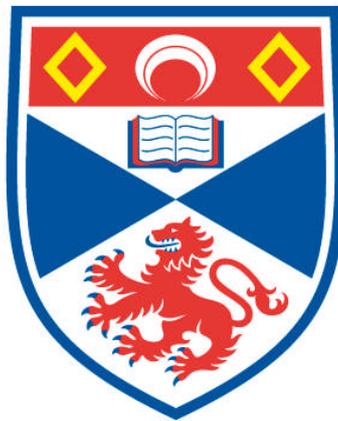


**MANIOC BEER AND THE WORD OF GOD : FACES OF THE  
FUTURE IN MAKUMA, ECUADOR**

**Victor Cova**

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



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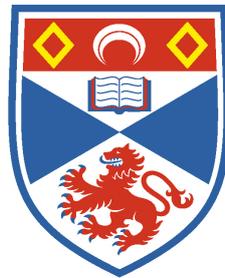
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MANIOC BEER AND THE WORD OF GOD  
FACES OF THE FUTURE IN MAKUMA, ECUADOR

VICTOR COVA



University of  
St Andrews

THIS THESIS IS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT FOR THE  
DEGREE OF PHD  
AT THE  
UNIVERSITY OF ST ANDREWS

23/09/2014

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I, Victor Cova, hereby certify that this thesis, which is approximately 77 000 words in length, has been written by me, and that it is the record of work carried out by me, or principally by myself in collaboration with others as acknowledged, and that it has not been submitted in any previous application for a higher degree.

I was admitted as a research student in September 2009 and as a candidate for the degree of PhD in Social Anthropology in September 2010; the higher study for which this is a record was carried out in the University of St Andrews between 2010 and 2014.

I, Victor Cova, received assistance in the writing of this thesis in respect of grammar and spelling, which was provided by Pierre Zahnd and Miranda Stuart

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## ABSTRACT

How can anthropologists describe the relationship between Christian and Amazonian ontologies? Based on a 13 months-long fieldwork, this ethnography of the Evangelical mission town of Makuma in lowland Ecuador describes the relationship between the Shuar and North American missionaries. In Makuma “Christianity” and “Shuar” both refer to ways of relating particularity to a universal but put different emphases either on the body or on belief, and on relation or on boundaries. I argue that these are constituted by “technologies of introjection of the future”. For Shuar people, these technologies range from manioc beer to powerful hallucinogens which serve to anchor a perceived chronic instability of Amazonian bodies. Shuar Christians avoid using any of these, which complicates their participation in social life. All the alternatives they have found revolve around the Bible. As another “technology of introjection of the future”, the Bible appears to Makuma Christians as a text addressed to them personally by a God come from a future beyond the future to help them live that future in the present. They translate the Bible into the Shuar language and document the world from the Bible’s perspective to stabilise the relationship between God, themselves, and Shuar people. Both “technologies of introjection of the future” are distinct but can be made to work together. I present various forms of cooperation between Shuar and missionaries (Bible translation, maintenance of a hydroelectric powerplant) alongside attempts to articulate a new relationship between the Shuar, God, and the Church that would bypass the missionaries (Islam, adventism, or indigenous churches). These are judged by the Shuar for their effects on kinship. I conclude the thesis with a more abstract definition of “technologies of incorporation of the future” which enables their articulation with capitalism and colonialism and opens up broader comparative horizons.

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My grandfather bought me Frank and Marie Drown's book at a second hand market. He unwittingly launched me toward Makuma. My parents, my sister visited me when I was far away. I had long conversations when I came back with Richard, Simon, Mme Vidal. The unwavering support of my friends and my family throughout the years kept me going.

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1: A truck on the newly built road to Makuma



2: Carrying a table on the main street of Makuma

## INTRODUCTION

### 1. ON BECOMING RESPONSIVE TO CHRISTIANITY IN MAKUMA

“It must have been so fun to share your relationship to Jesus with these people!” beamed Norma on the porch of her house in Makuma<sup>1</sup>. “Well” I replied, “I guess my relationship with Jesus is a little bit complicated”. Both my parents were militant atheists, I explained. On my father's side, we had been Catholics from Brittany, though not very practicing ones. My father was 21 in 1968, had worn his hair long, gone to India and belonged to a Trotskyist cell. He thought religion was the opium of the people. On my mother's side, we had been Jewish, which meant I was, somehow, Jewish as well. But already before the War, in Warsaw, my grandfather had decided that socialism was the way forward, not the synagogue. He went through Bar Mitzvah to please his parents, but left it at that. He fled to Russia not long after the German invasion, returned with the Polish Army (under commandment of the Red Army) when he was old enough to join it. My mother thought she was a Catholic like everybody else, until children mocked her for being Jewish when she was nine years old in the school playground. Later, my grandfather and a group of intellectuals who supported the student movement's demands for democratic reforms were expelled from the Party. He could not work or publish, his phone was tapped, his mail was read, his friends started to emigrate. He soon moved to France, then Geneva. He remains a historian of the French Enlightenment, and shares the era's scepticism towards religion. My mother became a biologist and was often virulent in her distaste for religion.

“But apparently my nanny was a Jehovah's Witness. She used to read us the Bible a lot”, I ventured. “You're Jewish?” she asked. “How fun! The Lord loves your people so much” I immediately added that I had been to a syn-

agogue perhaps three times only in my life, and that I was not even circumcised, but to no avail: I was Jewish. For Jim and Norma, this meant I was on the same side as they in the great history of sin and salvation that would end (for them) in the Rapture and (for Jews) in Tribulations. Other things brought us close to each other: a Frenchman who had come to Makuma, a Swiss garlic press that had lasted Norma years, England, where both I and their children had studied for a while.

I had exchanged a few emails with Jim, Norma's husband, over the previous few months. We had agreed that I could stay in the guest house in the mission for a few months as I was supposed to be teaching at the high school in Makuma, the small town that had developed next to the mission. Jim and I met briefly the evening before I met Norma to talk about the mission. We agreed to meet early the next morning at the bus station so that he could take me to the mission. On the one bus that drove to Makuma, we were the only two non-Shuar. The bus left the waking streets of Macas for the big highway that had recently been built by the government of Rafael Correa as part of his "Revolucion Ciudadana" , the Citizen's Revolution. It turned left into a smaller gravel road and slowed down to avoid the potholes. Many of children got on and left a little further. The bus emptied. Hours later, yet much earlier than expected, the bus driver declared he had to stop there. We disembarked and started walking with the few people who had been left in the bus. The stretch of road we were on was very recent. Although the road had reached Yuwientsa in the late 1990s, it never went further until recently. The province, for the first time headed by a Shuar man, the economist Marcelino Chumpi from the indigenous party Pachakutik, had been building a stretch of road between Yuwientsa and Makuma. They did so in open defiance of the government, who had been trying to bargain road- and hospital-construction against oil exploitation in the region. Trucks went back and forth on the road,

carrying rocks, pebbles, sand, or coming back empty. One of them let us ride along on the back of the truck. We climbed atop the giant tire, and two Shuar men who were already on top of the pile of rubble in the back helped us on. Jim was a tall, thin, white-haired man in his late sixties. Between the noise of the motor and the wind and the need to hold onto the metal sides of the truck with one hand and my backpack with the other so as not to be thrown off or lose whatever clothes I had, I could not really talk with him then. Even earlier, at the bar the night before, in the bus that morning, we had not talked much. Jim spoke slowly and often remained silent. After a while the truck stopped and we disembarked. The gravel had given way to a muddy gash in the landscape where the road would soon be, with mounds of earth on either side. I followed Jim along trails that wove a dry path from one side of the road to another, maneuvering in-between puddles. I slowed us down many times, still unable to distinguish between dry mud and deep puddles. After a few hours, we left the road behind us and followed a small path through the forest. It took us down to a small stream of water, then back up onto a small plateau. I was exhausted. A small airplane rushed past us and flew off the ground: this was the Makuma airstrip. We got closer to the mission itself. The small town that had grown next to the mission was on our right, but we turned left into the grassy mission grounds, past a few buildings, and arrived at Jim's and Norma's house. I was to discover that Norma was the very opposite of Jim: chatty, cheerful, disarmingly earnest. "Fun" was one of her favorite words. She was about as tall as Jim, with long grey hair, and wearing a long dress that reminded me of the Little House in the Prairie. She greeted us and went to fetch a jug of cold water from the fridge. I was at a loss. I had come to Makuma twice before, and had never seen a fridge, a jug, a floral dress, or Americans there. I was even more disarmed by her question: What exactly was my relationship with Jesus?

Months later, on the other side of the airstrip, in the town of Makuma, I would have a strangely similar conversation with Alicia. A Shuar woman, she came from a different part of Shuar territory to teach in one of the first primary schools in Makuma, whilst her husband became the first head of the high-school. Now she also managed one of Makuma's four shops from within her house. We had been sitting in her kitchen, eating doughnuts she was making for her grandchildren. We talked about the other French people she had known, and she mentioned a tourist who liked everybody except, she said with a laugh, "Americans and Germans", whom that tourist hated with a passion and had warned her against. She couldn't understand why. I ventured that it might be because of what happened during the Second World War, when Germany invaded France. She wanted to know more about what had happened during that war, and I did my best to explain. Among other things, I talked about my grandfather escaping out of Warsaw as a teenager, alone, and how he never saw his parents or his grandparents again. I talked about my grandmother who had watched as her sister was shot by a German soldier for refusing to walk in the gutter. "I understand" she said, "the same thing happened to my grandmother. All her family was killed in a raid by other Shuar and she had to flee alone. She grew up with another part of her family". Alicia came from the Upano Valley. As state-promoted colonisation intensified in the first part of the twentieth century, Shuar families were pushed further South and East. Shotguns and machetes became easily available. Feuding intensified among Shuar families. When violence among Shuar abated after the 1950s, it was replaced by violence from the settlers. Policemen would come into people's houses, take food, sometimes rape women, and imprison those who fought back, she told me. Families of Shuar and families of settlers fought against each other over land. "Yes" she said, "I understand". Alicia thought we shared a history of oppression. Another friend, Manuel, a politician who was then the head of the local political federation, thought instead

that it was our fates we had in common: during Tribulations, as the Bible predicted, all the nations would be in league against us. The Bible talked of the Jews, of course, but he could see all the Latin American countries forging alliances that also fit the Revelations narrative. They would get together to exterminate all the indigenous people of the Amazon, destroy their forests, and take their oil. This much he could foresee. As for himself, he often identified with the Jewish kings from Judges, challenged from every side, unable to do anything because of their people's unruliness. His own vice-president had colluded with other political leaders to force him to step down. He had managed to foil this coup as well as the next few, but ultimately he did have to step down.

That people in Makuma, North American missionaries or Shuar, thought that I was in many ways similar to them does not mean that they thought we were the same. "Jew", for the Evangelicals, articulated both similarities and differences between us, as did "European". If in their eyes I belonged like them to God's people, as long as I did not recognise the Messiah in Jesus Christ there was still an important barrier standing between us. Notwithstanding His love for Jews, according to my missionary friends God would still let them be tortured and killed during Tribulations. They sometimes expected me to know the Bible better than they, for instance asking me to read Hebrew words that some of their Bible commentaries featured. I could not satisfy their expectations. In other ways, I could not help but remind them that what they called "the Bible" was a very different set of books from what Jews read, sang, and commented upon. The Christian "Old Testament" goes beyond the five books of Torah, but leave out the volumes of Talmud and Mishnah (not to mention Rachi and Zohar) that most Jews consider canonical. Reading the Bible through so many layers of commentaries, the missionaries thought, ran counter to their attempt to take Scriptures literally, plainly. The many obliga-

tions and prohibitions that Orthodox Jews try to follow also seemed to them to be superfluous attempts to gain by works what had already been given for free by Jesus: salvation. A good Jew, for them, was a “Jew for Jesus”, in the same way as a good Christian was a Christian for Israel. This ambivalence was reflected in texts by Jews for Jesus which they lent me. There, the refusal by Jews to recognise Jesus was often revealed to result from a conspiracy by rabbis to hide the truth, for instance by never commenting upon certain verses that “obviously” referred to the coming of Jesus. Supersessionism, the belief that Christianity had made Judaism redundant, and anti-Semitic conspiracy theories, which they explicitly rejected, were therefore not that far. I was welcomed as the same, yet also as different.

A different ambivalence lay behind the way Shuar welcomed me. Many found me strange. I was too short and scrawny to be an *Inkis*, that is, an English-speaker, an American. Yet I clearly could not be an *Apache*, an Ecuadorian national, partly because I did not speak Spanish well enough, partly because I treated Shuar as equals and not as inferiors. Men seemed to find it difficult to decide if I was a very young man or a very old one, as only children and elders could live with only skin on their bones like I did. Consequently, they were not sure if they should take me seriously or not. A woman who was growing impatient with my refusal to sleep with her also bitterly asked me “if it was normal for people where I come from to always be alone”. I did not have a wife, and I did not seem to want one either. I did not know many people, I walked around town on my own, I lived alone. What might I be up to? As I was later told, the first time I set foot in the office of the Shuar political federation of Makuma (NASHE - Nacion Shuar del Ecuador) the people who were present at the time started talking about me in Shuar: “He says he comes to help us, but where in that tiny head of his, that hummingbird head, would he hide all that knowledge and wisdom?”. Whenever Manuel, who would later

be one of my great friends there, would introduce me to new people, he would tell that story and everybody would laugh. Hummingbird head, Jempe Muuke in Shuar, was the name he gave me. It did not take me long to understand what he was trying to do by telling that story and calling me that by way of introducing me. In this way he could simultaneously highlight my strangeness, the need to be suspicious of me and my intentions, and defuse the violence that such suspicion might arouse by making fun of me. The association with the hummingbird also implied that I could be used for good, as the mythical Jempe did when he stole fire from Iwia, the giant white anthropophagous monster, and gave it to Shuar.

As people started comparing me with themselves, finding commonalities and differences between us, as they also compared me with other sorts of people they had known, I did the same with them. I tried to understand how similar and different I was from the people I encountered, and how they related to each other. One day I would feel like I was just like these North Americans, somehow lost in that place, suspected of doing all sorts of monstrous things I was certain I was not (a spy, a headhunter, a thief). A few days later I would feel that a gulf was separating me from these people and what suddenly appeared to me as their strangely perverse God, their fear of Muslims, their love of C. S. Lewis. When the man who had become my best friend, Efren, told me we were more than brothers, I knew it was true as well as I knew that I had no idea what he meant by "brother". When Norma and Alicia would place me in the same history as theirs, I could sense that they both meant something very different by that, that they lived and talked about history in very different ways from the other, and from mine. Beyond this, I also had a sense that the ways in which they would compare people were themselves different. For Norma to say that I was like or unlike a specific person was not the same as for Alicia to say the same thing. Crucially, I knew that who I was

to them would decide my fate in Makuma. Try as I may to present myself in one or another way, I could not predict the effect of these efforts on them, nor could I disguise my body. The only way at my disposal to somehow control my future in Makuma required me to understand how I featured in Shuar and in missionaries comparisons, but this knowledge could only be an outcome of the very relationships I was trying to control. My future was in their hands and there was nothing I could do. As I tried to understand this, another problem surfaced: my own way of comparing Norma with Alicia could be contrasted to their ways of comparing me to others, but comparing all three required yet another level of comparison. Comparisons of comparisons threatened to accumulate infinitely. Did Norma and Alicia struggle with the same fear of infinite comparisons or was this a feature of my own mode of comparison, a trap of my own making? This Thesis is the result of my attempts to get to grips with the consequences of these facts.

It had taken me a long time to find the offices of NASHE. Wanting to go to Makuma just to see what it was like, I had sent an email to the missionaries. After all, I had first heard of the place through their writings. They told me to get in touch with NASHE first in order to get an authorisation. They couldn't tell me where their offices were, they said, because NASHE kept changing buildings. Someone else had told me the street where they were supposed to be on in Macas, but after walking up and down that street I still could not find any trace of NASHE. I finally enlisted the help of a friend from Macas. She asked a friend of hers who had a veterinary and animal supplies shop on that street and he mentioned a building that could be accessed by going through a sort of garage, where many Shuar came and went. We found the building, a nondescript beige cement building that looked like most buildings in Macas. There was still no sign of NASHE. We climbed a flight of wooden stairs to the first floor and an open door behind which a woman was shouting in Shuar

in a two-way radio whilst others were waiting in the same room, sat on white plastic chairs. Among them was Manuel's second wife, who would later tell him the joke that would give me my name. The secretary let us in to Manuel's office after telling him who we were. He shook our hands with a firm grip. He was about the same height as me, but had broad shoulders, a wide smile, and was generally much larger than me. I told him that I was thinking of working in Makuma, and he welcomed me immediately. He said it would be very good for the NASHE to have an anthropologist visit them, because Shuar there had a lot of knowledge to share but that, as an organisation, it wasn't very famous compared to their neighbor, the much bigger and wealthier FICSH. He added:

We have to do this very carefully, because my people are very cautious, you know, some of us are ex-military, others used to be spies for the government, we have experts in security, and so we know how things work. People can think that you are a spy from your government, or from ours, or from the mining companies, and that's why we need a paper that tells us who you work for, where you come from. Even Shuar can be spies, spying against us! Many times, government officials have come with clothes, or with gifts, to try and trick us! But we are no fools... and they had to flee our territory running! On the other hand, people with good intentions, humanitarians and ecologists, people like you, we recognise them immediately and we welcome them. Because we need allies, not for war, but to keep peace! The government calls us terrorists, people do not understand why we fight so hard against the oil and mining companies, so we need allies to give a good picture of us, and we need to be careful that no visitor- whether they be Shuar, a settler, or a foreigner- are killed here as it had been the case elsewhere in Shuar territory.

We talked about more things, a music festival in Switzerland he had attended years before, the oddness of snack vending machines, comparisons of French and Ecuadorian women. I felt hopeful when I left: he was a nice man, had treated me very nicely, and it seemed like we got on fairly well. More than anything, he had understood that I came as an ally, and he had offered me “access” to the “field”, something I had been told was a good thing. More than that, I left determined to help the Shuar people, and for a while I really felt like I could (and should) help “the Shuar”. This had never really appealed to me before. I had known enough activists to see, beyond their desires to change the world, the violent imperialist fantasies that often sustained them. I had had no time for the “white saviour” narratives that irrigate North American cinema, yet here I was, thinking I could save Shuar. Surely this was different? Didn't Manuel himself, their president, tell me I should do it? Didn't he say they lacked it all, contacts in the main NGOs working in the Amazon, knowledge of how to write funding applications, and that I could and should provide them with these things?

In time, I would of course come to understand that NASHE had more contacts than I did in more NGOs than I could even imagine, that they were very good at getting funding, and that my poor Spanish and even poorer understanding of their lives would not go a long way to help them. I also now know (because he later told me) that at the time, and for months afterwards, Manuel thought that I was a spy. His welcoming speech that day was full of underhand threats: we think you're a spy, and spies leave our territory running for their lives, when they do not get killed. Besides telling me who he thought he knew I was, however, Manuel was trying to make me into another specific sort of person. He gave me two possible positions to occupy: I could be a friend, or I could be a spy. He then systematically diverted me from adopting the enemy position, presenting it first as a false idea in some people's

heads, then by showing that attempts to spy on Shuar would fail, and third by implying that there would be violent consequences to my being found out. He then offered me a second position, that of the ally, who would help in specific activities, though attributing to these activities dramatically positive consequences. That is, indeed, who I felt myself to be when I left his office: an ally. This was when we decided I would teach at the Colegio Nacional Antonio Samaniego in Makuma (a mortifying failure), and perhaps even invite a friend to teach a Theatre of the Oppressed workshop to help with a “Young Leaders” training program he had wanted to set up (more of a success). At no point (and for the best) had he made it possible for me to be who I thought I was: a somewhat disinterested scholar who just happened to be there. I spent the rest of my time in Ecuador, and since, learning to be what he had made me: a friend.

This might then be one provisional way out of the problem of the infinitely receding comparison I described earlier. Comparison would be not only a cognitive activity, nor would it be purely motivated by how “interesting” its products are, but it would find its ground in ethics and politics. A friend of mine in Quito drove this point home when she mocked me for finding everything “interesting”. She had been telling me stories, we had been having food, she took me sightseeing, and all of it I found “interesting”. Not “beautiful”, “gross”, “delicious”, “sad”, but “interesting”. Everything the world threw at me was all the more “interesting” as I tried to be a “disinterested” scholar. I had not wanted to be anyone in particular, to take sides, to be taken and captured by these experiences. I had of course had a first reaction to foods, people, sights, stories, but I would then reflexively take a step back and contemplate these experiences themselves, which I could then all put on the same plane: “interesting”. When Norma, Alicia, Manuel, tried to understand who I was by comparing me to themselves and to others, theirs was not a

purely contemplative activity, they did not only try to find a cognitive surplus to their experience of me so that they could label me “interesting”. Telling me who I was, they were making me into specific sorts of persons whilst also acting directly upon the relation between them and me, and between me and other beings (God, the State, NGOs, etc...). Death, and more specifically murder, war, extermination, were the horizons of these discussions, of our relations. Would I kill them? Would I be killed by them? Would they meet me again in some afterlife, or would I burn in hell? Could this be prevented? What future did I herald, one of peace and prosperity, or one of conflict? Who- that is, which future- had sent me to them?

I had to learn to be a friend, because I often found myself unwilling or unable to be who others wanted me to be. For instance, I could not help being stingy. Although people rarely made demands on objects I owned (a radio, an inflatable mattress), I almost never caved in to their demands. Many times, I only noticed someone had made a demand after the fact: what I took to be compliments on objects I owned or complaints on their lack of proper bedding, for instance, really had been implicit requests. Only now do I realise that explicit demands must have felt somewhat humiliating to my friends, forcing them as it did to plead with me. Moreover, in spite of their remarkably reasonable nature, those few demands usually felt to me like they were too much. It is not easy for me now to explain why I couldn't let myself give them these things. Parts of it comes from having grown up in a world that distinguishes between gifts and exchanges in a very specific way, making the spontaneous asking of a specific gift by a relative stranger on no special occasion appear somewhat distasteful to me. It also comes from the heroic individual ethos that made it desirable for me to “save Shuar”: if a sacrifice was to be made, it had to look like I was making it willingly and independently. When that rhetorical framing was not present, and even at times when it was, I felt wary that

I would be used and abused. Beyond these reasons lay the fear of disappearing, of being completely assimilated, of not knowing who I was anymore. Possessing far fewer objects than I was accustomed to, finding it more difficult than ever to make sense of, and to live in, the rhythms of daily life and the shape of space, I held onto what I had as though my life depended on it. Needless to say, my life did not depend on it, quite the opposite: had I been more generous, I would have garnered more support from people, entered into more relationships, encountered less suspicion.

An important part of fieldwork was spent trying to notice and understand such resistances on my part to the worlds I encountered. Central in these was my refusal to convert to Christianity. Not that efforts in that direction were strong on the part of my friends, missionaries, and Shuar alike. I can only remember a handful of times when I was being witnessed to, only once when this led the person who was talking to me to ask if I wanted to join the Church. The missionaries limited themselves to giving me books of apologetics that they thought might interest me (one written for urbanite, educated upper middle class Americans, another a memoir of a Jew for Jesus during the Second World War, etc). Shuar friends would tell me how beautiful life as a Christian was, someone would tell me that, surely, God had sent me there to convert me so that I could become a missionary to my own people. Nevertheless, the question remained for myself: why was I refusing to publicly accept Jesus as my personal saviour? It was not a matter of refusing the existence of God, nor did I have any problem accepting that a man named Jesus could have died and resurrected a number of centuries ago. Finally, I couldn't deny that I was touched, somehow, by what I read in the Gospel, in the books I had been given (especially Bonhoeffer, St Augustine, and, more rarely, C.S. Lewis), in the testimonies I heard. In Susan Harding's words, I had been "convicted by the Holy Spirit", yet I nevertheless refused<sup>2</sup>. As with my refus-

al of gift-giving, there are many sides to this refusal, and I cannot say that I have unpacked them all. It was partly that, even as an uncircumcised Godless half-Jew, the idea of willingly converting to Christianity seemed like a final capitulation to thousand of years of resistance to more or less explicit attempts to force Jews to accept Jesus as the Messiah. I therefore read my own refusal as part of that history of refusal, even if I could hardly say what it was I wanted to protect from Christianity. This refusal nevertheless remained obscure to me, and I used it to better understand what Christianity was in Makuma, how it could both attract and repel me.

Lest the preceding few paragraphs give the impression that my choice to study Evangelical Christianity in Makuma was a decision that I took, I would like to emphasize that the many other projects I had (and this one too) were resisted by the people they would have involved. In other words, if I resisted being made into an exchange partner and into a Christian, various people also refused to play “informant” to the gringo I was. As I hope will remain clear throughout the chapters that follow, the Makuma world is not composed solely of missionaries and Shuar, of Christians and Shamans, but could also include at various times pilots, doctors, teachers, politicians, road-builders, construction workers, engineers, tourists, the ambassador of Saudi Arabia, scrap metal dealers, pop singers (and their half-naked dancers), delegates from various ministries, Muslims, militaries, biologists, not to mention all manners of stones, trees, tubers, flowers, birds, snakes, lizards, spiders, muds, hydro electric power stations, radios, Iwianch, tsunki, deer-headed men, magical arrows, poisoned manioc beer, Bibles, computers, and so on. Nearby Macas presented an even more complex figure. That I would spend most of my time mainly with Christians, if it went with some of my interests, also resulted from others refusing to talk to me.

## 2. WHAT THIS DISSERTATION IS ABOUT

### 2. 1. Comparison

I have described the various processes through which I was made, and tried to make myself, responsive to the meanings of Christianity in Makuma. I now want to specify what this dissertation will be about, before relating it to other works in the anthropology of Christianity and in Amazonian ethnography. In this text I aim to give the reader some idea of the dynamic complexities that make up the relationship between “Christians” and “non-Christians”, “Shuar” and “North American Missionaries”, in Makuma. I leave these terms in bracket until I present more adequate concepts to describe the social world of Makuma in Chapter 1: Yus Shuar, Iwianch Shuar, Inkis, Shuar Culture, Shuar Church. Indeed, the problem with words like “Christian” is that people like myself and many of my readers raised in secularised European and North American worlds may assume they know what sort of thing they refer to. Or, in the case of “Culture” and “Religion”, anthropologists who profess that these are confused and confusing categories still seem to know how they ought to be confused by them<sup>3</sup>. I want to suggest that these assumptions make it more difficult to understand what people in Makuma mean when they use these (or similar) terms. Doing away with them and pretending we can start from nothing would not make it easier, however: people in Makuma did not come up with words like “Christian”, “Culture”, “Church” and “Religion”. Even when they used them to translate pre-existing Shuar concepts, they chose those specific translations because of the sort of work they could make to do in a number of specific contexts. These contexts involve the relationships between people who were variously taken to stand for groups of other people or to give access to specific non-human beings and their power.

In other words, this text is an attempt at describing relationships between two people, where “people” is voluntarily left indistinct for now. It is a relationship between mainly two, although what these two are (individuals? collectives? kinship groups? cultures?) cannot for now be determined. More specifically, it attends to two different sorts of twos: one relationship that can broadly be described as that between “Christian Shuar” and “Non-Christian Shuar”, and one between “North American Evangelical missionaries” and “Shuar people”. The relationship between those two types of interaction, the ways in which they sometimes overlap and at other times differ from each other, is therefore the proper object of this text. Central to this investigation are the manifold ways in which the two poles of these two relationships are constituted by the relationship that articulates them, and how in turn they try to modify or stabilise the relationship that partly constitutes them. I have already indicated that I take this to be a problem of comparison, both as an object and as a method: how do Shuar and North American Christians “do” comparison? How do they compare different sorts of people? What role do these comparisons play in constituting “Shuar” and “Christianity”? But also: How to compare Christian and Shuar ways of comparing<sup>4</sup>?

## 2. 2. Politics

The object of this text can be described in yet another way. North American Evangelical missionaries belonging to the Gospel Missionary Union arrived in the Morona Santiago Province in 1910, and created a mission in Makuma in the late 1940s. Although from one point of view they were only the latest in a series of attempts spanning four centuries to bring the Gospel to Shuar, singularly they were among the first ones not to be killed<sup>5</sup>. In fact, their arrival coincided with the end of a particularly intense period of revenge killings among Shuar and between Shuar and Achuar that had been taking place since the late nineteenth century, probably at least partly as a result of increased

colonisation. Shuar social organisation has been described as a particularly intensive form of some aspects common to most Amazonian societies, not only a “Society against the State” but as “against Society” itself (Rubenstein 2011:59). Until the 1950s, Shuar mainly lived in single households constituted around the father of a family, his wives, their children, and their daughter’s husbands. The death of the father would often lead to a fission of the household into as many new households as there were adult men left. Occasionally, more households would live under the same roof. This would happen particularly in times of war, as the allies of a big man (*uunt*) would come to live with him in a sort of fortress. Until the late 1950s, social life would revolve around intense feuding among Shuar and with their closest neighbours, Achuar. Achu Shuar, Shuar of the Achu Palm Tree, were the traditional enemies of Shuar who would be hunted and whose heads, famously, would be shrunk in order to protect the killers against their avenging souls.

Since the 1950s, Shuar have increasingly started to live in communities made more permanent by an increasing number of infrastructures (airplane runways, electricity, water canalisations, schools, infirmaries, indoor football pitches, roads...). Under increased pressure from the State and with the help of missionaries, they have acquired land titles, at first individual, increasingly collective, and have organised themselves politically into federations. There are two main Shuar federations, the biggest one created with the Catholic missionaries, FICSH (Federation Interprovincial de Centros Shuar), and the smaller one, covering much less territory and created with the Evangelical missionaries, NASHE. Since the 1980s, Shuar have been increasingly present on the national stage, notably through the indigenous movement. Surprisingly, given the smaller size of NASHE, an important number of Shuar leaders at the national level come from Makuma (Tito Puanchir, Rafael Pandam). The rise in power of Shuar has very recently led to most elected positions in

the Morona-Santiago province being held by Shuar men and women, and Shuar Chicham becoming one of the official idioms of Ecuador. Simultaneously, this province has become increasingly central to the State's attempt to capitalise on all natural resources in the country and on the elaboration of a trade route between Brazil and China. The region was historically relatively protected from such attempts by geographical difficulties to access it. Gold exploitation started in the second half of the 19th century, for the purpose of which a permanent Salesian mission was established from Cuenca. Later attempts in the mid-20th century to discover oil proved unsuccessful: oil was found, but of such low quality that, given the difficulties of transporting it to be refined, the cost would be too high at the time. With the price of oil skyrocketing throughout the world since the late 1970s, most other sources of petrol in Ecuador being already exploited, and newer technology making extraction and refinement cheaper, Morona Santiago has looked more and more promising to oil companies. Simultaneously, Ecuador's economy and its State revenue have shifted from monocultures (bananas, cacao) to oil exploitation which constitute today as much as 50% of tax revenue. It is now also attempting to feature on the Brazil-China trade route through developing multi-modal infrastructures on the Morona and Tena rivers, the former being on Shuar territory. For twenty years, then, Shuar territory has become increasingly attractive to the state and to trans-national companies, and the construction of a road between Macas and Taisha, the military base that also stands as capital of the local government, going through Makuma, along with a connection to the national electricity grid, seems to be motivated by prospects of both renewed oil exploitation and facilitated trade.

The question, then, is to know the extent to which missionaries, and in particular North American Evangelical missionaries, have participated in these processes of neocolonialism and continue to help shape Makuma as a neoco-

lonial frontier zone. Their ties to national elites and to the Ecuadorian State until recently have been much looser than for the Catholics. At the same time, it has been suspected by some that they had important ties to transnational oil companies based in North America. They undeniably played a part in aiding the Shuar to sedentarize, at the same time as they helped them to fight attempts by the State and by settlers from the highlands to steal their land. None of this was possible without the collaboration of many Shuar who not only abstained from killing the missionaries, but even helped feed them, construct and maintain their infrastructures, protect them against various threats, and became involved in the Church. What did it mean (and what does it continue to mean) for North American Evangelicals to come live in Makuma? What did it mean (and what does it continue to mean) for Shuar to live with them? How do each feature in the political projects of the other? What sort of relationship have they tried to establish with the nation-State and with the capitalist market? How do the relations between Shuar and North Americans contribute to the Ecuadorian neocolonial frontier in the Amazon<sup>6</sup>?

### 2. 3. Ethics

There is a third way to describe this project, one that focuses on ethical commitments. Those North American missionaries who spent most of their life in the Ecuadorian Amazon did so out of obligations they felt they had both to God and to Shuar. Similarly, when faced with those strange foreigners, Shuar not only refused to kill them, but even protected and cared for them on a number of occasions, partly out of obligations to those who had become their friends, and partly out of an obligation to their own kin. These relationships of care and obligation were also associated with projects of self-transformation on both sides. The encounter with these Others were held by both North Americans and Shuar to lead to a transformation of the sort of person they

were, and to help them better fulfill other obligations to God and their kin. This entanglement of relations of obligation and care with projects of self-fashioning would take singular shapes in each case, with different emphases put on the body or on generosity. Beyond this, however, these ethical relations between Shuar and North Americans transformed each and the way they would then relate to their kin and to God. Notably, the entanglement of Shuar and North Americans and the development of usual obligations among them made some other obligations more difficult or impossible to uphold. How are missionisation and hospitality ethical projects, as much as political ones? How did these projects encounter and modify each other? How are both Shuar and North American ethical lives made more difficult by the obligations they have created towards each other? How do they sustain, break and repair the various relationships of obligations and care they find themselves entangled in?

#### 2. 4. Entanglements and faces of the future

These three descriptions of the same project might give the reader the impression that this text is trying to achieve too much. A choice should have been made at some point between the ethnographic theory of comparison, the political economy of a neocolonial frontier, and the study of ethical obligations. Each description relies on theoretical commitments and anthropological traditions that may seem difficult to reconcile. However, I hope that reading the ethnography will highlight the necessity of treating these three problematics together. It is necessary to understand how “Shuar” and “North American” theorise comparison and how these theories are informed by, and give shape to, everyday practices. This helps us understand what sorts of obligations emerge out of their relation, how they try to care for each other, and how their entanglement features in the microphysics of power at the neocolonial frontier. Yet, similarly, without the transnational networks

that make it possible for North Americans to live among Shuar and which are necessary for Shuar to resist and negotiate further colonisation by the State, the urgency and suspicion at the heart of ontological comparison and ethical commitment would seem absurd. Finally, life in Makuma would too easily be reified in terms of cultural and political binaries (North American vs Shuar, Imperialist vs Oppressed) if their manifold entanglements and mutual transformation out of ethical commitment were to be passed over. In other words, Shuar and North Americans, Christians and non-Christians are not the only ones to be entangled: likewise these three theoretical frameworks (comparison, politics, ethics) cannot be separated. I provisionally describe the relationship between Shuar and North American missionaries, as well as the relationship between comparison, politics and ethics in terms of entanglement. By “entanglement” I mean a relationship in which one term is taken and defined by that relationship to another term. Although the terms might pre-exist the relationship and voluntarily engage in it, this is not necessarily the case. I use “entanglement” instead to emphasize the passivity of the terms within the relation and their being produced by it, at least partially. A transformation of one term affects the web of relationships and terms in which it is entangled, and which in return affect it.

An important conclusion in this dissertation will be the ways in which these entanglements constitute temporality as such<sup>8</sup>. I will show in Chapters 2 and 3 that what I call “technologies<sup>9</sup> of introjection of the future” are central to the lives of Shuar and North American Evangelical missionaries. For Shuar, these technologies consist in a number of visionary-vomitory drinks that make it possible to encounter individual and collective futures as persons. For Evangelical missionaries, these technologies consist in specific ways of reading the Bible, praying, and documenting the present, ways through which one may encounter God. Both these technologies are located at the crux of the en-

tanglements mentioned previously. They draw their power from them and re-articulate them in powerful ways. In doing so they give Shuar and Evangelicals access to forms of immortality and ways of knowing that make it possible for them to fulfill ethical obligations and take political action, at the same time as they create new ethical demands and enfold people in new collectives. Shuar and evangelical Christians may not be the only people to use such technologies. Indeed, fieldwork itself may be taken to be another such example. My realisation that I was facing my future as I spoke with Norma or Alicia could then be taken literally.

### 3. SOME METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

In the 14 months I spent in Ecuador (October 2011 to April 2012, May 2012 to December 2012), I spent around 9 months in Makuma itself, 3 months in Macas, and 1 month in Quito. When in Macas, I mainly stayed at a small hotel, after spending my first week there in a family of settlers. In Makuma, I stayed in the mission itself, in a guest house I rented from the missionaries. In practice, however, I was not that sedentary. I spent much time travelling back and forth between different places: during my time in Macas I went to Makuma and Kuamar to visit Manuel or to attend festivities; I also went to Puyo and Shell on a number of occasions throughout the year. There I visited a friend in prison, followed some of the paperwork involved in getting a small airplane for NASHE, and stayed with Clever at his church; I travelled to Taisha and to various communities on the Santiago river, where I stayed for a number of weeks; even when in Makuma, I would often travel to other communities like Kuamar, Paantin, Amazonas, stop by Cuchaentsa on my way to Macas, or go with my friend Efren to Samikim, the community where his parents lived. Nevertheless, I was more sedentary than most of my Shuar friends

who always seemed to be on the move, travelling from a political meeting to a football game to a training course on tourism to a party.

Makuma itself is a peculiar community by Shuar standards. Few people apart from the missionaries have lived there for extended periods of time. The first missionaries chose the place because it stood at the crossing of various paths without “belonging” to any one family. The missionaries created a church, a school, a small infirmary, a shop and a landing strip. People from various families would meet at the mission and it served as neutral ground for feuding families to negotiate. It does not seem that many people decided to settle there until the late 1980s, when the Ecuadorian State created a school, a high school, and a health post, a movement which intensified with the creation of an administrative centre in 1996. Around these were created a small hotel, a number of shops and an “espacio cubierto”, a slab of concrete shielded from the rain by a very high metal roof, but no walls. Recently, the development of Makuma has been oriented around a “Plan de Desarrollo Urbano” which delimited parcels of land, named streets, and delimited space for a future stadium, market, a park, etc. Nevertheless, Makuma continues to be lived in only temporarily. Families move into their kin’s houses or rent a parcel of land for a few years, the time it takes for an older son to go through high school, or for the head of the family to carry out his term at the local administration, but rarely stay for much longer than this. Most families return to what they consider their real community during the school holidays, but also during the weekend. One of the reasons why few people want to live in Makuma is that there is no space for gardens, and little game left. Therefore, one either needs to travel relatively far to get food or to have enough money to buy eggs and rice from the shop. There is also little of the everyday sociality that exists in other communities. For instance, halfway through my stay in Makuma the high school tried to create a market day on Sunday in Makuma as a community

development project; it lasted for a few weeks, then turned into a football tournament when people stopped bringing produce that nobody was buying. When the tournament ended, there were meagre attempts to keep the *espacio cubierto* as a drinking space on Sundays. Ultimately, the centrifugal force proved too strong and people went back to their communities to party and drink. As a result of this same centrifugal force, Makuma often felt like a ghost town where little was going on, at the same time as it was supposed to be the centre of the *parroquia*, the lowest level of local government which nevertheless encompassed most of the communities represented by NASHE.

During my first week in Makuma, I went to the high school to start the class I had agreed to teach. Not wanting to overburden students or to take the place of a paid teacher, I insisted that my class be voluntary and take place in the afternoon. Unsurprisingly in retrospect, no one came to my first class, and only two people came thereafter, sometimes complemented by one or two teachers from the highlands. More worryingly, after the first week people stopped saluting me in the street or turned their back to me if I tried to greet them. I quickly learnt that a rumour was circulating that instead of teaching I had come to steal the knowledge of the students. I understood this to result from my association with the new anthropology teacher at the high school, a highland Quichua with a keen interest in Shuar myth. To ward off further rumours, I decided to teach economics: I had studied it as an undergraduate, many Shuar had been asking me to teach them about money, and, more importantly, it seemed unlikely that I would steal knowledge from children in that way. I also refrained from asking too much about “traditional things”, like myths and songs, which I understood to be the cause of discontent. Indeed, because all Shuar teachers have to write a dissertation on “Shuar culture” to obtain their degree, people seemed to have become suspicious of foreigners getting paid by the State for writing down stories and songs. Perhaps

thanks to my carefulness, or because time had gone by and people realised I was more innocuous than they initially thought, after a few months people relaxed more in my presence. My relationships became even more friendly during the summer when I was one of the few people to stay in Makuma and I became more intimate with these families who had stayed. In October and November of that year I co-led a Theatre of the Oppressed workshop with LA-based theatre director Brian Sonia-Wallace. The workshop was aimed at teenagers and young adults and took place every afternoon of the week and all day on Saturday for 8 weeks, leading to two public representations. It was much more successful than my initial attempts at teaching, put me in touch with more families, and helped me relate more closely than I ever could before with young Shuar men and women. Perhaps because my friend Brian looked like a stereotypical American in Shuar eyes (tall, muscular, with blue eyes and light-colored hair), perhaps also because I was not walking around on my own anymore, even people who had been very aggressive initially seemed to warm to me.

This situation had a number of consequences for my work. I spent a lot of time in my first weeks in Makuma talking with the missionaries, as no one else seemed to want to talk to me at the time. They helped me figure out how to do basic things like buying and cooking food. I was also trying to understand what was happening to me by comparing it to what had happened to them in the past. When Jim and Norma went on furlough to the US, and as things relaxed in Makuma, I spent more time talking to Shuar. In particular, I talked a lot with those closest to the missionaries: Daniel Chuu (head of the Shuar Evangelical Church Association (AIESE), Felipe Sandu (head of the hydroelectric power plant, Fundacion Yantsa) and his sons, Hugo Ashanga (owner of the small restaurant in town and also worker on the powerplant), Domingo Najandey (Bible translator, cartographer and pilot). I developed a

great friendship with one of my two students at the high school, Efren Nandey, who found time to try to teach me Shuar, and with whom I spent many evenings talking about the world and watching films, as well as with Manuel Maiche, president of NASHE, whom I have already introduced. Later on I also struck up friendships with three Shuar women, Jenny Nusirquia who was also studying at the high school, Helena who lived in a community nearby and had been married to a German truck-driver, and Alicia Puanshir, one of the first Shuar schoolteachers in Makuma, who also managed a shop in town. The missionaries came back, and others arrived: Dawn, who had adopted two Shuar girls after their mother died and wanted to keep living close to their original family; Dwain and Lois Holmes, who mainly worked with Achuar. These people were my main “informants”, and this dissertation results from conversations with them. I rarely taped our conversations and preferred instead to write them down extensively when I could get home. I did not do surveys either, partly because I observed the anxiety and anger caused by a survey done by nurses.

