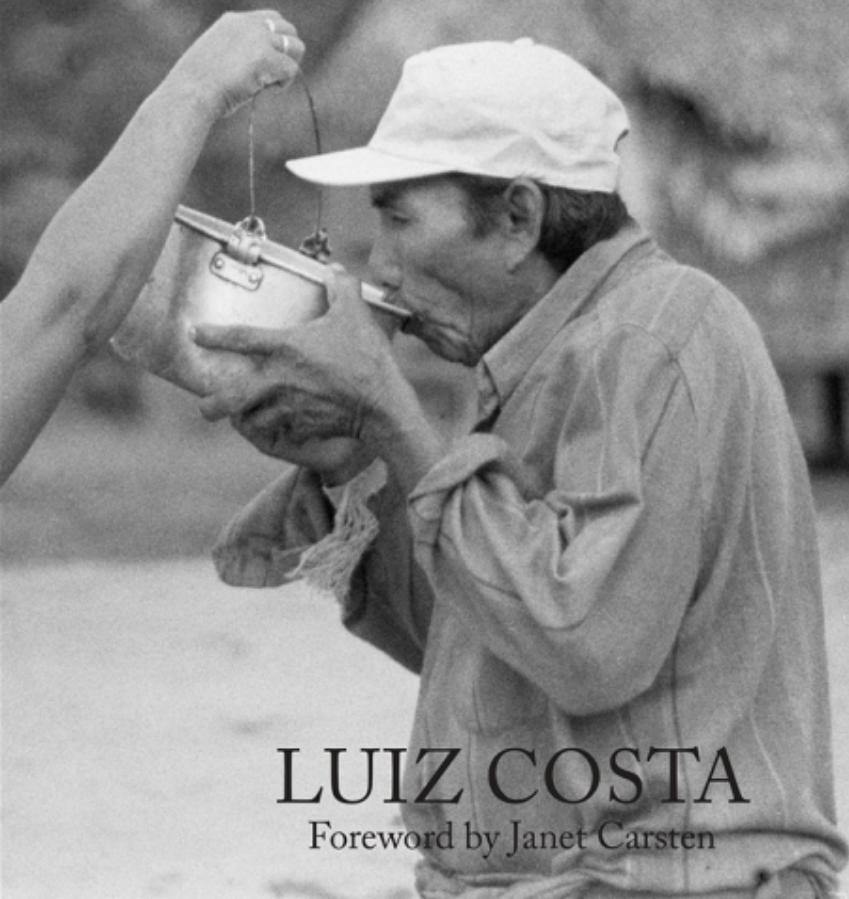




THE OWNERS OF KINSHIP

*Asymmetrical Relations
in Indigenous Amazonia*



LUIZ COSTA
Foreword by Janet Carsten

THE OWNERS OF KINSHIP



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THE OWNERS OF KINSHIP ASYMMETRICAL RELATIONS IN INDIGENOUS AMAZONIA

Luiz Costa



HAU Books
Chicago

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Cover and layout design: Sheehan Moore

Typesetting: Prepress Plus (www.prepressplus.in)

ISBN: 978-1-912808-15-1

LCCN: 2017917362

HAU Books
Chicago Distribution Center
11030 S. Langley
Chicago, IL 60628
www.haubooks.com

HAU Books is printed, marketed, and distributed by The University of Chicago Press.
www.press.uchicago.edu

Printed in the United States of America on acid-free paper.

To Joana, Antonio, and Manoel

Dominance may be cruel and exploitative, with no hint of affection in it. What it produces is the victim. On the other hand, dominance may be combined with affection, and what it produces is the pet.

Yi-Fu Tuan, *Dominance and affection: The making of pets*

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Acknowledgments

This book is based on research carried out for my doctoral thesis, presented at the Museu Nacional, Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro (National Museum, UFRJ, Federal University of Rio de Janeiro), in 2007. My time as a graduate student was made possible by a scholarship from the Conselho Nacional de Desenvolvimento Científico e Tecnológico (CNPq, the National Council for Scientific and Technological Development). Fieldwork among the Kanamari of the Itaquaí River was funded by the CNPq, the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research, the Programa de Pós-Graduação em Antropologia Social do Museu Nacional (PPGAS, Graduate Program in Social Anthropology at the National Museum), and the Centro de Trabalho Indigenista (CTI, Center for Indigenist Work). Subsequent postdoctoral work was funded by the Fundação de Amparo à Pesquisa do Estado do Rio de Janeiro (FAPERJ, Research Support Foundation of the State of Rio de Janeiro) and the Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior (Capes, Coordinating Agency for Advanced Training in Graduate Education). I thank all of these institutions for their support.

My career in anthropology owes everything to Carlos Fausto, who has encouraged me since day one at the Museu Nacional. He has remained my most important critic, supporter, and collaborator. This book exists because he insisted that I write it and then commented on everything I wrote. Readers will easily gauge how crucial his ideas are for my analysis of the Kanamari. Even more profoundly, he is one of my best friends, someone who is always there for me and my family. I could never thank him enough.

I consider myself very fortunate to have been an undergraduate at the University of Oxford. Barbara Kennedy (*in memoriam*) took a chance on me when no one else would. Peter Rivière introduced me to the anthropology of lowland South America. He once told me that if I wanted to become a South Americanist, I should return to Brazil and study at the Museu Nacional. It was one of the best and most generous pieces of advice I have ever been given. Peter Mitchell supervised me in college. He was responsible for most of my courses, took me on an archaeological excavation in Africa, and showed me how exciting academia could be.

The Museu Nacional was an exceptional place to learn anthropology. I would like to thank Lygia Sigaud (*in memoriam*), Gilberto Velho (*in memoriam*), Federico Neiburg, and Antonio Carlos de Souza Lima for their patience, help, and encouragement. Meeting Eduardo Viveiros de Castro while at Oxford was one of my main incentives to study at the Museu Nacional, where he teaches. He remains an unending source of inspiration. Bruna Franchetto taught me the importance of language, and I hope her influence shows in this book. Aparecida Vilaça is a fantastic anthropologist. I learned how to do fieldwork by following her example and taking her suggestions seriously.

My contemporaries at the Museu Nacional taught me much and made my graduate career great fun. I thank Pedro Cesarino, Paulo Maia, Anne-Marie Colpron, Roberto Salviani, Marcela Coelho de Souza, Oiara Bonilla, Beatriz Matos, Cristiane Lasmar, Roberta Ceva, Célia Collet, Gustavo Barbosa, José Antonio Kelly, and Flávio Gordon. Elena Welper is one of the best people I know.

Many people read all or part of this book or responded to oral presentations of its arguments, and their comments have been essential. I thank Rupert Stasch, Paul Kockelman, Cesar Gordon, Hanne Veber, Pirjo Virtanen, Maria Barroso, Marc Brightman, Vanessa Grotti, Miguel Aparício, Jean-Baptiste Eczet, Peter Gow, Cecilia McCallum, Els Lagrou, Anne-Christine Taylor, Philippe Descola, Carlo Severi, Philippe Erikson, Jean-Pierre Chaumeil, Bonnie Chaumeil, Isabelle Daillant, Nathalie Petesch, Patrick Menget, Emmanuel De Vienne, Mike Cepek, Magnus Course, Jean Langdon, Ruy Blanes, Veena Das, Danilyn Rutherford, and Andrew Shryock.

Giovanni da Col believed in this book when it was just a draft. I thank him for his encouragement, his unwavering support and patience, and his uncompromising dedication to rigorous anthropology. The HAU Books editorial team has been outstanding. I would like to thank Sean Dowdy, Kate Herman, and

Sheehan Moore for their help in getting the text ready. I had two of the best reviewers of Amazonian anthropology work on this book: David Rodgers and Catherine V. Howard. Catherine, in particular, reviewed the manuscript with a meticulous eye for detail, and her suggestions have improved the text enormously. It is a great honor to have Janet Carsten, whose work on kinship has inspired my own, write the foreword to the book.

I thank my colleagues at the Departamento de Antropologia Cultural (Department of Cultural Anthropology) and the Programa de Pós-Graduação em Sociologia e Antropologia (PPGSA, Graduate Program in Sociology and Anthropology) of the Instituto de Filosofia e Ciências Sociais da Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro (IFCS-UFRJ, Institute of Philosophy and Social Sciences, Federal University of Rio de Janeiro). In particular I would like to thank Marco Antonio Gonçalves, Els Lagrou, Cesar Gordon, Fernando Rabossi, Maria Barroso, Maria Laura Viveiros de Castro, Karina Kuschnir, Júlia O'Donnell, Marco Aurélio Santana, and Alexandre Werneck.

The researchers at the Laboratório de Antropologia da Arte, do Ritual e da Memória (Larme, Laboratory for the Anthropology of Art, Ritual, and Memory) at the Museu Nacional have helped in a great many ways. I would particularly like to thank Thiago Oliveira, Hélio Sá Neto, Luana Almeida, Messias Basques, Ana Coutinho, and Maria Luísa Lucas. A number of my students or former ones have helped me become a better anthropologist. I would particularly like to thank Danielle Araujo Bueno, Paulo Büll, Thayná Ferraz, and João Caldeira.

I am part of a generation of ethnographers who began fieldwork in the Vale do Javari under the auspices of the nongovernmental organization Centro de Trabalho Indigenista (CTI). I owe them so much: an opportunity, a start, a home away from home, logistical help, mentoring, friendship, and care. I would specifically like to thank Maria Auxiliadora Leão, Gilberto Azanha, Maria Elisa Ladeira, Conrado von Brixen, Helena Ladeira, and Hilton Nascimento (Kiko). More recently, I've had the privilege of becoming friends with Victor Gil, who helped me with all the maps and diagrams in this book. I also thank CTI for allowing me to include photographs from their archives in this book.

I would also like to thank the Regional Administration of the Fundação Nacional do Índio (Funai, the National Indian Agency) in Atalaia do Norte for making my time in the field free of hassle. The people of the Frente de Proteção Etno-Ambiental do Vale do Javari (FPEVJ, the Ethnoenvironmental Protection Front of the Javari Valley) played an important part at the start of

my fieldwork. This is particularly true of Idinilda, a very dear person who has helped all fieldworkers who have gone through Tabatinga. I also acknowledge the support of the (former) Conselho Indígena do Vale do Javari (CIVAJA, Javari Valley Indigenous Council) and the Associação Kanamari do Vale do Javari (Kanamari Association of the Javari Valley). I thank Jorge Marubo, Clóvis Rufino Reis, Toda Kanamari, Adelson Kanamari (Kora), and André Mayoruna. I spent a lot of time in Atalaia do Norte, where many people made me feel at home. I would like to thank Mr. Nonato, Tirim, Nery, Almério Alves Wadik (Kel) and his wife Francisca, and Gauça and Mara for their help in the field, and Mr. Dino, Mrs. Maria, and their daughter Mariquinha and her husband Moacyr for housing me in Atalaia do Norte.

I do not think I would have been able to stay in the field at all if not for the unconditional assistance and care provided by the former outpost chief of the Kanamari village of Massapê, Micherlângelo Neves, and his wife Raimunda. They put me up in the Funai post for much of my fieldwork, fed me, took me to all of the villages, took me back and forth from Atalaia do Norte and helped me send things to the Kanamari.

Back in Rio, my affinal kin have always been fantastic. I thank Jeanne-Marie Costa Ribeiro and Carlos Antonio Moita for helping with the boys while I wrote this book, and for much more. Yvonne Maggie is family, colleague, and friend. Without her constant support, both personal and professional, little would be possible.

My parents, Bebel and Fausto, have always encouraged me, even when they weren't quite sure of what I was doing and when it took me very far away from them. The same is true of my grandparents, Manoel (*in memoriam*) and Myriam (*in memoriam*), who took me in as only grandparents can. I also thank Miguel, Anna Maria Lino Costa, Maria Thereza Lino Costa, Antonio Carlos Lino Costa, and Paula Salles and her family. My friends Afonso, Vasco, Daniel Rosário, Daniel Ernst, Joe, André, Fred, João Lima, Carl, Marco, and Christian have always put up with and encouraged me.

Joana, Antonio, and Manoel are why I do everything. This book is for them.

Living with the Kanamari is a wonderful experience. I cannot think of a single one among them who did not help me at some point, and even those who appeared to be suspicious of my real motives treated me with dignity and even affection. As I come to name those that helped me most, I realize how unfair I will have to be. But since this book results from the conversations that I had with some of them, for many months on end, I specially thank Dyumi,

João Pidah, Kodoh, Dyan, Inore, Wahpaka, Meran Meran, Dyanim, Hanani, Marinawa, Paiko Nui, Wadyo, Tyomi, Apan, and Iun.

It was Poroya, however, who had been waiting for me on that evening in April of 2002. It was dark and we could not see each other, but the following morning he saw my sullen, sleepy face and laughed, as if he knew everything all along. In time, he made himself into my grandfather. I once told him that I happened upon the Kanamari by chance, that I very nearly went to live with their neighbors, the Marubo. He explained to me that I was mistaken, because a long time ago he had foreseen my arrival in a vision and had been waiting for me to show up, to learn the stories of the Kanamari and teach them to white people, so that we, too, would know a little about them. This book carries with it a heavy responsibility.

Han paiko. Itanti inowa ankira nuk tyo.

Orthography

The orthography of Katukina-Kanamari that I use in this book is mostly based on that developed by Francisco Queixalós and Zoraide dos Anjos. It includes some differences in relation to their published phonetic studies (e.g., Queixalós and Dos Anjos 2006; Dos Anjos 2012), since I have taken into account the orthographic solutions that were being advanced by young Kanamari school teachers at the time.

Vowels

- a like the *a* in “pattern”
- i varying between the *i* in “bit” and the *ee* “meet”
- o like the *ow* in “slow”
- u like the *u* in “strut”
- y like the *y* in “player”

Consonants

- b like the *b* in “bat”
- d like the *d* in “dance”
- h like the *h* in “behind”
- k like the *k* in “karma”
- m like the *m* in “man”
- n like the *n* in “nice”
- t like the *t* in “tan”
- r alveolar tap, like the *tt* in American English “latter”

w	like the <i>wh</i> in “what”
dy	like the <i>j</i> in “jam”
ty	like the <i>tch</i> in “match”
,	glottal stop

Some of the Kanamari nouns that I discuss in this book occur as elements of noun phrases, where they are always preceded by morphemes or lexemes. When I discuss these nouns without their complements, I mark the absence by a hyphen (*-warah*, *-tawari*). The use of the hyphen is important to my analysis, because some words that occur within noun phrases, where they are necessarily bound, can also occur as independent nouns or even as verbs, where they display different semantic qualities. In these cases, I drop the hyphen (cf. *-warah* and *warah*).

Since many of the ethnographies from which I quote passages are in Portuguese or French, I have supplied my own translations into English as needed, without further parenthetical annotation.

Foreword

JANET CARSTEN

How do ethnographies speak to each other across regions? What resonances, insights, or common themes might an anthropologist schooled in one geographical area find in a study of kinship in a region thousands of miles distant from her scholarly “home” territory? These questions inform my reading of Luiz Costa’s intricate and profound exploration of the logic and meanings of Kanamari kinship. I come to this work not as an expert on the indigenous societies of Amazonia but as a Southeast Asianist—and all too conscious of the pitfalls this entails. But a belief in the potential value of such conversations is a fundamental tenet of anthropology, and this book is a testament to its continuing pertinence.

Set primarily in the context of studies of indigenous Amazonia, Luiz Costa undertakes a forensic investigation of the salient elements of Kanamari kinship to show the connectedness and coherence of its central themes: feeding, “ownership,” dependence, and commensality. What, in local understandings, enables kinship relations to be made? To find answers to this question, we are guided through their constituent aspects, taking in relations with pets, the place of children, fosterage, blood, the importance of indigenous chiefs, and of relations with whites (from the early years of the twentieth century during the rubber boom to the contemporary significance of Brazilian state agencies), as well as ritual and myth. Time and again, Costa returns to the centrality of feeding and to the relations of asymmetry on which they are premised.

The philosophical questions that Kanamari people grapple with—and which their kinship can be understood to endlessly explore from different angles—are perhaps fundamental to all humanity. What does it mean to be obligated to another? What are the connotations of dependence? How can autonomy and predation be kept in balance? *The owners of kinship* shows us how the Kanamari tackle these questions, their relative importance, and the answers apparently provided by kinship as a constellation of practices and a “philosophy concerned with human obligation,” as Robert McKinley (2001: 152) has phrased it. But perhaps “the provision of answers” to questions is not quite on the mark here. Rather, as one might infer from McKinley’s apt encapsulation, beyond what people do, kinship is also a realm of speculation about the important relations and qualities of life—the things and people that make life worth living but which also plague us, and which underlie social disjunctions as well as continuities.

The echoes between Kanamari and Southeast Asian ethnography are striking—demonstrated, for example, in the prominence of ideas about food and blood, the centrality of children, and in widespread fostering relations. But, as if to discourage such easy analogies, there are some profound dissimilarities. As with a twist of a kaleidoscope, the pieces have been shaken up and arranged to produce quite different geometric patterns. This is not, however, a matter of mere aesthetic arrangements as the outcome of some untrammeled thought experiment. More profoundly, such contrasts are shown to be the historical issue of relations and circumstances that have no endpoint but continue to change and evolve in local and regional contexts. The outcomes, it turns out, may be perilous for those concerned.

Whereas in the parts of Southeast Asia with which I am most familiar, kinship could be said to be predicated on the reproduction of relations that are based on similarity, and which is elaborated in terms of local ideas about siblingship, among the Kanamari, the fundamental premise of kinship—as other studies of Amazonia have demonstrated—is the condition of alterity. Most starkly, this is embodied in the babies who, after birth, are considered not as close relatives of their parents but as alters. Pregnancy and birth itself threaten the well-being of a baby’s parents through premature aging, and Costa shows how Kanamari couvade rituals are aimed at protecting a baby’s close kin. This danger is materialized in the child’s blood, which not only encapsulates the soul but is particularly dangerous, because the child has not yet been made the subject of feeding. The newborn’s blood is therefore as alien as the blood of an

enemy, and blood in general encapsulates danger and alterity. Through feeding, first with breast milk and subsequently with food by their mothers, babies and children are gradually turned into kin with whom relations of commensality are established. In turn, this feeding is predicated upon ideas about dependence, hierarchy, and ownership—principles that also underlie relations with local chiefs who are conceived as the source and owners of the food that kin of one locality share. Significantly, however, it is not with relations between mothers and children that Costa begins his exposition of Kanamari kinship but, rather, with relations between women and pets.

This choice of starting point turns out to be revelatory. Women rear pets and thus come to be the body-owners of the latter, as they are also of their own children. Pet-feeding, like child-rearing, converts what is foreign and exterior into something familiar and interior. The parallel also contains a crucial difference: whereas human children are gradually incorporated into the world of kin, the feeding relations with pets do not develop into kinship. Pets may never be eaten; instead, they may be items of exchange with white people. Kanamari also rear livestock, which they do not themselves eat, for white people. These exchanges, along with others, in fact inhibit feeding relations, and white people are regarded as cannibals insofar as they eat the animals they rear. Images of cannibalism are also tellingly present in the rituals of force-feeding that were performed in the past between different Kanamari subgroups who were not kin to each other. These rituals of alliance, we are told, acted to inhibit relations of feeding and kinship but were conceived as having a regenerative capacity, rendering the forest fertile and thus enabling future feeding.

The truncated kinship of pets thus reveals the fundamental condition of alterity on which the edifice of the Kanamari cosmos is constructed. Whereas cognatic kinship in the Malay world, one might say, amplifies the sameness of siblings and the absorption of similar others as affines to create further similarity in the future, here the cosmos is created from differences, which carry the predatory mark of cannibalism. While blood in Malay ideas is both a vital fluid and an idiom of shared identity (children share blood with their mothers and with their siblings), for the Kanamari, for whom likewise it is a “vital principle,” blood is also highly dangerous, predatory, and crucially, not a source of shared identity. It is feeding that initiates and constructs kinship and the emotions with which it is associated. Considering these two quite different (and yet somehow resonating) versions of kinship from across the world together also brings to mind that cognatic kinship in Southeast Asia has its own more local mirror

image in the asymmetric alliance systems of eastern Indonesia, which hinge on the symbolic elaboration of differences between cross-sex siblings.

There are, after all, relatively few primary themes with which human kinship is generally concerned. Among these, sameness and difference, interiority and exteriority, dependence and autonomy figure largely, and may be projected onto relationships, objects, materials, and practices. While particular constellations of these have an aesthetic logic, their significance becomes clear in historical time. As Costa unpeels the different aspects of Kanamari kinship, we gradually come to understand how it enfolds loss. Exploitative exchanges with whites in the early and mid-twentieth century, especially in rubber plantations, have gradually been succeeded by relations with the Brazilian state that are conceived in more beneficent terms. But a return visit ten years after initial fieldwork shows how the munificence of the state carries a lethal and predatory effect. Former houses and communities are gone. State support does not allow alterity; instead it entails absorption. Kinship, as this book makes compellingly clear, requires exteriority and asymmetry for reproduction to occur.

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- McKinley, Robert. 2001. "The philosophy of kinship: A reply to Schneider's *Critique of the study of kinship*." In *The cultural analysis of kinship: The legacy of David M. Schneider*, edited by Richard Feinberg and Martin Oppenheimer, 131–167. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press.

Introduction

During the first months of fieldwork in the Itaquaí River, I would spend my evenings crafting questions to put to my hosts. Riddled with the grammatical mistakes and naïvetés of a beginner, these questions helped me learn the Kanamari language and served as a sort of dress rehearsal for future fieldwork, when I hoped my fluency would improve. One day, a man told me that the chiefs of old were very large and beautiful, and they never aged or fell ill. That night, I strung together the following admittedly shoddy question: “How were the bodies of long-ago chiefs”?

One of the first Kanamari words I learned was *-warah*, which I initially understood to mean “owner” but which, it soon became clear to me, also meant “chief.” There is nothing particularly exceptional about this. In numerous Amazonian languages, the chief is called an “owner” or an “owner of people” or some similar composite phrase. Thus, the Carib cognates *entu* (Trio) and *oto* (Kuikuro) designate both the owner of things and of the village, thereby coming to mean “chief” (Heckenberger 2005; Brightman 2007: 83–84). In Panoan languages, chiefs are typically designated by words that mean “owner” or “master,” such as the Kaxinawá *ibo* or the Marubo *ivo* (McCallum 2001: 33, 111–112; Cesarino 2016). The Kanamari *-warah* seemed to be a further interesting example of a common semantic feature of Amazonian languages.

Secure in my translation for “chief,” I scanned my limited vocabulary for a word for “body.” I initially considered *tyon*, which more accurately refers to the “torso.” In the end, I settled on *boroh*, which I had heard applied to the corpses

of dead animals. I assumed that it also meant “body,” much as we use “body” to mean “corpse.” Although I had doubts about its syntax, I was confident my question would be understood.

The next day, I tried it out on Poroya, my Kanamari grandfather. Like all Kanamari, he was highly tolerant of my linguistic errors and always did his best to infer my intended meaning. My question about ancient chiefs, however, was incomprehensible to him. Disappointed at my failure, I surrendered and repeated the question in Portuguese. Poroya had worked for over two decades with Brazilian rubber tappers and loggers, so he spoke Portuguese better than most Kanamari. He told me that my question made no sense because the word *boroh* only means “corpse,” and a corpse is a corpse, whether a chief’s or a commoner’s. The correct word for “(living) body,” he explained, is *-warah*. I thought we were talking past each other. I already knew that *-warah* designated the “chief,” and I had just learned that *boroh* means “corpse.” What I needed to know was the Kanamari word for “body.” Poroya, who had a knack for diagnosing my perplexities, explained the Kanamari “body” to me by saying, in Portuguese, that “our body is our owner and our chief” (*nossa corpos é nosso dono e nosso chefe*). I later learned that it is impossible to say this phrase as such in the Kanamari language, since all the nouns would translate as *-warah*. Nor would such a sentence be able to distinguish semantic roles, because “body,” “owner,” and “chief” are imperfect glosses for what, in the Kanamari language, is one concept. Indeed, the sudden shift from the plural “our” to the singular “body is...” was an indication that more than synonymy was at stake.

What Poroya told me was disconcerting. How could one word mean both “body” and “owner”? Had I misheard or misinterpreted something? As my initial unease subsided, I gradually came to realize that my research had found its course via an ill-formed question and the implications of its startling reply. Although this brought me a measure of anxiety, I took comfort in the fact that my predicament was the lot of the ethnographer. Evans-Pritchard, perhaps the finest ethnographer in the history of the social sciences, once wrote:

[A]s every experienced fieldworker knows, the most difficult task in anthropological fieldwork is to determine the meanings of a few key words, upon an understanding of which the success of the whole investigation depends; and they can only be determined by the anthropologist himself learning to use the words correctly in his converse with the natives. (Evans-Pritchard 1962: 80)

Evans-Pritchard did not mean that anthropologists should be linguists, although he certainly knew that anthropology is a kind of translation (Evans-Pritchard 1962: 61–63; 1969). What he meant is that, during the course of our fieldwork, we learn certain words that so thoroughly defamiliarize our own vocabulary and so pressingly demand that we adjust our beliefs and expectations that we are compelled to anchor our research in their meanings and commit ourselves to exploring their consequences. These words can only be learned by directly engaging with the language and the people who speak it over a long period of time. Evans-Pritchard was conceding that our ethnographies often hinge on a fleeting moment in which we learn the meaning of a word, but these moments will remain missed opportunities for ethnographers who do not then take the time to map out all of their consequences through careful ethnographic investigation.

Exploring the contexts when the Kanamari use the term *-warah*, I gradually discovered that it is structured by a specific relation. The bond between a chief and his followers, it turned out, was only one possible actualization of a much more ample schema for producing persons and the relations between them. The convergence of the “owner” and the “body” was a first clue that I was dealing with a concept that circumscribed kinship in some way, considering what I knew of the Amazonian stress on the production of similar bodies as a mechanism for creating and propagating kinship relations.¹ Indeed, it became clear to me over time that *-warah* was the cornerstone upon which Kanamari notions of kinship were built. A number of questions immediately followed: Who can become a *-warah* of whom, when, and under what conditions? What effect does the *-warah* have on the process of kinship? How is an “owner” equally a “body”? What does it mean to be an owner of kinship?

This book is an ethnography of the Kanamari that shows how the “social fabrication of kinship” (Vilaça 2002: 354) is dependent on a bond of ownership at once elementary and indispensable. If kinship is everywhere “the mutuality of being” (Sahlins 2013), then, for the Kanamari, mutuality is preceded by dependency. If we can speak of a “principle of kinship amity” (Fortes 1969), then kinship amity here is preceded by ownership asymmetry. By the notion of precedence, I refer to two related facts: first, in terms of the life cycle, people are

1. The literature on the Amazonian body is immense. I draw attention to studies that focus on processes that create similar bodies of kinspeople, which are then distinguished from the bodies of other peoples or beings. For a few examples, see Seeger, DaMatta, and Viveiros de Castro (1979); Gow (1991); McCallum (1998); Overing (1999, 2003); and Vilaça (2002).

initially embedded in relations of ownership before being distributed in other relationships; and second, in terms of Kanamari conceptions of kinship, ownership is a precondition of and for mutuality. Ownership generates the space within which the intersubjective qualities of kinship are lived; there are no kinship relations that are not derived from ties of ownership.

Since I cannot discuss all of the ways in which ownership determines kinship in this book, I limit myself to how kinship is articulated through the distinction between two ways of distributing food. One means is through the unidirectional provisioning of food (or of the means for its production or acquisition), which I call “feeding.” Among the Kanamari, “feeding” (*ayuh-man*) is a relation that generates an “owner” and a “body” (*-warah*) and implies the unilateral dependence of the fed person on the feeder. The other means is through food sharing between people who can produce food themselves, which I call “commensality.” Commensality is always associated with the marital relationship, since “only married people control the crucial resources which make production possible” (Gow 1989: 572). However, it also characterizes relations between coresident adults—relations that are created or rearranged by the marital tie. For the Kanamari, “commensality” (*da-wihnin-pu*) is a relation between productive persons and implies the reciprocal interdependence of those commensal with each other. Feeding, in sum, involves the differential capacity of one party to provide for another, while commensality involves different but complementary contributions toward food production, distribution, and consumption.

The lexical distinctions the Kanamari recognize, along with their implied relational structures, are not facets of an absolute classificatory grid. Kanamari relations cannot be exhausted by inclusion within one relational orientation or the other. Rather, the distinction between feeding and commensality provides a means for the Kanamari to speak about their relations, the development of these relations through time, and the conditions under which their relations emerge and thrive. What the distinction establishes is this: where relations of commensality are identified, they can be traced back to relations of feeding; where kinship persists, it does so within the purview of an owner.

OWNERSHIP

The issues I explore in this book derive from my experience with the Kanamari, but they draw me into a comparative investigation of the Amazonian “owner” or

“master.” Most Amazonian languages have a word that designates an “owner” of certain beings or things: owners of animal and plant species, paths, outcrops, villages, people, and so forth. The owner always projects a relation of “ownership,” typically characterized by an asymmetrical bond involving control, protection, dependency, and care. This bond is often expressed in an idiom of filiation, specifically in terms of the parent–child relation, although it interconnects in complex and ethnographically variable ways with native conceptions of kinship (Fausto 2012b [2008]).

Though long identified as a “classical theme” in Amazonian anthropology (Viveiros de Castro 1992: 345–356), “ownership” has not obtained the same degree of comparative generality or theoretical yield as other classical themes. Until the start of the twenty-first century, discussions of ownership were basically limited to ethnographic works that described the figures known as the “Owners,” “Masters,” “Fathers,” or “Mothers” of animals, typically characterized as monstrous or hyperbolic forms of the species over which they have control, and with which, in many cases, they establish relations of filiation (e.g., Murphy 1958: 13–17; Fock 1963: 26–32; Weiss 1972: 162). Most of these studies paid scant attention to the relational schema sustaining these figures, focusing instead on interactions between the masters of animals and humans. In some ethnographic contexts, such as the upper Rio Negro and the Andean piedmont, shamans must negotiate with the masters of animals to release their progeny to human hunters (Weiss 1975: 263–264). Occasionally, this release of animals for human consumption must be paid back in human souls, which inserts the negotiations between shamans and the masters of animals within a cosmic cycle of exchanges (e.g., Reichel-Dolmatoff 1971: 80–86; 1996: 82–99). Rather than investigating the vertical relations that bind the masters of animals to their “children,” ethnographies have traditionally privileged the horizontal relations of transspecific diplomacy—that is, those between two shamans, one an animal or spirit, the other human.

The prominence given to symmetrical relations between peers at the expense of the asymmetrical relations between masters and their creatures is revealing. As Fausto (2012b: 29) points out, one of the factors that inhibited more robust comparative studies of mastery relations is precisely the recurrent and ingrained image of Amazonia as a province of equality and symmetry, particularly when contrasted to the Andes, Mesoamerica, or the Old World. This image led to an almost exclusive emphasis on horizontal relations, including those internal to local groups, where we find a philosophy of social life marked by informality

and the absence of regulating social structures or coercion (Overing 1993, 2003; Overing and Passes 2000), as well as those external to local groups, where symmetrical ties between different collectivities, typically formulated in the idiom of symmetrical or “potential” affinity, structure supralocal systems (Viveiros de Castro and Fausto 1993; Viveiros de Castro 1993, 2001). As a result, mastery was demoted to a subsidiary role, whether by theoretical approaches that stressed the “conviviality” of the everyday as an antidote to the grand Western narratives of society (see C. Gordon 2014: 97–98 for a critique), or by “exchangist” approaches strongly influenced by structuralism (see Fausto 2012a: 172–176 for a critique).

Obscured by these two “analytical styles” (Viveiros de Castro 1996), mastery was prevented from developing into a central theme in the anthropology of indigenous Amazonia (see Penfield 2015: 101–103). This was despite the fact that ethnographies continued to describe a profusion of “Masters,” increasingly emphasizing their relational quality and hinting at their potential to afford deeper insights into indigenous societies than previously imagined (Seeger 1981: 181–182; Chaumeil 1983: 76–88; Descola 1994a: 257–260). A conceptual impasse nonetheless persisted in preventing mastery from being treated as a sociocosmological operator in its own right.

This neglect is being amply redressed in the twenty-first century, which has seen the expansion and refinement of studies of ownership and mastery in Amazonia.² Nonetheless, the contemporary salience of asymmetrical relations does not derive directly from the pioneering descriptions of the “masters of animals,” which seem to have been confined to the margins of Amazonian anthropology.³ An intellectual genealogy of how ownership became a privileged

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2. See, for example, Fausto (1999, 2007, 2012a, 2012b); Bonilla (2005, 2007, 2009, 2016); Lima (2005: 75–129); Djup (2007); Kohn (2007, 2013); Grotti (2009, 2012, 2013); Sztutman (2009, 2012); Brightman (2010); Cesario (2010, 2016); Costa (2010, 2013, 2016a); Hirtzel (2010); Guerreiro (2011, 2012); Maizza (2011, 2014); Walker (2012, 2013); Rodgers (2013); C. Gordon (2014); Brightman, Fausto, and Grotti (2015); Garcia (2015); Guzmán-Gallegos (2015); Penfield (2015, 2017); and Cretton Pereira (2016). Not all of these anthropologists adopt the language of “ownership” and “mastery,” but all discuss comparable ethnographical phenomena.
 3. A number of recent studies have begun to redress this relative sidelining of the once prominent theme of the animal masters (see Daillant 2003: 302–306; Djup 2007; Kohn 2007, 2013; Oakdale 2008; Hirtzel 2010). Gonçalves (2001: 340–344) provides a pioneering study of the filial relations that exist between animal species among the Pirahã, anticipating descriptions of the incompatibility of filiation and predatory relations that are developed in Chapter One of this book.

vantage point for interpreting regional ethnology would probably start with the studies of warfare prevalent in the 1980s and 1990s. While warfare had once been mostly studied as a form of symmetrical exchange—as an exchange of “aggressions,” “souls,” or “lives”—it became increasingly clear that Amazonian warfare operated in disequilibrium. A death never restored a state of balance but, rather, projected violence into the future as further deaths were envisaged and planned (e.g., Journet 1995: 184–189). Hence, Fausto (1999: 935–936; 2012a: 172–181) proposed that reciprocity, which restores equilibrium, should be distinguished from warfare predation, which determines the direction in which a relation between two subjects becomes resolved: “When predatory interaction is established between two persons . . . a metarelation is created in which one of them occupies the agent position and the other occupies the patient position” (Fausto 2007: 513; see also Fausto 2012a: 304–307; Viveiros de Castro 1992: 278). This relation typically involves the patient’s incorporation by the agent, who becomes affected or magnified by the assimilation of some capacity extracted from an enemy (Taylor 1985: 160; Viveiros de Castro 2002). Warfare thus always contained a residual element that resisted any easy assimilation to symmetrical schemes. Indeed, this fact had already been observed by Carneiro da Cunha and Viveiros de Castro (1986) apropos of the infinite and projective character of revenge. But it was, above all, through a focus on the relationship between the killer and his victim, and between the captor and his captive, that Amazonian ethnology began to conceptualize mastery as a relational schema.⁴

FAMILIARIZING PREDATION AND METAFILIATION

Carlos Fausto’s research, conducted in the 1980s and 1990s among the Parakanã, a Tupi-Guarani-speaking people of the Xingu-Tocantins interfluve in the Brazilian state of Pará, was decisive in articulating warfare predation with hunting and shamanism through a focus on how captives and victims become familiarized:

4. See, for instance, studies of Tupinambá ritual anthropophagy (Viveiros de Castro 1992; Sztutman 2012), Ikpeng (Txicão) hunting, warfare, and adoption (Menget 1988; Rodgers 2013), Jívaro and Mundurucu headhunting (Taylor 1985; Menget 1993), and Nivacle scalp-taking (Sterpin 1993), among others.

[A]lthough we can indeed speak of a symbolic economy of predation (Viveiros de Castro 1993), we also need to develop its complement, which is not a theory of balanced reciprocity, but rather of the asymmetric relations of the father/son or master/pet kind. . . . Predation is one moment in the process of producing persons of which familiarization is another. We cannot understand the meaning of Amerindian warfare through its reduction to the symmetric relations of exchange, but we may succeed through the construction of a *model of the asymmetric relations of control and protection*. (Fausto 2012a: 229–230, original emphasis)

Fausto (1999) coins the expression “familiarizing predation” to describe the relational structure that transforms external predation into internal familiarization. The notion of familiarizing predation frames the process through which powerful others become incorporated and contained, and predatory activity redounds in a bond of control. Furthermore, it enables this transformation by converting the affinal nature of predatory interaction (Viveiros de Castro 1993) into the consanguineal nature of familiarization. The structure has a high degree of generality, characterizing not only warfare (the bond between killer and victim or captive) but also shamanism (shaman and familiar spirit) and hunting (master and pet). Indeed, the latter sphere furnishes the model relation, as evinced in the widespread Amazonian practice of feeding and raising—in a word, familiarizing—infant animals captured during the hunt.

