FERTILE WORDS: ASPECTS OF LANGUAGE AND SOCIALITY AMONG YANOMAMI PEOPLE OF VENEZUELA

Javier Carrera Rubio

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

2004

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Fertile words: aspects of language and sociality among Yanomami people of Venezuela

Javier Carrera Rubio

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the University of St Andrews

September 2004
To the memory of my father.
Abstract

In the first part of the thesis (Chapters 1 to 7) I discuss two Yanomami myths of origin, namely the myth of the origin of the night, and the myth of the master of banana plants. While drawing heavily on Lizot's ethnographical and linguistic work, my analysis of the myth will be embedded within two interconnected debates of present concern to anthropology: On the one hand, the strong linkage between the poetics of myth narration and the poetics of the everyday life. To better explore this relationship I will also drawn on Overing's recent work on the fundamental importance of understanding the political philosophy that pervades such linkage. On the other hand there is also the important role that the world of the felt, the senses and passions play in Yanomami conceptions and practices of sociality.

In part 2 of the thesis, I deal with the issue of Yanomami warfare by describing Yanomami people's understanding of warfare. In doing this, I endeavour to develop a shift from the anthropologist's theories of war among the Yanomami to the Yanomami's own theories about both peace and its failure. War and conflict are addressed here from the point of view of the Yanomami aesthetics of their own convivial relations and sociality, along with its multiple oral expressions. I demonstrate that Yanomami people have their own (strong) theories about what is conducive to peace and war and how these theories are grounded in moral and political values attached to a particular Yanomami aesthetics of egalitarianism. In doing this, I explore the way Lizot emphasises the dialectic between Yanomami conceptions of peace and warfare. Furthermore, through an exploration of the linkage Lizot establishes between Yanomami warfare and their morality, I wish to shed new light on the political dimensions of their conflicts and the place of warfare in their culturally specific aesthetics of egalitarian relationships.

Part 3 of the thesis (chapters 9, 10, 11) deals with the Yanomami elders' speech, a mode of communication that has been almost neglected in other previous works. After having discussed various topics (myth and the everyday, Yanomami warfare) through which various aspects of Yanomami moral and political philosophy can be grasped, in this last part of the thesis I show the strong linkage between such philosophy and this type of speech. The elders' speech is dealt with in various parts of the thesis and also in various ways. First, and departing from the way a myth of origin explicitly makes references to it, I illustrate, the way Yanomami people conceive of this type of speech. I do this by describing, following Hymes' (1981, 2003) insights, the way in which the myth teller "describes" this speech in his narrative. Second, in Chapter 3, I make a brief description of the speech and in Chapters 9, 10, and 11 I provide fragments of the speech of an elder that I transcribed and analysed.
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Aknowledgements

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Note on pronunciation and orthography

The orthography used in this thesis for the transcription of Yanomami words follows the work of Lizot (1996; 2004). This orthography is the same used in the Salesian Yanomami inter-cultural schools in the Upper Orinoco, which has been recognised by the "Bureau of Indigenous Affairs" of the Ministry of Education (DAI). The phonetic values of Yanomami words can be as follows (see Lizot 1985:190):

a  a low central vowel like the a of bat and the a of father
e  mid front vowel as the ai of bait but without the high glide
i  a high front unrounded vowel like the ee sound of feet
o  a mid back rounded vowel as the o of note but without the glide
u  a high back rounded vowel similar to the oo sound of pool or the u of rude, but short
ê  a mid central vowel similar to the a sound in the word about or the u in just
i  a central and sometime back unrounded vowel, similar to the i of bird, approximated by pronouncing u as in pool with spread lips

The Yanomami vocals can be represented in the following manner:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>front</th>
<th>central</th>
<th>back</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>high</td>
<td>i</td>
<td>i</td>
<td>u</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>midle</td>
<td>e</td>
<td>è</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>low</td>
<td></td>
<td>a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are also vowels that are nasalised (e.g., pronounced with the air escaping through the nose). Nasalisation is indicated by a tilde [i.e., ã] over the vowel.

Vowel clusters (e.g., ee) are pronounced with a glottal stop between them.

Consonants are pronounced as in English with a few exceptions: p, t, and K are never aspirated and are pronounced as in the words spin, stem, and skin.

th is a [t] followed by an aspiration [h], always pronounced as the initial t in English time, till, and tone.

r is an alveolar flap; although not trilled, it resembles more the Spanish r that the English r.

sh is a palatal voiceless fricative and is pronounced as the English cluster sh in shell.

The consonants can be represented as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>bilabial</th>
<th>Labiodental</th>
<th>dental</th>
<th>alveolar</th>
<th>Alveopalatal</th>
<th>velar</th>
<th>glotal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Occlusive</td>
<td>p</td>
<td>t,th</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Fricatives</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>s</td>
<td>sh</td>
<td></td>
<td>h</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Nasals</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>n</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vibrantes</td>
<td>pr</td>
<td>fr</td>
<td>r</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semivocales</td>
<td>w</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>y</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A note on writing
In the writing of this thesis I have used both the present tense and the past tense. I have found the combination of both as a good way of rendering the kind of melding of tenses that exists when one writes a thesis about people who are far away, in the distance. They are in a kind of past, in our memory (e.g., field notes), but at the same time one is always thinking (in present tense) on the subjects one is writing about. As Passes (1998: iv) has written on the reasons for adopting both tenses in his thesis: "If I seesaw between the two tenses, then, it is because despite the pitfalls I find them equally useful...I value the present one's ability to express and stylistically underline the particularity of certain actions as as autonomous and creative, as opposed to mechanical and normative, acts. And I see the past one as a device for describing not something that is gone for ever but, rather, something that at a given moment in time was a part, a phase, of a yet unfolding process of social, cultural, and individual self-transformation."

The thesis contains Yanomami and Spanish texts, words and expressions. They all take double quotation marks (as direct quotes from other sources) and are presented in italics.

Methodological matters
This thesis was carried out addressing the challenges set so firmly by the recent works of Overing and others who have worked closely with her (Overing 1985,1987,1990, Overing and Passes 2000; see also Gow 1991, 2001; Santos-Granero 1991; McCallum 1989; Belaunde 1992; Kidd 1999; Passes 1998; Londono-Sukin 2000). These works are examples of the current "opening up of Amazonian anthropology" in their emphasis upon anthropological methods where "from start to finish attention is focused upon indigenous voices and points of view, rather than upon grand structures of mind, culture or society, unconscious or otherwise" (Overing and Passes eds. 2000: 2; see also Brady 1991; Wagner 1991). Accordingly, my main methodology has been a constant
listening process. From early morning till night, I was paying attention to the village everyday verbal life. In this thesis I hope to show the extent to which new ways of doing anthropology can provide a different picture, one that should achieve a closer and more accurate representation of the nature of Yanomami sociality.

Thus, this thesis, engaged in the exploration of the linkage between language and sociality, is the result of a new methodological approach. Such methodology incorporates within it an “anthropology of the every day” and also an “anthropology of emotions,” both being set within an exploration within the “ethnography of speaking.” As a methodology it is, therefore, explicitly crossing borders within the discipline of anthropology, toward the end of de-colonialising our ethnography and thus overcoming some of the major problems within our modernist grand narratives of social order which have more often than not silenced the knowledgeable voices of our indigenous “subjects.”

The role of Yanomami language use in rhetoric and everyday dialogues is a fundamental aspect of this research. My emphasis upon Yanomami’s “speech events” (Hymes, 1986 a) and their analysis has been a realistic project, as I am fluent in their language. Before I began my PhD studies, I worked five years - between 1990 and 1998- in the field among the Yanomami of Venezuela and also of Brazil. Residing in the Yanomami area, I worked as an adviser for different projects (i.e., for the Yanomami organization “Shaponos Unidos Yanomami del Alto Orinoco” (SUYAO), for the “Biosphere Reserve Project” with the European Community (CEE), in the Amazon state of Venezuela, and for “Medicins sans Frontiers” (MSF) and the Pro-Yanomami Commission (CCPY), both working in Roraima and Amazonas’ states in Brazil, for a health and education project). Finally, in addition to this, in December 2000, I taught a course on Yanomami language for the personnel working in the CCPY’s education programme in the Yanomami area in Brazil (Amazon state). The fundamental tools recently made available on Yanomami grammar (Lizot 1996), a number of Yanomami texts (Lizot 1996 b, 1997) and the new dictionary of the Yanomami language (Lizot 2004), have given me the opportunity of develop a richer and more accurate research from the linguistic point of view.
INTRODUCTION

hei shoriwē,
this my brother-in-law,

shoriwē napē,
my brother-in-law outsider,

hei pehe a kāi rē periowei,
the one who lives among both of us,

a yimika rii ta taiku!
listen to me!

(Heshiwarihima, a Yanomami leader of Hapokashita in his fifties, speaking to me in one of his speeches at dawn)

A few days before I finished this thesis, a friend of mine who has nothing to do with anthropology, asked me to tell her, “in five words,” as she told me, the main topic of my thesis. After thinking how I could do that without using any jargon, I just told her the first thing that came to my mind at that moment, but, as I realised immediately afterwards, summarised it very well. I told her that the thesis was a humble attempt to convey, insofar as I could, a tiny part of the richness and beauty of Yanomami spoken world. “That’s nice,” she said, and pointing towards the manuscript that I had on my lap very proudly, she asked again: “How did you do this in these lots of written pages? Are you showing any of the Yanomami voices?” These questions, and my answer, epitomise the main challenge I have undertaken in this thesis. A challenge that, involving two languages (i.e., Yanomami and English) that were not my native tongue (i.e., Spanish) has been very difficult, I have to admit. Nonetheless it has been a truly rewarding challenge that has made me see the world through different eyes.
Yanomami people has taught me, once I was able to listen to them, a great deal about how to be a better human being in this world.

This thesis, engaged in an exploration of aspects of language and sociality is the result of a constant listening exercise. The fieldwork research on which this thesis is based was conducted in the community of Hapokashita (a village of about 65 persons) located in the Upper Orinoco (Venezuela) from February to August 2000 and also based on 5 years earlier field experience of working among the Yanomami on NGO projects. During my fieldwork, listening to Yanomami people speaking was my main task. The work that I am about to present has been only possible as a result of this particular methodology.

When I began my fieldwork within a Yanomami community, I was mainly devoted to improving my understanding of their language. One of the best ways to do this was, of course, by listening to them. Among their different ways of speaking, the “patamou,” the elders’ speech, was one of my favourite types of speech and also one of my main objectives of study, as no detailed descriptions of this type of speech have ever been published in the literature devoted to Yanomami people. Convinced of the complexity of understanding the nature of its messages, that takes one far beyond merely understanding the language, I began to realize the fundamental importance of this type of speech in the ongoing creation of Yanomami sociality. Considering the rapid and increasing social and political changes taking place among Yanomami people in the Upper Orinoco that are relegating the role of the elders and traditional leaders, together with their speeches, to a kind of “old ways of speaking,” the study of the “patamou” is of vital importance.

Thus, I was so interested in understanding better the village everyday verbal life that I came to the point of deciding to also read Yanomami texts,
especially when becoming "tired" of listening to Yanomami speaking. That was not difficult as I had with me the collection of the Yanomami myths collected and transcribed in Yanomami language by Lizot ("no patapi téhê,“ in the time of the ancestors,” 1989). Moreover, I felt that doing so was a kind of an old duty for me. I knew that I had not paid all the attention that I should have done to their mythology and the performances of myth narrations. So there I was, reading the myths in Yanomami and, at the same time, as it were, listening to Yanomami everyday verbal life. Soon I perceived that following this “method” (e.g., “listening to” Yanomami voices and “reading” these very voices) I was learning Yanomami better, and truly enjoying it. Having, at that time, no intention of analysing myths, my readings of them were just for the sake of enjoyment. Yanomami myths, those incredible stories that unfold the times (and the ways) of Yanomami ancestors (“no patapi”) and which tell how Yanomami people came to be as they are today, are very pleasant to read. Even more so when one feels that you are learning their language through them. After some time, and mainly because of the particular methodology with which I was engaged, I began to realize the extent to which the language used in the myths is the same language one hears in everyday village verbal interaction. I also began to see that the poetics of myth narrations, and the political messages these myths convey through this distinctive poetics, and Yanomami everyday language were part of one and the same philosophy. The so-called formal and informal division of political language (see Bloch 1975) became blurred, as it were. This added to my interest in the readings. My efforts to understand the everyday verbal arts were, at the same time, providing me with a more positive “disposition” to read and understand better the myths. In other words, through my continuous listening exercise I was becoming better prepared to understand the continuous interplay of characters speaking to each other; I was better able to picture in my mind and to recognise the plurality of voices that make up and populate the mythical landscape. This type of exercise provided me with greater skills for appreciating the ways in which the narration of events were unfolded and structured by the myth narrator. And I reiterate again: all this was through my own experience of listening to and observing the everyday life of the Yanomami.
From this everyday vantage view, the pleasure of reading myths is even greater. One constantly can move, as it were, from the mythical setting to the everyday lived experience of the "right there," that is unfolding in front of your eyes, and in the process achieve an explanation of a particular mythical happening, a better reading of it, an answer to the message of that particular myth event. Yanomami everyday community life is the main frame from where much of the mythical scenery and imagery, with its multiplicity of contexts and social situations "used" by myth tellers in the unfolding of their stories are taken. Thus, being in this everyday context one's five senses can be used to synthesise more fully the atmosphere that surrounds these wonderful narrations. And one thing is clear to me: the better one is able to understand the mythic narrations, what is said and how it is said, the plurality of voices in constant interaction, the better one enjoys the messages they unfold. These two things, the understanding and the pleasure, I believe, are part and parcel of the same process. This is a fact that, as I hope to demonstrate, makes the reading of these myths not only the stories of the ancestors' times, "no patapi tehe," the name Yanomami give for what we call, with that generic and somehow problematic word, "myth."

Back in St. Andrews, I began the process of writing up my thesis. Soon I realized the extent to which the understanding of the elders' speeches, together with the important role they play in the linkage Yanomami establish between the pragmatics of language use and (their valued) sociality, had to be grounded in their mythology. The everyday talk of Yanomami people on the matters of community life, along with its elders' speeches, with the strong emphasis of their orators on the proper conditions for living a comfortable and peaceful existence, seemed to me to be deeply rooted in the mythological backdrop. In order to get to know better the former, I realized the extent to which one needs to have a good enough, at least, understanding of the latter.

On the one hand Overing's works opened my eyes to see within the practices of the everyday of Yanomami people what in a general way has been
always denied for Amazonian peoples,¹ and be able to understand the cosmic and mythical background without thinking of that as a “rupture” with the more ordinary everyday concerns of Yanomami people. On the other hand, Hymes’ work has taught me the enormous importance of listening to the indigenous voices and texts² “in all its details.” For my part, I wish to consider my work as a kind of experiment towards the better understanding of the fundamental values, aesthetics, moral, political, that the pragmatics of language has for the Yanomami and peoples like them around the world. Furthermore, I consider that doing this is, at the present day, an urgent task. The result of this mixture of approaches, not so different in purposes if looked at closely, has been a wonderful discovery. Furthermore, it has come as a relief and a liberating breath of fresh air for me. The work of understanding Yanomami speeches and narratives, the poetics of myths and everyday verbal life, was not going to be the privileged and solitary task of a PhD student making his own linguistic discoveries,³ but also was resulting in a strong way of doing a new sort of political anthropology. I recall here Overing’s opening words in a recent inaugural lecture for an international conference held in Florianopolis, Brazil. (Overing 2004a):

> “How do we develop an anthropological gaze that avoids the fallacy of the superior position of western civilisation? That is the question. How do we develop anthropological writing that does not silence “the other”? How do we de-colonise intellectuality? translate other peoples knowledges and ways of thinking? Capture their voices (in present jargon) with respect to this matter of knowledge and thinking? This is first and foremost a political endeavour...” (p.1)

Overing’s words, taken with the seriousness they deserve in the contemporary political climate, make the work of the anthropologist much more

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¹ See for instance the work of Clastres (1987), Rivière (1984), who both argue that Amazonian Indigenous peoples have been described more in relation to what they are not rather than for what they are in their own terms (see also Overing 1985).

² The word “texts” here refers to the indigenous oral narratives, stories, myths, everyday and ritual speeches, etc... once they have been transcribed and transformed in written “texts.”

³ On this point Hymes (1981:8) writes: “I am interested in the linguistic discoveries that result for their own sake, to be sure. When one looks at linguistic elements from the standpoint of their integration into a higher level of discourse in the service of a higher function, new relationships come to light that are contributions to linguistics itself. Poetics requires an evenhanded attention to stylistic and referential function alike, to the benefit of an understanding of language and competence.”
difficult, I have to admit. One way to avoid the fallacy of the superior position of Western Civilization, which is an important problem in anthropology, politics and a long list of fields, is to think profoundly about the inequality of the voices present in most of the anthropological works. This has to be overcome. However, to avoid the immediate label of idealism, so easy to use towards those who come from and have a different horizon of concerns, I like to conceive of the present work as an interesting exercise, a step forward towards the recognition of such inequality by means of the recognition of the Yanomami voices. Nothing more, nothing less. The words of Rousseau - apart from introducing well the reader into the egalitarian world of Yanomami people I describe in this thesis- help to frame the stance of this sort of academic - and political - enterprise:

“I conceive of two sorts of inequality in the human species; one, which I call natural or physical, because it is established by nature and consists in the difference of ages, health, bodily strengths, and qualities of mind or soul; the other, which may be called moral or political inequality, because it depends upon a sort of convention and is established, or at least authorized, by the consent of men. The latter consists in the different privileges that some men enjoy to the prejudice of others, such as to be richer, more honoured, more powerful than they, or even to make themselves obeyed by them” Rousseau (11964 [1756] quoted in Hymes 1996: 25, my italics).

Let me show the kind of theory and the methodology that I will be using to engage in the kind of anthropological writing that does not silence the other – in this case Yanomami people - and which gives the people the prominence from start to finish.

The thesis is divided in three parts (see below). Part 1, deals with myths and the everyday life; in part 2 I discuss Yanomami warfare; and in part 3 I deal with the elders’ speech (“patamou”).

**Myth and everyday**

In the first part of the thesis (Chapters 1 to 7) I discuss two Yanomami myths of origin, namely the myth of the origin of the night, and the myth of the
master of banana plants. While drawing heavily on Lizot's ethnographical and linguistic work, my analysis of the myth will be embedded within two interconnected debates of present concern to anthropology: On the one hand, the strong linkage between the poetics of myth narration and the poetics of the everyday life (see Hymes 1981, 2003; Witherspoon 1977; Brady 1991; Overing 1985, 1989, 1996, Gow 2001). To better explore this relationship I will also draw on Overing's recent (2004a, 2004b) work on the fundamental importance of understanding the political philosophy that pervades such linkage. On the other hand there is also the important role that the world of the felt, the senses and passions play in Yanomami conceptions and practices of sociality (see for example Rosaldo 1980; Lutz 1988; Lutz and Abu-Lughod eds. 1990, Leavitt 1996; and see also Overing and Passes eds. 2000; Ales 2000). Such a "melding" of approaches is necessary in order to describe the reality I saw and listened to in the field when living among the Yanomami. The richness of this reality led me to take a particular approach that places this work at the intersection of various disciplines and methods. The aim is that of achieving a dialogical approach (see Bakhtin 1981; Tedlock 1979, 1983; Tedlock and Mannheim 1995) to the Yanomami world of the social. To achieve this, the methodological stand of listening to Yanomami voices is of vital importance. By using a dialogical approach here I mean a way of approaching the voices one listens to in the field, that later on we write down as "data" and try to analyse to find "meaning", from the point of view of all those other Yanomami voices one has listened to. That is, is an effort to combine various Yanomami points of view in the task of translating their world view. Finally, the main aim for doing this is trying to capture their own voices on the matters they talk about in their everyday life (Hymes 1981, 2003; Kulick 1992, 1998; Overing Kaplan 1975; Lizot 1985).

the Yanomami and their points of view. The stress on “multiple voices” (Bakhtin 1981, 1984) is very important theoretically, for such a concern works against the one voice of, for instance, the structuralist analysis or an “analogical approach” (see Tedlock 1979, 1983; Tedlock and Mannheim eds.1995), which render all voices, save that of the analyst, silent, or as unknowing. I put into practice a number of the theoretical and methodological insights of their approaches, not through an exhaustive display of linguistic skills of the kind often shown by the ethnographers of speaking, but by paying attention to various types of discourses and the particular use of words and expressions within a range of different moments in the Yanomami everyday life and by a careful contextual analysis of those speech events. Thus, in this work, it is my desire to keep the indigenous voices at the forefront of my analysis of the linkage between Yanomami language and their valued sociality.

By complementing these approaches, I hope to shed new light on the importance that the poetics and politics of Yanomami language, in myths and the everyday, has in what Overing and Passes (eds.) (2000) have called an “aesthetics of conviviality.” I will endeavour to show the extent to which the Yanomami verbal arts and their art of social living are inextricably attached to each other and part and parcel of the same process of generating the proper (i.e., human) conditions for sociality. Finally, another point follows from the above. In bringing the voices of the Yanomami to the forefront of my analysis - to translate their mythical and everyday poetics - is not merely an anthropological endeavour. As Overing (2003b:1), has recently argued this is “first and foremost a political endeavour,” and one that goes a long way toward the end of decolonising intellectuality.

On Yanomami warfare

The long debate on the topic of Yanomami warfare, violence and aggression is ongoing, but it is certainly not resolved. Moreover, the recent process of Yanomami political integration within the democratic Venezuelan Nation-state has opened a rich field for new evaluations with regard to this topic. In this part of my thesis (Chapter 8), while following the Yanomami
conceptualizations and also Lizot's (1994a, 1994b) analysis and stress upon the mutual interdependence of peace and war, I endeavour to elaborate another theoretical bridge through the stimulating edited volume by Overing and Passes (2000), “The Anthropology of Love and Anger: the aesthetics of conviviality in native Amazonia.” In the latter, Amazonian social life is shown to be successful – from the indigenous point of view- to the extent to which conviviality (that is, the good and peaceful relations of social life) is perceived to have been achieved in fact in everyday life. This is a view that not only takes into consideration the good and peaceful qualities of indigenous life, but also the native recognition of the continuous interplay of the constructive and destructive sociabilities as acted out both in aspects of community life and their dealings with other Yanomami and outsiders. Within this new theoretical framework of an Amazonian “anthropology of the everyday,” the chapter on Yanomami conceptualization of the interplay between peace and war provides an example of the fundamental role that ordinary everyday concerns have in our task of understanding indigenous conceptions and practices. The data I collected in my field research make clear that the Yanomami’s own expressed understandings of both their sociable peace and their violent conflicts are grounded in the moral values constitutive of the very nature of their egalitarian sociality (see Lizot, 1994 a, 1994 b, 1999; Ales 2000). By means of an ethnography of Yanomami everyday life, which combines an anthropology of emotions with an ethnography of speaking, I will elucidate the extent to which this constant negotiation between these two different sides of their sociality – the expression of the positive and negative emotions- mirrors their own conceptualization of peace and war, and in so doing displays a social and political philosophy that “states loud and clear the necessity of egalitarianism as the only path possible for a human sort of social life” (Overing, 2004:11).

Through the above means, I hope to provide a better perspective for the appreciation of Yanomami moral judgements that lie at the core of both, the social problems leading to conflicts and violence and those leading to peace. I contend that to ignore the indigenous voices and opinions expressed through different ways of speaking precludes the very possibility of attaining an understanding of the sentient, living, experiencing, speaking Yanomami person.
Furthermore, I will demonstrate that these voices show a completely different picture of Yanomami social life that was totally ignored in the image of “fierceness,” as for instance portrayed by Chagnon (1968), or the “love of material plenty,” by Ferguson (1995). The problem is that these are pictures that still today dominate most of the outsiders’ views and opinions about Yanomami people and their conflicts.

On Yanomami elders’ speech

Part 3 of the thesis (chapters 9, 10, 11) deals with the Yanomami elders’ speech, a mode of communication that has been almost neglected in other previous works. After having discussed various topics (myth and the everyday, Yanomami warfare) through which various aspects of Yanomami moral and political philosophy can be grasped, in this last part of the thesis I show the strong linkage between such philosophy and this type of speech. The elders’ speech is dealt with in various parts of the thesis and also in various ways. First, and departing from the way a myth of origin explicitly makes references to it, I illustrate, the way Yanomami people conceive of this type of speech. I do this by describing, following Hymes’ (1981, 2003) insights, the way in which the myth teller “describes” this speech in his narrative. Second, in Chapter 3, I make a brief description of the speech and in Chapters 9, 10, and 11 I provide fragments of the speech of an elder that I transcribed and analysed.

As an important contribution to the ethnography of Yanomami people, my thesis includes transcripts and translations, obtained through direct observation and tape recording, of this mode of communication. Based on these texts, I explore the nature of the elders’ speech and illustrate the fundamental role it plays in the “production” of sociality and social relations. I also consider the way other anthropologists (i.e., Clastres 1977; McCallum 1990; Gow 1991; Santos Granero 1991; Belaunde 1992; Passes 1998) have described the speech of Lowland Amazonian leaders and also related it to notions of power. These descriptions, together with the few accounts available on the speeches of Yanomami elders (see for instance Chagnon 1977:92; Albert 1985:206-7 note
Thus, I discuss the way dreams are associated with social relations, and how the conflictive side of Yanomami sociality is expressed through an "emotion-talk" of bad, negative feelings that are also associated with dreams. I also describe the fundamental role of this speech in communicating news and information. Finally, I look at another fragment of elders' speech ("patamou"), in which the speaker addresses me and communicates what I have described as a message of "social incorporation." Through his words, I demonstrate that such a message of incorporation is conceived and verbalised as a generative process through which the daily creation of good feelings and shared moral sentiments plays a fundamental role. In these chapters one can see the strong linkage Yanomami people establish between the affective and emotional realms of interpersonal relationships and their conceptions of sociality. In the last two sections of chapter 11, I include two speeches of "young" Yanomami leaders in order to discuss, very briefly, an example of the ways the contemporary discourse of Yanomami people is becoming bound up with the changing socio-political context of the Upper Orinoco. These new leaders are assuming the role of "inter-cultural mediators" in the relations with "whites" and playing a significant political role in the contemporary political arena. Their words illustrate the ways Yanomami people are becoming more and more engaged in the expanded socio-political scenario of their contemporary life.

The main body of Yanomami texts on which these chapters are based were recorded, transcribed, analyzed and discussed in Yanomami language with my Yanomami collaborators in the field. This process of transcription and translation has been one of my fundamental sources of knowledge and information in the endeavor of becoming closer to Yanomami people's own views on their sociality. The long hours of transcription and translation work within the community, and the ongoing discussions with my Yanomami collaborators...
interlocutors in their own language (and specially during the more "private" -e.g.,
not among inquisitive children and interested others- sessions transcribing the
speeches) has proven to be a powerful method through which to grasp their
own points of view about what the speakers had said as well as to appreciate
their own ways of reasoning and framing such points of view. What is more, the
very process of transcription provided me an invaluable means for improving my
understanding of their language.
PART 1

The myth of the origin of the night and the elders' speech: notes toward a second interpretation
CHAPTER 1

From a myth read as a text to its performance seen as a texture: An exercise in Yanomami ethnopoetics

Introduction

In his analysis of Yanomami Ceremonial Dialogue, Lizot (1994b) points out important correspondences between the myth of the origin of the night and Yanomami Ceremonial dialogue, "wayamou." This myth of origin tells about the way Yanomami people got the first night in times when daylight prevailed. The arrival of the night generates the daily cycle: since then night will follow the day and day will follow the night. This introduction of the cycle of day and night at the same time provides the conditions for the development of salient modes of verbal communication. In order to see this, and to better introduce the main intentions of my analysis the myth must be presented.

1.1 The myth of the origin of the night (in paragraphs)

"In the forest the large black curassow would always perch in the same place and "cry." His incessant muffled lament could be heard, like that of the black curassows in the mating season. Black Curassow never moved sideways on the branch on which he was sitting; he would turn around where he sat, first in one direction, then another. The people of long ago, our ancestors, did not know about night; they did not know about dusk. In those days there was perpetual daylight, and they slept during the day. They would go hunting, come back, and eat the game they had caught, and never got angry. Whenever they felt sleepy they would sleep. That was how they lived.

Black Curassow is the son-in-law of Darkness and Night, a female spirit. There is Black Curassow's path, in the jumbled vegetation, covered with thorns! Our ancestors no doubt wanted to create spirits. In the place where he usually came to perch, Black Curassow would sound a long, muffled lament. This is what he would say:
Titiri, titiri, titiri, we!

Here is the Rock of the Revenant!

Here is the Rock of the Taro!

Here is the River of the Thoru Flowers!

He would name the mountains, the rocks and the rivers, and his lament never ended'  

Here is the River of the Thorns!

Here is the River of the Nostril!

That was what he would say.

The ancestors heard him. One day one of them declared: “We must try something, children! The one who sings so plaintively without stopping is a spirit.”

Here is the Maiyo Rock!

Our ancestors had never witnessed dusk. The sun always remained in the zenith, and they would sleep during the day. Black Curassow was so heavy that the branch on which he was perched bent under his weight. He was sitting very low, close to the ground, surrounded by darkness. “Children, we must try something! My children, my son, we must find a way!” They set off in the direction of black Curassow and approached with intention of killing him. He did not fly off when they came but remained perched on his branch, shaking off his parasites. When the men were fairly close one of them shot off a dart from his blowgun. The dart grazed Black Curassow and sent a few feathers flying. Precisely at that moment night fell. The sounds of the night could be heard: tiri, tiri, tiri … Those who had remained in the house briefly felt sleepy and began to snore. Very quickly the day returned. “Children, children, that’s it! I slept well; for an instant I slept pleasurably!” Daylight had returned and the lament began again: titiri, titiri, titiri, we!
Then Horonami declared publicly: "Now I'm the one who will kill him!" He was a skillful hunter, and set off right away to kill the bird. Once more Black Curassow was heard naming a place. He continued to name the different places in the forest. Horonami blew into his blowgun, and Black Curassow fell to the ground, dead. Instantly a profound darkness fell and the sounds of the night could be heard. Small white feathers detached themselves from Black Curassow's stomach and blew away, one behind the other, carrying with them the parasites that were clinging to them. They had turned into weyari, the spirits that announce the day.

A few men who had gone far into the forest were surprised by the night. Disoriented, they called: "Where is the path by which we came here? Come and get us!" "Go and look for the others, and light your way with the firebrands." Several men tied some firebrands together and went off, moving the firebrands in front of them as they went.

Meanwhile, in the house, our ancestors were facing a situation that was still new to them. "I am sleepy, and the dark frightens me." In the circular enclosure of the large communal house snores were beginning to be heard. "Light a fire, light a fire!" When the night drew to an end the sounds of the morning replaced those of the night, and the old people ordered: "Children, get up! It's daytime! Go hunting, kill some game!" They had a feeling of well-being after being able to sleep at night, and they had already started to dream. (Source Lizot, ms. In Wilbert and Simoneau 1990:145-47).

So now one might ask, how is this myth of the origin of the night related to Yanomami ceremonial dialogue? In this regard, Lizot points out the need of addressing the "relationship between the ritual and the myth; or more precisely, between Yanomami rituals and their mythology and associated beliefs" (1994:226). And he concludes that "the connection from ritual to myth is neither direct nor simple" (ibid). On this subject he writes:
"[W]hile the myth of the origin of the night may not exactly provide the basis of the ceremonial dialogue ritual, it does at least provide the conditions for its realization: the arrival of the night; the creation of Titiri and of the weyari-harikari (op. cit.:226).

As stated before, Lizot’s analysis focuses on the Ceremonial dialogue, wayamou. This is a type of speech mainly used to communicate with people from different communities and it happens during the night. Taking a Yanomami point of view and his village as the “spatial” reference, i.e., the “inside,” the Ceremonial dialogue can be described as a mode of communication with the outside, as a type of dialogue that is enacted with those people who do not live in the same community. Consequently, and for analytical purposes in order to simplify this introduction, I will label this type of speech as a “language for the outside.”

The insights provided in Lizot’s (1994b) analysis has led me to explore, although through a different venue, the extent to which this myth of origin also provides the conditions for the realization of another significant mode of verbal communication, namely Yanomami elders’ speech, the "patamou." By the nature of the elders’ speech a number of associations between this mode of communication and the myth of the origin of the night can also be established. Taking again the point of view of a Yanomami and his/her village as spatial reference, the elders’ speech takes place within the village, e.g., the inside, and is usually performed on an everyday basis either at dawn or dusk. Consequently, for the sake of presenting things in simple terms in this introduction, if the Ceremonial dialogue is the “language for the outside,” the elders’ speech can be labeled as the “language of the inside.” In including the “inside language” in the analysis of the myth of the origin of the night, my aim is to achieve two main interrelated objectives. Firstly, to shed new lights upon Lizot’s insights on the way the myth of the origin of the night can be related to Yanomami modes of verbal communication. Secondly, and taking the myth of the origin of the night and its relationship with the elders’ speech as the main path, to demonstrate the fundamental relationship between the poetics of myth narration and the poetics of the everyday (Hymes, 1981, 2003; Overing 2003, 2004; see introduction). Both purposes intersect and work towards the aim of
illustrating the salient role that myths play in the framing of much of daily practices. Let me explain briefly the first objective, namely the way the myth of the origin of the night is related to different Yanomami ways of speaking.

Lizot's findings on the correspondences between the myth and the Ceremonial dialogue represent one of the main points of departure of my discussion. Having described the form and content of the Yanomami Ceremonial dialogue and analyzed a number of important correspondences between this speech and the myth, Lizot asserts that his conclusions are consistent with the findings of Lévi-Strauss (1978:156) when the latter author writes that Amerindian “myths of the origin of the day and night conceptualize both space and time.” However Lizot goes further when he asserts that the originality of this Yanomami myth is that it conceptualizes the notions of space and time via “naming” and “exchange” (1994b:227). In stating this, Lizot is referring to two fundamental features underlying both the myth and the Ceremonial dialogue that I should present briefly in order to make clearer how they relate to notions of space and time. Thus on the nature of the ritual speech he says:

"The Ceremonial speech is first and foremost a social relationship manifested itself as a reciprocal exchange. The exchange is not of material objects, but words" (1994b:220).

Considering similarities and divergences between the myth and the Ceremonial speech, he writes that:

"The wayamou [i.e., the Yanomami dialogues in the Ceremonial dialogue ritual] does not limit itself to naming places in space and to proposing a toponymy. It populates this space; places social groups in it; humanizes it and socializes it. The different social groups are themselves polarized by the opposition of the Waika and the Shamathani. The former are distributed to the north and the latter to the south (among the central Yanomami)” (1994b:227).

Moreover, Lizot also highlights the ways in which notions of space are intertwined with notions of time in the Ceremonial dialogue. On this he says that:
"the wayamou space is doubly oriented. It is populated and stretches itself in the temporality imposed by the succession of night and day and lunar months" (1994b:227).

It is my view that, in addition to the Ceremonial dialogue (the "language of the outside"), exploring the correspondences between the myth and the elders' speech (the "language of the inside") important findings on the relationship between language and sociality can be elucidated. Thus, I will be arguing that the myth of the origin of the night can be said to conceptualize both space and time, not only by means of "naming" and "exchange," but also through the means of different types of language.

1.2 On the importance of working with the originals

To begin this exercise of "reading," and "seeing" a text (that comes from a performance) I would like briefly to present various aspects on the way Hymes approaches Indigenous American narratives that have been influential to my own analysis of the Yanomami texts, and in particular his emphasis on their performative elements, before unfolding, through my own analysis of the Yanomami texts, much more of his methodology.

One thing to be said from the start is the fact that Hymes places great importance in the need to work with the originals (e.g. the texts transcribed in the own language of the people one is working with). "Whatever the factors," he writes, "the texts of Native American tradition have been largely ignored. The translations have been consulted and sometimes analysed, the originals mostly not" (Hymes 1981:7). On this theme Hymes quotes Franz Boas, "the modern founder of our work" as he says of him, on the latter's continuous insistence about working with the originals:

"It is obvious that for the understanding of the form of native literature, if we may use this term for their unwritten poetry and tales,
a thorough knowledge of the language is indispensable, for without it the elements that appeal to the aesthetic sense of the hearer cannot be appreciated" (Boas, 1938: 44, quoted in Hymes 1981:7, my italics).

The fact that there is a published collection of Yanomami myths in Yanomami language (Lizot 1989) gave me the invaluable opportunity of working with the original transcriptions. In addition to this, the rich material about the Yanomami language published by Lizot, that includes a Yanomami grammar (1996) and an extremely rich dictionary (2003), provided me with wonderful tools to improve my knowledge of their language. Without these works on the Yanomami language my learning process would have been immensely more slow and difficult. Without the transcriptions of the original versions of the Yanomami myths nothing of what I am to present in the following pages would have been possible. Having seen, and listened to, the Yanomami performing myths gave me the opportunity of better understanding their myths. However, it was the fact of having them already printed down, with the accuracy that characterizes Lizot’s linguistic work, that gave me the main force for becoming involved in such a difficult, and also highly rewarding adventure.

With all the above stated in mind, re-reading\(^5\) some chapters of Hymes book “In vain I tried to tell you”, resulted in a real challenge that I felt ready to meet. For instance, keeping in mind the possibility of working with the Yanomami originals and the fact of having comprehensive linguistics tools to consult and to improve the knowledge of the language, consider the next paragraph:

“\text{When things were said or sung within the native culture, explicit analysis –a detailed meta-language for dealing with form- was not needed. Performer and audience shared an implicit knowledge of language and ways of speaking. For us there is no alternative to explicit analysis. As with the grammar of these languages, so with the}"

\(^5\) Before going to do fieldwork, I had read a number of Hymes' articles as I had taken a course of “linguistic theory in Anthroplogy” with Joanna Overing. I still remember the difficulties I had in fully appreciating Hyme’s insights when I was not so much acquainted with the indigenous verbal performances, their narrations and texts. I was in another stage and not yet ready. It was only when I came back from the field, and after having been working with the transcriptions of the Yanomami originals for some months, that I began to better understand Hymes' insights and findings. Then I must recognise that I experienced the sensation of being “discovering” things, as Hymes himself writes (see 1981 chapter 9:309-41).
verbal art: underlying relationships, taken for granted by their users, must be brought to light by conscious effort. Once brought to light, they can enable us to understand the creativity and cogency of the discourse in which they occur” (Hymes 1981:6, my italics).

As Hymes makes clear, one of the main tasks for the interpretation of myths is the better understanding of that sharing process of "implicit knowledge of language and ways of speaking" between performer and audience. The telling of myths among the Yanomami, told in communal sessions, generates a continuous interplay between performer and audience. In these sessions, the myth teller and the audience are, as Lizot has put it, “enjoined in a close relationship of quasi complicity (...) allowing each member of the audience to experience the message of the myth in an intimate and personal way” (Lizot 1975:8, in Wilbert and Simoneau 1990:6). Lizot’s description of the performance of a Yanomami myth provides a vivid and an excellent picture to better introduce the importance of Hymes’ methodological insights in my analysis of the myth:

“One really has to see the shaman storytellers making their way with remarkable pantomime through the vicissitudes of the tale; *mythic time returns to life before yours eyes*, and the Indians’ inimitable humour, the rollicking buffoonery that they know how to imprint, gives a roguishness not easy to transmit in translations, if they are to be true to the spirit. Nothing static or dead in all of this, nor conventional: vitality, explosions of laughter, exclamations, things suggested by a word or a gesture, but understood by everyone as obvious symbols. No props; the context is that of everyday activities. *The imaginary and the everyday are nurtured by multiple and permanent ingredients.* There is a near absence of dramatic play; all is expressed in suggestions or gesture, facial expression, tone of voice that animate each successive hero. It does happen occasionally of an evening the shaman asks for a knife, or takes an arrow or a bow to support his action. Nor is there any need for costumes: the body is naked; facial paint and bird feathers to reveal the beauty of the supernatural world of the hekura. It is a culture that lives, a mythology rooted in their existence” (Lizot 1975:8, in Wilbert and Simoneau 1990:6, my italics).
In this example we can appreciate the extent to which the myth telling/narration among the Yanomami is part of the everyday activities and is nurtured by them. This context of the everyday in which the myth performance takes place is precisely what Hymes considers as of fundamental importance to understand the real depth, the artistry of the performance of myths. In his critics of other interpretations of the verbal artistry of myths he comments that:

"Most interpretation of Native American verbal art fails (...) to comprehend its genuine depth. Interpretation that excludes speech falls short, as would a treatment of painting that excluded paint. Interpretation that seeks only an individual voice, the author's or the interpreter's, fall short as well. Interpretation that attends only to what is culturally defined, excluding both the mode of existence of the work and the personal voice, as is the case with most analyses of myth, yields only a surface image, however much it talks of underlying depth. Abstract relations among categories of plot and content are essential aspects of the understanding of myths, but aspects only. Artistry comes into view only if the text can be seen as a texture within which particular means have been chosen and deployed. Meaning is deepest where that artistry is most evoked. Although it may appear paradoxical, perception of depth depends on perception of detail and of the relationships implicit in its placement" (Hymes 1981:9-10, my italics).

So far there is no single work on Yanomami mythology that can be said to apply Hymes methodology. This fact poses a problem to the discipline, as everywhere it is said and recalled that the Yanomami are one of the best-studied and known people in the earth...! The enormous list of publications and amount of work devoted to them have generated the grounds to say this without being afraid of not telling the truth. The Yanomami myths published are all presented in lines of paragraphs. The only published text in which the original transcriptions are presented is, as I mentioned before, Lizot (1989). In the following pages, I want to apply Hymes' method and a number of his insights to

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6 The published work on Yanomami myths includes the rich collection of three hundred and sixty-four narratives (recorded among three of the four major subdivisions of Yanomami people: Yanomami, Sanema, and Yanomam) published in "Folk Literature of the Yanomami Indians" (Wilbert and Simoneau eds.1990). In this book, there are myths from a variety of groups collected by different authors: Albert, Becher, Borgman, Cocco, Colchester, Finkers, Knobloch, Lizot, and Wilbert.
approach the study of Yanomami ethnopoetics. To do this, one of the first things that have to be done is reconsider the form of presentation of the myth.

1.3 On the presentational form of the Yanomami myth of the origin of the night: not paragraphs but lines

In his introduction to the recent book "I know only so far" Hymes (2003) commenting on his development and progress on the understanding of indigenous American narratives, writes:

"Since "In Vain," I have come to grasp more fully the knowledge, the competence, one might say, that underlies and informs such narratives. Comparative perspective, awareness of transformations such as Claude Levi-Strauss has discovered, knowledge of what the fish in the rivers are like, and when grizzly bears last were seen in Oregon, all contribute to this fuller understanding. It remains true that the narratives exist in languages and, like we otherwise know as language, are organized coherently, from beginning to end, according to implicit principles of form" (Hymes 2003: vii-viii, my italics).

In addition, he expands more on the following:

"Such understanding must realize that oral narratives are organised in terms of lines, of patterned sequences of lines. One way to get to the heart of the matter is to consider that until recently, every published oral narrative, Native American and other, has been presented as a series of paragraphs. Paragraphs, of course, are what our culture has expected. In my experience, however, paragraphs conceal or at best make it difficult to recognize what actually goes on in a narrative: how action is shaped, how emphasis is distributed, what is marked against a common background. If the nature of the work that is necessary can be summed up, it is: not paragraphs but lines" (Hymes 2003: viii, my italics).

In what follows I am presenting an analysis of the Yanomami myth of the origin of the night following Hymes' methodology and insights. Consequently, I wish to present and analyse the myth in a different way than how it has been done previously (see Lizot, in Willbert and Simoneau 1990: 145-50; Lizot
Like Hymes does in his books (Hymes 1981, 2003), I can summarize my presentation and discussion in the form, not of paragraphs, but of lines.\(^7\)

**text 1.1**

[Myth teller’s voice]

1. *titiri ké a pata miā kāi roprai yaiyopē ha,*
   in the forest the large black curassow would always perch in the same place and “cry,”

2. *titiri ké a pata tikuu mai,*
   His incessant muffled lament could be heard, like that of the black curassows in the matting season,

3. *titiri ké a pata shirō ha hamorioni.*
   Black curassow never moved sideways on the branch on which he was sitting; he would turn around where he sat, first in one direction, then in another.

4. *hei poreri ké pē,*
   The people of long ago, our ancestors,

5. *patapi ké têpē he titiprao ha maparuni,*
   did not know about the night,

6. *têpē he weyaprao ha mararuherini,*
   they did not know about dusk,

7. *haru hami ke têpē mia kai harokaiaitarioma.*
   In those days there was perpetual daylight, and they sleep during the day.

8. *pē têpē rami huprou,*
   they would go hunting,

9. *têpē kooprou ha kooni,*
   come back,

10. *yaro pe ha pe iyama,*
    and eat the game they had caught,

11. *têē ki a toprao yaiyoma,*
    and never got angry,

12. *têē pē maharishi yoprou ha kooni,*
    whenever they felt sleepy,

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\(^7\) In the presentation of the myths in lines here I am using the translations of Lizot in his work on myths that is edited by Willbert and Simoneau (1990). It was too late for me, with the thesis deadline close at the end of the writing up period, when I realized that a more literal translation of the whole text, line by line, would have added more clarity and interest to my argument. In the next sections of this thesis, I provide a more literal translation of those lines that are discussed at length.
13 t'ë pë mioma,
they would sleep,

14 enaha t'ë pë kuaama.
that was how they lived.

15 parurifanariwe Titiri ke a,
Titiri is Black curassow,

16 rumirumiyoma pe hekamapi ke e a.
is the son-in-law of Darkness and night [a female spirit]

17 hei Titiri ke a no mayo,
There is Black Curassow's path,

18 titiri wa no mayo wekerewe ta yai thare!
in the jumbled vegetation, covered with thorns!

19 yai ke t'ë thapramai puhiopehe,
no doubt they really wanted to create spirits,

20 no patapi peni,
Our ancestors,

21 titiri a re ropraanowei hamì a shiro mia ikima.
In the place where he usually came to perch, Black curassow would sing a long,
muffled lament. [This is what he would say]

[titiri's voice]

22 “titiri, titiri, titiri, we !
"Titiri, titiri, titiri, we !

23 kihi Poreta ke ki !
Here is the Rock of the Revenant !

24 huhu, huhu...
huhu, huhu

25 Kihi Ofina roope ke ki !
Here is the Rock of the Taro !

26 huhu, huhu...
huhu, huhu

27 kihi Thoruri ke u !
Here is the river of the Thoru Flowers !

28 huhu, huhu...”
huhu, huhu...”

29 titiri ke a pata kuu piyekou ha kuperuni,
his lament never ended
kihi urihi ke ki aha weyei ha kuperuni:
and he would name the mountains, the rocks and the rivers,

"kihi Terekeope ke ki!"
"Here is the rock of Terekeope!"

huhu, huhu...”
Huhu, huhu...

[myth teller’s voice]
titirini ke t’ē pē aha weyei ha kuperuni:
That was what he would say

[titiri’s voice]
"kihi Misikipiwei ke u!
Here is the river of the thorns!

huhu, huhu...
huhu, huhu...

"kihi Fiyokawe ke u!
Here is the River of the Nostril!

huhu, huhu...”

[myth teller’s voice]
titiri ke a pata kuu ha kuperuni.
That was what he would say.

[the ancestors heard him. One day one of them declared:]
[a Yanomami voice within the communal house]
"ei ke t’ē ta wa pepra,
"We must try something,

ihiru pē,
children,

ihiru pewe!
children!

ei t’ē pē a re teteowei,
the one who sings so mournfully without stopping,
43  *Yai ke ṭē pé a.*
   is a spirit."

[titiri’s voice]

44  "*Kihi Maiyo ke ki!*
   "here is the Maiyo rock!

45  *hu hu, hu hu...*
   "hu hu, hu hu..."

[myth teller’s voice]

46  *No patapi ke pe he weyaprao ha maparuni,*
   Our ancestors had never witnessed dusk,

47  *Ei nashomi naha maharishi wa prepou ta no kuperaheshini.*
   The sun always remained in the zenith, and they would sleep during the night,

48  *Titiri e hi kai hithotheoma,*
   Black Curassow was so heavy that the branch on which he was perched bent under his weight,

49  *ṭē hi hithothetimapoma,*
   He was sitting very low,

50  *Yahatoto ha ke ṭē pata Titiri a tikeoma.*
   close to the ground, surrounded by darkness.

[A Yanomami voice within the communal house]

51  "*īhiru pe,*
   "Children,

52  *ei ke ṭē ta wapeprahe!*  
   We must try something!

53  *īhiru pe,*
   Children,

54  *pusi,*
   my son,

55  *ṭē ta wapeprahe she!*"
   we must find the way! "

[myth teller’s voice]
They set off in the direction of Black Curassow.

And approached him.

with the intention of killing him,

he did not fly off when they came,

but remained perched on his branch, shaking off his parasites.

when the men were fairly close,

one of them shot off a dart from his blowgun.

the dart grazed Black Curassow and,

sent a few feathers flying,

Precisely at that moment.

night fell,

the sounds of the night,

Could be heard.

at that moment could be heard:

[myth teller’s voice enacting the sounds of the night]

“tiri, tiri, tiri...”

“tiri, tiri, tiri...”

[myth teller’s voice]

those who had remained in the house briefly felt sleepy,

pe hohoruemoma.
and began to snore.

73 yetu kē tēē mi uhehetou mi ha yaparoni:
very quickly the day returned:

[A Yanomami voice within the communal house]

74 "ihiru pē,
"children,

75 ihiru,
children,

76 ihi rē kē ya rē totihoruhē!
That's it! I slept well!

77 ya horotowe rē totihoruhē.
For a short instant I slept pleasurably!"

[myth teller's voice]

78 tēē mia pata tetea heaa ha koponi:
[Daylight had returned] and the lament began again:

[titiri's voice]

79 "titiri, titiri, titiri, wēl!"
"Titiri, titiri, titiri, we!"

[myth teller's voice]

80 horonamini:
then Horonami declared publicly:

[Horonami's voice]

81 "kamiye hei tehe ya waikaharayouwe!"
"Now I am the one who will kill him!"

[myth teller's voice]

82 horonami sufirina ke a tothini,
he was a skillful hunter,

83 a nape ikutaa re yaikenowei.
and set off right away to kill the bird.

84 urihi ke ki aha makepou piyekou,
Once more Black Curassow was heard naming a place,
85 *urihi ke ki aha weyei piyekou ha.*
he continued to name the different places in the forest.

86 *horonami a horaprai tehe,*
As Horonami blew

87 *a kea shoarayoma.*
It fell at once

88 *yetu ke t'ë pë he itutou ha yaironi,*
Instantly a profound darkness fell

89 *titiri pe hea kuprou shoarayoma.*
And the sounds of the night could be heard.

90 *weyari pe re hayuyonowei,*
small white feathers detached themselves. [from black Curassow stomach]

91 *oromashi sho,*
and blew away,

92 *oromashipi ha noma pe re yeteawei sho,*
one behind the other, carrying with them the parasites that were clinging to them,

93 *pruka the pe yai tutuama.*
They had turned into weyari, the spirits that announce the day.

[ voices of Yanomami -a few men who had gone to far into the forest were surprised by the night. Disoriented they called]

94 *"ai pewe!"
"Ei you!"

95 *weti hami ke pemaki kukeyoruu kuroi?*
Where is the path by which we came here?

96 *wamare ta koreyo !”*
come and get us!"

[myth teller's voice]

97 *pë komima.*
They told

[A Yanomami voice within the communal house]

98 *"ei ke the ta yaikiretuhe she !"
"go and look for the others!
99 *kai kē wake pē ha okaokataararihendi.***
and light your own way with the firebrands,"

100 *pē yaikoherima.*
several men tied some firebrands together and went off, moving the firebrands
in front of them as they went.

[myth teller’s voice]

105 *shapono hamī:*
In the house:

[A Yanomami voice within the communal house]

106 "*ya maharishi waikiwe,*
"I am sleepy,

107 *titititi hani ya puhi haruprou yaiyo hai ke!***
And the dark frightens me "

[myth teller’s voice]

108 *kihami kē tō pē hohoruah shokea ha shoarini.*
In the circular enclosure of the large communal house snores were beginning to
be heard

[A Yanomami voice within the communal house]

109 "*mihi kai ke e wake ta yeki,*
"light a fire, light a fire

110 *wake ta yeki!!***
Light a fire!"

[myth teller’s voice]

111 *pe tō tītī hetii koo puhio yaro,*
when the night drew to an end,

112 *harika pē hea kuprariyoma.*
The sounds of the morning replaced those of the night.

113 *pata ke tō pē:*
And the older people ordered:

[A Yanomami elder’s voice]

114 "*ihirupe,*
"Children,
115  pē ta hoketou haitaru!
    Get up already!
116  pē tē haruu koo ke a re kuimi!
    Its daytime!
117  yaro kē a ta niyahe, yaro!"
    Go hunting, kill some game!"

[myth teller's voice]
118  titi ha pē ha mioni,
    After being able to sleep at night,
119  tē pē tothorayoma,
    they had a feeling of well-being,
120  pe tē pē maharimou waikioma ke yaro.
    and they had already started to dream.

Once the transcription of the myth has been presented in lines, the reader has the opportunity to read the myth and to see it better. This type of presentation on the page in lines, writes Hymes (1996:122), “does something crucial, something that is only beginning to be done.” And concludes: “It slows down and guides the eye. One reads for form as well as for information” (op.cit.: 122). And it is the results of this type of “slow reading” that I am to present in the following pages. However, once the myth has been written down in lines, I still want to introduce one more aspect of Hymes method of analysis related to the presentational form of indigenous narratives and the types of organization that underline such narratives. These aspects are of fundamental importance to achieve a better understanding of the Yanomami myth and I will be referring to them in my analysis in numerous occasions. This is what Hymes (1981) writes:

“Chinookan narratives, then, have an organization of poetic form, in terms of verses and lines; of rhetorical form, in terms of the organization of expectations, very much as enunciated by Kenneth Burke in his essay on “The psychology of the audience”(1931); and, one must not forget, a pattern of vocal realization as well. One might sum up these three aspects of oral performance in terms of “verses”, “expectations,” and “voices.” When all three are fully realized in a performance, one would find the following. Poetic form: the
organization in terms of verses, lines, stanzas, scenes (…), together with a disposition of markers of such organization. **Rhetorical form:** the organization in terms of sequences of onset, ongoing action, and outcome (…). **Vocal realization:** direct quotation, rather than reported speech; the taking of the voices of those who speak, differentiating them; onomatopoetic precision, giving the words that define characteristic sounds (Chinookan has a rich taxonomy of kinds of sound); expressive interactional detail, through particles initial in a quoted statement (or statement from the point of view of the narrator) that define the attitude taken, for example, assent, pain, lament, pondering, expectation (…); recurrent audience response… (…); lengthening of vowels for emphasis…” (Hymes 1981:320-1, my italics)

As I will be arguing in the next chapters, these are matters of great importance not only for Chinookan poetics, but also for Yanomami. They will help us to read the myth of the origin of the night from a better vantage view and closer to the Yanomami’s own views.
CHAPTER 2

Modes of sensory experience: learning about space, time and the elder’s voices through the senses...

Three passages from the original text of the myth will serve as the main path through which to put into practice Hymes’ insights. Upon analyzing these episodes/passages, I shall examine the way the myth teller narrates two different day/night transitions that take place in the myth. The first episode describes a short day/night transition: It focuses on the way in which the first night fell suddenly and how daylight returned again very quickly. The second describes the event that brought the arrival of the night properly and some of its consequences; it focuses on the killing of Titiri, the spirit of the night, and the creation of the other spirits that announce the day. Finally, the third text describes how the first night drew to an end and what happened at the arrival of the subsequent daybreak.

Through the analysis of these episodes my main aim will be to explore the subtle ways in which the myth teller in his narration unfolds and intertwines notions of time (e.g. different day/night transitions), notions of space (e.g. inside/outside) and the elders’ voices through a sequence of modes of sensory experience. In doing this my aim is three-fold: first, as stated before, I will further explore Lizot’s insights and demonstrate the extent to which the myth of the origin of the night can be said to conceptualize notions of space and time linguistically, or in other words through the verbal arts. Second, in doing this I hope to cast fundamental light upon the important role that modes of sensory experience (e.g., hearing, sight, feelings) play for the Yanomami in the process of learning, interpreting and understanding what they perceive. Finally, the above aims will serve, in turn, as a way to generate a Yanomami’s own frame through which I aim to illustrate and explore the fundamental place that the elders’ speech occupies in that process.

2.1 The spirit of the night is grazed: a short night and the “wrong” daybreak
The first day/night transition that takes place in the myth narration is when the Yanomami try to kill Titiri, the spirit of the night (see Text 2.1; lines X-X). They do not kill it and only managed to graze it. This generates a brief moment of night: night fell suddenly and the day returned very quickly. Let us see the manner in which these events are unfolded and expressed in the myth narrative of the myth teller.

text 2.1

[myth teller's voice]

65 yetu ke e t'ë mi titi ha harokotaruni.  
Precisely at that moment.

66 t'ë pë rê mi titiwei naha,  
night fell,

67 t'ë pë rê kutowei naha,  
the sounds of the night,

68 t'ë kutou shoarayoma.  
could be heard.

69 yetu kë t'ë kutou:  
at that moment could be heard:

[myth teller enacting the sounds of the night]

70 “tiri, tiri, tiri...”

[myth teller's voice]

71 shapono hamí kë t'ë pë no owe maharashitou ha yaironi,  
those who had remained in the house briefly felt sleepy,

72 pë hohoruemoma.  
and began to snore.

73 yetu kë t'ë mi uhehetou mi ha yaparoni:  
very quickly the day returned:

[a Yanomami voice within the communal house]

74 “ihiru pë,  
“my sons,

75 ihiru,
my sons,

76  
*ihi rē kē ya rē totihoruhe*  
that's it! I slept well!

77  
*ya horotowe rē totihoruhe.*”  
For a short instant I slept pleasurably!"

[myth tellers' voice]

78  
*tē mia pata tetea heaa ha koponi*:  
[Daylight had returned] and the lament began again

[titiri's voice]

79  
“*titiri, titiri, titiri, we!*”  
“Titiri, titiri, titiri, we!”

The manner in which the myth teller narrates these two transitions (e.g. the first from daylight to night; the second the return of the daylight) is highly illustrative of the way notions of space and time are intermingled by subtle ways by the myth teller. This will become clearer as my analysis of the text brings to the surface a number of "spatial" and "temporal" aspects implicit in the myth narration. Although all of these aspects are intermingled in the narrative, I will deal with them separately to achieve a clearer exposition. Finally we will see that a myth teller's way of describing/narrating the successive events tell us a great deal not only about the particular style of Yanomami mythical narrations but also about the Yanomami pragmatic of language use more generally.

For instance, let us focus our attention first upon the manner in which the myth teller describes the transition from daylight to night (lines 65-72). Later we will see his way of presenting the return to daylight (lines 73-79).

The spirit of the night is grazed and night fell suddenly (line 65-66). The myth teller describes this new situation by saying that the sudden lack of visibility was like it is now when it is night, as all the people know it and experience it nowadays. Then he goes on to describe another effect that goes hand-to-hand with the arrival of night, which is another sensory experience, the sounds of this first night, that he also compares, in the same way as he did
before with the visual, with the noises that all the people know that take place with the arrival of the night. It has to be remembered that the situation described by the myth teller is that of a community of Yanomami who did not yet completely know what the night was like, neither from the visual nor from the aural point of view. Thus, from the very beginning, from the first moment in which a change of the cosmogonical reality is taking place (and this is a fact of fundamental importance that I want to stress in my analysis) one can appreciate that the myth teller's narration (performance) unfolds events by means of a sequencing of imagery that has to do with sensory experience, e.g., the quality of light and sounds (cf. Hymes 1981:321).

Thus, on the one hand, the myth teller describes one particular type of sounds: those of the night coming from the forest (Lines 67-70). In the tropical forest the sounds of the night are quite noticeable and constitute a real polyphony: nocturnal birds, screeching insects, croaking of toads. This polyphony is even enacted by the myth teller as: "tiri, tiri, tiri" (Line 70)^8. These words are an example of what Hymes (1981:321), within the heading of "vocal realization", refers to as those words that "define characteristic sounds", a device that he calls "onomatopoetic precision." As Hymes notes for the Chinookan, the Yanomami, too, have a "rich taxonomy of kinds of sound." Generally, the Yanomami in their everyday verbal life, as well as their myth narratives, use these types of words in a great variety of forms, each of which represents different types of sounds. The use the Yanomami make of these words, that is, their particular "taxonomy of kind of sounds," in myth narrations particularly and in their everyday talk more generally, creates a colorful and strong imagery of the world of sound as they know it. It is important to note that in the episode we are dealing with here, the sounds of the night enacted by the myth teller come from "outside" the village and can be conceived of as a kind of "non-human" sound. On the other hand, the myth teller refers to another kind of sounds of the night, which in turn have "human" origin and are generated from "inside" the village, for instance the snores of people (line 72).

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^8 The sounds of the night are enacted by another myth teller in a slightly different way: i.e., tei, tei, tei (Lizot, in Wilbert and Simoneau 1990:148)
The day/night/day transitions experienced by the Yanomami in the initial events narrated are mainly characterized by their shortness. The way the myth teller imprints this sense of brevity in his unfolding of the events is worthy of mention. For instance he uses words such as “yetu” which means “suddenly”, “very quickly” (lines 65,69,72); he also uses the adverbal locution “no owe” which indicates that the action of the verb that complements is short (i.e. no owe maharashitou, “sleep for a short moment”) (line 70); and also he makes use of the verb “kuu,” “to say”, “to produce a sound”, “to make a noise”, when relating to the sounds of the night, in forms such as “kutouwei” (line 67), “kutou” (lines 68,69) which indicate that the sounds appeared, took place or happened suddenly, in a short spurt of eventing.

In addition to the linguistic precision, the myth teller introduces, by means of quoted speech, the voice of an elder in the village who expresses his opinions about what just happened. This is another example of “vocal realization,” “direct quotation, rather than reported speech; the taking of the voices of those who speak” (Hymes, 1981: 321). The elder says: “ya horotowe ré totihoruhe!, “for a short instant I slept pleasurably!” (line 76). The adverb horotowe, also indicating brevity, adds information to the verb “totihou,” which means “to get a feeling of pleasure from,” “to feel well,” “to enjoy.”

In addition to the manner in which aspects of brevity can be appreciated by the myth teller’s way of speaking, there are more clues that tell us about that first, short, and somehow wrong experience of night - more clues that add important information about the way this particular day/night/day transition was conceived and described by the myth teller. For instance, the very words he uses to describe the way the daybreak returns are revealing. He says: “yetu ke t’ë mi uhehetou mi ha yaparoni, “the day returned very quickly” (line 72). The meaning and importance of the word “yetu,” which means “suddenly,” “very quickly,” has been already mentioned. Here, I wish to focus my attention upon

9 The myth teller uses a similar evaluation (e.g., the result of the night described as a source of pleasure) at the outcome of the myth. Such evaluation has important connotations that will be explained later (see Chapter 4) through looking at another versions of the myth of the origin of the night.
10 I will provide more comments on this verb and its meanings in this myth on chapter 4.
the expression “mi ha yaparoni,” which adds information about the way in which the daybreak, “mi uhehetou,” took place. In the particular context in which the expression appears the information it conveys is very revealing. The myth teller is describing daybreak as a return, as the way back to a previous situation, as a state that was once already existing in the past. The daybreak is not a proper daybreak but one that is being equated with that which existed before: it implies a reversal to the past.

Consequently, the way in which this day/night/day transition is described does not precisely convey the sense of time set in motion, that is, a proper notion of “time.” These transitions are described in such a way that they only disclose a certain emergence of short forms of periodicity that are suddenly stopped: they do not indicate any continuity. Overall, the night was, if anything, only for a short instance, a brief "sign" of something the Yanomami still wanted to pursue, that is, the real night. Furthermore, from the temporal point of view, the starting point and the ending point of this day/night/day transitions would seem to be one and the same. By the words the myth teller uses, the changes that took place were not enough to erase the sense of a place frozen in time. A sense that is conveyed by the way in which the daybreak is equated with the return of the frightening laments of the spirit of the night (lines 78-79).

If the above narrative aspects tell us about the way notions of time are unfolded by the myth teller, let us explore the sequence of sensory detail mentioned before and see what we can elucidate from that.

