound, as the linearity that allows for its circular reiteration. For not only are those suffixes denotative of “association”, “question” and “centre” but, with these suffixations, the three corresponding onto-temporal categories through which natives conceptualise humanity also associate with the terms that define and translate the *saiti* musical structures we looked at above: the assertion of tonal associations, their questioning — with a negative reassertion — and, throughout, tonal centrality. Such musical-tonal “grounding” is, in the mythical words of *Mokanawa Wenia* that we shall see soon, the creational earth and the world of humanisation, the telluric ground and the tellurian surface whence humans emerge and where humanity opens the dwelling-clearance of human existence. In the end the meaning of *lyol*, as its etymology reveals and in the onto-temporality that the myth-chant unfolds, can only relate to some sort of essential humanity.

From these tentative associations, it follows that the two latter qualities of

“fieriness” and “pronounceability” — and the corresponding words and each of their semantic fields (*yoñ* and *yowañ*) — must concern humanity as well. Such hypotheses should be tested against the ontological background of the myth-chants, and at all their semantic levels. While the two contrasting phrases of each cell of *Mokanawa Wenia* present the musical grounds for the assertion and interrogation of tonal associations — whereby the respective quality is a function of either the “assertion” or the “interrogation” of an attractive note (F), an “essential centre” —, we should find the “fiery” and “utterable” character of *wenia*-creation in the *saiti* text. This could approximate native ontology to the Heraclitian *pyr* and *logos*, the Grecian “fire” and “unveiling utterance”. The words of bitter-emergence in *Mokanawa Wenia* stress the linguistic diacritic of humanity, anyhow: the knowledge / apprenticeship (*yosi[a]* / *yosiñ*) of language is one of the main mythical-musical movements that characterises the emergent humanity. Indeed, there is something “knowledgeable” about */yo/*¹⁰⁹.

That this morpheme occurs in the verbs *yosiñ* and *yosi[a]* (“to teach”, and “to learn” or “to know”, respectively) is as suggestive as other occurrences that, although vague and obscure, should not be omitted. */Yo/* occurs in *yoñsha* (“old woman”) and *yome* (“lad”) for instance, where the meanings of the suffixes attached are unknown to us, but whereby we can infer that */yo/* relates to age or maturation. It also occurs there where meaningful associations are too complex or uncertain, such as in *yopa* (“laziness”; *-pa* is an augmentative suffix); in *yoñka*

¹⁰⁹ The Grecian “gathering word”, *logos*, and the “emerging fire”, *pyr*, are here understood after Heidegger 1998 [1994], with special reference to the Heraclitian fragments 66 and 30 (1998 [1994]: 171-182), and to the fragments 50, 45, 72, 115 and 112 (1998 [1994]: 251-405).

(“guava fruit”; *-ka* is an adjectival one); in *yomañka* (“difficult”); in the verb *yome[a]* (“to get tired”); or in *yonai* (“fever”). An interesting but altogether speculative etymology for *yoñka*, for instance, would consist of *yoñ* + *ka*, that is, “that which excels in fieriness”, or just “fiery”; indeed, the native variety of guava has a reddish flesh, and also figures in myth-chants as *nai yoñka*, one of the “celestial fruits” — *nawa*-prototypical ones — that *saiti* characters eat in their travels through the cosmos. Also speculatively, *yomañka* could be dissected as *yo* + *ma(ñ)* + *ka*, i.e. */yo/* plus a “negative suffix” and an “adjectival” one. “Difficulty” for natives (after *yomañka*, “difficult”) would be a lack of */yo/*, while “laziness”, which the Marubo associate with “bad luck” much as regional Brazilians do (the associative term is *yopa* for the former, *panema* for the latter), would be an excess of it.

However to speculate more, based on these */yo/* occurrences, would be an offence to a more rigorous reader. With all claims against Platonic-Aristotelian metaphysics in this ethnography, we still resort to a metaphysical vocabulary throughout, above and beyond. This is the price to be paid for tentative attempts to express what is hardly expressible in words: the phenomenological “family resemblance” which relates a generic *saiti*-related lexicon to the *wenia*-emergence of the *mokanawa*-peoples in particular. This is compensated for, expectedly, by the stricter recourse to the musical structure of the mythical discourse, that is, by the reliance on the intoned and ritually performed words as they were presented and re-presented in the field, and as they are here objectified in transcriptions and translations, in native commentary and in the exegesis below. In short, the compensatory rigour relies entirely on the myth-chanting of these words as notes

within the musical cell we have visualised above, as well as on a closer study of some verbal lines that are particularly recurrent in the verses of *Mokanawa Wenia*, to follow soon.

We proceed in this direction with the very idiom that entitles this *saiti*. Not only is *weni(a)* a conspicuous mythical-musical word, but it also is a subliminal verb throughout all Marubo mytho-musicology. More than merely “to emerge”, “to get up”, *weni* means “to originate”, “to germinate”. In a more universal perspective — one adverse to monistic, essential universalisms —, *wenia*-emergence is not far from the presocratic *physis*. Here again, presocratic Greek is meant with a Heideggerian tone; but no matter how, Marubo *physis* always appears against the sonic background of Menezes Bastos’ uncanny words on the also Amazonian Kamayurá. In Amazonia, “nature” is conceptually established here and there through an anthropo-theological contract, a founding social pact between humanity and divinity. The originality of indigenous shamans lies on their simultaneous proximity to and remoteness from the west: if in *wenia*-emergence a nature-*physis* comes into being, establishing humanity on earth, such establishment occurs at the expense of the transferral of the native paradigmatic sociality — a *nawa*-ness without difference — to the other-world. This means that this earth-emerging world is the territory of alterity; the becoming of a celestial-divine *yové*-circularity

is to be mediated by the terrestrial-doubling *yochiñ*-linearity¹¹⁰.

In the wider meaning of *wenia*-emergence, a great deal of the generic function, purpose or scope of the myth-chants is given: they are the widest socio-ontological grounds of these peoples. All *saiti* may convey this meaning to a higher or lesser degree, but in *Mokanawa Wenia* there are literal references to the recognition of a “cultural” or humanised space by means of the establishment of a relationship between *-nawa* humans, viz. the Marubo matrilineal sections, with animals and plants, that is, their ethnonymic namesakes. It is through this original “pact”, mediated by animal-arboreal terrestrial substances, that humanity recognises and establishes itself in its surrounding or “natural” environment, which for the most part associates with rivers.

If the native cosmo-topology stresses the geographical importance of the terrestrial and celestial paths through which peoples and other entities intercommunicate, rivers are no less important as historical points of reference. This is very understandable in a landscape of dense jungle spread over a rather flat terrain, a plain relief that only the undulating elevations (*mato*) disturb, the aforementioned *cabeças-de-terra* or “earthen heads”, among which watery arteries (*waka*) drain the firm land. These little streams were poles of attraction rather than passageways in earlier Marubo times, when these peoples lived in the vicinities of

¹¹⁰ Cf. Grecian *physis*, after Heidegger again (1987 [1959]: 14):

“[*Physis*] denotes self-blossoming emergence (e.g. the blossoming of a rose), opening up, unfolding, that which manifests itself in such unfolding and perseveres and endures in it; in short, the realm of things that emerge and linger on.”

And Menezes Bastos (1989: 283, 287):

“‘Nature’ for these Indians is ‘divine’... [whereas] social reproduction... [is] the great threat, the one which impinges the renunciation of nature-divinity, and thus enforces

the headwaters that lead to medium-size rivers and major tributaries of the Amazon. In turn, both intermediate tributary waters and larger rivers (*noa*) have always been environmental diacritics throughout native history, and now function as ways of transport across the territory. Among the contemporary Marubo, the most visible watercourse in the map of the Javari Valley is the Ituí River, on whose adjacent *mato*-hillocks they live and where this fieldwork was conducted. Today, the Ituí is the river space they create as they humanise themselves and their environment, performing the socio-ontological event that *saiti* is.

We mentioned that the footpath network linking all native dwellings, gardens, logging and rubber-tapping sites, as well as the distribution of the various longhouse communities that it separates along several walking days, are terrestrial representations of the historical movements that myth-chants manifest in the association between “large riverbanks” (*noa mai*) and “earth mounds” (*mai mato*), between riverside and terra firma. We also mentioned that all this turns into “second-order” representations in native topology, that is, as a network of cosmological (e.g. *nai vai*, *nawañ vai*, “celestial route”, “rainbow”) and eschatological (*vei vai*, “dangerous way”) paths. We suggested, finally, that natives represent both their mythical and historical transit through these celestial and terrestrial paths in *saiti* music, which thus inscribes its own temporality in the cosmo-eschatological space.

All this is that which constitutes such a native *physis* or its mythical-musical origin or “representation”. The Marubo world does not consist of isolated “things” that conform to an “objective reality” which, in any solipsistic dimension,

the compulsion of humanisation.” (my translation)

either intelligible or sensible, makes itself available to a human-subjective epistemology. Marubo *physis*-nature has a temporal reality summarised and constructed in *saiti* rituals and myth-chants; that is the sense of “spatial self-humanisation” in mythical-musical creation. The Marubo world consists of temporal-ontological relations; it cannot be apprehended as a relation between “subjects” and “objects”, “culture” and “nature”. Much to the contrary, we insist: the idea of *saiti* as an “artistic expression” of a “cultural-specific reality” has no meaning for us, nor for the native world as fieldwork disclosed it — or at least for these natives, in the way that most westerners understand art and culture. What would be the point in chanting in ritual a “made-up social world” if this were meant to give full vent to a mere “culture-specific metaphysics”? What is the point of metaphysics at all, if it is taken as “cross-cultural category”, as if the “concept” that is meant to account for specific particulars or, even worse, the “idea” of a Grecian *eidos*, are generically taken for granted as “natural universals”? What is the use of giving musical expression to such a purported metaphysics in a performed festival at all, if the entire human and natural existence were not at stake there? What is at stake when the Marubo sing is their sheer existence, that is, that of their human nature, that reality which is contingent upon their own humanity. For if these *-nawa* peoples did not exist, the Amazonian world where they live would cease to exist as well; and this is no figure of speech, as we know well from the example of other lands where native life has been wiped out, where its ontological grounds have been uprooted.

The *saiti* myth-chants are a matter of life and death, and the world of natives, the very world of these peoples there in the Javari Valley — for cultural

specifics are secondary here —, is the stuff of which those myth-chants are made. From a native perspective, *saiti* deals with humanity as a *nawa*-relation with birds and animals, plants and other things that emerge-*wenia* in nature-*physis*. This is why the “Marubo” peoples are neither fond of this particular ethnonym nor of any similar form of “ethno-specificity”: for them, humanness is generic *nawa*-ness, the foreign element that “estranges” itself from earth and thus “emerges” in the world. Native ontology is the content of *saiti*, and such ontology cannot, by definition, be relativistic or “culture-specific” because it is constructed upon the *nawa*-other.

Thus the “cultural” content or “social” function of a *saiti* can only be “cultural” or “social” inasmuch as such contents and functions are opposed to its formal frequencies, structural relationships, and morphemes, lexemes, affixes. The phenomena that we define as such are our “hard data”, viz. the objectified subject-matter of the description and exegesis that this thesis attempts, the structural form in which we represent native forms. Yet while we envisage things in this way we betray our biases, and in doing so we nullify the native. Any such opposition between the functional content and the structural form of *saiti* pre-empts a descriptive exegesis of native ontology: it will be empty, sheer nothingness, once we take these forms, structures, etc. as the very ontological grounds of native culture and society! We suggest that a “cultural reality” does not exist without its respective *physis* or *wenia* or some “natural ontology” that founds, primordially, what things are and what is to be and to become. Fair enough. Still, such an “ontological relativism” is not enough to overcome the nihilism and emptiness of the fallacious nature-culture dichotomy that “multiculturalism” proposes. As far the Marubo are concerned, and I agree with them, such opposition, with all the

topological transformations of homologous models, would be just some sort of philosophical indigence to which much anthropology, and western thought at large, subscribes up to these days. Therefore we further suggest that myth-chants are not mere *a posteriori* representations of a corresponding native ontology, but that such ontology in fact occurs *a priori* in the performative realm of these structural forms, viz. in the mythical-musical formal structures of our case-study, *saiti*¹¹¹.

If a “cultural world” were not such a nihilistic and empty category from our analytical point-of-view — that, we suggest, coincides with the native one: *kultura tanama*, “culture, [we] don’t understand” — there would be no point in attempting to unfold the *saiti* synthesis of such a “native nature” through our “structural-formal” method, if you like. The assumption of that nihilism and emptiness — those to which western metaphysics, in the mainstream course of its social history, has led any ontological enquiry — is our methodological precondition, and we sustain that our methodology founds ample ontological ground among the Marubo. Hence, at the present state of our ethnographic capabilities for exegesis and

¹¹¹ The “multinaturalism” of Viveiros de Castro 1996, reaffirmed in his commentary to the debate on the “revisited animism” of Bird-David 1999, contains a valid critique to the weaknesses of multiculturalism. Still the positive side of such a critique is as vulnerable as any sort of cultural relativism: the shift from “epistemological” to “ontological” issues that it posits ignores the fact that the dichotomy which distinguishes those issues, once based on an homologous distinction between “culture” and “nature”, becomes itself a western-biased construal! While multinaturalism criticises multiculturalism in saying that not only “culture knows” and “nature is”, but that culture also “is”, it forgets to say that, as one should expect from its own reasoning, nature also “knows”... and such “natural knowledge” will be that of the anthropologist of course, never that of the native. All this amounts to nothing less than the same ingenuous pseudo-neutrality of every structuralist; and, as such, any epistemological reversal of the culture-nature dichotomy, or of any other similar, value-laden metaphysical template — like the opposition between particular “perspectival bodies” and a single “universal soul”, which that same author proposes with reference to “specific ontologies” — is methodologically weak. It is as though “multinaturalism” were just some sort of recycled version of structuralism, another positivistic-scientific, “naturalised”

description, the single necessary methodological complement to the study of the mythical-musical structure of *saiti* is the enquiry on the ontology that these natives perform in it. Here we intend to take seriously both what they say and how they say it, both the content and the form of their ontological statements. Therefore, a tentative explanation of *wenia* as a *physis*-like “emergence” is hardly enough, to the extent that we are not willing to run the risk of pushing the Marubo too much against the background of ancient Greece. To a certain extent, some epistemological honesty requires this; but after looking at our dead gods and ailing myths, and looking at them against the sonic background of those indigenous music structures, we must look at the *saiti* text itself and at the peoples who emerge in it, in their due myth-chant form. After all, who sprouts in original *wenia*-creation, in *saiti*?

Mokanawa for sure, but still much more than those peoples alone. We already know that *mokanawa* means “wild people” or “bitter people”. “Peoples”, or rather *-nawa* humans, here denote first ethnic groups in a somewhat loose sense, *raças de gente*, in the same sense as in the suffixing of Marubo matrilineal sections (*Shanenawa*, *Varinawa*...). Still *-nawa* is also a suffix for personal names (*Keniñnawa*...), but in an indirect, mediated way: the names of persons are *-nawa* to the extent that they are each related to specific kinship sections. The *keni* that the name of *Keniñnawa* means is “beard”, for instance, as the whiskers of a jaguar, while *Keniñnawa* is an *Inonawa*; he belongs to the section of the “jaguar peoples”, hence his name is that of a “man of bristles”. This homology is common, but not ordinary: here in this example, *-nawa* and *ino* mean in ethnonyms and in myth-

anthropology that proposes cultural essentialisms in the guise of potential generalisations.

music that which is respectively designated as *yora* (“person”) and *kamañ* (“jaguar”) in the everyday. Indeed, onomastic prefixes such as *ino-jaguar* are as semantically layered as the *-nawa* peoples themselves, that is, as all native onomastics is: the semantic key for personal or sectional names is mythical-musical.

Mythical-musical semantics aside, in everyday language *mokanawa* means isolated, non-contacted indigenous groups, or just all the native peoples — either isolated or contacted, inimical or not — who neighbour Marubo lands, such as the Matsés, the Matis or the Korubo. All this we have already seen in more detail above; now we just reinforce a few points. *Mokanawa* is as generic a denomination as “Marubo” or “Mayoruna”, an indigenous sub-classification of the prototypical exogenous *nawa*, like a negative counterpart of the social subdivisions that constitute the native matrilineal sections. More than just designating *índios bravos*, the aforementioned “wild-bitter” ones, the term refers to unrelated indigenous peoples, to *yora wetsa* — peoples of “other bodies”, those who anyhow share with the Marubo an original *nawa*-classificatory principle of self-constitutive alterity. Marubo language places such specific “wild-bitterness”, and all those *moka* peoples who are named after it, within a closer realm of alterity than the generic *nawa* “foreigner”, since it still refers to “another kind” of *yora* and, more often than not, to Pano-speakers as well. Nonetheless, *mokanawa* is a somewhat derogatory designation that marks the “wild-bitter” border of Marubo relations with the outside, a history-laden limit.

Apart from the fact that contact between indigenous and non-indigenous societies in the past decades has been intensified, it must be remembered that the

Javari Valley territory comprises one of the highest concentrations of Amazonian peoples in isolation or near-isolation from the nation-state. This includes the Korubo “club-wielders” (*caceteiros*) and other unknown *moka* peoples of whom the Marubo are duly afraid, although in native semantics their “bitterness” is less close to “wildness” than to the “tasteful ethos” of the blowgun poison. Hunting poison is a common component of Pano life, which *moka* designates both in chants and in the everyday. Not so much so among the Marubo, though: in their world, shotguns (*tipi*) are now almost homonyms to blowguns (*moka tipi*), and have thus become a conceptual substitute for the latter, while bows and arrows still survive in hunts. In contrast, the neighbouring Matis excel in the use of blowguns and of the correlated *moka* poison, regardless of the recent widespread introduction of firearms. In their case, accordingly and inversely, the weapon to be equated to the foreign shotgun is the arrow and bow. The Matis have a disparaging reputation among the Marubo of being monkey-eaters, and this makes sense inasmuch as monkeys, while being full of taboo-connotations for the latter, are the preferential prey for poisoned darts blown toward the treetops. The Matis are *moka* peoples par excellence, even though this may have little to do with disparaging reputations or with their dietary preferences. For the Matis and, if less conspicuously, no less for the Marubo, bitterness is a condition of empowerment, even though the former phrase such a power-embitterment in quite idiosyncratic terms¹¹².

¹¹² As *chimu* and *sho*, as amply studied in Erikson 1996. Ambiguous “mixed feelings” are the common-ground between Marubo and Matis representations of bitterness, as the same author phrases it:

“Être souffrant se dit d’ailleurs tout simplement *chimwek*, ‘devenir amer’, en quelque sorte, souffrir d’un excès de *chimu*... [Cependant] les hommes, loin d’éviter, recherchent l’amertume, qu’ils soient ou non chamanes.” (1996: 200, 203)

Thus what would seem at a first sight just the perverse adoption of prejudiced White values against the peoples of “wilderness”, a prejudice that “acculturated” Indians like the Marubo would manifest, in different ways, against the “pristine-primitive” Matis or Korubo, is in fact no less than a conscious native attitude against an actual past and a future potential of *moka*-ness. Hence, the “wild” character of the *mokanawa* would be much better understood as a “bitter” pathos, an aggressive ethos that belongs to the Marubo themselves, that they have manifested socially and politically in earlier times and is still latent in their *saiti* festivals, when their “welcome” addresses make it conspicuous as *inoñ vana* intonations, as stylised “jaguar’s roars”. *Moka*-bitterness is always a threat hovering along native history, over internal and external affairs, social and political relations; and still it is no evil icon to be exorcised. If, in all probability, it has been an essential ingredient in initiation and increase rituals, now it is indispensable in the acquisition of hunting and shamanic capabilities: its historical significance is a matter of variable dosage among the Marubo. Indeed, in a similar fashion, the Matis interrupted many of their ritual activities that involved such *moka* character of, for instance, initiation and increase, hunting and warfare, as a means to overcome and come to terms with the pacification of external relations with the national society and, above all, with the severe epidemics that ensued from it. If the Marubo reasoning can be used for the Matis, *moka*-ness and its correlate substances are venomous and virulent but still vital: its excessive, pervasive proximity in the form of the *nawa* foreigner just requires redoubled concern and semantic redefinition.

Thus, in any historical situation, *moka*-ness becomes a physical state that is

contingent upon a *nawa*-exogenous humanness, rather than being a phenotypic trait: the Matis, who are quite short, are *mokanawa* in the same sense as the Marubo who, being known among the contemporary native peoples of the region for their stout complexion, are equally wild-bitter in their origins. The designation of *mokanawa* is dependent on time, and historical time is dependent on the internal socio-political state-of-affairs vis-à-vis the exterior: much as the Marubo regard their own *moka* past as times of isolation, health and strength, the Matis are regarded as *moka* because they have had a more recent, if devastating contact with the nation-state.

In *Mokanawa Wenia*, peoples are born either tall (*kayapavo*) or short (*potopavo*), but always healthy and strong, their distinctive, bitter trait of alterity that adds to their “wild” aggressiveness. Variable size is rather a part of the wide array of human-classificatory criteria that define *moka*-ethnicity as plural, including the multiple creational substances, languages, ornaments and names that this *saiti* attributes to them. Dimensional, substantial, linguistic, ornamental and onomastic difference is the *nawa*-foundation of the ethnic speciation of the emerging peoples in the myth-chant, a speciation that happens to be homologous to the current sectional differentiation among the Marubo. *Moka*-ness is *nawa*-ness and, above all distinctions of size, substance, language, ornamentation and name it means audacity, or the mix of wild-aggressiveness and bitter health-strength, the defining trait of *mokanawa*-ness.

The Marubo say that the *moka* peoples are *valentes*, “fierce”: in the *saiti*, they are accordingly chanted as *nawa yovamavo*. The radical *lyol* is now associated with “fierceness”, here understood as an other-trait of self-constitution

among these peoples. Now the myths and histories that these natives narrate, in music and in everyday chatter, indicate that *lyol* and its variations are typical of the wild-bitter otherness of the *mokanawa*, and thus that these *mokanawa* are the original Marubo. *Moka*-ness is indeed an essential component in the *wenia*-creation of these *-nawa* peoples, as this *saiti*-chant makes explicit; and the Marubo are no less *mokanawa* than they are *yora*-bodies, *yochiñ*-doubles, *yové*-spirits, even if these words are not explicitly chanted in the myth-text. Implicit as these entities may be in mythical-musical structures, and as otherness is within the innermost native self, we shall now move to the more outspoken, textual expression of *Mokanawa Wenia* — which, nevertheless, still retains these meanings.

II.16 mutual domestication

No more than a brief exegesis is possible here. Hence, the three chapters that conclude this second part of the thesis shall focus on no more than the most conspicuous verbal phenomena of *Mokanawa Wenia saiti*, seen in the light of the previous discussion. This chapter looks at the form in which the mythical-musical creation of humankind is coterminous with ontogeny, that is, at the formal specifics of the establishment of a relationship between humanity and the ontological order of the world. In the myth-chants of *wenia*-emergence, peoples emerge as “others”, as *-nawa* beings, the form in which the Marubo conceptualise humanity, while the same myth-chants present their formal conception of animals and plants as “creational substances”. Through the latter, animals and plants, and the world at large, partake of the *nawa*-forms that name humans; or rather, the emergent *nawa*-humanity partakes of the emerging world through these animal and

arboreal substances. Creational substances are the specific animal and vegetable metaphors or metonyms (*chinañ* “breath-thoughts” and *imi* “blood” of tapirs and vipers, as well as *imi* “blood” and *nañko* “sweetness”, *vimi* “fruits”, *oa* “flowers”, *recho* “sap” of several species of plants) that give rise to human bodies in *saiti*. Further, humans acquire *-nawa* names after those animals and plants from whose substances they emerge, and then acquire language from birds and anteaters. Finally, from most of these plants and animals, birds and anteaters, humans acquire ornaments, and this entire process leads to their full emergence from earth and settlement in the world.

Now “peoples of *moka* wild-bitterness” refer to Indians in relation to Whites: the senses of *nawa* as a suffix and as a single word intertwine in the relationship between identity and difference that this very term mediates in the creation of the *mokanawa* humanity. *Mokanawa* designates those peoples who are to follow the long processes narrated in *wenia*-creation, along which they gradually acquire the proper human status as the Marubo devise it, one that humanity achieves through a paradoxical association with the other entities it confronts in the world, animals and plants. The emblematic ethnonyms (*Shane*, *Ino*, *Shawañ*, etc.) that prefix and thus define Marubo matrilineal sections are the consequence of “domestication”, a mutual process that native humanity entertains with the non-human realm of its universe. “Mutual domestication” is a process where *nawa*-beings become humans as they emerge from earth, acquire names and languages, and embellish themselves in the intercourse with animals and plants, to settle in the world at last. The *-nawa* peoples in myth-chants are like original “ethnic groups” or matrilineal sections, kin-*nawa* for the Marubo, since socio-

kinship relations among them are on the make in mythical-musical time. Their *yora*-bodies are to embody indigenous ethnonyms as badges of “mutual domestication”: humanity consists in an ontological compromise, a *nawa*-onomastic contract that it establishes in the world, much in the same way as these peoples have striven for a “mutually domesticating” form of relation with *nawa*-outsiders throughout their history.

In myth, the created creatures are “prototypically large” (*nawa*), but still in their infancy (*vake*): they are *nawa* before being *yora* beings, and are named accordingly as *moka*, as peoples in their bitter-wild origins. In this connection, the designative reference that the prepubescent personal names of these peoples make to a material object is also mythical-musical, often referring to the objective matter whereby humanity emerges from earth into the world (e.g. *shoi*, “hole”; *vimi*, “fruit”). In other words, both those *nawa*-sectional ethnonyms and these children’s names consist of animals, plants, and other related things around the Marubo, to which their myth-music superimposes several layers of meaning and above all a sense of worldly domestication. In this sense, the newborn *-nawa* beings coincide with actual children, as the Marubo say: they are in the initial stages of such a process. Marubo bodies are *yora*-fragments that become *yochiñ*- and *yové*-related souls to the extent that the *saiti* states humanity as a composite state of pieces of animals and plants, associating either personal names to objects, or objects to their animal- or tree-named matrilineal sections, or still identifying these objects with the sectional ethnonyms themselves, like *Ranenawa*, “people of the beads”). The mythical-musical logic is clear: if humans are made of vegetable and animal creational substances, the *-nawa* peoples and the persons who emerge as such are

subject to an arboreal, animal, etc. onomastics. The created peoples are other-becoming beings, and not simple *yora*-bodies subscribing to a specific ethnic or cultural identity: their self-attributed ethnicity is due to their *nawa*-nature and to the related *moka*-quality, to a human status that entails a wild-foreign state. For the Marubo, to be human is to partake of a tree or an animal; for to be one is to be another, to be is to other.

Now we shall examine how creational substances convert into *mokanawa* humanity, and proceed later toward an explanation of how this conversion relates to the correlate processes of human acquisition of name, language and ornament. The synchronic relations of animals and plants with the respective substances will be first placed in the diachronic temporality of *saiti* lines, the whole chronological order in which they appear throughout *Mokanawa Wenia*, and then will be taken as particular cases. The first row in the table below lists all creational substances, with the respective animals and plants underneath. The numbers in parenthesis beside animal and plant indicate the precise verses where each occurs for the first time, while the immediate, successive occurrences are omitted:

<i>chinañ-thought</i>	<i>imi-blood</i>	<i>nañko-sweetness</i>	<i>vimi-fruit</i>	<i>oa-flower</i>	<i>recho-sap</i>
<i>awá-tapir</i> (2)	<i>awá-tapir</i> (16)				
<i>rono-viper</i> (29)	<i>rono-viper</i> (39)				
<i>mai-earth</i> (65)					
	<i>tama-tree</i> (81)	<i>tama-tree</i> (88)	<i>tama-tree</i> (92)	<i>tama-tree</i> (97)	
		<i>paka-bamboo</i> (104)		<i>paka-bamboo</i> (112)	
		<i>shono-tree</i> (119)		<i>shono-tree</i> (127)	
		<i>waki-tree</i> (136)			
		<i>epe-palm</i> (147)		<i>epe-palm</i> (153)	
				<i>isañ-palm</i> (171)	
				<i>vino-palm</i> (184)	<i>vino-palm</i> (175)
					<i>aniñ-tree</i> (196)
		<i>rome-tobacco</i> (231)		<i>rome-tobacco</i> (224)	<i>rome-tobacco</i> (216)
				<i>mani-banana</i> (250)	<i>mani-banana</i> (240)
			<i>tama-tree</i> (268)		
		<i>kenañ-tree</i> (283)			
					<i>panañ-palm</i> (293)

Animals, plants, and their related substances feature with an approximate

regularity until verse 293, which indicates an abrupt change in the *saiti* toward the end of its 390 verses. Before that, the infallible succession of *awá-tapir* / *rono-viper* / *mai-earth* / *tama-tree* / *paka-bamboo* / *shono-tree* / *waki-tree* / *epe-palm* / *isañ-palm* / *vino-palm* / *aniñ-tree* / *rome-tobacco* / *mani-banana* / *kenañ-tree* / *panañ-palm* indicates that the distribution of the respective substances among these animals or trees follows a certain linear order: there is no interpolation to the successive series except for the *tama-tree*, which appears as late as in verse 268. The *tama-tree* is also the term that has the widest distribution among creational substances (the chant features *tama imi-blood*, *tama nañko-sweetness*, *tama vimi-fruit*, *tama oa-flower*), which points to the pivotal character of *tama* as a generic “arboreal category”, and coheres with the fact that such a category constitutes the aforementioned grounding of the prototypical *yové-spiritual*, intermediate abode (*tama shavaya*). And following the succession of “human-creational” animals and plants in the myth-chant, the linear chronology of substances would be in a corresponding order: animal-earthly *chinañ-thoughts* and *imi-blood*, *imi-blood* and *nañko-sweetness* of plants, and then plant-fragments, that is, *vimi-fruit*, *oa-flower*, *recho-sap*. Let us look at these creational substances more or less in this order, in the way that the *saiti* phrases it.

In preparation for the *wenia-emergence* of the *moka* peoples, chthonic creation is full of “thoughts” (*chinañ*) and pervaded with “sweetness” (*nañko*). Both are phrased in *saiti* verses as creational substances “put into place there”, i.e. as *chinañ oso atoñsho* (in verses 2, 31, 66) and *nañko oso atoñsho* (in 88, 104, 119, 136, 147, 231, 283), which could mean the “spatial thoughts” or the “sweetness of the [originating] site”. The difficult translation of these lines results

from the apparent senselessness of assigning a spatial character to something that is usually human breath-thoughts (*chinañ*), or assuming the inherent sweetness (*nañko*) of the origins of humans. Still *chinañ* and *nañko* are creational substances in more than a figurative sense: they conform to a theory of creation that envisages humanity and the world in a mutual perceptual genesis. Further, much as *chinañ* allows for several layers of meaning beyond that of “breath-thoughts”, “sweetness” is an oversimplification of a semantic-laden word: *nañko* is also, for instance, one of the several shamanic varieties of *oni* drinks, a type of *ayahuasca* vine-brew mixed with herbs and honey or fruit juice that helps native children to gain weight. *Nañko* is as nutritional as “breath-thoughts” are vital but, as occurs with *chinañ*, the gloss “sweetness” is inappropriate insofar as it takes substantial matter for an adjectival attribute: both substances stand for some sort of perceptual substantiality instead.

Given the serial distribution of the two ...*oso atoñsho* lines along the myth-chant, it is tempting to translate the dual distinction that this recurrent formula presents between “thoughts” and “sweetness”, the two creational substances it relates to, in mere structuralist terms: the two terms would be cultural forms to address a natural discontinuity, since animals have *chinañ* whereas plants have *nañko*. Still if the common and intrinsic “spatial” character (*oso atoñsho*) of these “thoughts” and “sweetness” already dims the contrast between animal and vegetable, the dissimilarity disappears altogether with reference to another substantial correlate of both: “blood”. Pools of blood (*imi veo atoñsho*) of both animals (verses 17, 53) and trees (verse 81) clot on the same ground that sweetness and thoughts constitute without distinction, in a sensorial sense: while still sweet

and thoughtful, creational earth is bloody too.

In fact, that “original earth” whence the original peoples emerge is often not designated: the verbal constructions with the syntagma ...*oso atoñsho* just imply it. “Earthen” or “tellurian” are no literal qualifications of the creational ground, no designation of substance: the ultimate message that creation conveys will be the ontological “spatialisation” of *noa mai* and *mato*, the *nawa*-land of large riverbanks (*noa mai*) and the high forest mounds (*mato*) where the native villages stand. These spaces are both original landmarks that figure elsewhere in the myth-chant and the precise cosmological features that configure the everyday reality of the native world; and in the myth-chant, the spatial substantiality of this original earth is itself blood (*imi*), sweetness (*nañko*) and thoughts (*chinañ*), the nutritional-vital substances that originate humankind. Still these three substantial origins of humans and their threefold provenience (the *awá*-tapir and the *rono*-viper, plus the generic *tama*-tree and its arboreal variants) are secondary to the unitary emphasis on the primeval terrestrial medium they constitute. Otherwise, the stemming of “bitter” peoples (*moka*) from a “sweet” substance (*nañko*) would sound like a “bittersweet” oxymoron, as absurd as animal *chinañ*-thoughts or the *imi*-blood of trees on the ground! Bitter-wildness, *moka*-ness is no more than a marker of *nawa*-alterity here, the “poisonous” potency that creates humanity and the human space, and its palatal taste is as relevant or irrelevant as the simultaneous “sweetness”, “sanguinity” and “thoughtfulness” of all original peoples with regard to their common creational ground. These sense-perceptions are the intellectualisation of humanity in the human space, of the original chthonic nutritional-vitality to which the equivalence of *nañko*, *imi* and *chinañ* refers.

The earth-constitutive relation among these creational substances is a function of their phenomenological “family resemblance”. That is, they associate among themselves through the partial superposition of their respective associations with animals (*awá-tapir*, *rono-viper*) and the generic tree (*tama*), as follows:

- *chinañ*-thoughts → *awá-tapir*, *rono-viper*
- *imi*-blood → *awá-tapir*, *rono-viper*, *tama*-tree
- *nañko*-sweetness → *tama*-tree

This “family resemblance” is locative: all the three substances are *veo atoñsho* or *oso atoñsho*, “in pools” or “in place”, as a grounding. However, these three creational substances exhaust neither the ground-constitution of *saiti* nor all the substantial origins of the emerging peoples, even though they typify both. The myth-chant introduces a further speciation of creational substances in order to account for human *nawa*-diversity, and this could indeed lead to a structuralist opposition, however paradoxical, between “animal origins” and “vegetable ones”. In effect, while the *awá-tapir* and the *rono-viper* remain the single human-creational animals, the arboreal taxonomy of *Mokanawa Wenia* adds eleven other plant species to the generic *tama*-tree, as a completion of the matrix of creational substances: *shono* (“*samaúma* tree”), *epe* (“*jarina* palm-tree”), *isañ* (“*patauí* palm-tree”), *vino* (“*buriti* palm-tree”), *panañ* (“*açaí* palm-tree”), *mani* (“banana tree”), *paka* (“*taboca* bamboo”), *waki* (“*mamoí* tree”), *rome* (“tobacco plant”), *aniñ* (“*tachí* tree”), *kenañ* (“*pente-de-macaco* tree”). Meanwhile, three metonyms of trees (*recho*-sap, *vimi*-fruits, and *oa*-flowers) join the two creational tree-metaphors “sweetness” (*nañko*) and “blood” (*imi*), enlarging the mythical-musical

classification of arboreal substances at the expense of the scarcity of animal ones, which include just the same *imi*-blood and the *chinañ*-thoughts.

Still the meanings of these substantial metaphors and the three added tree-metonyms of human creation might be not so divergent and, of course, this renders the very distinction between “metaphorical” and “metonymic” creational substances quite arbitrary. The generic *tama*-tree differs from the other trees not only inasmuch as it is the single arboreal species coupled with *imi*-blood, but also, and above all, in that it is an inordinate category, typical of the mythical-musical vocabulary and imbued with *yové*-spiritual connotation, just like the substantial metaphors *chinañ*-vitality and *nañko*-nutrition. Contrariwise, *recho*-sap, *oa*-flower, and *vimi*-fruit, the three other plant-specific metonyms that the myth-chant introduces with the addition of the eleven arboreal species, pertain to ordinary language, just like these species themselves. Well the *tama*-tree, no matter how inordinate, is also substance-related to ordinary *vimi*-fruits and *oa*-flowers; and the native interpretation of *recho*-sap as a speciated form of arboreal blood, i.e. as a fluid equivalent of *imi*, corresponds to an interesting classificatory distribution along the myth-chant, which shall blur again the opposition between substantial metaphors and metonyms. Since arboreal *recho*-sap and *imi*-blood are equivalent substances, both sharing the original nutritional-vitality of *nañko*-sweetness and *chinañ*-thoughts, the *saiti* presents them as mutually exclusive. Sappy trees do not exude blood and, vice versa, bloody ones do not exude sap: as the table above shows, while the generic *tama*-tree not only has *vimi*-fruits and *oa*-flowers but is “bloody” as well, it does not yield *recho*-sap like the other, speciated trees. The two creational-substantial categories *imi* and *recho* are complementary, and hence

their arboreal referents do not overlap:

- *imi*-blood → *tama*

- *recho*-sap → *vino, panañ, mani, rome, aniñ*

Now if we reduce this complementary classification to one overarching meta-category of “arboreal fluid”, considering the “tree-blood” (*tama imi*) as equivalent to a hypothetical “tree-sap” (*tama recho*), all tree-metonyms, and the additional arboreal species that correspond to them, will maintain a relationship of categorial similarity through *tama*-tree. It is as if these additional trees and the corresponding metonyms added were just poetical devices to enlarge the relational range between the emerging humanity and the arboreal substances of creation. The *tama*-tree will be the one category that encompasses all specific trees since, apart from being a “generic tree” in myth-music, it relates to all arboreal substances that occur in this *saiti*: besides *nañko*-sweetness, it associates not only with substantial *vimi*-fruits and *oa*-flowers but, through the *imi* blood-metaphor, with *recho*-sap as well. This means that all creational substances, both arboreal and animal ones, both “metonyms” and “metaphors” will have “something in common” through the generic *tama*-tree. This will be the pivotal term that connects the threefold substantial sub-classification of trees (*vimi, oa, recho*) with the category of *nañko*-sweetness, and the one that, through *imi*-blood, connects all these arboreal substances to *chinañ*-thoughts, the animal-exclusive creational substance. Hence, an overall phenomenology of family resemblance obtains throughout all sets of creational-substantial equations, between metonymical and metaphorical substances, between plants and animals, overcoming the paradox between a

multiple arboreal-animal speciation of human origins on the one hand, and the common earth-provenance of all *mokanawa* humans on the other. The list below summarises the equations between all creational substances and their respective plants or animals, underlying the arboreal and animal species that bring out the overall substantial resemblance:

- *vimi*-fruit → *tama*
- *oa*-flower → *tama*, *shono*, *rome*, *paka*, *epe*, *vino*, *mani*,
isañ
- *imi*-blood and *recho*-sap → *tama*, *aniñ*, *rome*, *panañ*, *vino*, *mani*
- *nañko*-sweetness → *tama*, *shono*, *rome*, *paka*, *epe*, *waki*, *kenañ*
- *imi*-blood → *tama*, *awá*, *rono*
- *chinañ*-thoughts → *awá*, *rono*

All creational substances, and the respective vegetable and animal realms, are thus intertwined:

- *nañko*, *oa*, *vimi* → plants
- *imi* or *recho* → plants and animals
- *chinañ* → animals

The Marubo conceive the single cosmic reality that begets their multiple-sectional humanity in the creational-substantial terms of these equations, instead of modelling several totemic templates after one real given. The *saiti* renders this

explicit in those formulaic lines in which each of the creational substances figure: they configure the ontological space where peoples emerge from earth into the world. Both *chinañ*-thoughts and *nañko*-sweetness are *oso atoñsho*, “in place”, while *imi*-blood is *veo atoñsho*, “in pools”. Meanwhile, the typical states of *recho-sap* (*avatoñsho*), of *oa*-flowers (*as’ iki atoñsho*), and of *vimi*-fruits (*reoko atoñsho*), as *saiti* lines present them, are three variant expressions that just express the existence of the respective substances “there”. If *chinañ*-thoughts and *nañko*-sweetness are homologous to the specific space where humanity “fits in” (*oso atoñsho*), *recho-sap*, *oa*-flowers and *vimi*-fruits would be contiguous to this space, while blood-pools (*imi veo atoñsho*) are midway between homology and contiguity: they “coagulate” there (*vetxo kaiñ atoñsho*).