There were three other European anthropologists working with Shuar when I did fieldwork. Two of them, Gregory Deshouliere and Emma O’Driscoll, had been there already for some months before Natalia Buitron Arias and I arrived in November 2011. Gregory and Emma were doing fieldwork in the South and East of Makuma, Emma in Sucua looking at urban life and Gregory in Pampantsa looking at shamanism. Natalia’s fieldwork focused on education and political life, and was split between Makuma and the Upano Valley. She was staying an hour away from my house, with one of Manuel’s wives, which meant we ran into each other quite a lot. We also met with the others quite regularly, exchanging news of what had been going on in our parts, but also just enjoying some time away from fieldwork. Knowing that other anthropologists were working in the same region, with the same people,

meant that we could each focus on more specific areas. Moreover, the already extensive literature on Shuar made it less urgent and less practical to attempt an exhaustive, all-encompassing monograph<sup>10</sup>. As a result, my thesis does not describe exhaustively Shuar kinship, social and political organization, relationships with their environment, shamanism, history; nor do I focus on the impact of colonialism on any of these aspects. Instead, I only give a partial account of these to the extent that it helps to understand what being a Christian means in Makuma. Nevertheless, this relative deficiency also amounts to a supplementation. Where most of these projects only include foreigners as they might affect Shuar, I include North American missionaries as objects of enquiry as such. Here, too, I am unable to go into much depth concerning their kinship, social and political organisation, theology, economic life, healing practices, hermeneutics, and so on. For both the Shuar and missionaries, I complement my own knowledge with the already existing, and extensive, literature.

#### 4. PLAN OF THE DISSERTATION

In my first Chapter I argue that the categories that outsiders to the mission use to talk about Makuma usually fail them. It is therefore necessary to understand what “Christianity” and “Shuar” mean for people in Makuma. Consequently I look at the ways in which the word “Christian” is used by people in Makuma, as well as their explanations of these uses. I also examine North American Evangelical Christian conceptualisations of “culture”, and the ways in which missionaries reflect on those. In both cases, these categories refer to specific ways of relating the particular to the universal. Both understand these relations to be dynamic and pragmatic, that is, continuously produced over time, but differ on the emphasis put either on the body or on belief, and on relation or on boundaries.

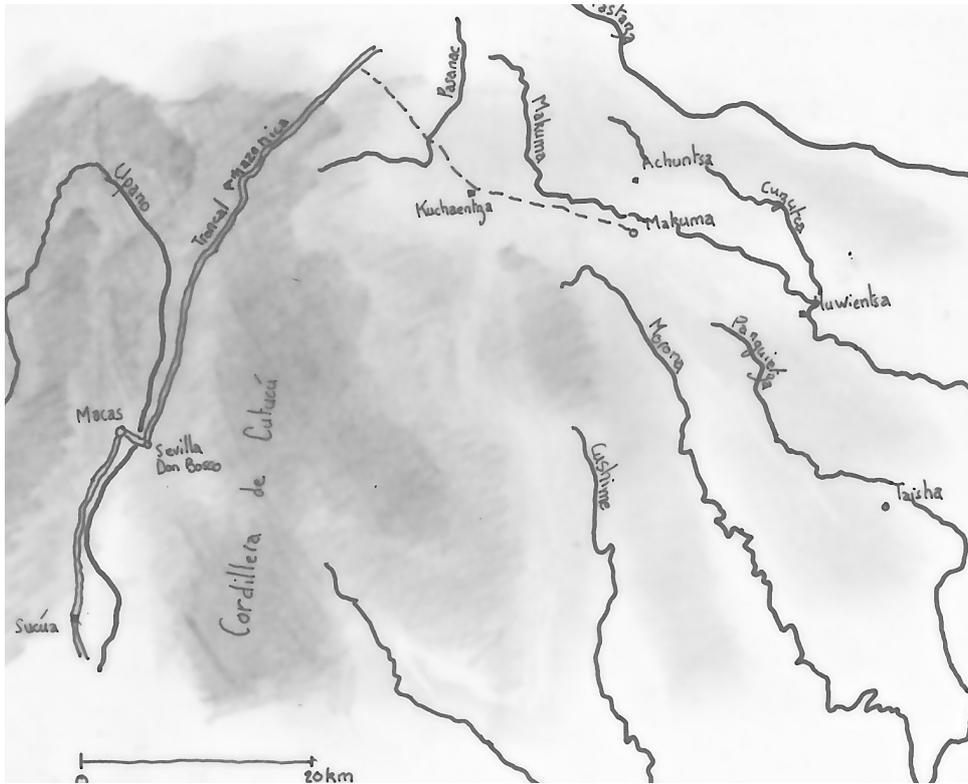
In chapter 2, I focus on Shuar social life and the difficulty for Christians to locate themselves there. Having shown in Chapter 1 the centrality of the Christian avoidance of manioc beer in distinguishing Christians from non-Christians on a conceptual level, I explore in this second chapter the consequences of this avoidance in everyday life. The avoidance of manioc beer becomes particularly acute during parties, where it is associated with an avoidance of some forms of dancing and the sensations and affects it generates. I place this specific avoidance in a wider context of avoidance by Shuar Christians of a number of beverages which share a number of properties: they must be vomited and give access to the future. It is this series of beverages which Christians avoid that I call “technologies of introjection of the future”. They serve to anchor the chronic instability of Amazonian bodies which leads to illness, conflict, and death. Conversely, they are central to the continuous production of Shuar persons and sociality. It therefore becomes easier to see how problematic it may be for Shuar Christians to be unable to take part in these. I show some alternatives they have found, all of which revolve around the Bible.

This leads me into Chapter 3, where I examine the role of the Bible in the lives of Evangelical missionaries in Makuma. They read the Bible as a text addressed to them, individually and collectively, by a God come from a future beyond the future, in order for them to live with Him in that future beyond the future. I show that the history of the mission is marked by re-appraisals of the missionary task through a renewed relationship to the Bible. At moments of crisis, missionaries learn to see themselves and the people around them in a new way, and transform their ways in an attempt to become as different as possible from agents of the anti-Christ. At the same time, through translations of the Bible and Evangelical material into Shuar Chicham, they stabilise the relationship between God, themselves, and Shuar. Finally, they constitute

the Church as Body of Christ through the production and circulation of texts which redescribe the world as miracle-infused.

The two sets of “technologies of introjection of the future”, Shuar and Christian, are not necessarily mutually incompatible. Nevertheless, making them work together is not easy, and there is no pre-existing consensus as to the best way of doing so. In chapter 4 I present various forms of entanglement, disentanglements and refusal to relate between Shuar and missionaries. I begin with the main two projects on which missionaries and Shuar work together: Bible translation and maintenance of a hydroelectric power plant. I give an account of the role that “God” plays in making these collaborations possible, and how they also relate Shuar to other foreigners. However, notably through the fate of the power plant, I also highlight the progressive disentanglement of God from Makuma and the new sorts of entanglements, mainly with the State and Capitalism that are appearing. I then turn to the creation of an “indigenous church” by an Evangelical church leader from Makuma. I show how, through this church, he is trying to articulate a new relationship between Shuar, God, and the Church that would bypass the missionaries. I then turn to the way in which these different technologies are judged by their effect on kinship.

In my conclusion I define these two technologies of introjection of the future in a more abstract way through a more systematic comparison. This then enables me to locate this relationship among other relationships, notably with the State and the market. I also present a version of what a technology of introjection of the future may look like for me using the work of Emanuel Levinas.



Map 1: Map of Morona Santiago showing Macas, Makuma and Taisha



3: The congregation in Makuma sharing lunch for Easter



4: Jim and Norma with Frank Drown's house in the background



5: Efren and family at home



6: Efren and his sister Felicia Najamdey's high-school graduation

## CHAPTER 1 - GOD'S SHUAR

On one of my first days in Ecuador, as I was waiting at the Ministry of Immigration for some paperwork, I overheard a woman speaking American English with a thick Southern accent. Already curious, I became even more interested as she told another woman that she and her husband were Bible translators working with Shuar. This, after all, was the reason I had come to Ecuador, in order to try to understand people like her and their relationship with Shuar. After their conversation ended, I struck up one myself and asked her if she was an SIL missionary, as I thought she probably was: “Yes, but don’t say that too loudly, SIL is not particularly welcome here. So we work under the name of a different organization”. Indeed, SIL had been expelled from Ecuador in the 1980s after they were accused of working for the CIA, and of being an imperialist presence in the region. “We originally started working with Quichuas, 20 years ago, but one day a Shuar woman begged us to ‘teach her people how the exterior world works’ and so we started working with them. How could we refuse? You know, this is a real shame. These people are so talented - if you got lost in the forest and an eight-year-old boy found you, you’d be in good hands: he’ll fish for you, he’ll build a shelter for the night, and then he’ll show you the way home! They are so talented, but here in the city their skills are worthless. What a shame it is to see these two worlds collide!”

This woman articulated her story following a very common narrative among Euro-Americans, that of the smart Indian whose world gets crushed by the encounter with modernity, and where the new White (Wo)Man’s Burden is to show a way into the “outside world”. This narrative begins with an a priori equality among all, whether Indian, North American or settler. In contrast with this background of equal capacity, inequality is presented as being the

result of a collision between two worlds, and more precisely of the opening of a closed, inside world to the outside world. This outside world is that of the city, of modernity, and more specifically of a modernity that respects nothing, that tragically cannot find value in tradition, and in traditional skills. This narrative then helps to make sense of and justify the presence of the missionary, even in the midst of persecution: The well-intentioned missionary, the translator, helps to alleviate the suffering associated with this opening to the outside world, and to combine, as much as possible, this opening with the preservation of tradition. Out of compassion, Christians - in this specific narrative - are the ones who facilitate an access of a particular (“Shuar culture”) to the “outside”, the universal and the cosmopolitan, in such a way as to preserve it *qua* particular. This narrative finds an echo in the evangelical discourse regarding the persecutions they understand themselves to be the object of, both at home and abroad, and where their own traditions are threatened by outsiders (muslims, communists, homosexuals, liberals...). Indeed, how could the missionary refuse her help to a Shuar woman when the same “outside” that threatens Shuar cannot recognize the value of Christianity?

However, for both the Shuar Christians and the North American missionaries who would become my friends throughout my fieldwork, the situation looked slightly different. What they described to me had the same elements: insides and outsides, equality and inequality, conflicting worlds, past and future, missionaries, settlers and Shuar, but as if re-arranged in a completely different order. In fact, when I described that encounter to the missionaries who have spent most of their lives among Shuar in Makuma, they were puzzled, though not surprised, by the woman’s naivete and her ignorance: Did she not know that most of the Bible, old and new testament, had been translated in Shuar already? That evangelical missionaries had been working with Shuar for over sixty years now? Did she not realize that the Shuar woman who had pleaded

for their help, in her very pleading, was demonstrating her skillful knowledge of the so-called “outside world”, and of the way North American evangelicals like to think of themselves? Like her, many missionaries arrive in Makuma - which hosts both the evangelical mission and the Association of Evangelical Shuar Churches- to bring the Gospel to Shuar. I witnessed one of these occurrences during my fieldwork: Not knowing who he was, the missionaries told the president of the Church association that they had been invited by a community who told them that they were quite eager to learn about Jesus. The president of the AIESE then quietly remarked that that was odd, that he indeed knew the man who had invited them, and that this man used to be a Christian and to come to Church every Sunday, until he started drinking heavily again. He then added that if that man had wanted to learn more, he could have asked the church leader in his community, or even come to meet him, the president of AIESE, in Makuma, as they used to be good friends. Why then would he ask Americans to come? Perhaps that man had other reasons to invite them? Perhaps, the President suggested, what they really wanted was not the Gospel, but the free clothes, or the medicine, or the money that North American missionaries invariably brought with them?

It would be tempting, by now, to think of Shuar as being strategic agents trying to manipulate powerful outsiders in order to obtain consumer goods from them. For five centuries, the missionary literature has been full of these accusations. Although these accusations are not entirely unfounded, manipulation is only part of the story. With Viveiros de Castro (2011), I would argue that it would be more productive to begin by trying to understand what the “inconstancy of the indian soul” looks like for Shuar themselves. It might be based on fundamentally different ways of understanding and living in the world. In other words, the problem might not lie only in Shuar being manipulative, or in missionaries being fooled by their exoticisation of the indigenous.

What might lead missionaries to be so frustrated in their efforts that they decide that “Indians” are deceitful, and what might lead anthropologists to revel in what they see as an act of cultural and political resistance, the strategic manipulation of the colonizing white man, might very well be the result of an inadequacy of fit between Euro-American categories and Shuar sociality and personhood.

In this chapter, I want to introduce a Shuar way of understanding the role Christianity plays in the relationship between Shuar and non-Shuar worlds in a colonial context. I begin with an analysis of the phrases Shuar use to describe Christian and non-Christian Shuar- “Yus Shuar” and “Iwianch Shuar”- which translate literally as “God’s Shuar” and “Devil’s Shuar”. I then propose to describe the relationship between Yus Shuar and Iwianch Shuar in terms of tensed relations with asocial others and bodily becomings. Finally, I turn to missionary understandings of what “peoples” are and how they relate to “Christianity” laid out by a North American evangelical pastor close to the missionaries in Makuma. This enables me to discuss the co-elaboration of the phrase “Yus Shuar” by missionaries and laymen, Shuar and North Americans, church-goers and shamans, and to understand what it means to be Christian in Makuma.

### 1. SHUAR / YUS SHUAR / IWIANCH SHUAR

The phrase that stands for “Christian” in Shuar language is “Yus Shuar”. Christians are “Yus Shuar”, meaning that Shuar Christians would be, if literally translated, “Yus Shuar Shuar”. Yet this is not a meaningful phrase, and Shuar Christians are instead named, quite simply, “Yus Shuar”. And so were non-Shuar Christians. There does not seem to exist a phrase that would designate Shuar Christians as opposed to, say, North American Christians. The assertion that someone is a Christian, and the assertion that the same person

is Shuar, would have to be made separately. So, what does “Yus Shuar” mean? “Yus”, most of my informants would say, is “God”. This is not an uncontroversial translation for the word God: Many non-evangelicals, and particularly Catholics, would translate God by “Arutam”, the being that people go on vision quests to get in touch with, an issue I will return to in Chapter 3. At the same time, most of my evangelical friends, Shuar or North American, would instead argue that “Arutam” is the devil. In any case, the first term of the phrase “Yus Shuar” designates a being, one that is radically different from human beings. This non-human being is said to have created the world and all humans, animals and plants in it.

The other half of the equation is “Shuar”, a polysemic word. Two meanings of Shuar can be opposed. When asked, in Spanish, what “Shuar” meant, people would usually say that it means “the Shuar nation”. “The Shuar Nation” is the indigenous group that has been recognized by the Ecuadorian State as one of a number of nations, alongside Huaorani or Kichwas. Similarly, anthropologists recognize “Shuar” as one group among a number of other groups (Achuari, Huambisa, Shiwiari, Awajun, Candoa, and others) composing the Jivaroan ensemble. Most of them (apart from Candoa) speak closely related and mutually understandable languages. They are part of the Jivaroan linguistic area, and Shuar is one language among others. Thus, in this first sense, Shuar is a collective identity that is recognized by the State, located on a territory, and whose members share a language and cultural traits. Shuar themselves would use the word “Shuar” in this way when speaking Spanish to a foreigner. However, the same people, when speaking Shuar chicham, would use “Shuar” in a different way. “Shuar” would then serve to identify a person or a number of persons who are known and recognized as kin (and usually allies): “winia Shuar”, my Shuar, my kin. More than a certain type of person, here “Shuar” designates a recognition of mutual hu-

manity between the speaker and another person (in what follows I keep upper-case “Shuar” to refer to collective identity and lower-case “shuar” for mutual recognition). In that sense, the Others of Shuar are not only Huaoranis and French, but various non-human beings who do not look or do not relate to oneself as humans do. Among those others feature *iwianch* (demons), but also *Jivaros*, who are savage Shuar who do not wear clothes and are too aggressive to live together, *Apache* (white people) or *Inkis* (whites who speak English). All of these beings can be distinguished by both their bodies and their way of relating to the speaker. Or rather, as I will show further, their embodiment and their way of relating to the speaker mutually constitute each other (see Taylor 1996). Human speech, Shuar *chicham*, is one of the ways in which humans relate to each other and become human to each other.

To summarise these different conceptions, we can see that “Shuar” might refer to one of two sorts of things: a recognition of identity between (an)other being(s) and myself in opposition to a radical difference (non-human persons); or a group among others that differs from these others in symbolic ways (the dances they do, the language they speak, the territory they occupy), as recognized by the State and other outsiders. Behind these two meanings of Shuar lies more than a distinction between an etic and an emic signification. They each correspond to a different sort of ontology. One of them distinguishes beings on the basis of their bodies, often leading to a distinction between “real humans” and a whole spectrum of non-human and quasi-human beings with whom one can enter into relations of alliance or predation because they share the same form of interiority (animism in Descola’s terms, multi-naturalism and mono-culturalism in Viveiros de Castro’s terms (1998)); the other recognizes a physical continuity between humans and non-humans, but distinguishes humans from the rest by their possession of interiority, and differentiates among human groups by the sort of symbolic system

they use (naturalism in Descola's terms, mono-naturalism and multi-culturalism for Viveiros de Castro).

We are thus faced with one extra-ordinary being, Yus, which we can for now translate as God (whilst keeping in mind the problems with this translation); and with two forms of sociality, one based on mutual recognition of humanness, and the other based on recognition by the State of symbolic identity in a series of differences. If we return to the puzzle that prompted this further examination, "Yus Shuar Shuar", it becomes clearer that the repetition of "Shuar" there refers to the two different meanings of "Shuar": "Yus Shuar (animist) Shuar (naturalist)". And from this, it already becomes clear that the translation of "Christian" in Shuar chicham articulates Christianity on a different basis from the dominant Euro-American one. Indeed, if the "Shuar" in Yus Shuar refers not to an ethnic or cultural identity, but to a type of shared embodiment that typically characterizes co-present humans, then "Yus Shuar" designates something other than an adherence to a religion among other religions that form part of the realm of "culture", a system of belief, or a creed. Instead, Yus Shuar must also refer to a specific mode of embodiment. But for now, we can keep in mind that when Shuar say Christian, this means God's people.

## 2. TO DRINK OR NOT TO DRINK

### 2. 1. Equality in spite of all

"If Christians are Yus Shuar, God's people, whose people are those Shuar who are not Christian?" I asked my best friend Efren. He had told me that he had been Christian in the past, and wanted to get reconciled with Christ one day, but for now did not identify as a Christian. "They are Iwianch Shuar, the people of the devil" he replied. I put my cup of coffee back on the table, surprised. "That cannot be! I mean, missionaries and Christians might want

to call them that, but who would want to call themselves 'Iwianch Shuar', 'the Devil's People'?" He took a sip of the cup of coffee I'd made him: "It's the truth. People would indeed call themselves 'Iwianch Shuar'. For instance, if you came to my house, and I told my wife to give you manioc beer, you could say 'I'm sorry, I cannot drink, I am Yus Shuar'. I would then reply, 'Oh, I'm sorry, I am Iwianch Shuar and I drink manioc beer'". As he gave the Christian's answer, he put his hand in front of him, palm facing towards the imaginary wife, clearly indicating his refusal. I will spend some time analysing this description and the context of its enunciation, as I believe it enables us to understand the complexity to which "Yus Shuar" refers. First of all, I expressed doubt over the possibility of anyone wanting to call themselves "Iwianch Shuar", and Efren was trying to show me that it was indeed possible. That is, I was considering the Yus Shuar/Iwianch Shuar dichotomy to be a false one as the second term seemed to imply a negation of the first, in the same way as the "savage" pole of the "civilised/savage" dichotomy stands only as a negation of the first pole. Instead, Efren was emphasizing that both poles stand on an equal footing, and that this was a dichotomy of a different kind. He then specified the kind of dichotomy in question by giving an exemplary situation, that of giving manioc beer to a guest. In this example, calling oneself "Yus Shuar" is a way to explain a refusal to drink manioc beer, and calling oneself "Iwianch Shuar" is a way to explain the offering of beer in the first place. A "Yus Shuar" is the sort of being who does not drink manioc beer, whereas an "Iwianch Shuar" is the sort of being who does. Here, one can begin to see that "Yus Shuar" and "Iwianch Shuar" refer to two different sorts of human beings, defined by what they do or do not ingest. And in that case, it is "Yus Shuar" which is defined by a lack, or rather by a refusal, and not "Iwianch Shuar".

But let us go further. The imaginary example my friend gave revolves around a form of politeness or civility, a tolerance of difference. To understand what

is at stake here, it might therefore be useful to contrast it with a similar example of tolerance in a multi-cultural context. Let us imagine, then, someone offering a cup of tea to their guest, who would refuse it by saying “I’m sorry, I do not drink tea, I am a Mormon”, and the other one replying “Please forgive me, I am an Anglican, and I drink tea”: Mormons do not drink tea because of their religious beliefs, Anglicans have no such interdiction and can drink tea, but may also tolerate the cultural and religious difference of their guest. However, the difference between Anglicans and Mormons does not rest mainly on whether or not one can drink tea, and few people would use that imaginary example to explain what the words “Anglican” and “Mormon” signify. Instead, the distinction might seem to rest on matters of belief, for instance on the texts they recognize as revealed by God. To return to Viveiros de Castro’s dichotomy between multi-culturalism and multi-naturalism, then, whereas what is at stake in multiculturalism is belief, in Shuar multinaturalism it is manioc beer. Manioc beer is the first food that infants ingest after their mother’s milk, and what people drink every time they get together. One of the first things I was asked by Shuar I hadn’t met before was whether I knew how to drink manioc beer, and that I did was at times a surprise for them: as a rule, *Inkis* (white people from America and Europe) cannot drink manioc beer, nor do most *Apache* (Ecuadorian settlers). One could say that to drink manioc beer with Shuar is one of the most central aspects of what makes Shuar. More: desiring manioc beer is what Shuar bodies do. Given this centrality, the very possibility that Shuar could not desire to drink manioc beer appears as a contradiction in terms. To call oneself “Yus Shuar” is therefore a way of indicating that one is still Shuar, but of a specific sort: to anticipate later development in my argument, a Yus Shuar is a Shuar who has lost their desire and capacity for ingesting one of the most characteristic of Shuar foods, manioc beer<sup>11</sup>.

Moreover, if manioc beer is sociality, it also has the potential to be anti-sociality itself, as it is one of the possible ways of murdering someone. Poisoning manioc beer is the way in which women kill their enemies. In the same way as I was told not to trust some of my male friends because they were headhunters and would kill me, I was also told not to visit specific communities because they poisoned the manioc beer and would kill me that way. It is important here to explain the extreme volatility and conflictuality of Shuar social life. The renown Shuar have acquired for successfully resisting colonization by the Spanish crown by killing missionaries and emissaries of the crown does not matter as much to their eyes as the intense feuding among families and with other groups that, until the 1960s, gave sense to most of Shuar life. Whether nostalgically or regretfully, many would tell me stories of their warrior ancestors who would “hunt” Achuar heads, kidnap their women, or avenge murder with murder. Although actual murder raids are rare today, fights with machetes are not, nor are retaliatory house burnings, or murders. Complex and shifting political alliances are still very much part of everyday life and the object of intense discussions. Poisoned manioc beer, as well as imperceptible poisoned arrows, are taken by many to be a continuation of feuding by other, more discreet means.

In that context, refusing to drink manioc beer when offered some by one’s guest would easily be taken as an accusation. Such an accusation would also mean that the other would have good reasons to want to poison one, that one considers him to be an enemy. Therefore, accusing the other of wanting to poison one would reveal oneself as an enemy of one’s guest, that is, as wanting to kill him. However, white people are usually exempt from this logic for two reasons. As I have already indicated, it is usually taken for granted that they do not drink manioc beer, and that they do not because they both cannot drink it and have no desire to. By the same token, they do not take part in the

feuding logic, with its sudden reversal of alliances, that makes latent paranoia reasonable among Shuar. Not that white people are not dangerous, or aren't suspected of wanting to kill Shuar. Quite the opposite: because they barely qualify as human, they are inherently an object of suspicion (see Introduction). However, antagonism towards them, almost by definition, would not involve drinking or refusing to drink manioc beer. In that sense, to refuse to drink and simultaneously to identify oneself as a "Yus Shuar" would be a way of obviating the accusation that the refusal implies. In that sense, it is as though the Shuar man in the example was saying "I am more different than I look; even though my parents were both Shuar and I was made into a Shuar person as I grew up, I have now acquired a radically different body that is more akin to a non-Shuar body".

We can already see that Efren's example therefore works in three different ways. First of all, it indicates that the difference between Yus Shuar and Iwianch Shuar does not imply the negation of one term by the other, as I initially thought it did. Furthermore, it insists on the continuity between these terms: because both are still "Shuar", they are still human to each other. Thirdly, it simultaneously insists on a radical difference in corporeality that does not amount to a declaration of war. It is important to note that Yus Shuar is not the only alternative mode of corporeality available to Shuar. Indeed, Efren was telling me this over a cup of coffee, a quintessentially non-Shuar drink. Coffee was not associated with missionaries, as far as I know. However, instant coffee could often be found on the tables of the settlers' restaurants in town, which Shuar would frequent during their visits there, where it is often prepared with hot milk. As for me, I would drink filter coffee, which is both made differently and tastes different from instant coffee. Often, Efren would come to my house with a friend, and make a point of showing how much he enjoyed coffee, when the friend would usually be disgusted by it

(whilst trying to hide their disgust out of politeness). Although Efren's body was accustomed to drinking filter coffee, his friends' bodies were not. Another good friend of mine would insist on feeding coffee to her three-month old baby, in the same way as she would feed her manioc beer, so that she would learn to appreciate it. In giving me this example over coffee, then, Efren was also showing that other forms of alternative corporality are available, as well as other forms of relationships to Inkis.

## 2. 2. Conflit in spite of all

It is necessary to contrast this diplomatic example, given to me to make the meaning of "Yus Shuar" and "Iwianch Shua" » explicit, with the memories various people shared with me of real episodes that involved drinking and Christian Shuar or non-Christian Shuar. These memories will also introduce the difference between evangelicals and catholics: where we would tend to consider both Catholics and Evangelicals to be Christians, the first would be called Iwianch Shuar whereas the latter are the only Yus Shuar proper. An older man told me his memories of inviting a cousin to his house many years in the past. The man identifies as a Catholic and has always lived south of the evangelical region. His wife, however, has recently become an evangelical, which will add some nuance to the story he told me. A cousin of his, a Christian from Makuma, came to stay with him. He was given manioc beer, as is expected in that context, and not unlike the example Efren had given me. However, unlike the Christian in Efren's example, he did not address himself to his cousin in refusing the beer, nor did he explain his refusal to him by calling himself a Yus Shuar. Instead, he prayed to God, and accepted the beer. The old man imitated his cousin for me, as he lifted his eyes to the sky and prayed full of (mock) fervour, "Dear Father God, forgive me if I drink this demonic beverage, in the house of this kin of the devil". At that, the old man laughed, both at how ridiculous the situation was, and at the insult his cousin

directed towards him. This example gives a slightly different slant to the meaning of “Iwianch Shuar”: Far from being a diplomatic solution to a potentially conflictual refusal, the name which that man had translated into the Spanish “kin of the devil” was clearly received as adding insult to injury. It had shocked him so profoundly that he could still remember it many years later. He added, as a way of further mocking his cousin, that “over there they only drink water and are not proper Shuar anymore”. Drinking only water, then, was the antithesis of drinking manioc beer, and incompatible with being Shuar.

Efren had given me his example to counter my remark that “Iwianch Shuar” was not a name anyone would choose to give themselves, yet this example might appear to give me reason. I return to that matter below. What is perhaps even more interesting, for now, and where the main difference between both examples lies, is simultaneously in the address of the message, and in the relationship to manioc beer: Instead of explaining his refusal to his cousin, he explained his acceptance to God. This story seems more realistic to me, more similar to what I have seen among Shuar: Christians do drink manioc beer. One would be hard-pressed today to find a Christian in Makuma who does not occasionally drink manioc beer. Most (if not all) Christian households also make manioc beer on a daily basis. This does not mean, however, that that crucial difference between Yus Shuar and Iwianch Shuar has now disappeared, or that manioc beer was not, after all, an important part of that distinction. There are two reasons for this: First of all, the manioc beer that Christians do produce and drink is not usually left to ferment, so that it is more a sweet manioc soup than an actual beer. Alcohol, and the drunkenness which beer-drinking aims at, is crucially absent from the Christian manioc beer. Second, and perhaps more importantly, the Christians I know would often share stories of the ways they found to avoid drinking beer, and talk about

their distaste for the fermented beer. Here, as elsewhere, it is not a matter of a “thin veneer of Christianity” that easily cracks under the assaults of “the Amazonian soul”, anymore than we could talk about a “thin veneer of Amazonianity” that easily cracks under the assaults of “the Christian soul”. We are not here in presence of cultures that would come on top of each other, or of appearances that barely cover essences. What we have instead is modes of relatedness that pull people and their bodies in divergent, often contradictory, directions, and their attempts to keep the relations going. This will appear more clearly as we look more closely at the old man’s narrative.

The old man’s cousin prayed, as evangelicals do, out loud and in public, especially before meals, addressing himself directly to God. In this case, however, unlike a more usual thanksgiving prayer, he asked for forgiveness from God. It therefore seems that he thought he would displease Him by drinking manioc beer, and that he should explain himself. The explanation he gave to God was that his cousin was a kin of the devil, and therefore that he had to drink manioc beer. In other words, maintaining a good enough relationship with his kin by sharing food with him would have outweighed the displeasure caused to God by drinking manioc beer. He is therefore torn between two partly contradictory forms of allegiance: on the one hand to his cousin, and on the other to God. The decision to drink manioc beer or not is at the crux of this contradiction, and whatever move he makes will end up angering or offending one of these two parties. By accepting the drink, and simultaneously apologizing to the other, he attempts to keep both allegiances working - though not undamaged, as the old man’s angry reminiscence makes clear. Allegiance to God clearly strains the consanguine relationship with those kin who are not Yus Shuar, to the extent that they might be barely recognizable as kin. Yet they remain kin, and to break off from them would be as terrible as offending God. This appears to work both ways: As I indicated, although the old man

derided his cousin, and through him all evangelicals, as not being “really Shuar”, his wife is herself a recent convert. Although these unions between evangelicals and catholics are not the rule, they take place often enough that they are not exceptional either. Yus Shuar and Iwianch Shuar therefore appear to be possibly consanguine kin as well as affines.

I will soon return more fully to the sort of relationship Yus Shuar have with “Yus”, and the one Iwianch Shuar might have with “Iwianch”. Before I do, I would like to highlight that, in the same way as being called “Iwianch Shuar” would be felt as an insult, “Christian” and “Yus Shuar” can also be used to insult someone, and once again in the context of drinking beer. Thus, Daniel, who has now become the president of the AIESE, would tell me about the time of his conversion. He used to drink a lot of bottled beer (*cerveza*) with his friends, and he would often even be the one to initiate drinking sessions that could last for days. After he married, however, he was drawn to an evangelical church and decided he wanted to be a Christian. Not long after, this led him to decide to stop drinking beer. When he would pass by his friends drinking beer in the village, they would nevertheless invite him to share a beer with them. He told me that when he would refuse, they would throw glasses and bottles of beer at him and call him “Christian! Christian!” and mock him. The situation here is slightly different from the ones I’ve discussed so far, since manioc beer is replaced by bottled beer. This story took place in an isolated evangelical mission in the Upano valley, where bottled beer has been widely available for a long time. Drinking bottled beer is less obviously involved with kinship, to a large extent because men do not need women to make or serve bottled beer, and instead need money to buy it, which connects it more to the world of the city, of paid labour, and of male friendship, a distinction I will return to later on. I was told similar stories that took place in Makuma, whereby people who refused to take part in the

parties, and in particular to drink, would be insulted and threatened until they would give in and join the party. Being a Christian, or rather, making oneself a Christian, is breaking away from one's kin, and from the sorts of bodies they share, bodies that party, drink beer, enjoy dancing, and end up drunk. For non-Christian Shuar, by creating this difference, Christians are thinking of themselves as being above others, and are judging them, breaking a generalized egalitarianism, and therefore threatening the community. Efred was therefore correct when he told me that the difference between Yus Shuar and Iwianch Shuar is not an asymmetrical one: both positions can be equally desirable and insulting.

### 3. YUS/IWIANCH

I have shown so far that Christianity appears to be a mode of relationality enabled by the making of a body that possesses its own set of appetites, disgusts and capacities, some of which are not shared with one's kin. This endangers kin relationships, for they are precisely based on the sharing of similar bodies. It seems that in the case of Yus Shuar, two forms of relationality become contradictory: relationship to God, and relationship to one's kin. But what is the nature of these relationships? And what are Iwianch Shuar related to? In other words, if indeed we understand "Shuar" in Yus Shuar to mean a kin group, a form of consubstantiality, what is the relationship between this "Shuar" and the non-human figures, "Yus" or "Iwianch", that precede it? It is not uncommon in Shuar to precede the word "Shuar" with a name in order to identify an other group. The most famous instance of this is that of the Achuar, or Achu Shuar, where "Achu" refers to a type of palm tree that grows where the Achu Shuar live. Instead of a plant, the word Shuar can be preceded by the name of a big man, or uunt, for instance Kuamar Shuar. If the preposition of a plant, a place name or the name of a big man is common to identify a subset of Shuar, that of a being like "Yus" or "Iwianch" seems

much less common. Indeed, the problem with words like “Yus” or “Iwianch” is that they cannot be localised in a specific place, nor do they straightforwardly designate a specific ancestor. In that way, they do not enable the designation of a clear subset of “people like us” or “kin” either by reference to where they live, or to a common ancestor. Among the Shuar, as elsewhere in the Amazon, residence and ancestry both make up what kinship consists in in history. What can the relationship between these non-human figures, Yus and Iwianch, and Shuar be so that it might come to determine a distinction in the form of corporeality that would defuse the conflictual potential of a refusal to share manioc beer, yet also be a source of insult?

First, it is worth noting that many of the people I encountered, whether they identified as Christians or not, would say when asked about God that he made human beings. Similarly, most would recognize that Iwianch are one of the forms that dead humans take. In that way, both Yus and Iwianch share a relationship of ancestry to living human beings, though a different form of ancestry in each case. Yus is the one creator of all human beings, whereas Iwianch are generic, anonymous ancestors to specific human beings. Second, both Yus and Iwianch are co-present with human beings, and can be encountered, although not directly and not without a cost. Humans can read God’s speech in the Bible, which is called in Shuar “Yusa Chichame Aarma”, the written speech of God (its translation into Shuar chicham, Shuar speech, will be explored in more details in Chapters 3 and 4). They can also hear it spoken by other people, for instance church leaders during the church service, or a family member at home. Finally, God can send messages to humans, for instance in their dreams<sup>12</sup>. Conversely, humans can, and do, speak to God in prayer or in songs. One can here recall the case I presented earlier of a young man preemptively asking God for forgiveness as he was about to drink manioc beer. One cannot see God, however, or touch Him, according to evangelicals. This

is even one of the reasons for their repudiation of Catholicism, since Catholics call God “Arutam”, which is the sort of being that appears after taking maikua, a hallucinogenic, and whom one has to see, touch and hear in order to be awarded its power. By distinction, for evangelicals the Bible is the only revealed word of God, and even the visions that seem to be sent by Him (although He never appears in them) have to be checked against the message of the Bible to make sure it is not a deception. Thus, communication with God is necessarily characterized by mediation.

What about Iwianch? A number of stories about Iwianch also make the impossibility of a direct relationship to Iwianch clear. Take for instance the joke I was once told: A very old couple, on the verge of death, make a pact: since they know that one of them will die before the other, they agree that whoever dies first should come back as an Iwianch to visit the surviving one, and that they would have sex for the last time. Not long afterwards, the woman dies, and, one night, as promised, she comes back to visit her husband. “Husband, I have come to visit you as we had promised”, she said. “Yes, that is good”, he said, even though, as she was an Iwianch, all the flesh and blood had left her and she was only skin and bones. They try to make love, but her vagina had closed up and he was unable to insert his penis in it. He therefore asked her to turn around, and put his penis in her anus, which had also shrunk but was still open. This caused her a lot of pain, and she shrieked “OUIOUIOUIOUIOUIOUIOUI”.

The shriek of pain itself was to be the punchline of the joke as it was told to me, though there might be other episodes to this story. The humour, along with the poignancy of this joke, comes from the impossibility to relate to Iwianch as one relates to living human beings. Iwianch are somehow recognizable as having previously been human, and even as having been kin. To this extent, they can evoke fondness and nostalgia. The sort of bodies that

Iwianch possess, however, is evidently non-human and attempts to relate to them directly, as to a human being, are doomed, however much one might desire to, thus the problem with sexual penetration comes from the woman's closed-up vagina, not from the man's lack of desire for her; subsequent efforts make it necessary to use an improper hole, the anus, and instead of causing pleasure it produces terrible pain. And yet, in spite of the inadequacy of this relationship, and the pain and danger attached to it, both partners nevertheless go through with it.

To sum up, the relationship between Shuar and Yus or Iwianch present a number of similarities. Both Yus and Iwianch are non-human figures who were at some point ancestors of living human beings but cannot enter in direct, face-to-face relation with humans. They are however also strikingly different figures. First of all, communication with God through reading the Bible and praying or singing is seen as beneficial, whereas communication with an Iwianch is necessarily catastrophic. This first difference might not hold as fast as it seems, for I have not heard Yus Shuar speaking about direct communication with Yus, nor have I heard Iwianch Shuar speak of indirect communication with Iwianch. It might in fact very much be the case that direct communication with God would end up being catastrophic, as it place the individual who encountered God in a position similar to those who have encountered an Iwianch, stunning them or making them unable to fully relate to other human beings for a time<sup>13</sup>. In fact, I will examine in a further chapter an example that might fall into this category. And it might also be possible that mediated encounters with Iwianch, for instance in dreams or premonitions, could be held as beneficial as this mode of encounter would enable one to protect oneself. Nevertheless, it does appear that, if nothing else, there is a difference in the habitual mode of communication with Yus and with Iwianch, and that this difference in turn triggers a difference in the consequences of

such communication. A second difference, and probably a more central one, is that whereas Yus is a non-human ancestor of humans and the world that is still alive, Iwianch are ex-human ancestors of humans that lost their humanity in dying. Along with that difference goes a difference between Yus as a unique being and Iwianch as a multitude. However, here our categories of life and death, unicity and multiplicity, might push us in a direction that does not necessarily make sense for Shuar. Indeed, if God is alive, so are Iwianch, and both are alive in ways that are incompatible with human life. One could say the same of God's unicity in trinity, and the generic multiplicity of Iwianch, each of which combines unicity and multiplicity in different ways, which also remain seemingly incompatible with the complex play of reproduction of identity and differentiation that characterizes Shuar kinship, as Anne-Christine Taylor (2000) has demonstrated. For reasons that should become clearer in chapter 3, I will not here attempt to characterize these ways of being alive and these combinations of unicity and multiplicity much further than indicating that they are incompatible with each other and with Shuar ones. Instead, I will conclude this preliminary investigation of Shuar understandings of Christianity by contrasting Yus Shuar and Iwianch Shuar with three alternative phrases: Arutam Shuar, Yus Shuarcha, and Yus Aents.

I previously indicated that Catholic and Protestant missionaries differed on the name of God, a question I will return to in Chapter 3. To remain with evangelicals, however, one can be surprised that they did not choose to name the non-Christian Shuar "Arutam Shuar". Indeed, for most of the evangelicals I spoke with, Arutam was the name of the devil. A considerable literature already exists concerning Arutam and the visions quests Shuar men and women could undertake in order to acquire the powers that it brings. I will not add a great deal on this matter, not least because most of the people I worked with did not undertake such vision quests, nor did they feel the desire to do

so. They would happily explain, however, why they did not want to go on this quest. Some would say that Arutam was simply not powerful enough, when compared to God and the Holy Spirit, who were the more powerful beings. Others would insist that Arutam would promise many things that God also promised, such as eternal life and happiness, but that he (Arutam) could not deliver, and therefore that he was a liar. This is why he was the devil, according to my Shuar friends, and to the missionaries as well, because he was so deceitful. Iwianch, on the other hand, is not an anti-God, a negative version of God that pretends to the same attributes, but a different sort of being from God, an otherwise. Similarly, non-Christians could easily have been called “Yus Shuarcha”, where the suffix “-cha” is a privative (like the prefix a- in atypical): non-Yus Shuar. This term might even have been preferred by missionaries, and they include it in their linguistic literature. But it is instead the name “Iwianch Shuar” that has stuck, indicating once more that those who are not Christian are not “mere” Shuar, nor are they “anti-Christians”: They remain Shuar affiliated to a powerful non-human being, but one that is otherwise than God.

Finally, I want to differentiate “Shuar” from another way of indicating belonging in Shuar chicham: “aents”. When one speaks of Egyptians, one would say “Ejjiptunmaya aents”, literally people from Egypt. Aents is the generic word for people who are not Shuar, that is, who are not kin. One would therefore expect that non-Shuar Christians would be classified as “aents” rather than “Shuar”, and therefore that Christians more generally, whether Shuar or not, would be called “Yus aents”. However, this is not the case. The translation that was chosen, and that persists until now, is the phrase “Yus Shuar”. To understand how radical this choice is, one needs only remember that it seems impossible that a non-Shuar adult would become Shuar. The missionaries once told me of a conversation they had had with some of their

closest friends in Makuma about this very issue. It became clear that they themselves would not be considered Shuar by other Shuar, even though they had lived in Makuma since 1969. It seemed, however, that their children, who had grown up with Shuar children, could be considered Shuar, though not without reluctance. This evidences the current polysemy of the word Shuar, which designates as much one's kin as it does an ethnic group with firm boundaries. But in this context it also shows the sort of transformations that "Yus Shuar" produces on the word "Shuar", opening it up to include an important number of people who would not previously have been recognized as being one's kin.