The return of daylight (line 73) is also described in relation to the aural. However, the different sounds through which the myth teller describes this return of daylight take on the form of two distinct types of “voices.” Both of these voices are additional and also clear examples of “vocal realization.” One is the

11 See chapter 4 on the importance and cultural significance of the distinction between these short forms of periodicity and the long forms of periodicity that the end result of the arrival of the night and the instauration of the daily cycle brought to the Yanomami. 12 This is an example of what Lévi-Straus (1978:125), referring to the way the myth narrations relate the unfolding of the events in the stories with the alteration of day and night calls “transitional formulae.”
voice of an elder within the village addressing the children (sons, my sons/children, lines 74-75) and expressing his feelings to them (that’s it, I felt so good, for a short instant I felt so well, lines 76-77). The other is the voice coming from outside the village, a voice that represents the return of the very laments that were so displeasing for the Yanomami: the voice of the spirit of the night. The myth teller describes the return of this voice, of these laments ("the mia") using the word "pata," which is an intensifier, augmentative, that emphasises the fact of the return of the laments that he enacts: "titiri, titiri, titiri, wel" (lines 77-78). Consequently, the return of the day is implicitly announced by the voice of the elder, of whom nothing is said but just his voice enacted, and explicitly equated with the return of the terrible voice of titiri (see last sections for a more detailed discussion of this human/non human distinction in relation to different types of sounds).

2.2 The spirit of the night is killed: the arrival of the proper night and the creation of the weyari-harakari, the spirits that announce daybreak and dusk

So stable daylight returns with the laments of the spirit of the night, and this situation did not please the Yanomami. Now the myth teller introduces, the voice of Horonami, an important character of Yanomami mythology.13 Just after the daylight had returned and the laments could be heard again, one of the villagers, by the name of Horonami, declared publicly: "Now I am the one who will kill him! [e.g. kill titiri]" (Line 81).

And that is precisely what he did: he killed Titiri.

Having introduced by means of quoted speech Horonami’s voice, the myth teller adds later: “He was a skillful hunter and set off right away to kill the bird" (Lines 82-83).

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13 Horonami is an important character in Yanomami mythology. It plays an important role also in the myth of "The Master of Banana Trees."
80  hōrōnamini:
then Horonami declared publicly:

[Horonami's voice]

81  "kamiye hei tehe ya waikaharayouwe!"
"Now I am the one who will kill him!"

[myth tellers' voice]

82  hōrōnami sufirina kē a totihini,
He was a skillful hunter,

83  a nape ikutaa rē yaikenowei.
And set off right away to kill the bird.

84  urihi kē ki aha makepou piyekou,
Once more Black Curassow was heard naming a place,

85  urihi kē ki aha weyei piyekou ha.
He continued to name the different places in the forest.

86  hōrōnami a horaprai tēhē,
Horonami blew into his blowgun

87  a kea shoarayoma.
And black Curassow fell to the ground

88  yetu kē tē pē he itutou ha yaironi,
Instantly a profound darkness fell,

89  titiri pē hea kuprou shoarayoma.
And the sounds of the night could be heard.

90  weyari pē rē hayuyonowei,
small white feathers detached themselves [from black Curassow stomach]

91  oromashi sho,
and blew away,

92  oromashipī ha noma pē rē yeteawei sho,
one behind the other, carrying with them the parasites that were clinging to them,

93  pruka tē pē yai tutuama.
they had turned into weyari, the spirits that announce the day.

In this episode/scene, we can appreciate the extent to which the arrival of the proper night is a direct consequence of the killing of Titiri. As in the preceding passage, the arrival of the night also took place suddenly, and is
described by means of a sensory sequence that also includes the senses of both sight (i.e., "profound darkness fell", line 83) and hearing (i.e., "the sounds of the night could be heard")\textsuperscript{14} (line 89). In addition to this, a fundamental change is now introduced that tells us how the cosmogonic process of the daily cycle, the notion of time already set in motion, is conceived by the Yanomami. Titiri has been killed and transformed into the demon of the night. His death generates a "procession" of Weyari, the spirits that announce the day ("pruka the pe yei tutuama", line 93).\textsuperscript{15} The generation of such spirits, together with the role they play in the myth, is of fundamental importance to understanding the way they are related to notions of time.

At this point additional background of the Yanomami cosmology should be provided. This is what Lizot (1994b:225) writes about the supernatural beings who "populate" the night:

"Titiri transformed himself into the demon of the night. Supernatural beings burst from his chest and the weyari-harikari, the demons of dusk and morning, sprang from his blood. Since that time, night has followed day. Walking from east to west, Suhirina is the first to reach midday. In the course of his travel, he slaughters all the animals he encounters. He is distantly followed by the weyari, who gather, cook, and eat the animals killed by Suhirina. They prefer the tough sloths. Their passage foreshadows dusk. Titiri follows them shortly after, when nightfall has just arrived. In the course of the night, but this time in the opposite direction, from west to east, these same beings follow the same route: Suhirina reaches the middle of the night, the weyari, now called harikari, show themselves just before sunrise, and Titiri appears with the first light of dawn. The night is the period of time between the two passages by Titiri."

As the reading of this description of the Yanomami cosmology may highlight, the procession of spirits that populate the night also implies, if viewed from the Yanomami viewpoint, notions of continuity and temporality. This

\textsuperscript{14} The verb "kuprou," "to be produced" indicates the importance of the new types of sounds Yanomami people were experiencing for the first time.

\textsuperscript{15} Similarly, in another version of this myth it is said that "as soon as he [Titiri] fell to the ground [dead] spirits opened his chest, and his blood immediately turned into weyari, the morning spirits" (Lizot, in Wilbert and Simoneau 1990:149). Note that the weyari spirits "change" their name: e.g harikari, announce the day, weyari the night.
procession of spirits is clearly identified within a conception of time as a process, that is, time set into motion. The imagery of this procession of spirits conveys the idea that the day/night transition is now something that, in contrast with the preceding and incomplete transition, progresses in circular process from one stage to another. Now, these processions of spirits set up a frame in which the daily cycle takes place. Such processions also implies various transitions: it has a starting point and an ending point, i.e., the passage of the weyari spirits at dusk, the two passages of Titiri – the night- and the presence of the harikari spirits that precedes daybreak.

So then the night is not the brief and short night the Yanomami had experienced before. And now the myth teller describes the new situation faced by the Yanomami by describing two different scenarios, i.e., outside and inside the village. This scenery is constructed through the diversification and detailing of voicing (cf. Tedlock and Mannheim 1995).

text 2.3
[voices of Yanomami -a few men who had gone to far into the forest were surprised by the night. Disoriented they called]

94 "ai pewe!
"Ei you!

95 weti hamı kę pemaki kukeyoruukuroi?
Where is the path by which we came here?

96 wamare ta koreyo !"
come and get us!"

[myth teller’s voice]

97 pę komima.
They told

[a Yanomami voice within the communal house]

98 "ei kę tę ta yaikiretuhe she!
"go and look for the others!

99 kai kę wake pę ha okaokataararihewi ,”
and light your own way with the firebrands;"
[myth teller’s voice]

100  pé yaikoherima.
several men tied some firebrands together and went off, moving the firebrands
in front of them as they went.

105  shapono hamí:
In the house:

[a Yanomami voice within the communal house]

106  “ya maharishi waikiwe,
“I am sleepy,

107  titititi hani ya pūhi haruprou yaiyo hai ké!”
And the dark frightens me!”

[myth teller’s voice]

108  kihami ké t'é pé hohorua shokea ha shoarini.
In the circular enclosure of the large communal house snores were immediately
heard.

[a Yanomami voice within the communal house]

109  “mihi kai ké e wake ta yeki,
“light a fire,

110  wake ta yeki!”
“light a fire!”

In relation to the outside the myth teller describes the situation of people
who were take by surprise by the fall of darkness (line 88). They were not too
far so they asked for help which is the usual thing Yanomami do when, for
example hunting, one goes out of the path and gets momentarily disoriented so
he or she has to call to the others to know where they are by the sound of their
voices. In this case the darkness of the new night makes them to request of
others, shouting, to come and get them (lines 94-97). This call for help
introduces a sort of “dialogue” between contrasting voices, i.e., the people who
were outside the village and the people who were inside. From the inside there
seems to be the voice of an elder (as we will have opportunity to see later on)
who orders others to go and look for those disoriented people with the help of
firebrands (lines 98-99).
In addition to these counsels, there are more voices from the village that the myth teller specifies by explicitly indicating the setting in which they take place: “*shapono hamî*” “in the village” (line 105). In this way he presents the location of the Yanomami voices that he is about to bring in by enacting them. The way by which the myth teller introduces the events that took place in the village revels the strong association the Yanomami make between their settlements and the voices of the people.16 In this case, the imagery he creates is that of the reactions of the people who got to know the night for the first time. For instance, there is a voice saying that “*I’m already sleepy*” (line 106); and other saying that “*the night makes me feel worried/anguish*” (line 107). Moreover, the first night makes the people in the village feel cold and/or worried so they ask to light fires, “*light a fire, light a fire!*” (lines 109, 110).

In addition to this, the myth teller gives the example, taking his own village as example, of how the people were sleeping and snoring within the settlement. This can be noted by the use of the word “*kihamî*” in the line 108 which means ‘there’, and is usually accompanied by signalling the location or area that is being referred to (“*Kihamî ké ñê pë hohura shokea ha shoarini:* in the circular enclosure of the large communal house snores were immediately heard). However a more literal translation helps to better appreciate the way the myth teller is using the setting of the myth, the village, as example. Thus, “from there, all around the village the people begin to snore.” In my view, this resource could be an example of what Tedlock and Mannheim (1983) call the “fusion of intimacies,” that occurs when the speaker compares the stage set of a scene in the story with the present setting of his story.

In the following section, we shall see the way the myth teller narrates the events of the first real and proper ending of the night and the arrival of the subsequent real and proper daybreak.

2.3 When the night drew to an end...: the arrival of daybreak, its sounds and its voices

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16 On this particular association see more on Chapter 6.
Let me summarize briefly to better highlight the argument of my discussion. So far we have seen that the first day/night/day transition was marked by brevity and incompleteness: Daylight returned very quickly with the laments of *titiri*. The second transition takes place as a consequence of the killing of *titiri*. *Titiri*'s death causes the proper arrival of the night. Black curassow gets transformed into the demon of the night and from his body spring the "*weyarf*" and "*harikari*" demons that announce dusk and dawn respectively. The following passage describes the transition from the first complete night to the first real daybreak. In what follows, we will see the ways by which a sense of continuity and temporality has been introduced.

**tex 2.4**

[myth teller]

111  *pe te titi hetii koo puhio yaro,*
    when the night drew to an end

112  *harika pe hea kuprariyoma.*
    The sounds of the morning replaced those of the night

113  *pata ke te pe:*
    And the older people ordered:

[a Yanomami elder's voice]

114  "*ihirupe,*
    "my sons,

115  *pe ta hoketou haitaru!*
    Get up already!

116  *pe te haruu koo ke a re kuimi!*
    The day has arrived again!

117  *yaro ke a ta niyahe, yaro!"*
    Go hunting, kill some game!"

By the way in which the myth teller narrates the events that take place in this passage one can appreciate that they are described as the result of a process. The transition from night to daybreak is now the result of a transformation that takes time and leads to the end of the night. Once again,
this is also marked linguistically. The significance of what is emphasized, as I am to illustrate in the following lines, conveys important and highly relevant information about the Yanomami understanding of the structure of the myth narration.

The night was ending, and by the way in which the myth teller describes this night/day transition we can elucidate important aspects of how this new change is conceived of within the narrative. In contrast to the preceding night/daylight transition, the myth teller now refers to the sounds of the morning and in such manner that he is clearly implying a process. A sense of continuity is being introduced.

Let us recall first some of the characteristics that marked the first transition. Thus, daylight returned “very quickly” (line 73) and the sleep was “short” (line 77). Overall, the return of daylight is marked by the fact that titiri’s laments began again (line 78), that is, there is a return to the former situation.

In the second transition, we can appreciate that daylight came when the night drew to an end (“pe the titi heti koo...,” line 111), and the sounds of the morning, already “produced,” “generated,” replace those of the night, (“harika pe hea kupraiyoma”, line 112). The meaning conveyed in this last sentence deserves more attention.

All those who have been living in the tropical forest, even for a short period of time, may have noticed that the arrival of daybreak is usually announced by a number of quite noticeable noises, i.e., birds, monkeys, etc... The Yanomami call these noises “harika pē hea.” The word “harika” means “dawn”, “daybreak”; and the expression “pē hea” refers to the noises and sounds that are associated with the arrival of the day. These are noises that immediately precede the daybreak, first overlapping with the sounds of the night, then, and slowly, replacing them. As we all know, this does not happen suddenly. And this is precisely what the myth teller is conveying by the tone and meaning of his message and by the imagery he recreates. In contrast to the way the Yanomami experienced the preceding night/day transition this one is
experienced as a continuum, something only possible within the frame of the already created daily cycle. This is a fact marked by the verb form used to express the way the sounds of the morning replaced those of the night: i.e., "kuprariyoma." The form "ku-pra-riyoma" is in the perfective past form of the root verb "Ku-," which means "to say," "to become," "to be produced," "to be born." In this case the meaning of this verb indicates that the sounds were the result of a process that took, at least, certain time. More generally this verb conveys the idea of something, or someone, that is "produced," and depending of the context it can be also rendered as: "to come about," "to be made," "to arise," "to happen," "to take place." Taking into consideration both, the semantic field of the verb "kuprariyoma," and the particular context in which the expression is used, we can appreciate that it stands in clear contrast to the way in which the preceding day/night/day transitions have been described. For instance the first day/night transition is described using the verb "kuu," which meanings can be translated as "to say," "to produce a sound," "to make a noise," in the form kutou that indicates that such sounds happened abruptly (lines 68-69). The subsequent night/day transition is described as a reversal to the former condition (line 73). Overall, through the combination of imagery and the precise use of verbal tense the myth teller describes quite literally, and poetically as well, the process that leads to the end of the night and which announces the break of the day.

Now, let us include more narrative details into this discussion. In relation to the sequence of modes of sensory experience mentioned before there is an important fact that has to be noted: the sounds of the morning ("harika pe hea") coming from the forest are not the only sounds that replaced those of the night. Now such transition is also followed, by the voices of the elders generated within the village. In the sequence of the senses recreated by the myth teller, one can appreciate the extent to which the imagery, unfolded by means of the aural, moves on from the sounds of the forest to the voices of the people. In a similar way that the sounds of the morning coming from the forest replaced those of the night, announcing the subsequent daybreak, the elders' voices, too, replace, so to speak, the sounds of the village in the night (i.e., snores of people) when daybreak is about to come. However, I want to say this in a
different way. By the manner in which the myth teller narrates the sounds of daybreak and the voices of daybreak, these two aural experiences would seem to go hand to hand. Moreover, and interestingly enough, the very words in which he describes these voices, in quoted speech, are a “typical” example of an “overture” of the elders’ speech, “patamou” (lines 114-117). Close attention to detail (“perception of depth depends on perception of details” see Hymes 1981:10) in the myth narration would seem to provide more clues for developing this hypothesis.

If we consider the verbs used by the myth teller to describe that the night drew to an end, i.e., “pē ḍē titi hetii koo puhio yaro” (line 111), we can appreciate that there is an implicit sense of agency, of wish, one might say, for the night to end/finish. Such agency, such wish to make the night to come to an end, would seem to be twofold. On the one hand, there is the birth of the “sounds of the morning,” e.g., the bird songs that announce the immediacy of daybreak; on the other, there are the “voices of the morning,” e.g., the voices of the elders that order the people to get up by announcing the proximity of daybreak. We are dealing thus with a sort of relationship between the noises of the forest, of a non-human character, and the voices of the Yanomami, of human origin. These two types of sounds seem to stand in close parallel since they establish a correlation between two modalities of aural experiences that are related/linked to the arrival of daybreak. The coming into existence of the sounds of the morning is complemented, almost equated, with that of the elders’ speech. And to my view one can think that the same expression, “kuprariyoma,” “to become,” “to come into existence,” used to describe those sounds of the morning that the Yanomami heard for the first time, after the first real night drew to an end, can be applied, too, to this new form of speech that took place, for the first time too, that very morning.

Let us to explore better the relationship between these two modalities of aural experiences to further elucidate their linkage.

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17 See Chapter 3 for a discussion of the salient role that the elders’ voices have through quoted speech in this myth.
2.3.1 From the sounds of the forest to the voices of the village

Taking a look at other Yanomami myths, one can find a particular passage that conveys information about the theme we are dealing with here. The myth, (Colchester, in Wilbert and Simoneau 1990: 177) comes from the Sanema, a sub-group of the Yanomami. Although the title of the myth ("How the Monkeys Got Their colors") would not seem to be related to our present discussion, the content deals with the theme of a night that never ended: "dawn did not come at all" it is said in one of its passages (op.cit.:177). It has to be said that among the Sanema in mythical times, in opposition to the Yanomami, they had only night and they wanted the arrival of daylight. Also, as with the Yanomami, is the killing of the black curassow that causes the final arrival of the day. The passage I want to bring to our attention says:

"Once they [the monkeys] had climbed up, still dawn did not come. Some other people climbed up too, but not all of them. Then after these had climbed up the lesser tinamou cried: "Hona! Hona! Hona! Hona! And the people also cried. The great curassow, the source of the night, mourned: "Mmt! Mmt! And people also mourned. They shot the curassow with specially tipped arrows- sek ! The bird fell: u bu ! bu! Bu! Bu! Bu! Bu! Bu! Bu! All the feathers became birds. Curassows, piping guans, Spix's guans, all the songbirds. And it became light. Some of the people climbed down again from the trees" (Colchester, in Wilbert and Simoneau 1990:177).

It is interesting to note the extent to which the cry of the lesser tinamou and the mourn of the great curassow are followed by the cry and mourn of the people (e.g., and the people also cried; and people also mourned).

If we broaden the scope of our search to find more about this particular relationship between "noises of the forest" and "voices of people," and keeping within the frame of the literature devoted to Amerindian peoples, the work of Lévi-Strauss (1970) on myths offers us important data to consider. In exploring the link that exists in certain Amerindian myths between "stars, night, and
gallinaceas,”¹⁸ Lévi-Strauss refers to a Sherente custom quotes the following passage: “The hours are counted during the day by the sun and at night by the stars and by the scream of the *inhambu*” (J.F. de Olivera, in Lévi-Strauss, 1969:204). Furthermore, in a footnote he offers more information:

“Evidence of the same belief is given by Ihering ("*Inhambu*" entry) in connection with *Grypturus stirgulosus*, whence its popular name "*Inhambu relógio*": the clock-bird...[and]...the *cujubim* bird (one of the *Cracidae*) announces daybreak, but the *inhambu* sings at night. Finally, the *mutum*, which is also a member of the *Cracidae* family "signs at night at such regular intervals that it can be heard every two hours... thus for the natives it is a kind of forest clock" (Lévi-Strauss 1969: 204, note 3).

Going back to the Yanomami, Lizot (1985:113) writes in “Tales of the Yanomami” the following passage that reflects the significance that the noises of the forest has for the Yanomami:

“The sun is declining. The parrots raise their annoying chatter, announcing the approaching twilight. When the sun is on the horizon, the *horema* bird says: “*were, were, were*...” (...) Later during the night, it is the toads and crickets that unleash their chorus until dawn. Toward morning, the *yoririmi* bird utters his “*yoriri, yoriri*...” Its song, slow and hesitant at first, rises faster and faster and ends in a cascade of trills (...) Soon after, another bird, *hutumi*, says: “*hutu, hutu*..."(...) The bat scolds: “*irosisi, irosisi*..." (...) The animals tell the time and set the hours; the Indians know their voices and hear their messages.”

On the animals that tell the time, Lizot and Clastres (1978:129, note 25) write about the *Tinamous* “they are also associated with the idea of time, as they sign at dusk...and at dawn.” These authors moreover indicate that “some species of *Tinamidae* sign at regular intervals during the night.”

Having considered the above information and equipped with more cultural background, I wish to return to the Yanomami myth of the origin of the night. My aim now is to further explore and try to unravel more of its subtle semantic

¹⁸ Note that the spirit of the night, is the black Curassow, which is a *Gallinacea*, as well as the Lesser *Tinamou* mentioned in the Sanema myth.
relationships, the interplay of corresponding symbols and the many layers of meanings through which the messages of the myth are conveyed. Let us focus on the birds that appear in the myth, and in so doing try to elucidate their semantic position.

We have seen the extent to which a number of birds are associated with the idea of time and how the Yanomami recognized the messages of their "voices." I want to recall now the major role that two birds in particular play in the myths of the origin of the night. They are the black curassow, ("paruri"), which is the forerunner of the demon of the night, and the turkey-hen ("marashi") which appears at the end of other myths of the origin of the night (see below). These two birds (Cracidae family) can be closely associated with notions of time from a number of different perspectives. Both of them symbolize the opposition day/night by the colors of their plumage i.e., black and white. In addition to the symbolic values, the respective plumages of these two birds play a "practical" role, so to speak, in the set of transformations that give rise to both the night and the subsequent daybreak.

We saw that from the black curassow's feathers came out the supernatural beings "weyari-harikari," the demons of dusk and morning:

"Instantly a profound darkness fell and the sounds of the night could be heard. Small white feathers detached themselves from black Curassow’s stomach and blew away, one behind the other, carrying with them the parasites that were clinging to them. They had turned into weyari, the spirits that announce the day" (Lizot, in Wilbert and Simoneau 1990:146).

In turn, in one of the versions of the myth, the turkey-hen is also explicitly associated to the arrival of daybreak:

"They threw out the small cases in which they kept their feathers, which were stored below the roof. While the cases were still in the air they turned into blue-throated piping guans. Only then did it become light" (Lizot, in Wilbert and Simoneau 1990: 148).
If we move from the plumage of these birds and the practical role they play in the myth narrations, to their respective cries, further associations with notions of time come to the surface. Thus, in the mating season of these birds, which takes place in the dry season i.e., between December and February, they produce quite particular cries. The black curassow sings at night, cries, as the Yanomami say, at about three in the morning till dawn; the turkey-hen emits a particular noise when flying just before dawn, as it makes rustle its back feathers. Consequently, taking them together, both these birds mark two different but related types of periodicity: From the symbolic point of view, with their respective plumages, we arrive at the alternation of day and night, that is, a short form of periodicity; from the acoustic/aural point of view, with their respective cries and noises, we are alerted to the presence of the dry season that coincides with the time of their mating period, and thus introducing seasonal periodicity. The daily cycle and the annual cycle are part and parcel of the same message: it is the introduction of a cyclical time, the day follows the night as the dry season follows the rains.

Without trying to generate any established system from these symbolic and acoustic relationships (i.e., colors, sounds and ideas of time and periodicities), it is my view that the semantic and symbolic value of these birds, the role they play in the myth narration, is subtlety understood from a Yanomami point of view as messages that for us, as Hymes, put it, can only come to the surface after conscious effort. I wish to recall here what Hymes writes on the shared world of performer and audience in the telling of myths (see also Meloe 1988).

“Local hearers of a narrative usually share with the teller the idiom employed, along with knowledge of conventions of form and expression, of references and allusions, of a taken for granted world” (Hymes 2003: 40, my italics).

And elaborating on this notion, he writes that Amerindian myths presumably “do not describe the world at least in important part because their hearers know what it looks like” (op.cit.: 444). With a few changes I have introduced, to better fit with the particulars of the Yanomami myth that we are
here dealing with, we can agree with the statement of Hymes, that goes on to say:

"It may be relevant how large a house is and how many fires it has, but not that it is made of wood. (...) Even in imagined worlds, like that of the [origin of the night], what is said and done declares the nature of the place. There is no scene painting for atmosphere. The images are of action. Often one senses that a narrator is picturing a scene, and hearers may indicate that they picture it as well" (Hymes 2003:444, my italics).

Here too, with Yanomami mythic narrations, we are also dealing with a particular way of scene painting. In this case, the different scenes of the myth are pictured by the way the myth narrator creates the "images of action" through speech and through the "display," so to speak, of various modes of sensory experience.

The above findings make us consider the dialectics between notions of space and time in its relationships with the dialectics between different types of sounds (e.g., non-human sounds and human voices). Considering these points we can say that the myth of the origin of the night can be said to express the distinction of inside/outside, through the dialectic of the human/verbal and the animal/non-verbal.¹⁹ The spatial and temporal axis is converted, so to speak, into a linguistic one.²⁰ However, in order to illustrate this better, and do so while trying to keep closer to Yanomami ways of expressing it, we have to move on and focus our attention upon the narrative details of the myth. Let us now listen to more voices of the myth, in particular the voices of the elders speaking from within the village.

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¹⁹ My findings can be said to demonstrate what Overing’s (2004: 74) refers to as "activated landscapes: "a space created relationally through practice...In short, practice makes space, and not vice versa, as a positivist or representational view would have it" (my italics).

CHAPTER 3

Sharing moral sentiments and creating sociality: The role of Yanomami elders’ speech in the myth of the origin of the night

In the myth of the origin of night, the myth teller introduces the voices of the elders in a number of passages by means of quoted speech. With one and important exception, as I will show, the voices of the elders are implicitly recognized by the audience as nothing is explicitly said about whose voices are they. To a Yanomami audience, the nature and significance of these voices comes from their clear identification with social roles, that is, with the role that the Yanomami elders play in everyday verbal interaction. The fact is that these voices would seem to be a recurrent theme throughout the myth. The concrete, particular moments in which the myth teller introduces the elders’ voices, together with the form and the content of what they say, demand careful attention. I believe that the importance of these voices of quoted speech will become clearer if we look at the contexts in which they are introduced by the myth teller: listen carefully to what they say, and judge, from a Yanomami point of view, how they say it.\(^\text{21}\) To my view, these voices offer an extremely fertile example telling us about the nature and significance that the elders words and counsels have for Yanomami people in their everyday life. In addition, I shall illustrate the extent to which the elders’ speech would seem to be an integral part of and play a fundamental role in the sequence of modes of sensory experience (hearing, seeing, feeling) that unfold in the myth. To introduce the significance that the presence of these voices have in the myth I should first provide some background about the elders’ speech. Due to the fact that later on this type of speech will be described and analyzed more deeply (see Chapters 9, 10, 11), I will provide here a brief summary of its major features.

\(^{21}\) To adopt a Yanomami point of view is possible, I believe, if one pays careful attention to the way they speak, their ways of verbalising what they are thinking and doing.
3.1 A brief excursion into the elders' speech

The term "patamou" \(^{22}\) is a verb that comes from the word "pata," a noun that means "big," "adult," or "an important person." If literally translated the word "patamou" means "to make like an elder," "to act like an important person." More generally in everyday life this term refers to a type of speech, and as such can be translated in various ways such as "to address in a loud voice the people within the community," "to give a public speech on particular issues," "to deliver a public harangue." The term that is used to designate this type of speech reflects well its main features. It is a mode of communication mainly associated with the elders of the community, "pata ëë pe." Although elders of both sexes might possess the knowledge and the mastery over language encapsulated by this type of speech, more often than not, it is performed by men.\(^{23}\) And more precisely, those men within the community who are the factional leaders or those elder persons who somehow stand out within the social and political community life, are the ones most likely to enact this kind of speech.

At a general level of analysis, the Yanomami elders' speech bears important similarities with a type of discourse that is widely known in Amazonian literature as "leaders' speech." In a general sense, and to provide an example, the definition provided by Clastres (1987 [1974]: 153-4) of the form and content of the Amerindian leaders' speech fits well with the Yanomami elders' speech. He describes this type of speech - pointing out that it is a "widespread custom" throughout Amazonian indigenous peoples - in the following way:

\(^{22}\) The verb "patamou" is formed by the noun "pata" which is verbalized by the addition of the verbal suffix \(-mou\), the mark of the present progressive. In the text I will be referring to this word as a noun either using the Yanomami term "patamou" as in "the patamou" or its English translation "the speech of the elders." For a grammatical description and analysis of the ways a Yanomami substantive can be transformed into a verb see Lizot (1996:82, 222-27)

"First of all, it is a ritualized act. Almost without exception, the leader addresses the group daily, at daybreak and at dusk. Stretched out in his hammock or seated next to his fire, he delivers the expected discourse in a loud voice. And his voice has to be strong in order to make itself heard (…) His discourse basically consists of a celebration, repeated many times, of the norms of traditional life: "Our ancestors got on living well as they lived. Let us follow their example and in this way we will lead a peaceful existence together." That is just about what the discourse of a chief boils down to" (Clastres, 1987:153-4, my italics).

Clastres description will be discussed in later chapters devoted to a deeper ethnographic description and analysis of the "patamou." By now I should note that the descriptions of my analysis will mainly refer to the "patamou" as the type of speech enacted by leaders (i.e., factional leaders, persons with an important role in community life matters).

Usually delivered at daybreak ("harika") and also at dusk ("weyate") when almost all the people are still close to the fire in both their hearts and hammocks, the leader enacting the "patamou" mainly addresses his co-residents. It may take place in the village, but may also occur in a temporary camp in the forest, when villagers are living there in what is called "wayumi," a word that can be translated as "to leave the village to go to live temporarily in the forest."24 The speech might even take place during a trip. In other words, it happens in those places where members of a community are actually living or staying, even if it is for short periods of time. This speech is generated from matters pertaining to everyday life, that is, the usual happenings and everyday concerns of those people who are living together. At the same time the "patamou" is also of fundamental importance for the villagers to live well and feel well, for it is a type of speech that creates a sense of togetherness and well being. Most importantly, the "patamou," enacted almost every day throughout the entire lives of the people, contributes to the creation, by means of language, of a veritable sense of community (also see Passes 1998 on the Paikwene). This speech is a type of communication that, although not always, is mainly used for those who are living together. There are exceptions, for instance,

24 See Chapter 5, text 5.1 (line 33) for an example of the way Poreawō (the ghost) uses this word ("wayumi") to say that he is not living in the communal house.
sometimes an elder may want to express something to visitors or guests and he might use this type of speech to communicate with them. However, this is something that is done within (e.g., "inside") the communal house- or in the place where people are living (e.g., in provisional huts in the forest). That is precisely one of its fundamental and distinctive characteristics: it encapsulates what we can call, as mentioned before, for methodological reasons, the "community’s talk" or the "talk of the inside." 25

Whatever event or subject the speaker might think is important to communicate to his fellow villagers might provide the grounds for a *patamou* to be performed. Sometimes the speech might focus on only one particular issue, but more frequently in the unfolding of his speech the speaker intertwines a number of different topics. Some of the more recurrent themes, for instance, are: the necessity of opening a new garden site; rebuilding the old roof of a house; going on a hunting expedition, or going to camp in the forest; or visiting the people from a particular community. Sometimes the speech is eminently educative and pedagogic, taking on the character of a rather moralizing speech. Other times, however, when persuasion constitutes the core of the speech, the performance might be better described as a sort of harangue. The "*patamou*" might also come as a direct result of a concrete action performed by someone from within the village or elsewhere, or by some particular group of people, leading perhaps, to a rather accusatory and more "direct" character of speech. Nevertheless, generally speaking, the speech is suggestive of things rather than explicit, especially in regard to expressing any sort of rules of proper behavior. Leaders and elders are usually very careful when expressing their opinions, sentiments and ideas to their fellow co-residents. Other times they can be quite explicit and direct, depending on the issues they are speaking about. 26 This fact relates to and reflects the highly valued notion of personal autonomy of Yanomami people, and the importance they attach to such autonomy in their everyday verbal life when relating to each other. On the whole, because of its

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25 Throughout this thesis, a fundamental distinction is made between the modes of verbal communication associated with Yanomami morality and the social relationships that develop within the interior domains of the community (e.g., "inside") and those ways of communicating, exchanging and relating, with people from other communities and outsiders (e.g., "outside"). On this see more on the final conclusions.

26 See for instance chapter 9 and 10.
forceful nature and its subtle way of weaving various themes together, the "patamou" does have powerful effects: it makes people think and feel things in a very characteristic manner.

However, the link between thoughts and feelings is not an exclusive aspect of the elders’ speech but rather it underscores its strong relationships with the everyday matters of the community. Careful attention to the everyday verbal life of the Yanomami community reveals the salient importance, the almost microscopic attention, they give to emotional aspects, that for other anthropologists have been seen as trivial and irrelevant, and therefore ignored by them in their analyses (see for instance Chagnon 1967, 1968, 1988; Ferguson 1992, 1995, but contrast Lizot 1985; Ales 2000). When talking about their own social relations, the Yanomami place strong stress, not only upon their good, but also their negative qualities. In these conversations on the social the expression of the mutuality of feelings and emotions constitutes a fundamental aspect of their judgments and evaluations of their interpersonal relations (also see Myers on Australian aborigines 1986:105 f). The use of words with an affective content or meaning during social interactions, that is, their “emotion talk” (Lutz 1988), is closely linked to the pervading moral values of their sociality, where they emphasize the social worth of such virtues as generosity, sharing and courage (see Lizot 1994 a, 1994 b; also Ales 2000).27 The very use of such “emotion talk” is understood as one means of expressing these values in direct relation to their intimate and social relationships of community life (also see Heelas 1986; Leavitt 1996; Lutz and Abu-Lughod 1990; Lyon 1995; Myers 1979, 1986; Rosaldo 1984; White 1990). The salient role that such “emotion talk” occupies in the elders’ speech becomes an essential aspect of what I have called the language of morality or language of the “inside.”

The forceful nature of the “patamou” can also be explained by being a type of speech that, among other things, combines two further qualities that are

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27 A re-evaluation of the salient importance that these moral values, in their mutual interdependence, have within the domain of interpersonal relationships in respect to the Yanomami views about personal autonomy, social equality, and good community life, constitutes one of the main paths through which the nature of conflicts and wars is being re-examined in Chapter 8.
deeply interrelated and highly valued in Yanomami everyday life: knowledge and oratorical skills. Both of these qualities are associated with the elders and especially with the leaders. For instance, if one poses a question to a young Yanomami about some plans involving the community (e.g., a feast or a hunting expedition), a very typical answer one might get would be: “kui, pata the pe tai,” “I don’t know, the elders know.” This answer does not mean that they have no opinion or do not know “anything” about that particular subject matter. Rather, in saying this, young people explicitly recognize the elders as both the main source of knowledge and the main medium through which such knowledge is usually communicated publicly. In addition to knowledge, the “patamou” requires a considerable mastery over language. It is a genuine expression of verbal artistry, displaying a high level of capability in linguistic expression that is linked to moral authority. A fact that can be noted, for instance, in that not all the elders of a given community usually deliver a “patamou,” and this, to my view, is not because they do not know the language but because they might not feel confident enough of performing it as beautifully as the others and they do not have the same moral authority to speak in the way this type of speech is usually performed. As with many other skills, this type of discourse requires an important amount of practice. In addition to this, and as a part of a wider consideration about the reasons that one particular elder may have for performing a “patamou,” one has to recall that not all of the elders have the same personal interest in making his opinion the subject of a public “dialogue.” This is an important aspect that I will address at length in later chapters (see chapters 9, 10, 11).

The effects these speeches have on listeners are usually expressed as well. The audience responses, the listeners' reactions and their ways of communicating them in fact plays an important role in the way the speakers' performance unfolds. As the speech develops, the villagers' approval can be made explicit by means of affirmations such as Awei kē! Awei kē! Peheti rē kē! wa peheti totiwe kē! “Yes! Yes! You are right! What you say is really true!” Such responses might also open the grounds for people to provide additional, more detailed information on the matter being discussed, expressing thereby their personal views and in doing that, also an implicit sense of approval. On
other occasions, however, someone's response might also indicate a sense of disapproval. In such cases the dissenter will express his or her own particular views, an action that can prompt a sort of more open "dialogue" among the villagers who, from their respective hammocks and hearths, want to participate or feel that they have something to say.

To conclude this brief introduction of the "patamou," I wish to comment on the extent to which this speech, by bringing together experiences and events from the past, describing and discussing the present, and projecting all these towards the future, centres on the recreation and maintenance of a safe and convivial community. The "patamou," in its enactment on an almost daily basis, in its emphasizing the salient role of productive work, co-operation and sharing on the one hand and trying to expose the more "antisocial" inclinations such as anger, hate, greediness, on the other, contributes both to keeping and creating the harmony and high spirits so necessary for the achievement of a comfortable affective life among those living together.

3.2 The elders' voices in the myth: feeling, thinking... and speaking, an example of the moral authority of Yanomami elders

After having become familiar, although very briefly, with what the Yanomami elders' speech is like, let us go back to the myth and focus, for instance, on the first time the myth teller quotes the voice of an elder, along with what this voice says. In doing this, we note that the voice of the elder appears in the line 39. From line 1 to line 38, the myth teller has introduced the general context of what was going on: the existence of the spirit of the night and the weird nature of its muffled laments, the non-existence of the night and the problems and anxieties these two facts have caused for the people. In reading these first lines of the myth, it is important to note the amount of lines the myth teller devotes to describe, by means of quoted speech, the spirit of the night's voice, and the form and content of its messages. Then, after the audience has listened and received some knowledge about the situation, the myth teller goes on to introduce the following voice in his performance:
In addition, the myth teller goes on to provide more context of the mythic situation in which the ancestors were placed. Thus, he tells more about Titiri’s laments (lines 44-45); more about the fact that the ancestors did not know the night and that they sleep during the day (lines 46-47); and also more about the actual location of the spirit of the night, its place and how he was seated in the branch, as implicitly indicating that the spirit had been well observed already (lines 48-50). Then, the voice of an elder is presented (i.e., enacted) again:

Before commenting on these voices, and in order to better understand the role they might play in the myth narration, I want to recall again (see Chapter 1)
the importance of what Hymes (1981:321) calls "vocal realization:" "direct quotation, rather than reported speech, the taking of the voices of those who speak, differentiating them." Similarly, on the use of quoted speech in mythological narratives, Basso (1986:134) writes:

"[t]here is replication in mythological quoted speech of what occurs in real life, the quoted speech content of a narrative functioning metalinguistically as a replica of the functions of "real speech" ... in traditional Kalapalo narratives or myths, quoted speech is clearly the most important way of developing characters and of giving meaning to their activities, because quoted speech constructs socially dynamic differences in the characters’ attitudes towards one another’s action."

Considering the above, let us now reflect on whose voices are these and the nature of their messages. By the moments in which the myth teller introduces these voices in the narrative, the following can be elucidated:

1) the first time (text 3.1, lines 39-43) the voice of the elder represents the informed perception and aesthetic judgment28 of Titiri’s voice. After having quoted the voice of the spirit of the night in a number of lines (see text 1.1, lines 22-28, 31-32, 34-37), this is the first time the myth teller introduces another voice. It constitutes a clear example of the vocal realization mentioned before. The myth teller "takes" the voice of this elder and introduces it in his narration without any description, as the audience know what voice is this. In clear contrast with the way the myth teller enacted and described the voice of Titiri, which, it has to be recalled again, is a spirit, in this case the voice of the elder goes without description (e.g., goes without saying), it is just enacted (see Tedlock 1983:10). To his audience these two different ways of vocal realization are clear as they know the nature of those voices; to the non-Yanomami readers of the myth the differences are not so explicit and have to be pointed out. It is interesting to note the judgment on the spirit voice by the elder, who first refers to the voice's weirdness, its non-stopping feature, and who then gives his opinion about it: "Is the voice of a spirit!" (text 3.1, line 43). The

28 See Chapter 7 in relation to the moral and therefore social and political implications attached to the aesthetic judgements made about someone’s voice or speech.
shortness and explicitness of the message the elder's voice communicates to his village fellows has to be understood within the frame of the myth narrative. That is, it has to be seen in relation to the myth teller's previous information about such voice.

2) the second time (text 3.2, lines 51-55) the voice unfolds the subsequent events that lead to the arrival of the night: after hearing Titiri's incessant muffled laments, the elder's warnings generate the decision to try to kill Titiri. In these lines, the voice of the elder appears again after more information on the particular context has been introduced (text 1.1, lines 44-50). This situation (i.e., the hearing of Titiri's laments) demanded a particular response that the elder is trying to pursue by asking his son to try to do something. Or stated otherwise, the elder's counsels generate the particular response (i.e., trying to kill Titiri) as a result of an empirical situation (i.e., the hearing of Titiri's incessant muffled laments). In addition to this, the elder's words and advice are not simply being reported. Rather they are a call for action; a call for recognition of what all the people in the village had the opportunity to hear: the incessant, long and muffled laments of Titiri, the spirit of the night (cf. Hymes 1981: 274-341). Furthermore, it is interesting to note that the implicitness of the elder's voice in the myth narration might respond to the fact that among Yanomami people, only elders and people with moral authority give such “orders.” A similar “order” expressed by a young person would have provoked laughter.

Similarly, after having experienced the first night, the quick arrival of daybreak (line 73) goes hand to hand with the voice of an elder (lines 74-77). Here again, nothing is said about whose voice is this: it is implicitly understood by the audience. Now, on this occasion the elder is communicating his own feelings and his personal experience of an event that, once again, all the people in the village are supposed to have been able to experience. He says:

**text 3.3**

[a voice of an elder within the village]

74  "ihiru pê,
     "my sons,
ihiru,
my son,

ihi rè kē ya rè totihoruhe!
That’s it I felt well! (e.g., I slept well!)

hya horotowe rè totihoruhe.”
For a short instant I felt well. (i.e., I slept pleasurably)

Note that the comments of the elder refer to his own personal feelings, in this case his feeling of well being after having been able to sleep. We have here an example of what type of message a Yanomami consider important in an event of these characteristics. The elder is addressing the younger people of the community in order to share his own personal experience. A feeling of well being that, as I will show later, plays an important role in the outcome of the myth.

The myth teller also introduces the voice of Hōrōnami – an important culture hero of Yanomami mythology-, who declared publicly:

hōrōnamini:
then Horonami declared publicly:

“kamiyēni hei tēhē ya waikaharayouwe!”
“Now I am the one who will go to kill him!”

By the tone of his words and the content of his message, Hōrōnami is explicitly portrayed here as an elder: he clearly embodies salient qualities that in Yanomami everyday life are linked with what an elder and an important person within the community should, ideally, be. For both, the form and content of Hōrōnami’s words are pervaded with moral authority. A fact that the myth teller explicitly recalls when he says about Hōrōnamini that:

hōrōnamini sufirina ke a totihini,
He really was a skillful hunter
In other words, from a Yanomami point of view, Hörōnamì is portrayed as someone who embodies skills which are typically associated with the elders and important people in the community life (e.g., skillful hunter, good judgment, determination and courage). Furthermore, the features of an elder and important person that Hörōnamì epitomizes make us realize the implicit contrast between elders and youngsters the myth teller expresses. Thus, the young people who tried to kill the spirit of the night did not achieve their aim, and it was only when someone with more authority (i.e., Hörōnamì) decided to act that the spirit is finally killed. This “detail” shows us more about Yanomami conceptions of the grounds on which moral authority is established (e.g., the youngsters do not make things as well as the elders do, in this case killing a spirit).

Later on the voice of an elder appears once again in the passage when Titiri is definitively killed, and profound darkness falls: it was the first night. Because of the sudden darkness, some people got lost in the forest. Disorientated, they called for help: “where is the path by which we came here? Come and get us!” they asked (lines 95-97). In this new and “difficult” situation that the Yanomami were experiencing, the myth teller, once again, introduces a voice, heavily loaded with knowledge and moral authority, that tells them what should be done:

text 3.6

98 "ei ké tê'ê ta yaikiretuhe she!
        go [and look for the others] lighting!

99 kai ké wake pé ha okaokataarariheni,”
    make firebrands," [ to light your way]

100 pé yaikoherima.
    Several men tied some firebrands together and went off, moving the firebrands in front of them as they went.

See Chapter 8, section 8.4.2, on Yanomami moral virtues.
Here, again, the voice of an elder generates a particular response to an empirical situation. It is a response that the myth teller specifies (line 100). These lines, in addition to the before mentioned features of the elders' voices, show the extent to which they are portrayed as showing concern and care for his people. What is more, this is an example that illustrates the Yanomami point of view of how, through the elders' voices, things can get done through words. Note that the meaning of the verb "ku-" is both "to say" and also "to be born," "to become." This is a fact that tells us more generally the fundamental importance of words (of the leaders and ordinary people) in Yanomami everyday life.

Finally, the elders' voices play a salient role in the outcome of the myth. When the myth teller describes the arrival of the first daybreak, after pointing out that the sounds of the morning that were beginning to be heard -locating the event in a particular time as we have seen in Chapter 2-, for the first time he explicitly introduces these voices as being those of the elders: "Pata tê pé." The very words he quotes are a clear example of a typical "overture" of the elders' speech.

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**text 3.7**

113 *pata kë tê pé:*
   And the older people ordered:

114 *"Itirupe,  
   "my sons,  

115 *pë ta hoketou haitaru!*
   Get up already!

116 *pë tê haruu koo kë a rë kuimil*
   The day is coming again!

117 *yaro kë a ta niyahe, yaro!"
   Go hunting, kill some game!"

The people in the village are pleasurably sleeping for the first time at night. However, in contrast with the former condition in which there was perpetual

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30 Cf. Austin (1975, "How to Do Things with Words").
31 Cf. Passes (1998: Chapter 5; and also 2004).
32 See Chapters 9, 10, 11 for examples of this in an elder's speech.
daylight and the Yanomami had to sleep during the day whenever they felt sleepy, now they have to wake up as daybreak comes (lines 111-112). Now, with the proper arrival of the night, time is set in motion and people should not be sleeping during the day as they were used to doing before - the literally, “before-time” period. Now they should get up at dawn, because, among many other things, they must get food (line 117) during the day in order to be able to sleep properly, i.e., with no hunger, during the night.

Activities such as the production, circulation and consumption of food play a fundamental role in the everyday internal relations of those who live together. Among these activities, that of speaking, in particular the elders’ speech, plays a salient role as from now on the above productive activities are “framed” within certain periods of time. As the words of the elders would seem to convey, after the first night with the arrival of daybreak there is a time for waking up and carrying out the daily activities, in this case the hunting to kill game. This would seem very obvious, but one has to remember that the myth teller is describing a completely new situation that the ancestors were facing. Nowadays, I have sometimes seen that when the gardens are not producing enough food, and the fishing, hunting or harvesting have not been successful enough - or also when any of the parents are ill and incapable of getting proper food, i.e., meat or fish, in the forest - one can hear some children crying before going to sleep at night. The reasons the Yanomami usually give are that they did not have “enough” food: they are still feeling hungry, “pê ohi shoawe yaro.”

On the whole the examples above provided (texts 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6) would seem to suggest the extent to which the elders’ voices stand out and are portrayed as the voice of “established” knowledge. Given the new nature of the events that the Yanomami were experiencing before and during the unfolding of those day/night transitions, the myth teller introduces the elders’ voices as the voices of those persons who know; those persons who, having

33 This statement should be taken within a general context of children’s ways of being. They might have other reasons as well, but the fact that they are hungry make them much more susceptible to cry.

34 The word “established” refers to the fact that the elder’s voices are generally recognised by all the people as being reputable, reliable, etc...
seen, heard, felt, and thought/reflected upon what was going on around them, are in the best position to tell the others their opinions. The way in which the elders’ voices are presented by the myth teller tell us more about the nature of such voices and the point of view of the Yanomami in the interpretation of them. Tedlock (1983: 10), commenting on the extent to which readers of oral performances transcribed in texts can be capable of understanding the particular performative artistry of a myth narration, has pointed out the importance of the readers’ necessity of taking the point of view of the performer and the context of such performance. He writes:

“Sometimes even an oral performer may describe a characters’ voice rather than enacting it, using a phrase like “his voice became tense” instead of using a tense voice. But enough performers of the past have preferred enactment to description to leave the readers of conventional transcriptions with the impression that spoken narrative gives little attention to the emotional states of its characters. This impression – a mere appearance- will remain so long as the spelling ear continues to limit the writing of visible texts. There are linguists who recognize the problem of tone of voice, but they tend to separate it from the “cognitive” realm of language proper and exile it to the “affective” realm of the individual speaker’s psyche, overlooking hidden affective implications of particular choices of wording or syntax, on the one hand, and the obvious fact that a performer may deliberately simulate an emotional tone, on the other” (Tedlock 1983:10).

Taking notice of Tedlock’s insights, there is an important fact that should be pointed out. As I have illustrated, the sensory sequence is intertwined with the elders’ voices throughout the myth teller’s narrative. The elders’ words are conjoined with the role that the senses play in the myth in such a way that, in my opinion, a close association between sensory experience and verbal authority is made evident. By the ways through which the myth teller combines different modes of perception such as: the aural (the sounds of the night, the snores of people, the sounds of the morning); the visual (darkness of the night, light during the day, the light of the fires); and the verbal (elders’ voices that announce and comment on the day/night transitions, and on the feelings caused by these transitions), it can be said that all of them are conceived as being part and parcel of the same perceptual process: the aural and visual providing sensory, the verbal cognitive, embodiment to the same process of
experiencing the effects of the day/night transitions and its consequences (cf. Hymes 1981:274-341). Moreover, the importance that the aural dimension has in the myth shows not only the socio-cultural importance that hearing has for the Yanomami, but also the strong conceptual linkage they make between hearing and listening and understanding and knowledge. As has been shown for other societies (Passes 1998, 2000b, 2001, 2003; Santos-Granero 1991; Isacsson 1993; Basso 1995, Kidd 2000) the act of hearing and listening is much more that a mere natural act, but an axiologically important cultural one.

On the whole, the myth teller enacts the elder’s voices in such ways that they encapsulate the vital role that the verbal plays for the Yanomami in the process of learning, interpreting and understanding what they perceive. What is more, the linkage between the elders’ voices, that is, the role of speech, and the acts of hearing and listening, so much emphasized in the myth narration, shows the extent to which both are interactive and interdependent social behaviors. What is more, the importance of the aural and the verbal in the unfolding of the different myth events shows the extent to which the Yanomami conceive of them as instruments of knowledge. A fact that can also be clearly perceived looking at the fundamental role that speech and hearing play in myth narrations in what Hymes calls “rethorical form:” the organization in terms of sequences of onset, ongoing action, and outcome.35 In the myth we have just seen, much of this rhetorical organization is developed by means of the acts of hearing and speech, either in the words of the myth narrator or in quoted speech.36 The fact that the audience responses (e.g., go to try to kill titiri, go to look for the people who were lost in the forest, lighting a fire) to some of the elders’ voices are not described but made implicit, tell us also about the extent to which the speech of the elders is patently symbolic of social and moral authority. This authority endows the elders’ voices with qualities that make other people take notice of what they say. The elders’ verbal authority does not have anything to do with the more conventional sense that the expression has in the Western politics, when its uses imply the sense of having the power to make decisions, the

35 See Chapter 1.
36 On the fundamental importance of quoted speech in Yanomami myth narrations see Chapters 5, 6 and 7.
power and right to command and control other people (for other Amazonian examples, see for instance Clastres 1987; Goldman 1979; Gow 1991; Guss 1989; Marbury-lewis 1967, 1979; McCallum 1989, 1990, 2001; Overing 1975, 1983-4; Rivièrè 1983-84, 1984; Santos Granero 1991; Thomas 1982)

Moreover, if we look at the "horizon of concerns" within which the elders' "verbal authority" can be elucidated -concerns that the unfolding of the myth narrative makes clear-, we can see that the role of "the felt" plays a fundamental part. To my mind, the role that the elders' voices play in this myth highlights the fundamental linkage between the senses, feelings and emotions, and verbal expression. What is more, because of the fundamental, salient role that the senses and feelings occupies within the cognitive processes and by the ways they are verbally expressed, we cannot say that they are internal to the body alone, or that they pertain to the private world of individual consciousness. Rather, as the myth illustrates, the ways feelings are shared by means of verbal expression causes them take on the character of moral judgments.37 For Yanomami people and their aesthetics of community (Overing and Passes 2000), the world of the felt is not a secondary and irrelevant aspect: the feelings of people are of fundamental importance in the everyday matters and as such they constitute social and political endeavors within the ongoing creation of sociality. As we have seen, both the felt and the verbal seem to be so conjoined and intermingled that we cannot focus on the latter without seriously considering the former and vice versa. For a general theoretical and also ethnographic framework of the ways emotions are culturally and socially constructed among a number of other indigenous peoples see for instance Heelas (1986), Lutz (1988), Lutz and Abu-Lughod eds.(1990), Myers (1979), and Rosaldo (1984), Overing and Passes (eds) (2000), White (1990), among many others. In the chapters devoted to the elders' speech (see chapters 9,10,11) I will illustrate by means of ethnographic examples that in the everyday life of the Yanomami the ways emotions are verbally expressed reflects the

extent to which such emotional aspects express salient aspects of their sociality.\textsuperscript{38}

The linkage between the world of the felt and moral values that we have seen through this exploration seems to be a widespread Amazonian feature. In the volume edited by Overing and Passes (2000) "The Anthropology of Love and Anger: The Aesthetics of Conviviality in Native Amazonia", these authors point out in their introduction the strong linkages that in the social world of indigenous Amazonian peoples exist between "emotions" and "thoughts." The interrelationship between the "felt" and the "thought" in the Amazonian views of sociality, together with the salient role that the "language of affect and intimacy" plays in such relationship, is described in the following terms:

"The rich language of affect and intimacy that is linked to Amazonian sociality is not to be mistaken for evidence of a prioritizing of emotions over reason (\ldots). It is a matter of utmost importance that it is not the case that the affective conditions of community life in Amazonia are "just a matter of emotion", and as such "felt, not thought." Rather they are integrally linked to knowledge and moral value, and therefore to a type of sociality that continually demands reflection upon the moral virtues and their practice. However, it is also the case, from the evidence of Amerindian discourse, that they consider not only that both cognitive and affective capacities are embodied, but also that, for them, the capability to live a moral, social existence requires that there be no split between thoughts and feelings, mind and body (\ldots) The idea that there is an aesthetics involved in belonging to a community of relations that conjoins body, thought and affect is widespread in Amazonia" (Overing and Passes 2000:19)

As shown above, the way the myth teller introduces the elders' voices in the unfolding of such important happenings, as is the arrival of the first night, is in agreement with the above remarks. The examples provided demonstrate the

\textsuperscript{38} In these chapters I will address the extent to which the theoretical insights of these authors can be said to apply to the ways emotions are culturally and socially constructed among the Yanomami. Thus I will show examples of the extent to which the Yanomami emotions can be viewed, following Leavit (1996) insights, as an example of the "interesting marriage of intellect and feeling," in Overing and Passes (2000:20) terms. On this particular "marriage" the latter authors write that: "Amazonian emotions as feeling-thoughts are social, cultural experiences learned and expressed in the body in the daily process of personal interactions" (op.cit.:20).
extent to which the affective conditions are bound to the knowledge of what was going on around the characters in the story. What is more, the knowledge valued and recognized, that expressed by means of the elders' voices, is a knowledge related to the world of the felt. The Yanomami were learning about something so important as this cosmic happening by talking about feelings! However I will demonstrate that this is not only the case in mythic narration, but a constant feature in Yanomami everyday life (see chapters 9, 10, 11).

Let us now explore more on this interesting linkage between feelings and morality and how they relate to Yanomami sociality. In the following chapter, the myth of the origin of the night is still the main path to do this.
CHAPTER 4

The pleasures of the night: Or, the morality of feelings

In this chapter, I will analyse the myth teller’s concluding remarks: the consequences that the final arrival of the night had for the Yanomami. These remarks lead us to consider a new aspects of the Yanomami world of the social, that, I shall contend, shed important lights upon our understanding of the myth of the origin of the night. Finally, the analysis of the outcome of the myth will provide new insights on the linkage between myths and everyday, in particular with the place of dreams in the enactment of the elders’ speech (“patamou”).

4.1 A feeling of well being: they began to dream…

Let us now to see the means through which the myth teller sums up the ways Yanomami ancestors experienced the first night.

After the night the daybreak came and the elders launched their speech at dawn. The daily cycle was set in motion: days and nights, and the appropriate development of everyday activities are now part and parcel of the everyday life of the Yanomami. Finally, things became how they are supposed to be in “present day” times. The myth teller narrates and explains this, just at the very end of his performance, in the following way:

text 4.1
[myth teller’s voice]
118 titi ha pê ha mioni,  
After having slept during the night,
119 tê pê tothorayoma,  
they had a feeling of well-being,
120 pê tê pê maharimou waikioma kê yaro.  
because they had already started to dream.

Once the Yanomami were able to sleep at night (line 118), the myth teller says that they experienced a “feeling of well being” (line 119), and he explains
this by saying that it was "because they had already started to dream" (line 120). These concluding remarks reinforce the sense of continuity - the idea that the past is moving into the present and the present into the future - which the new night had brought to the Yanomami. The "feeling of well being" the Yanomami got after having being able to sleep at night lead us to establish possible links with other versions of the myth of the origin of the night. In addition, they also introduce new aspects intrinsically associated with the economic cycle and the relations between the sexes that must be elucidated by means of ethnography.

Let me examine the last two sentences of the myth and explain their particular importance.

The words the myth narrator uses to explain that the Yanomami had had a good sleep are significant and deserve careful attention. He says: "të pe tothorayoma" (line 119). The words "të pe" are the third person plural of the personal pronoun "they," a pronoun that here refers to the Yanomami ancestors who experienced the arrival of the first night.39 The expression "tothorayoma" is the past perfect form of the verb tothai which, generally speaking, means "to feel pleasure," "to feel a pleasurable physical of sensation (e.g., making love, to have an orgasm)," "to enjoy," "to feel well," "to taste/flavour." In the context in which this verb appears in the myth narration, the myth teller is referring to the pleasurable physical sensation the Yanomami experienced after getting a good, proper night's sleep. A pleasure that, he specifies, had also been provoked as a consequence of starting to dream: "të pe maharimou waikioma ke yaro" (line 3).

Let us see more about these pleasures.

39In Yanomami everyday language and also in myth narrations personal pronouns play a fundamental role: they convey precise information on the subject or various subjects that participate or are involved in particular action. These personal pronouns shows the extent to which strong emphasis is placed upon the relational as one of the main features to be precised in the unfolding of events. For an in depth analysis of the various forms of personal pronouns and the multiple and precise meanings they might convey in the pragmatics of language use see the introduction to the Yanomami language ("Introduccion a la lengua Yanomami: morfologia") published by Lizot (1996: 52-65).
4.2 Understanding a feeling of well being: they continued making love…

Initially, at first sight one might think that these facts are quite explicit and clear: to sleep well during the night is a real pleasure, and even more if one has good dreams! However, far from arriving at the completion of the analysis, I felt that these concluding remarks posed even more questions and associations with a number of aspects of Yanomami life that would have to be "resolved" and explained if one is to pay serious attention to a myth like this (and I should say to all myths as well). Which in any case, is not an easy undertaking. Lévi-Strauss (1969:5), for instance, has stated that "the analysis of myths is always an endless task. Each step forward creates a new hope, the realization of which is dependent on the solution of some new difficulty. The evidence is never complete."

He further writes:

"The study of myths raises a methodological problem, in that it cannot be carried out according to the Cartesian principle of breaking down the difficulty in as many parts as may be necessary for finding the solution. There is no real end to mythological analysis, no hidden unity to be grasped once the breaking-down process has been completed. Themes can be split up *ad infinitum*. Just when you think you have disentangled and separated them, you realize that they are knitting together again in response to the operation of unexpected affinities" (Lévi-Strauss 1969:5, italics in the original).

Leaving then the hope of achieving a "happy end" to my understanding of this myth, and waiting to find those "unexpected affinities," I was encouraged to carry on. The first thing I did was to broaden the field of inquiry into the myth. Thus, in addition to the work carried out so far, I have attempted to link the themes the myth raises not only with the everyday verbal life, but now a linkage has been established with other versions of the myth of the origin of the night. The search, as I shall illustrate in the following pages, has had highly rewarding results.

One of the chapters of Hymes' (2003) recent book ("I know only so far") has the title: "Use All There Is to Use." Although for different reasons, I was lead
to follow this “motto” as well in my search for clues for a better understanding of the complexities and subtleties concealed within the Yanomami myth of the origin of the night. The fact that so far I have been using the Yanomami originals do not mean that other available versions of myths (i.e., which are not transcribed in Yanomami language) are of no interest at all or should be disregarded. For instance, when Hymes (2003: ix) writes that “individual cases [e.g., one single version of a myth] are not the only source of insight,” he is supporting the fundamental importance of a comparative perspective in order to identify related themes and new elements of the narratives. On this issue Hymes also writes that “[t]he structural comparison used by Lévi-Strauss should always be consulted. Always there is the unavoidable task of just looking around” (op.cit: ix). He expands on this:

“Other stories may inform us of meanings, possibilities, inventions, and transformations, even though new performances are not to be heard. It is here that Lévi-Strauss stands as a permanent example, however one may criticize particular interpretations. He has read widely with close attention to detail and so approaches particular stories with a sense of alternative possibilities and sources of creative change” (Hymes 2003:73, my italics).

Before beginning this excursion, this “juts looking around” exercise, so to speak, I wish to recall Lévi-Strauss insights on the way to arrive at a better understanding of a mythical theme after consulting other myths. He writes:

“No one myth is completely explicit but, by shuffling them round one over the other until they coincide, I have made them reveal, as through a grid, the common message of which each conceals a fragment or an aspect” (Lévi-Strauss 1978:180).

And also that:

“disjointed messages contained in other myths can serve to consolidate each other” (Lévi-Strauss 1978: 180).

The important collection of Yanomami myths available, allows one to look at other myths and find “alternative possibilities” towards the consolidation of
particular meanings of certain myths. In doing this, we can find, as Lévi-Strauss (1973) has put it, an “unexpected gift:"

"Consequently, as the field of inquiry widens and as new myths force themselves upon our attention, myths which were studied a long while back re-emerge and throw into prominence certain of their details, previously neglected or unexplained, but which now appear like pieces of a puzzle that have been put to one side until the gaps in the almost completed pattern reveal the shapes of the missing parts and their inevitable positions; then, when the last piece has been fitted into place, we are vouchsafed – like an unexpected gift or additional bonus- the hitherto undecipherable meaning of some vague shape or indefinite colour, whose relationship to the neighbouring shapes and colours eluded comprehension, whichever way we tried to think of it" (Lévi-Strauss, 1973:459, my italics).

Taking Lévi-Strauss insights into account, the myth (read myths) of the night has still more to say. The arrival of the night, as the myth teller tells us (see text 2.6), was a source of pleasure, so to speak. The Yanomami were able to sleep properly at night and in doing so they were able to dream. However, the curious reader will ask, and with enough reason, if this is “all” the Yanomami do during the night. Are these all the pleasures Yanomami people indulge themselves when daylight is over? If we just look at Yanomami everyday life we will see that the night too has many sides and offers the setting for doing things that are not always possible to do during the day. However, for methodological purposes, to keep our focus upon that very first night that the myth describes, I want to consider a number of answers that can be found, for instance, if we consult other versions of the myth. In doing this, my intention is to explore, following both Hymes and Lévi-Strauss insights, the “disjointed messages” and to get a better understanding of the possible linkages between them.

A number of versions of the myth of the origin of the night reveal, more explicitly in some parts and more implicitly in others, that the arrival of the night and the proper way of having sexual relations go hand to hand. Let me present some passages of these myths and try to explain by means of ethnography the ways the “common message” is established not only by the ethnographer, but by the own Yanomami too. In doing this, I believe there is an example of the
way the "hidden patterns," so much talked about in the structural study of myths, and usually, as Lévi-Strauss (1978:37) has put it, "only perceptible to us [e.g., analysts] on a formal level," can be found also looking at the performative level. That is, paying close attention to the way in which myths are told in particular languages within distinctive and culturally specific ways of life. As I have tried to show in previous chapters, there is still much to discover on the relationships between the so-called "hidden pattern" and the narrative (e.g., surface) content, that is, the performative aspects of myths. The "language of myths" offers us an invaluable place on which discover these relationships and find out how hidden or how overt they are not only for us, but for the people who speak and think through their myths.

4.3 A Sensual view of the arrival of the night: Sex, love and children

For instance, in one of the versions the main reasons given by the Yanomami for wanting the arrival of the night is that of enjoying better sex! 40 That is, of having the opportunity to make love properly (e.g., in their hammocks, at night and within the village). The myth says:

text 4.2

"At the time when tititkiwe spirits of the night had not yet been killed the day never ended. The white monkey people indeed were obliged to copulate in full daylight! That is true! They would copulate in full daylight, although trying to hide behind a smoke screen. They would light large fires and then choke the flames in order to produce a thick smoke. Finally they no longer wanted to copulate like that; they were tired of copulating in the forest and wanted to do it in their hammocks. That is how they were. They wanted to have night; they were tired of having sex in the forest" (Albert, in Wilbert and Simoneau 1990:172).

The myth continues and it is said that Ocelot killed the night spirits. When he returned home:

40 This version pertains to the Yanomame subgroup studied by Albert (see for instance Albert 1985). Although among the Yanomami and the Yanomame there are important linguistic and cultural differences. This fact does not prevent us to establish, when there are enough data to do so, their numerous similarities.
“Ocelot made a big fire with the wood prepared by his mother and stretched out in his hammock. Night fell, and he slept. The white monkey people took the opportunity to copulate in the dark. The night was still very short, and dawn came quickly. They said to one another: “We want more of the night!” Night fell again and the people began to think right: “Yes, it was really they; they really were the night spirits!” (Albert, in Wilbert and Simoneau 1990:173).