Philippe Erikson (1987) had already drawn attention to the prominence of the familiarization of infant animals captured during hunting. However, he developed the theme in a different direction, suggesting that the consumption of wild animals leads to a conceptual malaise insofar as it violates the ethics of reciprocity upon which indigenous moral philosophy rests. Pets thus “serve as an intellectual counterweight to prey” (Erikson 2000: 16; see also Vander Velden 2012a: 133–135), the familiarization and nurture of pets operating as a means of resolving the “cognitive dissonance” inherent in hunting (see also Erikson 1988, 2011).

The idea of hunting as a source of conceptual malaise was criticized by Philippe Descola (1994b, 1998), who, following Haudricourt (1962), highlighted the close correlation between the treatment of humans and animals in Amazonia. He showed how both the game animal and the enemy are figures of alterity and, given the generic and encompassing quality of affinal relations in Amazonia, are consequently identified with affines. Their counterparts, pets and

captive children, are in turn identified with consanguinity as they become incorporated as the “children” of their captors. This homology:

game animal : pet :: enemy : captive children :: affine : consanguine

provided the basis for Fausto’s model of the passage from symmetrical affinity to asymmetrical consanguinity in kinship, warfare, and shamanism, focusing on the internal movement of the conversion of predation into familiarization, i.e., the passage from the symmetrical opposition of brothers-in-law/enemies/spirits to the asymmetrical relation between parents and adoptive children, captor and captive, shaman and familiar spirit (Fausto 1999, 2012a).

In his original elaboration of the theory of familiarizing predation, Fausto (1999) proposed “adoptive filiation” as the complement of symmetrical affinity, the vertical counterpart to the predominantly horizontal mode of apprehending the articulation between kinship and other domains. Relations of real or symbolic control are modeled as a form of adoption, which gives prominence to the elective character of these relations in comparison with the apparent spontaneity of nonadoptive filiation (see Santos-Granero 2009: 192–195). More recently, Fausto has generalized the concept of adoptive filiation as *metafiliation*, a basic operator of indigenous sociocosmologies that, like symmetrical affinity (or meta-affinity; see Taylor 2000: 312), is intensive and transspecific, with the crucial element being adoption rather than the vertical transmission of substances (Fausto 2012b: 40–41).

This study of Kanamari feeding and ownership develops these insights and contributes to the current outpouring of research on “ownership” relations in Amazonia. Five aspects of Kanamari ethnography are of particular interest to this discussion. First, the Kanamari have a single word which applies to the “owner,” the “body,” and the “chief” alike. Second, the Kanamari clearly link the ownership relation to feeding or provisioning, thereby foregrounding an aspect of ownership relations that is always present in Amazonia but which may not always be so salient. Third, the mutual determination of feeding and ownership underscores the centrality of the elective or adoptive character of the ensuing relations. This allows us to investigate actual filiation as a relationship modeled on adoptive filiation rather than vice versa (as examined in Chapter Three). Fourth, all kinship relations are derived from ownership relations, both ontogenetically (as one moves through the life cycle) and phylogenetically (as a basic structural condition). Finally, the ownership relation is conveyed through an imagery of containment: to feed is to contain what is fed; to be fed is to be put into relation with an owner.

THE KANAMARI

The Kanamari are a Katukina-speaking people who trace their origin to the middle course of the Juruá River in the western part of the Brazilian state of Amazonas. Although they worked in rubber extraction and logging during the first half of the twentieth century, today most are engaged in a mixed subsistence economy based on swidden horticulture, the gathering of wild or semidomesticated fruits, fishing, and hunting. A few are also employed by government agencies or as schoolteachers. A 2010 census gives their population as 3,167 people, most of whom live on the tributaries of both banks of the middle Juruá (their traditional lands) or in neighboring river basins. They are situated in the midst of various Arawan-speaking people to the south and southeast, particularly the Kulina of the Juruá, and Panoan-speaking peoples to the north and west, notably the Kaxinawá, Marubo, and Matis. Their most numerous neighbors, however, are the nonindigenous foreigners, the “whites,”⁵ who inhabit towns and hamlets located near Kanamari villages, such as Atalaia do Norte and Eirunepé (see map in Figure 1).

The Katukina language family was first identified in the 1920s by the French priest Constant Tastevin, who visited the Kanamari intermittently from 1905 to 1924, and by the ethnologist Paul Rivet (Rivet 1920; Rivet and Tastevin 1921; see also Verneau 1921). The Katukina family was initially divided into four languages: Kanamari, Biá River Katukina, Tsohon-dyapa, and Katawixi. The latter language is now extinct, although Tastevin obtained a vocabulary in the early twentieth century, which suggests that Katawixi was significantly different from the three surviving languages. According to studies by the linguists Francisco

5. I am using the terms “white people” or “whites” as a literal translation of the Portuguese term *brancos*, the label used by the Kanamari (and most indigenous people of Brazil) to refer to all nonindigenous people in Brazil, regardless of the color of their skin, heritage, or racialized identity. In their own language, the Kanamari call the “whites” *kariwa*, a word of Tupian origin that serves as a category of contrast for nonindigenous peoples. Although it bears no relation to the Kanamari word for the color white (*paranin*), they unanimously translate *kariwa* into Portuguese as *brancos*, i.e., “the whites,” which is thus an all-purpose term for “nonindigenous Brazilians.” Although the term “whites” may appear exclusionary, ignoring the rich diversity of Brazilians, it does serve as an implicit recognition of which group exercises dominance in Brazil, where the distribution of social, political, and economic power among different racialized groups is still severely unequal.

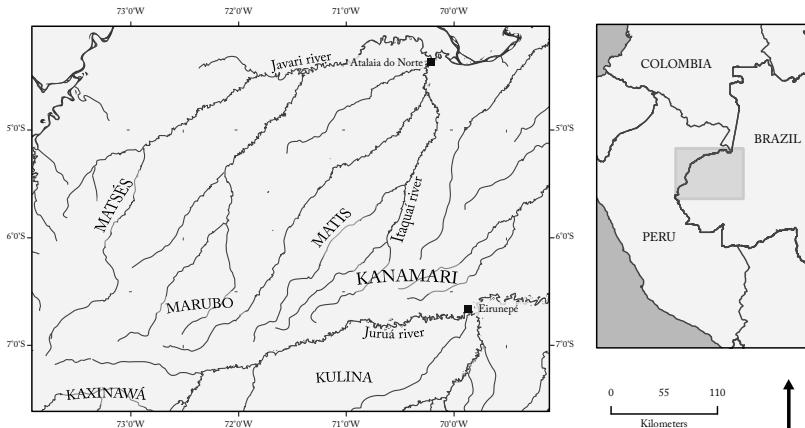


Figure 1. Location of the Kanamari and their neighbors.

Queixalós and Zoraide dos Anjos (Queixalós 2005; Queixalós and dos Anjos 2006; dos Anjos 2012), the three extant Katukina variants are best described as dialects of a single language, which they call “Katukina-Kanamari.”⁶ Although Katukina remains one of the lesser-known language families of Amazonia (Urban 1992: 98), recent studies have hypothesized its inclusion in a macro-family with the Harakambut languages of the Madre de Díos in Peru (Adelaar 2000, 2007) and the Arawan languages of the Juruá-Purus (Jolkesky 2011).

Tastevin provided the first ethnographic descriptions of the Kanamari, although many of his observations remain unpublished (Tastevin n.d.a, n.d.b, n.d.c, 1911, 1919). A few scattered reports on the Kanamari were produced in the mid-twentieth century (e.g., J. C. Carvalho 1955; Da Costa 1972), but modern ethnographic fieldwork only got underway in the mid-1980s. Reesink (1993) studied Kanamari mythology, Neves (1996) focused on their history and interactions with the Brazilian state, M. Carvalho (2002) explored their history, ritual, and shamanism, and Labiak (2007) studied the ritual complex known as *Warapikom*. Jérémie Deturche (2009, 2012, 2015; Deturche and Domingues

6. The *Tsobon-dyapa* (also *Tsobom-dyapa*, *Tsobonwak-dyapa*, “Toucan-dyapa”) were an “uncontacted” people of the Jutaí-Jandiatuba interfluve, most (perhaps all) of whom established permanent contact with the Kanamari of the Jutaí in the 1980s. We know very little about them, although the Kanamari claim to understand the *Tsobon-dyapa* speech (an understanding likely strengthened by prolonged language contact with the Jutaí variant of Katukina-Kanamari).

Hoffman 2016) has carried out extensive fieldwork among the Biá River Katukina and has produced comparative studies of Katukina speakers.

My own fieldwork began in 2002 and has focused mostly on history, myth, and social organization (Costa 2007, 2009, 2010, 2012, 2013, 2016a, 2016b, 2017). I have carried out a total of twenty months of fieldwork among the Kanamari. The bulk of my research was carried out during eighteen months in Kanamari villages between 2002 and 2006. I undertook subsequent short visits in 2009 and 2015. All of my research took place along the upper course of the Itaquaí River in the Vale do Javari Indigenous Reservation. The Itaquaí is not a tributary of the Juruá, although its upper reaches are accessible over land from the northern tributaries on the left bank of the middle Juruá. This area has been used as a hunting ground by the Kanamari since time immemorial, although they only established more permanent settlements in the region in the early twentieth century following growing pressure on their traditional lands. Although I refer to “the Kanamari” in this book, the reader should bear in mind that my ethnography has a more restricted remit.

The outstanding feature of Kanamari ethnography in regional comparisons are the named, endogamous, and geographically circumscribed social units that make up their society. All of these units receive a totemic name composed of the name of an animal species followed by the suffix *-dyapa*. These, in turn, are associated with a specific river basin, typically (albeit not exclusively) a tributary of the Juruá River (see Chapter Four). The Kanamari have always affirmed that these units married endogamously in the past (i.e., marriages occurred exclusively within the subgroup), although the earliest available ethnographic descriptions registered the existence of marriages between people of different subgroups (Tastevin n.d.a). However, the Kanamari are unanimous in describing intersubgroup marriages in negative terms and as an unfortunate consequence of postcontact interference in their society (e.g., Carvalho 2002: 101; Costa 2009: 165–169).

Tastevin originally called the *-dyapa* units “totemic clans,” although subsequent studies have avoided the rigid implications of the anthropological literature on clans by employing more neutral terms such as “people” or “subgroup” (e.g., Carvalho 2002: 87–106; Labiak 2007: 58–67). Far from being a unique social institution, the *-dyapa* are a Kanamari variant of a social morphology that, in slightly different forms, can be found among many of their Arawan- and Panoan-speaking neighbors on the Juruá and Purus Rivers. Ethnographers sometimes refer to these entities as “named groups” (Lorrain 1994: 136–139),

“named subgroups” (F. Gordon 2006), or “autonomous units” (Aparício 2011a). Although many ethnographic descriptions of these units exist, the most extensive comparative studies have been carried out by Aparício (2011a, 2011b, 2013, 2015: 75–99) and Calávia Saez (2013, 2016). I shall follow the convention adopted by most studies of Kanamari *-dyapa* units and refer to them as “subgroups.”

The composition, internal structure, and history of Kanamari subgroups will be described in Chapter Four. Subgroups are vital to any study of how Kanamari ownership determines kin relations, since they are the exclusive units of kinship in their society. All people in a subgroup are considered kinspeople (*-wihnin*) to each other, and ideally no one outside the subgroup is a kinsperson. Hence they are the largest units in which feeding and commensality are articulated.

FEEDING AND COMMENSALITY IN AMAZONIA

The distinction between feeding and commensality has mostly gone unnoticed in ethnographies of lowland South American societies. It is difficult to make any general claim as to why this may be so, since ethnographers might not distinguish between them for any of a number of diverging reasons. One reason may be that the distinction is not recognized by the people being described, in which case there is nothing more to be said. However, we cannot ascertain from the available ethnography how common it is for indigenous languages to register a lexical distinction between the verbs “to feed” (i.e., to provide food for those who would not otherwise have access to it) and “to eat together” (i.e., to share food with people who are capable of contributing to quotidian meals), much less whether this distinction is indicative of different relational orientations. Nonetheless, some ethnographers note similar, if not exactly identical, lexical contrasts. The Aweti of the Xingu, for example, distinguish between *-poj*, “to give food to a baby or a domestic animal,” and *mokat'u*, “to make an adult eat” (Vanzolini 2015: 166). This distinction plays an important role in Aweti understandings of kinship and sorcery.

Another possible reason for the analytical invisibility of the distinction is that it may be tangential to the ethnographer’s main object of study, in which case it may well be justified. The latter would seem to explain Pierre Déléage’s (2009: 119–120) inclusion of “commensality” as one of the basic semantic traits of the Sharanahua category of *jfo*, “owner.” The examples of commensality he

adduces are of children and pets being fed by their *ifo*, i.e., their parents or owners. In the case of owner–pet relations, he claims that “domesticating” an animal is above all (perhaps no more than) giving it food while it is small, so that it may grow accustomed to its human owners” (Déléage 2009: 119). In these relations, the familiarity of the pet for its owner is generated (“genesis” being another of the basic traits of the *ifo* category) as a unilateral dependency, since the pet has been removed from the relations that constituted it in the wild and transferred to an interspecific relation in which only an *ifo* can maintain it alive. This is surely different from the interdependence that characterizes relations between productive adults in Sharanahua society (see Siskind 1973: 83–88). In Déléage’s usage, relations that express a unidirectional provisioning, which I would term “feeding,” are called “commensality.” Since his research was not focused on the effects of different modalities of distributing and consuming food, there is no reason to question his usage any further.

When feeding and commensality are distinguished as different ways of relating to others, there remains a tendency to dissolve the asymmetry of feeding into the symmetry of commensality as an all-purpose *dispositif* for creating, sustaining, and perpetuating kinship ties. In Cecilia McCallum’s ethnography of the Kaxinawá, for example, feeding is defined as a basic operator of kinship relations: “The principal means of ‘making kinship’ . . . is the act of feeding” (McCallum 1990: 416–417). The Kaxinawá equate the concept of feeding with generosity. They produce kinship by being generous to others, just as they unmake kinship by refusing such generosity. To be “generous” or “kind” is to be *duapa*. The root of this word, *dua*, also composes the term *dua va-*, which McCallum glosses as “making oneself responsible for a person” and which has the wider meaning of “to help, to satisfy a desire, to treat well, to look after, to domesticate.” It is not restricted to the intrahuman domain, since *dua va-* is also used to describe the process of familiarizing a wild animal, of making it into a pet. As McCallum synthesizes, “this conflation of meanings indicates the active nature of being *duapa*. Feeding well and looking after is a process that makes someone or some animal closer, more like oneself, kin” (McCallum 2001: 76).

The prototypical model for feeding is the parental relation. Parents look after their children, just as generous men and woman look after others, which means ensuring that they are well provided for. The chief, in turn, is a “summation and intensification of the notion of adult person” (McCallum 2001: 70), a magnified father to the community, just as his wife is a magnified mother. According to

the Kaxinawá chief Elias, “In this way you become a leader. Feeding people is becoming a leader, whereas a miserly man, who eats alone, can never become a leader” (in McCallum 2001: 69).

The Kaxinawá term that McCallum translates as “leader” is *xanen ibu*.⁷ We have already encountered *ibu* at the start of this book, where I noted that it is one of many cognates of the Panoan words for “owner,” of which the Sharana-hua *ifo* just discussed is a further example. The term *ibu* can also be used to designate “parents,” and, McCallum adds, it “encompasses both possession and legitimate authority.” This is an integral aspect of the Kaxinawá notion of the person, which is accumulative and encompassing. Things that are owned are parts of the person who owns them. Food and things are owned absolutely, while land involves “connotations of ownership.” However, McCallum claims that “something of this attitude spills over into the relationship between parents and children; but relations between people are in no way comparable to relations between persons and things” (McCallum 2001: 92).⁸

In an ethnographic setting where ownership is a relation integral to persons, McCallum nonetheless claims that it is unsuitable for describing interrelations between them. As Brightman (2010: 152) observes, this hesitant epistemology of ownership is not confirmed by her ethnography of the Kaxinawá. There is little doubt that relations of feeding generate and sustain *ibu* as a filial bond. Parents are owners of the children they feed, and these children are an integral part of them; chiefs are owners of the people they feed, calling them “my children,” and it is the ownership (through feeding) of many people that magnifies the chief into an amplified “father.” Feeding generates ownership, so if feeding

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7. McCallum sometimes translates *xanen ibu* as “true leader” (e.g., McCallum 2001: 68), and sometimes states that a “true leader” is a *xanen ibu kaya* (e.g., McCallum 2001: 109). Kensinger (1995: 177) adds, “Any man who exercises leadership is called *xanen ibu*. Varying degrees of headmanship are recognized, thus *xanen ibu ewapa*, ‘large headman,’ and *xanen ibu pishta*, ‘little headman.’”
 8. After making this assertion, McCallum proceeds to explain that when a person dies, her possessions are destroyed, a practice common throughout Amazonia, where even houses may be destroyed and entire villages abandoned after the death of certain people, typically chiefs or shamans (Rivièrre 1984: 28; Turner 2009). The same applies to ownership of people, where the relations between the living and dead are what have to be dissolved, as McCallum (1999) has shown for the Kaxinawá (see also Taylor 1993; Vilaça 2000; Conklin 2001a; Oakdale 2001). In former slave-holding indigenous lowland South American societies, slaves were some times buried alive with their deceased owners (see Jabin 2016: 463–482).

is the principle means of making kinship among the Kaxinawá, then ownership is the basic kinship relation.

In what is one of the finest ethnographic description of commensality in Amazonia, McCallum (2001: 96–108) shows how commensality is a relation between productive men and women—how, in fact, collective meals are events in which gender distinctions are created or made evident, as men and women display their interdependence on each other by eating together the food that each one makes available. However, this mutual interdependence between productive adults is shown to be underscored by the chief's capacity to feed his children:

The meal is not only valuable because it makes the body; it also stands for the making of this world, inhabited by living kin, people who are really human. When men eat the food a woman serves them, or when visitors eat the food their hosts provide, their hunger and desire are satisfied. They have been respected, treated as kin should properly be treated. The selflessness and generosity of feeding the visitors is only paralleled in the feeding of their children. This is why leaders must feed the village as “parents” (i.e., “owners”) of the villagers. Feeding is the ideal work of kinship and most especially of parenthood. When a male leader addresses his people as “My Children” (*En Bakebu*), he should not only be speaking metaphorically. As Elias told me, he should also be speaking the truth. (McCallum 2001: 108)

By not drawing out the implications of the difference between feeding and commensality, McCallum equates chiefly feeding with the commensality that he thereby makes possible. Yet adult men and women who produce food for each other and eat together are involved in different relations from parents who feed their children, even if they may ultimately be interconnected. These different modalities of relating to others and their articulation have evident effects on native conceptions of kinship.⁹

9. McCallum recognizes as much when she alludes to Gow's distinction between “relations of caring” (i.e., feeding, the “parental” tie) and “relations of demand” (i.e., commensality, relations through marriage). These relations are kept distinct among the Piro, although they tend to be less clearly opposed among the Kaxinawá (McCallum 1990: 417). However, the fact that they are not clearly opposed does not necessarily mean that they collapse into each other, as her own ethnography makes evident. I would argue that we must draw out the implications of these

I am well aware that by framing my discussion exclusively in terms of how Amazonian anthropology has treated (or not treated) the distinction between feeding and commensality, I risk misrepresenting a very complex and multifaceted subject. The literature on the role of food in kinship is, of course, practically coterminous with the anthropology of kinship itself. Whether it symbolizes, constitutes, or defines kinship relations, food has always been a central aspect of kinship studies. Much of this literature, at least its more contemporary iterations, is concerned with how food is related to local conceptions of “substance,” including blood, flesh, semen, and milk (see Carsten 1995, 2001; Lambert 2000: 83–85). Anthropologists have also produced many studies of “substance” in Amazonia, offering excellent descriptions of how food creates consubstantiality (e.g., Conklin 2001a: 115–122; Storrie 2003; Uzendoski 2004). In this book, however, I am less concerned with the substantive aspects of food than with how feeding and commensality are “relational modes” (Descola 2013: Chapter 13), that is, essential means of engaging others. In this sense, in Kanamari usage, “[feeding and commensality are] applied to actions that from an English-speaking perspective do not involve taking in food in any immediate sense,” to adapt what Marilyn Strathern has said of “eating” in Amazonia and Melanesia (Strathern 2012: 3; see also Vilaça 2002: 352; Bamford 2004; Fausto and Costa 2013). In contrast to studies that reveal how food transforms bodily substance, which seldom need to justify the alimentary language that they adduce, Kanamari ethnography forces us to ask why feeding and commensality should be the terms through which social acts are apprehended and interpreted and, consequently, how they are simultaneously capable of charting the content and extent of kinship relations. While acknowledging that consubstantiality created through food sharing is a common feature of Amazonian societies, this book turns to how the different ways of producing and transferring food, as well as the means of its production, create the conditions for kinship relations to thrive.

KINSHIP

For the purposes of this book, “kinship” defines two overlapping qualities that the Kanamari consider integral to the relations between those who are

differential relational forms, however slightly they be distinguished, in order to understand how they are intertwined.

“kinspeople” (*-wihnin*) to each other. The first is coresidence. Amazonian anthropology has long recognized the centrality of coresidence in determining kinship relations throughout the region. Peter Rivière’s pioneering ethnography of the Carib-speaking Trio of Suriname noted that genealogical connection and coresidence coincide in native conceptions of kinship, a pattern he later showed to be common throughout the Guianas (Rivière 1969: 63–65, 1984: 40–41; see also Overing 1993: 55). Although the convergence of genealogy and coresidence in this region could be explained by the prevalence of small, dispersed settlements and a preference for village endogamy, studies from other parts of Amazonia have tended to confirm that the pattern is widespread, defining kinship in contexts in which atomization gives way to denser settlements and more intense interactions with different varieties of foreigners (Gow 1991: 162–167; Viveiros de Castro 1993: 171–177; McCallum 2001: 75–88; Vilaça 2002: 352–353). Coresidence is always about sharing intimate space, working together, mutual care, and, in some cases, a consubstantiality created through commensality (Rival 1998, 2002: 109–112; Vilaça 2002: 352). What defines kinship in the “generative cultures” of lowland South America (Overing 1999) is thus living and eating in close proximity, established in a social environment in which a stress on the informal and mundane aspects of daily life affords a degree of leeway in defining who is or is not a kinsperson, when, and in what context.

For the Kanamari, “coresidence” is expressed in the idea of *-wihnin to*, “to live together with kin.” Coresidence may refer to joint residence in a single village, where it typically defines “true [close] kin” (*-wihnin tam*) in opposition to “distant kin” (*-wihnin parara*). But coresidence can also delineate joint residence within a subgroup, where people inhabit different villages in the same river basin. Coresidence defines relations between people with whom nonritual interactions are ongoing.

Equally basic to Kanamari ideas of kinship is the concept of *ityonin-tikok*, “to know the land.” This is the Kanamari variant of a commonly reported native Amazonian concept often rendered (by anthropologists) as a “state of communal well-being.” Analogous terms from other Amerindian peoples are sometimes translated as “living well,” “good life,” “tranquility,” or “conviviality” (e.g., Overing and Passes 2000; Belaunde 2001; Overing 2003). *Ityonin-tikok* and *-wihnin to* are mutually determined. People who “know the land” are those who live together harmoniously through “love” (*wu*), “beauty” (*bak*), and “happiness” (*nobak*). *Ityonin-tikok* is a complex concept, immersed in a complex ethics

of social life, which would require a different study to elucidate. In this book, I therefore take *ityonin-tikok* to be synonymous with one of its facets, “affection” or “love” (see Lepri 2005: 714).

How ownership determines kinship will be explored through a study of feeding and commensality, as well as their articulation with, and impact on, coresidence and affection/love. Much of my discussion will focus on feeding (provisioning), since it seems to me that this is the piece of the puzzle that has largely been overlooked in investigations of the Amazonian “alimentary structures of kinship,”¹⁰ which have privileged predation (and cannibalism) and commensality (distribution and sharing). For the Kanamari, feeding is the means for transforming predatory relations external to the subgroup into kinship relations internal to it, as manifest through commensality. It therefore places native conceptions of ownership right at the heart of the quintessentially Amazonian project of “making kin out of others” (Vilaça 2002).

THE BOOK

This book is therefore about how feeding and ownership are features of metafiliation, a relational schema that has received less attention from Amazonianists than the mutualism of commensality or the symmetry of potential affinity. As such, it has certain limitations, two of which I should make explicit before proceeding.

First, by stressing the vertical relations of metafiliation, the horizontal relations of meta-affinity are pushed into the background. This is an intentional move. The aim is not to stress metafiliation at the expense of meta-affinity but, rather, to draw attention to an axis of Amazonian social life that tends to be downplayed in regional syntheses. Meta-affinal relations are discussed in Chapters Four and Five, where I show how they interconnect with feeding and ownership. On the whole, however, this book pays less attention to these relations than I have done so elsewhere (Costa 2007).

Second, the book focuses on the act of feeding and the relations and categories that it generates, to the detriment of its complementary terms—namely, the fed or the dependent. Of course, I shall have much to say about how feeding

10. A pun from Claude Meillassoux, although I use it with a different intention (see Fajans 1993; Viveiros de Castro 1993: 185).

generates dependence and how the agency of the feeder is augmented by the containment of the fed. I also discuss the danger posed by the spirits who come to be fed by shamans (Chapter One) and, likewise, that of newborns who come to be fed by their mothers (Chapter Three). Indeed, precisely because these others are dangerous, they must be fed and hence controlled for Kanamari life to become possible. By focusing on how this agency is overturned by the acts of the feeder, I describe how feeding is able to contain the power of what was previously a predatory agent, and which now becomes relatively passive vis-à-vis the feeder.

Nonetheless, I realize that my stress on the capacities of the feeder over the fed may give the impression that the objects of the feeding relations are truly passive, witless reactants to the desires of others. This possibly differentiates this book from other Amazonian ethnographies that show how the “weapons of the weak” (Scott 1987) are themselves effective, predatory engagements with powerful others. The material most relevant to the present discussion is Bonilla’s ethnographic studies (2005, 2007, 2009, 2016) of the Arawan-speaking Paumari of the Purus, situated just to the south of the Kanamari. Bonilla claims that, for the Paumari, subjection to another is not a surrendering of volition to a master but, rather, a variant of ontological predation. It is more like a parasitism, a “micropredation” of the master by its pet, than a containment of the pet by a master. This predatory subversion of ownership is evident in Paumari interactions with local white bosses. The Paumari term for themselves, *pamoari*, designates the client in a relation of subjection or commercial exchange with a boss (*kariva*). Collectively, to be human is to be subjected to others. However, in concrete engagements with specific white bosses, the Paumari may intentionally place themselves further in their service as their “employees” (*bonai abono*): “the employee is in a sense located one step ahead in terms of commitment to the boss, *and vice versa*” (Bonilla 2016: 117, emphasis added). This commitment forces the boss—who is otherwise a dangerous predator—to engage with the Paumari as a provider of goods and care.¹¹ Paumari thus pre-empt the bosses’

11. A similar point had been made by Santos-Granero (1986b: 120) in his discussion of the asymmetrical love of the *cornesha* priests of the Amuesha for their followers:

By establishing that the holders of power should be loving and generous providers, who should give more, and more essential things, than they receive from their followers, the Amuesha set limits to their power and provide the moral framework to ensure equality within hierarchy. This is achieved by representing the powerful ones as the “loving ones” and as “the ones who

predation of them by demanding a kind of forceful provisioning that “becomes a specific ideal mode of predation exercised by a client–employee who only obtains and never pays or works . . . annulling the temporality and distance presumed by the debt and therefore neutralizing his or her own subjection” (Bonilla 2016: 120).¹²

Here Bonilla is stressing a salient point concerning the strategies and artifices available to those “subjected” to others, who should not be conceived as merely passive objects of the agency of the (relatively) powerful (see also Rival 1996; Walker 2013; Penfield 2017). However, the Kanamari place more stress on the capacity of providers to provide than on the agency of those who receive care to demand. It is as though the Paumari and the Kanamari stress complementary perspectives on the ownership relation—a possibility that can only be investigated after further developments in the comparative ethnology of the Juruá–Purus. As an ethnography of the Kanamari, this book accordingly focuses on the owner more than on the owned, without thereby claiming that this is how an ethnography of Amazonian ownership must necessarily proceed.

Chapter One describes the Kanamari concept of feeding and the dependence that it generates. This relation is first presented in general terms before being investigated specifically in relation to pet keeping and shamanism. These are contexts in which Fausto identified “familiarizing predation” as an integrative mechanism, capable of uniting predation with the production of kinship. The chapter contributes to Fausto’s theory by showing how feeding articulates predation and familiarization. However, it also argues that, when the spotlight is

serve,” while the less powerful ones are seen as the “loved ones” and the “ones who are served.” This process could be defined as one of inversion of hierarchy by which the powerful appear as (and are expected to be) “servants” of the less powerful. (Santos–Granero 1986b: 120)

12. Other recent studies have similarly stressed how asymmetrical relations do not annul the agency of those who appear to be submitted to others. Killick (2011: 354–365), for instance, shows how Asheninka relations with whites bosses (*patrones*) allow the former to manipulate the latter against each other as a means for furthering their own interests. Penfield (2015: Chapter 4) has reinterpreted the asymmetrical relations between the Sanema and the Yé’kwana, traditionally described as relations in which the former are servants of the latter (see Ramos 1980: Chapter 1), as a form of predation, or “parasitic extraction,” whereby the Sanema are able to acquire desired Western goods without the burdens of reciprocity. See Ferguson (2013) on the theoretical issues involved in actively seeking out subordination as a means for acquiring goods and services from others.

placed on feeding rather than on predation and/or familiarization, pet keeping and shamanism are actually less similar than they first appear.

In Chapter Two, the discussion shifts from feeding to the categories that feeding generates. This entails a discussion of the Kanamari concept of the *-warah*, which I propose to translate as “body-owner.” The chapter considers what sort of figure the body-owner is and how the ideas of ownership it implies differ from other kinds of possessive relations.

Chapter Three explores the mother-child bond, which is also a relation between a feeder and someone fed, a body-owner and a dependent. In alignment with recent work, my argument is that relations of filiation are made possible by the conversion of predatory relations into kinship. But while Amazonian anthropology typically identifies the perinatal practices known generally as “the couvade” as the factors responsible for this conversion, I argue that, for the Kanamari at least, the couvade is purely negative, seeking only to protect parents (and other adults) from the emergence of a new existence. Thus, rather than the couvade, it is the feeding relation that initiates the process of making kinship between mother and child (and hence between coresidents). By demonstrating this link, I also intend to show how, in Amazonia, filiation is always an adoptive filiation, even when it is “natural” (Taylor 2015: 140).

Chapter Four discusses the feeding relation at a regional and historical level. It shows how the structure of Kanamari historical narratives—a tripartite schema of periodization well known to ethnographers of southwestern Amazonia—defines the role of feeding as it transitions between distinct historical epochs. The chapter examines how feeding operates in the Kanamari conception of their subgroups and of their relations with the Brazilian state. It thus defines the widest spheres in which feeding is capable of creating a space for kinship relations to thrive.

Having spent most of the book describing how feeding relations can generate commensality and kinship, Chapter Five turns to the cosmological preconditions for these relations. Through a study of myth and ritual, I show how the Kanamari world is created by the emergence of feeding from generalized predation. What is unique about Kanamari cosmology is how the movement from predation to kinship unfolds within a structure in which relations of (body-) ownership remain constant. In other words, feeding intercedes as a mediating term within a structure that pre-exists it.

The conclusion reviews the implications of my arguments for anthropological theories of Amazonian kinship.

CHAPTER ONE

Making need

This chapter investigates the Kanamari concepts of “feeding” and “dependence.” It begins with a general consideration of the meaning of these concepts, then shifting to descriptions of how they take concrete form in pet keeping and shamanism. My purpose is to demonstrate that, for the Kanamari, feeding and dependence generate a relational space within which “a relationship of predation (real or virtual) [is transformed] into control and protection” (Fausto 1999: 939). By focusing on the hinge between predatory and familiarizing activity, I also intend to draw attention to an oft-overlooked degree of variability in the contextual instantiations of familiarizing predation.

In his early work on familiarizing predation, Carlos Fausto defined four paradigmatic contexts to which the notion applied: hunting, shamanism, ritual, and warfare (Fausto 1999: 938). These contexts were first explored in relation to Parakanã ethnography and then examined comparatively in order to determine the scope of familiarizing predation as a schema for producing persons and sociopolitical units in Amazonia (Fausto 1999: 948). In all of these contexts, the movement from predation to familiarization results in “prototypical relations of symbolic control” through which we can discern the contours of a “generalized economy centered on the appropriation of subjectivities from the exterior into the *socius*” (Fausto 1999: 938 et passim, 2007, 2012a: 225–230).

However, the four contexts do not all receive equal treatment. While shamanism, ritual, and warfare are described and analyzed in depth, hunting

occupies an ambiguous place in the theory. On the one hand, hunting, along with the associated activities of capturing and raising the offspring of killed animals, provides the “generalized economy” with an idiom. Predator, prey, pet, taming, familiarization, and so forth are all categories and concepts more or less directly drawn from these relations between humans and animals. On the other hand, hunting and raising pets, as practical activities, remain somewhat silent elements in a schema that draws from them but veers toward less “prosaic” relations seen to accrue capacities to those who display mastery over others. The former are only really considered to be interesting to familiarizing predation to the degree that they can be linked to shamanism, ritual, and warfare.¹ Fausto admits as much when he laments the relative lack of attention that Amazonian pet keeping has received in the past: “This would not have been the case had we consistently connected it to another, *more productive* modality of familiarization, which occurs in shamanism and which defines the shaman’s relation with his auxiliary spirit” (Fausto 2012a: 226, my emphasis).

My goal in this chapter is to investigate what happens to familiarizing predation when its focus is not only the purportedly more productive relations of shamanic familiarization but also the apparently *more mundane* practices of pet keeping. Although I compare pet keeping to shamanic familiarization, my purpose is to identify both convergences and differences. I believe that the unequal treatment of pet keeping and shamanism in Fausto’s theory ultimately accounts for its synthetic quality. Although he no doubt privileged shamanism, ritual, and warfare because these were the salient themes in Parakanã ethnography, a focus on Kanamari pet keeping practices reveals certain residual but irreducible differences in relation to shamanism that have yet to receive the attention they

1. Fausto has recently returned to the question of hunting, interpreting it as a technology for desubjectifying the agentive qualities of prey, hence producing a material substrate upon which commensal relations can be erected (Fausto 2007; see also Costa 2012). The relation between the desubjectification of meat and the “raising” of pets remains to be explored, however. I should add that what applies to familiarizing predation also applies to Viveiros de Castro’s theory of predation, where hunting provides a base idiom but loses analytic space to other instances of predation (such as cannibalism, illness, etc.). See Costa and Fausto (2010: 96–99) for a review of the relation between “ontological predation” and hunting, Willerslev (2007) for a critique of the purportedly abstract quality of Viveiros de Castro’s theory, and Kohn (2002) for a phenomenological reading of perspectivism.

deserve.² These differences suggest that there may be more ways of articulating external predation with internal familiarization than Fausto's model predicts.

FEEDING AND DEPENDENCE

The Kanamari word for “to feed [someone],” *ayuh-man*, contains the root *ayuh*, which refers to a need for something or someone. In verbal phrases, it is usually a modal verb, as in *ayuh-dok*, “to need to defecate,” and *ayuh-pok*, “to need to have sex.” In these examples, *ayuh* indicates a mechanical or physiological necessity over which people have limited control. Portuguese-speaking Kanamari always translate *ayuh* in these phrases as *precisar*, “to need.”