Until now, I hope to have given a sense of what "Christian" and "non-Christian" means for Shuar by looking at the translation of the word in Shuar, various real and imaginary uses, and by contrasting it with other possible ways of indicating collective identity, humanity and negation. I hope to have shown that the categories of "Yus Shuar" and "Iwianch Shuar" are essentially relational, simultaneously indicating a relationship to a powerful non-human being, a mode of embodiment shared with other humans also related to this being, and a tensed relationship with those kin who do not relate to the same powerful non-human. I have also shown that the drinking (or not) of manioc beer is central to the definition of oneself or another as a Christian or not, a point I will return to in the next chapter. Before I conclude this chapter, however, I would like to return to the North American evangelical missionaries with which I opened. With a better understanding of what it means to be Christian in Makuma for Shuar, I can now more easily contrast this with the missionaries' self-understanding and their concept of "Christian" and "people". Indeed, it is possible to give a different translation to "Yus Shuar", and one that North American evangelicals would more easily recognize: God's People. This is an important point for at least two reasons. First of all,

Shuar from Makuma did not invent Christianity, but were introduced to it by missionaries, and it is out of this encounter, and more specifically out of the work of translation that it implied, that the phrase “Yus Shuar” was produced and maintained. In other words, however different from common Euro-American usage of the word “Christian”, the concept of “Yus Shuar” is not the result of a form of syncretism, or of folk religiosity, but one that is doctrinally acceptable to, and partly co-produced by, North American Christians. Unlike their Catholic counterparts, North American evangelical Christians define themselves by their refusal of syncretism, especially since Vatican 2. Moreover, as opposed to the name “Christian”, which explicitly refers to the “Christ” event, and therefore to the recognition of Jesus as the messiah, the phrase “God’s People” is much broader and may just as well refer to Jews. To understand what it means to be Christian in Makuma, it is therefore necessary to understand what it means for North American evangelicals to come to the Amazon.

#### 4. PANTA TA ETHNE : DIFFERENCE IN THE CHURCH

At the beginning of this chapter, I outlined the sort of political cosmology that a missionary’s discourse presupposed. Importantly, this was not the way missionaries in Makuma understood their own work, or who Shuar were. In order to help me understand their work among Shuar, Norma and Jim Hedlund, the missionaries I worked with, gave me a text by John Piper - the pastor at the church they usually attend back in Minneapolis. In this section I use this document to outline the missionaries’ understanding of “culture”<sup>14</sup>. I will then examine more specifically the way in which Jim and Norma talked about the mission in Makuma and their relationship with Shuar. In “Unreached Peoples: The Unique and Primary Goal of Missions”, a text from 1991, Piper tries to delineate a Biblical understanding of what “unreached people” means in order to better organize missionary efforts. His interest in

the Biblical concept of “people” is very much grounded in debates among missionaries over what they should be doing and how, where they should go and who they should evangelize. Indeed, depending on how “people” is interpreted, it might make more sense to evangelize and plant churches in Los Angeles, New York and Mexico City, where more individuals can be reached more easily, rather than dedicate one’s life to do the same among Shuar people. Thus, by looking in more detail at this text, I hope to provide a useful contrast with the description I have just given, as well as give a brief understanding of how the missionaries themselves understand and justify their presence among Shuar. Early on, in a section entitled “Definitions”, John Piper writes:

The parameters of a “people” will be determined by the natural capacities to understand this “testimony.” Revelation 5:9 - with its hope for all “tribes, tongues, peoples and nations” - suggests that hindrances to grasp the testimony may stem from an array of ethnic, linguistic, cultural and political factors. This makes a precise definition of a “people” virtually impossible.

It is worth examining this definition, or non-definition, and its implications in more details. Indeed, for Piper a people is not defined as an entity in itself, but in relation to the gospel. What makes a people count as such is its “capacities to understand” the preaching of the gospel, which is at once “the hindrances to grasp” it. Or to put it differently, a people is defined by the limits it poses to a given missionary activity. He then delineates four types of capacities/hindrances that he finds in Revelation 5:9, and parallels them with more operational terms: tribes/ethnicity, tongues/language, peoples/culture, nations/politics. Although it is not clear by this point what “ethnicity” and “culture” mean, taken independently from “politics” and “language”, and as barriers to preaching, what Piper here wants to emphasize is the pragmatic

nature of the definition of “people”, and as a result the impossibility (and, we might add, undesirability), of making it precise. Further on in the text, this pragmatic definition “people” helps to explain the discrepancy between different evaluations of the number of unreached peoples. He gives an example from the work of another theologian, Ralph Winter (1984, pp. 129-61): In Southern Sudan, where Bible translators count 50 languages into which the Bible must be translated, another missionary organization that provides sound recordings of readings of the Bible counts 130 *oral* languages. The definition of what a people consists in is thus a pragmatic endeavour that varies with each missionary organisation and the way they try to reach people (translation, sound recordings, education, community development, political advocacy, etc.). To repeat, for the purposes of missionization, a people does not exist on its own, or even in relation to other peoples, but in relation to missionary activities. We might as well turn this definition around: “people” is the name missionaries give to the hindrances and opportunities they encounter in their efforts to make the gospel available. As we will see later, and following this model, when Norma and Jim Hedlund talk about Shuar, they would not refer to an essential, millenary Shuar culture that pre-existed the arrival of missionaries, but the group of people produced in the missionaries’ attempts to share the Gospel with some individuals. “Shuar” designates that history of missionary encounter. But what happens to these “peoples”, then, when the gospel is made available? How does “Christianity”, as a universal, relate to “peoples”, as a multiplicity of particular groups defined by obstacles and affordances?

In the rest of the article, Piper tries to elucidate the meaning of the words translated as “people” in each of the main passages in the Bible which constitute the main impetus for the missionary task. What interests him in particular is the distinction between two possible meanings for the Greek “ethnos”,

particularly in its plural form “panta ta ethne”, as this is how the imperative to go and evangelize others is formulated both in the Gospel of Matthew and in Paul’s Epistles. If “ethne” is translated as Gentiles, meaning a multitude of non-Jews, then the more individuals the better. If, on the other hand, it is translated as “nations”, then what matters is reaching as many different people-groups as possible, even if few individuals in each group are converted. What Piper argues throughout this text is that the second is true. I will not discuss at length all of his argument, but rather focus a few aspects that are more relevant to the sort of argument I am making here about the relationship between Christianity and “culture”.

The issue at stake here concerns the relationship between the universal and the particular. Piper’s text is constituted by a tension between two different versions of that relationship. In the first version, there is an opposition between Jews as the unique people-group bearer of the transcendental truth of the unicity of God and the multitude of “other people”, primarily characterized as individuals, to whom this truth must be extended. In the second version, the differentiation of other groups is constituted in the very extension of this truth, and this differentiation must in turn be constitutive of the Church. In the first version, universality is given in a particular and then extended to pre-existing particulars (individuals), whereas in the second it is in the pursuit of universality that particulars are produced, and out of them that universality is constituted. In this second version, the church is universal “in the sense that it extends to all peoples (though not effectively to every individual)”, and “the final goal of God in redemption is not to obliterate the distinctions of the people but to tether them all into one diverse but unified assembly of ‘peoples.’” If these two versions are in tension, it is because the first one is never completely revoked by Piper. Instead, he presents it as a misapprehension of the first movement in the constitution of a universal Church.

In that sense, we might want to contrast an unfinished or partial universality from which the missionary task begins, which would be the testimony to the good news, with the accomplished universality towards which missionaries work, which would be the Church at what Piper calls “the end”. Missionary work therefore takes place in that paradoxical temporality characterized both by accomplishment and what-has-yet-to-be-accomplished, the contraction of time between the coming of Christ and his second coming. As Piper defines “people” in relation to the pragmatic work of missionizing, it must therefore also be understood within that messianic context.

More specifically, missionaries are not to create converts, but to retrieve them, to re-cover them: they are making the Gospel available to individuals who have already been converted by God. Examining the Gospel of John and Revelation, which he attributes to the same author, Piper indicates that “the ‘Children of God’ will be found as widely scattered as there are peoples of the earth”: Those who will become the Church, who will be “found”, already are “Children of God”, and have previously been scattered. Although he does not address this scattering and its causes, his very mentioning it in this context gestures towards that great epic of scattering and diaspora contained in the Old Testament, starting with the exile out of Eden, the Babelian catastrophe, the banishment of Hagar, the many rivalries among brothers, then among the Twelve tribes of Israel, and finally the Babylonian exodus. The story of Abraham is particularly relevant here, for it is with him that the narrative of universal redemption really begins, and Piper quotes God’s promise that “by you [Abraham] all the families of the earth shall be blessed” (Genesis 12:1-3). As an aside, what Piper does not quote here is the rest of that story, although it was probably present in his mind at the time, and would become increasingly important for evangelicals throughout the 1990s and the early 2000s: After that promise, Abraham has a first child not with his wife Sara,

but with his wife's servant Hagar, who bears him a son called Ismael. Both Hagar and her son are then exiled by Abraham, and most evangelicals understand them to be the ancestors of present day Arabs, and particularly of Muslims. This interpretation is crucial to understand how evangelicals have reacted to the wars led by the US in the Middle East since the 1980s: For them, in Islam too, God's promise of universality is realized, but in a skewed form, an issue to which I will return in Chapter 3. In any case, for Piper, in making the Gospel available, missionaries are participating in the messianic work of redemption from the scattering of the Children of God that resulted from sinfulness, and accomplishing God's promise to Abraham. Importantly, this redemption does not amount to a negation of difference, or an attempt to return to an Edenic state.

What does this inscription in a messianic history mean for the concept of "people" in relation to that of the "church"? I already remarked that to Piper, "people" are produced in the very effort to propagate the gospel and constitute the Church. Bearing in mind the event at Babel, it becomes clear that both the presence of hindrances to the Gospel and the possibility of overcoming them can only come about through God's will. Moreover, this overcoming of difference does not result in an obliteration of difference, for that would be a return to a pre-Babelian state. Indeed, one might argue that for missionaries this is the difference between the colonial State and the Church: where the first undermines difference through the use of force, money and schools, the "true" Church can only be built out of and through difference. Instead, the overcoming of a difference works only insofar as that difference is then maintained and reproduced. When missionaries created institutions to help Shuar resist State attempts at colonization, this was an integral part of their messianic work. In other words, if missionaries helped Shuar get land titles, organize themselves in a political federation, and promoted the use of

Shuar language in radio broadcasts and at school, they did so for the same reasons that they dedicated themselves to translating the Bible, or helped create an autonomous Shuar church: So that Shuar would remain Shuar and participate in the Church as Shuar Christians. The Church as an institution is always only potentially available universally, and in actuality mainly includes a small number of people. To conclude, for Piper missionary activity focuses on that universal potential, the making available of the Gospel, whilst God chooses, among all those who have access to the Gospel, the individuals who will become real Christians. This producing, overcoming and maintaining of difference only makes sense in the in-betweenness of messianic time. It is a man-made institution that inscribes itself in the not-yet apparent but already victorious Kingdom of God and prepares for its coming.

##### 5. THE MISSION OF MISSIONARIES IN MAKUMA

How do missionaries in Makuma approach these issues? They did give me this document to read, but how does it relate to what they do in Makuma? I have already indicated how this text makes specific institutions of the mission appear in a specifically messianic light. I would now like to turn in more detail to a number of conversations I had with Jim and Norma where they expressed concern that they might have done something wrong in Makuma. These conversations were doubtlessly provoked by my being an anthropologist, and I will explain in Chapter 3 what the missionaries understood by anthropology. What interests me here is the way in which these conversations and John Piper's text shed light on each other and evidence more general ways of thinking about particularity and difference among North American evangelicals.

“Sometimes I worried that we were doing it all wrong,” Norma would tell me on different occasions, “that the mission was too much. We were bringing all

of this technology, all of these changes, and I worried that in doing so we were making things worse for Shuar.” Come to Makuma to help people, to make eternal life available to them, her presence was nevertheless bound to what North Americans and Europeans commonly take to be a harbinger of history-qua-progress: technology<sup>15</sup>. Indeed, she came in the late 1960s with her husband Jim, whose work for the next 40 years would center around the creation and maintenance of a hydroelectric powerplant. As I will show in more detail in Chapters 3 and 4, the powerplant was not an end in itself, as secular projects of modernizations would have it, but part of the effort to bring the Gospel to as many people as possible through a radio broadcasting station. Indeed, the missionaries did not entirely agree with secular modernization projects, partly because they aimed at eradicating difference between “primitive” or “underdeveloped” people and “modern” ones. More generally, fundamentalist Christians until the 1970s opposed modernity for being un-Christian and focusing too much on worldly enjoyment. This is where the mission seemed “too much”: even though its aim was evangelization, the heavy use of technology towards that aim could lead to “making things worse for Shuar”. Her fear was that this would encourage Shuar to strive for worldly pleasures and technology, and that in doing so they would be completely assimilated into national society. The threat that technology posed, for Norma, was that of the dissolution of difference before missionization could properly take place. Worse: that missionization would be the cause of such a dissolution. The good intentions of the missionaries would pave the road to a literal hell.

Two elements tempered this judgement in Norma’s view. First of all, she would remark, they often adopted technologies and ways of doing things after Shuar had done so. For instance, the first missionaries used to live in a “Shuar-style” house, but started building the “Western-style” houses when

they realized many Shuar had too. Similarly, they started painting these houses when they saw a number of painted Shuar houses. The radio broadcasting station itself only made sense because Shuar had started listening to the radio (although there missionaries promoted the use of radios by selling them). In other words, many technological imports to the mission made sense because they had come from Shuar themselves. It could not be seen as an external imposition but instead as an autonomous choice, a result of their own agency, which made it possible for missionaries to lead a more comfortable life safe from too much guilt. The second element, however, was even more important. As Norma would say, “In any case, we knew that things would get worse after the Gospel would reach people”. Christianity was by necessity a violent break not only with the past, but within a people. It would necessarily introduce a rift among Shuar between those who would receive the Gospel, and those who would not. When Norma says “we knew”, she meant that this can be found within the Bible, for instance in one of the most striking pronouncements of Jesus:

“Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword. For I have come to ‘set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law’; and ‘a man’s enemies will be those of his own household.’ “ (Matt 10:34-36)

More specifically, she meant that refusing Christ after having been offered the Gospel was announced in Second Peter as worse than remaining in ignorance of the message:

For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they

are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning. (2 Peter 2:20)

Apostasy is worse than ignorance. Having seen Shuar stop going to Church, she could relate what she took to be negative transformations of Shuar life to result from their rejection of the Gospel after accepting it. A worsening of life was bound to result from encountering Christianity if people then “are again entangled in [the pollutions of the world] and overcome”.

According to Norma, life for Shuar had taken two turns for the worse. First of all, Shuar men had used the Church to then get better access to the settler’s world, in a way described by Steve Rubenstein (2001). For the missionaries, this had then resulted in the leader importing into the Shuar world a number of external elements, such as beer-drinking, prostitution, etc., which in time would result in completely assimilating Shuar to the colonial world. Later on, this led to a wave of cultural revitalisation which the missionaries saw as being promoted mainly by external agents. For them, Shuar were being manipulated into bringing back elements of their cultural past which would lead to a return of the worst (for missionaries and many Shuar) of that past: constant feuding and head-hunting. In doing so, however, they would not regain their autonomy, but would enslave themselves further to these external agents.

In fact, as missionaries would make the Gospel available to more and more people, creating a “Shuar” people in the encounter with various barriers to their efforts, remaining Christian would become the only way to truly continue to be “Shuar”. Against a prevalent Euro-American understanding of what is at stake in missionization, we can here see that, for missionaries, it is not the case that the missionaries’ departure and encouragements from patrimonial agencies would lead to Shuar returning to a previously existing state of independence. Quite the opposite: It is in the movement of missionization that

a Shuar collective identity is produced and through their belonging to the Church that Shuar can continue to remain autonomous, whereas de-Christianization and cultural revitalization would leave them at the mercy of the State and the capitalist market who would hurry to homogenize them. In that sense, not only does the existence of a Shuar Church help to spread the Gospel within that newly created whole called “Shuar”, but it is also the only way to maintain the existence of “Shuar” as different from “national Ecuadorians”.

## 6. CONCLUSION: THE PEOPLE OF GOD

It is now possible to examine the similarities and the differences between what Shuar mean by “Yus Shuar” and what North American evangelical missionaries mean by “Shuar Christian”. Now that it is clear how these concepts operate as ways of relating universals and particularity, they must be contrasted with the more common Euro-American understanding of the relation between “culture and religion” or among “cultures”. According to this naturalist account, biological humanity would be the universal in contrast to which “peoples” or “cultures” would stand as a series of more or less bounded groups of humans differentiated from each other by a number of characteristics. In opposition to this static (and State-centred) picture, the two pictures I have presented show the particular and the universal emerging together out of processes of sharing and refusing to share. They are immanent, historical products. Moreover, they are ways of talking about history and of producing it. They are also fragile constructions which have to be maintained and reproduced over and over again. In that sense, they are what human actions aim at, rather than what causes or explains them. In both cases too, to communicate is to become alike in some ways.

This enables us to see the emergence of one main difference between the two. For Shuar, one has to be careful who one relates to. Indeed, in interacting, and beyond that in sharing food, one becomes more similar to the other, but that also means that one runs the risk of becoming more different to one's own kin, and ultimately unable to relate to them as kin at all. Those who do become Christian, if they believe they can benefit from God's care and his power, run the risk of alienating themselves from their family. Ultimately, this alienation might lead to the impossibility of intersubjectivity, that is, to murder and war. If it can be desirable, or even necessary, to become a Yus Shuar, one must not take it too far and forget who one is becoming a Yus Shuar for: one's own Shuar. Indeed, it is possible to be *too* Christian, and thereby to pose a danger not only to oneself but to one's kin. Being a Yus Shuar is therefore an exercise in negotiation and diplomacy; the managing of different and conflicting loyalties and relationships so that none may be broken. For these reasons, one might have to alternate between being a Yus Shuar and being an Iwianch Shuar, depending on circumstances such as the need to become a political leader, to cure an illness, or to create a family. For Shuar, then, Christianity is a series of relationships leading to God, where each node along the way articulates and mediates between differences without negating them. Relationship to God is always also a relationship to another human being who is closer to God than oneself, typically a missionary. Christianity is heteronomy.

For North American evangelicals, the universal is constituted more in a play between actuality and potentiality: The Church is potentially present in the whole world but needs missionary activity to actualize this potential, and missionary activity works by making the Gospel potentially available to a whole group of people, among whom only some will in actuality access the Gospel. Because of the pragmatic constitution of these people groups in the mission-

ary activity, these groups never fully correspond to themselves. Thus, the “Shuar” in the Association of Shuar Evangelical Churches (AIESE) does not correspond to the “Shuar” of the Shuar Bible: those who go to churches that form part of the AIESE do not all read the Bible in Shuar, and this Bible is read in churches that do not belong to AIESE. The people-group called Shuar, constituted by preaching and prayer-groups, does not entirely map onto the people-group constituted by the translation of the Bible in Shuar language. This non-correspondence of Shuar with itself continuously undermines any attempt at the constitution of a unified Shuar church, at the same time as it helps constitute Shuar Christianity. The missionary emphasis on the preservation of difference also entails a promotion of autonomy and a devaluation of external control. As a result, not only have missionaries consistently refused to lead church services among Shuar for over 20 years, but they have also minimized their role in the translation of the Bible. The conjunction of these principles of autonomy and non-identity puts the emphasis less on the Church as a unified structure and more on individuals’ relationship to God and to one another through God.

To simplify this dichotomy, one could say that what differentiates North American evangelicals from Shuar Christians is the emphasis they put either on autonomy or on heteronomy. The emphasis on one or the other of these terms does not obliterate the other but instead takes it for granted. Thus, Shuar Christians requesting that missionaries preach or baptize them do not negate their own direct relationship with God but instead presuppose it. When the missionaries refuse, they do not try to conceal the part they played in bringing the Gospel to Shuar and their continual relevance to the constitution of Shuar Christianity, but take it as a basis from which to move forward. In the same way, if North Americans would put the emphasis on the need for Christians to be different from non-Christians, and the Shuar would insist on

the necessity for Shuar to remain similar to Shuar, they do so based on different versions of similar assumptions. Together, the concept of “Yus Shuar” and those people who consider themselves to be Yus Shuar articulate the relationship between Shuar and God through Inkis, North American evangelicals. This involves relating and mediating Inkis ways of relating to one another and to God as well as Inkis understandings of what it is to be human. Yus Shuar act as a buffer between the Shuar and the Inkis, who in turn act as a buffer between Yus Shuar and God.

Where the two differ more intensely is in their understanding of history and transformations: For Shuar, transformations are at least partly reversible and move along a continuous spectrum, which makes it possible for people to become Christian for a while as children, then to stop being Christian as a young adult, whilst still harbouring hopes of becoming reconciled with Christ at a later date. On the other hand, these processes of conversion and de-conversion perplex and frustrate the missionaries to no end, for they understand Christianity to be a radical break with the past: One can be a bad Christian, but not an ex-Christian, and especially not an ex-ex-Christian. The missionaries variably interpret these transformations as meaning that the person in question was never really Christian in the first place (possibly because they did not understand what it involved, or because they lied), or that they have become bad Christians and, though believing in Christ, have defiled his name.

I can now return to these other missionaries with whom I opened this chapter, those who thought they would be the first to bring the Gospel to Shuar even though an evangelical mission had existed in Makuma for over sixty years. It should be clearer by now why I do not think that the Shuar men and women who keep inviting them are trying to deceive them when they say they have never heard of God before. For Shuar, becoming Yus Shuar implies establishing relationships of co-humanity with Inkis - who are themselves in

relation to God - in order to share in their bodily abilities and the power which they possess. The small number of missionaries makes it impossible, however, for all (or even many) Shuar to fully relate to them and establish the sort of reciprocal relations and commensality necessary for that sort of transformation to take place. Moreover, because the way an Other appears to an ego depends on the sort of relation established between them, different missionaries will give access to a different God, whilst this God still remains the same one God. These differences will manifest in the sorts of being one becomes in relation to Him and the sorts of relations one is then allowed to have with others. This could involve differently tabooed foods and activities, as well as different forms of material exchanges with the missionaries (more consumer goods, less Bible translation). In inviting new missionaries, Shuar hope to get a new access to God, because they found it difficult to relate to existing missionaries, and because the prohibition of manioc beer proved too limiting. In the next chapter, I examine in more detail the great difficulties of being Yus Shuar among Iwianch Shuar that would make almost any other way of relating to God more attractive, in spite of the obvious power it provides.





7: The author drinking manioc beer with Manuel



8: Tarjelia, wife of Manuel, serving manioc beer to Marcelino Chumpi



9: High-school students demonstrating "traditional" Shuar dancing



10: Late night dancing

## CHAPTER 2 - MANIOC BEER

Was there a party going on? Often in the evenings I would strain my ears to discern the sound of music from that of frogs, birds and rain around my house. During my stay in Makuma, I lived in one of the oldest-standing houses of the mission, and by extension also of the whole region. What was now one house had once been a veterinarian's consultation room, a small flat for teachers, and, in the room above, a dormitory for girls. Later on it had been the house of the translators, and it now served to accommodate temporary guests like myself. It stood opposite the house of Frank and Marie Drown, the two founders of the mission, which now housed Dwain Holmes and his wife, both missionaries to the Achuar. Next to my house were that of Daniel Naanch, the current president of AIESE, a refectory, the diesel power plant, and the office of the Yantsa Foundation. Further away on the other side was the other guest house, which was at the time occupied by a single missionary and her two adopted children, as well as the house of Jim and Norma Hedlund, the current missionaries to Shuar. In-between stood the old radio building that now served to house translation activities. These few buildings, with even fewer inhabitants, were all the mission was composed of. During the day, people would come by to sell some food, send a message on the two-way radio Daniel managed, go visit the missionaries, or walk through the mission to get water at a source nearby. Even then, human sounds were few and far between. At night, all that I could hear were the sounds of birds and frogs and trees, often enough drowned by the heavy rainfall on the tin roof. Persistently, I would also hear the faint but distinct rhythm of a well-known chichera song which could be the sign of a party going on. I did not count the times that I opened the door to listen more carefully, and still failed to be certain whether or not a party was taking place, and where. The noise of the forest drowned that of the big speakers which some households used, but from the patterns

of crickets and frog calls sometimes sounds emerged that seemed like they might come from a party.

I would ask my friends on the following day, but more often than not they did not know what I was talking about, and speculated that perhaps it was a neighbor listening to music on his own, or a party on the other side of the river. My inability to know whether or not a party was taking place was just one instance among others of my inability to notice, distinguish, and identify sounds. Sitting at my table, a friend would suddenly look into the distance and say: “electricity has just come on” after days without it. I would ask them how they knew, and they would say they’d heard it. I could not hear anything. People would identify planes which they could not see just by the sounds they made.

This inability was also an instance of the uncertainty of social life in Makuma, the difficulty for me, but also for most of my friends, to really know what was going on, who was who and where. Parties were announced that never took place, others happened with many people unaware of them. My suspicion that parties were always going on had its roots in the intense partying activities in and around Makuma. Despite Makuma’s being one of the biggest communities around, only a few parties were held during the year: one for the high school, one for the primary school, some for Christmas and a few other events, each of which would last for a few days. None were held for the church. The high school also tried to make Sunday a market day on which people from neighbouring communities would bring their produce. People stopped bringing produce, but Sundays continued to be partying days with a football competition and drinks. The neighbouring communities of Amazonas and Tunantsa, each at walking distance of half an hour to an hour, organized parties and football tournaments even more often, and smaller communities like Achuentasa, Kuamar had many parties as well. Parties for similar

events (Christmas, New Year, Mother's Day, Father's Day, etc...) would take place at different times in different communities so that more people could be invited. Missionaries disapproved, because between the parties and the football tournaments young people were almost always unable to come to church on Sundays. Parties were an important concern for Shuar Christians too. They would often discuss how, in spite of their refusal to take part in them, they would be forced by various people to participate. Sometimes, people would come to their house and shout at them, shaming them into joining the activities. Listening to these tales, I would wonder why they would not participate in these parties. I had been to a few, and they did not seem so bad. They were usually entertaining, and sometimes they could be boring too, but I had never seen anything I would consider out of the ordinary or particularly shocking. Hoping to understand this better, I started talking about parties with Dawn, a missionary who had not been in Makuma for as long as the others. But she raised the question before I could: "Do you know what takes place during these parties? Why do they make such a big deal out of them?". She had rarely, if ever, been to a whole party, but what she had seen of them did not seem so bad either. On the other hand, many Shuar and Achuar told her that they had stopped being Christian because they had been to a party, and she could not understand why; partying is not as such a sin, it is not explicitly prohibited in the Bible.

Then again, she added, each Christian has his or her own definition of sinfulness, which depends on their relationship to God, she said, there's something personal to it. Take me, for instance, I used to go out a lot, and drink a lot, before I knew God, and God changed my desires so that, as the Bible says, I would not get drunk on wine but on the Holy Spirit. After that, when I would go to a party, all I could see were drunk people talking in a

room full of smoke, and I wondered what I was doing there. I just was not interested anymore.

She remarked that some Achuar would spend all night shouting at the door of Christians to get them to come to a party, which would be very difficult to resist. Why they would go to such lengths to get them to come, she could not understand, especially because whenever the Christians do go to a party, they are mocked and taunted for not being Christians anymore. Perhaps, she mused, it was because the non-Christians knew that they were doing something wrong, and that by having everybody participate they wouldn't feel as bad doing it. Which led us back to our question: what were they doing that was so bad?

I have shown in the last chapter how being Christian in Makuma revolves crucially around whether or not one drinks manioc beer. In order to make that point clearer, I will now look into more detail at beer drinking and partying in Makuma and the transformations thereof over time, in order then to locate Christianity within these events. In other words, while the last chapter showed the place of beer drinking in Christianity, this one examines the place of Christianity in beer drinking. I will describe a party which I attended before turning to the three points I introduced earlier: the sensory experience of partying, its connection to uncertainty and the future, and finally the way Christians come to locate themselves in them, not only conceptually and sensually, but also in space: unable not to party, Christians exist at the margins of parties, in a tense, distant relationship to them. My discussion will place manioc beer in the context of other beverages Christians do not drink and which I call "technologies of introjection of the future".

## 1. MOTHER'S DAY IN MAKUMA

I was invited to the Mother's Day party organised in the village of Kuamar. Two other friends of mine were there too, both anthropologists: Natalia, who had been living there, and her boyfriend Gregory, both of whom had also been invited for the event. We slept in the house of my friend Manuel's second wife and woke up a little before 4 AM to help prepare food for the party: because it was Mother's Day, men were supposed to cook most of the meal. They did help, but as usual women ended up being the main cooks, peeling plantain, boiling meat, crabs and rice, washing plates and cutlery. In the afternoon Daniel, who was president of the Evangelical Church Association arrived with his wife and their child. He had been invited to preach about family and motherhood. He arrived just as food was ready to be served. Everyone ate the same communally prepared food, but Daniel left most of his food on his plate. Then he went to the centre of the football field, where a few rows of chairs had been set up facing him. He started off by talking about the book of *Genesis* in a coarse voice; how God created animals and the first woman so that Adam would no longer be alone. He followed this up with excerpts from the Epistle to the Corinthians which discuss the good order of a family: How the mother and her children must obey the husband, and in return he must love them. He insisted on the importance of this reciprocated love, on the love that husbands owe their wives. In other words, the relationship between husband and wife should be reciprocal, but it should not be symmetrical (obedience being exchanged for love). Later on, Daniel left and the party continued.

A few days later, back in Makuma, I went to see Daniel in his office at the Church. I hadn't seen him since that party, and he started off apologizing for not eating with people that day: he had a very sore throat, which made it very

painful to eat anything. He had, however, enjoyed the crabs, and it was the first time that he had had any, so he wanted me to thank people in Kuamar and apologise on his behalf. I asked him why it was said that going to parties deprived people of their status as Christians.

There is nothing in the Bible that says that we cannot go to parties, and I, for one, do attend parties,” he told me. “But there are good aspects of culture, and there are bad aspects of culture. Going to the afternoon events, to see the traditional dances, I like that a lot! But the dances which they perform at night, the one that they got from the settlers, these are too much! It used to be prohibited in the culture for men and women to touch each other when dancing, or even to look at each other; there had to be at least three meters between the man and the woman. Today, young men only dance to touch women, to annoy them, and they cannot be content with just touching hands, they have to take them in their arms because otherwise they say it’s not entertaining, it’s only if they touch up-close that they feel happy! That is why I do not stay at parties at night.

Many have thought the following: “When I dance I do not do anything bad, I just enjoy myself!” But, first of all, one gets drunk, when having manioc beer, because one cannot refuse it. When one turns down manioc beer someone else will go: “who does he think he is?”. And even if one does turn it down, the others will say that one was drunk anyway, they will say that Christians get drunk, thereby insulting God because of me. And even then, even if I am not drunk, a young man will see me drinking and think that it is no big deal and start to drink and to lose himself. The teacher that died the other day did not pass away on the grounds of his leukemia only. Because he had been treated, the doctors said he was going to be able to live for a long time if he took care of himself and stopped drinking. But he did not stop

drinking, and before he died he went to a party and drank a lot there, then he went to another party and never stopped drinking. His wife herself told me so!

Daniel here concludes with an episode which had taken place recently, and somewhat shaken the Christian community: a middle-aged man, son and brother to important figures within the church, had been suffering from cancer for a few years. I had met him at the Easter lunch which the Church had organized a month before, and talked at length with him. Returning from a trip, I learnt that he had just died at a hospital in Macas. For Daniel, more than his long-standing illness, alcohol was the proximate cause of his death. This was all the more tragic that he was a school-teacher working at a community many hours away from Makuma. Teachers often play a central role in the organisation and carrying out of parties. Because he was not from the community where he taught, it would have been even more important for him to participate: as I will expand upon further in the next section, not only would he have been needed to re-organise sociality in a foreign direction (that is, in the direction of the mestizos, perhaps also the Christians), but he also had to be integrated into the community, to be made the same as everybody else, a quasi-kin. Finally, the fact that he had died because of alcohol consumption seemed to Daniel to be a clear consequence of his being a Christian. One might think here that death from drinking would seem like a retribution from God to punish the teacher, an expression of God's wrath and jealousy, but it is also important to remember that, as I explained in the previous chapter, becoming a Christian is understood to imply a bodily transformation, a result of which is a distaste for, if not an intolerance of, alcohol<sup>16</sup>. Disobedience to God is itself an attack upon one's own body, perhaps even a form of suicide (drinking poison is a common method to commit suicide among Shuar). Here, then, Daniel reiterates what I have already said concerning the

centrality of drinking to any understanding of what it means to be a Christian: Christians do not drink manioc beer, yet it is impossible to refuse manioc beer. Even to say that Christians drink manioc beer is to insult God. Because of this, if a Christian makes it possible for others to make up a lie about them getting drunk, they participate in the insult. In a similar way, if they make it possible for anyone to believe that a Christian can drink beer, they will be the reason for that other person's confusion. But what about the first part of this quote? Apart from alcohol, what goes on during parties that is so disturbing to Christians?

## 2. DANCING

Back at the party the previous day, football and volleyball tournaments had taken up most of the afternoon, mostly informally, with teams made up on the spot with whoever was there at the time. In bigger parties, within larger communities, the teams would have been prepared in advance, and the results would have determined who would fight whom in the next round, in another village. After the sports competition ended, the Mother's Day ceremony proper took place. Everybody sat around the football field, except for the mothers of young children who were asked to sit in the middle in a row. The school teacher, after a short speech, called up each of the children to come to the centre, recite a poem, and give something to their mother. It did not last long and as soon as it was done, music started playing loudly, and people began to dance at the centre of the field. Men and women stood around the football field, small circles of friends each around a woman serving manioc beer. Men would fetch women to dance with them, and the latter could hardly refuse. They would go to the middle of the empty space and start dancing: pacing back and forth in time with the music, facing each other, sometimes holding hands, sometimes slowly turning around on themselves. Most of the time, dancers would not look at each other, much less in each other's eyes.

They rarely smiled. Instead, they would look at the people who stood around them, watching. Their stern expressions did not show boredom-as I had first thought- as much as it did defiance and potential anger. The crowd of spectators was not made up of strangers, as in clubs in big towns, but of one's parents, grandparents, siblings and cousins, children and nephews, of potential boyfriends and girlfriends, ex-husbands and wives, of many friends and some enemies. Only from the center could one see everybody, notice who was there and who was not. Similarly, only from the centre could one see who was watching whom, and watch back. It was also the only space where a man and a woman could exchange a few words in almost complete privacy. Thus the dance, as it set apart and re-united men and women, spectators and dancers, stirred their desires and jealousy and encouraged joy and anger. Dance established a relationship which operated simultaneously between both dancers - one male and one female - and between each dancer and the spectators who observe them. As the evening progressed, people drank more, young people danced more, with the young men sometimes very skillfully imitating dance moves they had seen on music video DVDs or on youtube. Among the young people, the dancing couples would be more likely to seem oblivious to the onlookers, lost in their enjoyment of each other. The dancers' bodies also got closer to each other, touching each other more. Their very obliviousness was a defiant and aggressive assertion that the dancers did not care what onlookers thought or said.

Dancing, for Daniel, was the other non-Christian feature of parties. More specifically, he distinguished between different sorts of dancing. What was the difference between the "traditional dances" and the "evening dances" according to Daniel? It had to do with the relationship between seeing and touching, between pleasure and annoyance, and with finding the correct level of intensity. Daniel did not mention himself dancing but only observing. His

distinction of two sorts of spectacles rested on the presence or absence of touching and the distance between bodies. In the first case, there was a distance of “at least 3 meters” between dancers, and this he termed “beautiful”. In the second case, the dancers touched each other’s hands, and the touching of hands seemed to necessarily lead to an embracing of each other’s bodies. This he described as “too much”. Parts of that “too much” came from what he believed it produced in both partners; namely, happiness for the men and annoyance or disturbance for the women. The distance (or lack thereof) between bodies stired up feelings and desires inside these bodies, including in the body of the observer. The negation of distance between the dancers provoked an asymmetrical distribution of pleasure and pain in which the male dancer’s pleasure seemed to increase proportionally to the female dancer’s and the observer’s displeasure. Daniel did not explicitly describe the effect of the distance that existed between dancers in traditional dances. He did tell me, however its effect on himself, “beautiful”, and the preference that men have for more over less physical contact. Keeping in mind the triangular relationship between spectators and dancers, it might therefore be that traditional dances produce less pleasure in men and less displeasure in women - perhaps going so far as to trigger pleasure in them. In other words, in “traditional dances”, parts of the beauty that Daniel experienced might also have come from the equality between dancers and among dancers and spectators.

At parties, dancing caused gossip, and often enough it also led to violence: a young woman’s ex-husband beating up a man because she had been dancing with him repeatedly over the course of the evening; a wife shouting at her husband who had been dancing with her sisters too much and who, she feared, might want to get a second wife; a man hitting his wife because he suspected she had, or would be having, an affair with his brother.

Men started to invite me to dance with their daughters. I would go to the centre, dance for a while, then come back to the side and talk with one man or another. When I talked to the president of the community he told me that, in the past, children and students were not allowed to come to parties. He said, however, that the community had recently passed a motion allowing them to come on the condition that children would leave after 9PM and that both students and the president of the community would abstain from drinking alcohol. Looking around me as he said that, past 10PM, I could see quite a few small children, drunk students, and the president himself, quite inebriated. Some time after that Gregory, who had disappeared with Natalia, came to tell me that they had gone back to sleep at the house. They thought that I might need some sleep too, and knew how difficult it was to leave a party on one's own. I used the opportunity to make my excuses and follow Gregory back.

The day after the party, as I was on my way back to Makuma, Natalia and I visited Manuel's first wife. Natalia had told me that Manuel's sister wanted me to marry his daughter. Indeed, during our conversation she asked me if I was thinking of marrying a girl from around there. I could see the scowl on the young woman's face as I tried to explain why I was not thinking of marrying anyone at the moment. We walked on and Natalia told me what people had said about the moment when Gregory had come to fetch me the night before: As they saw it, Natalia had forced Gregory to come home because she was angry to see him dancing so much with her "sisters", Manuel's daughters; however, Gregory, drunk and still wanting to party, would take none of it and left Natalia alone to dance some more. Still according to them, when I saw this, I had brought him back to his wife and made sure he stayed there. She had denied this, of course, but the more she denied it, and the more embarrassed she was, the more they would re-assert it and laugh. The gossiping

work that had begun the day before went on, and would go on for days. In speech, at least, I became a future husband, brother-in-law and son-in-law to many of those present there. Similarly, Gregory was turned into a would-be polygamist, drunkenly wanting to marry the sisters of his wife in spite of her. In both cases, our protestations and refutations were not easily accepted, if at all.

This description of a party takes us some way to understanding how central they are to the production of kinship. First of all, this party in particular was organised to celebrate Mother's Day, a celebration typical of the settlers. The event itself revolved around a mini-ritual orchestrated by the schoolmaster and the children, in the course of which the latter were to show love and recognition for their mother. Similarly, men were made to take part in a typically feminine activity, cooking, in an explicit nod to one meaning of Mother's Day: women were not to work on that day, to recognise their efforts during the year and thank them for them. Earlier, the head of the Church Association had come to talk about the way in which, according to the Word of God, family relationships ought to be ordered woman was created to alleviate man's loneliness and the children and wife were to obey the father, who was to love them in return. In all three cases, then, knowledge of how kinship was said to work by outsiders was made to bear upon the families of the community. This knowledge did not come directly from the foreigners, however, but from Shuar. In the case of the schoolmaster, he was a close kin to most of the women present. In Daniel's case, he came from a different part of Shuar territory, but had been living in Makuma for a long time by then. More importantly perhaps, he was addressing people in Shuar, and quoting from the Bible in Shuar. Moreover, by then he had been invited to come regularly to that community for months in response to a parricide, an event to which I will return further on. It is also important to note that the versions of kinship

presented in each case were partly at odds with each other: one put emphasis on the mother herself as provider of food and care, whereas the other put the emphasis on her and her children's relationship to her husband, which although it should be reciprocal, should not be symmetrical (obedience being exchanged for love).

At the same time, these were only brief moments in a very long day that presented other versions of kinship. The meal, where everybody ate the same food that had also been prepared in common, was one of these. Throughout the day, everybody was also made to share in the drinking of manioc beer. During the afternoon, teams fought off each other at volleyball, and in the evening men and women danced with each other, at times gleefully, more often looking very stern. Around them, observing the dancers, many groups of men were drinking manioc beer and talking with each other. During the whole day, people were watching each other and beginning to interpret what was going on, accumulating gossip to tell over the next few days. Thus, the foreigners who were present at the party were made to fit into the ways families worked there. These competing versions of kinship were being enacted over a background of conviviality. The party enabled "everybody" to be together. This "everybody" included both kin and strangers, permanent residents of the community and guests, men and women, producers of food and consumers, and most activities that took place over the day and the night centered around the setting up of these oppositions and their overcoming. More specifically, what this first description makes clear is that parties are oriented towards the production of future kin and of future ways of being kin. These future ways of being kin are brought to bear on the present through the incorporation of foreign ways of being kin, whether through the organization of a Mother's Day ceremony by the school teacher, or through Daniel's

preaching. Future kinship was also incorporated into the present in more discreet ways: dancing, gossiping, and explosive outbursts of jealousy.