In another version, it is said that the ancestors used to have sex in the village. The myth begins as follows:

“Because long ago there was not night, Horonami shot Black Curassow with an arrow from his blowgun. The people used to have sex in the communal house in full daylight; it never occurred to them to say: “Let’s go into the forest.” They would have sex with Horonami’s wife while he was asleep. Sleep, then, while you are being deceived! Oh, sleeper, are they not having sex with your eyelids! Sleep!” (Lizot, in Wilbert and Simoneau 1990:148)

And yet in another version sex is also the major reason given for wanting the arrival of the night. It is said that:

“It was Horonami who made the night long ago. Before that time there was no night; it was always daytime. People used to sleep during the day, for night never fell. One day while Horonami was asleep the men did a lot of dirty things with the women in the house. Everyone could see it, for it was not dark as there was no night. Horonami’s wife, who saw it all, woke up her husband and said: “Don’t sleep! Right under your very eyes they’re misbehaving! You don’t see it because you’re asleep!” ” (Finkers, in Wilbert and Simoneau 1990:142)

Consequently, as the reading of these passages illustrates, an association between a long and proper night and the proper conditions for having sexual relations is clearly established. The issues of continuity and temporality that
were highlighted in the day/night earlier transitions discussed before are here implicitly present too. To appreciate this, more background on the everyday life of the Yanomami should be offered. For a reader non-familiar with the Yanomami ways of life the imagery these passages contain have to be made more explicit.

Given the context of Yanomami everyday life and the way their villages are built, it is not too difficult to imagine the reasons why the night generates much more room for sexual issues. First, during the day, the highly marked division of labour among the sexes and its eminently social nature do not precisely help in providing occasions for sexual relationships. In order to have sexual intercourse, couples have to be careful, or go to a more distant place where the presence of people is not expected. Furthermore, if we think about extra-marital sexual relationships, another point should be taken into account. During the day, most of the working activities are usually carried out in groups, family or otherwise, and women are rarely seen alone. This is a fact that reduces the opportunities for those couples that might want to have extra-marital sexual relations. On the other hand, the almost non existence of walls or any other means of physical divisions (e.g., doors, partitions) within the villages makes it almost impossible to do anything during full daylight without being aware of the “neighbours’ unsupportive gaze” - especially from the children who are almost always ready to proclaim upon what is going on around them, calling the attention of others. Consequently, as is clearly stated in the myth narrations, Yanomami ancestors were tired of these “inconveniences” that took away a better setting for enjoying the pleasures of sex. So, they “wanted to have night.”

Another point, that follows from what has been just mentioned, will allow us to appreciate better the ways by which the “sexual” underpinning of these passages of the myth have to be understood within the own Yanomami perspective of things. Yanomami people believe that children are born as a result of “continuous” sexual intercourse between a man and a woman, e.g. relationships maintained during a relatively long period of time. A child can
never be generated as a result of "short" (i.e., one single act, a short period of) sexual intercourse.

This particular relationship that Yanomami people make between sexual intercourse and the conception of children suggests that the ideas about the proper conditions for having sex in the myth have to be understood and placed within a wider frame. I am referring here, for instance, to the context of a community of social relations embodied by a Yanomami village and the fundamental importance that the creation of people (i.e., children) have for such a community. The wider frame I am suggesting here has been pointed out by Lévi-Strauss (1978: 175) when, commenting on the myths of the origin of day and night, writes that "while, from Amazonia to Tierra del Fuego, the myths associate chastity with daylight and sensuality with night, they are agreed in considering the regular alternation of day and night as the normal condition of conjugal relationships." And also when he writes that "night must be long enough to permit sexual union, the source of fertility" (Lévi-Strauss 1978: 193).

Consequently, the "physical" side of the sexual pleasures, which the texts 4.1 and 4.2 seem to make so explicitly present, therefore has to be understood in its relationship to the "social" side of those sexual relations, that the text 4.3 and 4.4 seem to consider. In other words, as the reading of the myths of the night and the ethnographical information illustrate, the pleasures associated with the night can be considered to be "twofold:" both "physical" and "social." The former is associated with the physical pleasures associated with sexuality, the latter with the pleasures that the birth of children, the creation of people, brings for a Yanomami family and for the community. Both pleasures strongly contribute to generating, maintaining, and renewing the good and proper sociality which is so important for the harmony of the everyday life within a Yanomami community.

If the suggestion put forward here is correct, the reading of various versions of the myth suggests that the sense of continuity of the daily cycle, highlighted in various ways and made so explicit, has to be also understood in the sense of continuity of people. However, the linkage between these two
continuities has to be conceived of and therefore understood from an Amerindian perspective. It is my view, that the kind of sexual relations the Yanomami were trying to pursue in wanting the arrival of the night were sexual relations conceived of and framed by a sense of continuity. Here Lévi-Strauss' insights are in agreement with this: Sexual relations and continuity (e.g., long nights, alteration of day and nights) generate fertility and the normal conditions for conjugal relations. However, as my discussion of the myth suggests, the fertile underpinnings of the myth have to be related, not only with the normal conditions for conjugal realtions, but, more generally, with the normal conditions of community life. As the description of the role that the elders' speech occupies in the myth highlights, close attention to the own Yanomami words allow us to see the way the fertility of this myth is understood by Yanomami people in a wider sense, and expressed in relations of "love," "care," "trust," "intimacy," "nurturance," among many others. And this is not all. Overing (2003:302-7) has pointed out the salient Amerindian linkage between notions of human fecundity and notions of proper sociality: a "fertile community," she says is a sign of "its high moral." Overing's statement pervades Lagrou's account on the Cashinahua (2000:155-6) in which the "image of the birth of many babies" is understood as "being representative of high village morale." This linkage between fecundity and morality is well represented by the nurturing, fertile side of the elders' speech in particular and of Yanomami language more generally, a notion that I will discuss in following chapters.

**Concluding remarks**

The reading of the myth under this perspective, leads us to think about what Yanomami people consider as the proper, the human conditions for the achievement of a social state. Among these proper human social conditions, the affective side along with its verbal expression seem to be axiological principles in the production of sociality. Fertility, the "production of people," is therefore understood as deeply interrelated, almost dependent on, the "production of good feelings" towards the aim of generating a social state of convivial relations, that is, "production of sociality." The pleasures of the night did have, indeed, a strong moral, aesthetic and political intent. A proper understanding of the
Yanomami conceptions of the pleasures of the night, as I have tried to demonstrate, can come to the surface only if we are able to listen to the text in all its details.

However, I have more to say in relation to the pleasures that the first night brought to the Yanomami and more to explore about the relationships between such pleasures and their ideas of aesthetics, moral value and sociality. The pleasure I am referring to now is the pleasure to speak. A type of pleasure that, for the Yanomami as well as for many other peoples, is an eminently social pleasure. In the following chapters, by exploring the nature of a mythical character that embodies the notion of “bad/ugly” speech, I will contend that the pleasures associated with language, as those pleasures that we have seen before, those conjoining the “physical” and the “social,” play a major sociopragmatic and sociopolitical role in the ongoing creation of proper sociality.
CHAPTER 5

Notes towards a dialogical approach to and understanding of Poreawé’s voice

For the Yanomami the very act of speaking is not only understood as merely an act of verbal communication, in the strong sense of the expression. That is, it is not only a matter of linguistic skills. Speaking is seen, above all, as a social activity and as such involves more than linguistic expression. To speak well involves knowing how to behave well within the manifold kinds of social relationships that make up their everyday community life. In his analysis of the Yanomami Ceremonial Dialogue Lizot (1994b) points out the strength with which the Yanomami make an association between meanness/stinginess and bad speaking, and in contrast link the virtue of generosity with the characteristic of speaking well. He goes on to comment that “[s]omeone who does not speak Yanomami very well or who does not speak at all, as is the case of very young children and outsiders,” he says, are said to be “aka porepi,” which means to use the “speech of the ghost,” and also “inarticulate speech” (op.cit.:224).

The description of “aka porepi” in everyday language can be heard to refer to a person that is dumb (voiceless), a person that do not speak well or do not make requests in the appropriate manner. The expression is also used to describe a person who is unable to participate in the Ceremonial dialogues. It also describes that person who in public meetings remains silent or does not manage to make his/her opinion clear. It refers to those who give goods without receiving a return, that is, they do not act so as to make their rights respected. More generally, and taking into account the fundamental role that speaking has for the Yanomami, it describes a type of person who does not engage properly in the everyday dynamics of community life. Furthermore, the expression “wa porepi”, (which translates literally as “to be of ghost speech”), in everyday life is used to refer to that person who speaks incoherently, as in a delirium, as when someone is ill, when speaking unconsciously when dreaming or under the effect of hallucinogens (Lizot 1994b:224). The expressions “aka porepi” and “wa porepi”
"porepi" are built around the word "pore," which means "ghost." The word "aka" means "tongue," and the word "wa," depending on context can mean "voice," "sound," "word" or "speech." Thus, the forms "aka pore" or "wa pore," with the addition of the nominal suffix -pi (which transforms the substantive form i.e., "aka pore," "wa pore-;") into an adjective, generates the expressions "aka porepi" and "wa porepi" (op. cit.: 224).

Lizot goes on to explain that, in contrast, those Yanomami who express themselves easily and thus as persons who speak properly, are referred to by terms such as "aka hayuo," "aka tao," "wa hatukewe" (1994b: 224). These are expressions that clearly associate language skills with social ones. They refer to various aspects of the Yanomami world of the social, from their valued sociality, to socialization practices, and also to particular ways of behaving properly and socially. Thus, for instance, the range of meanings of the expression "aka hayuo" constitutes a good example through which to appreciate this. It can be translated as "to speak Yanomami language;" "to be able to participate in the Ceremonial dialogues;" "to know how to present a claim/request or a requirement/demand in the proper way;" "to participate actively in the exchange of goods" (Lizot 2004: 8). The word "aka tao" means "to speak," "be able to speak (children)," and also, "to speak well with ease;" "to participate correctly in the ceremonial Dialogues;" "to be hospitable;" "to participate in gifts giving and exchanges" (op. cit.: 9). And finally, "wa hatukewe" means "to be hospitable;" "to welcome well the guest, saying the proper words so they can feel at ease" (op. cit.: 454). In his analysis Lizot remarks that "stinginess is ... associated with bad speech; generosity with good speech," and concludes by stressing that "the Yanomami therefore consider the exchange of goods and verbal communication (the exchange of words), to be equivalent" (1994b: 224). These equivalencies show the extent to which the values attached to "good" and "bad" speech respectively are associated with notions of proper and improper social behavior, i.e., generosity and hospitality on the one hand, and stinginess and lack of social skills on the other.

Taking into account the associations that the Yanomami make between the "Ghost" and stingy people, as well as children and outsiders, we might ask:
What do all these persons, these types of people, have in common with the Ghost that the same expression is used to refer to all of them? What are other associations made by the Yanomami around/with regard to the notion of bad speech? In order to try to find answers to such questions I aim to investigate the nature of Poreawe, the ghost, the character at the origin of the expressions “aka porepi” (“speech of ghost,” “inarticulate speech”) and “wa porepi.”

5.1 From text to texture

In chapters 1 and 2 we have seen the importance of what Hymes called vocal realization to the understanding of the different characters that appear in mythological narrations. The importance, along with the degree used, that aspects of vocal realization have in Yanomami myths is not always the same across all narrations. One of the particularities of the myth narration of the master of banana plantains is the salient role that, by means of quoted speech, the characters’ voices occupy. As Hymes highlighted, in order to see the way particular means have been chosen and deployed, we have to make the attempt to appreciate the artistry of the text and to see such text as a texture (Hymes, 1981). To my view the immense use of Yanomami voices and dialogues within the narrative, the ways in which vocal realization is enacted in the performance of the myth, is a fundamental aspect to appreciate such artistry and therefore it demands special attention.

In order to show this I would like first to present the myth of Poreawe, the master of bananas, in prose, as it appears in the literature. I believe that the “move” from text to texture demands us to know well the myth narrative, that is, to read it and see it in various forms. The reading of the version in prose is therefore a good introduction to move on, later, and try to see the text as a texture. After doing this, I will engage in a brief excursion into a number of theoretical themes and methodological issues that will help to create a frame to better approach and understand the importance that Yanomami voices have in the myth of Poreawe.

5.1.1 The myth of the master of banana plants (in paragraphs)
This myth was given us by Lizot.

Our ancestors did not know about plantains. They used to eat earth with the game that they hunted. It was Revenant who introduced them to bananas.

Horonami was in the forest. When it started to look like rain he picked some leaves, suspended a stick between two trees, leaned the leaves against the stick, and took shelter underneath. While waiting for the rain to stop he began to scan some wayamou words:

“A mountain rises up before me,  
Before me hangs the liana  
Which I will cut.  
When I have cut it  
I will fell that tree.  
A beehive  
It stuck to a tree trunk over there,  
I will burn the bees.”

Standing up he recited the formulas rhythmically, bowing at each declaration.

Then Revenant (Poreawê) appeared. He was carrying a load of plantains, and on top he had piled ripe bananas. When Horonami saw him he fell silent, wondering: “Who can that be?” Revenant (Poreawê) stopped suddenly. In his presence the man was stupefied and as if dazed. Even so he asked: “Who are you?” After a moment Horonami recovered his senses. “Who are you? Come over here.” “I won’t come; I’m travelling in the forest.” Revenant (Poreawê) had a speech problem; he spoke badly. Pointing to the bananas Horonami was curious: “What can that be? What is it?” “I don’t know; they are unknown things,” replied Revenant (Poreawê). “They’re very ripe. Come on, what are they?” “They’re plantains, bananas!” “Bananas?” “They’re bananas, bananas!
Pareami plantains, nomarimi plantains, paushimi bananas, rokomi bananas," specified Revenant (Poreawë). He probably wanted to tell the other about them, for he himself already had them. He had piled ripe bananas on top of the load. "Give me one so I can taste it. They look very sugary," said Horonami. "They're sugary, they're bananas. Bananas! " Revenant gave them one. Horonami peeled one end, tore off the skin all around, and tasted it, feeling with his tongue in several places. It tasted good and he ate it. But this food which was still new to him made him sick. "Yeri, yeri..." He began to rave.

Revenant (Poreawë) bursts out laughing. "You're losing your mind; take hold of yourself. The bananas are making you lose your mind. That always happens when someone eats them for the first time." Horonami recovered his senses. "Break off these and give them to me." Revenant handed them to him. "I'll eat them. Where do you live?" asked Horonami. "I live on the plain that stretches to the foot of the mountain. There I've got a garden and a house. I've been drinking banana mush for a long time. Right now I'm living in the forest; I went to fetch these." Horonami said: "When I tell the people in my village this and say: "I've just found out that these are bananas," they will certainly want to visit you." "My name is Revenant (Poreawë)," said the other. He warned: "If they come to ask for banana plants I won't let them take any. Do you people eat bananas? These plants belong to me. I always come this way when I camp in the forest. I don't take the road, I cut through the forest, I take a shortcut. When you get to my house you will find it empty." "All right, be on your way." "I'm tired of staying at home. When I go traveling in the forest I always come this way." Revenant (Poreawë) put the load on his back again and resumed his journey: tok, tok, tok. A moment later he started walking along a path.

After he was gone Horonami returned home. When he arrived the others noticed the ripe bananas and asked him: "What's that? What is it?" He did not answer at once. First he warmed himself for a long time, and hung up the bananas.
"What are those ripe fruit called?" He continued to warn himself and still did not answer. Two men of indeterminate age asked again: "What's that? Did you find them?" They really did not know what they were. An old man asked once more: "Did you find them?" "They're plantains, bananas. I was taking shelter from the rain when Revenant (Poreawē) arrived. He knew what they were. He began to talk, and said: "I'm Revenant (Poreawē)." I've just found out that they're bananas."

Horonami distributed bananas to the people. No sooner had they finished eating than they, too, began to lose their senses: "Yeri, yeri..." It was Revenant who introduced plantains. (Lizot, in Wilbert 1990: 153-55).

Bakhtin (1981) has stated that the interpretation of a text is not possible if based only on an examination of the text alone. He warns us to move away from a "monologic reading;" to try to capture and understand the "unstated" or "metacommunicative messages" conveyed by the text but not necessarily embodied within that text; and finally to perceive the salient value of "plural voices" and "multiple languages" in its "dialogic interplay." Tedlock and Mannheim (1995: 15) commenting on Bakhtin's constant emphasis on dialogical process, or "dialogism," point out that such dialogism is a feature that manifests itself at every scale of language use (Bakhtin 1981: 326-30, 426). On this they write:

"At the broadest level, whenever we speak or write, and whether or not we do so in direct response to another speaker or writer, our discourse occurs in the context of previous (or alternative) utterances or texts and is in dialogue with them, whether explicitly or implicitly" (Tedlock and Mannheim 1995: 15).

In saying this, Tedlock and Mannheim want to stress the fact that Bakhtin's ideas of dialogism have been mainly used in relation to texts, and in particular the novel, that for him is "the epitome of multivoiced discourse" (1995: 16). These authors go on to say that Bakhtin "completely overlook the ordinary
fokultale" (op.cit.:16), a genre in which the role of multiple voices is of fundamental importance. The role of the multiple voices that Bakhtin stresses as so important in the novel is no less important to the understanding of the richness and multiplicity of social contexts depicted through performance in oral narrations.42 They write:

“Skilled oral narrators... may present the characters in their stories as conversing, ... making speeches, praying, chanting, or singing, all of these in appropriate (or markedly inappropriate) social situations. (...) [these] skilled oral narrators are fully capable of producing as great a density of contrasting voices as any novelist, and indeed these voices are among their principal means for characterizing the actors in their stories. (...) Their moments of dysfluency include representations of the dysfluencies of the characters: mutters, hesitations, speech defects, foreign accents. A novelist must describe these myriad details and shadings of voice in words or else (where feasible) resort to unusual spelling or punctuation, whereas an oral story-teller can speak them directly. (...) The imaginal world that is constructed by the diversification and detailing of voicing, in combination with movements among stratified syntactical and lexical registers, is a social one, complete with contrasting roles based on sex, age, kinship, acquired statuses...(...) Some of these social differences may be revealed solely by represented voices, rather than being made explicit by the narrator. At a smaller scale are vocal characteristics that identify a particular person rather than a category of persons, and at a still finer scale are changes of voice that signal changes in the emotional state of the "same" character. Aspects of voicing, at whatever level, may spread from quotations into the surrounding discourse, as when a narrator describes the actions of a character in a way that echoes the identifying voice of that character, thus producing the oral counterpart of free indirect style in written fiction” (Tedlock and Mannheim 1995:16).

42 Bakhtin’s emphasis and insistence on the plurality of voices and the polyphonic interplay of characters against the monologue, or the subordination of a diversity of characters’ voices to the single viewpoint of the author, can be explained, in Tedlock and Manheim words, who consider “the oppressive political context in which he worked” (op.cit.:1995:16). However, they go on to say that, “his deeper condition was that of anyone who confronts, from within the West, the Western metaphysic” (op.cit.:16). This view is very close to Overing (2004,in press) recognition of the importance for anthropology that Post-colonial literature has had in “the programme of decolonising our ways of thinking about otherness and transformed the discipline”(p:3). The dialogical emphasis on the plurality of voices — those of the other — over the monologic and analytical stance is taken into account by Overing when she recalls that in anthropology very frequently “the stress has been upon the superiority of the anthropological investigator, and the gaze dismissive of much of what the rest of the world had to say”(ibid). In her way of doing anthropology she therefore leaves the frame of an oppressive scientific atmosphere and its “primary concern with the abstract and the sociological, with universals (i.e. that which is local to the west) and a rationalist, formalist, and juridical model of a ‘rights’-centred view of society” to focus on the “conscious, living, sensuous, experiencing, reflecting, laughing, weeping, talking, telling, admonishing, singing, punning, playing human beings” (ibid).
In previous chapters, we have seen the extent to which the myth narration's "voices" play a key role in order to the understanding of the myth in all its richness, as Hymes has nicely put it. However by means of the myth of Poreawë, I want to demonstrate the fundamental importance of understanding, the myth and its voices from the point of view of the pragmatics of everyday language use. That is, to read the myth from a viewpoint that keep in mind the ways Yanomami people speak, listen to and react to the way other people speak to them. The voices that are present in this version of the myth are: the myth teller, Horonami and Poreawe, and Horonami’s villagers. Their words, after a careful reading, can be said to encapsulate culturally specific values directly related not only to the notion of bad speech and Yanomami understanding of it, but also related to their views on what types of sociality are associated with such ways of speaking. In other words, a dialogical approach to these voices cast important light on Yanomami people’s own understandings of what are the meanings of speaking badly and the social significance of speaking like “the ghost.” Furthermore, these voices provide vivid images of “Yanomami actors,” thinking and speaking as social and moral beings. In order to capture this we have to try and see the text as a texture. As we have seen in previous chapters, one way of attempting this is by representing the myth in lines.

5.1.2 The myth of the master of bananas (in lines)

This myth comes from Lizot (1989:83-6). To better follow the different voices that the Myth teller enacts in his narration, I will indicate among brackets who is speaking and other details.

text 5.1
[myth teller's voice]

1  *Ei a pitha rê kui*,
   this earth,

2  *No patapi pêni a pitha wai ta no kuperaheshini.*
The ancestors ate this earth.

3 **Kuratha a taimahei,**
they did not know bananas,

4 **Ei pitha shiro wai ta no kuperaheshini.**
always with this earth.

5 **Yaro kē a tehiamaho,**
they ate the game,

6 **Ei kē a pitha ha tēē pē iyama.**
They ate it with this earth.

7 **Poreaweni kuratha kē pē tamarei no kureshi.**
Poreawe made them to know/show them the bananas.

8 **Horonami maa a kei tēhē a he ha yohoikuni,**
Horonami when it was about to rain wanted to take shelter,

9 **Yaa kē tēē hena ki thakini:**
he took some leaves:

[While waiting for the rain to stop he began to scan some *wayamou* words]

10 "**Fei pariki rē uprayahi,**
"A mountain rises up before me,

11 **Fei thoo thoku rē tuyahi,**
before me hangs a liana,

12 **Ya thoku ta pahetipra.**
Which I will cut.

13 **Ya thoku peyei ha kuperuni,**
when I have cut it,

14 **Fei hi rē uprayahi,**
this tree that stands before me,

15 **Ya hi pata wekeamai ha.**
I will burn this tree.

16 **Kihi puu a rē shatire,**
that beehive stuck over there,

17 **Ya na ki si ta ahiama."**
I will burn the bees."

[myth teller's voice]
Horonami kē a kuu kai keprou ha kuperuni.
Horonami was reciting and bowing at each declaration

Kuu pîyekou yaio tēhē,
when he was reciting

Poreawē kuratha kē pē wari ha yefirenī,
Poreawe carrying a load of banana plantains

Kuratha kē pē wake pata ha yororeni,
he had piled ripe bananas on top.

Poreawē a petariyoma.
Poreawe appeared

Horonami kē a ha tararini,
when Horonami saw Poreawe

A matha rē waltariyonowei.
He fell silent.

[Horonami’s voice]

“Weti ke a rii?”
“Who can that be?”

Poreawē kē a wari rē upratareyorunowei.
Poreawe stopped.

Poreawē kē iha poreri kē a shi warii rē kupariyonowei.
In the presence of Poreawe, poreri [Horonami] was stupefied.

[Horonami’s voice]

“weti pei kē wa rii?”
“Who are you?”

Yakumi kē a puhi hatukei ha kuperuni:
after a moment he [Horonami] recovered his senses:

[Horonami’s voice]

“weti pei kē wa rii?”
“Who are you?

31 *Eyemi kē a ta ahetetaru.*
Come close over here.

[Poreawe’s voice]

32 “*Ya aheteomi,*
“I won’t come,

33 *Wayumi kē ya ayou.*
I am living in the forest [wayumi].”

[myth teller’s voice]

34 *Poreawē kē a aka porepioma,*
Poreawe had a speech problem,

35 *Waritiwē a wa hama.*
He spoke badly/ugly.

[Pointing to the bananas, Horonami was curious and asked]

36 “*weti pei kē pē rii?*
“What that can be?

37 *Weti kē tē pē?*
What is it ?”

[Poreawe replied]

38 “*kui,*
“I don’t know.

39 *yai kē tē pē,“*
they are unknown things,”

40 *Poreawē kē a wari kuatarou ha kuperun.*
Poreawe replied.

[Horonami’s voice]

41 “*Uhu kē tē wai wake wanihitawē yai.*
“They are very ripe.

42 *Weti pei tē pē tothi taani?“*
what are they really ?”
[Poreawe's voice]

43 "Kuratha, Bananas,
44 "Kuratha!" Bananas!

[Horonami's voice]

45 "Kuratha rè pē?" Bananas?

[Poreawe's voice]

46 "Kuratha kē pē! Bananas!
47 Kuratha kē ki! Banana! [kuratha type]
48 Pareami kē ki, Banana, [pareami type]
49 Monarimi kē ki, Banana, [Monarimi type]
50 Hei paushima kē ki, this banana, [Paushimi type]
51 Hei rokomi kē ki. This banana. [Rokomi type]

[myth teller's ]

52 Pē pē tapramai puhio kē yaro. He [poreawe] want to show them. [the bananas]
53 Wa tō pē wari thapou no shoanowe. He [poreawe] already had them. [bananas]
54 tō pē wari ha yorororeni. He had piled bananas on top of the load.

[Horonami's voice]

55 "Tahiapi kē a ta hukepa, "give me one,
56 ya thē ta wapa.
I will taste it.

57  tê'ê ki no kretetio yaiyopiwê."
They really look very sweet."

[Poreawe's voice]

58  "Kretetiwô kë pë,
"they are sugary
59  kuratha kë pë,
they are bananas,
60  kurathal!"
bananas"

[myth teller's]

61  E rë hipekenowei.
[Horonami] peeled one end tore off the skin all around,
62  Si ha shokekeshokeketaarini,
He tasted it.
63  E si wapeatarama.
Eat it.
64  Weheri,
eat it,
65  Weheri.
Eat it.
66  Ni kreteni ha,
It smelled good,
67  Weheri,
ate it,
68  Weheriararini.
Ate it all.
69  Yetu kë e shi warii ha kuikuni,
suddenly he became sick,
70  "yari!
"yari!
71  Yari!"
yari!"
72  A kuuai ha kuperuni.
He began to rave.

73  Poreawe kē a wari ikaparoma.  
Poreawe burts out laughing.

[Poreawe's voice]

74  "wa shi warii ma kui.  
"Although you are loosing your mind.

75  A ta oweheri,  
take hold of yourself,

76  Kuratha kē ani wa shi warirayyou kuhe.  
The bananas are making you lose your mind.

77  Kurathapi wari hapa wamou shi wario kē a no kupereshi."
   It always happens when someone eats them for the first time."

[myth teller's voice]

78  E owehea rē korayonowei.  
He [Horonami] recovered his senses.

[Horonami's voice]

79  "Pei wa tōē pē ha Kusherarini,  
"Break off these, [bananas]

80  ei kē tōē ki ta hiyo,  
and give them to me,

81  ya tōē ki ta tea."  
I take them."

[myth teller's voice]

82  E ki ha hipekini:  
He [poreawe] handed them to him

[Horonami's voice]

83  "Ya ki wape.  
"I'll eat them

84  Weti ha pei kē wa peria kure?"  
Where do you live"?
"Kihi kë tê hehu rë yeprhirahari ha,
there in that place where there is a round mountain,

'tê he wai rë yarire ha,
I live on the plain that stretches to the foot of the mountain,

kiha kë ya hikaripi praa kupiyeheri,
there I got a garden,

ya shaponopi praa kure.
[there] is my house.

Yetu hamî kë ya u koama.
I’ve been drinking banana mush for a long time.

Hei ya tê ki kai kokema.”
I came to fetch these [bananas]"

"Ai pê rii ha,
For my people, [to the others in my village]

“kuratha kë pê pê ha tha!”
“I’ve just found out that these are bananas”

ya kuu ha,
if I say so, [when I said so]

yamaki yahiwe.”
We’ll visit you.”

"Poreawë kë ya,”
“I am Poreawe,”

wari ta no kuataropershini.
He [Poreawe] said.

“Wamare a huamai kukema,
if you come to visit, [to ask for...]"
98 Kuratha kē siki kararu,
to ask for banana sprouts,

99 pē siki kararu toai puhio yaro,
if they want to take banana sprouts,

100 ya tē siki kararu tikaremái mai kē tē.
I won’t let them to take any.

101 tē pē si kararu parimi.
These plants are not for giving. [chek this]

102 Kuratha ha re wamaki iyai ma ta thawe?"
Do you people eat bananas ?"

[myth teller’s voice]

103 Poreawē ke a wari kuma.
Said poreawe.

[myth teller’s voice]

104 “Ipa tē siki!
“these plants belong to me!

105 Ei ware he niya ma rē warouwei,
now you saw me here,

106 Hei ya rē hayupariyowei,
I come this way,

107 Eyemi ya wayumi rē kupraaiwei hamī,
this is the way I take when I go to camp in the forest,

108 Enaha kē ya he rē tiheripraaiwei hamī,
I do like this when I camp in the forest,

109 Ya he tiheria kokei.
I don’t take the road/I cut through the forest/I take a shortcut

110 Proke ya yanopi ha wamaki mayo wai upraope thai,”
when you get to my house you will find it empty,"

[myth teller’s voice]

111 Poreawē kē a wari kuu ha kuparuni.
Poreawe said.
[Horonami's voice]

112 "awei,
"yes/all right,

113 pei a ta kuhami."
Be in your way."

[Poreawe's voice]

114 "Feyemi kē ya kurayou kuhe,
"I was passing through here,

115 ya perio mohi.
I am tired of being/staying at home.

116 Heyemi kē ya rē kurayoheriwei."
I usually come this way."

[myth teller's voice]

117 Kuratha kē ki ha yehireni:
[poreawe] put the load on his back and resumed his journey:

118 Tok, tok, tok...
tok, tok, tok...

119 ōō he rē hataa kokenowei.
He started walking along the path.

120 Poreawē a ha aruherini,
after Poreawe had gone,

121 Horonami a korayoma.
Horonami returned home.

122 Yahi hamī a kokema.
He went back to his house.

123 Ai pēni tate pē ha tararini,
Once the other saw the bananas,

124 Pē warima:
they asked him:
[Horonami’s villager voice]

125  “Weti pei kē tēē ki rii?  
     “What’s that?”

126  Weti kē tēē ki?”
     What is it?”

[myth teller’s voice]

127  A wa huo haionomi,  
     He didn’t answer at once,

128  tēē pomoma.  
     He warmed himself.

129  Kē ki rē yaumakenowei.  
     He hung up the bananas.

[Horonami’s villager voice]

130  “weti pei kē tēē ki wake tothitawe yaiwe?”
     “What are those ripe fruit called?”

[myth teller’s voice]

131  A ha pomotaaruni,  
     He [Horonami] continued to warm himself,

132  Pata proehewe kē tēē pē:  
     two old men asked:

[Horonami’s villager voice]

133  “weti pei kē tēē ki?  
     “What’s that?

134  Wa tēē ki tararei kuhawe?”
     Did you find them?”

[myth teller’s voice]

135  tēē pē taimi yaiwehe kutaenl.
They really did not know what they were.

136  *Pata kē tēː*
    an Old man [asked]:

[Horonami's villager voice]

137  "*Weti pei kē tē ki kuo kuhe?*"
    "Did you find them?"

[Horonami's voice]

138  "*Kuratha!*
    "bananas!"

139  *Kuratha kē ki*
    Bananas!

140  *Kuratha!*
    Bananas!

141  *Ya weheo tēhē,*
    When I was taking shelter from the rain,

142  *Poreawē kē pē warokeyoru kurol,*
    Poreawe arrived,

143  *Kuratha kē pē pē ha thai.*
    He knew what they were.

144  *Poreawē pē tē waha,*
    Poreawe began to talk,

145  "*Poreawē kē ya,*"
    "I am Poreawe,"

146  *enaha pē tē kuu rē kē thai.*"
    I've just found out that they are bananas."

[myth teller's]

147  *Kuratha rē kē ki wake hi pea ha shetekeapotuheni,*
    He [Horonami] distributed bananas to the people,

148  *Kē ki wakē ha waara rihe ni:*
    when they were eating the bananas:

149  "*Yari,*
"yari,"

150 **Yari!**
    yari!"

151 **t’ë pë kuparou ha kuparuni.**  
    They begun to rave.

152 **Poreawē,**  
    Poreawe,

153 **Ihini kuratha wa ki tamarei ta no kupereshini.**  
    It was he who introduced the bananas.

(Lizot 1989: 83-6)

Let us talk about all these voices.

5.2 The voices of the myth

The myth "seen" in this way discloses important information on the role that quoted speech play in the development of the different characters. For instance, the myth has 153 lines of which 87 are the voices of the characters in quoted speech enacted by the myth teller: Poreawē’s voice has 41 lines, Horomani’s 40 lines, and Horonami’s villagers 6 lines. Considering this, I want to present, adapted to the characters of this particular Yanomami myth, Basso’s (1987) views on the importance of quoted speech in mythic narratives:

"Weird, awesome, and outrageous though they may be, mythological figures like [Poreawē and Horonami] do seem very like real people, if we temporarily suspend our fascination with their extraordinary activities and special worlds, and focus more carefully on the narrative details, on how these activities and worlds are described. The how (rather than what) of the description makes it seem as if what is happening is almost like what goes on in the lives of ordinary [Yanomami] listeners. The sense of familiarity has much to do with the way we learn about a character’s feelings and intentions, which are clarified through what other people say, and the ways the character engages others in the story. Mythological characters like [Poreawē, Horonami...], construct their special realities through activities, especially speech, that are organized and described in a "sensible" narrative form. This purposeful patterning constitutes a kind of interpretive matrix consisting of keys to the significance of the referential content, the "what" of the story. The discursive structure of
a narrative (the "how") highlights what happens to particular characters, contrasts the settings in which events occur, marks events as distinctive, and links events together into hierarchically ordered segments" (Basso 1987:227) [my brackets enclose substitutions].

She also writes that:

"The careful reader will have noticed that a great amount and variety of quoted speech is used to construct [Yanomami] stories. Most events are in fact "speech-centered" in that conversational dialogues [like those between Poreawē and Horonami and between Horonami and his fellow villagers] are the most important tool [Yanomami] storytellers use to develop their characters and give meaning to their activities. Through conversation, narrators construct developmental differences in the characters' attitudes toward one another and toward activities that are taking place in the story. Important characters shift ground from one dynamic posture to another, as they change (or reinforce) their subjective interpretations of the appropriate personal role in collective activities. Their quoted speech (which constitutes these processes) thus forms a coherent narrative progression of the greatest importance, involving as it does the ordered integration of statements about feelings, goals, and enactments, and accomplishments or failures. (...) [T]he way speech is quoted —what is said and how what is said points to something beyond the particular instance of speaking itself— reveals ideas [Yanomami] have about language itself, its use as conversation, and its functions and consequences for thought and action. In short, a careful look at quoted speech in [Yanomami] stories directs us to an understanding of how particular characters are conceived and related to each other, and how these conceptions suggest a broader framework of propositions about language, personhood, and society" (Basso 1987:229) [my brackets enclose substitutions].

It is important to note the similarity between Basso's view on the importance of quoted speech in indigenous narratives and the above introduced views of Tedlock and Mannheim. There are several aspects to the insights provided by these authors that apply largely to the Yanomami myth. Such aspects will appear as my discussion of the myth unfolds and progresses. By now, we can start by asking, for instance, what the myth narrator says about the ghost? And what about the main Yanomami characters, i.e., Horonami and his villagers, what they say about the ghost and how do they express it? Finally, what does the ghost say? And, how does he say it? What can be his reasons to saying what he says and in the ways he says it? How Yanomami people
understand the bad words, the ugly speech of Poreawē? As we will see, the character of the ghost is clearly pictured as an asocial being and he speaks as such.

Let us move on and see how this asociality is portrayed and the way Yanomami people think about it in its relationship with the notion of bad speech. In doing this, we will see the fundamental importance Yanomami people give to the aesthetics of language in its relationship with the aesthetics of sociality. Let us see the way in which language and sociality are part and parcel of the same, and distinctive, aesthetics of Yanomami people way of life.
CHAPTER 6

Living alone: The solitary existence of Poreawē and his lack of community

Rivièrè (1984) in his comparative study of Amerindian social organisation writing about the Amerindian conception of the settlement and the better ways through which we could grasp such conceptions, comments on the wrongness of placing “too much emphasis on the settlement as either a geographical location or a physical entity” (op.cit.: 72). The settlement, he says, “is better thought of as a set of people living together in the same place (...), [it] is above all a social phenomenon” (op.cit.:72). Rivièrè’s views can be complemented by Overing (2000) when, writing about the Piaroa argues that “they live within a “meaningful” universe, which we can understand as a contrasts with the unitary, objective, universe of the Western scientist.” “[It] is normal,” she says, that among the tropical forest peoples of the Amazon for postulates about “physical reality” to be constitutive of other postulates which are social, moral and political in scope” (op.cit.: 282). She concludes remarking that:

“The fact that indigenous postulates about reality are consciously not decontextualized from social, political and moral concerns, and thus from everyday practice, is not a trivial matter” (op.cit.282; and see also Overing 1985).

Considering this, let me try to contextualise a number of speeches that take place in the myth and look at them from within a wider perspective.

6.1 Social and asocial voices

In the following text, for instance, we can appreciate the way the myth teller enacts the voice of Poreawē, the Ghost, as he explains to Hōrōnami where he lives. After having tasted the bananas for the first time and asked for more bananas, Hōrōnami enquires about the place where Poreawē lives. This is what Poreawē answers to Hōrōnami:
Let me then try to contextualise Poreawé’s words within a Yanomami perspective. Placing his answer about the place where he lives within the context of the everyday, and taking into consideration social, political and moral concerns, we can then appreciate how the Ghost answer may be understood from a Yanomami point of view. However, before doing this, I want to introduce other voices that appear in various versions of the myth of Poreawé. Such voices are closely related to this issue and will help to better contextualise the answer we are discussing here.

The next example represents the voice of a myth teller. It shows his way of introducing Poreawé to his audience. These are the first words of the myth teller in a different version of the myth of the master of Bananas:

**Text 6.2**

1. *porepore,*
   revenant [i.e., the ghost]

2. *iha re a waha re weyenowei,*
   this was his name,

3. *kihami re a yami rii peritayoma.*
   he lived alone over there.'
(Lizot 1989: 86)
The second text comes from another version of the myth of Poreawé. It presents the speech of Hörōnami, enacted by the myth teller, to his fellow villagers, i.e., a Yanomami audience. Hörōnami tells them the way he obtained the bananas, and he also gives information about the region in which he got them: the region of Poreawé. The text provides more clues about what the Yanomami think about the Ghost’s ways of living.

**text 6.3**

1. “kihami Yakere the urihi hami,
   “Over there, in the region of Yakere

2. ya yakea kuaa ha ayathoherini,
   I got lost in a distant land

3. Yanomami ai the no perio totihiopi re mai”
   where no Yanomami lives.”
   (Lizot 1989:82)

The three texts above presented shed light upon the ways Poreawé lives and his existence. They will also help to appreciate the reasoning behind Rivière and Overing’s remarks and the way their insights can be said to apply to Yanomami reality. We can appreciate that these texts include examples of three different voices: the first (text 6.1) is the voice of Poreawé, the ghost, speaking to Hörōnami; the second (text 6.2) shows the voice of the myth teller, his first words to introduce the main character of the myth to his audience; and finally, the third (text 6.3) is the voice of Hörōnami describing to his fellow villagers the place where Poreawé lives. From these three different voices one can appreciate two different points of view; they reveal two different opinions about the ways Poreawé lives. When considered carefully, a clear contrast arises between them. On the one hand there are the ways in which the myth teller and Hörōnami describe the place where the ghost lives (texts 6.2, 6.3); on the other hand there is the Ghost’s own way of describing such a place -his own place (text 6.1). These different points of view, the different modes of speaking and the reasoning associated with them, reveal important features of the Ghostly “form of life” (Wittgenstein 1976 [1953]). They are of major significance in order to become acquainted with what kinds of living, and what “forms of life” the
Yanomami associate with a character like the ghost (see more below), which epitomises improper ways of speaking (e.g., bad/ugly speech) and asocial behaviour. Let us consider these voices in more detail.

6.1.1 Yanomami voices: The myth teller and Horonami

In the texts presented before, there are two different ways of thinking about, and verbally expressing, a number of features of the ghost’s settlement. On the one hand there are the voices of the myth teller and Horonami (texts 6.2 and 6.3). These two voices refer to the place of the ghost in similar ways and they share a similar point of view. For instance, the first text encapsulates a Yanomami point of view, so to speak, as it represents the voice of the myth narrator. He introduces Poreawé, the “Ghost,” by saying his name, where and how he lived: “he lived alone” (Text 6.2; line 3). Similarly, Horonami, speaking with his fellow villagers about where he got the bananas (i.e., in the region of the ghost), says that the ghost’s place is a “distant land where no Yanomami lives” (i.e., a land where nobody lives) (Text 6.3; lines 2-3). Both, the myth teller and Horonami, explicitly remark upon the extent to which the ghost settlement is neither “a set of people living together,” nor a “social phenomenon” (see Rivière 1984). In addition, if we still look at what is said about Poreawé’s house in another version of the myth available in the literature, the information is revealing, and supports the argument that I am elaborating.43 In this version it is said that:

**text 6.4**

‘Porehimi’s relatives are few (...) only his mother and father, his wife, and his children’ (Coco, in Wilbert and Simoneau 1990:159).

This text provides more information referring to the lack of “proper” social phenomenon in the house of the ghost. Now the emphasis is put on the fact that there is not an adequate number of people living together. Considering these texts and voices, along with their descriptions, the ghost settlement is far from

43 There are more “details” that one can get from other myths in which Poreawé appears. Thus, in these myths it is said that: 1) he had not fire; 2) not smoke was seen coming from his house; 3) he not gave proper food to his guest; 4) his place was a terrible cold place. The nature of this character is depicted in various ways, and all of them speak of his weird, non-human nature.
being what the Yanomami would consider to be a social phenomenon. For them, living either alone or with "few relatives" is not the proper way to live a human sort of life. Interestingly enough, both facts (i.e., living alone and living with few relatives) can be expressed in Yanomami with the same word, yami, that means "only one" or "only few", "lonely", "one."  

6.1.2 Poreawé’s voice

On the other hand there is the ghost voice (text 6.1). When he refers to the place of his settlement he emphasizes its geographical and the physical aspects (i.e. "plain," "mountain," "garden," "house;" see lines 2-5).

The contrasts between the Yanomami voices and the voice of Poreawé, viewed from within the myth's framework and taking into account the ways the Yanomami usually speak in their everyday life, do not merely show differences in detail. They are not just different ways of saying, essentially, "the same" thing. For the Yanomami the stress is upon the social, rather than the physical as Rivière (1984) suggests for the Trio people and others of the Guianas.

6.2 Social and asocial beings

The manner in which Horonami asks the Ghost where he lives and the ghost answers (text 6.1) are very significant in this discussion. If we compare this dialogue with the ways the Yanomami usually refer in their everyday life to other people one can see the extent to which places, people and social relationships are usually intermingled: They are conceived and expressed in the fullness of their mutual relationships.

I shall illustrate in the following pages that the different points of view in describing the ghost residence in the texts above discussed indicate fundamental distinctions that give evidence to social, moral and political values (see Overing 2000). For it is the case that these two different ways of describing

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44 For similar associations see for instance Overing on the Piaroa (1975) and Lagrou on the Cashinahua (1998) where orphans are said to be alone and therefore lonely.
where the ghost lives are loaded heavily for the Yanomami with moral and ontological implications with regard to what it means to be a human social being. These two different ways of speaking reveal, explicitly and implicitly, how the Yanomami conceive the form of life of Poreawe and, by extension, the associated notion of bad speech such a form of life epitomizes.

When a Yanomami refers to another person, he or she might usually give, in addition, a location, a place where that person lives. Such location, however, is not only made by giving physical or geographical information, but will place the person referred to within a specific social world as well. In addition to "physical places", information about kinship relationships, personal names of other people and names of communities or a group of communities are, more often than not, also provided. For a Yanomami, the "place" of a person, his or her existence, his or her identity in this world, is mainly conceived of and almost always described in relation to this social realm. This relationship, and the reasoning behind it can be better appreciated if we consider the Yanomami term "theri," which translates as "community" or equally as a "member of a local group," "an element that forms part of a group, a community." Let me illustrate this by means of the words of certain Yanomami.

Let us see for instance the manner in which a Yanomami tells something about another person and what this person has said to him. We will see the way he refers to such a person by expressing a kinship term first and then identifying that relative with a particular community. The example below comes from the speech of an elder in which he is informing his fellow villagers about a recent visit to a neighbouring community called Essemowe.

text 6.5

1 Shoriwe Essemowe theri,
   My brother in law from the community of Essemowe,

2 shoriwe Essemowe theri mamo riya yeo mi ma re hetuowei
   My brother in law from the community of Essemowe is going to see it just afterwards.

45 See Lizot (2004:439)
In this way, by knowing the social relationships of the speaker and the particular community referred to by him the listeners get to know who the person is, i.e., that particular brother-in-law. The speaker does not provide a name, however the information provided is enough for an adult person to know which person is being referred to.

The next text is an example of the way the term *theri* encapsulates the relationship between people and places. It is an example through which we can see that for the Yanomami to talk about people living in a certain place is tantamount to talking about the community that exists in such place.

**text 6.6**

1. *...guardia a kai kuo parioma,*  
   ...he was working as a "guardia nacional" before

2. *ihi the nowa ha a maprariyoma,*  
   then disappeared from our sight [i.e., he stop coming]

3. *ihi the nowa ha pirisi ha suwe pe terayoma,*  
   then he married a woman in La Esmeralda,

4. *ihirupi kua,*  
   he has a child,

5. *ihi pirisi theri a kuprou waikitarayoma miha*  
   and was again a member of the community of La Esmeralda [i.e., he lives now "properly" in La Esmeralda]

In this example Alfredo, the speaker, is introducing one particular person, an outsider, to his audience. This outsider was making his political campaign among the Yanomami. First Alfredo provides a brief introduction to this person and speaks about his particular job (i.e., "he was a "Guardia" before," and, "then he quit that job;" lines 1-2). Then he says that the outsider has now a wife and a child (lines 3-4). At the end Alfredo associates all these facts, all these bits of personal information by adding, as if it were a direct consequence from his preceding words, that the outsider referred to by him has become "a member of the community of La Esmeralda," he lives properly there, is already a member of that community ("pirisi theri a kuprou waikitarayoma;" line 5). In the context in
which Alfredo is speaking, the message he wanted to convey by using the term “their” is that the outsider lives “there,” in La Esmeralda, and not in another place (i.e., Puerto Ayacucho or Caracas) as do most of the politicians who visit them do.

Finally, the following example shows another use of the term “theri.”

text 6.7

1 yamaki reahumou tehe Mahekoto theri pe warokeyoruma....
   when we were having the funerary ceremony (feast) the people from the Mahekoto community arrived...

2 Aherowe a warokeyoruma,
   Aherowe came,

3 ihi tehe pe oshe sho,
   then his younger brother,

4 pe hii sho pe warokeyoruma....
   and his father also came as well...

In this case the term theri refers to some people of the community of Mahekoto. They are described afterwards, in a more detailed manner, either by his personal name, “Aherowe came,” (text 6.8; line 2) or by specific kin relationships of this particular person, “his younger brother” and “his father” (text 6.7; lines 3-4).

We have seen the word “theri” present in all of the above examples provided (see texts 6.5, 6.6, 6.7) all of which help to illustrate the various aspects of its meaning. The manner in which the Yanomami use the term “theri” in these sentences, together with the characteristic phrasing surrounding the word, show the strong linkage they establish between people, communities and social relationships. The semantic contexts in which this term appears help us to get closer to the Yanomami notions of individual identity in their own terms. It also shows the extent to which such an identity can not be conceptualised without an associated community of people. If the Yanomami are to have “a place” in this world, this place is eminently social. These views shed important light upon the Yanomami conceptions about the person, and also their ways of
thinking about the individual and his/her relationship within a social milieu. Furthermore, as I have tried to show, the use of the term "theri," or the lack of its use, is not merely a descriptive term. Its use is to make a claim about the Yanomami world of the social, a world in which individual selves are social.

To my mind, the Yanomami views on identity can be said to be close to certain views of the philosopher Charles Taylor (1985). In addition, his own stress upon speech and language use as constitutive of social behaviour provides a particularly appropriate vantage point to better understand the fundamental role that language plays in the Yanomami conception of personal identity and the linkage of such identity with a community of people. Taylor provides a critique of the features and the ideals that have helped to constitute what he calls "the modern identity" that in his view have tended "to generate an understanding of the individual as metaphysically independent of society" (1985:8). Individuals are not only "shaped by social environment," he writes, "an individual is constituted by the language and culture which can only be maintained and renewed in the communities he is part of" (op.cit.:8). Taylor goes on to further explain this relationship:

"The community is not simply an aggregation of individuals; nor is there simply a causal interaction between the two. The community is also constitutive of the individual, in the sense that the self-interpretations which define him are drawn from the interchange which the community carries on. A human being alone is an impossibility, not just de facto, but as it were de jure. Outside of the continuing conversation of a community, which provides the language by which we draw our background distinctions, human agency (...) would be not just impossible, but inconceivable. As organisms we are separable from society —although it may be hard in fact to survive as a lone being; but as humans this separation is unthinkable. On our own, as Aristotle says, we would be either beasts or Gods" (Taylor 1985:8, italics in the original).

Through the comments about different sequences of the myth, I have attempted to illustrate that for Yanomami people individual identity is a fundamental social question (see M. Strathern 1982; Overing 1993). Furthermore, it cannot be detached from the interpersonal and the dialogic
relationships with others (see Bakhtin 1981; Tedlock and Mannheim 1995; Ingold 1986). From a Yanomami perspective, a lone being - i.e., a being that is not a member of any local group, (someone who is "outside the continuing conversations of a community", in Taylor's terms) - is considered neither a beast nor a god, as Aristotle says. For them such a being certainly cannot be a Yanomami, cannot be a human person: he is a Ghost. And interestingly enough he does not speak properly. This take us to consider the extent to which the speech of the ghost is related to the fact that he has no community of relations and to "the recognition of the fact that to be a speaker of a language means to be a member of a speech community" (Duranti, 1997:20). The Ghost's lack of community give us more cues to understand the reasons he has speech problems.

Let us see more about this being and why he does not speak properly.

6.3 Poreawé's empty house: the lack of good conditions of communal living and the lack of life

I have already indicated various aspects of the Ghost's lack of a proper community and his lonely existence. Now in the next example, the ghost,

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46 On this relationship between the person and the social by means of the verbal, Ingold (1986) writes that "the conversation that is social life, is creative, and what is created is a relationship" (op.cit.141, his stress).
47 I recall here a classical definition of the concept of speech community, a term that clearly refers to linguistic phenomena (speech) in its relation with a socially defined universe (community). Generally, in Linguistic anthropology the start is the assumption that "for speakers to be able to acquire and use language skills, they must be members of a community within which those skills are transmitted and valued" (Gumperz, quoted in Duranti 2000:39). This social and contextual emphasis insists that the study of language usage goes beyond the referential function encompassing more general behavioural norms. Thus the definition of speech community as "any human aggregate characterised by regular and frequent interaction by means of a shared body of verbal signs and set off from similar aggregates by significant differences in language usage" (Gumperz, in Duranti 2001:43). A similar concern with the social side of language use is made evident in Hyme's (1972:277-8) criticism of Chomsky's notion of competence: "We have to account for the fact that a normal child acquires knowledge of sentences, not only as grammatical, but also as appropriate. He or she acquires competence as to when to speak, when not, and as to what to talk about with whom, when not, and as to what to talk about with whom, when, where, in what manner. In short, a child becomes able to accomplish a repertory of speech acts, to take part in speech events, and to evaluate their accomplishment by others. This competence, is integral with attitudes, values, and motivations concerning language, its features and uses, and integral with competence for, and attitudes toward, the interrelation of language with other code of communicative conduct." Yanomami people, as we are learning through the way Poreawé, the ghost, is conceived of, think about language as part and parcel of social relations.
Poreawe himself, expresses the absence of any sociality within his house: "you will find it empty" he says to Hörōnami threaterngly.

text 6.8

1 “proke ya yanopi ha wamaki mayo wai upraope thai,"
   "when you get to my house you will find it empty."

2 poreawē ke a wari kuu ha kuperuni,
   Poreawe said,

   At first glance Poreawe would seem to be providing some "useful," casual information to Hörōnami. It was as if Poreawē were telling Hörōnami to not come, as he would not be at home! Don’t waste your trip! Carefully examined, however, these words implicitly convey an important picture about the ghost’s identity that is congruent with the features we have so far been exploring. The ghost is now identifying his own dwelling as an empty space, the very place that for the Yanomami is part and parcel of their personal identity, which is inextricably linked to their very social existence.

   Generally speaking, an "empty house" has strong significance of a negative sort for Yanomami people. An empty house for them is synonymous with the lack of the conditions that would make possible communal living, and therefore, by extension, it is also associated with the absence of life. The more obvious reasons for a house to be left empty, either for a short or long period of time, are as follows: the illness of various of its members ("shawara"); the lack of available food; the expectation of an enemy attack; an attempt to alleviate possible social tensions, either within the community or with those living in the neighboring communities ("yahitheri’im’"); and finally, the event of a death of an elder member of the group. In mythic narrations and in everyday verbal life it is not unusual to find explicit associations between an empty house, the lack of quality conditions for community living and the theme of death. Let me demonstrate this theme through various examples.

48 See for instance Rivière (1984:28) who, writing about the indigenous peoples of Guiana says that: "The reasons for abandoning a village are numerous, and include death, especially of its leader; ineffective leadership; frequency of illness; deterioration of buildings; infestation; increasing distance to garden sites; scarcity of various resources; and hostilities."
6.3.1 Empty houses and death in myth narration

The association between an empty house and the theme of death is present in a myth about a large jaguar which was continually attacking the people from a particular community: Its population was being decimated. A Yanomami decides to go to this house to look for the survivors. This is the way the myth teller describes the events that took place:

text 6.9

1 the re henaprariyoherinowei tehe,
   when the daylight came,

2 a ayoherima.
   he departed.

3 a oweai re kukekirionowei.
   he got closer.

4 yano a proke ha the koprou re kukenowei.
   he arrived at an empty house.

5 yupu the ushi pe no wai weyahamipi no kirii,
   the ashes of the fires were frightening,

6 the ushi pe ahi totihiwe,
   they were really cold,

7 “wa the pe shee peria ta yaira ke?”
   “are there any survivors at all?”
   (Lizot 1989:200).

Later on in the same narration, a similar association between empty houses and the theme of death is once again expressed. It is told that once the Yanomami who were trying to find their relatives, found some of the survivors in the forest, and they then all headed back toward the jaguar-attacked house. The scene is described with the following words:

text 6.10

1 shapono hami pe hua shoarayoma;
   they went to the house;
2 pe kokema.
they arrived.

3 yaro kahiki re keonowe,
those who the jaguar had eaten,

4 the yano pe si nikerei ha.
their cold hearts [i.e., with no fire] were scattered about.

5 shee pe shiro kuoma:
only some survivors were left:

6 ei ihiru ke a,
one child,

7 ei ai ke a ihiru,
another child,

8 ei ai ke ihiru,
another child,

9 ei suwe ke the,
a woman,

10 ei ai suwe,
another woman,

11 ei waro ke the,
a man,

12 ei ai ke the waro,
another man,

13 ei huya ke the,
a young man,

14 ei ai ke the huya.
another young man.

15 kahiki wariyo kuo no kupereshi,
the rest were eaten,

16 yaro pe iyai kuai tothio no kupereshi,
the beast had really devoured them,

6.3.2 Empty houses in everyday life

I remember one occasion in which I went with the company of a
Yanomami to a house that resulted to be empty. As soon as we crossed the
door, and he saw the house completely empty, with no people and with thick vegetation in the central plaza, he told me that he wanted to leave as soon as possible. After this event, I recall numerous times in which, when entering an empty house, a similar dislike for empty houses was evident in the behaviour of the Yanomomi who were with me. The reasons for this will become more clear in the following pages. In her memories, Helena Valero (Valero, in Biocca 1996:75) recalls a Yanomami saying, after an entire faction had left the settlement where she was living, that:

"it is better that we go away too; that part of the shapono [communal house] that is in front of me has been emptied. When it's like that, sickness appears, Pore [the "ghost"] comes, the Hekura [supernatural beings] enemy come and take the children."

The empty house is here being equated with sickness, and the arrival of the ghost, and also with the attack of evil supernatural beings sent to them by their enemies: it is synonymous with death.

The next text shows another example of this equation between empty houses and death. In this case it is expressed by a Yanomami in the process of everyday speech making. Here we can further appreciate the way in which the picture of an empty house is a metaphor for death. On this occasion the words are those of a Yanomami elder. In his speech he is giving an account of the death of various elders from his community; they had been attacked recently and their enemies had killed some of his relatives. The following, some time after these events had happened, is the way in which he describes for his community the news that he had given to his younger brothers, when they visited him at the very spot where the traumatic events happened:

**text 6.12**

1 *Hei ipa osheye,*  
   This my younger brother,

2 *ipa osheye kē kipi,*  
   my two youngest brothers,

3 *ipa osheye kē kipi mi wau ha yamoikioni,*
when my two youngest brothers arrived (coming up the river),

4 *ipa osheye kē kipi mi ha yamoikioni,*
   when my two youngest brother arrived (coming up the river),

[he enacts now the way he gave his communication to his younger brother]

5 “*oasi,*
   "younger brother,

6 *oasi,*
   younger brother,

7 *e naha,*
   is like this,

8 *oasi e naha,*
   younger brother it is like this,

9 *ei ai nahi proke,*
   here this house is empty

10 *ei ai nahi proke,*
   here this house [referring to another one] is empty

11 *ei ai nahi proke,*
   here this other house is empty,

12 *oasi,*
   younger brother,

13 *e naha kē pē proke rē kutariyonowei ha,*
   because all these houses are empty,

14 *ei kuami, oasi,*
   these (i.e., the persons of this house) no longer exist (i.e., are dead), younger brother

15 *ihi kē rē,*
   it is enough,

16 *ei kuami,*
   these (i.e., the persons of this house) no longer exist (i.e., are dead),

17 *ya oshepi nowa ha tharuni...*
   I said this to my younger brother...

Note the similarities between the way the speaker emphasises the empty house (lines 9-11) along with the way of recounting the number of survivors in the text 6.10 (lines 6-10). There is an explicit equation between empty houses

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49 The Yanomami word "*nahi*" means house. It is also synonymous of the word "*yahi*" that also means house.
and dead people. People and houses are strongly linked and to speak of houses is to speak about the people who live in them. Inversely, we have seen the various ways in which the meaning of an empty house "yano proke" (and also other words meaning house i.e., "yanopi," "yahi," "nahi"), is associated with the theme of death. Taking into account all this, it is quite understandable why the Yanomami do not like empty houses. An empty house generates a feeling of fear and anxiety.

6.4 Poreawé's empty house: A place without people, a voiceless place

The lifeless atmosphere of an empty house, while associated with death, is also equated with silence and with a place that is voiceless. Once again, and from still another perspective, we can find the association between Poreawe's house, and the lack of communication, i.e., there is the absence of the voices of people. One of the first comments the Yanomami would make when entering an empty house would be to refer to the eeriness of not hearing Yanomami voices. The times I myself witnessed this happen, e.g. finding a Yanomami house empty, it seemed to me that for the Yanomami accompanying me that place was embedded by a peculiar silence and emptiness; a stillness which seemed, for them both penetrating and awe-inspiring.

The anxiety this type of silence generates for the Yanomami has to be viewed in perspective. The richness of the verbal life that characterizes a Yanomami village is such that entering into a house and finding no one there, and therefore hearing no voices, generates a strong feeling of emptiness. Yanomami daily life is so characterized by distinctive people sounds that the silence of an empty house is something very noticeable and strongly perceived by them. The richness of people's everyday verbal interactions constitutes a real polyphony of voices, and this generates a very distinctive "noise."50 This specific noise results from a very particular mixture of villagers' voices which

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50 On this particular Chagnon (1977:25-6), on the occasion of a visit to one Yanomami village writes that: "It is impossible to describe the noises they made on seeing me for the first time. The Yanomami are noisy people to begin with, but when they are excited, they are even noisier. They hissed, clucked, and hooted, and screamed."
should not be taken for granted; for it conveys an important sense of community to its members.

Passes (1998:32) points out the importance of this very distinctive human noise that he calls, very appropriately, the "loudness of co-existing"; and he describes it as "an important marker of Pa'ikwene sociality." These kinds of social "noises" generated by an Amazonian community is referred to in other works. For instance Seeger mentions the extent to which 'human noise and voices recreate and embody the Suya community' (1987:65-9,74-81); and Overing (2000:76-77) tells us that the Piaroa label the "sounds of village laughter and talking, when heard from afar in the forest, as huruhuru" (jaguar's roar). Among the Yanomami the sounds of people's voices are a recurring theme in mythic accounts and otherwise, where the approach to a village is described by either the voices of the people or the noises of their domestic activities, i.e., children playing or crying, people laughing, the noise of the cutting of wood, a shaman chanting, etc... (see also Overing op.cit.:77). Lévi-Strauss (1978) goes so far as to describe what we have labeled here as the loudness of coexisting as an important aspect of "an idealized picture of native life" presented in an Arapaho myth which is recounted by him in the following manner:

"As he approaches the village where he hopes to find a wife, Moon's eyes and ears are charmed by the beauty of the landscape, the joyful hum of activity and the songs and cries of humans and animals" (Lévi-Strauss 1978:220).

Yanomami people are quite accustomed to what Passes labels the "loudness of coexisting," a loudness that they experience in their everyday life from the day they are born. In my view, the meaning and significance of a silent house for Yanomami people has to be understood taking into account, first and foremost, the salient role that people's everyday voices play for them, together with the strong feelings of "togetherness" these voices generate. One of the first

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51 The Pa'ikené are more usually know in the literature as the Palikur. They live in the North of Brazil and French Guiana (see Passes 1998)
impressions I always feel when I go back to a non-Yanomami place after having spent a certain time within a Yanomami community, is precisely this lack of people's voices. Some times, I must say, this is perceived as a great pleasure, as a kind of recovery of one's own privacy, one's own silence; but other times that lack is felt intensely and deeply imbued with a feeling of loss and nostalgia. Therefore, I can imagine what this experience would be for a Yanomami, a person who has been living his/her entire life among those voices, the voices of his/her own people.

The impact that the absence of human noises have for other indigenous Amazonian peoples —this lack of villagers' voices—, has been pointed out in various ethnographies. Rivière (2000:257) remarks that among the Trio, although noise is associated with anger, "ultimate rage is when noise turns to silence, when speech and communication cease," and he goes on to say that "complete silence and uncommunicativeness are (...) associated with sorcery." Santos-Granero (2000:276) has noted that a Yanesha, telling about a number of families who had abandoned their community, told him that "the community was silent," by which he meant, writes the author, that the community "was dead." Consequently, it seems to me that the emptiness of the Ghost's house is in agreement with, and complement the picture of those other features of his identity with which we are already familiar: his lack of communicative skills entails an absence of human life. A picture that can now be better appreciated in the following mythical scene in which Poreawe, after hearing a Yanomami invoking his tutelary spirits, left his house empty. This is what the myth says:

text 6.13

1 the wahati totihiwe ha the hokeprariyoma.  
   because of the cold he woke up.

2 porepore a hekuraoma,  
   the man was a shaman,

3 kama a wa hirial tehe:  
   when Poreawe heard him speaking by invoking his spirit helpers:

53 The Yanesha are an indigenous people from Central Peru (see Santos Granero 1991)
"sheta yai heparo yai,
how terrible,
the a no kirio!"
what frightening voice!
pore ke a kuu re kukenowei.
poreawe said.
“ya shurukou ke a kure"
“I am leaving”
the wari kuu mai.
he don’t even say this. [e.g. he did not say that he was leaving]
porepore⁵⁴ a wa ma teteo tehe,
when Porepore (the ancestor) was still speaking
pe re mraa hathokeherinowei;
he disappeared;
pe yahipi prokotariyoma.
and his house was empty.

(Lizot 1989:202).

As we can observe in this example, once again the Ghost is referred to as someone who behaves inappropriately and leaves his house empty for no apparent reason. Once again the myth presents the ghost in a ‘social’ situation that ends up in a markedly asocial way.

6.5 Poreawe’s anger

The theme of the asocial ghost leaving his house empty in a markedly asocial way is referred to in another way. In this case the empty house of Poreawe is a consequence of his mean behaviour. A new, although already familiar feature of the asocial ways of this character can be appreciated in the next scene belonging to the myth of Poreawē. It comes from another version of the myth where it is said that Poreawē’s neighbours, after knowing him and learning what should be done to plant bananas, kept visiting to ask him for more banana sprouts to plant in their new gardens. This visits made Poreawe angry.

⁵⁴ The word porepore as well as poreri are used to refer to the mythological ancestors.
and he therefore abandons his house and plantation, leaving his place literally empty.

