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Totemic Outsiders

Ontological Transformation among the Makushi

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ABSTRACT: This article examines how sociological totemism mediates the co-existence of animism and an emerging naturalism among the Makushi in Surama Village (Guyana) within contexts of interactions with outsiders. Since the 1830s, such contexts have varied from missionization to eco-tourism, which Surama developed in the 1990s and which has since significantly increased. Eco-tourism currently facilitates access to employment, goods, outside knowledge, and international allies in Surama. In the present, villagers seek to fête and propitiate the leaders of outside groups and organizations to ensure the continued provision of these desiderata. Such practices are linked to shamanic relations with the 'masters' or 'owners' of animals, plants, and other aspects of the landscape. This article argues that these notions of mastery and ownership produce totemic homologies when applied to the intra-social relations of outsiders in Surama. The resulting homologies facilitate the emergence of a nascent naturalism that indicates ongoing ontological transformation in Surama.

KEYWORDS: Amazonia, animism, eco-tourism, Guyana, Makushi, naturalism, totemism

When entering Surama Village in Guyana, one is met with the sight of a large totem pole standing in front of the village office. Amerindian societies in the Guianas (as well as those across broader Amazonia) have no history of making such objects, which are associated with the Northwest Coast peoples of North America. Nor are they commonly associated with totemism, which was historically identified with a variety of societies and later conceptualized into more generalized frameworks. Nevertheless, the totem pole stands in Surama as a marker of Indigenous identity to outside visitors (mostly eco-tourists). It was constructed by an Indigenous artist from the coast of Guyana with influence from a Surama villager with a keen interest in the native peoples of North America. The totem pole depicts mostly non-human figures in vertical segments and includes a harpy eagle, a large snake, a jaguar, and 'King Geronimo' conspicuously displayed toward the bottom. I was told that Geronimo was included as a symbol of resistance to colonialism and outside control. Although most of the other figures represent non-human beings from the surrounding landscape, there is no known history of totemic representation of segmentary descent-based groups in Surama or surrounding Makushi villages—indeed, there are no such

groups. However, after my encounter with the Surama totem pole, I began to wonder whether, in addition to symbolizing unity and perhaps a pan-Amerindian Indigenist politics, it might also indicate a deeper transformation occurring in the village.

Since Descola's (1992, 1996) early intervention in long-standing debates concerning animism and totemism, Amerindian societies in Amazonia have often provided a general model for animist relations between humans and non-humans. This generalization is largely based upon the character of social relations (including with animals, plants, and spirits) among many (although certainly not all) societies in this region. Descola's early reconceptualization of animism and totemism provided a starting point for the development of the broader theory of 'perspectivism', which levels the ontological ground of 'personhood' between humans and non-humans (Costa and Fausto 2010; Viveiros de Castro 1998). It also allowed for new analyses of relations of 'mastery' and 'ownership' (Fausto 2012a) and 'familiarizing predation' (Fausto 2012b) between human and non-human beings.

Building upon these notions from Amazonia, the concept of animism has been extended to societies in North Asia and the circumpolar region (Ingold 2000; Pedersen 2001). Historically implying segmentary and descent-based social organization, such as lineages and clans, the sociological concept of totemism (as a system of social classification) has been generalized—often with an ethnological focus on Australia. It has been applied in some Amazonian contexts, such as northwestern South America, where these forms of social organization are prevalent. In this sense, totemism involves asymmetric relations often linked to parallelism (or homologies). As discussed below, sociological (or classificatory) totemism differs from ontological totemism (Descola 2013). Although they are mostly ontological animists, the Makushi in Surama have ideas concerning outsiders that constitute a form of sociological totemism. These uses of totemic classification (linked to notions of 'mastery' and 'ownership') produce homologies that have facilitated an emerging ontological naturalism. In this context, such naturalism refers to an expanding ontological separation—a conceptual kind of social distancing—between human and non-human beings. In Surama, ontological naturalism holds a complex connection with recently increasing interactions with outsiders (see Vilaça 2015).

Ontological animism and sociological totemism have come to be seen as interconnected and co-occurring in some parts of the world. In particular, Pedersen (2001) and Willerslev and Ulturgasheva (2012), as explained below, argue that they are found together in North Asia and Siberia if one broadens the notion of totemism beyond a focus on descent groups. Descola (1996, 2013) and Ingold (2000) both point to the possibility of societies combining animism and forms of totemism, but their focus tends to be on analytically separating the two. Ingold's notion of ontological totemism also broadens the focus beyond descent (ibid.; see also Descola 2013). Århem (1996) identifies the co-occurrence of animism and totemism among some Tukanoans in northwestern Amazonia.

This article will examine the literature on animism, totemism, naturalism, and mastery/ownership and will consider how a kind of sociological totemic classification is linked to an emerging ontological naturalism in Makushi relations with outsiders.[1] It will examine how the animistic inclusion of non-humans in and through social relations, with a focus on mastery and ownership among non-humans, is totemically brought into intra-human relations involving outside visitors. Mastery and ownership relations in the landscape, which imply animism, are also modes for relations between eco-tourists and the 'owners' that provide them for Surama. Although the Makushi seek symmetric relations of reciprocity with outsiders (Whitaker 2020b), they see outsiders' internal social relations as asymmetric and parallel to those of non-humans.