### 3. TOUCHING HANDS

As we have seen, parties are events during which outsiders are progressively integrated into the community, and in which the community is shaped by outsider knowledges and practices in order to orient itself towards a more peaceful life together and away from conflicts. It is important for Christians to take part, in order both to remain part of the community and to help direct it with Christian knowledge. However, parties also are dangerous events for Christians. They are reticent to party not only because of their distaste for beer drinking, but also because of the sort of sensory experience which “night dances” provide: too much touching, too much asymmetry. This was contrasted by a sort of dancing which kept the distance between partners that used to characterise Shuar dancing. In another domain, however, touching is more valued in current times than it used to be. Every day -outside, on pathways, or, even more so, at parties- the same people who would not have thought of doing it in earlier times now shake hands. An older friend of mine reminisced, for instance, that when his family used to meet friends on the road, his mother would run up to them and start singing and dancing, “just like a bird”, but that no touching was ever involved. He also recalled the times when his mother’s brother would come to visit them at their house. He only lived at a walking distance of a few hours, and he would come quite regularly. He would announce himself from afar with great shouting and whooping. When he approached the house, my friend’s father would take his spear and wait for him, and they would shout at each other for a long time, threatening each other with their spear, pacing back and forth, until it would be possible to sit down, drink manioc beer, and start talking: each man had recognized the other, each knew that the other did not want to kill him, and they could be-

have like allies. It seems as unimaginable to me today as it does to my Shuar friends who shake hands with each other, and with me. When people in Makuma would contrast the older forms of salutation to contemporary ones, they usually emphasised that it was a form of progress. As Daniel once told me, “now we shake hands for civilization’s sake”.

How is the shaking of hands more “civilised” than the elaborate forms of salutation that preceded it? What part of that transformation do people recognise as a form of progress? In both examples which my friend could remember, an individual faced a group and demonstrated either joy or anger with a loud voice and movements of the whole body. Today, individuals face one another, smile or keep a straight face, touch hands and often say each other’s names and a few sentences. Young women often look down or look away and barely touch the palm of their interlocutor’s hand, whereas male friends will hold onto each other’s hand and shake more vigorously. If the encounter occurred at a party or a meeting, one would usually shake the hand of all the individuals present, including children, going around the football field. These salutations could last for a long time, as friends would invite each other to chat for a while with them and drink before moving on to the next group of friends, acquaintances, or foreigners.

The threat of violence has disappeared since the missionaries had arrived. Where salutations used to be potentially dangerous events, they are now a subdued routine. Extreme uncertainty has been replaced by repeated reassurance. The possibility that one’s brother-in-law could turn out to be one’s enemy has been replaced by a mandatory assertion that, whatever else happens, and in spite of our disagreements on other matters, even strangers or political enemies should shake hands. Touch has become a sign of trust and an assertion of equality, an instrument in maintaining peace. This might seem to con-

tradict Daniel's strong aversion to touching as well as my analysis of it in terms of the conflictuality that touch embodies in dancing. Indeed, his assertion that "now we shake hands for civilisation's sake" did not mean that he embraced that new custom. Rather, he was telling me that things have gone far enough, that shaking hands is concession enough to "civilisation", and that touching should go no further. But if shaking hands is acceptable where dancing is "too much", it is because they are different forms of touching, and differ from a third one: spearing. The highly confrontational male ritual of salutation maintained distance between partners, but revolved around the possibility of a deadly touch: that one of them might murder the other by running him through. What Daniel meant when he ascribed touching hands to a progress of civilisation was that this was a tamer mode of salutation, one which did not imply the threat of war. The potentially violent "Jivaro" had been replaced by the tame Shuar, at least for now. He remained ambivalent towards it, however. As for dancing, shaking hands could easily lead to too much touching. Thus, he mocked a pentecostal pastor who had tried to make his Shuar flock kiss at the end of mass instead of the usual shaking of hands: how could he not realise that soon people would start talking and accuse him of wanting to take all these woman as his new wives? How could he be surprised by the anger of their husbands that led to his eviction from the community? For Daniel, the line had to be drawn at shaking hands, and even there people had to be vigilant. Shaking hands could easily lead to kissing, kissing to sex, and sex to violence, revenge, and war.

#### 4. TOUCHING VISIONS

In everyday life, shaking hands therefore provides an alternative to the potentially violent male salutation rituals. It lowers the intensity of the exchange, focuses on immediate mutual recognition, and emphasises both equality and friendliness. As an alternative to spearing, however, it does not completely

keep the danger of violence at bay. That violence expresses itself during parties, when people dance. For instance, shaking hands must itself be controlled by not lingering too much on young women's hands but barely brushing past them.. Beyond everyday events and very regular gatherings like parties, the dialectic of seeing and touching, peace and violence also manifests itself in extraordinary events like vision quests, where it meets more directly that of drinking and puking, future and past. Shuar mainly use three different plants to have visions: Natem (*banisteriopsis caapi*), maikua (*datura*), and tobacco. Because I was living on the mission and many people might mistake me for a missionary, Daniel made me sign an agreement to the effect that I would not drink alcohol, consume hallucinogenic drugs, or bring women over whilst I was staying there so as not to confuse people. As a result, I did not experience any of these plants. Many of my friends being Christians, the understanding I have of them is also coloured by their relationship to the Christian God. Some of my closest friends, however, were not Christians and told me more about their experiences with these plants. Traditionally, vision quests are undertaken to achieve a state of temporary immortality or enhanced power through the encounter of a vision. Arutam, which I already mentioned in chapter 1, is the ultimate form that such an encounter can take. There is an important body of literature concerning visions among Shuar, and particularly on Arutam quests, which I will not discuss directly here<sup>17</sup>. Instead, I will examine episodes that were recounted to me during my fieldwork.

At a party at my friend Felipe's house, he told me that his youngest daughter had had a vision the night before. Because she had been feeling down, they decided to give her natem. She sat all night and spoke as she was having visions. At some point, she said "So this is France? How beautiful! So this is the country where you took me, the country where we will live together!". Per-

haps, he mused, this meant I would marry her and take her with me. He also warned me that in the same vision she had seen a violent son that would have to be controlled. A few days later, another friend of mine told me about the visions she'd had whilst drinking natem the day before. She had just finished high school and was very depressed, because her husband had left her for another woman. In her vision, she had seen another woman graduating from university. When she had asked the shaman, he said that it meant that she would receive a diploma in the future. "This is what visions are for," she told me, "you see your future in front of you like a film, and you always see it happening to other people, when it is really going to happen to you. This gives strength, visions give strength, this is why you try to get them when you are feeling weak and lazy. When you take natem, you throw up and in this way you eliminate the weakness. You feel fresh, clean; it also changes your personality. It is like abandoning the past to move on towards the future. When I couldn't stop thinking about my ex-boyfriend, my grandparents said "why are you pining for him, it's over!" and made me drink natem. I had never drunk so much of it! And now I am well and on Thursday I am leaving to find a job in Macas!"

When taking natem, one sees other people doing things, like in a film. One is a forced spectator: it is impossible to move and act upon what happens in the vision. This does not mean that one cannot influence visions. As various other friends had told me, one can influence the process in many disastrous ways, for instance by concentrating too much on bad things. This will make these bad things manifest. Or by looking at one's own body, for that will precipitate one's death. But if done properly, one just sees things. Beautiful things. And one speaks the things that these other people say. It is only afterwards that some of these observed others are revealed by the shaman to be one's future self, who one will become. Simultaneously, one throws up. It is

the heaviness that held one down that is gotten rid of in throwing up. Lightness and cleanliness replace it. I specifically asked my friend if the seeing and the vomiting were two different things, two different parts of taking natem, two different ways in which natem helped to make oneself better, but she strongly asserted that they were the same thing: seeing the future is throwing up the past. “The future” and “the past” are not different locations in time, but persons and relations that natem gives access to. The future is a passive vision of other people in action, the past is an undigested filth that weighs on one’s stomach until it is puked out. Feeling down results from being filled up with too much past and the cure, natem, rids one of that past and fills one up with a future. What is eaten with one’s eyes pushes what got stuck in one’s stomach through one’s mouth. Seeing and vomiting are one.

For the people sitting around the seer, however, things are different. There is little light, so they do not really see anything, or anyone. They hear words and vomit fighting to escape the seer’s lips. They hear fragments of conversations and descriptions, and sometimes they also hear the noise that the liquefied past makes as it is expelled from the seer. The sound of the future, which is the voice of the seer’s future self, is what they hold onto, what they remember, discuss, share, comment, explain, gossip about. This voice of the future, this “So this is France?” gets repeated to the seer once the vision is gone, and to the seer’s kin and friends, and perhaps also to the seer’s potential kin. It gets repeated to the person who might hear them again in another place, in another time. And perhaps these kin and friends and potential kin then might repeat these words further out, or they might write them down as I now do. In other words, if for the seer the future is a vision of other people, for other people the future is a speech of the seer. It is the conjunction of these two futures after the vision is over that makes it possible to venture into an interpretation of what it might mean: a girl saw a woman with her lover in a beauti-

ful land, her father heard her say: “So this is France? How beautiful! So this is the country where you took me, the country where we will live together!”; the conjunction of her vision and her father’s hearing enables them to identify the woman in the vision with the voice of the seer, therefore the woman whom she saw is the woman whom she will be when she says these words again in the future, and the absent “you” she was talking to that night is the man who will take her to France. The future first encountered in the vision can find its way through that man. As they repeated these words to me, they made that future available to me too. Although I did not take up that offer, it still remains a possibility.

##### 5. TECHNOLOGIES OF INTROJECTION OF THE FUTURE

I have described visionary experiences in order to draw an analogy with parties and to better understand what Christians see in parties. Visionary experiences make a future available to a person and open up a way for a present-body to become a future-body, for oneself to become another. This process takes place through the personal remembering of the vision, bringing it back repeatedly into the present until the moment when it is realised, that is, until the point of view has shifted from that of an external observer to that of a participant. It also takes place through the repetition by the seer’s relatives of some of the words she uttered to specific people in specific contexts to make way for the realisation of that future. On a different scale, parties similarly enable encounters with virtual futures through spectatorship and embodiment. Spectators watch dancers, knowing that they will soon become them, trying out different pairings which are then commented upon and gossiped about for days, if not weeks, until a specific future is made possible for a pairing, or until an end is put to it by parents or jealous lovers. There, touch retains its ambivalent nature of a violent actualisation of a specifically powerful future. Like vision quests, the dances where touching is involved mark a young man’s

transition into adulthood. This involves overcoming the fear of touching a potential enemy in order to transform her into an actual affine. This transition, as Taylor has remarked, is inevitably violent, even as this violence is downplayed: a domestication, rather than a murder. My description of visionary experiences should help us to take seriously another statement which I would hear at parties: that parties are not good until one has drunk enough manioc beer to vomit it all out. There too, one could say that happiness and vomiting are one thing, except that instead of opening the way for an individual's future, it makes way for more manioc beer, that is, for future sociality.

This parallel between parties and visions makes it possible to see natem and manioc beer as two sorts of future-producing beverages. We can then add to this series another drink that similarly conjoins drinking, vomiting, visions, and talk: tea. In the mission, my house was facing that of a missionary who had been working with Achuar for over twenty years. Dwayne, whom people more often knew as Tukup, was famous for walking barefoot as well as selling balloons, fish-hooks, and musical instruments at a low price, and for buying snakes and frogs. He was also one of the few people in Makuma to wake up at 3.30 in the morning to drink Guayusa tea until the sunrise and vomit it out, like the ancients used to do. He lived in the big house of Frank Drown, the man who had created the mission in 1945. During Church leadership seminars, which would last for a few days, he would host Achuar and Shiwiar church leaders and together they would drink for hours in the starlight and talk. After a while, one could hear them go near the trees and vomit all the tea they had drunk. One of them in particular was famous for vomiting very loudly. Sometimes, Christian Shuar men from Makuma would also come and drink tea. Few did so, however, and they said it was because they did not know how to vomit anymore. They would end up with litres of tea weighing heavily on their stomach, making them feel ill and drowsy during the day.

They regretted it, even though it would be good to be able to clean oneself in such a way and to make space for food that would make them strong for a day of work. That path had been closed off for them, though, as they had made way towards “civilisation” and the body it brings. Their “tame” bodies, the same that had lost some of its capacity for anger, had also become unable to vomit tea.

One day Manuel expressed a similar nostalgic disappointment with contemporary Shuar bodies. He came to see me, and as we drank coffee he complained about being a bad father. He was not raising his sons properly. I asked him how he should do it, expecting him to say he should take them to a waterfall, make them drink natem or maikua, and help them get a vision of an arutam. Instead, he told me he should be with them everyday, take them out at 4 in the morning to the river to bathe, and drink tea. He should teach them to concentrate on the future they wanted for themselves. In other words, he longed for disciplines of purification of the body that get rid of traces of its past, in order to make way for specific visionary futures. But he did not do it: instead he would lay in bed with his wife and listen to the radio until food was ready and he would leave. As a political leader, he needed to hear the news and the salutations on the radio in order to know how to act next. He then had to spend most of his time away from home, to negotiate development projects and interrupt attempted coups against his presidency. The only way left for him to discipline his sons was to beat them when they did something wrong, and to invest in their education. In Manuel’s nostalgic vision of what a proper father used to be, drinking tea therefore appears as another way to open up to the future, associated like natem with the need to “concentrate” on one’s desired future, to visualise it. Or, as another described visions to me, one needs to “have faith” for them to work: one needs to think hard about what one wants to see until one does.

Tea, manioc beer and natem can thus be seen as technologies of introjection of the future. In all three cases, a future is produced by ingesting a liquefied version of a plant, which causes dizziness, and enables one to vomit remains of previously ingested food and to encounter desired futures as persons. These visions also spread among humans in a spoken form and lead to action. That visions be spoken and spread socially might seem paradoxical to readers of Shuar ethnographies. Indeed, silence is a crucial element of arutam quests: although the vision reveals itself to the seer as received speech, under no condition should they tell others of their vision, or even that they had had a vision. If they did, the arutam would leave them, and they would be left powerless. This silence, however, is only relative. Men (and some women) who have received visions often adorn themselves with face paints which articulate some of their relationship with their arutam for others to see. More generally, they were not supposed to hide the effects that arutam visions have on them, which include greater forcefulness of speech, for instance. In fact, these effects were the very aim of the vision quest in the first place. More importantly still, this revealed speech would be remembered, and might even take the form of an interior dialogue between an arutam and the seer. Non-spoken speech, what we would call internal speech, is not considered by Shuar to be “unreal”, unsocial, or even ineffective: indeed, magical songs depend for their efficacy on their being “unheard” by the person whom they are aimed at: in order to fully work, they must be sung only silently, in one’s head. Speech, therefore, is an integral part even for arutam visions.

I can now articulate these considerations around technologies of introjection of the future to the definition of Shuar I introduced in my first chapter. I have presented the centrality of beer as a consequence of Shuar embodiment. Shuar bodies are intersubjectively constituted in relationships of care and in memories of such relationships (see also Gow 1991, 1997). A person’s generic

face becomes specific over time through that person's relationship with others. Under specific conditions, these relationships can be changed, and with them people's bodies as they appear to each other. Relationships with particularly powerful beings also seem to be able to induce transformations in one's body, such as a distaste for manioc beer. However, Shuar sociability is particularly unstable: one's own brother-in-law can suddenly reveal himself to be one's enemy. Because these relationships are not external to embodiment but constitutive of it, sudden shifts in relationality transform one's body. Further, the uncertainty created by this instability itself affects the body. Taylor has shown how these transformations are experienced as pain and illness, that for Shuar history is sickness (Taylor 2014, 2007). The way in which the various future-enabling beverages that I have presented so far function here becomes clearer. In effect, what the more potent ones like natem and maikua do is establish new relationships between an Ego and an Alter through sight and sound and rid Ego of remnants of relationships to another Alter through vomiting. Both the new and the old Alters relate to Ego temporally: the vomited one is what remains of an Alter from the past, and the seen (and heard) one are Alters from the future. Because these future Alters will have been Ego, these relationships are hyper-certain: they are not the object of shifting alliances and conflictuality like other relationships. They therefore serve to anchor one's body in an introjected super-certain relationship to the future. This relationship is super-certain because it cannot be influenced from the outside, it is maximally certain. The difference between simple visions, like the ones I have described, and an Arutam vision lies in the sort of future encountered in them. In simple visions Ego encounters a future Alter whom he will become, whereas in Arutam visions Ego encounters a super-Alter, a maximally different Alter: an enemy. The futures encountered in less potent plants, such as manioc beer or tea, are less certain, yet participate to the same logic. They keep one anchored to one's kin in the more immediate

future, and enable one to keep up with their transformations. Thus, drinking beer and vomiting it produce humans. Drinking natem, tobacco, and maikua assures them a future.

In the next chapter and in the conclusion I will contrast these super-Alter and super-certainty with the Christians' hyper-Alter and hyper-certainty, come from a future beyond the future. In the mean time, this analysis already illuminates the Christian refusal to drink any of these. Indeed, Christians do not drink fermented manioc beer, natem, maikua, or tobacco. I have suggested earlier that it was the potential for violence that made both the consumption of manioc beer at parties and dancing an impossibility for Daniel. It may be that this is also the case for natem and maikua. Arutam quests, in their paradigmatic form, are about future murders. The hyper-certainty of the seer is correlative to a hyper-uncertainty of another who will fall prey to him, whom the seer will murder. In other words, it would be the upper limit of the sort of asymmetry that Daniel saw in dancing: murder. This may be the case, although it would be harder to understand where the violence lies in women's visions which do not, as a rule, revolve around the killing of an enemy. To explain why he did not drink natem, Daniel told me that people had forgotten how to take it and that all their visions are now deceptive. Arutam himself is deceitful, he told me, for he promised invincibility yet in practice brought illness. In other words, Shuar bodies could no longer take in natem, in the same way as they could no longer take in tea. Instead of curing them, natem would now poison them by giving them false visions. The relationships shown in visions would not be real ones, therefore causing people to fall ill instead of healing them. Similarly, although Daniel himself liked the taste of tea, drinking too much of it risked endangering his body, weighing it down temporarily instead of lifting him up. Instead of ridding Shuar of the past, tea itself belonged to the past and weighed their contemporary bodies down with a past

they could do nothing with. Whether it is because of their potential inducing of violence or because contemporary Shuar can only have deceitful visions, Daniel's dismissal of all these drinks can be explained by the fact that to him the sorts of relationships they establish, as well as the sorts of bodies that result from these relationships, are in some profound sense inadequate and harmful to contemporary Shuar<sup>18</sup>.

## 6. CHRISTIAN FUTURES

### 6. 1. "But I like to watch"

Just as it becomes easier to understand Daniel's refusal of beer, tea, natem, and maikua, the problem faced by Shuar Christians becomes even more imposing. Indeed, not only are Shuar Christians refusing to participate in collective ways of producing co-humanity and common futures, but they also seem to do away with any mode of creating a future for themselves. Even the more benign drink, which Achuar drink, does not seem to be a possibility for them. What do Shuar Christians do instead? To start answering this question, we will begin with what Christians do at parties and the ways in which they do manage to engage in them in spite of all. Further, I have until now focused on Daniel's understanding of parties. Yet Daniel's Christianity does not take place in a vacuum; he is not the only Shuar Christian, nor is he necessarily the most representative by mere virtue of being the president of the AIESE. This position both enables him to participate less, on account of of being somewhat of an outsider, and to participate only as an experienced, married Christian man; that is, as a preacher. In order to understand what Shuar Christians do at parties, and to better understand Daniel's own position there, I want to turn to people whose standing both in the Church and in the communities is less unique than Daniel's. More specifically, I want to briefly turn to new converts. Indeed, what retreats into the background when one focuses on the words of leaders and established Christians is the work that went

into becoming a Christian and the process of transformation<sup>19</sup>. It might seem, then, that the difference between the two is radical and comes out of nowhere. This is especially so in the case of Shuar, where Christianity is understood to be less of a system of symbols than a transformation of one's body. If this does work in accordance with Saint Paul's description of conversion as the acquisition of a new body through a new birth, it also contradicts the experience of Christians themselves who describe conversion as a process more than as an event. How, then, do recent converts experience parties?

A few weeks after the events I described at the beginning of this chapter, I went to an important political meeting in the cantonal capital, Taisha, located at a two-day walking distance from Makuma. I went with Natalia and other people from Kuamar to support Manuel in a conflict within the indigenous party, Pachakutik. The issue revolved around the articulation of the role of the three federations: the Achuar federation, NASHE, and the FICSH. After a whole day of occasionally intense debates, we had left the stadium where the debate was taking place to get some food and visit the town. Later on in the evening, I walked by the stadium where a party was now raging. Unlike the football fields in Makuma, here the stadium was surrounded by walls. Although we could hear the music from a long distance, we could not see who was dancing. We got closer, and just outside one of the doors, peering inside, I saw a young man from Kuamar. I went to say hi and asked him if he'd been dancing. "No, he said, I'm a Christian now. I don't like dancing anymore. And I don't listen to the music either... But I like to watch". As he said that, he echoed the words I had heard from a woman at a party celebrating the arrival of the road in a community an hour away from Makuma. Natalia and I met her when she was buying ice-cream for the daughter she had from a marriage with a German man. I had asked her a similar question to know if she was enjoying the party, and she had said that she did not dance or even listen

to the music because she was a Christian, but that it was both beautiful and very funny to watch people dance.

So far I have shown how the production of a future depends on the articulation of desire and power with the senses. What this young man and this woman describe is that the transition to Christianity, if it implies a transformation of one's source of power, also implies a transformation of both one's desires and of one's mode of experiencing parties themselves. In other words, for Shuar, the transition towards Christianity involves a transformation of one's body, of its appearances and disgusts, of its relationship to other human beings, and of its relation to specific sounds, sights and feelings. As they become Christian, Shuar bodies lose certain desires, such as the desire to dance. They also refrain from listening to the music and the lurid lyrics that it often contains. This transformation, however, is only partial and fragile. Indeed, they still desire to watch people dance and continue to find pleasure in it. If they did it too much, they might even be led to listening to the music again, or to dancing. Earlier I quoted Daniel saying that people might not think that dancing the way settlers do is doing something wrong. Learning more, letting one's body be transformed by reading the Bible and praying, might eventually lead this young man and this woman to stop enjoying the dance even as a spectacle. But going to the parties and staying on their margins, in that precarious position, torn between desires to see and aversions to hear, is in itself a way to discipline one's body and to learn to be a Christian.

The newly converted young man also told me a few other things which can already give us some idea as to what Shuar Christians do to produce futures for themselves. He mentioned first of all that upon his conversion the preacher had written his name in God's book, where the names of all Christians are written, a fact to which he seemed to give great importance. I did not meet this young man again, nor did I hear again of God's Book in which the names

of Christians were written. He might have been referring to the “Book of Life” in which, according to evangelical interpretations of *Revelation*, the names of all those who have trusted in Jesus Christ are written down in order to identify them during the final judgement. It might also have been that the preacher who was there when he came to the altar and publicly accepted Jesus during a Church service wrote his name in a register. Preachers usually give or sell at a reduced price Shuar Bibles and hymn books to new converts, a transaction which they have to record. He might have been referring to this. It may also very much be that he took all three to be one and the same event. Having one’s name inscribed in a register is an experience that, for Shuar, is associated with the State and the settler’s world, as having and renewing identity cards are necessary to find work in the city, to see a doctor without having to pay, to get money at the bank, and so on. It is also an experience related to life in the community and in the federation, where writing one’s name in a register is a routine part of the assemblies that take place at a community or in Makuma. Finally, registers are kept at school of pupils’ attendance as well as of their marks, with diplomas being highly valued for the authority they convey and the access they give to office work and higher pay. In this young man’s case, it seems to have had the similar signification of belonging to a community, of being obligated to that community, and of gaining access to a specific world. It is, however, resolutely oriented towards a future, that of the last judgement and of the new earth, and to be determined in relation to a particularly powerful being, God.

Moreover, he told me that his grandmother was in the process of “teaching [him] all the prayers, the ones to say before and after one eats, the ones to say before, during, and after work, all of them” but that he was finding it difficult to remember them all. This was also surprising, and I did not hear of it elsewhere. Evangelicals are particularly intent on their refusal of repeating pray-

ers, preferring to pray *ex tempore*. Nevertheless, this brings to mind two features of Shuar Christianity which were more public and widespread during my fieldwork: that of singing hymns, and that of prayer to open and close activities. Indeed, the hymn book was given to new converts along with a Bible, as I have indicated. An important part of Church services was devoted to hymn singing. Most of the songs were widely known by both Christians and non-Shuar and would be sung informally on a number of occasions. Most of these songs are calls to Jesus urging him to return. Similarly, Church services opened and closed with prayers, as did dinners among Christians. I also remember a church leader advising Christians to get rid of their collections of CDs and MP3s to replace them with devotional music. Often using exactly the same rhythms and melodies as the *musica chichera* of the dance parties, and similarly produced in the Andes by Andean artists, these songs redirect the feelings of sexual and amorous longing towards a longing to be with Jesus. We can also relate the private transmission of specific prayers for specific tasks from older to younger kin to the transmission of magical songs for hunting, gardening or love. These songs are ways of establishing inter-subjective relations among humans or between humans and non-humans and of acting upon that relationship in various ways (see Taylor 2000, Brown 2006). This nexus of relationships between hymns, prayers and magical songs would benefit from further analysis beyond the limited scope of the present work. It is nevertheless possible to see here that through singing hymns Christians aim to establish a mode of intersubjectivity oriented towards the future and a non-human being, with a shift from a multiplicity of addressees in magical songs to a unique one in hymns, and (respectively) from a concern with a close future to that with an ultimate future.

## 6. 2. Women from the future

Some Christians were in less precarious positions in parties. I have already described Daniel's ability to come in to eat and watch the traditional dances without having to stay for the night dances and get drunk on manioc beer. This ability was predicated on his coming forward during the day to preach in the middle of the football field. He shares this ability to come to the fore and address the community with all church leaders, whose main activity is to preach; that is, to give advice, and in particular advice about how to have a peaceful family life. In any given church, most of the church leaders will be most of the fathers of the families that attend that church, and reciprocally, most of the attendants will be the wives and children of the men who lead the church. Indeed, the ability to have this consolidated role comes simultaneously from not needing a wife, and from already having children. Without a wife, it would be particularly difficult to refuse to dance with women. At the same time, having children provides one with an audience and an authority to impart advice on how to lead a peaceful life. This role, however, is only available to men. This results both from Shuar traditionally reserving public speech to men, and from the missionaries' complementarist reading of the Bible that prohibits women from speaking during a service. How, then, can Christian Shuar women consolidate their place at parties? How can they avoid being made to dance with men other than their husband?

When parties took place in Makuma, I liked to start my journey around the *espacio cubierto* with Carolina's table. She would usually be at the left hand corner of the *espacio* closest to the Church and the streets I would normally arrive through. For a dollar, she would serve me a cup of juice from the big plastic barrel that stood on her table. For a few more dollars, she would fill a plastic plate with some chicken soup and a little bit of meat, usually cold by then, from a big metal saucepan. Her son had a few plastic boxes full of

sweets that he would sell to adults and children alike. Aged around 10 years old, he managed his own money, reinvesting what he had made at the previous party to buy more sweets for the next one. He would also sometimes come to my house to try to sell me bracelets, necklaces and containers. His grandfather had taught him how to make them. He was recognised for his craftsmanship, and sometimes Carolina's table would also offer tawasaps (Shuar crowns of feather) and spears made by her father, who was also a devout Christian. He loved to lead the singing parts of the Sunday service, or play the flute when someone else was leading, and always dressed impeccably. Some of the money they made together during festivities in Makuma would go to daily expenses, such as buying rice and eggs and oil. But they also needed money to make trips to see ophthalmologists in Shell, because many of her children had a degenerative eye condition that needed to be checked regularly. What they had been saving money for, however, was the building of a new house. The small shack in which they now lived was falling apart, the wooden floor rotten, the roof leaking, wind entering through the walls as if they did not exist. For all her distress, even her own brothers would not come to her help for free. At first, she had gathered enough money to buy the wood and the metal roof. One of her brothers, the school teacher whom Daniel had told me about, had agreed to help her build the house for free, but he had died before much of the house had been built. Her other brothers did not care. The last time I met her she still needed 20\$ to pay some men to make walls for her. She had to attend parties to sell food so that she could build a house in which life was possible and to take proper care of her children. However, she did not want to sell manioc beer and contribute to men's alcoholism. She would therefore sell fruit juice and meat, unlike the other women who sold manioc beer from the same plastic barrels as hers. It is difficult to say if she was more or less successful than they. Both she and the other women were being challenged by men who had enough money to have bottled beer brought

all the way from Macas, an expensive drink that signalled prestige and emancipation from the need to rely on wives, sisters, and mothers, to drink.

Carolina was not the only Christian woman to sell food and drinks at parties in Makuma. Alicia was another, and she came from the same village as Daniel, in the Upano valley. There had been an evangelical mission there too, with a school that she had attended, and her own father had always been close to the missionaries. These missionaries were from a different organization from the one in Makuma, she would say they were more open minded. Eventually, they were replaced by the same missionaries as in Makuma and they had closed the school down and enforced much stricter rules. She came to live in Makuma before Daniel did, to work as a school teacher, and she had stayed there ever since. Her children and now some of her grand-children lived in Makuma too. On her table, facing Carolina's, she would mainly sell bread and other flour-based food-stuffs. She had attended a workshop to learn how to bake many years ago. Her daughter too could bake, when there was enough electricity to make her oven work. I would buy flour from her little shop when I tried to make my own bread. From her table, she would cheer for her football teams, usually the ones in which some of her children or grand-children played, or she would support the teams of traditional dancers from the school where she taught, a few hours' walking distance from Makuma. She would drink manioc beer heartily. Her husband was a Catholic, and although she told me it had not always been easy to live that way, it had taught her a few things. For instance, she refused to look down on or gossip about non-Christian women, and more generally to believe that she was better than others because she was a Christian. She did not think that Catholics and Evangelicals were so different, nor did she think that Arutam was deceitful: to her it was just another name for God. Something else that made her stand apart from other Christians in Makuma was her unease with an ethnic church

like AIESE: She wanted to worship with everybody, and not just with Shuar. For that reason, she often preferred to go to Church in Macas. She would often be there anyway, either because the Ministry of Education asked her to, or because she would care for her husband in the house they owned in the bigger town. Her husband suffered from diabetes, he was going blind, and needed medical care. The money she made during the parties, like the money she made with her shop, mainly went to him.

At parties, then, Christian women could sell food. However, they could not sell the most popular food-stuff of all, manioc beer. The food they sold was clearly marked off as foreign foods. Some of them required the use of foreign ingredients and machines, like bread, but others like fruit juices were made of local fruits. But they also refused to sell other foodstuffs associated to the city, like beer and liquors. In other words, they mediated city-life and Shuar-life in ambivalent ways, and in a different way from church leaders. If the public speech of church leaders was important, the emphasis which Shuar put on transformable bodies and the sorts of food they desire or cannot eat makes these Shuar women's presence at parties just as central. They provide an access to the world of the city that does not revolve around beer-fuelled male sociality and which, paradoxically, does not compete as directly with manioc beer. Both women had spent a significant part of their lives between settler towns like Macas, Puyo, and Makuma. They were also two of the few people who lived full time in Makuma, which meant that they did not have easy access to land for gardens or to get wood for their houses. They had become the main providers for their large families and relied heavily on health services. Thus they depended on money more directly than people who had easier access to land. It is also important to note that Alicia mediated even more intensely with the settler's world through her job as a teacher, her relationship to a Catholic man, and her desire to worship with settlers. This manifested in

her going so far as to drink fermented manioc beer and to accept that “Arutam” was a valid translation for “God”. This was not a result of being “less” evangelical than someone like Daniel, for she was older than him and had probably been a Christian for longer, her own father being himself a church leader. Instead, she proposed more or less openly an alternative to the Christianity that the missionaries in Makuma were offering. I will examine in more detail another church leader’s attempt to create an alternative access to the evangelical God in Chapter 4. For now, it is important to note that Christian and non-Christian ways of producing the future are not necessarily incompatible<sup>20</sup>.

## 7. CONCLUSION: THE BIBLE AND THE FUTURE GOD

In this chapter I have tried to understand the ambivalence of Shuar Christians towards parties and their precarious positions there. I used a justification of Christians’ ambivalent presence at parties given to me by the head of the Shuar Church, Daniel, to illuminate my own experience of a party to which we had both been invited. In particular, I showed how he discriminated between “good” and “bad” partying by relating them to past forms of partying, as well as by the sorts of effects produced in dancers and spectators by the relations established through different sorts of dances. I analysed visionary-auditory events that take a particularly intense form in the consumption of natem and maikua and related these to more quotidian drinks such as manioc beer and tea to show that they lie on a continuum of drinking practices that stabilize contemporary bodies by introjecting future relationships and regurgitating past ones through a form of drunkenness. This, then, made it clearer that Shuar Christians refuse not only manioc beer but all of these drinking practices, thereby taking themselves out of ways of creating future persons and sociality, in an attempt to do away with conflict and violence. I have given an overview of the ways in which Christians do continue to parti-

cipate in parties (by being pure spectators, by preaching, by selling specific sorts of food) in order to draw out more general ways of producing a Christian future (praying, singing hymns, listening to devotional music, preaching). All of these practices point to the transfer of multiple future-relationships onto God and to literacy as the horizon of these various practices.

God and literacy conjoin in the Bible. For Christians, only God could know what the future would be made of, and He alone could help one achieve things. They would say that when Natem promises great visions, it is only lying and trying to deceive men. As Daniel explained to me, “’Arutam is a liar’, [his] father told [him] as much as he was dying. ‘Look at me! He promised me health and a long life, and here I am, unable to move, dying! Do not let yourself be fooled!’ he said”. Unlike Arutam, God does keep his promise, he added, as the Bible shows he did with the Jews, but ultimately he is the only deciding agent. In other words, God is more trustworthy because he keeps his promises, and all the more so because the Bible was a repository of the promises and how he had upheld them. Christians and non-Christians alike in Makuma were fond of *Revelations* for this reason, and would often interpret current events from the knowledge it provided them of what the future would be like: speculations concerning the false prophet resonated with attempts by mormon missionaries to convert Shuar in the cities, as well as with the recent conversion of a Shuar family to Islam; China and the Middle-East held the role of the world empire that would persecute Christians, or perhaps, some said, it would be a coalition of Latin American countries preparing themselves to annihilate all indigenous Amazonian people. During my time in Makuma, the annual leaders’ retreat focused on a close reading of that very book of the Bible, in its Shuar translation, following on work done in previous retreats, a reading that would be continued over the next few retreats. I also heard of non-Christians practicing bibliomancy, to know what the future

would hold for this or that political maneuver. Reading the Bible could then be used to live with the future in the present. It would be the Christian way of encountering the future as a person, God, and to read the present from that future point of view. Reading the Bible to one's family, to one's Church, or during a party would therefore be one way for Christians to make a future for themselves and to contribute to the future-making activities of the community.

This raises more questions than it solves, however, like Daniel's "hoping against hope" does. For one, the Bible is a very different sort of object, and reading a very different sort of practice, from the various drinks Shuar take to produce futures. If reading the Bible can be another technology of introjection of the future, its mechanism must be specified. For instance, the power of the Shuar technologies I have described resided as much in the relationships they established with various futures that would take place during the seer's life, as in the elimination of the past they provoked. The Bible seemed instead to insist on memorializing the past and on focusing on a future that would come after death. Sitting at a table with a number of Bibles and dictionaries opened in front of him, or failing to hope against hope that his wife and her baby would survive birth, Daniel had chosen a risky path to ensuring a future for himself and for his kin. What could the Bible propose to him that natem couldn't? Moreover, Daniel was not the only Shuar to suspect that visions of the future that might have been available to ancestors had become deceitful because people did not know how to drink anymore. As an object brought in by outsiders, the Shuar's understanding of it depends to a large extent on the ways in which these outsiders understand it. How did the missionaries understand the Bible? What do they do with it? Could they be trusted? What sort of a future were they proposing to Shuar, and what repercussions would this have on their lives? What sorts of entanglements

would Shuar make themselves be vulnerable to by giving up so much in order to follow the missionaries?



11: The landing strip in Makuma, with the Cordillera del Cutucú in the background

## INTERLUDE:

### HOPING AGAINST HOPE

When I met him, Daniel had been the president of the Shuar church for about 10 years. He lives in Makuma, on the mission grounds proper rather than in the village, which is located on the other side of the landing strip. The house he lived in had not been painted over in a long time, if it ever had, unlike the houses of the missionaries nearby, or that of the radio. At 7. that morning, he started shouting in messages on the two-way radio as he did everyday, three times a day, also asking for clarifications, confirming news, sometimes just joking around with the other radio operators, or giving them "strength and advice", as he would say. He then walked across the hill to the landing strip, and across it to one of the streets of the village, the one that is always muddy, turned left towards the church, walked by houses of faithful, and less faithful, families. There were three buildings in the church allotment: the association building, the church, and the kitchen. He went towards the one on the left, a two-storey building, and unlocked it. He left the door open, in case anyone might want to come around to buy medicine or talk about the Bible or current affairs with him that day. He went to the big office on the right, where his three Bibles, his Bible dictionary and his encyclopedia were still laid out from the day before. He would be talking about hope at church this Sunday, and, as he would tell me later on that day, he had been struggling with the text, with Paul writing about Abraham "hoping against hope", "en esperanza contra esperanza" as the Reina Valera translation reads. God had come to Abraham and told him that he would be a father, and not just a father, but the father of a people more numerous than the stars, who would inherit the earth, even though he and his wife were too old to have children. That, Daniel told

me, reminded him of the last time when his wife had given birth, about 12 years before, and how when the baby didn't seem to be coming there was just pain, and he prayed for her, fairly confident at first, then begged when the pain wouldn't stop after many hours of struggle, and then, as the sun was beginning to rise and his wife's strength seemed to have completely abandoned her, he had stopped hoping. He was done with God. And then the baby was born. On that day he had failed to have hope to be a father, and did not understand how Abraham could have done it. He took the bulky red translation of the Bible in Shuar, left the large office, and sat down in the pharmacy, by the window so he would have enough light to read. On the way in, he checked that the money from the day before was still there, that no one had come in to steal it this time, but he had remembered to lock the door the night before and everything was just as he had left it. Once more, he turned to the text of Genesis, to Abram's mysterious meeting with God that gave him his name, Abraham, and to Sara's laughter. Once more, he tried to learn how to trust in God's promises, how to hope, how to be a Christian.

That was twelve years ago. His thoughts now drifted to the problems he'd had with his identification papers, to the money he owed various people. It all started with Daniel's son: he had left to find a job, and they asked him for his ID. They told Daniel's son that the ID he had was a child's ID, and that he would have to renew it, now that he was over 25. And to do this he needed his birth certificate. At the Civil Registry in Macas, the employee who was helping him renew it card noticed something odd on her computer: his last name was spelt slightly differently from his father's; one was spelt "Chu" and the other "Chuu". So she asked him for both his parents' birth certificates. This meant going from Macas to Logroño and to Sucúa, and spending one more

night at the hotel, costing him \$8 for the bus, \$5 for the hotel, and he did not have much money on him because he still could not work. The \$15 he had made that month had already been spent. He decided to go back to Makuma and try to find money there, either by helping with the logging or by borrowing it from a friend. A few weeks later, he left again for Sucúa and Logroño, and he obtained the birth certificates of Daniel and his wife, which he brought to the Civil Registry in Macas. There something even more surprising appeared: The last names of Daniel did not correspond to that of his own parents, and neither did his wife's to hers. In Daniel's case, even though his own last name was "Chu", his father's was "Naanch". His son then had to go find the birth certificates of his four grandparents, and like the previous time he did not have enough money on him for that. He returned to Makuma to borrow enough money to be able to leave again for a few more days. He travelled once more to Logroño, to Sucúa, to Macas, this time with all the documents: "Your father has to change his last name, so that it'll be the same as his own father, and then you can change your last name so that it be the same as your father", they told him. Daniel and his wife themselves had to go this time in order to officialise the change, and after that they had to change the names on the ID cards of their other children, of their grandchildren, on their own wedding contract thus affecting the names of their married children and the diplomas... Each time a new outing to the city, and at times they had to pay the civil servants too so that they would do the jobs they had to do for free. They had to pay one of them up to \$160. This was too much for a family that made about \$10 a month, all from spontaneous donations from people at church, because Daniel did all his work at the pharmacy and at the two-way radio for free. What would there be left of this meagre income to pay for electricity, or to buy food? They did not even have a plot of

land on which to grow a garden in Makuma. Where would he find enough money to pay people back?



12: The radio-turned-Bible-translation building

### CHAPTER 3 - THE WORD OF GOD

At the end of the first meeting with Manuel which I recounted in my introduction, he invited me to come to Makuma for a meeting of the leaders of NASHE. I was to take the bus and walk to Makuma alone, as I would meet him there directly. The night before my trip, my friends among the settlers in Macas strongly advised me against it. "You'll die", they said. I dismissed their concern as one more manifestation of their racism against Shuar. I jumped on a bus at 5 AM, the only white man there. Throughout the next few hours, the bus increasingly emptied until we arrived at the Rio Colorado where the road ended at the time. There was another young man walking to Makuma for the first time and we started talking. We walked on the tree trunk that crossed the river and followed the big trench carved by the machines of the Gobierno Provincial where the road would soon stand. After an hour and a half, the young man disappeared. I was alone on the road. Manuel had told me to follow it until the end, so I did. The weather had been quite dry, and the road was easier to walk on. An hour later, the road went uphill. There was a boy standing on the side. When I asked him where Makuma was he told me I had arrived. The primary school stood to my left, and to my right the building of NASHE with a Shuar warrior holding a shrunken head painted on its wall. I walked to the main entrance, but it was locked. I shouted greetings. Nobody came. I waited. It started raining. A tall man with long hair arrived. He opened the lock with a key and we got in. I explained to him why I was there. He told me that the meeting had been cancelled: a leader had died and Manuel was at another meeting in Puyo. He hadn't told anyone about my coming there. We waited. Another man arrived. He introduced himself as Clever Sandu. He was as embarrassed as I was. He asked me questions to try and understand who I was. As I made attempts at a reply the other man started aggressively mocking me in Shuar. Rain on the corrugated iron roof did

not make conversation easier. Clever seemed convinced that, for now at least, I was not a threat. We went to eat together at Hugo Ashanga's restaurant. The NASHE leader who had just died was his brother. He had been off work for a while because of a Hepatitis B, but after getting better he had started working again. He asked me to come to the mourning ceremony in his community, Amazonas, half an hour away from Makuma. Wailing women held me and cried, a lock of my hair was added to a pile of hair on a banana leaf, the bulk of which came from the widow whose hair had been cut short. Santiago, the father of the family, spoke, and his sons and in-laws looked down in shame with red eyes: they did not protect him, he told them, they let him down and they let him die. Clever made me buy rice and sugar for the meal which they would have later on, then sent me on my way back to the hotel where I was to sleep.