These distinct *saiti* phrasings are the native statements that might suggest again a distinction between substantial metaphors and metonyms, through an analogy with that which structural linguistics would call syntagmatic and paradigmatic axes. If thoughts (*chinañ*) are metaphors of animals, sweetness (*nañko*) will be of plants; and if sap, flowers and fruits (*recho*, *oa* and *vimi*) were metonyms of trees, parts standing for the whole, then blood (*imi*) would be an intermediate: a metaphor for trees and a metonym for animals. However, these *saiti* expressions are not analogical figures of speech in the way structural linguistics understands it: according to native phenomenology, all creational substances are both adjectives and substantives, i.e. they indicate adjectival substances rather than being attributive adjectives to some substantial matter. Thus, they do not constitute an epistemology of the real, qualifying and distinguishing between ontological realms; rather, they make up native ontology

itself, with all its epistemological offshoots. In this *saiti*, the Marubo represent such ontology as the chthonic-alechemic creation of humans; linguistic distinctions between metaphors and metonyms could just serve the end of variation and reiteration of this mythical-musical ground.

Further, both animal and vegetable substances are in direct connection with human nomination: naming is coterminous to creating, a reassertion of the creational common-ground, of the substantial continuity between animals, plants and peoples. The names of the created peoples derive from those of creational-substantial animals and plants through the expression ...*ikañ ayavo*, i.e. “[they] have [their] names” or “[they] are [their] homonyms”, a poetical formula that, more often than not, follows the indication of the respective animal or vegetable substance in the ...*atoñsho* lines. The Marubo submit the word *ikañ* to interesting twists of meaning: in *Mokanawa Wenia*, it was glossed as “homonym”, but translators rendered it in other myth-chants as “to ripen a plan”, which relates to nomination as much as our equivalent gloss “thinking” does to creation. Names and ripeness, thoughts and plans are analogous processes of coming into being, which connect animal and vegetable origins to the corresponding human creatures.

Next comes the linguistic stage of the ambivalent process of domestication, a stage that accompanies and follows the chthonic generation of humans whereby humanity is assigned and assigns itself to an ethnonym. This whole process is to be understood as one of mutual approximation, instead of the establishment of ontological partitions among humans, animals and plants; and the ambivalence of this approximation is particularly clear in the human acquisition of the ability to speak, which the myth-chant phrases in two countering directions. Humans both

learn their languages (*vanaki a yosisho*) and have them taught (*atoñ vana yosiñ*) in their intercourse with animals that are classifiable in two distinct genera. In contrast to the animals from whose substances humans emerge, the origins of human languages refer to two species of anteaters (*shae* and *vi*, known in the region as the big *tamanduá bandeira* and the smaller *mambeira*) and several species of birds (the two types of macaw *shawañ* and *sheshe*, and the blue bird *shane*). Originating from anteaters or birds, language is as exogenous as the animal and vegetable substances that ground the origins of peoples. Still much as humans are not engendered out of other beings but become human, i.e. “*nawa*-others” through their ground-constituent creational substances, language (*vana*) does not simply come from non-human entities, but is “that which brings forward” (*vitima*) a mutual relationship, a reciprocal contract that coheres with the alchemic-chthonic nutritional-vitality which comes through animals and trees along the mythical-musical process of *wenia*-emergence.

The embellishment and establishment of humanity in the world is the last movement in this earth-emerging process of “mutual domestication”; and it is not the least significant one. But before we turn to it, let us look at the meanings that the *saiti* of *Mokanawa Wenia* encodes in the message that the original existence and knowledge of humans is not anthropomorphic, i.e. that human names, as badges of their animal-arboreal *nawa*-creation, as well as their bird-anteater languages, do not originate as exclusive to humankind. First, the substances of anthropogeny (thoughts, blood, sweetness, flowers, fruit, sap) that configure the earthen mould in which humanity takes *nawa*-form connect the two extremes of the creation movements, from animals and trees, toward the nomination of

humans. On the animal side, there is a stress on predation (*awá*-tapir and *rono*-viper, prototypical prey and predator); on the arboreal side, the three substantial tree-metonyms are just additions to a key metaphor, a palatal substance (*nañko*-sweetness). Further, the chthonic interrelation between the animal-arboreal substances that give rise to humans obtains through the *imi*-blood of the *tama*-tree and, after this creational substance and all others, the dual composition of *-nawa* ethnonyms codifies the mutual relationship that human creatures entertain with animals and plants throughout that “ontological movement” of creation: humanity is a composite state of *nawa*-transmutation. Now in contrast to this substantial-nominal relationship between humanity and non-humanity, neither predatory animals nor perceptual substances take part in the transmission of linguistic knowledge to humans, in this “epistemological movement” as it were; this is a prerogative of inedible animals, among which birds stand out.

The ontological and the epistemological levels of human creation have a sonic commonality: both the existence and knowledge of humans, both movements from non-humanity to humanity, are inscribed in mythical-musical temporality as successive verbal verses juxtaposed to reiterative musical cells. Still the non-human entities and the respective substances that these movements involve emphasise the distinction between both levels: the creation-onomastic form of chthonic humanisation requires sense-perceptible substances as mediators between the human outcome and the predation-related animal or plant source, whereas the linguistic form of humanisation dispenses with substantial mediation between humanity and the inedible animals that relate to it. The onto-epistemological schema below summarises those parallel movements of mutual domestication

between humans, and animals and plants:

earth	→	predation of tapir and viper, sweetness of trees, animal-arboreal blood	→	human names
humans	→	inedibility of anteaters and birds	→	human language

As a rule, naming acts mark the long series of creation events, and this explains why the acquisition of *-nawa* names after animals and plants is tantamount to their “ripening” (...*ikañ ayavo*), which must necessarily mean the ripening of their creational substances, since human names seal the animal-arboreal substantiation of humanity. Those tellurian substances, which “sound” into being as human names, mediate the relationship of mutual domestication between humanity, predation-related animals and sense-perceptual trees. In contrast, the parallel “linguistic” domestication is unmediated by substances since it is insipid, that is, it includes inedible and non-predatory animals, anteaters and birds. Linguistics is impermeable to onomastics since, between humanity and non-humanity, a mutual epistemology pre-empts the substantial mediation of an ontological mutuality: the list of language-givers (*shae* and *vi* anteaters, and the birds *shawañ*, *sheshe*, *shane*) excludes the name-giving animals and plants which the following table lists with the respective distribution of creational substances. The connection among animal-arboreal provenance, creational substance, and the resulting human name is indicated with arrows:

animal	arboreal		substances		names
tapir			<i>chínañ</i> -thoughts		-
viper		→	<i>chínañ</i> -thoughts	→	<i>rono</i>
tapir			<i>imi</i> -blood		-
viper			<i>imi</i> -blood		-
	generic tree	→	<i>imi</i> -blood	→	<i>tama</i>

<i>mamoí</i> tree		<i>nañko</i> -sweetness	→	<i>epe</i>
generic tree	→	<i>nañko</i> -sweetness	→	<i>tama</i>
<i>samaúma</i> tree	→	<i>nañko</i> -sweetness	→	<i>shono</i>
tobacco	→	<i>nañko</i> -sweetness	→	<i>rome</i>
<i>taboca</i> bamboo	→	<i>nañko</i> -sweetness	→	<i>paka</i>
<i>jarina</i> palm-tree	→	<i>nañko</i> -sweetness	→	<i>epe</i>
<i>pen-te-de-macaco</i> tree	→	<i>nañko</i> -sweetness	→	<i>kenañ</i>
<i>açaí</i> palm-tree	→	<i>recho</i> -sap	→	<i>panañ</i>
<i>buriti</i> palm-tree	→	<i>recho</i> -sap	→	<i>vino</i>
<i>banana</i> tree	→	<i>recho</i> -sap	→	<i>mani</i>
tobacco		<i>recho</i> -sap		-
<i>tachí</i> tree		<i>recho</i> -sap		-
<i>taboca</i> bamboo	→	<i>oa</i> -flower	→	<i>paka</i>
generic tree		<i>oa</i> -flower		-
<i>samaúma</i> tree		<i>oa</i> -flower		-
tobacco		<i>oa</i> -flower		-
<i>jarina</i> palm-tree		<i>oa</i> -flower		-
<i>buriti</i> palm-tree		<i>oa</i> -flower		-
<i>banana</i>		<i>oa</i> -flower		-
<i>patauí</i> palm-tree		<i>oa</i> -flower		-
generic tree	→	<i>vimi</i> -fruit	→	<i>vimi</i>

There are several gaps and redundancies in the column of ethnonyms, as indicated by dashes (-) above: among others, the tapir (*awá*) does not generate a corresponding name, whereas the generic tree (*tama*), as well the *taboca* bamboo (*paka*), lend their names to the substantiated humans through two different substances each (respectively *imi* and *nañko*, *nañko* and *oa*: here again, *nañko*-sweetness is an essential arboreal substance). Nevertheless, except for the *nañko*-sweetness of the *mamoí* tree, which entails the human name of *epe* and not *waki* as expected, and the *vimi*-fruit of the *tama*-tree, an exceptional creational substance that appears as a homonym in place of its arboreal provenance, there is a literal correspondence between the namesake entities, be they animals or plants, and the consequent names.

At last, both the “ontological” and “epistemological” movements of mutual domestication, both the substantial-onomastic and linguistic constitutions of humanity converge in one movement of “beautification”. While creational substances mediate the association of predation-related animals and vegetables

with the created humans, whose languages derive from their intercourse with inedible birds and anteaters, body-adornments mark their settlement in the world and complete the mutual-domestication process through the mediation of “ornamental elements” that, while having animal and vegetable origins, relate to both sense-perceptual predation and inedibility. If animal and arboreal creational substances and their derivative names are mythical-musical symbols of the chthonic origins of humanity, of the nutritional-vitality of earth made human body through substantial animation, ornaments are the resulting synthesis of this world-humanisation: humans are the hybrid outcome of a zoo-botanical genesis.

As with the human acquisition of names and languages, *Mokanawa Wenia* expresses the distinction between the symbolic emergence of humans from earth and their synthetic embellishment-establishment in the world on a categorial basis: creational substances and ornamental elements, while having the common animal-arboreal provenance, pertain to sets of animals and plants that are almost altogether different. But unlike the absolute categorial incompatibility between the endowment of names and languages, the taxonomic expression of the distinction that the *saiti* draws between creation and ornamentation is a concentric relation: the latter encompasses the former. If native linguistics and onomastics are two conceptual poles that exclude each other, ornamental elements are inclusive: ornamentation relates both to animals and plants from whose creational substances humanity emerges, and to those animals which endow language to humans.

This means that, on the one hand, all language-givers except for the *vi* anteater originate ornamental elements as well (i.e. some ornaments derive from *shawañi*, *sheshe*, *shane*, and *shae*). On the other, even though there is a less direct

congruency between creation and ornamentation, there are for sure more important similarities than the fact that both *saiti* movements require substances or elements as mediators between humanity and non-humanity. Apart from some common vegetable sources (the palm-trees *panañ* and *epe*) for both creational substance and ornamental element, the distinction that the myth-chant presents between the animality that gives rise to creation (tapir and viper) and that which produces ornamentation (jaguar and monkey, sloth and anteater, etc.) is rather nominal. After all, the latter animality includes the same predation-quality that characterises the former, along with the same inedibility that qualifies language-giving animals. This means that, although ornamentation is no substantial symbol of creation, ornaments synthesise the humanising effect of both the movements of substantiation-nomination and those of language-endowment, i.e. the effect of the mythical-musical vectors that come from earth and are directed to the world. The embellishment of the emergent humanity is the synthesis of a symbolic chthonic emergence that results in the terrestrial establishment of humans. If humanity is the outcome of the ground-constituting movements of animal-arboreal predation-percepts, the outgrowth of animals and plants concurs with its aesthetic settlement on land. If animal-arboreal creational substances are agents of fertile humanisation, ornamental elements like tails and teeth of animals, stems and sprouts of plants are objects of the subjective agency of humans. Embellishing is the final act of the mutual domestication movements that, from earth, convolve humanity and non-humanity: without ornaments of animal and vegetable origin, there is no human dwelling in the world.

The distribution of ornaments and ornamental elements, listed below in

relation to the animals and trees that originate them, shall make clearer the conceptual continuity that the myth-chant establishes between creation and ornamentation, between symbol and synthesis:

animal	arboreal	elements	ornaments
<i>shae</i> -anteater		→ <i>ina</i> -tail	→ <i>papiti</i> -dorsal ornament
<i>isko</i> -bird		→ <i>ina</i> -tail	→ <i>shañpati</i> -frontal garment
<i>shawañ</i> -macaw		→ <i>ina</i> -tail	→ <i>txipañti</i> -posterior garment
<i>shawañ</i> -macaw		→ <i>ina</i> -tail	→ <i>keo</i> -labial ornament
<i>shawañ</i> -, <i>kayoñ</i> -, <i>kana</i> -macaws		→ <i>ina</i> -tail	→ <i>tene</i> -headdress
<i>kayoñ</i> -, <i>kana</i> -, <i>sheshe</i> -macaws, <i>txere</i> -parakeet, <i>vawa</i> -parrot,			
<i>osho</i> -crane, <i>isko</i> -bird		→ <i>ina</i> -tail	→ <i>maiti</i> -, <i>soromaiti</i> -headdresses
<i>txere</i> -parakeet		→ <i>sheta</i> -tooth	→ <i>tashekiti</i> -ankle band
<i>naiñ</i> -sloth, <i>kamañ</i> -jaguar, <i>iso</i> -monkey		→ <i>sheta</i> -tooth	→ <i>tewiti</i> -necklace
<i>shawañ</i> -macaw		→ <i>sheta</i> -tooth	→ <i>rane</i> -bead
<i>shae</i> -anteater		→ <i>rani</i> -down	→ <i>shañpati</i> -frontal garment
<i>shane</i> -bird, <i>kayoñ</i> -macaw		→ <i>rani</i> -down	→ <i>maiti</i> -, <i>soromaiti</i> -headdresses
<i>vawa</i> -parrot		→ <i>rena</i> -facial down	→ <i>soromaiti</i> -headdress
<i>voñto</i> -snail		→ <i>kesha</i> -shell	→ <i>romoshe</i> -nostril ornament
<i>piñtxo</i> -palm		→ <i>shañko</i> -sprout	→ <i>maiti</i> -headdress
<i>epe</i> -palm		→ <i>shañko</i> -sprout	→ <i>initi</i> -straw band
<i>piñtxo</i> -, <i>panañ</i> -, <i>pani</i> -palms		→ <i>eshe</i> -seed	→ <i>rane</i> -bead
<i>shepañ</i> -palm		→ <i>sheo</i> -needle	→ <i>romoshe</i> -nostril ornament
<i>voa</i> -palm		→ <i>kanase</i> -stem	→ <i>keo</i> -labial ornament
<i>pani</i> -palm		→ -	→ <i>vatxi</i> -skirt
<i>rome</i> -tobacco		→ -	→ <i>pei</i> -leaf (to suck)

The table above further testifies that, contrary to the naming-creating of the *mokanawa* peoples, their body-ornamentation is not opposed to the learning and teaching of their languages. On the contrary, the animal and arboreal ornaments connote predation but inedibility as well, blurring the distinction that excludes the bestowal of languages from the creation of and assignment of names to humans, that is, that which distinguishes between their acquisition of knowledge and their coming into being.

On the other hand, the concentric inclusion of animal and plants relating to the symbolic substances of creation-nomination among those that relate to the synthetic elements of ornamentation is an elaboration of the widest humanising direction of the *saiti*, that is, that which directs the emergent humanity from the

earth that is to the world that becomes. While creational substances (thoughts, sweetness, etc.) are the metaphors and metonyms of animals and plants which constitute human bodies — or, better said, the ontological basis of the animal-arboreal fragmentation-combination which constitutes the grounding of the *wenia*-sprouting of humanity —, the ornamental elements (tails, stems, etc.) that derive from similar animals and plants are prosthetic bodily sprouts. From the originating earth surface to the originated body skin, the human coming into being is a symbolic and synthetic ontological arrangement of a humanised world: humans sprout on the earthen substances of animals and trees, while the sprouts from animals and trees substantiate upon a worldly humanity. Animal-arboreal substances and elements conform to the *yové*-reiteration of the *saiti* musical cells, from which humans come into existence and acquire names and ornaments; but from this conjunction of ontological origins, it is the *yochiñ*-successiveness of mythical-musical verbal verses that leads to the adorned end of humanity, settled in the world with animal and arboreal names and bodies. If creational substances and ornamental elements predicate a *yové*-spiritual origin and destination, both incorporate recycling *yochiñ*-double living-matter. Divinity is given human form through humanisation movements whose content is a mythical-musical, mutual domestication between humanity and non-humanity.

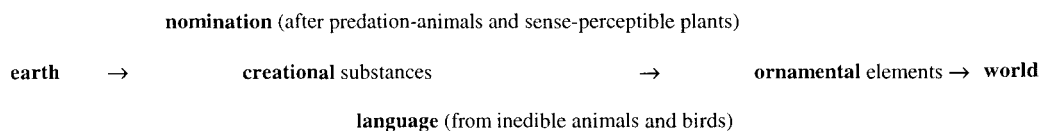
These are the relevant remarks that we should keep for further reference, in this classificatory digression through these animal-arboreal references of the original humanity in *Mokanawa Wenia*. First, the animal-arboreal earthly origins of the *nawa*-creatures in their *yové*-originated and *yové*-destined process of world-humanisation mean the mythical-musical inscription of the *yochiñ*-qualities in the

movements of creation, those that ensure a distinctive linear life and allow for a circular birth and death. Second, such inscribed distinction is incorporated from non-human beings and encoded within human bodies: in the psychophysiology of natives, as left and right, eyes and excreta, stomach and shadow; in their myth-chants, as origins and destinations, substances and ornaments, hole on earth (*shoi*) and home in the world (*shavá*).

To end this chapter, we shall refer back to the creation order of the substantiation of humanity as it occurs along *saiti* verses, as the first of the tables above sketches. The *wenia*-emergence movement of substantiation-creation starts with animal-earthly “thoughts” and “blood”, and then changes into vegetable “blood” and “sweetness”, plus the plant-fragments “fruit”, “flower”, “sap”. The turning point in the *saiti* series is the conversion of *imi*-blood from animal to vegetable realms. As a confirmation of our previous suggestions, the myth-chant signals this transition as an explicit earth-constitution: right between the respective identification of creational substances with animals and plants, in verse 65, the *saiti* lines describe the *chinañ*-thoughts of the land itself (*moka mai*) producing the creative noises (*pereñ akimane*) that give rise to the *moka* peoples. This confirms the higher relevance of the generic chthonic origins of humanity in relation to specific animal or arboreal substances, or the identity between fertile earth and substantial fertiliser or, rather, the primacy of the reiterative character of creation over its successive variants. Earth is the creational bed of all original substances, irrespective of their animal-arboreal origins, and the originative source of humans, irrespective of their substantial generation, viz. of their ethnonyms. Both non-humans and humans originate from earth, for earth is the creational-substantial

ground for both; but instead of earth mediating a mutual domestication between humans on one side and animals and plants on the other, plants and animals are the actual mediators between humanity and the human world, by means of their metaphors and metonyms, their substances and elements.

The myth-chant represents such general direction from earth as the resultant of the specific movements of humanisation from chthonic creation to settlement on land, from tellurian origin to human habitation, through acquisition of name and language and the establishment of the embellished *nawa*-creatures in the world. The resulting equation below is the summation of all the mutual-domestication movements that involve plants and animals throughout the recurrent progression of the *saiti*:



The mythical-musicality of *saiti* states that, like all forms of mutual domestication, the acquisition of language refers to a *yové*-circularity that, in its interaction with and constitution of humanity, requires the incorporation of *yochiñ*-linearity. This is so even though it does without the animal and arboreal fragmenting and reassembling of the movements of creation and ornamentation, the circular decomposition and recombination of the substantial and elemental ingredients that the linear order of *saiti* humanisation classifies as follows:

- earth origin → **creational** substances (primary mediators)
- world destination → **ornamental** elements (secondary mediators)

Animals and plants stand between the humanising earth and the humanised world: through animal-arboreal substances and elements, that is, through reified forms, metonyms or metaphors of bodies, chthonic sounds form and ornament human beings. To be human requires more than earthly fecundity: the intermediary fragmentations of animals and trees is the means through which humans follow from the primary, undifferentiated ground to the secondary, appropriated land, and hence the classification into primary and secondary mediators. Still, although humans originate in terrestrial emergence, there is no temporal precedence of spatial earth over the chthonic sounds that herald the emergent humanity, of silent space over sonorous coming into being, as otherwise there is, in the humanisation process, a precedence of the animal and vegetable components of the grounding that *saiti* opens before humanity. Rather, dark deep earth precedes the high daylight of the world, but a sounding circle constitutes the temporal line between these two polar spaces. Human creation is a sonorous spatial reification, regardless of the substantiality of the beginnings; it is the sound of the inhuman space made into human habitation. Is “thought”, as a synonymous to “breath” (*chinañ*), less substantial than *imi*-blood or *recho*-sap? The question is irrelevant: the vital-nutritional pulse of *yové*-circularity motivates human creation-nomination through all creational substances, in a true process of making “ripe” (Marubo *ikañ*) rather than making into a “thing” (Latin *res*), for ripeness evokes linear growth and decay, *yochiñ*-ness.

The following schema may best summarise the anthropogenic circular order encompassing the linear movements of creation. They are the reiterative succession that sets the opposite onto-temporal states of the cosmos in between

and around the two spatial poles of the continuum of human creation:

- *mai*, “alchemic earth” → *shavá*, “world clearance”

The arrow indicates alternation rather than causality, ambivalence rather than antinomy. The movements of *wenia*-creation place darkness on the side of earth in opposition to the clarity of the worldly days: one exists as a function of the other. Further, the opposition is as spatial as it is chronological since, as we will soon see, the *shavá*-clearance is the daylight on a temporal scale as well. The ultimate temporal significance of the nether movement to the surface clearance is the creation of linear time in counterpoint with a circular recurrence: the mythical-discursive linearity moves stasis to dynamics, while the same myth-music counterbalances this movement with a musical-poetical circularity. From the establishment of the *-nawa* peoples at home — with their names, languages, ornaments in the *shavá*-clearances of their world, on land elevations (*mato*) and large riverbanks (*noa mai*) — the *saiti* points back to the *nawa*-alien earthly profundity. But these are themes for the next exegetical chapters of *Mokanawa Wenia*.

II.17 poetical formulae

The last chapter suggests that, even though the chant of *Mokanawa Wenia* is not just a verbal-linear narrative of the myth of “bitter-people emergence”, neither does its formal distinctiveness lie in its sonic-musical expression only. There has been some further allusion in previous chapters to the mythical-musical employment of “poetical devices” such as rhymes and strophes, in addition to the

dyadic organisation of the verbal lines and verses in phrases and cells; still, regardless of its formalisation, *saiti* poetry means more than mere conventions of narrative rhetoric. “Poetry” means here the interface between verbal content and musical form, between the verbal message of the myth-chant and its musical intonation. Mythical-musical poetry is the analytical idiom that synthesises the overall succession of verses along the reiteration of the *saiti* cells; it configures the verbal structures that formulate the mythical-musical “story” in a formulaic code that, as the next chapter will summarise, relates to the structural dualities of the intoned form.

As with the native conceptualisations presented in the previous part, the difficulty in giving a literal rendering for most of the mythical statements chanted in *saiti* leads to an inevitable profusion of glosses. The recurrent formulae presented in this chapter and in the next one are the extreme cases of verbal repetition in the myth-chant of *Mokanawa Wenia*, and the multiple translations below are an insufficient compensation for this repetitive insistence. However, it would be even more unsatisfactory not to consider the higher relevance of these insistent lines and verses vis-à-vis the entire narrative. Going through the whole text of the *saiti* in this thesis is not only impossible but unproductive, as far as its aims are concerned: we aim at a selective choice that focuses on the textual fragments whose high recursion is comparable to that of the musical structure. Our focus is on those poetical formulae that configure the closest verbal counterpart to the sonic structures of musical phrases and cells; for any translation that does not take the particular formal character of native myth-music as a single structural whole, as both musical and verbal, as both poetical and sonic, is bound to be

beside the mark.

Those recursive line-clusters are privileged situations for examining the relation between text and sound: if there is room for teleology in *saiti*, the purpose of verbal repetition is to achieve a parallel effect with musical reiteration, that is, to relate the mythical narrative in verses to the temporal dialectics of circularity and linearity that the dyadic cell puts across. Text and sound are side by side in the archaeological search for ontological origins in the myth-chants. Contrariwise, the sounds of the mythical-musical words that relate human beings and entities in the native world have no functional purpose. The mythical-musical form of *saiti* is of no utilitarian use; or, at least, it is less meaningful as a full-fledged fulfilment of a final function, e.g. as a more or less arbitrary “symbolic instrument” in support of a sociocultural form of being, than as the institution of a historical potentiality for the Marubo to become. The *saiti* does not portray the purposeful model of an ideal humanity, for here humanity is original, as all that is *nawa*: it is the “prototypical other” rather than a “teleological self”, and the *saiti* myth-chants search such archaeological origins of an alien humanity in the ever-changing native world. At each historical moment, the Marubo will become that other that they decide humanity was.

Before exploring the temporal meanings of native mythical-musical origins, which are nothing but a construal of the “sonic stress” that the Marubo put on their myth-music and on the words therein, we will sum up the narrative of *Mokanawa Wenia* in respect of the relations between the human emergence it describes and the humanisation process that emerges through its movements. Here we will present the bare skeleton of the *saiti* through its main poetical formulae, those that

figure with higher constancy and order in respective association with the threefold direction of humanisation that characterises the myth-chant and its onto-epistemological taxonomies, viz. the three movements that associate animals and plants with the emergent humanity. In short, this chapter will interpret some of the formulaic expressions of those alchemic-chthonic movements which humans perform from earth toward the humanised world in myth-chant poetics: first, human creation and acquisition of name through creational substance; second, the endowment of language; third, their embellishment through ornamental element. The chapter above presented several tables that listed the taxonomic peculiarities of the animal-arboreal origins of these three movements. Now the tables below put them within the textual context of the myth-chant, the poetical form that will allow for a deeper exegesis of its verbal structure in this and in the next chapter. The verse numbers precede each sequence of lines, in the order they appear in the *saiti* of *Mokanawa Wenia*:

creation	language	ornament
2.	<i>moka awá chinañ / chinañ oso atoñsho</i>	4-5-6. <i>ato aya weni / moka shawañ ina / atoñ teneao a / shavá raka ini</i> 7. <i>moka pani vatxi / shavá raka ini</i>
	10-1.	<i>moka shae vana / vana vin' aya</i>
15-6-7-8.	<i>wa noa mai / pereñ akimane / moka awá imi / imi veo atoñsho / moka awa imi / vetxo kaiñ atoñsho</i>	12-3. <i>moka voa kanase / atoñ keoao / shavá rakaraka</i> 19-20. <i>moka piñtxo eshe / atoñ raneao / shavá rakaraka</i> 23-4. <i>moka shawañ ina / aweñ ina iñkeshe / atoñ txipañ iti / shavá rakaraka</i>
	27.	<i>moka shawañ vana / vana vin' aya</i>
30-1.	<i>moka rono chinañ / chinañ oso atoñsho / rono ikañ ayavo</i>	33-4. <i>moka voa kanase / atoñ keoao / shavá raka ini</i> 35-6. <i>moka naiñ sheta / atoñ tewit'ao / shavá raka ini</i>
39.	<i>moka rono imi / vetxo kaiñ atoñsho</i>	42-3. <i>moka isko ina / atoñ mait'ao / shavá raka ini</i> 44-5. <i>moka shawañ ina / atoñ keoao / shavá rakaraka</i> 47. <i>moka pani vatxi / shavá rakaraka</i> 48-9. <i>moka voa kanase / atoñ keoao / shavá rakaraka</i>
53.	<i>moka rono imi / imi veo atoñsho</i>	57. <i>noa vi vana / vana vin' aya</i>
		61-2. <i>moka isko ina / atoñ shañpa iti / shavá rakaraka</i>
64-5-6.	<i>wa noa mai / pereñ akimane / moka mai chinañ / chinañ oso atoñsho</i>	70-1-2. <i>ato aya weni / moka kana ina / atoñ mait'ao / shavá rakaraka</i> 76-7. <i>moka naiñ sheta / atoñ tewit'ao / shavá rakaraka</i>
78.	<i>moka mai chinañ</i>	
81-3.	<i>moka tama imi / imi veo atoñsho / tama ikañ ayavo</i>	85. <i>moka sheshe vana / vana vin' aya</i>

- 88-9. *moka tama nañko / nañko oso atoñsho / tama ikañ ayavo*
92-3. *moka tama vimi / reoko atoñsho / vimi ikañ ayavo*
94-5. *moka osho ina / atoñ mait'ao / shavá raka ini*
97. *moka tama oa / reoko atoñsho*
99. *moka shane rani / soromait' yavo*
102-3-4-5. *wa noa mai / pereñ akimane / moka paka nañko / nañko oso atoñsho / paka ikañ ayavo*
107. *moka txere ina / ina mait' yavo*
109-10. *moka kamañ sheta / atoñ tewit'ao / shavá raka ini*
112-3. *moka paka oa / as' iki atoñsho / paka ikañ ayavo*
116. *moka paka oa / as' iki atoñsho*
118-9-21. *noa mai tsakasho / wa nipa kawa / moka shono nañko / nañko oso atoñsho / shono ikañ ayavo*
122-3. *moka osho ina / atoñ mait'ao / shavá rakaraka*
127. *moka shono oa / as' iki atoñsho*
129-30. *moka sheshe ina / atoñ mait'ao / shavá rakaraka*
133-4-6-8. *noa mai tsakasho / wa nipa kawa / moka waki nañko / nañko oso atoñsho / epe ikañ ayavo*
139-40. *ato aya weni / moka panañ eshe / atoñ raneao*
146-7-51. *noa mai tsakasho / wa nipa kawa / moka epe nañko / nañko oso atoñsho / epe ikañ ayavo*
148-9. *moka shawañ ina / atoñ teneao / shavá rakaraka*
153. *moka epe oa / as' iki atoñsho*
159-60-1. *noa mai tsakasho / wa nipa kawa / kana isañ yora / voto tana irisho / piniki a avaiñ*
165. *moka shae ina / ina papit' yavo*
167-8. *moka shae rani / atoñ shaiñpati' iti / shavá rakaraka*
171. *kana isañ oa / as' iki atoñsho*
174-5-81. *noa mai tsakasho / wa nipa kawa / moka vino recho / recho avatoñsho / vino ikañ ayavo*
177-8. *moka kana ina / atoñ teneao / shavá rakaraka*
184. *moka vino oa / as' iki atoñsho*
187-8. *moka txere ina / atoñ mait'ao / shavá rakaraka*
191-2. *ato aya weni / moka epe shañko / atoñ init'ao / shavá rakaraka*
195-6. *noa mai tsakasho / wa nipa kawa / moka aniñ recho / recho avatoñsho*
201-2. *ato aya weni / moka kayoñ ina / atoñ teneao / shavá rakaraka*
203-4. *moka kayoñ rani / atoñ soromait'a / shavá rakaraka*
206-7. *moka iso sheta / atoñ tewit'ao / shavá rakaraka*
208-9. *moka shepañ sheo / atoñ romosh'ao / shavá rakaraka*
211. *moka shane vana / vana vin' aya*
215-6. *noa mai tsakasho / wa shoko pake / moka rome recho / recho avatoñsho*
218-9. *moka rome pei / atoñ aw'ao / shavá rakaraka*
220-1. *moka vawa ina / atoñ mait'ao / shavá rakaraka*
224. *moka rome oa / as' iki atoñsho*
227-8. *ato aya weni / moka vawa rena / soromait' yavo*
231. *moka rome nañko / nañko oso atoñsho*
236-7. *moka piñtxo shañko / atoñ mait'ao / shavá rakaraka*
240-7. *moka mani recho / recho avatoñsho / mani ikañ ayavo*
242-3. *ato aya weni / moka kayoñ ina / atoñ teneao / shavá rakaraka*
244-5-6. *moka kayoñ ina / aweñ ina iñkeshe / atoñ mait'ao / shavá rakaraka*
250. *moka mani oa / as' iki atoñsho*
255-6-7. *noa mai tsakasho / wa nipa kawa / awá tama yora / voto tana irisho / piniki a avaiñ*
259-60. *ato aya weni / moka pani eshe / atoñ raneao*
265-6. *moka epe shañko / atoñ init'ao / shavá rakaraka*
268. *moka tama vimi / reoko atoñsho*
271-2. *moka kayoñ ina / atoñ teneao / shavá rakaraka*
275-6. *moka voñto kesho / atoñ romosh'ao / shavá rakaraka*
277. *moka pani vatxi / shavá rakaraka*
280-1-2. *noa mai tsakasho / wa nipa kawa / moka kenañ vema / voto tana irisho / piniki a avaiñ*
283-4. *mokañ kenañ nañko / nañko oso atoñsho / kenañ ikañ ayavo*
286-7. *moka osho ina / atoñ mait'ao / shavá rakaraka*
292-3-300. *noa mai tsakasho / wa nipa kawa / moka panañ recho / recho avatoñsho / panañ ikañ ayavo*
296-7-8. *ato aya weni / moka shawañ sheta / atoñ raneao / shavá rakaraka*
305-6-7. *noa mai tsakasho / wa nipa kawa / rovo kenañ vema / voto tana irisho / piniki a avaiñ*
309-10-1. *ato aya weni / moka txere ina / atoñ mait'ao / shavá raka ini*
312. *moka txere sheta / tashekiti aya*
314-5. *ato aya weni / mokañ isko ina / atoñ mait'ao / shavá rakaraka*
364-5. *ato aya weni / moka shane rani / atoñ mait'ao / shavá raka ini*

Before going into detail in the translation of each sequence of lines, let us

retain the main message of the myth-chant. The resultant of the poetical-formulaic relations that humans entertain with non-humans — an engagement that the *saiti* translates in the threefold succession which the three columns above distinguish, i.e. as their own mythical-musical creation and nomination, as their acquisition of language and embellishment — are constructs of selfhood and otherness that cohere with the construction of a native habitation in the world. While the Marubo codify the connections between these onto-epistemological constructs and the consequent construction of their cosmos in their personal and sectional names, their *saiti* myth-chants formulate these same connections in the threefold direction of the earth of creation moving toward the world of humanisation. These movements are expressed in the combinations of animal-arboreal elements with the embellishment of humanity; in the intercourses with birds and anteaters whence human languages come; and in the non-human creational substances that generate the emergent peoples with their names. However, before the taxonomic peculiarities that characterise each movement can acquire an onto-epistemological, i.e. musical-temporal significance, the myth-chant must give their overall direction through its poetical framework. Let us look again at these three movements, now diverting our focus from their formulaic variants — to wit, those animal-arboreal taxonomies that qualify the associations between an earth-emergent world and the emergence of humanity — toward the poetical structure of the formulae themselves.

The schematic summary above includes all the animal or arboreal creational substances, language-givers and ornamental elements that the previous chapter introduced and classified in tables. Now we are concerned with the recurrent

character of these canonical *saiti* formulae, whose higher importance vis-à-vis their variation has already been attested in the last chapter. After the deduction of all variant plants and animals and their respective substances and elements from the line-sequences, the three movements of creation-emergence, language-endowment, and ornament-embellishment reduce themselves to the poetical paradigms below. Some minor formulaic variations are indicated in parenthesis:

creation	language	ornament
<i>wa noa mai / pereñ akimane</i>		
<i>noa mai tsakasho / wa nipa kawa (wa shoko pake) / (moka)... yora (vema) / voto tana irisho / piniki a avaiñ</i>		
<i>moka... / ...atoñsho</i>		
<i>...ikañ ayavo</i>	<i>moka... vana / vana vin' aya</i>	<i>ato aya weni / moka... / atoñ... ao ('yavo) / shavá raka...</i>

As we now can see, the direction of the three movements of the myth-chant points indeed to more than a pure discursive linearity, not only from a musical perspective but from the viewpoint of its verbal structure as well. In its most condensed form, the *saiti* poetics summarises these three movements as the “*moka*-bitter *weni*-emergence of the *nawa*-peoples”, as *Mokanawa Wenia* phrases it in its most reiterative lines (*mokañ vake nawavo / nawa weni ini*, as the next chapter will explain). Still the more extensive poetical forms of the myth-chant multiply these movements instead, but distributing them as several cyclical formulae along the narrative, as the table below shows in a somewhat artificial series. There the glosses that follow each line entail a more detailed relational organisation of the line-sequences than the previous threefold classification of mythical-musical movements allowed for, and the arrows just highlight this. Now we visualise how the poetical-formulaic actualisation of those three movements differ from each other; and in the rough glosses below we soon see that, contrary to the sequences of lines related to “language” and “ornament”, each “creation” formula complies

with a different sub-stage: that of “preparation”, of “substantiation”, or of “nomination”.

preparation → substantiation → nomination → language → ornament

wa noa mai = “that large riverbank”

pereñ akimane = “it made a noise there like so”

noa mai tsakasho = “upright there in the large riverbank”

wa nipa kawa = “there [it] went standing toward”

wa shoko pake = “there the peel fell off”

(moka)... yora (vema) = “(bitter or animal)... (plant) body (or surface root)”

voto tana irisho = “out there, aside and along”

piniki a avaiñ = “there has been a murmur”

→ *moka...* = “bitter... (arboreal or animal substance)”

→ *...atoñsho* = “(creational substance)... (in place, spread) out there”

→ *...ikañ ayavo* = “(an animal or plant) homonym [they] have”

→ *moka... vana* = “bitter... (bird or anteater) language”

→ *vana vin' aya* = “[they] have the wish to bring the language”

→ *ato aya weni* = they have in emergence”

→ *moka...* = “bitter... (arboreal or animal element)

→ *atoñ...ao ('yavo)* “their... (a true ornament have)”

→ *shavá raka...* = “[in the] lying clarity... (adorned)”

In the course of our taxonomic study of this myth-chant, we have already singled out the formulae of two of these sub-stages of creation. The previous chapter showed how the substantiation of human creation is the outcome of several combinatory variants of the six different creational substances and the fourteen arboreal-animal correlatives listed in the tables therein, and how the nomination of the emergent peoples follows from the correlative animals and trees, sealing such consubstantiality with homonymy. The translations of the *saiti* line-formulae of creation-substantiation and creation-nomination have been presented thus: the expressions ending with *...atoñsho* translate an “ontological spatialisation”, i.e. the constitution of a creational space “there” (*atoñsho*), while the lines with *...ikañ ayavo* express the “possession of homonymy”, which is a figurative “ripening” (*ikañ*) of that ontological space where all the animal-arboreal substances lie, as its constituents.