**text 6.14**

1. **e siki toa koa no hushuarehei fa**,  
   they kept coming constantly to ask for banana sprouts [e.g. they became annoying]

2. **a fa hushuoni**,  
   he got angry,

3. **siki taa fa shoakeferini**,  
   and abandoned his plantations,

   (Lizot 1989: 87)

In the text of the myth we can see that the Ghost avoids any visit and requests from his Yanomami neighbours by telling them that he will not engage in any conversation with them, and that if they were to come, they will find his house empty (see text 5.1, lines 91-111). Now, in the above example (text 6.14) the narrator says that Poreawe leaves his garden, and therefore his settlement, in anger. This was an anger caused by the constant visits and requests of his Yanomami neighbours who had, to be sure, a very different aptitude for social and verbal interaction. Yet, the same reaction - that of leaving his garden or house in anger - is present in another version. There, it is said that after realizing that he had suffered a theft, (something I will refer to later) he became angry and left as he did not want to live near the Yanomami any longer:

'But he was so angry with the Yanomami that he no longer wanted to live near them. He abandoned his plantation and went elsewhere, far, far away' (Cocco 1972, in Wilbert and Simoneau 1990:163).

Among the Yanomami one of the main characteristics that mark anger can be said to be social and physical separation, and the lack of communication (see Lizot 1994a; Ales 2000). Having seen the isolation and social separation that characterizes the ghost, his outburst of anger make us to think about the reasons the ghost might have to become even more isolated. Moreover, it would seem that he also somehow represents the feeling of anger. The reasons
Lizot (1994a:857) writes that:

“anger is usually mute, and the Yanomami who experience it cease all forms of communication with others—they do not speak, they do not answer, they refuse what is offered to them—and no violent act is committed. Angry people (men, women, children) stretch out in their hammocks, one arm folded under the head, in a very characteristic posture (“hesika reprao”).”

I have seen Yanomami in anger and the motives they had were quite numerous, ranging from such small “domestic” problems as not receiving food from someone or a minor argument with a close kinsman, to a serious discussion, a fight or the death of some relative. For the Yanomami, the death of a close person is considered good cause for becoming angry. “One says of people who weep for a dead person,” writes Lizot, “that they are angry, pe hushuo” (1994a: 857).

This said, let us consider the social and physical separation and the rupture of communication that follows in the wake of an outburst of anger within Yanomami everyday life. One time stands out, when I became perceived as partly responsible for such a rupture of communication. In this instance, the particular social distancing that the expression (and feeling) of anger that was generated was exceedingly vivid and striking. I was making a census of one community with the help of two Yanomami. One was a Yanomami who had arrived with me, while the other was a young, teenage member of that community. The latter was a joyful character who was obviously enjoying his new task and thus also, in his kindness, encouraging me do so as well. At one point, however, an old woman arrived from the path leading the garden to disturb our tranquility, for she was shouting angrily. She told us that some of the Yanomami who had accompanied me on that trip (who were from a distant community, and thus several days walk away) were trying “to persuade” (i.e., to have sexual intercourse with) her daughter, who also happened to be wife of my young collaborator. Immediately, he reacted. He angrily threw his pen onto the
floor, went straight to his hammock and stretched out there, one arm folded under the head, "hesika reprao," as the Yanomami refer to this very characteristic posture, for almost the next two hours. It was not till the incident was clarified, (for in the view of my companions all had supposedly been a misunderstanding), when his anger was abated, that he then came back and talked to me. His words, I supposed, were intended to make things easier for me. He told me, not that he was angry, but that he had been very "close" to anger "ya mori hushitariyoma." The social break and lack of communication generated by such an outburst of anger along with the strong emotions it had engendered had caused a real threat to the harmony of the community (cf. Ales 2000:133-51).

6.5.1 Considering Poreawé's anger in the light of other Indigenous Amazonian peoples views on the feeling of anger

How can we place the feeling of anger of a character like Poreawé ? We have seen the disruptions caused by Poreawé's way of speaking and his mean, stingy behaviour (e.g., he was overtly unfriendly, he did not want to share and avoided social interaction). In addition to this, he becomes angry. The emphasis upon the disruption of harmony that can be caused by the angry person is a common theme that can be found among many other Amazonian peoples. A brief exploration of the ways in which the feeling of anger is negatively associated with sociality among other indigenous peoples can shed further light on Poreawé's asocial nature and also on the relationship between bad speech and the lack of conditions for community life.

For instance, Rosengreen (2000:221) notes that in Matsigenka mythology "anger tends to be associated with people who in some way stand apart from the community." The relationship between the feeling of anger and

55 I have thought about this event many times afterwards. Perhaps the incident reported by that old woman was true; after all it was not difficult to believe that the Yanomami who had come with me to that village had really been trying to get involved in some sort of "affair" with the girl. Nevertheless, I later came to understand much better the old woman's tone of gross exaggeration – as my Yanomami companions put it as well. She also was denouncing an event that was seen/perceived as a threat to the harmony of the community life. By means of the angry and loud tone of her words she was preventing, publicly, such events actually to happen.
the detachment it generates, he says "is not a simple causal relation as the one
is as likely to provoke the other as vice versa" (op.cit.:221). Overing (2000:78)
notes how among the Piaroa anger is placed on the side of "the asocial,"
"dangerous emotions (...) are ruinous to sociality," and points out some of the
reasons by saying that "angry words disturb the high morale that is so
necessary to the viability of the relatively egalitarian relations through which
Amazonian community life is lived" (op.cit.:76). Similarly, Belaunde (2000: 209)
has pointed out that among the Airo-Pai, the feeling of anger "is not solely an
emotional state, but a transformational force of key sociological and
cosmological significance." She goes so far as to note that anger:

"It is synonymous with death and acts as an operator of radical
alterity. It is also the main drive behind sorcery. So powerful are the
meanings and bodily experiences attached to anger, that it is said to
dehumanise people and transform their perception of reality so as to
make them into murderers. An angry person quite simply is not a true
person or a kinsman, but an enemy, a monster..."(op.cit: 209).

For Cashinaua people, Lagrou (2000:153) says that "anger is principally
expressed by means of a denial of dialogue" and usually expressed by a
"withdrawal from social interaction" Kidd (2000:121-22) notes, that for Enxent
peoples anger is an abhorrent state related to "unacceptable forms of speech,"
"antisocial behaviour," and "hate."

Considering such examples, how are we to interpret the social separation
and the denial of dialogue of someone like Poreawé who lacks the knowledge
for maintaining proper social boundaries and also the skills for social
communication? In so far as the Yanomami would recognize it, his anger and
his leaving his place empty form a picture of this character that is the very
antithesis of any positive conditions for sociality: he avoids proper social
interaction and he does not engage in adequate conversation. The ghost's
anger generates anger as well (cf. Overing 2000). Clearly, the ghost goes
counter to any achievement of the social and affective relationships that would
enable him to live a human and social sort of life – at least by Yanomami
standards.
CHAPTER 7

Poreawé’s mean spiritedness: Yanomami aesthetic and moral judgments of his ugly voice

In this chapter I will focus mainly upon the speech of the ghost and the Yanomami judgements about it. Once again various texts and examples of both the myth and the everyday will serve as route for my discussion. As we will see, the ugly speech of Poreawé, his refusal of giving and speaking lead us to associate it with the theme of death.

Let me first give a brief introduction to the text I am about to present together with the context in which it appears in the myth narration. The first text is the scene that takes place when Hőrōnami meets Poreawé in the forest. It presents their first exchange of words and in the last two lines, the myth teller remarks on Poreawé’s bad speech.

text 7.1
[myth teller’s voice]

22 poreawe a petariyoma.
    poreawe appeared.
23 hőrōnami ke a ha tararini,
    when Horonami saw him,
24 a matha re waitarīyonoweis.
    he shut up [he stopped, as he was reciting wayamou speech]
[Horonami’s voice]
25 “weti ke a rií?”
    “who can that be?”
[myth teller’s voice]
26 poreawe ke a wari re upratareyorunoweis.
    poreawe stopped suddenly.
27 poreawe ke iha poreri ke a shi warii re kupariyonoweis.
    in his presence the man was stupefied and as if dazed.
[Horonami’s voice]

130
28 "weti pei ke wa rii?
who are you?

[myth teller's voice]

29 yakumi ke a puhi hatukei ha kparuni:
after a while, having recovered his senses:

[Horonami's voice]

30 "weti pei ke wa rii?
"who are you?

31 eyemi ke a ta ahetetaru!
"come over here!"[e.g. come closer]

[Poreawe's voice]

32 "ya aheteomi,
"I won't come

33 wayumi ke ya ayou."
I am going to/of wayumi." [e.g. I am going to live in the forest]

[myth teller's voice]

34 poreawe ke a aka porepioma,
revenant had a speech problem,

35 waritiwe a wa hama.
he spoke badly.'

(Lizot 1989:83)

This text represents the very first encounter between Hōrōnami and Poreawē. As we have seen, although Hōrōnami was bewildered after seeing Poreawē, he asked him who he was two times (lines 28, 30) and told him to get closer so they could talk properly (line 31). Poreawē refuses categorically. He is not in the mood for conversation; he is traveling in the forest. This first "introduction" (e.g., enactment) of Poreawē’s voice in the myth, although brief (lines 32-33) provides the myth teller the opening for discussing what it was like: in the last two lines we have the myth teller’s voice describing the ghost’s way of speaking. First he says that Poreawē had a "speech problem", "aka porepioma" and then that he "spoke ugly/badly" "waritiwe a wa hama." Both descriptions express complementary ideas that evaluate negatively the ghost’s
speech. In the second part of the description, by using the expression "waritiwe," which means "ugly," "badly," "bad intended" (see more below), the myth teller is evaluating the ghost's speech in aesthetic terms.

The following example text/dialogue (see text 1.3.2 below) represents the way the Ghost's answered a particular comment that Hörōnamí made. It also includes the myth teller's comments about the way the ghost spoke. This dialogue takes place in the following context: Hörōnamí meets the Ghost with the bananas in the forest. After having tasted the bananas, Hörōnamí says to him: "When I tell the people in my village this [the discovery of the new fruit] and say: "I've just found out that these are bananas," they will certainly want to visit you" (Lizot 1989:85). What follows is their conversation:

text 7.2

[Horonami's voice]

91 "Ai pe rii ha
   "to the others,

92 "kuratha ke pe pe ha thai,"
   "I got to know the banana plants,"

93 ya kuu ha,
   When I said to them,

94 yamaki yahiwe."
   We will visit you."

[Poreawe's voice]

95 "Poreawe ke ya,"
   "My name is Poreawe,"

[myth teller's voice]

96 wari ta no kuataropereshini.
   He said.

[Poreawe's voice]
"Wamare a huamai kukema,
"If you [i.e. your people] came to ask for,

Kuratha ke siki kararu,
the sprout of banana plantains,

Pe siki kararu toai puhio yaro,
if they want to take the sprouts, [of banana plantains]

Ya the siki kararu tikaremai mai ke the.
I won’t allow them to take the sprouts out.

The si kararu parimi.
The banana sprouts are “eternal.” [e.g. they cannot be touch]

Kuratha ha re wamaki iyai ma ta thawe?”
Do you possibly eat bananas?”

[polythet teller’s voice]

Poreawe ke a wari kuma.
Poreawe said [+ depreciative]

“ipa the siki i!”
“These plants belong to me!”
(Lizot 1989: 85)

In this brief exchange of words we are given a vivid example, dialogically enacted by the myth teller, through which we can appreciate (see below) what the Yanomami consider to be an ugly voice: an aesthetic judgement is being made about Poreawé’s voice. Similar aesthetic judgments about the Ghost’s speech are found in other myths, as we will see below; and they are also proclaimed in everyday life, as they are enacted for instance by shamans when they mimic the ways of the ghost in their shamanic sessions. Among the Yanomami it is usual to evaluate aesthetically the speech of others; an evaluation which is also informed by a number of factors.56 One day I was

56 Passes’ (1998) study about various aspects of intercommunication and conviviality among the Pa’ikwene (Palikur) of French Guiana, points out the extent to which the evaluation of someone’s ways of speaking, the judgement about the communicative value of someone’s words, takes into consideration a number of factors. The author, drawing on Lyons (1981) mentions the “sonic components of a discourse:” the “prosodic” (intonation, stress pattern, etc.) and “paralingual” (vocal tone, loudness, cadence, etc.) aspects; he also remarks the importance of the hearer’s appreciation of the speaker’s “kinesic” (movements, gestures) and “proxemic” (muscular, facial, ocular and other somatic signals). In addition, and following Hymes (1971), Passes highlights the “personal and socio-cultural situation” in which the discourse is embedded. Furthermore, beyond the “semantic (sign-referential) level of the words” and the “propositional content level of the sentences,” he mentions the extent to which the relationship between the “speaker’s emotional and physical attitudes” are considered as meaningful. Finally,
observing a shamanic session and I noted that one of the shamans began to speak in a "language" that it was not Yanomami. People were laughing at him as he was speaking and making weird movements (e.g., walking very slow and without rhythm). At some point he uttered some yanomami words, or at least some words that I could understand, so I asked who he was mimicking. They told me that it was Poreawé. Another day, I saw a similar event (e.g. a shaman mimicking someone speaking very badly/ugly). This time, however, the Yanomami told me, laughing, that it was the way the people spoke in Puerto Ayacucho (e.g., the way "whites/outsiders" speak). When I told them that I thought that the character the shaman was mimicking was Poreawé, they told me that "whites/outsiders" speak like Poreawé too!

Now, with the concrete grounds these two texts provide (text 7.1 and text 7.2) I wish to contextualise ethnographically the reasons the Yanomami might have to aesthetically evaluate the ghost's voice in such ways.

7.1 Poreawé's ugly voice: Aesthetic and moral evaluations of the speech of the ghost

Overing (1989) points out the difficulties of understanding aesthetic judgments in Amerindian societies from a Western point of view. "Aesthetics in the modern West," she writes, "has been disentangled from most other realms of activity; it has been separated out from religion, from the moral and the political, and from the domain of knowledge and truth" (op.cit.:159). According to this view, we can see, for instance, the definitions provided of the words "aesthetic" and "aesthetics" respectively, in the Collins Cobuild English Dictionary (1997): "Aesthetic involves beauty or art, and people's appreciation of beautiful things;" "Aesthetics is the branch of philosophy concerned with the study of the concept of beauty" (p:29). However, it is her opinion that from an indigenous point of view aesthetic judgments are not conceived as such an "autonomous category" (Overing 1989:159). She claims that to understand indigenous aesthetics we need to "reintegrate aesthetic judgment with the morally good and morally bad, and both judgment and morality with productive
knowledge and activity” (op.cit.: 159). Overing goes on by providing an example of such linkage made by the Piaroa:

“for the Piaroa (...) production itself was viewed as a creative activity that was either beautiful or ugly, and as such social or asocial, domesticated or dangerous. Behaviour that was beautifully controlled was understood to be conducive of community, while ugly excess was not. Beauty for the Piaroa was then a moral notion, having to do with both the morality of personal relationships and the use of productive forces. Aesthetics, in the broader sense of its meaning, where beauty is seen as an expression of moral and political value, becomes critical to an understanding of their everyday social life and of their own judgements of it” (Overing 1989:159).

In chapter 3 we have seen the extent to which the act of speaking can be considered a productive and creative activity towards the end of generating proper sociality. In this case we are dealing with the very opposite of that “beautiful speech” of the elders: the speech of Poreawé is “ugly.” His words are clearly asocial and not conducive of community, in Overing’s terms – i.e. he refuses to engage socially. In order to understand the reasoning behind the aesthetic evaluations the Yanomami make about Ghost speech I will discuss further the two texts provided above (7.1, 7.2). By analyzing, with the help of ethnography, what Poreawé says and his way of speaking, one can elucidate the reasons the Yanomami may have for evaluating his speech as “waritiwe,” “ugly” and “bad intended.”

Let us first go back to the end remarks of the first text of this section and consider the expression “waritiwe a wa hama” (“he spoke ugly/badly;” text 7.1). The expression refers to the way in which the ghost speaks: it tells us about his ugly speech. The word “waritiwe” is an adverb that in this context is describing the state of the Ghost voice, the condition of his speech, what it is like. In Yanomami everyday life, this term can be heard to describe a wide range of things. Its semantic field includes meanings such as “bad,” “of bad quality,” “evil,” “displeasing,” “badly intended.” For instance, food can be “waritiwe,” if it is in a “bad state”, “rotten/deteriorated” - it “does not taste good”; people can be “waritiwe,” they can be physically (thought this is a lesser stress) “ugly” people.

57 On this see more on Chapters 9,10,11.
for they might have some features (e.g., an ugly face or body) that are not considered beautiful, "riyehewe," or just displeasing to others (e.g., they talk too much, scold too much, demand things constantly); a house can be "waritiwe," it is not that "comfortable," (e.g., is old "hote" and full of holes in the roof, the floor is dirty, and therefore can be uncomfortable). In fact, it can be said that almost everything can be "waritiwe;" and it can be so in a variety of ways and gradations: from a little bit ugly to really ugly. The causing of discomfort in others is a strong theme in the use of the term "waritiwe."

However, let us and see the particular meanings and connotations of this expression when used in relation to someone's speech. In order to evaluate the nature of someone's words, we can say that it mainly refers to two aspects that are related. On the one hand it might be related to its form, i.e., the ugliness and displeasing sound (e.g., bad intonation, too loud, the pitch of his/her voice is too high); on the other it might be in relation to its the content, i.e., the malevolence and bad intentions of its message. It is almost always the context that can inform us whether the expression "waritiwe" refers to one or the other meanings. Let me illustrate this by means of two examples which are also related to our subject discussion: Poreawê’s ugly voice.

7.1.1 Poreawê’s voice: a displeasing sound

There are two scenes within the myth narrations where Poreawê’s voice is vividly described in relation to the ugliness and displeasing sound of his voice. The first of these scenes comes from a myth entitled “A Clever Son-in-Law” (Lizot 1989, in Wilbert and Simoneau 1990: 512-517). The scene takes place when this “clever son-in-law” is advised of the attacks of a jaguar in his wife’s community where he was doing there his bride service: “A jaguar is exterminating the inhabitants of your wife’s village where you regularly go to visit. A wild beast!” He answers firmly: “I’ll leave tomorrow to look for the survivors.” So he leaves the village and goes to try to find the survivors in the forest. On his way he heads inadvertently towards the Ghost’s house. This is the way the myth teller narrates the event:
"He was headed toward the home of the Revenant. As he walked
he called: "Are you there?" The path went along the mountain ridges,
leading straight toward Revenant. The man stopped for a moment in
an open area on a hilltop from where he could see all around. "Are
you there?" he called as loudly as he could. "Eeee," replied
Revenant. "It comes from over there! It sounds like their voices. Is
that where you are?" [thought the Yanomami] "Eeee!" The sound was
enough to make one's blood freeze" (Lizot 1989, in Wilbert and

The second scene comes from a myth entitled "Porehimi" (Cocco 1972,
in Wilbert and Simoneau 1990:158-63) that narrates the way the Yanomami got
the banana plantains in the days when: "their children ate dry earth, white clay,
and rotten wood... [and] the rest of the ancient yanomami ate only wild fruits." A
group of Yanomami went to Poreawé's house as they had discovered the day
before that he had "vegetable food." The myth teller narrates the scene in the
following way:

"The Yanomami of those days were always roaming about, looking
for mud, gathering fruit. Their chief was called Miyomawe, and
therefore they were Miyomawetheri....One day when they had gone
far away they found human footprints. Next to the footprints there
was a felled tree, not broken but felled. The ancestors sat down right
there and began talking: "Here's a path that goes in that direction.
There must be a Yanomami living there who has a stone axe to fell
the trees with. Look where he cut this tree..."...In those days our
ancestors did not have stone axes. Three of them went to see where
that path would lead. They reached the house. Observing it, they also
saw shells containing vegetable food. They did not enter but returned
to their own camp near where the path began. After telling the others
what they had seen they slept... The following day the chief again
sent a few men to have a look. They reached the house, and
entered. Immediately an old man called out in a very ugly voice:
"Hama kepe, aiiii!" (Cocco 1972, in Wilbert and Simoneau1990:
158-63).

These two examples tell us about the strong manner in which myth
narrators emphasize the ugliness of Poreawé's voice. In both examples
Poreawé's voice is enacted very briefly. For instance: in text 7.3: "Eeee,
....Eeee"; in text 7.4: "Hama ke pe aiiii!" (see the underlined text). However, although the brevity of this voice, it seems enough for the myth teller to recall the negative aspects of this voice. In the first text the Yanomami is calling from the distance as he thinks the voice he is listening to comes from Yanomami he is trying to find, but soon realizes that "the sound was enough to make one's blood freeze." In the second, as the Yanomami enter the house Poreawë announces the visit recalling that they have visitors ("Hama ke pe aiiii!") That is, as soon as Poreawë is introduced, no matter either the particularities of what he is doing or where he is, his voice is immediately presented as ugly.

7.1.2 Poreawë's voice: a displeasing message

The following text pertains to the last narration given as example (Cocco 1972, in Wilbert and Simoneau 1990:158-63). It describes the scene that follows right after the Yanomami entered the house where they were received by that old man's ugly voice (Poreawë). In this case we can appreciate the unpleasantness of the message of that ugly voice; the narration constitutes an example of the way the bad intentions and ugliness of the content of a particular speech might be evaluated. The reader will appreciate that in the following dialogue there are few variations in relation to the character of the ghost that I have been describing so far in my analysis: in the next example, Poreawë is called Porehimi, he lives with few relatives and some Yanomami visit him. The myth says:

text 7.5

"Father, why don't you prepare banana liquid for them to satisfy their hunger?" asked the son. "Don't you see that they are very hungry?" "No," said Porehimi [Poreawe], "I don't want to give them anything." In his house Porehimi [Poreawe] had many bunches of ripe bananas hanging, but he was stingy and did not want to share them.” Seeing the bananas the visitors asked him: “Shori, what kind of fruit is that hanging there, so beautiful and ripe?” “What! You don't know this fruit? It’s called banana; these are my bananas.” “No, shori, we've never seen that fruit (...) Give us some of those so we can taste them.” “No!” said Porehimi [Poreawe], in an ugly voice. “I'm not giving you any of what's mine. You are familiar with bananas; you are just lying.” (Cocco 1972, in Wilbert and Simoneau 1990:158-163)
Through the above example, we have seen that the evaluation of someone's speech as "waritiwe" can be used to describe both the sound and the content, as the sound of an evil speech can be really "ugly" and, certainly, unpleasant to hear. A fact that can be perceived in the village everyday life. For instance, when someone was speaking in an "ugly" way (see above) to others, I heard the following comments and/or expressions:

**Text 7.6**

"waritiwe wa wa hai mai,
"don't speak ugly/badly,

totihitawe wa ha wayoani."
speak well/properly."

**Text 7.7**

"Wa taatihe,
"Don't speak about that,

mami kai,
be silent/shut up,

e naha wa kuu mai."
don't say it like that.

**Text 7.8**

"pe a ta wayou mrari."
"stop talking."

We have seen how the word "waritiwe" is used in the above examples for aesthetically evaluating Poreawé's speech (Texts 7.1; and 7.2; and also text 7.3 and 7.4). Nevertheless, I want to explore further the reasons the Yanomami have for judging Poreawé's speech as ugly. So let us now to look at Poreawé's words, together with the social meanings they convey, so as to elucidate the reasons why the Yanomami think he spoke so badly to them.

### 7.2 Poreawé's speech, its nature and the theme of death

58 In contrast, a good and beautiful speech is something pleasant and recognised as such by the listeners. This will be dealt with in the chapters (9,10,11) devoted to the description and analysis of the speech of the elders.
Let us consider the dialogue held between Hörōnami and Poreawē in the text X.2. Hörōnami, after learning what the Banana plants are like, says to Poreawē that he and his fellow villagers will visit the Ghost house (lines 91-94). This is a typical example of how the Yanomami initiate a relationship in positive terms: they will visit, a strong act of sociality. However, the Ghost in his reply does not show any kindness (lines 95, 97-102, 104). What is more, the Ghost begins by naming himself! (line 95). In doing this, he equates himself with death.

Let us see the reasons for this.

7.2.1 My name is Poreawē!

The act of naming oneself is one of the most abhorrent things a Yanomami can certainly do. Among them, personal names are unique and "belong" to one specific person: they cannot be repeated. When the person dies, the name must be erased from the verbal repertory; it is as if the name would also die with them. While personal names provide individuality and uniqueness to the person, and serve as a marker of differentiation from one another, the kin terms embody their sameness as social beings.59

In Yanomami everyday life the personal name of other people cannot be expressed in their presence; to do so is a grave offence and considered as a clear provocation.60 There is a strong avoidance in mentioning the names of living people. The more adult the person becomes, the more socially active that person is, the less one might hear their "true" personal names.61 It is frequent to see boys in their early stages of adolescence, who, when called by their personal names publicly protest and demand to be named by kinship terms or

59 For similar views see Overing who, writing about Amazonian peoples (1996), refers to notions of kinship, as "being of a kind", and Gow (2000), on Piro kinship idiom as "multiplication of identical entities."
60 The interdictions over personal names is found among numerous societies in Amazonia and elsewhere. This particular dislike for the names being mentioned seems to have a wide range of motivations.
61 Most of people are usually known by specific nicknames, and the "true" name is rarely mentioned.
by a teknonym such as "elder brother of someone" or "younger brother of someone." Thus, they would say: "ya pata waikiwe, ihiru ya ma re mai! " I am old enough (i.e., I am already an adult)! I am not a child anymore!"

Chagnon (1983 [1968]: 18) argues that "the more effective they are at getting others to avoid using their names, the more public acknowledgement there is that they are of high esteem." He goes on to say that the sanctions behind these prohibitions also "involve a combination of fear, respect, admiration, political deference, and honor" (op. cit.: 18-19). According to Lizot, the naming of a person in his or her presence has its cosmic dimensions: it is as if one were provoking "symbolically" his or her death (see Lizot 1984: 125-35). 62

Yet, an even more strict reasoning applies for the names of dead people, which should also never be spoken. In this case the offence and provocation apply to the dead person's relatives. When someone says the name of a dead person, it is said that it "makes the dead come back, that is, its spectre, feared by everyone" (Lizot 1999: 25; and also see Lizot and Clastres 1978 and Lizot 1999). Chagnon (1983:23) describes the extent to which his inquiries about genealogies, trying to find out the names of the dead people, were always an "unpleasant experience" and "occasionally dangerous as well depending on the temperament of my informant." His account of one of these unpleasant and dangerous experiences is highly illustrative for the argument I am elaborating. In one occasion during his fieldwork Chagnon was updating his census 63 and the name of a dead person was mentioned:

"I knew I had the name of the dead woman in my list, but nobody would dare to utter her name so I could remove it. I knew that I would be in serious trouble if I got to the village and said her name aloud, and I desperately wanted to remove it from my list. I called on one of my regular and usually cooperative informants and asked him to tell me the woman's name. He refused adamantly, explaining that she

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62 For more descriptions about the Yanomami practices in relation to names see Ramos (1974: 171-185) and also Cocco (1972: 284-90).
63 This onerous task seems to have been an overriding theme in Chagnon's fieldwork. He has stated several times that one of his main interest among the Yanomami was focus on collecting their genealogies, and has gone so far as writing that "figuring out the social organisation of the Yanomami essentially meant collecting extensive data on genealogies, marriage and reproduction" (1983: 18).
was a close relative – and was angry that I even raised the topic with him” (Chagnon 1983:23).

Consequently, the evidence indicates that the ghost, by expressing his own name in such a manner, with such boldness, is equating himself with death itself. This is not surprising; the myth of Poreawë is filled with allusions that associate, explicitly and metaphorically, the ghost with death. They are worthy to consider.

Poreawë is the Master of Bananas, a fruit that is associated with the Yanomami funerary ritual. They consume the bone’s ashes of their dead in a beverage made with bananas. The relationship between Poreawë, bananas and death can be perceived in various myth narratives’ versions. In one version it is explicitly noticed (see below) where it is said that Poreawë showed the Yanomami what to do with their dead:

text 7.8

“That’s what you must do with your dead,” he said. ‘Burn them and grind their bones, as you saw here today, and then drink the ashes mixed with banana liquid.” The Yanomami watched and learned. Later Poreawë held a reahu ritual and drank his grandson’s ashes. It was Poreawë who showed the Yanomami how to do a reahu” (Cocco 1972, in Wilbert and Simoneau 1990:162).

So far we have seen a number of features that associate the ghost with death. However there are various aspects of death that are epitomised by the ghost and can be elucidated. While it can be said that physical death generates a dramatic rupture in the continuity of social relationships between the living and the dead, the amoral and asocial behaviour of Poreawë, that prevents the enactment of any kind of proper-positive social relationships, can be said to imply “social death’. The themes that associate Poreawë with this type of death are present in a number of ways: he lives alone, he does not want to communicate, he refuses to give, he does not want to be visited. Both, the explicit and implicit message his words convey (i.e., I am Poreawë!... I won’t let
them take any bananas... these plants belong to me) are an allegory of the theme of death, both physical and social.\(^{64}\)

Helena Valero (Valero, in Biocca 1996) recalls a dialogue she had that describes a vivid example of the association between physical and social death. In her memories, it is said that those who kill and those who do not share, end up in the same fire of Shopari, as if they were judged by the same fault ("sin," in Valeros's own terms).\(^{65}\) Therefore, killing (e.g., the generation of physical death) and not sharing (e.g., the generation of social death) are equated; both acts deserve the same punishment. Her words, although pervaded by a clear and overt Christian undertone—a fact that should not be taken for granted—lead us to see the correspondences established by the Yanomami between these two types of death:

"I used to say to those who killed: "You, evil men, will go into the fire of Shopari." \(^{66}\) "No," they replied, "it will not be us who will go." My son's father used to say to me: "You will go, because when anyone takes your cuia or your other things, you protest and shout. If anyone wants your bananas you are jealous of them; you are jealous of all your things and you will not give them away. Those who have and who reply to those who ask: "I have nothing; if I had it I would give it", those who have and do not give to him who asks and is hungry, they are the ones who will go to Shopariwake. This is the worst sin of all" (Valero, in Biocca, 1996: 137-38).

In this example, the consequences of not giving are described as even a worst thing that the killing of persons. The ethnography leads us close to this. Lizot writes (1986:184) that in some communities, to declare, "I will not give anything" or "I will not give away what you are asking" is to risk a clubbing; and also that "to refuse a gift is inevitably insulting and is understood as a sign of hostility." Lizot goes on to note that "the only vice the Yanomami morality

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\(^{64}\) The analogies between Poreawé and death can be extended even further. In one of the versions of the myth, it is said that Poreawé brings fire to his wife. In Yanomami mythology the origin of fire is closely related with death (see Lizot 1999:1-3) (Also see the relationship that Lévi-Strauss makes between fire and the dead in mythologies. 1969.)

\(^{65}\) In fact Yanomami people say that the souls of the people who have killed someone go, after dead, to a rock inhabited by "hekura", "spirits."

\(^{66}\) "Shopari wake" is the celestial fire through which the souls of the stingy people are consumed. Here Valero explicitly equates this with the Christian idea of hell. Her Christian prejudices, should be recalled, as they might result somehow exaggerated.
recognizes is avarice, and they have a punishment for sin: fire – with the
difference, however, that the Yanomami fire is celestial and consumes souls
apparently without pain” (op.cit.:184).

7.2.2 Poreawé: Physical death and social death

Among many Amazonian peoples the refusal to give has been widely
recognised as synonymous with what I am referring to here as “social death.”
Thus, among the Trio, Rivière refers to the refusal to give as a “serious breach
of etiquette, just as the failure to be included in a distribution a clear indication
of marginality” (2000:257-8); McCallum (1990: 417) says that for the Cashinaua
it is equated with a “denial of kinship” among the Yanesha, those who do not
give, writes Santos-Granero (2000:272), are treated “with indifference,” and are
also ignored in community life and excluded “from day-to day- networks of
commensality.” He concludes by remarking that “[t]hey force the [stingy people]
either to behave as expected or to abandon the collective” (op.cit.: 272).

As I pointed out before, in the view of the Yanomami, the ghost’s refusal
to share and his bad/ugly speech are related to each other. Let me illustrate
now the extent to which both refusals (i.e., not to give; not to communicate) can
be seen as synonymous with social death.

The insistence of the ghost on not sharing with the Yanomami, goes
hand to hand with his avoidance of not communicating. These two aspects,
which are an overriding motif in the myth, demonstrate that he is clearly not
willing to share and refuses any exchange,\textsuperscript{67} either of goods (i.e., bananas) or
words (i.e., dialogue). In doing so he prevents any possibility for the creation of
sociality, the paradigm of social life, the only one conceived as relevant for the

\textsuperscript{67} In the encounter between Hôrônami and Poreawé, it is Poreawé, and not Hôrônami, the one
who is in the position to be generous as he has the bananas. He could, for example be
generous and give bananas in order to get something later in return, but he even refuses. It has
to be remembered that this encounter epitomises the way two Yanomami who do not live
together might interact by means of exchange, as their relationship might develop with time and
further encounters, visits and exchanges. See the information provided on the Ceremonial
dialogue, “wayamou” (Chapter 1 and final conclusions).
Yanomami. Once again, the Ghost's words in the mythic context are a straightforward lesson through which to appreciate this.

In text 7.2, after having said his name boldly (line 95), Poreawē goes on and warns Hörōnami. The tone of his message is crushing and its content revealing: He will not allow them (i.e., Hörōnami and his fellow villagers) to take banana sprouts from him (lines 97-104). The way he begins such a message is by means of the expression “wamare a huamai kukema,” that can be translated as “if you were to come to ask for” (line 97). This is a message that is worthy of being ethnographically contextualised.

In Yanomami language, the verb “wa huamai” has various meanings such as “to generate a response,” “to try to make someone to accede to a request,” and also “to take the initiative in a Ceremonial dialogue,” that is to say, to begin the speech by which a host, on the occasion of visitors from a distant community, provokes the response of his interlocutor. On the whole, the meaning of the verb implies two actors bonded by means of speech, a sound, or even a whisper. In other words, one person asks or generates a sound, noise, whistle, etc...in order to get a response (response here should be interpreted in the wider sense of the expression). The fact that the ghost warns the Yanomami using the expression “wa huamai,” is revealing. He does so in such way that he is not only telling the Yanomami that he will not share the banana seedlings they want. His words do not only express his lack of generosity and greediness; his message implies more than the lack of willingness to give. To my mind, by means of this expression Poreawē is telling them that he will neither respond to nor participate in any kind of exchange, neither of words nor of goods. How is this attitude to be understood by the Yanomami that, in addition to the need they had for acquiring bananas for themselves, have, as Lizot (1985:184) writes, “a passion for barter and bargaining,” not so much for the sake of the object itself, which is after all of only secondary importance, but for the social and spiritual element involved in every exchange.” The ghost clearly avoids any possibility of dialogue that,

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68 See Lizot (1994b).
following Yanomami ways, would surely normally take place if he were to be visited by \textit{Hörōnami} and his villagers. Furthermore, a clear contrast arises between the attitude of \textit{Poreawē} and that of \textit{Hörōnami} in relation to generosity with respect to the sharing the bananas. Thus the myth teller describes that Horonami, after going back home and warming himself in the fire, distributed the bananas among his own people ("Kuratha re ke ki wake hi'pea ha shetekeapotuheni," line 147). Lizot words again are pertinent to better appreciate the contrast between the mean spiritedness of \textit{Poreawē} and the way the Yanomami usually behave, he writes that "they also appreciate the pleasure of quickly giving away what they have just received" (op.cit.: 184). The Ghost’s attitude, finally, takes us back to the idea pointed out by Lizot with respect to the ceremonial dialogue when he asserts that the Yanomami "consider the exchange of goods and verbal communication to be equivalent" (1994b).

\textbf{Concluding remarks}

These passages of mythic narration that I have discussed relate the ghost to types of behaviour that the Yanomami regard as completely antithetical to positive values that create a good everyday social life. In addition they provide us with a full picture of the salient significance of, and mutual equivalence between bad speech and stinginess (i.e., a lack of communication skills and a lack of generosity). \textit{Poreawē} is a character lacking all the virtues the Yanomami consider as basic to the achievement of a convivial social life: he lacked the capabilities for proper communication, generosity, trust, love, care, and compassion. He isolated himself, he was self-centred, mean, ungenerous, hostile, and quick to anger. He is a character who is, above all, inarticulate and who speaks in an ugly manner.

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Now, two questions follow from the Chapters we have read so far. First, in our exploration of the myth of the origin of the night (Chapters 1-4) we have not "seen," so to speak, the presence of the moon. Second, and considering both
myths (the myth origin of the night and the myth *Poreawê*), we have seen how through language (good and proper speech of elders; ugly/bad speech of *Poreawê*), a principle of identity and difference is evidenced. However, in talking about difference we have not mentioned the fundamental presence of war and conflict among the Yanomami, that is, one of their more extreme ways of dealing with difference. In other words, we have not asked what is the place of violence, "the very opposite of language" and "the essence of power" (Clastres 1987: 154), in Yanomami conceptions of sociality. To explore this, let us begin by going back to mythic times. Let us look at the Yanomami myth of the moon, a myth that is also associated with the origin of warfare.
CHAPTER 8

On Yanomami warfare

In this chapter my aim is to describe Yanomami people's understanding of warfare. In doing this, I will endeavour to develop a shift from the anthropologist's theories of war among the Yanomami to the Yanomami's own theories about both peace and its failure. In other words, war and conflict will be addressed here from the point of view of the Yanomami aesthetics of their own convivial relations and sociality, along with its multiple oral expressions. In short, we start the study of "war" from the indigenous perspective with the emphasis upon the topics of morality and proper sociality, and Yanomami knowledge of such practices. I will demonstrate that the Yanomami have their own (strong) theories about what is conducive to peace and war and how these theories are grounded in moral and political values attached to a particular Yanomami aesthetics of egalitarianism.

8.1 The ambiguous fecundity of the moon: a cosmological backdrop of the cannibalistic, violent and dangerous achievement of the human social condition

Let us see the Yanomami myth of the origin of the moon (and warfare).

A strange feast (a myth given us by Lizot)

This happened a long time ago, at a time when human beings were already numerous on the earth. Among them was a great shaman. He had conceived Moon-Spirit, the hekura, as we know him today, who did not yet exist at that time. He had imagined him; he had both the knowledge and the skill for this.

One day the people realised that the shaman was dying, and they grieved: "What has happened to him, what is going on?" When he died his wife expressed her pain: "My husband, you, the shaman, come back among us!" They burned the body. It was consumed by the fire. The ashes were growing cold when night fell. The following morning the bones were to be gathered. Everywhere in the house the dead man was
mourned. But the shaman had transformed into a hekura after his death; he had become Moon-Spirit. When the darkness was total he said to himself: "Now is a good time." He entered the house. He did not head for an unoccupied spot under the roof but approached the mournful charcoals, crouched next to the remains, and ate the charred bones, which cracked between his teeth. He ate his own bones.

The son of the dead man woke up. He got up, and looked. The person who was there looked like his father. The boy approached and pressed close against his back, saying: "Father, my father!" Moon-Spirit was just finishing devouring the bones. He had eaten everything that remained after the incineration, the bones and the charred wood. He remained squatting, but pivoting where he sat. Then the Yanomami noticed him and shouted: "Who comes and disturbs our mourning? That's an outsider; he is not one of us!" They jumped out of their hammocks and seized their arrows. Everywhere there was a great haste. They formed a half circle around Moon-Spirit who began to ascend to the sky, and shot off their arrows at him. All missed their target.

Scorpion was present as this was happening. He was smiling. "Is such a clumsiness really possible?" he wondered. Just then a shout resounded: "watch out, he's escaping!" In a flash Moon-Spirit had ascended to the sky, and soon the arrows could not longer reach him. No arrow could reach high enough. Moon-Spirit was high up in the sky, about to disappear behind the clouds. Another clamour went up, and the people called to Scorpion to help them. "Come here; help us shoot him!" His brothers-in-law begged him to join them: "Brother-in-law, everyone here knows your reputation as an infallible marksman; they are counting on your help."

Scorpion slipped out of his hammock. His arrow was slender and short, with a narrow bamboo point. He bent his bow and aimed at Moon-Spirit, commenting: "Listen to it, look at it, in case it doesn't reach enough." So saying he let the arrow fly. "Yes, look, that's it!" exclaimed the others. He had hit his target. The blood spurted out and sprinkled over the earth, over there, in the direction of the intrepid shamathari. From the clots of blood that fell the shekinari, man-eating creatures, were born.
Moon-Spirit is one of the Hekura. There is his path, descending downstream, illuminated by flames. (Lizot, in Wilbert & Simoneau 1990:60-1).

This myth considers the way a shaman of great powers conceived the Moon-spirit. This shaman "had both, the knowledge and the skills for this." However, all this knowledge and these skills did not bring anything good to the Yanomami. After his terrestrial death, he transforms himself into a cannibal spirit who goes back to the village to devour not only his own bones, but "everything that remained after the incineration, the bones and the charred wood." The description of Moon's way of eating (his abhorrent "table manners") is important to note: they say that the bones "cracked between his teeth", that is, he made noise eating. This reference to noise leads us to perceive more features that the myth of the origin of the night and the myth of the moon have in common. Both of them represent a similar attitude of distaste toward the noises of his main characters (e.g., the terrible voice of Titiri and the no less terrible noise produced by Periporiwë). On this particular point Lévi-Strauss writes that there is a:

"very large set of myths whose common denominator is that they attribute the same relevant function to various attitudes toward noise, or to attitudes that can be recognised as transformations of such attitudes. The semantic function of these myths is to bear witness to the fact that there is an isomorphic relation between two types of order, which may be either the cosmic order and the cultural order; the cosmic or meteorological order and the social order; or one or other of the orders above and the zoological order, which is situated on an intermediary level in relation to them" (Lévi-Strauss,1969:315-16).

In the myths that we are concerned with here we can see the extent to which the cosmic order (e.g., the origin of the daily cycle and the origin of the moon, that is, daily and seasonal periodicities) is related, both in implicit and explicit ways, to the social, biological and cultural orders (e.g., cannibalism, modes of communication, women's menstruation, war...). Once again, the insights of Lévi-Strauss mythologiques help us to see relationships between different and apparently disconnected domains that become closer if viewed
from the indigenous point of view. What is more, it is in the relationship itself, by realizing how subtle “myths speak,” or better said by appreciating the subtlety with which the “people speak” through their myths, that we can better perceive the indigenous way of thinking about their cultural universes and their ways of verbalising it.

But let us come back to the myth of the moon. Chosen to kill him, is Suhirinawë, Scorpion, a great hunter who finally shoots the Moon-spirit. From his blood, which “sprinkled over the earth....in the direction of the intrepid shamathari” also “the shekinari, man-eating creatures, were born.” The blood of Moon, a cannibal spirit, engenders people (Yanomami) who kill each other and other cannibal creatures as well.69 The allusion to the intrepid shamathari is a clear reference to war, as it is said that they usually fight a lot.70

The myth of the origin of the moon recorded by Chagnon (1977) illustrates this:

After the flood, there were very few original beings left. Periporiwe (spirit of the moon) was one of the few who remained. He had a habit of coming down to earth to eat the soul parts of children. On his first descent, he ate one child, placing his soul between two pieces of cassava bread and eating it. He returned a second time to eat another child, also with cassava bread. Finally, on his third trip, Uhudima and Suhirina, two brothers, became angry and decided to shoot him. Uhudima, the poorer shot of the two, began letting his arrows fly. He shot at Periporiwe many times as he ascended to hetu [the sky], but missed. People say he was a very poor shot. Then Suhirina took one bamboo-tipped arrow (rahaka) and shot at Periporiwe when he was directly overhead, hitting him in the abdomen. The tip of the arrow barely penetrated Periporiwe’s flesh, but the wound bled profusely. Blood spilled to earth in the vicinity of a village called Hootheri, near the mountain called Maiyo. The blood changed into

69 In relation to theme of blood, note the similarities between Periporiwe’s blood and Titiri, the spirit of the night. The blood of both spirits gives birth to other spirits mainly cannibalistic in nature. Suhirinawë, present in both myths, plays an important role in Yanomami cosmology.
70 It has to be recalled that the myth narrator comes from the area in which the Central Yanomami live and they call Shamathari all the Yanomami located to the south of them, that is, to the south of the Orinoco river.
men as it hit the earth, causing a large population to be born. All of them were males; the blood of Periporiwé did not change into females. Most of the Yanomami who are alive today are descended from the blood of Periporiwé. Because they have their origin in blood, they are fierce and are continuously making war on each other (...) Where the blood was thickest, in the areas directly underneath the spot where Periporiwé was shot, the wars were so intense that the Yanomami in that area exterminated themselves. Where the blood had an opportunity to thin out, the Yanomami were less fierce and therefore did not become extinct, although they, too, fought continuously. (Chagnon 1977:47-8)

The various ways in which the Moon-spirit embodies and epitomises the theme of cannibalism has been already developed elsewhere (see Lizot and Clastres 1978; and see also Lizot 2000). In addition, Yanomami warfare has fundamental associations with the theme of cannibalism. As Albert (1990:562) has stated: “the launching of any raid involves an endocannibalistic funerary rite for the victim to be avenged and the ritual simulation of the exocannibalism of the enemies responsible for that death” (see also Albert 1985:353-60). However, let us recall here one of the fundamental features of the cannibal attributes of Moon: i.e., the perversity of cannibalism that Moon represents\(^7\). He eats himself, not leaving anything. In doing this Moon-spirit prevents the celebration of the reahu, the Yanomami funerary feast. In addition to this, his amoral behaviour has to be seen from another perspective. As Lizot (1994) has pointed out, in relation to the ceremonies during which the Yanomami consume their dead:

“These ceremonies are not only the occasion for feasts, however: the corpse of the deceased is an object for both exchange and consumption. Hence, the Moon’s eating of his own body is scandalizing: he removes himself from the exchange. Obviously, the exchange does not solely focus on material objects” (Lizot 1994: 230).

\(^7\) The Yanomami practice a form of endocannibalism, as they consume the ashes of the dead person blended into a banana soup.
In doing all this, Moon-spirit, a great shaman with powerful knowledge and skills, refuses to be a “social being.” His amoral behaviour, his perverse cannibalism also refers to another asocial aspect. In eating his own body, Moon refused to let his own vitality pass on to the next generation, a process that Yanomami believe happens when they drink the ashes of their dead in the funerary rituals. Moon clearly shows his refusal to partake in a life-given activity that would have taken place through the ritual consumption of his body by his close kin.

The myth of the moon recorded by Cocco is also illustrative for this discussion:

All the Yanomamo, all the foreigners, all the people in the world are of Peripo’s blood.

Periporiwë was living in this world together with his daughter and his son-in-law Amoawe. His daughter was named Purimayoma. But the woman was very afraid of her husband. She did not want a husband; she wanted to have that man only as a brother. Periporiwë did not like this; it made him angry and ashamed.

One day he invited his daughter and his grandson, and they went into the forest, far from their house. There he seized his daughter and strangled her. Afterward he told his grandson to remove her ovaries, and gave them to Periporiwe, who wrapped them in some leaves. He did this to demonstrate how to wrap the game in order to roast it. They returned to the house with the package.

But the woman was not dead. After her father had left she regained consciousness and was transformed into a firefly.

In the house Periporiwë roasted the bundle and sat down to eat his daughter’s ovaries. But when he was finished he felt very strange. His body grew hot and he began to pace up and down through the house like a crazy man, here, there, fanning himself. He was anxious, and shouted because he felt so hot. Then he went out into the patio, wandering around, and there he began to rise up into the air. The ancestors laughed at him, saying: “Periporiwë is crazy. What’s going on with him?”
Periporiwê kept on ascending, turning around. He was no longer fanning himself. Thinking that it was a game the children threw sticks at him. The rest laughed in the belief that he was going to descend again, that he was only demonstrating his magic powers.

But Periporiwê rose higher and higher. Then the men began to gather in the patio, and they aimed their arrows and shot him. He kept rising up, twisting and turning. Pokoihibëma also shot at him but could not hit him. The Atamari also came to shoot at him, but they missed as well.

Suhrinawê was calmly lying there, looking upward. He was in no hurry, lying there like the brave man he was. The old men commented: "Why didn't they shoot him when he was low down? Now he's too high up. Periporiwê has escaped; no one will catch him now."

At that point Suhrinariwê got out of his hammock, picked up his bow and arrows, began to stare upward, and said: "Asieeennn! Why didn't you shoot him when he was very low? Now he is high up." He pulled his bowstring. Finding it loose he tightened it, and hit it a few times: pau, pau, pau! All this he did so that we would learn to tighten our bows before shooting. If we miss the target it is because the string is loose.

Then Suhrinariwê looked up, and aimed an arrow with a rahaka point. Periporiwê was no longer moving; he was settled in his place in the sky, looking down. Suhrinariwê let fly the arrow: tahhh! It struck Periporiwê in the chest, right in the nipple. All shouted: "Aaii!"

Immediately drops of blood began to fall from the wound. Here, there, everywhere there were drops of blood. Each drop that fell turned into a new Yanomami. Yanomami everywhere, brave Yanomami. Periporiwê was left without blood, without strength, gradually descending toward the edge of the earth. There he turned into a high mountain which is called Periporimaki, far, far away where not even the foreigners live. The Yai live there. That was how Periporiwê died. The moon of today is not Periporiwê’s body; it is his spirit. That is why it is bad; it takes the soul of children, who then easily die (...). (Cocco 1972, in Wilbert and Simoneau1990:55-57).
However, to state that Moon, this cannibal spirit, is only associated with the lack of life would not be entirely correct. To see the reasons for this we have to learn more about this mythical character and the ways he is related to the Yanomami world of the social.

8.2 Periporiwä’s blood: the ambiguous fecundity of the moon as the ontological basis of violence and war

There is no doubt that Moon-spirit seems to be a strange character. However, the ambiguity of Moon’s character is not an exclusive feature of Yanomami mythology. Lévi-Strauss, for instance, writing about Amerindian myths, refers to the Moon as a character that “provides the theme of a mythology of ambiguity” (1978: 109). In the case of the Yanomami, this ambiguity is epitomised in the shedding of moon’s blood; or to be more accurate, in the dual meaning that this blood conveys for the Yanomami, as this character is associated with both life and death which are linked messages in this myth.

After being hit by Suhirina’s arrow the blood of moon is spilled on the earth. This shedding of blood is both at the origin of warfare and is associated also with women’s menstruation. Warfare is bloody activity for men, and is associated with death; the second, refers to women’s menstruation and is associated with fertility and procreation. The close association between these two types of “cosmic blood,” both having the same cosmological origin, is reinforced in ritual. Thus, women in their first menstruations (together with their spouses) and men who have killed follow the same ritual: unokaimou, a ritual of purification that is aimed at decontaminating those who have been in close relation with the shedding of blood (for a description and interpretation of this ritual see Lizot 1999, also see Albert 1985). Moreover, there is still a

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72 See Lévi-Strauss (1978: 95-97) for a reading and analysis of a number of Cashinaua myths of the origin of the moon that present numerous and striking similarities with the Yanomami myth of the moon.

73 It is interesting to note that Moon’s amoral behaviour and cannibalistic ways also prevents the enactment of the ritual called paushimou, in which the bones of the death are pulverised and placed in gourds that will be distributed among the close kin.

74 For a different description and interpretation of this ritual among the Yanomame see Albert (1985: chaps 7-11). Regarding Albert’s analysis, Lizot (1994a:237, note 20) points out that his
temporal dimension in Moon’s relationship with life and death. The Yanomami count time by means of the moon, a cyclical time that therefore represents both “procreation and death” (Lizot 1999: 37). Considering the above, we could state that Moon’s ambiguity seems to refer to the very ambiguity of human life itself. Are we all not born to die? And also to procreate?

However, if looked at from the perspective of the social “stage”, that is, the stage between birth and death, one might ask how and why is the shedding of Moon’s blood associated with Yanomami sociality? The answer to this question is twofold. On one hand, the relation between women’s fecundity and Yanomami sociality is clear: the fecundity of women is a precondition for the generation of people; to procreate is to have children, to produce people that will give continuity to social life. To achieve the social state, human beings (e.g., Yanomami people) require the fecundity, procreation, and productivity of women (see Chapter 4, and also Clastres 1994). On the other hand, the relationship between Yanomami warfare and their sociality raises a number of questions. How can it be that the same source of blood, associated with the giving of life, also generates violence and death? What is the relationship between Yanomami war and their sociality? Is the myth of the origin of the moon saying that Yanomami people “need” warfare to achieve the social state proper to the human condition?

To provide an appropriate answer to these questions I would like to consider first a number of theoretical issues related to the theme we are dealing with here.

8.2.1 From cosmic fecundity to the fertility of everyday “generative” practices

“...suggests an interpretation that is very distinct from that proposed by Albert (1985) for the Yanomame ritual ... The fact that the ritual is carried out by women who are having their first period (and their husbands) and by murderers requires a global interpretation, explaining one case and then another. The myth of the origin of the moon opens up another opportunity for analysis.”

75 See Ales (2000: 133-151) for a way of thinking about this topic.
We have seen the extent to which procreation is at the heart of the preconditions for social reproduction: it assures the continuity of people. However, this social reproduction has to be related to very particular, and culturally defined, ways of being social, that is, it has to be understood in its specific relation to Yanomami sociality. What we might call "biological procreation" is not sufficient, though of course necessary. Within the specific sociality of Yanomami people, the notion of social reproduction does not only mean the bringing of children to life: the more we are the better! No. The specificity of this social being is rather focused upon the practices that generate the social relations and the way people relate to each other (here one should include also the begetting of children, which is always understood as processual with all the feeding, caring for, and growing).

To further unfold the linkage that I think exists between the biological fecundity epitomised by moon's blood and the social fecundity the myth implicitly conveys, I want to draw on what Overing (2003; see also 1996) has called "the practice of generative cultures." In order to emphasise the intentionality behind much of what indigenous Amazonian peoples do to create sociality and social relationships, Overing starts by considering Sahlins' (1987: xi-xiii) distinctions between two types of social emphasis: the "prescriptive" and the "performative." In reflecting upon a Piaroa point of view (and also upon an Amazonian perspective), she notes that:

"peoples who stress the prescriptive (well known to the social sciences) are attached to social form and institutional rule, while those appreciative of the performative place priority upon practice. With those attached to the performative, it is action that declares identity and enmity, the gift that makes the friend, the sharing that creates the kinship. In other words, the appropriate act creates the relation and not the other way around. There is also the matter of affect. With priority given to the performative, important aspects of social relationships are negotiable, to become constructed by choice, desire, and interest (...) [the] social life of a "community of similars" is something that is created daily though the specificity of the actions and affective life of each of its members" (Overing 2003:301-2).

76 See Chapter 4 on the problem of considering biological reproduction and social reproduction as two different domains from a Yanomami point of view. For them, what we call biological is also part and parcel of social reproduction.
Overing further develops these notions when she suggests a change in the terms to be used. Thus, in the place of Sahlins' notion of the "performative", it would be preferable to use the phrase "generative," as the latter encapsulates better, she says, the "Amazonian stress upon modes of fecundity." She expands more on this and writes that:

"The cosmological discourse of the Piaroa is in the main about fecundity, for it dwells upon the individual powers for life creation and destruction of the mighty creators gods. Likewise, their discourse about the everyday skills of people is about their own generative capacities for acting in this world. It probably can be argued with cogency that Amazonian sociality in general is more about the issues of fecundity than those of status, role and property. Thus the concept of "generative" captures the indigenous stress upon the fundamental relation of everyday skills and practice to the social process (…) Certainly for the Piaroa, to be social is to be fertile in a specifically cultural way (…) It is because of cosmological history that it is only human beings who can acquire these specific powers for creation that are engendering of a fertile communal life" (Overing 2003: 302, italics in the original).

After the reading of these lines, we should ask again, in what ways are Yanomami violence and war related to fecundity? Could we, following Overing's insights, think about Yanomami violence and warfare as generative practices engendering of a fertile communal life? To answer these questions I want first to present what can be considered to be a "positive view" of the way the more "warlike" Indigenous Amazonian peoples might conceive of the relationship between war and their world of the social.

In the first pages of his essay "The Archaeology of Violence," Clastres (1994 [1980]: 139-167) points out that in the ethnographic literature devoted to the understanding of "primitive" societies the theme of violence is rarely dealt with. When it is discussed, he says, "it is primarily to show how these societies

77 A similar question can also be posed, for instance, for Piaroa people (Overing 1986) and Arawate (Viveros de Castro 1992).
78 Clastres uses terms such as "primitives", "savages", and similar ones to refer to indigenous American peoples to denote that they are peoples who live of freedom, that is, without states. It goes without saying that in his work these terms are rather positive in contrast to the pejorative meaning they usually have in certain western contexts.
work toward controlling it, codifying it, ritualising it, in short, tend to reduce, if not to abolish it" (op.cit.: 139). This, he thinks, is misleading, and notes that:

"From the enormous documentary accumulation gathered in chronicles, travel literature, reports from priest and pastors, soldiers or peddlers, one image continuously emerged from the infinite diversity of the cultures described: that of the warrior. An image dominant enough to induce sociological observation: primitive societies are violent societies; their social being is a being-for-war" (op.cit 140-1).

Having said this, Clastres in one of his stronger statements goes on to say that:

"No general theory of primitive society can economize a consideration of war. Not only does the discourse on war belong to the discourse on society but it assigns it its meaning: the idea of war measures the idea of society" (Clastres 1994:143).

In his view, Clastres explicitly links war in primitive societies with the specificity of their world of the social. A linkage he stresses a number of times in the unfolding of his essay. Thus, for example, he states:

In p. 153) "To ask oneself, consequently, why the Savages wage war is to probe the very being of their society."

And on p. 156) "Wouldn't war simply be a prerequisite for the primitive social being? Wouldn't war be, not the threat of death, but the condition of primitive society's life?

And on p. 164) "War is at the very heart of the primitive social being, war constitutes the very motor of social life (...) should war cease, the heart of primitive society will cease to beat. War is the foundation, the very life of its being, it is its goal: primitive society is society for war; it is, by definition, warlike..."

79 From the very beginning Clastres notes a clear exception to the paucity of works dealing with the theme of violence in ethnographical descriptions on "primitive" peoples. Thus, on Chagnon's (1968) work ("Yanomami: The fierce People") he states that: "[s]till, this is not a reason to draw up, as others have done, a caricatured portrait, where the taste for the sensational far eclipses the capacity to understand a powerful sociological mechanism" (1994 [1980]: 143). Clastres, seems to leave aside the works of Harris (1974, 1977, 1979, 1984a, 1984b).
Taking into account both Overing’s views on the linkage between fertility and social life and Clastres’ arguments, that stresses the fertile side of warfare, let us go back to reconsider the interrelated themes that opened this chapter: namely the ambiguous fecundity of the moon and Yanomami warfare.

On the one hand we have Clastres’ “positive views” on the importance that warfare, (“not the threat of death but the condition of primitive society’s life,” e.g., enabling of freedom from tyranny) has for the understanding of the social world of primitive peoples. On the other hand Overing’s emphasis on Amerindians’ “social understanding” of fertility (and the ever present threat of its collapse through perverse fertility, which if unmastered, is engendering of violence and cannibalistic behaviour) help us to explore the myth of the moon and perceive its ambiguous message from another view point. Let us now consider Yanomami warfare and see the extent to which we can agree with Clastres and state, for instance, that Yanomami warfare is “the condition of Yanomami life.”

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80 Overin’s ethnography on Piaroa people has close similarities with Clastres “positive” views of violence and warfare. She for instance stresses the “perversity of powers” to live a social life (e.g., the problems of “perverse fertility” are at the heart of living a human social kind of life).

81 In my discussion of Yanomami warfare I am not dealing with the French and Brazilian theorists of ontological predation (i.e., Viveros de Castro 1992; Fausto 1997, 2000, 2001; Descola 1993; Vilaca 1992). The reason for this is a shift of focus from the complex symbolism and ritual practices described and analysed by the theorists of ontological predation, to following the works of Overing, Clastres, Lizot among others- the ways in which this symbolic and ritual richness is part and parcel of moral and political values attached to a culturally specific Yanomami aesthetics of egalitarianism. In latter works, I hope to deal more in-depth with the ways in which Yanomami notions of predation and cannibalism are related to moral and political values, and how this affects the production of persons and of proper sociality.

82 It is interesting to note the extent to which Clastre’s views of primitive warfare take into account Yanomami reality. The reading of his work gives me the impression that he was highly influenced by what he “saw” in the field when he was among the Yanomami of Venezuela, who he visited in the company of Lizot between 1970-71 (see Clastres 1994 [1971]: 9-27). He says about the Yanomami that they are “the last great primitive society in the world, to live up to the present as though America had not been discovered. And so one can observe there the omnipresence of war” (op.cit. 142-3). Clastres’ “positive view” on the primitive warfare can be, once again, appreciated in the final paragraph of his 1994 essay on the Yanomami. He writes: “ A thousand years of wars, a thousand years of celebrations! That is my wish for the Yanomami. It is this pious ? I’m afraid so. They are the last of the besieged. A mortal shadow is being cast on all sides... And afterwards ? Perhaps we will feel better once the final frontier of this ultimate freedom has been broken. Perhaps we will sleep without waking a single time... Some say, then, oil derricks around the shaponos, diamond mines in the hillsides, police on the paths, boutiques in the riverbanks... Harmony everywhere” (1994:27). Clastres’ irony shows the extent to which the association he makes between “primitivism” and war denotes, at its core, the strong political stance he perceived as the essence of the existence of violence and warfare in these societies. His message is therefore understood as a clear defence of the primitives’
8.3 On Yanomami warfare

In the following pages I will present different theories of Yanomami warfare. Taking Lizot’s (1994a, 1994b) insights as the main ground for my discussion I will approach the issue of war from the indigenous perspective with the emphasis upon the topic of sociality (which encompasses the moral and the aesthetic) and Yanomami knowledge of such practices. In doing this, I want to emphasise that Yanomami people have their own (strong) theories about what is conducive to peace and war. I will argue that conflicts have a strong political dimension that reflect Yanomami aesthetics of egalitarianism and how violence and warfare are but the other side of the coin of their love of tranquility and peace in everyday social life (Ales 2000; Lizot 1994 a, 1994b; Overing and Passes eds. 2000) but have nevertheless been the aspect of Yanomami life most documented, and discussed, in the literature (see Ales 1993: Albert 1985, 1989, 1990; Chagnon 1966, 1967, 1968, 1974, 1990, 1979, 1988; Ferguson 1989, 1992, 1995; Harris 1979, 1984; Lizot 1977, 1994a; Sponsel 1983).

8.3.1 Theories of Yanomami warfare

At the present time, there are three main theories purporting to explain Yanomami warfare, the history of which being relevant to this work.

First there is Chagnon’s interpretation, which is a synthesis of two theoretical frameworks, namely framed by the traditional functionalism of anthropology and the sociobiological or evolutionary biological paradigm. For Chagnon, the Yanomami make war to get better access to natural or reproductive resources. Chagnon’s hypothesis of war, along with Marvin Harris’ so-called “protein hypothesis” has initiated years of debate. Nevertheless, while Harris’ hypothesis and the controversy it created was, in Lizot’s words

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freedom to wage their wars in their own ways, and put in other words, this freedom is a kind of wall against the emergence of the state, a war for equality.


84 On this debate see, among many others, Chagnon and Hames (1979, 1980); Gross (1975); Hames and Vickers (1983); Harris (1974, 1977,1979,1984); Lizot (1977, 1984); Sponsel (1983).
“fruitful” and “made us realize the insufficiency of our data on human ecology and forced us to begin research that we had neglected up to that time,” Chagnon’s theory has been strongly critiqued for, among other things, its dangerous political consequences as providing the potential rationale for ethnocide.\footnote{This can be observed, for instance, in the following works: Albert (1989, 1990); Booth (1989); Carneiro da Cunha (1989); Ferguson (1995); Lizot (1994a); Ramos (1987); Geertz (2001).}

Secondly we have Ferguson’s “material motivation hypothesis,” a theoretical conception of the actual practice of war among the Yanomami being “a result of antagonisms [that are] related to scarce, coveted, and unequally distributed Western manufactured goods” (1995:8; see also Ferguson 1990a, 1990b, 1992). In the view of Ferguson, “wars occur when those who make the decision to fight estimate that it is in their material interest to do so,” e.g., to get the outsider’s goods (Ferguson 1995:9; see also 1990 a: 30). Ferguson’s theory of warfare has to be judged in close relation to his very particular methodology. His own honest words (see Ferguson 1995, note 7:406) make this point clearer. From the very beginning of the book he clearly states that he has “never seen a Yanomami” and that being “unsatisfied with existing explanations of their conflict” he “set up to apply [his previous] two approaches, to see if they worked in this [the Yanomami warfare] supremely puzzling case” (op.cit:xii, my italics). He also says that his 1995’s approach to the Yanomami warfare is “deliberately one-dimensional. The analytical model developed... is a world away from the Yanomami’s own views on life and death” (op.cit:xii, my italics). I agree with Ferguson (op.cit.: 368) when he says that we should use all the “accumulating knowledge” (i.e., all the published work about the Yanomami) “to generate a better theory [about Yanomami war].” Nevertheless it is my view that, to do that, and more than anything else, one has to look at the accumulating knowledge of the indigenous people (i.e., their theories on both “peace” and “war,” their own experiences and their ways of verbalising all that) and not only at the accumulation of knowledge of the anthropologists.