My central argument is that Makushi interactions with outsiders involve totemic relations (in the sociological sense) that mediate ongoing animism and an emerging naturalism in Surama.

Although the Makushi and other Amerindian societies in the Guianas are associated with minimal social organization, the absence of segmentary descent-based groups, and a resulting focus on the house and settlement site (Rivière 1984; see also Rivière 1969, 2009), sociological totemism is seen among the Makushi in their use of non-human relations (differences between master-owners and their non-human wards) to understand human relations (differences between human outsiders). In other words, the relation between non-human master-owners and the non-humans they control provides a 'homologous differentiation' (Pedersen 2001) for understanding the relation between tourism leaders and the tourists they bring to Surama. In both cases, there is a vertical and asymmetric relation that is used to compare human to non-human social organization. Although the Makushi strive for symmetry and reciprocity in their relations with both human outsiders and non-human master-owners (Whitaker 2020b, n.d.), they recognize a homology of asymmetry (and predation) in these others' intra-social relations. As described below, propitiations traditionally directed toward non-human master-owners are now often directed toward totemic human outsiders. This homology has enabled a partial transfer of mastery relations from the landscape into relations with these human others. As such, it has facilitated the emergence of an ontological naturalism that co-exists with animism in Surama.

The Makushi and Others

The Makushi are Cariban-speaking Amerindians living in Guyana, Brazil, and Venezuela. In Guyana, they live in separate villages, such as Surama, with government-recognized territories. These villages have democratically elected *toshaos* (village leaders) and village councils. Local governance and control over outside access to villages is under the remit of these leaders. Social organization is minimal within the villages and is mostly centered around households (see Rivière 1984). In the past, these were composed of related nuclear families and were often coterminous with the village itself. Although houses in Surama are now mostly single-family units spread throughout the village, they are clustered along kinship lines resembling earlier conditions. At a basic level, houses are the sites where the Makushi use food and cassava beer to incorporate outsiders as affines. However, as the unity of the household-village has separated into the contemporary reality of many (often loosely extended) families and households within a larger village territory, relations with outsiders have largely shifted to the village level (Whitaker 2016).

Past Makushi relations with outsiders are relatively well-documented. They first appear in the historical record in 1740 in relation to a slaving raid orchestrated against them from Brazil (Whitaker 2016: 18, 109–127). In 1833, when an Anglican missionary named John Armstrong visited the Makushi in Pirara Village and the surrounding area, local Makushi indicated that such raids were ongoing and that they wanted a resident missionary presence. Makushi groups began visiting the upstream mission operated by Armstrong and Thomas Youd and further expressed such desires. In 1837, a Makushi delegation from Pirara visited Youd and told him that they had built a church and dwelling, as well as planted provision fields, in expectation that he or another missionary would relocate there. Subsequently arriving at Pirara to start a mission, Youd encountered a festival-like atmosphere with ample cassava beer and food. He was given gifts as residents of local villages began arriving. Such efforts to attract Youd and the propitiations toward him resemble current Makushi relations with master-owner spirits and tourists, as I will describe below. Indicating strategic intent, the Pirara villagers later refer to their efforts to 'fetch' Youd. Similar desires for outside presences and efforts to procure them recur throughout the rest of the nineteenth century. I have examined these events in more detail

elsewhere (Whitaker 2016, 2020b, n.d.), but I briefly mention them here to provide historical context for contemporary Makushi interactions with outsiders in Surama.

In terms of both persons and things, desires for the 'outside' are commonly encountered across the regional ethnological literature. This reflects an "openness to the other" in Amazonia that "promotes a recurrent outside-inside movement" (Fausto and Neves 2018: 1613; see also Lévi-Strauss 1995; Rivière 2000: 254). Within the Guianas, for example, the Panare (Cariban-speakers in Venezuela) also seek the outside and its potential within ritual contexts (Henley 2001: 217). Like the Makushi, the Patamona (highland Cariban neighbors of the Makushi) have sought to 'fetch' missionaries and other outsiders as useful "external connections" (Whitehead 2002: 25). However, unlike the Makushi in Surama, several Cariban societies in the Guianas establish asymmetric relations with outsiders. Such asymmetry is increasingly emphasized in the regional ethnological literature (Brightman et al. 2016a: 15). For example, the Ye'kwana (Cariban-speakers in Venezuela and Brazil) have asymmetric relations with neighboring Sanema (Yanomaman speakers), who show deference and avoid reciprocity with them (Penfield 2017). The Trio (Cariban-speakers in Suriname) also form asymmetry with the neighboring (and Cariban-speaking) Akuriyo, who have a servant-like relationship with them (Brightman 2010, 2016; Grotti and Brightman 2016). In contrast, the Makushi in Surama strive for symmetry and reciprocity in their relations with outsiders (Whitaker, n.d.). Such symmetry contrasts with the asymmetry and predation they see in the intra-social relations of both outsiders and master spirits, which forms the central totemic homology described in this article. After discussing the development of concepts of animism, totemism, and naturalism, I will further discuss Makushi notions of mastery and ownership and their significance for relations among humans and non-humans.