In the translations of these formulaic expressions, we were then concerned

with the means for animal and arboreal mediation in the earth-emergence of humanity and in the humanisation of the world; now our concern is the very chthonic character of such emergence, as the constitution of that space where the human and the non-human are made one. Humans are chthonic creatures whose transitional movements from earth into the world are not spontaneous but mediated: the emergent peoples are formed out of a configuration of animal- and tree-substances. However, regardless of the specific animal or plant that gives rise to a chthonic humanity, this generic speciated substantiality of the earth is the true alien common-ground of the creational mediation that overcomes an undifferentiated chaos. Then, of course, the word “substance” assumes a loose sense with reference to the *saiti* myth-chants. There, “creational substances” refer to excrescent attributes of those animals and plants; it is a means to identify those “things” that constitute the earth with an arboreal-animality that, through chthonic alchemy, transforms itself and triggers the emergence of humanity and of the human world, and nominates both in this process. Now if the Marubo world is not an objective construction, but rather an “other-compost” on earth that precedes the constitution of the “ethnic-self”, such creation-nomination cannot be subjectively construed. The myth-chants are that which inscribes the cosmic topography of the native world as a given on earth; therefore, as these *saiti* formulae specify, the generic creation and nomination of peoples lack the specific creating and nominating agency of, say, such-and-such animal or plant. The emergent humanity is named after an earth-originating, animal or arboreal creation substance; and still, no animal or tree does name nor generate humans, as much as neither humanity nor divinity ever assumes the role of nominator or creator-generator. Much as the *saiti* myth-chants are “a collective domain”, their referents are not the outcome of

any particular individual agency. The indigenous agent in myth-music is its very referent: the generic foreigner, exogenous, bitter and wild.

Still the myth-chant does not simply name these emerging peoples as *mokanawa*, “wild-bitter foreigners”, just because this would be an omission of the multiple *nawa*-speciation of humans based on a animal-tree substantial classification, which happens to be the one definitional socio-ontological trait of the Marubo. The simultaneous generic-specific meaning of this onomastic speciation throughout human emergence — in creation movements that, as seen, are at once non-subjective and non-objective — lies in the preparation of the composite constitution of the chthonic ground before the actual substantial-nominal emergence of humanity.

Along our study of the mythical-musical statements that instate the non-human mediation between humans and the humanised world, we have so far neglected those formulaic expressions that, with less constancy and but with a still lesser degree of variation, precede the poetical formulae that articulate the “substantial” and “nominal” movements of creation. The last table presents those foregoing formulae under the title of an initial movement of “preparation”, that in which some sort of omen announces the emergence of humans from the earth into the world. These creation-preparatory formulae are phrased in the *saiti* in two different two-line sequences: *wa noa mai / pereñ akimane* in some occasions, and *noa mai tsakasho / wa nipa kawa* (or *wa shoko pake*) in others, with the occasional addition of the sequence (*moka*)... *yora* (or *vema*) / *voto tana irisho / piniki a avaiñ* to the latter.

In outline, those two sequences have a similar and simple message: they

indicate the “large river land” (*noa mai*) where “there stands” (*wa nipa*) an occasional “noise” (*pereñ*). Now we shall look first at the additional three-line sequence that distinguishes those two sequences more clearly, in formal terms; for this supplementary distinctiveness between those two formulae of creation-preparation contains in fact a more obvious “preparatory” meaning than their similitude encodes. The three lines that at times follow the sequence *noa mai tsakasho / wa nipa kawa* describe a “murmur” (*piniki*) that keeps coming from around (*voto tana irisho*) the “body” (*yora*) or the “surface root” (*vema*) of certain trees (the generic *tama*, the *isañ*-palm, or the *kenañ*-tree). Further, as with the creational substances that feature in the consecutive creation-substantiation formulae, here too an animal qualifies these trees in an “ethnonymic” guise (the *kana*-macaw, the *rovo*-bird or the *awá*-tapir); or still, in one case, the tree is qualified just as *moka*-bitter, just like the *-nawa*-named peoples who shall substantiate from the creational ground.

Still, this similitude between substantiation and preparation formulae is misleading. These three lines that complement the creation-preparation formulae are indeed close to those of substantiation, that is, to those formulaic sequences (*moka* + animal or tree + creational substance / ...*atoñsho*, as we have seen before) which allow for the consequent nominal identification (...*ikañ ayavo*, “[they] have homonyms”) between the emergent peoples and the animal-arboreal substances of creation. Further, the confusion between the two types of creation formulae is even more conspicuous when the formulaic lines of preparation indicate a native sectional-ethnonymic animal, that is, when the animals that occur in the preparatory sequences are also contemporary denominations of the native

matrilineal sections. This is the case of the *saiti* lines *rovo kenañ vema* and *kana isañ yora*: the *rovo*-bird and the *kana*-macaw are current section denominations among these peoples, the respective *Rovonawa* and *Kananawa*. Nevertheless, in these lines both *vema* and *yora* refer to the animal-arboreal qualification of the origin of humanity, instead of being the human product of chthonic creation. Much as *yora* is here rather an “arboreal body”, the “surface root” *vema* stands for the creational ground of mythical-musical creation, without ethnonymic consequence: the alternative *moka*-bitter qualification of the *kenañ* tree in a similar line (*moka kenañ vema*) does just as well as the *rovo*-bird or the *kana*-macaw.

Here *vema* (something known as *bamba* in Brazil) refers to the spreading roots on the base of the tree trunk, those that show above the ground without detaching from it, like an aerial root does. This is the sense in which this “tree root” is like an excrescence of the ground, and as such constitutes the grounding of human creation, acquiring the same tellurian sense in which *yora* is a “tree body” in these formulae of creation-preparation. In this connection, the conceptual distinction between the *yora*-body of natives, as these formulae now instantiate, and the native *nawa*-humanity, which this whole myth-chant characterises and substantiates in other poetical formulations, must be once more made clear. The former term may be a collective reference to the native first person or an undetermined third-person subject, but its translation as “human” is insufficient: beyond a “body” (*yora*), one needs a marker of alterity (*nawa*) in order to belong to humanity, within the cosmological order of this ab-original world. Hence, since the *saiti*-lines where *yora* and *vema* occurs configure an additional canonical formula to the mythical-musical movement of creation-preparation (viz. *moka-*

bitterness or animality + tree + *yora*-body or *vema*-root), both its first two terms (the “bitterness” or “animality” of “trees”) and the last one (“body” or “root”) are qualifications of the earth that originates humanity, but before becoming *nawa*-humanity. *Voñchiñpa* was explicit in saying that *saiti* expressions like *kana isañ yora* do not refer to “people”; and assured me that, although the myth-chant qualifies the creational ground as *rovo* or *kana*, that is, as homonymous to his own kin-sections *Rovonawa* and *Kananawa*, in fact all the *weni*-emergent peoples in the myth-chant are bitter-wild *mokanawa*, in their origins at least.

Hence in the formulaic lines *kana isañ yora* and *rovo kenañ vema*, for instance, *kana* qualifies *isañ* as the “yellow macaw’s *patauá* palm” just like *rovo* qualifies *kenañ* as the “*japu* bird’s *pente-de-macaco* tree”, instead of being ethnonymic marker (i.e. a hypothetical *Kananawa isañ* or *Rovonawa kenañ*). Further, that which *kana isañ* (or *rovo kenañ*) qualifies is not *nawa*-people, as the natives reassure us; here *yora* (or *vema*) means the “bodily quality” (or the “excremental character”) of the ground itself, in the guise of the animal-trunk stuck on the earth whence the peoples are to sprout. The myth-chant confirms this later, when the altered repetition of *kana isañ* in another line (*kana isañ oa*, verse 171) equates the *yora*-body to *oa*-flower, therefore relating the preparatory creational ground to the human-consubstantial creational substance, and not to the substantiated *mokanawa* humans themselves. The tree trunk, like the root on its bottom, is an indicator of an imminent sprouting on the murmuring ground, a chthonic milestone which signals that if the upward emergence of peoples originates in arboreal substances, it is also animal-laden.

Along the same lines, the preceding creation-preparatory sequence *noa mai*

tsakasho / wa nipa kawa refers to the grounding whence animal-arboreal substances materialise and prepare *wenia*-emergence, that is to say, to the creational substances themselves. An awkward translation for the two lines would be “upright on the large river land, there it stands”. What stands there? The referent is implicit: the creational ground itself, in the form of animal (or *moka*-bitter) trees! This is why these two lines, which represent this ground as a “large river land” (*noa mai*), appear together in a formulaic configuration that may occur alone, but whose occasional complement is the additional three-line creation-preparatory formula above, viz. (*moka*)... *yora (vema) / voto tana irisho / piniki a avaiñ*. In a joint translation, these additional lines explicitly say: “there has been a murmur out there, aside and along there where stands [the] ‘animal’ (or ‘bitter’) tree body (or surface root)”.

Otherwise, that two-line sequence *noa mai tsakasho / wa nipa kawa* is always an exclusive alternative to the other preparatory formula *wa noa mai / pereñ akimane*, an also twofold combination of lines that more or less condenses the meanings of the extant formulaic combinations of creation-preparation. Our free translation for *wa noa mai / pereñ akimane* is “that large riverbank sounded like so”. Here, the “noise” (*pereñ*) that rises from earth is equivalent to the “murmur” (*piniki*) of the ground-outgrowing “bodies” (*yora*) and “bottom roots” (*vema*) that come out, “aside and along” (*voto tana irisho*) the earth-excrescent trees, those that stand on the same “large riverbanks” (*noa mai*) that figure in the two alternative-exclusive sequential sets of preparation formulae.

The words *tsakasho* (“upright and outward”) and *nipa* (“stands there”), as they appear in the formulaic sequence *noa mai tsakasho / wa nipa kawa*, have no

equivalent in other *saiti* lines, though: they specify the direction of the creational ground. As these words occur in a formula that precedes and prepares the creation-substantiation of humanity, they qualify the location of the creational substance by situating its ground-position “like a tree”, as *Voñchiñpa* says. This is so not only when their subsequent referents are the *yora*-bodies and *vema*-roots of animal- or bitter-qualified trees, i.e. when they precede the additional creation-preparatory sequence, but also when they refer to the position of creational substances like *nañko*-sweetness (in verse-sequences like 146-147-151) and *recho*-sap (e.g. in verses 292-293-300). Not only the fluidity of *nañko*-sweetness and *recho*-sap cannot “stand up” unless these substances “stand for” mellifluous trees, but also unless these trees are ground-constitutive. Unless, in short, those substances and their positional references represent a generic animal-arboreal ground that gives rise to an ethnonymic-specific emergent humanity. This opposition between the animal-arboreal generality of the chthonic common-ground and the specificity of its human-constituent substantial speciation is precisely that which distinguishes between the “preparatory” formulae above and the “substantial” ones — those which, as we have seen before, end with the ...*atoñsho* lines, “...there”.

This distinction is that which qualifies the creational ground of the *mokanawa* peoples with the paradox of a concrete non-human unity that still allows for an animal-arboreal multiplicity, a paradox that is homologous to the native attribution of a *nawa*-foreign substrate to humanity in contradiction of its *nawa*-ethnonymic speciation. Still such a paradoxical distinction is not always clear. In the myth-chant, the generic alchemic preparation of the chthonic grounding of human creation mixes up animals and plants, while the several

substantiations of humanity are specific animal-arboreal variations on this mixture. In the field however, we got mixed-up: this amounted to an interpretative dilemma between the simultaneous generality and specificity of the ground that originates humanity. How would this ground of emergence stand toward the emergent humans, after all?

Another translation instance was to clarify things better. Formulaic differences aside, had our friend *Voñchiñpa* not translated creation-preparatory lines like *awá tama yora* as the “body” of a specific arboreal species (known as *gameleira*), and had he given instead the literal translation “tapir-tree’s person”, we would be indeed tempted to take the *awá*-tapir for a *nawa*-ethnonymic marker, in this example. That is, one would expect that the *awá*-tapir qualified a creational substance, the *tama*-tree, which would in turn nominate the corresponding human creature; and hence, while humanity would be just as variegated as its original soil, it would be more arduous to justify its *mokanawa* commonality of origins. However, as with similar lines in the other versions of this supplementary formula of creation-preparation (i.e. *kana isañ yora*, *rovo kenañ vema*, *moka kenañ yora*), here the qualification (*kana*-macaw, *rovo*-bird, *moka*-bitter) of the respective tree (*isañ*-palm, *kenañ*-tree) is locative rather than ethnonymic: it describes the simultaneous arboreal-animality of the creational ground, instead of naming the emergent humanity. In this example, the reference to “tapir” (*awá*) is restricted to the *tama*-tree itself, and the tree is a “bodily” outgrowth (*yora*) of the creational ground, irrespective of the *nawa*-ethnonymic identity of the humans who emerge from it in sequence.

The sense of this “ground-positioning”, or rather the overall directionality of

creation, becomes even clearer in one particular verse (215) where, in place of the usual *wa nipa kawa*, the expression *wa shoko pake* follows the line *noa mai tsakasho* in the preparatory formula. The literal translation of that variant line *wa shoko pake*, at first sight quite obscure (“there the peel fell off”), might shed light on the significance of all these preparatory sequences that initiate the several movements of the multifaceted creation process, from the *wenia*-emergence of the *mokanawa* peoples from animal- and arboreal-engendered earth until their adorned settlement in the world. The meaning of that line relates to the connotation of cosmic renovation that the literal gloss of *shoko* conveys. It usually means “to peel”, a key emblem of native eschatology as well as an important anthropogenic indication in this *saiti*, although this word appears no more than once in *Mokanawa Wenia* outside the formulaic context of creation-preparation (i.e. in the formula *noa mai tsakasho / wa...*). If “to peel” seems an inappropriate gloss in this context, the single alternative occurrence of that word in the whole myth-chant, in the line *shoko rakaraka* was given a translation in the field that, likewise, does not seem to match its literal significance: “all gathered [settled] together”. In both *saiti* contexts where the word occurs, the line translations obscure the literal meaning of *shoko*; and still such a “peeling” will cohere with its *saiti*-contextual meanings with some congruence if seen in the light of some of the several comments that, in the previous part of the thesis, prepare this mythical-musical exegesis.

As we have seen above, the gloss “peeling off” refers to the skinning of renewed souls, peoples made anew in the threshold to the post-mortem paradise. In native eschatology, *shoko* is re-creation, whereas in the *saiti*, “peeling” is instead a preparatory movement toward human creation (in the line *wa shoko pake*), an

inverse significance that further relates to “dwelling” (in *shoko rakaraka*, for the literal meaning of *raka* is “to lie”, “to stay”, “to inhabit”). Now a consistent parallel between the eschatological heaven and the mythical earth comes to the fore, and a freer and clearer interpretation can be given to the creation-preparatory formulaic quote of *shoko*-peeling in *saiti* verses. The translation of the hermetic line *wa shoko pake*, “that fallen peel”, must follow the alternative meanings of *pake* (“to fall”, or any “downward action”): here *shoko* translates best as the skinning down, standing up and coming out of human beings *weni*-emerging on the large riverbanks. Further, the myth chants the eschatological destination of bodily renovation, in the line *shoko rakaraka*, as the prototypical cosmic establishment of the newborn *-nawa* peoples. Those who emerge from earth follow the direction of mythical-musical movements leading toward their human habitation in the world and, since this is a trajectory of *shoko*-renewal, it is as well parallel to the dangerous *vei vai* path that dead humans traverse toward spiritual divinity.

This celestial parallel is valid to the extent that the mythical-musical lines that demarcate the paths of the terrestrial cosmos, through large rivers and high mounds, configure *wenia*-emergence as circles moving along earth-creation and world-settlement. Then we understand how to be human in plenitude, i.e. to be created, named, adorned, settled as *-nawa* peoples, is equivalent to *yora*-bodily renewal, i.e. to the *yochiñ*-linear return to *yové*-circular divinity. The being and the becoming of these peoples perform a sonorous alchemy, for it is a mythical-musical performance; and myth-music expresses such an alchemic performance as the animal-arboreal chthonic emergence and establishment of humanity into the world. In *Mokanawa Wenia*, the earth signals world-creation by producing general

noise (*pereñ akimane, piniki a avaiñ*), a preparatory omen to sprouting beings on large riverbanks, peoples springing from the original animal-arboreal chaos into life, in movements analogous to those that are to become at human death. Chthonic noises are the first sonic signs of things to come, heralds of emergent beings and the means for the formation and transformation of their world; noises are a preparation to mythical-musical words that in turn are, in the form of circular and linear sounds, a creative and transformative driving-force of the cosmos.

Thus, while mythical-musical creation occurs on the banks of large rivers (*wa noa mai, noa mai tsakasho*), the earth-emergent trajectory of human lifecycles is similar to that of the after-death, inasmuch as it leads such humanity along time, along sonic circles and lines, to its prototypical habitation in that spatial situation which delineates the native world and cosmos at large. What is this location of *wenia*-creation then, whence human beings emerge and where their emergence becomes establishment? *Keninñawa* used to say that *noa* means a wide and deep river, “like the Juruá”. The Juruá River is one of the largest tributaries of the Amazon, possibly the longest. We noted before that it borders native territory in its upper course, and as such constitutes a borderline that has been approached and traversed throughout the history of these natives: it is the *nawa* limit of their world, although these limits have been stretched along time. As mentioned, Marubo-like Indians, probable former co-residents like the Katukina now live beyond its course, and if the natives who people that world today consider large riverbanks (*noa mai*) as foreign land, this is because these rivers have been a favourite access to and from the external domain not only for foreigners but also, and above all, for the native peoples themselves. In the everyday, *noa* means

nawanamañ, the domain of the *nawa*-outsiders at large; and still some *saiti* accounts, such as this original saga of the *moka* peoples, attest that large rivers are rather congenial environments for these *-nawa*-named humans... originally. Unless *noa* is intended there as a mere mythical-musical marker of alterity, like the will-bitter foreignness of the *mokanawa*, large rivers are an original place for all emergent peoples — including those who are now known as Marubo.

Hence, the mythical location of the original *-nawa* matrilineal sections in this specific environment — the banks of large rivers — places again Marubo origins on the ethnic “outside”, a realm that has a necessary historical importance for the internal affairs of these originally *moka*-wild natives. The identification of the Marubo as *-nawa* peoples implies that their adaptation to the sites where they have converged in the past — the inter-riverine, headwater territories —, as well as their present adaptation to a composite ethnic unit concentrated in a single habitat, are indeed the ephemeral fruits of temporal vicissitudes. The *saiti* myth-chants trace one and the same *nawa*-origin in common to all native peoples at the outer limits of their world, and this makes the inner differences that their matrilineal section-prefixes represent less relevant as “ethnic markers” than as a conceptual emblem of the human condition. Marubo ethnonyms do not encapsulate an opposition between animal-tree “particulars” and a *nawa*-human “universal”: *nawa*-ness is the very unitary principle of same-otherness that relates humans to multiple animals and trees and things, irrespective of what these are in particular, thus constituting humanity as a whole. If the *nawa*-land of *noa*-rivers is the original centre of human emergence and establishment, its placement on the rims of the universe traces the limits of native existence on that same mythical-musical

borderline that identifies humanity vis-à-vis things in the world. Hence, it is not fortuitous that *noa mai* have an etiological importance as a cosmic-geographic reference, as the native curing chants render explicit: the *nawa*-outside of the large riverbank is the origin of the human diseases because it charts the finiteness of humanity, here understood both as one's lifespan and as one's ontological condition as well.

So much for the formulae of creation-preparation: along with those of creation-substantiation and creation-nomination, they configure a significant part of the code which draws the ontological limits of humanity through its alchemic-chthonic, *saiti*-formulaic relations with animal and arboreal substances. Along the same lines, the less conspicuous movement that constitutes native epistemology, i.e. that teaching and learning (*yosiñ* and *yosia*) of verbal skills which we find elsewhere in *Mokanawa Wenia*, is a relational outcome of the circular encounter of humans with other living things. The wish for this encounter to be brought into existence (*vana vin' aya*) is that which allows for the acquisition of language from a "wild-bitter" bird or anteater (*moka...vana*). Later on in this same *saiti* translation, *Voñchiñpa* emphasised the ambivalent contrast between the different phrasings for the same action of language-endowment. The *mokanawa* peoples first learn an exogenous language (*vana ki yosisho*) from its non-human source; in sequence, the agency of word-acquisition moves from humans toward the language-givers who teach them the linguistic capability (*ato vana yosiñ*). This two-way motion goes against a view of language as thing appropriated or apprehended: it is an event of exchange, no property, a means for establishing a relationship of "mutual domestication" between humans and non-humans, a skill

that follows from the very constitution of the *mokanawa* condition of humanity: not only “wild-bitter”, but also, and above all, “foreign”.

Now we are left with the formulae of ornamentation. They appear in different versions that always reiterate the diverse combinations of animal- or plant-yielded element and human-fabricated ornament. The myth-chant tends to formulate these combinations in a sequence of two lines: first *moka*-bitter + animal or plant + element, and then a subsequent line that names the respective embellishment in the alternative formulae *atoñ... ao*, “their such-and-such ornament [emphatic]” or ...’*yavo*, “the such-and-such ornament [they] have”. Quite often, another line precedes this twofold sequence, to wit *ato aya weni*, “they have [the ornaments] in emergence”; and even more often, the lines *shavá raka ini* or *shavá rakaraka* close the formula of ornamentation. *Shavá raka* translates in a short statement as “[they] lie in the clarity” or, with the poetical freedom in which native translators often indulge, as “[they] dwell in the clearance”. We shall indulge ourselves in an even freer interpretation of *shavá*, taking it as the establishment of the earth-emergent peoples in the “worldly daylight”; but first let us qualify this important construal with some native exegesis on this word. As a sheer consequence of their frequency, these two variant expressions of *shavá raka* will have a strong and layered significance in the formulae of ornamentation: if the canonical formula *ato aya weni / moka... / atoñ...* occurs just 12 times out of 48 ornament-formulaic occurrences, 41 sequences out of this total will end with either of those two concluding lines¹¹³.

¹¹³ As the table above testifies, the complete sequence *ato aya weni / moka... / atoñ... / shavá raka...* occurs in verses 4-5-6, 70-71-72, 191-192, 201-202, 242-243, 296-297-298,

Here we follow the same procedure that the translation of the formulae of creation-preparation required above: let us look at that which differentiates between the two variants of the *shavá raka...* lines, before examining their commonalities. Here in this case, the difference between the two lines is reducible to a small but significant particle, *ini*, which alternates with a repetition of *raka*, i.e. *shavá raka ini* becomes *shavá rakaraka* at times. *Voñchiñpa* could not give a precise gloss to *ini*; it might well be just an auxiliary verb. However, at the same time he would translate other lines with *ini*, in several *saiti*, as general “embellishment”; it is quite a recurrent word, since to embellish, to name and to create are three favourite mythical-musical themes, issues that are in contiguous semantic fields in that sonic-linguistic context. Here it seems that, more than performing a mere syntactical function, *ini* links original human body-formation to body-adornment.

Native translations suggest that the mythical-musical aesthetics echoes the linear-circular ethics of eschatology, in a temporal semantics that goes beyond mere temporality: a beautiful beginning begets those peoples who direct their destination to the double transience of death and disease through the transformative dangers of the eschatological path *vei vai*, wherein a virtuous humanity is bound to beauty-becoming, spiritual beautification. Indeed, the translator of *Mokanawa Wenia* did not need a direct *saiti* reference to comment

309-310-311, 314-315, 364-365. The first line (*ato aya weni*) is omitted in 12-13, 19-20, 23-24, 33-34, 35-36, 42-43, 44-45, 48-49, 61-62, 76-77, 94-95, 109-110, 122-123, 129-130, 148-149, 167-68, 177-178, 187-188, 203-204, 206-207, 208-209, 218-219, 220-221, 236-237, 244-245-246, 265-266, 271-272, 275-276, 286-287, while the last one (*shavá raka...*) is absent just in 139-140, 227-228, 259-260. The formula occurs in two lines in verses 7, 47, 277 (as *moka.../ shavá...*), the only cases in which ornament and ornamental element are quoted in a single line; and it occurs in its most reduced form, without the first

with some consistency that all emerging peoples adorn themselves just like the souls of the dead do upon their arrival in the paradise of renewal. While *Voñchiñpa* insisted that *shavá raka ini* meant “all, countless (*shakama*) beautiful beings”, he translated the other line-variant *shavá rakaraka* as “...and they embellished themselves”, regardless of any straight sign of a textual mention to “embellishment”!

Any attempt toward a more literal rendering was unsuccessful, despite the wide variety of native paraphrases provided for the two line-variants. We can only assume that by coming to the “clarity of existence”, by “dwelling in the clear”, humans necessarily beautify themselves, to the sheer extent that they become human and humanise the world: mythical-musical embellishment mediates between the alchemic-chthonic origins of humanity and *shavá raka*, its “habitation clearance” or “place of residence”. All the newborn bitter-peoples (*mokañ vake nawavo*) emerge (*nawa weni ini*) with their adornments, as these recurrent lines describe along with the poetical formulae of ornamentation throughout the myth-chant. Therefore, we should not take *ini* for a diacritical marker that differentiates between the two variant lines where the expression *shavá raka* occurs. The “lying ground” *raka*, there where one “is”, is beautiful inasmuch as it becomes human habitation with the emergence of humanity, and in the same sense as *shavá* qualifies this “dwelling” referent as “clear beauty”, as a “clearance embellishment” or an “ornamental clarity”.

The ordinary meaning of *raka* (“to lie”) already relates to a semantic field

and the last lines, in verses 99, 107, 165, 312 only.

(“place of stay” and, metonymically, “forest clearance”) that is contiguous to *shavá*. Thus, *shavá* translates either as “the clarity where one lies” or as “dwelling” just as well. Now we should look for the layers of meaning that the two variant lines share in this very equivocal word, then: *shavá* alone means “clarity”, but the term allows for much manipulation in native semantics. *Vari shavá* for instance, literally “the clarity of the sun”, denotes the time-span of a year. Here *shavá* already gains a temporal connotation. Instead, its adjective form *shavaya* is not used for time but for space, with the same designation of a “dwelling place”. Still *shavaya* is here applicable both to humans and non-humans, to living beings and beyond life, that is, at the various levels of the native universe. The meaning of *shavá* associates the “day clarity” with the inhabited spaces of the cosmos, to the several cosmological planes of the native world, on earth or in the skies, like the cosmic layers *mai shavaya* and *shoko nai shavaya* or the intermediate *tama shavaya* that we mentioned in the previous part of the thesis. *Shavá* refers to a literal “clearing”, as the meaning of the *tama shavaya*, a “clearance of [among] the trees” renders explicit: it is the opening where the *vari*-sun illuminates the existence of human beings and other cosmic entities.

The Marubo posit a homology between all the superimposed terrestrial and celestial layers, the various *mai*-earths and *nai*-skies and the intermediary strata where all living and non-living beings dwell. Yet, these latitudinal levels of existence retain their respective ontological peculiarities. The word *shavaya* gives the universal-homologous common-ground in its significance of “clearance-dwelling”: it is a measure of the humanisation of the cosmos. However, while there is little environmental variation among those cosmic landscapes, since paths

always crisscross all layers of the native cosmos as well as the everyday reality of natives, their respective entities vary in the types of temporal-categorial relations they maintain with humans. This means that the characterisation of the cosmic layers of the native universe takes place in function of their own respective inhabitants, and depends on the association of these with either *yové*-spirits or *yochiñ*-doubles or with equivalent entities. All these layers are spatial, but constitute an interconnected universe which shamans, mythical characters and the dead traverse in music, through the inter-cosmic *vei vai* “path of perils” and other ways. Therefore, in spite of its spatiality, such mythical-eschatological cosmology has a foremost temporal-laden meaning: the network of paths that defines the human-relational cosmic space is traversed through time. The Marubo can draw many figurative depictions of their cosmos upon request; but these are just illustrations that, being visual, do not capture its essential character, to wit, the temporality that is inherent to their myth-music, structures that natives communicate in *saiti* just because they cannot communicate them otherwise¹¹⁴.

The measure of the applicability of this temporal-laden cosmic significance of *shavaya* to its root *shavá* will lie in the etymology of *-ya*, a suffix that could just relate to the verb *aya* (“to have”) but which, at any rate, stands against the meanings of other forms of suffixation in native grammar. While the *-ka* suffix has a pure adjectival function (as in *roaka*, “good”, or *ichnaka*, “bad”), words ending with *-ya* tend to be closer to nouns. A tendentious opposition between substances and attributes should always make the definition of the lexical repertoire of

¹¹⁴ In this way, this mythical-musical exegesis intends to complement the multi-layered description of the native cosmos that Montagner Melatti 1985 features.

shamans, with all its “substantial affections”, quite difficult; but at least in everyday speech, it looks as though *-ka* implies an excellent quality to something or somebody, while *-ya* entails the substance of such quality, irrespective of degree. Still the affixation of these suffixes to qualitative nouns seems to place them in a quantitative gradient: from an adjectival *-ka* to a stronger *-ya*, i.e. a substantial attribution of the essential root. Thus, if the derivative *shavaya* is “that which has [substantial] *shavá*”, this word-root may translate in *saiti* not only as “[solar] clarity” or “[clear] dwelling”, with a strong temporal connotation, but it will be the radical essence of native temporality. Hence, the mythical-musical meaning of *shavá* is beyond the mere spatial sense of *shavaya* in everyday speech, where it designates ordinary, terrestrial dwelling: if *shavaya* has a specific spatial referent, it is no less time-laden in a cosmological sense, and the essential form *shavá* distils this significance in *saiti*. In myth-music, regardless of its specific spatial connotations, *shavá* means a temporality that presupposes a temporal ambivalence that native cosmography represents in the several *shavaya* planes. In *saiti*, the word *shavá* is that which expresses the generic equivocal temporality of the native world¹¹⁵.

Marubo cosmo-topology has temporal implications that tautologically define cosmic topoi, and so does the mythical-musical meaning of *shavá*: the word *shavá* (and in consequence *shavaya*) conveys the immediate presence, a temporality

¹¹⁵ On a weeklong journey undertaken with people from my host village, from the Marubo community of Vida Nova down to the Brazilian town of Atalaia do Norte, life was intense and close together among all those aboard the overloaded canoe. We travelled night and day, slept and ate on board, and were of course always anxious to spot places to rest and hunt and collect some food on the riverbanks. Whenever an abandoned or temporary dwelling was spotted, people would shout: *shavaya*! More than just a “clearing” or a “dwelling”, *shavaya* was the spatial human mark on the horizon that punctuated at intervals

“made present”. *Shavá oma*, an exemplary expression in other *saiti* myth-chants, stands alone for “dawn” as the first daylight, or may translate as “almost daylight”, with no other temporal specification but that of “near clarity”. Still more significantly, in this case the suffix *-ma* may stand for “causation”, instead of its alternative native meaning of “negation”: it will be “that which causes *shavá*”, and here this word can mean “day”, “light”, or even “the daylight that produces temporality”. If that were the case, the etymology of *shavama*, an everyday construction that means both “yesterday” and “tomorrow”, would in turn consist of more than “daylight” + “negative suffix”: it would be a “no-time”! It would literally mean “non-temporal”, and not “not-today”, which coheres with the fact that the ordinary word for “today” is *rama*, whereby natives say *ramase* for “now”, i.e. “truly today”. If the true opposite of *rama*-today is the “absence of clarity” *shavama*, i.e. “time without light”, this expression will be in the end tantamount to an “absent temporality” that more than “not now” is, for native understandings, dark.

The *saiti* myth-chant is, qua anthropo-cosmogony, the creation of *shavá*-light in the double-sense of human-space and world-temporality. The “presentified” present of natives is *shavá*-clear; it is not the punctual instant but instead the instantaneous presence of time in a spatial “there”, and that is truth, since *shavá* is the clearance where humanity and the humanised world become true. It is as if the mythical exegesis of *shavá* brought the same message as the *saiti* musical structures: native time is dyadic, multidirectional and discontinuous, as opposed to the univocal-continuous temporality that we are familiar with. For the

the temporal movement of the canoe on the river. Like a visual chronometer.

Marubo, the most relevant temporal opposition is not between the “before” and the “after”, with the present as an instantaneous negation of time, as much as our view of the “point” as the negation of space should sound extraneous to the native geometry. For them, that which matters is immediacy against temporal mediation, the present “there” that, against the complementary absence of the “not there” (*shavama*), would assert rather than negate their temporality, and thus open a human space in the world, a “clearance”. Hence Marubo time is not a triad past / present / future, but a dual dialectics of clear presence and dark absence, for these peoples become human in *shavá*, the world-clearance that is the instant when all is and becomes: native temporal-humanisation is the circle and the line, a recursive present and a successive progress, the centre and the periphery¹¹⁶.

II.18 circles and lines

If the everyday reality that the Marubo peoples live in the Upper Ituí is the *nawa*-humanity that the *saiti* myth-chants instate as their origins, this reality is temporal; and as such, it points to the historical transformations of the native world. The Marubo perform this transformative reality along time, and so instate their own conception and perception of it in chants, which amount to nothing less than the mythical sense of their own history. Likewise, the significance of the verbal verses of *saiti*, and of the mythical words that natives chant thereby, is the product of an accumulation of semantic transformations along the notes of the

¹¹⁶ Cf. Overing 1995 and Stolze Lima 1999 for a reopening of the debate on time in Amazonia, a discussion that is as critical of the positivism of Gell 1994 as it is undoubtedly indebted to the structuralism of Clastres 1987 [1974], in its groundbreaking exegesis of

musical cells, the intonation of which makes sense of the being and becoming of their form of humanity and of the human world where they live. Of all *saiti* that constitute the raw data for this thesis, *Mokanawa Wenia* is the most formulaic: its verbal narrative consists of poetical formulations that render clearer the cellular circularity to which the discursive linearity of all myth-music conforms. This general feature of native mythical-musical poetics refers to the specific values of the temporal semantics of all Marubo myth-chants; and even if the structural formulation of *Mokanawa Wenia* were not enough reason for us to focus our study on it, its exegesis would have to end up in this fundamental trait of all *saiti*, viz. their circular-linear ambivalence. It is in this dialectical ambivalence that we shall find the analytical correspondences between the mythical performance and its musical-poetical form, the synthesis of the myth-chant as a social and sonic medium.

Mokanawa Wenia narrates how animal and arboreal substances spread as the grounding of creation and stand up “like trees” on the large riverbanks, where the ground rumbles and the substance-namesake *mokanawa* peoples *weni*-emerge and settle on land with the ornaments and languages they acquire in their intercourse with birds and other animals and plants. But the verbal linearity of this mythical narrative is in effect circular, both because it gains a cyclical contour in the recurrent poetical formulae of the creation movements of preparation, substantiation, nomination, as well in those of language and ornament acquisition, and because the original grounding of humanity is the same ground of human establishment: the land of the large rivers. Conversely, this whole creation-

native moral-ontological statements.

habitation circle follows one linear direction from the animal-arboreal earth toward the world of humanisation, a direction that those several sequential lines perform as particular movements from the “large riverbanks” where human emergence takes place (*noa mai*) to the human occupation of the “ground clearance” (*shavá*) on the same land. Thus the movements that *saiti* poetics formulate in cycles of sequences will contain the circular linearity of the direction of human creation. In other words, if this trajectory is on the whole circular, the partial events that compose it succeed each other linearly: these movements follow the circles of emergence-establishment in linear sequences that overlap each other in the poetical form of the formulaic cycles that the tables above present.

Still we have seen before that the reiteration of these cycles and the overall creation-settlement circularity that these sequential movements perform are not the sole, and not even the most important musical-poetical means to formalise the linear narrative of the mythical discourse. The preceding chapters situate all animals and plants, substances and elements that figure in the myth-chant in those few tables therein, organising them in their respective poetical formulae of human emergence and world humanisation; now in order to understand their temporal dialectics, it is time to place all these mythical words in the musical form of the *saiti*. This will result in a synthesis of the mythical-musical narrative with reference to the previous analysis of phrases and cells. The poetical-formulaic structure of the myth-chant has already made explicit how its sequences of verbal lines reproduce, in bare outline, the circular-linear temporality that its musical-cellular structures present. Still, if the main structural meaning of the myth-chant is temporal, the dyadic temporality that the musical-cellular structures set forth

should have a more direct bearing on its verbal-narrative progression than a mere analogical template would. The poetical-formulaic movements that perform the verbal direction of the *saiti* narrative occur in the same temporal-dialectical interaction that the circular and linear phrases within each musical cell of *Mokanawa Wenia* entertain. Such generalisation should not be new to the reader; the new revelation that this final chapter will make is that the narrative direction of the humanisation movements in the entire chant is translatable as a temporal transit from circularity to linearity. In brief, the musical significance of the binary succession of phrases within each recursive cell, from the circular first-half to the linear second-half, is the same temporal message that the 390-fold progression of verbal verses puts into words.

Here there is no scope for a semantic determinism of musical structures over verbal ones, for both cellular and poetical formulae have a formal pre-eminence in *saiti*. The semantic primacy of myth-chants is in the musical-poetical form, for their primary significance concerns time; and if the cell of *Mokanawa Wenia* concentrates a higher semantic potency as regards the temporality of this *saiti*, this is just because its overall meaning lies nowhere else than in the temporal relationships that its dyadic structure contains in the most basic form. This temporal-semantic correspondence between the minimal cell and the maximal structure of the narrative provides the key to the musical-poetical effect that the disposition of verbal verses along the myth-chant produces. The recurrent lines and cyclical formulae that codify the *saiti* direction in its several stages are more than circular arrangements of linear sequences just because it is through their repetition in the dyadic phrases of the equal cells that they become the signposts of the

discursive progression of the myth-chant. The semantic connection between the mythical narrative and its poetical formulae is more than just verbal: the linear discourse of *Mokanawa Wenia* formulates circular variations on a musical theme.