Finally, according to Lizot, warfare is understood as a total social act that should be analysed within the context of indigenous culture, that is, considering
the Yanomami own conceptions and their internal logic (1984 [1977], 1994 a, 1994 b, 1999 b). In contrast with the aforementioned theories, Lizot does not try to find “an origin” of Yanomami warfare; he takes warfare as a reality and tries to understand his role in the social world of Yanomami people: he aims to elucidate the way warfare functions within the network of social relationships. For Lizot, the question of “What is Warfare?” for the Yanomami can only be answered by considering the “dialectic of peace and warfare”; that is, one can only provide an appropriate answer by “defining what peaceful relationships are” (Lizot 1994b: 214). Lizot’s (1994 b) analysis represents a fundamental point of rupture with the theories of Chagnon and Ferguson. In this article (1994 b), for the first time in the history of the ethnography on the Yanomami, their own ways of conceiving peace began to be seen as highly relevant to the understanding of the nature of war among them. Through the analysis of Yanomami ceremonial dialogue (one that provides a coherent whole that includes practices and conceptions, mythology, rites and symbols) the non-violent and convivial sides of Yanomami sociality are subtly analysed. Clearly peace among the Yanomami was not merely a break between their endless wars. This article shows the extent to which both anthropology and the anthropologist had previously in the warfare debate left the Yanomami love of peace and their moral values completely aside. Lizot describes Yanomami understanding of peace and war as being “both the same expression” of their conception of social life, and therefore “they [peace and war] are not perceived as antithetical but as a similar expression of exchange and reciprocity: nothing more than two modalities [expressions of types of reciprocal exchange relationships among Yanomami people],” that is, they are two sides of one coin (1994 b:232). Thus we see that Lizot’s views are in agreement with the before mentioned argument of Clastres and his conception of primitive war as a fundamental part of their world of the social.86

86 Lévi-Strauss’ (1974 [1942]) article - in which he analyses the relationship between war and commerce, and concludes that war is “the result of unsuccessful transactions”, has been criticised by both Clastres (1994 [1980]) and Lizot (1999). For instance, Clastres writes that: “according to this [Lévi-Strauss] conception, war , as a skidding, a rupture of the movement toward exchange, could only represent the non-essence, the non-being of the society. It is the accessory in relation to the principal, the accident in relation to the substance” (op.cit: 151). See also Lizot (1999b) for another critical point of view of Lévi-Strauss’ interpretation of the place of warfare in primitive societies; and Fausto (2000: 935) where he writes that the exchangist view
Albert (1985; 1990) similarly describes Yanomami warfare as a "social institution." Albert, within the context of describing a culturally specific way of understanding social life, and its symbolic dimensions, highlights as essential constitutive dimensions of Yanomami warfare their "theories of aggression and revenge, conceptions of social difference, and the associated rituals" (1990:562). For him, Yanomami warfare cannot be understood without taking into consideration "the symbolic relationships between raiding and supernatural aggression" (ibid). Therefore he asks "how can inter-village raiding be understood apart from its ritual context when the launching of any raid involves an endocannibalistic funerary rite for a victim to be avenged and the ritual simulation of the exocannibalism of the enemies responsible for that death?" 87

To conclude, for Albert (op. cit.: 561), Yanomami warfare as a social institution has to take into consideration its "complex cultural constructs" in which he highlights three main features 1) "classification of socio-political distances;" 2) "a theory of physical and supernatural aggression;" and 3) "a system of symbolic exchanges via funerary and war rituals" and the actual perpetuation of a group of people (see also Albert 1985).

Ales (2000) has written on this issue as well. Her understanding of war is that Yanomami people go to war to ameliorate the pain of others, whose loved ones had been killed. In doing this, she can be seen to stress the value of generosity, the alleviating of the pain of others, being a generosity act. However, her discussion is somewhat abstract, and she does not take into account other ethnographies, a fact that does not add clarity to the warfare debate.

leads to a conception of warfare "as a form of balanced reciprocity", and to an "encapsulation of warfare within the concept of reciprocity, its reduction to a synthetic formula of the gift." See the main text for my interpretation in which, furthering Lizot's insights, I argue that the exchange and reciprocity idioms used by Yanomami people in their interpersonal relations, reflects a strong concern with social balance and are a privilegiated domain through which we can elucidate a culturally especific aesthetics of egalitarianism.

87 For a description and analysis of the symbolic dimensions of Yanomami warfare and its association with cannibalism see what Albert (1985, Chapters XI-XII: 340-524) calls "Théories cannibals et réciprocité rituelle."
While generally agreeing with Albert's interpretations, and taking into account the richness of the ritual and symbolic associations described in his work, in the following pages I will, however, focus on Lizot's views. Thus, I want to explore more the way he emphasises the dialectic between Yanomami conceptions of peace and warfare. Furthermore, through an exploration of the linkage Lizot establishes between Yanomami warfare and their morality (see next section below), I wish to shed new light on the political dimensions of their conflicts and the place of warfare in their culturally specific aesthetics of egalitarian relationships. Let us expand more on Lizot's views on Yanomami warfare and see the extent to which peace and warfare are, as he writes, "nothing more than two modalities" of the same conceptions of their world of the social - understood here as the conditions to achieve a proper human (social) sort of life.

8.4 Yanomami Warfare according to Lizot: notes towards an understanding of warfare as a moral (and political) issue

As stated before, Lizot's views on Yanomami warfare take as point of departure the dialectic of peace and warfare. As has been reported for other Amazonian peoples (see Gow 2000) the love and attachment to tranquil relations is but the opposite side of the coin of violence of the universe, and an expression of a way to keep their own human violence at bay. Understanding peace, and the love for tranquillity, is fundamental to the understanding of war, and viceversa. Or said in other way, in order to understand Yanomami warfare we have to begin, first of all, by achieving an understanding of the process that moves from peace and the production of positive relations to the deterioration of such relations, and finally to warfare itself. Lizot's understanding and description of this dialectics is grounded on Yanomami moral virtues and the importance they have in the development of interpersonal relationships. It is only by taking into account the constant emphasis that Yanomami people make

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in their achievement of everyday peaceful relations, upon tranquillity and the positive social/affective aspects of community life, that we can then obtain a better understanding of the nature of Yanomami warfare.\textsuperscript{89}

In his description of the passage between peace and war, Lizot starts by pointing out that "the ceremonial dialogue [is] a reciprocal exchange, essentially peaceful in nature" (1994: 228). Expanding on this, he specifies that this type of speech is "a modality for peaceful exchange," but he also notes that "not all exchanges are peaceful" (ibid). Briefly, the Yanomami have peaceful exchanges and exchanges that are violent. Furthermore, I should note that all these "exchanges" are relational, that is, concerning types of relationships. The Ceremonial dialogue is an expression of what I will call a relational attitude, as it is an expression of one modality for creating or addressing peaceful and balanced relationships by means of language.

On the nature of exchange and reciprocity among the Yanomami Lizot stresses that "the reciprocal exchange directs the whole system of communication" (1994b: 228-229). Lizot explains the above statement by considering the way Yanomami people refer to and describe a number of activities in their life. He stresses the importance of reciprocal exchange relationships among the Yanomami to understand their conceptions of peace and war, and their ways of verbalising what they do in peace and what they do in war. By means of a semantic description, he shows the extent to which different activities (e.g., peaceful and violent, social and asocial) are conceptualised and described through the same relational idiom – all being attached to a very particular moral philosophy. In other words, processes of peace and war are similarly expressed as they are conceived as different expressions of the same philosophy of social life. For instance, Lizot points out a number of expressions that refer to the reciprocal exchange of words, of goods, of food, of attitudes, of corpses of the deceased... He provides the examples: "wa koamai:" "to answer back;" "koamai:" "to return a borrowed object;" "no koamai:" (lit. "to return the

\textsuperscript{89} For an example of the importance Yanomami people give to these themes in their everyday verbal life see chapters 9, 10, 11.
value”), “to assure reciprocity of a commercial exchange” and also “to take blood revenge,” “to kill someone because of a murder,” and finally the word “kahiki no koo” that means “to give an offering of meat and an accompanying dish” (e.g., after receiving the same from the recipient). Although these activities are quite different in nature, all are expressed and verbalised through an idiom in which notions of mutuality and reciprocity are its main feature. In all the above examples a reciprocal/mutual mode of relationality can be appreciated. All the above expressions are engineering of relationships of certain kinds that show types of relating where the notion of balance becomes crucial and overt/explicit. Furthermore, he stresses the fundamental importance of taking into account the social side of the reciprocal exchange relationship these verbal expressions convey: “the exchange does not solely focus on material objects” (op.cit.:231). That is, one may “exchange” words, things, attitudes, and all of this may be for good or for ill, but overall there are two persons either developing a social relation or an asocial one. This leads him to point out that “by extension, it can be said that everything is suitable for exchange” (op.cit.:230). He describes this by referring to what would seem to be a “confusion” of the “levels of exchange and the modalities of reciprocity” (op.cit.: 231). He concludes by observing that “reciprocity,” understood here as a Yanomami mode of relating in a variety of domains of social life, “simultaneously covers the field of peaceful relationships, relationships based on violence, and finally, warfare” (op.cit.: 231).

8.4.1 The notion of social balance in Yanomami reciprocal exchange relationships

At this point there is an important aspect I wish to highlight. While building on the strengths of Lizot’s research, and in particular his continuous emphasis upon the indigenous perceptions and points of view (for a clear and vivid example see Lizot 1985), I will at the same time steer clear of the so-called structuralist paradigm (and its all encompassing language of exchange and reciprocity), which more often that not, would seem premised upon Western understandings of society and thought. It is my belief that a theoretical
emphasis on indigenous views conflicts with much of the ways certain structuralist grand narratives, especially those having to do with "exchange" and "reciprocity" have been applied. I want to emphasise the extent to which Lizot's use of terms and notions of "reciprocity" and "exchange" does not mean that he embraces, mechanically, the modernist grand narratives of social order which have more often than not silenced the voices of our indigenous "subjects." Rather, I want to point out the extent to which Lizot describes, using a number of aspects and concepts of the well known vocabulary of reciprocity, the indigenous theories about what is conducive to peace and war and their way of verbalising such theories. But I still want to say this in a different manner. The Yanomami understanding of "reciprocal exchange relationships" has little to do with Western social narratives with their attachment to rigid dualities of the individual and the collective, the public and the private, nature and culture, reason and emotions, the domestic and the political (see Overing 1985; Overing and Passes 2000). Such dualities of social thought make an ill fit with the social thinking and attached practices of the Yanomami. Therefore, and in order to avoid confusion with the structuralist paradigm, I do wish to retain as important for Yanomami the idea of relationality in creating and maintaining social relations, and the fundamental stress made by them on the notion of balance, and also the importance for them of the continuous reckoning of individual exchanges. As we will see, all the above are fundamental to the understanding of Yanomami modes of relating in peace and in war. At the same time, it is also very important to understand their ideas with regard to retaining and creating

90 In order to make clear Lizot's application of the theory of reciprocity it is important to note, from the start of this section, the aspects that Lizot (1994: 229) highlights in his description. Thus I provide both his views and the passages he quotes firstly from Mauss (1966 [1923]), secondly from Levi-Strauss (1966), and finally from Sahlins (1972).

From Mauss: "it is the obligation to give and to receive (to return also) that constitutes the foundation of peaceful relationships"; and "exchange is the common denominator of a large number of social activities that are seemingly heterogeneous"

From Lévi-Strauss, commenting on the gift: it is "the exchange which constitutes primitive phenomenon, and the different products of the social activity (tools, manufactured products, foodstuffs, magical formulas, ornaments, dances, songs, and myths), are rendered comparable to each other by their common character to be transferable," And "they are often substitutable to the extent that different values can replace each other in the same operation."

From Sahlins: he "warns against making the mistake of perceiving the exchange in terms that are exclusively material: it is, first and foremost, a social act."
their own individual freedom in the process of forming, and carrying out their social relations.

Let me provide an ethnographic example from elsewhere that might allow us to better perceive the role that reciprocal exchange relationships, together with the idiom through which they are verbalised, play within Yanomami dialectics of peace and warfare.

The example comes from Kulick's (1992) work on language shift in Gapun, a New Guinea village. He emphasises the enormous stress that Gapuners place on a principle of social "balance" in the carrying out of their everyday life. His discussion (op.cit.: 112-113) about code-switching, as an example of what he calls "a measure of balance" in the everyday village production of speech, and the aesthetic dimensions this balanced production of speech has in community life, give us an appropriate frame in which to place our present discussion. Moreover, Kulick's insights into the linkage between peoples' everyday verbal life and their broader social concern will help me to stress, once again, a methodological and theoretical stress of this thesis on "listening to" the way the Yanomami verbalise what they are doing. 91

Kulick writes that:

"A great deal of the code-switched repetitions in the villagers' speech follows a call-response pattern in which the speaker calls out an opinion, threat, warning, or thought, and the respondent (or the speaker her-or himself) echoes that utterance in another language. The fact that the template for the code-switched response is frequently the surface structure of the immediately preceding utterance/call makes it clear that villagers pay close attention to the structure of the talk they are producing. And a striking characteristic of much of the code-switching that occurs in Gapun is that it appears to be motivated more by the surface features of the previous utterance than by any underlying social principle. Indeed, the

91 Kulick's constant emphasis upon people's ways of saying things in order to understand the social concerns through which language shift can be better understood is another example through which to appreciate Hymes' insights on indigenous poetics: "perception of depth depends on perception of detail and of the relationships implicit in its placement" (1981:10).
salience for the villagers of this kind of oscillation between languages...[would seem to be]...the construction of a rhythmically patterned discourse. There is an aesthetic, almost musical, quality to much of the speech that villagers produce. It is as though they continually monitor their own speech and that of others in order to collaborate to produce a talk that contains a measure of balance between Taiap and Tok Pisin” (Kulick 1992: 112-113, my italics).

Kulick goes on to associate Gapuners’ concern with the aesthetic measure of balance in their everyday village “production of speech” to their more general concern with social balance. He writes:

“The effect of balance between languages that villagers...manage to achieve through their patterned repetition and code-switching may be the linguistic manifestation of the more general concern with social balance that is a central issue in the life of every villager. Together with the majority of other Papua New Guinean communities, Gapuners have a strong sense that all social relationships should be reciprocal and balanced, and much of what the villagers do is directed toward maintaining a balance, or spitefully and pointedly upsetting it. In the past...the tit-for-tat pattern of warfare practiced by the villagers maintained a very real sense of balance between different clans. Sorcery today is considered by the villagers to serve much the same function. Between individuals, balance is embodied in reciprocal exchange relationships...It seems as though the pervasiveness of these kinds of ideas about balance in social relationships also plays a role in shaping the ways in which the villagers use their languages in their talk to one another” (Kulick 1992: 113, my italics).

The idea of social balance is therefore a “central issue” in the everyday life of each individual Gapuner. As Kulick stresses, the aesthetics related to the “production of speech” cannot be divorced from the aesthetics related to the “production of social relations.” Gapuners’ overriding concern with linguistic and social balance generates both a particular culturally specific way of speaking and a no-less-culturally-specific aesthetics of interpersonal relationships. That is, the sense of balance plays a fundamental role not only in the aesthetics of language, in its poetics, but in the very aesthetics of interpersonal relations. For Gapuners, all their “social relationships should be

92 For a similar relationship Yanomami people establish between the aesthetics of language and sociality see chapters 5, 6, 7.
reciprocal and balanced;" this is a feature that pervades both peace and warfare.

Overing's work is also an appropriate example to realise the way a concern with reciprocity as a fundamental issue within the ethnography of Amazonian peoples might well develop into a concern on what she calls "an aesthetics of conviviality." For instance, back in 1984, she wrote that:

"The implications for Amerindian social life of the elementary structure of reciprocity ordering it is that society itself becomes a logic for maintaining a balance, a proper relationship among cultural items in the universe that allows society to perpetuate itself. Reciprocity itself can thus be equally viewed as a particular mode of self-perpetuation, not of groups – which might entail the coercive control of both people and scarce resources- but of relationships, a perpetuation that counteracts the development of such control" (1983-84: 346).

Nowadays, Overing retains her focus upon the indigenous stress upon the need for creating relational (equality) and emotional balance in social relationships toward the end of developing safe and convivial relations among those who live together. However, this concern is no longer expressed by using such analytic terms as "reciprocity" and "exchange." Rather, she emphasises the fundamental role to sociality of the way individuals through the playing out of their moral virtues and a particular and culturally specific aesthetics of interpersonal relationships, generate, day by day, a convivial life for living well together (Overing and Passes 2000: 1-30). At issue here is the crucial value upon political, as well as domestic, freedom, the issue that Clastres writes on so passionately. Through such convivial engagement, a life of freedom can be created among coresident Piaroa, or Yanomami through the daily (re)generation of equals. At the same time, this daily generation of relations among equals/similars is what keeps (cosmological, social, personal) violence at bay, and the tyranny that the emergence of hierarchical institutions would entail. Freedom from violence is what this is about, and dignity of person, of course.
Taking into account Kulick's views, can we say that the way Yanomami people express ideas and notions of reciprocal exchange (e.g., the use of an idiom of "reciprocity" and "exchange") to describe their interpersonal relations is the linguistic manifestation of a broader concern with aesthetic—and individual—embodiment of balance in social relations? In posing this question, and in finding an answer, we are again faced with the fundamental importance of understanding "surface manifestation" (e.g., peoples' ways of speaking and expressing themselves) as the only possible—and interesting—way to arrive at the supposedly deeper domain of "structures," and not the other way around e.g., from structures to people's surface manifestations.

In what follows, in order to better understand the way Lizot describes Yanomami people's understanding of peace and war as "the same expression" of their social world and as "a similar expression of exchange and reciprocity" I would like to draw further attention to the way Kulick refers to the notion of reciprocal exchange relationships as the aesthetic—and individual—embodiment of balance in social relations. Let me explore this through an example of the way Yanomami concern with the "aesthetics of measurement" takes place not only in the production of positive social relations, but in its very opposite, when the context is one of asocial relations. I believe that the way of playing out the "practices of asociality" can be a profitable site to better understand the positive practices that lead to a fertile, safe and tranquil life. Moreover, looking at the way Yanomami people speak about conflict we will achieve a better understanding on the political side of their ways of dealing with conflicts, an issue that will be deal with in later pages.

Soon after my arrival to the community of Hapokashita I wanted to find out some information on the war had taken place between their community and the community of Torita. Since my last visit to the Yanomami area two years before these two communities had progressed from friendly relations to a state of animosity. A number of mutual attacks had taken place between them leaving
six deaths, three in each community. Being curious about the causes of the conflict, I asked a young Yanomami what had happened. Although knowing that asking this type of question was not going to provide me with the “ultimate truth,” I had to begin somewhere so I asked him directly about the conflict: “The last time I was here you were friends,” I said to him. “What happened?” I asked him. The following is his answer:

text 8.1

1 Yamaki re niyayore ya t’e wäha wayoai,
   I’m going to tell you about our war, [lit. about our “mutual shooting of arrows at each other”]

2 ihi t’e re kui,
   this war,

3 t’e re kui ha,
   with this war,

4 weti naha t’e kuonomi....
   Is not a proper question... [ I had asked him the causes that motivated the war...]

This way of replying to a question is a typical way of beginning the explanations of events. For this speaker the question is something so “obvious” that it seems that asking is not the proper way of approaching the subject. After stating this, more for the sake of illustrating a certain way of speaking than for information of content, I will present the way he went on to explain to me a number of incidents related to the reciprocal thefts that happened between the people of the communities of Torita and Iratawe:

text 8.2

1 kama pëni,
   they, [e.g., the people of the Torita community]

2 irathawe theri pé niipi thomimai no motamahe,
   They stole a lot of Irathawe’s food, [e.g., from the gardens of the people of Irathawe community]

3 kihami,
   there,
4 *Irathawe hamî pe perio tehe,*
when they were living in Irathawe, [e.g., the place known by that name]

5 *pê niipi topramanomihe,*
you didn’t care about the food, [e.g., they stole it]

6 *pê niipi waikamahe,*
they damaged their food,

7 *pee nahe mo kâî wariyamahe,*
they also damaged the tobacco plants,

(...)

8 *ihî têhê pê niipi nape ukua mi ha hetuokuni,*
then they went to root out their foot/gardens in turn, [e.g., the people from Irathawe community when to root out the gardens from the people of Torita]

9 *kuratha e si wariyamaa mi heturema,*
they damaged the banana plants,

10 *pee nahe mo wariyaa mi heturema,*
they damaged the tobacco plants,

11 *Irathawe theri pêni e si wariyaa mi heturemahe,*
the people from Irathawe damaged the gardens in turn,

12 *torita theri pê niipi rê kui,*
the food of the people from Torita,

(...)

13 *pê waroa kokei,*
they arrived home, [see line 15]

14 *kama pê shaponopi hamî,*
to their communal house,

15 *torita theri,*
the people from Torita,

[and then they saw their gardens]

16 *nii a wanitiwe,*
the food was damaged/ruined,

17 *kuami,*
there was no food at all,

18 *nashi e si hoyaa mi hetuapotayouhe,*
they had thrown away the manioc plants everywhere,

19 *ihî tô né nowâ ha pê hushitariyoma,*
because of this they became angry,
torita theri,  
the people from Torita,

pē ha hushitharuni,  
became angry,

a napē ukukemahe....  
[and] They went to fight... [e.g., to have a fight with the people from the community of Irathawe] 

The account is clear in the order of the events and shows the way the Yanomami explain (e.g., verbalise) a conflict - the reasons they give and the motivations behind some of the actions. There is much more to be said about further reasons and motives these communities might have had to end their good relations and begin the chain of actions that led to a fight. However, this is not the moment to do that and by now I want only to focus on a number of aspects that Berno, the speaker, highlights in his narrative.

Firstly, he begins by stating that the people from the community of Torita were the ones who initiated the sequence of mutual thefts in the gardens (lines 1-7). This generates the response, e.g. the theft, of the people from the community of Iratawe, who, it has to be said, live all together with the speaker in the community where I was conducting fieldwork. Thus, the people from Iratawe went in their turn to damage the gardens of the people from Torita (lines 8-12). For this reason, the people from Torita became angry and went to have a fight with the people from Iratawe (lines 19-22). During the fight two people....

93 See for instance Lizot (1994:855) who writes that “[m]ost Yanomami wars are not the result of a single, localized incident, identifiable in a temporal sequence, even if a particular incident provoked the ultimate explosion into armed conflict. Rather, they result (...) from a progressive degeneration of the relations between communities over a more or less prolonged period of time. The event that actually triggers the opening of hostilities is never but a detonator; the causes are many and interwoven, and not always easily identifiable. Questioned on the reasons for a war, the Indians themselves generally either recall only the final incident that served to set it off or spontaneously refer to a quarrel about a woman. If one tries to reconstruct the origin of the conflict by concentrating only on the testimony of informants, one never obtains information about anything but the final incident and certainly not a precise and detailed description of the complex situation that makes it possible for a trivial or relatively minor incident to be at the origin of a war. To limit oneself to the testimony of the Indians is a little as if a historian were to limit himself to the statements made in the press, during a war between two nations, by the politicians in charge of justifying the recourse to arms.”
from the community of *Irathawe* were fatally injured and died. Revenge had to be taken: It was the beginning of the war.

On this way of initiating the hostilities between groups that lead to war, Chagnon (1977:122) writes that:

"[O]ccasionally, food theft involving related villages also precipitates raiding (...) [S]omeone stole the peach-palm fruit belonging to a man in the other group, resulting in another food theft for revenge, a club fight, and then raiding, but it should be pointed out that the raiding came about only after a long history of disputes between the groups; food theft was merely the catalyst that finally initiated the hostilities."

There is also an interesting account in Valero's memories (Valero, in Biocca 1996:220) when she recalls an event where a Yanomami describes a garden ruined as a result of bad relations and as a sign of clear hostility. She says:

"We passed through the roca [garden]; the tushaua [leader] saw his beautiful plants of arrow-canes ruined and said: "They really want a fight. Do they want to kill me or do they want me to kill one of them, what do you think? When anyone wishes to be enemies, this is exactly what they do; they break down the arrow-plants" (Valero, in Biocca 1996:220).

After the reading of these examples, we can see that there is an important concern for balance in the set of reciprocal thefts of gardens between the people of *Torita* and *Iratawe*. This is a concern that continues as the relations deteriorate. From these thefts they proceeded on to a fight in which two persons were fatally injured. As stated before, the death of these two persons announced warfare: they had to avenge them and kill in their turn (cf. Clastres 1994, chapter 11, where he describes the "primitives" refusal of others having power over them)
We have seen what can be said to be a “practical expression” of the above mentioned concern with balance and the way this balance is expressed in a particular mode of relating. I should emphasise that a similar account, on the “positive” is perfectly possible. The only thing we have to do is to substitute the negative feelings underlying the reasons for the thefts of the gardens that lead to a fight and then to a war, for the positive feelings that would have lead to mutual visits when the reciprocal exchanges would be peaceful (e.g., of words, food, goods, and positive attitudes).

However to conclude by saying that the Yanomami, as the Gapuners described by Kulick, have a general concern for social balance which is embodied in reciprocal exchange relationships is to leave the discussion somehow abstract and therefore incomplete. To explore further the importance of social balance among Yanomami people, together with their modes of relating and associated social practices, I wish to consider their moral universe.

8.4.2 On Yanomami moral virtues

In his discussions of themes related to the well known different variations of reciprocity, Sahlins (1968:19) writes: “[I]n its broadest meaning this sectorial design is a moral plan of the tribal universe. Hence its influence on economic and political conduct, which are different forms of moral conduct.” The emphasis upon morality (e.g., different modes and expressions of moral conduct) to understand social and economic relations makes one realize the extent to which terms such as “reciprocity” and “exchange,” mainly associated with “things” under a “Western reading” of them, might well describe, for other people, ways in which particular individuals interact with each other and verbally express what are they doing in their own ways. The task for understanding the role that such terms and notions (with all the heavy and broader theoretical connotations they might have) play in indigenous conceptions and practices, should, in the first place, take the individual and autonomous person as its main referent point (e.g., interpersonal relationships). The way people behave and develop their social relations, either by means of sharing, reciprocating or exchanging, in one
way or another is, then (in Amazonia – not always elsewhere), a “personal matter” between a particular subject and the persons he/she relates with. Therefore, it is my belief that the social world of Yanomami people will be better perceived, understood and described as the multiple and processual outcome of the everyday interpersonal relationships developed in the way just described. Having said this, let us see what Lizot writes about Yanomami morality.

Lizot points out that the Yanomami moral code:

“is organised around two dominant virtues: generosity ("shi ihite") and courage ("waitherf"). This is not coincidence. The former implies frequent gift-giving; and the latter comprises the obligation to take revenge ("no yuo"); namely, to retaliate in kind, corpse for corpse. This is the implacable application of “an eye for an eye, tooth for tooth” (Lizot 1994:230).

Generosity plays a fundamental role in Yanomami sociality. It is one of the main grounds on which convivial relations are build up. In chapter 7, I deal with the importance of generosity in Yanomami social relations. I also explore the strong linkage they make between generosity and good speech. Generosity ("shi ihite") can be clearly understood as a main virtue at the heart of the positive emotions that contribute to creating relationships among persons and then to the very production of Yanomami sociality. And generosity among Yanomami people should be better understood not only in relation to things, food, and words, but rather in the general sense of generosity of spirit, and therefore in its relation to violence and war too. The importance of the notion of courage ("waitherf"), the other moral virtue stressed by Lizot as dominant, deserves careful attention. Although the virtue of courage is tied to generosity, as we will see below, it can be, more often than not, associated with negative emotions like those leading to violence and also warfare. There is a lingering message of a “dual morality” that encompasses, mixes and confounds, as it were, the indigenous views on life as well as those on death. Lizot writes that:

“the term waitheri has no simple translation; it is a concept for which the sense is complex and denotes a moral value. This lexeme
signifies at the same time "courageous," "gallant," "bold," "reckless," and "stoic." In the semantic field that it embraces, "fierce" occurs only at the far edge of the spectrum of possible meanings, to describe an extreme behaviour. He is a waitheri who avenges himself (no yuo) and who inflicts on others exactly that which those others have made him undergo... to be waitheri is to be courageous and stoic, to have no fear of other's aggression, to refuse submission, to be capable of opposing the will of others, and to stand up to them; it is also to be able to endure the greatest physical or psychological suffering. It is interesting to note that the two animals which, in the eyes of the Indians, best embody waitheri behaviour are the coati, for its bravery, and the sloth, because it "does not die" – in other words, because it endures the most excruciating wounds; it is difficult to kill. It is not a killer animal like the jaguar that has been chosen to represent the waitheri ideal, but rather two other animals and, if these animals are different, it is because the Indians recognise at least implicitly the two poles of the semantic field covered: courage and stoicisim. A waitheri man is not necessarily a spontaneously aggressive man (1994 b: 857).

We have seen the strong linkage that exists between the "waitheri" behaviour and the practice of avenging oneself "no yuo." In what follows, I want to provide more cultural background concerning the Yanomami practice of revenge. Before doing this, however, I want to recall once again Kulick's discussion of the way the notion of an aesthetics of measurement and the concern with social balance are embodied in reciprocal exchange relationships at the interpersonal level. Let us note, by now, that in both the positive (e.g., peace) and the negative (e.g., war) relationships, we have two parties (persons or communities) bounded by a mutuality of actions. In doing so, we will appreciate the extent to which in describing relations between people, an "idiom of reciprocal exchange relationships and social balance" is used to describe "negative" social relations (e.g., violence and war).

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94 It has to be noted that this reference to the word fierce is a clear allusion to Chagnon's work ("The Fierce People"). Indeed, the quote comes from an American Ethnologist's article that has as its title: "on warfare: an answer to N.A. Chagnon" (Lizot 1994).
95 In order to better understand what I mean by "an idiom of reciprocal exchange relationships and social balance" I provide here some definitions related to the term from the dictionary (Collins: 1337).
1) reciprocal: a reciprocal action or agreement involves two people or groups who do the same thing to each other in or agree to help each other in a similar way.
2) reciprocate: If your feelings or actions towards someone are reciprocated, the other person feels or behaves in the same way towards you as you have felt or behaved towards them.
Let us see what Lizot writes on Yanomami conceptions of revenge:

"According to the Yanomami, to take revenge and to be brave is to retaliate in kind; to do to others exactly the same, no more no less, as they do... as I stated, corpse for corpse. To take revenge (no yuo) literally means “to seize the value.” Children of both sexes are taught this lesson as soon as they are able to stand on their feet. For instance, when a child has been bitten or hit by another child, the mother or father, conscious of the strict application of the rule, forces retaliation in the same manner and at the same spot. Revenge is also taken on objects. The Yanomami bite the thorn that pricked them; they cut the sharp point that wounded them; they bite the lice that tormented them; they burn the head and the teeth of the wildcat that killed a dog. Return insult for insult. A victim of destruction must in turn destroy. It is imperative to hit back when hit. Finally, one must avenge the dead” (Lizot 1994: 230).

Here again we see the close relationship between the moral virtue of courage, “waitheri,” and the practice of revenge “no yuo.” This relationship will become clearer through an example of the way a Yanomami narrates the necessity of taking revenge. The following account is from Berno, the speaker of the former narration (see texts 8.1,8.2). It is a narration about the way he informed the people from Mahekoto, a neighbouring community, of his intentions to retaliate the killings of two people from his community. (in the following text the brackets are intended to provide some information for the reader to follow better the different voices that Berno is enacting when he describes to whom is he speaking).

text 8.3
[Berno speaking to me]

1 aherowé a warokeyorum
Aherowe arrived.

3) reciprocity: is the exchange of something between people or groups of people when each person or group gives or allows something to the other.

96 Let me recall here (on this particular see more in the following pages of this chapter) that for Clastres (1994:96, see Chapter 11) this “corpse for corpse”, entails warfare and political freedom: “no one is “worth” more or less than other, no one is superior or inferior...no one can do more than anyone else; no one is the holder of power”
And then his younger brother,

His father also arrived,

Having arrived/once they came:

[then the visitors "asked" him]

"ōāsi,
"my son, [e.g. son-in-law]

weti naha kē waheki puhi kuu kure?"
what are you both thinking about it?"

They told me.

[Berno "replies"]

"ma,
"No,

father-in-law,

is not like that,

they want me to accompany them,

I think/ having thought so,

is enough,

I am going to see [e.g. to attack] in return, [e.g. after they have attacked me]

father-in-law,

I am preparing the ashes, [of the dead people]"

we both talked,
18 ware rë wasipopiwei kë kipi iha,
to both of them, [e.g. with those who advised me]

19 "permiso."
"permission,"

20 ya e kuma,
I said,

21 "ya no yuo,"
"I am going to take revenge, [lit: I am going to size the value]"

22 ya e kuma,
I said,

[then the visitors "replied" to Berno]

23 "ho,
"Ho, [e.g. all right]

24 t'e ta thaa mi hetuki,
do that in return,

25 yanomami pë t'e he ou,
the yanomami challenge/defy themselves,

26 hei nape iha,
with the whites,

27 pë rë waitheriwei iha,
with the whites that are fierce, [e.g. the Guardia Nacional]

28 ya wā haiwe,
I will tell them,

[the visitors "speaking" to the Guardia Nacional]

29 kama hekamayë,
My son-in-law, [as if he was telling the Guardia Nacional about him…]

30 pei ke a no yurayou kuhe,
has gone to take revenge,

[the visitors "speaking" to Berno]

31 nape pe iha ya kuu tehe,
once I have said this to the whites,

32 the ta thaki,"
go to war/attack them,"

[Berno speaking to me]

33 kuma,
he said,

34 kamani mihi kekipini,
with them,

35 ware re wasipopiei kekipini,
with those two who told me not to go to war,

36 ware kekipi kuma,
they told me,

37 kekipi kuu ha,
after having talked,

38 kamiye ya e kuu shoatayoma:
I just said straightway:

[ Berno “speaking” to his visitors]

39 “hei tehe shoatawe,
“right now,

40 ya ukuo shoaa.”
I am going to get there [e.g. to approach there to attack the enemies]
immediately”

[ Berno speaking to me]

41 ya kuma.
I said.

In order to better understand the way in which Berno speaks and expresses himself, we have to note that, although intermingled in the narration, there are four different flow of words, all of them “interpreted” by Berno.

1) Firstly, Berno addressing his words to me to explain the conversation between him and his Yanomami visitors (lines 1-4, 7, 17-20, 22, 33-38, 41).

2) Secondly, Berno “speaking” to his Yanomami interlocutors (lines 8-16, 19, 21, 39-40).

3) Thirdly, Berno’s interlocutors, the people from the Mahekoto community, “speaking” to him (lines 23-28, 31-32).
4) And finally, Berno’s interlocutors make as if “speaking” to the Guardia Nacional (lines 29-30)

Let us look at further aspects of the text. Berno, begins by describing the arrival of the actual leader of the community of Mahekoto (Mahekoto theri) (line 1) followed by his younger brother (line 2) and his father (line 3). These visitors asked him what he was thinking about the actual situation of conflict (lines 5-6). Then, Berno tells them what he thinks. Note the way of beginning his answer (lines 8-10) by saying that it is “not like that” (i.e., weti naha ya puhi kuimi: lit. how is it I don’t think, line 10). This is the same type of answer he gave to me when I asked him about the events that caused the war (see text 8.1, line 4). He says then that the people in his community want him to accompany them to attack the people from Torita in revenge for the dead people whose ashes he (e.g., the people of his community) is preparing (lines 11-16).97

There follows two more important voices and points of view to take into account. On the one hand there is the voice of Berno explaining his plans of taking revenge to his interlocutors: “ya no you,” “I am going to take revenge” (lit. “to seize the value”) (line 21). On the other, there is the voice of the Mahekoto leader listening to Berno and replying to him: “All right, do it in return, Yanomami challenge/defy themselves” (lines 23-25). The dialogue that takes place, as enacted by Berno, straightforwardly highlights conceptions and practices related to the topic under discussion, e.g. the undertaking of revenge and the war between two communities. In this dialogue, we can appreciate two complementary features of the way the Yanomami understand warfare. On the one hand the moral ground of taking revenge (line 21) and on the other the “reciprocal idiom” through which this morality is expressed - along with the concern with social and political balance such idiom underlies (lines 23-25). These two features are part and parcel of the same philosophy, one that Berno and his interlocutors know well. One expresses the necessity to retaliate in kind, to kill someone in return, to do exactly the same that the enemies did with them;

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97 The Yanomami consume the ashes of their deaths in a mixture made with banana soup. The war expeditions are usually launched after the ashes of the death have been consumed in a feast called reahu.
the other agrees with this attitude as he knows that Yanomami people challenge/defy themselves and understands very well with all the moral and political values underlying such challenge.

There is an additional point that should be clarified. In expressing his moral obligation of undertaking revenge, Berno tells something of importance. He asks for permission, “permiso” in Spanish (line 19). Why permission? Because he is going to take revenge (e.g. going to war) (line 21). However, to whom is he asking for permission? And Why is he doing so? The answer to these questions comes later through the voice of the leader of the community of Mahekoto (lines 26-27) who lives with the “whites” in Platanal (see the map) and therefore he has more contacts with the outside world. He is referring to the Guardia Nacional (national police) (i.e. hei nape iha, pe re waitheriwei iha, lit. with these whites, with these who are courageous) (lines 26-28). Berno is therefore, through the mediation of his interlocutors, asking the Guardia Nacional for permission to go to war. In his answer to Berno (see lines 23-25; 29-32), the leader of Mahekoto also highlights the fact that going to war is expressed as taking revenge (“no yuo”). He explains to Berno that he will tell the Guardia Nacional that his son-in-law “has gone to take revenge” (lines 29-30); and once he has explain this to the “whites,” he should go to war (lines 31-32). However, Berno is not going to wait, and he is announcing to his interlocutors the plans to attack the enemies: “right now, I go there immediately (e.g., to attack the enemies)” (lines 39-40). In Berno’s statement we can see that the asking for permission is more a way to be “politically correct”, so to speak, so as to recognise the role of his neighbours as mediators with the “whites.” Berno does not want to wait until the Mahekoto leader “asks” the “whites” for such permit. He is going “right now.” Among the Yanomami I know, no one asks the “whites” for any permission for going to war.

Another important point can be elucidated from the way Berno explains the plans of going to war. I am referring to the extent to which the moral virtue associated with the obligation to retaliate in kind, “waitheri,” is conceived of as relational and pertaining, first and foremost, to the domain of individual and
interpersonal relationships. The individual, personal side of Yanomami morality has to be emphasised. For the Yanomami interpersonal relationships are relational — and this is an important fact that I repeat again—, their emphasis is always on the relational. Although a moral virtue pertains, first of all, to the autonomous, responsible, and interrelating individual (e.g. he or she, male or female, boy or girl); it is in the plural, in his/her relations with others that a moral virtue is made into a “virtue.” Let me recall once again: "He is “waiheri” who avenges himself ("no yuo") and who inflicts on others exactly that which those others have made him undergo..." (Lizot, 1994a:857).

Having looked at Yanomami morality and the fundamental importance of the generosity/courage pair of virtues in its mutual interrelationship, let us see the linkage between this virtue-centred morality and what we have described as different types of reciprocal exchange relationships taking place in peace and warfare. On this, Lizot writes:

“It is now clear that the relationship between generosity and courage rests on a close analogy and that these two qualities are governed by the same logic: that of the gift and the counter gift, or in other words, the reciprocal exchange. Whereas one quality is definitely oriented toward peace, the other is oriented toward war" (Lizot 1994b:231).

And he concludes by stating that,

“Like the gift and hospitality, revenge and warfare are governed by the principle of reciprocity. The Yanomami associate generosity and courage because the two virtues are perceived as two modalities of exchange and reciprocity. The accomplished man must excel in the exchange. He must therefore be generous and take revenge at the same time. He is an accomplished man because he fully participates in the exchange under all its forms. The principle of reciprocity is of such importance in Yanomami culture that it is incorporated into grammar... Reciprocity simultaneously covers the field of peaceful relationships, relationships based on violence, and, finally, warfare..." (Lizot 1994b: 231-32).
After coming to understand the way Yanomami morality is embodied in reciprocating relationships and the fundamental role that the linkage generosity and courage plays in the indigenous understanding of “peace” and “war,” some questions arise. For instance, how does this “dual morality” (e.g., with its peaceful side and its non-peaceful one) affect the development of interpersonal relationships? How is it related to the production of sociality? After reading Lizot’s insights should we conclude by thinking that whereas one moral virtue, “generosity,” is directed towards the production of sociality (e.g., peace) the other, “courage,” poses a constant threat to it and is associated to its destruction (e.g., war)? How might these moral virtues, in conjunction, work towards the achievement of proper, e.g., human, social relations between people? How can the Yanomami create social relationships by “choice, desire, and interest” (as Overing (2003) described the main way in which the “community of similars” can be achieved among Piaroa people) that have the obligation of revenge at the heart of the moral virtues constitutive of their very social life? It is my opinion that the complex, sometimes ambiguous, interplay between this “moral pair” is a key aspect for understanding the culturally specific aesthetics of Yanomami egalitarianism.

In the section that follows, I will be arguing that the aesthetics of sociality which this dual morality “produces” has to be understood as the political expression of the Yanomami strong, radical (I might say), refusal of inequality. In relation to this, and before moving on, I would like to emphasise two more things. First, there is the idea of relational that is attached to all individual actions and second there is the overriding concern with social balance. Both are critical in a Yanomami view for the achievement of political equality and freedom from tyranny. In both instances we can see that the multiple and varied modes of reciprocating relationships of Yanomami people are a mode through which these concerns are fulfilled.

8.5 The moral and political side of Yanomami warfare: or the battle of “a particular way of being human (i.e., being Yanomami) in the world” against inequality
Now let us dwell upon the political implications that the everyday enactment of this dual morality might have in the achievement of the egalitarian relations that characterise Yanomami sociality. Here again, the main difficulty is posed by the "waitheri," "courageous" behaviour associated with a notion of strict retaliation in kind, with revenge and, eventually also, with violence and stoicism. What "place" might the practice of revenge occupy in the interpersonal relationships of those living together? In providing an answer to these questions I would like the reader to keep in mind Yanomami notions of power and the dangers that, for an egalitarian sociality like the one Yanomami people generate, the development of relations of power might entail.

Let me begin by recalling Clastres’ (1994 [1980]: 96) words on the egalitarian relations of “primitive” societies as they will help to better picture the strong political underpinnings of Yanomami “dual morality.” He writes that:

“Primitive societies are egalitarian, it is said somewhat incorrectly. This suggests that the relations between people there are relations between equals. These societies are "egalitarian", because they are unaware of inequality: no one is “worth” more or less than another, no one is superior or inferior. In other words, no one can do more than anyone else; no one is the holder of power. The inequality unknown to primitive societies splits people into holders of power and those subjects to power, dividing the social body into the dominating and the dominated” (Clastres 1994: 96, italics in the original).

In relation to this, Santos Granero (1986:108), points out that indigenous egalitarian societies do not need to develop notions such as “equality,” and therefore its opposite, “inequality.” Santos Granero’s insights will help to understand what Clastres refers to as “unawareness of inequality.” He says that:

“the egalitarian nature of their social interaction and moral values precludes the existence of such concepts which could have only sprang from societies ridden with social inequalities and hierarchical

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98 Cf. Ales (2000) for a different approach to this issue.
distinctions. One has only to think of the Athens of Plato and Aristotle which was divided into free citizens, slaves and foreigners, or of the estates of Rousseau’s XVIII th century France, to realize that the Western concept of equality was born from a situation of actual inequality” (Santos Granero 1986:108).

Moreover, on the question of “what is then an egalitarian society?” Santos Granero (1986: 110) writes that:

“What is at stake here is whether we should define equality as a political ideology, a moral value or a social practice. If egalitarianism is to be defined as a political ideology or doctrine we have very little or no chance of finding egalitarian societies amongst the so called “traditional” societies. In contrast, if we regard egalitarianism as the result of moral imperatives enacted in social interaction on a daily basis the chances are that we will find a large proportion of traditional societies which are better qualified than our own to deserve the label of “egalitarian” (my italics).

Keeping in mind both, Clastres’ insights on the relationship between equality, egalitarianism and power relations and Santos Granero’s stress on the topic of morality to understand such egalitarian relations, let us return to Yanomami “dual morality.” On the one hand, and to recall again, it is not difficult to understand the fundamental place of being generous (read generosity in spirit). On the other hand, and once the issue of power has been introduced (e.g., “no one is superior or inferior... no one can do more than anyone else; no one is the holder of power” (Clastres, 1994:96)), it becomes more clear, or less ambiguous at least, the no less fundamental role of being courageous. Now we are in a better disposition to understand the reasons why for the Yanomami “to have no fear of others’ aggression, to refuse submission, to be capable of opposing the will of others, and to stand up to them” (Lizot,1994:857) are considered by them as moral virtue. Moreover, the importance of the moral and political side of not showing fear provides a wider frame to understand the constant “battle against fear” that one can perceive in the everyday life of the Yanomami (e.g. see the Yanomami saying: “All right, do it in return, Yanomami challenge/defy themselves” text 8.3 lines 23-25). In fact, the refusal of showing fear (“kirf”) is such a widespread custom evoked in so many circumstances that it deserves more of our attention.
Helena Valero provides a number of accounts of Yanomami overtly stating that, even under the risk of being attacked, they will refuse to show fear. The following examples help to better see this. A Yanomami from one community went to invite the people from another community with whom relations were rather tense. This is what Helena Valero says:

"He came into the square and went straight to the tushawa [i.e., leader]... Then the tushawa [i.e., leader] shouted: "Pei haw! He has come to tell us that the Mahekototheri want to attack us on account of the women whom we have taken!" ...[after his first words the visitor...] [he] continued to speak for a long time; he said: "The mahekototheri want to be friends with you again; you have killed no one, they have killed no one. They are sending to tell you to keep their women... they send me to tell you that may certainly keep them. They invite you to their reaho." He talked and talked. The tushawa [i.e., leader] answered: "Yes, brother, I know you have come to invite me, because you and they want to avenge yourselves, because you want to take our women. Then take them! I will come; I will come, because I do not want you to think I am afraid of you! I will come." Thus he finished his speech. The next day the tushawa decided to set out with all the Namowetheri to go to the Mahekototheri" (Valero, in Biocca 1996: 171).

And yet, once they finally went to the feast, Valero, who was at that time the wife of the very leader whose "fearless" words we have read, remembers that:

"I did not want to enter [the makekototheri’s house]; I wanted to stay outside...[then] the old mother [of the leader; that is, Valero’s husband] said to me: "No, no, come; if you don’t stay with us, they will look for you and say that my son has not brought you because he was afraid that they would seize you." I too thought: "Its true; then they will say that he was afraid they would take me." I took my hammock, put it in the basket, and went with them" (Valero, in Biocca 1996: 177).

In these examples, one can appreciate the strong concern with not showing fear to others. In relation to the first example one can believe that it is a value that epitomises the public opinion of a leader and warrior. However, the second example tells us that not showing fear is of equal importance for old women. In Yanomami everyday life one can frequently hear comments of this
nature (e.g., on the importance of not showing fear and its linkage with the notion of revenge). Thus, for instance, when the mother who forces her child to retaliate when another child has bitten him, she might usually stress this by saying:

_kiri mai!_
don't be afraid!

_a no ta yure!_
and take revenge! (e.g. bite, hit...etc... in return!)

I also witnessed the example of a Yanomami community that was building a palisade after having had a fight with their neighbours. After this fight, which left many of their neighbours injured, they were expecting an imminent attack. So when I asked them why they didn't leave the house to go and live elsewhere until tensions calmed down, they told me that they were not afraid of them. They wanted to stay in order to show them that they were not cowards! (e.g., they wished to retain their freedom). Examples like this can be seen in numerous contexts, from interpersonal relations to inter-communitary affairs. To conclude this, and taking a broader picture of the linkage between not showing fear and social relations more generally, Lizot (1994a:857) writes that "[p]erhaps it is clearer now why intimidation cannot constitute the basis of yanomami social relations: submission is contrary to Indian morality; it is dishonourable." Finally, perhaps we should have second thoughts about the (in)famous title of Chagnon's book ("Yanomami: the Fierce People") and change the picture, for instance, by referring to the Yanomami as the "fearless" people. But let us explore further.

The fundamental importance of being fearless in the social world of Indigenous Amazonain peoples among whom warfare is practiced, is well known and has been reported in numerous accounts._99_ The Yanomami seem to

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99 To mention but one famous example I quote Montaigne (1991 [1586] ("The Complete Essays", "On the Cannibals") who had an acute observation of the important role that courage had in warfare among the early Tupi wars. He says that: "Their warfare is entirely noble and magnanimous; it has as much justification and beauty as that human malady allows: among them it has no other foundation that a zealous concern for courage. They are not striving to conquer new lands, since without toil or travail they still enjoy that bounteous Nature who furnishes them abundantly with all they need, so that they have no
know the dangers of letting others believe that they can impose their will on them, of letting others think that they can intimidate them. Moreover, the fact that among the Yanomami being fearless is a moral virtue tells us about the fundamental importance of considering Yanomami warfare - understood here as the very opposite of the feeling of fear- not only as a moral issue, but as a fundamental expression of their social and political philosophy. A social philosophy that seems to postulate that humanity, e.g., being Yanomami, is only possible in a community of relations based on principles engendering of equality where freedom from tyranny is the touchstone for all action. This very humanity is, if I can put it that way, a matter of life or death. And this makes us return to reconsider the ambiguous fertility of the moon, his perverse cannibalism (associated to warfare and violence) and positive fecund side (associated to the fertility of women). Another reading of this set of cosmological relationships is that violence is ontological, and thus the human condition since the very beginnings of its existence. Refusal to inequality represents an expression of this ontological violence. Each people might have different way of leading with violence, and among Yanomami people I am tempted to say that their strong attachement to equality and the violence of their conflicts and wars are two sides of one coin.

Furthermore, the “battle against fear” associated with the principle of retaliation in kind and revenge – and with the “battle against inequality”-, is also a battle which works towards the production of the “community of similars” (Overing 2003). Therefore we can see that Yanomami “dual morality” is associated with and works towards the achievement of a way of relating in which the “relations between people...are relations between equals” (e.g., “similars”). This is a morality that works, at different but complementary ways,

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towards the specific production of interpersonal relationships between people in which “no one is the holder of power” (Clastres, 1994 [1980]: 96).

Concluding remarks

If we acknowledge the above, we should also think that warfare among the Yanomami is but one side, the extreme I should say, of their strong refusal of inequality- and more positively speaking of their constant search for parity, and the freedom that it provides. At the same time, such refusal shows the active ways in which the Yanomami prevent the development of relations of coercion. They go to war to revenge the dead, a fact that also speaks about the love of their kinsmen, but this principle of revenge is also found in the fight against intimidation. At the horizon of this discussion, one can see, very clearly indeed, the shadow of another refusal: the refusal of coercive power, perceived by them as highly destructive of relations of equality and freedom. Yanomami principle of revenge, their violence and warfare, and their refusal to coercive power are part and parcel of the same social philosophy. Now we can understand Clastres’ views - agreeing or not with all aspects of the rather sociological function he attributes to primitive warfare and without forgetting Yanomami dialectics between peace and warfare- of warfare as “the very motor of social life” (e.g., motor of social life in equality - having understood the fundamental place of freedom and the place that violence plays in the fight againts intimidation, against the appearance of coercive power). Perhaps we can also begin to understand now the ambiguous fertility of moon’s blood, with its dual character (e.g., live giving and death) and also the no less ambiguous “fertility” of Yanomami warfare.
PART 3

FERTILE WORDS

On Yanomami elders' speech and the "production" of sociality
Introduction

In this last part of the thesis, I want to explore the nature of Yanomami elders' speech, “patamou” and illustrate the fundamental role it plays in the production of sociality and social relations. Accordingly, in the following chapters I will present, translated and commented upon, a number of fragments of one speech delivered by a Yanomami elder. These texts will provide us some understanding of the cultural background and specificity of this Yanomami mode of communication, allowing then discussions upon a number of issues concerning its moral, aesthetic, and therefore political value in the production and reproduction of Yanomami sociality. The texts I will present are, with few exceptions, fragments of a single lengthy speech (which took place in the community of Hapokashita, in the Upper Orinoco the 12/5/2000). These fragments have been chosen to illustrate a number of features characteristic of the elders’ speech. They also will provide for the reader examples of the way the speaker unfolds different topics within a single speech.

Before beginning the exploration of Yanomami elders' speech I want to provide a brief background on the way this type of speech has been discussed by other authors working with lowland Amerindian peoples.

On the anthropologists’ views of the Amerindian views on the power of leaders’ speech

In Clastres’ work “Society against the State” (1977), where he analyses the way power and speech are linked, he also establishes a difference between societies with a state and those without state. In the former, he writes, speech is “powers right,” while in the latter “powers’ duty.” He goes on to say that the entire political philosophy of Amerindian society “can be glimpsed in the obligation of the chief to be a man of speech” (op.cit.:130). For him, the speech of leaders works towards the generation of non-dominant relations and is not a discourse of power. This leads him to refer to this speech as “empty speech:” “the discourse of the chief is empty precisely because is not a discourse of
power" (op. cit.: 131). For Clastres, power is coercive in nature and the lack of coercion of leaders' speech expresses its lack of power. Amerindian society, he says, knows that "violence is the essence of power" and by giving to the chief the "monopoly of speech," the "opposite of violence," society has "the guarantee that prevents the man of speech from becoming a man of power" (op. cit. 131).

Clastres' notion of "empty speech," when considering leaders' words, has been challenged by various authors who have been working among different Indigenous Amazonian peoples (see McCallum 1990; Gow 1991; Santos Granero 1991; Belaunde 1992; Passes 1998). Grounded in a different approach to and understanding of the leaders' speeches of leaders, they all agree on one important aspect: the speech of leaders is not empty but rather plays a fundamental role in the production and reproduction of sociality. To better place my discussion within the broader picture of Amazonian literature, let me present their views.

McCallum (1990: 416) writes about Cashinahua people that:

"Leaders must periodically address their coresidents in moralising speeches. This "teaching" is a necessary part of the process of making and maintaining a community...Far from being 'empty' (Clastres 1977) the speeches are seen as weapons in the fight against human fallibility, and thus as an integral aspect of the social process."

She goes on to argue that:

"[the leaders'] speech can be understood as a force for the production of persons, on the one hand, and of communities, on the other. The two process are interlinked....Repeated speeches are thought to build up the person's awareness or knowledge of the social nature of his or her own actions. This is what I mean by the production of persons. At the same time, the speaker "makes community" by expressing the social, making clear once more the behavioural foundations upon which human sociality rests.... Whatever the particular aims of specific speeches, the ultimate moral purpose is the construction of human sociality...leaders appear as both caring for their people and enabling them to care for each other" (McCallum 1990: 416).
Gow (1991:226-27), writing about speeches of leaders among Piro people says that:

“This speech does not refer, as Clastres would have it, simply to the traditional values of the group, the values that everyone shares. It refers to the fragile attainment of the local group which is constantly under assault from each person's pressing obligations to be living with other kin elsewhere. The local group is not a pre-existent entity which leaders simply harangue with empty words: its very essence is the product of the speech of leaders constantly reminding people why they live together. The speech of leaders in the native communities of the Bajo Urubamba is not so much empty as aesthetic. It appeals to aesthetic values such as “it is good to live in a real village”, “it is good to give festivals”, and “it is bad to fight.” The apparent banality of such speech resonates against the angry and violent orders of the patron or curaca, and against the perpetual dilemma of all adults [of living elsewhere... with other kin] Leaders in these communities are those people who not only subscribe to such aesthetic values, but who also “put themselves forward” to effect them in collective social action... The village, and the activity of its inhabitants, is aesthetically pleasing to native people. But without leaders' constant reiteration of the values of community life, people would leave... In order for kinship to create a village, and for villages to create kinship, someone must “put themselves forward” and “know how to speak.””

Santos Granero (1991) writing on the pedagogical aspect of leader's speeches among Amuesha people of Peru writes that:

“a good leader teaches with his words; he enlightens his audience, and makes them understand. In brief, he shares with or transmits his knowledge to his followers... the words of a leader, should not only teach, but also guide” (op.cit.:301).

Based on this, he goes on to criticise Clastres’ views and writes that:

“I would argue against Clastres that the association between speech and power in Amerindian society is not, as he would have it, a contingent or whimsical one. Although it is true that the power of the Amerindian leaders is not supported by the “means of violence” characteristic of state societies, it cannot be said that their power is merely nominal, not that their speech amounts to little more than a
harangue devoid of meaning. I would suggest rather that the speech of the Amerindian leaders carries the weight of an order without appearing as such, for it is grounded in moral considerations shared by both leaders and followers" (1991:302).

Belaunde (1992:97), like the above mentioned authors also stresses what we can call the kin-like feature of leaders' words when she writes about the speeches of Airopai leaders of Peruvian lowlands that "by advising his followers, the headman takes a parental position and, as Airo-Pai say, he speaks "like a father" to his community."

Finally, Passes (1998), has explored further the linkage between leaders' words and power in his PhD thesis devoted to the study of aspects of intercommunication and conviviality among Pa'ikwené people of French Guiana. Based on an understanding of power which is not exclusively violent and coercive, and including in his study indigenous conceptions of the acts of hearing-listening, "both in terms of social practice and the systems of indigenous logic in which it is embedded" (op.cit.:146), he argues that the words of Pa'ikwené leaders are not empty but "full." In relation to the so-called lack of power of leaders' words, he says that "precisely because they are a discourse of uncoercive power... [leaders' words] hold within them the positive moral and creative element of power; and contain meaningfulness, value, artistry and affective mass" (1998:138).

Passes (2004:6-7) refers to the issue of power as "an ambiguous one given cultural variations in practices and concepts." He goes on to say that "[i]n Western secular, rationalist thinking power is generally equated with the political and represented as an asymmetric relationship wherein the powerful possesses power over others almost as though it were some tangible private property. Serious problems arise, however, if one insists on seeing power in native Amazonia in terms of a Western-type "political economy," with its implication of coercion, differential access to the means of production, and in-built structural power." Passes, following McCallum's insights (2001:157ff), goes on to say that "in Amerindian societies where there is relatively equal access to material and symbolic resources, power and inequality are best understood, not as intrinsic
to the social structure but as present to a lesser or greater degree in the unfolding of all social relations." For Passes, then, power is relational and the different degrees in which power relations can be found among native Amazonian peoples depends more upon the way people deal with their own social relations in culturally specific ways. According to this, he writes that "there is also a widespread belief in Amazonia (as elsewhere) that power is immanent in words, with utterances being endowed with the cosmogonic power of creation and destruction. Typically conceived as violent, dangerous, anti-social, and intrinsically extra-social force, power should only be allowed into society once the culturally appropriate actions have been taken to render it safe" (see Overing 1983-84, and also 2000 for a former discussion about these issues). To conclude, for Passes, therefore, language is a powerful means to produce sociality.

For Passes power "is not an exclusively one-way process" and he suggests that the leaders' speeches are offered "with the specific intention and in the hope of obtaining not for themselves personally but for the group that power's agency in the shape of its non-destructive, life-giving properties and effectiveness" (op.cit.:138). In relation to the poor listening of leaders' speeches he argues that "we tend ethnocentrically to see [it] as a disinclination to pay attention and listen" (op.cit.:146). He concludes that "no matter how desultory and fitful the listening of a Pa'ikwené in respect of the speech of leaders and others, it does not necessarily imply unconcern, disaffection or disengagement" (op.cit.:147). Taking all this into consideration he finally stresses the fundamental function of political speaking, together with the listening, as a "producer of sociality." Leaders' speech and the speech of ordinary people too, he argues, "not only has a semantic content but also an extra-semantic one shared by speakers and listeners alike. The latter component, or "load," comprises moral, aesthetic and affective aspects which act inter-constitutively" (op.cit.:145).
In accordance with the views of these authors,\(^{101}\) I will argue that Yanomami elders' speech produces and reproduces sociality and social relations. However, I want to do this by showing the own Yanomami speeches translated and commented. I doing this my aim is to illustrate the particular ways in which sociality is produced by means of language.

**On the paucity of ethnographic descriptions of Yanomami elders' speech**

In the profuse literature devoted to Yanomami people, the elder's speech has been poorly discussed. The descriptions available are few (Chagnon 1977: 92; Albert 1985: 206-7 note 19, 441 note 10; Lizot 1988: 557; Ales 1995, 2000: 138-9) and rather general. These authors, except two exceptions (see below), do not provide examples of the speech on which to base their arguments. Albert (1985:440) gives a number of words and short sentences. In Lizot (1996:82-102) we can find six Yanomami elders' speeches transcribed in Yanomami language, but this publication is aimed at Yanomami who are studying in the intercultural bilingual schools (op.cit.:2), and therefore they are neither translated or commented. Let us look briefly at the way these authors have described Yanomami elders' speech.

Chagnon (1977 [1968]: 92) for instance writes that:

"Once in a while someone gives a long, loud speech voicing his opinion of the world in general....those who are interested may add their own comments, but the audience usually grumbles about the noise and falls asleep."

According to Albert (1985: 206-7 note 19, 441 note 10) the elders' speech ("hereamou" in Yanomame), is in opposition to the normal way of

\(^{101}\) See also Campbell (1995:114-116), who on Wayapi people, writes that "Waivai is a “chief.” I think of him as a kind of moral commentator, like a tern and self-important writer of editorials in a national newspaper. Sure, he’s a Thunderer when he walks about at night, or in early twilight, putting on his official voice and doing some "hard talking" (that people shouldn’t be lazy; that women should get up early and bathe in the river when it's cold, and so on). But people didn’t take much notice. Certainly decisions were not his to take, and no one would think of asking him to make one."
speaking and is reserved for the elders and factional leaders. It gives the voice ("donner voix") to the local group and confers them with a sense of collectivity vis-à-vis the other neighbouring communities. In particular, he stresses the role of this speech in economic and ritual aspects of community life such as collective hunting and feasts.

Lizot (1988:557) writes:

"Leaders and important persons may speak in public, mainly in the evenenings and at dawn, in order to express their complains, feelings, to make a warning related to some dangers, explain the neccesity of doing something, communicate a decision or comment a problem. This way of speaking in public is called "patamou" that literally means to behave as an important person; is significant that some women can also express themselves in this way. The "patamou" is a non ritualized way of speaking in public" (my translation)

Ales (2000:138-139), who has recently written more on this, but still in a rather general way, writes that the speeches of elders:

"instil reassurance and optimism for today and for the future among the group....the pata public discourses make people feel that they are not alone; as an important daily component of the practices of conviviality, such verbal art communicates the feeling of belonging to a community..." (Ales 2000:138).

Alès argues further that these speeches also deal with bad behaviour:

"because they [acts of bad behaviour] can be predicted to provoke internal or supralocal conflicts, and to lead inevitably to a disruption of tranquility and the onset of troubles...[these are the reasons] why the shouting and angry moralising monologues the leaders direct to their communities are so specifically protective" (2000:139).

The above descriptions give us a very general idea of the way the speeches of Yanomami elders relate to everyday community life. One can say that the descriptions of the Yanomami elders' speech are, generally speaking, in agreement with the way other authors have described the leaders' speech elsewhere (see Clastres 1984; McCallum 1990; Gow 1991; Santos Granero
1991; Belaunde 1992; Campbell 1995; Passes 1998). The descriptions available in the literature give us an idea of the importance that these speeches have for the people in their everyday community life. However, one might ask how elders actually address their people in relation to different issues. How are things said by them in Yanomami language? What kind of news are communicated and how is this communication shared? Finally, how do such speeches produce and reproduce sociality? I have to remember that the Yanomami elders’ speech is literally disappearing in an important number of communities. I believe that the general descriptions commented upon previously leave us with a rather vague idea of this verbal art and its relationship with art of social living. In the preceding chapters (see chapter 3) I have discussed some of these issues. The chapters that follow are aimed to provide some answers to these questions and illustrate the ways by which an speech of elders does all the above.
CHAPTER 9

FERTILE WORDS 1

Weak up my sons, I have had a presentiment! On the feelings and social relationships of a Yanomami dream

In this chapter I will present 7 texts. They are different fragments of the speech that Heshiwarima addressed to his coresidents. In the first section I discuss a presage Heshiwaröhima tells to his covillagers; the second section provides some contextual background to better understand this presage. Thirdly, the last section illustrates the way dreams are associated with social relations. Through the texts I am about to present, I will illustrate that conflictive social relations are expressed through an "emotion-talk"of bad, negative feelings, and is associated with bad dreams too.