Like its Portuguese and English translations, *ayuh* can also be used as a nonmodal verb. This is the case of *ayuh-man*, in which *ayuh* is bound to *-man*, a polysemic verb that means “to make/to do/to fabricate/to get,” as well as “to say.” In *ayuh-man*, the suffix *-man* functions as a causative.³ In contrast to other verbal phrases incorporating *ayuh*, the Portuguese word *precisar* (to need) does not figure in Kanamari translations of *ayuh-man*. Instead, people always translated it to me as *dar comida* (“to give food”), although it literally means “to make need” or “to cause need.”

As with any causative event, *ayuh-man* expresses a “macrosituation” that encodes two “microsituations”: the causer feeds, the causee is fed (see Comrie 1981: 165–166). One of the possible outcomes of *ayuh-man* is that the participant who is fed “eats” (*pu*) something transferred. However, as the analysis of the verb attests, this is not what is linguistically expressed. What, then, does *ayuh-man* cause in another?

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2. According to Fausto, there were few pets in Parakanã villages in the 1980s–1990s, with the exception of dogs. On a visit to the Parakanã in 2015, by contrast, he saw peccaries, tapirs, and pacas being raised, though not monkeys, which they do not eat (Fausto, personal communication).
 3. Causatives in the Kanamari language can be formed by *-man* or *-bu*, factitive stems that indicate “to make” or “to produce,” or else by the causative suffix *-tiki*. While *-tiki* is strictly limited to causative constructions, *-man* and *-bu* have wider semantic scopes (on *-bu*, see Costa 2012: 104). The two sets of causative constructions do not appear to be grammatically interchangeable. The difference may be related to the distinction between direct (*-man* or *-bu*) and indirect (*-tiki*) causation (Comrie 1981: 171–174).

To cause another to eat is a method for causing a need in the fed person in relation to the person doing the feeding. The Kanamari call this need *naki-ayuh*, in which *naki* is equivalent to the English preposition “in.” *Naki-ayuh* is literally an “internal need” or “urge.” Since *naki-ayuh* is always oriented toward whoever is feeding, it can be glossed as a “dependence on [the feeder].” *Kamanyo na-naki-ayuh awa niama*, for instance, means “Kamanyo needs [depends on] his mother.” What is meant is a univocal and unidirectional dependence of the fed (Kamanyo) on the feeder (his mother). What is conveyed is a constitutive, at times vital, need that follows from feeding.

The Kanamari typically translate *naki-ayuh* into Portuguese as *precisar de*, “to need [someone or something].” The Portuguese expression *depender de*, “to depend on,” was not part of Kanamari vocabulary at the time of my fieldwork; the gloss is thus my interpretation. I use the word “depend” in its etymological sense of “to hang from,” i.e., to be derived from, attached as a condition. Similarly, the analysis of *naki-ayuh* as indicative of an *internal* need is my own. Although *naki* does literally mean “in,” “inside,”⁴ the Kanamari never explicitly emphasized any “internal” quality of the induced need. My impression is that the “internal” in *naki-ayuh* does not refer to an intimate aspect of the dependent qua individual. Rather, dependency is a characteristic internal to the *relational space* created between someone who feeds and someone who is fed, the person who creates the need and the other who has it created for them. In other words, the need is not generic and private, but oriented and public, bound to a relation instigated by the feeder.

Feeding is not an act that cancels out a previously existing need (i.e., hunger), but one that instills or perpetuates a need. In other words, while both the English verb “to feed” and the Kanamari verb *ayuh-man* are causatives, the first causes eating and the second causes a need or a dependence. As we saw at the beginning of this section, none of the verbs containing *ayuh* describe the satisfaction of a need but, rather, its underlying sway over those caught in its grip.

The protracted character of the dependency generated by feeding is evident in an innovative use of *naki-ayuh*. The Kanamari have adapted the term to translate the relationship between the whites and the soccer teams that they

4. The word *naki* can be unproblematically translated as “in” or its derivatives, depending on context. For instance: *hakmi-naki*, “inside the room (of a house),” *ityaro-mi-naki*, “inside her womb,” i.e., a euphemism for a “pregnancy” (*opaboron*). The Kanamari term for the celestial realm of the dead is *Kodoh Naki*, which I translate as “Inner Sky.” It refers to a world within the visible sky (*kodoh*) (Costa 2007: 376–380).

support. Impressed with the fanaticism shown by followers of Brazilian soccer clubs, the Kanamari have started to use *naki-ayuh* to render the Portuguese stative verb *torcer* (“to support,” “to root for”). *A-naki-ayuh Vasco*, for instance, means “he supports Vasco [a Rio de Janeiro soccer club].” Literally, though, it means “[his] internal need/urge is Vasco” and implies that nonindigenous men have little control over their reactions to the soccer teams that they support. This Kanamari “reverse anthropology” (Wagner 1981: 31–34) apparently rests on a metaphorical or nonconventional usage, since I never heard it being said that the soccer club “feeds” its supporters. Nonetheless, it provides an insight into how the Kanamari understand dependency. They have shrewdly realized that a victory does not cancel a supporter’s ongoing support for (i.e., dependence on) his team, but reorients him to the next games and upcoming title challenges, just as provisioning does not cancel but, rather, prolongs the relationship between the feeder and the dependent.

Since this metaphorical use of *naki-ayuh* seems so distant from any literal understanding of feeding, we must ask: Why is the asymmetrical relation of dependence glossed as an act of giving and receiving food? Many of the events that the Kanamari include as examples of “feeding” are indeed similar to what we would understand as “feeding” insofar as they are acts that involve the transfer of food for consumption from someone who has food to another who does not. Other events, though, bear little resemblance to what we normally and literally think of as feeding. Causing another to eat by giving them food emerges as the prototypical instance of a more general asymmetry that involves one participant making available to another something that was previously unavailable, thereby creating or furthering the latter’s dependence on the former. At its limit, then, *ayuh-man* need not be related to eating or subsistence activities at all. *Ayuh-man* could be glossed, perhaps, as “to provision” or “to supply,” but, while this has the advantage of capturing its semantic elasticity, it obscures Kanamari translations and leads us to downplay the term’s paradigmatic ethnographic expressions.⁵ Hence I shall follow the Kanamari lead and translate *ayuh-man* as “to feed,” denominating the link that it establishes between the feeder and the fed as “the feeding bond” or “the feeding relation.”

5. The words “provision” and “supply” also share the disadvantage of recalling the supply and debt system (Portuguese: *aviamento*) that was characteristic of the Amazonian extractive economy (see Chapters Two and Five). In the Kanamari case, this economy must be distinguished from relations of *ayuh-man*, as I shall show in the next chapter; mixing translations in this way would cause confusion.

Feeding is a positive relation, a transcontextual asymmetry with highly variable ethnographic manifestations. Instead of providing a list of diagnostic or typical relations, feeding is best apprehended as a specific way of looking at relations or of interpreting them. Some acts or events are spontaneously construed as feeding. These are events which, for the Kanamari, do not admit alternative analyses and hence must be described as a feeding relationship. Feeding is here absolute: it pre-exists and overwhelms any other possible interpretation of the nature of the relation between two parties. The paradigmatic, unmistakable instance of the feeding bond is the relationship between a woman and her pet. Although those Kanamari who speak Portuguese translate *ayuh-man* as “to give food [to someone],” when directly asked “what is *ayuh-man*? (*baniantu ayuh-man anin?*)”, many respond that it refers to when a woman chews some food, takes it from her mouth, and places it in the mouth of a pet that she is raising.⁶

Other acts of feeding that would immediately and incontrovertibly be identified as such include: breastfeeding or giving food to weaned children (the mother-child bond); feeding a familiar spirit with tobacco snuff (the shaman-familiar spirit bond); or supplying others with the physical means to obtain food for themselves, for example, by distributing rifles, fish hooks, and machetes (the Brazilian state-Kanamari bond). More generally, it characterizes any ineluctably positive and asymmetrical relationship, including those between adult and junior partners, where the former imparts something (e.g., knowledge, skill) to the latter, who thereby comes to depend on the provider. This includes teacher-pupil relationships, such as those between an experienced hunter and his companion, or between a shaman and his apprentice, both of which may also be described as a feeding relationship. The feeder holds sway over the dependent; indeed, in some cases (e.g., pets, children), the dependent is completely reliant on the feeder for its survival. Acts of transfer like those enumerated here are not only directly described as *ayuh-man*; they are unlikely to be described in any other way.

In other cases, feeding may be more difficult to identify or isolate, since it is not an elementary value that allows no other interpretation but, instead, a much

6. Some Amazonians “suckle young mammals just as they would their own children” (Roth 1924: 551; see also Cormier 2003: 114; Rival 1993: 643; Goulard 2009: 215) or else allow animals to eat directly from their owners’ mouth (Cormier 2003: 46). I have never seen the Kanamari feed pets in either of these ways, although I cannot be certain that it never happens or never did in the past.

more mediated aspect of a complex relational matrix in which, at times, all parties involved contribute to productive activities. Nonetheless, in some situations or from certain perspectives, one party to the relationship appears to be *more* productive than the others, and this is rendered as a feeding bond. Feeding here marks moments in which a symmetrical relationship is revealed as one that is underscored by (or, indeed, derived from) the asymmetrical bond of feeding, thereby reaffirming past asymmetries and extending them into the future.

Situations that typically denote feeding in this way include: providing the physical setting (e.g., house or longhouse) in which raw food is processed and distributed among coresidents (for instance, when an animal is butchered and shared in the house of a village chief, who thereby feeds his coresidents); the transformation of raw food into cooked meals for collective feasts; and singing the chants that enable the reproduction of forest flora and fauna during rituals (the relation between the *nobman*, “chanter,” and those who participate in the *Pidah-pa* [Jaguar-becoming] ritual, discussed in Chapter Five). On certain occasions, feeding can characterize the relation between husband and wife, turning an alliance otherwise valued for its mutual interdependence into a unilateral dependence.⁷

In the remainder of this chapter, I will focus on how feeding operates in two contexts: pet keeping and shamanism. In the final section, I will consider in detail how, despite their similarities, the two domains differ in terms of the degree of control they establish, the relations they create, and the way in which they serve to prevent predation from being projected onto social relations of intimacy and care.

7. The Kanamari say that husbands feed their wives and never vice versa. This relationship merits a much more extensive discussion than I can provide here, so I defer analysis for another occasion. However, I should note that ethnographers of western Amazonian societies often report native interpretations of the marital tie, and gender relations more generally, as being asymmetrical. Kensinger (1995: 51–52), for example, states that Kaxinawá women may refer to their husbands as *xaneibu*, a term otherwise used for headmen (see McCallum 2001 for an alternative interpretation). Lorrain (2000), writing about the Kulina, neighbors of the Kanamari, states that men are the primary givers and women the primary receivers in the most diverse spheres of activity, and speaks of the “encompassing character of male agency in production [which] is correlated with a primary access of men to all products, whether male or female” (Lorrain 2000: 303; see also Santos-Granero 1991: 205 on marital asymmetry among the Arawak-speaking Amuesha).

THAT WHICH WE CAUSE TO GROW

Like many Amazonians, the Kanamari capture, tame, and raise the offspring of killed animals as pets (Figure 2). Pets are typically the young of animals hunted by men and brought back to the settlement (“clinging to their dead mother,” as the Kanamari say of monkeys). Most pets are individuals of edible species, including tapirs, peccaries, and many varieties of birds and monkeys. But the Kanamari also raise the offspring of animals they hunt for sport (such as parakeets) or for their teeth (such as tamarins and squirrel monkeys), which are used to make necklaces. The only animals that they explicitly say they do not raise under any circumstances are apex predators, such as the jaguar, the anaconda, and the black caiman, as well as venomous snakes, all of which are considered too “violent/angry” (*nok*) to be tamed.



Figure 2. Tsamuha and his birds (Photo: Luiz Costa, 2003).

Barring these species, familiarization may be attempted with any animal so long as it is captured in its infancy, a basic condition for the success of the taming process (Descola 2013: 379). During my fieldwork, the Kanamari considered raising a sloth, an animal they do not eat, but ultimately decided to return it to the wild soon after capture. One woman kept a king vulture as a pet, although this was considered highly eccentric behavior and made her the butt of many

jokes. Another told me that ocelots (inedible) and deer (edible) were kept in the past, but that people had “grown bored of” (*oborob*) raising them. Although anacondas are never kept as pets, I have seen the Kanamari raise a boa constrictor.⁸

The Kanamari have two expressions for “pets.” The most common is *bara o’pu*, which literally means “small game” and is used to refer either to the young of wild animals or to pets (i.e., formerly wild animals), regardless of their age. When referring to a specific animal being raised, the root *bara*, “game/animal,” may be substituted by the name of the species. Thus, a white-lipped peccary pet (or a white-lipped peccary offspring in the wild) will be referred to as a *wiri o’pu*. Even those pets that reach physical maturity are called “small game,” which here indicates their condition as animals being raised by humans. They remain conceptually stunted even when they reach adult size—a meaning that *bara o’pu* shares with the English word “pet,” which derives from “petty,” hence “small” (Tuan 1984: 100).

Although men hunt, women are the ones who usually feed and raise pets, a division of labor common in Amazonia (see Erikson 1987, 1988, 2011; Taylor 2001; Cormier 2003: 114–115).⁹ The role of women in taming is actually encoded in the Kanamari term for “pet”: when preceded by a name or possessive prefix, *o’pu*, “small,” is the kinship term for “son” in female kinship terminology. *Bara o’pu* can be translated as either “small game” or “game son” [w.s.], thus highlighting an association between parent and child (in this case, mother and son)

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8. I should make it clear that my use of “pets” excludes animals that the Kanamari do not even consider raising, such as fish (cf. Estorniolo 2014). It also excludes three further classes of animals, none of which are called by any of the Kanamari terms for pets. These are, first, domesticated animals of foreign origin, such as dogs, pigs, and chickens (these will be broached in the next chapter). Second, Kanamari children sometimes keep cockroaches or grasshoppers in small boxes for short periods of time. These insects are simply referred to as “toys” (*bomarapa*) or “things” (*odyan*) and never by any of the terms for “pets.” Finally, the term excludes chelonia. River turtles and land tortoises tend to be collected in designated expeditions at certain times of the year rather than actively hunted. They are not kept as pets: instead, their carapace is perforated and they remain tied to a house post for future consumption. Significantly, they are also never fed. They are said to be able to “withstand” or “survive” (*kima*) without food or water, which, in my experience, they can indeed do for quite some time. See Bonilla (2007: 275–277) on the place of chelonia in the diet and cosmology of the Paumari of the Purus.
 9. Among the Karitiana of the Brazilian state of Rondônia, the “owner” of a pet is the head of the household to which it is attached. However, it is the women and children of the house who develop affectionate bonds with pets, and, as some men admit when pressed, they become their true owners (Vander Velden 2012a: 114).

relations and owner–pet relations that is widespread in Amazonia (see Fausto 1999).¹⁰ Among the Kanamari, pets sometimes become more closely associated with children than women. In these cases, though, the pet will normally have been fed by a woman, who then transfers responsibility for feeding the pet to her (or someone else’s) child. For the Tupi-Guarani Guajá, Cormier (2003: 114) states that “pet keeping is better described as the reproduction of mothering.”

The other common expression for “pet” is *ityowa tyuru-tiki-yan*, “our thing that we cause to grow/thrive,” which further stresses the bond between the animal and its human owner that is established by feeding.¹¹ *Tyuru*, “to grow,” refers explicitly to vegetative growth. Pets are animals that humans cause to increase in weight and size through feeding. *Tyuru* does not imply any kind of moral maturation attained through education or training in correct behavior: it is a growing out, not a growing up. Although pets may well be scolded when they directly interfere with the activities of humans, their misbehavior is usually indulged. In fact, it may be argued that their immaturity is positively encouraged. As occurs throughout Amazonia, Kanamari pet keeping involves techniques for the retention of juvenile traits in adult individuals. Two of these traits recur frequently: familiarized animals do not reproduce in captivity, nor are they encouraged to do so (Descola 1994a, 2013: 379–386; Taylor 2001: 54);¹² and pets maintain

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10. The term *bara o’pu* may appear to imply that “pets” are associated with sons rather than daughters. However, in the Kanamari language, “sons” is the unmarked form for “sons and daughters,” a feature it shares with Romance languages. When a woman speaks of *i-o’pu hinuk*, “my sons,” she may therefore mean her sons and/or daughters. *O’pu* is also used for “baby boy,” *piya o’pu*, and “baby girl,” *ityaro o’pu*, although here the Kanamari translate the term as “little boy/girl,” which stresses the link between *o’pu* and children. In general, while the Kanamari show great interest in the sex of the animals that they hunt (because of their different quantities of fat at different times of the year), they show little interest in the sex of their pets (as we shall see shortly, pet names are determined by species alone).
 11. Native terms for “pets” in Amazonia commonly register their passive status in relation to acts of feeding. For example, the Huaorani of Amazonian Ecuador call their pets *queninga*, which means “that which is fed” or “that which has received food from humans” (Rival 1999: 79), while the Tukanoan Barasana call their pets *ekariera*, meaning “those we feed” (Stephen Hugh-Jones, cited in Fausto 2007: 502). The ancient Carib term for “pet,” *iégue*, means “an animal whom one feeds” (Breton in Norton 2015: 40).
 12. On a recent trip to the Parakanã, Carlos Fausto found them raising a female tapir. When he asked whether they would eat it, they replied they would do so only if it gave birth to a calf (Fausto, personal communication 2015). Since these animals are very large and require plenty of space, adult tapirs usually spend the day, or even days,

an altricial dependence on their owners throughout their lives (Cormier 2003: 122–124; Vander Velden 2012a: 195–200). Raising pets thus involves causing them to acquire mass while retarding the development of their autonomy. By becoming so reliant on their providers, pets are unable to survive without being fed by their caregiver. This vital dependence through feeding is tersely conveyed in the expression “our thing that we cause to grow/thrive.”

When the infant animal accepts being fed, it is deemed to have lost the potential to feed itself and therefore can no longer exist outside of the emerging bond. Moreover, feeding is not simply the provisioning of food: it is a process that forces a change in diet upon the pet, since the animal must learn to accept the food that humans eat, prepared using human culinary techniques. This may include eating meat of its “own species” (Erikson 2011: 22).¹³ The Kanamari point out that the pet’s newly acquired palate further identifies it with its new owner, supplying an additional deterrent to escape (see also Déléage 2009: 191; Goulard 2009: 215–216).

Although it is the central technique in taming, feeding occurs in tandem with a series of other operations. When a hunter brings a young animal to a village, it has its teeth removed and, if necessary, its claws. Birds immediately have their wings clipped. If the pet is a mammal, it is tied to a house post (see Figure 3); if it is a young bird, it is stored in a loosely woven basket that is kept warm. Periodically, the pet is freed in order to be picked up and passed over the smoke of the hearth so that it grows accustomed to the smell of the house and will lose the desire to run away. All pets are initially fed banana porridge, sweet manioc drink, or peach palm (*Bactris*) fruit drink—the same foodstuffs given to

away from the village, where the Parakanā have no control over their reproduction. The reply of the Parakanā stresses the fact that pets must always remain “children” (see Descola 2013: 383). If they have children of their own, they cease to be the pet-children of their owners and become related to others. Consequently, they can be killed and eaten.

13. This practice is not interpreted as a type of cannibalism but as evidence of a transformation that the animal has undergone or is undergoing. As Cepek (2012: 57) reports for the Cofán: “When you ask a Cofán person why his pet squirrel monkey, raised from a baby in his home, will itself eat squirrel monkey meat, he will tell you laughingly, ‘It has become an *a’i* [Cofán person].’ In other words, it considers itself to be a person, and squirrel monkeys are no longer its conspecifics” (see also Descola 2013: 383–384). This is one aspect of a more general estrangement of the pet from its former conspecifics. The Pirahā, for example, say that a pet loses its ability to communicate with animals of its (former) species; thus a pet monkey does not recognize the call of other monkeys (Gonçalves 2001: 340–341).

babies being weaned. These meals often include pieces of banana, manioc, or the flesh of peach palm fruits, all of which are pre-masticated by women before being placed directly into their pet's mouth or beak. Birds gradually learn to eat food placed in the palm of their owner's hands, while toothless mammals have food intentionally thrown on the floor near the house post to which they are tied. Later, when they no longer need to be tied, they eat from their owners' plate. Submitted to this process, the animal shifts from being "of the forest" (*ityonin hinuk-warah*) to being "of the house" (*bak hinuk-warah*); it is eventually untied from the house post and allowed to move freely within the village. The pet is tamed as it comes to need its new owner and the potential development of its ability to survive outside of the household is canceled.



Figure 3. Infant pet spider monkey tied to a shelter (Photo: Victor Gil, CTI archives, 2015).

FROM DEPENDENCY TO LOVE

As the relationship develops, feeding can become laced with sentiments that first seem to eclipse the originary dependence or, at least, to add other possible nuances to it. One of these sentiments is *wu*, which denotes a mutual and

reciprocal tie between people who jointly contribute to the subsistence economy. The Kanamari regularly gloss *wu* by the Portuguese *amor*, “love.” As we saw in the Introduction, *wu* is one of the key facets of the Kanamari value of “knowing the land” (*ityonin-tikok*), which is their variant of the “conviviality” or “good life” so often described in the Amazonian literature. It is the preferred idiom through which the Kanamari express the marital relation, where it is much more common in everyday speech than the idiom of feeding. Marital relations are relations in which, to borrow Descola’s description for the Achuar (1994a: 285), “the men and women of a domestic group are bound up in a reciprocal relation of dependence and complementarity with respect to their material conditions of reproduction.” *Wu* points to this interdependence rather than to the unilateral dependence of one party of the relation on the other, as construed by feeding. As such, it is characteristically an index of commensality rather than feeding.

In most circumstances, the Kanamari would not say you *wu* something that does not or cannot *wu* you back (unless the intended referent is a child or a pet, in which case the usage indicates an ongoing or intended change in the nature of the relation; see below). In such cases, they would use a derived term, *owu*, which is better translated as “to want” or “to desire.” It is possible, for instance, to *owu* coffee, clothing, or other material things. In these instances, the Kanamari are expressing the fact that they want some coffee (or whatever) to drink at that moment, if available, or that they might want ground coffee to brew at home. The difference between *wu* (“love”) and *owu* (“want”) rests on the suffix *o*. In its unbound form, *o* simply means “other”: *o hak*, for instance, means “[the] other house.” In some cases, it is affixed to other lexemes, where it acts as an approximative morpheme, indicating a less prototypical exemplar of a given class. Thus *dyani_obak* (açaí-palm-other-house) is the name given by the Kanamari to the temporary shelters built on trekking expeditions, which are makeshift structures usually covered by a loosely thatched roof of açaí palm leaves as shelter from the elements. Here the *o-* that precedes the word for “house” (*bak*) indicates that the referent is a less perfect exemplar of a house. *Hak* denotes the sturdy structures built in villages from quality wood and with carefully thatched roofs. Such houses are built to last and require collective work involving a group of kinspeople, whereas açaí palm shelters are temporary and rudimentary, easily erected by a couple or even a man or woman working alone (Figures 4 and 5). Accordingly, *owu* is a derivation of *wu*, which stresses the less exemplary nature of wanting material things in contrast to interpersonal and reciprocal love.



Figure 4. *Hak* (house) built in a village as a durable structure for a family
(Photo: Hilton Nascimento, CTI archives, 2007).



Figure 5. *Dyaniobak* shelters built quickly on a trail during travels (Photo: Hilton Nascimento, CTI archives, 2008).

Semantically, the affix *o-* is the opposite of the lexeme *tam*, which can be translated as “true” or “proper,” indicating prototypicality with respect to a class. *Wu tam* is to “truly love someone,” in contradistinction to *owu*, which is simply to want something. Although I cannot develop a comprehensive study of these Kanamari classifiers here, it appears to me that the distinction between *o-* and *tam* is less one of vertical subdivisions of a kind and more one of horizontal extensions (*tam*) or contractions (*o-*) based on “likeness” (Wierzbicka 1992). A “true house” (*hak tam*) would be a fine house, perhaps a new one, sturdy and in keeping with the divisions of an exemplary Kanamari house. The temporary shelter, in turn, is not a subset of the category “house” but, rather, is “like” a house (e.g., it provides shelter, it has an açaí palm roof, and so forth), even though it lacks other defining traits (e.g., a raised house floor, *Bactris* palm roof, and so forth). By analogy, “to want” could be construed as a contracted form of “love” in which only desire and immediate physical satisfaction are at play rather than mutual contemplation and protracted mindfulness.

Wu ideally involves reciprocal and interpersonal relations of mutual dependence. Dependency is a hallmark of all social relations, but it comes in different forms. According to Alain Testart,

[T]here are two types of dependency: on the one hand, the mutual and symmetrical dependence of peers (for example brothers or cross-cousins) on each other; and on the other hand, the asymmetrical dependence of one hierarchically differentiated position on another (for example, between father and son, or uncle and nephew). (Testart 1989: 7)

The first would be what the Kanamari call “love,” the latter, “feeding” or “dependence.” Adapting Gow’s (1989, 1991, 2000) terminology, feeding relations can be said to be “relations of caring” or “looking after,” in which productive adults (as contextually defined) provide for those who are otherwise “helpless.” In contrast, “love” is the Kanamari idiom for relations that Gow defines as being of “mutual demand” and which Testart defines as “mutual and symmetrical dependence of peers,” characteristic of the spousal relation, but also other symmetrical relations such as those between brothers-in-law (Gow 1989: 573; Testart 1989). Love is a relationship between subjects whose dependence on each other derives from their complementary contributions to their ongoing relationship.

For the Kanamari, people who love each other are people who intentionally contemplate each other and who speak of and remember each other frequently.

Wu is, in fact, encoded in the Kanamari word for “to remember,” *wunindak*. Here *wu* is subordinated (*nin*) to *-dak*, a suffix of spatial, temporal, and social deixis that indicates that someone or something moves in conjunction with the referent and away from the proposition of a referential speech event (Silverstein 1976: 23–34).¹⁴ *I-wunindak* can therefore be glossed as “my love will continue along with me” (into the future, toward other places), in contrast to “to forget,” which is *i-wunintyku*, “my love has died.” This quality of extended mindfulness makes it much harder for love to be a constitutive element in many of the paradigmatic feeding relationships where the dependent party—pets or neonates—lack the capacity for speech. All they can do is express their need for the owner through nonverbal cues.

This does not mean that “love” does not feature in asymmetrical relations. As we have seen, it can be used to describe the mutual care of owners and pets that have been together for some time. However, as a general rule, *wu* always includes traces of mutuality and symmetry. When a relationship with predominantly asymmetrical traits is expressed in the idiom of “love,” this implies: (1) that the asymmetrical relation is in the process of transforming into a symmetrical relation (as when children begin to talk and contribute to daily meals; see Chapter Three); and (2) that the asymmetrical traits are obviated in favor of a symmetrical language within a specific discursive context in which this gloss is desirable (as when someone points out the love between an owner and a pet, downplaying the asymmetry of feeding and dependence that is at its core).

It would be satisfying for my description and analysis if the derivational *owu*, which implies a nonreciprocal wanting, were used between parents and newborns, and between owners and pets, and *wu* restricted solely to reciprocal relations between people capable of speech (hence parents and older children, but never pets). Although I lack more precise data, it is my impression, however, based on my intuitive knowledge of the Kanamari language, that *owu* is never used for newborns and pets. *Owu* thus seems to be used for wanting material things rather than wanting/loving all those “things” that are incapable of verbalizing their love back. Nonetheless, my claim here is speculative, and further research would be necessary to make any secure affirmation.

14. *Ikaok-dak opatyn*, for instance, means that a child (*opatyn*) cried (*ikaok*) for the whole duration of a trip (taken by the speaker and child) to a place other than that where the speech event is occurring (cf. *ikoak-dakdyi opatyn*, which denotes the same situation but in reverse, implying movement toward the speaker, i.e., the child cried all the way *here*).

LOVING AND NOT LOVING A PET

In relation to pet keeping, what I want to show is how, in the development of the owner–pet relation, feeding comprises a precondition for (saying that) a pet and an owner love each other, although it need not result in love. In other words, the feeding relationship is prior to “love,” insofar as all relations between an owner and a pet involve a bond of feeding/dependency, but only some come to be construed in terms of “love.”

When a woman begins feeding a pet, she may state that she will “produce its old age” (*kidak-bu*), meaning that she intends to care for the pet as she and it age together. After some months of taming, women commonly sleep with their pets in their hammocks. They are also fond of pets that follow them around the village as they engage in their daily chores. Others may then point out that a pet follows its owner or clings to her hair or clothing because it loves her. At this stage in their relationship, most women will refer to their pets through an established pet vocative term. Like many southwestern Amazonian societies, the Kanamari have a set of vocative terms for pets that distinguish them from wild individuals of the same species (see Erikson 1988: 28). I borrow the expression “pet vocatives” from Dienst and Fleck’s (2009) excellent review of the practice in southwestern Amazonia, which includes an exposition of Kanamari vocatives and those of neighboring peoples.¹⁵

Among the Kanamari, all pets of the same species (regardless of sex or age) are called by the same term. The etymology of pet vocatives varies for different species. They may be abbreviations of the Kanamari word for the animal in the wild, the names of mythical characters, the names of parts of the animal (like “beak”), or words that neighboring Panoan or Arawan-speaking people use for the wild species in question. Regardless of the nature of the pet vocative, the Kanamari say that these always comprise the name of the wild species in the language of the *adyaba* ogres, who, as their mythology recounts, raise captive Kanamari as their children (see Chapter Two).

15. The phenomenon of pet vocatives seems to be preponderant in southwestern Amazonia, but analogous linguistic data is found elsewhere. Among the Cariban Arara of the Iriri river in southeastern Amazonia, for instance, intimacy with pets is expressed by means of stylized language games or ludlings that are limited to human–pet interactions and vary depending on the species being addressed (Costa de Sousa and Parker 2012).

Once owners start to call pets by these pet vocatives, they rarely feed them directly. Instead, pets simply “eat” (*pu*) food that people prepare for themselves, often taking food directly from peoples’ plates or the pans where food was prepared (Figure 6). At the death of a beloved pet, women sometimes enter a period of “mourning” (*mahwanin*, literally, “longing”), which involves suspending work, eating less, and periodically bursting into laments in which the appropriate pet vocative is repeated. When I once showed a man a picture of his wife and her late pet wooly monkey, he told me not to show it to her under any circumstances lest she resume mourning, despite the fact that more than a year had passed since the pet died.



Figure 6. Pet saki monkey (Photo: Hilton Nascimento, CTI archives, 2009).

While all pets are created through acts of feeding, not all receive the love of their owner in this way. Many pets die young, sometimes a few weeks or months after being brought to the village. These animals are unceremoniously tossed in the river or the forest. Others are fed sporadically and heedlessly, eventually dying or running away without arousing any commotion or sadness. At other times, pets remain unloved. Their owner will continue to feed them at least

a little food, but no further care is given nor any intimacy shared. Although people neither kill nor eat pets that they have fed, pets can be given to or exchanged with other Kanamari or neighboring whites in the knowledge that they will become food. On some occasions, a pet that is exchanged or given is raised by the recipient, who decides to feed rather than eat it. In such cases, the pet is effectively adopted, since its dependency is transferred to a new owner. Some pets become ownerless instead, ignored by those who originally fed them. The Kanamari say of these animals, in Portuguese, that they are *da comunidade*, “the community’s.” Rather than meaning that they are “everyone’s” pet, the expression means that they are actually the responsibility of no one. These strays wander from house to house eating leftover scraps and begging or stealing food.

Many ethnographers of native Amazonia have noted the ambivalence displayed by owners toward their pets, which may be cared for or ignored, loved or disdained, treated with a “rather brusque affection” (Descola 2013: 253; see also Erikson 1987). Among the Kanamari, it is impossible to predict whether a pet at the start of the taming process will be actively raised or passively ignored, but the ambivalence other authors have noted is, in this ethnographic case, inseparable from a consideration of whether the pet is fed regularly by its owner or sporadically by a number of people.

Where love between master and pet exists, it can be ascribed to an originary feeding bond. Yet not every act of feeding results in love. The relation between a woman and the pet she feeds is one where she establishes control over its fate, where she is the source of its life. As long as feeding continues, the pet’s dependency on its owner is sustained, and the development of other relations remains a possibility.

FEEDING JAGUARS

Feeding is also the central technique in shamanic familiarization and, indeed, in shamanism more widely. But the nature of the spirits with which shamans interact and the danger inherent to the familiarizing process introduce significant differences when compared to pet keeping.¹⁶

16. The Kanamari know three types of shamanism. *Baob* shamanism of the “horizontal” type (Hugh-Jones 1994) is the only one that concerns me in this section. *Marinawa* shamanism of the “vertical type” will be addressed in Chapters Four and Five with

Kanamari *baoh* shamans are (mostly) men who manipulate *dyohko*, a substance that exists in the body of shamans as well as in some animals and plants.¹⁷ This substance is maintained in a viscous state inside the shaman's body but solidifies into a resinous gemstone when expelled either through vomiting or extraction. When outside the body, it can be made into a sorcerer's dart by being heated and then mixed with pathogenic objects, including maggots, hair, lead, and bits of dead animals, a process called *dyohko bibanhowam* ("mixing *dyohko*"). These fabricated darts are also called *dyohko*. Sorcerers hurl them at their victims, using either a slingshot or a blowgun, causing the dart to penetrate the victim's flesh. When someone falls ill from the intrusion of a *dyohko*, a shaman must locate the dart in the patient's body and suck it out. As elsewhere in Amazonia, the difference between a "shaman" (*baoh*) and a "sorcerer" (*baobi*) is a matter of perspective. One person's shaman is another's sorcerer (see Whitehead and Wright 2004: 2–3), and a shaman is always potentially a sorcerer/enemy (e.g., Brown 1986: 63; Gow 1991: 240–241; Vilaça 2010: 108).

Shamanic initiation (*baob-bu*, "shaman making") occurs in two stages: first the initiate's body must grow accustomed to *dyohko*; second, he must obtain and control the *dyohko* of a dead shaman. The first stage begins with the parents soliciting a shaman to initiate their young boy. The procedure involves a long period of trial and experimentation until such time as the "*dyohko* likes his [the boy's] flesh" (*dyohko na-nakibak a-hai*). Around the age of twelve, the *dyohko* will stay in the boy's flesh and will henceforth "grow inside with him" (*tyuru naki-dy*), increasing in size as the boy grows out (Costa 2007: 343–346).

Although the *dyohko* is a shamanic substance, as evinced in the role it plays in composing the flesh of living shamans, it is also a spirit, echoing similar

respect to its role in chieftaincy. The Kanamari possess a third type of shamanism known as *omamndak*, which is potentially available to every adult man (Costa 2007: 330–336). For more detailed ethnographic descriptions of the different varieties of Kanamari shamanism, see Reesink (1993: 75–90), Carvalho (2002: 271–326), and Costa (2007: Chapter 7).

17. When questioned directly, Kanamari men and women explicitly say that only men can become shamans. There is one exception, however: a woman whose father was Kanamari and mother Kulina, who had been raised as a young girl by her mother's family, was recognized as a "powerful" (*diok*, "pungent") shaman by everyone. Here it seems that her foreign origin took precedence over her gender. I was also told that one shaman was initiating both of his daughters, although I do not know if anything came of this. On shamanism and gender in Amazonia, see Pollock (1992) and Colpron (2005, 2006).

concepts across indigenous Amazonia that designate a “fundamentally heteroclitic and heterogenic ‘category,’ which admits a number of subdivisions and internal contrasts” (Viveiros de Castro 2007: 159; 2014: 65–69). While *dyohko* does indeed admit subdivisions and contrasts (e.g., deer-*dyohko*, stingray-*dyohko*, etc.), all of these converge in the figure of the jaguar (*pidah*). This is evident in the origin of the very first *dyohko*. The creator hero Tamakori buried the incisor tooth of a black jaguar named Matso, and *dyohko* sprouted from it. To “make a shaman” thus means to imbue a child with a principle originating from a mythical jaguar. When the initiating shaman adjudges that *dyohko* has reached the heart of the initiate and will no longer flee his flesh, the Kanamari say that the novice now has a “jaguar heart” (*pidah diwahkom*). The Kanamari associate the heart with the seat of the soul, since it is where blood—a sensible manifestation of the soul (see Chapter Three)—is said to “dwell” (*to*). In this sense, possessing a jaguar heart means possessing a supplementary or excess soul, one that implies a differential postmortem destiny (Costa 2007: 349–354).¹⁸ When the shaman dies, his jaguar heart will leave the body with a loud “roar” (*parihan*), take on a jaguar form, and flee into the forest. The very powerful shamans of the past could actually avoid death altogether by assuming their jaguar form. One particularly renowned shaman was attacked by some rubber tappers, who repeatedly shot him at point blank range. He remained unfazed. After the whites had expended all their rounds, the shaman simply got on his hands and knees and became a jaguar before their eyes, calmly making his way into the forest.