If this statement is still cryptic, the key to it is quite simple. The particular frequencies of musical-poetical occurrence of reiterative lines and cyclical formulae along the 390 verbal verses of the entire myth-chant impart an alternate character to each line and formula, as a sheer consequence of the dyadic form that their repetition in constant cells produces. The distribution of verbal lines along verses locates them within either circular or linear phrases, i.e. in first or second half-cells, and this suffices as a sign of the consistent relationship between the musical syntax and the poetical-formulaic mythical discourse. For in effect, the lines that complement or take part in the sequences that announce the earth-emergent humanity tend to occur in the first, circular half of cells; whereas the second and linear half-cell tends to present a complementary or sequential line that presents emergence as a process toward world-humanisation. This demonstrates an undeniable consistency between the whole verbal narrative on the one hand, which particular lines or formulaic sequences develop along the *saiti*, and on the other hand the maximal temporal significance that the musical cell concentrates in a minimal arrangement of eight tones, which configure four tonal intervals that two phrases oppose in pairs. Much as these two phrasal halves express together a tonal opposition between $G_b \downarrow F / G_b \downarrow F$ and $C \uparrow F / F \downarrow D$ within the cell, the temporal meaning of the whole myth-chant lies in the opposition between the cyclical affirmation of the central tone and its questioning-negative reassertion. In sum, in accordance with their poetical disposition along the myth-chant, the

recurrent lines assume an alternate character of assertive reiteration or progressive inversion, the opposite temporal poles that an invariable musical structure impinges on the verbal semantics of the *saiti*¹¹⁷.

Conversely, beyond the dialectical progression of the mythical-musical poetics, the disposition and distribution of *saiti* lines along sequences of verses, i.e. along time, corroborate at several levels that temporal significance which the minimal cell states with maximal economy in its dyadic-phrasal structure. This chapter will now present the most conspicuous manifestations of these correlations, and elaborate their exegetical implications. Not only the actual verbal-poetical organisation of *Mokanawa Wenia* supports the wider semantic validity of the musical-cellular direction from circles to lines, both vis-à-vis the whole mythical narrative and in view of its partial abbreviation in the most reiterative lines and formulaic sequences, but this direction will also have an obvious bearing on the exegesis of these *saiti* words.

To start with, the maximal-minimal structural homology of the myth-chant is significant in that *Mokanawa Wenia* is divisible in two general sections at its widest level, each with a specific formulaic configuration. The initial section follows the formulaic events above, viz. those of preparation, substantiation, nomination, language-endowment, ornamentation and settlement at last. Then after the recurrence of the respective formulae and a few complementary lines, overlapping with some recurrent regularity along more than three-quarters of the

¹¹⁷ These “musical” and “verbal” meanings correspond to the distinction Bastos 1989 draws in Kamayurá vocal styles between semantic “value” and “judgement”, i.e. *ethoi* and *axia* in Greek. The approach to the interaction of sound and text that this distinction allows for is one of the finest musicological elaborations ever produced in the ethnography of Amazonia.

totality of *saiti* verses, all of a sudden the narrative changes: the peoples cease to emerge but still undergo the process of humanisation, albeit in a different poetical form. Human emergence stops when a couple of new characters, *Oañ Mani* and *Oañ Maya*, makes an appearance in the final section of the myth-chant and summons the emergent peoples to large fallen trunks. There all peoples sit, and the two new arrivals re-endow them with their names and reaffirm their language-capabilities. These renewed movements appear now in different poetical formulae, while a single reiteration of ornament-acquirement follows them in the same formula as before. Now all these formulae succeed each other in a strict sequence; and after this summation of the humanisation movements, the summoning session after earth-emergence leads to the literal journey that the *mokanawa* peoples undertake through the world. The linear course of the myth-chant will complete the circular process of chthonic creation-humanisation.

Then, in particular, the reaffirmation of the linear direction of the circular dialectics of *Mokanawa Wenia* will appear in the formulaic sequences and lines that are a semantic condensation of the partial movements from earth-emergence toward world-establishment. Among these lines and sequences, the formulae that relate to human ornamentation stand out. These are the ones that, in most cases, start with a formulaic reference to emergence from the earth (*ato weni aya*, “the emergent ones had...”) and, after one mention to an animal or arboreal element and another to the ornament it constitutes, end with another reference to the circular settlement of humanity into the world (the “embellishment-establishment” lines, *shavá raka...*). The significant direction of the *saiti*, from circles to lines, comes to the fore in the connection between these sequential formulae and the

other reiterative lines and sequences that associate with them. That these ornamentation-formulae are a summary of emergence-humanisation, i.e. that they condense the verbal-poetical significance of all mythical-musical movements from the earth of emergence to the world of establishment, would already suggest their semantic relevance with reference to the temporality of the whole myth-chant. Now their alternative occurrence in musical-opposite half-cells will confirm this and even more: these formulae, with the lines that relate to them, state the temporal transformations that the *saiti* undergoes and its semantic ambivalences at once.

As preferential samples to conclude our exegetical study of *Mokanawa Wenia*, we will look at these and other lines that recur in the myth-chant. Recurrent lines, be they in formulaic sequences or not, are the most significant operators of the mythical narrative, since they disclose its musical-poetical dynamics in their statistical distribution. A number of these lines were already present in the formulae above; others are even more conspicuous than these, appearing in isolation or in partial sequences, like the *saiti* refrains *mokañ vake nawavo* or *nawa weni ini*; and some still pertain to other formulaic arrangements that we have not seen yet. In the case of isolated lines, i.e. those that do not conform to a formulaic-sequential pattern, the musical significance will be an absolute factor: the predominance of their overall occurrence in circular or linear half-cells determines their respective character. In the case of sequential formulae, the circular or linear character of each line will be otherwise dependent on its relative frequency, either in comparison with the other lines of the same sequence or with similar formulaic constructions. In any case, the temporal meaning of the entire myth-chant, and of

all its recurrent lines, will gravitate around the opposition between circle and line.

The crucial task of looking at mythical texts like *Mokanawa Wenia* qua *saiti*-intonation, at the verbal dimension of the myth-chant within its musical context, is just one among the many projects that this thesis proposes without the intention of an exhaustive accomplishment. Still had we stopped here, our enquiry would be more than insufficient or incomplete: the analytic omission of the mythical-musical synthesis of native words and sounds would have been an inconsistent obviation. Despite any careful consideration of linguistic notions like *wenia*, *moka*, *nawa*, and other relevant words in this myth-chant, or of native conceptualisations like *yora*, *yové* and *yochiñ*, whose respective imports are essential for all mythical-musical understanding, an anthropological neglect of their musical form would be as unsatisfactory as a musicological disregard for the mythical words that natives chant in *saiti*. Both approaches would fail to ask about those who sprout in mythical emergence.

The Marubo chant their origins as “the emergence of the wild-bitter peoples”. However, these peoples do not just come into being in a wild-bitter (*moka*) emergence (*wenia*), nor does their ethnic specificity just derive from a single generic humanness (*nawa*). Rather, natives frame the multiple compositions of their origins in temporal terms, in a musical-poetical framework that, beyond describing specific animal and arboreal components on earth becoming human beings in the world, specifies the temporality of this alien trajectory of humanisation. The Marubo chant their mythical origins in the poetical-musical configurations of *saiti* verses, in recurrent lines and formulae whose cell-phrase arrangements qualify their animal and arboreal emergence as both circular and

linear. Hence, now our inquest asks about the musical-poetical form that will relate these mythical arrangements to the native conceptualisations under study so far. Rather than searching for an artificial “ethnographic totality”, for definite answers in a descriptive final-product, we shall make total sense of the historical referents of native mythology, as well as of the cosmological and psychophysiological references of the native ontology, in the temporal ambiguity of their own *saiti* form. The simple concluding statement that a bitter-wild humanity emerges in the *saiti* form of *Mokanawa Wenia* brings us back to our beginnings: who are the Marubo?

Mokañ vake nawavo is the recurrent mythical-musical refrain that encapsulates many of the traits of the peoples who emerge in this myth-chant: wild-bitterness (*moka*), youth (*vake*), humanness (*nawa*), and the collective character (*-vo*) of the manifold arboreal and animal forms that humans assume in the *saiti* formulae of creation. In effect, that particular line defines *Mokanawa Wenia* in its most general aspects: the gender-alternative *mokañ vake shavovo* (the “bitter women-children”) appears just once, and this disproportion seems to be a sign of the human-generic character of the emergent *moka* peoples. Contrary to its habitual use as a gender-laden sectional-suffix, *nawa* means here an exogenous humanity, a general principle of alterity that is more akin to a genderless qualifier. Here *nawa* is the ambivalent self-other: as with *moka*, its social referent is at once external and internal, disruptive and constructive of an ethnic identity that, although generic, *weni*-emerges in many specific forms along time.

However, that these *mokanawa* peoples do not sprout on their own means more than the multiplicity of their ethnonyms: to put it in the *saiti* words that at

times coincide with the inevitable male-centricity of the *yoya* chant-leader, these peoples emerge from earth “with their women”. The myth-chant states that *atoñ awe shavo*, i.e. “female third-persons of their same [*moka*] kind” follow the emergent *nawa*-humans, but in a much lower frequency than their recurrent assertion in the line *mokañ vake nawavo*, as generic “bitter-wild children-peoples”. A native gloss translates *atoñ awe shavo* as “their sisters”, and still these *awe shavo* are not the literal siblings of the *mokanawa* peoples: the syntagma reads best as *aweshavo*. It reads better in a single word, i.e. as a euphemism for “sister” that in fact means “those who are female”, because what emerges in this line is a social third-party *par excellence*. Here *awe* means “what” or a “thing” (e.g. in *awerá*, “what is it” or “*awemá*”, “nothing”), but also has a pronominal character that indicates a “third person”, and may translate simply as “he or she”. The myth-chant reiterates the genderless commonality of origins of the *mokanawa* peoples, coming in successive movements out from the earth, while *shavo*, the female gender as a potential social term of relation, occurs as a much less frequent addendum. It is as if gender relations were not coterminous to human emergence, for the inauguration of *nawa*-society depends on the subsequent advent of a *shavo*-female third-party.

The myth-chant announces the consummation of both social and gender relations but once, with the single introduction of the mysterious line *vevo aiñ aya* in verse 87, in immediate verbal connection with the lesser reiteration of the gendered form of emergence, viz. *atoñ awe shavo*. The former line was translated in the field as “[their] wives came in front”; still, the sense of “women” that this translation of *vevo aiñ aya* purports seems to draw on the preceding verse, in

which the line *atoñ awe shavo* features. Well, if *aiñ* is the nominative form of “wife” in ordinary usage, *shavo* is its vocative, but with a strong consanguineous sense, since it is a matrilineal section suffix as well; and even though *vevo* indicates seniority, precedence, natives always emphasise the original consanguinity of the emergent *mokanawa* women. Now if *aiñ* refers to a transformation of *shavo*, the latter will be closer to the referent of its sectional-suffix function, “female kin”, than to its function as an everyday conjugal vocative. This means that if the *moka* peoples are generic *nawa*, their original affinity emerges from female consanguinity. Although the literal translation of *vevo aiñ aya* could be “the first [elder] existing wives”, *Voñchiñpa*, the translator, insisted that these women sprout as “their sisters”, as the *atoñ awe shavo* of the *mokanawa*. Are sisters taken as wives or becoming so? The habitual vocative-conjugal meaning of *shavo* should not bias the native gloss: its systematic mythical-musical reference is “kinswoman”. Above all, *shavo* is a kinship-related, sectional-ethnonymic lexeme, a gender-marker that subordinates *aiñ*-conjuality, and under which kin terms such as *txitxo* or *txira*, “sisters” proper, are subsumed as well.

Now it is the very poetical musicality of the myth-chant that states this subordination of marriage to kinship, of affinity to consanguinity, or still of kin terminology to sectional affiliation. In the relative occurrence of the respective lines along the cells of the myth-chant, *atoñ awe shavo*, “their kinswomen”, occurs in 21 verses evenly distributed from the beginning of the *saiti* until verse 276, against one single occurrence of *vevo aiñ aya*, “[they] have [their] first wives”. Most of the times, *atoñ awe shavo* appears in musical circularity: the proportion of

occurrence between first and second half-cell is 13 : 8, which means that the tonal centre of the initial cellular phrase ($G_b \downarrow F / G_b \downarrow F$) tends to assert the presence of *shavo*-women as a gender-differential section-constituent. The two lines occur in succession but in different verses, both in the first half of the respective cell, which expresses in music an equal assertive reiteration. This is no arbitrary coincidence: the announcement of the emergent peoples, be they consanguineous or affine, gendered or otherwise, tends to be the same circular event that precedes the linear direction of their subsequent emergence. Thus the mythical-stenographic statement of the “bitter-wild children-peoples”, in the words of the line *mokañ vake nawavo*, also has a more or less even distribution along musical cells, which in most cases will assert the same circularity. This line ceases to occur 55 verses before the end of the *saiti*, long after *atoñ awe shavo*, and that shall constitute the statistical marker that formally delimits the two stages of *Mokanawa Wenia*¹¹⁸.

We said that the line *mokañ vake nawavo* is a verbal stenography of the *saiti* just in that it represents “wild-bitter children-peoples”, that is, it contains the key words that define humanity in its mythical-musical emergence; but if this is so, such stenography should include the two other recurrent lines that present the verb *weni*, “to emerge”: *ato aya weni* and *nawa weni ini*. These two lines complement the characterisation of the *mokañ vake nawavo*, these *mokanawa* “children-

¹¹⁸ The “wild-bitter *nawa*-children” *mokañ vake nawavo* occurs in verses 3, 11, 18, 25, 32, 38, 40, 54, 58, 64, 66, 78, 79, 82, 90, 93, 98, 102, 105, 106, 113, 120, 125, 128, 137, 152, 155, 176, 181, 185, 193, 197, 212, 217, 222, 232, 233, 238, 251, 254, 257, 269, 282, 285, 290, 294, 301, 303, 307, 316, 326, 335. Its gendered counterpart *mokañ vake shavovo*, the “wild-bitter she-children” occurs in verse 62, and the altered form *kanañ vake nawavo*, the “macaw’s children-peoples”, in 172 only. Their “kinswomen” *atoñ awe shavo* occurs in verses 3, 6, 41, 46, 69, 74, 86, 100, 108, 143, 150, 157, 189, 198, 203, 209, 214, 244, 252, 273, 276, whereas their “original wives” *vevo aiñ aya* occurs in verse 87 only.

peoples”, as earth-emergent. We have already come across one of these “emergence-complementary” lines, since it is part of the formulae of embellishment-settlement: *ato aya weni* translates as “they [the *mokanawa* peoples] sprout with...” ...their ornaments. This line occurs in 12 verses in regular distribution along the myth-chant, not in straight sequence with all ornamental formulae but always as a formulaic introduction to them, as an allusion to their precedent earth-origin. Therefore, it could not be other than an assertive and circular line, with an unequivocal higher frequency on the first half-cell. The other stenographic line of this myth-chant, *nawa weni ini*, means just “[the] *nawa*-peoples sprout”, and thus will be in turn linear; this is no surprise either, since in its partial formulaic occurrences, it appears in a complementary association with *mokañ vake nawavo*. That the simple significance of the line *nawa weni ini* is that the *mokanawa* “sprout” complements the circular assertion of these emerging bitter-wild peoples; thus, it is also hardly surprising that both its frequency and that of *mokañ vake nawa* are the highest among all *saiti* lines. If the line *mokañ vake nawavo* occurs in no less than 54 verses throughout the entire myth-chant, *nawa weni ini* has 72 occurrences, and the two lines occur in the same cell 21 times¹¹⁹.

Further, the distributions of *ato aya weni* and *nawa weni ini* along the *saiti* verses also demarcate the formal subdivision between the initial and final parts of

¹¹⁹ The “emerging peoples” *nawa weni ini* occurs in verses 4, 19, 26, 32, 34, 38, 40, 42, 45, 48, 50, 59, 67, 69, 72, 77, 82, 83, 89, 90, 94, 96, 98, 101, 106, 108, 110, 114, 120, 121, 128, 137, 138, 141, 143, 150, 151, 154, 156, 158, 163, 166, 172, 176, 182, 185, 186, 190, 197, 213, 217, 219, 221, 225, 229, 232, 234, 241, 247, 251, 254, 270, 273, 284, 285, 291, 294, 301, 308, 313, 316. There is also a variation to this line in verse 226, viz. *rome nawa weni*, whose unusual construction with “tobacco” instead of “wild-bitterness”, i.e. as “the tobacco-peoples emerge”, should give an even more shamanic-laden connotation to *saiti* creation. This connotation is indeed that which their ornamental possessions shall point at with the formulaic introduction of the line *ato aya weni*, “they emerge with...” in verses 4,

the mythical-musical narrative: the regular occurrences of these two lines stop not long before the “wild-bitter children-peoples” *mokañ vake nawavo* themselves cease to emerge, in the 315th and 316th verses respectively. This statistical delimitation will have semantic implications inasmuch as the lines *mokañ vake nawavo*, *nawa weni ini* and *ato aya weni* configure the most typical and concise statements of this myth-chant: together, they reiterate its leitmotif, viz. the “emergence of the bitter children-peoples with their [ornamentation]”, coming from earth toward their embellishment and establishment in the world. That the even frequencies of the three lines stop round about the same spot not only subdivides *Mokanawa Wenia* in two parts, but also characterises the first one as an emblematic phase of “bitter emergence”. Moreover, the circular incidence of these recurrent lines in this first part will delimit the linear character of the second stage. The line that at once epitomises earth-emergence and introduces the formulae that lead to the world-establishment of humanity (*ato aya weni*) has a definite circular character, but the subsequent ornamental sequences move toward linearity. Meanwhile, the other refrains that characterise the epitome of *wenia*-emergence (*mokañ vake nawavo* and *nawa weni ini*, that is, together, the “*mokanawa* children emerge”) present absolute cellular-phrasal proportions that complement each other, and whose relative result is the successive reiteration of emergent-circularity as a prerequisite for emerging-linearity. Whenever these lines occur in the same cell, the former will precede the latter and, in this cellular succession, *mokañ vake nawavo* will be in the assertive and circular half twice as often as *nawa weni ini*.

This reinforces again the maximal verbal validity of the minimal musical

70, 139, 191, 201, 227, 242, 259, 296, 309, 314, 364.

structures of this *saiti*. Just like the two narrative phases, the two phrases of the musical cells of *Mokanawa Wenia* represent a relative opposition between the initial circular-assertion and the final linear-progression of a central tone.

Likewise, the complementary occurrence of *mokañ vake nawavo* and *nawa weni ini* in the same cell places the circularity of the “bitter-wild children-peoples” before the linearity of their “emergence” in 14 against 7 occasions. This corresponds to the overall higher frequency of *mokañ vake nawavo* in the first halves of cells (in 29 out of 54 verses), which assigns an absolute circular-assertive character to that line; and also coheres with the general tendency of *nawa weni ini* to appear in second cell-phrases (38 out of 72), which configures this line as linear and progressive. Further, this is in line with the circular precedence of *ato aya weni* over the sequential lines that lead to the human settlement in the world. The verbal significance and the poetical disposition of all these recurrent lines and respective formulaic associations follow temporal-semantic values that the musical transcription of *Mokanawa Wenia* renders explicit, in a nutshell: *wenia*-emergence is a line along time, whereas the *mokanawa*, the bitter-wild peoples, emerge and re-emerge in circles. The process of emergence, which the line *nawa weni ini* (“peoples emerge”) expresses, is a linear progression with respect to the *mokañ vake nawavo* (“bitter children-peoples”), that is, to the cyclical circularity that the emergent ones assert. Along the same lines, *ato aya weni* (“those who emerge have...”), the line that introduces the formulae of ornamental world-destination after their earth-emergence, puts a higher emphasis on circular assertiveness because, in its musical-poetical context, it makes stronger reference to the emergent peoples than to the emerging process: it also occurs twice as often in the first half-cell as in the second, in a proportion of 8 : 4.

Conversely, through these three verbal lines the first part of *Mokanawa Wenia* characterises a literal stage of “*wenia*-emergence of the *moka*-bitter *nawa*-peoples”, of the chthonic movements in which, after the temporal dynamics of musical cells, linearity follows circularity. However, the figurative meaning of these movements in the *saiti*, viz. the humanisation of the world, goes much beyond its epigrammatic title: it pervades the whole myth-chant. The first stage that those three lines epitomise delimits the circular recurrence of the earth-emergence of the *mokanawa* peoples; but the final part is no less creative, if shorter and linear-like. It ends with an account of the journey that, at last, the human creatures undertake through the world, which establishes an analogy between the transformative ways of native eschatology and a peripatetic humanisation. Because the endowment of all attributes of humanness along the first *saiti*-phase of *wenia*-emergence is not enough to characterise humanity in full, the creation of *mokanawa* beings will become a complementary travelling transformation in the second stage.

This final “linear-transformative” part starts after verses 317-318, when a concise line marks the end of the initial “circular-emergent” stage of *Mokanawa Wenia* twice. This line translates as a literal “ending”, *weni i mashtesho* (i.e. “the emerging finishes there”) and, as one should expect by now, it appears first in the circular half-cell and then in the linear one. From then on, some of the formulaic movements that, in the initial *saiti* stage, overlap each other and punctuate human emergence at regular intervals will reoccur in the same order as we saw in the tables above: acquisition of name, language, ornament. Still the poetical form of most of these formulae changes, and their disposition in a stricter sequence does

not overlap; and this confers a linear character to them. The strict linear succession, in this final stage, of those cyclical events that intersperse human emergence in the initial one is but one of the several traits that, while conforming to a common pattern of humanisation, differentiate the two parts of the myth-chant. Further, this distinctive differentiation is precisely evident in that earth-emergence develops out of different substances, with several onomastic denominations, linguistic and ornamental attributes that lead to world-settlement in the first part, while in the second these denominations and attributes follow instead from a reunion of the settled *mokanawa* peoples after the lead of two new characters. These, *Oañ Mani* and *Oañ Maya*, form a male-female couple who, rather than agents of creation, are markers of this semantic change in the myth-chant.

Still more distinctive of that second stage is the ensuing travel along the large riverbanks, for it indicates that an incomplete humanity results from the predominant circularity of the emergent *mokanawa* peoples in their initial humanisation: the lacking component is that linear journey which complements it. When their summoning-reunion takes place from verse 319 on, the earth-emerged peoples are already settled in the world, but lack mobility. They collect upon fallen trees, as an invariable “location formula” expresses with the following lines: the line *moka*-bitter + animal or tree + *tapañ*-trunk, always in the circular half-cell, preceding *ato seteñ vakiñsho*, “they sit like so”, always in the linear one. Further, in another line that always follows a variant of *moka...tapañ*, in this same location formula, the *Oañ* creational-couple walks up and down along each trunk on the ground, as if anticipating the ensuing movement of humanity across the land: *tana*

vakiñ aki, “so they do it along”, always in the second half-cell as well. In different ways, both the sitting situation of the *mokanawa* peoples, side by side on the *tapañ*-trunk, and the walking movement of the *Oañ* couple along it rehearse, in linear half-cells, the linearity that humanity will represent in its subsequent journey¹²⁰.

In anticipation to this journey, the *mokanawa* peoples regain their names in the same formulaic line that figures as a creation-nomination movement in the previous stage (...*ikañ ayavo*); but now their denominations come after the trunks where they gather, and not after a creational substance as earlier. As in the first part, the ...*ikañ ayavo* formula, “...namesakes [they] are”, most often appears in the circular cell-halves and, with one exception, there is also a straight correspondence between those *tapañ*-trunks and the names they assign to humans: nomination is always a circular confirmation of the linear animal-arboreal origins of humans, be they creational-substantial or locative. This means that, in these and in other senses, the formula *moka... tapañ* is equivalent to those of creation-substantiation: its middle-term is either animal (i.e. the *rono*-viper) or arboreal (i.e. the *vino*-palm, the *paka*-bamboo, the *isañ*-palm), and these animals and trees figure as qualifications of creational substances in the first stage as well¹²¹.

Still, regardless of the semantic congruence of the *tapañ*-trunk with the

¹²⁰ The formula *moka... tapañ / ato seteñ vakiñsho / moka...tapañ / tana vakiñ aki / ...ikañ ayavo* appears, in either complete or reduced form, in the verse-sequences 319-321-323, 325-328, 330-331-333, 338-339-341.

¹²¹ As the tables above indicate for the initial part of the myth-chant, the nomination formula ...*ikañ ayavo* appears in sequential connection with creation-substantiation formulae in verses 31, 83, 89, 93, 105, 113, 121, 138, 151, 181, 247, 284, 300, with a first half-cell predominance of 8 : 5. In the final *saiti*-stage, as the previous note suggests, it occurs in verses 323, 328, 333, 341, and here the circular half-cell predominance is even more

creational ground, such human assembly along it differs from emergence on earth, and not only due to the sitting situation of humans on trunk-benches or to the walking movement of the creational couple along them. Here in this stage, the relevant diacritic is that the habitation of humanity in the world is not consequent on, but simultaneous with the humanisation movements. This means that the line that here expresses such human habitation coincides both with the formulaic sequences of gathering-nomination and with the subsequent ones, those that renovate language-endowment. The line *mato ivo nawa* presents the settlement of humanity in formulaic connection with both movements, and here it means that “[these] peoples [are] high-mound owners”, that is, that these *mokanawa* possess the land both after their initial earth-emergence and all through their final re-nomination and re-endowment of language. Here these two formulaic movements are in turn coincident with sedentary settlement, and not anticipative of it, because the humanisation process that first led to such a settlement now leads to a transformative transit: those same fallen trees where the *mokanawa* beings gather and after which they reacquire their names will soon become passageways. Accordingly, the half-cell distribution of the line *mato ivo nawa* assigns the temporal-semantic ambivalence of this “high-mound human possession” around the ground-trunk. Such human habitation is at once an initial departure and a final arrival, the commencement and the consequence of humanisation; hence, the verbal line that expresses it in musical phrases must be about as circular as it is linear¹²².

pronounced: 3 : 1.

¹²² The line *mato ivo nawa* appears in verses 322, 327, 333, 340, 342, 348, 354; and of

Mokanawa Wenia represents the transformation of the fallen trunks along which the emerged humanity stands as their transposition across the large rivers where these humans will be heading for. This is no great semantic juggling for the Marubo. Rather than a long “gathering bench”, *tapañ* is a common native word for any large fallen trunk lying across a river or over an otherwise impassable terrain. The most ordinary connotation of *tapañ* is that of “access”; hence, these fallen trunks are much more emblematic of a bridge to travel across than of a site for the reunion of humans after their emergence and settlement. The transformative meaning of *tapañ* in the *saiti*, from bench or bridge, means that human beings are now mobile rather than sedentary. In this second stage of the myth-chant, *tapañ* becomes a transition between the alchemic-chthonic emergence of human beings and their transformative journey. It denotes a “path”, with all its mythical-musical, *saiti*-choreographic connotations: a linearity that gives continuity to the circularity that the emergent humans represent in the first part of the myth-chant.

Nonetheless, as some of the poetical formulae above suggest, that the *tapañ*-trunk is more a dynamic situation than a stationary position does not mean that it is on the whole dissimilar to the ground where the animal and arboreal creational substances ferment, from where humanity sprouts and settles with ornaments on land. Rather, and in more than a musical sense, its final semantic shift from gathering bench to moving bridge, from stasis to dynamics emblematises not just the reiteration of those initial humanisation movements, but their partial reversal as well. When the settled re-nomination stops (*ane i mashtesho*, literally “the naming finishes there”, in verse 363) and the emerged peoples start moving along the large

these 7 occurrences, 4 are in circular half-cells, while 3 are in linear ones.

rivers, shouting the festive shouts (*noa kaya tana / sai in' aya*, i.e. “they leave along with *sai*”, in verse 366), the familiar eschatological combination of travelling with transformation will take place across the trunk-bridges. The translocation of the *tapañ*-bridges is also the transposition of mythical-musical creation to another key. When humans cross the large rivers, the watery domain poetically inverts terrestrial humanisation: the now journeying peoples will lose their ornaments which, once fallen into the river, generate insects, the “lesser animals” (*shako*-worms, *vina*-wasps) that do not take part in the initial human earth-emergence and ornamental world-settlement.

It follows that that the *Oañ* couple, the mythical-musical characters who summon and align the peoples on fallen trunks before this final journey, are not at all creators but rather “creational assistants”: it is the location of humanity on the transformative trunk-benches, and the successive re-nomination and re-endowment of language and ornament that somehow recreates or, better said, reverses creation. Better said, *Oañ Mani* and *Oañ Maya* fulfil their roles with the new ordering of the re-nomination and language-endowment of the *mokanawa* peoples in a linear sequence which, concluding with an embellishment-establishment formula, becomes a summary of their *wenia*-emergence. Still this is just an intermediary prelude for these *moka*-beings to line up for a journey that is the transformative completion of their *nawa*-circularity, a complement of the circular origin of the initial alchemic-chthonic movements that convolve humanity and non-humanity.

Hence both the linear sequentiality of formulae in the second part of *Mokanawa Wenia*, before humanity initiates its migratory movement, and the creation-associates *Oañ Mani* and *Oañ Maya*, the two characters who introduce it,

just underscore this spatial transposition of anthropogeny from alchemic-chthonic creation to rootless roaming. *Oañ Mani* and *Oañ Maya* point out the specific homologies that underlie the two stages: if the emergent *moka*-humans stand for both sexes in the first part, since *nawa* is a gender-generic suffix there, humanisation is gender-complementary in the figure of these two new characters. Further, if this second stage marks the transition from earth-emergence to terrestrial-transit with the re-nomination of peoples, the very names of the *Oañ* couple suggest the renovation and reversal of the initial creation movements. *Oañ Mani* is a literal “flowery banana”: his name is an inversion of the “banana flower” *mani oa*, a specific creational substance from which peoples emerge in the first part of the myth-chant. Meanwhile, the name of his female partner *Maya* figures already in other *saiti* as that of an “assistant” in human creation, and such creation occurs there in association with flowers as well.

Now this re-enactment and reversal of the initial human creation in the final part of the myth-chant suggests that, no matter how pervasive, the circle-line direction that the *saiti* reveals in its verbal and musical keys, in the twofold narrative and at all the semantic levels that relate to it, does not exhaust its temporal meaning. Both the minimal dyadic cells and the maximal poetical structures that set *Mokanawa Wenia* as an anthropological statement, as a narrative of a circular humanity coming from animal and arboreal substances in linear emergence, also reiterate a socio-eschatological paradigm. The *moka* peoples are not only men or women growing out of an animal-arboreal earth which develops into a human world: more than an emergent humanity, what emerges in the myth-chant is the multiple *nawa*-basis of the native ethnicity, and of the sociability of

those who base their convivial affinity on a wild-bitter consanguinity. This *saiti* is an ontological matrix for these natives, both for their social speciation in the everyday world and for their post-mortem perfection in the *-nawa*, ethnic-specific society of the *yové*-spirits.

As we have seen, the *saiti* expresses the substantial transformations that lead to human creation as an emergence from substances of plants and animals that, in their allusion to *yochiñ*-predation, differ from the inedibility of language-giving birds and anteaters. The transformation of animal *chinañ*-thoughts into *nawa*-humans, for instance, is equivalent to a linear *yochiñ*-progression toward the circular *yové*-assertion of a “bitter-wild”, “infant” and “foreign” humanity (*mokañ vake nawavo*). That non-human substances become human beings in the onomastic formula *x-nawa*, where “x” stands for animal or plant, means that *nawa*-humanisation is not human-transformation then, but refers instead to a transformative non-humanity, a “doubling” of humankind. Thus, the circle-line direction of the humanisation process in the myth-chants refers rather to the *nawa*-becoming of animals and plants, and not to human beings as such. The Marubo world is an earthen mixture of animal and arboreal elements and substances which the myth-chant mixes along time in its circular-linear dyadic cells. Still the humanisation of the non-human, i.e. *nawa*-transformation, entails not only *yora*-corporeal constitution, i.e. the anatomic-ethnonymic, soul-substantial structure of these *mokanawa* peoples, but their acquisition of the human attributions of ornamentation and language as well, viz. that which happens to be the paradigmatic attributes of the spiritual paradise. The Marubo are *mokanawa* not only in that their bodies and names derive from an alien principle on earth, but also

in that their human actualisation of these origins and of all that which concurs with their establishment on the prototypical world-clearances, both in terrestrial life and in celestial death, is the circular outcome of a linear process. Hence, if the *saiti* succession from circularity toward linearity describes well the non-human origins of humanisation, it is an incomplete description of this process, of that in which the original humanity engages. The indefinite reiteration of such succession asserts a definite circular meaning to all linear processes.

Rather than just conforming to the circle-line direction that typifies the myth-chant, the *saiti* line *mokañ vake nawavo* asserts *mokanawa*-ness as an anthropological paradigm in function of time: as a bitter-wild (*moka*), foreign-prototypical (*nawa*) circularity that incorporates or, in native psychophysiological terms (*yora*-bodies, *yové*-spirits, *yochiñ*-doubles), embodies a complementary linearity. Further still, this line points at a “primordial infancy”: it is the musical-poetical validation of the native statements that, as we quote elsewhere, posit the archetypical character of their matrilineal sections, a sort of pre-social originality that their section-specific eschatological destinations are just to reproduce. The peoples who emerge in the myth-chant are children throughout (*vake*), and such original infancy comes as circles out of a linear generation from earth. Still these peoples are without parents, for their emergent circularity is just an animal-arboreal growth in a linear chthonic gestation: they emerge into the world from an alien and alchemic earth, rather than from particular animals and plants. They are orphan children of a generic wild-bitterness, fruits of *nawa*-prototypical substances and elements that combine anew into human wholes. Their infancy is the circular amalgamation that results from the linear chthonic estrangement of a fragmentary

humanity from fragments of animals and plants; it is the generic expression of this alien and manifold generation in the human origins, not of the specific affiliation of the original humans. The Marubo are not children of such-and-such plant or animal, but the multiple outcome of the humanisation of the non-human.

Not only the *mokañ vake nawavo*, the “wild-bitter children-peoples” express this “childish” character of the original humanity; another *saiti* line does it even better, and always after the formulae of human embellishment-establishment in the world, i.e. after the *shavá raka...* lines. That line reads *sai toa iki*, where *sai* is the aforementioned “festival shout” and *iki* is a verbalising suffix or auxiliary verb, while *toa* might mean “offspring”. But if one translates its constitutive words without much effort, its overall meaning is not that obvious. The key to the line is in that last word, *toa*. It translates in other myth-chants as “child”, as it should do in everyday contexts: *shavoñtoá*, for instance, is a kinship term for “matrilineal nephew” and, following the affiliate-consanguineous tenor of *shavo*, here the meaning of *toa* is a literal “kinswoman’s child”. As a terminological counterpart of the *koka* “maternal uncle”, whose moral ascendancy over younger kin is incontestable, the main vocative connotation of *shavoñtoá* is a patronising one: the two terms are asymmetrical, since the *koka* is normally senior to the *shavoñtoá*. As a vocative then, *shavoñtoá* denotes the consanguineous seniority of the designator over the designated, a denotation which *koka* cannot express as a reciprocal term between non-kin in-laws. But if still hierarchical, the term *shavoñtoá* means less affinity than consanguinity: its best gloss would be the “male offspring of female sibling”. Thus, extrapolating, the *saiti* line in question should read *saitoá...*, meaning that the *mokanawa* “children” are both “subordinate” to and

“consanguineous” with the “festive shouts”: they are born from *sai*¹²³.

In the light of that, this line becomes an explicit statement of the original creative power of the *sai* festive falsetto, that predatory vignette which the *mokanawa* peoples shout in their mythical-musical journey along the large rivers, and which the Marubo shout in the preambles of the *saiti* and during the *saiti* itself, here understood both as festival and as myth-chant. The free translation of natives for *sai toa iki*, in *Mokanawa Wenia*, is “the people newly born”, however fully formed, in festive celebration, “established in embellished clarity”, in accordance with the *shavá raka...* formulae, the “clearance settlement” of the emergent peoples which always precede that line in the immediate half-cell or verse before. Instead of shouting into being, these “children” are creative in shouts; instead of nether sounds moulding animal and arboreal substances into human shape, as the creation-preparation formulae of the myth-chant read, now the sounds themselves are the substantial mould, the material form of the earth-emergence of humanity after its world-settlement. Still, *sai toa iki* was rendered in the field as the creation of millions of peoples as well, as “all those who are born”; and thus the *sai*-shouts could as well be understood as the onomatopoeia of the festive cries of the emergent children in multiple multitude. Here in this line, the emergent creatures (the *toa*-offspring) and the emerging process itself (as *sai iki*, sound-intonation) are confounded, and hence *sai toa iki* is as just as circular as it is linear: 4 occurrences in either half-cell, in the overall *saiti* proportion¹²⁴.

¹²³ Melatti describes the everyday meaning of *shavoñtoá* in his neat portrait of kinship relations among the Marubo (1977: 101).

¹²⁴ The line *sai toa iki* occurs in verses 36, 123, 168, 189, 205, 238, 246, 299.

However, while the line *sai toa iki* always follows the ornamental sequences that end with the *shavá raka...* lines, the temporal ambivalence of its overall half-cell distribution is not quite representative of the circular-linear temporality of humanisation which becomes manifest in or after those formulae of embellishment-establishment. There, in the development of these sequential formulae of ornamentation and in several other formulaic sequences and lines, the progress of the mythical-musical narrative through the verbal verses assumes an unequivocal direction from circularity to linearity. If the three definitional lines of *Mokanawa Wenia* (the “bitter-children” *mokañ vake nawavo*, their “emergence” *nawa weni ini*, and *ato aya weni*, that which “they have in such emergence”), those that occur throughout and assign meaning to the first part of the *saiti*, already hint at the succession from circles to lines in absolute frequencies, other formulaic line-sequences also indicate this successive direction. The lines and formulae that express it most often appear in those ornamental sequences or in association with them because, we repeat, the formulaic lines therein are a summary of all humanisation movements in this myth-chant: they often begin with a reference to the earth-emergent peoples (e.g. *ato aya weni*, “they emerge with [ornaments]”) and end with their world-establishment (e.g. *shavá raka...*, “lying in the [embellished] clearance”). In their relative occurrences in circular or linear half-cells, these and other recurrent lines point at the typical direction of the *mokanawa* peoples, their displacement from the earth of *wenia*-emergence through their world.