Ontologies: Animism, Totemism, and Naturalism

The concept of totemism was first introduced into anthropological debates by John Ferguson McLennan (Rivière 2018). Along with the concept of animism, which was defined as simply a belief in souls or spirits by Edward B. Tylor ([1871] 1958), it became a central part of such debates in the nineteenth century. Émile Durkheim ([1912] 1995) viewed totems (with an ethnological focus on Australia) as implying collective representations primarily in cases where non-human species are used to represent a social group. James G. Frazer ([1910] 1935) further conceptualized totemism with a focus on exogamy. However, Claude Lévi-Strauss (1963) shifted the concept from Durkheim's view, arguing that totemism involves "analogies between things in nature and groups in society" (Bird-David 1999: 67–70). Pedersen (2001: 417) writes that for Lévi-Strauss "it is not the possible (animist) identities between, say, Species A and Clan 1, or Species B and Clan 2, that matter (as both Frazer and Durkheim believed). Rather, what matters, what makes a society totemist, is the fact that the difference between Species A and Species B is similar to the difference between Clan 1 and Clan 2." Building on this notion of totemism from Lévi-Strauss, Descola (1996: 86–87) initially conceptualizes animism and totemism as 'mental models' or 'schemata of praxis' that group together different societies' similar conceptions and practices involving patterned relations between humans and non-humans. In this sociological sense of totemism, Descola concedes that a society can have features of both totemism and animism (ibid.: 87–88, 95; see also Descola 1992; Viveiros de Castro 1998). In Descola's early formulation, totemism involves social groups within a society being conceptually organized (and ordered) through contrasts and labels deriving from non-human beings, while animism provides an opposite approach that posits non-humans as human-like with language and culture.

Although Descola (1996: 88) claims this form of totemism is not found in societies without descent groups, a sociological totemism can be seen in Makushi relations with outsiders in Surama, which form a homology (as described above) with relations among non-human beings within the landscape.

Diverging from his earlier conceptualization of sociological totemism, Descola (2013: 120–125, 166) later reconceptualizes totemism in an ontological sense (closer to Durkheim) that focuses on shared 'interiority' and 'physicality' to avoid an opposition of totemism and animism based on one between society and nature, although he still contends that his original "definitions [of animism and totemism] remain valid as principles for justifying the frontiers between groups of humans and of nonhumans." This ontological totemism focuses on shared originating substances and attributes (ibid.: 144–172). Although I will suggest the possibility of a slight tendency toward an ontological totemism near the end of the article, the Makushi in Surama primarily evince sociological totemism.

Descola (1996: 89–90) argues that animistic relations between human and non-human beings can be characterized in terms of reciprocity (which he later calls exchange), predation, or a combination of both, and in some cases protection (see also Descola 1992, 2013). Reciprocity involves equivalence and notions of a balanced exchange—often of 'generic vitality'—between humans and non-humans. For example, 'master' spirits in Amazonia may take human souls to transform into game animals in order to balance the reciprocal exchange of vital forces (Descola 1996: 89–90). Transgressions by hunters against the wards of such master-owners are thought to result in such reprisals (Descola 2013: 4). However, predation involves uneven relations of taking and notions of revenge, punishment, and retaliation. These notions provide elements for comparing conceptual systems involving human relations with non-humans.

Ingold (2000: 107) interprets Descola's notion of animism as meaning that human relations with non-humans (ecological relations) occur in continuity with social relations (see also Bird-David 1999). For Ingold (2000: 112), using respective examples from Arctic and Australian societies, animism and totemism are "orientations that are deeply embedded in everyday practice" and that are "immanent in their ways of relating." In an ontological sense, resembling (and foreshadowing) Descola's (2013) later conceptualization, for Ingold (2000) totemism involves a shared and ongoing set of 'ancestral' relations (not centered on genealogical ancestry) involving land or another point of origin as a source of the 'vital force' and life-giving power that incarnate both humans and non-humans, while animism involves the vitality of 'land' being dispersed into a series of relations that connect humans and non-humans through the "circulation of vital force" and relations of "reciprocal interdependence" (ibid.: 112–114).

For Pedersen (2001: 412–413), different combinations of animism and totemism (in the sociological sense of the latter) underpin Indigenous ontologies and are found together in North Asia (see also Willerslev and Ulturgasheva 2012). These concepts pertain to different ways of organizing relations between human and non-human beings (Pedersen 2001: 413). As such, animism involves horizontal (or symmetric) relations, while totemism involves vertical (or asymmetric) relations (ibid.: 416–417; Willerslev and Ulturgasheva 2012: 53). Animism implies an 'analogous identification' that points to substitutability between humans and non-humans (Pedersen 2001: 413, 416). In contrast, totemism implies a 'homologous differentiation' that points to parallels in differences between humans in different domains and between non-humans in different domains (ibid.: 413, 417–419). This extends sociological totemism's conceptual relevance to many Amazonian societies and beyond only those societies with lineage, clan, or other descent-based segmentations.