The second stage of shamanic initiation involves familiarizing the jaguar heart of a dead shaman.¹⁹ This stage must be taken up by the young shaman during his adolescence at his own initiative. Whenever a shaman dies, the *dyohko* assumes a jaguar form in the eyes of shamans and nonshamans alike. However, living shamans, because of the *dyohko* embedded in their own flesh, are able to interact with the jaguar and thereby come to see the spirit in the form of its ex-image (i.e., in the deceased’s likeness). Furthermore, a window of time exists after the shaman’s death during which the *dyohko* does not know that its former owner has died, so it remains “confused” (*wa-tikokotunin*; also

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- 18. The Kanamari use the term *pidah-diwahkom* to refer to the shaman’s “jaguar heart,” but they also regularly call it *pidah-ikonanim*, “jaguar-soul”; in one instance, I even heard it called *pidah-diwahkom na-ikonanim*, the “jaguar-heart’s soul.”
 - 19. Familiarizing a jaguar heart may involve dealing with the *dyohko* of a shaman whom the initiate knew in life, as we shall see shortly. So many old, dead shamans live in the forest, however, that this sort of direct social relationship is not indispensable.

“ignorant,” “obtuse”). During this period, the *dyohko* looks for its ex-kinspeople, all the while believing that they are still its actual kinspeople. Once it finds them, though, it is unable to see them in their likeness. It can only see them as “others” (*onahan*). For this reason, it “makes enemies of them” (*a-todioknin anyan binuk*), inflicting harm through its sorcerer darts. The death of a shaman is thus always a tense affair for the living, not only because they are mourning a kinsman, but also because they fear the darts hurled by the confused jaguar heart of the deceased. Typically, the living kin left behind by the dead shaman abandon the settlement, at least temporarily, to try to elude the jaguar heart. The loophole in this perspectival nightmare is that living shamans are not only able to see the spirit in its former image (i.e., as the deceased shaman) but, likewise, are also seen as a kinsperson—rather than as an “other”—by the deceased shaman. At the death of a shaman, another shaman must go to meet the spirit, for only he can curb the harm that the jaguar heart causes the living.

The shaman Dyumi told me how he familiarized the jaguar heart of his father-in-law, known as Dyo'o when he was alive but now mostly remembered by his Brazilian name, João Dias. This type of encounter, which pits a shaman against a jaguar heart, is known as *omahik*, which can be translated as a “shamanic battle”:

I magically captured (*bu'man*) my father-in-law's soul, a *dyohko*. He died, João Dias died. It then became a jaguar. I saw it then, my father-in-law's soul, a very big jaguar. I went by myself, along a path that led from the Sibélio stream. I went with my machete, clearing away the undergrowth. Deep in the forest, I saw the *dyohko*, my father-in-law João Dias's heart. I went further along the path and came face to face with the jaguar. First I spoke to it. I called, “Hey, father-in-law!” Silence. I called again. Silence again. The jaguar stared at me, and I stared at it and at the forest behind it. It became a person (*tukuna*). A true person. I stared again and it was João Dias itself. Its true body-owner (*a-warah tam*). I said: “Come here, father-in-law.”

“Where is Nui?” it asked after its brother. It remembered.

“He is downriver, my father-in-law.” I said to it.

“I want to go to him, I want to see Nui,” it told me. I took my pouch, which I had already filled with *dyohko*, and began to pierce it. Once, twice, many times I pierced it, but I could not magically capture (*bu'man*) it.

“You have made me an enemy (*todiok*), Dyumi!” it said. “You have truly made me an enemy!” It scolded me. It did not know [that it had died]. It said again: “I am going to see Nui.”

But I kept piercing it with *dyohko*. It became a jaguar again. Then I magically captured (*hu'man*) it. It had been harming people, Luiz. It had been piercing people with *dyohko*. (Dyumi, 2005)²⁰

The verb *hu'man*, which I have clumsily translated as “to magically capture,” is often glossed by the Kanamari who speak Portuguese as *pegar*, which means “to get.” Indeed, the word incorporates *man*, which we have already encountered in *ayuh-man*, where it acts as a causative. But *man* is a versatile morpheme that, as I already noted, can mean “to do,” “to say,” “to make,” and “to get.” To the best of my knowledge, the morpheme *hu'* has no meaning outside of the expression *hu'man*.²¹ *Hu'man* is only used in two contexts: rituals and shamanism. Here I refer exclusively to its role in shamanic familiarization (see Chapter Five for its role in ritual).

In a shamanic battle (*omahik*), the victor will magically capture (*hu'man*) the spirit (*dyohko*) of the defeated entity, which entails reducing the latter to a gem-stone. *Omahik* is a predatory relation established between two agents. These may be two rival shamans or, as in the above case, a shaman and a jaguar heart. But the result of this predatory relation is the transformation of one of these agents into a patient vis-à-vis the other. In the case of Dyumi and João Dias, it was the latter who was magically captured and thus had its capacities constrained by Dyumi’s ability to control it. Had Dyumi lost, João Dias would have not only familiarized his *dyohko* but also eaten his flesh.

Familiarizing a jaguar heart is the final stage of shamanic initiation, and one only becomes a “true shaman” (*baoh tam*) when one owns a jaguar heart, without which shamans are unable to officiate during certain rituals (see Costa 2007: 379–386). This is why the Kanamari say that, no matter how many years of initiation a shaman undergoes, it is, in the end, “the jaguar that makes the shaman”

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- 20. Although the story involves a complex dialectic between jaguar and human forms, I have chosen to translate the Kanamari third-person singular pronominal prefix *a-* and pronoun *anyan* as “it” rather than “he” whenever referring to the different forms that João Dias assumes after death.
 - 21. For some time in the field, I assumed that the word *hu'man* meant “to lift,” “to hoist.” This made metaphorical sense to me, since I imagined a shaman acting as a support or buttress for the agency of the *dyohko* he obtained. It was only after my knowledge of the Kanamari language improved that I realized I was mishearing *hu'man*, which means “to capture by shamanic means,” as *homan*, meaning “to lift.” I should add that, as far as I know, the *hu'* in *hu'man* bears no relation to the morpheme *-hu*, which marks the intentional modality and always occurs as a verb ending.

(*pidah na-baob-bu*). Shamans cannot keep jaguar hearts inside their bodies alongside the *dyohko* that grows with them. Instead, they keep them (along with an assortment of other powerful *dyohko*) in a cloth or leather pouch²² (or, in the past, a ceramic vase). The more jaguar hearts a shaman captures, the more powerful (and feared) he will be.

To subdue jaguar hearts, it is imperative that the shaman feed them in his pouch with tobacco snuff. So long as he feeds them, the *dyohko* stay under his control. He will refer to them either by name (e.g., João Dias) or else as “my (*atyá*) *dyohko*.” The *dyohko* speak to the shaman, calling him either *atyá pama*, “my father,” or *i-warah*, “my body-owner,” a concept I shall elucidate in the next chapter. The words used to describe the relation between the shaman and the jaguar heart he magically captures are the same as those used for the relationship between a woman and her pet: the shaman “feeds” (*ayuh-man*) the jaguar heart, which “depends” (*naki-ayuh*) on the shaman who provides snuff for it. The relation between a shaman and his familiar spirit is a classic example of metafiliation constituted through feeding, which recurs throughout Amazonia. According to the Yanomami shaman Davi Kopenawa, for instance, “a shaman’s spirit calls him ‘father’ because they live by his side and he feeds them with the *yākoana* powder [a hallucinogen]” (Kopenawa and Albert 2013: 69).

One day, when Dyumi’s village was being visited by distant relatives, an initiate stole the pouch in which João Dias was stored and took it away with him. Dyumi did his best to call João Dias back with promises of abundant snuff, but the thief was astute and kept the jaguar heart well fed with snuff of his own. João Dias would not return. The thief thus made himself the owner of a jaguar heart, cheating his way out of the requirement of a shamanic battle and depriving Dyumi of the jaguar heart he had familiarized when he became a true shaman. At the same time, the thief created a lingering state of fear among João Dias’s former kinspeople, since his jaguar heart was no longer held under the control of Dyumi. Now everyone was scared, particularly João Dias’ widow, who feared that the boy would lose control of the jaguar heart. It would then go

22. These pouches are obtained in neighboring towns, usually as some kind of packaging for something else (like jewelry). They are kept tightly sealed with tucum palm string and stored somewhere safe. One shaman kept his pouch in a locked chest; another tied it to the roof of the house, well out of the reach of children. Shamans say that they must *tokodo*, “take care,” of these pouches. *Tokodo* implies keeping something stored in a specific place and not carrying it about. It seems to be composed of *to-*, “to reside, dwell,” and *kodoh*, “high up,” i.e., out of reach.

after her, remembering the time when they were married. Unable to recognize its ex-wife, it would devour her.

It is not difficult to see why shamanism occupies such a prominent place in Fausto's model of familiarizing predation. For the Kanamari, the first act of shamanic familiarization is a battle fought between two agents. In the case described above, the battle started when Dyumi ambushed João Dias while it was "confused" and ended with the jaguar heart's defeat and magical capture. Defeat reduced João Dias to a gemstone that Dyumi then stored in a pouch, where it would do Dyumi's bidding so long as it was fed with tobacco snuff. A predatory event was thus converted into a relation of adoption and control.

Furthermore, Dyumi's control over João Dias was constituted in the idiom of metafiliation. In fact, *omahik* is framed by a complex operational sequence that ensures metafiliation is the only possible outcome. The battle itself had two moments. When Dyumi first encountered João Dias, the latter was three things to him: initially it appeared as a jaguar, subsequently as a human, but always as a father-in-law. In this form, it displayed an excess potency vis-à-vis Dyumi and could not be familiarized. As Fausto (2012b: 41) notes, the relation between father-in-law and son-in-law is based on the superimposition of two asymmetries: one between generations and another between wife-giver and wife-taker. Although the father-in-law/son-in-law relationship has important sociological correlates throughout Amazonia (Turner 1979, Rivière 1984) and articulates in different ways with metafilial relations (Halbmayer 2004; Grotti and Brightman 2016), its coupling with the jaguar frames a surfeit of predatory power that precludes the passage from predation to familiarization. Although Dyumi pierced it with his darts, he was unable to magically capture João Dias as a jaguar/father-in-law.

During the melee, however, João Dias' confusion suddenly gave way to clarity. It realized that it was no longer speaking to a son-in-law but to an enemy ("You have made me an enemy Dyumi! You have truly made me an enemy!"). Dyumi kept piercing his enemy, which then turned back into a jaguar before finally being magically captured by Dyumi. The shamanic battle decided the direction in which João Dias' multiplicity came to rest. While at first João Dias appeared as a jaguar → father-in-law, the battle transformed him into an enemy → jaguar. It was only once the transformation was completed in this way that João Dias could be defeated and magically captured (jaguar → pet). Shrunk to the form of a gemstone, João Dias was then stored by Dyumi in a pouch, fed snuff, and, as a consequence, came to call its former son-in-law "my father." Predation creates enmity, which then allows feeding to create metafiliation.

The metafilial relation does not annul the spirit's power; rather, it restrains and channels it, subsuming the jaguar heart to the shaman's agency. The shaman can now "order" (*nobu*) it to do his bidding. João Dias became limited by Dyumi's volition in at least three ways. First, João Dias's movement was contained by Dyumi. After his death and the jaguar heart's roar as it fled into the forest, João Dias (re)gained the ability to move and seek out what it wished to find (i.e., its ex-kinspeople). By losing the shamanic battle and being reduced to a gemstone, stored in pouch and summoned only when Dyumi needed it, João Dias either moved along with Dyumi or when Dyumi ordered it to do so. Second, Dyumi redirected João Dias's predatory capacity. Fed with snuff, João Dias no longer caused harm to his (ex-)kinspeople. It could only harm those whom Dyumi ordered it to harm, and it was an enemy to his enemies. Finally, João Dias' transformative capacity was also inhibited. After Dyo'o died, João Dias assumed a jaguar form to his former kinspeople but saw them as "others." Then this perspectival glitch was canceled by Dyumi. Dyumi's kinspeople only saw João Dias as a gemstone, when they saw it at all, and João Dias had no active relation (positive or negative) with Dyumi's kinspeople (who were, for the most part, its own former kinspeople). It only assumed a jaguar form in the eyes of Dyumi's enemies, whom it saw as "others," and with whom it only ever interacted at Dyumi's behest.

This metafilial control is necessarily ambivalent here, since the spirit accrues power to the novice shaman. It is, after all, the jaguar that makes the shaman, i.e., the jaguar that supplies the shaman with the power to cure and combat enemies, although at the price of introjecting the violence of the spirit into the space of kinship. Feeding holds this violence in suspension. However, this does not prevent the spirit's former kinspeople from occasionally doubting the shaman's ability to control it or fearing it may be stolen—as indeed occurred with João Dias. Like the *incantos* of the Piro shaman (Gow 1991: 240), the *dyohko* establishes kinship with the shaman as its father and coresides with it, but it does not establish kinship with the shaman's coresidents. Indeed, this is why a shaman is ambivalent: he is kin to one's own kinspeople but also, and at the same time, kin to dangerous others (see also Miller 2009: 71–75).

FEEDING AND EATING

In both pet keeping and shamanism, the relation created by feeding and the subsequent dependency allows the foreign element—animal or spirit—to inhabit

the village space, effecting the passage from forest to house, exterior to interior. Feeding is also a means of control, making the pet conform to its master or curbing and coordinating the agency of the spirit with the shaman's agency. This control is created by the same urge, the same induced need of the pet/spirit for its owner. In both cases, feeding amplifies the capacities of the feeder while limiting the capacities of the fed. This is the ambivalent source of shamanic power. But feeding a pet is also a significant moment in the development of a woman's or child's capacity to provide for others (see Chapter Three). Insofar as feeding is the mediating term in the passage from predation to familiarization, it remains a constant operator in both pet keeping and shamanism.

Closer inspection, however, reveals that feeding also does different work in each context. I want to draw attention to four differences that, it seems to me, have not always received the degree of attention they merit. First, the feeding/dependency dynamic reveals a different substantive content depending on whether it operates through pet keeping or shamanism. Second, although feeding is always a hinge between predation and familiarization, it has different effects on the dependent as we shift from pet keeping to shamanism. Third, while shamanic familiarization articulates predation and familiarization in a linear sequence, such that the victim of predation becomes the shaman's pet, pet keeping is situated at a remove from the predatory activity at its origin, meaning that the victim of predation and the pet are kept separate. Fourth, when we add a temporal dimension, the biographical trajectory of pet and familiar spirit inverts each other. I shall investigate each of these contrasts in turn.²³

In my earlier abstract discussion of feeding, I characterized the relation between a feeder and a dependent as an asymmetrical bond in which the former provides for the latter. I characterized this bond as constitutive and vital, and

23. The ethnography of Kanamari shamanism has been simplified in order for these contrasts to be drawn more clearly. Here I am stressing what I have called the "second stage" of shamanic initiation, in which the shaman must familiarize a jaguar heart. However, the first stage of shamanic initiation, which I have underplayed in this analysis, involves the initiating shaman directly "feeding" the initiate, whose flesh grows accustomed to having *dyobko* within it. A similarity seems to link the first stage of shamanic initiation and pet keeping, while the second stage of shamanic initiation develops in a different direction as it engages with dangerous spirits. If this is correct, then there may be a technically and effectively indistinguishable feeding bond that remains constant and which may be complemented by another such bond in shamanism (and perhaps in other contexts, such as ritual). An investigation of this possibility will have to be taken up on a different occasion.

observed that the paradigmatic example of the bond—the one most readily adduced by the Kanamari—is the connection between a woman and the pet she feeds. A pet is an infant animal orphaned by a hunter. Its dependence on its surrogate is hence a *sine qua non* component of its development—what Lemonnier (2012: 31) calls a “strategic” technical operation that “cannot be delayed, omitted, or replaced without jeopardizing the whole process.” In pet keeping, a failure to feed is tantamount to allowing the animal to die. The relationship between owner and pet develops as the pet itself matures from infancy into adulthood; throughout this process, there is only one possible agent, one party who is able to feed, prey on, or ignore the other. This dependency is synthesized in the expression “our thing that we cause to grow/thrive.”

If I may be allowed an analogy with Aristotelian biology, feeding is here similar to the principle of *treptikon*, “to nourish, to thicken, and to make grow” (see Simondon 2001: 42–44).²⁴ As I showed earlier, feeding is no guarantee that the owner and pet will love each other. Rather, it marks the passage for the infant animal from a state of dependence on its mother to one of dependence on its surrogate, the positive content of the latter bond remaining undetermined. Feeding is here more vegetative than ethical, more impulsive than edifying. In the context of pet keeping, feeding is the basic cell from which more complex and valued social ties can (potentially) develop.

Correspondingly, the resulting state of dependence, *naki-ayub*, is not a full-fledged desire for the feeder, but a basic capacity for responsive interaction. It is an inclination toward the feeder, an unthinking and unreflective response. For the pet, the attractiveness of the feeder is manifested nonconceptually as a drive to read off or mimic his or her intentions. This is what the pet does, as the Kanamari never tire of pointing out. It mimics (*ma-dyi*)²⁵ its owner, follows her,

24. This *treptikon*-like aspect of feeding approximates it to the Parakanā concept of *-piteram*, which is an induced maturation “linked to motor and sensory development and to the constitution of the flesh” (Fausto 2012a: 214). The Parakanā child is said “to have no flesh” (*naha’at*) when born; only when it is being fed with breast milk is it said “to have flesh completely” (*-a’amam*).

25. *Ma-dyi* means “to imitate.” It is a technique often used by hunters, who imitate (*ma-dyi*) the calls of animals they are tracking. It is also used for a child imitating its caregiver or for pets that follow their owners, lie in their hammocks, and so forth. It can be analyzed as *ma(n)*, “to do,” and the deictic *-dyi*, which points in the direction of the owner: to imitate is to do as the owner does. It seems to be related to Amazonian concepts often translated as “seduction” and which imply imitative behavior in the interest of seduction (see Taylor 2000).

reacts to her. Note that this is not necessarily equivalent to a form of obedience: making pets obey their owner is notoriously difficult. Instead, this mimicking is an induced attachment that manifests an axiomatic feature of the pet's imprinting onto its feeder's behavior. In the Aristotelian theory of desire, the dependence of a pet on its owner is similar to *epithumia*, "appetite" (Tuozzo 1994; MacIntyre 1999: 16–17; Pearson 2012: 91–110).²⁶

In contrast to the owner–pet relationship, the one between a shaman and a spirit is an asymmetrical relation in which both are potential subjects. Magical capture is an act in which a being that is, to all effects, more powerful than the shaman is turned into his dependent. The relationship involves two possible agents, hence the shamanic battle that unfolds works to resolve this tension into a situation in which one party becomes subsumed to the other. While feeding is also a strategic operation in shamanic familiarization, the failure to feed a spirit does not result in the latter's death but, on the contrary, in its release from the shaman's control and very possibly in his own death.

Accordingly, in shamanic familiarization, feeding is more similar to the Aristotelian notion of *aisthètikon*, "to instill a moral sense of virtue," while dependency is closer to *boulésis*, "wish or volition" (Simondon 2001: 44–46; Pearson 2012: 140–152). This conceptual pair complements and expands on the *trep-tikon*/*epithumia* contrast that characterizes pet keeping. A shaman who captures and feeds a jaguar heart does not want to make it grow out but, instead, to reduce it to a gemstone and to contain it as a servant. Feeding the *dyobko* enables it to tolerate (if not directly engage in) village life, allowing it to coreside with its former kin (whom it otherwise sees as enemies). Feeding is here an *aisthètikon*, a readjustment of the spirit's wary perspective and generalized violence; it is an educative measure, not a means for physical flourishing. Correspondingly, the spirit's dependence on the shaman is not the drive of a creature lacking agency, but a *boulésis*, a wish or volition, a dialogue in which both shaman and spirit probe each other, deliberate with each other, even when the shaman (hopefully) retains the final word. The spirit is midway between an unwilling ally and a reluctant pet. While the *epithumia* of the pet for its owner is a mechanical desire

26. Recall, however, that the Kanamari notion of "dependence" has at least three specificities vis-à-vis the Aristotelian theory of desire: first, dependence (i.e., "appetite") is neither self-governing nor spontaneous but fostered by the initiative of another (i.e., the feeder). Second, the ensuing dependence is not generic but directed toward the feeder. Third, the pleasure obtained from the feeder does not cancel the dependence but prolongs it.

for the pleasant, the *boulēsis* of the spirit is a negotiated desire for the good (see Tuozzo 1994: 542; Pearson 2012: 140–159). So long as this disposition is maintained in the spirit, the shaman's control is secure and his coresidents are safe.²⁷

It seems to me that these differences as we shift from pet keeping to shamanism are fairly predictable adjustments of the feeding/dependency pair as it encounters either helpless or powerful beings. Instead of challenging the conceptual unity of the feeding bond, it adds semantic density. But the analysis of these concepts and their interrelation, as well as the Kanamari's insistence on pet keeping as their paradigmatic instance, indicate that ideally feeding is more a kind of nourishing that creates and prolongs an appetite in helpless beings and less a type of moral education that creates an intentional desire in powerful beings. Feeding is a technology for making wild animals into pets that supplies a model for making *dyohko* spirits into familiars, where it encounters certain limitations inherent to the nature of spirits that demand its adaptation. In this way, Kanamari feeding invites us to invert the prominence that Fausto gives to shamanism in familiarizing predation. We may say, paraphrasing him, that, from the vantage point of feeding as a relation that converts predation into familiarization, Kanamari shamanism is more appropriately studied when it is consistently connected to another, *more exemplary* modality of familiarization—one which derives from hunting and which defines an owner's relation with her pet.

In both pet keeping and shamanism, the different varieties of inculcation and desire provide a pivot in the movement from predation to familiarization by canceling, as far as possible, the likelihood of a predatory relation being actualized between the parties involved in the feeding bond. In this respect, again, pet keeping and shamanism display an underlying similarity. But the direction of

27. Or, to be more precise, they are relatively less in danger, since morally transparent shamans and spirits are inconceivable in Amazonia. As a Shuar man succinctly put it to the anthropologist Marie Perruchon, “There are bad shamans and there are good shamans, but they are all bad” (in Beyer 2009: 46). This ambivalence of the shaman results, in part, from the concessions he must make to his familiar spirits: since what is good for the spirit and what is good for the shaman do not coincide, the shaman must cause the spirit to obey him or at least to work with him, achieved with varying degrees of success. It would perhaps be more accurate to claim that their uneasy truce revolves around an “apparent good,” a tense synchronization of what appears good to each party in the familiarizing process. On the Aristotelian distinction between “good” and “apparent good,” see Pearson (2012: Chapter 3).

the predatory activity thereby canceled is inverted in each case, which affects the relations constituted by feeding.

An almost universal fact of Amazonian pet keeping practices is that pets are not eaten, at least not by those who feed them.²⁸ The Kanamari never eat the pets that they feed, regardless of the relations later developed with them. If the relationship with the pet does not develop into affection or the pet grows too old to be kept, the Kanamari may give it away to the whites or perhaps exchange it with people in distant villages, knowing that this pet may thenceforth be killed and eaten. But even if the animal is killed and cooked in her own village, the woman who formerly fed the pet will never eat it. Some Kanamari even insisted that those raising a pet should not eat meat of the same species being raised (presuming it is an edible species). Although I never saw anyone respect this injunction, it emphasizes how predation and feeding are mutually exclusive activities. Although less deontic in their statements, the Kanamari, like most Amazonians, would no doubt subscribe to the injunction of the Huaulu of Eastern Indonesia, who proclaim that “if we feed them, we do not feed on them” (Valeri 1992). Feeding here defies the possibility of the feeder preying on those that he or she feeds.

With spirits this is not an issue, because eating spirits—say, chewing on the gemstones that a shaman stores away—would be a form of suicide (*ayuh-tyuku*, a “death wish,” literally “to need to die”). Spirits are fed not to prevent their feeders from eating the spirits but, on the contrary, to prevent spirits from preying on the feeder and his kinspeople. Jivaroan Aguaruna women, who keep *nantag* spirit stones to enhance the productivity of their gardens, know this

28. The comprehensiveness of the taboo on eating pets in Amazonia was established beyond doubt by Philippe Erikson (1987; see also Basso 1973: 21) and has been reiterated and confirmed many times over (e.g., Rival 1993: 643; Descola 1994b: 336; Cormier 2003: 114; Norton 2015: 39–40). Pets are sometimes eaten in ritual contexts, but only among a few peoples, such as some Panoan and Tupi-Mondé groups or the ancient Island Caribs (see Descola 2013: 229; Dal Poz 1993: 182; Norton 2015: 38–39). The only exception to this injunction seem to be the Panoan Katukina (not to be confused with the Katukina language family, which includes the Kanamari language), who eat pets without any accompanying ceremony. However, the Panoan Katukina seem to allow individual animals to inhabit their villages by providing only the minimum requirements of familiarization. These animals are hence never actually adopted but, rather, tolerated as “orphans” (E. Lima 2000: 190–194; Beirigo Lopes 2017: 205–207). Other evidence for eating pets is anecdotal and inferential, not having been actually observed by the ethnographer (Maybury-Lewis 1967: 37; Vander Velden 2012: 110 n. 12).

well, expressing it as the inverse of the Huaulu maxim: “Each month the *nantag* must drink achioite. If they are not fed, they can eat us” (in Brown 1986: 121). Feeding here defies the possibility of that which is fed preying on whoever feeds it.²⁹

Spirits are subjected by and to the shaman through a process in which the horizontal relation between subjects (a form of predatory engagement between shaman and spirit) is genetically and logically anterior to the vertical relation between shaman and familiar spirit (a familiarization), which always remains ambivalent and therefore potentially reversible. Although the same generic schema applies in pet keeping, we seem to have a process closer to a familiarization that, while at times violent, is practiced at a distance from actual predatory activity.

This may seem counterintuitive, since pets are obtained through hunting, which is perhaps the practice most people imagine when thinking of predation. But the point is precisely that pets are a by-product of this activity (Taylor 2000: 318). Hunting aims to obtain meat for consumption. As I have described elsewhere (Costa 2012), among the Kanamari, animal meat undergoes a technical process aimed at stripping it of all its specific characteristics and hence of its potency. Animals are killed, skinned, butchered, distributed, and cooked in order to ensure that flesh acts as a neutral base from which kinship relations can be elaborated (see also Fausto 2007: 502–504). Predation in hunting aims, first and foremost, to obtain meat that can be desubjectified and consumed, not to acquire pets that can be raised. Capturing animal young is only a remainder of this activity. By contrast, predation in shamanism aims to obtain the spirits that are later fed and stored away.

The hunting activity that produces orphaned and captive infant animals also requires the immediate alienation of the creature, unlike shamanism, where the captured spirit is only alienated unwillingly (such as by theft). No Kanamari hunter I know of raises the infants of animals he kills (nor does he treat the meat he brings back to the village; see Costa 2012). Rather, hunters hand them over to women, typically their wives but sometimes mothers, sisters, or

29. A further difference between feeding pets and familiar spirits is that, for an infant animal to become a pet, it must be fed human food, whereas for a spirit to become a familiar, it is fed “spirit food” (snuff). This is a function of the *treptikon*-like relation between owner and pet, which allows the former to impose a change in diet on the latter, in contrast the *aisthēthikon*-like relation of shaman to spirit, which requires a negotiated moral compromise.

daughters. These women may then subsequently transfer them to a child, often a son, daughter, or sibling. There is hence a discontinuity between hunting as predatory activity and pet keeping as familiarizing activity that contrasts with the continuity of the relation between shaman and spirit.

This transference from hunter to feeder and from man to woman (to child) may at first appear similar to the moment in familiarizing predation that Fausto (1999: 942–943, 2012a: 244) defines as “transmission” or “re-enemization,” which is characteristic of warfare and some ritual activity. This moment allows a formerly subdued pet to regain some of its volition, either because it is circulated (and hence alienated from its master) or because it is allowed to regain some freedom (and hence once again become an enemy to his captors). The similarity between transmission in ritual and the transferral of an animal infant captured while hunting is only apparent, however. In terms of the operational sequence of familiarization, a Kanamari hunter who “transfers” his pet to its future feeder is acting well in anticipation of anything that, say, the Parakanã dreamer does (Fausto 2012a: 238–244). First, while the dreamer tames and fattens the song obtained from his dream enemy (and thereby familiarizes it), the hunter has no contact with the infant animal—it is not a pet to him (and thus he does not familiarize it). In fact, while it is in his possession, it is not a pet at all. He simply transfers these infant creatures as a consequence of transferring a dead game animal. The paradigmatic image here is an infant monkey clinging to its dead mother’s fur. It is the dead monkey that the hunter transfers to a woman. Second, the hunter plays no part in raising the pet. This is not his business but the business of women who chose to raise it. Third, these pets—by definition the preserve of women—are not raised to be killed but to be loved. Any value that they might accrue to the women raising them does not result from their re-enemization and subsequent execution.

Finally, when we add a temporal dimension and investigate the development of pets and spirits, we find an inverse distribution of the trajectory of their agentic capacities. Pets are caught as infants, hence they relate to their owner as a surrogate. This relationship is prolonged as far as possible. A pet must be made to grow physically all the while retaining its juvenile traits, which are indulged at the expense of its maturation (see also Cormier 2003: 128). But pets age and, as they do so, they tend to become less attached to their owner and increasingly restless and violent, particularly to people other than their feeder (Cormier 2003: 121–122; Lea 2012: 344–345). When this happens, most Kanamari see no option but to give or exchange these pets with whites, distant Kanamari, or

other Amerindians.³⁰ People who coreside with the owner of a mature pet may also lose their patience when faced with its ambiguity. In one village there was a woman who kept two otters. Some two years after being caught, they started to become very hostile toward any visitors. One night, adolescent boys killed them so that they could receive guests unperturbed. Although their owner missed them (*ma hwa*), she admitted that they had grown too “violent/angry” (*nok*).

In one exceptional case, a Kanamari woman on the Jutaí raised a pet wooly monkey that was much older than any pet I encountered in the field.³¹ He became significantly agitated in the presence of anyone except the woman who fed him. His age was so advanced for a pet and his position in the household so singular that he was given a separate hammock in a designated place in the household. It appears that this pet had regained a measure of autonomy vis-à-vis his prior condition of dependence, a state of affairs that no other pet that I know of achieved (Figure 7).

With spirits, the opposite occurs. What I omitted from the story of Dyumi is that João Dias, too, was a powerful shaman, having been made a shaman through the magical capture of the jaguar heart Pima. When Dyumi captured João Dias, he also obtained Pima. In this case, Pima was what the Kanamari call an “old *dyohko*” (*dyohko kidak*), which means that it exists at a remove from a powerful *dyohko*, in this case, João Dias, the jaguar heart of a shaman who had just died. Dyumi told me many stories of how, at his command, João Dias would transform into a jaguar and travel, in the blink of an eye, to exact revenge on the Kulina, the Kanamari’s erstwhile enemies. Pima, by contrast, was “weak” (*diok tu*) and “just a *dyohko*” (*dyohko ti*). Dyumi fed it with tobacco snuff, but it never did anything.

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30. The moment in Kanamari pet keeping that appears closest to “transmission/re-enemization” in the Parakaná schema of familiarizing predation is when a woman grows tired of her pet and transfers it to another, who may kill and eat it. Like the dreamer, the woman who feeds her pet will never kill it, even after its transference in this way. However, unlike “transmission” in Parakaná *opetymo*, handing over unwanted pets is by no means a necessary or strategic moment in pet keeping. Although many acknowledged the possibility of the practice, I was aware of just one woman who raised a very old capybara, which she later swapped for a hammock with a man in a distant village. This man subsequently admitted to me that he had eaten it.
 31. I have never been to the Jutaí and so have not met this monkey nor its owner. The photograph and information comes from Victor Gil of CTI, whom I thank. The owner of this wooly monkey was a *Tsobom-dyapa* (Toucan-dyapa) woman, one of the formerly isolated Katukina speakers who were contacted by the Kanamari of the Jutaí in the 1980s.



Figure 7. Wooly monkey and his jaguar-pattern hammock (Photo: Victor Gil, CTI archives, 2014).

As spirits become “old spirits” they lose their capacity to magnify their owner. A shaman may have any number of such spirits, which comprise relatively nondescript appendices to a shaman’s identity. The most they can do is supply an epithet. The shaman Wayura, for instance, owned a very old *dyohko*, Ancestor Powu, whose name sometimes substituted for his own. Wayura was only called Ancestor Powu in contexts in which his own advanced age and reduced powers were stressed. It was thus a joke that mocked Wayura’s debilitation by associating him with his debilitated old spirit rather than any recognition of his power. Old *dyohko* may situate living shamans in a lineage of dead shamans, but this relationship is reduced to a fairly sterile, if not actually deleterious, identity. While pets thus become less dependent and docile as they mature, reverting to fierceness and regaining some of the agency that had been lost through the familiarization process, spirits decline in power as they age and undergo multiple processes of familiarization, becoming little more than heirlooms.

In this section, I have revealed the subtle differences between pet keeping and shamanism. Since it is pet keeping that has usually been appended to shamanism, its specificities effaced or relegated in the process, the remainder of this book emphasizes feeding bonds that are formally similar to the exigencies of pet

keeping, such as the relation between mother and child (Chapter Three) and between the Brazilian government and the Kanamari (Chapter Four), before returning to the significance of magical capture in ritual (Chapter Five). First, however, we must shift our discussion from relations of feeding and dependency to the categories they generate, which takes us to the Kanamari concept of the “owner.”

CHAPTER TWO

Mastering agency

Anyone who feeds another is the *-warah* of whomever or whatever he or she feeds. *-Warah* can designate the caretaker in parent–child relations and the woman or child who feeds a pet. A shaman who feeds a *dyohko* is the *-warah* of that *dyohko*. As we saw in the Introduction, *-warah* is the Kanamari term for “owner” and, consequently, “chief,” although today it coexists with loanwords such as *cacique* and *tuxaua*. The word appears in the majority of contexts in which an asymmetry is expressed and every time a feeding relation is identified. As with analogous words from other parts of Amazonia, “the category and its reciprocal terms designate a widespread mode of relationship that applies to humans, nonhumans, and things” (Fausto 2012b: 29).

All feeding relations generate a *-warah*, but not all *-warah* are described through feeding. In this more pervasive sense, the *-warah* can best be approached as a “salient pattern” (Kockelman 2013: 3), a fundamental aspect of how people interpret relations in the world—whether their own relations, those of others, or relations inferred from (and construed as immanent to) the world. It is a form that both constrains and affords possibilities for how the Kanamari inhabit the world and engage with others (see also Kockelman 2007b; Kohn 2013: Chapter 5), one that has a number of recurring determinations: *-warah* defines the singular in relation to multiple, autonomy in relation to dependency, the whole in relation to parts, owner in relation to owned, and origin in relation to derivation.

Although this book focuses on the articulation of feeding with *-warah*, a generic description of ownership is first required. I begin the chapter with an exploration of the grammatical features and semantic range of *-warah* to explain how it defines a specific type of ownership in which the owner is “magnified” in relation to what he or she owns. To add further precision to my description of the magnifying quality of ownership expressed in *-warah*, the second half of the chapter contrasts *-warah* to other possessive relations recognized by the Kanamari. The contrast will be explored by situating owner–pet relations, as described in the previous chapter, alongside the interactions the Kanamari have with their livestock—that is, with species like chickens and pigs that are foreign in origin, reproduce in captivity, are raised for subsistence or commercial purposes, and have no wild counterparts in the rainforest. I show how pets are owned while livestock are possessed and why this must necessarily be so.