The most frequent and obvious allusion to this direction is the line *avi ato pari*, the “whereabouts to and from” of the emergent peoples. Although it contains

literal directional references, the translation of *avi ato pari* has been problematic in all its occurrences. In fact, it has been vain to search for literal native glosses, for its several translations in the field always came as an addendum, as a mere reaffirmation of the direction of the chthonic people-emergence toward the primordial human establishment in the ground-clearance. The partial significances of *avi* (“first”, a somewhat analogous meaning to *vevo*, the “firstborn”, as we shall see) and *ato* (which here means “where”, an interrogative adverb of location) merge with the last word of the line, which in turn provides a better clue toward the significance of the whole syntagma: *pari* is a suffix which means “spatial direction”. A cognate variant of *pari* is *paro* or *parori*, as in *nai parori*, i.e. “South” (literally “the direction of the sky”), in opposition to *nai parowetsa*, which means “North” (literally “the other [opposite] direction of the sky”). Otherwise, the celestial ascension that figures in some *saiti* narratives is through *nai tae*, the “sky foot”, which the Marubo situate in the East (*nai taeri*, in which *-ri* is the emphatic, directional suffix); whereas the same myth-chants narrate the way back to earth through *nai votiñ ikitoñ*, “where the sky ends”, which is the West. Thus the cardinal directions of the native world are variations on the theme of a directionality which expresses a multiple bipolar linearity in the equations foot : end :: East : West :: North : South. Marubo humanity has a linear course in spatial directions, although their world is itself multidirectional: from foot to end, from East to West, from North to South. Is this a mythical testimony of patterns of historical migrations?

Instead of indulging in a verbal speculation, perhaps we should read *avi ato pari* in a musical key. The transitional meaning of this line comes to the surface in

the relation between the mythical-musical movements of creation and settlement, more than in its constituent words; and if, at a verbal level, it indicates the “directionality” of *Mokanawa Wenia*, its musical sense is of a transition from circles toward lines. The line *avi ato pari* will associate with the circularity of the emergent humanity but, most importantly, it will indicate the linearity at which the movements of human emergence point. From the circular assertion of the emergent peoples, *Mokanawa Wenia* incorporates an increasing linearity, as the succession of the lines *mokañ vake nawavo* and *nawa weni ini* in respective cell-phrases sum up, up to the point when the human creatures set out on a literal journey in the final part of the mythical-musical narrative. In this connection, while *avi ato pari* has to express the circular recurrence of the emergent *mokanawa*, it should also show the linear direction of *wenia*-emergence. In absolute terms, the frequency of occurrence of this line, almost as often in the first cell-phrase as in the second, demonstrates again this temporal ambivalence. However, its position in relation to other formulaic lines is the actual measure of the semantic position it occupies in the myth-chant: there, *avi ato pari* presents a circular character which points at a linear direction¹²⁵.

This means that this line will acquire its most general significance from its specific poetical-musical context. The “original direction” that *avi ato pari* means almost always appears in a formulaic sequence as well: with just a few exceptions, it precedes *shavá vevo ini*, i.e. the “firstborn of the clearing”, a line that expresses the “primordial character” (*vevo*, as in *vevo aiñ aya* above) of the chthonic

¹²⁵ The line *avi ato pari* occurs in verses 8, 21, 50, 58, 68, 73, 114, 124, 131, 142, 166, 169, 179, 226, 234, 241, 248, 253, 262, 274, 287, 299, 308, in which the overall proportion

birthplace of humanity with respect to its clear *shavá*-dwelling. Whenever the two lines occur in succession, *avi ato pari* comes before *shavá vevo ini*; and in most of these cases, they occur in the same cell. Therefore, the “whereabouts from” of the *mokanawa* peoples (*avi ato pari*), i.e. the ground of human creation, has a circular precedence over their first destination in the world, the *shavá*-clearance where these humans will dwell.

In an apparent contradiction, the recurrent lines that express the same clearance-establishment as the line *shavá vevo ini*, viz. the ornamental formulae that end with the *shavá raka...* lines — those of “clearance settlement” — more often than not precede *avi ato pari* — the “original directionality” — in the immediate verse or half-cell before. However, this just means that *avi ato pari* has a double meaning. This line is, in relation to those ornamental formulae where the *shavá raka...* lines occur, the circular recurrence of the linearity of the embellishment-establishment of humanity in the world; and in relation to *shavá vevo ini*, it is an assertion of the emergent circularity of these first *mokanawa* newborn (*vevo*) toward the same day-clarity (*shavá*). In relation to all the three lines of “*shavá*-destination” (*shavá vevo ini*, *shavá raka ini*, *shavá rakaraka*) the line *avi ato pari* indicates the same direction of the humanisation movements, but with different emphases, which correspond to those three distinct mythical-musical phrasings of the *shavá*-clearing. Then, of course, that it always appears in association with the formulae that express the *shavá*-direction of humanity is not in the least surprising. Neither is it surprising that it ceases to occur a bit before the lines *mokañ vake nawavo* and *nawa weni ini*, the emblems of chthonic creation,

between first and second half-cell occurrences is 12 : 11.

i.e. just when the *mokanawa* children cease to emerge; for just like these two emblematic lines, and in indirect connection with them, the “original directionality” of *avi ato pari* must mark the twofold structure of the mythical-musical narrative.

Similarly, the *shavá*-lines will also characterise the myth-chant in two phases; and therefore they must share a general meaning, even though they occur in different constructions, formulae and positions. As we have just seen, in the form of *shavá vevo ini* they always come after *avi ato pari*, the “whereabouts” of the *mokanawa*; while in all their occurrences as *shavá raka ini* and *shavá rakaraka*, they conclude the ornamental sequences that tend to precede that line. Nevertheless, in a loose and literal translation, all the *shavá*-lines denote that the “[firstborn] settle in the [ornamental] clearance”; and more specifically, the verbal meanings of these three lines concentrate on the ever-present term *shavá*, and on the association between *ini*, *vevo*, and *raka*. Based on the previous study of each of these words, we shall examine each variant line in detail; but for now, one may already guess without effort that these three lines indicate, if in different degrees and with different connotations, the linear settlement of the circular-emergent bitter-peoples.

Like all *shavá*-lines, *shavá vevo ini* is difficult to translate. Native translators would say that it indicates the “first day” of the emergent peoples, making occasional reference to the preliminary character of this “coming to *shavá*-light” of humanity, to signify that it was the first event in a successive row along the reiterative *wenia*-emergence of the *moka* peoples. The word *vevo* means the original precedence of the “firstborn”, which is its immediate gloss; it succeeds the

circularity of the earth-emergent peoples and thus alludes to the linearity of *raka*, “to dwell” in the world, a word that underscores a denotation of “dwelling” in the other *shavá*-lines. Still, that which *shavá vevo ini* inaugurates proper is worldly daylight rather than human dwelling, for the originating earth is dark, as natives say. We have seen that, with no exception, this line occurs always after the circle-line directional indication of *avi ato pari* (“where [they] come from”). Now this indicates that, even though the three *shavá*-lines have commensurate verbal meanings, if the manifest musical linearity of *shavá vevo ini* (“the first [embellished] people in the clearing”) and its even distribution along the myth-chant contrasts with its variant versions, viz. the *shavá raka...* lines (the [ornamental] clearance-dwelling”), this has semantic consequences — which relate to the “precedence”, the “inauguration” significance that *vevo* indicates. These two formulaic variants of *shavá...* occur instead in alternated clusters, presenting a higher relative degree of circularity and a character of mutual commutability between each other.

Then in order to understand the contrast of musical meanings among these three verbal variations on the mythical theme of *shavá*-clearance, that is, on the theme of the prototypical human dwelling in the cosmic order of creation, one must look again at their poetical context, that is, at their correlation with other *saiti* lines. So much as the “bitter-children” *mokañ vake nawavo* tend to precede their “emergence” *nawa weni ini* throughout the myth-chant, for example, the line *shavá vevo ini*, the “clearance of the firstborn”, tends to follow *avi ato pari*, their “original direction”. Although both of these two-line formulae occur at regular intervals along the *saiti*, their mythical-musicality conforms to a gradient from

circularity to linearity: the “wild-bitter children-peoples [who] emerge from [the earth and] come first into light” undertake a mythical-musical trajectory from circles to lines, toward their world. That is, in the temporal order of *Mokanawa Wenia*, the *mokanawa* peoples *weni*-emerge and then take the *pari*-direction toward being and becoming the *vevo*-firstborn of the *shavá*-clearance. Accordingly, the absolute musical significance of *shavá vevo ini* must be linear: its incidence in the second half-cells is approximately fifty percent higher than in the circular, initial cell-phrase¹²⁶.

The other two *shavá*-lines (...*rakaraka* and ...*raka ini*) sum up a half-cell proportion that slightly inverts that of *shavá vevo ini*: 22 circular occurrences against 19 linear ones. However, their relative musical-poetical context does counteract this absolute temporal inversion. The line that marks this context is *ato aya weni*, “they emerge with [ornaments]”, the one that often opens the ornamentation formulae and is one of the three recurrent refrains that emblemise *Mokanawa Wenia*. We have just seen that the two other emblematic refrains of the *saiti* do express a circular-linear succession, in their partial formulaic arrangement *mokañ vake nawavo / nawa weni ini*, that is analogous to the temporality of the formula *avi ato pari / shavá vevo ini*. Much in the same way, the line *ato aya weni* relates in analogous temporal terms to the ornamental formulae that often end with the *shavá raka...* lines; and in this case, the analogy will also stress their relative linear character, but now at the expense of their absolute circularity.

The mythical-musical meaning of these lines is tortuous, but their poetical

¹²⁶ *Shavá vevo ini* appears in verses 8, 21, 68, 73, 115, 131, 142, 169, 179, 227, 235, 248, 253, 263, 274, 288, 300, 309.

context makes it straightforward, unequivocal, although changeable. If the circularity of *ato aya weni*, the “sprouting [ornamental] existence” of the *mokanawa* peoples prevails over its linearity in the absolute half-cell proportion of its 12 occurrences, in 9 of these occurrences this line will begin a formula of ornamentation that ends with “embellishment-establishment”, in the form of one of the *shavá raka...* lines. In turn, in 6 of these 9 formulaic combinations, viz. those which begin with *ato aya weni* and end with one of *shavá raka...* lines, the former line will be in the circular half-cell while the latter is in the linear one. This is consistent with the absolute musical circularity of *ato aya weni* and its usual poetical-formulaic position as a prelude to the ornamental movement of the emergent humanity; and that the *shavá raka...* lines should conclude this movement with their relative linearity is as well consistent with the temporality of the myth-chant, even though this contradicts their absolute circular frequency. After all, in this *saiti*, the linear counterpart of the circular-emergent *mokanawa* peoples coming from dark earth must be the daylight of the *shavá*-clearance, the precise temporal direction that the *vevo*-firstborn take.

Thus all three *shavá*-lines cohere with the musical-poetical direction which, through these three stenographic refrains of *Mokanawa Wenia* (i.e. *mokañ vake nawavo*, *nawa weni ini* and *ato aya weni*) and their respective half-cell configuration, this *saiti* indicates for the *wenia*-emergence of the *mokanawa* peoples. Now the verbal distinctiveness of the line *shavá vevo ini* in relation to the two *shavá raka...* lines, i.e. its “inaugural precedence”, is that which is to explain their musical-poetical discrepancy, i.e. the relative contrast between the absolute linearity of the former against the slight circularity of the latter. Unlike *vevo*

(“firstborn”) and *raka* (“to dwell”), the word *ini* is irrelevant as regards this distinction, inasmuch as it occurs both as ...*vevo ini* and ...*raka ini* in these *shavá*-lines. That word just construes the *shavá*-lines as a reference to all emergent peoples as those who “home on clearance”: the “ornamentation” meaning of *ini* is here a semantic compromise between the native meanings of “habitation” and “clarity”. Anyhow, the close relation of semantic similitude that all *shavá*-lines entertain is independent of any particular literal gloss for *ini*. These three line-constructions equally associate with embellishment beyond the purport of their constitutive words: the adornment-mediation of human habitation after creation is already expressed in *saiti* in the form of the ornamental formulae in connection with which they occur, either as conclusive lines or as sequential formulaic sequels.

Instead, the words *vevo* and *raka* are the diacritics that sum up that distinctive musical-poetical contrast between the “inauguratory” character of *shavá vevo ini* and the more straightforward reference to “habitation” which the *shavá raka...* lines make. It is then in function of those two words that the exegesis of the word *shavá*, that which in the conclusion of the last chapter takes it as the common-root of the multiple spatiotemporal layers of the native world, will have diverse implications in the myth-chant. The temporal significance of *shavá* which, in the ...*vevo ini* line, is a linear departure from undifferentiated darkness to clear, daylight succession — since *vevo* means “the first in a row” — acquires a more circular, but still ambiguous meaning in the two other lines, ...*rakaraka* and ...*raka ini*. On the one hand, *shavá vevo ini* is the line that, in the myth-chant, better translates the *vevo*-primeval inauguration of temporality in the native world,

from circles to lines, as a momentous *shavá*-instant, as the temporal “now” that human habitation opens as a spatial “there”, in opposition to the primordial, almost “pre-spatiotemporal” earth whence humanity emerges. On the other, the two other *shavá raka...* lines cohere more with the ambivalent temporality that this *shavá*-opening inaugurates, viz. the simultaneous circularity-linearity of the human *raka*-settlement where native time and space is and becomes.

In sum, the line *shavá vevo ini* translates better as “those who come first [in beauty]”: here, the relevant verbal meaning is the moment when *shavá*, here understood in its double spatiotemporal sense of “clearance” and “instant”, occurs for the first time to the primordial *mokanawa* humans, to the human firstborn (*vevo*). Thus, the musical-poetical significance of this line indicates a linear departure of the circular-emergent peoples from earth to the world. This line, and the moment it inaugurates, stands in straight opposition to the chthonic origins of humans inasmuch as light opposes darkness; but, as much as light, it requires darkness in order to exist. It represents a pervasive event in the myth-chant: contrary to the other two variant versions of *shavá*-lines, which occur in alternating clusters, the momentous clarity of the first human dwelling which the *...vevo ini* line expresses occurs in 18 verses evenly distributed along the myth-chant. In 7 of these verses, this line occurs in the initial circular half, against 11 occurrences in the linear ending of the cell, up to the crucial event that “puts an end there” (*mashtesho*) to *wenia*-emergence in verses 317-318. Here the reader shall remember that the *Oañ* creation-associate couple leads the gathering summing-up of the *mokanawa* peoples, which will in turn lead to their journey through the world; and here *shavá vevo ini*, the “first coming into worldly clarity

[from dark earth]” stops, marking the same formal cleavage noted so many times before.

Conversely, the relationship of commutable variation between the lines *shavá raka ini* and *shavá rakaraka*, which their occurrence in alternate clusters of similar ornamental formulae attests, shows their semantic equivalence around a common meaning of “clearance habitation”, as well as a temporal ambiguity, that is, a lack of definition between a circular and a linear character. The overall sum of the distributions of the two lines in verses along the cells results that their absolute musical-poetical significance is slightly more circular than linear, but the statistic emphasis is so weak that their meaning can be reduced to neither circularity of linearity. In fact, although the *shavá raka...* lines are interchangeable, their respective half-cell frequencies contradict each other: the proportion of *shavá raka ini* is 4 : 5, while that of *shavá rakaraka* is 18 : 14. In addition, contrary to the even distribution of the *...vevo ini* line along the myth-chant, *shavá raka ini* and *shavá rakaraka* occur in a relatively disproportionate frequency of 9 occurrences of the former against 32 of the latter, while these occurrences are divided in 5 verse-clusters each. Like the more regular, pervasive “original whereabouts” of *shavá vevo ini* however, these two lines would reinforce the formal cleavage of *saiti* narrative in the same spot noted before: the end of human settlement in the world coincides with the termination of earth-emergence. This is so except for one late occurrence: the three *shavá*-lines occur at regular intervals until verse 315, when they cease to be intoned but for a single exception of *shavá raka ini* in 365. This last occurrence corresponds to the final summary of all humanisation movements, after the gathering and before the travelling of humanity in the very

final part of the myth-chant¹²⁷.

This, together with the fact that these two *shavá raka...* lines occur in those 5 alternate clusters of verses grouped in association with the formulaic reiteration of more or less invariable lines, would not just attest their equivalent, interchangeable character but point as well to their probable verbal reducibility to a central meaning revolving precisely around *shavá raka*. These two words, we have seen, share the connotation of “human dwelling”. But if *raka* means “settlement”, the site where one stays and the act of staying, the immediate effect of the variation of those two lines would be the cyclical reiteration of some common significance related to “habitation”, which in turn relates to that which the line *shavá vevo ini* purports. Such significance is, of course, tantamount to the temporality of the *shavá*-clearance, the human space that inaugurates time in the native world, the actual resultant of the movements of humanisation that the myth-chant directs from circles to lines. Marubo temporality is neither univocal nor continuous because, while the absolute linear meaning of the line *shavá vevo ini* is a reinforcement of the unequivocal temporal direction of the *saiti* from circles to lines, the mythical-musical poetics reinforces the ambivalent circularity-linearity of the other two *shavá*-instances. In the end, the relative temporal ambivalence of the *shavá raka...* lines subordinates the absolute linear meaning of *shavá vevo ini*, for the well-balanced proportion of half-cell occurrence in the sum of these three variants reasserts the overall musical-poetical equivocality of the human

¹²⁷ The *saiti* distributes the line *shavá rakaraka* in the following five verse-clusters: 13, 20, 24; 45, 47, 49; 62, 72, 77; 123, 130, 149, 168, 178, 188, 192, 202, 204, 207, 209, 219, 221, 237, 243, 246, 266, 272, 276, 277, 287, 298; 315. The line *shavá raka ini* appears also in five clusters, but only in verses 6, 7; 34, 36, 43; 95, 110; 311; 365.

ornamental habitation in the *shavá*-clearance: in total, the higher frequency of line-occurrence in the second phrase — 29 : 30 — is negligible.

Such temporal equivocality would require some further enquiry, even though we cannot leave here anything else but a few final clues. Now this leads us to two fundamental questions, which find their answers here and there throughout the thesis but must be formulated again under the guise of a conclusion to this broad and still brief exegetical outline of some of the musical-poetical generalities in the *saiti* of *Mokanawa Wenia*. These questions return to the same issue of the temporal ambivalence that the myth-chant assigns to the origins and destinations of humanity: if the direction of the humanisation movements between these two poles is from circles to lines, the *shavá* clearance-temporality where humans settle with their adornments is both circular and linear. The answer to the paradox between this ambivalence and the definite temporal direction of the myth-chant is in the very relation of equivocal equivalence that holds between the origin and destination of the mythical-musical humanity. Now after all, where do the *mokanawa* peoples spring from earth, and where is their home? Without any essential statement about an “their time” as opposed to “ours”, the answer to this question shall render clear once and for all the diacritic that differentiates the native temporality from any ethnocentric chronology that may envisage time and progressive, causal and cumulative, irreversible. Rather than a different “concept of time”, natives conceive their humanity-mundanity with a different temporal means.

The combination of lines that localises and positions the ground of *wenia*-emergence is part of the aforementioned creation-preparation formulae: there, the

two-line sequence *noa mai tsakasho / wa nipa kawa* states that humans emerge “upright on the lands [along] the large rivers, there [they] went standing on”. This sequence recurs toward the end of the first part of the myth-chant, which concludes the full substantiation of humanity from chthonic animals and plants. These two lines are therefore “regenerative”, as well as creation-preparatory: they succeed several other formulae of substantiation and nomination. Nevertheless, they tend to occur in one single verse, preceding some of those formulae and following the direction of the whole myth-chant, from circles to lines. In fact, these lines not just reproduce, but emphasise such directionality. The creation order is circularly located on the riverbank (*noa mai tsakasho*), and linearly placed in a standing position (*wa nipa kawa*); in other words, those two lines establish the creational location as a circular affirmation, whereas its specific position, that is, its direction is a linear transience¹²⁸.

Now almost always after the formulae of embellishment-establishment, i.e. those that end with the *shavá raka...* lines, and often after the similar *shavá*-ending sequential formula that follows them, i.e. the line *avi ato pari* and its sequel *shavá vevo ini*, another twofold sequence will reaffirm that the land of human inhabitation is the very same ground as that of human creation. These two lines read *noa mato wetsa* and *wetsa ivo ini*, and tend to occur together as well, translating as “[in] another high riverbank [a large river mound], [they] take another possession”. This pair of lines is the final counterpart of the initial

¹²⁸ The combination of lines *noa mai tsakasho / wa nipa kawa* occurs in this phrase order in verses 118, 146, 159, 174, 195, 255, 280, 292, 305. The two lines have very few exceptional occurrences, i.e. out of this order and position within the same verse: the first in verses 133 and 215, and the second in 134, 135, 385.

indication of location and position of earth-emergence in the creation-preparatory sequence, positing the same mythical-musical direction, but now from location to possession of world-settlement: the latter line linearly succeeds the former whenever it occurs, not always in the same verse, but most of the time in the second half-cell.

We have seen above that *wetsa* is a “close other”, in connection with native other-self self-conceptualisations such as *nawa*; here that term denotes the expansive movement of the human population in the world. This reasserts some previous conclusions about the internal-exteriority of native humanity: more than an incorporation of the exterior, *nawa*-ness means an extension of ethnic boundaries, an expansion of the humanised world into the non-native universe. *Noa mato wetsa* is a mythical land to be inhabited “beyond”, a cyclical reference in native history, as we have seen often here. *Wetsa ivo ini* is, in succession, the consequent appropriation of that new land, which often occurs in the span of native lifetime. The line *noa mato wetsa* is musically circular, except when it occurs in a variant form, with a “volitional” suffix (...*wetsanoñ*); in this case, which would imply a human-agential direction, it tends to be placed in the second half-cell. In contrast but accordingly *wetsa ivo ini*, the human agency of land-appropriation, tends to appear as linear, in the ending of the musical cell, and even when it appears in the beginning, in a few exceptional occurrences, it always succeeds *noa mato wetsa*. The key association that holds the two lines together happens between the expression *noa mato* in the first one, the prototypical dwelling place on the “large river bank”, and *ivo* in the second, a word that refers to human inhabitation too: the native *kakaya*, an “elderly leader”, must be also a

shovoñ ivo, a “longhouse owner”. Among the Marubo, to inhabit is to possess; and hence the meaning of “another appropriation” of humanity (*wetsa ivo ini*) succeeds “another high bank of a large river” (*noa mato wetsa*), another prototypical dwelling in the world¹²⁹.

Now we can substantiate the statements that open this chapter: this *wetsa*-other site of land-appropriation (*noa mai... / ...ivo ini*) after the world-establishment (*shavá...*) of the *mokanawa* peoples is the same positional-locative ground-preparation (*...tsakasho / wa nipa kawa*) of the formulae that precede the creation-movements in their earth-emergence, that is, the high banks of large rivers. This is the utter ambivalence of native humanity in its world: the temporal succession from circularity to linearity in the arboreal-animal earth of human creation leads to an instantaneous *shavá*-combination of circles and lines in the settlement of humans on it.

Another *saiti* line, *noke ivo nawama*, can reinforce this conclusion, while this conclusion can in turn explain the unusual rendering that natives provide for its words. This line was translated in the field as “those who are not our relatives”. Its single occurrence in the entire myth-chant (in verse 26) might be due to its bizarre construction: although here the association between “owner” (*ivo*) and “people” (*nawa*) expresses the familiar equivalence between “to appropriate” and “to dwell”, the negative suffix (*-ma*) negates familiarity with these inhabitant-possessors of the prototypical ground. The hypothetical positive expression *noke ivo nawa* would translate as “those who live with us”, our neighbours who share

¹²⁹ The lines *wetsa ivo ini* and *noa mato wetsa* occur respectively in verses 9, 22, 37, 51, 125, 180, 199, 318 and in 9, 13, 22, 37, 51, 124, 180, 188, 199, 200, 237, 317.

the same world, our kin, if *nawa*-strangers. Instead, here in this *saiti* the negation of that is that which significant: those who emerge from the earth are other than us, other than our own *nawa*-kin. Those who emerge in the myth-chant are literal *moka* peoples, wild-bitter “others”. They are *noke nawama*, in a definite opposite pole to “us”, and not as possessors of other-*nawa* lands but as regards an other-identity.

Now this is an apt answer to the question about who emerges in *saiti*, and not just with reference to *Mokanawa Wenia*. The native human condition is itself one of otherness in the world, the necessary contradiction that the *nawa*-opposition between humanity and humanisation entails, a paradox that natives posit in their myth-chants, in temporal terms — between circles and lines, *yové*-spirits and *yochiñ*-doubles — and that just time can sort out, in their history, in their lifetimes and afterlives. The hyper-assertion of alterity in the *saiti*, of a *nawa*-ness which is a double negation of identity (they are *nawa*, “foreign-humans”, but not “our” *nawa*: they are *noke nawama*), qualifies once more the statement that the emerging *moka* peoples represent the generic other that is still a *-nawa* self. More than the creation of different human races altogether, the *wenia*-emergence of the *mokanawa* peoples is the actual fragmentation and speciation with which the Marubo conceive their world, and hence divide themselves into their matrilineal sections: the *mokanawa* constitute the indigenous ethnic fragmentation and social speciation with which the natives of the Upper Ituí hear and respond to their environment and to the exogenous denomination of “Marubo”.

III. Chants of Creation

This third part will be less a conclusion than an opening proposal toward a methodology on music research and musicological writing in ethnographic form. It will summarise some theoretical assumptions that guided our work throughout this thesis and some of the structural traits of the myth-chants that their exegesis unfolded; it is, therefore, a synthetic statement of our analytical methods.

Once I was back from Amazonia, my main efforts were directed toward the vast amount of myth-chants collected in the field. This task proved to be exceedingly difficult, and not so much for the mechanical difficulties in editing the transcriptions and making minute comments on the translations: the main, intrinsic difficulty lay instead in the exegesis of the abstract interrelationships between the concrete representations of musical transcription and mythical translation. Ever since fieldwork was finished, the main object of study of this thesis, its favourite subject-matter, has come to be precisely that element which makes the *saiti* more than a mere verbal narrative. This element is what we might call the poetical musicality of the form.

Given that the Marubo seem to blur the two western, analytically distinct categories of myth and music in such a synthetic form — *saiti* —, it would be limiting to envisage the myth-chants through one single perspective, be it either mythical or musical. There would be no point in taking the sectarian stance of a quintessential mythologist, who would see *saiti* as a story, or that of the orthodox

musicologist, who would hear it as song. The problem was to escape from such methodological crossroads, for the issue is more than parochial. The “quintessential” or “orthodox” academic splitting, the separation between the text and the form in which it is intoned is not without consequence. It masks the representational subjection of every “aural genre”, either myth or music, to a flawed visual formalism; and that means, in the case of these myth-chants, the objectification of myth and music as eternal, immutable ideas visually represented in a fallacious synchronic temporality. Even when song, verbal language, or other such “genres”, aural-vocal or otherwise, are admittedly seen as variations on a formal continuum, such a continuum is invariably regarded as structural *langue*, an abstraction of, say, a concrete musical-poetical *parole*.

Further, the language of the Marubo does not differentiate between the musical-mythical form of *saiti* and the festival context in which it takes place. Vocal forms, as structured things and not as mental abstractions, are not just the sole means to a unitary, if dialectical, meaning to the concrete inherence of text and tone; the formal character of vocalised structures is the actual key to disarm the semiotic-functionalist trap that captures the intonations of texts within their “communicative function in a social context”. Formal significance is the means to social meaning; and by means of myth-music, society does not mean anything aside from the mythical-musical message. The Marubo conceive myth and music as one single form as much as they do not conceive their *saiti* chants as a mere medium, a mere expedient to express an extraneous message, or as a channel to convey a “context-interactional” content, words and meanings that are alien to their musical poetics. Instead of a “theory of discourse as social praxis”, we

propose a “theory of social praxis as discourse”. The Marubo have good reasons to express what they do in a specific *saiti* form, and this specificity is our concern: musicologically speaking, sociology is a formal study.

This is why this thesis took as a working hypothesis that the “content” of mythical-musical “form” is to be found in the form itself, in the structures of performance that present themselves to our study. Thus, we substitute the abstract separation of content and context from form and structure for an analytical distinction between musical transcriptions and verbal translations. This distinction presupposes some unity however, a formal and structural basis to provide the synthetic concreteness which contains the convergence between the content and context of what natives express. The basis for this simultaneous unity and distinction between the “verbal” and the “musical” is the “sound”. We would ourselves find authoritative the notions of “lyrics” and “melody” as distinguishable and united in “song”; well, the native informants, translators and performers would subscribe to the unitary and distinctive notions of “verbal” and “musical” sounds as well, if they had the words. The Marubo would resort to Portuguese whenever they tried to explain the “musical” as opposed to the “verbal”, since no native word could be found to nominate that which natives call “sound” (i.e. Brazilian *som*) in *saiti*. Their own language provides these other words instead: *saiti*, *sai iki* and the like. The fundamental linguistic opposition we would pose between “speech” and “music”, the Marubo find between *yorañ vana* and *yové vana*, “word of body” and “word of spirit”; hence we would better translate these words as their respective “non-intoned” and “intoned” language.

Be it more or less grounded on the indigenous language, the unitary

distinctiveness we find between *saiti* pitches and words — that is, the distinctive unity between the verbal and the musical levels — has far-reaching consequences. It provides methodological orientation to our approach to the chanted text inasmuch as it constitutes a bridge between linguistics and musicology, metaphysics and physics. It bridges both levels because it searches for a semantic unity of intoned word and word intonation, of performative structure and structured performance. For us, the foremost meaning of *saiti* is the semantic congruency of the word with its intonation, of the musical form with its conceptualisation in verbal concepts. The ambition of this work lies in the attempt to overcome the ontological compartmentation between conceptualised things and concepts, the epistemological gap that persists in cross-cultural dealings which compartmentalise physical nature from metaphysical culture, the concrete object from the subjective abstraction, the absolute fact from the relative interpretation, the local particular from the universal generality. Although such conceptual conversion and subversion requires simple methodological procedures — we simply pay more heed to what our ears hear than to what our eyes see —, it aims at a radical re-signification of the dichotomous concepts above and of the very metaphysical idea of “concept”. We claim that if the native conceptualisations that relate to the *saiti* are made explicit in indigenous words, their implicit verbal meaning is reducible to the explicit “tonal form” of the myth-chants, i.e. to their musical-poetical structure.

The self-evident form that the notion of “mythical-musical structure” presents here is meant with an intention rather akin to “representation”. Such representation, however, has not the “representational” tinge of a Kantian

metaphysics: it derives instead from the sense of the Portuguese verb *representar* and its corresponding noun *representação*, which has a strong “performative” or “acting out” character (as in *representar uma peça*, “to stage a play”). *Representação* means here a temporal representation¹³⁰.

To be brief, here “representation” means to highlight the systematic nature of ritual, and the synthetic character of performative symbols at large. Words like “representation” and other western-metaphysical concepts named “symbol”, words that are equally misrepresented as Platonic ideas in the account of the performative ontologies of non-western peoples, are here taken as *a priori* synthetic givens as opposed to *a posteriori* analytic tools. All these *saiti* “chants” are performed “myths” in a most immediate sense: they are mythical-musical “symbols” which “gather [meanings] together”, which “represent” humans, the gods, and the world where they live. *Saiti* is the “symbolic” praxis in contrast to the “diabolic” theories that “scatter away” the significant means and the significative meaning. We argue against the analytical perspective through which the performed synthesis of “word” and “tone” is semantically separated. We argue that, rather than crumbled into fragments, the significance of *saiti* words is the significance of *saiti* tones, and that both meanings are meant in the *saiti* ritual-festival, a representation along and

¹³⁰ This denotation of form and structure in a performative context is drawn from the late mythologist Eudoro de Sousa — mainly in his “mythological” works *Mistério e Surgimento do Mundo* and *História e Mito*. These, plus the earlier publication *Horizonte e Complementaridade*, are critical responses to the positivistic stance on the evolutionary transition from Mediterranean myth and Grecian metaphysics, the progression from religious mysteries to presocratic thought. These can in fact be taken as responses to the myth of positivism at large, especially that which is blatantly espoused by Claude Lévi-Strauss in his own “mythologies”. Here is another example:

“...la pensée mythique se dépasse elle-même et contemple, au-delà des images encore adhérentes à l’expérience concrète, un monde de concepts affranchis de cette servitude et dont les rapports se définissent librement” (Lévi-Strauss 1967: 407)

about time¹³¹.

Moreover, here the etymology of “re-presentation” points to the repetitive character of the Marubo mythical-musical construct, be it chanted or danced, be it performed in Amazonia or commented in ethnographic transcription and translation. Regardless of the medium in which *saiti* is represented — be it aurally performed in loco or visually projected on paper —, such a mythical-musical semantics must always be represented along time and as a comment upon time. Instead of a made-up a-temporal elaboration outside the real temporal reality, or instead of being a cultural mirror of nature, *saiti* representation repeatedly performs presentation: the myth-chants are “always the same about the same”¹³².

If these quotation marks contain a generic evocation of Socratic dialectics, Marubo myth-music expresses a specific dialectical dialogue. As mythical-musical representations, *saiti* forms are things that objectify subjects, mortals and immortals, establishing the world and its entities in time, i.e. establishing the temporality of the being and becoming of these entities and their world in the mutual relationships that their performance sets out. The *saiti* festivals and myth-chants are an intelligible encoding or formal representation of the temporal

¹³¹ Eudoro de Sousa provides us with another definition of “symbol”, without immediate resource to etymology:

“The symbol is not something — a thing, an image, or an idea — that *signifies* some other thing, image or idea; the *symbol is what it means itself*, even if it reveals itself under another guise or at another level of reality. In other words, one can say that two or more lines of intelligibility converge in the symbol, and two or more degrees of reality interfere at the same event. It is impossible to comprehend ritual action, to understand mythological entities or to apprehend the essence of any artwork outside this category of the symbolic.” (Sousa 1973: 78-79, my translation, author’s emphases)

¹³² “According to Plato, ‘always the same about the same’ was Socrates’ answer to someone who one day asked what he kept on talking about so much and so often.” (Sousa 1978: 5, my translation)

perception of the Marubo; they conform to a patho-logical organisation of lived experience, a logic of sensible affections that is alien to any distant transcendental model standing against closer immanent experiences. The *saiti* are, thus, a “musical patho-logy”, an epistemological key to ontological evaluation. The performance of *saiti* is the mimetic dramatisation of the temporality of mythical-archetypal figures and cosmological entities, the musical-imitative relation between humanity and divinity; thus, such a “patho-logical discourse” creates the world-ambience, the ethics wherein moral statements shall be made, with all the eschatological implications that the chapters above outline¹³³.

Saiti is, further, a temporal matrix: it is structure in time and a commentary on time. *Saiti* myth-chants organise temporality within the cosmological space that their performance opens up: they operate the spatiotemporal dialectics between the now and the not-now, between circularity and linearity and centre and periphery, rather than operating at a spatiotemporal-neutral level. *Saiti* performers cut across a myth-history divide that, in an arbitrarily impinged metaphysics, would erroneously oppose synchrony vs. diachrony, morphology vs. chronology, immutability vs. movement. More than traversing through temporal layers — a “mythical time” opposed to a “historical time” —, Marubo myth-chants institute and constitute time in absolute terms, within its own relational logic, along with the constitution of a cosmic topology and of a human psychophysiology. *Saiti* chants are onto-epistemological discourses, and in being so, they perform a

¹³³ “Patho-logy” is here understood after Menezes Bastos & Menezes Bastos 1995:

“...Kamayurá music [is] a ‘patho-logical’ discourse, an environmental science of sentiments as values of Good and Evil... [through] the enormous impact of musical phonology and syntax on language... in song, the verbal-linguistic flatness gives way

discourse on and along time¹³⁴.

Therefore, the ciphered content of *saiti* forms and structures — i.e. their formal and structural content per se — is to be understood as the founding reference to Marubo cosmology, humanity, history and to society at large and, vice versa, Marubo society, history, humanity and the whole cosmos are to be understood through the lenses of the formal mythical-musical structure. Thus, the objective of this monograph has been to draw comments on the *saiti* as a poetical-musical symbol analysable through its representations, its transcriptions and translations, inasmuch as these myth-chants are symbols that are themselves contextual-synthetic representations.

The methodological order presented in this chapter is a reversal of the actual order of presentation along the thesis. Yet, in line with our methods, we value the exegetical description of *saiti* musical poetics more than the secondary relations between myth-chant and festival; we value the final exegesis of the performance genre more than the performative context that the first part of this dissertation describes. At a minimal level of synthetic concentration, the specific theoretical

to a musicalised language.” (1995: 4, my translation)

¹³⁴ In another text, Menezes Bastos qualifies the temporal tenor of such “musical pathology” among the Kamayurá:

“Through the creation of an adequate affective atmosphere, music makes possible the transformation [between two temporal dimensions]... doing so... axiologically...” (Bastos 1988: 51, my translation; author stresses first, second stress is mine)

Still in another text, Bastos notes the “adaptive” and “associative” implications of such musical “axio-pathology” at an onto-epistemological level:

“The... Kamayurá... have on the phono-auditory universe an absolutely founding focus toward the constitution of their form of being... [through the] us[e] (and educat[ion]) and cognitiv[e] organis[ation of] the world of senses, the particularities of this system of behaviour and knowledge poin[t] also to the[ir] ecology” (Bastos 1999: 2)

style of this thesis is baroque: it comprises the verbal-musical rhetoric of the mythical-musical dialectics and its perceptual-intellectual discourse, which is the cosmological dialogue expressed in chants. At a maximal level of analytical exposition, its generic practical concern is the equation between the two aforementioned pairs of opposites — myth-chant : festival :: genre : context. The privileged analytical duality in our methods — i.e. the relationship verbal : musical, that is, intoned words : structures of intonation — is synthetically expressed as a formal representation at both ends of the research process, both as *saiti* performance during fieldwork and as translation and transcription in monograph.

Hence, the methodological template that entails our concern with structural form is not merely negative. It is a response to and also an acknowledgement of the metaphysical border drawn along western vicissitudes between the academic and the artistic domains, the verbal-intelligible and the musical-sensible. We argue against any epistemological incompatibility that could reinforce the split that separates a study of the ontology of the Marubo peoples from a formal exegesis of their *saiti* myth-chants. But even though our critical target is the arid epistemological cleavage between the artistic and the academic, the aural and the visual-verbal, between forms of knowledge that are fallaciously held to be incompatible, the theoretical issue at stake throughout this thesis remains the inescapable dual perspective that pervades anthropological practice, at least in its reduced ethnographic form, its reified end-product. This is the distinction between “us” and “them”, between the written academic ethnography and the myth-music performed in the field. Although the epistemological splitting apart of music and

words is here under critique, this and the other dichotomous dualities listed above are not entirely erased: this is all we can do in our time, the historical limit of this dissertation. The historical-epistemological critique it proposes remains on the surface of a dual opposition between western and native ontologies. We are their foils, and vice-versa: this thesis is an indication of how it happened that most musicological studies in academia are skin-deep, of how distant our music is from the *saiti* myth-chants, and of how it could be otherwise. We stop short of presenting anything else than mere indications¹³⁵.