Previous engagements with totemism by Amazonianists have been mostly limited to societies with such segmentation. For example, Århem (1996: 190–193) suggests that the Makuna—a

Tukanoan society in northwestern Amazonia—combine animism and totemism in its sociological form (see also Descola 2013: 8–9, 345–352). This combination of ontological animism and sociological totemism involves social relations of kinship, reciprocity, and marital exchange prefiguring human relations with owner spirits and game animals (animism) and owner spirits (e.g., Water Anaconda and a forest being called Yiba) serving as ancestral symbols for Makuna clans (totemism). In this case, the totemic aspects are linked, as in classic sociological totemism, to a segmentary and descent-based social organization. However, they are dependent upon an underlying foundation of animistic relations.

Among the Makushi, as in the cases just described, ontological animism and sociological totemism co-exist. Animistic relations between non-human master-owner spirits and their wards, as described in the following section, are parallel to relations between certain human outsiders and the eco-tourists they provide to Surama. Although I initially thought this might represent a more general shift from animism to totemism, it more clearly suggests that sociological (although not necessarily ontological) totemism has become implicated in the emergence of naturalism among the Makushi. Although naturalism does not mean the end of animistic relations, which continue to exist and to ground the totemic classifications implicated in the nascent naturalism, it is found in the present in conjunction with these relations.

Distinct from animism and totemism, ontological naturalism basically involves a belief in 'nature' as a separate domain in the world. In Descola's (2013: 172) later formulation, it is the counterpart of animism and "reverses the formula of animism" by "articulating a discontinuity of interiorities and a continuity of physicalities." In other words, all beings (human and non-human) share a material substrate, but they do not all share a social and inward personhood. While animism extends social relations into the non-human world, naturalism introduces ontological social distance between humans and non-humans. Although common in Western societies and foundational to modern scientific disciplines of knowledge, naturalism is not traditionally a dominant schema among the Makushi and most other groups in Amazonia. However, partially through the influence of interactions with outsiders, such as past missionaries and present tourists, as well as teachers, NGOs, and governmental representatives, this ontological mode is emerging among some Makushi villagers in Surama, particularly in the younger generations.

Relations of Mastery and Ownership among the Makushi

Examples of animism often center around concepts of mastery and ownership in Amazonia where anthropologists have often documented such relational modes as posited among non-human beings in the landscape (Bonilla 2013; Costa 2010, 2017; Costa and Fausto 2010; Fausto 2012a, 2012b; Kohn 2007; Penfield 2017; Walker 2012; Whitaker 2020a). These modes variously extend into relations of control, protection, and domination between non-humans and sometimes humans. For the Makushi and others, this mastery often involves forms of mediation (such as in hunting) between humans and non-humans and evinces animism, since sociality and culture are extended from humanity to relations between non-humans.

The Makushi in Surama variously describe master-owners within the landscape. In the Makushi language, such a being is called a *putorï* (or *padlru* in the local dialect). Some say that all beings have a *padlru* (or leader), while others say that this applies only to some beings and not to others. One of the most commonly mentioned is a master-owner of peccaries. For example, Tom[2] told me that peccaries have a leader that goes ahead of them. This leader is the *padlru* of peccaries and controls their movements. In relation to this, Albert, a local shaman,

explained: "The master would blow his horn and the peccaries would go wherever they have to go." At times, hunters strategically imitate master-owners when 'fetching' game. Anne stated:

> Well, my partner, he says they have a mama. They have a leader. A couple of times, I went in the forest with my partner and he finds the peccary and he tells me: "They have a leader you know. It whistles. It makes a sound." And so if those peccaries are just lying down, my partner would make that sound, and those animals would come to you. So when the leader makes that sound, the animals would get up and follow the leader, so if you make that sound they would come straight to you and you would shoot them. I don't know if all the animals [have leaders], but I know about the peccaries. Maybe all of them have [leaders].

Although humans can imitate it, the *padlru* of peccaries protects the peccaries from excessive hunting by humans and can bring pain, sickness, or death upon a hunter (or his or her family members) if necessary as a reprisal. In addition to peccaries, other animals (particularly hunted game) are also often said to have master-owners. Mastery is sometimes extended from individual species, such as peccaries, to entire types of beings, such as fish. A few plants also have a kind of master-owner, such as the 'cassava mama' (see Daly 2016; Mentore 2012; Rival 2001), and fish are sometimes believed to have one in the form of the 'water mama'[3] as discussed below (Whitaker 2020c). References to 'masters', 'owners', and 'mamas' are often interchangeable in local discourse, although the cassava owner is generally marked as female and less reciprocity-oriented, as discussed further below. Maternal notions involving ownership of cassava are relatively common in Amazonia and have also been described among the Achuar in Ecuador (Descola 1994; Ingold 2000: 82). Although similar, 'mama' suggests consanguinity (parenthood and non-reciprocal giving) in the case of cassava, while 'owner' suggests affinity (and potential reciprocity) in the case of non-humans in the forest (Descola 1996: 90; 2013: 4–6; see also Bird-David 1990; Rival 2001). Landscape features, such as mountains or rivers, also sometimes have owners.