9.1 A dream at dawn: Wake up my sons, I have had a presentiment!

Before beginning this section I want to remind the readers of the ending of the myth of the origin of the night¹⁰² as it is relevant to introduce the theme of this section.

[after having describe the way Yanomami people got the first night, the myth teller describes the arrival of daybreak in the following manner]

118 titi ha pe ha mioni,
After being able to sleep at night,

119 the pe totihorayoma,
they had a feeling of well-being,

120 pe the pe maharimou waikioma ke yaro,
and they had already started to dream,

Keeping in mind the way the myth teller establishes a relationship between dreams and feelings let us see the way this relationship is experienced

¹⁰² See Chapter 1 text 1.1
in everyday life. The following text is a narration of the way a Yanomami, “after being able to sleep at night” had a dream. However, we will see that not all dreams bring a “feeling of well-being.” Let us see why this is so:

**text 9.1**

[Heshiwarihima speaking to his co-residents about a dream]

1. *Ware a riya hora wāri,*
   they are going,

2. *ware a riya hora wāri nomohorimai,*
   they are going to betray/ambush me,

3. *ware a riya hora wāri nomohorimai yalyohe kutaeni,*
   they are going to betray/ambush me,

4. *ware a nomohori ya rē ayarēhahei e....*
   they are going to betray/ambush me alone...

5. *warē a nomohori ya rē ayarēhahei e....*
   they are ambushing me alone...

6. *ya tokuhērii yatiparuhe,*
   even though I am running away, [e.g. from the place where the enemies tried to kill him]

7. *ya tokuhērii yatiparuhe,*
   even though I am running away, [e.g. from the place where the enemies tried to kill him]

8. *ya tokuhērii yatiaparuhe,*
   even though I am running away, [e.g. from the place where the enemies tried to kill him]

9. *ware a posi waa he yatia rē ayaaparihahei e,*
   they fail to hit me,

10. *ware a posi waa he yatia rē ayaaparihahei e,*
    they fail to hit me,

   *Heshiwarihima* begins his speech by narrating/describing a treachery of which he was going to be the target. The people from the community of *Torita* (which are, as we saw before, his actual enemies) wanted to invite him to their house, feigning to be his friends but with the intention of betraying him: they
wanted to kill him (lines 1-5). However, Heshiwarihima’s enemies do not achieve their target. He runs away trying to escape and save his life (lines 6-8). His enemies follow him throwing a volley of arrows. But Heshiwarihima’s strenght allows him to keep on running away through the forest with the arrows that are constantly being throwing at him not hitting the target (lines 9-10).

Reading these lines one might ask: When did this event happen? When did Heshiwarihima suffer this treachery? Is this dramatic narrative an actual happening or does it represent an old one that pertains to the past? The answer to these question is inmediately provided, in line 11:

[Heshiwarihima speaking to his coresidents]

11 Ya tapimou atarou ré kuparuhe e,
I am dreaming/having a presentiment,

12 hutukeatarohe,
wake up/be alert/be aware,

13 huyapě,
Youngsters,

14 ōāsi,
my sons,

15 hutukeatarohe,
wake up/be alert/be aware,

16 hutukeatarohe,
wake up/be alert/be aware,

17 ya tapimou kē a ré kupē,
I am dreaming/having a presentiment here,

18 ya tapimou,
I am having a presentiment,

19 hutukeatarohe,
wake up/be alert/be aware,

103 This kind of treachery, nomohori, is not uncommon among the Yanomami. It has been reported by Chagnon (1977:123) who refers to it as the "ultimate form of violence." Furthermore, Clastres (1994: 159), writing on the theme of warfare, also refers to betrayal as a common feature of "primitive" peoples: "...for betrayal is always possible, and often real. Here a trait appears, described by travelers or ethnographers as the Savages' inconstancy and taste for betrayal."
ōāsi, my sons,

hekamayē, my nephew,

rāi haiyo, wake up,

rāi haiyo, wake up,

ōāsi, my child,

ya tapimou, I am dreaming/having a presentiment,

ya tapimou, I am dreaming/having a presentiment,

ya tapimou, I am dreaming/having a presentiment,

rāi haiyo, wake up,

ōāsi, my child,

hekamayē, my nephew,

rāi haiyo, wake up,

ya tapimou pario kē a kuhe, I am dreaming/having a presentiment,

ya tapimou, I am dreaming/having a presentiment,

ya tapimou, I am dreaming/having a presentiment,

ya tapimou, I am dreaming/having a presentiment,

ware a wāri, to me,

ware a wāri nomohori riya katitia ha totihireheni, they really want to ambush me,

ware a wāri nomohori riya katitia ha totihireheni,
they really want to ambush me,

39 *ware a riya hōrā wāri*,
they really want to ambush me,

40 *ware a,*
to me,

41 *ware a wāno riya hōrā wāri premapou totihiohe ya'iyohe kutaeni*,
they tell me they are really going to make me suffer,

42 *ware a nomohorì ya ré ayarehahei e,*
they are going to betray/ambush me,

43 *ya tokuhērii yatiparuhe*,
I keep running away,

44 *ōāsi,*
my sons,

45 *ya tokuhērii yatiparuhe*....
I keep running away....

46 *rāā hairì,*
wake up,

47 *hekimayē,*
my nephew,

48 *rāi haiyo,*
wake up,

49 *rāi haiyo,*
wake up

50 *rāi haiyo,*
wake up,

51 *rāi haiyo,*
wake up,

52 *ya tapimou,*
I am dreaming/ having a presentiment,

53 *ōāsi,*
my son,

54 *ya tapimou,*
I am dreaming/ having a presentiment,

55 *pē ta rāāprou haiyo,*
come on wake up,

[He mimics the jaguar’s roar (i.e., “*iramou*) so the people “really” wake up]
56 ya tapimoatarou re kuparuhe,
I am dreaming/ having a presentiment,

57 ōāsi,
my child,

58 ya tapimou,
I am dreaming/ having a presentiment,

59 ya tapimou,
I am dreaming/ having a presentiment,

60 ya tapimou,
I am dreaming/ having a presentiment,

61 warē a wāri nomohori ya ha,
I am dreaming/ having a presentiment,

62 ware a nomohori ware a riya hōrā wāri ma re nomohorimaiwehei,
they ambush me, they were going to ambush me,

63 nomohori re he,
deceit/betrayal,

64 a wano ta thapohe,
heed these words/message,

65 a no ta thapohe,
heed these words/message,

After reading these lines we can see that the events took place in Heshiwarihima’s imagination. However his dream, as many of the dreams that the Yanomami leaders use to tell to his people at dawn, represents a presag, is understand as a presentiment. It is a presentiment, and as such it is considered to be a warning, almost a sign of what is about to happen.¹⁰⁴ He is

¹⁰⁴ Among Yanomami, in times of war, such omens usually prevent dangerous things from happening. For instance, omens may prevent the warriors from continuing on their war expedition. An example from Lizot (1985:182-83) on the way a Yanomami experienced an omen in his way on a war expedition, tells us more about this. He writes: “Ebrewe spends the night under the open sky, in his hammock stretched between two strong poles transversely joined. When he awakes, he gravely announces that he dreamt that a jaguar was drinking from the brook. The vision does not bode well, and Eprewe thinks they should turn back. He has no difficulty convincing the others, who are not anxious to push on when everything is warning them of the risk they are running...At karohi, no one is surprised by their sudden return; it is the fate of three raids out of four not to be carried to conclusion. No one blames them for their caution; the omens were obviously unfavourable, and people are glad to see them return alive.”
telling of a presentiment, yes, but one that carries all the weight of both a moral and practical lesson (see more below) in times of conflict.

From the moment when Heshiwarihima says that he has just dreamed/had a presentiment (line 11) until the very end of the fragment (line 65) there is no more “new information,” strictu sensu, added to his speech. The theme of the treachery he has suffered occupies the central subject of this part of his speech and forms the main message. It is the experience of his presage that he wants to communicate to his fellow villagers in order that they be aware, remember that they have enemies who still can kill them. The state of war (e.g., the actual attacks) between the two communities was supposedly finished. However, this is never marked by a specific event, there is no a peace treaty. Recovering into a state of peaceful relations depends more upon the good intentions of both parties, and this is a process that takes time. The message of the speech, the presentiment of danger, has to be understood then to signify that there was still evidence that peace could not yet be taken for granted, e.g., good relations with the other communities were not yet so firmly established. In the following pages, as Heshiwarihima’s speech unfolds, we will realise that he had a number of reasons to take this cautionary position.

In line 12, just after he has informed his people about his presentiment, he asks them to wake up and be aware of what was that he just said (e.g., with regard to the treachery, “nomohori”). However, who is he asking to be aware? Who are exactly the people he is asking to wake up?

In line 13 he refers to the youngsters, “huyapē.” The word “huyapē” is formed by the sustantive “huya,” which means “young man,” “adolescent,” and the nominal classifier pē, which indicates that the group of people, in this case the youngsters, is not a homogeneous set, that is, it is a group formed by a number of different youngsters, with different kin relations, some being more mature than others. After the rather general term “huyape,” Heshiwarihima uses the term “ōāsi,” which means “my son/my child” (line 14). This word is a

105 See Lizot (2004:305).
kinship term, a vocative that refers to any consanguine, male or female younger than Ego (male or female speaking). This is a term that can be used to address a younger brother or sister, son or daughter, or a parallel cousins. Then we see that Heshiwarimi also uses the term “hekamayê,” which means “son-in-law” (line 21). This word is another kinship term, and refers to Heshiwarimi’s son-in-law, as a general category either as real or potential sons-in-law, that is, as the son/sons of his sister/sisters. These three terms of address, e.g., “huyapê,” “őäsi,” “hekamayê,” are the ones Heshiwarimi will use throughout the fragment of the speech presented. Thus, we note that the more generic term “huyapê” (“youngsters”) is the first he uses in the speech, and it appears once in line 13; then we see that the term “őäsi” (“my son”) is used seven times (see lines 14, 20, 24, 29, 44, 53, 57); and then the term “hekamayê” (“my son-in-law”) three times (see lines 21, 30, 47).

I shall note that by pointing out the precise number of times Heshiwarimi uses a particular term I only intend to illustrate his way and style of addressing the audience. For instance the repetitions he uses have significance. The repetitions do not only occur with the terms of address, but also happen within other sentences, that express different ideas and topics. For instance, the initial theme of the treachery (“nomohori”) is mentioned in three separate sequences, first in lines 1-5, then in lines 36-42, and then in lines 61-63. The fact that he just dreamed/had a presentiment is recalled fifteen times (lines 17, 18, 25, 26, 27, 32, 33, 34, 35, 52, 54, 56, 58, 59, 60). He asks the listeners to be awake and aware, e.g., “hatukeatarohe”, four times (lines 12, 15, 16, 19); to wake up nine times e.g., “râi haiyo” (see lines 22, 23, 28, 31, 48, 49, 50, 51), “rââ haiî,” (line 46), and he also uses the more general and more emphatic way “come on wake up,” e.g., “pë ta rââprou haiyo” (line 55).

In addition to the repetitions to make an emphasis, to call the attention better, he uses a very interesting device to reinforce his call for waking up: he mimics the jaguar’s roar, in what the Yanomami call “iramou,” “to roar like a jaguar.” The word is formed by the substantive “ira,” and the verbal desinence –

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106 Heshiwarimi in his speech also addresses other people/listeners using other terms that we will have the opportunity to observe in following pages.
mo-u that verbalises the substantive to create “iramou.” When I asked a Yanomami who was helping me in the transcription of the speech, the reasons for Heshiwarihima doing that, he answered me that he does this for really waking up the people and to catch their attention better. One can easily imagine what could be the reaction of people learning the roar of the jaguar at dawn within the village... The fragment of the speech presented ends with the lines 64 and 65, which are a reminder for the people to heed the information provided by the speaker, Heshiwarihima. Using the imperative form, “a wāno ta thapohe,” he exhorts the listeners to take notice of the dangers of a presentiment like the one he just had in the context of the history of their situation of conflict with another community.

9.2 “Yesterday “ghossiping” appeared once again... they are saying really nasty things....:” Understanding and contextualising a presentiment

After having expressed his presentiment, Heshiwarihima refers to the treacherous things the enemies are constantly saying about him, and he angrily tells them:

**text 9.2**

[Heshiwarihima speaking to his enemies]

1. **shio,**
   Shio [an interjection to ask the other to be silent, in this case the enemies]

2. **mamikāi,**
   shut up

3. **shio mamikāi,**

107 The use of animals’ sounds and cries is not an uncommon feature among Yanomami people. For instance, after this speech was transcribed, I learned that Yanomami warriors just before launching an attack, use to mimic the sound of different animals that are in someway or another related to death, e.g. the jaguar, “ira,” then “iramou,” the vulture, “watupa,” then watupamou. On this way of mimicking the animals before going to attack the enemy Chagnon (1977:128) writes: “[t]heir village became unusually quiet shortly after dark. Suddenly, the stillness was pierced by an animal-like noise, half scream and half-growl, as the first raider marched slowly out to the center of the village, clacking his arrows against his bow, growling his individualised fierce noise, usually a mimic of a carnivore: a wasp or a buzzard (...) the other raiders joined the first man, coming one at a time after short intervals, each clacking his arrows and growling some hideous noise.” I have also seen this mimicking of animal’s sounds happening at feasts when the ashes of the death were consumed, just before a Yanomami approached the calabase from which to consume the banana soup mixed with the ashes of the dead.
Shio shut up

4  *wamaki nowa thayou*
you speak

5  *wamaki nowa thayouwei*
you the ones who are speaking

6  *pe ta periomopotu!*
go and rest in your hammocks! [e.g., be tranquil in your hammocks rather than gossiping and saying bad/injurious things about us]

7  *pe ta periomopotu!*
go and rest in your hammocks! [e.g., be tranquil in your hammocks rather than gossiping and saying bad/injurious things about us]

*Heshiwarihima* does not like to “hear” the injurious things the enemies are saying and tells them to “shut up” (lines 1-3). To those speaking the disruptive things (lines 4-5) he finally tells them to “go and rest in their hammocks” (lines 6-7). In saying this, he is expressing his unwillingness to hear their words and he orders them to engage in more peaceful behaviour: lying tranquilly in the hammocks. *Heshiwarihima* is thereby establishing an opposition between the negative attitude of speaking disruptively and the positive one of lying tranquilly in ones’ own hammock (e.g., minding their own business). The reasoning behind this opposition can be better understood with an example of everyday community life, for the same expression can be heard time and again, especially when children are behaving badly or bothering the adults when they are trying to carry out some activity (e.g., a meeting). Then, they will say to them:

*pei,*
come on,

*pei,*
come on,

*ihirupi,*
children,

*yapekou mai,*
do not bother us,

*pe ta periomopotu!*
Go and rest in your hammocks!
This positive-like quality of lying tranquilly in one’s hammocks has been described by Gow (2000:60) writing on the Piro people, as characteristic of the culturally specific aesthetics of life where not doing anything is tantamount of being open to social interaction. Gow notes how misleading it would be to judge this lack of activity within the framework of a “specific middle-class European aesthetic of social life, in which “doing nothing” is strongly frowned upon” (op.cit.: 60). Trying to better understand ethnographically the Amazonian meaning of the frequently heard statement such as “I’m not doing anything,” he remarks how this expression has to be seen as an “invitation to interact: the hosts are assuring the visitors that there is nothing already happening to distract their full attention from the manifold pleasures of this new activity, “being visited””(op.cit.: 60). He goes on to say how such a statement embodies “an aesthetic of life that asserts that company is, in and of itself, desirable,” and how the positive appreciation of this lack of activity, that allows for social interaction, ultimately reveals that “nothing is more important than everyday sociability” (op.cit.:60). I believe that the way in which Heshiwarihima in his speech orders the enemy to go and rest tranquilly in their hammocks can be understood in similar terms as Gow does with Piro people. In this case it can be read as an invitation to stop being asocial.

Just after having told to behave themselves and to lie tranquilly in their hammocks, Heshiwarihima goes on to provide more news related to his omen:

text 9.3

[Heshiwarihima speaking to his coresidents]

1 Sheroana theri,  
the guy from Sheroana,

2 Sheroana theri,  
the guy from Sheroana,

3 Sheroana theri a yimika tao tehe,  
when the guy from Sheroana was listening to, [i.e., the enemies]
And then *Heshiwarihima* enacts the words of the guy from *Sheroana*:

4 *“wahereki rei...”*
   “you both

5 *wahereki re wāri re,*
   to you both

6 *wahereki rei,*
   to you both

7 *yimikamaïwei;”*
   I am informing you/communicating to you both*

Then *Heshiwarihima* continues his speech:

8 *Sheroana theri a yimika tao tehe,*
   when the guy from Sheroana was listening to, [i.e., the enemies]

9 *wā no hushuo ayao no kiriwehe,*
   they are saying really nasty things,

10 *wā no hushuo ayao no kiriwehe,*
   they are saying really nasty things,

In this fragment, *Heshiwarihima* is providing information to his people about some news related to the “state of the relationships” with their actual enemies. He relates that the guy from *Sheroana* (a community 3-4 hours walk from *Hapokashita*. See map in appendix 2) listened to some very unpleasant comments made by another Yanomami (see line 1-3, and more on this below). This person from the community of *Sheroana* wanted to inform *Heshiwarihima* and his brother about this event, and *Heshiwarihima*, to express this, enacts the very words of the guy from *Sheroana*, saying that: “I am telling you both” (see lines 4-7). If we ask what is being communicated, what is the nature of such information, the answer is made clear by *Heshiwarihima* in the following lines: “they are saying really nasty things”, “*wā no hushuo ayao no kiriwehe*” (lines 9-10). *Heshiwarihima*’s way of “summarizing” the information that the guy from *Sheroana* gave him, provides for grounds for understanding better the reasons for having the presentiment we have just seen in the previous text. The expression “*wā no hushuo*” means “to be saying unpleasant things,” the
second part of the sentence “no kiriwe-,” which means “horrible,” “frightful,” reinforces the unpleasantedness of the things being said.

What happens, for a Yanomami, when someone is saying such a horrible things, even if they are speaking “from the distance”? Heshiwarihima goes on to give his opinion of such frightful things that have been said about them:

[Heshiwarihima “speaking” to his enemies]

11  wama a puhi hōra re thatamarihe tehe,
    if you want to make us to feel worried, [e.g., by saying those nasty things (line 10)]

12  wama a puhi hōrā re thatamarihe tehe,
    if you want to make us to feel worried, [e.g., by saying those nasty things (line 10)]

13  ya tisua kopei ta kuhani,
    I have the arrows ready,

14  ya yaweteparemata ma kuli
    although I had take it out/put them away, [ i.e., the arrow]

15  ya tisua kopei ta kuhani,
    I have the arrows ready,

16  ya tisua kopei ta kuhani,
    I have the arrows ready,

First, in a rather rhetorical way, and referring to his enemies, he says that “if you want to make us to feel worried/anxious”.....(line 11-12). Then he emphatically responds to the question: “I have the arrows ready,” “although I had taken them out/put them away,” “I have the arrows ready,” “ I have the arrows ready” (lines 13-16). To understand these sentences, to decode its messages, the first thing we have to do is to remember the aforementioned context of conflict that exists between the two communities. In other parts of the speech that I am not commenting upon here for various reasons (e.g., space and the complexities of some parts of the speech), Heshiwarihima reveals that the enemies are still thinking on revenge for their dead people. His
answer referring to the arrows is therefore a clear signal of his readiness to face such danger. He is not afraid but rather prepared to any attack.\textsuperscript{108}

So far Heshiwarihima has talked about the nasty things the enemy is saying about them and his brave, fearless response to that. Now he goes on to provide more details about the nature of the news received.

[Heshiwarihima speaking to his co-residents]

17 weyaha, yesterday.
18 wâño ke a petai re kôô re, [he] has made some gossip/news/information appear once again,
19 wâño ke a hore re petama, [he] has made some gossiping/news/information appear,
20 wâño a kâi norami huu ha kuikuhuruni, news/gossiping/informations have come through to here,
21 Sheroana therin, the guy from Sheroana....
22 Sheroana therini mai! no it was not the guy from Sheroana!
23 Yoroawe theri a norami huu ha kuikuhuruni, when the guy from Yoroawe came, [i.e., came here, down the river]
24 Yoroawe theri, the guy from Yoroawe,
25 Yoroawe therini, the guy from Yoroawe,

Heshiwarihima mentions that the news are of recent origin: "weyaha," "yesterday" (line 17). He also introduces a brief history of the news that came to his knowledge by means of a recent visit that the guy from Sheroana made (line 21, and also see the reference to this in the first, opening lines1-3). But no! "it wasn't the guy from Sheroana!" he is more explicit (line 21), so as to give

\textsuperscript{108} On the importance the Yanomami concede to not showing fear towards their enemies' threats and the importance that this behaviour has in relation to their morality, sociality and notions of power see chapter 8. Also see Clastres (1994, chapter 11)
the information with all the precision that the seriousness of the situation requires. It was the guy from the community of Yoroawe, (i.e., Yoroawe theri) who really brought the news (lines 23-24). Note the identification/substitution between the word news/gossip, “wāno a” (line 20) and the person who brought the news, the guy from the community of Yoroawe theri (line 23). The two sentences have the same construction. In line 20 Heshiwarihima refers to “the news that has come through to here,” and in line 23 he refers to “the guy from the community of Yoroawe that has come here.” To my view this substitution, beyond the fact of revealing a particular Yanomami style of speaking, is a way of personalising more the news, so as to reinforce the truth it contains and also to emphasise the personal agency of the informant. The guy from Yoroawe, the source of the information, is not a liar, therefore the information is more reliable. Having said this about the person who came with the news, he enacts the very words the guy from Yoroawe said to him and his brother:

[Heshiwarihima enacting the way the guy from Yorowawe asked him]

26 “wahereki nohi yimikaa katitia wawetorei kuhe”? did you both get my message/listened to my message well ?

[Heshiwarihima speaking to his coresidents]

27 ai ya puhi re mohotuprou kōōwei the kuami I am not going to forget again

28 Ma eh !, No

29 ma eh !, No

[Heshiwarihima "speaking" to his brother-in-law who lives down river]

30 heriye wa hatukea ayaa ta yaipokiriwe ehhhhh..... my brother-in-law be aware down there on your side ehhhh..... [i.e., down the river where his brother-in-law lives]

31 heriye wa ha...., my brother-in-law you...
my brother-in-law be aware down there on your side ehhhh..... [i.e., down the river where his brother-in-law lives]

[Heshiwarihima speaking to his coresidents]

He thought here [i.e., the house, when he came to inform us]

this is the recent news that just came to you

this is the recent news have came to you

Heshiwarihima goes on with his speech and enacts the question the guy from the community of Yoroawe posed after having informed him (line 26). Then, addressing his coresidents and raising his tone of voice he emphatically says, as a way of answering the above question, that: "I am not going to forget/to be reckless again," "no!" "no!" (lines 27-29). The expression used by him to say this ("ai ya puhi re mohotuprou kőõwei the kuami"), tells about his past experiences in which perhaps he wasn’t cautious enough in trying to avoid or prevent other attacks by his enemies (probably he is referring to a past attack that resulted in the death of two of his relatives). At the same time, while recognising such lack of circumspection in the past, he is now stating very clearly that such a situation will not happen again, "no!" "no!" he says. This way of referring to a negative experience that had bad results has the intention of making the people remember what would happen to them in case they did the same as he did (e.g., his lack of circumspection, being reckless, being forgetful about dangers). It also epitomises the moral and pedagogical aspects of his words, and the care of Heshiwarihima for his people. For a “pata,” an “elder person” as him, has to be “puhi moyawe,” “cautious” and “circumspect;” has to be “puhi katukewe,” that is, to be “noticed,” “advised,” “skilful,” “attentive,” “thoughtful,” “reasonable;” and has to be “puhi taorewe,” that is “to foresee the consequences of his acts” and “knowing what to do.”
Among the people that Heshiwarhima is warning there is also someone else, someone who does not live with them in the village. However, although this person is not in the village, he tells him from the distance, as if trying to make his words get there: "my brother-in-law be aware down there on your side" (line 32). He is referring to his brother-in-law who lives in another community down river. This brother-in-law of Heshiwarhima participated in one of the attacks they carried out against their enemies and killed one person. This is a fact that makes of him a particularly special "desirable" target for the possible further revenges of the enemies. The fact that he also lives "alone" (i.e., he lives with the family of his wife, with his affines) in another community also makes this warning more necessary. The recent news received, in addition to the presentiment that Heshiwarhima had, would seem to require special precautions. Furthermore, in warning his brother-in-law, who obviously cannot hear him, Heshiwarhima is providing an example to his coresidents of the proper ways of showing concern and caring about one’s kin. He shows that in times of war, all precautions have to be taken, and among such precautions is that of preventing the suffering of those who live apart. Remaining his people of this, Heshiwarhima also makes them remember it and also talk about it, so it is not forgotten.

The fact that the information received is of recent origin is repeated again in a different way in lines 34-35. With a slightly rhetorical undertone, he asks his audience "is this the recent news that just has come to you"? And once again Heshiwarhima refers to the news and not to the person who brought them. He says that "á no kai re timia shoapariyo kuhe," literally meaning that the news, the information, has just descended down the mountain. Do news and informations descend mountains among the Yanomami? In a sense, yes. The fact is that the person who travelled with the news lives in a place (Sheroana) that is behind a big mountain, and in order to come to visit Heshiwarhima’s community he has to descend such mountain. Therefore we can see the way news descends through the mountains. This way of speaking shows, once again, the extent to which the elders in their speeches, by means of a mastery use of language are constantly making references to the social and geographical reality surrounding a particular community.
The speech goes on and, as we have seen before, Heshiwarhima’s experience is put at the service of the youngsters:

[Heshiwarhima speaking to his coresidents]

36 a ukeprai haiyotihehe,
don’t take the arrow points out hurriedly, [e.g. don’t take them out from the arrows’ shaft]

37 uhu pe theiyope,
leave them there, [e.g. leave them in the arrows’ shaft]

38 a ukepraatihehe,
don’t take the arrows out,

He sings/chants so as to call the attention. In Yanomami language : “a
nowā thayou....”

39 a ukeprai haimotihehe,
don’t take the arrow points out hurriedly,

40 huyape,
youngsters,

41 öāsi,
my child,

42 a ukeprai haimotihe,
don’t take the arrow points out hurriedly,

43 uhu pe theiyope,
leave them there, [e.g., in the arrows’ base/shaft]

44 pe theiyope,
leave them,

45 pe theiyope,
leave them,

46 a ukeprai haimotihehe,
don’t take the arrow points out hurriedly

47 uhu pe tisupramope,
they will be inside, [e.g., inserted in the arrows’ base/shaft]
Having shown his own response to the possibility of an attack (see lines 13-16) he now remains the youngsters to do the same: “don’t take the arrows out hurriedly”, “leave them there (in the fust/stick of the arrow)”, “don’t take the arrows out hurriedly” (lines 36-38). Having said these three sentences he repeats, after line 38, the kind of singing the Yanomami call “a nowa thayou,” which literally means that “he is informing”, “communicating news”, and it can be understood as a song that serves to signal, calling the attention of people as he is saying important things. He then goes on with his speech warning the youngsters, “youngsters,” “my child” (lines 40-41) about not taking the arrow points out, and to nevertheless be alert (lines 42-47).

So far we have already seen that the guy from Yoroawe brought the information to Heshiwarihima’s house. We also know that this person got such information (e.g., the really nasty things the enemies were saying about Heshiwarihima), when he himself was present listening (line 3). However, to whom was he listening to? Where and how did he get such information? Although Heshiwarihima has been very accurate and careful when describing who was the source that brought the information, such precision does not seem to be enough. He still has more knowledge about the sources of such information that he provides in the following lines:

[Heshiwarihima speaking to his coresidents]

48 weyaha ke a wâno hipeparei ma re kuhe,
he gave me the news yesterday, [e.g., recently, and here in the house]

49 weyaha,
yesterday,

50 weyaha ke a wâno hipepareyoruu ma re kuhe,
It was yesterday that he came here with the news, [e.g. he came here to inform me]

51 weyaha,
yesterday,

52 Shoanawe ke a wâno thapareherii ma re kuhe,
Shoanawe went with the news,

53 Shoanawe,
Shoanawe,
Shoanawe, Shoanawe,

Shoanawe a wāno thapareyoruu ma re kuhe, Shoanawe went to give with the news,

Shoanawe, Shoanawe,

Shoanawe, Shoanawe,

Shoanawe, Shoanawe,

weti ke a wāno thapareyoruu kuhe ? who went with the news ?

Shoanawe a wāno thapareyoruma, Shoanawe went with the news,

weti ke a wāno thapareyoruu kuhe ? who just went with the news ?

Shoanawe ke a wāno thapareyoruu kuhe, Shoanawe just went with the news,

Shoanawe, Shoanawe,

ai theni mai, not any other,

Shoenawe a wāno thapareyoruma, Shoanawe went with the news,

weyaha, yesterday,

weyaha, yesterday,

weyaha, yesterday,

weyaha..... yesterday....

[He mimics the jaguar’s roar (i.e., “a iramou”) so the people “really” wake up]
“He gave me the news yesterday”, he says (line 48); “It was yesterday that he came to give me the news” (line 49). The listeners know already who the person was who brought the news, i.e., the guy from Yoroawe. Now Heshiwarihima gives more details about who informed the guy from Yoroawe: “Shoanawe went with the news” (line 52). It was this person (i.e. Shoanawe) from the community of Torita, the very enemies of Heshiwarihima, who went to inform the guy from Yoroawe. Note the way the style of the speech unfolds, line after line, as it were, from our textual perspective, providing new information while at the same time repeating the sentence construction and keeping the same cadence and rhythm of speech. For instance the sentence of line 48 “weyaha ke a wâno hipeparei ma re kuhe,” “he gave me the news yesterday”, which informs about the act of receiving the information by Heshiwarihima, is repeated, in an almost exactly manner, in line 50. However, this time he is adding more information on the nature of such action (e.g. the giving of information). He adds the directional “–yoru–,” e.g., “weyaha ke a wâno hipepare-yoru-u ma re kuhe,” which means “he came [here] to inform me” or “he gave me the news [here] yesterday” (line 50).

Heshiwarihima goes on and, keeping almost the same sentence construction we have seen above, adds more, and quite revealing, information. He says “Shoanawe ke a wâno thapareherii ma re kuhe,” “Shoanawe went with the news” (line 52); and “Shoanawe a wâno thapareyoruu ma re kuhe,” “Shoanawe went to give the news” (line 55). With this new informations, the message Heshiwarihima describes is more complete:

1) first, he describes the way he himself received the news from the guy of Yoroawe (lines 34, 35, 48-51).

2) second, he describes the way the news was presented to the guy from Yoroawe by Shoanawe, another Yanomami who went to inform him of it (lines 52-67).
Once Heshiwarihima has stated a new subject (e.g., firstly the guy from Yoroawe, secondly Shoanawe) he describes the events through the combination of different but closely interrelated means:

1) By repeating that it was “Shoanawe [who] went with the news” four times (lines 55, 60, 62, 65).

2) By making the rhetorical question “who went with the news?” two times (lines 59, 61)

3) By providing the answer himself by repeating the name of Shoanawe six times (lines 53, 54, 56, 57, 58, 63).

4) He even emphasizes that it was “not any other” (line 64).

5) He also describes that all this happened very recently, i.e., “yesterday”, four times (lines 66, 67, 68, 69).

6) He finally concludes by mimicking the jaguar’s roar and making some noises as a kind of short chanting, doing what elders do in the night or at dawn when they are going to inform their people, “nowa thayou.”

In the unfolding of Heshiwarihima’s speech we will have the opportunity to see that this way of speaking, this style of unfolding different information and providing precise details so as to better picture the way the event has happened is a constant feature of the elders’ speech.

Let us move on and see a different fragment of Heshiwarihima’s speech.

9.3 “Don’t dream about us! We don’t like dreaming with you!”

After having talked about a number of themes having to do with the hostility of their enemies and the bad words and threats the enemies are
making about them, *Heshiwarhima* addresses his enemies telling them the following:

**text 9.4**

[Heshiwarhima “speaking” to his enemies]

1. *pē kuramamotihē,*
   don’t dream about us/don’t see us in your dreams,

2. *pē kuramamotihē,*
   don’t dream about us/don’t see us in your dreams,

3. *pē kuramamotihē,*
   don’t dream about us/don’t see us in your dreams,

4. *pē kuramamotihē,*
   don’t dream about us/don’t see us in your dreams,

5. *pēmaki kuramai puhioni,*
   we don’t like to dream about you/see you in our dreams,

6. *pē kuramamotihē,*
   don’t dream about us/don’t see us in your dreams,

7. *pē kuramamotihē,*
   don’t dream about us/don’t see us in your dreams,

*Heshiwarhima* has his reasons for saying this. In the same way that he had a presentiment of the treachery, he also imagines (see below) all the nasty things and bad words the enemies are saying about them. One can “see” if others, e.g., the enemies, are saying evil things about you in dreams, said a Yanomami to me. Thus you will say that: “*ware yahatuawei,*” “they are insulting me.” A similar statement is found in Valero’s account (in Biocca 1996:226) when she recalls a Yanomami saying that:

“You sleep, you dream something horrible in the night, get up [and want to kill the *Pishaashitheri,*] you think: “I have had a bad dream, because they think evil things of me,” and this is why you want to [kill them].”
As with most social interactions, dreams also generate a ground on which feelings between people, the actual state of their relations can be expressed: a bad dream (e.g., a dream in which one imagines that others “are saying nasty things”) generates a reciprocal feeling towards those “saying” the nasty things about you. In the case we are discussing here the state of the relationships is one of latent hostility, as the presentiment that openend Heshiwarihimas’ speech epitomises. Heshiwarihima expresses this latent hostility overtly when he says to his enemies that:

**text 9.5**

[Heshiwarihima “speaking” to his enemies]

1. *wama a puhi mori thaamai,*
   you are about to feel worried/anxious, [e.g., if we decide to attack you]

2. *wama a puhi mori thaamai,*
   you are about to feel worried/anxious, [e.g., if we decide to attack you]

3. *wama a puhi mori thaamai,*
   you are about to feel worried/anxious, [e.g., if we decide to attack you]

4. *wama a puhi mori thaamai,*
   you are about to feel worried/anxious, [e.g., if we decide to attack you]

5. *wamaa a puhi mori thaamai,*
   you are about to feel worried/anxious, [e.g., if we decide to attack you]

6. *wamaa a puhi mori thaamai,*
   you are about to feel worried/anxious, [e.g., if we decide to attack you]

7. *wama a puhi mori thaamai waweto totihio,*
   you are really about to feel very worried/anxious, [e.g., if we decide to attack you]

8. *thaamai wawetoo totihio,*
   to really feel very worried/anxious, [e.g., if we decide to attack you]

9. *thaamai wawetoo totihio,*
   to really feel very worried/anxious, [e.g., if we decide to attack you]

10. *thaamai wawetoo totihio,*
    to really feel very worried/anxious, [e.g., if we decide to attack you]

In these lines we can see that the presentiment *Heshiwarihima* had, together with the news received, which was of a negative character, generated this response. If the enemies say the things they are saying, they can also pay
the consequences (e.g., to feel anxious if Heshiwarihima and his people decided to attack them). In other words, because Heshiwarihima’s enemies make him feel worried, he tells them that they will feel the same.\textsuperscript{109}

A different but similar expression of what we can call a “mutuality of feelings” is evidenced further. In this case, the reciprocal feelings are expressed through the theme of dreams. This is what Heshiwarihima says in his speech:

\textbf{text 9.6}

[Heshiwarihima “speaking” to his enemies]

1 \textit{kuramamotiehehe},
don’t dream about us/don’t see us in your dreams,

2 \textit{kuramamotiehehe},
don’t dream about us/don’t see us in your dreams,

3 \textit{kuramamotiehehe},
don’t dream about us/don’t see us in your dreams,

4 \textit{kuramamotiehehe},
don’t dream about us/don’t see us in your dreams,

5 \textit{kuramamotiehehe},
don’t dream about us/don’t see us in your dreams,

6 \textit{p\text{"e} kuramamotieheh\text{"e}},
don’t dream about us/don’t see us in your dreams,

7 \textit{p\text{"e} kuramamotieheh\text{"e}},
don’t dream about us/don’t see us in your dreams,

8 \textit{shoay\text{"e} CHAVEZ ya kuramai tahiao},
I only dream/see in my dreams my father-in-law Châvez,

9 \textit{kah\text{"e} wamaki r\text{"e} kui p\text{"e}maki kuramai mohi},
we are not in the mood to dream/see you in dreams,

10 \textit{CHAVEZni k\text{"e} war\text{"e} a w\text{"a}ri r\text{"e} nakai r\text{"e} nareyowe\text{"e} h\text{"e}y\text{"e}mi he},
Châvez has called me with the others around here,

\textsuperscript{109}Cf. Clastres’ words related to egalitarian societies that I quoted in chapter 8: “These societies are egalitarian…. because…no one is “worth” more or less than another, no one is superior or inferior. In other words, no one can do more than anyone else; no one is the holder of power” (1994: 96).
[Heshiwarihima enacting Chávez’s message to them]

11 “hêyêmi pê wai ta kuaaima,  
“come to stay here,

12 hêyêmi he,  
here,

13 hêyêha kê pê wai ta hiraikiyo,  
come to gather/assemble here,

14 pêmaki pruka a ta perio,”  
let’s go to live all together,”

[Heshiwarihima “speaking” to his enemies]

15 CHAVEZ kê a rê kurihe,  
said Chávez,

16 CHAVEZ kê ya kuramai ta tahiao,  
Chávez is the only one I see in my dreams,

17 pê kuramamotihê,  
Don’t dream/see [us] in your dreams,

18 pêmaki kuramai mohi,  
we are not in the mood for dreaming, [e.g., like you with us]

19 pê kuramamotihê,  
Don’t dream about us/see us in your dreams,

20 pêmaki kuramai mohi,  
we are not in the mood for dreaming/seeing people in dreams, [e.g., like you do with us]

21 pêmaki kuramai mohi,  
we are not in the mood for dreaming/seeing people in dreams, [e.g., like you do with us]

22 pêmaki kuramai mohi,  
we are not in the mood for dreaming/seeing people in dreams, [e.g., like you do with us]

23 pêmaki kuramai mohi,  
we are not in the mood for dreaming/seeing people in dreams, [e.g., like you do with us]

24 pêmaki kuramai mohi,  
we are not in the mood for dreaming/seeing people in dreams, [e.g., like you do with us]
In these lines Heshiwarihima’s message is clear: don’t make me feel bad by your dreams... ! Knowing the negative feelings that bad dreams cause in other people, he tells them “don’t dream about us/don’t see us in your dreams!” (lines 1-7), something equivalent to saying: don’t think evil things about us! don’t make nasty comments about us! Don’t insult us! And having said this he states that he is not like them who dream those ugly things. Rather he only dreams with good things, “I only see in my dreams my father-in-law Chávez” (line 8), and not disruptive things, “we are not in the mood to dream/see you in dreams” (line 9).

How and why is Venezuela’s president Chávez portrayed as an example for good dreams? A couple of months before, Chávez visited La Esmeralda, a “criollo” community which is the capital of the newly created municipality of the Upper Orinoco. In his visit, he supposedly spoke to a number of Yanomami telling them that they should go close to La Esmeralda to live all together with the “criollos.” Heshiwarihima even enacts president Chávez words, or better said, the translation someone made to him of Chávez words, as he does not speak nor understand Spanish (lines 11-14). After saying this Heshiwarihima states, now using the imperative form so as to reinforce his statement, that he is the only one who is going to dream/see himself in his dreams with Chávez, “Chávez kë ya kuramai ta tahiao” (line 16). It is interesting to note the way he expresses this. He uses of the verb “kuramai,” “to dream/to see in dreams”, with the complement of a verb that has an adverbial function “tahia-o,” which in the context of the sentence conveys the meaning of “someone who is in the position to do something,” in this case “dreaming with Chávez” (see lines 8 and 16). In saying this, he wants to emphasise that he is the only one in the privileged position of dreaming with president Chávez, a dream caused by his “close” and “good” relations with him. We can also understand Heshiwarihima’s statement as a way of saying that he is closer than his enemies, the people from Torita, to “white” people, that is to say, to those who have manufactured objects. Having said so, as a way of telling his enemies that he has better things, and people, than they and their ways, to dream about, he tells his enemies twice not to dream about them (lines 17, 19) and six times that they are not in the mood for dreaming/seeing them in their dreams (lines 20-24).
The disruptive feelings that Heshiwarhima got in his dream can be better appreciated in the following fragment where he addresses once again the people of the community of Torita, his enemies, because they are saying evil things of himself and his community:

text 9.7
[Heshiwarhima enacting the kind of things his enemies are saying about him and his people]

1. no peprarou kē yahe thē mori hipeai,
   we are going to bite them, [i.e., to make them feel bad/to suffer/ to make them lose their dignity]

2. no preprarou kē yahē thē hipēki,
   we will make them suffer, [i.e., to make them feel bad/ to make them lose their dignity]

3. no preprarou yahē thē hipēki,
   we will make them suffer, [i.e., to make them feel bad/ to make them lose their dignity]

4. kahē “e naha wa no rii prea kukei” kuutiehéhi!
   “you will suffer in this way” don’t say that!

5. kamiyē ya no ré preoewi thē kuami,
   I am not the person who loses his dignity/who is desperate/pitiful,

6. thē kuami,
   nothing like that,

7. ya no pretaama ma kui,
   although I had a time of sorrow/ although I suffered,

8. ya no pretaama ma kui,
   although I had a time of sorrow/although I suffered,

9. ya rāmi huu shi wāri totihitou tēhē,
   when I was hunting constantly,

10. ya sherekapi uketao he yatipe,
    I was constantly taking my arrows, [e.g. going hunting]

11. thē kua a ta kurani?
    was it like that?

12. thē kua wawetoa a ta totihia ta kurani,
    it was clearly like that,
"We will make them suffer" [e.g by attacking them] is one of the comments Heshiwarihima thinks his enemies are making (lines 2-3). “Don’t say that!” he says (line 4), and stresses that “I am not the person who loses his dignity/who is desperate/pitiful” (line 5). In saying this, Heshiwarihima is reminding the enemy that he is not the kind of person that in times of hostility only suffers and lives in a deplorable state (e.g., because it is more dangerous to go out of the house to go hunting, to look for food, to defecate, etc...). He is a “waitheri,” a “courageous” person in face of danger from them. Of course the times of war and conflict between communities are not “happy moments,” as he clearly recognises when he says that he had a time of sorrow and suffering (lines 7-8). However, although he went through these difficult times (e.g., war), nevertheless he was “hunting constantly” (line 9) and “constantly taking his arrows” (e.g., to hunt) (line 10) something that he reasserts by asking rhetorically if “was it like that” (line 11) and answering positively (lines 12-13). Said in other words, although he was exposed to the dangers of being attacked, he was not afraid of going to the forest to hunting and looking for food.

After saying this he goes on to speak more about the horrible things the enemy are saying of them:

[Heshiwarihima enacting the words of his enemies]

14 "wamaki ihirupi oheri,
your children will be hungry/starving,

15 wamaki ihirupi oheri,
your children will be hungry/starving,

16 wamaki ihirupi oheri,
your children will be hungry/starving,

17 wamaki ihirupi ohi," your children are starving,"

[Heshiwarihima “speaking” to his enemies]
18 pe á wai thatihê, 
don’t say that, 

19 mami kaihe 
shut up, 

20 pe á wai thatihê, 
don’t say that, 

21 pe á wai thatihê, 
don’t say that, 

22 pe kuramamotihê, 
Don’t dream about us/see us in your dreams, 

23 pe maki kuramai puhiomi, 
we are not in the mood for dreaming/seeing people in dreams, [e.g. like you do with us] 

24 pe maki kuramai puhiomi, 
we don’t want to dream/see people in dreams, 

25 pe maki rê kuramaiwei yama rê mai, 
we are not the people who dream, [e.g. like you do of us] 

26 kahê pe maki kuramai puhiomi, 
we don’t want to dream/see you in dreams, 

As we have seen before, in times of war life becomes more difficult and Yanomami people usually have to endure periods when there is not enough food to eat properly, that is, difficult times and even periods of starvation. Yanomami people usually use an euphemism that tells us about this relationship between hunger/starvation and war. This euphemism provides us with an example for better understanding the way Heshiwarihima speaks. The verb “ohêm you,” which literally means “to starve each other/to mutually/reciprocally provoke starvation” is understood as “to be in war with each other.” It is interesting to note the way an expression of violence and war is equated with the very opposite of acts of sharing and generosity. When two communities are in good, peaceful relationships they will be doing the very opposite, that is, they will mutually/reciprocally share their food. Now we can understand better why the enemy is referring to the hunger of the children of Hapokashita. If the people from Torita attack them once again, their children will be starving. The manner in which the people from Torita are speaking, by saying that they are willing to provoke the hunger of the children, is a way of
expressing their willingness to attack them, to go to war again. This is clear by the manner in which Heshiwarihima enacts these voices, using the form "ohē-
̄ni." This form is an imperfective imperative, which expresses the willingness of the locutor, in this case Heshiwarihima’s enemy, to cause the hunger of his children, therefore the expression "wamaki ihirupi oheri," “your children will be hungry/starving" (lines 14-16). This message is an example that Heshiwarihima “gives” of the nasty and evil things the enemies might well be saying about them. Heshiwarihima doesn’t want to hear that at all, and he says: “don’t say that” (lines 18, 20, 21) and “shut up” (line 19). This verbal interaction tells us another way in which bad speaking (see Chapters 5, 6, 7) is also equated with disruptive feelings and negative social relations. Moreover, we have here yet another example, a different expression of the fact that, while discussing social relations, Yanomami people establish a strong association between bad speech (e.g., the disruptive things the enemy are saying) and death (i.e., "your children will be starving").

In addition to this, Heshiwarihima tells them again not “to dream about us/see us in your dreams” (line 22) and that “they are not in the mood for dreaming/seeing people in dreams (e.g., like the enemy do with them)” (lines 23-24). They are different! They "are not the people who dream (e.g., who dream nasty/evil things like the enemy does with them)” (line 25). Finally, and as if all the above said would not be enough, he insists that they “don’t want to dream/see you in dreams” (line 26).

Having said so, Heshiwarihima provides another example of what the kind of “good dreams” are that he likes. In the following lines he is going to talk about the kind of people who occupy his dreams, e.g., the kind of people who are the main “characters” in his dreams. The kind of dreaming he is about to talk about is in clear contrast with the dream/presentiment who opened his speech as the former comes from a good, positive and peaceful relationship. The type of dreams he is going to talk about below is an expression of and contributes to the generation of good feelings. Heshiwarihima knows the fundamental importance that the “production” of good feelings has for the achievement of a peaceful and tranquil life, and thus for the generation of a safe and convivial
community life. Because of this, he prefers to think about friendly people and also, as we will see, to dream about them. Let us see the reasons he gives for why he prefers these kinds of dreams:

[Heshiwarhima “speaking” to his enemies]

27  *ipa heriyê Eshemowê theri ya rê mia kuhuruhe*
    my brother-in-law of Eshemowe I just went to see/visit,

28  *mihi kê ya kuramai tahiao,*
    I only dream with him/see him in my dreams,

29  *yahêki nohi rê iyopoyouwei,*
    we miss each other,

30  *yahêki nohi rê iyopoyouwei,*
    we miss each other,

31  *mihi kê a yai,*
    he is the one,

32  *mihi kê a yai,*
    he is the one,

33  *nayê kê a no hekama,*
    he is the son-in-law of my mother, [i.e., my brother-in-law]

34  *nayê kê a no hekama rê kui,*
    he is the son-in-law of my mother, [i.e., my brother-in-law]

35  *nayê kê a no hekama,*
    he is the son-in-law of my mother, [i.e., my brother-in-law] no doubt

36  *mihi heriyê ya rê mia kuhuruhe,*
    my brother-in-law I went to see/visit,

37  *nayê kê a no hekama,*
    he is the son-in-law of my mother, [i.e., my brother-in-law]

38  *nayê kê a no hekama,*
    he is the son-in-law of my mother, [i.e., my brother-in-law]

39  *nayê kê a no hekama,*
    he is the son-in-law of my mother, [i.e., my brother-in-law]

40  *yahêki nohi rê iyopoyouwei,*
    we both miss iyopoyouwei,

41  *mihi kê a yai,*
    he is the one,

42  *mihi kê a yai,*
he is the one,

(...)

43 shoriwē,  
brother-in-law,

44 nayē kē a no he kama rē kui,  
the one who is the son-in-law of my mother, [i.e., my brother-in-law]

45 nayē kē a no he kama yai,  
The one who really is the son-in-law of my mother, [i.e., my brother-in-law]

46 mihi kē a yai,  
he is the one,

47 mihi hē,  
that one,

48 mihi kē a yai,  
he is the one,

49 kahē pēmaki kuramai mohi,  
we are not in the mood for dreaming about/seeing you in dreams, [like you do with us]

50 kahē pēmaki kuramai mohi,  
we are not in the mood for dreaming about/seeing you in dreams, [like you do with us]

51 shoriwē ya rii kuramai yahēki nohi rē iyopoyope,  
I dream/see in my dreams my brother-in-law, we both miss each other,

52 ipa heriyē ya nohi rii iyopou katitiipe,  
my brother-in-law the one I really miss,

53 shoriwē ya nohi rii iyopou katitiipe,  
the brother-in-law the one I really miss,

54 kahē pēmaki kuramai mohi,  
we are not in the mood for dreaming about/seeing you in dreams, [like you do with us]

55 pé kuramamothē,  
Don't dream about us/see us in your dreams,

56 pé kuramamothē,  
Don't dream about us/see us in your dreams,

In this fragment, Heshiwarihima begins by stating the person he is going to talk about, i.e., his brother-in-law from the community of Eshemowe that he
just went to visit up river (line 27). It is about him, only, that he dreams (line 28), and he provides one of the reasons for this: "we both miss each other" (lines 29-30). "He is the one" (e.g., he is the one about whom I like to dream), he says twice (lines 31-31), and not any other. He explains this better: the person with whom he likes to dream, the person that he misses, is his mother's son-in-law, "nayë kë a no hekama," that is, his brother-in-law (lines 33-35). This is an information that he emphasises, repeating it various times through lines 36-48.

Then Heshiwarihima goes back to the recurrent theme of telling the enemy that they are not in the mood for dreaming about them (lines 49-50). The notion of balance we saw in chapter 8 can be perceived now in the domain of dreams, that, as we are going to see, are also portrayed as relational. In clear contrast with western individualistic, and highly personalised way of conceiving dreams, Yanomami people express a mutuality of dreams that tells us about the fundamental importance of good and proper sociality. He also tells them, as if making a clear contrast, that he dreams with his brother-in-law, as they both miss each other (line 51), and also because he really misses him (lines 52-53). He contrasts these good feelings again with his lack of interest of dreaming with the enemy (line 54), a fact that he stresses in a different manner when he tells his enemy not to dream about them. This is a statement that can be understood as if he were telling them to do the same (e.g. I do not like to dream with you, so you do not dream with me…) (lines 54-56).

So far, Heshiwarihima is making clear and constant references to the situation of war. His presentiment opened the speech providing the grounds to talk at length about the actual situation of war between the communities of Torita and Hapokashita. His presentiment also "confirmed," so to speak, the information recently received by Heshiwarihima about his enemies' evil intentions (see text 9.3). Based on this, in the unfolding of his speech he has been making references to the enemies' constant negative comments about Heshiwarihima's people. The enemies' bad intentions have been linked to bad dreams, which have been repeatedly disapproved of and condemned (e.g., "shut up don't say that," "don't dream about us," "we are not in the mood for dreaming about you/seeing you in my dreams"). It is frequent among the
Yanomami, when speaking about the bad things “others” might do, to reject and dissaprove such conflicitive behaviours by expressing the contrary, i.e., the proper ways of doing things or a type of behaviour that is clearly different. In clear contrast to the enemies’ bad dreams, and the associated bad feelings they generate in them, Heshiwarihima insists on the good dreams he also has, and the associated good feelings that they generate on him. In this way, he is making a clear contrast between bad dreams, negative social relations and negative feelings, on the one hand, and good dreams, positive social relations and good feelings on the other. As social relations, dreams are also a relational matter.

In the following Chapter I will present more fragments of Heshiwarihima’s speech through which we will see the way in which, while keeping to the theme of war and the “interplay of opposites,” he also introduces a new theme. Let us see more on the ways Heshiwarihima speaks to his people.
CHAPTER 10

FERTILE WORDS 2

Sharing remembrances and communicating news: the past, the present and the future in Yanomami elders' speech

In this chapter I present 3 texts. In the first section (texts 10.1, 10.2) I show two fragments of speech that deal with the theme of warfare and the bad feelings associated with it. The manner in which these feelings are talked about in these texts will illustrate the fundamental importance they play in the achievement of social balance in Yanomami sociality. They are examples of the relational way of conceiving of and generating sociality. In the last section I present another text (text 10.3) that shows the importance Heshiwarihima concedes to communicating information to his fellow villagers and his way of doing it in a "patamou."

10.1 "We didn´t return by our path!:" elders’ remembrances as a reminder to the youngsters...

In the following fragment of his speech, Heshiwarihima asks his enemies a new question:

text 10.1

[Heshiwarihima "speaking" to his enemies]

1 katauri miā topraoho kē thē ?
   does the great currasaw cry ?

2 katauri miā topraoho kē thē ?
   does the great currasaw cry ?

3 miā titeteohe kē thē eehhh ?
   does the great currasaw cry close ?

   (...) 

4 uhhhhhh uhhhhh uhhhh,
   Uhhhhhh uhhhhh uhhhh,
In this fragment to the speech, Heshiwarihima asks his enemies rhetorically, and quite ironically as well, if the great curassow, the preferred bird game for the Yanomami, cries close (lines 1-3). He then mimics the great curassow's cry (line 4) and poses the same question again (line 5). Then he asks more precisely by naming the name of the region where the enemy went to live after having killed two men of Heshiwarihima's community. After attacking Heshiwarihima's people, the enemies went far away to avoid being attacked easily in return. However, Heshiwarihima's people went there and killed one man, so they knew where the enemy was living: "Over there in the region of the river Watetema" (line 6). After saying this, he asks once more if the great curassow cried near by that area (line 7), to which he responds affirmatively and quite emphatically: "Yeeesss!" (line 8), "it cried clooooose!" (line 9), and then he mimics the great curassow, "uhhhhh, uhhhhhh, uhhhhhh" (line 10).

Why is Heshiwarihima asking whether great curassow was crying close to the enemies community? And, What would be the meaning of his affirmative response? To answer these questions, we should first know more about the next message of his speech. As we have seen before, he speaks as the enemy

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110 The word watetema, comes from the word watetewe, which means, "to be open," "to be separated" and can refer to the fact that the river, in the headwaters, is formed by various small rivers, "caños" in spanish.
is supposedly to be doing, e.g. he enacts the kind of things they are saying about him and his people. Let us see this:

text 10.2
[Heshiwarihima enacting the kind of things his enemies are saying about them]

1 *pē thē pē thamou shi warii,*
   they are blocked, [e.g., the house is blocked]

2 *shereka pē ha pē thē thamou shi warii wawētoowē tothiwē,*
because of the attacks/war they are really quite blocked, [e.g., because of the enemies they are afraid of getting out of the house

3 *pē thē pē thamou shi warii,*
   they are blocked, [e.g., they don’t go out easily because of the fear of an enemies attack]

4 *pē thē pē thamou shi warii,*
   they are blocked, [e.g., they don’t go out easily because of the fear of an enemies attack]

5 *pē thē pē thamou shi warii,*
   they are blocked, [e.g., they don’t go out easily because of the fear of an enemies attack]

6 *pē thē pē...*
   they are.....

7 *pē thē pē yaikamai kiri wawētoo totihiooo,*
   they are quite afraid really of going out with firebrands to light their way, [e.g., in the night before dawn for hunting]

[Heshiwarihima "speaking" to his enemies]

8 *pē ā thatihē,*
   don’t say that/don’t speak like that,

9 *pei kē ya ku u p eo,*
   this is what I say,

10 *pē ā thatihē,*
   don’t say that/don’t speak like that,

11 *pei kē ya ku u pē o,*
   this is what I say,

12 *ku u pē o ha yaiyon i,*
   I really say this,
"They are blocked [e.g., they don't go out easily because of the fear of an enemies attack]" (line 1) is what the enemies are saying of Heshiwarihima's people. Why they are blocked? "Because of the attacks/war they are really quite blocked [e.g., because of the enemies they are afraid of getting out of the house]" (line 2). These two sentences, that Heshiwarihima enacts as if they were being said by his enemies, provide us with more clues about why he was asking whether great curassow was crying close to the enemies communal house. Heshiwarihima's question was a way of asking ironically (see below) if they were afraid of them. In saying this, Heshiwarihima is telling them, although in a different way, exactly the same thing as the enemies are saying about them. Let us look at this more closely.

The enemies are saying that Heshiwarihima's people are blocked, they don't go out of the communal house (lines 1-5). Even when they hear the cry of the big curassow near by "they are quite afraid really of going out with firebrands to light their way" (line 7). To better understand this way of speaking, it has to be remembered the way in which the great curassow is hunted. In the mating season of the bird, the male starts to cry ("mia ikii") at about three o'clock in the morning, and the hunters, attracted by the cry of the bird, leave the house and light their way with firebrands (yaikou). Once they are close to the cry, they identify the tree where the bird is perched and wait till dawn, till they can see it, and shoot their arrows. In times of war, the hunters who try to kill the great curassow at dawn in the way described, are an "easy" target for the enemies who usually wait for someone to appear to shoot their arrows. Valero's account (Valero in Biocca 1996: 233) of a Yanomami plan to kill the enemies in times of war helps us, once again, to better picture this:

111 It is interesting to note that most of Yanomami raids are carried out in the dry season, which coincides with the great curassow mating season, that is, when it cries. In this time of the year it is less difficult to walk through the forest. In addition, in the dry season it is also more difficult to discover tracks of the enemies.
"The tushawa [leader] afterwards told me the whole story. They came to where our old roza [garden] was. The Pishaasitheri had changed shapono [communal house], but they saw their track. Night was falling and they sat down in the forest. When it was dark, Fusiwe spoke as follows: "Let us go along the path. Tomorrow morning early we shall meet people; I feel that there are people thinking about this path so we shall keep watch!" It was a clear night with a moon; while they were going towards the shapono [communal house], they heard a bird, the mutum [great curassow], which was crying out its song in the night. Fusiwe said: "Let us wait here; they will hear the mutum [great curassow] bird and they will come to shoot it in the moonlight." During the night, attracted by that song, there came a Pishaasitheri, but he did not come right where they were lying in wait; when the man came close, the bird fell silent."

Let us now go back to Heshiwarihima’s speech. As has been previously discussed, his enemies’ message, e.g., that they are afraid of going out of the house, is something that Heshiwarihima does not want to hear. First, he has told them that in the place where the enemy live, the great currasow cries: "yes," “it clearly cries," he said, as if implying that they were not hunting it, that is, they did not go out at night before dawn out of fear (text 10.2). In other words, Heshiwarihima is telling them that while he is not afraid of them, they are afraid of him. Second, in relation to his enemies’ comments about the fact of he being afraid of going out of his house for fear of an attack (lines 1-7) he tells them "not to speak like that" (lines 8, 10). After having said so, he finally states, as if telling his enemies that he has a great deal of experience and knowledge about war and times of danger, that he knows “quite well how that is” (line 13).

It has to be remembered that Heshiwarihima is speaking in a moment when the conflict with his enemies was becoming very relevant again. He is referring to the theme of war and he has to show that he knows about this. To support the moral authority he has to tell the enemy to shut up and that he is not afraid of them he is going to tell about his own experience in times of conflict. Here again we can see that, at the same time as his speech unfolds, he

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112 See the way Heshiwarihima mimics the great curassow cry (text 10.1, lines 4,10). For another example see the myth of the origin of the night (chapter 1, text 1.1, lines 24, 26, 28, 32, 35, 37, 45).
constantly gives examples through which to ground the moral authority his words embody. Let us see how he speaks about his experience of war:

[Heshiwarihima speaking to his coresidents]

14 Shoriwê shamathari,
my brother-in-law shamathari,

15 shoriwê shamathari urihipi wai ha,
in the region where my brother-in-law shamathari lives,

16 "pēmakî pruka thariyo ta kuhani!"
"let us go and kill each other!" [e.g., let us go to war]

17 heriyē,
my brother-in-law,

18 awei e ta kuu,
it's true isn't it, [lit. say yes]

19 heriyē,
my brother-in-law,

20 heriyēpē,
my two brothers-in-law,

21 ma heriyēpē oshe oshepiyoma,
no, my two brothers-in-law were still babies (or small children) at that time,

22 kihi heriyē kē kipi epena pē rē koawei,
my two brothers-in-law over there are those who usually inhale hallucinogens, [e.g., those who usually do shamanism]

23 kihi ai heriyē a rē kui,
my other brother-in-law over there,

24 a pahi hatukehērima,
he realised that,

25 kihi sho.... shoriwê oshe a rē kui,
he/over there too....my brother-in-law the young one,

26 a pahi hatukehērima,
he realised how that was,

27 hei heriyē kē kipi epena pē rē koawei,
these two brothers-in-law who usually inhale hallucinogens, [e.g., these two brothers-in-law close to me who usually do shamanism]

28 yama thē tararema,
we saw it,
yama thē tararema,
we saw it,

 (...) 

peī yamaki mayō ka hamī yamaki kōōnomi,
we didn’t return by the same path, [lit. We had to run away through the forest]

ōāsi,
my children,

hekmayē,
my son-in-law,

peī yamaki mayō ka hamī yamaki wāri kōōnomi,
we didn’t return by the same path, [lit. We had to run away through the forest]

ōāsi,
my children,

hekmayē,
my son-in-law,

heriyēpē,
brothers-in-law,

peī yamaki mayō ka hamī yamaki wāri kōōnomi,
we didn’t return by the same path, [lit. We had to run away through the forest]

ōāsi,
my children,

shoriwē shamathari urihipi ha,
in the region where my brother-in-law shamathari lives,

peī yamaki mayō ka hamī yamaki wāri kōōnomi,
we didn’t return by the same path, [lit. We had to run away through the forest]

shomi hamī yamaki wāri kōa ayaryohērima,
we returned through a different route, [e.g. through the forest]

ōāsi,
my children,

hekmayē,
my son-in-law,

heriyēpē,
brothers-in-law,

ihī rē kē?
is not that true?
In the first lines, Heshiwarihima states the topic he is going to talk next: the time when they attacked an enemy's community in the region of the Shamathari, where his brother-in-law lives (lines 14-16). In order to better understand the fragment we have to pay close attention to the different personal pronouns he uses when speaking and the different people he is addressing. In doing this, we can note that first he uses the first person plural personal pronoun “pêmaki,” which means “we” (line 16) (see more below). He provides more information about this “we”: first he asks his brother-in-law, “say yes”, “awei e ta kuu”, (line 18), as if soliciting from him to remember the event he is going to talk about, an event in which his brother-in-law also participated. Then he goes on, pointing with his words, as it were, to different and specific hearths of the circular house facing them and naming, by their respective kinship reference terms, a number of coresidents who were also with him in that event. He mentions them in turn:

1) "brother-in-law" he repeats (line 19).

2) "my brothers-in-law", he say afterwards (line 20).

However, he thinks better about his last sentence and, correcting himself, states that “no” they were not there, “my two brothers-in-law were still babies (or small children)” (line 21). Then, facing towards a different direction (a fact that can be clearly perceived listenting to the voice in the tape), he says:

3) "my two brothers-in-law over there those who usually inhale hallucinogens," he says to call the attention of his two brothers-in-law who usually do shamanism (line 22).

4) then he calls the attention of another brother-in-law whose hearth is in another section of the house: "my other brother-in-law over there" (here again by listening to his voice one can perceive that Heshiwarihima is facing him) (line 23).
5) And talking to all the people he says that "he [e.g., his brother-in-law] realised that" (line 24).

6) However there are still more people who were present at that event that Heshiwarihima remembers as he talks. So he adds that "over there too....my brother-in-law the young one" (line 25), because he also "did realise that" (line 26).

7) Finally he talks about two more of his brother-in-laws, in this case the ones "close" to him, "who do shamanism" (line 27).

Note the difference between the line 22, in which he begins his sentence by the word "kihi," "over there," and the line 27, in which he begins by the word "hei," "this," that refers to someone closer. This two sentences are the almost the same in the sense that they refer to two brothers-in-law of Heshiwarihima who usually inhale hallucinogens, but they are "two sets" of brothers-in-law.