THE BODY-OWNER

In possessive noun phrases, *-warah* is bound to an argument (hence the hyphen), which may be a noun or a pronominal prefix (Queixalós 2005: 181–182). In a construction such as X-*warah*, *-warah* can be defined as that which the argument (“X”) is dependent on, is a part of, is derived from, and/or belongs to. An X-*warah* phrase refers to an autonomous or singular entity that takes the argument as one of its dependent or derived entities. The resulting composite referent is autonomous but construed by the relations of dependency that sustain it. Thus, *tukuna-warah*, “person-owner,” means “chief,” designating the owner in relation to the people he owns. The chief is a singular figure who subsumes his people to himself, “an entity with relationship integrally implied” (Wagner 1991: 163). Some examples will help illustrate this definition further.¹

-Warah designates the largest or most prominent element in entities constituted of multiple parts. It refers, for example, to a tree trunk in relation to the tree’s branches, leaves, roots, and so forth, or to the main stream of a river basin in relation to its affluents and headwaters. What is conveyed is not only the size of the trunk vis-à-vis the rest of the tree or the main channel vis-à-vis

1. I would like to thank Paul Kockelman for helping me make sense of the grammatical determinations of *-warah* and clarifying many of the implications of my analysis of Kanamari concepts. Any mistakes are my own.

its affluents but also the role that the former play in consolidating the disparate elements of the latter into a singular unit: tree and river basin. The *-warah* does not denote the tree trunk (*omam nyanin*, literally “large wood”) or the river (*wah*) on their own; rather, it refers to the trunk and river in relation to their constituent parts, in a situation in which the dependence of the latter on the former is stressed.

At the same time, *-warah* may express the multiply constituted entity as a whole when apprehended through its relations to other entities (its parts) conceived to be subordinate to it. Thus a river basin (say, the Juruá) is a *-warah* in relation to its subsidiary river basins (its affluents and their affluents), and a tree is the *-warah* of smaller and younger plants in its vicinity. The same relation between many elements and their singular conjunction is conveyed in these cases, but the idea of derivation is also underscored: the Juruá conjoins its many affluents into a singular river basin and comprises their condition for existing,² while a large tree is the condition for the smaller trees (i.e., it is the parent species), just as one tree or group of trees may constitute the dominant or most conspicuous species in an environment. Where ecological relations are involved, a plant may be the *-warah* not only of other specimens of its own species but also of different plants, as long as they are perceived to be functionally dependent on it.

The *-warah* is similar to the Wayápi (Tupi-Guarani) word *-rovijā*:

The semantic traits of the term *-rovijā* . . . are the large size and preeminence (salience) that some individuals assume in relation to other members of the same group. Thus not all samaúma trees are considered chiefs (*-rovijā*), only a specific samaúma tree that, on a certain occasion, draws attention for its size and width in relation to others. Not all pequi trees are chiefs, only a specific tree that stands out in the landscape. . . . In these contexts *-rovijā* establishes and qualifies a relation between a term (a member) and the group (the category) to which it belongs. (Cabral de Oliveira 2012: 63–64)

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2. The idea that the largest stream is the condition for its tributaries may be somewhat counterintuitive for Westerners used to thinking of headwaters and streams “feeding” the larger channel. This idiom of smaller streams feeding larger ones is not only absent from the Kanamari language, it is also contradicted by their hydrological theories. In myth, the Juruá pre-exists all of its streams, which were created by the demiurge Tamakori who blew onto the banks of the Juruá, creating the paths for the future streams (see Chapter Five). Fluvial hydrology is simply not described in terms of “feeding.”

Like *-warah*, the term *-rovijā* can be used to refer to the largest channel in a river basin, to the “leader” in a pack of animals, to (human) chiefs, parents, and to the most prominent member of a group or category (see Grenand 1989: 462; Cabral de Oliveira 2012: 62–68).³

Portuguese-speaking Kanamari admit their difficulty in translating *-warah* in a consistent manner. Instead, they provide a number of contextual glosses that take into account the nature of the argument. These include the Portuguese for “trunk” (*tronco*), “chief” (*chefe, cacique, tuxaua*), “big” (*grande*), and “the place of” (*o lugar de*, i.e., the origin of something or someone). However, the most common and conceptually most wide-ranging and flexible glosses are “body” (*corpo*) and “owner” (*dono*), as Poroya first revealed to me when correcting my clumsy question (see Introduction). In most cases when I asked bilingual Kanamari to translate *-warah*, I was told that it means either “body” or “owner” or that both translations would be correct. Although contextual glosses are necessary in pragmatic circumstances, I submit that, in the Kanamari language, they make little sense. When it occurs in a noun phrase, *-warah* always designates an asymmetrical relation that can be synthesized as either the “body of” or “owner of,” but also as “chief of,” “main tributary of,” and so forth. For the sake of brevity, I shall render *-warah* as “body-owner [of],” a composite of the two most common translations for *-warah*.

Translating *-warah* as “body-owner” poses a number of problems, not least being the fact that it is composed of two words that do not exist, *per se*, in the Kanamari language. There is no “body” in Kanamari, only a “body-owner”—although there are different ways of referring to the physical aspects of persons and animals, as we shall see shortly. Equally, there is no “owner,” only an entity that becomes a body-owner in the process of determining another—although there are ways of referring to one’s possessions in Kanamari, as I discuss at the end of the present chapter. But the neologism “body-owner” has the advantage of retaining the two most common interlinguistic glosses provided by the Kanamari, thus permitting an intuitive understanding of *-warah* via its encounter with the limitations and affordances of the Portuguese language when the Kanamari use it.

In conformity with the trunk as the body-owner of a tree and the main channel of a river basin as the body-owner of its affluents, the “body” is only

3. For a similar Marubo (Panoan) concept, see Welper (2009: 184) and Cesarino (2016); for a Kraho (Gê) example, see Morim de Lima (2017).

referred to as *-warah* when it expresses a relation of dependence. *-Warah* can be used to establish distinctions within the component parts of a body as well as refer to a body in asymmetrical relation to other bodies. Thus, when speaking of human and animal bodies, *-warah* may designate the torso in relation to the extremities. The torso on its own (i.e., independent of the relation to its extremities) is simply called *tyon*, a word with the more restricted meaning of “chest.” Likewise, if the physical or sensible aspect of the body is the intended referent, the speaker will use *hai*, “flesh,” or *dak*, “skin.” *-Warah* is used when the speaker wishes to draw attention to the distinction of, or relationship between, the torso and those parts of the body that are understood to be dependent on it. Consequently, as far as the constitutive parts of the body are concerned, *-warah* communicates both the salience of the torso and its singularity as the appendage that conjoins all other elements of the body. *-Warah* can furthermore designate the body as a whole (i.e., trunk, limbs, head, etc.) when conceptualized in relation to other bodies that are derived from and/or dependent on it. Thus, a mother is the *-warah* of her newborn (see Chapter Three), and a chief is a *-warah* of his people, their reason for coresiding and the origin of the settlement in which they live (see Chapter Four).⁴

In pet keeping, a woman is the body-owner of the pet she feeds, since it belongs to her (to love or to trade away) and depends on her for its survival. Anyone who wishes to refer to this woman in relation to her pet will call her *a-warah*, “its body-owner.” The pet, in turn, is not the body-owner of anything.⁵

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4. Despite the universally celebrated centrality of the “body” in native Amazonian sociocosmologies (e.g., Seeger, da Matta, and Viveiros de Castro 1979; McCallum 1996; Vilaça 2005), few (if any) Amazonian languages have words that can unproblematically be translated as “body,” in the sense of a whole entity composed of functional parts (Overing 1999: 94; Fausto 2007: 522). Concepts that anthropologists usually translate as “body” generally have either infracorporeal or supracorporeal referents. In the former cases, the terms usually mean “flesh” or “meat,” like the Kanamari *hai*, the Candoshi *vanōtsi* (Surrallès 2003: 36–37), or the Wari’ *kwere*, which also refers to a “way of being” (Vilaça 2005: 449–450). In the latter cases, they include the Kanamari *-warah*, which refers to the body as a term that singularizes asymmetrical relations, much like the Bakairi *sodo* (Collet 2006). In some cases, the notion of the body as an ensemble of parts applies to the corpse, but not to any word designating the living person (e.g., Leite 2016: 156).
 5. This includes an eclipsing of the possible body-owner status of the pet’s torso in relation to its limbs and so forth. Although the Kanamari, when asked, accept that, say, a pet squirrel monkey’s torso is the *-warah* of its limbs (as with wild animals), they never speak of the pet in this way. The owner-pet relation incorporates any

The Kanamari have no way of referring to the pet through the concept of the body-owner without subsuming it to the woman who feeds it, although it may simply be called “pet”—a state that implies an ownership relation—or, in the case of pets who have lived in the village for some time, by its vocative term. This relation displays all of the features of the *-warah* that I have just presented: it refers to the “largest” element or the “whole” in the part–whole relation (i.e., to the woman), to the relation itself (*a-warah* includes the pet within the owner), to the dependence of the pet on its owner, and to the constitutive asymmetry of the relation between them.

While a lexical unity exists between the different manifestations of the body-owner, the *-warah* is not consistently paired with a uniform term that holds across different contexts. There is no “body-owned,” no neat, categorical mirror for the body-owner. Instead, each instance of the body-owner needs to be scrutinized for its appropriate reciprocal. Nonetheless, all the possible reciprocal terms for *-warah* mark the subordinate status of the entity that locates its body-owner in someone or something else, meaning that they are semantically related even if they are lexically unrelated. Subordinate status is marked in two ways: either by using terms such as “pet” and “child” (including “son” and “daughter”), both of which are linked to notions of filiation; or by taking a term that normally implies no relation of subordination and marking it with a possessive pronoun. The former applies to pet keeping, as we have just seen, while the latter applies to shamanic familiarization, where the shaman addresses the spirit he feeds as *atya dyohko*, “my spirit.” It also applies to relations between chiefs and followers. Followers call a chief *tyo-warah*, “our body-owner,” and the chief calls his followers *atya tukuna*, “my people,” or *atya opatyn*, “my children,” in the latter instance combining both ways of marking dependent status.

Note that, in many instances, *-warah* phrases are not used in direct address, i.e., they are not and cannot be used by the subordinate party to refer to its body-owner. This is because they involve relations between adults, on the one hand, and entities that lack the capacity for speech, such as pets and newborns

relations internal to the pet. This is not a specific feature of pet keeping but, rather, a general feature of *-warah* as a concept which possesses self-similar properties replicated at different scales (see Costa 2010: 184–185; Mosko 2005: 24–28). Thus, a human torso may be the *-warah* of its limbs when a person is the referent, but when the same individual is defined as the *-warah* of another person, this relation is backgrounded.

(but not spirits), on the other. In these cases, *-warah* phrases are only used by third parties referring to a body-owner and its/his/her dependents.

INALIENABLE POSSESSIONS

My discussion of *-warah* in this book will be limited by two constraints which always occur together, one ethnographic and the other linguistic. The ethnographic constraint that interests me is how the body-owner emerges from the feeding relation. Not all of the examples of the body-owner given above are spoken of in terms of feeding. I have never heard the Kanamari say, for example, that a torso feeds its limbs or that a tree trunk feeds its branches. However, they do say that a woman feeds her pet, a shaman feeds his familiar spirits, a mother feeds her child, and a chief feeds his people. Considering the articulation between feeding as a relational disposition and the body-owner as a concept, we can restate the definition of *ayub-man* provided in the previous chapter in light of the definition of the *-warah* provided in this one: to feed is to cause an entity to be dependent on a body-owner, to be part of a body-owner, to belong to a body-owner. In Chapter Five, I examine relational dispositions other than feeding that sustain body-owners, but, even in these examples, my aim will be to show how they modulate into feeding.

Linguistically, I am interested in *-warah* as an element in possessive noun phrases of the X-*warah* type. These possessive noun phrases fall into a grammatical class known as “inalienable possession,” which typically marks “intrinsic, intimate, and obligatory” relations between the possessor and the possessee (Aikhenvald and Dixon 2013: 4, 8–10; see also Chappel and McGregor 1996; Keen 2013: 189). In Kanamari, inalienable possession is a simple synthetic construct that expresses direct grammatical possession. All that is needed to mark inalienable possession in Kanamari is word order (possessor–possessee), whereas alienable possession must incorporate morphemes and abide by other morphosyntactic constraints (see below; also see Queixalós and dos Anjos 2006: 47–48).⁶ Kanamari possessive constructs thus agree with the principle of iconic

6. Possessive noun phrases of the inalienable type can incorporate the morpheme *na*, which marks for definite participant. Thus, *tukuna-warah* means “chief,” while *tukunana-warah* refers to a specific chief, such as the chief of a particular village. The morpheme marks the possessor such that *tukunana-warah* becomes *a-warah*, “his/her/its chief,” when the definite noun is replaced by a possessive pronoun. The

motivation in grammar, which predicts that inalienable possessives will involve less formal marking than alienable possessives (see Aikhenvald and Dixon 2013: 8).

Furthermore, in Kanamari, as far as I know, all inalienable possessions are “absolutive inalienables” (Kockelman 2010: 18; Ball 2012: 311), which never occur outside of possessive constructs. Generic reference is framed either by the name of the class/species or by an appropriate pronoun. For instance, to refer to human arms, the Kanamari will either refer to *tukuna-pam*, “human-arms,” or to *tyo-pam*, “our-arms.” The absolute nature of inalienable possession is true even of animal body parts during butchering, which are always (generically) owned by the name of the species being processed. In these cases, though, the body part is always qualified by the term *hai*, “flesh/meat,” indicating that it has been dismembered. Thus, a person who receives the arm of a wooly monkey to cook may say that it is *atyā kamudya-pambai*, “my (alienable) wooly monkey-arm-flesh (inalienable)” and never **atyā pambai*, “my (alienable) arm-flesh.” In other words, inalienable possessions must always be grammatically possessed, even when they are actually alienated from their grammatical possessors and placed under the control of another.⁷

use of the evidential determiner is of limited importance to my argument, so I shall restrict my discussion to generic reference (i.e., to constructions without *na*). See Queixalós (2005) for a different interpretation of the *na* morpheme in Kanamari, which relates it to the valency of predicate phrases.

7. The only exceptions I know to the absolute character of Kanamari inalienable possessives are neologisms. For instance, the Kanamari word *-ba* designates upper or fore appendages situated at the extremity of complex entities (those composed of multiple elements). It can thus designate the hands (of humans), the forepaws (of animals), or the leaves (of a plant). Since the Portuguese word for “leaf,” *folha*, also designates a “sheet” of paper, the Kanamari have adapted **ba* to translate the Portuguese expression for “sheet of paper” (Portuguese: *folha de papel*; Kanamari: *papel oba*) into their language. They have also adopted **ba* to translate the Portuguese *nota*, which refers to a “bill” of currency (Portuguese: *nota de dinheiro*; Kanamari: *dinheiro oba*). This association between “sheet” and “bill” is probably due to their historical link: during the years of rubber extraction, many bosses gave the Kanamari slips of paper with instructions that were to be given to selected merchants, who would then pass on the specified goods to them. Sheets of paper from a boss were as good as money, as it were, and hence both are qualified by the same neologisms in the Kanamari language. Note, however, that, for both these linguistic innovations, the possessive prefix must be substituted by the morpheme *o-*, which designates a less representative token of a class (as discussed in Chapter One), hence stressing the contrived and approximative usages implied.

In the Kanamari language, inalienable possessive constructs usually designate whole-part relations, such as a body in relation to its parts (e.g., *wiri-ki*, “peccary-head,” *tukuna-ib*, “person-tooth,” i.e., a human tooth) and a person or an animal in relation to their immaterial components (e.g., *tukuna-ikonanin*, “person-soul,” *tukuna-wadik*, “person-name,” *bara-wadik*, “game name,” i.e., the name of an animal species). Intrinsic parts of things are also related in the same way, such as the handle of an ax (*tyowi-wako*, “ax-handle”) or the door of a house (*bak-ono*, “house-door”), as are spatial associations (*bak-aomakana*, “next to the house,” literally “at a half of the house”). Inalienable possession is also a feature of some, though not all, kinship terms. These are fairly standard elements in any inclusive account of those things marked as inalienable possessions cross-linguistically: “the category [of inalienable possession] often includes body parts and kin relations, part-whole or spatial relations, and culturally important possessed items” (Kockelman 2010: 22). To my knowledge, the latter is the only class in lists of this kind that the Kanamari do not mark with direct possession.

Though what can or must be inalienably possessed varies cross-linguistically, Kockelman (2010: 27) shows that one of the characteristics that they share is that inalienable possessions “ontologically classify”: “possessing such objects (as types), be it physically or discursively, is almost a necessary and sufficient condition for being fully and prototypically human” (Kockelman 2010: 35–36). Of course, as we have just seen, even inanimate things inalienably possess parts of themselves, but this only strengthens the link between inalienable possession, animacy, and agency, since “the number of such objects individuals possess correlates with their degree of personhood” (Kockelman 2010: 36). The quantity and quality of inalienable possessions are a direct index of social capacity. In brief, the more grammatically inalienable possessions an entity has, the more likely is the possessor to be animate and display greater agency than those with fewer inalienable possessions.⁸

8. Kockelman (2007a: 351–352) advances two further points concerning the relation between inalienable possession and personhood: first, inalienable possessions ontologically individuate (i.e., they are tokens of specific individuals); and second, they historically and biographically trace (i.e., they are palimpsests of individuals and groups). These points are highly pertinent to the Amazonian case (see, e.g., Sztutman 2009: 68), although I am unable to discuss them to the degree they would merit in this book.

Kockelman's theory is apposite to Amazonian anthropology because the things that he includes in lists of inalienable possessions are also those things that have traditionally been described by the ethnological literature as playing a pivotal role in the ontological classification of persons or humans in the region.⁹ All humans can be expected to have body parts, names, souls, and kinspeople, and these things may well be what defines humanity. Any Amazonian theory of personhood must be built on the interrelations between these elements and how they are affected by other factors. At the same time, these are also those aspects, features, or relations that, when acquired and owned in excess, augment the capacities of people that accumulate them. Possessing them in abundance marks a person's singularity *vis-à-vis* other people. They are what Fausto (2007: 509) calls a "supplement," or what Taylor (1996: 209) refers to as "a condition of enhanced selfhood," conferring creativity or agency to those who acquire more of them.

Let me be clear that I do not mean to imply that immaterial qualities, body parts, and kinship terms are grammatically inalienable possessions in every Amazonian language. Such a blanket statement would not only be untrue, but we lack sufficient data to assert that this is even the statistically predominant pattern. Nor do I mean that grammatically inalienable possessions are immutable. Quite the contrary, as I will show: that which is inalienably possessed changes regularly, and this change is part of what makes them capable of both creating and altering humans. What is immutable is that possessing a range of inalienable possessions is a necessary condition for being a human person, and that possessing them in excess (either sequentially or simultaneously) is a sufficient condition for being a magnified person.¹⁰

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9. Following up on Hallowell's (1960) pioneering work, Amazonian anthropology has used "personhood" and "humanity" as different but related analytical terms. According to Viveiros de Castro (2014: 58–59), the concept of the person is "anterior and logically superior to the concept of the human," the latter being the reflexive mode of the collective. In other words, "person" is a basic capacity for social interaction, "human" is the form that anyone with this capacity assumes for themselves and their congeners. Alternatively, it can be said that "person" is the unmarked concept while "human" is marked (see Leite 2013 on conflicting notions of "humanity"). In the broad terms in which I am discussing inalienable possessions, this implies that any person apprehends him- or herself with certain elementary attributes that tend to converge in human form but is by no means limited to that form (see also Santos-Granero 2009: 135).
 10. The presence of "body parts" in this list may seem specious. However, it makes sense when we consider that: (1) throughout Amazonia, body ornaments both mark important life cycle events (and hence signify or enable the acquisition of

Likewise, there are many qualities and characteristics of magnified people in Amazonia that, in most indigenous languages, do not seem to be owned as grammatically inalienable possessions. Spirits and songs, to take two classic examples, are obtained from the exterior, often via predatory means, and converted into capacities for producing (beautifying, curing, enhancing) people in the interior of society, but they are rarely linguistically construed as inalienable possessions: instead, these introjected elements are typically possessed in predicative form, thus making them grammatically indistinguishable from any other possession. This is true too for the Kanamari. Shamans communicate their ownership of familiar spirits through alienable possessive constructs (*atyā dyohko*, “my (alienable) spirit”), which are also how ritual specialists speak of their songs (*atyā waik*, “my (alienable) song”).

However, spirits and songs are different from names, souls, body parts, and kinship terms in that they are constituents of certain types of magnification, such as those that produce shamans and ritual specialists, but they are not elementary, *sine qua non* indexes of humanity. All humans have a name, and receiving a first name is a sure sign that a child, for instance, can be raised and cared for, or that it can otherwise attain a fully human status (e.g., Crocker 1985: 63–67). This name will later change, or new names be acquired, but this will always be a process that traces back to a first name obtained in early childhood (e.g., Gonçalves 1993: 42; Ewart 2013: 197–204). In contrast, children do not usually need to have associated songs and spirits to be considered human¹¹ and to be nurtured and raised by their parents and coresidents. In Amazonia, there seems to be a correlation between inalienable possession as a possible (if not always actual) grammatical class, native concepts of the person, and the acquisition of supplementary competency.

greater capacity) and are considered somatic aspects of their possessors (Seeger 1975; Turner 1980, 1995; Erikson 1996; Miller 2009, 2015; Santos-Granero 2009: 6–8); and (2) the acquisition of body parts from enemies is one of the paradigmatic examples of how predatory activity enhances the capacities of those who transform its products into trophies (e.g., Menget 1993; Sterpin 1993; Fausto 2012a: 257–260).

11. Songs and spirits may be found at the origin of children, as principles enabling the fertilization of women, for instance (Fausto 2012a: 250–256). However, this is a capacity accrued to adults, who thereby enhance their own fertility. Newborns themselves do not have songs and spirits.

A KANAMARI THEORY OF AGENCY

In contrast to other inalienable possessions, *-warah* does not align personhood and agency. In this case, inalienable possession and semantic ownership are inversely distributed, the former indicating humanity, the latter augmented social capacities. One may inalienably possess a body-owner, but this relationship immediately construes the grammatical possessor as the entity that is semantically owned, while the entity that is grammatically possessed is construed as the semantic owner. In sum, *having* a body-owner makes one a person, *being* a body-owner makes one a magnified person.

To phrase this idea in terms of the development of the human person, we may say that having a body-owner is a lowest common denominator of humanity, whereas being a body-owner is necessary for personal growth. Being a body-owner indexes a person's enhanced capacities through the incorporation of the actions of dependents to his or her own actions. Apprehended as a singularity, this composite person who subsumes others to him or herself is the Kanamari figure of an agent. Indeed, the body-owner is to its dependents as the agent is to its patients, the whole to its parts, the owner to its owned.

We have already encountered the humanizing effect of having a body-owner in both pet keeping and shamanism. Feeding is the basic operation for introducing the infant animal into the domestic space, imbuing the future pet with an appetite for the feeder. It is the precondition for the eventual development of more enduring bonds of affection. Grammatically possessing a *-warah* thus communicates a generic capacity for proper (human) behavior without being coterminous with the behavior itself, since an animal may be made a pet through feeding without its body-owner necessarily developing intimate ties with it. In shamanism, feeding provides the primary means for subduing the activity of the spirit, making it conform to village life, or at least refrain from disrupting it. In both cases, feeding makes the feeder into a body-owner of the fed-dependent. Possessing a body-owner is, therefore, indeed a requirement for inhabiting the moral space of humanity.

Possessing a body-owner is also a necessary and vital step in the life cycle of Kanamari persons, a theme I shall develop in more detail in the next chapter. As in many parts of Amazonia, human bodily form at birth is an indication of the newborn's humanity, but remains insufficient by itself to determine its human condition (Gow 2000: 47; Taylor 1996: 205; Vilaça 2002). Insofar as feeding makes one a *-warah*, the first indication of the child's potentially human

condition is the moment when it suckles at its mother's breast. A woman becomes a mother (*niamá*) and a body-owner of a child when she feeds it, first with breast milk, later with food that she cooks. If the mother dies while the child is young, it is imperative to the child's survival that someone else—typically a mother's sister or the mother's mother—assume a maternal role, thus becoming the child's *-warah*. What is absolutely integral to the child's development is having a *-warah* who feeds it.

Kockelman's theory of inalienable possession and personhood rightly predicts that possessing the *-warah* "provides relatively incontrovertible evidence to others—in the sense of being minimally ambiguous and maximally public—that one occupies the status of person" (Kockelman 2010: 35–36). Having a *-warah* is an inescapable fact of Kanamari existence, one that, in conjunction with evidence of other inalienable possessions, such as a prototypically human likeness (i.e., having the necessary body parts), bestowal of a name, behavior which indicates having a soul (e.g., dreaming), and so forth, formally establishes one's humanity. All people will recognize others as their body-owner, at least in some contexts and under certain circumstances, even if exactly who that body-owner is varies with age and as a function of the person's engagement in different relational contexts. Having a body-owner is a sociologically inalienable condition arising from vital relations of feeding.

Yet because it arises from these relations of feeding, having a body-owner is an index of relatively reduced capacities. Feeding a pet deprives it of its future agency, blocking its development into an exemplar of its species (by removing its teeth, claws, feathers; by feeding it cooked food; and so forth). Feeding a spirit constrains its movement and bends its will to that of the shaman. Otherness is tamed, such that animals and spirits can no longer act out of their own volition, which they relinquish to their feeder (see Fausto and Costa 2013: 159). This displacement of agency through taming procedures is recurrent throughout lowland South America, for instance among the Nivakle of the Chaco:

The term *nitóya*, translated into Spanish as “manco” [tame, mild] is the negative of *tóyi*: “good (persons), right, ferocious, wild (animal).” . . . These apparently contradictory glosses become intelligible when we consider that *tóyi* derives from *tói*: “to have consciousness, knowledge, power, be self-aware, remember.” Thus a “right” animal is one that “has consciousness” of what it is: it appears *tóyi*, wild and ferocious. A *nitóya* or captive animal is an “unconscious” animal. (Stern 1993: 59–60).

In terms of Kanamari sociology, a *-warah* construct includes the party that is fed as part of a higher-order term, the body-owner (i.e., the feeder). While both the feeder and the fed are, in some way and within certain limits, human, inasmuch as the values of the former (“knowing the land”) are extended to or imposed upon the latter, it is the grammatically possessed feeder who is the “whole.” He or she is the one who displays a greater “degree of personhood,” in Kockelman’s (2010: 36) terms.

We have seen that *-warah* does not denote a substantive entity defined through its physicality but signifies the objectification of an asymmetrical relation. The asymmetry of the *-warah* is not only a feature of structural positions in a relational schema: it also has real effects on how the terms placed in relation are constituted. The referent of the term *-warah* (within a given relationship and context) has the capacity to act with and for those that he or she contains by aligning their activities with his or her own (see Strathern 1988: 274–288). For the Kanamari, agency does not inhere in individuals, but is always a matter of objectifying—channeling and coordinating—the activities of others toward some collective end.¹²

In his recent discussion of kinship as “the mutuality of being,” Sahlins stresses that, just as kinship makes experience “transpersonal” by diffusing it among those who are kin to each other, so agency is “a function of the conjunction, located in and as the relationship it also realizes in action. Agency is in the unity of the duality” (Sahlins 2013: 52–53). For Sahlins, agency has a quality of “we-ness,” being distributed among those who are conjoined in action. In contrast to the diffuse agency posited by Sahlins, the Kanamari render the capacity to act as a function of one term of the relation, the body-owner, whose position is constructed through a vested asymmetry. For any action performed in the

12. By “agency” I am referring to “a culturally prescribed framework for thinking about causation” (Gell 1998: 17). This approach to agency harks back to (and emerges from) a late-twentieth century anthropological (and, more generally, sociological) concern with the classic problems of intentionality, the power to act and to affect wider structures through acts (see Ortner 2006: 129–153; Kockelman 2007b: 375–376, for reviews). It is the specifics of a Kanamari theory of agency that I hope to elucidate. “Agency” can also be understood in a more universal way, such as in the cross-linguistic sense in which a given argument relates to the semantics of a verb, e.g., “I hit him,” “he cried,” etc., or in the semiotic sense in which anyone capable of interpreting another (e.g., recognizing another as the body-owner of someone or something) displays agency (see Kockelman 2013), none of which will be investigated in this book.

context of this bond, one of the terms of the duality—namely, the one who feeds the other(s)—will display greater initiative and power or will be attributed these qualities by others. Agency is thus not equally distributed among the terms that constitute the *-warah*, since the person who occupies the encompassing limit of the duality will ultimately (be held to) set the course of future actions.

Sahlins (2013: 53) proposes a definition of agency as “shared intentionality” as an alternative to Strathern’s emphasis on agency as a quality of the singular person who “acts with another in mind” (Strathern 1988: 272). Regardless of the relative value of each approach as social theory, for the Kanamari agency lies in the “singular person” as constituted in an asymmetrical relation of feeding another or others, thereby construing the will of the latter as his or her own.

This agency is constructed both discursively and in practice, as the following example makes clear. In the summer months, the Kanamari leave their villages to set up temporary camps in the forest, where they hunt, gather, and search for turtle eggs on the river beaches. Typically, the village will break up into domestic units, each household traveling at its own time and in its own direction. The decision on when and where to travel starts to be taken as soon as the rains begin to recede, involving family discussions at night or in the morning. A husband, his wife, and their adolescent children will all suggest certain lakes they might visit or hunting grounds they should pass through. While everyone in the household offers some input, it is the body-owner of the house who ultimately announces the decision by saying something along the lines of *X-na-tatam adu wabo*, “I will go toward X,” where X can be the name of a lake, a camp site, a person, or village. Once his intentions have been voiced, anyone in the household asked about their plans for the summer months will reply with some variant of *Y-na-iwana adu wabo*, *X-na-tatam*, “I will follow Y, toward X.” X is the same place that the body-owner declared his intention to travel toward, while Y may be either his name, a kinship term, or *i-warah*, “my body-owner.” All other residents of the household therefore say that they will follow their body-owner. Although they have a say in the deliberations and their opinions may even be decisive, it is through the utterance of the head of the household that a possibility becomes a reality. Collective action takes a singular form.

Body-owners are only referred to, therefore, when they are the loci of activity. This means that, for the Kanamari, an individual, solitary “body” never actually materializes, since any activity in which the body-owner is manifest requires at least two participants, one of whom will be the body-owner of the other. The

Kanamari word that translates as “alone,” *padya*, literally means “empty.” People who are “empty” lack relations in which they feed others or are fed by them. They are therefore neither the body-owner of others nor do they themselves have a body-owner. Such a state is dangerous and befalls people who, for example, become lost in the forest. Lacking asymmetrical relations, they run the risk of becoming a “spirit-soul,” *ikonanin*, errantly wandering from place to place (Costa 2010: 175–178).

As far as I know, the only time an individual body may be referred to as *-warah* is when it is undergoing a process of dissolution, such as when an ailment causes the soul to wander far from a body. In these cases, it may be said that the ill individual is the “body-owner” of his or her “soul” (*ikonanin*) or “blood” (*mimi*). This usage is typical of shamanic cures, as the shaman calls the soul-blood back to its body(-owner). The use of “body-owner” is here part of efforts to restore the patient’s health and to resume his or her kinship relations by revealing that the person is made up of an integral and constitutive asymmetrical relation while evoking the kinship between the patient and those who care for him or her. The same relation between the body-owner and the soul-blood became explicit in Kanamari efforts to describe to me the constitution of the person, when they would often explain that the “soul” depends on its body-owner like a child depends on its parent (Costa 2010: 181–185). These instances are evidence that the body-owner is a feature of healthy persons constituted by “healthy” relations; its evocation during illness intentionally looks to restore this state by positing its emergence after the cure is effected. The Kanamari never speak of an individual who is lost or orphaned, who therefore lacks body-owner bonds, as being or having a body-owner; in fact, they will often describe him or her as being “almost a soul” (*-ikonanin nahān*), which means lacking any relations, (almost) dead (see Chapter Three).¹³

13. The same applies to animals, the prototypical example being a peccary that gets lost from a herd and finds itself “empty.” Widowed and divorced women (but not men), can be called by a kinship term followed by *padya* (e.g., *atyā niama padya*, “my empty mother”). *Am padya*, “to be empty,” is also the Kanamari expression for “bone” (which is what remains of a person “empty” of his or her flesh). Perhaps for this reason, *padya* is also used for the recently deceased, in the sense of “the late so-and-so” (those long deceased are generally called *kidarak*, “elder,” particularly if they have surviving younger namesakes). On loneliness as emptiness, see also Lagrou 2000; Rodgers 2013: 93–94; Sterpin 1993: 59–60.

TO OWN AND TO POSSESS

The Kanamari language also recognizes alienable possessions in noun phrases or predicative possession in clause-level constructions that incorporate possession verbs. Alienable possessions include those things that have a less intimate and more contingent relation with the possessor, linking the possessor and the possessee through the possessive form *nawa*.¹⁴ *Poroya nawa oba* is thus “Poroya’s tobacco,” the tobacco that Poroya may have on or with him at a given time. Anything that can be possessed through alienable noun phrases can also be possessed through predicative phrases that include verbs that can mean “to have” or “to possess.” One of these is *warah*, which, in these contexts, only admits translation into verbs indicating possession:

Question: Oba warah tu kidik?

“Do you have tobacco?”

Reply: Oba warah adu tyo or Wa warah

“I have tobacco” or “I have [it]”

This sort of predicative phrase does not make the person who has tobacco into a body-owner of tobacco. However, such a construct is possible and occurs in mythology. In the myth of “Paca, Deer, and Tapir,” which is a myth about the proper relations between allies, Deer is said to be *Oba-Warah*, “The Body-Owner of Tobacco,” and all other beings have to go to him to obtain it. Deer’s power as a shaman derives from this exclusive relation of dominion in a world where tobacco existed nowhere else.¹⁵ In the discursive exchange above, by contrast, one person is simply asking another whether they have tobacco on them or stored away, perhaps so that they can take snuff together or maybe to exchange it for something else.

In the following discussion, I refer to the body-owner bond as a relation of “ownership” and to relations implied by other forms of grammatical possession,

14. Alienable possession noun phrases can also be formed using designated possessive pronouns. For instance: *atyā hak* is “my [alienable] house” (cf. *i-warah*, “my [inalienable] body-owner”); *inowa hak* is “your [alienable] house” (cf. *no-warah*, “your [inalienable] body-owner”); and so forth (see Queixalós 2005: 179–184 for a discussion of Katukina pronominal paradigms).

15. For a transcription and analysis of this myth, see Costa (2007: 225–237). For other versions, see Tastevin (n.d.b: 7) and Carvalho (2002: 296–298).

including alienable possession noun phrases and predicative constructions, as a relation of “possession.” “Ownership” designates a constitutive relation, one in which both the (body-)owner and that which is owned are defined via the relation. They do not exist as such outside of it. “Possession” designates a contingent relation, one in which the possessor and the possessee exist independently of the relation. It is extrinsic to them.

An association between, on the one hand, ownership and metafiliation, and, on the other, possession and contingency, appears to be common in Amazonia. The Urarina of Peru, for example, use a word (*ijaeñe*) for the “owner/master,” which is often interchangeable with the term for mother (*neba*), and another (*erora*) for the ordinary possessor of material things (Walker 2013: 170–171). This dissociation between ownership and possession seems to account for Viveiros de Castro’s (1992: 345–346, note 33) observation that, among the Araweté, the “juridical notion of ownership” (what I call possession) is the least important aspect of the figure of the “owner” or “master” (*ñā*). This is to be expected, since the “owner” synthesizes a constitutive relation of asymmetry rather than any “juridical notion.”

Nonetheless, the fact that *-warah* can be used both in noun phrase constructs, where it designates an asymmetrical and recursive relation that I gloss as “body-owner,” and in predicative phrases, where it is used much like the English verb “to have,” might suggest that its focal meaning is contained in the latter form. Since the possessive relation reappears in both grammatical forms, it would not be unreasonable to set out from the hypothesis that *warah* means “to have,” that this sort of clause-level possession is its conceptual structure, and that, for reasons unknown, it was combined with other meanings in noun phrase constructions where it assumed the derivative ideas of recursivity, corporeality, and singularity, all of which were added to what would be the purportedly “core” meaning. It would not matter whether this semantic and grammatical extension of the *-warah* is strictly conceptual or whether it also tells us something about the phylogenetic development of the Kanamari language (and perhaps the ontogenetic process of its acquisition). What would seem to matter is that *warah* is a word that axiomatically means “to have.”

Despite its intuitive appeal, this interpretation is probably false. Although I lack the competence and the data to analyze the Kanamari language in rigorous semantic terms, much less to reconstruct its historical development, an ethnography of the use of *-warah* in diverse contexts suggests that, if anything, it is possession that is derived from ownership. I base this hypothesis on three

facts. First, the contexts in which predicative use of *warah* occurs are rare. Alienable possessive relations are more commonly expressed through possessive pronouns or through the use of other verbs of possession.¹⁶ Second, the vast majority of the contexts in which *warah* refers to a relationship of possession are drawn from the domain of Kanamari relations with white people, that is, the nonindigenous foreigners whom they have known since the latter half of the nineteenth century. Predicative *warah* phrases thus seem to cluster around a specific domain which is historically quite recent. This makes its use much more contextual and restrictive than the body-owner, which designates a basic Kanamari relational schema.