Our study of Marubo myth and music — *saiti* — may be thus beyond the claims of structural linguistics, but it is under the historical influence of the western myth that segregates music from its logic — musicology — since the times of Classical Greece, the mythical mark of our history. We limit ourselves to a methodological critique, which is to be taken as nothing but the negative background for a positive methodological statement. We aim at an analytical coherence with respect to our main structural-musical preoccupation, which is in turn aimed at the methodological unity of the monograph, at a textual synthesis of all those extended thematic threads that the reader should have found enmeshed among and through each *saiti*. It is the congruity of these distinct themes — the histories, identities, shamanic practices, eschatological theories, spatial organisation, onto-temporality, psychophysiology, and the native conceptualisations of humanity and divinity — which accounts for that which the Marubo acknowledge as the unity of their mythical-musical knowledge.

¹³⁵ See Menezes Bastos 1989 for a more detailed critique of the academic “musicologies” — including its anthropological version —, especially its introduction (republished as

Due to the aforementioned dual ontological split that underpins our methods, and the consequent epistemological barrier we create, we could not avoid the use of some conceptual tools, some metaphysical apparatus in “our” dealings with “their” myth-chants. Here we summarise a few terminological considerations, as a retrospective outline of the mythical-musical formal framework we have been working on. The thesis’ backbone, its methodological tenor, entails the reiterative assertion of that main motive, the fundamental dual opposition which pervades its widest thematic detours. This translates in the *saiti* as the opposition between, on the one hand, the reiterative, circular, cyclical character of the musical cells and poetical formulae, and of the cellular phrases and verbal lines respectively presented therein; and on the other the parallel, linear, discursive character of the narrative alongside the entire myth-chant, its “story”. This preoccupation with the poetical-musical form of the *saiti* chants therefore unfolds the constitutive aspects of myth which the western-commonsensical obsession with written words leaves out. The *saiti* comprise both words and notes, but their poetical musicality is that which will indicate the ways in which they interact — that is, either circularly or linearly. Musical poetics is the founding potency of *saiti* and the actual means to understand it, a dimension that both encyclopaedic definitions and linguistic-centred studies of myth either ignore or undervalue¹³⁶.

Structural form in the *saiti* myth-chants is the methodological concern that

Menezes Bastos 1995).

¹³⁶ Take for instance the entry for “myth” in the Concise Oxford Dictionary: “a traditional narrative usually involving supernatural or imaginary persons and embodying popular ideas on natural or social phenomena etc.”; or, even worse, “a widely held but false notion”, or still “a fictitious person, thing or idea”. According to these definitions, could the poetical-musical structure of myth be held as “false” or “fictitious”?

entails the leitmotif developed in this thesis. In the end, the textual thread that enmeshes the other counter-pointing motives of the thesis into one piece is twofold: the leitmotif is both circular and linear. That is, this leitmotif emerges from the mythical-musical analysis of the *saiti* texture — the words and tones of the myth-chants, the ritual-formal relationship that constitutes the symbolic synthesis of those peoples. This twofold main theme converges in these concluding remarks. Now this third part is a somewhat arbitrary conclusion to the monograph, but at least we arrive here at last at an analytical statement on *saiti* temporality, the symbolic synthesis of native time. Here we finish a research trajectory from the study of words to that of tones, that which leads to the examination of the successive and reiterative sequences of verbal verses and lines in relation to the respective musical cells and phrases. In this final stage, we shall represent such sequences by means of letters and other algebraic signs, the abstractions of concrete myth-chants. The equations that conclude this concluding part are intended as a temporal systematisation of native histories, the mythical stories that are musically performed in each chant. The systemic termination of the temporal thread found throughout the thesis is constructed through the use of those formal antinomies which emerge from the dyadic character of the myth-chant, as we studied above: circularity vs. linearity, reiteration vs. discursiveness. These antinomies are identified at each of the three structural levels of the *saiti*, viz. in its overall narrative structure, in its cell and verse macrostructures, and its phrase and line microstructures. We shall explain this terminology in some more detail before proceeding to its schematic representation, the prospective methodology for future flights.

This dissertation justifies the terminology throughout. The discussion on native temporality was first based on the grounds of an ethnographic commentary on history and eschatology, and this was set later against the formal, exegetical background of the two contrasting textures in the *saiti* myth-chants: words and sounds, the two intertwined strands of poetical and musical structures, of circular and linear perspectives. These terms are justified by the claimed inherence of both medium and message, which is itself a political claim. “Time” is our designation for “indigenous categories of time”, and the same applies to “lines” and “circles”, “words” and “sounds”, “myth” and “music”. These and other such terms have been no more than analytical notions here, and would be arbitrary ones altogether if some sort of analytical notions — be they antinomic or not — were not inevitable in any sort of theoretical analysis, and if anthropological theory was not a matter of politics, of the inevitable politics of ethnographic practice. The seemingly arbitrary poetical-musicological method proposed here and its respective structural-formal antinomies are in fact unavoidable: they are a politically-laden response to the essentialism so usual among ethno-scholars of ethno-disciplines such as ethno-musicology, many of whom take “music” and the like to be essentially western categories with little cross-cultural “utility”. What this essentialistic utilitarianism indeed does is to universalise the alienation of the “meaningful function” from its “musical medium”. In consequence, it “others” non-western musical means of expression: once they are alienated from “their” expressed message, the “functional meaning” they purport is bound to be alien to “our music”. It is as if “music” and similar terms were western-quintessential “concepts”, and not mere words through which we can approximate, approach, and understand that which other peoples conceptualise with other terms. Yet, whatever words we use, we

shall all go on making “music” and listening to it as such.

Conversely, the deafness to native sounds, their objectification as the “cultural representation” of some underlying, universal and understandable “nature”, is also a long-standing political-metaphysical stance that we must refuse to subscribe to, given its heavily-laden western bias. Yet if one validates the hypothesis that both “music” and “language”, or “cultural things” at large are to be seen or heard not as essential universal categories, but as particular articulated objects instead — i.e. as “systems” or “games”, “structures” or “forms” —, the postulation of a number of analytical tools to deal with them objectively, be they either arbitrary or inevitable, should be valid as well¹³⁷.

The object in question being the *saiti* myth-chants, the conclusive systematisation of the postulates that this thesis presents is as follows: verbal verses group a variable number of verbal lines, and both are the respective verbal counterpart of the musical cells that aggregate phrases; the ongoing repetition of coincidental verses / cells configures each *saiti* myth-chant. Lines and phrases are the respective verbal and musical microstructures; verses and cells are the respective macrostructures. Phrases determine the alternative circularity or linearity of lines at a micro-level, while a circular, reiterative perspective prevails at the macro-level of cells and verses. Conversely, throughout the overall structure encompassing all cellular repetition of verbal verses there is a linear, discursive emphasis envisaged through the narrative perspective. The micro-elements of

¹³⁷ Menezes Bastos & Piedade already attack that political-epistemological position — the “withdrawal” of music from the mere “domain of words” — as a “hermeneutic absurd”, in the context of a bibliographical review on Amazonian musicology (1999: 1).

phrase and line aggregate and interact at the intermediate macro-level of verse and cell, where circularity is the prevailing rationale of cellular unity; whereas a linear verbal structure, an overall narrative, prevails as the rationale of unity for the whole *saiti* chant, where verses and cells aggregate.

Now it is clear that the linear unity found at the maximal narrative level of the myth-chant is verbal, but the circular reiteration of verbal verses in musical cells is still that which constructs this unity. At this minimal end of the constructive unities of the myth-chant, i.e. at the ground micro-level of alternative phrases / lines, there is a discursive-recursive dialectics between the words and the notes that perform these words. The privilege to either linearity or reiteration, i.e. the alternative emphasis on succession or repetition changes in accordance with the line sung within the respective musical phrase, i.e. in accordance with the notes in which the words are chanted, as we have seen in the case of *Mokanawa Wenia*. Nevertheless, beyond the discursive-recursive dialectics of the phrase / line micro-level, the *saiti* myth-chants are above all about the cyclical reiteration of musical cells, as well as of verbal-poetical macrostructures such as formulaic clusters of lines, recurrent verses or strophes. Similarly, this poetical and musical circularity undermines the overall verbal-narrative linear unity of the myth-chant, both at the line / phrase and at the verse / cell level. This is a constant feature of mythical-musical performance which may nevertheless occur in different degrees and at different levels, as *Mokanawa Wenia* and other *saiti* render evident.

Mokanawa Wenia highlighted another common *saiti* feature in its field performance. Despite the uncontested wisdom that *Ivañpa* displayed in his musicological and verbal orthodoxy — in his undisputable, paradigmatic singing

—, in various moments during his recordings he hesitated: it was as if he had to think before proceeding to the next verse line, being not so sure about their sequential succession in the *saiti*, that is, about the mythical-musical “order of events”. This has not been an isolated event: in other recordings, *Tekañpapa* even got it wrong sometimes, either correcting himself immediately or being corrected later by another informant, at the transcription-translation stage. Verbal hesitation seems to be tolerated and not at all incompatible with recognised expertise; much to the contrary, the exact order of verbal lines and verses seems to be less important than the musical firmness of a good myth-chant performance, that which is measured by the consistency of the repeated cells and phrases. The extreme verbal complexity of *saiti* indicates a paradoxical random quality in the succession of verses and lines instead, something that contrasts with the steadier phrase-cellular repetition, and the frequent hesitation of performers confirms that.

Conversely, while this indeterminacy accounts for the verbal uncertainties of *Ivañpa* against the remarkable firmness of his intonations, this is still just one sign of the wider poetical freedom of *saiti*. In different forms, verbal-cyclical structures vary against a more stable structural background of the musical phrases and cells of the myth-chants. Again, these are not idiosyncratic traits of *Mokanawa Wenia* or of its performer in the field: the high degree of commutability of certain verbal lines in poetical formulae, as we saw in the previous chapter, are examples that are also found in other *saiti* such as *Teté Teka* or *Paka Viá*. In addition, as often in *Mokanawa Wenia* as in other *saiti*, a new verse happens to start with the same line as the one sung last in the previous verse, as if verses were too often verbally “linked” one to the other. This kind of “poetical liaison” between cells

merges adjacent verses, and thus reinforces the typical musical-reiterative character of the *saiti* at the verbal level as well. Further, at the intra-cellular level of the verses, frequent elisions between words also subordinate verbal lines to musical phrases: all syllables must fit into invariable notes (e.g. in the line *atoñ mait'ao*, in *Mokanawa Wenia*, the final vowel of *maiti* is omitted).

Without much effort, the subordination of verbal discursiveness to musical reiteration that we find in the dialectics of *saiti* lines and phrases is recognisable in western music too. In the western concert hall, a discursive musical logic normally determines the structure of the piece — its beginning, middle and end — even in the absence of words. This is the precise particularity of western tonality: the musical narrative is transferred to sequences of sounds. Its limits are well established in sonic parameters, and these have a high degree of social acceptance, as most of us know well the distinction between moments of “music” and “non-music”, of silence and of noise, of listening and applauding. This is because we recognise in western tonality a musical discursiveness that delimits the piece. In *saiti* myth-chants, the recognition of musical delimitation takes place at a verbal level instead. However, these limits are blurred when the line / verse-sequence gives way to cellular repetition: the narrative becomes cyclical. The contrast between different western and indigenous tonalities, between discursive and recursive tonal forms, is thus minimised: in the classical-romantic sonata-form it often happens that themes, counter-themes, modulating sections — the equivalent to “cells” in myth-chants — and expositions, developments, re-expositions, and codas, merge within one another at higher structural levels, blurring the sequential order that here occurs at a musical-discursive level. It is as though western-musical

interpolation, in sonata-forms as well as in earlier renaissance and baroque counterpoint, either along the harmonic discourse or in the polyphonic displacement of musical themes and phrases, were verbally translatable into poetical structures in Marubo musicology, in the commutability of lines across verses that actualises the circular-linear dialectics of the myth-chants¹³⁸.

One may extrapolate and say that it is as if the discursive dialectics of the sonata-form, the morphological paradigm of western tonality, and the cyclical circularity of the “other”, non-classical western musicality — the long, a-temporal notes of plainchant, the explicit or implicit modal drones of early and folk musics in the west — were intermingled in Marubo *saiti*. Here the repeated cell circumscribes the poetical discourse by means of formulaic repetition, which emblematises both diachronic narratives and reiterative cycles, the erudite vs. popular dialectics found within the western framework. This “global” comparison obtains inasmuch as *saiti* cells / verses circumscribe a bounded unity within which the musical phrases / verbal lines maintain a dialectic relationship, a literal rhetoric of assertion and contradiction, questioning and answering, exposition and conclusion; and further, inasmuch as this discursiveness occurs within each inner recursive unit of all myth-chants, instead of delimiting its overall boundaries. The dyadic *saiti* cell of *Mokanawa Wenia* illustrates well this comparative image; but still the universal truth among these natives is that the workings of all their myth-chants, their sonic mechanisms, their play of ascending and descending tonal relations, of pulse and counter-pulse, and these musical devices alone are that

¹³⁸ Cf. Wisnik 1989 for an also “globalising” musical-historical account based on the dichotomy of circle vs. line, and Harnoncourt 1988 and 1993 for poetical rhetoric in

which unfolds their mythical narratives.

One might well claim that, while it is true that *saiti* myth-chants unfold a narrative, the mythical-musical discourse is not a “story”: it has no plot, with a beginning, a development and an ending, with conflicting and dialoguing themes, with a puzzle, a contradiction and then a solution. In other words, the mythical-musical narrative is not the direct verbal version of the tonal discursiveness of the sonata-form. However, the similarities are more striking than the differences. The closer homology with western formal tonality is not found in the entirety of the native myth-chant, its maximal unity; it is found instead in its smaller cellular units. The cellular structure of *Mokanawa Wenia*, for example, starts with a reiterative tonal assertion that is questioned and reasserted through negation at its conclusion. Therefore, it is also obviously true that these musical-rhetorical devices do not develop into a grand-scale tonal discourse: the development of *saiti* tonality is concomitant to the cellular closure, and follows and precedes its assertive reiteration. The mythical discourse of *saiti* is in fact open: its tonal and durational dialectics happens on a minimal scale, within each verse / cell and among the phrases therein, among the verbal lines that are dialectically expressed in several musical-poetical guises.

This means that the larger narrative structures of the myth-chant always emulate the smaller cell macrostructure, and thus the maximal verbal unity tends toward that minimal musical level of the changeable phrases. If instances of both formal circularity and linearity are to be found throughout the myth-chant, at

baroque music.

various structural levels, they are all reducible to the level that is internal to the cell. There, circularity and linearity conform to a specific micro-discourse of their own, one that, as *Mokanawa Wenia* exemplifies in the dyadic phrasal form of its cell, follows a less verbal-structured rhetorical template than the “sonata discourse” does: its tonal irresolution asks for a constant assertive reiteration, i.e. for the cellular structure itself. This rather restricts to poetical invention the possibility of variation on the mythical-musical template; and this is why mythical-musical construction among the Marubo has words as addenda to a cosmo-temporal matrix set into phrases and cells. In this sense, not only would it be absurd to say that *saiti* myth-chants are formless and unstructured, but it would also be senseless to say that their form and structure are not meaningful, or even that its musical poetics is less important than its verbal narrative. Rather, the contrary is the case: *saiti* is itself the temporal matrix of the Marubo cosmos.

The aim of this thesis has been precisely to unfold the cosmic-temporal key to this self-referential musical code, which is to be found in the tautological code itself. This code expresses a clear emphasis on repeated minimal structures and, in general, the specific poetical formulation of *saiti* words is a corroboration of musical-cellular repeatability, as *Mokanawa Wenia* exemplifies in the extreme with the formulaic lines and sequences *mokañ vake nawavo / nawa weni ini*, with the formulae of creation, etc.. However, while linearity also takes place at the micro-level of cell phrases, encompassed by the cellular circularity of all verses, the cyclical sequences of poetical structures, i.e. the strophes and rhymes that the most recurrent lines of the *saiti* configure in their formulaic organisation, act toward verbal discursiveness when encompassed by the linear perspective of the

entire mythical narrative. The form of distribution of poetical formulae may delimit the *saiti* in sections for instance, as *Mokanawa Wenia* shows in the chapter above. More often, in other myth-chants, the increased verbal repetition of these formulae may indicate a musical “fading out”: formulaic repetitiveness is a non-discursive device that results into the linearly bounded, discursive closure of the whole myth-chant or of some of its narrative sections.

A similar effect obtains when a mere descriptive intonation, a “representative recitation” listing some of the several Marubo matrilateral sections marks the limits of the *saiti*. The more “list-like” the poetical structure of the myth-chant is, the more “section-structured” it will be; and the more such formulaic repetition happens toward its end, the closer the final narrative section will be to what could be termed as a mythical-musical “coda”. This is again more conspicuous in other *saiti* than in *Mokanawa Wenia*, although this myth-chant develops a list-like structure that defines its second stage. Whatever the case may be, this makes the conclusions of the mythical-musical performances less arbitrary, and the minimal cell / verse reiteration becomes translatable into discursiveness through verbal repetition as well. This is more than a mere resemblance to the tonal devices that conclude much western music, like the thematic repetition in a fugal stretto or in a sonata coda, or the repeated alternation of tonic and dominant chords in the grand finale of a classical-romantic symphony. Still, conclusive repetition in *saiti* is not in the musical but in the verbal domain: cellular repetitiveness is, instead, a principle of composition rather than a device for tonal conclusion. Conversely, while the myth-chants build up on reiterative cells and conclude with repetitive poetical formulae, western tonality is so impregnated with

musical discursiveness that tonal-thematic repetition alone can be conclusive.

In effect, the occasional discursiveness of cells or verses in *saiti* is counteracted by their constant, seemingly unending musical repetition. The musical-cellular macrostructures of the myth-chants subsume both their circular-linear microstructures of lines and phrases and their poetical linearity too, although such linearity may be found in combination with reiterative circularity in the structural realm above the cell, i.e. in the next ascending order of aggregative magnitude — the verbal-strophic formulae or the “list-like” verses, the formulaic sequences that act as “conclusive remarks” or demarcate the sections of the *saiti*. Still one is invariably taken back to a predominant circularity, also a verbal-poetical one this time, by descending one degree of structural order from the aggregates of cells to the isolated verses. There are signs of reiteration within each verse in the economy of the whole myth-chant, either in the form of the aforementioned “liaison” between verbal lines across verses or in that of their formulaic commutability — e.g. between the line-variants *shavá raka ini* and *shavá rakaraka*, in *Mokanawa Wenia*. Further, such signs of reiteration include some conspicuous formulaic endings that reinforce the final musical phrases of each cell — as the “rhyming vowels” that conclude many recurrent lines of that myth-chant and that, for the sake of convenience, were omitted from our translations in the last chapters. Here it is also redundant to term such endings as “formulaic”, once the ordering musical rule, the canonical cellular structure that defines conclusive phrases is already too strict. These verbal devices only reinforce musical structures, which hardly admit any exception to the relentless *da capo* repetition of cells.

Now we have already more than sufficient reasons to suspect that this *saiti* structural game between circularity and linearity takes place at both verbal and musical levels — and in their interaction above all — and at several “orders of structural wideness” of each level and throughout the whole *saiti*. Still, it also seems to be clear that the Marubo maintain a value-hierarchy of circularity over linearity, of musical over verbal structures.

The incompleteness or openness of *saiti* is a corollary to these and other propositions. Here we mean the ad hoc, circumstantial character of the myth-chants. I do not know for sure what the “complete version” of a myth would be, and nobody could explain or sing it to me while in the field, for the probable reason that completeness or overall “bounded-ness” is incommensurate with any possible indigenous conception of what a *saiti* might be. If this question, the “what” that *saiti* is, is one of the foremost aims of this research, its future development should have to account for such a mythical-musical trait, viz. the impossibility of an exhaustive description. And in the present state of affairs, in the inconclusive conclusion of our dissertation, *saiti* can be defined in the most general terms only. The *saiti* myth-chants as an open-ended amalgamation of phrases and lines, verses and cells, all very amenable to *bricolage* in more than a structural-linguistic sense, but in accordance with specific musical-poetical rules: a generative matrix through which those peoples develop their own temporality, and thus perform their own socio-historical decisions, as simultaneous subjects and objects of their mythical-musical discourse.

Musically, there is an incomplete sense of ending to each musical phrase, which the Marubo chant as no more than a cell-fragment, while there is in contrast

a marked end to each cell in the form of a pause or silence, which in festival performance may precede a verse repetition of not. From a western-tonal perspective, the rationale of conclusiveness appears to be inverted: although musical cells have definite endings, i.e. they are self-contained tonal motives, *saiti* phrase cadences sometimes seem arbitrary, i.e. not tonally-structured. The *saiti* itself would be just a cluster of cells if the cellular structure were regarded as an irrational aggregate of tones. However we have seen how, in the example of *Mokanawa Wenia*, the musical phrases within each cell are very much structured, in a dyadic way in that case. The ruling structural order of the myth-chant is at the level of the cell, as the performer's silence or the literal repetition that follows each one indicates; but there is no musical-formal ending at all to any of the partial verbal-formulaic clusters of cells performed, nor to the form of *saiti* as a whole. As a conclusion to the chant, the cells just cease to be intoned. Overall, the *saiti* myth-chant is fragmentary and minimalist, an open aggregate of isomorphic cells. The myth-chant ends when the *yoya* song-leader manifests the concluding signal of *sai* — high-pitched falsettos — or, alternatively, when the same conclusive vocal manifestations are heard from the responding responsory. This *sai* termination subsumes itself under the verbal linearity of the *saiti* only, i.e. that of the narrative discourse intoned in successive verses, in formulaic sequences and recurrent lines; but the timing of this termination is not nearly as precise as the open cellular structure of the myth-chant.

This is because on the verbal side there is as well a strong rationale behind the openness of mythical-musical content: as we have seen, among the Upper Ituí Marubo, all complex wisdom that regards native healing, witchcraft and shamanic

arts at large is usually projected onto knowledge displayed and forthcoming from Upper Curuçá elders. For these *-nawa* peoples, knowledge is from the outside toward the inside: from the perspective of co-residential kin, no *saiti* rendered by co-residents could possibly be taken as a full musical-mythical account. This “foreign value” is locally appreciated even when the performing *yoya* chant-leaders are kin elders who do not live where the myth-chant is performed, as was the case with *Ivañpa* in April 1998. This manifested incompleteness of the inside with respect to the outside — not as a positive-negative relationship, but as the complementary identity between the outside-like insider and the inside-like outsider — is not only epistemological but ontological: it affords many of the cosmo-political explanations that are essayed elsewhere in this thesis.

One last reason for *saiti* unbounded-ness might be that, again, its repetitive quality itself could be a clue to explain the ever-beginning character of each mythical-musical performance or general theme, at both verbal and musical levels: open-ended repetition characterises the fragmentary-unitary character of shamanic knowledge, a vivid sign that it is more than a mere atavistic tradition. Two secondary features stem from this last reason, which by no means is supposed to be the most important as regards the event we seek to explicate, but still leads to most important implications. It must be noted that the itemisation of all these explanatory “reasons” are pure rhetorical devices, and they all refer to the characteristic that struck us at the very beginning of our study of the *saiti* myth-chants, viz. their openness, which then required some structural explanation. Now the secondary features that ultimately stem from our reasoning on this first impression are strong claims, and the reader must decide whether they are worth

being mentioned as conclusions to this thesis or if they are no more than exploratory hypotheses; but still, whatever judgement is passed, it should prompt further research on the Marubo *saiti*.

One feature is that the shamanic leading theme that links all myth-chants, and that allows for the creation of a homogeneous mythical-musical corpus, amounts to the fact that all *saiti* display similar sentiment-laden, structural hierarchies (*pathos*-evaluation), as well as compatible, not to say complementary world-making contents (*ethos*-ambience). The contents of myth-chants and their tonal hierarchies, their circularity and linearity and the relations between both, are the expression and the expressible in *saiti* structural form, that is, in its musical poetics.

The other feature is that this structural-formal *pathos*-evaluation of *ethos*-ambience is variable. This variation is evident in the degree of circular or linear character of the musical phrases within each cell. Further, it is made evident as a higher or lesser degree of verbal-poetical recurrence within each *saiti*, and the absolute or relative circularity or linearity of its recurrent lines and verses. Yet both musical and poetical variations of degree are secondary: although variable, the mythical-musical character of cellular circularity over linearity remains constant for the sake of the overall “onto-epistemological” homogeneity just mentioned, which the prevalent open recursion of the *saiti* cellular code accounts for. *Saiti* is always cellular from a musical perspective, and this cell structure is at times also accompanied by verbal-formulaic repetition. *Saiti* structures are cellular, always in music and often from a verbal perspective too: in briefer words, music circles round verbal lines. All myth-chants collected in the field attest to this

constant.

This feature of inconstancy within constancy is clearly illustrated in several *saiti*, and the alternative circularity and linearity of their recurrent verbal lines, which in *Mokanawa Wenia* vary in accordance with the musical phrase in which they occur, is just one example. After the demonstrations in the last chapters, now we shall draw our attention to the verbal character of the cyclical repetition that we generically referred to before as “strophes” and “rhymes”, and to which we made specific reference in *Mokanawa Wenia*. Here we may term this verbal-cyclical character as “poetical symmetry”; and by this, we designate the macrostructures that that *saiti* illustrates throughout in the form of formulaic combinations of recurrent lines (e.g. *ato... / moka... / atoñ... / shavá raka...*). The aforementioned line formulae that are repeated in “list” form toward the end of myth-chants or *saiti* sections, with some variations in the order of verses, are another example.

Poetical symmetry is at work, for example, in the placement of a vowel in the final vocalisation of some verses, in their concluding lines, which thus constitute a rhyme with the last line of the preceding verses. In such instances, the semantic value of the vocal sound is beyond its verbal, linguistic scope. The semantics of these verbal endings is musical, as when entire musical phrases are vocalised without verbal lines: poetry without words. Rhymes are a mere confirmation of the musical prevalence at the verse / cell level of the *saiti*, that which imparts overall circularity to it. Another instance of poetical symmetry at this level takes place when strophes, circular and still verbal, overlap and displace verses in relation to cells: phrases and lines are in and out of phase, and yet musical circularity is preserved and, so to speak, multiplied. In this and in other

cases, such poetical devices act according to that counter-pointing cyclical temporality, to a circular rhythmic-melodic logic that we see at work both at this intermediate macrostructural level of the recursive cells and in the prevalent and pervading musical-cellular perspective that one finds in the phrases therein.

A few concrete instances may clarify some abstract vocabulary. The preceding chapters have already mentioned some *saiti* lines or whole verses that have no words: they are structurally defined by the musical structures alone. In this case, verbal “lines” and “verses” should be respectively called by no other names than musical “phrases” and “cells”. In these situations the melody is intoned in a single vowel — such as *i* or *a* —, and each note is sometimes preceded by a glottal stop — e.g. *'i 'i 'i*. This is indicated in the attached translation and elsewhere with a hyphen (-).

More frequently, these *i*'s or *a*'s or other sounds — vowels or nasal consonants — are intoned at the end of verbal lines or verses. Here they are used again with no immediate, designative verbal denotation, in which case the literal translation in the appendix below shall indicate them with three dots following the gloss immediately before (...). They are rhymes of just pure vocalisations. Still, it is not too rare an occurrence that ending vowels might be considered as a temporal declination. The declination *-a* or *-ai* at the end of verb-roots means both present or recent past action, as opposed to the terminations *-aiñ*, *-taiñ*, *-vaiñ* and other variations, which are employed to express a continuous action in a more remote past. All this might be in line with mythical-musical temporal meanings — a hypothesis that our current knowledge cannot verify — or may be another poetical device toward “symmetry”; and as such, these vowel-terminations would be just

phonetic transformations of words in the musicalised verbal language¹³⁹.

The latter possibility would avoid further confusion in *saiti* translation, but it would also mean to ignore the possible verbal function of such ending vowels, and to consider instead *a* or *i*, as well as other affixes, as mere “linking sounds” between phrases / lines. Still this choice is favoured by the aforementioned fact that, among other sounds, *a* and especially *i* are often intoned in the *saiti* as vocalising sounds, both in the case of single notes or in whole musical phrases in which no words nor verbal lines are chanted. Whenever such vowels are employed in the aforementioned last notes of many “verbalised” musical phrases and cells, it should be signalled clearly enough — through a hyphen or three dots — whether these sounds have a sole poetical significance, i.e. if they designate a musical-cellular, “symmetrical” logic but have no designative meaning. This is of particular importance, for example, in the case of the verb-root *oi*, “to see”, “to look”: if the gap between the root and the vowel-complement in its visual, written representation (i.e. that between *oi* and *a*) were omitted, the expression could easily be mistaken for *-oia*, a suffix meaning “equally”, “as well”, or “oneself”. Although the written notation is phonetically indifferent, regardless of the verbal meaning intended — in the performance of the myth-chants, it sounds *oia* all the same —, here the musical emphasis is clear when it is the case of a “vocalisation” device deforming *oi* toward a “poetical symmetry” between lines. If the verbally semantic-free vowel in the final vocalisation of *oi* is just meant to rhyme with the last line of the preceding verse, we emphasise, the semantic value of the vocal

¹³⁹ With reference to Kamayurá music, Menezes Bastos 1989 labels this phenomenon precisely as “vocalisation”.

sound is beyond its verbal scope, and hence such value is “musical”, cyclical-symmetrical.

Throughout this thesis, we have made an effort to deepen this “meta-semantics” in a “meta-philological” study of *saiti*, i.e. in the exegesis of its poetical-musicological essence, that which should coincide with its extra-verbal mythological essence as well. Such an effort corresponds to nothing else but an introduction to the project that this thesis proposes. The study of the relation between word and note, of the musical interaction between sense and sound, would entail a focus on the structural-formal “ethical-pathology” we mentioned before, on a logic that would be before, behind, between, above and below any transcendent abstraction of concrete immanence, that is, beyond Aristotelian distinctions between “intellect” and “sense-perception”¹⁴⁰.

The instances mentioned above give an idea of what we have called “poetical symmetry” in *saiti* — perhaps too pompous a term for such familiar, simple devices in native myth-music. It is worth noting again that, in spite of the parallel effect between the verbal lines and verses that such devices produce, and of the cyclical character of all musical-poetical structures — of cells and other reiterative patterns —, there is no strict temporal correspondence between musical note and verbal sound, i.e. tone and word are not “iso-rhythmic”: *saiti* temporality is variable. This relationship between words and sounds, this “canon” or “counterpoint” between phrases and lines, is analogous to the unmeasured relation

¹⁴⁰ That is in line with Menezes Bastos’ project toward a “musical semantics” (1989)... and with the poetry of John Donne, of course: “...license then my roving hands, and let them go...”.

between the *saiti* myth-chants and the polyrhythmic *ako* drumbeats, or to that between the mythical-musical form and the choreographic rotation of dancing circles responding to the *yoya* chant-leader, or to the polyphony of *keñchiñtxo*-healers singing simultaneously to the ailing patient. These are sonic-choreographic configurations that, as we have noted, are transpositions of a mythical-musical logic: although recurrent *saiti* lines repeat themselves, verbal verses are arranged in a different order at each time, establishing new sound / word relationships at each phrasal-cellular repetition.

As exemplified elsewhere, such verbal variability takes place by simple change of line order, of line position, or by the intonation of “blank” lines — those where musical phrases are not uttered with words, but are sung instead by means of “vocalised” vowels, or still hummed in *bocca chiusa*. In other words, there is a certain degree of independence and arbitrariness or, better phrased, a higher flexibility to the chanted words, whereas the musical phrases or cells are intoned in a much stricter sequence. Nevertheless, the variability and somewhat arbitrary character of the line / phrase relationship disappears as the *saiti* myth-chant is seen from a wider semantic perspective, as the statistics of verse occurrence of the recurrent lines of *Mokanawa Wenia* have shown in the previous chapter.

The clash between verbal mobility and musical stability results in the “canon” or “counterpoint” that has also been described above as a syncopated rhythm over a regular pulse, in a somewhat analogous way to a western-familiar melismatic melody over a monochord drone. Again, this temporal opposition between variation and constancy resounds in other performative events pertaining to *saiti*, both to the myth-chant and to the festival: the *ako*-drum is beaten steadily

by two players, one on each of its extremities, each observing the same pulse but dividing it differently with different-sized drumsticks — the smaller the drumstick, the smaller the pulse is divided. The two steady players, in turn, are opposed to the rotating middle-player, a role that nearly every male festival participant who surrounds the *ako* at its performance fulfils. The drumbeat in the middle follows the same pulse and divides it similarly to the largest of the steady divisions, but accentuates it differently, enhancing the effect of a rhythmic counterpoint; and once again, the effect is similar to that concordant cacophony that is created when several *keñchiñtxo*-healers sing different *shoñti* curing-chants at the same time¹⁴¹.

If these concluding remarks on the mythical-musical structures are still not clear, the diagrammatic and paradigmatic illustration of a *saiti* myth-chant below is our last resource. It is based on four propositions:

- (a) the *saiti* myth-chant is a linear narrative composed of an aggregate of verbal verses made up of lines, which respectively coincide with musical cells made up of phrases;
- (b) *saiti* microstructures are defined by the interaction between line and the corresponding phrase, resulting in a dialectics of word and note, phoneme and pitch;

¹⁴¹ Erikson 1996 provides one of the few descriptions of Pano music that allows for a parallel with this one, with particular reference to chants aimed at increasing the potency of blowgun poison — which is, by the way, a Marubo reference in the *saiti* of *Teté Teka*, a decisive element in the mythical-musical process of murdering the monster-hawk. That author describes:

“Chacun entonne sa litanie dans son coin... On ne cherche aucunement à synchroniser son récitatif, entrecoupé de chuintements ‘shhhh’, avec celui de ses voisins. Toutefois, l’émouvante cacophonie qui en résulte n’en témoigne pas moins d’une évidente volonté d’agir de concert.” (1996: 215)

(c) *saiti* macrostructures are defined by the interaction between verse and the corresponding cell, resulting in a reiterative counterpoint of verbal linearity against musical circularity;

(d) such macrostructures and the resulting verbal-musical perspectival counterpoint take place also at a poetical level, where linear verses and lines are repeated both in phase — rhymes — and out of phase — strophes — with the circular cells and phrases; both rhyme and strophe devices result in an effect of symmetry, which gives an emphasis to circularity above linearity.

In short:

(a) the *saiti* chant, as a mythical narrative, is verbally linear;

(b) its microstructural units, lines and phrases, interact in a circular-linear dialectics within a cellular framework;

(c) its macrostructures, verses and cells, interact in a reiterative counterpoint of lines against circles;

(d) musical circularity is verbally reiterated and counter-pointed through poetical symmetry.

Therefore:

(a) *saiti* myth-chant = X + Y + Z + W + K etc. = Σ verses / cells
overall structure = open linear unity from verbal perspective

(b) Σ verses / cells = Σ (a, b, etc. lines : α , β phrases)

Σ (X, Y, etc.) = Σ (lines : phrases) = Σ microstructures

bounded unity in verbal-musical dialectics of lines and circles

X = (a / b) : (α / β) → phoneme : pitch
 Y = (c / b') : (α / β) → word : note
 Z = (e / a) : (α / β) → line : phrase
 W = (b / c) : (α / β) → verbal : musical
 K = (b' / f) : (α / β) → microstructural interaction

(c) *saiti* myth-chant = Σ cellular macrostructures = Σ (verse : cell)

verse / cell = circular unity from musical-poetical perspective

(X, Y, etc.) = verbal linearity : musical circularity

verses : cells = (a / b) etc. verbal lines : (α / β) musical phrases

(a / b), (c / b') etc. : Σ (α / β) = verbal verses : musical cells

(d) poetical symmetry = rhyme / strophe macrostructures

(a / b), (c / b') = circular lines

→ repeated vocalisation in final lines = reiterative rhymes

(a / b / c / b') = circular verses

→ line-phrase, verse-cell counterpoint = strophic reiteration

The major claim of this thesis is that Marubo ontological statements on time can be elicited from such structural interactions. Again, it is pointless to discuss whether the visualisable categories of “circularity” and “linearity”, of “verbal” and “musical” are “emic” analytical constructs, in contrast with the “etic” aural structures — those that are cellular, rhythmic, or melodic ones, at a morphological realm if you like. It would be a discussion like that in Bertold Brecht’s anecdote of the Chinese philosophers, those who drowned in a flood while debating whether the Yellow River existed independently from them or was a figment of their thoughts. Otherwise, for those who are available to see structural form while

listening to the Marubo *saiti*, it is irrelevant whether “our” terms or “their” terms are “made up” or “real”, either ethnocentrically or egocentrically. Seeing through listening what the Marubo sing, and how they sing it, is something of a more synthetic kind than a mere verbal-visual account, less subject to analytical will and more congenial to the native context and commentary. Non-printed sounds are fleeting; they are linear narrative and recurrent lines, progressive verses and reiterative cells, successive phrases and regular tones.

This thesis attempts to make these aural impressions visible, with all the inherent limitations of such a task, and no more of our time should be wasted in trying to justify the truth-validity of such a visualisation. If it is granted that the *saiti* are visualisable at all — if it is possible to write monographs on myth-chants, here or elsewhere —, our aim has been reached, and we are free to claim: such music is myth in time, a sensible and intelligible symbolic synthesis of synchrony and diachrony. And as for the dilemma between social natures and natural societies, between the “ethno-” and the “non-ethno-”, we suggest: a relationship between particular sensibility and universal intelligibility cannot obtain unless one pays heed to the temporal structures in which humans and worlds inscribe each other, sensibly and intelligibly.

Appendix

MOKANAWA WENIA

wild people + to sprout

Voñchiñpa translated this myth-chant for the most part on his own. Here a word-to-word translation is present without the transcription of the corresponding notes; and thus we omit the *saiti* prosody at the level of the interaction between verbal line and musical phrase, which after all did not take much part in our exegesis. We do not mean to underrate its semantic relevance, though: our omission is just due to economy. Contrariwise, this transcription includes all the line-ending vowels that had been excluded from the exegetical quotes of the myth-chant in the body of the thesis. As indicated before, each of the 390 verbal verses below corresponds to the cell that is transcribed above; and here the dashes (-) indicate musical phrases without lines, those that *Ivañpa* vocalised in *i*. The footnotes present henceforth some trivial commentary to clarify a few unusual words, and much marginal exegesis that shall entertain the more inquisitive reader, waiting for further development.

1. -
-
2. ***moka awá chinañ***
bitter + tapir + breath-thought
chinañ oso atoñsho
breath-thought + in place + to do (locative, outward)
3. ***mokañ vake nawavo***
bitter (genitive) + child + people (plural)
atoñ awe shavoya i
they (genitive) + who + woman (adjectival)...

4. **nawa weni ini i**
 people + to sprout + auxiliary verb...
ato aya weni a
 they + to exist + to sprout...
5. **moka shawañ ina**
 bitter + red macaw + tail
atoñ teneao a
 they (genitive) + feather headdress¹⁴² (emphatic)...
6. **shavá raka ini i**
 clarity + to lie + to embellish...
atoñ awe shavovo
 they (genitive) + who + woman (plural)
7. **moka pani vatxi**
 bitter + *tucum* palm-tree + skirt¹⁴³
shavá raka ini i
 clarity + to lie + to embellish...
8. **avi ato pari ki**
 first + where + direction...
shavá vevo ini i
 clarity + elder¹⁴⁴ + auxiliary verb...