Having pointed out those co-residents who were with him in the event, he goes on to address those who were not "there" in the event with him: "we saw it", he says. And he says so using the first person personal pronoun "yama," (e.g., "yama thé tararema"), which means "me and the others", that is, is an exclusive pronoun that does not include the listener (line 28-30). In Yanomami there are two different plural first person pronouns. Lizot (1996:53) writes that "depending wether the personal pronoun includes or not the speaker and/or the listener, the personal pronoun is inclusive or exclusive. Thus, in Yanomami "pemaki" = locutor/speaker + listener+ others (+ inclusive in relation with the listener); "yamaki" = locutor/speaker+ others – listeners ( + exclusive in relationship with the listener)." The use of this pronoun, the exclusive "we", tell us that Heshiwarihima is telling the other what happened in the event: "we didn’t return by the same path" (line 31), addressing now his child (line 32, 39), his nephew (line 33, 44), and his two brothers-in-law, those who were still small children (lines 37, 45). To all of them, to all of those who did not experience the event, in clear contrast with those he mentioned before, (i.e., those who "realised how it was"), he reminds them that: "we didn't return by the same
path", and that they "returned through a different route (e.g. through the forest)" (line 42). Having said this, he asks the people who knew how that event was: "is not that true?" (line 46).

Reading these lines, we should ask: What is the meaning of this message? What does Heshiwarihima want to convey by stating that they used a different path to return from the region where his shamathari brother-in-law lives? Finally, what is the point he wants to make by saying this to the youngsters in this particular speech?

Let us recall the points of this fragment of Heshiwarihima’s speech and try to disclose the message that these words might convey from a Yanomami point of view, which is the main point of all this.

They went to attack an enemies’ community and after the attack they returned by a different route. Lizot (1994:854) writes that when warriors go on an expedition, just after the attack, they always try to escape and return home “as quickly as possible.... For warriors, the return is the most dangerous moment, and raiders are quite often intercepted as they come back." So now we know that Heshiwarihima is talking about that very dangerous moment. Did Heshiwarihima and his fellow warriors go back through the same path? No, he tell the youngsters a few times: “they didn’t return by the same path." And if we take a look at what he says just a few lines after having said this, he also tells them that:

[Heshiwarihima speaking to his coresidents]

52 yamaki kāi mori wāri parionomi,
we almost didn’t want to go ahead [e.g. none of us wanted to go the first on the way back]

53 yamaki kāi mori wāri pario ayaonomi,
we almost didn’t want to go ahead [e.g. none of us wanted to go the first in the way back]

(...)  

57 ōāsi,
my sons/my children
58 wayu kē thē mī wārī yapayapaapramai taomi totihwē tao,
warriors do not ever go back by the same path [lit. Warriors don’t know going
back by the same path they took at all...]
(…)  
60 shomi hami ya wārī kōa ayarayohērii ta kuhani!
I came back by other path, you say that!  
61 awei shomi hami yamaki kōrayohēriima,
yes we came back by other way  
62 huyapē,
youngsters,  
63 ōāsi,
my sons/my children,  
64 shomi hami yamaki kōrayohēriima,
we came back by other way  
65 pei yamaki mayō ka hamayamaki kōōnobi,
we didn’t come back by the same path,

A similar event is described by Lizot (1985: 154):

“Kaomawe informs him of a noteworthy event: … The warriors were
already near the enemy dwelling when they were surprised by a
group returning from the garden. A few shots were exchanged, but
no arrow reached its target. Since they had been discovered, the
warriors of Batanawe thought of returning home without attempting
anything: An attack against enemies warned of their presence was
too risky. They changed their minds, however, and made a long
detour to launch their arrows over the roof. Some men of Hasubiwe
went out without being noticed and went to lie in wait on the bank of
the Orinoco, at a place where they thought their assailants would
pass. When the warriors broke off their attack, they did indeed fall
into the trap. Arrows were whizzing near them; at any moment one of
them could be killed. A warrior of Batanawe shouted:…Run as fast as
you can and get beyond them, otherwise we shall be killed!”

Similar views on the importance of caution and knowledge of detours can
be perceived also when Lizot (1985:176-177) describes the conversation
between two brothers-in-law: “they chat about this and that, especially about
war”…

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"...[t]he next morning, I was still in my hammock. I had just eaten a banana, and I was reaching for another. Suddenly I heard the noise of an arrow leaving the bowstring. I made a sudden movement, and the arrowshaft grazed me; it bore a curare point. We immediately rushed to our bows to drive off the attackers... it was after such an attack that a man from Shiparariwe was killed, you may remember. They were returning after having unsuccessfully attacked Mahekoto. The warriors of Mahekoto had made a long detour, running all the way to surprise the aggressors on their return trip. So the assailants were returning without suspecting anything. Their group was preceded by a man who had ignorant prudent advice and had hurried ahead. An enemy faced him, an arrow ready on his bowstring, and killed him."

To better understand the reasons why Heshiwarihima is telling this particular happening, and also his way of doing it, we need to remember various things of his speech. First of all, the anxiety that the presentiment that opened his speech (Chapter 9) generated in him. An anxiety that also responds to the information he got (information that, as we have seen, he carefully unfolds and describes with close attention to details so as to make sure the people take notice of it) about the "really nasty things" his enemies were saying. For Heshiwarihima, his enemies were clearly still thinking about attacking them. This is a fact that poses a serious threat to the lives of his people. As an elder who cares for his people, he wants to show them that, even if the actual situation of conflict is highly dangerous and poses a threat to the harmony of community life, they, as whole are not afraid. His words provide encouragement and confidence to the youngsters by telling them that he and other coresidents have experience in wars and know how this is. To the vicious words his enemies are saying about them, he responds that they are not afraid; if someone is afraid because of this conflict it is their enemies but not them (See Clastres 1994, chapter 11)

10.2 Communicating news: elder’s speech as an example of fusion of dialogues

In the following fragment of Heshiwarihima’s speech, he is going to inform his brother-in-law, an elder who is another factional leader in the village, about the news he received in a recent visit to Eshemowe, a neighbouring
community. There, his brother-in-law, the one of the Eshemowe community, told him something that he now communicates to his co-villager and the rest of the audience. The way Heshiwarhihima communicates the information will illustrate the extent to which Yanomami elders' speech, far from being a monologic type of speech, as a Western understanding would have it, embodies a fusion of dialogues and therefore a multiplicity of Yanomami voices.

This is the way the information was given:

**text 10.3**

[Heshiwarhihima speaking to his coresident brother-in-law]

1. **waiha**, later/wait/on other occasion,
2. **waiha**, later/wait/on other occasion,
3. **waiha**, later/wait/on other occasion,
4. **heriye waiha**, later/wait/on other occasion my brother-in-law,
5. **waiha**, later/wait/on other occasion,
6. **waiha**, later/wait/on other occasion,
7. **waiha**, later/wait/on other occasion,
8. **waiha**, later/wait/on other occasion,
9. **waiha**, later/wait/on other occasion,
10. **waiha**, later/wait/on other occasion,
11. **heriye**, my brother-in-law,
12. **waiha**, later/wait/on other occasion,
13 waiha,  
later/wait/on other occasion,

In these lines, Heshiwarihima is telling his brother-in-law (line 4) to wait  
(lines 1-3, 5-13). Let us see what he should wait for.

[Heshiwarihima speaking to his co-resident brother-in-law]

14 mihi,  
over there,

15 mihi,  
over there,

16 mihi heriye,  
my brother-in-law over there,

17 mihi ya mi ya mi re hetua kuruhuruhe,  
over there the one I went to see/to visit,

18 wa mayo ka tute ham,  
on your recent/new steps/tracks,

19 wa mayo ka tute ham,  
on your recent/new steps/tracks,

20 mihi ya mi ya mi re hetua kuruhuruhe,  
over there the one I went to see/to visit,

21 ihi e naha re a kutou korayou kuhe,  
this one told me the following,

22 ihi e naha re,  
this one told me like this,

Heshiwarihima tells to his co-villager brother-in-law that he went to visit his  
brother-in-law up river (lines 14-17). On his way there, he followed the same  
path ("wa mayo ka tute ham", lit. on your recent steps/tracks) as his co-villager,  
as the latter had gone to visit the same person a week before (lines 18-19).  
Now he is going to tell him about what this brother-in-law, the one who lives up  
river, told him. Heshiwarihima does this by enacting the words his brother-in-law  
told him:
[Heshiwarihima enacting the words that his brother-in-law told him]

23  
   waiha,
   later/wait/on other occasion,

24  
   waiha,
   later/wait/on other occasion,

25  
   waiha,
   later/wait/on other occasion,

26  
   waiha,
   later/wait/on other occasion,

27  
   waiha,
   later/wait/on other occasion,

28  
   waiha,
   later/wait/on other occasion,

29  
   waiha,
   later/wait/on other occasion,

30  
   waiha,
   later/wait/on other occasion,

31  
   shori waiha,
   brother-in-law later/wait/on other occasion,

32  
   waiha,
   later/wait/on other occasion,

33  
   waiha,
   later/wait/on other occasion,

34  
   waiha,
   later/wait/on other occasion,

35  
   waiha,
   later/wait/on other occasion,

36  
   shori waiha,
   brother-in-law later/wait/on other occasion,

37  
   shori waiha,
   brother-in-law later/wait/on other occasion,

38  
   waiha,
   later/wait/on other occasion,

39  
   hei ke,
   this,
In these lines we can see the way Heshiwarihima was told to wait (lines 23-38). This is why he told his co-villager to wait in the opening of this fragment of speech. The waiting, as is said to Heshiwarihima by the brother-in-law he went to visit, has to do with the plants, e.g. bananas (lines 40-46). This is what Heshiwarihima wants to communicate to his co-villager brother-in-law. He begins to explain this in the following manner:

[Heshiwarihima speaking to his co-villager brother-in-law]

47  e naha,
     like this/in this way,

48  e naha,
     like this/in this way,

49  e naha,
     like this/in this way,

50  e naha,
     like this/in this way,

51  e naha,
     like this/in this way,

52  heriye e naha,
brother-in-law like this/in this way,

53 **heriye e naha,**
brother-in-law like this/in this way,

54 **e naha,**
like this/in this way.

55 **e naha,**
like this/in this way.

56 **e naha,**
like this/in this way.

It is “like this,” *Heshiwarihima* repeats various times to his brother-in-law (lines 52-53). Why all the repetitions? As we have seen in other fragments, *Heshiwarihima* repeats words, sentences and expressions as a way to emphasise, to call attention and, sometimes, I believe, to have more time to think more about his next theme of discussion. Although we are not used to see in repetitions nothing particularly interesting, I have prefered to write all these repetitions so as to show the way he unfolds his speech. Then he is going to enact again the words he was told by his other brother-in-law in his visit:

[Heshiwarihima enacting the words that his brother-in-law told him]

57 **paimi ke,**
thick/old,

58 **paimi ke,**
thick/old,

59 **paimi ke ya the si ki,**
these plantations are thick/old, [e.g., with weeds]

60 **paimi ke ya the si ki wā ha no wāri wayoaaprarai ayao ha,**
if I say to everybody that these plantations are thick/old,

61 **paimi ke ya the si ki wā ha no wāri wayoaaprarai ayao ha,**
if I say to everybody that these plantations are thick/old,

62 **e naha ke ya kahiki kuu ha ta yaiyo tao,**
I am going to say this,

63 **ya kuimi yaiwe kutaeni,**
certainly this is not what I am going to say,
64 shori ei ke ya wā,
brother-in-law this is what I say,

65 ei ke ya wā,
this is what I say,

66 hei ke si ki yai ha,
with these plantations,

67 hei,
these,

68 hei,
these,

69 hei,
these,

70 hei,
these,

71 hei,
these,

72 hei ke si ki yai ha,
with these plantations,

73 hei ke si ki yai ha,
with these plantations,

Heshiwarihima’s brother-in-law is telling him that he does not think—and therefore say—, that the banana plants of his garden are old (lines 57-63). His garden is not thick (e.g. when the garden is old and in bad state, covered with vegetation/weeds); certainly this is not what he is going to say (line 63). Heshiwarihima then stops enacting the words he was told and speaks again to his co-villager brother-in-law.

[Heshiwarihima speaking to the brother-in-law of his village]

74 e naha,
like this/in this way,

75 e naha ke ware nowā thaa mi heturei kuhe e naha,
like this/in this way he told me in his turn/alternately like this/in this way,

76 e naha ke ware nowā thaa mi heturei kuhe e naha,
like this/in this way he told me in his turn/alternately like this/in this way,
77  e naha,
like this/in this way,

78  e naha ke ware nowa thaa mi heturei kuhe e naha,
like this/in this way he told me in his turn/alternately like this/in this way,

79  e naha ke!
like this/in this way!

80  e naha ke!
like this/in this way!

81  shori e naha,
brother-in-law like this/in this way,

82  e naha,
like this/in this way,

83  e naha ke ware nowa thaa mi heturei kuhe,
like this/in this way he told me in his turn/alternately,

84  e naha,
like this/in this way,

85  e naha,
like this/in this way,

86  e naha,
like this/in this way,

"This is the way he told me in his turn/alternately" says Heshiwarihima to his co-villager brother-in-law (lines 75,76,78,83). In saying this Heshiwarihima is expressing his willingness to convey the same message he was told on his recent visit. It is in this way, “Brother-in-law in this way” he stresses (line 81). Note the way Heshiwarihima describes the conversation with his brother-in-law by saying “ware nowa thaa mi heturei,” which means that he spoke to him in his turn, as if emphasising the dialogue they had. The way he spoke is described as a succession, alternation, that is, as taking his turn in a dialogue that they hold together. In the following fragment he is going to tell more information enacting again the words he was told:

[Heshiwarihima enacting the words that his brother-in-law told him]
87 *waiha*,
later/wait/on other occasion,

88 *waiha*,
later/wait/on other occasion,

89 *waiha*,
later/wait/on other occasion,

90 *waiha*,
later/wait/on other occasion,

91 *waiha*,
later/wait/on other occasion,

92 *waiha*,
later/wait/on other occasion,

93 *shori waiha*,
brother-in-law later/wait/on other occasion,

94 *waiha*,
later/wait/on other occasion,

95 *waiha*,
later/wait/on other occasion,

96 *waiha*,
later/wait/on other occasion,

97 *hei ke ya si ki re sheyekiyoh*,
these plantations that I have planted,

98 *hei ke ya si ki re sheyekiyoh*,
these plantations that I have planted,

99 *hawe yetu ha ya si ki sheyeapotayoma*,
it seems that I planted them a time ago,

100 *hei ke si ki kuai re waikipyie ha*,
with this plantation that is ready,

101 *hei ke si ki ha yai*,
with this very plantation,

102 *hei ke si ki ha yai*,
with this very plantation,

103 *hei ke si ki ha yai*,
with this very plantation,
These lines refer again to the need for waiting. And they refer also to the banana plants (lines 97-98) that seem to be ready to harvest (lines 99-100). But there is more information about these plants that Heshiwarihima is passing onto his brother-in-law:

[Heshiwarihima enacting the words that his brother-in-law told him]

104  mihi a re,
     over there with them,
105  mihi a re perimapou ayaohahei,
     over there with them who live on their own,
106  mihi a re perimapou ayaoha ha “pratanare therini”,
     over there with that who live on their own the people from Platanal,
107  mihi a re perimapou ayaoha,
     over there with them who live on their own,
108  e naha e no thaakirioa yaro,
     because they are waiting in this way,
109  e naha e pe no thaprarou waikia kirioa yaro,
     because they are already waiting in this way,
110  waiha shori,
     brother-in-law wait,
111  waiha,
     later/wait/on other occasion,
112  shoriwe ke ya ke pe wāri nakai yawereo pario,
     first I am going to call my brother-in-law alone,
113  shoriwe,
     my brothers-in-law,
114  shoriwe,
     my brothers-in-law,
115  shoriwe,
     my brothers-in-law,
116  shoriwe,
     my brothers-in-law,
117  shoriwe,
     my brothers-in-law,
118  shoriwe,
my brothers-in-law,

In these lines there is more information related to the banana plants. Eshemowe wants to call his brothers-in-law, those "who live on their own, the people from Platanal" (lines 106); and invite them "alone" (e.g. to invite them only, and not with anybody else) (line 112). This is the reason why he has been telling Heshiwarihima to wait. It is his brothers-in-law he wants to invite first as they have been waiting (line108-109). And he insists on the fact that it is his "brothers-in-law" he is going to invite first (lines 113-118). This is an important point and Heshiwarihima stresses this to his co-villager brother-in-law in the following manner:

[Heshiwarihima speaking to the brother-in-law of his village]

119  ei ware à ta hiria katitire ei,
      listen truly to my words,

120  ei ware à ta hiria a ta katitire,
      listen truly to my words,

Having stressed the importance of listening well to him and taking notice of the message, Heshiwarihima enacts again the words he was told by his brother-in-law in the recent visit:

[Heshiwarihima enacting the words that his brother-in-law told him]

121  shoriwe ke ya kipi,
      my two brothers-in-law,

122  shoriwe ke ya kipi miramai pario
      I am going to "deceive" [e.g. he says this as a jocke] first my two brothers-in-law,

123  shoriwe,
      my two brothers-in-law,

124  shoriwe,
      my two brothers-in-law,
Here we can see the way repetitions are a common feature to this type of speech. Nothing new is added to the information, but the stress on some particular aspects of it should be understood as ways of emphasising them. In this case, Heshiwarihima is emphasising what he was told, that is, the fact that it is his brothers-in-law that he is going to invite first. Heshiwarihima then tells to his brother-in-law that this is what Eshemowe told him:

[Heshiwarihima speaking to his co-villager brother-in-law]

Then Heshiwarihima tells to his co-villager brother in law about the way he answered to his brother-in-law in the dialogue they had:

[Heshiwarihima enacting the way he spoke to his brother-in-law in the dialogue they had]
135 awei,
yes,
136 awei,
yes,
137 awei,
yes,
138 awei,
yes,
139 awei,
yes,
140 awei,
yes,
141 awei,
yes,
142 awei,
yes,
143 awei...
yes....
144 ho,
all right,
145 ho,
all right,
146 ho,
all right,
147 ihi re,
it is like this,
148 shori,
brother-in-law,
149 ihi re waikiwe,
it is really like this,

Then, he speaks to his brother-in-law again:

[Heshiwarihima speaking to the brother-in-law of his village]

150 e naha yaheki nowa thayou mi hetuo kuhe,
we both talked in this way one after the other,
151 e naha,
like this,

152 e naha yaheki nowa thayou mi hetuo kuhe,
we both talked in this way one after the other,

153 shori e naha,
like this brother-in-law,

154 e naha yaheki nowa thayou mi hetuo kuhe,
we both talked in this way one after the other,

155 shori,
brother-in-law,

This is the way Heshiwarihima informs his brother-in-law. However, there is more information in the message he was told by the brother-in-law he went to visit. Now he goes on providing more details:

[Heshiwarihima enacting the words that his brother-in-law told him]

166 shoriwe ya kipi nakaa ha parireni,
after I have called my two brothers-in-law,

167 ya kipi nakaa ha parireni,
after I have called them,

168 a yawereo tehe,
when we are alone, [e.g. with no more guests]

169 yawereo tehe,
when we are alone, [e.g. with no more guests]

170 ai the mamo wai tisikiwe yeprarou ayao totihio maô tehe,
when no body else is here bothering,

171 kama heriye ke kipi sho,
with my two brothers-in-law,

172 kama heriye ke kipi sho,
with my two brothers-in-law,

173 yawerewe totihiwe yamaki yai katiti roo ta totihio sho,
only us, we are going to be here,

174 shori e naha,
in this way brother-in-law,

175 e naha kuwe ke ya the thapou kupe,
I will do it in this way,
176  e naha kuwe,
    It will be like this,

These lines provide more information about Heshiwarihima's brother-in-law willingness to invite his brothers-in-law first (line 166-167), and invite them alone, when there are no other people (lines 168-170). They are going to be really alone (line 173). This is what Heshiwarihima's host told him about what he will do (lines 174-176). And this is what Heshiwarihima is telling to his brother-in-law to let him know:

[Heshiwarihima speaking to the brother-in-law of his village]

177  heriye e naha ke yaheki nowă thayorayou ta kuhani,
    My brother-in-law we both spoke in this way,

178  e naha ke yaheki nowă thayorayou kuhe,
    we both spoke in this way,

179  e naha,
    like this/in this way,

180  e naha,
    like this/in this way,

181  e naha,
    like this/in this way,

182  e naha,
    like this/in this way,

183  e naha,
    like this/in this way,

184  e naha,
    like this/in this way,

185  e naha,
    like this/in this way,

186  e naha ke yaheki nowă thayorayou kuhe,
    we both spoke in this way,

187  e naha,
    like this/in this way,

188  e naha ke yaheki nowă thayorayou kuhe,
    we both spoke in this way,
Then Heshiwarihima repeats the final words of his brother-in-law just before he went back home.

[Heshiwarihima enacting the words that his brother-in-law told him]

189 ai shomi shomi the mamo wai yeprarou kōō ayao maō tehe,
when the others are not here looking at us,

190 yāmi totihiwe heriye ke kipi sho,
with my two brothers-in-law only,

191 yamaki roo ta totihio sho,
we are going to be here,

192 ya puhi kuope,
I will think,

193 shori si the ta katitireherii,
brother-in-law be clear on this, [lit. be clear on this on your way home]

In these lines there is not new information added. However Heshiwarihima in line 193 recalls that all the previously mentioned was the message that his brother-in-law wanted him to remember in his way home, as if telling him to take the news with him, and therefore let the others know. Then Heshiwarihima speaks to his co-villager brother-in-law:

[Heshiwarihima speaking to the brother-in-law of his village]

194 e naha ke ware nowā tharei kuhe,
he told me like this,

195 e naha,
like this/in this way,

196 e naha ke ware nowā tharei kuhe,
he told me like this,

197 e naha,
like this/in this way,

198 e naha,
like this/in this way,

199 e naha ke a kuu kurahari e naha,
he told me like this (up river) like this,

200  **e naha,**
like this/in this way,

201  **e naha,**
like this/in this way,

202  **e naha,**
like this/in this way,

203  **e naha,**
like this/in this way,

204  **e naha,**
like this/in this way,

205  **e naha ke a kuu kurahari,**
he told me like this (up river) like this,

206  **e naha ke a kuu kurahari,**
he told me like this (up river) like this,

207  **“haiyee” a puhi ta kuu,**
"it is really possible" to think like this/say that,

These final words are a repetition of the way Heshiwarihima's brother-in-law, the one who he went to visit, spoke to him. Finally, Heshiwarihima asks his co-villager brother-in-law to realise all the information and news he gave him. (line 207).

This fragment illustrates the way Heshiwarihima informs his co-villager brother-in-law. My intention in showing this text has been to give an example of the way in which news are, sometimes, given to the coresidents during a "patamou." It has to be remembered that much of the times the themes spoken in a speech of an elder open the grounds for further discussions in a more informal level. The people listen, the people know and then, whenever they want, the people will talk about it.
CHAPTER 11

FERTILE WORDS 3

A message of incorporation: speaking to an outsider as an expression of Yanomami sociality

In this chapter I will illustrate the strong linkage between Heshiwarhima’s speech (e.g., language) and the generation of social relations (e.g., “production” of sociality). In text 11.1 we will see the way Heshiwarhima stresses sharing and generosity in the production of good, positive and fertile social relations between me and other co-residents. Generosity and sharing are portrayed as fundamental values for the achievement of a tranquil life that at the same time will contribute to the creation of intimacy and good conditions for work. I want to demonstrate the extent to which his speech can be understood as an expression of incorporating an outsider (i.e., myself) into the safe and productive interpersonal-social relations of community life. Through describing and commenting upon Heshiwarhima’s words, I will be arguing that this message of “social incorporation” is both conceived of and verbally expressed as a generative process through which the daily creation of good feelings and shared moral sentiments plays a fundamental role (see Overing and Passes 2000). Through this disclosure, the importance of the use of an idiom of mutuality and notions of social balance to describe social relationships will also be made evident. Furthermore, as Heshiwarhima’s speech unfolds, I will demonstrate the fundamental linkage Yanomami people establish between the affective and emotional realms of interpersonal relationships and their conceptions of proper sociality (see chapter 3, section 3.1)

11.1 “My brother-in-law, outsider: Listen to me!”

One night before dawn, listening and recording the Yanomami elders’ speech, Heshiwarhima, a factional leader of his community, addressed his words to me. I was living in the next household; separated only by a few meters from him, the sound of his words came through to my house (e.g., hearth) with special clarity. I had already spent three months in his community when this
speech took place. During that time, I had been paying special attention to his speeches, which were an almost everyday event. Thus, I had become more and more accustomed to listening to his speeches, as well as the ones delivered by other elders, day in and day out. Through the constant process of listening, I had become more familiar with his personal style of speaking: the rhythms, sounds and the ways in which he usually addressed, mostly at dawn, his community fellows. Heshiwarihima was usually speaking from his own household. Most of the times he would speak from his hammock, although there were occasions when he would prefer to stand up as a way of being more emphatic and thus deliver a stronger speech. He would be then toing and froing in front of his hearth, stopping sometimes to seat on the ground for a while, only then to stand up again, and so on.113

Let us look at Heshiwarihima’s words and how he tells them. It is around 4:20 am in the morning, and he has been talking for about an hour. After having dwelt upon a number of issues (see texts in previous chapters) he was then about to talk to me - and about me:

text 11.1
[Heshiwarihima speaking to his co-residents and to me]

1 hei shoriwe,
this brother-in-law,

2 shoriwe nape,
brother-in-law outsider,

3 hei pehe a kāi re periowei,
the one who lives among both of us,

[Heshiwarihima speaking to me]

4 a yimika rii ta taiku,
listen to me,

113 Among the Yanomame in Brazil, I have seen elders performing “patamou” walking around, as in circles, in the central plaza of the communal house.
Heshiwarhima begins a new topic in his discourse by explicitly pointing out to whom he is addressing his words. In this case, he is talking to me, a "white/outsider," "nape," and he uses the term "shoriwe," which means "my brother-in-law." The Yanomami usually use the term "shori," "brother-in-law," which is reciprocal, when addressing certain outsiders. On the whole, by using this term with "whites/outsiders" they are explicitly setting the grounds and expressing his willingness for a particular way of relating to one another, where mutual friendship, generosity and trust are explicitly portrayed. Furthermore, in addition to the use of this kin term, he says something very important, as we will have opportunity to see as his speech unfolds. He says, addressing his coveriliger brother-in-law, another factional leader, that I am "the one who lives with both of us," "pehe a kai re perioewi" (line 3). Finally, after this "introduction," he tells me emphatically, using an imperative, "listen to me," "a yimika rii ta taiku" (line 4).

Heshiwarhima speaks to me in this way and addresses me with a Yanomami relationship term because I am an outsider who lives, although temporarily, among them. My hammock is in their dwelling; I do share food with them (almost every single day I spent among them I gave and received food); I had a fire in my hearth for cooking and keeping warm. And more importantly, the way in which he speaks to me reveals how he is acknowledging, at least to a certain degree, the fact that I am able to listen to and understand them. This does not mean that, as an outsider, I cannot be addressed by the term "ghost speech" ("aka porepi") (see chapters 5, 6, 7). In this specific context he is mainly highlighting some of the good qualities he thinks I have that are "useful" for them. As we will see, it is always necessary to try to understand the specific context in which conversations take place and try to get closer, as much as we can, to the speaker's intentionality in order to fully appreciate the ways he/she

114 Let me recall one more time that this fragment of speech is only a short part of the whole speech that Heshiwarhima, the speaker, delivered. Every new topic that he discusses has its own way of "introduction" and of stressing that he is talking about a different issue (see for example text 11.1)
115 The use of imperatives, and the meaning that the word conveys in our western languages, cannot be always equated with the Yanomami meaning of it, that is, identified mainly with a way of giving orders. In much of the cases, by using this grammatical form, the Yanomami convey by it their willingness to do something; their desire that an act or an activity should be done in a certain way, time or place.
uses particular ways of saying things during a conversation or dialogue. Consequently, he is addressing someone who is able to communicate with him; he is portraying me as closer to the Yanomami views about what it means to be social; and, most important, he treats me as a person capable of such sociality.

What does it mean to be a “nape” (an outsider) from a Yanomami point of view? To answer this, we have to begin by defining, although briefly, what the meaning of the word “Yanomami” is. The word Yanomami is a self-denomination that refers to a person who lives like the Yanomami; someone who speaks their language and behaves like them. Being Yanomami, for them, it is also equated with what they consider it is to be a human being. In opposition to being a Yanomami there are those beings that do not live, do not speak, and do not behave like Yanomami people. These beings, i.e., animals, supernatural beings, ghosts and outsiders “nape,” do not have the qualities and ways of behaving that most Yanomami people have. In his prologue to “Tales of the Yanomami,” Lizot (1984) writes that Yanomami see themselves at the center of the human world: “the central focus of the human universe (...) around which everything must necessarily converge or gravitate” (op.cit.: 2-3). He goes on to say that for “a Yanomami, anything that doesn’t belong to his own sociocultural world is necessary alien, “nape” (...) The words Yanomami and “nape” form both a pair and an opposition” (op.cit.:2-3). The nature of this dualism is better understood by looking at the various semantic fields of the term “nape.”

Outsiders, including “whites,” are called by the term “nape,” a word that also means to be different, to be a stranger. Generally, it refers to someone who

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116 For a similar equation of language, action and humanity see Passes (1998:26), who writing on Pa’ikwené people says that: “Pa’ikwaki, the Pa’ikwené’s own name for their language, possesses immense affective value for its speakers... It was not at all uncommon for people proudly, and quite without prompting, to sing its praises to me. They held it a special, precious, and unique part of their community’s goods, as something to be cherished; and also defended, for many in the present generation fear for the preservation of its integrity in the face of the deep inroads made by Créole, and to a lesser but steadily increasing extent, Portuguese and French. They named Pa’ikwaki as one of the markers and indeed determiners of their identity as Indians on the one hand, and as an exclusive people on the other” (my italics). Passes refers also to the examples of Amuesha people from Peru (Santos-Granero 1991:87-8), and Pemon from Venezuela (Thomas 1982:19) among which similar relation between language and identity can be found.
is not Yanomami such as other indigenous people and other outsiders. The term also refers to those Yanomami who, to some extent, and as a result of different kinds of contacts with the outsiders, come to live and behave like them, and are able to speak or understand their foreign language and obtain their manufactured goods. Furthermore, it is also used to describe the behavior of other Yanomami who are not friendly towards one, those who are hostile and an enemy. The word “nape” is also the root of several verbs, all of which relate to otherness and alterity. Thus, the verb “napeal” means “to know the outsiders;” it refers to various aspects related to the process of being, or becoming, like outsiders; from the more “material” aspects such as clothes and goods, to others related to personal behavior, gestures, language and ways of living. The word “nape” is also the root of the verb “napemou” that means “to hate” or “to behave in an unfriendly and non-hospitable ways.” This verb describes different attitudes and ways of behavior considered to be dangerous, asocial and violent (potentially cannibalistic), such as those people, animals, or supernatural beings that are hostile towards one, such as someone’s enemies, and predators such as animals and other malevolent beings which behave is a predatory/cannibalistic manner. Furthermore, the word “nape” in a syntactic chain specifies that the action has a particular objective; with some verbs of movement the nature of such an objective is an aggression, both in the literal and also in the metaphorical sense. For example the verbs “nape huu” and “nape ithou” mean “to go on a war expedition”, and the verb “nape keo” means “to attack physically.” The semantic field covered by the word “nape” is deeply related to sociocultural domains characterized by difference, danger and the lack of proper communication. They are domains that represent the very antithesis of the sociable, fertile conditions for sociality. As such, they are conceived and placed in the exterior domains beyond the social that pertain to the realm of the outside. Moreover, one can say that the Yanomami/outsider distinction is deeply related to the broader conceptual opposition that holds between inside and outside. These distinctions cross-cut numerous realms of

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117 In the contemporary context of regional politics the Yanomami are identifying other indigenous peoples as being “like Yanomami people” in opposition to the non-indigenous people, such as criollo people and other members of the national society.

118 The form “napeal” is in the progressive present tense: “nape-al”
their everyday life playing within it a salient role and thus requires attention in order to understand the ordering principles informing Yanomami sociality.

Once the Yanomami/napê dichotomy has been noted, we can then perceive that Heshiwarihima, when he describes who is he speaking to, is stressing very important aspects of Yanomami sociality. To a certain degree, given my condition as an outsider, he is referring me as a "social" subject, or, at least, as a less asocial one. He is talking to me by drawing on terms that reveal Yanomami cultural grounds for what is considered to be a social relationship (e.g., living among them, giving and receiving food, relating to them using Yanomami relationship terms, speaking their language...) For him I am a sort of "different outsider." A fact that will become clearer when we examine closer what he tells me.

The day before this speech took place, he had just came back from visiting his friends and relatives in the community of Eshemowe - a neighbouring community located one day's walk up the Orinoco river. There, his brother-in-law, his "real" Yanomami one,¹¹⁹ told him something about me. Heshiwarihima wants to tell me about it:

[Heshiwarihima speaking to me]

5 e naha,
like this/in this way,

6 shori,
brother-in-law,

7 e naha,
Like this/in this way,

8 e naha,
Like this/in this way,

9 e naha,
Like this/in this way,

10 e naha,

¹¹⁹ Yanomami people usually make a distinction between "real" ("yai") and "not real" (e.g., by saying "pê shorimou petao," "he just calls him brother-in-law") in using their relationship terms among them and with outsiders too.
Like this/in this way,

11 **shori**,  
brother-in-law,

12 **e naha**,  
Like this/in this way,

13 **e naha**,  
Like this/in this way,

14 **e naha**,  
Like this/in this way,

15 **shoriwe Eshemowe therini**,  
my brother-in-law from Eshemowe,

16 **shoriwe eshemowe therini**,  
my brother-in-law from Eshemowe,

17 **wa hōrā puhiihe**,  
he seems to appreciate/to love you,

18 **wa hōrā puhiihe**,  
he seems to appreciate/to love you,

19 **wa hōrā puhiihe**,  
he seems to appreciate/to love you,

20 **wa hōrā puhiihe**,  
he seems to appreciate/to love you,

His brother-in-law, says Heshiwarihima repeating several times the words “like this/in this way” (lines 5-10, 12-14) as a way of introducing more emphatically his message, “seems to appreciate/to love me” (lines 17-20). The verb “puhi” can be also rendered as “love.” A Yanomami who wants to express his/her good feelings towards you will tell you overtly “pe puhii,” “I love/appreciate you,” or even they will say in an emphatic way “pe puhii tothiwe,” “I really love/appreciate you.” Heshiwarihima in his speech is expressing these good feelings towards me along with other additional “information.” Let us see:

[Heshiwarihima speaking to me]

21 **waiha e asita ta tere**,  
later on, get the fish line,
22 shori waiha e asita ta tere,
brother-in-law later on, get the fish line,

23 e asita ta tere,
get the fish line,

24 e asita ta nakare,
ask for the fish line,

25 e asita ta nakare,
ask for the fish line,

26 shoriweni wa hōrā puhii,
my brother-in-law seems to appreciate-love you,

27 shoriweni wa hōrā puhii,
my brother-in-law seems to appreciate-love you,

28 shoriweni wa hōrā puhii,
my brother-in-law seems to appreciate-love you,

29 waiha e asita ta nakare,
later on ask for the fish line,

30 yāniki e asita ta tere,
slowly get the fish line,

31 yaheki shi ma re pruka harimou mai,
neither of us are going to become impatient,

Heshiwarihima is telling me to get (e.g., to buy for them as presents) the "fish line", "e asita" (lines 21-25; 29-30). But, he tells me to get the fish line "later on", "waiha" (lines 21, 22, 29); to get the fish line "slowly/not in a hurry", "yaniki" (line 30). He explains to me the reasons why he is not in a hurry by saying that "neither of us are going to become impatient" (line 31). Note that he uses the dual second person personal pronoun "yaheki" (line 31), as he is describing to me his opinion and the one of the other factional leader of the community. They are two elders who have important roles in the social and political life of the community. The reasons for his "patience" to get the fish line, the reasons for them "not going to become impatient" are made clearer in the following words he tells me:

[Heshiwarihima speaking to me]
32 a ta ohotamo!
work!

33 a ta ohotamo!
work!

34 a ta ohotamo shori a ta ohotamo!
work brother-in-law do your work!

35 yāniki a ta ohotamo!
do your work slowly!

36 a ohotamou totihitao!
do your work well/properly!

In these lines he tells me how to do my work. I was living among them and working everyday in the household where I was staying. In this house I had a table where I worked everyday, with the aid of two Yanomami collaborators, on the transcription and translation of Yanomami speeches like the one I am discussing here. However, Heshiwarihima is not only telling me to do my work. He tells me, with more precision, that I should work “slowly” (e.g., with tranquillity) and “well” (lines 35-36). In saying this, he seems to be emphasising the salient importance that the achievement of a peaceful and tranquil state have for doing a good work. With these words, it seems to me as if he were telling me that I should be feeling well in order to work better:

[Heshiwarihima speaking to me]

37 wa ohote waikai ha totihioni,
once you have finished your work completely,

38 wa ohote waikai ha totihioni,
once you have finished your work completely,

39 nakare!
ask!

40 nakare!
ask!

Here the reasons for Heshiwarihima’s patience are made more clear. I have to get (e.g., to purchase) the fish line for them, but I should finish my work
first, and finish it in a proper way (lines 37-38). It is only when I have finished my work that I should go and buy the fish line for them. Now, in his following words he gives me more reasons to get the fish line – along with other presents as we will see later – for them:

[Heshiwarihima speaking to me]

41 wahereki hōri praamatihe!
don't make both of us feel needly! [e.g., suffer because of the lack of something]

42 wahereki hōri praamatihe!
don't make both of us feel needly! [e.g., suffer because of the lack of something]

43 Kapitami ei yaheki re kui,
we are both Captains,

44 wahereki hōri praamatihe!
don't make both of us feel needly! [e.g., suffer because of the lack of something]

45 shoriwe wahereki hōri praamatihe!
my brother-in-law don't make both of us feel needing! [e.g., suffer because of the lack of something]

46 pei ke yahe hi pe wake riya ma re yemaapiyei,
we are going to light a fire to burn the trees,

47 yahe the yashia hititiapou...
when we have finished with the trees...

48 pitha yahe a yashia hititiapotayoma,
when the ground is completely free of trees,

49 pei ke yahe hi ki riya ma re wake yemaiwei,
we are going to light a fire to burn the trees,

50 wahereki hōri praamatihe!
don't make both of us feel needying! [e.g., suffer because of the lack of something]

51 Kapitami yaheki!
we are both Captains!

52 Kapitami ke yaheki!
we are both Captains!

53 wahereki hōri praamatihe,
don't make both of us feel needying! [e.g., because of the lack of something]

54 shori wahereki hōri praamai puhiothe,
brother-in-law don't think about making us to feel needing! [e.g., because of the lack of something]
In these lines we can see the essential linkage Heshiwarihima makes between goods and social relationships. By giving to them the goods they are asking for will make them very happy. And this is an important aspect of Yanomami sociality – to generate happiness, to prevent suffering.\footnote{Cf. Ales (2000).} This is what he conveys by telling me that I should not make them feel needy by not giving them the things that they really need (lines 41-45). In this sense, the expression might well convey the meaning of a certain type suffering, understood here as the discomfort provoked by the unfavourable situation of lacking something. This will become clearer as we follow Heshiwarihima’s argument. Although in these lines it seems that there is not a clear, explicit demand for anything in particular, a careful reading reveals a subtle message: “we both [i.e., Heshiwarihima and the other factional leader in the village] need an axe.” For instance, he tells me about his plans for clearing the forest for their new gardens in the same ways their elders did in the days when they did not have metal axes. This is why he tells me that he is going to burn the trees (see lines 46-49). Furthermore, and as a way to stress their social role as elders (note again the use of the dual personal pronouns forms such as “wahereki”, in lines 41, 42, 43, 45, 50, 53, 54; and “yaheki” in lines 43, 46, 47, 48, 49, 51, 52, that refers to Heshiwarihima and the other factional leader), that implicitly refers to their own great generosity and morality, he says that they are important people using the expression “capitami,” “captains” (line 43, 51, 52). Nowadays, some Yanomami people do refer to factional leaders by the Spanish term “capitan.” In the particular context of this speech, it seems to me that in using the term “kapitami” (i.e., captains) Heshiwarihima is acknowledging the importance “white” people endow Yanomami leaders, that is, Yanomami who are “kapitami.” He knows well that “white” people, in their dealings with Yanomami people, usually feel more comfortable speaking to and arranging things with “leaders.” Following the typical “western political ways” of doing things, outsiders usually think that speaking to “The Leader” will make their dealings with Yanomami people more “official”, easy, or at least less problematic. This is a fact recognition on the part of Heshiwarihima that tells us about Yanomami people’s subtle understanding of the “whites” hierarchical
ways of conceiving and doing things, and also about the highly sophisticated psychology of social relations they put into practice when dealing with us, outsiders.

Moreover, he tells me further about the way we are going to deal with this particular social, and political, situation (e.g., a Yanomami-outsider way of relating). Heshiwarihima explains to me that he thinks and therefore speaks to me in the way he does now:

[Heshiwarihima speaking to me]

55  e naha ke pe nowā riya thaaı,
    we are going to do/to speak like this,

56  yākumı pe nowā thai ohoteo tehe,
    slowly we are going to do/to speak like this,

57  pe nowā riya thaaı
    we are going to speak like this,

58  shori ke pe nowā riya thai,
    my brother-in-law obviously is going to do/to speak like this,

59  wawewe ke ya the riya hipeai,
    I am going to give you [my words] clearly, [e.g., to speak well with you]

60  kamiyeni wawewe ke ya the riya hipeai mi hetuowei ya.....
    I will obviously speak to you clearly in return [e.g., we both are going to speak well to each other]

In telling me the above, Heshiwarihima seems to be expressing a mutual relationship by telling me that we are going to talk properly, to communicate with one another on a long-term basis (the word “yakumi” means after long time) (line 56-60). Thus, in establishing a linkage between the act of speaking together and the act of sharing my goods with them (e.g., assuming my generosity towards them), together with the aforementioned proper and tranquil ways in which I should be carrying out my work, he is portraying what he thinks should be the proper social grounds for the further development of our relationship. These are social grounds where generosity, both in words and goods, becomes a fundamental aspect. In the manner in which he conveys this message, he is telling me the way he conceives of what is for him the proper
ways for developing social relationships with an outsider like me who is living among them. The fact that I am living among them in their communal house ("shapono") is an important aspect that will become more clear as his speech unfolds. On this way of conceiving Yanomami-Outsiders relationships (e.g., in where outsiders’ generosity is stressed in order to prevent a kind of "suffering") he gives me more information as he goes on to tell me that:

[Heshiwarihima speaking to me]

61 Capierani,  
Capierani, [i.e., with Gabriela]

62 marecroini,  
Marecroni, [i.e., with Mari Claude]

63 marecroini,  
Marecroni, [i.e., with Mari Claude]

64 mareacraiani,  
Mareacraini, [i.e., with Mari Claude]

65 wahereki re thapohe naha,  
like they were with both [i.e., the two factional leaders] of us, [lit. like they had us]

In these lines Heshiwarihima refers to two "white" persons who at one time also lived among them. Gabriela and Maria Claude, respectively an anthropologist and a linguist, carried out fieldwork among Heshiwarihima’s people when they were living in a different settlement. These “whites” were very generous with them, so they told me, and this is why he is now telling me that I should be like them and give them presents. Note the way he tells me this by saying “wahereki re thapohe naha”, that I have translated as “like they were with us” (line 65). The verb “thapo-” literally means “to have,” “to possess.” Generally speaking, it can be heard, for instance, to describe a man who is married, a husband who “possesses/has a wife.” In using this expression in his speech, I believe that Heshiwarihima is portraying me as the one who “possesses/has them” and therefore should “look after and care about them,” that is, I should be the provider of goods and presents, and in this way the one caring for/about them. However, we will see that this type of relationship is not only based on the flow of presents (i.e., things) from me to them, as it would
seem to be. Rather this flow of things that Heshiwarihima is explicitly suggesting
will be carried out in a relationship based on mutual and reciprocal actions. To
appreciate this we should move on to see more about the kind of things
Heshiwarihima is telling me about:

[Heshiwarihima speaking to me]

66 shori yāniki,
slowly brother-in-law,

67 tere,
get it,

68 tere,
get it,

69 tere,
get it,

70 yāniki,
slowly,

71 yāniki,
slowly,

72 a ta ohotemou totihitao,
work well/properly,

73 shori a ta ohotemou totihitao,
brother-in-law work well/properly,

74 yāniki,
slowly/not in a hurry,

75 yāniki,
slowly/not in a hurry,

76 yāniki,
slowly/not in a hurry,

77 yāniki,
slowly/not in a hurry,

78 yāniki,
slowly/not in a hurry,

79 yāniki,
slowly/not in a hurry,

80 yāniki totihiwe,
really slowly/not in a hurry,
81 yāniki totihiwe,
really slowly/not in a hurry,

82 shori yāniki totihiwe,
brother-in-law really slowly/not in a hurry,

83 yāniki totihiwe,
really slowly/not in a hurry,

In these lines Heshiwarihima tells me more about the strong linkage between the good conditions for carrying out my work and also the importance of acquiring goods for them. On the one hand, he emphasises that I do not need to get these goods in a hurry (lines 66-71). On the other hand, and following the same idea of patience, so to speak, he also tells me that I have to work well (lines 72-73) and not in a hurry (lines 74-83). He expands more on the proper conditions for carrying out my work when he tells me that:

[Heshiwarihima speaking to me]

84 yaheki a tishikou mai ke the,
neither of us will bother you, [e.g., when you are working]

85 yaheki puhi taope ke the,
we will let you work well, [e.g., we will know how your work is going]

86 yaheki puhi taope ke the,
we will let you work well, [e.g., we will know how is your work is going]

87 yaheki puhi taope ke the,
we will let you work well, [e.g., we will know how is your work is going]

88 yāniki,
slowly/not in a hurry,

89 yāniki,
slowly/not in a hurry,

90 yāniki,
slowly/not in a hurry,

91 pata yaheki ma re kui,
we are both elders,

92 yaheki a re parerouwei,
bothering, [e.g., we both bothering you ]

93 yaheki a re parereaprarouwei,
bothering, [e.g., we both constantly bothering you]
Heshiwarihima explains to me that they neither of the factional leaders will not bother me, “yaheki tishikou mai ke the” (line 84) when I am working, as they both know well how to behave, “yaheki puhi taope ke the” (lines 85-87). To give me even more security that this is the way they will behave, to reassure me that this is going to be true, he tells me that they are elders (e.g. knowledgeable persons), “pata yaheki ma re kui” (line 91). In addition he declares that they will not create disorder around me when I am working (lines92-94). Note the way he tells me this, first describing the fact that they both “create bother” (lines 91-92) and then stating that this (e.g., they disturbing me) is not going to happen (line 94). This way of expressing the need to avoid a bad behaviour is quite frequent in both the elders’ speeches and in everyday verbal interaction. First the person will state something negative (e.g., a negative type of behaviour), to declare later that he/she will not do that, that he/she is not the kind of person who do that . One example will help to see this. One evening Heshiwarihima, who had been the whole day out hunting, could not find a pot in his house and began asking who had taken it without his permission (to take other things without permission is not an unusual thing that happens among Yanomami). When someone answered that the pot was, “by chance” in his house, Heshiwarihima went to get it, crossing the central plaza while saying, in a loud and angry voice so all the people could hear him that:

**Yanomami pe taimi totihiwe!**
Yanomami people know nothing at all!

**matohi pe pe shiro hupehupemou no motatii!**
They are always taking other’s peoples things/personal possessions!

**matohi huparewe ya ma re mai!**
I am not the person who takes other’s peoples things/personal possessions!

This way of speaking, reveals the importance that Yanomami people give to the proper ways of behaving and the extent to which negative attitudes are perceived as highly disruptive to tranquillity and the good conditions for living together. This can be also perceived in the fact that Heshiwarihima is making
his “own particular problem” a public matter, so it is something that all the village must listen to and know.

Going back to Heshiwarihima’s speech, he goes to tell me more things related to the good conditions for living and working together:

[Heshiwarihima speaking to me]

95 pei wa the shiro ohote waikai totihio tehe, when you completely finish your work,

96 pei yaheki a no matohiwemou totihitao yanikio wawetoo totihiope, you will really give to both of us many presents,

97 yaheki a no matohiwemou totihiwemou totihitao wawetoo totihiope, you will really give to both of us many presents,

They are providing me with the proper conditions to carry out my work, so when I have finished it, when I have it completely done (line 95) I should give them presents (lines 96-97). Note the way he express this by using the expression “no matohiwemou”, that is formed by “no,” a verbal classifier which in this context expresses “value”, and a verb made from the substantive “matohi,” which means “possessions/personal belongings,” plus the verbal suffix “we” and the verbal inflection “mo-u” indicating the present progressive that expresses the fact of getting my presents will be a process, at different times, that is, when I am living among them. In other words, he is picturing my generosity towards them not as a single act, but rather as a “generative process,” as a plurality of acts of giving, that will create good feelings and therefore will make them feel happy. It would be incorrect, then, to understand this “demand” as a kind of payment, retribution or exchange for their “services” to me – it is instead a “way of being; a Yanomami way. Heshiwarihima then goes on to emphasise what he has just told me:

121 On this verbal classifier, which is very common in Yanomami language, Lizot (2004:259) writes that it “is perhaps the most abstract and subtle of all morphemes in Yanomami language.” The meaning of “value” when this verbal classifier is related to western things and objects is an easy case to translate it, and does not seem to present any problem, but when related to inmaterial things the translation is more difficult.
[Heshiwarihima speaking to me]

98  e naha,
in this way,

99  e naha,
in this way,

101  e naha,
in this way,

102  e naha ke ya puhi kuu,
I think in this way,

103  e naha ke pe nohi thapou kupe,
we are going to do it in this way,

104  e naha,
in this way,

105  shori e naha,
brother-in-law in this way,

106  shori e naha,
brother-in-law in this way,

107  e naha kamiyeni,
I in this way,

108  e naha pe nohi thapou,
this is the way I think/speak,

109  e naha,
in this way,

110  e naha,
in this way,

111  e naha,
in this way,

112  e naha,
in this way,

113  e naha,
in this way,

114  e naha,
in this way,

After having said this to me, he gives to his broader audience, his coresidents, more reasons to sustain the patience they are having for me:
[Heshiwarihima speaking to his coresidents]

115 *waiha ke wamareki pruka paushimape waiha*,
later on you will adorn yourselves, [e.g., you will get many adornments to make us beautiful]

116 *waiha*,
later on,

117 *waiha*,
later on,

118 *waiha*,
later on,

It will be later that they will get more presents from me. Presents that will serve for adornments and to make them look beautiful, such as colour beads to make necklaces. Note that he is addressing his coresidents just after having made clear to me how things should be done, that is, the proper way in which I should over time behave towards them. He is therefore playing a particular role as mediator in which he is caring about and showing his concern with the well being of all coresidents, me and other villagers. On the one hand he is reminding me that I should be feeling and working well, with tranquillity. Then, when my work is accomplished, and everything is done slowly, not in a hurry, in good conditions, with the product of my work, being one which he is implicitly contributing to by helping me feel well in the process, I should then share and be generous towards them.

In the following lines, *Heshiwarihima* introduces his brother-in-law from *Eshemowe* in his speech again. Let us see the reasons for this:

119 *shoriwe Eshemowe theri*,
my brother-in-law from Eshemowe,

120 *shoriwe Eshemowe theri*,
my brother-in-law from Eshemowe,

121 *mamo riya yeo mi ma re hetuowei*,
is going to see afterwards, [e.g., he also is going to be waiting for your presents]

122 *mamo riya yeo mi ma re hetuowei*,
is going to see afterwards, [e.g., he is also going to be waiting for your presents]

123 *hayökoma e ta nakare,*
ask for/get an axe,

124 *waiha yāniki hayōkoma e ta nakare,*
later on with no hurry ask for an axe,

125 *e ta nakare,*
ask for an axe,

126 *e naha ke a kurayou kuhe,*
he said it like this,

127 *shoriwe Eshemowe theri,*
my brother-in-law from Eshemowe,

128 *e naha ke a kurayou kuhei,*
he said it like this,

129 *ei wawewe,*
he said it clearly,

130 *ei wawewe,*
he said it clearly,

131 *ei ke ya e the ma re fipeare,*
this is what I am saying to you,

132 *ei ke ya e the ma re fipeare,*
this is what I am saying to you,

133 *ei,*
this,

134 *ei,*
this,

135 *ei,*
this,

136 *ei,*
this,

137 *ei,*
this,

138 *ei,*
this,

139 *ei,*
this,

140 *ei ke ya e the ma re fipeare,*
this is what I am saying to you,

141 *ei,*
this,
my brother-in-law said it like this,

like this,

like this,

like this,

like this,

Heshiwarihima’s brother-in-law from Eshemowe (lines 119-120), is waiting and going to see/observe afterwards (“mamo riya yeo”) (121-122). What is he waiting for? The answer comes right after: get/ask for an axe! later on with no hurry get/ask for an axe! get/ask for an axe (lines 123-125). Heshiwarihima’s brother-in-law told him that he also wanted an axe too (see the way the same theme of the need for an axe is posed in lines 46-49). And this is why he is also going to see afterwards, to see if I give him the axe. Heshiwarihima tells me the words his brother-in-law told him (lines 123-125); words that he is now telling me “wawewe”, clearly (lines 129-146). Then, and addressing his coresidents and the other factional leader of the community, who is also his brother-in-law, he tells more about the good things they will be expecting from me:

[Heshiwarihima speaking to his coresidents, to his covillager brother-in-law and to me]

later on you will adorn yourselves, [e.g., you will get many adornments to make you beautiful]

later on,

brother-in-law later on,

later on,
later on....

152 *the ohotamou totihitao totihio tehe,*
when he works well,

153 *the shirō waikiprou totihloheri tehe,*
when he finishes his work,

154 *yaheki a yai re potoowei,*
the one who came with both of us, [e.g., the one who appeared]

155 *kama shoriwe a puhi kāi tao waikiwe,*
my brother-in-law is already looking forward to this,

156 *kama shoriwe a puhi kāi tao waikiwe,*
my brother-in-law is already looking forward to this,

157 *ya puhi kuu kutaeni,*
this is the way I think,

158 *ya puhi kuuu kutaeni,*
this is the way I think,

159 *iro ya siki wai ta kakaama,*
give me a loincloth, [lit. cut me the Howler Monkey’s skin]

160 *iro ya siki wai ta kakapa,*
give me a loincloth, [lit. cut me the Howler Monkey’s skin]

161 *kamiye yaheki shi harirawe re kuwei,*
neither of us are in a hurry,

162 *yamaki mi,*
we are not, [e.g., we are not in a hurry]

163 *yamaki mi,*
we are not, [e.g., we are not in a hurry]

164 *ihī shoriwe Eshemowe theri sho yama the pruka thaai he usukua kure,*
my brother-in-law from Eshemowe and I know it very well,

165 *yama the pruka thai he usukua kure,*
we both know it very well, [e.g., we know it well in the “same” way]

166 *shoriwe Eshemowe theri sho,*
my brother-in-law from Eshemowe,

167 *heriye sho yaheki rii re periowei,*
my brother-in-law we both are living here too, [e.g., my brother-in-law too both of us we are living here]

168 *yahe the....*
we both...

169 *yama the pruka thai he usukua,*
we know it very well, [e.g., we know it well in the "same" way, we both have knowledge of this]

170 yama the thai he pruka usukua,
we both know it very well, [e.g., we know it well in the "same" way]

**Heshiwarighima** is addressing his co-residents, telling them to be patient, as "you will adorn yourselves later" (line 147). Then, he speaks to his co-villager brother-in-law by saying "shori waiha," "brother-in-law, later on" (line 149), and repeats to him that when I have finished my work properly they will get more presents from me (lines 152-154). His other brother-in-law, the one from Eshemowe, is also waiting for this to happen (lines 155-156). Then speaking to me he refers to those things that will make them be beautiful: a loincloth "give me a loincloth"! (lit. Howler's monkey skin) (line 159-160). He also tells me that his brother-in-law from Eshemowe is also being patient. They all know well, know in the same way, "ihi shoriwe Eshemowe theri sho yama the pruka thaai he usukua kure," "my brother-in-law from Eshemowe too we all know it very well" (line 164). He is now speaking about all of them as elders who know the "same thing/same knowledge", who know how to behave well and be patient with me. Note the way he describes this: First he mentions his brother-in-law from Eshemowe (line 166), then he mentions his brother-in-law from his own community, (167). After this, he uses the dual pronoun "yahe" (line 168), but corrects himself, as he is talking about three people, so he uses the first person plural pronoun "yama" (lines 169-170).

So far, Heshiwarighima has been speaking about the importance of being patient with me and at the same time stressing how this patience will benefit them as I will give them presents when I had finished my work. However, for Yanomami people the good conditions for working among them are not divorced from the good conditions for living among them (see also Passes 2000 on the Pa‘ikwené). This will become clear in the following part of his speech:

[Heshiwarighima speaking to his younger brother-in-law. I was living with him and his family, and he also was my collaborator]

171 kōā ke,
wood,

172 āshō ki ta tihetia henarare,  
cut wood early in the morning,

173 heriye,  
my brother-in-law,

174 kōā totihwe āshō ki ta tihetia henarare,  
cut good wood early in the morning,

175 e mohimoutihe,  
don’t be lazy/don’t get tired,

176 mihi heriye ke wa re...  
this my brother-in-law....

177 heriye wa re thaapraraiwei,  
my brother-in-law the one you see/the one who is with you/who is close to you,

178 kōā ke āshō totihitawe ke āshō ta thari,  
cut really good wood,

179 wake totihwe ke āshō ta yaiprari,  
keep the wood for making good fire [e.g., pile up wood for making good fire]

180 a ta pomoma,  
keep him warm,

181 a ta pomoma,  
keep him warm,

182 heriye,  
my brother-in-law,

183 heriye,  
my brother-in-law,

184 a ta pomoma,  
keep him warm,

185 heriye,  
my brother-in-law,

186 a ta pomoma,  
keep him warm,

187 totihwe ke āshō ta thari,  
cut really good wood,

188 totihwe,  
good,

189 totihwe ke āshō ta yaiprari,  
keep/choose good wood,
190 e mohimotihe,  
don't be lazy, 

191 e mohimotihe,  
don't be lazy, 

192 e mohimotihe,  
don't be lazy, 

193 e mohimotihe,  
don't be lazy, 

In these lines of Heshiwarihima's speech there is a new person addressed, a new recipient. Heshiwarihima is speaking to another brother-in-law who lives in the communal house (line 173). This brother-in-law of Heshiwarihima lives in the same household where I live and he is one of my main friends and collaborators. We eat together and he usually gets the wood for the fire of the hearth where we usually cook. For these reasons Heshiwarihima tells him, to "cut wood early in the morning" (lines 171-172). However, it is not any type of wood that he is asking him to cut for me. He refers to "good wood", "kōā ke āšō totihitawe" (lines 174, 178, 179, 187, 189) to make a good fire. When I was living among the Yanomami I liked very much to warm myself close to the fire at night and early in the morning. Heshiwarihima knew this very well, as we both used to talk many evenings close to the fire. Therefore his advice to his brother-in-law: "a ta pomoma", "Keep him warm" (lines 180, 181, 184, 186). Cutting and gathering wood is not the "favourite" work of a young Yanomami, and various times we ran out of wood and we had to ask for some from other neighbours. One day we talked about this in the presence of Heshiwarihima, and this is why he tells him "not to be lazy," "e mohimotihe" (lines 190, 191, 192, 193). Clearly, Heshiwarihima knows the importance that a good fire had for me and the feeling of well being such a fire gave me. In saying this to his brother-in-law he is showing me the way he cares about the comfortable conditions for my living with them. He wants me to work well, but also, and above all, to feel well. The good feelings he is referring to can be better understood when he tells his brother-in-law that by doing what he
says (i.e., cutting wood and looking after my fire) I will call him as my child
"ihiru":

[Heshiwarihima speaking to his younger brother-in-law, my collaborator]

194 wa ihiruape,
he will call you as his child/he will relate to you as his child,

195 wa ihiruape,
he will call you as his child/he will relate to you as his child,

196 totihiitawe ke e ta kuiku,
behave properly/ be good with him,

197 wa ihiruape,
he will call you as his child/he will relate to you as his child,

198 nape ke peni the pe ihiruaihe,
the "whites" call/relate to some Yanomami as their children,

199 nape ke peni the pe ihiruaihe,  
the "whites" call/relate to some Yanomami as their children

200 pe the pe ihiruaihe,
the "whites" call/relate to some Yanomami as their children

201 wa ihirupope,
he will have you as a child,

201 ya ..
I...

202 ware a ma re hiria waikirerei,
he has listened to me already,

203 haiye !
Ah! it is really possible!

204 ihi e naha heriyeni ware a nohi hōrā thapou waikia ta kurani,
this is the way my brother-in-law thinks/speaks about me,

205 ware nohi ma re thaawaiirerei,
he knows me already/he thinks that already,

206 e naha,
like this/in this way,

207 thari ki ta thaa,
get fire wood,

208 shoriwe a thari ki ta thaa,
get fire wood for my brother-in-law,
209 shoriwe a thari ki ta thaa,
get fire wood for my brother-in-law,

210 a ta pomoma,
keep him warm,

211 pe nii yaope,
he will roast food,

Heshiwarihima reminds his brother-in-law that, to be like my child, he has “to be good to me/to behave properly” “totihitawe ke e ta kuiku” (line 196). He knows that some “white” people relate to some Yanomami as if they were their children, and he says so (lines 198-200). A fact that he emphasises when he says that I will acknowledge him (e.g., look after him, care about him) as my child (line 201). Then Heshiwarihima refers to me by saying that I am already listening to him (line 202) and that I know the way he cares about me (lines 204-205). In this manner, Heshiwarihima is describing, and generating, what Gow (1989, 1991) refers to as “realitions of caring” as a way of “making kinship.” In his speech, I have been “included” and referred to as a person to look after, to demand from, to care about, to be fed… (see also Belaunde 1992; Kidd 1999). Similarly, Kidd (1999:9) writes that through the processes of giving and receiving, people make choices about whom to relate to and consciously create these relationships through the sharing of food and other goods. These views can be summarised recalling Overing’s (1989b: 162 ff) insights when she stresses that the creation of sociality (e.g., kinship) is something that must be achieved daily. But let us go back to Heshiwarihima’s words. After having said the above, he repeats the importance of getting good wood to keep me warm and also to cook (lines 206-211). The theme of cooking leads him to ask for the attention of other coresidents. Coreidents who were also living in the same household in which I and my collaborator were living. The other listeners are Heshiwarihima’s sisters. Let us see what he tells them:

[Heshiwarihima speaking to his sisters]

212 yaiye e pe rāā a ta hairaru!
sister wake up already!

213 kama a nii yao mohitou tehe,
when he is not in the mood for roasting his food,
214 ripi e the wai ta hihea piyekihe!
give him cooked food in turn/then,

215 ripi e the wai ta hihea piyekihe!
give him cooked food in turn/then!

216 ripi e the wai ta hihea piyekihe!
give him cooked food in turn/then!

217 pema a ta totihipo,
let us make him feel well,

218 pema a ta totihipo,
let us make him feel well,

219 shoriwe pema a ta totihipo,
let us make my brother-in-law feel well,

Heshiwarihima tells his two sisters to look after me too. He knew I really enjoyed eating roasted bananas and manioc, and also that I liked learning how to roast it in my own fire. He tells them that when I was not in the mood for cooking they should give me food already roasted/cooked (lines 214-216). Eating well and sharing food is also another important, fundamental condition for feeling well, and this is what he wants: “shoriwe pema a ta totihipo”, “let us make my brother-in-law feel well” (line 217-219). I believe that Heshiwarihima knows that providing me with the conditions for feeling well and happy was not going to be an isolated thing only (e.g., the happiness of an outsider who lives among them temporarily). If I work well, if I eat well and if I feel well, he knows also that I will be more generous with them, I will make them feel well too. The feeling of well being of a particular, concrete coresident is a relational matter, and thus has further and positive implications in the way other villagers feel too. This can be perceived by what he next tells to his sisters:

[Heshiwarihima speaking to his sisters]

220 waiha tope ke ki maōmamai kōowe,
later on we will get more beads again,

221 waiha tope wama e ki harepope,
later on we will be wearing beads,

222 waiha wama e ki hareape waiha,
later on you will hang beads in your necks,

223 waiha,
later on,

224  *waiha*,
later on,

225  *waiha*,
later on,

226  *waiha*,
later on,

227  *waiha wama e ki hareai kōōpe waiha*,
later on you will be wearing beads again later on,

228  *ke ki teakiriowe Yacucho hami*,
he is going to get the beads in Puerto Ayacucho, [lit. He will get it down in “Yacucho”]

229  *ke ki teakiriowe*,
he is going to get the beads in Puerto Ayacucho,

230  *ke ki teakiriowe*,
he is going to get the beads in Puerto Ayacucho,

231  *waiha ke wama e ki hareai kōōpe*,
later on you will be wearing beads again later on,

“Later on you will get more beads again,” says *Heshiwarihima* to his sisters. This is his way of recalling to her sisters that if I feel well and comfortable I will be generous again with them (when I arrived at the village I had gave “mostacilla” to them) (lines 220-222, 231). However this will be later on (lines 223-227), when I can get the beads in Puerto Ayacucho (line 228-231). After having said this, Heshiwarihima goes back to the topic of culinary activities:

*[Heshiwarihima speaking to his sisters]*

232  *kama shoriweni nii yaa.....*
roast the food (e.g., bananas) for my brother-in-law...