Makushi persons traditionally engage with these master-owners in contexts of hunting, farming, and other subsistence or extractive activities. For example, normatively speaking, hunters seek to prevent counter-predations by master-owners. In order to do this, I was frequently told, they leave tobacco, alcohol, or other items under a tree (as a propitiation to the master-owner) before entering the forest to hunt and say a short 'prayer' to the master-owner, explaining their purpose and need. For example, Robert told me:

> The man who leads the hunt, he would be negotiating with the owner of animals. And if he feels that he can't get anything then he might cancel the hunt because he believes that the owner of animals is a powerful being that can hurt you. And he cares for his animals, and can hurt you. If you killed a jaguar, you would have to leave tobacco[4] because they felt that was the appropriate gift to the owner. If you did not leave tobacco then the owner could come after you and kill you.

Villagers in Surama often mention tobacco (and sometimes alcohol or other goods) as something one would leave regardless of the kind of animal killed or hunted. Robert further explained that tobacco is associated with connecting with non-human beings because of its use by shamans in communicating with spirits. On another occasion, he said that giving tobacco water is "like offering a friend a beer." This act of pre-emptive giving (or propitiation) is aimed at forming a reciprocal—and to some degree symmetrical (see Rivière 2009)—basis for hunting without reprisal, although the hunter must still take only what is needed or reprisals may still occur.

In addition to sickness and death, failure to follow reciprocity-oriented practices involving propitiations and prayers in relation to master-owners may bring poor hunting and farming yields. Shamans sometimes have to mediate and intervene with master-owners to ensure a continuing or renewed supply of game animals and to make amends for the trespasses of hunters who kill too many animals, break forest taboos, or fail to act reciprocally. However, the normative Makushi practices involving master-owners seem to be often flouted today in Surama, and some villagers openly express doubt as to whether such beings are real or have the powers and significance traditionally attributed to them (Whitaker 2020a: 847–848). As described below, this is partially due to a totemic shift of associated relations and practices from non-human beings within the landscape to human outsiders who visit the village, mostly in contexts of eco-tourism.

Villagers often described master-owners as beings like those they protect, for example, the peccary *padlru* might be a peccary, or as a bird flying ahead of their wards. Sometimes the gray brocket deer was identified as a master-owner or sometimes more generally as *the* 'master of animals'. For example, I was told: "In past, it was a tradition up to my generation, you had to pray and ask for permission from the master of the forest, and we know the master is the little deer [gray brocket deer], and we had to pray to get his permission before getting animals. If you get his animals without permission, he gets your children, and it causes fits." Villagers sometimes also describe a *padlru* as a 'short man' or as a spiritual (or not necessarily human) Patamona. The latter refers to an Amerindian society neighboring the Makushi in Guyana, which seems to further link local notions of mastery and ownership to outsiders.

Makushi persons sometimes become akin to master-owners in various ways. One way is to imitate the various master-owners within the landscape, as mentioned above concerning peccaries. Another way is to 'own' pets. For example, villages in Surama occasionally keep as 'pets' several local species of animals—macaws, parrots, and tapirs. These animals are 'familiarized' but not domesticated (Fausto 2012a; Fausto and Neves 2018; see also Descola 2013). The relations between these 'pets' and their human 'masters' evince the themes of protection, care, and dominance common to discourses of mastery within the landscape. Political and household leaders are also sometimes seen as akin to master-owners within village and domestic contexts. In general, mastery and ownership form a flexible relational mode that extends beyond the landscape to encompass a wide array of interactions (see Costa 2017).

Although undergoing changes—as some villagers currently choose not to propitiate non-human master-owners in the landscape—relations involving mastery and ownership contribute to a general ethics of dominance within domains and normative reciprocity across domains. For the Makushi in Surama, non-human master-owners are part of the same ontological reality as their wards, which they dominate, and the human others who aim for reciprocity with them. This involves an animistic view of both human and non-human domains in terms of social relations. However, as the relational mode of these interactions with non-human beings is brought into Makushi social relations with human outsiders, a totemic homology appears between mastery within the landscape and mastery among the outsiders. This migration of relations among non-humans into human social relations helps to drive nascent naturalism as interactions among non-humans become naturalized between humans, and traditional human social relations with non-humans become defamiliarized. This shift is reflected in the doubt and non-adherence that some younger villagers express toward non-human master-owners within the landscape. Their increasing interactions with outsiders and access to electronic technologies have in some cases led them to reject what they call "stories" and "traditional" beliefs. Although animism is still present in Surama, the social distance between villagers and non-human master-owners is growing as the distance between villagers and outsiders continues to shrink.