¹⁴² It is not clear whether the *tene* headdress has a specific morphology; here it is simply designated as a “hat” (*maiti*) made of red macaw tail-feathers.

¹⁴³ Several utensils are made out of the fibres taken from the *tucum* sprouting palms (*tucum* in Brazil, *pani* for the Marubo). It is an alternative material to cultivated cotton. While hammocks are made of both fibres to this day, in the past female skirts used to be so too. Note that feather garments are as ornamental as necklaces and headdresses, and skirts are opposed to other adornments just inasmuch as the distinction between yielding (*moka...*) and fabricating (*atoñ...*) the ornamented peoples in the clearing of the world (*shavá...*) is not made explicit in the corresponding formula, of which this verse takes part. In contrast to other ornamentation formulae, palm-tree and sprouting palm, i.e. the arboreal origin and the raw material of skirts (*vatxi*), are here expressed in one single line, *moka pani...* followed by the settlement of peoples on the cleared surface of earth, in the *shavá raka...* line. This line, as the counterpart of creation, reasserts the ornamental character of chthonic creatures (in accordance with *Voñchiñpa*’s translation: “all created peoples ornamented”, cf. *supra*), and thus assigns the skirt as a synthesis of sprouts, both of the palm-fibre yarn and of the emergent humanity, of palm-arboreal yield and of human fabrication. Here, the reduction of the fourfold formulaic structure of ornamentation (they [the *mokanawa* peoples] possess / arboreal or animal material element / ornament / terrestrial location: *ato aya weni / moka... / atoñ... / shavá raka...*) to two lines (*moka pani vatxi / shavá raka ini*) is a sign of the humanly innate sense of skirts: eggshells, birthplaces, as detailed above.

¹⁴⁴ Rather than the literally saying “clarity elder”, *shavá vevo* is better translated as “those who come first”; cf. chapter above.

9. ***noa mato wetsa***
 large river + high mound + other
wetsa ivo ini i
 other + owner + to reach...
10. ***tsoa vana vitima***
 whose + language + to bring (nominal, causative)
moka shae vana
 bitter + anteater + language
11. ***vana vin' aya***
 language + to bring (volitional) + to exist
mokañ vake nawavo
 bitter (genitive) + child + people (plural)
12. ***moka voa kanase***
 bitter + certain palm-tree + long and thin stems¹⁴⁵
atoñ keoao a
 they (genitive) + supra-labial piercing ornament (emphatic)...
13. ***shavá rakaraka i***
 clarity + to lie (twice)...
noa mato wetsanoñ
 large river + high mound + other (volitional)
14. ***shoko rakaraka ki***
 to peel+ to lie (twice)...
 -
15. ***wa noa mai ki***
 that + large river + land...
pereñ akimane a
 noise+ thus (causative, locative)...
16. ***moka awá imi***
 bitter + tapir + blood
 -
17. ***imi veo atoñsho***
 blood + pool + to do (locative, outward)
moka awá imi ki
 bitter + tapir + blood...

¹⁴⁵ *Keniñnawa* explained: *voa* is a palm-tree similar to the *palheira*, which in Portuguese means something like “straw-tree”, a palm whose leaves are used as thatched roofing for Marubo shanties and longhouses. The trunk of those trees is covered with long, thin stems, similar to thorns. Marubo men used to dry and stick these thorny stems above the pierced upper lip, making the ornament *keo* that is so usual among Pano peoples, as far back as in the times of the naturalist-traveller Marcoy (*apud* Melatti, ed. 1981: 17).

18. *vetxo kaiñ atoñsho*
 clotted + to go (continuous past) + to do (locative, outward)
mokañ vake nawavo
 bitter (genitive) + child + people (plural)
19. *nawa weni ini i*
 people + to sprout + auxiliary verb...
moka piñtxo eshe
 bitter + *murú-murú* palm-tree + seed¹⁴⁶
20. *atoñ raneao a*
 they (genitive) + bead¹⁴⁷ (emphatic)...
shavá rakaraka i
 clarity + to lie (twice)...
21. *avi ato pari ki*
 first + where + direction...
shavá vevo ini i
 clarity + older + to embellish...
22. *noa mato wetsa*
 large river + high mound + other
wetsa ivo ini i
 other + owner + to reach...

¹⁴⁶ *Muru-muru* is the name local Brazilians give to a short palm-tree whose seed has detergent properties. Its commercial use almost seems to be starting to get widespread in regional towns; but for generations, the Marubo have used the bead-shaped dark seeds to fabricate necklaces, bands and garters. The contention that chthonic creation is aesthetic is reinforced by the fertility of the ornamental beads themselves: the emergent peoples adorn themselves with *murú-murú* seeds... which, in the *saiti*, appear as adjacent to the earth that, as equivalent to clotted tapir's blood and other creational substances, gives birth to these same peoples.

¹⁴⁷ More than "beads", *rane* is in fact a metonym for all ornaments made out of tiny particles of snail-shells (from *novo*, the *aruá* snail) or seeds (as of the *murú-murú* palm-tree mentioned here). That is, *rane* is a metonym for garters and girdles, bands and belts, bracelets and braces, sashes and necklaces, although glass-beads (*txakiri*) are the commonest material of which these adornments are made these days. Still those *rane* seed-beads are not to be mistaken for *txakiri*, the glass-made ones, although they are as important a material of adornment and as popular as the ones made of the snail-shell *novo*, produced from an homonymous snail found on the riverside or, as another common alternative nowadays, from white pvc plastic. All these ornaments are acknowledged attributes in the characterisation of *yové*-spirits, prototypically beautiful entities. Note the coincidence of all that with an also important item in the shamanic apparatus among the riverine nationals of the Colombian piedmont, miles away from Marubo lowlands: *txakira*, heavy bead necklaces whose multiple loops adorn the shaman prior to and during every curing session (cf. Taussig 1987).

23. *moka shawañ ina*
bitter + red macaw + tail
aweñ ina iñkeshe
it (genitive) + tail + half-length
24. *atoñ txipañ iti a*
they (genitive) + to cover the back + auxiliary verb¹⁴⁸ (nominal)...
shavá rakaraka i
clarity + to lie (twice)...
25. *mokañ vake nawavo*
bitter (genitive) + child + people (plural)
nawa raka shakama i
people + to lie + aplenty...
26. *noke ivo nawama i*
we + owner + people (negative)...
nawa weni ini i
people + to sprout + auxiliary verb...
27. *moka shawañ vana*
bitter + red macaw + language
vana vin' aya
language + to bring (volitional) + to exist
28. -
-
29. *moka rono chinañ ki*
bitter + poisonous snake + breath-breath-thought...
moka mai nateñ ash'
bitter + land + impregnated + to do (outward)
30. *veo ini'otivo*
pool + auxiliary verb (locative, nominal, plural)
moka rono chinañ
bitter + poisonous snake + breath-breath-thought
31. *chinañ oso atoñsho*
breath-thought + in place + to do (locative, outward)
rono ikañ ayavo
poisonous snake + homonym + to have (plural)

¹⁴⁸ *Txipañti* would be another ancient adornment-garment that, as opposed to *shañpati* (a cotton *cache-sexe* men used to wear in the past, cf. below), was worn over the lower back and buttocks; and similarly to *shañpati*, the noun is probably derived from an elision of the expression *txipañ iti* here employed.

32. *mokañ vake nawavo*
bitter (genitive) + child + people (plural)
nawa weni ini i
people + to sprout + auxiliary verb...
33. *moka voa kanase*
bitter + certain palm-tree + long and thin stems
atoñ keoao a
they (genitive) + supra-labial ornament (emphatic)...
34. *shavá raka ini i*
clarity + to lie + to embellish...
nawa weni ini i
people + to sprout + auxiliary verb...
35. *moka naiñ¹⁴⁹ sheta*
bitter + sloth (genitive) + tooth
atoñ tewit'ao a
they (genitive) + necklace (emphatic)...
36. *shavá raka ini i*
clarity + to lie + to embellish...
sai toa iki a
high-pitched shout + born from + auxiliary verb...
37. *noa mato wetsa*
large river + high mound + other
wetsa ivo ini i
other + owner + to reach...
38. *nawa weni ini i*
people + to sprout + auxiliary verb...
mokañ vake nawavo
bitter (genitive) + child + people (plural)
39. *moka rono imi*
bitter + poisonous snake + blood
vetxo kaiñ atoñsho
clotted + to do (continuous past) + to do (locative, outward)
40. *mokañ vake nawavo*
bitter (genitive) + child + people (plural)
nawa weni ini i
people + to sprout + auxiliary verb...

¹⁴⁹ The correct spelling would be *nāiñ*, since the root is *nāi*, the “sloth”, and not the “sky” *nai*; but since the animal referent of the *sheta* “tooth” is obvious, we ignore the tilde over the vowel, for the sake of orthographic consistency (cf. *supra*).

41. *atoñ awe shavoya i*
they (genitive) + who + woman (adjectival)...
shavo kayapavo i
woman + tall (superlative, plural)...
42. *nawa weni ini i*
people + to sprout + auxiliary verb...
moka isko ina
bitter + *japu* wildfowl + tail
43. *atoñ mait'ao a*
they (genitive) + headdress¹⁵⁰ (emphatic)...
shavá raka ini i
clarity + to lie + to embellish...
44. *moka shawañ ina*
bitter + red macaw + tail
atoñ keoao a
they (genitive) + supra-labial ornament (emphatic)...
45. *shavá rakaraka i*
clarity + to lie (twice)...
nawa weni ini i
people + to sprout + auxiliary verb...
46. *atoñ awe shavovo*
they (genitive) + who + woman (plural)
-
47. *moka pani vatxi*
bitter + *tucum* palm-tree + skirt
shavá rakaraka i
clarity + to lie (twice)...

¹⁵⁰ *Maiti* means “feather headdress” or just a Marubo gloss for the western-style “hat”; this word has a wide semantic range, covering many styles of body-ornamental feather-work. As for the general morphology of the *maiti*, here we shall limit our description to the very basics, and to the few headdresses seen in the field: a circular straw-frame and vertical long feathers in a row running perpendicular to the girth of the head support. Still this structure is amenable to variation and, if the feathers come normally from the macaw’s tail, there is a remarkable variety of feather colours, sizes and sources: even those of vultures are used. In fact, the semantic layers of the *maiti* are as deep as its aesthetic complexities. Ancient custom established that guests would fabricate several *maiti*, wear them and thus “invade” the hosts’ longhouses and near-surrounding gardens, destroying some of their trees, plants, the longhouses’ threshold, the male frontal parallel benches (*kenañ*), the ceremonial drums (*ako*) and other possessions and appliances, as the thesis details above. In return and compensation for all damage perpetrated, after much dancing and display of their much ornamented heads and bodies, the guests would give their *maiti* away to the hosts.

48. *nawa weni ini i*
people + to sprout + auxiliary verb...
moka voa kanase
bitter + certain palm-tree + long and thin stems
49. *atoñ keoao a*
they (genitive) + supra-labial ornament (emphatic)...
shavá rakaraka i
clarity + to lie (twice)...
50. *nawa weni ini i*
people + to sprout + auxiliary verb...
avi ato pari ki
first + where + direction...
51. *noa mato wetsa ki*
large river + high mound + other...
wetsa ivo ini i
other + owner + to reach...
52. -
-
53. *moka rono imi*
bitter + poisonous snake + blood
imi veo atoñsho
blood + pool + to do (locative, outward)
54. *weniko ini ki*
to sprout (collective) + auxiliary verb...
mokañ vake nawavo
bitter (genitive) + child + people (plural)
55. *moka txoroñ rane*
bitter + certain frog (genitive) + bead¹⁵¹
rane vin' aya
bead + to bring (volitional) + to exist

¹⁵¹ Certain animals embellish much as they bestow the capability to speak; hence, “beads” (*rane*) can be equated to “language” (*vana*). The association that holds between “medicine” (*rao*) and “body ornaments” among the Pano Kachinawa (*dau*, also “brilliance”, a kinship moiety among the latter, cf. Lagrou 1998), and a more generic connotation of *rao* as “knowledge” among the Marubo might suggest that beads, qua language and possibly beyond, are tantamount to shamanic knowledge. This is a connotation that some observations above would confirm; note however that here “beads” appear in a verse and line structure where the formulaic logic would lead one to expect, in accordance with previous verses and lines, not *rane* but *vana* instead, “language” (i.e. *moka... vana / vana vin' aya*). In spite of all probable associations, *vana* might have just been mistaken for *rane*, for which reason the *txoro*-frog is omitted from the table of ornamental animals and elements above.

56. -
-
57. *noa vi vana*¹⁵²
large river + small anteater + language
vana vin' aya
language + to bring (volitional) + to exist
58. *mokañ vake nawavo*
bitter (genitive) + child + people (plural)
avi ato pari ki
first + where + direction...
59. *nawa weni ini i*
people + to sprout + auxiliary verb...
-
60. -
-
61. *moka isko ina*
bitter + *japu* wildfowl + tail
ato shañpa iti a
they + to cover in front + auxiliary verb (nominal)...¹⁵³
62. *shavá rakaraka i*
clarity + to lie (twice)...
mokañ vake shavovo
bitter (genitive) + child + woman (plural)
63. -
-

¹⁵² Now unlike all other language-giving animals, the animal itself, instead of sharing the quintessential “bitterness” (*moka*) with the emergent peoples, shares an explicit exogenous provenience with the *mokanawa*: the large river (*noa*). This supports the contention that both diacritics (*moka* and *noa*) are interchangeable markers of alterity... and of identity: are not the Marubo the *-nawa* peoples themselves, i.e. “foreign” dwellers of large riverbanks?

¹⁵³ The phrase *shañpa iti* refers to an ancient garment in cloth covering male genitals, *shañpati*, literally “to cover” + “nominalising suffix”. In a similar way as all garments listed in the myth-chant, the garment is a rather ornamental feather-dress, an aesthetic constitution of humanity borrowed from animals or plants.

64. *mokañ vake nawavo*
bitter (genitive) + child + people (plural)
wa noa mai ki
that + large river + land...
65. *pereñ akimane a*
noise + thus (causative, locative)...
moka mai chinañ
bitter + land + breath-thought
66. *chinañ oso atoñsho*
breath-thought + in place + to do (locative, outward)
mokañ vake nawavo
bitter (genitive) + child + people (plural)
67. *nawa weni ini i*
people + to sprout + auxiliary verb...
nawa kayapavo i
people + tall (superlative, plural)...
68. *avi ato pari ki*
first + where + direction...
shavá vevo ini i
clarity + older + to embellish...
69. *atoñ awe shavoya i*
they (genitive) + who + woman (adjectival)...
nawa weni ini i
people + to sprout + auxiliary verb...
70. *ato aya weni a*
they + to exist + to sprout...
-
71. *moka kana ina*
bitter + yellow macaw + tail
atoñ mait'ao a
they (genitive) + headdress (emphatic)...
72. *shavá rakaraka i*
clarity + to lie (twice)...
nawa weni ini i
people + to sprout + auxiliary verb...
73. *avi ato pari ki*
first + where + direction...
shavá vevo ini i
clarity + older + to embellish...

74. *atoñ awe shavovo*
they (genitive) + who + woman (plural)
-
75. -
-
76. *moka naiñ sheta*
bitter + sloth (genitive) + tooth
atoñ tewit'ao a
they (genitive) + necklace (emphatic)...
77. *shavá rakaraka i*
clarity + to lie (twice)...
nawa weni ini i
people + to sprout + auxiliary verb...
78. *moka mai chinañ ki*
bitter + land + breath-thought...
mokañ vake nawavo
bitter (genitive) + child + people (plural)
79. *weniko ini ki*
to sprout (collective) + auxiliary verb...
mokañ vake nawavo
bitter (genitive) + child + people (plural)
80. *atoñ chinañ ratea*
they (genitive) + breath-thought + to scare¹⁵⁴
-
81. *moka tama imi*
bitter + tree + blood
imi veo atoñsho
blood + pool + to do (locative, outward)
82. *nawa weni ini i*
people + to sprout + auxiliary verb...
mokañ vake nawavo
bitter (genitive) + child + people (plural)

¹⁵⁴ The fright is attributed to the sprouting peoples themselves. Their thoughts (*atoñ chinañ*) are scary and scared (*ratea*), the cause and the effect: thoughts are engendered as they are estranged from earth, and estrange engendered strangers. Cf. *supra*.

83. *tama ikañ ayavo*
tree + homonym + to have (plural)
nawa weni ini i
people + to sprout + auxiliary verb...
84. -
-
85. *moka sheshe vana ki*
bitter + certain type of macaw¹⁵⁵ + language
vana vin' aya
language + to bring (volitional) + to exist
86. *atoñ awe shavovo*
they (genitive) + who + woman (plural)
-
87. *vevo aiñ aya*
older + female¹⁵⁶ + to exist
-
88. *moka tama nañko*
bitter + tree + sweetness
nañko oso atoñsho
sweetness + in place + to do (locative, outward)
89. *nawa weni ini i*
people + to sprout + auxiliary verb...
tama ikañ ayavo
tree + homonym + to have (plural)
90. *mokañ vake nawavo*
bitter (genitive) + child + people (plural)
nawa weni ini i
people + to sprout + auxiliary verb...
91. -
-

¹⁵⁵ It is said that the *sheshe*-macaw eat the fruits of the *pupunha* palm-tree, an important native cultigen, plaguing the gardens of the Marubo.

¹⁵⁶ Here *aiñ* refers to *shavo*, as we have seen above; and since the consanguinity of the term is emphasised, *aiñ* is now translated just as “female”, and not as “wife”, as in ordinary usage.

92. ***moka tama vimi***
bitter + tree + fruit
reoko atoñsho
to fall down¹⁵⁷ + to do (locative, outward)
93. ***vimi ikañ ayavo***
fruit + homonym + to have (plural)
mokañ vake nawavo
bitter (genitive) + child + people (plural)
94. ***nawa weni ini i***
people + to sprout + auxiliary verb...
moka osho ina
bitter + crane¹⁵⁸ + tail
95. ***atoñ mait'ao a***
they (genitive) + headdress (emphatic)...
shavá raka ini i
clarity + to lie + to embellish...
96. ***nawa weni ini i***
people + to sprout + auxiliary verb...
nawa raka shakama i
people + to lie + aplenty...
97. ***moka tama oa***
bitter + tree + flower
reoko atoñsho
to fall down¹⁵⁹ + to do (locative, outward)
98. ***mokañ vake nawavo***
bitter (genitive) + child + people (plural)
nawa weni ini i
people + to sprout + auxiliary verb...
99. ***moka shane rani***
bitter + blue bird¹⁶⁰ + down
soromait' yavo
headdress¹⁶¹ + to have (plural)

¹⁵⁷ The specific aptness of this word for “ripen fruits” points to the metaphorical potential it shares with *ikañ*, the namesake “ripeness”; cf. *supra*. In other *saiti*, “falling fruits” are an indication of ripeness, comparable to the initiating state of pubescent youngsters who, metaphorically, are *vimi reoko*.

¹⁵⁸ This is a metonymic denomination for cranes, since *osho* means “white”.

¹⁵⁹ One would expect *oa* “flowers” to be *as' iki atoñsho*, to be “right there”, rather than to *reoko atoñsho*, to “fall there”, in accordance with the canons of the creation-substantiation formulae. This is the only case in which the latter syntagma is not used in connection to *tama vimi*, the “generic tree-fruit”; still, the invariable arboreal referent justifies its employment here.

¹⁶⁰ The poetical-formulaic structure that relates animals and plants to their outgrowth, i.e. to

100. *atoñ awe shavoya i*
they (genitive) + who + woman (adjectival)...
nawa raka shakama i
people + to lie + aplenty...
101. *nawa weni ini i*
people + to sprout + auxiliary verb...
-
102. *wa noa mai ki*
that + large river + land...
mokañ vake nawavo
bitter (genitive) + child + people (plural)
103. *pereñ akimane a*
noise + thus (causative, locative)...
*moka me*¹⁶²
bitter...
104. *moka paka nañko*
bitter + *taboca* bamboo + sweetness
nañko oso atoñsho
sweetness + in place + to do (locative, outward)

the respective ornamental element and then to the resulting human ornament in the myth-chant, indicates that the *shane* blue bird is here at the same level of macaws, parakeets and other animals and plants. In other *saiti*, the blue bird is a recurrent figure as a sectional-ethnonymic animal, as an indication of the membership of subjects and objects to a matrilineal section; here instead *shane* is an ornamental motive, besides being a language-giver alongside with anteaters and other birds. Thus, here *shane* does not refer to the *Shanenawa*, the “peoples of the Blue Bird”, but rather to the more original realm of the establishment of ontology-founding relations among humans and other beings in the world.

¹⁶¹ Here a clearer definition of this type of head-ornament will be lacking again. *Soromait(i)* is, indeed, a category related to *mait(i)*, which was given the same gloss above, “headdress”. The aforementioned table of ornaments makes the mythical-musical similarity even clearer: the down and feathers which constitute the latter (from the *shane* blue bird, the *kayoñ* macaw, the *vawa* parrot) are among the elements which form the former. The *maiti* class is inclusive of the *soromaiti* genus of “hats”.

¹⁶² *Voñchiñpa* pointed out an error here. In fact, *me* seems to mean nothing, and the following wordless notes, to be sheer hesitation... following the formulaic logic of previous instances of the line *pereñ akimane*, which is part of a creation-preparatory formula, one would expect a creational substance after *moka*; would *Ivañpa* be tempted to sing *moka mai chinañ*, as in verse 65? That would mean a reversal to the previous stage of creation, when tellurian thoughts give rise to peoples (verses 2 to 65), whereas from verse 81 on all substances on earth have been vegetal. *Ivañpa* hesitates and corrects: in the next verse, arboreal sweetness (*paka nañko*) is made earthy, and thence creation ensues in the proper order.

105. ***mokañ vake nawavo***
 bitter (genitive) + child + people (plural)
paka ikañ ayavo
taboca bamboo + homonym + to have (plural)
106. ***nawa weni ini i***
 people + to sprout + auxiliary verb...
mokañ vake nawavo
 bitter (genitive) + child + people (plural)
107. ***moka txere ina***
 bitter + parakeet + tail
ina mait' yavo
 tail + headdress + to have (plural)
108. ***nawa weni ini i***
 people + to sprout + auxiliary verb...
atoñ awe shavoya i
 they (genitive) + who + woman (adjectival)...
109. ***moka kamañ sheta***
 bitter + jaguar (genitive) + tooth
atoñ tewit'ao a
 they (genitive) + necklace (emphatic)...
110. ***shavá raka ini i***
 clarity + to lie + to embellish...
nawa weni ini i
 people + to sprout + auxiliary verb...
111. -
 -
112. ***moka paka oa ki***
 bitter + *taboca* bamboo + flower...
as' iki atoñsho
 to do (emphatic) + auxiliary verb + to do (locative, outward)
113. ***paka ikañ ayavo***
taboca bamboo + homonym + to have (plural)
mokañ vake nawavo
 bitter (genitive) + child + people (plural)
114. ***nawa weni ini i***
 people + to sprout + auxiliary verb...
avi ato pari ki
 first + where + direction...

115. *shavá vevo ini i*
clarity + older + to embellish...
-
116. *moka paka oa*
bitter + *taboca* bamboo + flower
as' iki atoñsho
to do (emphatic) + auxiliary verb + to do (locative, outward)
117. *weniko ini ki*
to sprout (collective) + auxiliary verb...
atoñ chinañ ratea
they (genitive) + breath-thought + to scare
118. *noa mai tsakasho*
large river + land + upright (outward)
wa nipa kawa a
that + to stay (directional) + to go (past)...
119. *moka shono nañko*
bitter + *samaúma* tree¹⁶³ + sweetness
nañko oso atoñsho
sweetness + in place + to do (locative, outward)
120. *mokañ vake nawavo*
bitter (genitive) + child + people (plural)
nawa weni ini i
people + to sprout + auxiliary verb...
121. *shono ikañ ayavo*
samaúma tree + homonym + to have (plural)
nawa weni ini i
people + to sprout + auxiliary verb...
122. *moka osho ina*
bitter + crane + tail
atoñ mait'ao a
they (genitive) + headdress (emphatic)...
123. *shavá rakaraka i*
clarity + to lie (twice)...
sai toa iki a
high-pitched shout + born from + auxiliary verb...

¹⁶³ If the luscious *samaúma* tree is a prototypical dwelling for the *yové*-spirits, *nañko*-sweetness is their prototypical food: here the figurative originality of humanity is at its most “circular-spiritual”, literally speaking.

124. *avi ato pari ki*
 first + where + direction...
noa mato wetsa
 large river + high mound + other
125. *wetsa ivo ini i*
 other + owner + to reach...
mokañ vake nawavo
 bitter (genitive) + child + people (plural)
126. -
 -
127. *moka shono oa ki*
 bitter + *samaúma* tree + flower...
as' iki atoñsho
 to do (emphatic) + auxiliary verb + to do (locative, outward)
128. *mokañ vake nawavo*
 bitter (genitive) + child + people (plural)
nawa weni ini i
 people + to sprout + auxiliary verb...
129. *moka sheshe ina*
 bitter + certain type of macaw + tail
atoñ mait'ao a
 they (genitive) + headdress (emphatic)...
130. *shavá rakaraka i*
 clarity + to lie (twice)...
weniko ini i
 to sprout (collective) + auxiliary verb...
131. *avi ato pari ki*
 first + where + direction...
shavá vevo ini i
 clarity + older + to embellish...
132. -
 -
133. -
noa mai tsakasho
 large river + land + upright (outward)

134. *wa nipa kawa a*
that + to stay (directional) + to go (past)...
-
135. *wa nipa kawa a*
that + to stay (directional) + to go (past)...
-
136. *moka waki nañko*
bitter + *mamoí* tree¹⁶⁴ + sweetness
nañko oso atoñsho
sweetness + in place + to do (locative, outward)
137. *nawa weni ini i*
people + to sprout + auxiliary verb...
mokañ vake nawavo
bitter (genitive) + child + people (plural)
138. *epe*¹⁶⁵ *ikañ ayavo*
jarina palm-tree + homonym + to have (plural)
nawa weni ini i
people + to sprout + auxiliary verb...
139. *ato aya weni a*
they + to exist + to sprout...
-
140. *moka panañ eshe*
bitter + *açai* palm-tree + seed
atoñ raneao a
they (genitive) + bead (emphatic)...
141. *vevo wekoñ ini i*
older + to revolve + to embellish...
nawa weni ini i
people + to sprout + auxiliary verb...

¹⁶⁴ It is similar to the papaya tree, bearing similar fruits.

¹⁶⁵ Following the formulaic logic of creation-nomination, one would expect the emergent peoples to be named *waki*. However, this exceptional denomination might not be entirely arbitrary: *epe* is suggestive of alterity. As *Voñchiñpa* says, it is a common *mokanawa* name, largely found among the Mayoruna; and further, and also in opposition to the Marubo, the *jarina* palm-tree is the distinct raw material for roofing among other *mokanawa*, i.e. Pano-speaking neighbouring peoples: the Matis.

142. *avi ato pari ki*
first + where + direction...
shavá vevo ini i
clarity + older + to embellish...
143. *atoñ awe shavoya i*
they (genitive) + who + woman (adjectival)...
nawa weni ini i
people + to sprout + auxiliary verb...
144. -
-
145. -
-
146. *noa mai tsakasho*
large river + land + upright (outward)
wa nipa kawa a
that + to stay (directional) + to go (past)...
147. *moka epe nañko*
bitter + *jarina* palm-tree + sweetness
nañko oso atoñsho
sweetness + in place + to do (locative, outward)
148. *nawa raka shakama i*
people + to lie + aplenty...
moka shawañ ina
bitter + red macaw + tail
149. *atoñ teneao a*
they (genitive) + feather headdress (emphatic)...
shavá rakaraka i
clarity + to lie (twice)...
150. *atoñ awe shavoya i*
they (genitive) + who + woman (adjectival)...
nawa weni ini i
people + to sprout + auxiliary verb...
151. *epe ikañ¹⁶⁶ ayavo*
jarina palm-tree + homonym + to have (plural)
nawa weni ini i
people + to sprout + auxiliary verb...

¹⁶⁶ Now *epe* makes sense: the homonymous creational substance, *epe nañko*, precedes the creation of the nominated. Did *Ivañpa* correct himself, after the “mistake” mentioned in the

152. *mokañ vake nawavo*
bitter (genitive) + child + people (plural)
-
153. *moka epe oa*
bitter + *jarina* palm-tree + flower
as' iki atoñsho
to do (emphatic) + auxiliary verb + to do (locative, outward)
154. *nawa weni ini i*
people + to sprout + auxiliary verb...
nawa potopavo i
people + short height (plural)...
155. *mokañ vake nawavo*
bitter (genitive) + child + people (plural)
nawa yovamavo i
people + audacious (plural)...
156. *nawa weni ini i*
people + to sprout + auxiliary verb...
-
157. *nawa raka shakama i*
people + to lie + plenty...
atoñ awe shavoya i
they (genitive) + who + woman (adjectival)...
158. *nawa weni ini i*
people + to sprout + auxiliary verb...
-
159. *noa mai tsakasho*
large river + land + upright (outward)
wa nipa kawa a
that + to stay (directional) + to go (past)...
160. *kana isañ yora*
yellow macaw + *patauá* palm-tree + human
voto tana irisho
adjacent + along + auxiliary verb (directional, outward)
161. *piniki a avaiñ*
to murmur... + to do (continuous past)
*moka shawañ shakapa*¹⁶⁷
bitter + red macaw + hide (superlative)

note above?

¹⁶⁷ *Shawañ shakapa* is another contradictory reference to the movements of creation, a

162. *mai verak' ativo*
land + underneath + to do (nominal, plural)
mai rakaraka i
land + to lie (twice)...
163. *a aki avaiñ*
...thus + to do (continuous past)
nawa weni ini i
people + to sprout + auxiliary verb...
164. -
-
165. *moka shae ina*
bitter + anteater + tail
ina papit' 'yavo
tail + dorsal ornament¹⁶⁸ + to have (plural)
166. *nawa weni ini i*
people + to sprout + auxiliary verb...
avi ato pari ki
first + where + direction...
167. *moka shae rani*
bitter + anteater + down
ato shañpat' iti a
they + to cover in front + auxiliary verb (nominal)...
168. *shavá rakaraka i*
clarity + to lie (twice)...
sai toa iki a
high-pitched shout + born from + auxiliary verb...

reference that adds to the contradictions that the preparatory formulae introduce. The contradictory meanings of both this line and those formulae are convergent: they can be taken for creational substances, and thus create confusion in the attribution of name to the emergent peoples. Are they *Shawañnawa*? Or are they *Kananawa*, in accordance with the precedent formulaic sequence? The contradiction is due to the ambiguity of the “big hide of the red macaw”, *shawañ shakapa*; just like *kana yora*, the “yellow macaw’s body” in the previous formula, it is not a creational substance but a qualification of the creation-ground as animal-made. The macaw’s hide is the murmuring land itself, independent from the created peoples, as the next verse renders clear: *mai verak' ativo / mai rakaraka*, “underneath the land [the murmurs] are, on the land they lie”.

¹⁶⁸ *Papiti* is a typical Amazonian rucksack: baskets or packets supported on the back through a strip of tree bark round the forehead. Among the Marubo, it may otherwise compose names of weapons (*paka papiti*, a bamboo dagger hung on the back) or of ornaments, as an indicator of their position.

169. *avi ato pari ki*
first + where + direction...
shavá vevo ini i
clarity + older + to embellish...
170. -
-
171. *kana isañ oa*
yellow macaw + *patauá* palm-tree + human + flower
as' iki atoñsho
to do (emphatic) + auxiliary verb + to do (locative, outward)
172. *kanañ vake nawavo*¹⁶⁹
yellow macaw (genitive) + child + people (plural)
nawa weni ini i
people + to sprout + auxiliary verb...
173. -
-
174. *noa mai tsakasho*
large river + land + upright (outward)
wa nipa kawa a
that + to stay (directional) + to go (past)...
175. *moka vino recho*
bitter + *buriti* palm-tree + sap
recho avatoñsho
sap + to do (past, locative, outward)
176. *mokañ vake nawavo*
bitter (genitive) + child + people (plural)
nawa weni ini i
people + to sprout + auxiliary verb...
177. *moka kana ina*
bitter + yellow macaw + tail
atoñ teneao a
they (genitive) + feather headdress (emphatic)...

¹⁶⁹ This is an unusual means of reference to the chthonic creatures: *kanañ vake nawavo* is a matrilineal section among the Marubo, whereas all ethnonyms in the present *saiti* refer to *mokañ vake nawavo*, “other” peoples. Still this atypical sequence of creation just confirms the ambivalence of the *mokanawa* qualification: bitter-foreign selves.

178. *shavá rakaraka i*
 clarity + to lie (twice)...
nawa raka shakama i
 people + to lie + aplenty...
179. *avi ato pari ki*
 first + where + direction...
shavá vevo ini i
 clarity + older + to embellish...
180. *noa mato wetsa*
 large river + high mound + other
wetsa ivo ini i
 other + owner + to reach...
181. *vino ikañ ayavo*
buriti palm-tree + homonym + to have (plural)
mokañ vake nawavo
 bitter (genitive) + child + people (plural)
182. *nawa weni ini i*
 people + to sprout + auxiliary verb...
 -
183. -
 -
184. *moka vino oa*
 bitter + buriti palm-tree + flower
as' iki atoñsho
 to do (emphatic) + auxiliary verb + to do (locative, outward)
185. *mokañ vake nawavo*
 bitter (genitive) + child + people (plural)
nawa weni ini i
 people + to sprout + auxiliary verb...
186. *nawa yovamavo i*
 people + audacious (plural)...
nawa weni ini i
 people + to sprout + auxiliary verb...
187. *moka txere ina*
 bitter + parakeet + tail
atoñ mait'ao a
 they (genitive) + headdress (emphatic)...

188. *shavá rakaraka i*
clarity + to lie (twice)...
noa mato wetsanoñ
large river + high mound + other (volitional)
189. *sai toa iki a*
high-pitched shout + born from + auxiliary verb...
atoñ awe shavoya i
they (genitive) + who + woman (adjectival)...
190. *nawa raka shakama i*
people + to lie + plenty...
nawa weni ini i
people + to sprout + auxiliary verb...
191. *ato aya weni a*
they + to exist + to sprout...
moka epe shañko
bitter + *jarina* palm-tree + sprout¹⁷⁰
192. *atoñ init'ao a*
they (genitive) + embellishment¹⁷¹ (emphatic)...
shavá rakaraka i
clarity + to lie (twice)...
193. *weniko ini i*
to sprout (collective) + auxiliary verb...
mokañ vake nawavo
bitter (genitive) + child + people (plural)

¹⁷⁰ Regardless of the semantic proximity to *weni*, “to sprout”, *shañko* and correlated words are recurrent in *saiti* language. All denote the sprouting leaves of palm-trees, whose fibres are used for cordage and ornamentation. However *shañko* has an important added meaning, as already suggested above: *oni shañko* and *rome shañko* are respectively the spirit-helpers of ayahuasca and tobacco, major ingredient in shamanic sessions, everyday companions of most mature man, propitiators of communication with curing spirits and guides in the eschatological labyrinths. The consumption of and communication with these shamanic substances, the dialogue and bonds established with their spiritual essence are fundamental for both disease diagnosis and cure — when the *shañko* spirits appear in dreams to indicate the therapeutic procedure and rationale — and for a tranquil death. *Shañko* are the beacons and the means to follow the liminal paths between life and death.

¹⁷¹ Here *ini* as “to embellish” sounds more appropriate, since it assumes the nominal form with the suffix *-ti*: the literal meaning of the *init(i)* is thus “embellishment”, while the key reference is a typical Pano adornment: bands of straw (or sprouting leaves) round the head, waist and limbs. These ornaments are quite common when the Marubo feast (*sai iki*); and in fact, the root *ini* seems to be as relevant in determining the noun *initi* as in its etymological association with *ini iki*, the shamanic counterpart of the mythical *saiti* and the curing *shoñti*. Cf. *supra*.

194. -
-
195. *noa mai tsakasho*
large river + land + upright (outward)
wa nipa kawa a
that + to stay (directional) + to go (past)...
196. *moka aniñ recho*
bitter + *tachí* tree¹⁷² + sap
recho avatoñsho
sap + to do (past, locative, outward)
197. *mokañ vake nawavo*
bitter (genitive) + child + people (plural)
nawa weni ini i
people + to sprout + auxiliary verb...
198. *atoñ awe shavoya i*
they (genitive) + who + woman (adjectival)...
nawa raka shakama i
people + to lie + aplenty...
199. *noa mato wetsa*
large river + high mound + other
wetsa ivo ini i
other + owner + to reach...
200. *noa mato wetsanoñ*
large river + high mound + other (volitional)
-
201. *ato aya weni a*
they + to exist + to sprout...
moka kayoñ ina
bitter + a certain type of macaw + tail
202. *atoñ teneao a*
they (genitive) + feather headdress (emphatic)...
shavá rakaraka i
clarity + to lie (twice)...

¹⁷² *Keninñawa* characterised *aniñ*, a small tree known locally as *tachí*, as the usual home of a type of ant whose sting is said to be very painful. Now not only shamanic strength but, as one would expect, human creation may associate with pain too — with *moka*-bitterness.

203. *atoñ awe shavovo*
they (genitive) + who + woman (plural)
moka kayoñ rani
bitter + a certain type of macaw + down
204. *atoñ soromait' a*¹⁷³
they (genitive) + headdress...
shavá rakaraka i
clarity + to lie (twice)...
205. *sai toa iki a*
high-pitched shout + born from + auxiliary verb...
-
206. -
moka iso sheta
bitter + *macaco preto* monkey (genitive) + tooth
207. *atoñ tewit'ao a*
they (genitive) + necklace (emphatic)...
shavá rakaraka i
clarity + to lie (twice)...
208. *moka shepañ sheo*
bitter + *palheira* palm-tree + needle¹⁷⁴
atoñ romosh'ao a
they (genitive) + nostril ornament¹⁷⁵ (emphatic)...

¹⁷³ Another example of the variety of “poetic symmetry” noted in the conclusion to this thesis. The usual, currently spoken word is *soromaiti*; however, the last vowel is elided in order to leave room for a non-verbally significant sound, transforming the word into *soromait... a*. This transformation is enhanced by a rhythmic accent on the final syllable, as the musical phrase leads it into a strong beat, the F tonal centre. Here again, “the semantic value of the vocal sound is beyond its verbal scope, and hence such value is musical” (cf. *supra*). Just one caveat: what kind of symmetry is this? What is it symmetrical with, if there seems to be no “rhyme”? It must be noted that the function of “symmetrical suffixes” is normally assigned to “verbally non-meaningful” vowels; and that here it is clear that all ornamental elements following the lines that begin with *atoñ...*, in the ornamentation formulae, end with the emphatic suffixed *-ao*. Hence, the *-a* of *soromait'* would be a poetical, shortened version of such “verbally meaningful” suffixation.