I went back to Amazonas the next morning as soon as I woke up, as Clever had told me to. He invited me to have manioc beer. The man who was offering us the beer said something in Shuar and laughed. I asked Clever to translate for me. "He says he has heard on the radio this morning that a white man stole the suitcase of a young Shuar boy, and he hoped it isn't you otherwise we'll have to beat you up". I assured them I hadn't stolen a suitcase in my life. They laughed. We started walking back to the Rio Colorado and the bus. I was slower than Clever and his friends, which made them laugh. Clever and I talked. He asked me if I knew anything about diamonds, because he had heard that there was a huge diamond somewhere in the Kutuku mountain and he wanted to get his hands on it. He realised how useless I was when I told him I knew nothing about mining. I was there to study the missionaries, I said. He asked me why the missionaries had taken everything away: they used to have machines, a hospital, a school, a radio station, a veterinarian, and now there was nothing left. One day they had taken away everything, and he

wanted to know why. Because I had not met them yet, I did not know either, but I told him that I would ask them. And did I know what they were doing now, he asked?

They are not here disinterestedly, they do not want to help Shuar as they say they do, they are making a lot of money out of the mission: Old Francisco Drown does not come anymore, because he has opened a university in the US where the classes are taught in Shuar, and people are paying a lot of money for that. He is selling pictures of Shuar people, and he has a cinema where he shows films about them.

The missionaries, he said, are making money on the back of Shuar, and that is not right. I concurred: if that was what they were doing, then it was not good. I repeated that I would ask them, and I would let him know. As we got closer to the river, he pointed at a small pool of stagnant waters in front of a cliff. “There is a huge boa living there” he said. Finally, we made it to the bus.

The questions Clever asked me about the missionaries came back repeatedly throughout my stay. Most people thought that something suspicious was going on. The missionaries said that they wanted to help Shuar, but it seemed that they had abandoned them. None of the services they used to offer existed anymore. They didn’t even preach at Church. It seemed that all they did now was work on the hydroelectric power plant and translate the Bible. Because this seemed absurd, people had other explanations for the continued presence of the missionaries. Perhaps they were just pretending to their own people that they were doing things so as to keep cashing in their money. Perhaps they made money selling postcards with pictures of Shuar people on them. Perhaps they had a cinema where they showed films about Shuar. Or even a University. As far as I know, none of these speculations are true *stricto sensu*: Frank and Marie Drown did write a book about Makuma that contained a few

of the many pictures they took, but they do not make enough money from it to live, nor do they have a pension. Jim and Norma keep the people who send them money informed of what they do, which does indeed focus on Bible translation and technical maintenance. There are good reasons, however, for Shuar to be perplexed by the transformations in mission life over the past twenty years, as it shifted from large scale community development to a much more restricted domain of activities. Created in 1945 by Frank and Marie Drown, the mission was developed in an attempt not only to make the Gospel available to Shuar, but also to protect them from acculturation and expropriation by the State, as I explained in Chapter 1. Thus, the missionaries promoted agriculture in order to help Shuar get land titles and stop the State from expropriating their land, they opened shops in order to make sure they wouldn't be cheated on prices by racist settlers, and they opened schools in order for Shuar children to learn in Shuar and to preserve the language. They opened a radio station as a culmination of these efforts, hoping that it would reach both inland Shuar and those living in the cities, as well as the settlers, in order to make the Gospel available to all. Throughout the 1980s, however, there was growing discontent in Ecuador about the presence of North American missionaries, who were accused of being spies for the CIA and agents of acculturation (Stoll 1982). At the same time, a strong indigenous political movement appeared that united Andean and Amazonian people against new forms of colonialism, with a strong cultural revivalist component at its core. It was around that time that the mission changed radically.

In this chapter, I look at the changing face of the mission's activities since the 1980s. I focus on the ways in which missionaries have come to know themselves in relation to Shuar over time, and how this has affected the way in which they have lived in the mission. More particularly, I want to show the

centrality of a specific sort of relation to the Bible in these modes of knowledge and action.

## 1. DYING TO THE WORLD

### 1. 1. Hyper-uncertainty and the Messiah

In 2012, when I met them, the missionaries in Makuma told me that « something had happened » in the early 1990s, something that they could not explain or even understand well, but that had been decisive for the future of the mission. During our first conversation in Macas, Jim even added: “It took me a while to understand why God had let these events happen, but eventually I understood that it strengthened the Shuar Church and the mission”. He wouldn’t really tell me what these events had consisted in, however. Nor would Norma. Not that they were concealing anything: Norma and Jim were always tried to answer my questions as precisely as possible. They often shared their doubts over what they might have done wrong. I spent hours in their kitchen, talking with Norma until late at night about the history of Makuma. For instance, she told me that Manuel was born when they first arrived there. They knew his parents very well. They had seen him grow up. They told me how he used to come to their house to ask them questions about all sorts of things as a young boy, how curious about the world he was. They saw him become a tour guide and described to me how ingeniously he had set up the cabanas by his house and a small garden for the tourists. They could also talk about most of the current or past political leaders, about the families in and around Makuma, the history of the communities in the vicinity. We also talked a lot about how Ecuador had changed, yet had retained its impenetrable bureaucracy. We talked about their family and about the political situation in the US. Often they invited me to take whatever book I wanted from their house. Among others I read Bonhoeffer, St Augustine, C. S. Lewis,

Moody, and Piper. Concerning the “events” of the early 1990s, if Norma and Jim could not easily tell me what had happened, it was to a large extent because they did not know. Eventually, they gave me some of their archives so that I could find out for myself what had happened then, and understand how they did not really know what it was. Norma gave me the diary that she kept at the time, some letters internal to the Church, the newsletter they sent to their donors/patrons , minutes of meetings, and so on.

Norma’s diary had space reserved for each day. After the date, she usually included a reference to the part of the Bible that she had read that day. The references were to the Shuar translation of the Bible. Sometimes she then wrote a short address to God. At other times, she wrote summaries of the day. When she gave me the photocopied pages, she told me that She did not usually keep a diary, but she had during these years. God had moved her to. Now she knew why: to keep a trace of these events so that they could be made sense of later, perhaps by someone like me. At the time when she started writing that diary, in February 1990, Norma was facing a difficult choice: Should she leave, or should she stay? For the past twenty years- that is, for most of her adult life- she had lived in and devoted her life to the evangelical mission in Makuma. As she would explain to me when I met her, her husband was the reason why God had sent them there in the first place: the mission needed someone to take care of the hydroelectric plant to power Radio Amazonas, the Christian radio station that Frank Drown had decided to create to help evangelise Shuar people. Once her children had become old enough to study in Quito or in England, she had more time to help translate booklets about the Bible into Shuar, or to work alongside Shuar at the radio station. She had also spent a lot of time giving advice to people who would come to their house when they asked for it, reading with them the parts of the Bible that she thought addressed their questions, sharing with them stories

and food. However, for about a year before the beginning of her diary, people had been coming to their house to tell them that the missionaries were going to be killed, soon, and that they had to be protected. Women would come in the evening and stay with them until morning. Time and again, the assault on their house seemed to have been delayed. New dates would be given for their execution, but she knew that it would not be pushed back forever. It was not the first time that people had threatened them, but that usually took place during the big political assemblies. Something different was going on this time, and she was not sure what.

On the 24th of February, Norma wrote the following in her diary:

Matt 26:66. They spit in your face & mocked you - and you didn't run away. So am I running away because I see the Shuar don't really want our help? Yet, Lord, it was so (left off writing, I don't know what my thought was!) Help me distinguish from leaving for a good reason for running away & to realize few will understand either reason. (Hedlund 1991:14)

Norma had to decide. She could leave, or she could stay. Each choice would leave her with a very different understanding of what it means to be a missionary, and of what the situation was in Makuma: If she stayed, she might be imitating Christ by resisting persecution and thus being an example to other Christians, Shuar or not; on the other hand, she might equally just be imposing herself on a people who did not want her help. If she left, she might be following a sign of God, telling her that she was needed somewhere else than in Makuma- or she might very well be running away cowardly from persecution, thus betraying Christ. In other words, the choice she faced implied incompatible descriptions of the world: a first scenario would see her sacrificing herself in Makuma as a necessary example to strengthen the faith of other people, whereas the opposite one would see her presence in Makuma as su-

perfluous, if not nefarious, when it would be needed somewhere else. In deciding which was the case, she did not feel she could rely on other people's understanding of the situation, for "few will understand either reason". This epistemic choice would seem to depend on God's intentions. For her, the best guide to God's plan was the Bible. However, the Bible itself could not help her decide between the two options, because the incompatible descriptions of the situation already came from her understanding of the Bible: it was because the Gospel describes Christ leaving places where he was not wanted yet staying in others where he was threatened that both situations seemed possible to Norma<sup>21</sup>. It is the Bible itself that was leaving her with an impossible choice to make. She therefore ended her journal entry with a prayer, a plea to God to "help [...] distinguish from leaving for a good reason or running away".

Four days later, during a radio staff meeting, the missionaries decided they "should leave - for the moment at least - then go to Macas for paperwork," and indeed the following day they flew off to Shell. Shell used to be an exploration base for the oil company of the same name before the war, and had since become an exploration base for North American missionaries such as Norma and Jim, and a base for the Missionary Aviation Fellowship that would fly them out. Macas, on the other hand, is the settler town closest to Makuma and the administrative center. The paperwork in question might have concerned the future of the mission, although the never-ending stream of paperwork had been a constant of their missionary work. A week later, in Macas, she returned to this issue. She wrote:

Markus 4:33-34 Jesus talked in parables to many & many understood, most did not. But to his disciples who were with him only (alone) he taught them plainly. I trust you to do the same thing with us & I know you desire I trust you with all the decisions,

that they be for our good as well as the community Shuar. (Hedlund 1991: 15)

The current situation therefore appeared to her as a parable. In the parables, Jesus answered specific questions with stories that did not always seem to bear a direct relation to the question, and the Gospels themselves do not as a rule make the relationship explicit. In *Mark* 4:33-34, after telling the parable of the sower, a parable that is itself about parables, Jesus proceeded for once to explain to his disciples what he meant. Yet even then the explanation did not resolve the issue but only served to raise more questions. The explanation of the parable was itself a parable, one which Norma tried to interpret that day in Macas. She focused on the disciples to whom Christ “taught plainly”. The text says that he did so “when they were alone”, and Norma glosses that this meant when they were “with him only”. In other words, Jesus teaches His disciples, and His disciples are the ones who are “with him only” and not with anyone else, the ones who do not serve two masters (to quote another parable), but Him only. To the disciples, the meaning of mysterious events was eventually revealed. In other words, this meaning could not be decided upon by the disciples themselves. This illuminates for us her previous entry, where she did not tabulate the pros and cons of leaving Makuma but asked for help from God: the meaning of history, and of her own actions, was not something she could decide of her own accord; it could only result from a revelation from God of His will.

This, of course, is not to say that Norma and Jim did not weigh the different possibilities, as will become clear in the latter part of this chapter. However, they refused to attribute to this instrumental reason an ultimate status. Nor did this mean that action had to be delayed indefinitely until its meaning would be clear: Jim and Norma had decided, and they had decided to leave. Nevertheless, the meaning of that decision was held in abeyance. For her, it

was a proof of her faith that she did not decide what the situation was and what her actions meant, but left this to God's judgment. As she writes to God, "I know you desire I trust you with all the decisions". Indeed, having now left Makuma, she might be two very different things: a betrayer of Christ and of the Shuar church and community who ran away at the first sign of persecution instead of standing firm, or on the contrary a faithful follower of Jesus and friend of the Shuar who accepts that there are better and worse times to preach, that some people are not able to hear and that preaching to them would be harming everyone. In other words, in a first epistemic moment, she knew herself as possibly both a faithful follower of Christ and a sinner; as undistinguishably both. Later on, however, she proved herself to be a follower of Christ in her very refusal to define either herself or the situation on her own terms, and by leaving that decision to the Lord: indeed, it is in refusing to decide that she decides that Christ is Lord and that He is the only master, that she is not serving another master than Him. The Bible, being God's Word, presents the faithful with a future state of absolute certainty, salvation, at the condition of a present hyper-uncertainty.

By deferring the meaning of her acts to God, she created the hope that one day all will be revealed: at the same time as she affirmed her faithfulness by refusing to choose whether or not she was following Christ, she also reaffirmed that even if she had failed Him, she was still saved because by His grace she still put her faith in Him. She experienced being a saved sinner once again. In refusing to decide by herself whether or not her choice had been the right one, she knew herself to be a sinner, at least potentially. Simultaneously, because she could still trust in Jesus and hope that she would be saved in spite of all, she knew herself as being saved, again. In turn, this knowledge of herself as a saved sinner produced a form of knowledge in which the others, the sinners, were potentially saved. She knew the very people who attacked and

threatened her were like her - sinners - and therefore also potential Christians, which renewed her hope in the possibility of the mission as a utopian space. If, as I have tried to argue until now, the possibility of a realised utopia rests on the deferral of the sovereignty of meaning to God, who thus becomes Lord, in this deferral also rests the possibility for hope to be reproduced. Furthermore, the model of Shuar personhood which I presented in the previous two chapters enables us to better understand the relationship between these elements. If hyper-uncertainty is death and hyper-certainty is an existentially intensified life, immortality, we can now begin to understand how Christianity re-configures these elements. Norma's hyper-certainty about her relationship to God in the future is correlated to her hyper-uncertainty about her relationship to God and to other human beings in the present. Her daily reading of the Bible produces both seemingly contradictory states. As she reads, she questions her own understanding of the world and of the Bible in order to reaffirm her faith in Jesus. Being dead to the world, she is eternally alive in God. From this future standpoint, all relationships to other beings appear in the same way, their relative uncertainty becoming a generalised hyper-uncertainty: The present world is a world of death. One's present body, a corpse, thereby becomes equivalent to all other bodies as equally dead and potentially alive. Missionary activity depends on the ability to superpose both perspectives: the one in which being North American is different from being Shuar, and the one in which all bodies are equally dead.

## 1. 2. Hyper-certainty and the Antichrist

Because the main target of the threats and attacks against the missionaries was the radio station which they helped run, it is important to describe how central it was to the mission at the time. This radio station was created to enable missionaries to reach more people than was possible by physically walking from village to village. A radio station could help reach Shuar who lived

far away from the centers, as most of them did. It would also enable new, isolated converts to stay in touch with other Christians. Originally, the radio ran only for a few hours a day, powered by a diesel plant. This soon proved insufficient, however, and a hydro-electric electricity plant was brought over from the USA and installed in the Makuma river (Drown 1961). As I indicated previously, this was also the main reason why Jim and Norma Hedlund arrived in Makuma. The radio station had been expanded to have two more studios in big settlers town: Puyo, a large Amazonian town next to Shell, and Macas. These two new studios were headed by an Ecuadorian missionary and would provide additional revenue for the radio by broadcasting advertisements. It is therefore difficult to overstate the transformation produced by the creation of a radio station, as it made it necessary to build new infrastructure (power plants, concrete buildings), to bring in new missionaries with the technical skill required to maintain these infrastructure, to enter into a new sort of economic activity (advertisement), and to deal with an important load of legal work and bureaucracy to secure broadcasting authorizations and frequency.

In the radio, both perspectives were superposed. The radio station was pursuing two different aims, which we could call genericity and cultural preservation. On the one hand, the radio station was trying to address *anyone*. Indeed, although most of the programs were in Shuar, many were also in Spanish and for the Spanish-speaking settlers. Moreover, The radio station enabled them to reach out to Shuar-speaking populations beyond the Ecuadorian borders, including Achuar, Huampis and Awajun. At the same time, by addressing each in their own language and in their own home, the radio was seen as furthering the protection of Shuar culture, which the missionaries understood to be part of their work. Indeed, as I explained in Chapter 1, it is such an understanding of missionization that drove them to evangelize

Amazonian peoples, even though they might be more difficult to reach and there would be fewer of them, rather than, say, urban North Americans: they understood key passages of the scriptures to emphasize the conversion of individuals from all nations over the conversion of a large number of individuals. Radio programmes in Shuar could therefore help convert Shuar *qua* Shuar without the need for them to relocate in the mission, as Catholics had generally done. To that end, from the beginning of the 1980s, the missionaries had tried to find different ways to shift the control of radio programming to a Shuar team, preferably from the autonomous Shuar Evangelical Church. This proved difficult, as few of those willing to work at the radio had the literacy and logistics skills to do so. Nevertheless, by the 1990s the management of the radio had already shifted to a Shuar man, and the missionaries restricted themselves to more technical and advisory roles.

By the end of the 1980s, the combination of an inflationary crisis, protectionist policies and extended transport and telecommunication infrastructure had greatly reduced the audience of the radio station. It had become very difficult to buy good, quality batteries at a reasonable price, and people shifted to television in urban centres. Because the revenue of the radio depended on advertisement and, to a much lesser extent, greetings, the station's economic situation was greatly affected by this drop in audience. By that time, the radio had become one of the main activities of the mission. Indeed, following the creation of the Association of Shuar Evangelical Churches of Ecuador (AIESE), the missionaries refused to lead church activities in order to ensure the autonomy of this nascent church organization. They had also stopped their health and general education-related activities when the State started to take charge of them. For various reasons, most of the mission staff had also left, leaving mainly Jim and Norma to take care of the mission and, particularly, of the radio activities. Thus, the threats against missionaries and the radio staff

in 1990 and 1991 took place in a context of general decline of missionary and radio activities. This made these attacks against the radio staff seem particularly strange to the missionaries: they were accused of sleeping on pillows stuffed with dollars and sucres, the national currency, but no one was paying to get their greetings on air anymore. This could have been a protest against the price of the greetings, but they had set it so low that even poor families would find it cheap. This led the missionaries to suspect that there was something going on beyond mere appearances behind the threats. The attacks on the mission, seen from a worldly perspective, could not make any sense. Could shifting their perspective provide a solution?

In May 1989, the year immediately before the “events”, Jim and Norma were on furlough in the US, and went to a Christian University. There, Jim took a course on Marxism and on Liberation Theology. He wrote in an essay for that course that he was eager to come back and teach Shuar Christians about the dangers of these theories, and prayed that they would be able to resist and not be led astray by them. Indeed, during that course he had learnt that to become a marxist would potentially mean falling for what he saw as one of the false prophets that Jesus had warned about in the Gospel, Paul in his letters and John in his Revelations. In other words, the problem with marxism was not its wordliness, but that it was the world in messianic clothing<sup>22</sup>. Upon their return to Ecuador, Norma and Jim witnessed a number of initiatives from the Catholic church to encourage cultural revival. Some of their Shuar friends in Makuma would be invited to meetings in Macas where, they said, they had been encouraged to return to an ancestral way of life, to wearing itip and crowns of feathers. Behind these initiatives, they could recognize the influence of Marxist-influenced Liberation Theology. They could also see the protests of the indigenous movement in the years leading to the commemora-

tion of Columbus landing on the shores of the American continent, and the marxist rhetorics of anticapitalism that accompanied them.

This context provided them with enough clues to suspect that some marxist-inspired group or another was behind the threats. They were accompanied by what they took to be God answering their prayers and giving them clues: a chance encounter with the wife of one of the leaders of the “opposition”, a friend overhearing a conversation in Quito, an ex-member of a communist party converting to Evangelical Christianity and revealing informations about far-left interests in the region... What from a present-body perspective looked like random acts were revealed from a future-body perspective to be parts of a global strategy by God’s enemy. Whether or not the missionaries were correct lies beyond the scope of this chapter. What I want to emphasise instead is the impact that their imagining of a potential overthrow of the mission by marxists would have for their understanding of the mission itself. Indeed, in the discussion of what should be done if the missionaries were to leave, one thing became clear: the radio would first have to be disabled, and then perhaps dismantled. Whereas they could agree that the hydro-electric station might be left to be operated by whoever would stay in the mission, it was out of the question to leave the radio to the opposition. It was not just that, should the radio be left in the hands of the marxists, the listeners might not be able to tell the difference, although this was an important point for them. Rather, the very possibility of marxists operating the radio had made the whole material infrastructure suddenly uncanny. Indeed, if the radio lent itself particularly well to the forms of universalist utopia that the missionaries were trying to embody, as I emphasized previously, it was as well suited to the marxist project. Evangelical Christianity needed the radio to address all Shuar and all Achuar, from both Ecuador and on the other side of the border in Peru, but also the mestizo settlers, and this irrespective of their level of education. And

so did marxists. No other project seemed to fit so well with that form of communication: in particular, the Ecuadorian State was not so much interested in reaching Peruvian Shuar, or in broadcasting Shuar; nor was the Shuar Federation interested enough, as the threats followed a decade of trying to devolve the radio to them.

When the radio became the focus of the struggle, the missionaries' engagement with marxism changed, as did their understanding of their own activities in Makuma. What they had seen from a future perspective was beginning to have equivalences in their present perspective. Marxism was not simply a threat, or even *the* enemy, but what might end up replacing Christianity in Makuma. It was no longer an ideology, but people who would come and occupy the mission and live in the missionaries' houses in order to use the radio for propaganda. In imagining the practical struggle against marxists rather than just the ideological struggle, the similarities between their own project and that of their enemies became evident. Indeed, if the marxists were to take the place of the missionaries in the mission, the buildings and the technology that had served the missionaries so well would happily comply with their new masters. This realisation was particularly important: the buildings, the machines, and more importantly the radio, would not resist the invaders but help them out. The past twenty years, then, all spent building and maintaining these buildings, would have prepared the way for marxism to spread in this part of the world too. We can note here the similarity with the dilemma Norma faced: The missionaries and the mission itself, suddenly recognised themselves as potentially unfaithful. This was a different sort of unfaithfulness, however, and the "other" with which they identified was of a very different sort: marxists held the role not of the mere sinner, but of the potential Antichrist, the false prophet who deceives believers by promoting a message that is almost the same as Christ's, but not quite. If the future per-

spective radically simplified the world by making all bodies appear as dead, this indistinction enabled another difference to appear: that between the potentially-saved-dead and the deceivers, pawns of the Antichrist.

It became urgent to ensure that the radio would not be overtaken by anyone: first by breaking the transmitter, then by reserving the bandwidth for another five years so that no one would be allowed to broadcast on it, and finally by transporting the radio transmitter back to Shell or Macas, the nearby towns from which the missionaries could go on air again. But *should they* go on air again? Apart from the decreasing revenues and audience, I would argue that the new form of self-and-other-knowledge gained in the confrontation with marxism made it impossible for the missionaries to use radios in Makuma. On the contrary, they needed to make it impossible for the mission to be recuperated by marxists, and therefore had to abandon radio activities. Even though the leaders of the opposition ended up being expelled by hundreds of Shuar with spears and shotguns, even though the manager of the radio and other prominent Christians were elected to lead the federation, the radio was indeed definitively abandoned and sold away. For over twenty years now, the radio has been sold away, and Jim and Norma have spent the last two decades working on the translation of the Old Testament and the publication of a Bible in Shuar. This can be seen as a direct response to these events: although the Bible is not as accessible as a radio station because of the literacy skills it requires, it would not let itself be appropriated as easily by the marxist false prophets, and would still be easily circulated.

The description which I have just given of the changes that the mission in Makuma underwent in the early 1990s comes from an analysis of documents provided to me by the missionaries. Norma gave me her diary for that year, as well as letters they would write to friends and supporters in the USA, reports

for GMU, summaries of meetings, essays written during their furlough in the late 1980s, and so on. Examining their content, I have shown the way in which missionaries arrived at a form of knowledge about themselves and about others. Reading the Bible and translating it were central aspects of this process. Doing so provided them with a form of double vision, whereby the present world could be seen as full of dead people from the perspective of a future world of eternal life. This double vision was what drove missionary activity in the first place. It also enabled them to continue working in Makuma in spite of threats coming from seemingly nowhere by identifying the source of these threats in the Antichrist. They could then fight this enemy by destroying the radio station and redirecting their efforts toward Bible translation.

What does it mean, however, to translate the Bible? I have already shown in Chapter 1 that “making the Gospel available to Shuar” could take many forms. Community development was one of the forms that missionary work took in Makuma for decades. Schooling, medicine, land titles, building and maintaining landing strips were all part of that work. It is also clear that for Frank Drown stopping the war between Shuar and Achuar was simultaneously the objective, the means and the pre-condition for the spread of the Gospel. Indeed, this was what becoming Christian was about. Thus, as soon as the mission was established in Makuma it became a priority to reach Achuar. It was also clear to him that bringing the Gospel to them would make it possible to stop the feuding. Once peace was established, both Shuar and Achuar would have an easier time living Christian lives. Similarly, another important axis of missionary work aimed at regulating the relationship between Shuar and settlers. There too, the Gospel was simultaneously pre-condition, means and aim of development work. As Christians, Shuar would not be lured into the materialism of settler life and the oppression that comes

with it. With the help of missionaries to develop their communities they would also stand to the settlers as equal and would not be assimilated. Finally, as I have explained, educated people owning their own land they would have an easier time living as Christians. The situation Norma and Jim faced in the early 1990s, with the alternative between radio work and translation work, was very different from the development-oriented early days of the mission. I now want to turn to the late 1970s, when what I will call a “cultural turn” took place. The discovery of anthropology by Marie Drown led to a transformation in the way in which missionaries understood their relationship to the Bible, which led to a re-orientation of its activities. This partly accounts for why Norma and Jim already knew what an anthropologist was before meeting me, why they saw anthropology in a good light, and why they found anthropologists authoritative.

## 2. THE INVENTION OF “CULTURE”

### 2. 1. What the ancestors knew

Norma and Jim had an ambivalent relationship to anthropologists. On the one hand, they had heard of anthropologists who, having been cared for and helped by missionaries, attacked them violently in their publications. They found the irony all the more biting that, at the same time, these anthropologists who claimed so much authority would spend barely a year or two among the people they studied, whereas the missionaries had dedicated their lives to them. At the same time, however, they also had a lot of respect for some anthropologists. In particular, they often referred to a Christian anthropologist who had come to Makuma in the early 1980s. “He had predicted everything that happened afterwards”, they told me. He only stayed for a few days, walking around and asking a few questions. Later on he wrote them a short summary of his findings, where he advised the missionaries to leave Makuma be-

fore they would be expelled. He related the situation in Makuma to the rise of indigenous movements in Latin America. The missionaries debated the report and decided to stay nevertheless. “When we read that report again after the events”, they told me, “we realized he had been right. He had described what was happening to us.” The very invitation of a Christian anthropologist to visit the mission was itself the result of Marie Drown’s discovery of anthropology. She was convinced that anthropology had an important message for the mission and made all the missionaries get cultural training. To better explain this enthusiasm, Norma gave me was a series of anthropology essays written by Marie Drown in the late 1970s, to which I now turn. In them, she shows how the concept of culture can help re-interpret missionaries’ relationship to Shuar and to the Bible and re-configure the political economy of knowledge in Makuma. Where missionaries had thought that the flow of knowledge should go from them to Shuar, anthropology helped them see that they first had to acquire knowledge from Shuar. Anthropologists hold an ambivalent role in this new political economy, where they can act as intermediaries as well as spoil the whole process.

Marie introduces her reflections with a description of one of the moments in which she was made aware of the problem of “culture” for missionary work, which I will quote from at length.

“Why do you say that dogs don’t have souls when our much-respected parents and ancestors say they do?” The question stopped me right in the middle of the story of the rich man and Lazarus. I couldn’t ignore it; There was Juaní, a Christian Shuar Indian woman who had come to visit old Grandmother Chinkiasu. We had been sitting around the fire singing hymns, reading Bible stories and talking about them. “Oh, is that so?” I stalled, “I didn’t know they said that. Tell me more about it, “I begged as I plugged a little mike into my tape recorder and held it close to

her. (...) “How is it that dogs don’t have souls? That’s what I’m wondering about. Our people always told us that the devil made dogs and that in hell, they would come to help us. When we die and are in the place of suffering, where the devil will be, and the fire is hot and we are burning with our throats cracking from thirst, our people used to say that then, the dog would bring water in his ears, filling them with water he would bring it to those who had been kind to him, they used to tell us (...) how could these words not be true when they helped us be good to the dogs. I’m still wondering. And if they are true, how can I believe that dogs don’t have souls?” (Drown 1977-8: 1)

Marie then goes on to agree that, indeed, the ancestors knew a lot: they knew about hell, and God says as much as they did about the burning and the thirst in the parable of Lazarus. But, she continued, they did not know about being in heaven with God where there is no suffering. The object of that interaction for Marie is knowledge already possessed by Shuar or still to be taught to them. In this chapter’s conclusion I will try to re-interpret that passage from Juaní’s point of view. For now, I want to grasp the sorts of knowledge Marie saw herself and her interlocutors as lacking and possessing, and more specifically how the recognition that Shuar already know some things leads to a realisation of her own ignorance. Indeed, she remarks after that narration how “more often than at first I am recognizing how much I lack of understanding the thinking processes of these people among whom I have lived for more than thirty years.” (1977-8:3). In other words, the accumulation of knowledge of Shuar over the years that she has spent among them amounts more than anything to a negative knowledge, a knowledge of her own ignorance. What seemed to be ignorance, which could be easily remedied with some teaching, in fact reveals itself increasingly to have been an all-encompassing, satisfying and adequate system. It even already included in some way

a knowledge of some Biblical truths like the existence of hell and the devil. Simultaneously, the “system” of thought of the missionaries, which had seemed entirely Christian, reveals itself to have rested on a cultural base. She continues: “But then, just as often I wonder: who has time to go digging around in peoples’ backgrounds, history, personal lives, myths and beliefs and all that is necessary to know in order to find out how they think, anyway? This must be an area we can leave up to the Lord to handle while keeping busying ourselves with getting Bible study materials into their language and into a simple programmed format”. Anthropology, which she studied and obliquely refers to here, seems like a form of knowledge that could remedy her ignorance. However, time devoted to producing that knowledge for herself would be time away from delivering knowledge to Shuar about their own salvation. Missionaries, unlike anthropologists, are there to help Shuar “gain and maintain the freedoms that are rightfully theirs as human beings created in the image of God and redeemed by the shed blood of Jesus Christ” (1977-8:3). In other words, these two forms of knowledge are incommensurable yet also mutually dependent. One form of knowledge, the Gospel, gives eternal life. The other, anthropology, only gives access to culture. But in order to make salvific knowledge available to Shuar, it has to go through culture.

The results of this politics have been disappointing: If “tribal warfare” and “polygamy” have ended, “witchcraft abounds and the power of the shaman is obviously great. The deceitfulness of materialism and the rush to catch up with the technologically-oriented world is challenging and attractive to the Shuar (...) They want to learn everything we have learnt and to put to their own use whatever technological tools and system we have” (1977-8:4). The influx of knowledge from the missionaries has helped to put an end to some violence, but it is caught in-between two forms of deceitfulness: that of the shaman and that of the settler. As each side tries to learn “everything” about

the other in order to produce effects upon the world, both end up disappointed: “They are often dissatisfied with themselves and with us and we with them and ourselves. They seem to be looking for some secret power to gain the prestige, authority and ability to lead and unite their people into a happy way of life. They think we are holding out on them when after several Bible study courses, they are still unable to influence their people the way they had expected to. There must be something more! And for our part, we are looking for that elusive something too” (1977-8:5). Missionaries wonder if they have done too much or too little, why some communities backslide and even why they became Christian in the first place, if they should focus more on Bible translation or on community development. Both the missionaries and Shuar expect the transmission of knowledge to produce effects in the lives of Shuar to “improve their situation” (1977-8:5). Their mutual failure to do so threatens to destroy their hope.

## 2. 2. Two ways of reading myths

The first solution to that problem, like the first solution to any problem, is prayer: “We need to pray more and depend more completely on the power of the Holy Spirit” (1977-8:5). Anthropology then re-appears, not as the aim of one’s life, but as a possible answer to that prayer: “Is there some secret key to unlocking the culture, the knowledge and use of which would provide the openness to the Gospel we pray for?” (1977-8:6). If anthropology as such would be a waste of time, in the hands of missionaries it enables them to re-read their practice in order to reveal the mistakes they had made. For instance, the lack of time heretofore devoted to the study of Shuar “religious beliefs and traditional value systems” (1977-8:6) reveals the other occupations of the missionaries as being potentially a form of enslavement to the “tyranny of the urgent” (1977-8:7), which is a form of worldliness and obedience to the flesh. Nevertheless, there remains something paradoxical in the

missionary's attention to anthropological knowledge. Indeed, as Marie understands it, anthropology asks missionaries to pay attention to people's erroneous belief as though they were not entirely erroneous. It is in Shuar's erroneous beliefs-their myths- that the "key" might lie. If they are erroneous it is not because they are mistaken, which would indeed make it necessary to replace them with other beliefs. Rather, it is because they are deceitful. This deceit plays itself out not only for Shuar themselves, but for the missionaries too. Shuar erroneous beliefs deceived missionaries into thinking that they should simply replace them, when in reality these beliefs themselves "hid" and "disguised" expressions of "ideals" and "needs" to be used for the glory of God (1977-8:7). Rather than coming to replace old beliefs with new beliefs, missionaries should therefore focus on showing that culture as a system of beliefs is accomplished in the Gospel.

Myth appears to be one of the *loci* where the "key" is located. Mythology, according to Marie Drown, provides people with

a complete and integrated system of belief, a basis for understanding life, for discerning between good and evil and a pattern for decision making. It is complete in that it answers their questions about their perceived universe and immediate environment and seems to offer solutions to all needs - physical, psychological and spiritual (1977-8:8)

In other words, myths are to be read in a way that uncovers what these needs are. It then becomes possible to match these needs to portions of the Gospel that answers them. As a result, it becomes possible to present these parts of the Gospel to Shuar in the most persuasive way. Beyond this, the analysis of myth is also expected to reveal a lack in the Shuar system of belief, a need that is not properly addressed by any myth. This lack is then to be addressed with the Gospel, to show that the Gospel fulfills the same needs as myths and goes

beyond them to fulfill other needs (1977-8:7). The narration that opens Marie's essay, and which I have quoted from at length, is one example of this process of missionary myth analysis: a "myth" is given (dogs in hell) that answers a practical need (why shouldn't we harm dogs?), to which a corresponding answer should be found in the Bible. Although in this case she does not explicitly mention which, we can suspect that it would be the commandment given to Adam in Genesis to care for all animals. Beyond this, a lack in the myths is revealed (no mention of heaven without suffering) that shows the superiority of the Gospel. Missionaries can therefore show to Shuar that Christianity already answers their questions at least as well as their myths do - and more.

It is possible to look at this process in another way: the analysis of myths produces a distinction in Shuar culture between (true) needs and (false) answers which makes it possible to produce a knowledge of the Gospel through these correct needs. This knowledge of the Gospel-for-Shuar can then be contrasted with one's pre-existing knowledge of the Gospel, which thereby becomes a Gospel-for-Americans. The anthropological intervention is therefore two-fold: on the one hand, it enables missionaries' presentation of the Gospel to be more persuasive; on the other hand, it transforms potentially unsettling encounters with non-believers into reaffirmations of the universal validity of the Gospel. A multiplicity of cultures appears, not in relation to a single world of nature that they come to interpret, but in relation to a single revelation that answers their multiplicity of needs: the Gospel. As I have already shown, the specificity of the Bible as evangelicals read it is that it describes the world from the point of view of the future. Anthropological relativism, by making Shuar culture and American culture equally different from that world, endangers one of the assumptions that lay behind the missionaries' involve-

ment in community development: that it would be easier for Shuar to be Christian if they lived more like North Americans.

Indeed, anthropological knowledge transforms what it means to be a good missionary in Makuma. In Marie Drown's description as I have presented it there is a clear distinction between a before and an after the encounter with anthropology. Anthropology emerged as a possible answer to prayer following a crisis of faith in the work of the mission on the part of both missionaries and missionised. In the light of anthropology, community development work appeared to be deceitful as it stopped the missionaries from focusing on the right sort of work. Without ever disavowing that stage of missionary work, Marie nevertheless made it clear that missionaries should re-focus their efforts. To return to the model I took from Piper's work in Chapter 1, "community work" as a form of missionisation had run its course, and Shuar-as-communities was not the main obstacle/affordance to be addressed in order to make the Gospel available. Instead, the wall into which missionary efforts were running was perhaps being revealed as that of "culture" understood as a system of needs and beliefs embedded in myths. Shuar-as-culture differed significantly from Shuar-as-communities, and missionaries-as-community-developers should also differ from missionaries-as-cultural-brokers. As a result of this "cultural turn" the mission's activities would end up being considerably reduced, with "community development work" such as schooling and medicine being downplayed and others like radio broadcasting and Bible translation being emphasized. Subsequent transformations I described in the first part of this chapter built onto that first shift. One might even speculate that they were indirectly provoked by them, as Shuar would have been increasingly frustrated with the missionaries' continued presence without any visible benefit to the community, leading them to suspect that what had once

been a two-way relationship had now become a one-way exploitation of Shuar by the missionaries in non-obvious ways.

Indeed, the “cultural” turn did not aim at making the mission fulfill the needs of Shuar as stated by them, but at helping them use the Gospel to correct the way they expressed their needs in order to better fulfill them. Central in this attempt was the missionaries’ understanding of the effects of colonialism and of their own place in colonial history: as previously stated in a citation, Marie perceived the promises of the settler world and its technology to be as deceitful and threatening as those of the shamans. Accordingly, in the same bundle of documents authored by Marie Drown after her discovery of anthropology in the 1970s, we find a text entitled “Notes on the ‘IN’ and ‘OUT’ groups in the Shuar World View” where myth analysis and diagnosis of the history of colonialism go hand in hand. This text presents a slightly different understanding of the usefulness of myth analysis for missionaries. Where the first one read myths as false answers to real needs, this new text reads myth to identify the sorts of beings missionaries might be for Shuar. In other words, instead of focusing on the relationship between Shuar myths and the Bible, it focuses on the relationship between Shuar culture and American culture. In this document, Marie Drown tries to translate Shuar concepts into American ones. There, anthropology enables missionaries to see the world as Shuar see it. By shifting back and forth between her own point of view and that of Shuar, she can understand how Shuar perceive missionaries.

The text begins by classifying the sorts of beings Shuar talk about in two lists, the in-group (ii-Shuar, i.e. our Shuar, arutam, liberators, legendary heroes like Etsa) and the out-group (chinch Shuar, i.e. other Shuar, their shaman and leaders, including “Auca Indians”, “Jungle Quechuas”, Ecuadorian soldiers, Catholic missionaries, etc) (1977-8b:1-2). Surprisingly, however, instead of

immediately going on to an analysis of myths that feature “liberators” and “enemies”, she then proceeds to narrate the history of the mission. Beginning in the first decade of the 1900s with colonial town Macas, the first missionary couple immediately set eyes on nearby Sucua, which was at the time an entirely Shuar town. As a missionary couple finally moved there in 1921, settler colonialism had also moved on to force more and more Shuar families out of the Upano valley, until the time when Marie wrote when there was no ministry to Shuar there. Another couple then created a mission in Chupientsa in the 1930s, which was then entirely Shuar but, in 1978 was already partly colonised. The mission in Makuma dates from early the 1940s and was an ultimate effort to pre-empt colonialism on the part of the missionaries (1977-8b:4). Thus, the history of the evangelical mission in the region as narrated by Marie follows and tries to forestall the advance of settler colonialism. The missionary opposition to that process focuses on its violence, first that of settlers pushing Shuar out of the Upano valley, and then that of Shuar killing Achuar who were living in the South East of the valley and in Trans-Cutucu. This same concern explains their focus both on securing land-titles for Shuar from the late 1940s onwards to stop colonial encroachment and on simultaneously evangelising to Shuar and Achuar in order to stop their feuding. This history then helps her formulate an analysis of a recurring feature of Shuar mythology: the giant, white, anthropophage Iwia. She speculates that he might have originated as a description of early Spanish *conquistadores* or later attempts at colonialism, and that this was still being told because it hadn't lost its relevance. The myths describe why Shuar must fight against Iwia and how they can resist him. For Marie, their continued relevance in the Makuma region probably indicates that they remained useful to judge the missionaries (1977-8b:5). In other words, by shifting back and forth between American and Shuar perspectives, Marie can establish a number of equivalences (Iwia = early Spanish *conquistadores*) that stabilize the relationship enough to see that

what appears distinct to the missionaries (early Spanish *conquistadores* and contemporary North American missionaries) looks the same to Shuar. It then becomes clear that making the Gospel available to Shuar requires being distinguished from Iwia to Shuar eyes.

### 2. 3. Catholic mythology

At the same time as the evangelical missionaries were discovering anthropology, Catholic missionaries also underwent their own “cultural turn”. This other turn had a different genealogy. It was made possible by the reforms brought about by Vatican II, as much as it responded to the Theology of Liberation elaborated in nearby Columbia. With Shuar, it was shaped by a small number of men, especially Father Siro Pelizzaro. It led to the edition of a series of texts authored by both Shuar and non-Shuar about Shuar culture, as well as to the creation of a radio station in Sucua, a bilingual education system, and an experimental Shuar Church where heroes of Shuar myths such as Etsa or Nunkui are worshipped alongside Jesus and God, whom they call Arutam. Ultimately, this has led to the creation of Abya Yala, one of the biggest publishers of anthropology in Spanish (most Shuar ethnography continues to be published there). This was a radical change for the Catholic Church in the region. It followed a century of considering Shuar to be “campesinos”, farmers, and attempts to make Shuar speak Spanish and submit to the Ecuadorian State and the clergy. They were somewhat marginal efforts that only involved parts of the Catholic Church in Morona Santiago. It is important to note this in order to understand both the material and the ideological differences between Catholics and evangelicals.

Much has already been written about the Catholic missionaries in Morona Santiago, both by the missionaries themselves and by anthropologists and historians<sup>23</sup>. Here, I only want to look at one of the results of this work, the

Chicham Diccionario Shuar-Castellano. Co-written by Siro Pelizzaro and Fausto Oswaldo Náwech, the dictionary presents itself as an ambiguous object. On the one hand, it is a secular object, heir to the Enlightenment. As the authors write in the introduction, “we call this Shuar-Spanish dictionary “encyclopedic” because, as well as the signification of words, it gives information about mythology, the use of plants, and the customs of animals” (9). At the same time, they also indicate that this introduction was written in “Sucúa, 15th of June, 2005. Feast of María Ascended into the Heavens”. The Virgin Mary is a major focus of celebration in the region since the early days of the conquest, notably because she is credited for stopping a Shuar invasion of Macas. These two claims to authority, the encyclopedism of the Enlightenment and the blessing of the Church and the Virgin Mary, are asserted jointly without any clue that they may be considered contradictory. This is not merely part of a strategic plot that would recuperate anthropological works to evangelise. Rather, it is a first clue that, to these Catholic missionaries, anthropology is theological through and through. As we will see, for them Shuar culture itself was Christian before being led astray by the devil.