Tobacco, which I mentioned above, is a case in point. Tobacco plays a central role in shamanism, although the Kanamari did not grow the plant during my fieldwork, either because they lacked the seeds or because it was said to encourage thieves to raid their gardens. Whatever the reason, the Kanamari must obtain locally produced tobacco from the nearby town of Atalaia do Norte. The whites know that the Kanamari desire tobacco so, when they interact with the Kanamari, they often have packets of shag to swap for garden produce or domesticated animals (typically chickens). Tobacco is, at the moment at least, an operator in relations between white people and the Kanamari, hence falling into the category of objects involved in interethnic contact.¹⁷

I cannot, of course, claim that all uses of *warah* in predicative phrases occur in the sphere of interethnic contact. Indeed it would neither be possible nor productive to heuristically isolate such a sphere of social activities from other spheres. Nonetheless, the fact that possession of Western goods

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16. Three such verbs are *wauk*, *datam*, and *ho*. *Wauk* can be translated as “to exist” and is similar to the Portuguese *haver* or the French *avoir*. *Wa-wauk tu*, “it does not exist,” is a common reply to questions imputing possession, such as “Do you have a canoe?” (reply: “It does not exist,” i.e., I do not have a canoe). *Datam*, loosely “there is,” is a further common reply to questions concerning whether someone (or some place or thing) has something (question: “Do you have a canoe?”; reply: “There is,” i.e., I do have a canoe). *Ho* can be translated as “with” and is much more common than *warah* in predicative phrases. One of the Kanamari glosses for domestic pigs, for example, is *wiri-tya-honin*, “a peccary with a tail.”
 17. Notably, the acquisition of tobacco from distant others and its subsequent local treatment squares with well-known Amazonian theories of the power of alterity and its familiarization (Overing 1984: 84). Despite the importance of tobacco for native Amazonians, many peoples throughout the region always obtain imported tobacco or complement locally grown tobacco with foreign variants (Agostini Cerqueira 2015: 130–131; Russell and Rahman 2015: 3).

is expressed by dedicated or irregular possessive forms is an understudied aspect of Amazonian languages. In Panará (Gê), for instance, “*kia* is used principally, but not exclusively, to mark possession of goods which are foreign to the culture of the speakers of this language, that is, those known or acquired through contact with the white man” (Dourado 2002: 99; see also Van Velthem 2000: 70–71). The distinction drawn above, between ownership and possession, is thus redoubled, in some cases, by a grammatical or lexical bifurcation of possession of indigenous material culture and possession of Western goods.

The third and perhaps most compelling reason why it seems likely that *-warah* has assumed connotations of possession through contact with non-indigenous peoples is that *warah* is the Kanamari word for “[Western] merchandise” (*mercadoria*, as Portuguese-speaking Kanamari translate it). *Warah* includes industrial goods, tobacco, and Western foodstuffs such as sugar, salt, and coffee, but it excludes Kanamari material culture or food. Most things that are typically possessed by the predicative *warah* can be called by the noun *warah* (but see below on livestock). Grammatically, “merchandise” is distinguished from “body-owner” by whether it is alienably or inalienably possessed: *atya warah* is “my (alienable) merchandise,” whereas *i-warah* is “my (inalienable) body-owner.” It is, of course, impossible to know what the X-*warah*/*warah* distinction may have meant before contact, but, at present, the use of *warah* in the context of possession is restricted to contexts involving relations with white people or with those things most closely associated with them and which the Kanamari desire (Figure 8). Venturing a hypothesis for the etymology of *-warah/warah* based on the evidence presented here, I suggest that it initially expressed an ownership relation and later assumed connotations of possession as a consequence of Kanamari interactions with the whites, which began in the late nineteenth century; at the very least, any earlier connotations of possession were subsequently colonized by relations with white people. It is more likely, then, that *warah* as possession derives from *-warah* as ownership or that the former’s contemporary meaning is regimented by the more essential and elastic meaning of the latter.

Merchandise is a visible aspect of the magnification of the whites, one that can have equally dazzling effects on Amerindian societies. As various authors have shown, these effects are not just related to the utilitarian superiority of some industrial goods, such as metal axes and machetes, over native counterparts, but also to their capacity to expand the scope of rituals (C. Gordon 2010)



Figure 8. Kanamari canoe packed with merchandise (Photo: Hilton Nascimento, CTI archives, 2008).

or to inspire changes to indigenous material culture (Van Velthem 2000). For the Kanamari, the easy access that whites have to industrial goods and their knowledge of how they are used or operated is a source of awe, one that partly accounts for their amplified agency: their ability to quickly clear large tracts of forest, to build sturdy homes and public buildings, and to operate fast motor-boats, cars, and airplanes. It is unsurprising, therefore, that *warah* should have come to mean “merchandise”: the Kanamari call “merchandise” *warah* because it is one of the things that makes white people into *-warah*, one of the manifestations of their creativity and power.¹⁸

18. Although it is grammatically possible to refer to white people as *warah-warah*, “merchandise body-owners,” the Kanamari do not spontaneously use this noun phrase. When I tested the formula with them, they seemed to accept its validity but found it cumbersome and funny. However, in certain contexts, they may call one or more whites the body-owner of a specific element in the general category of “Western merchandise.” Thus, a mechanic is *moto’-warah* (“motor body-owner”), a shopkeeper is a *açucar-warah* (“sugar body-owner”) and so forth.

Much to the Kanamari's dismay, however, this is a creativity that neither they nor the whites fully comprehend. The Kanamari know that most merchandise is not locally produced, that it comes from "truly far away" (*ino tam*), but they expect local whites to be able to explain to them who makes motors and where gasoline comes from, or who produces money, for instance (see also Erikson 2009). All they are able to obtain from their inquiries are cryptic and patronizing replies, such as "the Americans make it," or "it comes from São Paulo." The Kanamari thus see merchandise as part of the power of the whites, but do not understand the relational dynamic that sustains this power.

The one thing closely associated with the whites that is not counted as *warah* is livestock. Yet having livestock is very clearly one of the ways that the whites constitute themselves as body-owners. *Takara-warah* (chicken-body-owner), for instance, is used to describe white women who head households, who typically have many children. *Boi-warah* (cattle-body-owner) is a translation for *fazendeiro*, "ranch or plantation owner," a term used for powerful landowners from distant places (e.g., ranchers from the Juruá town of Eirunepé) or those the Kanamari have seen in television soap operas. Livestock clearly magnifies white people, but it is excluded from a list of what counts as *warah*, the merchandise of the whites. In the remainder of this chapter, I investigate why this is so and, in the process, explore what possession of livestock can teach us about ownership of pets and people.

ANIMAL SONS OF THE WHITES

Livestock are domesticated animal species that reproduce in captivity and are bred for consumption or exchange. The only livestock reared in Kanamari villages during my fieldwork were chickens and pigs. In Amazonia, an area of the world where animal domestication never took place, these species are unmistakably of foreign origin. Few ethnographers have paid more than passing attention to livestock in Amazonian villages (a notable exception being Vander Velden 2010, 2012a, 2012b). Those who have done so invariably observe their differences from pets that are captured from the wild, do not reproduce in captivity, and are raised to live in human settlements. However, rather than taking these differences as the basis for contrasting livestock and pets, most authors ultimately treat the two as subsets of a more general class of "pets." The justification

for this procedure is usually that both are directly fed by humans and that, as a consequence, most Amazonians refrain from eating their livestock for the same reasons that they refrain from eating their pets.¹⁹

This is the approach favored by Vander Velden (2010) in his discussion of conceptions of cattle among the Karitiana, an Arikem-speaking people inhabiting the Brazilian state of Rondônia. The Karitiana did not keep cattle when he carried out his fieldwork, but they expressed a desire to maintain a herd in the main village in the Karitiana Indigenous Reservation. The state of Rondônia has been largely overrun by cattle farms and soy plantations, and the only areas of forest that (for now) resist this devastation are federally demarcated indigenous reservations. The Karitiana reasoned that a herd would provide a safety net against what they perceived to be the declining number of game animals in their reservation, largely as a result of deforestation in the surrounding region. Maintaining a herd would simultaneously provide them with a source of food and free them from the arduous task of hunting.

Vander Velden is skeptical of the reasons volunteered by the Karitiana. Not only does there seem to be no real dearth of game animals in their reservation at the moment, but the Karitiana also, in the past, had access to state funding for breeding chickens and goats, initiatives that failed due to a lack of adequate training and commitment. The main difficulty with the idea of a herd of cattle as a reserve of meat, however, is that, despite their affirmations, the Karitiana would be unlikely to eat the animals that they keep: “If they adequately raise and cohabit for a long time with these beings, and, above all, if they *feed* the animals directly—as they do with children—it is plausible to suppose that the Indians will not slaughter and consume their livestock” (Vander Velden 2010: 59–60, original emphasis). Feeding hence cancels predation, as it does in pet keeping.

At first glance, the Kanamari also seem to interpret livestock as a variant of their pets. The term for “livestock” is *kariwa nawa bara o’pu*, “the small animals of the whites,” which incorporates their term for “pet,” *bara o’pu*. However, it also qualifies the term for pet with the possessive form *nawa*, which indicates that these pets belong to the whites. The possessive *nawa* indicates actual (alienable) possession, not propriety, adequacy, or association, which the Kanamari express with the associative *ami am*. For instance, early on in my fieldwork, when I

19. Lévi-Strauss’ (1973: 285) description of Nambikwara “domestic animals” is typical of this tendency to recognize differences between domestic animals and pets, only to then merge them on the basis of feeding relations and the prohibition on eating them.

helped the Kanamari develop a schoolbook, I unhesitatingly called it *Escola nawa livro*, which would literally be “the school’s book.” The Kanamari corrected me: it should be *Escola ami am livro*, “schoolbook,” since it did not actually belong to the school but was to be used in it. Although the expression **kariwa ami am bara o’pu* does not exist in the Kanamari language, it would more accurately describe animals that are proper to the whites, or that are associated with them without necessarily belonging to them. In contrast, *kariwa nawa bara o’pu* very clearly establishes livestock as belonging to the whites, who are their real owners—in the very Amazonian sense in which “ownership” determines both authority and genesis (Fausto 2012b: 30–31; Déléage 2009: 119–120). We may therefore translate *kariwa nawa bara o’pu* as the “animal sons of the whites” or, taking its gendered etymological implications fully into account, “animal sons of white women.” Irrespective of whether livestock are being reared by white people or by the Kanamari, the animals are always referred to in this way.

This may seem like a trivial lexical distinction, one that registers the foreign origin of livestock while, at the same time, acknowledging their conceptual unity with pets as animals that inhabit villages and are dependent on humans. The identity between livestock and pets would be confirmed, in practice, by the fact that the Kanamari do not eat livestock raised in their villages as long as they possess them, just as they do not eat their pets as long as they own them.²⁰ As such, the expressions for “pet” and “livestock” might be interpreted as encoding slight differences (such as exogenous origin and reproductive behavior) that are then glossed over through the identical relations the Kanamari establish with both, which would take precedence over and above any anomalies. Indeed, as we have seen, this has been the traditional approach to livestock in Amazonian anthropology.

This apparent similarity, however, is underscored by a fundamental difference in the way that the Kanamari relate to their pets in contrast to the livestock that inhabit their village: unlike Vander Velden’s supposition for the Karitiana,

20. The prohibition on eating pets and livestock obscures a subtle, but crucial difference. Livestock are not killed and eaten so long as they remain “of” (-*wa*) any Kanamari. Once pigs and chickens have been handed over to the whites (who, as we shall see, were always their true owners), they may be eaten by the Kanamari (when offered to them), even by their former possessor. As we saw in the last chapter, pets may be exchanged with other people, who may then eat them, but they will never be eaten by their former owners. This difference follows from that between contingent possession of livestock and constitutive ownership pets, as explored below.

the prohibition on eating livestock has nothing to do with feeding and the generation of intimacy. Strictly speaking, livestock are not fed at all. The word *ayub-man* does not feature in Kanamari discourse on the alimentary behavior of these animals. Instead, they are simply said to “eat food” (*tyawaihmini-pu*) as they range through the village searching for leftovers. Despite the efforts of health agents, who insist on the role of domestic animals as vectors for disease, neither pigs nor chickens are kept in pens. Chickens occasionally have small henhouses, but the Kanamari do not erect fencing to confine their movement. In the period immediately following campaigns for culling domestic animals, the Kanamari may, under pressure, keep pigs in small pens, in which case food has to be thrown directly into them. Nonetheless, these are temporary arrangements. As soon as health workers stop paying attention, the pigs are again allowed to roam freely through the village, where they have to scavenge for leftover food.

Unpenned pigs tend to cluster beneath raised houses, where they eat food that falls to the ground or discarded waste. They are also notorious for eating feces and often gather around toilet pits. Chickens also huddle under raised houses and many actually enter houses via the stairs, pecking at food that has fallen on the house floor. They are normally shooed away, but different households have different levels of tolerance for the presence of chickens. While pets are thus fed directly in a domestic environment, livestock mostly feed themselves with food that is discarded or that accidentally falls to the ground (Figure 9), maintaining a spatial and moral distance from more intimate relations with pets (see also Vander Velden 2012a: 195–200).

Consequently, the Kanamari never say that they are the “body-owner” of livestock. Livestock are certainly more closely associated with those Kanamari who will benefit from their sale or exchange, but these animals are only said to be “of” so-and-so, marked through alienable possessives incorporating the morpheme *-wa*. *Nudia nawaporco*, for instance, means “Nudia’s pig,” but no one would say that Nudia is the body-owner of his pig or that he is a body-owner by virtue of having a pig. Possession of a pig is framed through a possessive construct without resulting in any process that we might associate with the accretion of agentive capacities. While livestock may be “of” a Kanamari person, the Kanamari are not thereby their owners.

A further distinction between pets and livestock is that the latter reproduce in captivity, whereas the former do not. This proves an impediment to feeding livestock, even were the Kanamari inclined to do so. Whereas pets are orphaned, violently removed from relations with the mothers that previously fed them,



Figure 9. Livestock must obtain food that falls from raised houses (Photo: Hilton Nascimento, CTI archives, 2009).

and are inserted into new relations where they are fed exclusively by their body-owners, livestock are fed primarily by their mothers during infancy. Piglets are suckled and chicks range freely with hens and roosters. Human feeding of livestock, were it to be carried out, would thus be tempered by the primary orientation of infants toward their mothers, on which they are first and foremost dependent, meaning that their bond to humans could never be an exclusive one. This dependence is, in turn, further determined by the absolute ownership of all livestock by their white masters.

SUPPLYING LIVESTOCK

Livestock in Kanamari villages are invariably inserted in relations with white people that are remarkably similar to, when not identical with, the relations involved in the *aviamiento* system (“supply and debt” system) that comprises a basic feature of colonial and postcolonial extractive economies in South America (Gow 1991: 90–115; Piedrafita Iglesias 2010: 43–159). In Amazonia, these

systems are based on debt-peonage relations in which bosses supply a work-force with food and goods in general, providing the material means for clients to carry out extractive activities. The products then obtained from this work go toward canceling the original debts. These debts, however, are never actually canceled, only constantly displaced as new debts are perpetually incurred.

Similarly, livestock are always owned by an individual white person, and the Kanamari merely act as their caretakers until the animals are ready to be claimed by their true owners. White people can purchase the animal outright by advancing merchandise to the Kanamari, or else they can claim the animal infant for the future, often negotiating in advance the payment to be made when it is ready for slaughter. In either case, the whites lay claim to the animal in question and assign those Kanamari set to benefit from its sale the responsibility for fattening the livestock until ready to be slaughtered. When the animal is deemed fat enough, the white owner will take it back with him, still alive, to Atalaia do Norte, or the Kanamari caretaker will travel into town and deliver it to its white owner. A few years may pass, therefore, between the time when an infant animal is claimed by a white man and its eventual transfer to its owner.²¹ What the Kanamari claim in return is the merchandise (*the warab*) that has already been or will be paid for the animal, rearing the livestock for and on behalf of specific white men who constitute their real owners.

The whites who own Kanamari livestock are almost exclusively government agents, working for the National Indian Agency (Funai), the federal office responsible for indigenous affairs, or the Brazilian Health Agency (Funasa), both located in the nearby town of Atalaia do Norte.²² Because of the nature of their work, these agents travel regularly to Kanamari villages. Following official ratification of the Vale do Javari Indigenous Reservation, all the whites who used to live near the Kanamari were relocated, meaning that today no whites live in their immediate vicinity. The trip to Atalaia do Norte takes at least six days and only some government agents have the necessary permits to enter the

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21. Although women do work in the Itaquáí, mostly as nurses, men are always the ones who claim ownership of the livestock in Kanamari villages. However, a man may do so on his wife's behalf and then offer the livestock to her as a gift so that she may host banquets.
 22. The acronyms of Brazilian government agencies were traditionally written in capital letters, hence FUNAI and FUNASA. The latest Portuguese-language orthographic agreement allows only the first letter to be capitalized. I will follow the newer convention unless quoting directly from older sources.

indigenous reservation. Government agents who travel regularly through the reservation have an extensive and intricate knowledge of all the livestock kept in the Itaquaí region, which they—symbolically and, in some cases, actually—earmark for themselves. There are no livestock in Kanamari villages that do not belong to specific white men. Even pregnant sows often have their offspring claimed before birth.

The importance of this source of animal meat for the residents of Atalaia do Norte cannot be overestimated. This is not simply a subsidiary activity in which civil servants engage, but a significant source of desired meat (particularly pork) in a town where domesticated animals are scarce. Many homes in Atalaia do Norte have a pigpen or henhouse where animals obtained from indigenous villages are kept prior to slaughter. Other than this—and the occasional hunting and fishing trip—the meat that residents of Atalaia do Norte obtain is either frozen chicken or beef jerky, both of which arrive from Tabatinga (the nearest redistribution hub) by boat once a day. There are no pastures or grazing land around Atalaia do Norte.²³ Government agents thus operate as brokers for those residents of Atalaia do Norte barred from the indigenous reservation, obtaining livestock, both for themselves and for others, in transactions for which they receive a commission. Livestock can be sold for a hefty profit in town, where the cooked animals feature prominently in large banquets for occasions such as weddings and birthdays. They therefore not only satiate a desire for fresh animal meat, but they can also be mobilized in an economy of prestige. As a consequence, government employees who travel frequently to Kanamari villages know how many animals there are, where they are kept, and who their caretaker is. They know how many sows are expecting and roughly how old most of the animals are, as well as whether hens are egg-laying or not. They also know which white person laid claim to the future sale of each animal. In general, it is fair to say that white people's knowledge of the sociology of the Itaquaí River is a

23. This claim applies to Atalaia as I knew it from 2002 to 2006. The lack of local grazing land and cattle meant that there were no local ranchers, which explains why the category *boi-warah*, “cattle body-owner,” was used for men of renown living in distant places or for fictional characters seen on TV soap operas. Today, however, the road linking Atalaia to the town of Benjamin Constant has been paved, opening up the surrounding area, some of which has become grazing land. Further studies would be necessary to investigate the impact of these changes on Kanamari–white relations.

by-product of their knowledge of the distribution of its livestock.²⁴ Not only do the Kanamari frame the whites as the body-owners of livestock; the whites stress the same through the idea that the Kanamari are “caring for” (*cuidando de*) their (the whites’) animals.

In arguing that Kanamari relations to livestock should be understood within the logic of the *aviamento* system, I am not claiming that these relations are contemporary avatars of the extractive economy in which the *aviamento* logic of supplies, debts, and labor was historically experienced. Livestock are different from rubber or timber. They coreside with the Kanamari and do not have to be extracted from the surrounding forest. They are raw materials brought to Amazonia by white people rather than local raw materials desired by them. They potentially reproduce into perpetuity and can be easily accommodated within the everyday pace and activities of Kanamari life, resulting in little of the rupture and disorder generated by involvement in the extractive economy in the first half of the twentieth century (Costa 2009: 165–169).

What I am claiming is that livestock are analogous to the raw materials obtained from the extractive economy, in the sense that they are things that the whites desire and do not have, and which the Kanamari have but do not desire. As with the extractive economy, commodities are used to “pay” for livestock, just as they were “supplied” in exchange for rubber in the past. Livestock and merchandise thus occupy differential values in a native political economy. More importantly for present purposes, the fact that exchange here defines possession means that livestock are not suited to relations of ownership that allow the magnification of Kanamari people. Any authority over livestock is conditioned by the fact that they are owned by the whites. The latter are the ones who, in the end, magnify themselves through their animal children. While the body-ownership of pets enables the magnification of the Kanamari, the body-ownership of livestock enables the magnification of the whites.²⁵

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24. Conversations between civil servants who work with the Kanamari typically go something like this: X: “We need to go to Remansinho village, there are some people ill there.” Y: “Which village is that?” X: “It’s where Nudyia lives, the guy who bred that large pig you saw at Mr. Moreira’s house.” Y: “That was a beautiful pig, does he have any more?” X: “Yes, there are many pregnant sows in Remansinho.” I overheard many such exchanges between government agents who visited the Kanamari.
 25. The fact that the whites make themselves body-owners by feeding livestock is true both historically, since livestock were fed and reared by the whites throughout much of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and theoretically, since this relation

MARIA-CHICKEN

Why is it so important that ownership of pets and possession of livestock be kept separate? If livestock and merchandise both magnify whites, why do the Kanamari not call the former *warah*, as they do the latter?

The Kanamari, as we have seen, obtain their animal-children through the predatory activities of male hunters, who bring infant animals back to the village and transfer them to the women who raise them. White men traditionally obtained livestock through breeding, and their wives helped them rear these animals for slaughter. The different relations in which these animals are obtained and raised, as well as their divergent destinies, are what the Kanamari find most disturbing about the whites.

The constitutive bond between the whites and their livestock is made explicit in the Kanamari myth that explains the creation of the present world. The myth in question narrates a canoe journey made by Tamakori, creator of the Kanamari, and his clumsy brother Kirak. This myth is the Kanamari “myth of history” insofar as it describes the phenomenal conditions of the present world through the cessation of some of the ongoing transformations of myth, paving the way for the historical changes that make up Kanamari collective memory (see Chapter Four; also see Costa 2007: 242–290; and Gow 2001: 92–95 on the concept of the “myth of history”). I shall call this narrative “the Journey.” White people feature prominently in the Journey, which can be read as a sustained commentary on the many different relations that the Kanamari can establish with them. They first appear in an episode in which Tamakori and Kirak, while traveling down the Juruá toward Manaus, meet a white woman named Maria:

“Brother, what exactly are we going to look for now?” [Kirak asked Tamakori].

“Let’s drink some coffee before we continue our journey” [Tamakori replied]. They saw a fire lit. “There, a white woman. We’ll drink some coffee with her.” They stopped their canoe.

“Piu, piu, piu, piu,” goes the chicken. Her name was Maria. She was a chicken a long time ago. She was surrounded by her chicks. She said, “Go wash the dishes, boy!”

remains the template through which the Kanamari interpret the whites. However, it is not true at present, because the whites no longer feed the livestock they acquire from the Kanamari. I will analyze this paradox in Chapter Five.

"Where are you going, Tamakori?" [asked Maria].

"I am going to Manaus."

"Hmm. Would you like some coffee before you go?"

"Yes I would."

Maria gave him some coffee. Coffee was her feces. She mixed it with water and Tamakori drank it.

"I'm off to Manaus, Maria," he said and returned to his canoe.

"Brother, let me drink coffee as well," asked Kirak, who had been waiting for Tamakori in the canoe.

"All right, go and drink some."

But Kirak bumped into the chicken as she was sleeping. She woke up, startling Kirak and causing him to fall into the river. His brother raised him by the arm, set him straight, and they were on their way again.

Throughout the Journey, Tamakori and Kirak interact with other beings, but each brother apprehends these beings in distinct ways, thereby revealing certain constitutive ambivalences. Much of the Journey is about how the present world retains some of the ambivalence that the brothers draw out of the hybrid characters with which they engaged. In this episode, two such hybrids are encountered by the heroes: Maria, the white woman, who is also a chicken; and the coffee that she serves, which is also her feces mixed with water. Closer inspection reveals that these hybrids are not apprehended as such by the two protagonists. While the narrator of the Journey was explicit about the ambivalence of Maria-Chicken and coffee-feces, an ambivalence which he conveyed to me as the listener, Tamakori interacts in the story with a white woman named Maria and drinks coffee. Kirak does not get to drink the coffee: when he tries to do so, he stumbles over a chicken, which startles him and causes him to fall in the river. The episode is consistent with others along the Journey during which Tamakori reveals how to interact with the ambivalence of the world in the proper manner, by remaining indifferent if not oblivious to it, while Kirak's impetuousness shows the dangers of not acting properly by actively engaging with the world's ambivalence.

So what sort of ambivalence does Maria-Chicken convey? The Maria-Chicken hybrid is, in fact, composed of Maria-Chicken-Chicks. The chicks only play a passive role in the episode's events, but their presence is crucial, since they show how the whites are constituted by a jumble of relations of feeding and predation. The chicken feeds her chicks, teaching them to peck for food. Maria provides food for the chicken and her chicks. But, as the Kanamari know

all too well, she then feeds on them.²⁶ For the Kanamari, this is abhorrent: relations of kinship and relations of predation need to be kept distinct, the latter being transformed into the former through feeding. By not keeping these relations distinct, by confusing feeding and predation, the whites eat their children, i.e., they eat those they feed and whom they (should) call by kinship terms. What the Maria-Chicken-Chicks conglomerate demonstrates is that white people muddle relational dispositions that need to be kept separate.

The Kanamari word for coffee is *koya tekñin*, “black caissuma.” In southwest-ern Amazonia in Brazil, caissuma (*caíçuma*) is the common name of a whitish beverage made from mashed sweet manioc. The Kanamari normally consume in its unfermented state in quotidian contexts (as *koya aboawa*, “new caissuma”). Drinks made from a caissuma base are something that all households should have at all times, ready to offer to anyone who shows up unannounced. Here the Kanamari are obviously associating coffee, which is what the whites offer to their own casual visitors, with their caissuma. But while their own beverages are made from a root cultivated in their gardens, planted by men and cooked by women, white people can only offer a drink composed of chicken excrement mixed with water. This seems to be the logical corollary of their inability to dis-tinguish predatory relations from kinship. The whites breed their game like the Kanamari grow their crops; while the Kanamari staple beverage is a product of their crops, the white equivalent is no more than a nauseating by-product of the animals that they keep, which they both feed and prey on. Since they cultivate their “prey” and eat their “children,” it is fitting that they should offer the excre-ment of these “prey-children” to their guests.

We can now clearly state the conceptual dilemma posed for the Kanamari by the relation between whites and livestock. The very existence of livestock makes white people’s society a challenge to Kanamari society because these animals embody the paradox of a predatory form of kinship. The adoption of livestock by the Kanamari thus runs the risk of introjecting the cannibalism of the whites into their own social universe. To prevent this from occurring, Kanamari refuse to feed livestock, forcing the animals to make do with what they can scavenge in the village and its environs. They consequently block any possibility of being the body-owners of the livestock that inhabit their villages. Instead, they rear them on behalf of their true owners in exchange for Western merchandise.

26. One of the many Kanamari names for the whites is *takara-puyan*, “chicken eaters,” which is a defining trait of the whites in Kanamari imagination.

Unlike the relation between the whites and their merchandise (the *warah*), a connection that remains enigmatic to the Kanamari, the relation between the whites and their livestock is completely transparent to them. I would argue that this transparency excludes livestock from the category of *warah*: livestock cannot mystify the Kanamari because they are palpable evidence of the cannibalism of the whites. The fact that the only aspect of white people's magnification that the Kanamari can decipher reveals their cannibalism raises a number of suspicions concerning the true nature of the relation linking the whites to their merchandise—suspicions that are accentuated by the vagueness and secrecy with which white people seem to surround the source of this merchandise. But for now, the Kanamari are capable of deflecting these doubts by obtaining merchandise through exchange for livestock, rejecting the relational matrix that appears to sustain the whites by using their overt cannibalism to tap their covert technology.²⁷

Both merchandise and livestock make whites into body-owners, but both can be "possessed" by the Kanamari, one being exchanged for the other. They therefore switch property regimes as they pass between whites (who own them) and Kanamari (who possess them). Ideally, I should also describe how the merchandise obtained by the Kanamari circulates among kinspeople, allowing convivial relations to flourish, as a counterpart to how livestock inhabit the village. However, this would require taking into account the different destinies of distinct types of merchandise: some remain very close to their possessors (e.g., a woman's aluminum pans, which allow her to make food for her kinspeople; or a man's CD player, which allows him to host regional music parties), while others are quite readily circulated (e.g., tobacco, foodstuffs, glass beads, and plastic jewelry). An ethnography of Kanamari possession and use of merchandise would deviate from my present aim, which is to show how the whites constitute themselves as body-owners by feeding what they prey upon, while the Kanamari make themselves body-owners by converting predation into feeding.

WORTHLESS CHILD-EATERS

How can the logic of supplying mitigate this cannibal threat? The question is important because the relations between whites and their livestock are precisely the dimension of white society that has historically been more or less

27. See Costa (2007: 257–259) on white people's technology as magic.

independent of—or even shielded from—the *aviamento* logic. This part of their subsistence economy has always remained unaffected by exchange, since livestock were mostly raised by those whites who consumed them. If they were exchanged at all, they were exchanged between the whites and not between the whites and the Kanamari. And although they may have been eaten in meals with Kanamari workers in the past, they were never supplied to them. Furthermore, animal husbandry in the Itaquaí has survived the peak and decline of the extractive economy in the region, persisting into the present when relations with white people are no longer (only) based on the *aviamento* regime. Livestock were thus marginal to the extractive economy when it was operative and remain an anachronistic but pertinent feature of Kanamari relations with the whites even though the extractive economy has been largely supplanted by relations with government agencies ostensibly based on different principles. In terms of regional history, it is curious and somewhat counterintuitive, therefore, that the Kanamari constantly refer livestock to the *aviamento* logic, transforming a subsistence activity into an exchange relation.

Although it may not be immediately obvious, the Amazonian extractive economy, with which *aviamento* is most closely associated, provides the environment for the Maria-Chicken episode. Again, the seemingly insignificant chicks provide the clue. The phrase that Maria-Chicken directs toward the chicks—“Go wash the dishes, boy!”—is the only part of the episode spoken in Portuguese and clearly mimics the loud and imperative speech of the whites (*Vai lavar prato, menino!*). The coffee, which the Kanamari came to know from the many years spent living and working with the whites, is further evidence of this. Maria-Chicken is not just any white person, but a white woman who lives on a rubber estate. Livestock are not simply linked to the whites, then; they are more specifically linked to white women and embedded in an extractive economy that had an enduring impact on the Kanamari. To prove this point, we need to turn to how the Kanamari interpret their own insertion in this economy.

Although the Kanamari were sporadically and peripherally involved in the rubber economy in the early years of the twentieth century, this involvement saw a marked intensification in the 1920s and early 1930s (Tastevin n.d.a). This was after the heyday of the rubber economy, but it marks a period during which white people penetrated into the tributaries of the Juruá where the majority of the Kanamari lived (see Chapter Four). By the Kanamari’s own account, they began to extract rubber for the bosses through the initiative of two Kanamari

brothers, named Ioho and Dyaho, who learned how to work rubber from their white captor.

The Kanamari say that Ioho and Dyaho were out collecting turtle eggs on the beaches of the Juruá when they were kidnapped by a white man called Preto Português, who took pity on them. He transported the boys to the town of Eirunepé on the middle Juruá, where he and his wife Maria Esther raised them as their own children. They put them in school, where they learned to speak Portuguese, to read, write, and do arithmetic. The boys spent five years with Preto Português and his wife, after which they decided to flee and run back to their family. Once they returned and told the other Kanamari their story, it was decided that the boys would teach the Kanamari how to transact with the whites. From then on, the Kanamari would know how to extract rubber and would also know its value in exchange for the Western goods they craved. Thus began their involvement in the rubber economy.²⁸

Ioho and Dyaho are historically attested characters, who figure in Kanamari genealogies and oral histories. One of Ioho's sons and five of Dyaho's children lived in the Itaquá during the time of my fieldwork (Figure 10). I have no reason to doubt the Kanamari concerning this story, which I heard, with variable concern for detail, from three interlocutors (one a son of Dyaho). Except for the kidnapping that opens the narrative, the story is not particularly exceptional, considering the practice widespread in the Juruá-Purus region of boys spending a period of time living itinerantly with white bosses before getting married and returning to village life (e.g., Bonilla 2005: 45).²⁹ The story is told, however, as a transformation of another story, which tells of a married couple of monstrous cannibals known as the *adyaba*, the “worthless ones.”³⁰

In this story, the Kanamari were dancing when the *adyaba* kidnapped two brothers and took them back to their house. They cared for them for many years, providing them with food so they could be fattened and later eaten. While the

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28. For a complete version of this story, see Costa (2007: 93–95).
 29. This pattern was common among the Kanamari when they were directly involved with the extractive economy. Since the demarcation and ratification of their reservations, the practice of spending teenage years with a white boss has mostly been replaced by a desire to send children to school in Atalaia.
 30. *Adyaba* is formed by the third person singular pronominal prefix, *a-*, and the word *dyaba*, “to be worthless.” The concept of *dyaba* can be used to describe a failure or incapacity to behave properly or an artifact that is malfunctioning, such as a broken radio, which is called a *rádio-dyaba*.



Figure 10. Ihnan, Joho's only surviving son (Photo: Luiz Costa, 2005).

man went to fetch food, the woman cooked and sang for the boys. In time, they learned the language of the *adyaba* and their songs. In the process, the boys also learned of their plans. They decided to trick the *adyaba*, pushing the woman into the cooking fire and killing her while her husband was away. When he returned, the boys hid. The *adyaba* husband thought his wife had already cooked the children, so he unwittingly feasted with relish on his wife's flesh. The boys then revealed their deception to the male *adyaba*, killed the ogre, and returned to their families. They taught the other Kanamari the songs of the *adyaba* learned during their captivity; henceforth, the Kanamari were able to perform the ritual known as *adyaba-pa*, "adyaba-becoming."³¹

The similarities between the two stories should be obvious: two brothers are kidnapped by strange beings, taken to a distant land where they are kept

31. For a full transcript of this story, see Costa (2007: 100). Similar stories are found throughout southwestern Amazonia, where the *adyaba* couple are often substituted by jaguars (see Altmann 2000: 53–56) and the captive children transform into sun and moon (see Gow 2011: 6–8). The Kanamari have a different story for the origin of sun and moon, involving the incestuous relationship between a brother and a sister, as is also common throughout Amazonia (Belaunde 2005; Gow 2010).

for many years, raised by a foreign couple who care for them and from whom they acquire knowledge, which they then share with the other Kanamari after their escape so that all of them can learn how to interact with these foreigners. The Kanamari do, in fact, explicitly link white rubber extractors to the *adyaba*. The favorite meal of the *adyaba* is the flesh of the Kanamari children they raise, mixed with the resin from a tree known as *pabkuru kirak*.³² The whites also eat their “children” (i.e., livestock), and their arrival in the Juruá basin is inseparable from their desire for the sap of the rubber tree. In another story featuring the *adyaba*, in which the home of these ogres is burned to the ground by the Kanamari, the men go to investigate their charred remains, only to find burned cotton hammocks and metal pans, two items that the Kanamari first became familiar with through their engagement with white people who set up rubber camps in the vicinity of their villages. Both the *adyaba* and the whites fuse predation and kinship; they raise and eat their children, but they possess goods and knowledge that the Kanamari desire—songs from the former, merchandise from the latter.

The *aviamento* logic provides a way out of the conundrum of how to relate to white people and obtain what they possess without succumbing to the relational schema in which whites themselves thrive. The chicken and her chicks, the Kanamari children captured by the *adyaba*, and even, it is implied, Ioho and Dyaho are all in a position in which they are ultimately going to be consumed by those who feed them—they are being produced for consumption. In the extractive economy, by contrast, everything that is produced already belongs to others—and will be consumed by others. Its logic dictates that production and consumption are subsumed under exchange, since, within the relational schema of the *aviamento* system, work only gets underway once goods have been advanced, and the products of work only cancel the debt that was thereby incurred.