¹⁷⁴ Similar to *kanase*, the *sheo* are thorny stems used for facial decoration; it is the word used to designate metal needles obtained in modern times.

¹⁷⁵ Similarly to *keo*, the *romoshe* ornaments are stuck on pierced nostrils, living examples of which are to be found among the language-related neighbours of the Marubo, notably the Mayoruna, the Matis and the Korubo.

209. *shavá rakaraka i*
 clarity + to lie (twice)...
atoñ awe shavovo
 they (genitive) + who + woman (plural)
210. -
 -
211. *moka shane vana*
 bitter + blue bird + language
vana vin' aya
 language + to bring (volitional) + to exist
212. *mokañ vake nawavo*
 bitter (genitive) + child + people (plural)
 -
213. *weni ikañ ayavo*¹⁷⁶
 to sprout + homonym + to have (plural)
nawa weni ini i
 people + to sprout + auxiliary verb...
214. *atoñ awe shavoya i*
 they (genitive) + who + woman (adjectival)...
 -
215. *noa mai tsakasho*
 large river + land + upright (outward)
wa shoko pake a
 that + to peel + to fall...
216. *moka rome recho*
 bitter + tobacco + sap
recho avatoñsho
 sap + to do (past, locative, outward)
217. *nawa weni ini i*
 people + to sprout + auxiliary verb...
mokañ vake nawavo
 bitter (genitive) + child + people (plural)

¹⁷⁶ This is one of the few cases of lack of coincidence between the nomination and creation of the *mokanawa* peoples, possibly due to a long discursive distance between creational substance (*aniñ recho*, verse 192 above) and the human name here specified. The linear memory of both singer and listener dissolves after a long list of ornaments interposed in circular formulae; hence, the created humans have now a generic *weni*-emergent provenance and denomination.

218. *moka rome pei*
bitter + tobacco + leaf
atoñ aw'ao a
they (genitive) + to suck (emphatic)...¹⁷⁷
219. *shavá rakaraka i*
clarity + to lie (twice)...
nawa weni ini i
people + to sprout + auxiliary verb...
220. *moka vawa ina*
bitter + parrot + tail
atoñ mait'ao a
they (genitive) + headdress (emphatic)...
221. *shavá rakaraka i*
clarity + to lie (twice)...
nawa weni ini i
people + to sprout + auxiliary verb...
222. *nawa kayapavo i*
people + tall (superlative, plural)...
mokañ vake nawavo
bitter (genitive) + child + people (plural)
223. -
-
224. *moka rome oa*
bitter + tobacco + flower
as' iki atoñsho
to do (emphatic) + auxiliary verb + to do (locative, outward)
225. *nawa potopavo i*
people + short (superlative, plural)...
nawa weni ini i
people + to sprout + auxiliary verb...
226. *rome nawa weni i*¹⁷⁸
tobacco + people + to sprout
avi ato pari ki
first + where + direction...

¹⁷⁷ The Marubo are not used to suck tobacco placed inside the mouth, against the cheeks, as other Amazonian peoples do. Thus the mythical-musical quote might be either a reminiscence of ancient times or just another index of alterity: tobacco leaves, *rome pei*, would be an addendum to ornamentation, an announcement of the arrival of the foreign *mokanawa* peoples, whose “ornament” is the sucking *rome*.

¹⁷⁸ This is an unusual construction to express the creation-nomination of peoples. It is possible that the introduction of several tobacco-related substances (*recho*-sap, *oa*-flower,

227. *shavá vevo ini i*
 clarity + older + to embellish...
ato aya weni a
 they + to exist + to sprout...
228. *moka vawa rena*
 bitter + parrot + facial down
soromait' 'yavo
 headdress + to have (plural)
229. *nawa weni ini i*
 people + to sprout + auxiliary verb...
 -
230. -
 -
231. *moka rome nañko*
 bitter + tobacco + sweetness
nañko oso atoñsho
 sweetness + in place + to do (locative, outward)
232. *mokañ vake nawavo*
 bitter (genitive) + child + people (plural)
nawa weni ini i
 people + to sprout + auxiliary verb...
233. *nato ikañ ayavo*
 core¹⁷⁹ + homonym + to have (plural)
mokañ vake nawavo
 bitter (genitive) + child + people (plural)

nañko-sweetness) giving rise to human creation alters here their usual formulaic correspondence with human nomination (...*ikañ ayavo*). It is more probable, however, that the unusual “ornamental element” *rome*, the “sucking tobacco” singled out in verse 218 as an additional marker of alterity (cf. note above), leads to such an exceptional form of reference to the emergent *mokanawa* peoples.

¹⁷⁹ This is another onomastic irregularity in tobacco-induced creation, to which no consistent reason could be provided except for the very exceptional mode of non-coincidental nomination mentioned above. *Voñchiñpa* said that *nato* sounds similar to *nañko*, the last tobacco-related substance listed for tobacco-consubstantial creatures; but at any rate, nomination after the creational substance, and not after its animal-arboreal qualifier, would be an exception to the formulaic canon of the myth-chant. It must be said that *nato* seems to be more suggestive of *chinañ*, another fundamental creational substance: in combination, both result in the essential *yové*-quality of humanity, the thought-breath soul.

234. *nawa weni ini i*
 people + to sprout + auxiliary verb...
avi ato pari ki
 first + where + direction...
235. *shavá vevo ini i*
 clarity + older + to embellish...
 -
236. *moka piñtxo shañko*
 bitter + *muru-muru* palm-tree + sprout
atoñ mait'ao a
 they (genitive) + headdress (emphatic)...
237. *shavá rakaraka i*
 clarity + to lie (twice)...
noa mato wetsanoñ
 large river + high mound + other (volitional)
238. *sai toa iki a*
 high-pitched shout + born from + auxiliary verb...
mokañ vake nawavo
 bitter (genitive) + child + people (plural)
239. -
 -
240. *moka mani recho ki*
 bitter + banana + sap...
recho avatoñsho
 sap + to do (past, locative, outward)
241. *nawa weni ini i*
 people + to sprout + auxiliary verb...
avi ato pari ki
 first + where + direction...
242. *ato aya weni a*
 they + to exist + to sprout...
moka kayoñ ina
 bitter + a certain type of macaw + tail
243. *atoñ teneao a*
 they (genitive) + feather headdress (emphatic)...
shavá rakaraka i
 clarity + to lie (twice)...

244. *atoñ awe shavovo*
 they (genitive) + who + woman (plural)
moka kayoñ ina
 bitter + a certain type of macaw + tail
245. *aweñ ina iñkeshe*
 it (genitive) + tail + half-length
atoñ mait'ao a
 they (genitive) + headdress (emphatic)...
246. *shavá rakaraka i*
 clarity + to lie (twice)..
sai toa iki a
 high-pitched shout + born from + auxiliary verb...
247. *mani ikañ ayavo*
 banana + homonym + to have (plural)
nawa weni ini i
 people + to sprout + auxiliary verb...
248. *avi ato pari ki*
 first + where + direction..
shavá vevo ini i
 clarity + older + to embellish...
249. -
 -
250. *moka mani oa*
 bitter + banana + flower
as' iki atoñsho
 to do (emphatic) + auxiliary verb + to do (locative, outward)
251. *mokañ vake nawavo*
 bitter (genitive) + child + people (plural)
nawa weni ini i
 people + to sprout + auxiliary verb...
252. *atoñ awe shavoya i*
 they (genitive) + who + woman (adjectival)..
nawa raka shakama i
 people + to lie + aplenty...
253. *avi ato pari ki*
 first + where + direction..
shavá vevo ini i
 clarity + older + to embellish...

254. *nawa weni ini i*
 people + to sprout + auxiliary verb...
mokañ vake nawavo
 bitter (genitive) + child + people (plural)
255. *noa mai tsakasho*
 large river + land + upright (outward)
wa nipa kawa a
 that + to stay (directional) + to go (past)...
256. *awá tama yora*¹⁸⁰
 tapir + tree + human
voto tana irisho
 adjacent + along + auxiliary verb (directional, outward)
257. *mokañ vake nawavo*
 bitter (genitive) + child + people (plural)
piniki a avaiñ
 to murmur... + to do (continuous past)
258. *shoi ikañ ayavo*
 personal name + homonym + to have (plural)
moka shoi kiniñsho
 bitter + personal name¹⁸¹ + hole (genitive, outward)
259. *kaya ini iki a*
 to leave + to embellish + auxiliary verb...
ato aya weni a
 they + to exist + to sprout...
260. *moka pani eshe*
 bitter + *tucum* palm-tree + seed
atoñ raneao a
 they (genitive) + bead (emphatic)...
261. *vevo wekoñ ini i*
 older + to revolve + to embellish...
moka shoi kiniñsho
 bitter + personal name + hole (genitive, outward)

¹⁸⁰ Like in all creation-preparation formulae, the exclusive indication is locative rather than ethnonymic. The reference to “tapir” (*awá*) is restricted to the tree itself and is irrespective of the human identity created, as that of the *shoi* peoples quoted a few verses later.

¹⁸¹ Here the origin of *shoi*, a current personal name — it was the name of one of *Keniñnawa*’s sons — is made explicit as a literal “hole”. Here in the myth-chant, *shoi* would fall in the same aforementioned exceptional category of names, of those that do not form a straight creation-substantial connection between humans and animals and plants, like *weni* and *nato*. With the former, it shares the chthonic reference; like the latter, it is an ordinary prepubescent name among natives.

262. ***kaya ini iki a***
to leave + to embellish + auxiliary verb...
avi ato pari ki
first + where + direction...
263. ***shavá vevo ini i***
clarity + older + to embellish...
-
264. -
-
265. ***moka epe shañko***
bitter + *jarina* palm-tree + sprout
atoñ inít'ao a
they (genitive) + embellishment (emphatic)...
266. ***shavá rakaraka i***
clarity + to lie (twice)...
-
267. -
-
268. ***moka tama vimi***
bitter + tree + fruit
reoko atoñsho
to fall down + to do (locative, outward)
269. ***mokañ vake nawavo***
bitter (genitive) + child + people (plural)
nawa kayapavo i
people + tall (superlative, plural)...
270. ***nawa weni ini i***
people + to sprout + auxiliary verb...
-
271. -
moka kayoñ ina
bitter + a certain type of macaw + tail

272. *atoñ teneao a*
 they (genitive) + feather headdress (emphatic)...
shavá rakaraka i
 clarity + to lie (twice)...
273. *nawa weni ini i*
 people + to sprout + auxiliary verb...
atoñ awe shavoya i
 they (genitive) + who + woman (adjectival)...
274. *avi ato pari ki*
 first + where + direction...
shavá vevo ini i
 clarity + older + to embellish...
275. *moka voñto kesho ki*
 bitter + certain snail + shell...
atoñ romosh'ao a
 they (genitive) + nostril ornament¹⁸² (emphatic)...
276. *shavá rakaraka i*
 clarity + to lie (twice)...
atoñ awe shavovo
 they (genitive) + who + woman (plural)
277. *moka pani vatxi*
 bitter + *tucum* palm-tree + skirt
shavá rakaraka i
 clarity + to lie (twice)...
278. -
 -
279. -
 -
280. *noa mai tsakasho*
 large river + land + upright (outward)
wa nipa kawa a
 that + to stay (directional) + to go (past)...

¹⁸² Now *romoshe* refers to a round concave disk cut out from a certain snail-shell, an ancient ornament among the Marubo, popular among the Matis and already portrayed among the Mayoruna during the Spix-Martius expedition of 1823-31 (*apud* Melatti, ed. 1981: 17).

281. *moka kenañ*¹⁸³ *vema*
 bitter + *pente-de-macaco* tree + surface root
voto tana irisho
 adjacent + along + auxiliary verb (directional, outward)
282. *piniki a avaiñ*
 to murmur... + to do (continuous past)
mokañ vake nawavo
 bitter (genitive) + child + people (plural)
283. *mokañ kenañ nañko*
 bitter + *pente-de-macaco* tree + sweetness
nañko oso atoñsho
 sweetness + in place + to do (locative, outward)
284. *nawa weni ini i*
 people + to sprout + auxiliary verb...
kenañ ikañ ayavo
pente-de-macaco tree + homonym + to have (plural)
285. *mokañ vake nawavo*
 bitter (genitive) + child + people (plural)
nawa weni ini i
 people + to sprout + auxiliary verb...
286. *moka osho ina*
 bitter + crane + tail
atoñ mait'ao a
 they (genitive) + headdress (emphatic)...
287. *shavá rakaraka i*
 clarity + to lie (twice)...
avi ato pari ki
 first + where + direction...
288. *shavá vevo ini i*
 clarity + older + to embellish...
 -
289. -
 -
290. *mokañ vake nawavo*
 bitter (genitive) + child + people (plural)
nawa raka shakama i
 people + to lie + aplenty...

¹⁸³ *Kenañ* is a soft wood-tree, the raw material for its metonymic homonym, the parallel longhouse benches.

291. *nawa weni ini i*
 people + to sprout + auxiliary verb...
 -
292. *noa mai tsakasho*
 large river + land + upright (outward)
wa nipa kawa a
 that + to stay (directional) + to go (past)...
293. *moka panañ recho*
 bitter + *açai* palm-tree + sap
recho avatoñsho
 sap + to do (past, locative, outward)
294. *mokañ vake nawavo*
 bitter (genitive) + child + people (plural)
nawa weni ini i
 people + to sprout + auxiliary verb...
295. -
 -
296. *ato aya weni a*
 they + to exist + to sprout...
 -
297. -
*moka shawañ sheta*¹⁸⁴
 bitter + red macaw + tooth
298. *atoñ raneao a*
 they (genitive) + bead (emphatic)...
shavá rakaraka i
 clarity + to lie (twice)...
299. *sai toa iki a*
 high-pitched shout + born from + auxiliary verb...
avi ato pari ki
 first + where + direction...

¹⁸⁴ Do red macaws have teeth (*shawañ sheta*)? *Voñchiñpa* corrected me: the bird's curved beak looks like a tooth, but is material for beads (*rane*) much as the *txere sheta* (parakeet's beak) is material for ankle bands a few verses later. There are sufficient layers of meaning attached to *sheta* to support the figure of speech... or figure of music, I correct: *shawañ sheta* is just another item in the mythical-musical "list" of animal teeth making presence in creation events. Under a mythical-musical logic, red macaws' teeth are as meaningful as jaguars', etc.: the meaning is aesthetic.

300. *shavá vevo ini i*
 clarity + older + to embellish...
panañ ikañ ayavo
açaí palm-tree + homonym + to have (plural)
301. *mokañ vake nawavo*
 bitter (genitive) + child + people (plural)
*nawa weni ini i*¹⁸⁵
 people + to sprout + auxiliary verb...
302. -
 -
303. *mokañ vake nawavo*
 bitter (genitive) + child + people (plural)
aririvi weni i
 to do (directional, exclusive) + to sprout...
304. -
 -
305. *noa mai tsakasho*
 large river + land + upright (outward)
wa nipa kawa a
 that + to stay (directional) + to go (past)...
306. *rovo kenañ vema*
japu bird + *pente-de-macaco* tree + surface root
voto tana irisho
 adjacent + along + auxiliary verb (directional, outward)
307. *piniki a avaiñ*
 to murmur... + to do (continuous past)
mokañ vake nawavo
 bitter (genitive) + child + people (plural)
308. *nawa weni ini i*
 people + to sprout + auxiliary verb...
avi ato pari ki
 first + where + direction...

¹⁸⁵ *Ivañpa* makes an apparently unmotivated interruption after this verse. It is true that this *Mokanawa Wenia* was an exceptionally long *saiti* performance, one of the longest together with *Teté Teká* — and the two *saiti* were recorded in a row, in a total of almost three hours of non-stop myth-music. Here *Ivañpa* might have been just recuperating, of thinking about the further development of the myth-chant.

309. *shavá vevo ini i*
 clarity + older + to embellish...
ato aya weni a
 they + to exist + to sprout...
310. -
moka txere ina
 bitter + parakeet + tail
311. *atoñ mait'ao a*
 they (genitive) + headdress (emphatic)...
shavá raka ini i
 clarity + to lie + to embellish...
312. *moka txere sheta*
 bitter + parakeet + tooth
tashekiti aya i
 ankle band + to have...
313. *nawa weni ini i*
 people + to sprout + auxiliary verb...
 -
314. *ato aya weni a*
 they + to exist + to sprout...
mokañ isko ina
 bitter + *japu* wildfowl + tail
315. *atoñ mait'ao a*
 they (genitive) + headdress (emphatic)...
shavá rakaraka i
 clarity + to lie (twice)...
316. *nawa weni ini i*
 people + to sprout + auxiliary verb...
mokañ vake nawavo
 bitter (genitive) + child + people (plural)
317. *weni i mashtesho*¹⁸⁶
 to sprout... + to finish (outward)
noa mato wetsa
 large river + high mound + other

¹⁸⁶ This line is the one that, as we have seen before, marks an end to the initial stage of *Mokanawa Wenia*. It leads to a summary of the main movements that, in regular intervals amid human emergence, characterise the events of creation. In a different setting, after emerging from earth and settling in the world — but now around “benches / bridges” — the created peoples will acquire names and language and ornament again; or rather these cyclical events, which are narrated as each people come into being in the initial stage of the *saiti*, will be placed in succession, in a more linear fashion.

318. *wetsa ivo ini i*
other + owner + to reach...
weni i mashtesho
to sprout... + to finish (outward)
319. *moka rono tapañne*
bitter + poisonous snake + fallen trunk (locative)
ato seteñ vakiñsho
they + to drop + like so (outward)
320. *Oañ Maya inisho*
flower (genitive) + personal name + to gather (outward)
*Oañ Mani*¹⁸⁷ *akavo*
flower (genitive) + personal name + to do (plural)
321. *moka rono tapañ ki*
bitter + poisonous snake + fallen trunk...
tana vakiñ akiñ ro
along + like so + thus...
322. *ato aneane i*
they + to name (twice)...
mato ivo nawa ro
high mound + owner + people...¹⁸⁸
323. *rono ikañ ayavo*
poisonous snake + homonym + to have (plural)
ato akiao i
they + thus (emphatic)...
324. -
-

¹⁸⁷ Creation is again gender-complementary in the figure of the *Oañ* couple, as much as, at other socio-historical levels, leadership has been. Indeed, in the past this might have been even more explicit among the Marubo: note that the neighbouring Pano-speaking Korubo, moving from isolation and conflict with the encroaching nation-state toward intermittent contact, are led by a woman; and that, according to local Brazilians, her name is *Maya*.

¹⁸⁸ *Voñchiñpa* translated this line as “their peoples”. This version would make a more literal sense if *mato* were translated as a possessive pronoun (second person plural). Yet still in this case, such a possession, unlike that which *ivo* indicates, would be problematic: are they the *-nawa* peoples of *Oañ Mani* and *Oañ Maya*, or those of the nominating animals and plants, i.e. of those that nominate the *tapañ*-trunks (the *rono*-snake, the *vino*-palm, etc.)? And who enunciates *mato* as a second person? Hence, in accordance with previous lines in the myth-chant, we maintain the translation of *mato* as “high mound”, which means that the *mato ivo nawa* are the peoples who dwell there, that is, the “owners” of dwelling places. Cf. *supra*.

325. *moka no*¹⁸⁹ *tapañne*
 bitter + cocoa tree + fallen trunk (locative)
ato seteñ vakiñsho
 they + to drop + like so (outward)
326. *mokañ vake nawavo*
 bitter (genitive) + child + people (plural)
ato aneane i
 they + to name (twice)...
327. -
mato ivo nawa ro
 high mound + owner + people...
328. *vino ikañ ayavo*
buriti palm-tree + homonym + to have (plural)
ato akiao i
 they + thus (emphatic)...
329. -
 -
330. *moka paka tapañne*
 bitter + *taboca* bamboo + fallen trunk (locative)
ato seteñ vakiñsho
 they + to drop + like so (outward)
331. *moka paka tapañ ki*
 bitter + *taboca* bamboo + fallen trunk...
tana vakiñ akiñ ro
 along + like so + thus...
332. *ato aneane i*
 they + to name (twice)...
 -
333. *mato ivo nawa ro*
 high mound + owner + people...
paka ikañ ayavo
taboca bamboo + homonym + to have (plural)

¹⁸⁹ Given the lexical similarity of sound, it is possible that *no* (“cocoa tree”) has been mistaken for *vino* (“*buriti* palm-tree”): after all, all other “bridges”, “paths” or “benches” (*tapañ*) pertain to an animal or tree mentioned before in the “emergence stage” proper (*rono*, *isañ*, *paka*), which here again tends to correspond to the acquired name (in this case, it would do in the line *vino ikañ ayavo*, in verse 328).

334. *a iki a nañ*
 ... to say + ...thus
ato aneane i
 they + to name (twice)...
335. *mokañ vake nawavo*
 bitter (genitive) + child + people (plural)
Oañ Maya inisho
 flower (genitive) + personal name + to gather (outward)
336. *Oañ Mani akavo*
 flower (genitive) + personal name + to do (plural)
ato aneane i
 they + to name (twice)...
337. -
 -
338. *moka isañ tapañne*
 bitter + *patauá* palm-tree + fallen trunk (locative)
ato seteñ vakiñsho
 they + to drop + like so (outward)
339. *moka isañ tapañ ki*
 bitter + *patauá* palm-tree + fallen trunk...
tana vakiñ akiñ ro
 along + like so + thus...
340. *ato aneane i*
 they + to name (twice)...
mato ivo nawa ro
 high mound + owner + people...
341. *mani*¹⁹⁰ *ikañ ayavo*
 banana + homonym + to have (plural)
ato akiao i
 they + thus (emphatic)...
342. *mato ivo nawavo*
 high mound + owner + people (plural)
*a vana ir'ao*¹⁹¹
 ... language + to gather¹⁹² (exhortative, emphatic)

¹⁹⁰ *Isañ ikañ ayavo* would be more consistent with the naming location (“*isañ tapañ*”): as *no* in the note above, it is probably another involuntary inconsistency, this time inspired by the name of one of the creation-assistants, *Oañ Mani*.

¹⁹¹ The second, summed stage of creation indicated above moves from acquisition of names to acquisition of languages, from this line on.

¹⁹² Or “to embellish”? The overall meaning that the native translation assigns to this line is

343. *mañ kameñ neská i*
 you (plural) + to speak + likewise...
a iki a nañ
 ... to say + ...thus¹⁹³
344. *moka vi vana*
 bitter + small anteater + language
vanaki a yosisho
 language... + ...to know (outward)
345. *moka vi vananoñ*
 bitter + small anteater + language (volitional)
atoñ vana yosiñ i
 they (genitive) + language + to teach...
346. *ato akiao i*
 they + thus (emphatic)...
 -
347. *moka shane vana*
 bitter + blue bird + language
vanaki a yosisho
 language... + ...to know (outward)
348. *mato ivo nawavo*
 high mound + owner + people (plural)
a vana ir'ao
 ... language + auxiliary verb (exhortative, emphatic)
349. *mañ kameñ neská i*
 you (plural) + to speak + likewise...
a iki a nañ
 ... to say + ...thus
350. *moka shane vananoñ*
 bitter + blue bird + language (volitional)
atoñ vana yosiñ i
 they (genitive) + language + to teach...
351. *ato akiao i*
 they + thus (emphatic)...
Oañ Maya inisho
 flower (genitive) + personal name + to gather (outward)

“you will use the language”; but if language can be translated as a “tool”, it might be better equated to an “ornament” in this myth-chant.

¹⁹³ As in many other myth-chants, this expression (*a iki a nañ*) functions as quotation marks: *Oañ Maya* and *Oañ Mani* are addressing the *mokanawa* peoples.

352. *Oañ Mani akavo*
flower (genitive) + personal name + to do (plural)
-
353. -
-
354. *mato ivo nawavo*
high mound + owner + people (plural)
a vana ir'ao
... language + auxiliary verb (exhortative, emphatic)
355. *mañ kameñ neská i*
you (plural) + to speak + likewise..
a iki a nañ
... to say + ...thus
356. *moka añta vana*
bitter + certain type of red macaw + language
vanaki a yosisho
language... + ...to know (outward)
357. *ato vanañ yosiñ i*
they + language (genitive) + to teach...
a akiao i
...thus (emphatic)...
358. -
-
359. *moka mire vana ki*
bitter + a small type of parakeet + language...
vanaki a yosisho
language... + ...to know (outward)
360. *atoñ vana yosiñ i*
they (genitive) + language + to teach...
-
361. *Oañ Maya inisho*
flower (genitive) + personal name + to gather (outward)
Oañ Mani akavo
flower (genitive) + personal name + to do (plural)

362. *atoñ vana yosiñ i*
they (genitive) + language + to know...
-
363. *ane i mashtesho*
to name... + to finish (outward)¹⁹⁴
-
364. *ato aya weni a*
they + to exist + to sprout...
moka shane rani
bitter + blue bird + down
365. *atoñ mait'ao a*
they (genitive) + headdress (emphatic)...
shavá raka ini i
clarity + to lie + to embellish...
366. *noa kaya tana i*¹⁹⁵
large river + to leave + along...
sai in' aya
high-pitched shout + auxiliary verb (volitional) + to exist
367. -
sai yo ini i
high-pitched shout + to lead + auxiliary verb...

¹⁹⁴ *Mashtesho* marks the ending of the summation of the emerged peoples, as it marked its beginning in verse 317 above. If the location (on *tapañ*), the ethnonymic nomination (after *rono, vino, paka, mani*), and the language acquisition (from *vi, shane, añta, mire*) of humanity have all been present at this stage so far, its predominant character has been the differential “naming” of humans (*ane*), whereas the former, first stage emphasised their “emerging” proper (*weni*). Note that ornamentation is absent from the movements that here come to an end: it shall become present again at the events which follow in this second stage of *Mokanawa Wenia*, when journeying and feasting celebrate dwelling in the world. Then creation is reversed, and these ornaments, epitomes of the being of humans, promote the ontological fragmentation that is inherent to human becoming.

¹⁹⁵ Here starts the journey that best characterises the second stage of the myth-chant. If in other myth-chants of *wenia*-emergence (cf. Melatti 1986) it is exposed in a prolonged, elaborated form, in *Mokanawa Wenia* it is nothing but a small coda. Still here it reproduces a pattern of ontological transformation and human capability-acquisition, that is, a rite-of-passage process that constitutes and ensues creation in the course of many *saiti*. This amounts to just another testimony of continuity within the mytho-musicological repertoire and in shamanic knowledge at large.

368. *moka rono tapañne*¹⁹⁶
 bitter + poisonous snake + fallen trunk (locative)
atoñ vake onemain'
 they (genitive) + child + to go along (temporal)
369. *moka rono tapañne*
 bitter + poisonous snake + fallen trunk (locative)
atoñ vake senañ a
 they (genitive) + child + to get a shock...¹⁹⁷
370. *wa noa maranoñ*
 that + large river + inside
txoi ivaiñmainoñ
 dive + auxiliary verb (continuous past, temporal)
371. -
 -
372. *moka pani eshe*
 bitter + palm-tree + seed
atoñ raneao a
 they (genitive) + bead (emphatic)...
373. *menokovaiñ i*
 to break (collective, continuous past)...
ene keñko vema
 water¹⁹⁸ + riverbed + surface root¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁶ *Tapañ* is now a bridge across a stream, not a bench for reunion; it is transitory, not sedentary. This semantic shift is in accordance with this final stage of *Mokanawa Wenia* that, as we have seen, presents the verbal content of creation in a transformed formulaic form, after the “chthonic” phase has been developed at length. Literally, *tapañ* is now a fallen tree named *rono*, “viper”.

¹⁹⁷ “Like that of an electric eel (*a poraquê*, among locals)”: another common theme in other *saiti* of human emergence, such as in that of *Wenia* proper (cf. Melatti 1986). The whole event is a partial reversal of chthonic emergence: the same children of creation fall down — in some sort of inverted sprouting — and through their ornaments deposited on the ground, that is, on the riverbed — in modified earth, fertility in an aquatic domain —, go back to non-humanity, this time to that of insects, in between animals and trees. In turn, shocks are inversions of sounds, distorted vibrations. The lines that narrate the civilising journey that ensues chthonic creation — “mutual domestication” carrying on in full — proceed in circular transition between original revival and repetition of origins: human beings become what other beings they were. Again, ornaments mediate and synthesise: here and elsewhere, they are that through which beings come to being. Of all symbolic animal or arboreal origins, animals and plants conjoin in a human-ornamental conformation, here and elsewhere. More than conveying a human message, the medium of ornaments is humanity: a chronic middle-ground between chthonic corruption and the synthetic symbols of substantial creation.

¹⁹⁸ Here *ene* has the same semantic scope of *waka*, but at a mythical-poetical level: it means

374. *voto tana irinoñ*
adjacent + along + auxiliary verb (directional, volitional)
teivoya
heap (plural, adjective)
375. *avé anoñshorao*
together + there (outward)...
ene shako revonoñ
water + worm + to procreate (volitional)
376. *moka naiñ sheta*
bitter + sloth (genitive) + tooth
atoñ tewit'ao a
they (genitive) + necklace (emphatic)...
377. *menokovaiñ i*
to break (collective, continuous past)...
wa tama shavaya
that + tree + dwelling²⁰⁰
378. *shavá ava iniki*
clarity + upward + auxiliary verb...
-
379. *moka txitxañ shama*
bitter + certain basket²⁰¹ + bottom
nani ikivaiñsho
to deposit + auxiliary verb (continuous past, outward)

both “water” and “river”.

¹⁹⁹ The metaphor is explicit in indicating not only the semantic assimilation of arboreal root to underwater declivity, but also the topological inversion of creation: the ordinary *vema* (“surface root”) is tree-roots emerging from earth, whereas *ene keñko vema* is earthy roots submerging into water. The reversal of the creation order pivots on the tellurian-watery surface, the point of passage, of earthy contiguity (*voto tana irinoñ*): shock vibrations in people produce underwater animals through ornamental fragments unmade on earth, in opposition to the reverberating sounds on earth which produce subterranean peoples through animal-arboreal fragments that are to be made into ornaments.

²⁰⁰Of course *shavaya* is rather a cosmic layer, a prototypical *yové*-spiritual dwelling (cf. *supra*).

²⁰¹ The *txitxañ* basket is made with the fibres of the sprouting leaves of the *buriti* palm-tree, which are detached from the growing stem, dried under the sun and twisted and spun on women’s thighs so as to make a very strong yarn. As it is the case of many Amazonian palm-trees, the *buriti* leaves grow from a single central stem that sprouts from the very top of the trunk upward, multiplying itself into several leaf stalks. As the small leaves flourish out from the stem, they bend sideways, forming thus the round canopy of palms. This “eye” of the palm-trees is precisely the aforementioned *shañko*, a powerful shamanic principle.

380. *teivoya*
 heap (plural, adjective)
avé anoñshorao
 together + there (outward)...
381. *vina revo kawañ o*
 wasp + to procreate + to go (exhortative)...
382. *moka shawañ rena ki*
 bitter + red macaw + facial down...
toakovaiñ i
 to scatter (collective, continuous past)...
383. *wa tama shavaya*
 that + tree + dwelling
shavá ava iniki
 clarity + upward + auxiliary verb...
384. *Vopi Vari sheni*²⁰²
 Dying + Sun + ancestral
ano veso kaiñ a
 there + to wake up²⁰³ + to go (continuous past)...
385. *txai tivo*²⁰⁴ *ikotiñ*
 cross-cousin + prototypically large + external patio
wa nipa kawa a
 that + to stay (directional) + to go (past)...

²⁰² *Vopi Vari* is an unheard-of character in other myth-chants, although the qualification *sheni*, “old”, is quite usual as a marker of “prototypicality”. The most obvious reference to such a “Dying Sun” is, of course, the West (*nai votiñ ikitoñ*, “where the sky ends” cf. *supra*), although this was not a spontaneous indication in this *saiti* translation. There was otherwise an explicit reference to it as a bodily entity, *yora*, or rather a sun-spirit, *vari yové*: “it’s not the sun that heats us!”, *Voñchiñpa* laughed.

²⁰³ That *Vopi Vari* “wakes up” is not just an allegory for the rising of the “Dying Sun”; it means that it is in its living grounds, as the next verse confirms (a common native greeting in the morning is *miñ vesoi*, “are you awake?”).

²⁰⁴ In mythical-musical usage *tivo* is applied to animals only, as in *yawa tivo* (an expression which translates as the “original white-lipped peccary”, and relates to its relationships with humans, in the homonymous myth-chant) or in *txai tivo* (which is translated as the monstrous hawk in another *saiti*, that of *Teté Teká*). As we have seen, in the latter instance *txai tivo* literally means “big cross-cousin” or “brother-in-law”, and is in consequence a “prototypical affine” or “enemy”. The immediate translation of *txai tivo* in the myth-chant is nevertheless that of a “large bird of prey”, the mythical-musical protagonist, and still it denotes a figurative “longhouse”, a “prototypical dwelling” (cf. *supra*). In short, *tivo* must mean “large” in some “prototypical” sense still to be unfolded, and to be compared to *nawa* as well. The former word can also mean “widely” or “largely” in other *saiti*; thus, a somewhat forced etymology would dissect it as an amalgamation of nominal and plural affixes: *ti* + *vo*. Here, however, *txai tivo* just reinforces the residential denotation that the

386. *moka tama mevi*
bitter + tree + branch
meso tana irinoñ
tip + along + auxiliary verb (directional, volitional)
387. *moka kama voshkaki*
bitter + nest + a certain wasp...
nateñ ikivaiñsho
impregnated + auxiliary verb (continuous past, outward)
388. *teivoya*
heap (plural, adjective)
avé anoñshorao
together + there (outward)...
389. *kovina revonoñ*
several kinds + to procreate (volitional)
inañ taise
thus + purpose
390. -
-

previous line of the *saiti* points to.

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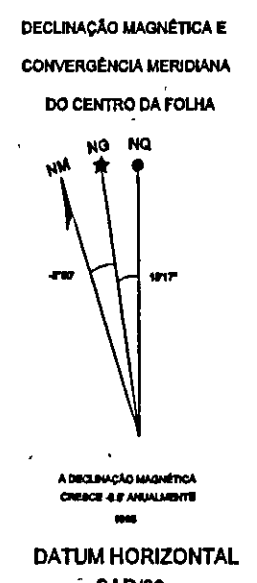
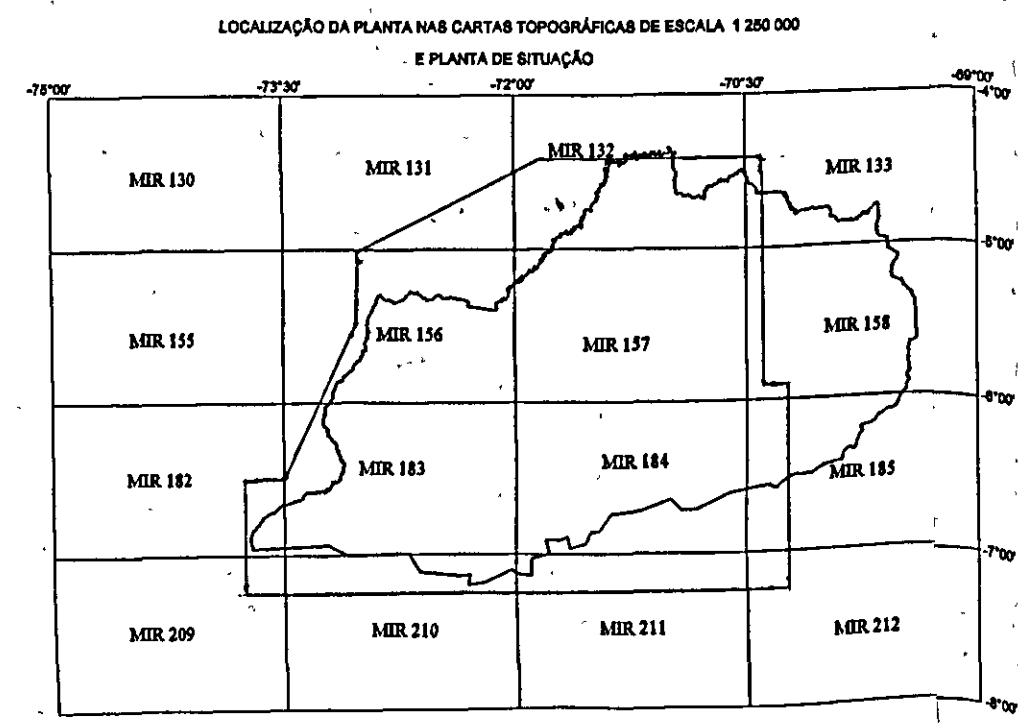
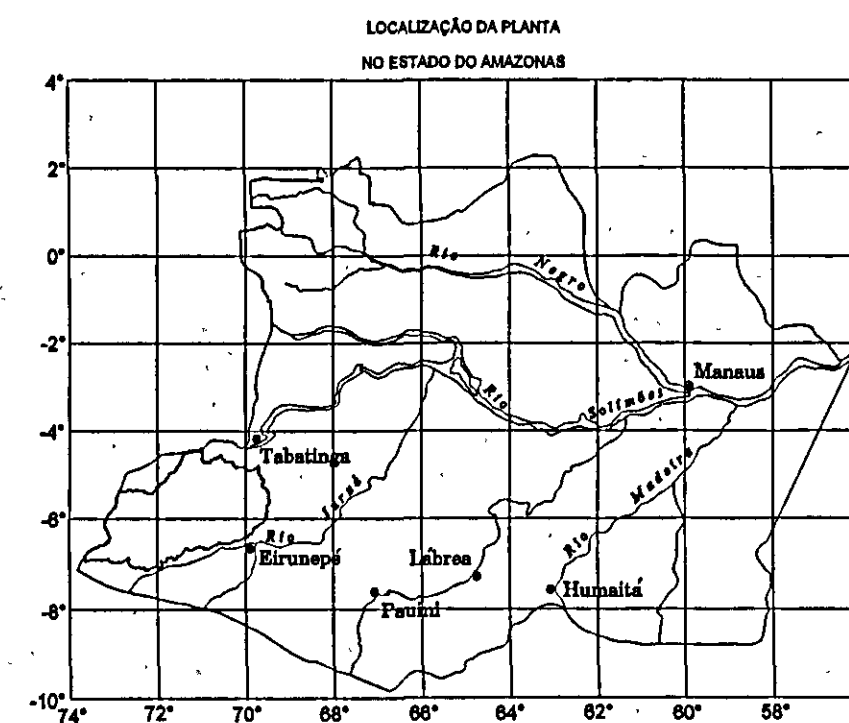
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- SINAIS CONVENCIONAIS
- Terra indígena delimitada
 - Ponto definidor de limite
 - ▲ Aldeia indígena
 - ✕ Índios isolados
 - Curso d'água permanente
 - ↗ Curso d'água intermitente
 - Rod transitável em tempo bom
 - - - Limite estadual
 - Cidade
 - ⊠ Batalhão de Fronteira