The Landscape and Its Relations

A focus on relations of mastery among non-humans links debates over animism and totemism to the broader landscape. In this sense, the Makushi forest is a 'cultural forest' (Balée 2013)—in the historical-ecological sense of a landscape (Balée 1998, 2006, 2010; Balée and Erickson 2006b; Crumley 1994)—that includes master-owners as integral parts (Descola 2013; Kohn 2007; Whitaker 2016). Such landscapes are culturally 'domesticated' through local practices and concepts (Clement 1999: 190; 2006: 165; Erickson 2006: 235). Domestication goes beyond genetic changes and refers to transformations of "local and relational environments into productive, physically patterned, cultural landscapes for humans and other species" (Erickson 2006: 241; see also Balée 2013: 176).

Landscape relations are often social relations and frequently express the spiritual and ontological (animistic) understandings through which local people have engaged in interactions with the various non-human beings within landscapes (Rival 2002: xx, 180). As such, spiritual and environmental knowledge is integrated in Amazonia (Balée 2013: 126). Christine Hastorf (2006: 92) argues that plant domestication and cultivation in South America have centered around meanings and understandings and that "human society" can be seen "as a narrow term because these societies also included plants and animals in their world." Going further, Fausto and Neves (2018) replace 'domestication' with 'familiarization'—or 'familiarizing predation'—in explaining relations between humans and non-humans (with a focus on plants) in Amazonia. They suggest that the concept of 'familiarizing predation' can be used as "an alternative model to domestication, in which the relationship with plants is part of a general concern for 'making kin out of others' (Vilaça 2002), as is typical of contemporary Amazonian indigenous societies" (ibid.: 1605). This 'alternative model' centers around mastery and ownership but also 'parenthood' among both human and non-human beings, such as the 'cassava mama' among the Makushi. In this sense, domestication itself (whether of species or entire landscapes) can be conceptualized in terms of domination in social relations between humans and non-humans (Ingold 2000: 73–75). Although the Makushi resist such asymmetric relations in their interactions with outsiders, these relations (stemming from domination and cultural domestication within the landscape) form parallels with outsiders' intra-social relations and provide models for understanding the relations of others.

As with the example of the 'cassava mama' among the Makushi, Indigenous societies ranging geographically from South Asia (Bird-David 1990) to Amazonia (Fausto 2012a; Rival 2002) have used animistic idioms of parenthood (motherhood or fatherhood) to express relations (including mastery and ownership) within the forest and the broader landscape. The forest itself is sometimes conceptualized among the Makushi in a generalized way as 'Mother Earth' (Whitaker 2020a). Bird-David (1990: 190–192) suggests that foragers (or gatherer-hunters/hunter-gatherers) understand their landscape in terms of a 'giving environment' (involving non-reciprocal, giving-focused, and often metaphorical relations of parenthood), while cultivators and cultivator-hunters understand it in terms of a 'reciprocating environment' (often involving metaphorical notions of ancestry). However, this perception is complicated among the Makushi and often elsewhere in Amazonia.[5] Despite combined economic uses of foraging, cultivation, and paid employment, as well as some keeping of cattle, idioms of parenthood (mostly maternal) that focus on the culturally domesticated landscape and center around non-reciprocal giving seem to be ever more common in Surama, although some villagers still posit that the failure to maintain normative reciprocal relations with master-owners may result in illness, death, or loss of resources. However, these maternal and otherwise animistic relations are now paired with naturalism in discourses and practices concerning the landscape. The local forest is now increasingly described and treated as a generalized and largely impersonal source of things (despite the

maternal idiom) and less as a series of entities with whom one is engaged in social relations, for example, reciprocity and gifting.

Traditional relations with master-owner spirits controlling game animals, such as propitiations of these beings prior to hunting and fishing, are de-emphasized in the present, while leaders of eco-tourists and other outsiders (as discussed below) now inhabit roles that reflect the previous master-owners in reciprocal exchange and provisions. Relations of reciprocity have partially shifted from the landscape to these outside human others who have seemingly taken the place of the non-human master-owners to some extent (Whitaker 2020a, n.d.). Traditional animistic relations with non-human master-owners are now largely focused on human outsiders. This has accompanied a nascent (and still emerging) differentiation of the social world between humans and non-humans in keeping with ontological naturalism. As described above, although the domain of the previous master-owners (particularly the forest and rivers) is now often associated in Surama with a generalized idiom of maternity, this seems for many villagers to be without much relational (or animistic) content aside from a feeling that extractions from the forest should be limited, owing to notions of conservation and sustainability that have recently been introduced by outsiders (Whitaker 2020a).