This becomes clear once we turn to the dictionary’s entry for “Arutam”. The reader might remember that Arutam, being the name of the sort of being one encounters in the most intense vision quests, is also considered by most evangelicals to be the name of a demon, if not of the Devil himself. For Catholics, however, Arutam is the official translation for God. Here is the entry for Arutam in the dictionary:

Arútam, na. = God. Arútam is God Almighty who lives in the Tuna, the sacred waterfall, from all eternity (Gen. 1, 2). He is the real God, because He does not have a beginning or an end, He is Creator and Lord of all things, All-knowing, Almighty and absolutely invincible. He comes to Shuar through rivers. For this

reason Shuar call Him with the *anent* prayers, building chapels Ayamtai near the rivers and the waterfalls. He goes out from the river under a terribly frightful guise. If the Shuar who encounters Him is brave and gets close to Him, he takes a human form, becoming Chichamtim (the Word), who announces unknown things and gives a mission. Those Shuar sent by him to accomplish a mission receive His Power (Arútmari), becoming wáimi-aku (saints). These, after his death, become arútam-Shuar (kin of God), living with him for ever. Jesus is the same Arútam become man. Arútam is pure íwianch' spirit. Because he does not have a body, he manifests to Shuar under different guises.

- He manifests as the Nunkui woman, to create orchards and life underground, teaching to the woman agriculture, pottery, childbirth, and all that she needs to know.

- He manifests as the Shakáim' man, to create the forest, teaching to young men how to fell trees, build canoes, make clothes, hunt and care for domestic animals and women, sow, tend crops and harvest them.

- He manifests as Etsa, son of Arútam born of a woman, to create the animals who live on earth, civilise men, so that they could free themselves from the Iwia cannibal, organise their house and the hunt to get food.

- He manifests as Tsunki, to create the animals of water and teach to Shuar all that relates to fishing and health.

- He manifests as Ayumpum, to give fertility to women, giving them the uterine waters that make children be born (uchímiatai entsa) and the maternal milk that makes them grow (úuntmatai entsa). And also to give men the bravery and techniques of war so that they can defend life. (142-143)

The translation of “Arutam” as “God” performs a number of functions. First and most obvious of all, it provides a form of continuity between two discontinuous worlds. This continuity makes it possible to establish a number of other equivalences between those two worlds. Thus, if Arutam is God, then what Shuar do to get in touch with Arutam corresponds to what Catholics do to get in touch with God. The songs they sing and the precarious buildings they build become prayers and chapels. Those who have found Him become saints. And vice-versa: Jesus is the same Arutam (ref). Second of all, this translation organises the Shuar world into a hierarchised cosmology. Arutam being the One, all the other characters that figure in ancestors stories and the sorts of knowledge Shuar have can be related to Him. Where there were stories told by kin to kin there is now a mythology. Where there was a multiplicity of beings, all are now revealed to be the One. The combination of these two aspects produces Shuar not so much as a culture, but as a religion. Living in the forest, felling trees, planting gardens, and feuding all become synonymous with obeying the Christian God. More: it produces Shuar as always already having been Christian.

The similarities and differences between the Catholic and the Evangelical approach to translation should be clearer by now. To formalise them, let us look at the dictionary entry for “dog”, to compare with Marie’s description of the dog’s ear:

Yawá, na. (r, ram, ri) = name for boys; Tiger , dog, wolf. (...) According to mythology, Yawá was an inept Shuar who could not hunt, fell trees or even harvest the fruits of the forest. Etsa made him a great hunter and gave him a very fine sense of smell because he had overcome the temptation to have sex with a seductress who was provoking him. He became very angry when he realized that the homosexual Kujáncham (fox), under the pretense

of curing a strong itch on his anus, which he himself had provoked with the forest pelma sunkip, was in fact abusing him. He changed his penis and became a dog. He became a hunting dog and was very cruel to his prey. As he moved away from home he transformed into *sáatam* (wolf), who ate its own owner when she went to look for him in the forest. He converted into an exterminator of Shuar. He married an abandoned and sickly woman, who killed him, putting an incandescent stone in his throat. From this woman, who was pregnant, were born all the tigers but most of them were burnt upon birth. Iwia ate Yawá and from his testicles came out huge and very cruel tigers who provided him daily with meat, killing all the living beings. As a hypostasis of Arútam Dios, he appeared under the shape of a tiger to a Shuar man lost in the Cave of the Tayos (oilbirds). He showed him the way out and gave him strength to get revenge on his enemy, who had cut his vine, to keep him from coming back and to steal his wife. (208-209)

After the Shuar name “yawa” and its translation as “dog”, the authors of the dictionary insert a list of composite words which include “yawa” and designate specific sorts of dogs, tigers and wolves. They then describe the mythical being Yawa. They do so with a summary of an undetermined number of myths, probably belonging to different myth cycles. Indeed, these are not framed as stories told about Yawa, but as descriptions of Yawa. They are put in a certain order that appears to give them a logic: First Yawa was a man gifted by Etsa (himself an avatar of God), then he became a dog, then he became a wolf, then he was killed and through him were born tigers. As he becomes more and more savage, he also gets closer and closer to Iwia, the enemy of Shuar, to the point of becoming Iwia’s servant. There is a sudden break, for he subsequently reappears as a hypostasis of God, guiding a wronged Shuar to his liberation and vengeance. This is very different from the treatment

Marie gives to dogs, where a single story is contextualised by the discussion in which it was told, identified as a deficient answer to a need, and can then serve to show how the Bible gave a better answer to the same question. For Marie, the Bible was at a distance from both Shuar and North Americans. For Pelizzaro and Náwech, Shuar myths are a Bible already. This is not to say that, for them, there is no unity around which a plurality gets organised, in the way the Bible come to organise a plurality of cultures for Marie. Instead, as I indicated with Arutam, God is that unity. A unique God reveals Himself differently to different people, giving them a set of teachings and institutions through which they can relate to Him.

The difference between Catholics and Evangelicals, however, should not be overstated. That difference revolves around whether the Bible is the sole revelation of God or not. For Evangelicals it is, which makes of North American and Shuar knowledges similarly imperfect cultures to be corrected in relation to the Bible. For those Catholic missionaries who follow Pelizzaro, it is not, and both the Catholic Church and Shuar culture are ways through which one can relate to God. This difference can then help explain the very different shapes that their cultural turns took. As I mentioned, for the Catholics the aim had been to record, translate, and publish Shuar myths and customs. From this body of work a Shuar equivalent to the Bible could be produced. With reference to the Christian Bible and to other sources of knowledge, it could be purified of its degradation. It could also stand for the future as a standard by which Spanish-speaking descendants of Shuar in the city could continue to know how to worship God the Shuar way. For Evangelicals, instead, the discovery of Shuar culture as such increased their efforts to translate into Shuar a number of documents. The Christian Bible was paramount among these, and occupies missionaries and Shuar to this day. But they also included texts that would help Shuar understand the Bible, as well as resist

assimilation by settler society. If it makes sense to examine work done by Catholic missionaries on myths to understand their attempt at relating Shuar to God, for Evangelical missionaries one must instead turn to the texts which they translated from English and Spanish into Shuar.

### 3. THE CHURCH AS MONEY

One such text is a booklet entitled “Dios quiere que Usted tenga liberated financiera”, by Felipe Leng. Published in 1980 in Colombia, it was translated into Shuar in 2004 and can be found at the AIESE library in the translation building. It is particularly interesting in the context of this argument as it demonstrates how missionaries addressed a recurrent demand on the part of Shuar which is undeniably related to settler colonialism and the increasing integration of Shuar into an international capitalist market. The book addresses this demand by re-orienting the need for money and consumer goods in order to match God’s purpose as presented in the Bible. It is not clear how many Shuar, if any, have read it. Some church leaders might have done so, and the president of the Church Association made a clear reference to it in a conversation with me, but most people I spoke to seemed unaware of its existence. Whether or not the text itself circulated much, it was translated by missionaries because, according to them, it presented a clear and sound understanding of Christian economics that people could readily use in their lives. The text is therefore symptomatic of a certain way of dealing with money that infused other teachings and economic practices on the part of the missionaries. This will become clearer in the next chapter where I present a dissenting Shuar voice concerning these teachings and practices. For now, as in the rest of this chapter, my focus is on the missionaries, and I try to read the documents they provided me along the grain. Moreover, I focus less on the contents than on the relationship the text tries to induce between itself and the reader, and between the text and the Bible. In this way I hope to better understand how

the missionaries who translated it envisaged the pragmatic effects of knowledge.

In many respects, a typically evangelical Bible study, *Dios quiere que tenga libertad financiera* consists of a list of propositions concerning economics, each justified by one or more quotes from the Bible. Other Bible studies follow a Biblical narrative and derive lessons from it, for instance reading the book of Ruth to learn how God wants women to behave. Like them, however, it aims not at producing a theoretical treatise to describe or prescribe the workings of an economic system, but to help someone who is already a Christian transform one more area of his or her life (economics, family relations, and so on ) so as to better align it with the Bible. It is therefore not meant to be “read” but, as the author insists, to be “studied” and taught, either by a pastor in his congregation, or (and especially) by “a man and his wife” in private study. He promises results in “2 to 3 years” (Leng 1980:95). This pragmatic, time-bound aspect mimics contemporary self-help books that abound both in the US and in Ecuador, and which promise improvements in one’s life as a result of acting according to how the world (allegedly) “really” works. Whereas in self-help books this access to the real is mediated by the experience of successful people or by “science” (psychology, economics), here it is the Bible that offers such a mediation, with God’s will being what ultimately is the Real.

In order to understand the relationship between knowledge and economics which this text sets up, I first turn to the narrative that introduces and frames the book<sup>24</sup>. In his preface to the book, the author recounts one moment in his journey to what he calls “financial freedom”. He and his wife were working in a church that had told them that they would not be paid a salary, in a country where, as a foreigner, he could not work, and yet where they were certain they had been sent by God. In what was already a precarious condition, his

wife was needing to see a dentist for an operation the next Thursday, which would cost them \$140. How would they get money? (Leng 1980:7) The rest of the narrative sees the author's faith decrease as his expectation that God would miraculously provide for him is repeatedly frustrated: on Sunday, nobody was moved by God to give them money during Church service, nor did they receive money through the mail on Monday or Tuesday. On the last possible day before the operation, Wednesday, having received only an unpromising letter, he angrily told God that He was not being fair. He then realised that the letter contained \$400, and therefore that this had been a way to test his faith and to teach him a lesson. Along with the money was a letter from a couple who had converted out of an "Eastern religion" to Christianity after meeting the author, and had subsequently been lifted out of poverty (Leng 1980:8).

This short narrative was placed before the main text and echoes the appendices on "how to teach this book". It frames the main text and articulates a theory of the pragmatic effects of knowledge. It focuses on the distinction between two sorts of knowledge, and points at the way to moving from the first to the second. The first sort of knowledge which this text introduces is a propositional knowledge *that* God will provide. It is opposed to a faithful knowledge *of* God as provider. Whereas the first makes God work like Nature and leads to an expectation that praying will automatically lead to receiving, the second re-interprets reality as already evidencing God's providing; in it, Nature works like God. Thus, the text re-interprets evidence of unanswered prayers as either (or both) a test of one's faith or an indication that one's perceived needs did not align with God's purpose. As with Norma's diary, knowledge of the Bible puts one's present experience in abeyance and makes it hyper-uncertain by systematically relating it to a hyper-certain future revelation. This contrasts markedly with the self-help literature and the naturalistic mod-

el which emphasise instead the first, propositional/instrumental orientation to knowledge.

Furthermore, this text also shows the way to a transition from the first to the second. The revelation that leads to the author converting from a propositional knowledge to a faithful one is itself a narrative of conversion from deceitful knowledge ("Eastern religion") to faith: the gift he unexpectedly received in the mail came from two recent converts. Their own journey from allegedly erroneous knowledge to faith also led them from poverty to abundance and to practicing what appears later on as one pillar of "financial freedom": gifting. This narrative within the narrative equates their transition to his own and introduces a causal relation between the two. Conversion therefore appears as a never-ending process, something one has to keep working at, even when one is a pastor. Moreover, it makes gifting the central process through which this conversion takes place and spreads through the world. Indeed, as the gift of money responds to the gift of conversion, they come to be identified with one another. But beyond this, it is possible to see that what looks like a relationship between two people (the pastor and his converts) corresponds instead to two separate relationships: that between the pastor and God, and that between the converts and God. They send money because God moved them to. He receives money because he asked God for it. And the text itself should be taken as a gift from God to induce a certain relationship to him.

The core of the text continues this line of inquiry by re-conceptualising wealth as gift through the Bible. At stake in this re-conceptualisation is the relationship between Evangelicals, capitalism, and marxism. One of its silent interlocutors is the Roman Catholic Church, and especially the Theology of Liberation. Thus the author argues against the idea that wealth itself is sinful until the coming of the Kingdom. Nevertheless, he also distinguishes

between Christian and non-Christian wealth. Christian wealth is “blessed” by God and produces enjoyment, whereas non-Christian wealth is not blessed and produces sadness (Leng 1980:13-18). But what does that blessing consist in? It results from the recipient fulfilling three conditions: faith (to love and honor God), works (to meditate and accomplish his law) and virtues (wisdom and humility). This can be generalised by saying that “blessing” results from a knowledge that God is the true originator and agent of wealth, and a knowledge of God through wealth. Wealth is blessed if it can be used as a medium for God to make himself known.

What does this mean? For the author, God uses wealth at all stages of a conversion, first to show his power, then to discipline the believers. He does so by giving them wealth to confirm that they are following him, as well as by taking wealth away from them when they go astray. With more mature followers, he uses wealth to unite believers through the Church, and by augmenting faith through a multiplication of their possessions (Leng 1980: 18-28). Both wealth and its enjoyments therefore become a sign for the believer of his faith and obedience, a form of knowledge. Non-Christian wealth, in turn, is wealth that is not recognized as a form of knowledge, and that, as a consequence, does not lead to obedience to God. Instead, accumulating non-Christian wealth leads to slavery; either to ever-increasing desires or to indebtedness, which then leads to even more disobedience. This is where the identification of economics to a knowledge of God turns to the political. Non-Christian wealth does not only produce negative affects, but also to a specific form of domination. It places one in a relation of submission to “the world”. More concretely, this submission takes the form of debt slavery. As a result, blessed wealth aims at more than imparting a new form of knowledge: it aims at making one free.

According to Leng, the first step of this “financial freedom” is to “transfer all of one’s property to God”. This takes three forms. First of all, a prayer whereby one recognises that all one’s possessions were already God’s, and asking Him to take all and use it as He wants. In other words, this first step is less a real transfer of possession (He owned it all already), and more the acquisition of a different mode of relating to one’s property: their appearance and disappearance through “destruction, loss, theft” point to God’s agency. Many of the motifs we have seen so far are repeated here. Property ceases to be something to be enjoyed (or not) in itself in the present with one’s kin. Instead, it is transformed into signs that the present is unknowable and unenjoyable except from the perspective of the end (Leng 1980 69-70). In a second step, the first, symbolic transfer of ownership to God becomes a practical transfer of ownership to other Christians (Leng 1980: 69-74, 91-94): once “financial freedom” is achieved, it must be put to the service of God by circulating among Christians through personal gifts and loans, a weekly dime, and sacrificial gifts to the Church and particularly to missionary works. The relationship between the believer and God becomes one between God and other believers, as He becomes the only legitimate origin and aim of gifts. The circulation of money itself comes to embody the Church as much, if not more, as institutional frameworks. The Church is a prefiguration of the community of believers that will exist on the New Earth, as well as being the Body of Christ, the material aspect of God on earth. As a result, the circulation of blessed wealth in the present is God. Believing in God means folding economics into a mode of relationship to God and a means for God to extend His agency into the world. The final reaches of this process on this Earth lies in the “presentation of God to the unbelieving world”, that is, in missionary work.

#### 4. THE CHURCH AS TEXT

So far I have analysed one document recently translated into Shuar by the missionaries in order to continue exploring the relationship between knowledge and power in the mission. A particular interest of that document lies in its embodying a specific mode of knowledge which is also a specific form of economy that emphasises indirection, passivity, and mediation. I have shown how this mode of knowledge/economy culminates in the figure of the missionary. I now want to turn to another type of document produced by missionaries: newsletters directed at the churches and individuals who send them money. Indeed, missionary work in Makuma is funded by donations from churches and individuals throughout North America. If that money transits through a centralised missionary organisation (Gospel Missionary Union, now become Avant Ministries), it is nevertheless addressed to individual missionaries or to missionary families. However, in keeping with the economic ideas which I introduced in the last section, missionaries do not ask directly for money, or only exceptionally so: because God provides to those who have faith in Him, in order to receive money the missionaries only pray to God for it and ask others to pray for them to receive the money they need<sup>25</sup>. They also pray (and ask others to pray) for God to provide for other needs such as health, comfort, strength, appeasement of a conflict, and so on.

The letters themselves are extensions of the personal relationships formed by the missionaries with these churches during their furlough. Regularly, missionaries leave the mission to return to the United States for a number of months, sometimes years. Besides reuniting with their families, they spend that time travelling across the country to speak at churches and Bible schools about the work they do in the Amazon. The hope is that these talks would enable God to strengthen the faith of people in the attendance, and to move

their hearts to contribute donations to continue missionary work. Sometimes only individuals are thus moved to contribute, and sometimes the institution itself decides to send collective donations. They also often ask to be kept informed of what the missionaries are doing and how they are using the donations. The newsletter sent regularly by the missionaries fulfills this double purpose: on the one hand, they let North American Christians know how the missionaries are doing so they can help them, for instance by praying for them; simultaneously, the newsletter serves to discipline the missionaries themselves by providing another layer of oversight over their activities.

In the case of non-denominational churches with limited institutionalisation, this is one of the ways in which Christians relate to each other. Instead of an extensive hierarchical structure with oversight over local matters, here horizontal agreements of variable formalisation prevail. These can take a very indirect form, such as newsletters to which the recipients might respond by withdrawing financial support, or a more direct and formalised way such as a written agreement among a group of people who regularly worship together, specifying conditions under which a member may be excommunicated. Norma once emphasised the importance of that sort of oversight by describing the trials which an Evangelical church in Macas had gone through because they refused that sort of oversight: the pastor created a vibrant Evangelical community on his own, and refused not only to join a denomination, but also to inform other non-denominational churches of his activities. For Norma, this lack of oversight was the reason for a subsequent scandal that threatened to completely destroy the Evangelical community in Macas, and led to the excommunication of the pastor from the church that he had founded.

If the newsletter reports on the missionaries' activities and needs, it also often features updates concerning Shuar Christians who are close to the missionaries. In these cases, the letters' recipients are asked either to pray for

them at their own request, or to plead with the missionaries that God would bring them back on the right path. Here I include the updates concerning two of my close friends in Makuma, Ernesto Warush and Felipe Sandu. A newsletter entitled *Introducing Shuar leadership* from January 1993 features the following:

Ernesto and Estela. Past President of the Shuar Church Association. Ernesto recently finished his second year at the GMU Seminary. A very capable musician, he taught beginning guitar at the seminary and has held numerous weekly music seminars in Shuar communities. We were elated when several Shuar churches helped Ernesto with his tuition expenses during his first year at the seminary but for some reason this did not continue the second year. Ernesto is concerned that rapport be maintained in order that he be able to minister upon his return to the Shuar communities. (...)

Felipe Sandu is a new member of the team. He has attended several of the workshops to learn translation techniques and has used his skills in programming and direction of the Shuar broadcasts of Radio Rio Amazonas from Makuma for almost 20 years. After the recent closing of the radio ministry Felipe expressed his desire to be involved full time with the translation. He is an excellent editor and, of the team members, has the best working knowledge of both the Shuar and Spanish languages. He is entering the team's work on the computer and edits or makes suggestions on the printouts he returns to each member. Felipe and Untsumka and their nine children live in Makuma. Pray that he will fulfill his position on the church association board and as adult Sunday School teacher faithfully. He often gets sidetracked, leaving a poor model for his children.

We encounter him again in the *Prayer Update on Shuar Leadership*, dated April 1994:

Ernesto, after finishing his second year at the GMU seminary, has been at home in his village for the last year. His concern for a ministry among his people has not waned and he made a wise decision in returning home. His people respect his teaching because his life backs up his words. Ernesto is seeing many learn to walk as Christians in a deeper way. They are learning to tithe, and have completed the frame, roof and floor of a large church in the village center, completely through the Lord's provision without solicitations from others. With this increased faith, the Lord is taking them further along as they wrestle with evil powers and false teachers. Ernesto thanks you for praying and asks you to plead before the Lord for them, the Shuar, that Christians will recognize Biblical truth as more important than material gain and Christ more important than Satan. (...)

Felipe Sandu is still entering the translation team's work on the computer and edits or makes suggestions on the printouts he returns to each member. Two new members have been added to the team who are to learn to use the computer under Felipe's training, but he is wondering about their level of commitment to the job. Pray as he trains them. He is no longer on the church association board, nor is he teaching Sunday School, as he has begun to return to his home-town village for church each Sunday - a good choice. Pray that he will faithfully attend and be the example that his children need, even getting involved there. Two of his sons teach Sunday School there.

The *Shuar Leadership Prayer Update* for February 1999 features the following about them:

Ernesto Warush and family live in Yuwientsa, a six-hour walk east of Makuma. Ernesto studied two years at the GMU seminary, and has at last been recognized as pastor of his congregation because of his loving care and encouragement of the believers in his community. He and the group of elders from his church are visiting communities surrounding Yuwientsa with the result that about 50 people have believed and have been baptized in the last couple years. With Estela his wife he is raising a unique family of five children, the result of abundant love, good conversation, and stability at home. Their firstborn, still in grade school, has his sights set on a seminary education and is preparing himself now through ardent Bible reading in Shuar. We hardly know of any other Shuar children who care to read their own language or anything. The next younger sibling is dreaming of learning all he can about computers. Ernesto seems to suffer from delicate health and needs to control his activities closely (...)

Felipe Sandu continues as director of translation computing, but in absentia. In other words he rarely ever comes to work with us. His effort to keep his fire big enough to heat all the irons was unsuccessful. Sadly, he seems to need the praise of men to consider an effort worth his time so involves himself where that praise is forthcoming.

Beyond the chronicle of Ernesto and Felipe's lives, what interests me here is the form which this chronicle takes and the way it was meant to be read. The histories that these prayer updates tell are histories of gaining or losing knowledge, where one's life is less a matter of enjoyment, for instance, than it is a matter of learning and teaching through being a living example. Proper knowledge depends on its orientation towards God (rather than material gain or feuding) through the Bible (rather than secular education, money for its own sake, or shamans) and produces texts and buildings to consolidate this orient-

ation and move others in the same direction. The letters themselves actively contribute to this work; first, as they mobilise an imaginary community to pray for Ernesto and Felipe to maintain their orientation; second, as they edify the readers as to the way in which God shapes human lives. Finally, they also evidence the result of missionary work and its necessities, potentially moving the reader to send money to further that work.

It is important to notice that these newsletters are not often glossy accounts that focus on what the missionaries have achieved. Instead, they insist on the difficulties and the fluctuations that constitute everyday missionary life. They insist on the defection of some, the open hostility of others, or their own physical frailty. In doing so, they enact a specifically Evangelical understanding of honesty and confession. They reproduce at an inter-institutional level the mechanisms of confession and discipline that constitute each individual church. As I have indicated, the churches and individuals who donate money can see what is being done with their money. More importantly, however, they can also judge how the missionaries talk about their work. They can then relate the problems that they read about to the theological premises that underlie missionary language. If this language does not correspond to what they understand the Biblical to teach, they can attempt to discipline the missionaries, either by correcting them, or by withdrawing support. The hope is that, in doing so, they will help the missionaries mend their ways. On the other hand, if they are well written about, if the doctrine is right, then the problems might instead arise from the difficulties of fighting against powerful evil powers. This might call for more funds, but also for the more powerful work of prayer. In both cases, adequacy between these newsletters and the Bible is crucial to locate evil and decide how to act.

If newsletters constitute the Church synchronically by making it possible to locate and fight against evil, they also do so diachronically. Newsletters are

carefully archived along with all the other documents that missionaries produce. Missionaries explained to me the necessity of keeping archives in order to identify deceit. For instance, in the early days of the mission, missionaries would keep a different diary for every community they visited. They would enter the names of the people they had met, what they had been told, and what they had done. When a different missionary would visit that place, he would read that diary and compare it with what the people he met would tell him. As a result, he would be able to identify which ones of them were lying to him and which ones were not. More specifically, he would be able to tell the real Christians from those who were only pretending to be. Similarly, and to return to an example I opened Chapter 1 with, he would be able to tell if the Gospel had been made available to specific people or not. In other words, he would be able to expect and produce a continuity between the relationships established by his predecessor and his own. In doing so, he could stabilise the identity of the people whom he would meet as well as his own. Divergence between archived accounts and experience would make it possible to distinguish between, on the one hand, real Christians and real unbelievers, and, on the other hand, fake Christians and fake unbelievers. Archives make it possible for missionaries to identify deceit by stabilising relationships over time. They also continue the work of confession and discipline by making it possible for outsiders, including anthropologists, to see for themselves how they had changed over time.

## 5. CONCLUSION: FACES OF THE FUTURE

In this chapter I have tried to shed light on the missionaries' relationship to the Bible. Using archival documents and discussions with Jim and Norma, I have shown how daily readings of the Bible enable them to look at the present from the perspective of hyper-future immortal bodies in communion with God. This perspectival shift depends on their "dying to the world", that is,

living in a constant state of hyper-uncertainty. In turn, this perspectival shift enables them to identify and fight against their deceitful enemies. I have described the transformation in the relationship between missionaries and Shuar introduced by the concept of “culture”. This concept responded to a crisis in the mission’s understanding of itself, as previously held knowledge seemed to have become ineffective. “Culture” made it possible for missionaries to change their relationship to Shuar from a temporal to a relativist one. A new perspectival shift was then available between “Shuar” and “North American” through which new modes of access to the Bible could be constructed. Where Catholics enacted this perspectival shift by translating Shuar myths into Spanish, Evangelicals did so by translating the Bible and guides to Biblical teachings into Shuar. I have analysed one such guides to specify the Evangelical relationship to the Bible. In their daily reading of the Bible, Evangelicals transform the world into signs of the world to come. Different relationships become aspects of a single relationship to God. In particular, the sphere of economic exchange and money is enfolded into this unique relationship to God. Economic exchanges and money all become pure gifts mediated by God and whose circulation outline the coming hyper-future community in the present. Another sphere of circulating texts in which confession and discipline are enacted form the counter-part of this economic sphere. Evangelicals convert the world by relating its constituent parts through these two spheres to the Bible and, ultimately, to God. Or, to put it differently, God extends himself in the world first through the Bible, then through gifts and other texts. Missionaries are these outposts of God’s colonisation of the world.

My choice to focus on texts produced by missionaries in this chapter echoes the centrality of texts in their own ways of knowing the world. When discussing the important events of the early 1990s, the missionaries not only dismissed their current memories of these events, but also their past knowledge

of these events. They had not known what was happening at the time, and now they only had partial memories of these still obscure events. To find out what had happened, they gave me the texts that comprise this chapter. The very production of these texts was sometimes a mystery. For instance, when Norma gave me her diary she remarked that now she understood why she had written it in the first place. At the time, she only had an intuition that she should write things down. Now she knew that according to her I was the reader whom God had intended for these texts, in which God was the main interlocutor. I remarked in Chapter 1 that it was important for the missionaries that I was an anthropologist. This chapter aimed at making this clearer. Anthropologists were seen by the missionaries to possess expert knowledge on “culture”. As such, they were thought to have the ability to judge whether the perspectival shift between cultures had been effected correctly, and what effects the missionaries had had on “Shuar culture”. The Christian missionary whom they had invited to give a diagnostic on the mission in the early 1980s had, they told me, predicted everything that had happened to them subsequently. This, along with the ambivalent status which being a Jew gave me, goes a long way to explain the trust that they invested in me. I also believe that it sheds light on what they hoped to achieve by giving me these documents: confession. I am not, however, a Christian anthropologist. I could not at the time respond to confession with judgement, advice or admonishment, nor can I do so now. I have instead answered these expectations perpendicularly, as it were, by interpreting their reading and writing practices in light of the theories which I developed in Chapter 2 to make sense of Shuar Christianity.

In fact, I believe that Marie Drown already knew very well what Shuar thought of the missionaries. The ethnographic vignette with which she opened her essay on missionary anthropology is a case in point. The question

of the pragmatic effects of knowledge lies at the centre of Juaní's retort to the missionary. Although the use of rhetorical questions and conditionals softens the blow, there is no doubt that Juaní was not only refusing to believe Marie's account, but also making it clear that she suspected her of ill will. Indeed, her thinly-veiled message is that dogs do have souls, that this knowledge enables a mutually beneficial relationship of care between humans and dogs, that by denying that dogs have souls the missionary was putting that relationship in jeopardy, and therefore that Marie was intending to leave dogs defenseless in the Shuar world and Shuar defenseless in the devil's world. In other words, Juaní, like other Shuar whom I have met, was accusing missionaries of making Shuar "stupid". The grandson of an important Shuar church leader, who was now officiating as a tour guide and a shaman in Macas, told me as much when I asked him why his ancestors had converted to Christianity: "It doesn't make sense, it is as though the missionaries had injected them with something to make them stupid!". The surreptitious "injection" of poison to kill or transform someone's behavior calls to mind the shaman's main weapon, his magical arrows, tales of stealthy murders through the use of tiny arrows dipped in poison, as well as, more obviously, the missionaries' injections of antibiotics and other medicine at the mission's hospital. Furthermore, to my knowledge, to interrupt someone's monologue to explicitly mark disagreement with them would usually mark defiance and aggression. The mood was not one of disinterested metaphysical argument, but rather of tensed suspicion and anger. Finally, the rhetorical nature of the exchange shouldn't have escaped Marie: Shuar dogs are routinely beaten and usually ill-fed in spite of what the ancestors say about their future role, not to mention that there are many other reasons to treat dogs well, not least of which is their central role in hunting and defending the house. As I suspect Marie understood very well, Juaní was then accusing missionaries of what some Shuar

continue to accuse them of: stealing their knowledge and replacing it with ineffective stories that would render Shuar dependent on foreigners.

As soon as the missionaries taught them how to write, Shuar found their own use for literacy which they have carried on into the present: love letters. Esteban, now an old man, studied at the missionary school in its early days. He told Natalia and I how girls and boys used to exchange messages at the time. They were not allowed to speak to one another during the day and they lived in different buildings: the girls in the attic of the house I would end up living in, the boys in a purpose-built Shuar house. In the evenings, love letters would be exchanged through slits between the exterior wall and the roof. Because there were no windows from the girl's dormitory, nobody could be sure who the sender or the recipient would be. The missionaries also mentioned a letter a man had asked them to give his wife. The text of the letter was not concealed in an envelope yet they found it undecipherable. It was as though this couple had elaborated over time their own private language, they told me. Love letters continue to be central uses of literacy. Thus, as I sat one day in a school assembly, a young man showed our mutual friend the very elaborate love letter he had prepared for his lover. More than a letter, it was a whole notebook filled page after page with declarations of admiration and unending love, drawings of the loved one playing football and, in the last pages, with the impossibility of closure ("This is the last page and I must say goodbye now" on one page, "Now this is really good bye" on the next, and so on). These love letters remain semi-public, formulaic affairs. Having left a group of children to play with the word processor on my computer one day, I saw them write a generic love letter, addressed to a non-specific "my love". After a while, they erased all the text they had written and replaced it just as swiftly with a generic bureaucratic missive: "To whom it may concern:"





13: Felipe's children in the remains of the plane crash in his garden



14: The mission trash waiting for the metal scrap dealers



15: Manuel sitting outside his house in Kuamar



16: Carmen (Manuel's wife) and daughter Jintia Nua having coffee

## CHAPTER 4 - SHORT-CIRCUITS

When I told people that I was French, they would often ask me the following question: “Do all Frenchmen veil their women?”. At first, I did not really understand the question, being unfamiliar with the Spanish verb “tapar”; “to cover”, used in relation to bodies. Then I would explain that this was not true. I thought for a while that they were mixing up France with some other part of the world they might have seen somewhere on television or that they had heard about the debate around the law to prohibit the hijab in public places. However, many people seemed to have met French people before. I suspected that there had perhaps been a group of Muslim French tourists visiting the region. A few friends had also mentioned that a Shuar woman had married a French man some years prior. Although too many people had told me this for it to be a lie, the context in which these comments were made had led me to dismiss them as yet another attempt to encourage me to marry a Shuar woman. Then I was told that the Muslims were allied with the Chinese to try and exploit oil in Shuar territory. More importantly, the Frenchman who had married a Shuar woman was suspected of being a spy sent by the Muslims. It took some effort on my part to make sense of this, but eventually I did. The Chinese had become a familiar sight around the country, I reasoned, as the Ecuadorian State turned to China to finance their public works and buy their oil. I speculated that the association which Shuar made between the Chinese and Muslims might have to do with the president of Ecuador, Rafael Correa, appearing in public with Mahmood Ahmadinedjad not long before the visit of Chinese representatives was cancelled because of protests. The French husband was accused of being a spy for the same reason as most foreigners would be accused of being spies, or perhaps even just to imply that I, being French, was a spy too. I had thought that, by then, people

had stopped suspecting me of being a spy, but was resigned to confront these assumptions one more time.

Then one day, just as I was leaving for Quito, I was told that the ambassador of Saudi Arabia was coming to visit Makuma. I could not delay my trip but made sure to speak to a few leaders as soon as I came back. In one of many reversals, I had suddenly decided that my Shuar friends must have been correct all along and that “Muslims”, at least Saudi Arabs, were interested in exploiting oil in Makuma. By association, the French man I kept hearing about had to be a spy. This would be important news, as the main oil exploitation companies up until that point had been Canadian, and the co-operation with China was heralded to replace them. I did not expect countries from the OAPEC to start investing in oil exploitation in Ecuador, and it could be indicative of larger, theretofore invisible, shifts in Ecuadorian political economy. When I returned, the political leader whom I met was impressed with the Saudi Arabs. They wanted to build a school and initiate a few development projects, which he thought would be positive additions. But more than anything, he quite liked Allah. Their God, he told me, was like the Christian one, except that with this one it was allowed to kill in order to defend one’s territory. This, he said, might come in handy soon. A few weeks later, at a large political assembly on a Friday, I saw a young Shuar man wearing an impeccably white robe. I was told that he had been to Egypt to study at a religious school and that he was going to open a mosque in Macas. Many people were suspicious of him. “Already, the government is calling us “terrorists” when we protest against Correa” they told me, not wanting to be associated with Muslims whom they had heard about in connection with 9/11. Christians were particularly hostile. “Even the Catholics use the Bible, but these ones have a completely different book, they are liars!” one of my more moderate Christian friends told me. Still worse, during the Church Leaders’ retreat,

Muslims were often identified with the Antichrist as the congregation analysed the text of *Revelation*. This suddenly hit home when my best friend, Efren, told me he was thinking about becoming a Muslim. He was leaving for Guayaquil where he would learn about the Koran in a mosque, in the hope of having the Muslims pay for him to go to University in Egypt. Before he left, I asked him to take me to speak with that young Shuar muslim man so I could understand more about the nature of recent events. I did not share my Christian friend's apocalyptic paranoia, and I had little sympathy for the conservative political discourse and the Islamophobia that underpin the so-called War on Terror. Nevertheless, I could not help being suspicious, both because most of my friends were and because I was not sure what the implications would be for their already difficult struggle against the State. I hoped that talking with this man would help me uncover what was going on or put my mind at rest.

We arrived at Miguel's house in the late afternoon. He had recently come back from Egypt where he had spent a few months at the university. It had been a very exciting trip for him. He had learnt a lot and had been eager to return. It would take years for him to be able to go back, however. Already for this trip, he had had to study hard and make many trips to the mosque in Guayaquil. There he had learnt to read Arabic and to recite the Koran. He would have to study even more before he could go again. In Egypt, he had discovered Fiqh, Islamic jurisprudence, which he found fascinating. He was hoping to learn more about that. He told us he already knew how to pray and could recite by heart large parts of the Koran in Arabic and in translation. We left hours after the night had fallen with contact information for Mattias, Miguel's brother-in-law and the Frenchman in question. I met him and his family upon my return to France. He told me how he had met Shakay, Miguel's brother, when he visited Ecuador as a teenager with his mother. Following this encounter, he dropped out of high school to live with Miguel's

family for two years and married Alicia, Miguel's sister. During that time, his brothers-in-law asked him about the prayers he did and he told them about Islam. When they wanted to know more, he looked for an Imam in Ecuador. His father, an Afghani immigrant to France, had brought him up in an Islam closer to the mystical intensities of the Sufi than to what he perceived as the legalism of the Saudi Arabs. He directed his in-laws to an Imam who would be more interested in charitable work than in militantism. This, then, was the reason for the ambassador's visit. My surprise and apparent inability to take seriously the existence of Shuar Muslims was set to rest by one of the things Miguel told me that first evening: "Islam is the same thing as Evangelical Christianity. The only difference is that in Islam we have only one God, not three!" This mirrored one of the claims which many Evangelicals made in relation to Catholicism: "Evangelicals are the same as Catholics, except that we have only one God and we do not worship statues of the Virgin Mary or of the Saints!" More specifically, it paralleled assertions made by Shuar Pentecostals or Adventists that they were the real Evangelicals, and that the missionaries were in fact Catholics. Another element of Miguel's tale echoed some of the things that many Evangelicals had told me: their joy at being part of a community that extended far beyond Shuar, where they were equal with settlers, mestizos, and gringos.

Now that for many people it is becoming clear that the Evangelical mission in Makuma is nearing its end, many wonder what will happen next. What will be the role of Evangelical Christianity once the last missionaries leave for good? Will other forms of Christianity take its place? Will new ways of performing Christianity emerge? Will it be something altogether different, like Islam? Behind these questions lies another: what will enable people to continue living together in the future? What will stop the forces of the State and the market from destroying the land where people live and the ties that make people kin?

In this chapter, I want to understand the sort of community that is the Church and how it differs from the relationships among kin. To do so I examine the concept of the Church as Body of Jesus; that is, as the material extension of God's action in the world. Building on the last three chapters, I turn to the relationships between Shuar and missionaries today and to attempts at bypassing the missionaries to relate to God. I begin by examining the main activities in which missionaries and Shuar collaborate: Bible translation and the maintenance of the hydro-electric powerplant. I then briefly outline the life story of a Shuar Christian church leader who has created a church with the help of Korean Evangelical missionaries. I finally turn to kinship as the main motive to convert, or refuse to convert, to Evangelical Christianity and its competitors.

## 1. BUILDING GOD'S KINGDOM

### 1. 1. Translating the Bible

The building that housed the radio station in Makuma was built with concrete and wood. The ground floor was built of concrete in order to better protect the electrical equipment from the elements. The radio staff could live on the second floor made of wood. The recording studio was located slightly below ground level, to cool it down. What is left of the recording equipment that filled it up now lies in a mess in a small room behind it, abandoned there after the events which I recounted in the previous chapter. The studio itself is where Bible translation takes place. One wall is covered in maps of the Middle East and drawings of the Jerusalem Temple as described in the Bible. On the opposite wall are pictures of the various North American translators who have helped with the Shuar Bible, and of their families. There are also pictures of past incarnations of the translation room, for instance when the text to be worked on was projected onto a white sheet on the wall. Nowadays,

the text appears on two large computer screens, and any change made to the text can easily be seen by everyone present. The translators continue to stay upstairs where the radio staff used to live. They try to come for a week every month, but sometimes they go for months without any translation session. Translators do not get paid for their work. They get food and a room for that week, free transportation too, but that does not help to feed the cows, tend the cacao plants, or feed children left in their home communities.

One day, Norma was sitting in front of the main screen because she could work more easily with computers than could the translators there for the week. At other times, Domingo would be in charge of the typing because of his long experience with computers. Behind Norma sat Daniel, a Shuar Christian from the Morona zone, down south. He had arrived on Wednesday on a small aircraft from the Alas de Socorro/Missionary Aviation Fellowship company in Shell, his flight paid for by the missionaries. He came to live there with his wife and baby daughter for a week. Whilst he was translating, she would be taking care of the child, cooking, and sometimes sitting in with us, quietly listening, every now and then participating. On Daniel's desk a Bible lay open, the Reina Valeira translation, as well as a notebook and a pile of printed sheets of paper. They were trying to work on *Isaiah 37*. They had already prayed to give thanks to God for allowing them to be present on that day and to work on His word, and to ask Him for help and guidance in this difficult and uncertain task. Of course, they told me, only He can guarantee that the final translation may have the effect He desires. Daniel read the text in Spanish, slowly, and he would announce what changes should be made from the draft that appeared on the screen, how the word order should be changed to flow better.

Norma would later tell me that this was his gift, and that each of the translators had their own gift. Germán is the best at writing the first draft, because he

is the one who understands Spanish the least, so the Shuar he writes is very pure. Another translator, Domingo, has a gift for computers, though not so much for language. Without him it would take much longer to get the text of the translation on the screen. Daniel's gift lies in re-ordering words to make it easier to read, and Manuel's in the interpretation of the text, and so on. Norma told me that God had ordered them in that way: He decided who would come and when, because He knew what each of them needed and what the text itself needed. The translator's team changed much from one session to the next. Sometimes, only one translator could make it - and usually the session would be scrapped. At other times, too many people would come, although this had not happened in a few years. But those who come are here for a reason, and even their absence is meaningful: for instance, once work on a book is completed, they may see how much they could have contributed, which encourages them to come. In other words, God mediated the relations among translators. They did not relate to each other directly but only through Him.