32. Kirak, the name of Tamakori’s devious brother, is also the Kanamari word for “exuviae.” Dandruff is called *kirak*, for instance, while nails are *bakom kirak* (“finger exuviae”). An underlying unity links the *adyaba*, the whites as livestock breeders (i.e., the “worthless whites”), and Kirak, who throughout the Journey reveals the deleterious aspects of the world. An investigation of Kirak’s role in this unholy triumvirate would require a more detailed analysis of the Journey. See Costa (2007: Chapter 5).

In a sense, the Kanamari have taken the lesson taught by Ioho and Dyaho to its logical conclusion. The knowledge obtained from the whites enables the Kanamari to interact with them and to obtain the merchandise that they desire while, at the same time, keeping white people and the Kanamari apart, preventing the latter from succumbing to the lure of the former. By possessing livestock that are (body-)owned by the whites, the Kanamari screen their own relations of body-ownership and kinship from white people's cannibalism, of which livestock are living proof.

CHAPTER THREE

On the child's blood

In previous chapters, I focused on the feeding bond and the ensuing ownership relation in the context of pet keeping and shamanism. I showed how the Kanamari convert predation into kinship through feeding and how they buffer this process from the convergence of predation and feeding that comprises the society of the whites. In this chapter I wish to turn to the feeding relation in the context of the bond between parents and children and, more specifically, between mother and child. My intention is to show that the mother-child bond results from the feeding relation and is not therefore a natural or direct filiation but an adoptive filiation (Menget 1988; Fausto 1999: 938, 2012b: 31). In this sense, the parent-child bond must be interpreted as a determination of the same process of converting predation into kinship through feeding that I have described in earlier chapters.

To demonstrate this, I will analyze the Kanamari postnatal seclusion practices that they call “to lie on the child’s blood” (*opikam opatyn na-mimi tom*). This seclusion is their variant of the couvade, although it contains certain decisive—and perhaps irreconcilable—deviations from well-known examples of the Amazonian couvade. I will analyze the Kanamari couvade alongside post-homicide rites, another moment of seclusion, in order to show that the birth of a child is not the emergence of a new kinship relation but, rather, an event that throws existing kinship ties into disarray. Birth “is a way of publicly confirming, denying, or creating classificatory relationships, or rearranging the cognatic

universe in the idiom of substances" (Menget 1979: 205). Rather than extending kinship relations, birth immediately requires their protection.

In this respect, the Kanamari couvade is not so different from what has been described in other parts of Amazonia, which has always been the ethnographic region most closely identified with the practice (Tylor 1865: 202; Métraux 1949; Fock 1963: 147; Rival 1998: 629). Deriving from the French word *couver*, "hatching," the couvade traditionally designated "the strange fashion observed in some countries of confining the father rather than the mother on the birth of a child and subjecting him to a series of rigorous taboos in order to safeguard the infant's welfare" (Lowie 1920: 174). It is doubtful whether the couvade ever existed in this form (Frazer 1910: 246). In lowland South America, at any rate, twentieth century ethnographies quickly established that no such practice existed in the region (Métraux 1949: 369–370). Instead, the descriptions of perinatal practices that they provided helped to broadly redefine the couvade in two ways.

First, they expanded the sociological scope of couvade observances, showing that the couvade applies not only to the father but to both parents, to close kin, and, in some cases, to all coresidents (Lévi-Strauss 1966: 195; Lima 2005: 140–147; Rival 1998; Vilaça 2002: 356). This widening of the couvade's "field of application" (Menget 1979: 208) is often coupled with a lengthening of the time frame to which "the couvade" refers, since birth has come to be interpreted by the regional anthropological literature as a moment that cannot be isolated from pregnancy and weaning, and sometimes also blurs into naming and coming-of-age rites (see, e.g., Crocker 1985: 52–67; Bonilla 2007: 165–217; De Vienne 2016).

Second, over time the couvade has been increasingly subsumed in or replaced by other rituals and practices and interpreted in relation to them—"not as something in its own right, but rather as an aspect of something else" (Rivière 1974: 434)—leading it to be understood, therefore, as just one moment within a wider set of orientations toward life and humanity. Most notable are those studies that interpret the proscriptions of the couvade alongside the ritual privations of posthomicide and postmenarche rites (Albert 1985; Menget 1993; Conklin 2001b; Viveiros de Castro 2002; Fausto 2012a: 164–168). Equally important have been analyses of the couvade as a set of practices that refers to the duality of body and soul (Rivière 1974), a process for consubstantializing men in uxorilocal regimes (Rival 1998), a part of men's construction of women's bodily processes (Belaunde 2001), or a privileged moment in Amerindian

practices of making kinship relations (McCallum 2001: 19–21; Vilaça 2002; Fausto 2007).¹

We are led to ask what, in effect, makes such diverse practices—always on the verge of being dissolved into so many other practices—a phenomenon that still merits its own label. The answer seems clear: the couvade is concerned with the well-being of the baby, with its physical and/or spiritual integrity, even though it may also be concerned with the well-being and integrity of its parents and their kin. Perinatal restrictions are “at once child-centered and parent-focused” (Rival 1998: 630), or, as Vilaça (2002: 356) states, the couvade “protects the baby—and very often the parents too—from external influence.” Without the baby, why would anyone speak of the couvade?

This chapter contributes to the ever-widening definition of the couvade through a case study in which the only aspect of its definition that has hitherto resisted all efforts at dissolution—the fact that these practices are concerned with the baby’s well-being—is a superfluous and contingent aspect of the prohibitions. Although some postnatal activity is said to ensure the baby’s good health, such interpretations always emerge after the fact, for, in reality, identical proscriptions are observed even when gestations do not result in the birth of a living infant. Otherwise very similar to what has been called “the couvade” in the ethnographic literature on Amazonia, one of the key elements of the couvade complex is merely incidental in Kanamari perinatal practices, since the child’s well-being is a derivative aspect of the proscriptions. Rather than being directly aimed at protecting the infant from anything, they are intended to protect the parents and their coresident kinspeople from the virtuality of a new existence.

The fact that the Kanamari couvade—if we may still call it that—is not aimed at the child’s well-being is a corollary of the fact that procreation is not equivalent to filiation. Birth does not create a kinship tie but instead threatens those that already exist. The couvade acts to isolate Kanamari kinship from the danger of childbirth, but, where live births are concerned, it leaves behind, as a precipitate of its principle aim, a newborn child that must be adopted by its future mother. Only when the neonate suckles at its mother’s breast, when she feeds it, does it come to have a body-owner. At the end of my analysis of Kanamari perinatal practices, I shall describe how the newborn is made into a

1. For reviews of anthropological approaches to the couvade in Amazonia, see Fock (1963: 145–151), Rivière (1974), and Rival (1998: 628–633). For a more general review of the literature on the couvade, see Doja (2005).

kinsperson and how the life cycle ensures that those who are fed will one day themselves become feeders.

ANOTHER WHO GRABS US

The Kanamari call “sexual intercourse” *dyoro* or *pok*, but, in the context of the development of the fetus, they refer to it as “making a child” (*opatyn-bu*) or “making the woman’s belly” (*ityaro-mi-bu*). The distinction stems from the recognition of a slight bulge—simply called “her belly” (*a-min*) or “big belly” (*min nya*). Identification of this swelling leads to speaking of subsequent sexual intercourse less in terms of pleasure (*tyo-nakibak*, “we like [it]”) and more as work, indicated by the verb *bu*, “to make, to produce.” It is not pregnancy that is thus recognized: the woman is described as “pregnant” (*opaboron*) from the moment menstruation ceases, a fact that may well be public knowledge. But before her body swells, no one speaks of “her belly” or of the process of making the child.

The Kanamari are unanimous in affirming that the child’s flesh and bones are made from sperm through repeated acts of sexual intercourse. Soul and blood are not made by anyone, they are “just there” (*datam ti*). No one I spoke to claimed any substantive contribution from the mother during pregnancy. The fetus “dwells” or “resides” (*-to*) within her, but it is male sperm that produces it. Suspension of sexual activity after a belly becomes visible results in miscarriages, stillbirths, or children who are too feeble to survive. Since “making a child” requires repeated acts of intercourse, the Kanamari often say, in Portuguese, that this involves “hard work” (*trabalho duro*) for men (Costa 2007: 298–302).

As far as I know, the Kanamari do not have a specific word for the fetus. They refer to an unborn child simply as “child” (*opatyn*) or employ the same word used to refer to its mother’s growing belly, *a-min* (“her belly”), which here includes the developing fetus. The visible manifestations of the fetus in its mother, however, demand that the parents and close kin (ideally all coresidents) “be careful,” *tobiaik*.² This involves being aware of one’s surroundings, being attentive to

2. *Tobiaik* can be decomposed into *to-*, a marker of volitional verbal constructions indicating that an action is carried out intentionally toward a certain end; *bia* which means “to be careful”; and *'ik*, a perfective aspectual suffix indicating that the action of the verb occurs (has occurred, will occur) intermittently for a set period of time (for instance, *ikaok* is “to cry,” while *ikao'ik* is to sob regularly but not constantly over

other people's actions and behavior, and taking care of what one eats. Those who *tobiaik* should avoid certain foods, namely game meat—particularly “pungent” (*diok*) meat, such as tapir and peccary. Fathers should refrain from hunting once their wife's belly becomes visible. Pregnant women must always eat separately (sometimes before or after collective meals) and refrain from cooking or producing manioc drink (Figure 11). Those activities that pregnant women do carry out, such as garden work, are subject to certain restrictions. For example, pregnant women may accompany kinswomen to the garden, but they must walk at a certain distance. When they bathe, they do so slightly downriver from others.



Figure 11. Pregnant woman eating alone (Photo: Luiz Costa, 2004).

Elsewhere in Amazonia, similar prepartum precautions are usually described as a means to protect the unborn child from any harm that may come to it due to the parents' behavior or diet. The Suyá say that a man should not chop down large trees after his wife's belly has started to swell, since the child may be harmed by the crashing of the tree as it falls (Seeger 1981: 150). Among the Araweté, expectant parents should refrain from eating the thighs of deer

a period of time). *tobiaik* is thus a temporary, modulated condition in which the person has to be careful at certain moments and in relation to certain actions.

or curassow, which would cause the child's legs to be thin and weak at birth (Viveiros de Castro 1992: 180). The Kaxinawá attribute the birth of deformed children to their parent's diet during pregnancy (McCallum 2001: 17). Although observing that stringent prohibitions are only enforced among the Piro after childbirth, Gow (1991: 153) writes that "pregnant women are careful to avoid certain foods which could damage the child."

Kanamari explanations are different. Prepartum precautions count among instances of "being careful." The number of occasions when the Kanamari have to "be careful" are numerous, but they fall into two broad classes: during any activity that requires them to leave the settlement and its immediate surroundings, either physically (hunting, traveling) or metaphysically (dreaming, taking hallucinogens); and when a foreign element makes itself present in the settlement. The latter includes intersettlement rituals, the presence of spirits (revealed by ominous signs, like a sudden breeze or things falling for no apparent reason), sorcerers, and a dead person's soul when it "stands up" (*dadyahian*) and leaves its corpse.

"Being careful" because of a pregnancy is one more example, therefore, of the kinds of precautions observed because a foreign element—in this case, the unborn child—makes itself present among related people. None of the prepartum precautions are said to protect the unborn child from exterior harm. On the contrary, they protect a group of coresident kinspeople, including the expectant mother, from the harm that a fetus may bring. The unborn child is thus not the object but the cause of the proscriptions that kinspeople place on themselves.

Pregnant women are kept separate because of the dangers that the pregnancy poses to those around them. Any man who eats food cooked by a pregnant woman or drinks beverages prepared by her becomes *miori*, "unlucky," a term that refers to generalized misfortune. People who are *miori* become bad hunters, fail to seduce women, and suffer all sorts of accidents (branches fall on them, they regularly trip over things, and so forth). Moreover, the mere physical proximity of pregnant women can cause the fetus to directly harm others, particularly young children. People say that an unborn child wants others for itself. This translates into an interdiction on prepubescent children, who must stay away from pregnant woman lest the fetus "tug" (*nikikman*) at their hair, taking it for itself and making its victim bald. Children who go bald become ill, while a newborn, whose body is otherwise "unripe" (*parah tu*), is born with "brittle hair" (*kipui tinin ti*) taken from a child while still in the womb (see Costa 2007: 306–309).

One of the most common fears during pregnancy is premature aging (*kidak-pa ninkiman*, “to age quickly”), which is manifested as “graying” (*kibu*) or “baldness” (*kipoa*), “wrinkly skin” (*dak dibdihan*), and “fatigue” (*haiotyuku*, “flesh death”). Premature aging can afflict not only the future parents but everyone in the village who is not “careful” with their actions and diet whenever a coresident woman is pregnant. For this reason, the only mammal prescribed to a pregnant woman is the spider monkey, since its black fur is a prophylactic “medicine” (*horonin*) against gray hair. Other animals, such as agoutis, are prohibited to all coresidents of a pregnant woman, as they cause graying. Certain actions are also proscribed as a means to prevent aging. The parents of the child should refrain from scratching their heads directly with their fingers (some say they should not comb their hair at all) and should use a stick or toothpick instead, lest they bald. Nonobservance of these proscriptions may accelerate graying and baldness, but they are intrinsic dangers of pregnancy, requiring no further transgression, that the Kanamari seek to mitigate by “being careful.”

While both parents and, to a certain extent, all coresidents must be careful, the future mother is the one who has to “withstand” (*kima*) the unborn child. Pregnancy is conceived to be a constant “pain” (*dyá*) that steadily increases as labor approaches. One woman told me that pain during pregnancy occurs “because a child is another who grabs [us]” (*opatyn odrim na-man tyo*). Pregnant women, like people who are sad, angry, ill, or lost in the forest, are never hungry. Because they eat very little, they grow weak and wither (*tyururu*). To avert this state, they have taken to demanding vitamin supplements from the Brazilian National Health Foundation (Funasa).

The Kanamari word for labor, *odiok*, literally means a “type of pungency.” *Diok* is used to refer to strong or pungent peppers, powerful shamanic darts, the flesh of certain animals, and strong manioc beer, as well as to exsanguinated blood (see Chapter One on the affix *o-*). It also makes up the word *todiok* (see note 2, this chapter, for the meaning of *to-*), which the Kanamari gloss “as to send away angrily,” but it has the more general meaning of “to make into an enemy” (Costa 2007: 124–125). If the child is “another who grabs [us],” parturition is the culmination of lengthy pain caused by this other being. By stressing the agonies of childbirth over the work that goes into it, the Kanamari differ from their neighbors, the Arawan-speaking Kulina, for whom giving birth is “very hard work” (Lorrain 1994: 107). For the Kanamari, making the child is hard work (for men), while birth is painful (for women).

AVOIDING CHILDBIRTH

The fears that accompany pregnancy and childbirth are reflected in procedures that seek to forestall or even permanently prevent pregnancy or birth. These procedures are justified by a “fear” (*ya*) of the future child. They include shamanic contraception techniques and abortions.

Shamans can expel “true *dyobko*” from their body and insert it into the bodies of women, where it acts as a contraceptive. In this context, the *dyobko* is referred to as *mahu*. The *mahu* are usually inserted into women at their own request, where it stays as long as they do not want to become pregnant. Shamans can also extract *mahu* for women when they wish to become pregnant. This use of *mahu* creates a shamanically induced temporary infertility, allowing postmenarche women to engage in sexual activity before marriage. This period is vital for the physical maturation of women, since sexual activity leaves their bodies “full” (*pohan*) with male sperm, making them grow “chubby” (*tyahim*) and “beautiful” (*bak*) without running the risk of premarital pregnancy.³ Since first marriages are unstable, the *mahu* can also allow a marriage to be tried out before the couple has a child, since divorce becomes more difficult after they have offspring. *Mahu* can likewise be used by people having extramarital affairs and by couples who have decided that they do not want any more children.

Although the *mahu* is a method of birth control, the Kanamari know one procedure that prevents a woman from ever getting pregnant. A *mahu* is inserted into the brain of a baby girl through the anterior fontanel, “the head’s heart” (*ki-diwahkom*), before the suture closes. Through the head’s heart, the *mahu* travels to the heart itself, where it is impossible for a shaman to remove it, rendering the girl barren. The Kanamari say that the woman is now *mahu*, which here has the generic meaning of “infertile.” In Portuguese, they say that she has “been cured” (*está curada*) or has been “operated” (*operada*).

Pollock suggests that the similar concept of *awabono* among the Kulina, neighbors of the Kanamari, causes infertility by blocking the passage of semen

3. During fieldwork I took this to be evidence of men “feeding” women with sperm, which would help explain why men are described as feeders and women as their dependents (see Chapter One). However, *ayub-man* was never mentioned in connection with sexual activity. The relevant idiom for describing sexual intercourse after a woman’s belly swells is that of “producing” or “making” the child. Although semen “satiates,” this does not imply that a man feeds his partner or the fetus through sexual intercourse.

into the womb and the flow of menstrual blood out. It is thus “a kind of inversion of normal illness: illness is an improper incorporation of a male substance [*dori*, the Kulina equivalent of the *dyohko*], while infertility is an improper failure to incorporate a male substance [sperm]” (Pollock 1992: 38). I am uncertain of the extent to which the mechanics of the *mahu* are similar to what Pollock describes for the Kulina. What is relevant for present purposes is the idea of shamanically induced infertility as an inversion of illness—an illness that, in this case, can only be pregnancy. This resonates with the Kanamari claim that women who become barren are “cured.”

Although I have never seen anyone inserting a *mahu* into the head of a baby girl, I know of three childless older women said to have been “cured.” Two women are in stable marriages and the other is a widow. Since this procedure must have been carried out while they were still very young, it was evidently not their own choice but a decision made by their parents, one considered an act of “pity” (*omahwa*). The process is seen to be an antidote to the ambivalence of birth, enabling parents to spare their daughter the suffering that they themselves endured.

Women who have not undergone this shamanic operation and become pregnant can choose to abort. The Kanamari do not know of any natural abortifacients. A group of women must press down on a pregnant woman’s belly, just below the rib cage, forcing the fetus out. The woman’s belly then needs to be rubbed to ensure that the placenta is expelled, a process the Kanamari call “kneading the belly” (*a-min omirik-mirik*). The expulsion of the fetus is called *a-boroh wara*, “its corpse is born,” the same expression used for any stillbirth.⁴ Abortions take place away from the village, often in a garden hut. The fetus and afterbirth are buried quickly and unceremoniously wherever the abortion occurs. There is some interest in ascertaining the sex of the fetus when possible, but this is then expressed as a generic sexual identity and framed as a conditional in the future perfect tense: it would have been male (*paiko*, not *piya o’pu*,

4. It seemed to me that the verb “to be born,” *wara*, was a verbalization of the noun *-warah*, analyzed in the previous chapter. Since one of the meanings of *-warah* is “origin” or “base,” it would make sense that it should be verbalized as “to be born.” I still suspect that an etymological relation links the two. However, I should state that the Kanamari categorically denied that “body-owner” (*-warah*) and “to be born” (*wara*) were the same word, and often repeated both in succession for me to hear the difference. All that I could discern is that “to be born” lacks the word-final aspiration, which I have marked with an “h.” The word-final aspiration is here clearly a phoneme, although when it occurs with certain other lexemes, it seems to be a function of phonological harmony.

a “boy”) or would have been female (*ahwa*, not *ityaro o’pu*, a “girl”). This stresses the embryonic humanity of the fetus, lacking or only displaying *in potentia* the elementary bodily distinction between the sexes, a difference otherwise noted at the moment of birth.

I have no hard data on the frequency of abortions among the Kanamari, but even a cursory analysis confirms that abortions are more common before a first marriage. I do, however, know of married women with children who had also had abortions. In all cases, what Kanamari men and women stress is that both the *mahu* and abortions stem from a fear of the child. Here not even the pain of parturition is stressed, since women are also vocal about the pain of abortion. What elicits genuine fear is the child itself, developing within a kinswoman, in a space created and sustained by coresident kinspeople.

Contraceptives and abortions may share a common justification in the fear of newborns, but they have diverse outcomes. While shamanic contraception, whether temporary or permanent, prevents pregnancy and, by extension, post-partum proscriptions, abortions cannot prevent the couvade, since, although there is no living child, its blood is still present.

LYING DOWN ON THE CHILD’S BLOOD

When a pregnancy is brought to term, the approaching delivery focuses and redoubles the observance of the prepartum prohibitions. While a woman’s visibly swollen belly leads to a generalized state of “being careful” (*tohiaik*) for her and her coresidents, her water breaking forces the soon-to-be parents to *opikam*, “lie down.” The father makes his way to his hammock, concealed under the same mosquito net as his wife’s hammock. The baby is delivered by a midwife, who washes away the blood and vernix in an herbal bath that diminishes the harmful effects of the afterbirth on the parents (Figure 12). Mother and child then join the father under the mosquito net (see Costa 2007: 300–303 for a detailed description of birth practices).

Opikam, lying down, modifies *tohiaik*, being careful, in two ways. First, it narrows the scope of those to whom prohibitions apply, shifting from coresidents in a village who must be careful to the soon-to-be parents who must lie down. Second, it intensifies prohibitions on behavior and diet to such an extent that there is very little that those who are “lying down” can do. The Kanamari thus distinguish between a generic state of “being careful” that implicates all



Figure 12. Midwife washing newborn in herbal bath (Photo: Luiz Costa, 2005).

coresidents and a paralyzing “lying down,” which forces the future parents into near absolute inactivity.

Lying down always occurs *mimi tom*, “on blood.” After birth, the Kanamari say that they *opikam opatyn-na-mimi tom*, “lie down on the child’s blood.” Blood may be visible or it can be adduced through its “stink” (*mahan*), which outlasts postnatal bleeding by a few days. The preposition *tom*, “on,” has the sense of “in connection with” as well as “in the vicinity of”: the couple lies down due to *and* at a certain distance from the child’s blood (typically in raised hammocks). The child’s blood is said to be “new blood” (*mimi aboawa*) and “pungent blood” (*mimi dioknin*), expressions that are used interchangeably. A critical aspect of the Kanamari couvade, to which I shall return shortly, is that the blood that motivates the practice is the child’s, not the mother’s.

Following birth, the most pressing concern is to ensure that both new blood and the afterbirth are removed from the village. Since the parents are immobile in their hammocks, this task falls to close kin, who clean the blood spilled on the floor with water and soap. The only times I have seen the Kanamari clean their house floor with soap is when blood is present, including the blood of dead game animals. In the case of childbirth, the process is repeated many times after delivery for as long as the mother continues to bleed or the stench

of blood remains noticeable. The placenta (*kadyohdak*) is immediately removed from the village and buried near a garden or tossed into the river. I never heard the Kanamari speak of the placenta as forming a unit with the child, as it does among the Piro (Gow 1997). It is simply part of the same “new” substance and, like blood, must be disposed of.⁵

While the mother’s bleeding continues, the parents must remain as immobile as possible under the mosquito net. For a new mother, this is a default condition since continued bleeding causes *mimi dya*, “blood pain,” which prevents her from moving around much. Both parents should only eat small pieces of cooked manioc or a stew made of *dom tinin*, piaba fish (*Leporinus sp.*). These are omnivorous bottom feeders in the riverine food chain, virtually harmless for consumption under all circumstances. Even so, expecting parents should not eat the actual flesh of piaba, only the stew, perhaps mixed with manioc flour. Eating the meat of any other animal, particularly large mammals, results in premature aging. Sexual intercourse while blood is still present causes a “rotten penis” (-*poa paha*). The set of alimentary and behavioral proscriptions observed by the parents is known as *nobianin* (-*bia* being the same root found in *tohiaik*, “to be careful”).

The Kanamari say that ideally new parents should eat nothing at all while blood is visible and should remain lying down at all times. If the parents do nonetheless carry out certain activities, these may prove harmful to the child. A father who should be lying down cannot hunt or touch his hunting implements. If he shoots an arrow or fires a rifle, the child dies as though hit by the projectile. Machetes and axes, if handled, lash at newborns, causing internal bleeding. A woman’s scissors, used to cut the umbilical cord, cannot be touched by her, nor can her needles and thread, which will otherwise cause diarrhea in the newborn.

5. Some Kanamari say that the placenta should be placed atop a high palm tree, ensuring that the child will grow tall by establishing a metonymic relation with the height of the tree. Considering the association between palm trees and ancestrality among the Kanamari and throughout the region (Rival 1993; Erikson 2001), I suspect there may be more to this practice. However, I have never seen this carried out. The Kanamari do not seem to express the relationship of the child to the placenta as a dyad, a twin birth, as is the case in many parts of Amazonia (see Walker 2013: 210–212), nor do they conceive of the child and placenta pair in terms of siblingship, as do the Malays of Langkawi (Carsten 1995: 226–227). Their attitudes to the placenta are closer to those of the Rai Coast villagers of Papua New Guinea, for whom the placenta is “rubbish” that must be discarded (Leach 2003: 131). What is of concern to the Kanamari, as we shall see, is the relationship of the child to blood.

These explanations, which are typical of Amazonian couvade proscriptions designed to protect the child, are, for the Kanamari, positive and secondary elaborations of the negative and primary imperative to lie down and cease all activities. This is evident in the fact that abortions and stillbirths are subject to the exact same proscriptions, which are also called “to lie down on the child’s blood.” In the case of a stillbirth, a couple lies down together and ceases all activities for as long as the blood remains present. The same occurs after an abortion, although, in these cases, the would-be father may not be involved, and the would-be mother will lie down alone, tended to by a close kinswoman. Otherwise, the proscriptions are identical, and, in all cases, their cessation and the subsequent resumption of regular activities are called *nodyabu'nin*.⁶ The only difference concerns the visible exterior signs that mark their duration. Whereas with live births lying down lasts until the umbilical stump falls off, with stillbirths and abortions lying down lasts until “the new blood is finished,” i.e., all visible and olfactory signs of postpartum bleeding cease. However, the Kanamari recognize that both last approximately one week (see also Carneiro da Cunha 1978: 105).

When asked why, upon a stillbirth or abortion, they lie down in the absence of a newborn who could be harmed by their actions, the Kanamari say that they do so to avoid “aging quickly because of the child’s blood.” Similarly, when I asked why the father of a stillborn does not hunt if there is no child to be harmed, I was told that, were he to hunt, he would become “unlucky” (*miori*), his legs would weaken, and his hair would turn gray. The likely fate of parents who do not lie down in the presence of new blood in the village, regardless of whether the blood follows a live birth or not, is ultimately to decay into *atyinani*—a condition which the Kanamari gloss as “to be old and worthless, tossed to the side of the house.” This state of decrepitude is similar to the Bororo state of *rakarare*, which entails reduced or nonexistent productive capacities. However, *rakarare* results from the unavoidable expenditure of “blood” (*raka*); indeed, it literally means “without blood” (Crocker 1985: 42). For the Kanamari, on the contrary, *atyinani* is not an inevitable outcome of aging following blood loss, but the consequence of prolonged and unprotected exposure to excess blood. People who are *atyinani* lack all productive capacities in their later life and are compelled to rely on the pity of others.

6. The Kanamari explained to me that *nodyabu'nin* designates the “end of the diet” (Portuguese: *fim da dieta*)—the end of *nolianin*—but I am unable to analyze the word any further.

Explanations of the Amazonian couvade often rest on the fact that, because of its vulnerability, the child is particularly susceptible to the actions of adults, especially its parents. The couvade is hence beneficial to the child, since its parent's inactivity limits contact with the harmful influences of foreign agents. The Kanamari have inverted this causal explanation, stressing not how adult inactivity benefits the child but, instead, how the child, whether living or stillborn, forces inactivity upon adults who have to be careful and lie down because of it. Indeed, the only foreign agent that informs Kanamari "couvade" theories is the fetus/child and its blood, which come to be present in a village of coresident kinspeople.

PUNGENT BLOOD

As we have seen, Kanamari perinatal practices are oriented toward the management of blood and its effects on the premature aging or withering of adults. This is made explicit in the observance of identical practices whether or not a living child is present. All that is required for people to lie down on the child's blood is the child's blood, not the child. What needs to be investigated, then, is why blood should corrupt adult bodies. I turn to an analysis of Kanamari conceptions of blood, exploring them in light of two ideas that seemingly recur, in different guises, throughout the world: the idea that blood is linked to vitality (Carsten 2013: S13–S16); and the idea that blood signifies identity (Carsten 2013: S7–S8).

One of the ways that blood is usually linked to vitality is through its association with a concept that we may call the "soul" or "spirit," denoting a principle of animacy mostly invisible to the untrained eye. An association between blood and soul is widespread in Amazonia, where it takes many forms. In some cases, they are complementary components of living persons, blood being linked to a vital principle and the soul to an essence (Crocker 1985). In other cases, both the soul and the flow of blood are equally vital principles (Viveiros de Castro 1992: 209). For other peoples, both elements share a basic identity, as among the Shuar for whom "the true soul is present in the living individual primarily in the form of one's blood" (Harner 1972: 149).⁷

7. The use of the word "soul" raises certain problems. Not only are there well-known difficulties in translating Amerindian "soul" concepts into European languages, but

For the Kanamari, blood is the sensible aspect of the soul, the visible presence of an otherwise invisible principle. Despite there being different lexemes for “blood” (*mimi*) and “soul” (*ikonanin*), the former is the index of the latter. The Kanamari explicitly say that blood is “really our soul” (*tyo-ikonanin nim-bak*; Costa 2012: 99–102; see also Carvalho 2002: 288–292). In this sense, the Kanamari will claim that blood or the soul (used interchangeably) “dwells” (*-to*) in the heart. The heart pumps blood “in our veins” (*tyo-tyin pru naki*), generating heat (*boron*) and making people grow (*tyuru*). While it remains contained in the body, blood is a vital principle, animating the “flesh” (*-hai*) and thereby enabling movement.

However, as Belaunde has observed, while intravenous blood is usually a vital principle in Amazonia, exsanguinated blood is a hazard: “the blood let by people has a transformational effect upon lived experience, and opens the curtains of communication and perception usually separating daily experience from other cosmological space-times” (Belaunde 2006: 130). For the Kanamari, all exsanguinated blood is termed “pungent blood” and must always be avoided, although some kinds of blood are more dangerous than others. This is evident in relation to the blood of animals, graded according to the lethality of their blood-soul.⁸ Apex predators—particularly jaguars, anacondas, and black caimans—and poisonous snakes are especially harmful. These animals are collectively called *bara adyaba*, “worthless animals,” because they are unfettered predators who cannot be consumed.⁹ All they do is harm the living, either directly or through their blood. The exsanguinated blood of venomous snakes is “truly its poison”

many Amazonian groups also attribute more than one soul to people, not all of which are associated with blood. I hence use “soul” as a common, if problematic, native and/or anthropological translation for an aspect of “persons” in Amazonia.

8. Quantity, color, and odor of blood are common indexes of the predatory capacity of animals throughout Amazonia, for instance, among the Pirahã (Gonçalves 2001: 359) and the Kaxinawá (Lagrou 2007: 354–358). They are usually linked to the presence or absence of a “soul” in the animal whose blood is under investigation.
9. *Adyaba* is the same term used for the worthless ogres who raise captives as food and are closely linked to the whites (see Chapter Two). The application of the term “worthless” to apex predators, more typically associated in Amazonia with an unparalleled predatory beauty (Gow 2001: 110–113; Van Velthem 2003), may be confusing at first, but it follows from two features: (1) their only means of relating to others is predation—they know no means of converting predation into types of relationship that establish value; (2) accordingly, they cannot be the substance of commensal relations among humans (i.e., they cannot be converted into edible meat) upon which values such as love and beauty are built.

(*ababadionin tam a-miminin*) and has the same effects on those who touch it as a snakebite. A woman who once accidentally stepped on the blood of a viper killed on the path to her garden fell gravely ill. Her leg swelled up and she drifted in and out of consciousness, requiring her to be transported to the town of Atalaia do Norte to receive medical care.

Certain edible species are also “sort of worthless animals” (*bara adyaba nahan*), meaning that they are capable of causing harm after being killed if additional care is not taken. The brocket deer is particularly dangerous, but the soul of a dead collared peccary can eat one’s heart, and agouti blood causes graying. These animals are the ones most strongly tabooed during times spent being careful and lying down, including the perinatal period. Livestock blood is also dangerous because of its association with cannibalism and the whites (see Chapter Two). In contrast, pets are not dangerous (“our pets do not harm us,” *ityowa bara o’pu naman tu adik*), although, as with all bleeding, care has to be taken if they get injured. Other animals with “weak blood” (*mimi dioktunin*), such as most scaly fish and some types of monkey, are harmless and can be consumed during moments of “being careful” and even, if unavoidable, during periods of “lying down.”

Human blood is no less lethal and can be dangerous even for those who bleed. I once cut my finger on a machete and immediately put my lips around it, in an attempt to stop the bleeding. The Kanamari were horrified, not only because “drinking blood” is a cannibalistic act, but because they did not want me to get “ill” (*konama*) from contact with my own blood. *Tobiaik tyo*, “Be careful!” I was told. At first, I thought this reaction might have been because I was white, and thus my blood endangered the Kanamari, but I began to notice that people who bleed complain of other ailments, typically headaches and tremors. They also remove themselves from the company of others while they try to stanch the wound. Shamans who have a jaguar heart also possess lethal blood that can itself be used as a weapon. I was told about an old Kanamari shaman who sought revenge on the Kulina, whom he blamed for killing his brother. When he arrived at the village of the perpetrators, he simply bit his lower lip to make it bleed, then blew and spat the blood at them, killing them instantly.

The blood of the newborn that accompanies birth is not only pungent like all exsanguinated blood; it is also “new” (*aboawa*), since it has not yet been submitted to feeding or indeed to any other process of making kinship recognized by the Kanamari. This is a quality that it shares with the blood of enemies, who are likewise bound by mysterious means of making or not making kinship that

remain incomprehensible to the Kanamari. Conjugating pungency and newness, the blood of newborns and enemies is particularly deadly to those who fail to take proper precautions in its presence.

The perils of pungent blood vary according to the nature of the entity that is bleeding, although this is only a matter of degree. All pungent blood indicates alterity and danger. This association ensures that the metaphor of shared blood as identity—which is “almost too obvious to be worth stating” for Euro-American kinship ideology (Carsten 2013: S7; see also Schneider 1968: 23–25), and which anthropology has accordingly often treated as a universal fact (e.g., Malinowski 1930: 19)—remains completely alien to the Kanamari. They not only lack any notion of the vertical transmission of “blood” as a substance that unites generations, an idea that has a restricted range in native Amazonia (cf. Viatori 2005); the Kanamari do not even use the idiom of their “own blood” to distinguish themselves from other types of beings. In this respect, they differ from many other Amazonian peoples for whom blood functions as a metaphor for relations between commensals (e.g., Conklin 2001a: 115; Guerreiro 2011: 108–109).¹⁰

“Own blood” cannot be a symbol of shared identity because blood is the constant backdrop from which specific types of beings are formed: soul and blood, it should be remembered, are “just there” at the moment of conception. This is not only true of humans but of animals as well. Blood/soul is an idiom for what is common to all hematic beings (hence transecting kinship relations) and does not lend itself to establishing distinctions between classes of such beings (or, therefore, constituting kinship relations). It is thus an avatar of difference rather than identity. This is a predictable consequence of the association of blood and soul in an ethnographic context where “a person’s body indexes her constitutive relation to bodies similar to hers and different from other kinds of bodies, while her soul is a token of the ultimate commonality of all beings, human and non-human alike” (Viveiros de Castro 2009: 243; see also Vilaça 2002: 360–361; Hugh-Jones 2011).

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10. The idea that blood marks horizontal relations without establishing vertical linkages is found in other ethnographic regions, such as among the Kamea of Papua New Guinea, where the “one blood” bond unites siblings who shared a womb without implying the transmission of blood from mother to children (Bamford 2007: 56–79). It even seems to be characteristic of some Kanamari groups, such as those of the Juruá studied by Carvalho (2002: 98), although in other respects her analysis accords with my own.

Feeding inverts this condition by creating the axiomatic dependence from which identity can develop. Kinship then ensues as the active establishment of shared identity (through commensality, prolonged coresidence, and so on) out of a principle common to everyone.¹¹ True, souls can also be individualized and specific, projecting definite images or doubles, but this is not a given: rather, it is the outcome of an ontogenetic process that fabricates this specificity through ongoing relations with proximate others. In the words of Fausto (2007: 506), “what starts as part of a generic pool of subjectivity (or soul-stuff) has to be made into a specific kind of person through acts of feeding and caring” (see also Fausto 2007: 509, n. 22). Persons must be fabricated because, as a principle of existence, the soul lacks any particularizing identity (see Conklin 2001a: 137).