Outsiders in Surama Village

Although the history of Makushi interactions with outsiders can be traced back to the eighteenth century and includes themes of enslavement, alliance, missionization, economic trade, and sorcerous reprisal (Whitaker 2016, 2017, 2020b), the predominant form of current interactions between the Makushi in Surama and outsiders (other than local non-Indigenous people) involves tourism (Whitaker, n.d.). Since the 1990s, Surama Village has developed a successful and locally owned eco-tourism lodge. Surama Eco-Lodge is widely considered a leading eco-tourism operation in Guyana and South America. Its market is broadly international in scope. For example, during fieldwork in the village, I met and encountered tourists originating from countries as wide-ranging as Australia, Belgium, Canada, Czech Republic, France, Germany, New Zealand, Norway, Romania, Russia, Trinidad, the UK, and the US.

There are a variety of forms that tourism takes in Surama. Bird-watching, one of the more popular activities, centers around the tropical parrots, macaws, harpy eagles, and other exotic native species in the region. For birding expeditions, outside companies (often called 'tourism operators' by locals) bring tourists to Surama and other local tourism ventures, as there are also established eco-lodges at Rewa Village, Nappi Village, and the Iwokrama International Centre. Jungle trekking and adventure fishing in the local rivers are also major draws. Tourism operators, such as Wilderness Explorers, organize tourist visits for such activities in Surama. In addition, tourists undergoing 'survival training' are brought to Surama by a company called Bushmasters, which was operated by a former member of the British SAS (Special Air Service) until his untimely death in Lethem, Guyana, in 2020. However, the largest groups of tourism-related visitors for Surama are the biological and conservation research teams, whose visits are organized primarily through Operation Wallacea and various linked educational institutions. The teams visit Surama Eco-Lodge en route to base camps set up by the village in the surrounding forest. In addition to the tourists and their leaders, Surama also has visiting NGO leaders and consultants who advise on tourism and conservation. In total, this involves a significant amount of annual interaction with outside persons in Surama Village.

As described above, outside visitors to Surama generally visit under the aegis of one or another company that provides logistical services and acts as a mediating entity between them

and the village. Surama villagers use strategic forms of hospitality and fêting in attempts to create reciprocal relations of mutual benefit with the key outsiders operating or otherwise 'leading' the tourism groups (Whitaker 2016, 2020b). For example, they present these outsiders (as with a traditional *padlru*) with drinks and other gifts upon arrival, engage them in conversation with local leaders, and sometimes provide them with 'culture show' presentations involving Makushi songs, dances, and traditional forms of dress (Whitaker, n.d.). Such customs of hospitality among the Makushi (particularly presentations of drinks and stylized conversation) were described from the nineteenth century onward and reflect traditional practices of propitiating master-owner spirits in contexts of hunting and farming (Whitaker 2016). By forming (ideally symmetric) relations of reciprocity with both master-owners and key outsiders, the Makushi seek to ensure continued provisions of desiderata (whether food or tourists).

As the master-owners of tourists, company operators and leaders are thought to have asymmetric and vertical relations with those they bring or 'lead' to the village. This is not to say that villagers do not understand the mechanics of the tourism business and only see it as an extension of hunting, farming, and shamanism. Although some tourists directly book visits by contacting the Surama Eco-Lodge through its website, the marketing and recruitment of tourist groups is mostly done by outside operators. Villagers working at the eco-lodge coordinate with these operators to develop itineraries and accommodations for visitors. Eco-lodge workers have a keen sense of what tourists want and why they come to the village. In their interactions with tourism operators, they seek to benefit from the perceived mastery and ownership of these entities over tourists and their resources while aiming for reciprocal exchange with these outsiders. The relational mode that mediates local interactions with tourism operators is derived from traditional relations with master-owners within the landscape. Strategies of gifting, formalized reciprocity, and strategic partnerships are reflected in both cases. The use of the concepts of mastery and ownership in these interactions produces a totemic homology between the asymmetric relations of non-humans with their master-owners and those of tourists with their leaders and companies. The animistic relations posited among non-humans provide a mode for relations posited among outsiders in the context of tourism in Surama. This partial shift of animistic relations of mastery and ownership into relations with outsiders accompanies a declining emphasis on these concepts within the landscape (marked by non-adherence and doubt, as mentioned above) and the nascent emergence of ontological naturalism.

Totemism, Outsiders, and the Landscape

Beyond what has already been described, outsiders are also linked to the landscape in ways that may resemble some versions of ontological (and not merely sociological) totemism. Willerslev and Ulturgasheva (2012: 57) discuss how humans are thought to become non-human beings (such as animals) after death in animistic societies and are often thought to become (or be associated with) features of the landscape (such as mountains) in totemism. Although this perception is often complicated—for example, the Eveny in Siberia sometimes view dead shamans as becoming animals (animism) and sometimes associate them with mountains (totemism) (ibid.: 57–58)—it fits with Ingold's (2000: 112–114) emphasis (drawn largely from ethnographies of Indigenous Australians) that totemism's central focus is ancestral connections with the land and 'vital forces'. The dead among the Chukchi in Siberia are also associated with features of the landscape, such as mountains, and "represent in an important sense the prototypical totemic principle of higher-ranked ancestors that dwell in the landscape" (Willerslev and Ulturgasheva 2012: 61). In contrast, among Darxad Mongol pastoralists in North Asia, "mountains have

spirit-'owners' (*ezed*), with whom local people have to engage in a respectful manner" (Pedersen 2001: 413). In all of these cases, features of the landscape are associated with social asymmetries linked to ontological totemism.