Before the translators got together to work on a specific passage, they would have received a draft translation of that passage written by one of them. That draft would have been typed into the computer from a manuscript version. Once in the translation room, the translators faced a few sentences in Shuar on the screen, and the open pages of one or two Spanish translations of that same passage. Line-by-line numbering of the biblical text enabled them to know exactly which text on the screen corresponded to which text in their Bible, as well as to consult a commentary concerning these same few sentences. They discussed the meaning of the Shuar and that of the Spanish, proposed other ways of saying the same thing, raised questions that led them to look up other passages. After a while, Norma usually typed out the result of the deliberation, sometimes a small correction of the draft, sometimes a

very different but provisional phrasing that she left in parenthesis. The decision as to which translation to keep would be taken at a later time, perhaps by a different team. At times she would have a doubt about the spelling of a word. This often happened with double consonants that even a well-trained ear might not hear very well when people talked, but could introduce nuances of tense or meaning. So she searched for all the occurrences of the word in the text that had already been translated. They appeared in a list, and next to each of them a symbol indicated whether that word has been confirmed as a good translation or whether it was still considered to be suspect. When Norma would find a word with a similar meaning in a confirmed translation, she would run it past the translators to see if they agreed, and eventually choose that one.

But that day they were running into trouble: In the verse they were trying to translate neither Daniel nor Norma could be sure whom the pronoun “him” referred to in Verse 3:

37 And it came to pass, when king Hezekiah heard it, that he rent his clothes, and covered himself with sackcloth, and went into the house of the Lord.

2 And he sent Eliakim, who was over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and the elders of the priests covered with sackcloth, unto Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz.

3 And they said unto him, Thus saith Hezekiah, This day is a day of trouble, and of rebuke, and of blasphemy: for the children are come to the birth, and there is not strength to bring forth.

Did it refer to Hezekiah? To Isaias? To God? To Hezekiah’s messenger? Daniel consulted another translation in simplified Spanish, but that did not seem to help him much. Norma, on her side, read up a detailed commentary

in English published by the fundamentalist Bible institute Moody, looked up a Summer Institute of Linguistics booklet on Isaias, opened a Biblical Atlas that clarified how far into Judea Senaquerib had conquered at that point in the narration. The immediate context of the verse, philological explanations, theological commentary, and historico-geographical reconstructions all played a part in relating that pronoun to the noun it referred to. After a while, everybody seemed to agree that “Isaiah” seems to be the object of the “him” in question. Norma told me that pronouns like this are one of the hardest features of Spanish for Shuar speakers, because Shuar Chicham has specific syntactical features that often makes Shuar mistake the speaker for the addressed, and vice versa, when they hear or read Spanish.

For that reason, she proposed to the translators that the reference of the pronoun should be made explicit in their translation. She suggested they replace it with the name that it refers to, “Isaiah”. But Daniel wouldn’t let her: the name did not appear in the Reina Valeira version, so it should not appear in the Shuar version either. First of all, he said, because God said that they should not change a word of the Bible; but also because if they did, and if someone were to compare the Reina Valeira to the translation in Shuar, they would see the difference and say that the whole Bible was a fraud. The relation between the Shuar translation and the Spanish translation must therefore be stable enough to be able to calm down the suspicions of fraud that other Shuar will doubtless raise. Yet Norma told him that the linguists of the Summer Institute of Linguistics have confirmed in the past that this could be done and was not an issue for them. Their exchange illuminated the different obligations that each of them had towards other people. Daniel had to account for other Shuar who would compare the Shuar translation of the Bible to the most widely available, authoritative Spanish translation. Norma also had to take into consideration the SIL translators who were not interested in the Re-

ina Valeira translation and cared more about the text being clear and understandable to Shuar as well as the Shuar text being in accordance with the Hebrew text. Eventually, Norma and Daniel agreed to specify the name in a footnote. Beyond the difference in allegiances, it was also clear that sometimes the translators would be more literalistic than the missionaries. For instance, some were disturbed by Jesus' proclamation that He is "the path": how could a man be a path? More generally, translation raises many issues for fundamentalist Christians' understanding of the Bible as literally true. It brings to the foreground the many metaphors on which the text hinges, as well as the under-determinacy of the meaning of the text. They would try to minimise this issue by distinguishing between "historical" and "poetic" texts. Historical texts, being the more straightforward ones, would be translated first and more easily, and poetic texts would take more time and were often left for the end. Thus, the Shuar Bible that AIESE sells contains many summaries whose translation has been left for later. The books that are most theologically challenging, such as Job or Ecclesiastes, also remain as yet untranslated. This solution is only partially satisfactory, however. This is partly because the translation of these parts cannot be delayed indefinitely, but also because so-called "historical" parts are tied to the "poetic" ones in prophecy, which undermines the very distinction between the two. Thus, seemingly poetic parts of Isaiah's prophecy come to be realised in a literal way in Jesus' life. What was important for translators, then, was to preserve the openness to interpretation of some parts of the text and to make sure other parts would not become ambiguous because of the translation. Sometimes, this implied changing the text to make it more explicit, minimally through replacing a pronoun by a proper noun, or more substantially by replacing a noun by a paraphrase.

Norma later told me that one of the ex-translators had used these minimal changes to the translation as a pretext to get angry at the missionaries and storm out of translation session never to come back again. However, for her, these were not the real causes of his departure: it had been clear for some time that he had been growing further and further apart from the Lord in other parts of his life too, and his departure from the translator's team was the result of that. In other words, the presence or absence of a translator could also be an index of his relationship to God for the missionaries. Being too busy to translate would be equivalent to letting other preoccupations come before the Bible. This would then become a reliable way to see more generally what was leading people astray at any given time: the desire for money, for instance, or too much involvement in development projects, but also football competitions or politics. A person's involvement in these other relationships would weaken their involvement in what missionaries considered to be the relationship that should dominate one's life: one's relationship to God. Reciprocally, then, involvement in translation was a good sign of the depth of one's relationship to God. It was an important commitment, as it not only required abandoning one's house for a week every month, but one also had to prepare to that week by reading the Bible, writing a draft translation, or correcting someone else's draft. It was also made clear that translators were to devote themselves fully to their task, and had to do so out of devotion to God. Again, they were not paid for their work, not even as compensation for time spent away from home. Moreover, in order to counter gossip that translators only used translation as an excuse to go to Makuma and enjoy themselves, or even search for another wife there, translators tried to avoid going to the village. They stayed on the mission grounds and only went to the village for the shops, and even then, rarely. Finally, they were discouraged to bring members of their family with them. A wife or a very young child was acceptable, but a teenage son who would require a lot of food and wouldn't contribute to the

work was considered too much. In other words, the translators' intentions and relationships also had to be made unambiguous even if it implied twisting their lives artificially.

At the end of the day, after eight hours of work, they sent the text to Jim, Norma's husband. He had been working for some of the day in another office, making sure, among other things, that all the proper names in the text were spelt properly. He would check every occurrence of a proper name in every text with a database of proper names and their translation in Shuar to make sure they were used consistently. This is because the Shuar alphabet which a previous SIL linguist settled for only has 16 letters, whereas the Hebrew had 26, and many of the biblical names of Hebrew and Persian kings only differ from each other by one or two letters. After this step, the text would be checked again by another team of translators. Someone who had not taken part in this translation would then translate it back from Shuar into Spanish so that the translation could be sent to an SIL linguist. That linguist's ability to read both Spanish and either Greek or Hebrew would enable them to ensure that the Shuar translation referred back accurately enough to the text of the most authoritative manuscripts established by philologists. He would make some suggestions that would be submitted for approval to another team of Shuar translators at a future time. The team would make other modifications until they settled on a final version. In this back-and-forth exchange of texts and translations, it becomes even more clear that the work of translation mainly consists in disambiguating and standardising meanings. As Spanish is translated into Shuar and Shuar is translated into Spanish, what is compared is not so much the Spanish and the Shuar translation as different Spanish translations among themselves and different Shuar translations among themselves. An aesthetic of clarity, straightforwardness, and coherence preside over the choices for one formulation over another. Each choice ripples onto

the rest of the text in its various translations until the new translation becomes consubstantial with all the others<sup>26</sup>.

Simultaneously, the gifts of time, work, money, food and text that underlie these ripples and accompany them enact the Church itself. The work of translating the Bible depends entirely on the sacrificial gift economy which I described in the last chapter. I have already indicated a number of such gifts, beginning with God's gift to the translators of specific and complementary skills, continuing with His gift of the translators themselves to the task of translation, and ending with the translators' gift of themselves exclusively to God for these periods of time (this is to say, they would dedicate themselves only to God for a week each month). Their presence in Makuma itself is made possible by gifts of money to the missionaries to pay for the airplane fare and by gifts of food from Christians in Makuma and nearby communities to provide for the translators' needs? Interestingly, during the last translation session in which I participated, a small debate occurred because one translator had written a letter to one of these communities to thank the people there for the food they had sent. Daniel, the president of AIESE, was opposed to this letter. He thought that the letter might make it look like the translators were asking for food, and it might make people donate it out of a desire for recognition. In other words, the letter threatened to render this pure-gift economy exclusively mediated by God into a relation of reciprocity. The missionaries thought the letter was acceptable—a positive thing, even—and the translator himself, as justification, referred to Paul's frequent thanksgiving in his Epistles. The letter was apparently received with enthusiasm and that community sent vast quantities of food for the next translation meeting. Beyond Makuma, translation implies an international gift economy that also makes the work of SIL missionaries possible. Once the final Shuar text is established, it continues to rely on this sacrificial gift economy. It is sent to

Switzerland for typesetting, then printed in China, shipped to Guayaquil by boat, to Macas by car, and from Macas to Makuma by plane. Every step of the way is paid for by gift money and most of it goes through Christian organisations that work at a reduced price on projects like these. Ultimately, Shuar Bibles can be sold in Makuma to Shuar for a few dollars only because most of the labour that went into producing them was voluntary and stood outside of the market economy.

#### 1. 2. The hydroelectric power plant

Translation work in Makuma could not happen without the hydroelectric plant to provide electricity to the computers and, more recently, to the satellite dish that enables internet communication. Maintenance of the powerplant is the other main activity for the missionaries in Makuma today. By examining it, we can continue looking at the Church as material aspect of God's extension into the world. However, unlike translation which is located firmly at the centre of this extension, the power plant operates at its border. It thus demonstrates the complicated entanglements of the Church and the world. In this section, I want to trace the assemblages that made it possible for the power plant to arrive in Makuma and be maintained there over the past forty years. Perpendicularly to the previous section, this one presents a very different side of the relationship between Shuar and North American missionaries. Unlike the team of translators, the team of plant workers is much less obviously "Christian": if most plant workers have been associated with the Church at some point in the past, they are much less so now, if at all. At the same time, the history of the power plant is intensely Christian, and the probable changes to be brought about by the imminent connection of communities in Makuma to the national grid suggest as much. In what follows, I present the history of the hydroelectric plant as narrated by Frank Drown in his mem-

oir, *Mission to the Headhunters*, before describing present-day maintenance operations and future prospects concerning the plant.

How did a hydroelectric power plant find its way to Makuma in the early 1970s? With the decision to create a radio station a decade earlier, the mission needed to be able to power it. For over ten years they used a fuel generator, but this proved too costly when they started broadcasting for longer hours as the fuel had to be flown in. Frank Drown then thought of using the current of the Makuma river to produce electricity, and collaborated with an engineer of the HCJB radio station in Quito to determine what sort of equipment would be most appropriate (2002:318-9). Another ex-HCJB engineer, who then lived in Iowa, helped source an existing power plant which would fit these requirements and which had fallen into disuse owing to the changing electricity needs there. The Iowa Electric Light and Power Company sold the plant to the mission for two dollars “in view of the wonderful work [they were] doing to help some of the world’s underdeveloped people” (2002:320). The “Christian Farmers of South East Iowa” then volunteered fifty men to dig out the plant. A crane operator reduced his price to help move the plant onto a truck, and a friend of the missionary engineer offered to sandblast and ship it to New Orleans, from where they were brought to Guayaquil, Ecuador. From there, three trucks were commissioned to move the parts to a mission station in Latacunga (2002:321-3). Frank Drown therefore mobilised a network of missionary engineers and Christian unions to conceive, locate, and transport an electric power station at a much lower cost than would have been possible without this network. He also benefited from transformations in the energy production network in the USA that made hydroelectric power redundant, and appealed to notions of generosity and community development to reduce his costs. Here as elsewhere, nevertheless, Frank makes God the main actor of his narrative, and presents his interactions with these very di-

fferent actors as a dialogue with God. It is indeed because Evangelical Christians fold politics, economics and knowledge onto each other and into a mode of knowing God, as I have shown in the last chapter, that this network could be mobilised. It is this folding that produces missionary engineers and Christian unions who can flawlessly provide the missionaries with resources, and it is the same folding that moves individual Christians and churches across the USA to make donations to pay for the few secular nodes.

It is not so paradoxical, then, that transporting the power plants from Iowa to Latacunga would be the easier part of that enterprise and that the move from Latacunga to Makuma would turn out to be the most hazardous one. Indeed, in spite of a continuous Evangelical presence in the country for about thirty years, the folding that made the first part of the trip flow smoothly is not as consistent in Ecuador as it is in the USA. First of all, the absence of road infrastructure meant that the power plants had to be transported by planes. Yet because of their weight they required the use of planes bigger than any of those which had until then landed in Makuma by then. This meant that the landing strip had to be lengthened considerably to allow for the planes to land, and that it had to be reinforced to sustain their weight. But it also meant that the planes from the Missionary Aviation Fellowship and their pilots could not be used, and that the cost of such an operation would be considerably larger than the mission could afford (2002:331-333). In other words, existing Evangelical networks either were of little use or had to be adapted to the task, whilst civilian or commercial networks were less inclined to be folded into the Evangelical one. Alaska Airlines, a company that was working with the budding oil extraction industry in the Northern Ecuadorian Amazon, was eventually contracted to deliver the power plants at a hefty price. Beyond the cost, however, there remained a number of other non-human obstacles that made the delivery difficult. For instance, the first plane

that delivered parts of the plant got stuck in mud on the airstrip for two days before the plane could leave again (2002:336). But real trouble started when the plane came back with the rest of the power plant. It delivered it successfully, but got stuck in mud and, unwilling to wait, the pilot tried to take off from a merely rudimentary ramp:

He released the brakes. The monstrous plane moved forward and up. But all of a sudden terrifying sounds like cracking of guns filled our ears. The wheels had slid back into the hole and the plane went down even lower than before. On the far left side I saw the propeller and motor hit the ground. The prop sheared off, flinging sharp pieces in every direction. One blade piece cut the fuel line on the second engine and a bright flame and thin finger of smoke began to rise. (2002:340)

The plane continued to slowly burn for hours, during which Frank and the pilot asked people to run for cover, expecting the plane to explode, and Frank tried to salvage books and clothes from a missionary house that stood nearby.

All at once I heard loud snapping and breaking sounds and saw those high, aluminum wings break loose from the body and collapse. The tip of the lowest wing touched the ground. Worse yet, the wing on the right (just over the hydro equipment) fell on a fence post which pierced the fuel tank. I filled with fear as I saw fuel pouring out through the hole and running right under the hydro equipment. 'That will catch on fire and it will be the final blow to our hydro project!' I thought. Then, as I watched, something happened that changed my fear to admiration. God miraculously, it seemed to me, changed the direction of the wind. The smoke and heat began to move towards the nose of the plane instead of the back. The smoke curved around to the west away from the fuel tanks still in both of the wings. It blew away from

our buildings and away from the hydro equipment (...) Why had I feared? God is always faithful to care for everything and everyone involved with what He wants to do.

God therefore reappears as the prime agent in the transportation of the power plants, moving not only souls but also wind, smoke and flames to extend his network. It is crucial here to keep in mind that the power plant was to further the reach of the radio station and, later on, to facilitate communication between translators in the USA and translators in Makuma. Moreover, this extension of the network was made possible by an intensification of the folding of other, mainly non-human, networks, such as that connecting the muddy airstrip, the wheels of the plane, fire, fuel and wind, into God's miracle.

The aftermath of the fire would end up benefiting both the mission and the airplane company. The Ecuadorian government had prohibited the oil company from taking the plane they had imported back into the USA when their oil exploration was unsuccessful. However, the plane wreck could be converted into money by the company's insurance policy, and under that form the plane was allowed to travel out of the country. Moreover, a salvage company from the USA then came for whatever parts of the plane would be worth it. They had to rent out equipment from the mission and hire the missionaries to get the job done, which this time converted into revenue for the mission that exceeded the price they had been asked to pay by Alaska Airlines. This salvaging operation also included taking the plane out of the airstrip and restoring the strip so it could be used again. The mission rescued radios and rollers from the wreck; these were then used to move parts of the plant from the airstrip to the river. They also collected a fuel tank that then served for the diesel plant. Aluminium skin from the wings served to make gates for the power

plant's waterway (2002:342-344). In other words, the intensification of God's fold in the network enabled it to be extended outwards into the hydroplant.

Not everything, however, ended up being rescued. Frank Drown's narrative continues here, indicating how even more resources and manpower were channeled by God to Makuma in order to finish building the power plant and housing it. He does not, however, mention how a small landslide lowered the riverbed after a storm a few months after the power plants started working. As a result, and until recently, the power plant would only work when the Makuma river was particularly high as a result of heavy rainfall upriver. The machinery would also need constant repair and transformations over the years, and over time old parts would have to be replaced. Because the plant was particularly old, many parts were hard to find or had to be manufactured especially for it, which required extensive travelling on the part of Jim Hedlund across Ecuador and the USA. Why did God stop one fire if He then was to let a landslide ruin His work? As the previous chapter clarified, such a question would not cause missionaries to question the existence of God. They have indeed wondered why God had let such a thing happen. If anything, however, it has strengthened their resolve to repair and maintain the plant in order to better know what God was trying to tell them in disrupting it.

During the 1990s, the operation of the power plant was delegated to a Shuar-run foundation, headed by Felipe Sandu from its inception. The reader may remember Felipe as the manager of the radio station throughout the 1980s, a key element in the immediate aftermath of the attempted coup against the missionaries in 1991 as he was elected president of the Church Association, and as a part-time translator in the mid-1990s. With a small team of Shuar men, he has been supervising the daily maintenance of the power plant. This involved cleaning the waterway that powers it, installing and repairing electri-

city lines that connect it to communities around Makuma, and finally connecting (or disconnecting) individual houses from that network. Since then, the Yantsa Foundation, named after a species of firefly, has also managed subscriptions to the networks and collects payment for it. The price for electricity was set voluntarily low in order to enable more people to access it. Moreover, it did not take long for people to figure out how to connect themselves to the network without going through Yantsa. At the same time the Foundation was finding it difficult to disconnect bad payers without facing accusations of abuse from entire communities. In effect, the service is mainly subsidised by the mission, one of its main consumers and few regular payers. Because pay was irregular and most workers had other occupations (a restaurant to run, high school classes to attend, etc), the workers themselves were not always reliable. The mission also helps to bring HCJB engineers to Makuma to try and sort the consequences of the landslide. During my stay, this meant that three missionaries (one American, one Dutch, and one Ecuadorian) would come every few months to find new ways of surveying the river bed with the help of the power plant workers and of altering its course. Ultimately, the missionaries negotiated with the *Prefectura* to use road work machines during the dry season to move rocks and gravel onto the riverbed so as to temporarily elevate it.

What could appear to be a solution to this long-standing problem, however, is now taking place just as Makuma is about to be connected to the national electricity grid because a national road is being built to connect the town to the Trans-American highway and to the capital of the province, which doubles as a military base. In all likelihood, the old power plant will end up selling its energy to the national network, which will charge individuals in Makuma a much heftier price to use its services and will probably be ruthless in disconnecting those who cannot afford them. In other words, that meticu-

lously created extension of God's network in Makuma is soon to be replaced by another monopolistic network, that of the national State, which operates under a different logic. With the road, scrap dealers appeared to buy years of accumulated tin cans, broken pots, radios, and rusted trucks from the mission. They also tried to recuperate those parts of the plane that had not been salvaged before. As I indicated, many of these had been incorporated into new assemblages. For instance, parts of a wing had also been used to make a roof for a building that had since fallen into disuse. For days I could see the scrap dealers trying to disentangle the wing from the mix of concrete, roots, branches, and mud where it had since lodged itself, and they were still at it when I left. The monumental plane's core lay abandoned somewhere in what had become Felipe Sandu's property. His youngest children took me there before the *chatarreros* would come to dismantle that too. For a while we explored the site and I took pictures. Later on I heard the *chatarreros* were refusing to pay the price that they had agreed upon and people were becoming disillusioned about them. Perhaps the core will continue to lie there for a while longer, entangling itself in trees and plants, housing insects and animals, serving as a hiding place for children playing games or young lovers, and to anchor stories for tourists, anthropologists and friends. Or perhaps it will have turned into money to pay for one of Felipe's children's education, for some wine, a loudspeaker, and a cow for his daughter's birthday party or his youngest son's graduation ceremony, for paint and wood to fix and improve one of his houses. It is doubtful, however, that this money will go to the Church or the mission. Never once did Felipe tell me that he was a Christian or even that he used to be one. He had forgotten that he had once been president of the Church Association and I never saw him at a service. I did see him enjoying himself at parties as we drunk manioc beer from the same bowl and shared conversation and laughter. And all of this did not stop him from being one of the closest friends of the missionaries, a friendship that had star-

ted as soon as Jim and Norma had set foot in Makuma and that endured over these 40 years.

It would be as hazardous to say that Felipe was, or was not, a Christian, as to say the same about the power plant. “Christianity”, whatever it is, certainly shaped their existence and continues to do so: to this day, both he and the power plant continue to participate in Christian work, if more marginally so, by enabling the translators’ efforts. Nevertheless, it never completely overtook them. One day, and it is difficult to say when, Norma and Jim will stop coming to Makuma; the translators, if they still meet, will receive their electricity from the national grid, and Yantsa, if it continues to operate, will be paid by that electricity company. It would be more accurate to say that Felipe, like the power plant, was once a central part of the missionaries’ work of intensification and extension of God’s presence in Makuma. Unlike Bible translation, which continues to be at the heart of that work, both the plant and Felipe and his family are now only partially mobilised by it, and soon they will become even more independent from it. They might soon be required by other networks, perhaps those of the State, of capitalism, or perhaps by new, unexpected networks that would also go through shamans and the beings they deal with. Now that I have described a network in which missionaries and Shuar continue to collaborate, though one in which the relationship to the missionaries is dying out, I now want to turn to a network that, although born out of missionary efforts and also aiming to further God’s presence, actively differentiates itself from both the missionaries and the Shuar Association of Evangelical Churches.

## 2. CROSSING PATHS

Shuar Bibles are only sold through the Association of Shuar Evangelical Churches (AIESE). They are in high demand in town too, I was told in the

evangelical bookstore in Macas. But in order to be able to sell them to bookshops, AIESE would need to amend its tax status. The amount of paperwork needed every year to even remain in existence was already so overwhelming for Daniel that it was hardly imaginable that he would make that situation even more difficult. Bibles were sold at a subsidised price for Shuar: whereas I would pay 5\$ for one, Shuar paid only 2\$. Translators and new converts were the main consumers of Bibles, but some of the copies had more surprising trajectories. For instance, I was told that a Jehovah's Witness preacher who did not speak Shuar was reading from a Shuar Bible at a street corner in Sucua. Sunday services in Makuma would always be based on readings from the Shuar Bible, even though about half the people attending would only bring a Spanish version. As the preacher would quote the name of the book, chapter and verse he was reading from, people would hurry to find the passage in question, although, often, by the time they had located it, the preacher has already gone on to a new section. I started writing down the passages in question, and not long afterwards I noticed that other people did the same, or simply underlined them. Some people would read out loud passages from the Bible to their family in the evening, others would only read them to themselves, comparing different translations.

Looking at the places where the Shuar Bible unexpectedly did not appear might be just as interesting as looking at where it did. Clever was the president of an indigenous church in Shell, the town where most Evangelical missionaries have been based for a long time. He had started living there with his wife after seven years spent at a Bible School in Quito. He was a strong proponent of the need for specifically indigenous churches, and for indigenous people to take over foreign missionaries. When I met him he was in the process of creating a federation of indigenous Evangelical church leaders in Ecuador. There already existed one such federation, founded by missionaries

in the 1980s to oppose the CONAIE, but Clever wanted to distance himself from it because it had been in favour of oil exploitation and was perceived to be subservient to North American interests. When I first met him, I expected him to share the enthusiasm I'd met among the translators for the Shuar Bible, as it seemed to fit in with his stance on cultural revival and preservation, and indigenous autonomy. He did not, however, use the Shuar Bible in his ministry or in his private worship, even though he possessed one. In order to better understand why he did not, I will relate a conversation we had when I went and spent a few days with him in Shell, as well as one missionaries' response to his criticism. Specifically, I want to better understand his relationship to the missionaries and his understanding of Christianity.

To meet Clever, I left Makuma for Shell. I walked away from the bus stop by the big airstrip alongside which the town was built. Flights from Alas de Socoro, the local avatar of Missionary Aviation Fellowship, operated from there to most of the Amazon, including Makuma. I went past the Vozandes hospital, managed by HCJB. Many Shuar from Makuma still go to Vozandes, even though they can receive free medical attention at the public hospital in Macas. Clever was waiting for me in front of it and we walked back to his church, in which he also lives. As we started eating, I asked him about the network of indigenous Christian leaders that he told me he had been creating.

What we want to do is for people to become Christian without abandoning all of their culture. That's what I did. When I left from the forest to the city, it was a shock and I lost myself; I was ashamed of being Shuar and of speaking my own language. But I have since realized I was mistaken, and for this reason I don't want the same thing to happen to other young people. Yesterday my wife and I went to a community near Makuma to discuss what we want to do. We want to develop a comprehensive program, not like the missionaries who came and told us that one should

only be religious and that the rest was bad. Unlike them, we want to provide a lot of information so that people are better informed. This way, when they go to the city, they are aware of the dangers they should avoid. For instance, the missionaries made us afraid of money and told us that it was something dangerous, something worldly. But I have been thinking, and I have reached the following conclusion: money is not bad as long as one does not have ambition and does not let oneself be dominated by money. Because everybody needs money to live! And if a Shuar has money and shares it with his family, it is a good thing! When I understood this, it hurt me that the missionaries would have hidden this from us. When they arrived, the missionaries took all of our customs and told us that it was bad to drink manioc beer, to have two wives, and this produced great conflicts within communities and families. People changed all of their customs, replacing manioc beer with water, changing the way they dressed. They thought that being Christian meant becoming a completely different person. But the message that I want to spread is that one can be Christian and Shuar: religion does not come to change culture, it only comes to alter beliefs.

Clever here criticised the missionaries for hiding something from Shuar, thus echoing what many other Shuar had told me they suspected the missionaries were really doing. However, his suspicion differs from the more usual one on two points: first of all, it does not come from someone who only knows missionaries from a distance, but from someone who has been quite close to them; second he does not speculate on why they would have lied in that way, unlike many who tried to find ways in which the missionaries might be making a lot of money on the back of Shuar. Instead, he focuses on what they taught about money: that it is dangerous and bad, because it is “of the world” or “of the flesh”, and that worship of God should always come first. Avoid-

ance of money had indeed been quite central to mission life. Early on, Frank Drown had invented a local currency to pay for Shuar labour and sell them goods from the city in the mission shop, as much to ensure that Shuar would remain independent from the Ecuadorian market as to control the goods that would be available to them. In the way the story was recounted to me, Shuar soon discovered the deception and forged the local currency he had invented until the system collapsed and people got paid in sucres. In a similar way, missionaries did not want to pay translators for their very demanding work to make sure it that would be done out of faith and not out of greed. That some of them would stop translation work to be involved in more lucrative activities was often understood by missionaries to be the result of the devil's work, making people desire consumer goods and money over a holy life.

What Clever criticises, then, is the unviability of this attempt to live away from the capitalist market ("everybody needs money to live") as well as the missionaries' refusal to treat other ways of life as equally acceptable. He argues that money can be domesticated and made to help one's family, and that evil does not inhere in money itself. Instead, the problem stems from faults in character, like ambition, stinginess or greed that exist even when money is not in use. These would make one hoard things for oneself instead of sharing them with others. But money, like any other thing, can also be shared with one's family. On the other hand, he points out that many of the things the missionaries said and did created much more conflict among kin. In becoming Christian, people became completely different people, and therefore became very different from their own kin. I have shown in greater detail how conflictual it would be to refuse to drink manioc beer or to participate in a party. Clever advocates a form of Christianity that would not entail such a radical break with one's kin, but only a change in "belief". In the rest of the conver-

sation, I asked him what in his experience had led him to come to that conclusion.

- You said you got lost in the city. What happened?

- I spent four years at the seminary, and then I worked for seven years at the mission in Quito, following its rule that the only thing that matters is religion. In doing so I distanced myself from my people. I was more and more ashamed of being Shuar. It is as though they had injected me with something so that I wouldn't be myself anymore. And when I went to the forest I felt very weird. I wanted to be like them but I couldn't. For this reason in 2007 my wife and I decided to leave that place. I wanted to follow what my heart was telling me. And so I started my transformation process to become Shuar again. Now I adapt to my surroundings: when I go to the forest I paint myself, I wear a crown, I speak Shuar, and when I am in the city I behave like the people in the city.

- And, now, if one can be Shuar and Christian, as you said, what is the difference between those Shuar who are Christians and those who aren't?

- The Shuar who is not a Christian has his visions, his dreams; he has his Arutam and his path. The Shuar who is a Christian also has his own visions, his own dreams, but he believes in God the Creator and he makes his own path. The two paths can never be the same; they cannot intertwine, but they can cross in various places, because both Christian and non-Christian Shuar want to move forward. They want development, health, and education.

Clever therefore made it clear that people were not wrong when they thought that becoming Christian meant becoming a completely different person. In fact, this is what happened to him: the more he stayed at the seminary in

Quito, the more he estranged himself from his own kin and the less he was able to live with them. When he was in the city, he was ashamed of being Shuar, of speaking his own language, whereas when he would return to his village he wouldn't be able to participate in everyday life activities. There is much in common between this inability to be with one's kin because of prolonged contact with powerful outsiders, and traditional understandings of the consequences of relating to *imianch* (being stunned, catatonic, etc). He found the cure for this inability to fully relate either to one's kin or to city folks in his marriage and in a change of place. He married a kichwa woman, who had also been studying and working at the seminary in Quito. She could not speak Shuar, nor could he speak Kichwa, but they were in a similar state of in-betweenness and unease. They then left Quito for Shell, a town located in-between Quito and Shuar territory, but also in-between Shuar territory and the village where Clever's wife was from. They did not go to Clever's community because his wife did not want to live in Shuar territory, nor did Clever want to live in his wife's community, but there is a further reason for their choosing Shell: from that place, it would be possible for Clever to transform back into a Shuar person. This involved, according to him, painting himself and wearing a *tawasap*, a crown of feathers. It is worth noting here that Shuar men in Makuma would rarely paint themselves or wear a *tawasap* other than on important political occasions. Moreover, many people mocked and disapproved of young men wearing *tawasap*, which they considered should only be for older, more powerful and authoritative men. Nevertheless, this enabled him to acquire an adaptable body, one that could live among city folks as a city-dweller, and among Shuar as Shuar live. It is the shaman-like plasticity of his body that enables him authoritatively to propose a different path for Shuar Christians, one that would more easily cross with those of one's kin, even if these kin are not Christian.

We can now return to Clever's refusal of the Shuar Bible. There is a simple, pragmatic reason for his not using the Shuar Bible during his sermons. The Church he leads is for all indigenous people, not just for Shuar. In order for all of his congregation to understand him when he preaches, it makes more sense for him to do so in Spanish and not in Shuar, nor Kichwa or nor Huaorani. Rather than seeing this as a merely pragmatic decision, it is important to examine the very project of an "indigenous" Church. Indeed, the churches planted by North American Evangelical missionaries would all be either non-specific, like the ones in the big cities, or aimed at a particular "culture", like the Shuar churches, or the Achuar churches, and so on. As I explained in Chapter 1, they aimed at addressing and preserving particulars defined in the very act of missionising. Clever's Church in Shell does not completely break from this approach: it addresses a specific population in Shell in their specificity. This specificity, however, cannot be subsumed under the usual categories of a shared language, a shared territory, or even a shared "culture". Instead, it is defined by the multiplicity of specificities it addresses. At the same time, it is not a "universalist" church: although North Americans, Koreans, and mestizos were welcome to the services I attended, they were clearly aimed at the "indigenous". Clever's path, constituted by the going back and forth between "the city" and "the forest" and constitutive of the body plasticity he learnt with his wife, produced "the indigenous" as a specificity to be addressed and preserved as such. It is from the vantage point of "the indigenous", as well as in service to them, that Clever can both assume inheritance from the missionaries and criticise it. It is from this vantage point that he has repeatedly articulated his desire to see the history of missionisation told from the point of view of "the indigenous" to the missionaries themselves, and it is from this point of view as well that the Shuar Bible becomes, for him, useless, if not unreadable.

When I asked him what he thought of the Shuar Bible, he told me it had been badly translated. When reading it, he would often not understand what the words meant and he had to re-read every sentence many times to grasp what the translators had meant. For him, the sentences were too long, the words too bizarre, it did not flow well... sometimes there were mistakes, too. It seemed that all the efforts made by the missionaries and the various translators, some of whom were very good friends of Clever's, had amounted to nothing. All the work put into checking, rearranging, revising, replacing, proposing and evaluating, all that work had not produced a coherent text but, at best, a text twisted out of shape. In their attempts to produce a Bible that would be uniquely Shuar, whilst still wholly Christian, the missionaries and the translators had tweaked the Shuar language out of shape and made it unrecognizable. Like Shuar Christianity, which had divided families without providing a viable future in the settler colony and produced a Shuar way of life without anything Shuar in it, the Shuar Bible was a mistake that stopped people from focusing on more important things. The proper object of evangelisation was not "Shuar" people or "Huaorani", but "indigenous people". By attending to this group, the focus would be less on separating Christians from non-Christians, and more on the crossroads, the places where Christians and non-Christians could work together: education, development, health, etc.

Jim had a different explanation for Clever's refusal to use the Shuar Bible: it was not that the Bible was badly translated, but that it was translated too well. According to him, most Shuar Christians who had grown up reading the Spanish translation of the Bible did not understand many of the antiquated words it used, nor the references to landscapes and animals typical of the Middle East more than of the Amazon (e.g. deserts and camels). On top of this were other obstacles like the Spanish syntax that often confused native

Shuar speakers. The Shuar translation focused on describing objects and concepts unfamiliar to Shuar so they could get a better idea of what it was they were reading. Still according to Jim, the translators were also very careful to disambiguate passages which, taken literally, would seem too close to aspects of the Shuar world deemed demonic. Clever's inability to understand the Shuar Bible therefore came from his encountering the scandalous nature of the Bible as if for the first time. For the missionaries, his refusal of the Shuar Bible therefore amounted to a refusal of the Bible as such. This does not mean they would refuse any criticism of the translation, as they were painfully aware that some passages could have been written much more gracefully had the proper translators been there at the time. But other clues led them to believe that he might have lost his way. His insistence on development work was one of them, leading him to spend more time asking for money from people for projects that would probably never see the light of day than caring for his congregation or studying the Bible. He had developed alliances with Korean missionaries, he was travelling to conferences in Brazil and in the United States, but they suspected that his knowledge of the Bible was not as sturdy as he claimed. His inability to settle back into Shuar life, as well as the sorts of food he ate at home would also help show how, for the missionaries as for Shuar, he had also lost his way as a Shuar man and was now a man of the city.

It is not for me to decide who is more or less "Shuar" or "Christian". Rather, I have introduced Clever's story to present some of the reasons that might lead one to seek a path to God that would not go through the American missionaries in Makuma. The reasons Clever gave me are very much congruent with the analysis I have presented in Chapters 1 and 2 of the difficulty at the heart of Shuar Christianity: going towards God through a relationship to missionaries without breaking ties with one's own kin. Because Clever found his

body so thoroughly transformed by his prolonged stay at the seminary, he tried to find a way to transform back into a Shuar. This led him to promote the term “indigenous” to describe the sort of being that he had become as well as the people whom he was to lead in his church. A “Shuar” Bible, like other attempts at a purely ethnic Church, dissatisfied him, and he forged new alliances with new missionaries. The aim remained the same: sharing the power thus acquired with his kin in order to live well in the settler colony, where money is necessary to live. Some, including the missionaries, would not consider this an unqualified success, and suspect that he has lost both his kin and his Christianity in the process. In what follows, I want to present one other path that others have taken to acquire power for their kin without going through the Evangelical missionaries. I will then return to Islam by way of conclusion.

### 3. TWO WIVES OR THE FUTURE OF KINSHIP

Because she observed the Sabbath, Olmedo’s mother could not prepare food for the Saturdays when we had day-long theatre classes. She would usually attend her ex-husband’s services on that day. He had become an Adventist preacher a few years prior, when he had also left her for her sister. Whilst he had been married to both, Olmedo’s mother was the eldest and her children, her husband had told her, were old enough by now to take care of her. Except that those who were of age were not necessarily willing to stay with their mother. Olmedo, who was thirteen at the time, had to leave school and start working to help his mother and younger brother cope. He helped her in the garden and joined a development project to grow cacao plants. When I met him, he had been able to return to school. He proudly showed me his cacao trees and explained how he learnt to prune them and to protect them from voracious ants. The first big fruits were showing. His return to school would prove short-lived, however, and he joined the military service as soon as he

could. He told me and a group of other young Shuar men and women the story of his mother's abandonment during a Theatre of the Oppressed workshop session: this I was co-leading over two months in Autumn 2012 with director Brian Sonia-Wallace. I mentioned in the introduction how these workshops were part of my agreement with Manuel to work in Makuma.

Theatre of the Oppressed is a set of exercises, performance aesthetics and theories developed by Augusto Boal to make theatre a tool for oppressed groups to identify, discuss, and fight oppression. "Forum Theatre", the technique which I discuss below, involves setting up a basic plot that exemplifies a situation of oppression and asking the audience to step into the scene to resolve it. Actors are instructed to resist that solution and defeat it using the tools available to their character. The aim of this technique is to help participants grasp the complexity of the situation, present traditional solutions, and go beyond these to explore new strategies. More than anything, however, the technique prevents the emergence of any satisfactory solution on the stage and aims at leaving the audience dissatisfied, preventing a catharsis that Boal and his followers see as impeding action in the real world. Depending on the days between ten and fifteen young men and women participated in our workshop, with ages ranging between five for the youngest to 26 for the oldest, but with most of them aged sixteen or seventeen.

In preparation for this Forum Theatre play, we had all been sharing stories of difficulties in our families: some talked about their parents believing malicious gossip about their children and punishing them, others about being obligated to live alone in the city to study and rebelling against their parents. Olmedo's story struck home with the group: although it was unique, what he told remained a possibility for many of the participants, either as children of

bigamous men, or as future wives and husbands. We turned his story into a simplified plot to serve as the backbone of a Forum Theatre play:

On the way from the house of this first wife to that of his second wife, a man meets his uncle who tells him that his first wife has been cheating on him. After asking his second wife for advice, he returns to the first and tells her he wants to divorce her.

As this was to be an experiment in Forum Theatre, as soon as a few of the participants performed the few scenes of which the plot consisted, we all talked about what the different characters could have done differently at different points to reach a more satisfactory outcome. We repeated the experiment the next day with a much wider audience composed of politicians and the families of the actors. On both occasions, it quickly became clear that the accusation of infidelity only highlighted a more confounding problem: how can a man live with more than one wife nowadays? In the course of both performances, the first suggestion put forward to solve the problem was that the father should have made his wives live together, like the ancestors used to do, instead of keeping them apart in two different houses. On the first day this was proposed by a young man, on the second by Manuel who was still President of the NASHE at the time. We explored this solution: it led to the first wife becoming irritated at the second wife, who she felt was illegitimate. Why, she asked, should she have to deal with her? She had never agreed to it, whereas the second wife knew from the beginning that her husband was already married. During the second representation, Manuel, himself married to two wives, tried to reason with the first wife with the help of her father and her brother, whom he summoned onto the stage. This he did to no avail, however: in both cases, the first wife decided to leave her children in the care of their father and to go to the city to make a new life for herself. The second performance ended there, whereas the first had focused on what the son

could have done to change things. Besides ineffective protest or resolving to run to the city to retrieve his mother, he appeared quite powerless within the conflict.

Christianity was not mentioned when Olmedo talked of his parents' separation, nor did it feature in the Forum Theatre play that was based upon it. It was much later, after many conversations with him and mutual visits, that he added this aspect to the story. It had all started when the family had gone far away from Makuma to visit relatives. When they arrived after days of walking, they were greeted not only by their kin but also by Adventist missionaries. The missionaries tried to convert them, and the father soon obliged, but the sons would not budge. As Olmedo told me, they already disliked the way their father was treating them and their mother, and wanted to see if this new religion would change their father first. Only if it did would they be convinced that this was a good way of living. But the conversion only precipitated their parents' separation: knowing the missionaries disapproved of polygamy, he had claimed only to have one wife, and he designated the second one as such. This led to even more resentment between the children of each wife, culminating in a significant fight that erupted during a football game. In spite of all, the sons had given in to the pressure from the missionaries and their father: they had gone into the river to be baptised and signed a confession of faith, without really believing in it or attending any of the services. Nevertheless, Olmedo said that Adventists were more legitimate than Evangelicals because they followed the Bible more closely (e.g. keeping the Shabbath). As I pressed him to explain to me the difference between the two, he told me that Adventists were the real Evangelicals, and that the Evangelicals were Catholic, a distinction which I will return to later on.

The North American missionaries were present during the Forum Theatre play. When urged by Brian Sonia-Wallace to make a contribution, Jim reluctantly got up and addressed the audience. He said that he could understand the anger of the first wife, because he had promised his own wife to be faithful and monogamous, and because taking another one would amount to breaking this promise. He did not outright condemn the man or the second wife, however, nor did he mention the Bible. More generally, the Evangelical missionaries in Makuma had had a more complex approach to polygamy than the one which Olmedo attributes to the Adventists. It was clear to them, notably from St Paul's Epistle to the Corinthians, that God had intended a man to marry only one woman. They were wary of some men seeing conversion to Evangelical Christianity as a good way to justify abandoning one wife, usually the older one. Even if they did so in good faith, this seemed an unacceptable issue to the missionaries and they tried to prevent it. For them, these men's marriages, even if they were partly unlawful, could not be undone, nor could they continue in the same way. If a man were to keep both wives after his conversion to Christianity, the missionaries thought it would show that he had missed something fundamental in God's plan for humanity. But the mistake would be as grave if he completely abandoned one of his wives, especially if he rejected the more vulnerable of them. Instead, the missionaries strongly advised that a man should keep only one wife, preferably the first one, and keep fulfilling all his obligations except for sexual relations towards the second one. This would hit at the heart of the matter: the difficulties of providing game and working in the garden (or making enough money) for more than one wife was already one of the difficulties that led to a return to monogamy in current conditions. Hunting had become more and more difficult because of game depletion, and work had become market-oriented. Many men who thought they could enjoy more than one wife, often in very different locations, soon found themselves exhausted by the increasingly difficult

efforts needed to maintain both wives and their children as they themselves got older too. The missionaries' refusal to accept spousal abandonment in the name of conversion was therefore more than a pragmatic decision to protect vulnerable women and children. For the men who followed, as one of them told me, it provided a daily reminder of their sinfulness and of the consequences of giving in to the desires of the flesh without being able to follow through with the consequences.