233  *nii yao*,
roast the food,

234  *nii yao*,
roast the food,

235  *nii yao*,
roast the food,
you, both my sisters, think/remember....

c. think/remember this,

c. think/remember this,

don't roast the food of my brother-in-law,

Yánomámi,

Yánomámi people seem to be lazy,

he,

Let him always cook the food of the "whites",

we don't care about him/look after him properly,

we don't care about him/look after him properly,

he was roasting his own food,

he was roasting his own food,

do that in this way,

do that in this way,

don't let him burn his fingers,
when you burn your fingers....

[heei, hiiii.... [e.g., is painful, mimicking a cry of pain...]

you women should do that,

don't make my brother-in-law burn his fingers,

Heshiwarihima reminds his sisters that they should roast the food for me (lines 232-235). He also tells them to remember to be "attentive" and "hospitable" with me (lines 236-238), and then not let me roast my own food (line 239). However, things are not all the time this way and he complains by saying first that Yanomami people seem to be lazy... (line 240-241), and then that tend to me/"have" me in a bad way (lines 244-245). He provides an example of this: "he was roasting his own food" he says (lines 246-247). And then suggests they give me food so that I can enjoy myself (lines 249-252). In saying this, Heshiwarihima is not only refering to his sisters' generosity, that is, refering to the fact of sharing food with me. He also emphasises what can be called generosity of spirit. I explain this. One day I burnt my fingers when roasting bananas in the fire, and he is remembering this event when he tells his sisters "don't let him burn his fingers" (line 253). As women, used everyday cooking with fire, they know very well how it is when one burns one's fingers roasting bananas, for example, so they have to prevent me from burning my fingers again (e.g., prevent me from suffering again) (lines 254-257). However, cooking is not only an activity of women, and he then addresses his brother-in-law, my friend and collaborator:

[Heshiwarihima speaking to his younger brother-in-law, my collaborator]

that one who is being cared for as a child,

roast the food,

roast the food,
261 wa re ihirupou shi topraoweini nii ta yapra,
you who are like his child roast the food,

262 nii ta yapra shoriwe,
roast the food,

263 nii ta yapra,
roast the food,

264 wa nii yapraai tehe ya e puhi toprarotii ta ayao,
if you roast the food I am going to be happy,

265 ya e puhi ta topraroti,
I am going to be happy,

266 nii ta yapra,
roast the food,

267 nii ta yapra,
roast the food,

268 kui...?
I don't know [e.g. I don't know if you will do it/ if you have listened well to my advice]

In these final words, Heshiwarihima speaks again about the care that his young brother-in-law should show towards me (lines 259-263, 266-267). In addition, and most importantly, he recalls that if he does that, e.g., roasts food for me, cares about me, I will not be the only person who is going to feel well and happy. If he sees this happening, he also is going to feel happy (lines 264-265). We have here another example of the way the feeling of well being of a villager generates good feelings in others. However, things are not always as they should, and Heshiwarihima ends this part of the speech in a rather esceptic way by saying that he does not know, “kui...”, (line 268). He does not know whether either his young brother-in-law or his two sisters will follow his good advice.

Concluding remarks

It was not until I had transcribed his words and thought in depth about them that I realised the salient importance that this message, addressed specifically to me, conveyed. On the whole the message is one about the incorporation of an outsider into the Yanomami world of the social, which is
embodied in the everyday convivial relations of community life. For the Yanomami, as we saw earlier, outsiders are examples of a kind of sub-humanity: their asocial and amoral ways of being demonstrate that they are incapable of sociality until transformations prove otherwise (see Overing and Passes 2000:6). Heshiwarihima’s words clearly refer, both metaphorically and literally, to this transformative and generative process of incorporation. Speaking about my incorporation into their everyday community life he has been stressing issues that are, for him, important for the creation of proper sociality to allow for the ideal of living well together to be achieved. His speech displays what I have called the fertility of words. By referring to the fecund side of words I want to emphasise the extent to which Yanomami people conceive of good and proper verbal communication as a nurturant process in the everyday creation and maintenance of sociality. This is why in order to be social and engage in the community life properly, I should be, first and foremost, able to listen to him.

However, Yanomami people speak in a different manner with outsiders and about them. Let us see this.

11.2 Other ways of speaking to outsiders

Since the 1992 Law of “Politico-Territorial Division” of the Amazon State, the relationships between some Yanomami with regional and national politicians are generating important modifications of varying kinds that are infiltrating into the Yanomami’s socio-political life. The increasing influences of external agents of change, with the values they import forthcoming from the Western nation-state’s notions with regard to laws, rules, status, role and property, can become elements of clear destabilization that are anathema to the Yanomami social and political values we have seen in previous chapters. In the Upper Orinoco the Yanomami communities with regular contacts with the representatives of the Venezuelan government a new kind of leadership is increasingly arising that generates a complex interplay between the two radically different ways of conceiving and conducting politics - and of the social. Such new styles of leadership are taking on cultural significance both within their communities and
in the outside world. Assuming the role of "inter-cultural mediators" in the relations with the outside world, these new leaders are playing a significant political role (e.g., mediators and "spokesmen" in a number of meetings with outsiders - politicians, governmental agents and others-, see texts below) and becoming more and more engaged in the expanded sociopolitical scenario of their contemporary life. This young leaders are receiving formal recognition by outsiders who call them "capitanes" (captains-chiefs). Although playing an important role in the mediation of the inter-group conflicts, and therefore becoming actors of salient relevance for the prevention of such conflicts, an increasing number of these new leaders are "being created" and "maintained" by the nation state - a fact that has wider connotations. Thus, it is mainly through them that the various agents of the government and politicians are creating their own (political and moral) "order:" they appoint "leaders" where leaders already exist, i.e., those who have the knowledge to teach the moral values of the society, but who do not accommodate to the new laws and rules. This imported political order offers the Yanomami a new type of "autonomy" (e.g., tools, food, money, jobs), however, and at the same time, it might also be creating the circumstances for its destruction.¹²² Let us see two examples of the role of these leaders as mediators and translators in a political meeting.

11.2.1 Speaking about "napē" to the elders

In the following text, I will provide a fragment of a discourse that took place in the Yanomami village of Mahekoto. Alfredo, a Yanomami leader in his late thirties, "translates" and thus shows his own interpretation of the speech that a regional politician - in an electoral campaign - made just before. He began his "translation" in this way:

text 11.2

1 \textit{ihi thē nowā ha pēma a yimika a nohipi thapoma.}  
Their words have made us informed.

2 \textit{ai huya pēni napē pēma pē ā ihete re thatil}

¹²² For a view of the present day reality see Colchester (1995); Carrera (1997); Lizot (1999 a); Kelly (2003).
The young people who already know the Spanish language

3 a wā kāi hiriapatayomahe.
have heard them before everywhere.

4 ihi thè nowà ha pata wamaki rē kui wamakini
So, for the elders

5 wama āwā ihete hiriai rē maōhe
who do not understand the language,

6 yanomami yani ihi tēhē ya wāno wēyei a rē kuhe naha, Roberto a rē kui
I am now going to explain in Yanomami what Roberto has just said.

7 ihi thè nowà ha ai pémakini péma a thai waikiwē Roberto pirisi ha a peria,
Some of us know Roberto already; he lives in La Esmeralda.

8 maestro a ohotamoma ihiru pé ihami
He was working with the children as a teacher.

9 a ma rē kuu wawētoohe kama
He has told us

10 kahe wamaki yimika hamí āwā riya ha hiriamoni a kuma,
that he came to communicate to you the news from the outside

11 ihi thè nowà ha Roberto a rē kui hawē candidato a kua
So, Roberto is a candidate.

12 ihi thè nowà ha candidato wēti thè ha a kua ?
But what does candidate mean?

13 alcalde123 a niya rē roo piyōoweoi,
The one who is going to be Mayor [lit. the one who is going to sit next]

14 ihi mihi rē a,
That’s what he is

15 ihi tēhē a mimou piyēkōō,
So, he is observing us.

16 ihi thè nowà ha eyeha a namí huu parioma,
Then, He thinks he has been here before.

17 ihi thè nowà ha péma a thai,
He is getting to know us.

18 ihi tēhē ora hamí pēni yānomāmi ai pēni a thaimihe,
He has not met the other Yanomami who live up the river.

19 ihi thè nowà ha hei tēhē a mimou,
Now, he is observing.

123 Spanish words are underlined.
This speech represents a typical example of a contemporary encounter between Yanomami and outsiders. This discourse encapsulates significant aspects of the changes and transformations taking place in the Upper Orinoco in the ways the Yanomami relate to the outsiders and their world. By looking at the ways the speech given by the politician is translated by Alfredo, a Yanomami, to other Yanomami we can perceive the complex interplay between the different languages and their respective social philosophies. This will provide an example of the dynamics of the process of cultural translation and of the salient role such translation plays in the ways contemporary discourse among the Yanomami is generated.

First of all, an important feature of the ways in which communication between Yanomami and outsiders is carried out has to be elaborated. As Alfredo’s opening words make clear, there are some young Yanomami “ai huya peni” who already understand the Spanish language, who have heard the news before (lines 2-3). In saying this, Alfredo is highlighting a very important difference that exists in the audience. Thus, his following words are mainly addressed to a specific group within the audience, the elders, “pata wamaki re kui wamakini,” to whom he openly says, making even more explicit the language and cultural gap, “do not understand the language” (lines 4-5).
Consequently he is going to explain to the older people in Yanomami language, a fact that he expresses by saying that he is Yanomami: “yanomami yani” (line 6). He is going to tell them what the politician has just said. And this is an important difference that should be carefully considered in order to understand not only his translation, but the ways in which his speech is carried out and performed.

Alfredo’s translation illustrates the particular perspective of a Yanomami who knows both the Spanish language and the outsiders quite well. But this speech is one in which he is explaining an outsider’s speech to his elders, and consequently, he is being accommodating to them. He knows the ways in which his elders’ understand things and their styles of reasoning as well, as he was raised and socialized among them. Both the form and content of this discourse is of marked importance as Alfredo is deeply involved in a complex and interesting translation where he is creating a bridge between completely different world views. This is a process of cultural translation that seems to make a cultural elaboration of two languages based upon totally different premises. On the one hand the politician talk, on the other a Yanomami explaining to the elders this talk. Alfredo gives his translation of the politician speech from his own particular Yanomami perspective. Although Alfredo is portraying himself as someone who knows the “white’s” ways, in clear contrast with the Yanomami “who do not understand the outsiders language,” he is providing an example of what it seems to me could be a process close to what Feyerabend defines as translation of incommensurable world views. Overing (1987) points out how Feyerabend (1975: chapter 17) “by defining incommensurability as two world views based upon totally different universal premises” comes closer to an “anthropological road,” and moves away from a discussion of incommensurability “in terms of a specific cognitive process and a specific human nature, i.e., the Western one.” In her discussion she uses the term incommensurability referring “to difference in metaphysical ideas” and goes on to argue how in the exploration of “styles of reasoning,” in the “successful description of alternative worlds,” the anthropological focus is rightly upon “products of the mind,” and not mind *per se.* Overing’s analysis addresses in this way one of the main problems when translating different world
views, that is, "incommensurability." She goes on to say how "the problem of incommensurability that interests Feyerabend in anthropology is the requirement that "alien" ontologies... must be expressed by the anthropologist in his own language" and how he "sees the communication of systems or statements incommensurable to our own (or to the one at hand, e.g., the language of a particular theory) as a challenge and as an art of the possible" (op.cit.: 71-72). To my view, such a task is also that of facing Alfredo. He is not only translating the politician's speech for his elders, but he is also trying to make sense of a speech that, from the perspective of his Yanomami audience (see lines 4-6), is the speech of an alien world. And we should not forget that for this audience the way the politician speaks is that of "ghost speech" (see chapters 5,6,7).

For Alfredo this is a process of cultural translation that demands a special effort of interpretative reflection. For instance, his way of describing and explaining what a candidate is and the purpose of his presence among them casts an important light upon what he thinks the elders will perceive as salient and relevant. Alfredo is then translating the politician words, values and attitudes into a cultural specific Yanomami way of understanding.

For instance, when he asks rhetorically, "What does it mean to be a candidate," his answer is: the one "who is going to sit next," "a niya re roo piyeowei," (lines 12-13). The meaning of this expression cannot be properly understood without knowing more details of the cultural framework in which the word is grounded. The verb "roo" means "to sit," "to be seated," "to be," "to exist," "to gather together." This expression can be found in everyday language conveying various meanings within different semantic domains: In describing the moon in the sky, as a way of talking about the time when talking about future happenings; in the act of visiting and sitting with people within the village; on the menstruating women who are sitting close to their hammocks, their legs extended on the ground in a very characteristic way. Furthermore, and interestingly enough, the two synonyms offered by Lizot,\(^{124}\) namely "to visit" and

\(^{124}\) See Lizot (2004:370)
“house,” “hama” and “yahi,” can be better understood by the way the Yanomami frequently used this verb, “to sit,” when talking to me and other outsiders. As one passes by a Yanomami hearth, a common expression would be:

**heyeha a ta roiku,**
sit down right here

**pemaki a ta wayo**
let us engage talk

In this way they are overtly expressing their willingness to talk to you, which can also be understood as a cultural expression of the context in which a social relation can be enacted and established. Thus, the way Alfredo describes the political role of major is by identifying it, both metaphorically and literally, with a particular place and a social relation. He refers to the place where the major works, La Esmeralda. In the particular context of outsider’s politics in the Upper Orinoco, referring to “La Esmeralda” is synonymous with the kind of place where the Yanomami usually go to visit and to talk with outsiders in order to ask for and purchase different goods. Moreover, Alfredo is describing in this way the particular outsider’s governmental-style office worker way of being (quite peculiar for the Yanomami) where the person in charge is easily recognised by having the biggest chair in the office.

After telling the people know who the politician is in relation to themselves, Alfredo goes on to speak about the politician’s visit. The manner in which he describes what the politician has been doing reveals the integral role that the senses play for the Yanomami when talking about personal experiences and social events. For instance, Alfredo describes the politician’s activities during his campaign by using verbs and expressions that directly refer to the senses such as “hearing,” “listening,” “seeing,” and “observing” (lines10, 15,19,24,25,26). We have seen already the salient importance Yanomami people concede to the world of the senses and expressions of it when talking and discussing social matters. If we further consider the meaning of some of these expressions, we can better appreciate this.
For instance, he states that the politician has come “to let them know”, or “to communicate to them the news from the outside”, “awa riya ha hiriamoni”, so that they can hear it with “their own ears,” “kahe wamaki yimika hamí” (line 10). In this way he is stressing how the communication and the relationship between them, the politician and the Yanomami, is closer and more intimate than the relationships with other regional politicians. This is an important detail taking into consideration both the particular context of the political campaign, of which this discourse is part. There had been much gossip and false information arriving at Platanal, so the fact that the politician is actually there, in front of them is an important fact that Alfredo is stressing. Moreover, this meeting represents a clear contrast to the usual way in which news and messages from outsiders arrive at Yanomami communities. In clear contrast to other politicians, he -the politician- is communicating to the people in their presence, face to face, and not through a messenger, or through letters or radio. Consequently he is setting and stressing the grounds for what is understood by his audience to be essential for establishing a proper, and more intimate and trustful social relationship.

The role of sight is also emphasised by Alfredo. Including himself, he stresses that “we are seeing Roberto with our own eyes,” “kamiye pei pemaki mamoni pema a tapra” (line 25). He says this after having said that this politician is “seeing them” (line 24) as well, and interestingly enough, just before remarking that this outsider they are all just seeing is precisely the one who wants to be Major (line 26). In other words he stresses the role of sight/visibility in judging that person’s intentionality, in this case that he wants to be a major.

The importance that sight and visibility has as an instrument of knowledge has been stressed by Kulick (1992:234-47) in writing about the Gapun people of New Guinea. He writes:

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125 It has to be said that Alfredo is actively supporting Roberto and talking in a positive way about him, the politician, as they are both in the same political party.
126 The Yanomami are becoming used to receiving the news from the outside in manifold ways, from letters to radios, to word of mouth.
“...everyone in Gapun is aware that appearances can be misleading or deceptive, villagers rely heavily on the observation of people’s actions when they evaluate their thoughts and intentions. Whereas language —what people say— is considered to “hide” things, seeing — the observation of what people do— reveals. The importance of seeing is a recurring theme in the villagers’ practices of knowledge...[Gapuners have an understanding] that in “seeing” something a great deal about it becomes accessible to knowledge and evaluation” (Kulick 1992:239-40).

As for the Gapuners described by Kulick, among the Yanomami too, the emphasis on the role of the senses - the relevance of seeing with one’s own eyes and hearing with one’s own ears – reveals the importance of the senses as privileged channels and the main instruments of receiving knowledge. The senses play a crucial role when evaluating social relationships as they are considered to provide the best basis for evaluation of a persons thoughts, feelings and intentions. In this particular context it could seem quite obvious that the members of the audience are seeing and hearing the politician with their own eyes and ears. Nevertheless, the politician is an outsider who does not speak Yanomami and, interestingly enough, did not give presents to them. This lack of generosity of this particular outsider (a very negative thing among Yanomami people as we saw in preceding chapters) is perhaps being overlooked through by Alfredo’s emphasis upon his presence among them, on his interest in seeing the people and hearing what they have to say. Consequently, Alfredo, wanting to convey a favourable and good image of the politician, a more sociable one, is appealing to the senses as a way to stress his particular social and moral qualities.

In the next section I will present another speech that illustrates a different way of translating the politician speech.

11.2.2 Speaking about “napê” to the youngsters

See chapters 2 and 3 for a description of the importance that the role of the senses play in mythic narrations.

For a similar stress in the ways knowledge and the social are related to the domain of the senses among indigenous peoples in New Guinea see Kulick (1992 pp: 234-247). For Amazonia see also Passes (1998) and Rosengren (1998).
After Alfredo's speech, Jose Siripino, a factional leader of his community, Koparimakeope, addressed words to the same audience. He is a prominent figure and mediator between the Yanomami and the outsiders within the intercultural context of the Upper Orinoco. Like Alfredo, he is involved in the same political party as that of the politician who gave the speech was:

text 11.3

1  (.....) mihi hamí,  
   with that,  

2  esto partido a hamí,  
   this party,  

3  kamiyê yahêki rii postulandomai,  
   the party which we are going to be part of,  

4  kamiyê ya rii,  
   I,  

5  Postura no a,  
   I am included,  

6  y Alfredo a rii kua,  
   and Alfredo is also,  

7  e naha yahêki kua,  
   as we both are,  

8  yahêki kua thê pé nowâni,  
   and because of that we both are, [in the party]  

9  huya wamaki rë kui,  
   you, young people,  

10 wârô pata wamaki rë kui,  
   you, elders,  

11 prewê unidos,  
   all together,  

12 napê kama pé rë kuwei naha,  
   as the outsiders say,  

13 unidos pêmaki kuu ha thê topraar  
   it is better if we are all together,  

14 hay mucho partidos pé á hai,  
   there are a lot of [political] parties that are talked about,
15 *prewë a kuu waikirayoma,*
he has mentioned many already,

16 **COPEYANOS esto..., V republica...**
COPEYANOS esto..., V republica... [i.e., political parties of Venezuela]

17 *prewë napë pë partido,*
there are many outsider political parties,

18 *kama pë rë kuuwei naha,*
as they [outsiders] say,

19 **ese es partido tradicional,**
that is the “traditional party,”

20 *kamiyë yanomami pëmaki dividiendomaihe,*
they [outsider parties] are dividing us Yanomami,

21 **partido tradicional pëni,**
with the traditional parties,

22 *miha yo estoy bien entendido kamiyë ya rë kui,*
I know very well about that,

23 **weti thë ha pëmaki dividiendomai he parohowëhe?**
Why they are dividing us so much?

24 *pëmaki Organizandomoumai topramai mohihe ha,*
they don’t want to help us organise, they are too lazy to do that,

25 **tantos anos kama pëni pëmaki,**
It’s been so many years,

26 *kama pë rë kuuwei naha,*
As they say,

27 *pëmaki pisoteandomou shi topraa totitawëhe ha,*
because they are always stepping all over us,

28 *mihi pehi o waiha kamiyë pëmakini,*
with that, or then....,

29 *kama pë rë kuuwei naha,*
as they say,

30 *kamiyë pëmaki ihirupi iha,*
with our children,

31 **pëma... pëma thë hirai Futuro,**
we are going to teach them in the future,

32 *waiha enaha,*
thus, later on,
33 kamiyé pêmaki rê kui pêmaki rê gobernandomouhe waiha kamiyé pêmaki....
With the ones that have governed us later we.....

34 weti thè ha falta preparar pêmaki rê kuweí,
we say that we are not yet well prepared,

35 y weti thè ha yanomami ai pêmaki gobernandomo,
and why are other Yanomami in the government,

36 kamiyé pêmakini,
with us,

37 o Alcalde iha pêma thè thèpou,
or as with the Mayor we have,

38 Estudiandomou taô,
he knows how to study,

39 y llega bachillerato,
and receives a degree,

40 o a Universidad a ha e waroo,
or he will go to university,

41 medico a riya kuprou,
he will be a doctor,

42 concejales ani a riya thapramai,
this is what the advisors are going to do,

43 Alcalde iha a kuu ha,
if the mayor says,

44 ahe yâmi wa pé shimai tahiao mai,
do not send only your people,

45 kamiyé yanomami yamaki kâi preparaopê a kuu,
we Yanomami will be well prepared,

46 a ta shima!
send them !

47 plata a ta hiyo,
give me money!

48 pêmaki kuu ha,
That is what we say,

49 mihi pehi pêmaki concejal mou mi hetuwê,
Because of that we are going to be like the advisors now.
In this speech, Jose Siripino is not making a translation in the strict sense of the word. Although in close relation to the politician's speech, now Jose Siripino is expressing his own opinions to the audience. This is another example of how communication between outsiders and Yanomami is conducted.

Siripino, as Alfredo did in his speech, is making the important distinction between youngsters and elders (see lines 9-10). His speech shows a different mode in which linguistic accommodation can be carried out in order to better communicate. In clear contrast with Alfredo's speech, however, Siripino chooses a different kind of linguistic accommodation, as he is addressing his words to the youngsters. This can be clearly noted in his speech, for instance, in his constant use of both Spanish words and the use of a mixture of Spanish and Yanomami in the same word. He is speaking in the same context as Alfredo (see text 11.2) with the same audience, and dealing with similar topics. However, we have two completely different kinds of discourses and almost two different languages as they are directed to audiences differently acquainted with the world of the "whites" and thus with different understandings of them.

The reason that he is addressing the youngsters can be better understood if we examine the message he is conveying. It is a message that reveals the salient importance they concede to the changes and transformations taking place in their lives, it encapsulates the ways in which they perceive their active engagement with the outside world. Siripino is choosing the topics that he is sure will suit his particular audience. He knows very well their general mood and opinions about these subjects and consequently he tries to accommodate to them. For instance he talks about the necessities and possibilities for getting new jobs and training (see lines 37-43). His discourse is a vivid reflection of how the Yanomami think about and relate to the outsiders.

Presenting Spanish words and ideas to other Yanomami by saying "as the outsiders say," “napê kama pê rê kuwei naha” (line 12), or “as he [the

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129 In Siripinos' speech Spanish words and the mixture of Spanish and Yanomami are underlined.
outsider] says, “kama pē rē kuwei na ha” (lines 18, 26, 29) Siripino is reproducing, in a sense, the discourse of outsider and embellishing his own words with theirs. In the Upper Orinoco this is a very common and recurrent rhetorical device. It is frequently used in the intercultural context by the Yanomami who understand some Spanish. This way of speaking that mixes Yanomami and outsiders' languages demonstrate their knowledge of such expressions and the ideas they convey. Beyond a willingness to learn and to become familiar with outsiders' expressions or ways of speaking, the use of these outsiders' terms reveals the very specific words and concepts that are considered significant, for one reason or another, by the speaker, e.g., the terms that refer to possible jobs and occupations. And this is something that tells us more than merely a proficiency in the outsiders' language, as it also reveals Yanomami people's willingness to engage with the outsiders' world.

For example, of particular importance is the following. In addressing the topic of 'their children' and the 'future' (lines 30-32) Siripino talks either by using a combination of Spanish and Yanomami words in the same sentence or in another mixture that adds specific Yanomami morphemes and suffixes to Spanish nouns, verbs and adverbs. In this way, he talks about 'lack of preparation' (line 34), 'studying' (line 38), 'receiving a degree' (line 39), 'getting into the university' (line 40), 'becoming a doctor' (line 41). And he relates all of these steps to a particular way that a better future, following the outsiders' path, as the politician has said to them, can be understood and better achieved. His message seems clear. To deal with the outsiders and their world, requires us to be well trained and prepared (line 45).

Toward the end of his speech he summarises by relating these ideas about the future to his new political role as adviser (line 49), a role that is portrayed as the channel through which to generate the possibility to study and achieve a better future. To do this the role of new Yanomami “politicians” is understood as key to such a particular mediation process. Their chore is to

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130 As Kulick (1992: 74) has pointed out talking about the use of different languages by the Gapun villagers of New Guinea, "communication is richly varied and in a state of continual flux between different speakers and different languages."
develop ways for communicating to the outsiders in their ways. Here, as I pointed out before, to speak properly is also culturally understood and related to generosity. Knowing how to speak properly and strong, in this case with the outsiders, is the means through which way Siripino should be able to acquire all the above (training, etc...). He knows that this is important to stress, and says, as if addressing the major directly, as if showing a vivid example of how he should act in that specific situation: “send them” [their children to study] (line 46), “give me money” [to send them, to pay the expenses] (line 47). This is how he describes and explains the role of the “Yanomami politicians.” “Because of that”, he says, “we are going to be advisors now” (line 49). This type of language of demand, can be compared with what McCallum (1990) calls “idioms of Power” when describing the way contemporary Cashinahua leaders speak about their functions as leaders. She writes (1990:420-1):

“In talking to me he often used ... Portuguese “idioms of power”, knowing full well the meaning that I (a person classified, along with the Cariu, as Nawa [outsider, “white”]) would ascribe to them. He was interested in convincing me that his position corresponded to the images of power that he had conjured up. But he was so fascinated by the idea that at times he gave the impression of being convinced of his assertions himself... His fascination with the idea of coercive power, then, should also be seen in the light of this sense of his own lack of authority. From this perspective, he is using the terminology creatively, looking forward to a time when things will be different. His use of these idioms of power testifies to his personal vision of the community’s future, and to his own personal and complex ambitions.”

In the case of Siripino, the “idiom of power” he uses, seem to reflect a combination of both, the own ways of speaking of the “whites” and the strong talk the Yanomami usually use when talking about how to get the best of outsider goods.

Concluding remarks

In these last two texts I have explored, very briefly, the ways the contemporary discourse of the Yanomami is bound up with the changing socio-political context of the Upper Orinoco. Yanomami contemporary discourse arises from an ongoing and highly dynamic process of “cultural translation” that
conveys how Yanomami people perceive, reflect upon and incorporate or reject, outsiders and their politics. These texts illustrate the manners in which cultural translations imply a complex interplay not only between different languages but also between distinct social and political philosophies. Through their contacts and involvement with politicians Yanomami people are generating a new political discourse that results, as I have tried to illustrate, from a mixture between the "language of the politicians" and the Yanomai language. In this manner, the political hierarchy and power of the Nation-State, with all its laws, rules, regulations and elections, is becoming more and more enmeshed in the Yanomami everyday social concerns.

I believe that the shift underway in the politics and poetics of the contemporary Yanomami discourse reflects the ways in which new political values from the outside are being incorporated into it. A process of incorporation that shows, if carefully examined, the complex interplay and juxtaposition of two different rhetorics as the change in both what is being communicated and to whom it is communicated deeply affects the manner in which they communicate. Looking at the various ways the Yanomami use their language to communicate with outsiders (see text 11.1) and to talk about them (11.2, 11.3) in a number of different contexts (i.e., with an outsider who lives among them and with politicians in political campaign) I have tried to illustrate the differences in the way they use language and therefore their different ways of enacting, or portraying, sociality by means of this language.
CONCLUSIONS

In my discussions of the myth of the origin of night (chapters 1, 2, 3, 4), I was able to look at a number of relationships and cultural associations between different domains of Yanomami life. In so doing, we have been lead into an "anthropology of the senses." For instance, the extent to which the pleasures that the first night brought to the Yanomami have to be understood in light of the Yanomami's own conceptions of the senses that, as I have shown, intrinsically links "the physical" and "the social." For the Yanomami, sensuality, understood here in the broader sense of its meaning, is far from pertaining to the body alone: it cannot be detached either from their own understanding of moral behaviour or their notions of proper sociality. By means of a "sensual idiom" embedded within particular Yanomami notions of time (the daily and seasonal, the biological and human periodicities) and space (inside and outside), I have been able to illustrate the manner in which the myth narrator unfolds a subtle and complex set of relationships that includes such domains as "verbal communication," "sex," "fertility," "dreams," "production," "love," "care." On the whole, it can be said that the pleasures of the first night - those feelings of well-being the Yanomami experienced as a result of a long and proper night - have led us, when framing them within a wider Yanomami perspective, to appreciate fundamental associations between apparently different domains, for instance, the link between the origins of modes of verbal communication (e.g., elders' speech, Ceremonial dialogue) and different expressions of fertility (e.g., the production of people and the generation of food). Such associations teach us to think about the fertile side of Yanomami language.

The idea of the fecundity of Yanomami words can be further understood by the fundamental association, epitomised by the character of Poreawö, that holds between the lack of community, the lack of proper communication and the lack of life (Chapters 5, 6, 7). To my mind, such linkage seems to suggest the extent to which language - understood here in the positive form of proper speech, that very thing that the ghost lacks- is conceived of by the Yanomami
as synonymous to living a human sort of life. This is a particular sort of life that for the Yanomami is epitomised by a life of community; it is a social life dependent upon proper sociality, one that leads to a good conviviality; it is a life that has to be constantly made social and therefore created and maintained dialogically through proper ways of communication (see for instance Overing and Passes eds. 2000: 1-30; see also Passes 2000:97-113). As the character of the ghost makes clear, this type of life, a human one, is not possible in conjunction with his mean spiritedness, asocial behaviour and ugly speech. I recall again Overing’s (1989:159) insights: “behaviour that was beautifully controlled was understood to be conducive of community, while ugly excess was not.” Aesthetic judgments made by Yanomami of Poreawe’s ways of speaking were, as well, overt expressions of moral and political value. What is more, considering the fertility of words and the associations between the ghost and death, I am even tempted to go so far as to suggest that for a Yanomami to speak is synonymous with being alive – as a human social being.

Let me further explain this idea.

In chapters 1, 2, 3, and 4, I have explored the ways in which the myth of the origin of the night provided the conditions for the development of salient modes of verbal communication. In particular, I have described the ways in which the myth is related to elders’ speech, a type of speech, used for communicating within the community of coresidents, that plays a fundamental role in the production of morality and sociality. For methodological reasons this speech can be referred to as a paradigm of the “language of the inside,” a language mainly associated with the sharing of moral sentiments. In describing the role that the elders’ speech plays in the myth of the origin of the night my aim was to complement and to further Lizot’s (1994b) analysis that, let me recall once again, highlighted the relationship between this myth and the Ceremonial dialogue (“wayamou”). This dialogue, is a type of language used to communicate with people who do not live in the same community, a mode of communication that can be referred to as the “language for exchange,” or as the “language for the outside.”
Consequently, the myth of the origin of the night provided the basis for the development of two very different modes of verbal communication that generate a distinction between the production of morality and sociality inside the community (i.e., elders' speech) and the exchange with the outside (i.e., Ceremonial dialogue). Thus, these two types of language show us two distinct ways of conceiving, producing and enacting sociality: one from the inside point of view and related to morality; the other directed towards the outside and related to exchange. I will not at this point return to the ways the elders’ speech generates sociality (see chapter 3). However, to make the distinction between ways of speaking and different expressions of Yanomami sociality still more clear it is important to highlight a number of features of the “language of exchange” that is used towards the outside. On the Ceremonial dialogue and the types of social relations with which it is associated, Lizot writes that this speech:

“takes place during the night on the occasion of a visit or a feast. It does not take place when the guests are yahitherimi; only when they belong to more distant communities, with whom, it must be remembered, contacts are rare, making opportunities for exchange less frequent” (Lizot 1994:217).

Lizot goes on to note an important exception to the above remarks. Such an exception, he says, has significant importance as it both “confirms the particular status of the yahitherimi (i.e., people who live in the neighbouring communities) and leads to the eventual function of the wayamou [Ceremonial dialogue] in social relationships” (Lizot 1994:217). He specifies:

“When ties between members of the yahitherimi [people who live in neighbouring communities] deteriorate and there is a threat of open conflict, it is common for the communities involved to explain themselves during a wayamou [ceremonial dialogue]. In this case, the dialogue enables the expression of grievances in all openness. The speaker has the right, and even the duty, to say anything he wants to his opponent, using the most offensive terms: accusing him in the most brutal way, insulting him, treating him like a coward, threatening him, and challenging him” (1994:218).

131 The word Yahitherimi refers to the people who live in various neighbouring communities often stemming from a common community of origin (see Lizot 1994b, note 2:236)
However, the Ceremonial dialogue is more often than not enacted in friendly contexts:

"Because the wayamou, as an exchange of words, takes place in a friendly context, it contributes to the strengthening of ties between the participants and thus to the maintenance of peace. This is enhanced by the fact that it immediately precedes an exchange of gifts, just as the himou can herald a food offering or be a prelude to the distribution of cinerary gourds. The ceremonial dialogue is both the exchange and the premise for exchange. Indeed, with the coming of dawn, after the voices reciting the wayamou have stopped and the guests have taken a short rest and a light meal, a commercial transaction begins. This is the conclusion of the visit. As soon as it reaches its end, the guests will head for home. Their brief presence will have been the occasion for a continuous and intense exchange of food, tobacco, words, and goods, from hosts to guests and occasionally in the opposite direction. These exchanges, somewhat accelerated and contracted in time, compensate for the infrequent relationships between groups that live far apart" (Lizot 1994:220).

And he finally emphasises, as we have the opportunity to read in a previous chapter, that:

"The Ceremonial speech is first and foremost a social relationship manifested itself as a reciprocal exchange. The exchange is not of material objects, but words" (Lizot 1994:220).

In order to better understand the fundamental association Yanomami people establish between different types of social relationships (e.g., those among co-residents and those with outsiders) and different types of language (e.g., the "language of morality" inside the community, and the "language for exchange" used towards the outside), I would like to draw on Overing’s (1992) insights into what she called "An Amazonian Theory of Production and Exchange." The theoretical frame here developed arises from Overing’s insistence upon attempting to understand of Piaroa sociality by following their own conceptions. A number of important similarities can be found between the way in which Overing’s unfolds Piaroa understanding of sociality and the linkage between different ways of speaking and different types of social relationships made by the Yanomami. Let me further explain.
In her analysis Overing writes that "[t]he salient distinction in the Piaroa understanding of sociality was that of production and exchange" (Overing 1992: 180). She also emphasises the fundamental difference existing between the "different types of social relationships that were involved in the flow of food and materials between people" (Overing op.cit.180). About these different types of social relationships, she writes that:

"On the one side, there were the internal relations of community life built through productive work, co-operation, sharing and the creation of intimacy and high spirits, while on the other there were the external relations of exchange which, through the competition of individuals, created a world ever hovering on the edge of violence, coercion, predation and even war. Thus, the tranquil and safe community of insiders structured by the principle of sharing and production was in sharp contrast to the competitive and individualistic relations of foreign politics structured by the principle of exchange. It was a distinction of identity and difference that was complete, one that opposed the inside and the outside, safety and danger, friend and foe" (Overing 1992:180).

So if we take this "frame" of social relations and include within it (see the brackets below including the added words), within its logic, the two Yanomami modes of communication we have considered, we can follow, very well indeed, Overing’s analysis when she emphasises that:

"In order to unfold the logic of the Piaroa [Yanomami] in their linkage of types of social relationship with the flow of things ["flow" of words, e.g., modes of verbal communication] between people, it is necessary to follow Piaroa [Yanomami] classification, and not received anthropological wisdom (...) it is in fact the dialectics of production [e.g., production of morality, good feelings, sociality through the elder’s speech] and exchange [e.g., exchange of words, things, visits through the ceremonial dialogue] that needs to be examined to reach the indigenous theories of sociality—and indeed its reality. The start must be indigenous and not structural theory, else a focused picture of indigenous reality never comes into view” (Overing 1992:181).

In reading these aspects of Piaroa sociality as described by Overing, we have a wider cultural background from which to better understand the relationship that Yanomami make between modes of communication and social relationships. Moreover, Overing’s interpretation helps us to see the myth of the
origin of the night and the myth of the master of banana plants (e.g., of Poreawe) from a new perspective. These myths, by means of the fundamental associations they establish between different types of language (e.g., elders' speech, ceremonial dialogue, "ugly speech") and different expressions of sociality, provide the grounds for another, and no less fundamental, association that takes the form of an ontological principle of identity and difference. A Yanomami world of the social, a world created during mythic time through the unfolding of its mythical events, is then, since its very beginnings, divided in two: those who are "like us" (e.g., those who live together, those who are co-residents, those who are kin) and those who are different (e.g., those who live apart, the other, the asocial). The originality of these Yanomami myths is that they would seem to equate the very foundations of the human world of the social, i.e., foundations of Yanomami sociality, with the very foundations of different ways of speaking. In other words, these myths can be said to express the dialogical emergence of the world of the social (cf. Tedlock and Mannheim 1995).

Briefly, and borrowing Overing's insights, this dialogical emergence of the Yanomami world of the social is one that opposes on the one hand a language related to the production of morality, good feelings, and sociality (e.g., a language of affect and intimacy, the language of the "inside") addressed towards those who live together towards the aim of promoting "the tranquil and safe community of insiders structured by the principle of sharing and production" (Overing 1992) (see chapters 3, 9, 10, 11). On the other hand, there are two aspects to highlight. First, there is a language of exchange, the language for the outside, for those who do not live together, for those who are different; a language which can be said to pertain to "the competitive and individualistic relations of foreign politics structured by the principle of exchange" (Overing 1992) (i.e., the Ceremonial dialogue). Second there is the association between lack of proper communication (e.g., Poreawë's ugly speech) and the lack of life (see chapters 5,6,7).

132 To give but one example of this widespread ontological principle among Amazonian peoples see Overing (1983-84: 341): "society exists only through the interaction of unlike entities and forces that are potentially highly dangerous to one another"; "society can come into being only through the coming together of dissimilar forces."
These distinctions can be better perceived if we recall the before mentioned ideas in relation to the role that the Ceremonial dialogue (the “language for the “outside”) plays when ties between close neighbours (e.g., yahitherimi) deteriorate. When there are good relations among these close neighbours there are constant visits and the Ceremonial speech does not take place. One might say, even at the risk of generalising too much, that the language used is closer to the language of affect and intimacy, and therefore closer to the language used among coresidents. However, as soon as there are some risks of open conflict, there is a shift in the type of language used, from a language related to the production of morality and good feelings, a language of affect and intimacy, to a dialogue that is structured by the principle of exchange. Let me state once again that by means of the rather general “model” that this division generates, I do not want to convey a highly formalised picture of Yanomami ways of speaking. My main aim in highlighting this opposition is to stress the fundamental and highly dynamic role of language in the creation of sociality and types of social relatedness.

The exploration of these myths of origin leads us to see various things. First, in providing the foundation of both the elders' speech and the ceremonial dialogue, the myth of the origin of the night implicitly states that, in order for the world of the social to exist, a diversity of people is needed (see Overing 1983-84,1986, and Overing Kaplan 1984, for more on an ethnographic context in which society exists only through the interaction of unlike entities and forces that are potentially highly dangerous to one another). The myth, in opposing these two different ways of speaking, conveys the idea of a principle of identity and difference, of the existence of a plurality of communities, and therefore a multiplicity of differences. Second, the myth of Poreawé shows us the extent to which this principle of identity and difference is equated to and expressed by means of language (e.g., to speak well or not to speak well... is a fundamental social question). The lesson of the myths is that for Yanomami people, speech

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133 One can say that for Yanomami people, as for the Piaroa (cf. Overing 1986), the archetypal necessary and dangerous “other” is the affine.
and social life are thought of as two sides of the same coin, they are conceived of in their mutual interdependence.

A myth from the Yanomamé makes this association between humanity (e.g., the Yanomami world of the social) and speech quite explicit. The title of the myth is "Omamé creates the present Yanomami Humanity."

"Omamé created the Yanomami by tearing open a horomasikiwe palm stalk. Omamé made us who are here by opening lengthwise a palm stalk, and he made us think straight. Then he fled; he abandoned us and we are still here. The Yanomam he created were first like the eggs of the wayahome ant, hidden inside a hollow palm stalk, the kind that is used for making blowguns. He listened intently, moved closer and cut the stalk to see what was inside. Then he abruptly tore it open lengthwise: sheeeeee! He saw something that looked like ants' eggs. After placing a few large inokomehanake leaves on the ground he cautiously made the eggs fall onto them by gently striking the palm stalk with his finger. Then he caused them to be transformed, picking them up, giving them the power of speech and making them stand as humans. He would pick one up and say to him: "You! You will conduct the ceremonial wayamu dialogue!" Then he would set him down - hi! Thike!- transformed into a Yanomam. He would continue by picking up another: "You! You will conduct the ceremonial yaimu dialogue!" And he would make him stand up. He took another: "You! You will be a shaman!" Setting him down on his feet he picked up another: "You! When you are sent as a messenger to invite allies to a reahu festival you will conduct the ceremonial hiimu dialogue!" Thus he continued to stand them up and teach them to speak, adding to their number: "You! You will make hwereamou speeches!"

134 The Yanomamé is a Yanomami subgroup. There are a number of differences in language and cultural traits between them.

135 Omamé is called Omawe among the Central Yanomami. Omawe is the youngest of the two brothers and culture heroes (Omawe and Yoawe). He is the beautiful one, the one who makes good things. As Lizot (2004: 283) writes, these mythical beings are "ambiguous beings, they create things, but by chance, and the end result of their productions is beneficent sometimes and maleficent others" [my translation].

136 In Wilbert and Simoneau 1990, Yanomamé people are referred to as Yanomam.
That was what he told them. Are there not since that time shamans among the Yanomam? Do our ancestors not make speeches since then? Do we not still conduct ceremonial dialogues during reahu festivals? It was Omame who told us all that. Since then we still invite one another through himu [himou] dialogues to perform presentation dances during reahu festivals. That was how he taught us the power of speech." (Albert, in Willbert & Simoneau 1990: 39-40).

This reading of the Myth of the Yanomame seems to support my interpretation. Humanity is conceived together with the “power of speech.” This “power of speech” takes the form of various ways of speaking (e.g., speaking well, wayamou, yaimou, patamou, himou; speaking bad, Poreawé’s ugly speech) which are the dialogical expression of a general principle of identity and difference that is related, as I have demonstrated, to different modes of enacting sociality. At the same time, these ways of speaking implicitly convey the idea of a principle of identity and difference that, at the same time, speaks of the existence of a plurality of communities.

However, there are more aspects that have to be stressed in this dialogical emergence of Yanomami world of the social. As we have seen in the chapters dealing with Poreawé, the ghost, (chapters 5, 6, 7), the chapter on warfare (chapter 8), and the chapters on the elders’ speech (9, 10, 11), in a Yanomami world of the social, with the existence of a plurality of communities and a multiplicity of differences, not everything is good words. Thus, in chapter 8 - a chapter that also departs from a myth (the myth of the origin of the moon) - I have discussed the place of violence, “the very opposite of language” and “the essence of power” (Clastres 1987:154), in Yanomami conceptions of sociality. I have argued that warfare among Yanomami people is but one side, the extreme

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137 For a similar relationship between the origins of humanity and the origins of speech see Clastres (1993 [1974]) on the Guarani people. On this particular point he writes (1994 [1980]:104) that “[t]heir great god Namadu emerges from the shadows and invents the world. He first creates the Word, the substance common to the divine and the human. He assigns to humanity the destiny of collecting the Word, of existing in it and protecting it. Humans, all equally chosen by the deities, are Protectors of the Word, and protected by it. Society is the enjoyment of the common good that is the Word.”
I should say, of their strong refusal of inequality- and more positively speaking of their constant search for parity, and the freedom that it provides.

In my discussion about Yanomami warfare I have argued that it is only by looking at the values and practices that the Yanomami attach to peace, and their link to the achievement of a tranquil, nurturant social life, that the eruption of violence can be understood. It is the relationship between these two affective states that is both constructive and interesting from an analytical point of view. This is not necessarily meant as a generalization to cover all conflict, everywhere, but it does highlight the necessity of looking carefully at matters of moral and social value in order to understand why, and in what contexts, they fail. Moreover, in the Yanomami case, the present day “intrusion” of the nation-state, with its institutions and political values, adds a more imperative and practical reason for introducing to the wider public the highly moral side of Yanomami sociality, along with their knowledgeable ways of achieving this “beautiful,” “healthy” and tranquil way of life. While they have always recognized the difficulties in maintaining this mode of being, I believe that it is made more vulnerable than ever through the vicissitudes of nation-state encroachments.

As I have tried to demonstrate, Yanomami people’s understanding of coercive power as something highly destructive of relations of equality and freedom can be grasped if one is able to perceive the political philosophy that pervades the strong linkage between the poetics of myth narration and the poetics of the everyday life (Hymes 1981, 2003; Overing 2003, 2004). Let me now present another myth that, in addition to the myths we are familiar with already, offers us the possibility to grasp what we can call mythic time examples and commentaries relevant to present day Yanomami social behaviour. To show this, let me first introduce a new mythical character in the myth that describes how the Yanomami got the fire:

The theft of Fire (a myth given us by Lizot, in Wilbert and Simoneau 1990:128-30).
Caiman was the owner of fire, and they took it from him by surprise. Caiman and his wife used to go into the forest alone where they would roast their packets of caterpillars over the coals. Caiman kept the fire hidden in his mouth. Every time he left he would repeat to his children: “My sons, I’m going into the forest to look for food. If you must climb a tree while searching for food, hold on firmly!” He would add: “Don’t fight when you’re travelling!” That was his advice. Then he would go into the forest to cook his packages of food on the embers. He used to eat his food cooked.

One day during his absence the ancestors said to Pokorari’s two children: “Little ones, go and see whether some cooked food hasn’t fallen on the ground near the old man’s fire.” The two children remained alone in the house while the other people attended to their tasks. They went and rummaged around near Caiman’s hearth and found a cooked caterpillar there. Because of his negligence Caiman has caused a cooked caterpillar to be discovered. “Older brother, the Pokorari have found a caterpillar which is completely curled from being cooked.” The child who had made the find tied the caterpillar to his father’s hammock rope, wrapped in a leaf. When the father returned the child told him what he had done.

“Children, come and sit here”, said an old man. They gathered near him. “Those two over there are eating cooked food.” They talked about Caiman. “Tomorrow we’ll enjoy ourselves,” said someone among them. Then, turning to Black-Faced Antthrush, he added: “Tomorrow you will have fun with us; you will cover him with excrement. When he starts to laugh we’ll take the fire from him.”

They slept. In the morning the old man said: “You will make merry. You will pass in front of us one by one, circle the house, and then return. You, Tepui Wren, will plait a piece of openwork basketry, and the rest of us will pair off and paint each other’s bodies with patterns.” Tepui Wren plaited the piece of basketry, and the men covered their bodies with motifs. “Enjoy yourselves!” proclaimed two old men. They gathered. In the center of the assembly brothers were grouped. They danced while performing pranks, and the two old men participated as well. “Yes, that’s it!” They filed past, one behind the other. Then they realised that Tepui Wren was not taking
part in the merrymaking. “Come one, you too, have some fun! Have you thought about what you are going to do?” “Why are they playing games?” wondered Caiman. He was tall. Now he was watching them, stretched out diagonally in his hammock. The elbow of his bent arm on which his head was resting pointed toward them. Several among them had already danced, affecting grotesque and amusing postures.

That was the moment they chose to talk to Black-Faced Anthrrush in a low voice: “Hurry up, now it’s your turn. We’ll grab the fire and warm ourselves by it.” Crested Oropendola and Black Nun Bird (both have a red beak) began talking in whispers. “Go over and squat below him; creep behind him without being noticed and crouch down,” whispered Crested Oropendola to Black Nun Bird. Aloud he said: “I’m going to sit next to my older brother.” He went over to Caiman and added: “Big brother, let the children have fun; it’s not important.” And he sat down very close to Caiman. “Play, children!” From then on he watched attentively what was going on. Black-Faced Anthrrush presented himself. He shook his tail, lifted it, and showed his anus; his tail was dancing rhythmically. Thus he approached Caiman with his tail in the air. The people burst out laughing: “Ha, ha, ha!” Anthrrush slipped and turned, and all of a sudden he spattered Caiman with excrement. The moment the latter began to laugh the fire popped from his mouth. Black Nun Bird, who had been crouching below Caiman pretending not to notice, quickly seized it. He had taken possession of the fire but was not able to take flight. Prueheyoma, Caiman’s wife, nearly succeeded in extinguishing the fire by urinating on it.

Then Crested Oropendola rushed over to him, grabbed the fire, and flew and deposited it on the dry branch of an apia tree. The fire spread along the dry wood and glowing embers began falling. Prueheyoma cursed them: “By this fire, by this eternal fire you will suffer! You will be reduced to dust! Your charred remains will be gathered and you will crush one another with a pestle!” she predicted.

To better unfold the intentions of my argument, I would like to summarise the message (i.e., the moral) of this myth as “From Iwariwe’s fire in mythic time to the Yanomami circle of fires of present day time.” I believe that this is a
message that epitomizes what seems to be an overriding feature emerging from
the mythic narrations. Through the interplay of mythical characters in the
unfolding of events one can learn, as Overing (2004:76) has put it, “those
practices that are good, and engendering of health and well being,” and also
“those which are disastrous to social existence.” In her recent work, as I have
discussed throughout this thesis, Overing (ms. in press) stresses the link
between various aspects of Piaroa sociality and their mythic narrations.
Referring to the poetics involved in Piaroa mythic narrations - the performance
of them are an everyday occurrence for them - she points out the extent to which
such poetics are linked to “cosmological and moral perceptions” and to “an
unfolding of ways of being in the world” (2004b:72). She writes that:

"the mythic narrations are most concerned with the implications for
the human condition of the mighty modes of power let loose in mythic
time that allow for life on earth. [read here for example the Yanomami
example of origins of night (titin), moon (periporiwe), bananas
(poreawe), fire (iwariwe)] Mythic time was when the landscape of
what became today time on earth slowly unfolded through the
sorcery and antics of powerful creator gods” (Overing 2004:8).

Describing Kuemoi, “the archetypical evil figure of creation time,” she
writes that:

“This very foolish god who has all the knowledge of the culinary arts
speaks to a highly sophisticated theory of ethical behaviour, and to
the side of human nature (as the Piaroa perceived it) of the
potentiality of all human beings for odious and wicked behaviour...
Overtaken by total madness, Kuemoi always acted without reason.
He had no dignity. Evil here is clearly being associated with
knowledge (too much power) and Kuemoi clearly had far too much of
both” (Overing 2004:10, my italics).

Keeping in mind Overing’s comments, one can also see that among
Yanomami people too, mythic narrations clearly speak about the consequences
of certain type of behaviours epitomised by mythical characters. According to
the examples, the commentaries on models of social behaviour (i.e.,
commentaries on social existence that speaks of the human condition), that we
have seen in Yanomami myths, the one who behaves “wrongly,” the one who goes against the interest of the group (e.g., the one who is destructive of relations of equality) is punished. Let me recall very briefly the particular outcome of the mythical characters we are familiar with already (i.e., Titiri, the spirit of the night; Periporiwe, Moon spirit; Poreawe, the master of bananas; and finally, lwariwe, the owner of fire):

1) Titiri, who had a terrible, mournful and asocial voice, was the spirit of the night. He was his only “owner.” Yanomami people wanted the arrival of the night. To do that they killed Titiri. The night was for “All” Yanomami, and not only for Titiri, not only for “One.”

2) Periporiwē was the moon-spirit. His selfish, wrong and disturbing “table manners” depict him as a terrible, perverse cannibal. He eats himself, an act of predation equated with murder. He prevented the celebration of the reahu, the endocannibalistic ritual of the dead in which the ashes of the dead are mixed in a banana soup and consumed by close kin. However, he ate the dead’s bones all by himself. The “wrong” cannibal act of Moon spirit led to punishment and revenge; it is the undertaking of the moral imperative of retaliation in kind, to do to others exactly the same as they did to you, no more no less.

3) Poreawē was the master of bananas. He was a mean character with an ugly voice. He was the only owner of banana plants. He knew how to produce bananas, but did not have the will to share his skills and capabilities with Yanomami people. In addition to this, he did not want to be visited and he did not want to speak, that is, he clearly refused sociality. Horonami (a Yanomami) was angry by Poreawē’s behaviour and steals the banana plants form him. Bananas were for all Yanomami people, and not only for Poreawe.

4) lwariwe was the owner of the fire. A fire that he kept only for himself and his wife. Yanomami people wanted the fire too and they steal it from lwariwe. The myth describes a fundamental change: from lwariwe’s fire to the Yanomami
circle of fires. The fire was not going to be only for “One,” and Yanomami people chose to have the fire for all.

Recalling these mythical characters we can see that their particular “codes of decorum” generated different forms of conflict and/or anxiety. For Yanomami people the behaviour of these characters and their peculiar ways of being in the world, rendered them incompatible, so to speak, with the human, social condition that Yanomami people wanted to achieve in the times of the ancestors (e.g., mythic times). These characters embodied different skills, forces, capabilities, ownerships and competences that, if possessed only by “One,” were thought of as highly destructive to the social and human existence. The way in which I have summarised the myth of origin of fire (“From Iwariwe’s mythical time fire to the circle of fires within the villages of today’s Yanomami people”) epitomises the overriding moral and political message coming through mythic narrations. In addition to this, it also makes me think again -after having understood better the lesson of myths - of how the aesthetic pleasure it gives, when one sees it, embodies a quite distinctive Yanomami aesthetics of social life. It was only after having listened carefully to the voices of Yanomami people (in myth and in the everyday), and after having seen the everyday village life that I had a better grasp of the fundamental moral and political values that this aesthetics of life conveys. The fires burning every night in “All” the hearths of the communal house is a sign that makes one remember the way the Yanomami got the fire from “One,” from Iwariwe.

I think it important to stress the reasons why the Yanomami ancestors gave such “punishments” to these mythological characters. The punishments carry an important moral and political message if viewed from the Yanomami point of view. In order to clarify this message, and also to generate a wider frame for comparison, I will provide more information about the Piaroa, as Overing presents it to us, which is related to our present discussion. The information refers to their present day times when they:

“know full well the dangers of the powerful relation of Knowledge to power. In everyday life, the Piaroa are ever watchful of signs
indicating the emergence of a tyrant, that tyranny and self-centredness, that inflated ego that becomes disrespectful of personal relations, that becomes disdainful of the dignity of others within the community of relationships in which they live, that ignores the relationality of power. Tyranny is foolishness; it has to be mocked. We can perhaps better understand the fact that the Western abstract sense of Society, with its jural rules, its hierarchical structures, its heavily repressive mechanisms, its impersonality - and all those things - are offensive to most Amazonian peoples. I'd say that the peoples of Amazonia have a well developed consciousness of power, and a rich poetics through which to express it. Freedom is a political matter for them" (2004 a:14).

The reading of these lines clearly suggest the extent to which, for the Piaroa, odious and wicked behaviour is equated with the behaviour of those who have a knowledge (and power) which is not put to the service of the community of relationships in which they live. Such bad behaviour does not only concern the master of that knowledge and powers (e.g., the "One") but also can be highly destructive of convivial sociality (e.g., for the "All"). One reason for this, and a very important one, is that this type of behaviour is understood as sowing the seeds that might well give rise to another type of evilness, a type of behaviour embodied by the figure of the want-to-be-a-tyrant.

The outcome suffered by Yanomami mythical characters in creation time, a time which, let me insist once again, not only precedes and founds, but also (by means of the everyday performances, transformations, and constant re-elaborations of mythic narrations) is part and parcel of the present day time, tell us something very clearly: The ancestors' aesthetic and moral judgement about the asocial behaviour of these mythical characters did not allow for any other possibility. In the creation time world in which the no patapi, the ancestors of today time Yanomami people, there was no room, so to speak, for characters like Titiri, Periporiwê, Poreawê, and Ivariwê. The ancestors' way of being in the world, which was to become afterwards the human and social world of today time, refused such beings. The ancestors did not want beings like them in their world. Similarly, the Yanomami people way of being in this world, which is part and parcel of the human and social world that myths describe, strongly refuses beings that behave in the way these mythical characters did (e.g., tyrants). This
can perhaps be one of the main messages I would like to convey in this thesis: Myths are inextricably linked to everyday practices; both are part and parcel of the same way of life. In saying this, I am in agreement with Clastres (1994:200) when he writes that:

"The classic or structuralist analysis of myths obscures the political dimension of Savage thought. Myths no doubt reflect upon each other, as Lévi-Strauss writes, but they reflect upon society first: they are primitive society's discourse on itself."

My description and discussion of Yanomami elder's speech can also be referred to as an everyday reflection (discourse) upon the social human condition which myths describe. The moral and political philosophy emerging through the myths is reflected in the speech of Yanomami elders. This type of speech that, I should recall again, has been almost totally neglected by other authors, demonstrates what I have called the fertile side of Yanomami words. I have endeavoured to demonstrate that language plays a fundamental role in the generation of good feelings, shared moral sentiments and, therefore, in creating and maintaining sociality. The strong moral side of Yanomami elders' speech shows the extent to which the moral of the myths is everyday commented upon and renewed. As I wrote on Chapter 1, I could not properly understand this type of speech without having first a good grasp of Yanomami myths. It was only when I knew more about myths and their characters, only when I understood better the way these narrations unfold ways of being in the world, that I could perceive the strong linkage between the poetics of the elders' speech (e.g., everyday poetics) and the poetics of myth. I recall Overing's (2004 a:11) words on what she has called, talking about mythic narrations, "a poetics of egalitarianism:" "Sitting within these narratives, and what we can discern through the narrative performance, is a full blown political philosophy that states loud and clear the necessity of egalitarianism as the only path possible for a human sort of life."

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138 I should note that this will be one of my next research interests that I wish to explore further.
The Yanomami have a forthright manner in expressing their feelings - the emotional quality of experiences - for those around them: not only friends and neighbours but outsiders also bear the brunt of their outspoken comments. This is not only a feature of the elders’ speech but more generally of everyday village talk. Frequently the causes and motives of these feelings, as well as their possible consequences, are publicly expressed and discussed, and in truly passionate ways. The type of words and expressions they use when talking about others, be these other Yanomami or outsiders, can clearly express those aspects that make them feel good and thus the positive aspects of their affective relationship with them. These feelings towards others are expressed by stressing the salient importance of values such as generosity, trust, love, mutual co-operation, tranquillity and compassion, among others (cf. Lutz 1988, Lutz and Abu-Lughod eds. 1990; Overing and Passes 2000). Nevertheless, they also do the same with regard to the bad and destructive emotions that lie at the core of most of their interpersonal, intra and inter group conflicts. Thus, feelings such as anger, hate, jealousy, greed, are common expressions of the type of emotions that cause a break and threaten the harmonious life they so value (see chapters 5, 6, 7 on Poreawe, and 9, 10, 11). Communal living, as I have mentioned above, is not free of negative and amoral features.

When the social relations of community life deteriorate the expression of such feelings can be constantly heard in critical evaluations of daily life. These negative aspects are constantly observed and discussed by villagers in their daily life. They are critically evaluated through the minute observations of the elders, and particularly explored at length in their speeches ("patamou"), which, as I have showed, vary in vocal intensity, in rhetorical elaboration and in public importance. Such critiques of negative “emotion talk” are usually addressed by the elders and other knowledgeable persons of the community, both male and female, toward the end of promoting the state of convivial relations that most people in fact desire. These critiques, which place great value on attaining personal and interpersonal tranquillity, serve as guides for the members of the community -especially children and younger people -in their attainment of appropriate social behaviour. My focus upon these speeches has been a very
useful way of learning about how the Yanomami organize and speak about what they know; by carefully analysing them we can also learn not only of how these leaders think about their present lives but what concerns them – and therefore their audiences - about the future. In chapters 9, 10, and 11, I have tried to show that the extremely rich emotional content of these speeches disclose an incredible subtlety and the finest of human sensibility in dealing with “the social,” which is a crucial aspect of Yanomami social life – an aspect which is generally absent in almost all the published works on the Yanomami.

In addition to this, in the last two texts I have presented (see chapter 11, texts 11.2, 11.3), right after having described the way elders’ address their fellow villagers, my aim has been to introduce the strong contrast there is between two types of discourses. On the one hand I have showed the elder’s speech, and on the other the new ways of speaking of young Yanomami leaders. This contrast speaks of an important difference that, although not dealt with at length in the thesis, I want to emphasise in these last pages.

A discourse of “progress” and “rationality” is being imposed upon the affective comfort and nurture so valued in the Yanomami sociality. Thus, there is a marked contrast between the “development talk” of government agents - based on imported and the abstract issues of economic development, justice, and the rights and obligations framed within the context of the highly impersonal relations of the domain of the state - that clearly works against the affective principles and values of a Yanomami sociality. They are totally at odds as moral systems.

During my experience of working among the Yanomami (in both, Venezuela and Brazil), I have perceived that these discourses of development - economic or otherwise-, clearly ignore (because attached to the “savage past” or to those “uncivilized Yanomami ancestors”) the everyday discourses of Yanomami people that have to do with own views about social and personal “development.” This Yanomami kind of development is grounded in a “virtue-centred” morality, that is (as Overing and Passes (2000:4) note for Amazonian peoples), primarily centred upon “the creation of a high quality of the
interpersonal relationships" among "those who personally and intimately interact in everyday life" (see chapter 11). In other words, the everyday "social talk" of the Yanomami, with its constant emphasis upon beautiful and peaceful relations, is completely misunderstood -or better said- still unknown by the outside agents of the State. Ignoring the affective, moral side of the Yanomami domestic relations, the new regional and national politicians, along with their foreign ideas and practices focused on the "public" domain, do not take into account the importance the Yanomami themselves concede to family and community relations that are centered around the care and responsibility of children. The ways by which the "traditional" elders teach their children and young people the skills to achieve a harmonious community life, and thus avoid conflicts and violence, are fundamental aspects that should be included within the new context of this political encounter with the Nation State. Otherwise, the strong "peace" side of Yanomami sociality becomes highly vulnerable in the face of the "politicised social" that is increasingly being imposed by outside agents of change.

With the increase in Yanomami-Nation-State relations -and the process of social differentiation being generated as a consequence of such relations that are based on a strong inequality - the Yanomami cultural elaborations upon the social benefits of practicing the everyday virtues of love, care, compassion, generosity and the spirit of sharing are being stressed as of vital importance to themselves. It is my view that they should be, as well, to government agents of change. However, on the contrary, these important social means that Yanomami peoples use to avoid or resolve conflicts are not being taken into account. For instance, the way governmental agents, politicians and members of the National Guard (Guardia Nacional) speak about Yanomami conflicts and wars when interacting with the new leaders, it is clear that, once again, the Yanomami are being perceived according to Chagnon's picture of them as people "embroiled in virtually endless warfare over women, status and revenge" (see Ferguson critique 1995: 6) or even as "bloodthirsty people obsessed by the desire for murder" (see Lizot's critique, 1994 a: 845). In the context of their political integration within the democratic Venezuelan Nation-state the conflicts and wars of the Yanomami are having consequences that, in the present day,
are not merely a "Yanomami problem." Such conflicts have made of them a
"Nation-State problem," with the rather "problematic Yanomami." There is a
general cultural misunderstanding of the Yanomami sociality that can lead to a
complex and dramatic situation of political dominance.

It is my belief that the efficacy of nation state policies is critically
dependent upon the taking into account of the indigenous views on peace, and
also the actual social practices of Yanomami people, along with their
considerable knowledge about such matters. These aspects (also absent in
most anthropological works on Yanomami people) should as a matter of course
be taken into account by the agents of the government when considering the
possible amelioration of Yanomami intergroup conflicts and wars (e.g., through
their integration in the democratic Venezuela). I hope that this thesis, in
contributing to a better understanding of the ways Yanomami people
themselves promote peace and harmonious community relations can work
toward a responsible efficacy to be incorporated into the new policies being
implemented. Finally, I truly hope that this work, in itself, will represent an
opportunity to advance such an aim.
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