The Makushi in Surama today often equivocate about the destinations of the dead. This is largely due to the influence of missionaries and other visitors bringing narratives of Christianity and secularism. Nonetheless, many still describe understandings that the dead become animals or other non-humans in congruence with animism. However, from the nineteenth century, there are also cases where landscape features (particularly mountains) have been associated with prominent outsiders. For example, Thomas Youd, the Anglican missionary to the Makushi (1830s to 1840s) mentioned above, was thought to reside on top of a particular mountain after his death (Whitaker 2016: 154). In effect, Youd became the master-owner of the mountain. This reveals one of the earliest documented cases of outsiders obtaining the role of such beings among the Makushi. It is in keeping with Fausto's (2012a: 39–40) claims that relations of mastery and ownership often provided a framework for asymmetric relations with Europeans during the colonial era and continue to do so today. Nevertheless, a broader association of outsiders, the dead, and the landscape occurs in the context of water mamas.

Like certain forest animals, water mamas (similar to mermaids) are sometimes said to capture people and transform them into water mamas (Whitaker 2020c). This is described in terms of both predation and seduction, as there are notions of sexual attraction and allurement between humans and water mamas. I was told that deaths in Makushi villages are sometimes described in terms of a person finding a spouse "under the water"—implying union with (and sometimes transformation into) a water mama. As such, the dead (including both ancestors and outsiders) may at times be incorporated into the landscape as master-owners. I mentioned above that water mamas are sometimes thought to be master-owners of fish and/or rivers. This conceptual linkage can be taken one step further because water mamas are also associated with Europeans (particularly those from the colonial era) and other white people.[6] This association occurs at the level of the landscape as well (see Kohn 2007). Together with the example of Youd, it articulates the ancestors, outsiders, and master-owner spirits within the landscape, which holds 'vital forces' often associated with ontological totemism. Although further work is needed to establish whether Makushi groups truly evince ontological (rather than merely sociological) totemism in this sense, these connections suggest that such totemism may have more conceptual applicability in Amazonia than previously acknowledged.

Conclusion

This article has shown how the Makushi—a society without segmentary or descent-based social organization—mediate animism and naturalism through sociological totemism in Surama. It has examined how animistic relations of mastery and ownership—found in concepts and practices involving non-humans within the Makushi landscape—have shifted toward intra-human relations involving the leaders of tourism groups and others and currently form totemic parallels between non-humans and humans in Surama. The relations between tourism leaders and tourists are homologous to those of master-owners and their non-human wards. Comparable strategies are used by the Makushi in cases of non-human master-owners and leaders of tourists to ensure the continued provision of various needed and desired items. This has resulted in a partial transfer of traditionally animistic relations (involving mastery and ownership) within the landscape into intra-human relations (involving sociological totemism) and has contributed to ontological transformation through the emergence of a nascent naturalism among the Makushi in Surama.

At a broader level, this article contributes to existing work on ontological schemata—particularly animism, totemism, and naturalism—that draws out their interconnections and interrelations in societies ranging from Amazonia to Asia. It helps to further clarify anthropological concepts of totemism in both its sociological and ontological forms and in its broader applicability in conjunction with other ontological schemata. In particular, the article shows one path through which totemism (primarily in its sociological form) can be examined apart from societies with descent-based social organization. In going beyond the classic totemic contrasts between internal relations in society and external relations in nature, we find external social relations (interactions with human outsiders) that yield their own totemic contrasts within the local landscape. Such relations provide a bridge among the Makushi in Surama between the ontological modes of animism and naturalism and facilitate the co-occurrence of these modes within the same society. Within the context of the Surama totem pole, the combination of animistic relations and naturalism is linked to the totemic homologies formed between non-humans and human outsiders. This provides a framework for understanding historical and current interactions with others, both human and non-human, among the Makushi.

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NOTES

1. Relevant fieldwork for this article was conducted in phases in Surama Village, Guyana, in 2012, 2013, 2014, and 2015.
2. All personal names mentioned in this article are pseudonyms to protect confidentiality.
3. This is a mermaid-like being associated with historical interactions with Europeans (Whitaker 2020c).
4. In addition to being a shamanic drug among the Makushi, tobacco is also used to feed a variety of spiritual beings and certain animated plants.

5. For Ingold (2000: 47), such idiomatic uses of parenthood (or other relations) reflect lived experiences whereby "the constitutive quality of intimate relations with non-human and human components of the environment is one and the same" (see also Mentore 2012).
6. Siberian societies also have somewhat similar beliefs in 'masters' or 'owners' (Pedersen 2001: 413, 415).

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