Adventist Christianity provided Olmedo's father with a different path to the Christian God from that which the Evangelicals offered, one which enabled him to channel goods and knowledge more easily and which was compatible with his abandonment of his first wife. This path appeared, at some point at least, to make it more easily possible to live a good life in the settler colony. This choice did not, however, satisfy many others who favored other solutions: attempting to make both wives live together, for instance, or to provide for both. Some very faithful young Shuar men even remained celibate until their late thirties or forties in order to avoid these failed marriages. Church life, individual and communal prayer, Bible reading and religious music, they told me, helped them to resist all temptations of the flesh - the temptations to sleep around without thinking about the consequences, for instance. It is difficult, however, to ignore the crippling effects of such prolonged celibacy. Refusing to marry a woman who wouldn't be faithful also meant having to live with one's parents until very late in life. Such a life of celibacy was easier in the city, where it also enabled one to devote oneself to learning a trade and hold positions of responsibility. Paradoxically, another friend of mine had become a Catholic precisely in order to live in the city. Although she thought the Evangelical life was "beautiful", it was also impossible for her. If she lived in the city, she needed to make money, and to make money one of the jobs most readily available to her was working in bars, serving alcohol. Another

option would be to find a husband to care for her, and to do this she had to go out to dance and drink, and she *had* to sleep around. Although she found all these things “dirty”, they were what would make her life possible in the city. The Evangelical God would not let her, but Catholicism would make her life easier: these things would still be bad, but if she did them she could confess and be clean again.

Olmedo himself did not trust the churches. He focused on his cacao plantation to provide money for his mother and his brother through the Catholic Chankuap foundation who bought his produce at a good price and provided him with some training in agriculture. He was also betting on a high-school education in agriculture and pisciculture to enable him to make money in the future. He joined the theatre workshop to learn how to speak in public, with hopes of becoming a political leader and bringing development projects to his community. He was also encouraged in this by his mother and his sister who, through him, sent me and Brian some food, and later invitations to visit their communities. Through our relationship, they got access to a volleyball, which would then enable them to invite other communities to compete with them. Olmedo also received access to my digital camera, which he used for various school projects. He would also take pictures of friends and ask me to have them printed in town so he could distribute them afterwards. In other words, he and his family had found in the high school and in his relationship with these other foreigners an access to powerful knowledge and goods that might make a future possible in the absence of a father. Not long after the workshop ended, however, he became increasingly dissatisfied with the highschool because of rumors concerning a relationship he was said to have with a girl there. Relationship with women, real or fictional, was threatening his vision of becoming a successful cacao grower. He joined the military service a few

months after I last saw him, pulled away from Makuma by even more powerful relations.

#### 4. CONCLUSION: DIVERGING PATHS

In this chapter I have presented two of the most stable institutions that see Shuar and North American missionaries collaborate, Bible translation and the hydroelectric power station. I have presented both of these projects as different aspects of God's Kingdom in the world. Translation stabilises and intensifies the relationship between Shuar and the Church by establishing and making coherent correspondences between their world and those of other Christians. The creation and maintenance of the hydroelectric power plant participates in the extension of God's reach where humans and nonhumans have to be made to comply with His will. It is there that a number of clues seemed to indicate the possibility of God's defeat and retreat from Makuma, where the forest and the market fight over His remains. With Clever, I have shown the appearance of a different inflection in God's presence. Clever's invention of an indigenous church to stabilise the relationship between Shuar and the city in favour of Shuar goes through Korean missionaries rather than through North Americans and their Shuar Bible. Similarly, with Olmedo's story I have shown that the relationship to powerful outsiders should ultimately serve Shuar to help their own kin. When his father's conversion to Adventism failed to make him a better man and to unite the children of both his wives, Olmedo and his brothers refused to convert. Instead, Olmedo turned to economic projects, the school, and ultimately the army. Different churches made it more or less easy to live in the village or in the city, in part depending on one's gender and age. What would be crippling in one place would be liberating in another, and vice-versa.

Importantly, throughout all their conversions and de-conversions, Shuar I spoke to always insisted that God was one and that it did not matter so much which church one belonged to. Invariably, this assertion of equality of all paths to God also came with a criterion to distinguish them: some missionaries were deceiving. In Makuma, this was the distinction between Catholics and Evangelicals which I examined in Chapter 1. Evangelicals only prayed to one God, whereas Catholics also prayed to the saints and the Virgin Mary. The Catholic priests would try to deceive Shuar by telling them that the saints were alive, but it was easy to see that they were just made of dead wood or plaster, people told me. Yet this distinction between Catholics and Evangelicals did not have much to do with the people who called themselves Catholics or Evangelicals. Thus, Olmedo told me that Adventists were Evangelicals, whereas the people of the AIESE were Catholics. Or, as I indicated at the beginning of this chapter, Muslims would be the true Evangelicals because they prayed to only one God, whereas Christians prayed to the Trinity. Ultimately, however, all prayed to the same God. What was at stake there very much resembles the opposition between Yus Shuar and Iwianch Shuar I examined in my first Chapter: a distinction that did not imply encompassment, but attempted to create space for a peaceful relationship among one's kin and others. To the extent that one's relationship to God would ultimately determine both His mode of appearing and one's own body, Yus and Iwianch are opposed to each other. To the extent that Yus Shuar and Iwianch Shuar are Shuar, Yus and Iwianch are the same.

Over the past twenty years, the conflict between Shuar (and other indigenous groups of the Amazon) and the Ecuadorian state (along with other Latin American States and the transnational companies that sustain them) has become more violent. Uprisings led by the CONAIE (in 1990, 1994, 1997, 2000, 2002, and 2005) have answered violent neo-liberal policies, like the

dollarisation of the economy or attempts to privatise natural resources including water. In March 2009, in Bagua, Peru, twenty-five Awajun and Wambi, who form part of the Shuar Chicham language family, were killed by the police as they protested oil exploitation on their territory and the free-trade agreements between Peru and the U.S.A. that facilitated them. In September 2009, a Shuar protest in solidarity with nationwide indigenous protests led to the death of a Shuar teacher, Bosco Wisum. Although it is very likely that policemen are responsible for his death, the government immediately incriminated Shuar leaders for even organising a protest and flagged them as terrorists. In this context of increasing political violence, it is possible to see how Evangelical Christianity and Islam differently enable and cripple political action. Clever, for instance, refused to join the national Evangelical confederation of indigenous people because of its association with North Americans and its belatedness in opposing oil exploitation. In a different context, Daniel told me how difficult it had been for him to do anything when a conflict erupted between Shuar and settlers in his community: although he could not be violent because of the Gospel, he also had to help his own people. Eventually, all he could do was to help people cross a river on a canoe and to pray for them. Islam, then, promises much to people, as Miguel and others told me: not only the possibility of using violence to defend one's territory, as the ancestors used to do, but also armed support of an international community, whilst simultaneously making polygamy possible once again. It also threatens, however, to stigmatise the indigenous movement even more by associating them with those whom Shuar consider to be "real terrorists".





17: Olmeido and two ripe cacao fruits



18: Olmeido at a party



19: Assembly at the covered space in Makuma



20: A child's drawing of an airplane on the wall of a house

## CONCLUSION

### 1. TECHNOLOGIES OF INTROJECTION OF THE FUTURE

In this thesis I attempted a description of the relationship between Shuar and the North American Evangelical missionaries who had come to make the Bible available to them. I began by sketching what Christianity meant for Shuar and what Shuar culture meant for missionaries. I showed that in both cases “Christian” and “Shuar” were ways of talking about, and producing, history; contingent and precarious assemblages that had to be continuously produced and maintained. Over the course of the following two chapters, I endeavoured to describe each of these assemblages in more details and to render their relationship to time more explicitly. I showed that central to these precarious constructions were what I called “technologies of introjection of the future”. For Shuar, a series of beverages ranging from manioc beer and tea to powerful hallucinogenics like *natem* and *maikua* made it possible for mutual humanity to be maintained and reproduced over time. All these beverages function by simultaneously emptying Shuar bodies of dead remnants of past sociality and filling them with visions of the future. Importantly, Shuar Christians are defined by their refusal to partake in the drinking of these beverages in any sustained way. They do participate in the constitution of the future through other means, all of which center on the Bible. For Evangelical missionaries, the Bible makes the constitution and maintenance of the Church possible through re-descriptions of the present. These re-descriptions stem from the hyper-future point of view of Heaven, which the Word of God embodies. Crucial to this endeavour is a mistrust of present sensory experience coupled with meticulous documentation and archiving, in particular of Shuar language and myths. I indicated that many Shuar criticise this process, which they claim weakens the careful maintenance of relationships with nonhuman beings on which Shuar subsistence depends. Finally, I

turned more explicitly to relations between Shuar and missionaries. I showed that both Bible translation and the maintenance of the hydroelectric power plant participated to that project of extending the grasp of the Evangelical God over humans and nonhumans in Makuma. I also described various refusals on the part of Shuar to relate to that God, or at least to relate to Him through these missionaries. Kinship, or more specifically the potentially deleterious effects of Evangelical Christianity on the family, grounds both these refusals and efforts to establish new relations to powerful nonhuman entities come from the future such as the Catholic God, the State, or Allah.

I now want to return to these “technologies of introjection of the future” to summarise some of their main characteristics and better understand their articulation with one another. These technologies stabilise a self by introjecting a future negative relation with an Other into the present. The two sorts of technologies I have described here function in very different yet related ways. Shuar visionary-vomitive technologies work by introjecting a relation to a future self and simultaneously purging remnants of past relationships. They vary from collective and near-future technologies such as beer drinking to more individual and remote-future technologies, ultimately taking the form of an introjected relation of predation: murder. These rest on, and simultaneously imply, technologies of forgetting and vomiting. Christian messianic technologies operate by introjecting a relation to a hyper-future self, one’s own resurrected body, and memorialising past relations to God. The more this hyper-future self is actualised in the present through daily reading of the Bible and prayer, the more it forms part of a collective body: the Church. Seeing the world through resurrected eyes, one can distinguish among other resurrected bodies, dead/worldly bodies, and deceivers. This possibility both rests on and implies textual technologies of memorialisation. The difference between both sets of technologies rests on the difference between a future

and what I have called a hyper-future, a future beyond all futures. The future beyond all future that characterises Christian messianism introduces a Being beyond all beings, God, and a community beyond all communities, the Church.

Importantly, neither set of technologies precedes the other, either historically or logically. From the point of view of messianism, Shuar worlds are characterised by a lack, the absence of a relationship to the transcendental, which must be supplemented<sup>27</sup>. From the point of view of Shuar, messianic technologies are characterised by a surplus: they are too much and must be moderated<sup>28</sup>. They are not mutually exclusive, however: messianism goes outward to fill voids; Shuar convert the intense power coming from these outsiders to make it bearable for their own. In other words, North Americans and Shuar depend on each other and constitute each other. To this extent, there is no contradiction in Shuar partially becoming Christians, or in missionaries partially becoming Shuar. Nevertheless, although possible, these becomings are also uneasy, tense, and never fully realised. Shuar's full Christian becomings, like everyone's Christian becoming, remains partial until the resurrection. North American missionaries' Shuar becomings remain partial until they fully participate in the production of kinship. That each ultimately refuses to commit themselves fully to the other is an object of endless puzzlement on both sides: why won't they let their sons marry our daughters if they want to live here? Why won't they abandon their sinful ways if they want to go to Heaven? The history of the relationship between Shuar and North American missionaries is the history of these pushes and pulls, of this interdependence that on the ground looks like an endless series of steps forward and backward, conversions and de-conversions, projects and schisms.

Comparison is not only what the anthropologist does to these technologies: comparison lies at the heart of each of them. Messianism and Shuar can in fact be seen as technologies of comparison mediated by the future. Through them, people know other people's worlds. Shuar come to adopt the bodies of city-dwellers, of inkis-gringos, of soldiers, graduates, French wives. Christians, starting with St Paul, become Greeks, Romans, or Shuar. They lead to different sorts of comparison, as Eduardo Viveiros de Castro has shown: explorations of the other's mind for the latter; of the other's body for the former. Here again, their opposition does not lead to incompatibility. Shuar working with Christians, adopting Christian bodies, do what Christian bodies do: they sit at desk, read books, write books. Conversely, North American missionaries looking at Shuar belief systems notice the centrality of ideas of commensality and learn to eat with Shuar. In theory and in practice, as the example of Clever in the last chapter demonstrates, one can shift among these endlessly, embodying intellectuality in a Bible School for seven years, and spending the next seven learning to integrate Shuar culture. There is a limit to symmetry, however. Amazonian multi-naturalism is also a multi-culturalism. Beliefs and practices are part and parcel of one's specific form of embodiment, habits of the body. As a result, they lead to an endless series of different worlds without any of them taking precedence over the other. Christianity, however, organises differences by relation to a singularity: God, in Whose image a singular man was produced. This Being beyond beings, living in a time outside of Time, determines the nature of these beings and of time itself by the relation they have to Him.

This fixation and centralisation of relations gives Christianity its power. As all relations in the world are themselves gradually fixed to God, His power increases, and those who relate to Him benefit from this increase. Their existence intensifies, their (spiritual) bodies strengthen, immortality seems grasp-

able. Yet this One is not the only One, or at least this access to the One is not the only way in. There are other Christians, other monotheists, other Gods, some of whom might be the same. There are Evangelicals, Adventists, Catholics, Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormons. There are also Jews and Muslims. And beyond these there is the State and Capitalism. Each group has its own transcendental, its own Real in reference to which other relations are determined. From within these relations, outward expansion and inward intensification seems ineluctable. Politics, there, concerns the relationships among these realities, the alliances between Gods, between State and Capital. Or, conversely, it focuses on the attempts to maximise the differences between the One and its near enemies, deceivers of all sorts (Marxism, the State...). From without, however, they look like contingent colonial enterprises competing against each other and threatening to overwhelm one another by over-determining one's relations to one's kin. Shuar politics consist in articulating these outsiders in order to keep relations among Shuar dynamically stable, without letting anyone dominate them. "Shuar" is the name of an immanent transcendence, contingent, multiple, ever moving and without a center. It pits these outsiders against each other in an endless game to escape domination by any of them. When the One seems to pull Shuar entirely into His power and threatens to re-define their relationship to each other as relationships to Him, thereby exterminating Shuar as such, they turn to an other One.

These technologies are also ethical through and through. It is not only that the introjected future concerns a future relationship with another, although this is the case also. Whether it is the vision of a French marriage or that of a perfect human community on the New Earth, the content of the introjected future concerns future intersubjective relationships. Nor is it merely that the use of these technologies results from, and produces, ethical obligations, although this too is correct. People engaged with Christianity and with natem

to solve problematic ways of relating to others, and as a result would become obligated to help others, by preaching the Gospel or by defending their kin against enemies. What makes these technologies ethical technologies is that the (hyper-)future itself appears to one as a person. Both God and Arutam are persons to whom one related as an “I” to a “Thou”. The relationship between the self and the introjected future takes the form of an internal dialogue, like the Shuar man who apologised to God for drinking manioc beer with an Iwianch Shuar, or like Norma writing in her journal that she had forgotten how her sentence was supposed to end. Further as a result of this introjection one has new ethical obligations directed not only to present or future persons but to one’s (hyper-) future self. One can disappoint and betray God and Arutam, who as a result may desert the offender. In the case of Evangelicals, reconciliation with God is achievable, though not easy. In fact, as I indicated in Chapter 1 and 2, it is this personal relationship to God or to Arutam that determines what one can or cannot eat and drink, and more generally what one’s body is like. This new, intense, private relationship transforms one’s own relation to others.

I have indicated before that the various techniques that form these technologies of the future range from minimal ones to maximal ones. God and Arutam are the maximal forms taken by the future in both technologies: Arutam *qua* future as such and God *qua* hyper-future. What are its minimal forms? In my analysis of Shuar visionary-vomitive technologies, the minimal technique was the drinking and vomiting of manioc beer during a party. The future made possible by doing so was more drinking, more manioc beer, that is, more sociability. What would be the equivalent for Christians? Characteristically, the event that initiates Christian life, conversion, is also typically portrayed as an encounter with the maximum, God. It is characteristic insofar as it forms part of the series of inversions which corresponds to the shift from future to hy-

per-future. Where encountering an Arutam is an achievement that crowns the series of visionary-vomitive technologies and by necessity comes later in life and produces a super-existence, encountering God initiates Christian life as a hyper-existence. Its minimal counterpart, the least potent and most mediated encounter with God, then, would be testimony. The relationship between testimony and beer-drinking corresponds to the broader logics I have identified before, with an opposition in the emphasis between body and speech, vomiting-future and memorialising-hyper-future, reciprocity and unidirectionality.

## 2. OTHER FACES OF THE FUTURE

It should be clear by now that what I am presenting here is not a particular feature that would uniquely exist in Makuma and nowhere else. My very choice to focus on *both* North American missionaries and Shuar points to this more-than-local aspect of “technologies of introjection of the future”. This “more-than-local” aspect is what I now want to articulate. I do not, however, find that doing this warrants a jump to the un-situated, ahistorical, supposedly universal discourse called “theory”. This form of theorising has rightly been criticised for continuing to grant Euro-American thought a universal status, free to articulate cultural particularisms. I find this criticism particularly warranted in the case of philosophers like Heidegger, theoretician of the superiority of German culture and language, who have uncritically been appropriated to describe human experience of the world as such (see Jackson, Ingold). It is much less warranted in the case of others such as Guattari and Foucault whose research aimed at displacing Western thought, attacking its universality, and making way for investigations of other worlds. Here I want to invoke the work of Emmanuel Levinas, a Jewish Lithuanian immigrant in France, survivor of the failed attempt to exterminate European Jewry, whose work was always split between philosophy and Jewish theology.

He attempted to think the responsibility of European thought in the Shoah by re-conceptualising responsibility itself. For him, this re-conceptualisation went through a displacement of European philosophy by Jewish theology. He was, as Derrida called him, a jewgreek. I invoke him at this juncture not as a spontaneous thinker of universality, but as this “jewgreek” who was forced by extermination to conceive the bare minimum required for a future to be possible after such a catastrophe. I also invoke him as a possible stand-in for myself; an attempt to articulate what both the missionaries and some of my Shuar friends saw in me with what I see in myself: a Jew, a bad Jew, a secularised, assimilated, uncircumcised, French Jew. My reading of Levinas is not uncritical, however. Feminist and post-colonial philosophers have already pointed out a number of issues in the way that Levinas conceptualises the feminine and in his Euro-centrism<sup>29</sup>. These same critiques, however, attest to the fecundity of Levinas’s work. I will not do justice here either to Levinas or his critics and followers. I will restrict myself to an overview of his work on temporality in connection to the themes developed in the preceding chapters, in order to then use my ethnography to take Levinas’s thought beyond itself.

Time and Ethics were at the centre of Levinas’s preoccupations. In fact, his work centres on the relationship between Time as such and Ethics *qua* relationship with an Other. By “Time as such” I mean exactly what I have shown Shuar and North American missionaries experience: not memories and projects, that is, extensions of their present, but a future (and a past) beyond all possible experience. From some of his earliest texts to his latest works, he consistently argues that “time is not the achievement of an isolated and lone subject, but that it is the very relationship of the subject with the Other” (1987: 39). In *Time and the Other*, a conference he gave in Paris in 1947, he presents a genealogy of the co-emergence of time and of sociality. He begins with pure being, the pure “there is” that we can imagine would be even after

all things die, and that we experience in insomnia, a “vigilance without end”, without object, and without time (48). In contrast with pure being, the appearance of things, of beings, introduces a first modality of time: a pure present, an endless beginning. There, an ego’s relationship to itself and to things introduces the possibility of freedom, of mastery over the fact of existing in materiality (53-57). This first relationship to the world characterises it primarily as nourishment and enjoyment, and is experienced ultimately through the suffering of work necessary to keep existing (68). In this first relationship to the world, unlike during insomnia, Ego can escape and return to itself, yet it encounters objects outside of itself as though they came from it (64-65). Although ego can experience duration there, remember and predict what can happen to it, for Levinas these retentions and protensions still do not amount to an experience of time itself, i.e. of a past and a future.

For time as such to appear, for Ego to experience time, it must encounter a pure future, that is, a pure alterity. Levinas describes four minimal experiences of the future-as-alterity: the “infantile shaking of sobbing” before death (72), the caressing of a lover, the engendering of a child, and, in later writings, Speaking itself. First, death marks a future that will never be present as well as one that will take me by surprise. There, the mastery of the present, that activity of Ego in knowing and enjoying the world, is inverted into an infinite passivity, an inability even to be able do anything. This absolute alterity of death breaks my solitude and possesses my existing in unknowable ways, rendering me absolutely passive when facing death. It is this passivity towards death that the “infantile shaking of sobbing” embodies, a shaking that, needless to say, is not confined to children (72-75). In the “shaking of sobbing” when facing death, then, I encounter the Future as an Other: “The very relationship with the Other is the relationship with the future” (77). But this is not the only place where the future is encountered. Immediately after charac-

terising death as a first relationship with the future, Levinas introduces the caress as a more sustained presence of the future in the present. In the caress, Levinas finds another similarly asymmetric relationship between Ego and Other where Ego is passive and where Other is never given, grasped or present, but always already hidden, fleeting.

The caress is a mode of the subject's being, where the subject who is in contact with another goes beyond this contact (...) the seeking of the caress constitutes its essence by the fact that the caress does not know what it seeks. This "not knowing", this fundamental disorder, is the essential. It is like a game with something slipping away, a game absolutely without project or plan, not with what can become ours or us, but with something other, always other, always inaccessible and always still to come (*à venir*). The caress is the anticipation of this pure future (*avenir*), without content (89)

When I caress another, they are not present to me. I cannot know how it feels to them in advance. I can try to imagine, I can try to predict, but in the caress itself I absent myself for the other. In the caress, I give myself to them and wait passively for a response. Time appears in the future in this passivity, this waiting, in the heart of activity. Levinas follows caress with fecundity: in paternity is a relationship to an Other that is myself beyond power, possession, or sympathy.

In a later essay, *Diachrony and Representation*, Levinas gives a fourth description of the emergence of time in the relation to an Other, as an Other, in language. For him it is clear that descriptions of the past or the future, in books of history or science fiction, can never give one an experience of Time. Nor are my memories of the past or my plans for the future, my internal monologue, uninterrupted by another, always other than experiences of the

present. In the re-presentation of past and future, both past and future are reduced to the present. The Said, discourse, only knows the present (100-102). But all recording of something said presupposes an act of saying, all discourse a sociality, an encounter with another. For Levinas it is the face of the other that obligates me to be responsive even before I can intend to or know that I am responding or what I will say. In other words, this responsibility, literally this ability to respond, precedes every conceivable present. As such, it constitutes for me an immemorial past, a past that was never present. The act of saying something, whatever that something turns out to be, is always already a form of responding which the past-in-the-present that is my responsibility to the other makes possible. In saying something, then, I experience the past as such, not a memory or a knowledge of the past but a pure immemorial past (111). I also experience the future. Indeed, I do not only respond *to* the other, but also *for* them. I offer my words to the other in naked anticipation of the effects of my words. As in the caress, I cannot know or experience the effects of my words on the other. Their own response to me may stand in for that knowledge but it will never amount to their experience. In speaking to someone, in the expectation of hearing, I also experience in the present a pure future that will never be present (108). This, for Levinas, is Ethics. Ethics predates any intentionality, knowledge, meaning, or institution. Ethics also anticipates and goes beyond them. Ethics is time itself, the experience in the present of an immemorial past and of an unexpected future through my responsibility to an other person. It precedes my birth and takes me beyond my death (108, 114). This responsibility is not reciprocal, nor symmetrical. It consists in the risk of killing merely by existing, the shame of surviving the death of others, the non-indifference to the other's death, beyond my own (110).

If ethics is time, for Levinas this means that ethics is not a representation of time, nor is it in time<sup>30</sup>. In other words, and to return to the argument developed throughout this text, the technologies of introjection of the future are not modes of representation of the future, nor are they primarily cognitive or phenomenological. They are also markedly distinct from technologies of prevision, futurologies, and so on. Christians and Shuar can encounter the future as an other person because it is in the nature of the future to be encountered so. This encounter with the future is ethical before being cognitive or even phenomenological. The relationship between Ego and God, Ego and his Arutam<sup>31</sup>, Ego and his future self, are interpersonal relationships even when they are internalised. As such, these relationships can include disappointments and betrayals. This is not to say that relationship with the future is not also cognitive and phenomenological. In fact, as I have showed time and again, knowledge is produced in this encounter. This knowledge concerns the present and the beings that inhabit it, enabling one to distinguish between friends and enemies. Yet once again this knowledge is ethical through and through and only makes sense in terms of the interpersonal relationship between oneself and the future, in the promises, obligations, reciprocal gifts that animate it. Time itself is at stake in the Word of God and in manioc beer. However, both manioc beer and the Bible are elaborations on this feature of reality. They go beyond it. In the encounter with Shuar and Evangelical missionaries Levinas must be taken beyond himself, beyond Jewish theology and Greek philosophy. Let us return to his “caress” : what makes it “ethical” in his account is that at every point it risks turning pleasure into pain and love into murder. Similarly with speaking, the possibility that my words may make the other lose face, cry, or become angry makes my speaking “ethical”. For Levinas, however, recognising or remembering this primacy of ethics should lead me to a form of ethical paranoia wherein I would be terrified of murdering the other. In other words, the prohibition to kill the other appears to Levi-

nas as a necessary consequence of the recognition that these relationships are ethical. Instead, I would argue that if this same sudden reversability<sup>32</sup> of love into murder (and vice versa) lies at the heart of the two technologies I described, it does not lead to a univocal imperative to desire love over murder. In fact, it is this ambivalent relationship to Other that motivates the use of these technologies. Because dancing can turn into rape, in-laws into enemies, Christians into agents of the anti-Christ, Shuar and Christians need ways of stabilising these relationships to keep them “facing the right way”, as it were, to keep them on the side of the caress rather than on that of murder. The technologies that make this possible for a collective all entail converting one’s relationship with the future from an agonistic to an irenic one. Emblematically, in the Arutam quest one must surmount one’s fear of a terrible figure to touch it, which converts it into a benevolent kin. In conversion to Christianity, one renounces a life of opposition to God to accept Christ in one’s heart. And, in both cases, this stabilisation of a relationship with the future amounts as much to a pacification of some relationships as to the emergence of a new antagonism. More than an imperative prohibition of murder, these technologies of introjection of the future aim at redistributing and stabilising relationships of love and anger, kinship and enmity.

In introducing Levinas, it might seem like I have done what I said the missionaries, Catholic and evangelical alike, do when they translate the Bible in Shuar or Shuar myths in Spanish. Under the guises of recognising the reality of Shuar and Missionary talk of Arutam and God, I would have instead related them to a Real, a One, neither the Christian God nor (human) nature, yet nevertheless a transcendental Real. What is interesting with Levinas, however, is precisely that this Real is never One, nor is it ever present. The Real that Shuar and Evangelicals share is their relation to an Other. Yet the Other to which they each relate is not the same. It remains different. Groun-

ded in relation itself, Shuar and Christian worlds diverge as much as they meet. In fact, I have been careful to leave this Other that is the future undetermined and ambivalent. It may side in with Shuar in an anarchic fight against the One, or it may help Christianity (the State, the Market, Nature, and so on) capture Shuar and keep them hostage. Such is the ambivalent and reversible nature of ethical relationships, of responsibility. Such is the openness of the future, escaping all predictions. What Shuar and missionaries share, and what I share with them, is not a thing, nor a substance, nor even a mind, but a relation to difference, openness to the future; a gap, a wound. The relationship between Shuar and North American Evangelical missionaries, their relationships with me, is a non-relation mediated by the future.

I would now want to outline some possible futures, that is, comparative developments. First, Shuar and Evangelical missionaries are not the only ones to relate to the future as a person, and to elaborate upon this Real with various individuals and collective technologies. From mediumship to a number of forms of divination, the comparison between Shuar and Evangelical missionaries opens the way for further comparisons. It would be just as interesting to compare this face-to-face relation to the future with other, more immanent relations to it, from protension to bureaucratic-managerial projects, financial futures contracts and other derivatives, or political hope. Secondly, there exists a unique difficulty and fecundity in the non-reductive description of a relationship between two interrelated ethnographic subjects that abstract comparisons can not capture. Against attempts to recapture some form of unity by doing “multi-sited” fieldworks, it seems just as fruitful to study the multiplicities given in one site. In other words, I concur with Candea’s appeal to return to “village ethnography”. This has already been very fruitful in studies of missions. In the case of Makuma, there is a number of other Others to be looked at, as I suggested repeatedly throughout the text: the State and the

Market, that non-Evangelical missionaries, but also with “book magic” or tourism. Finally, the view of Other as future, which is merely another way of saying that kinship is history, makes it possible to return to classical objects of anthropological enquiry such as kinship, divination, religion, representations of time, and technology, and relate them in new ways. Ultimately, however, the future of anthropology does not lie in the books that will come, in the theoretical turns we will take, and even less in new methodologies. The future of anthropology will continue to lie in “other people”, in the ethical relations forged with others, interactions which have perhaps improperly been called “fieldwork” and for which there exists no substitute, improvement, or shortcut.



21: At Efren's graduation party

## NOTES

1. Although the name is currently spelt “Macuma” in official documents, in this dissertation I follow missionary spelling of Shuar whereby the place is spelt “Makuma”.
2. See Harding (2000:34-60)
3. See among others Kroeber & Kluckhohn (1952), Asad (1993), Klassen (2013), Laidlaw (2013)
4. My focus on comparison as both a social practice and an analytical tool, or more specifically on the fruitfulness of the relationship between the two, takes its inspiration from Strathern (2004), Toren (2002, 2009), Crook (2009), Goldman (2009), Gow (2009), Wagner (1981) and Salmon (2013), Stengers (2011), Viveiros de Castro (2011). The study of missions has been a particularly fertile ground for this sort of enquiry. See in particular Pels (1999) and Keane (2007).
5. Not all Evangelical missionaries were so lucky. A group of five missionaries based in Makuma tried to contact Huaoranis. They became tragically famous when their bodies were found by Frank Drown, who founded the mission in Makuma, along with the Ecuadorian army. Two of their relatives then endeavoured to bring the Gospel to Huaoranis. One of them, Elisabeth Elliot, has written a number of accounts of these events (1957, 1958, 1961, 1978). Frank and Marie Drown wrote an account of their time as missionaries in Makuma (Drown 1961). See also High (2008)
6. This line of enquiry flows directly from the late Steve Rubenstein’s exemplary work on the colonial frontier in lowland Ecuador, beginning with the effects of market capitalism on kinship (1993), continuing with relationship between catholic missionaries, the Shuar federation (FICSH) and the Ecuadorian State (2001) and the “erotic economy” at the colonial frontier (2004), and culminating in a more general proposal for a political ecology of Amazonia (2006) and an ambitious attempt to relate visionary experiences, subjectivity and colonialism (2011). Beyond these articles, this dissertation results from (and responds to) long conversations in person, via e-mail messages, and in imagination since his death.
7. For a discussion of the more recent avatars of an anthropology of ethics, see Laidlaw (2014) and Faubion (2011). From a perspective critical of the celebration of freedom and agency that infuses much of this debate, see

Povinelli (2006). The anthropology of Christianity has been important in the development of these debates, see in particular Faubion (2001), Robbins (2004), Klaitz (2010), Smilde (2007). Although more marginal in these debates, ethnographies of Amazonia have led to some of the most remarkable studies of moral sentiments, in particular in Conklin (2001) and the articles in Overing and Passes (2000).

8. The perspective I adopt in this dissertation owes much to Nancy Munn's profound description of the intersubjective processes through which spacetime is produced in Gawa (1976, see also 1992). A number of important works on time and history have appeared since, some of which of particular importance for this project: Gell (1992), Lindquist (2005), Miyazaki (2004, 2013), Toren (2005), Hodges (2008). Once again, the anthropology of Amazonia has been a particularly fruitful ground for these debates in a number of edited volumes (Overing Kaplan 1977, Hill 1988, Fausto and Heckenberger 2007) through important ethnographies (Gow 1991, 2001, Viveiros de Castro 1992). Aparecida Vilaça's work on Christianity and temporality among the Wari' is particularly worthy of attention and has constituted an important source of inspiration throughout the writing of this dissertation. See in particular Vilaça (2010), Vilaça and Wright (2009), and my review of Vilaça and Wright (Cova 2013).

9. I use the word "technology" to describe what Shuar and Evangelical Christians do in order to emphasize a number of their characteristics: they are organised series of chains of actions that unite humans and non-humans to exploit features of reality. Simultaneously, the word "technology" enables me to distinguish my project from other attempts to describe similar processes solely in terms of culture (Robbins 2004), hermeneutics (Crapanzano 2000), or cognition (Luhrmann 2012, Malley 2004). Although my use of the term owes much to the French school of the anthropology of technology (Leroi Gourhan 1993), the processes I am describing correspond to a *sui generis* "mode of existence" rather than to the technological mode of existence *per se* in Latour's new research program (Latour 2013). Finally, the word "technology" with its emphasis on materiality, resonates with two Jivaroan ethnographies. First of all, it is a reference to Taylor's foundational article on the evangelical missionaries as seen from the point of view of the Achuar people she did fieldwork with (Taylor 1981). That paper was the impetus for my own fieldwork. In it she argues that the technology missionaries bring is what matters to the Achuar. Most of this dissertation grapples with this interpretation, at times challenging it, complicating it, generalizing it, inverting it, and refracting it through the voices of contemporary Shuar and missionaries in Makuma. Second, it similarly echoes

Brown's intricate descriptions of Awajun magic-as-technology, and his reflections on the relationship between the categories of "magic" and "technology" in anthropology (2006).

10. The ethnographies of reference on Shuar proper are Karsten (1935), Harner (1972), Hendricks (1993), Mader (1999) and Rubenstein (2002). They only make sense in relation to other work on neighbouring groups that constitute the Jivaroan ensemble with Shuar, such as Achuar (Descola 1996 and 1998, Taylor 1993, 1996, 1997, 2000), Awajun (Brown 2007, Greene 2009) and Candoa (Surrallés 2003).

11. See Gow (2001: 243-6) for a discussion of the consequences of refusing to drink beer following Evangelical conversion among Piro. On Amazonian description of what Euro-Americans call culture in terms of habits of the body, and on the "chronic unstability" of bodies that follows, see Vilaça (2005). For an extension of this argument, see Pedersen and Willerslev (2012). According to Taylor (2000), women consider their manioc plants to be extensions or even clones of themselves. Manioc beer would therefore be central to the production of consubstantiality not only because women chew and spit the manioc to produce it, but also because they are consubstantial with the manioc itself. See also McCallum (2001), Conklin (2001) and Mentore (2012).

12. Dreams are another form of introjection of the future, along with signs (strangely behaving animals and so on). I do not include them here as they seem to belong to a different order altogether. See Descola (1989), Kohn (2014). Nathan (2011) provided much of the inspiration for my understanding of technologies of introjection of the future.

13. Taylor (1234)

14. On Christian understandings of "culture", see Rowland (2003). More broadly, on St Paul's articulation of particularism and universality with temporality see N. T. Wright (1992), Agamben (2005), Badiou (2003), Caputo and Alcott (2009), Harink (2009). For a very different way in which Christianity is made to articulate difference, see Guadeloupe (2009).

15. Missionaries serving in Quito and Shell as part of HCJB face similar issues, see Swanson (1995)

16. This may be the clearest difference between Amazonian and mestizo ways of talking about alcohol. Alcoholism is one of the most frequent motives for conversion to Evangelical Christianity, especially in Latin America. However,

as Smilde (2007) has shown, alcoholism is defined from within the evangelical economy of meaning and in a specific cultural context: converts retroactively define their behaviour as alcoholism on criteria that often have little to do with medical definitions of alcohol. Thus, in Venezuela where Smilde worked, “alcoholism” usually designated the tension between male sociality and family life for married men, where the devil was perceived to be pushing men to binge and spend the little resources that their household needed (Smilde 2007: 58-71). In Makuma, as Daniel explains, the criteria for alcohol abuse and its consequences are different because they occur in a different ontology, affect different relationships, and lead to different consequences.

17. Taylor (1993, 1996, 1997, 2000, 2007) provides a systematic account of the relationship between mortuary rites, arutam quests, temporality and kinship. She qualifies the introjected arutam as an “existential intensifier”. Mader (1999) focuses instead on the role of arutam in the socialization of the person over time. Finally, Rubenstein (2011) uses arutam quests to elaborate a sophisticated theory of Shuar subjectivity. These three accounts rely on very different theoretical frameworks and analyse arutam quests at different levels. Nevertheless, they are surprisingly coherent with each other. Here I try to dislodge arutam quests from the extra-ordinary status they often have in ethnographic descriptions by relating them to a series of other practices, some of which are more than ordinary. As a result, I aim to avoid a risk present in all three accounts: that of equating the disappearance of arutam quests in some parts of Shuar population with a disparition of Shuar proper. I also try to avoid the opposite option, which would fail to see the centrality of arutam quests to the re-production of Shuar life. Instead, my account tries to follow what I showed in the last chapter: that manioc beer is more central to Shuar life than Arutam quests, and that Shuar who do not partake of hallucinogenic drinks remain Shuar, but of a slightly different kind. Thanks to Grégory Deshoullière for helping me clarify the relationship among these three accounts of arutam quests.

18. Klaitz (2007) provides a fascinating account of the differences between different Botswanan Churches’ attitudes towards touch and the sorts of substances that can and cannot be shared, including beer, because of the affects of love or anger that they produce in people.

19. The difference there is not so great between Shuar in Makuma and North American Catholic Charismatics described by Csordas (1994). For both the aim is to produce a “sacred self” that goes beyond propositional assent and includes imagination, affect and experience of the body. It is not only the

present that is affected, but also a person's past and future (Csordas 1994: 133-139, 150-162)

20. For a description of a relationship between Christianity and traditional practices that does not lead either to syncretism or to conflict, see Toren (2006)

21. This hyper-uncertainty concerning the future is a direct result of Evangelical Christian typological view of history whereby events in history are both fulfillment of prophecy and signs of things to come. As a result, fixed future and past events produce present events (Harding 2000: 229-242). It is not that the Christian spacetime is produced through narrative, as Robbins asserts (2004:157), and that this would somehow devalue the present (179-80) but that their relation to narrative produces specific effects. As Harding shows, the Bible for fundamentalist Christians is not a representation of history but history itself (Harding 2000:230). For a slightly different understanding of typology, see Crapanzano (2000:158-182). His criticism of Harding stems more from his critical hermeneutic approach than from a disagreement concerning Evangelical practices.

22. On the relationship between Marxism and Christianity, see Kolakowski (1978), Rossbach (1999). More generally on the relationship between Christianity and social theory see Milbank (2006), and between Christianity and market capitalism see Long (2000). The relationship between missionaries and communism is all the more complex due to missionaries' strong egalitarianism and their ambivalence towards capitalism. They believe that everybody has an equal ability to access the Bible, that is, the Real, and that all are judged by God. As a result they have promoted forms of participatory democracy at all levels of the political organisation that has become NASHE and within the Church. Many of their earlier activities aimed at correcting inequalities caused by an unregulated capitalist market through the use of a local currency or by helping Shuar negotiate better prices for their produce. Finally, they refused to have or deliver diplomas because they could recognize the important inequalities produced by the diploma system in Ecuador. Ultimately, Shuar refused to be taught Bible school by unaccredited teachers. This is why both Norma and Jim spent their furlough at a Bible school. In spite of their rejection of the consequences of capitalism both in theory and in practice, the missionaries continue to profess an unwavering support for capitalism. It seems that what they oppose in communism is the strong centralised State apparatus and the collectivization of property.

23. On the history of Catholic missions among Shuar from a sympathetic

point of view, see Bottasso (1982, 2003, 2011).

24. My analysis of this introduction draws its inspiration from Harding (2000). Her analysis of the rhetorics of witnessing (27-60) remains unsurpassed. By turning to rhetorics rather than hermeneutics or representation, she arrives at an understanding of Evangelical life at once more sympathetic and truer to lived experience. In particular, she shows that the “hermeneutics of suspicion” that is often used to criticize Evangelicals is in fact presupposed by them in order to heighten the effects of their “poetics of faith”. In other words, it is because Evangelicals are able to conjure disenchanted descriptions of the world that they can subsequently re-describe the world as imbued with God’s miracles (85-116).

25. My description of the sacrificial economy that constitutes the Church through gifts and counter-gifts of prayer, money and texts, I also draw inspiration from Harding’s work. See in particular Harding (2000:109-123).

26. Anthropological discussions on translation are too numerous to be included here. Most of them, however, remain theoretical and few describe processes of translation ethnographically (for an exception see Rubel and Rosman 2003). Here my analysis draws much inspiration from STS, in particular Callon (1986) and Espeland and Stevens (1998).

27. See Chap. 3, Section 2.1

28. See Chap 3, Section 2

29. For the most sustained feminist criticism of Lévinas, see Sandford (2000). For a post-colonial reading, see Drabinski (2011). For more sympathetic readings and continuations, see Levy (2003), Katz (2003), Lingis (2008).

30. On the relationship between Levinas and Husserl on time, see Bernet (2006).

31. The gender of arutam depends on the gender of the seer. Men tend to go on arutam quests more than women, but both are possible. On the other hand, the Evangelical God is ultimately non-gendered but always appears in male form.

32. On reversability, see Corsín Jiménez and Willerslev (2007)

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