THE CHILD-ENEMY

The ethnographic context in which blood and soul are most closely associated in Amazonia is homicide. Killing often causes the blood/soul of the victim to enter (or otherwise affect) the killer, who must then be subjected to seclusion rites, typically to expel or neutralize the dangers of blood (through processes such as vomiting and blood-letting). By doing so, he acquires certain qualities from the enemy that accrue to him as supplementary capacities, such as new names, songs, and so forth (e.g., Albert 1985; Viveiros de Castro 2002; Fausto 2007: 509; 2012a: 164–168). Killing and homicide seclusion variously result in different postmortem destinies (Viveiros de Castro 2002), stall bodily decay (Conklin 2001b: 143), or make life “persist” (Fausto 2012a: 164).

Kanamari homicide rites are very similar to other Amazonian homicide rites in their superficial and procedural aspects but are fundamentally different in their results. For the Kanamari, nothing is acquired from the victim: no names, body parts, or reproductive capacities (see also Rival 2002: 55). On the contrary, killing causes premature aging in the killer and, if care is not taken, in his coresidents as well. All that seclusion can do is inhibit the process set in

11. Rodgers (2013: 87–88) describes how, among the Carib-speaking Ikpeng of the Xingu, infants are able to see spirits until the cumulative effects of breastmilk (i.e., feeding) cause these spirits to “vanish into the invisible.” The Ikpeng know a technique that involves dripping placental blood into the newborn’s eyes to prevent the spirits from vanishing into the invisible, allowing the child to grow into a shaman (i.e., a being who sees the world as newborns do).

motion. Killers, whether kinspeople or foreigners, are described as “angry people” (*noknin*) and their behavior classed as “worthless” (*dyaba*).

Killing poses a danger because it is a way of bringing new blood/soul into the space of kinship. The blood/soul of the victim infuses the killer’s body, causing his belly to swell. The man must then return to his village and “lie down” in his hammock under the mosquito net. The Kanamari explicitly say that the killer “lies down on the [dead] man’s blood” (*opikam paiko na-mimi tom*), just as new parents “lie down on the child’s blood”—the blood of both enemy and newborn being “new” as well as “pungent.”¹² The killer must avoid eating collared peccary and brocket deer, “sort of worthless animals,” as we saw above, that would cause the killer’s belly to swell further until it bursts and the killer dies. Even if nothing is eaten, the blood continues to “grow” (*tyuru*) in the killer’s belly, causing withering and ultimately death. It is as though the theme of longevity and persistence, a prominent dimension in the homicide rites of many Amazonian peoples, is reduced among the Kanamari to the negativity of an aging that, instead of imbuing the killer with a supplementary capacity, sets him on course for decrepitude. The killer must therefore introduce a titica vine into his mouth and down into his stomach in order to expel all of the dead man’s blood through vomiting, nullifying its harmful effects (Costa 2007: 311–314).

Amazonian posthomicide rites generally involve two techniques that Conklin terms “incorporation” and “purging.” The former aims “to introduce into the male body positively valued substances that enhance masculinity,” while the latter seeks “to remove substances that impede the development of manly qualities” (Conklin 2001b: 148). Throughout Amazonia, posthomicide rites navigate the tension between extracting a positive element from the victim (through incorporation) and avoiding the corresponding dangers (through purging). For the Kanamari, however, posthomicide rites, like all rites focused on blood, including the couvade, lack techniques of incorporation and focus exclusively on purging. However, what the removal of blood makes possible is not the development of manly qualities.¹³ Rather, the Kanamari purge the space

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12. When describing what aspect of the enemy affects them, Kanamari use the words “soul” and “blood” interchangeably. When speaking of “lying down,” however, they refer to the enemy’s blood, although they may say, at least as an exegesis for the inquisitive anthropologist, that the killer *opikam paiko na-mimi tom, a-ikonanin drim*, “lies down on the [enemy] man’s blood, because of his soul.”
 13. Vilaça’s (1992: 107–115, 2010: 88–99) interpretation of Wari’ posthomicidal practices focuses on the killer’s role in consubstantializing the dead enemy as he

of kinship of blood so that the life and health of kinspeople can be sustained. In this sense, posthomicide rites and the couvade are not analogous rites focused on different means for asserting what Conklin (2001b) terms the “conquest of vitality.” They are, in effect, the exact same rite of purging, pragmatically adapted to two different contexts.

A commonly reported danger for the Amazonian killer and his coresidents is that the capacities acquired from his victim risk overwhelming his self-control, compelling him to turn on his kinspeople, whom he comes to see, through the eyes of his victim, as enemies (Viveiros de Castro 2002: 279; Fausto 2012a: 169–172). This violent movement toward others is countered by seclusion where the killer remains immobile while he familiarizes the victim’s spirit. The killer’s potential for indiscriminate violence and anger is also a risk for Kanamari who fail to properly regurgitate enemy blood (Costa 2007: 309–310). For the Kanamari, though, the centrifugal movement of the killer, which may cause him to flee into the forest (*ityonin-man*, “to get/gain the forest/land”), is an extreme and rare amplification of a series of minimal and erratic tremors or anomalous twitches that always and immediately afflict the killer. The killer fidgets and contorts (*tyak-tyak’am*, “to be moving-moving”), he “trembles” (*owik-wik’am*), he is “unaware” or “ignorant” (*wa-tikokok tunin*) of his own behavior, becoming prone to spasmotic movements. These movements are not an aspect of his “flesh” (*hai*), that is, they are not indices of his volition, but an aspect of the victim’s blood acting through him (*paiko na-mimi drim*, “because of the man’s blood”). Vomiting this blood allows the killer’s body to reconnect with his kinspeople, re-establishing the correct way to interact with them.

These slight, irregular movements—small chromatic displacements that prefigure the deracination of the killer—are explicitly linked to the spasmotic movements of the newborn (*tu’am opatyn waranin*, “thus is the newborn child”). The child’s flesh is “unripe” (*parah tu*, i.e., immature) and blood seeps readily from it, a condition already manifest in the intrauterine environment in which the fetus develops. While the fetus (i.e., the flesh) is generated through the accumulation of semen in the womb, the Kanamari, as I have already noted, have no explanation for the origin of blood aside from the fact that it is “just there.”

grows fat from the soul-blood in his body, making no explicit reference to the development of “manly qualities.” Like the Kanamari, other Amazonian peoples, such as the Gê-speaking Xikrin-Kayapó, stress techniques for purging the enemy’s soul rather than those centered on incorporating its qualities (see C. Gordon 2006: 97–98).

Hence the fetus develops in tandem with its own bleeding, since its inchoate flesh cannot guarantee the circulation of blood. This intrauterine constitutive bleeding is evident at the moment of birth, as lochia and postpartum hemorrhaging, which the Kanamari consider to be evidence of the newborn's blood, not that of its mother. In Kanamari theories of conception and parturition, bleeding is both anterior to and a precondition for the flesh and the circulation of blood through it.

The ontogenetic priority of bleeding over the circulation of blood is encoded in the Kanamari word for "to bleed," *mimiok*, which is composed of *mimi*, "blood," and the suffix *-ok*. This suffix indicates the minimal requirement for developing more complex and morally valued capabilities. To have the physical capacity to hear, for instance, is *matyamiok* (*matyami*, "earhole," + *ok*), while to listen/understand is *mapikan*. To be able to produce babbling vocal sounds (like a baby's prattle) is *koniok* (*koni*, "language/speech," + *ok*), a term that the Kanamari also use for any language they do not understand, while the articulation of these sounds as a comprehensible language is *koni*. Bleeding is thus prior to having "blood in our veins" (*mimi tyo-tyinpru naki*). *Mimiok* not only refers to perinatal bleeding but to all bleeding, which emphasizes that the ontogenetically primitive state of blood involves its release from weakened flesh in uncoordinated movement.

I showed above that the association between blood and soul links intravenous blood flow to a vital principle, while exsanguinated blood is linked to a predatory capacity. We can now restate this contrast as a unified kinetic theory of blood-soul. At the start of the life cycle, movement is erratic, irregular, and external to the flesh. Yet this is the condition from which the flesh is matured through feeding and subsequent acts of care. Young children are massaged in order to acquire "beauty" (*bak*). *A-po-hai bu*, "to produce its buttocks," for instance, is a massage that grandmothers know to ensure that children grow up to have rounded and firm buttocks. *A-tyon-tyini*, "tearing the chest," involves either parent placing both thumbs in the middle of the child's chest, pressing down and rubbing them outwards, thereby ensuring that it will grow up with good posture and an increased pulmonary capacity (see also Vilaça 2002: 349; Fausto 2012a: 214). In the process, as the child ages, it acquires coordination by turning the disordered movement of blood-soul into the intentional motion of bodies—prattle becomes speech, hearing becomes listening, and bleeding becomes blood flow. By getting rid of blood that is exterior to the body and caring for infants whose blood flows within them, the Kanamari fabricate the circulation of blood

as contained movement in opposition to the unbounded movement outside the body, creating a vital principle out of a deadly viscosity.

This is why the blood of animals, although “pungent,” is never described as “new blood” (*mimi aboawa*). Animals rear their offspring through means appropriate to each species, and while these means may be different from those through which the Kanamari produce beauty, they are not completely alien to them: the Kanamari, like all native Amazonians, have detailed knowledge of the movement and behavior of the animal species in their environment. The same logic explains why white people do not have new blood. As we saw in the previous chapter, there is little mystery to how the whites produce themselves, even if the results are repulsive. Newborns and enemies, in contrast, are completely opaque to the Kanamari: the former may be fed, and only then is it possible to develop their human qualities, while the latter are impenetrable, and it is best to get completely rid of their residue through postomicide seclusion. According to the Kanamari, one of the main traits of the Kaxinawá, their former enemies, is the unpredictability of their movements, and therefore it was futile to prepare against an eventual ambush by them (Costa 2007: 222–223).

For the Kanamari, as for the Kuyokon of Alaska discussed by Ingold (2011: 172), “beings—whether human or non-human—do not come into the world with their essential attributes already predetermined but rather enfold, at any moment in time, a past history of growth and movement within a field of relationships with others.” In a world such as this, infants exist at a particularly critical juncture. First, they are unsocialized and unrelated to those to whom they are born, lacking the kinship (i.e., history) that characterizes the ongoing ties that constitute the village space in which they make their appearance. Second, their emergence modifies the existing field of relationships in a rapid and radical manner (see Gow 1997, 2000). The Kanamari express this paradoxical quality not by focusing on the deficient nature of the child’s “immature” body but, instead, on its spasms and the blood with which it comes into the world. With birth, all attention is directed toward the soul and its visible counterparts, because the child, rather than being a person with a history of established relationships with others, is “a moment of activity that may subsequently be resolved . . . into an objective form” (Ingold 2011: 170).¹⁴ For the Kanamari,

14. I adapt Ingold’s description of Kuyokon hunting, which stresses how animals are recognized by their movement before (eventually) being individuated into a specific form, to Kanamari notions of individuation through kinship. I have elsewhere

the indeterminate qualities of the child, its lack of history, its inchoate flesh, its fragile participation in (but maximum impact on) existing relationships, all immediately associate it with the figure of the enemy, who is not only asocial but also elusive, moving at the fringes of the area inhabited by the Kanamari, capable of causing sudden and intense damage to the living.

The association between the newborn and the enemy brings us back to the well-known relation between the couvade and homicide rites. The killer, whose belly is full of the exsanguinated blood of his victim, undergoes a process of regression to a state that the life cycle and kinship relations had enabled him to overcome. His predicament is very similar to that of the expectant mother, whose future child bleeds within her, and who, as we have seen, is therefore always “weak,” relies on vitamin supplements and is barred from performing most of her regular activities. She, too, goes through a process of withering, since both she and the killer harbor enemies within them. Kanamari ethnography amply confirms the place of the couvade in the Amazonian predatory complex (Menget 1993; Vilaça 2002; Fausto 2007). In societies that value killing enemies as a means for the “conquest of vitality,” the baby is a metaphor for the enemy-victim, and posthomicidal seclusion is a “metaphorical pregnancy” (Conklin 2012b). But in Kanamari society, which sees killing as “worthless” and debilitating, it is the enemy-victim who is a metaphor for the baby, and the “couvade” is a metaphorical posthomicide seclusion.

Kanamari perinatal rites also make it difficult to agree with Lévi-Strauss’ (1966: 195) general claim that in the couvade “[the father] plays the part of the child.” For the Kanamari, both father and mother “play the part of” the killer, since all have their bodies awash with blood. The links the Kanamari establish are therefore less syntagmatic and internal to procreation ideology, and more paradigmatic, determined by generic relations of flesh and body(-owner) to blood and soul.¹⁵ Lévi-Strauss assumes that the father’s relation to the child requires more attention because he is conceived to be closer to the newborn due to his greater contribution to its formation in the womb. Although the

discussed how blood is managed and avoided during hunting and butchering the animal carcass (Costa 2012).

15. Other Amazonian peoples also stress paradigmatic links between the couvade and posthomicide rites. But while the pertinent metaphorical link is established, at least in some aspects, between the child and the killer (e.g., Fausto 2012a: 167), the Kanamari draw a clear homology between the child and the homicide victim, i.e., the enemy.

father's sperm creates the child's flesh for the Kanamari, at birth the child is still "unripe": its flesh is never strong enough to subdue the indeterminate blood that overwhelms it. Any identification there may be is subsidiary to the much more pronounced strangeness existing between the parents and the newborn (see Stasch 2009: Chapter 4; Course 2011: 27–28).

Finally, it must be remembered that danger is not only manifest when blood becomes visible at the moment of birth or after an abortion. Pregnancy, during which the disturbance of the woman's body is associated with the disturbance of the social body, already anticipates the danger to come. However, live births pose a problem that stillbirths and homicide seclusion do not: something does, indeed, remain that needs to be incorporated, for the child-enemy must be made into a kinsperson.

FEEDING ENEMIES

Interpretations of the Amazonian couvade typically explain the incorporation of the newborn into the kinship network in the process of explaining birth rites. The couvade is concerned with the baby and its relations to those to whom it is born, as well as to the myriad beings that exist in the world and covet this new life for themselves. As a rite, it may protect those whose kinship relations are being rearranged in the process of protecting the baby (Vilaça 2002: 356). Alternatively, it may act to make the baby into a kinsperson while it consolidates the parents as a married couple and incorporates the man (along with the child) into the longhouse in uxorilocal regimes (Rival 1998). The couvade renders what is exterior to society interior: it is the first step in the humanization of the child—a step that, throughout Amazonia, must be complemented by others in a lifelong process of “transform[ing] Others into Humans and Humans into Others, through time” (Gow 1997: 44).

For the Kanamari, such interpretations will not do. The couvade is not aimed at protecting the child and hence does not strive to humanize it. Instead, the couvade clears the domestic space of blood so that existing kinship relations can be preserved and—in the case of live births—so the work necessary to ripen the child's flesh can commence. It seeks to reduce the deleterious effects of procreation without thereby encountering a solution for the child, which, as far as an analysis of the Kanamari couvade is concerned, is only a residue or a remainder of a process of managing blood.

A notable similarity exists, therefore, between the couvade and how the Kanamari relate to white people via the logic of the *aviamiento* system, as described in the previous chapter. Both are means for protecting Kanamari kinship from the exterior in contexts where relating with the exterior becomes necessary. In the first case, the *aviamiento* logic acts to buffer the kinship that the Kanamari create through feeding relations from the perverse predatory kinship of the whites. It enables them to acquire merchandise without becoming like those whose goods they crave. With the couvade, perinatal practices cancel all unnecessary contacts with the exterior (Fausto 2007: 505) in order to ensure that kinship relations can be created, propagated, and protected from external threats. This enables the Kanamari to replenish their society without thereby becoming like enemy-children. While the *aviamiento* logic operates at the macrolevel of interethnic contact, the couvade operates at the microlevel of human reproduction (or intraethnic contact).

This is where feeding comes in. As in the conversion of a wild animal into a pet, or a spirit into a familiar, feeding is the means for making the child-enemy into a kinsperson at the same time that it makes the mother into a body-owner of the newborn. Feeding a child is successful when it “suckles” (*nia-bik*) at its mother’s breasts soon after birth, an event that is concomitant with the purging of blood put into effect by the couvade restrictions. This is an intimate moment between a mother and her child, concealed under the mosquito net. The news travels quickly, however. The father or the midwife will tell people who gather around the house where the child is born whether it is a boy or a girl and report that it has suckled at its mother breast. Henceforth, the information transmitted to the curious is not that the child was born, but that it—now referred to as either *piya o’pu*, “boy,” or *ityaro o’pu*, “girl”—“has suckled” (*nia-biknin*) or that it “has been fed” (*ayuh-manin*).¹⁶ At the same time, the act of feeding makes the mother. The Kanamari do not refer to a woman pregnant with her first child as a “mother” (*niamá*), although they may refer to the fetus as her child (*awa opatyn*). Not until the baby has suckled is she identified as a mother, and not until she leaves seclusion is she publicly referred to as such.

This, at least, is my impression, based on listening in on conversations. My knowledge of the Kanamari language did not allow me to formulate a question such as “Is a woman pregnant with her first child a mother?”—at least not in

16. Among the Huaroani, “the child exists as a person from the first conscious parental act of feeding” (Rival 1998: 626).

any way that made sense to the Kanamari. All I can say is that, whenever I was paying attention, I never heard a woman being called *niamá* during her first pregnancy, even when the pregnancy was being discussed. She is called by her name or a kinship term, and the fetus is referred to as *a-min*, “her belly.” I cannot make precise claims concerning how long it takes for a new mother to feed her newborn for the first time, since new parents are secluded under a mosquito net and screened from sight. I asked a number of women about this and was usually told that the baby would be fed one day after “screaming,” i.e., a day after it was born and cried. Midwives only announce the birth of a boy or girl at least one day after the village hears the newborn cry for the first time. Thus, although the couvade and first feeding occur at the same time, they are always kept distinct, if only because the former follows still and live births while the latter is a complementary requirement of live births only.

The feeding relation is established in the postpartum period, but it continues for as long as the child is dependent on the mother. Throughout the child’s infancy, the mother can be referred to as *a-warah* (his/her/its body-owner; the same expression is used for the body-owner of a pet) or *awa opatyn-na-warah* (her child’s body-owner). Once the child receives its first name, usually in the first months of life, the mother may also be called *X-warah*, where “X” is the name of the child. The same is true of a father, although here we often find the mother in a mediating position. Although on occasions I heard fathers directly referred to as the *-warah* of their children, they will more commonly be described in recursive fashion as the *-warah* of their wives and, through them, of their children.¹⁷ The father and mother are called *-warah* contextually, in light of certain events (e.g., when a mother breastfeeds her baby, when a young child follows her in the garden, when a father clears a garden plot for his wife and children, and so forth). *-Warah* is not a reclassification or a teknonym, as among the Araweté, where a man who becomes a father drops his old name and comes to be called “father of X” (Viveiros de Castro 1992: 143–144). Nor does it substitute a name or a kinship term. Rather, this is a way of drawing attention to an asymmetrical aspect of relations within the nuclear family at certain moments and is hence a means to highlight their conceptual convergence with other *-warah* figures.

17. As Strathern (2011: 246) notes, the “irreducible asymmetry” between parent and child “recurs within the definition of parent itself when two aspects of parenthood are distinguished by sex.”

The child, in turn, is regularly said to “depend” (*naki-ayuh*) on its mother. The mother-child dyad is one in which agency is skewed toward the mother, who quickly resumes her work in house and garden as soon as all traces of blood have been eliminated. The birth of a first child is usually the cue for the new family to move out of the mother’s father’s house, where they had been living since marriage, and to become the heads of their own household (or at least to establish a semidetached annex to the wife’s parents’ house). The birth of the child magnifies the parents in this way, affording them greater agency vis-à-vis their coresidents and, particularly, the child’s mother’s father (Costa 2016: 92; see also Rival 1998: 634). But the child itself, throughout its infancy, contributes very little to the daily upkeep of the household. Even when children are old enough to contribute food on certain occasions, “the labour of these children does not circulate in their names for they are treated as extensions of their parents in terms of production,” as Gow (1989: 578) has observed for the Piro. In this sense, whatever tasks a child may perform are “simply an adjunct to adult activity” (1989: 578).

To grow and thrive, the child must be fed by its mother. The process of growth, though, is one in which the child progressively develops body-owner bonds of his or her own by learning to provide some food (fish or forest fruits) to his or her younger siblings and/or becomes responsible for the care of one or more pets (Figure 13). The development of body-owner bonds is a feature of maturation, part of the life cycle of all persons—one which, as in other areas of Amazonia, will ultimately involve the acquisition of gendered productive capacities (McCallum 2001: 41–58). To be an adult human being is to enter into and maintain body-owner bonds with others.¹⁸

As someone becomes a body-owner in relation to others and hence progressively becomes a productive person, many of the body-owner bonds that previously constituted the person in question become weaker or drift toward more symmetrical and mutualistic relations (including love), which elide the earlier asymmetrical bond of dependency. An adult man may love his mother, but he does not need her in the same way that he did as a child; she no longer feeds

18. For the Aikewara (Surui) of Eastern Amazonia, older children assume the position of *kunomitu'sara*, “owner of children,” taking upon themselves the responsibility of organizing games and stimulating small expeditions to hunt birds or gather tortoises. This is the first manifestation of the capacity to be an owner (*sara*), which involves being able to initiate an activity, to start something that others follow. “Owners of children” hence display a quality that is a hallmark of adult persons (Calheiros 2014: 62–63).



Figure 13. Boy and his pet coati (Photo: Hilton Nascimento, CTI archives, 2009).

him, since he can produce his own food and is able to feed others, thereby becoming a body-owner to them.¹⁹ This does not mean that he may not ever find

19. This implies intermediate stages in a burgeoning autonomy. Among the Arawan-speaking Jarawara of the Purus, the process of raising a child is said to be completed

himself in a subordinate position to others who act as his body-owner in certain contexts, but these situations become rarer as the opportunities for assuming a superordinate position as a body-owner multiply. Thus, while “the skills for achieving personal autonomy later in life can be acquired only through a kind of founding submission to a situation of dependency and attachment” (Walker 2012: 197), as for the Urarina of Peruvian Amazonia, “personal autonomy” is then erected upon the capacity to submit others to a situation of dependency and attachment. One person’s magnification implies another’s humanization and vice versa.

The transition from a child dependent on parents to an adult who feeds children is negotiated during adolescence, when teenagers become virtually homeless—or, rather, become at home in any house or village. This is the age at which dependence on parents becomes significantly lax, as young boys travel from village to village looking for girlfriends (Figure 14). As I observed in the previous chapter, in former times, adolescent boys would often spend some time under the supervision of one or more local bosses, working and developing relations of debt peonage that could potentially ensure a steady flow of merchandise in the future. Today, they may spend some time in town, attending school. Girls tend to travel less, but still they gradually become less attached to their house and move more freely through the village, visiting kinspeople living in other households. They also accompany older women to gardens and help bring manioc back to the village. After the menarche and its corresponding period of seclusion, they may well travel without their parents (Figure 15). This is the age when boys and girls begin to test future marital arrangements, which will propel them into the role of productive adults who “love” each other and maintain relations of “mutual demand” (Gow 1991: 129–137).

The transition is also a progression from feeding/dependence to love, similar to the passage involved in the process of taming and raising pets analyzed in Chapter One. Neither children nor pets are able to contribute food toward daily

when he or she is approximately thirteen years old. As Maizza (2014: 501) notes, “this does not mean that care and attention cease, but only that, in some way, she needs less care from her parents.” Among the Tukanoan Barasana, initiated young boys approaching marriageable age set up a “felling and cultivating unit with the unmarried sister next to him in seniority. . . . The economic unit that they form is intermediate between their role as children, still learning under the authority of their parents, and the truly responsible and independent unit formed after marriage” (C. Hugh-Jones 1979: 50).



Figure 14. Autonomous teenage boys visiting a village (Photo: Luiz Costa, 2005).



Figure 15. Autonomous teenage girl ready for travel (Photo: Luiz Costa, 2005).

meals. While they may partake of these meals, young children and pets are not given plates of food, instead being allowed to take their share from anyone's plate, particularly those of their mothers. By this means, "a gloss of mutuality is put upon the unequal, asymmetrical relationship" (Strathern 1988: 90) and, through the gradual widening of mutuality, the asymmetrical relationship will ultimately shift toward other relations. Children and pets are not required to eat together with adults, since they are directly fed. The commensality they consequently share with adults is tempered, if not determined, by feeding relations that are more basic and immediate.

Rather than a sharp passage from feeding/dependence to love, therefore, a drawn-out transition takes place in which both idioms can overlap. The ensuing ambiguity is sometimes expressed in jokes. Pets (particularly monkeys) that take their food from their body-owner's plate or from pans where food has been prepared, as well as those that join people for meals in households, are considered a farce. "Is it human (*tukuna*)?" the Kanamari will ask and burst into laughter: "Is this pet our kin?" Seeing the pet next to its body-owner eating from her plate, someone may get up and, taking food from their own mouths, place it in the mouth of the pet, saying "Here, take your food," as if to remind it (or others) that although fed, it is not a commensal. Children are subject to similar jokes. When boys start to bring home fish they have caught in the nearby stream, or when girls help their mother with cooking, adult Kanamari will jokingly refer to them as "grandfather" (*paiko*) or "grandmother" (*bwa*). The point of the joke is to ironically situate children at the opposite end of the life cycle, shifting them from nascent commensals to (soon-to-be) ex-commensals, thereby stressing their incipient and negligible participation in communal meals by equating this marginal involvement with the reduced contributions of elderly kin.

While I have been stressing similarities across the *-warah* relations created by feeding, here we encounter an evident difference between raising pets and raising children. The altricial nature of children and pets requires that both exist through their body-owners, but the ability to create body-owner bonds through feeding (and hence to mitigate former bonds of dependency) is a feature of the maturation of children that is absent for pets. Both children and animals are new individuals entering the space of everyday relations, but kinship with animals can only go so far, because pets never feed others and they never produce food. Owner-pet relations that develop into love and commensality are, in this sense, a public fiction, because there is no way to fully extricate the bond from its underpinnings in the same way that a child disengages itself from the

ownership of its mother as it initiates body-owner bonds with others through feeding.

FOSTERAGE

Kanamari kinship terminology is a variant of Dravidian terminologies. One characteristic equation of such terminologies is that same-sex siblings “merge” with one another, so that a person calls his or her mother and mother’s sister, for example, by the same kinship term or by a closely derived term. Kanamari terminology deviates from canonical Dravidian terminologies, however, by an irreducible distinction between parents and their same-sex siblings.²⁰ Thus, the Kanamari term for mother is *niamá*, which is a term of both reference and address. It is a denotative term used (almost) exclusively for the first woman to breastfeed a child. The mother’s sister is called *anya*, a term which also means “woman” in a generic sense (e.g., *kariwa anya*, “white woman,” *tukuna anya*, “Kanamari woman,” etc.). Correspondingly, the father is called *pama* while the father’s brother is called *mon* (a term with no extrakinship meaning). Terminologically, a Kanamari should only have one “mother” and one “father.”²¹

The terms for “mother” and “father” are the only terms in Kanamari kinship terminology that unequivocally designate just one kin type. The distinction these terms establish between lineal and collateral relatives is neutralized in ego’s generation, which distributes kin types according to canonically Dravidian

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- 20. The terminological distinction between lateral and collateral relatives in the first ascending generation is a widely attested aspect of Amazonian Dravidian terminologies. Silva (1995) has labeled this feature “laterality” in opposition to the “circularity” of equations characteristic of South Asian Dravidian terminologies. Laterality is very common among the Katukina- and Arawan-speaking people of the Juruá-Purus basins. See Deturche (2009: 226) on the Biá River Katukina, whose kinship terminology is structurally identical to the Kanamari’s save for the presence of a distinct set of affinal terms. For laterality among Arawan-speaking peoples, see Maizza (2012: 116–122) for the Jarawara, Odmark and Landin (1985: 108) and Bonilla (2007: 316) for the Paumari, and Kroemer (1994: 47) for the Zuruhā.
 - 21. The reciprocal terms for “mother” are *i-’opu*, “my son” and *i-tyo*, “my daughter.” In the earlier discussion on pets, I showed that the term *-’opu* is the unmarked term, such that *i-’opu binuk*, “my sons,” may be shorthand for “my sons and daughters.” A father calls his son *i-pia*, literally “my man,” and calls his daughter by the same term his wife uses. Both mother and father can also use *atya/ityowa opatyn*, “my/our children,” to designate all their offspring.

equations, such that male ego calls a mother's sister's son *i-dya*, "my brother," and so forth. It is only weakly operative in the first descending generation, with the distinction between one's own children and a same-sex sibling's children being optional and open to shifting contextual considerations.²² Kanamari kinship terminology thus isolates mother and father from every other position in the terminological grid.

The denotative character of the terms for mother and father may seem surprising in light of the fact that the Kanamari practice a form of fosterage through which a child is raised by kinspeople other than those he or she calls "mother" and "father." To my knowledge, there is no word that refers explicitly to this practice. The Kanamari just say that so-and-so "raises" (*tyuru-tiki*, "causes to grow") the child. Fosterage is seldom if ever definitive (see also Menget 1988: 64; Maizza 2014: 499–500; Bonilla 2016: 128–129, n. 20). Fostered children are preferentially transferred to their grandparents, usually from around the age of five. Sometimes they may be raised by a mother's sister, but this is both rarer and more temporary. What the Kanamari stress are the close kinship and residential ties between actual and foster parents (see also Menget 1988: 65; Halbmayer 2004: 153–155; Maizza 2014: 498–503). As a result, although fosterage is quite common, it is not easily visible to the uninformed ethnographer, since the houses of the birth and foster parents will not only be in the same village but usually in the same residential cluster, and the child will spend some time in both houses.

A further difficulty in identifying fosterage is that it does not result in regular and consistent terminological reclassifications. The first woman to breastfeed a child is always the mother, and, in every case I inquired about, she was also the genetrix. A person's "mother" (*niama*) never changes over the course of a lifetime. The one case I know in which a woman other than the genetrix is called "mother" is more similar to full-fledged adoption than to fosterage. It

22. Typically, same-sex siblings' children who live in the same village as ego will be called by the same term for "son" or "daughter," while those living in other villages will be called by a derivative term. Thus, a man will call his brother's son who resides in the same village as himself *i-pia*, "my son," the same as he calls his own sons. However, he will call a brother's son who lives in another village *i-biwampia*. The Kanamari gloss *-biwampia* as "almost son" (Portuguese: *quase filho*). Words incorporating *biwam* (or *bowam* due to vocalic harmony) suggest "mixture" (as in *dyobko bahanbowam*, "mixing *dyobko*," discussed in Chapter One). My guess is that the terms a man uses for his BS (*biwampia*) and his BD (*biwamtyo*) can be translated as something like "mixed son" and "mixed daughter."

involves a girl whose birth mother died soon after she was born and her father quickly married her mother's sister (genealogically her *anya*), whom she now calls "mother"; however, when I obtained her genealogy, she continued to refer to her late genetrix as "mother." Notably, the birth mother did not die during childbirth, and hence she breastfed her daughter before she was raised by someone else. I occasionally heard foster children use "mother" as a vocative for their grandmother, but they would always refer to her (when speaking to others) by the appropriate genealogical term, *hwa*, "grandmother." In every case of fosterage of which I am aware, the child continues to call the woman who first breastfed him or her *niamá*, even when he or she also calls their foster mother *niamá* in certain contexts. The identity of the father is somewhat more flexible, partly because theories of multiple paternity allow a degree of leverage in classifications. Nonetheless, in almost every case, the "father" is the man who was married to the child's mother at the time of birth.

Fosterage in Amazonia tends to match what is observed among the Kanamari, with the child being raised by a grandparent or, less often, a mother's sister. The practice seems to be particularly common in southwestern Amazonia, where it is also found among the Arawan-speaking Jarawara (Maizza 2014: 498–503) and the Paumari (Bonilla 2007: 339–344), both living in the Purus, and the Arawak-speaking Piro, in the lower Urubamba region (Gow 1991: 158–162).²³

23. Menget (1988) opts to refer to "group-internal adoption" in general, thus blurring the distinction between fosterage and situations closer to actual adoption, such as arrangements following the death of a parent. His purpose is to distinguish all varieties of "group-internal adoption" from "group-external adoption" of war captives. I prefer "fosterage" not only because it approximates Kanamari ethnography to similar practices from other parts of the world (e.g., Young 1971: 41–43; Carsten 1991; Leinaweafer 2007, 2008), but also because the English verb "to foster" is derived from an older word that meant "to rear by supplying with food," which squares perfectly with what the Kanamari understand foster relations to be about, as we shall see shortly. Similarities can be found between the patterns of adoption/fosterage in southwestern Amazonia and in Andean societies, where "child circulation" between kinspeople is a significant theme in regional ethnology (Leinaweafer 2008; also see Van Vleet 2008: 62–67). This may be related to the salience of "circulation" (see Allen 2002: 194–195) and "feeding" (Ramírez 2005) in Andean cosmologies. I can only note these parallels here, which suggest a new avenue for research into the elusive Andean-Amazonian frontier (see Santos-Granero 2002).

Although fosterage has been described in some ethnographic works, there is yet to be a more extensive comparative study along the lines of what exists for adoption by capture. The latter has been the object of imposing and comprehensive regional syntheses, focused on warfare, captivity, and the place of captives in the reproduction of the group.²⁴ The stress on adoption by capture has shown how Amazonian kinship is constructed from difference, since it positions the captive in the kinship relations of his or her captor, particularly when the captive is a child. Processes of consubstantiation then act to turn the adoptee into a kinsperson, slowly modifying his or her body and growing it into a body similar to those of his or her captors (Santos-Granero 2009: 178–181). As Vilaça states, “if a baby in the womb and a child adopted *from strangers or enemies* are both equally construed as consubstantial . . . , adoption makes it even more apparent that shared substance is produced in terms of a relation of alterity” (Vilaça 2002: 354, emphasis added; see also Taylor 2000: 324; Santos-Granero 2009: 192–195).

While a focus on adoption by capture highlights the process of bringing foreigners into the local group and the mechanisms that make these foreigners into kinspeople, its prominence in regional comparison conceals a vital distinction made evident by fosterage. While captive enemies can become a woman's sons and daughters, just as those she bore are her sons and daughters, fosterage very rarely leads to the severance of the relation between the birth mother and the child, even when it implies a number of important rearrangements in the relationships of those involved. Among the Kanamari this enduring tie is almost a rule, but the same equation is found elsewhere. Among the Ikpeng, for instance, none of the varieties of “group-internal adoption” imply a rupture in the original filial relations (Menget 1988: 64–65). For the Kulina, foster children “are clearly distinguished from actual children” (Pollock 1985: 42). Among the Jarawara, foster parents may be called “mother” and “father” by young children, but once they are older, they will call their birth parents “real parents” and their foster parents “raising parents”²⁵ (Maizza 2014: 498). So if adoption of foreign children

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24. On adoption by capture, see, for example, Taylor 1985; Menget 1985, 1993; Carneiro da Cunha and Viveiros de Castro 1985; Combés 1992; Viveiros de Castro 1992; Sterpin 1993; Teixeira-Pinto 1997; Fausto 1999, 2012a; Santos-Granero 2009; Sztutman 2009, 2012, among many others. See Godelier (2011: 108–112) on varieties of fosterage and adoption.
 25. I adapt Viegas' (2003: 23) solution to translate the Portuguese word *criação*. She renders the concept of *filho de criação* among the Tupinambá of southern Bahia as

reveals the constructed nature of all relations of filiation, fosterage would seem to contradict it, revealing the inerasable bond between the birth parents and the child they created.

Peter Gow was probably the first to address this conundrum in his ethnography of the Piro: “It always seemed odd to me that while native people do not consider physiological parenthood in itself to give a person any rights over a child, they frequently pointed out cases where a child was raised by someone other than its physiological parents” (Gow 1991: 158). He interprets this as an expression of two separate idioms of kinship: one based on physical connection and shared substance, revealed in the importance of postpartum prohibitions and breastfeeding; and another based on caring and the reciprocal use of kin terms (Gow 1991: 161). Hence, the recognition of “physiological parenthood” and the direct, unmediated, physical relationship with the child are always distinct from “raising” children who are no longer directly reliant on these physical bonds but depend instead on care mediated by the work of their parents. Fosterage is possible when the first idiom gives way to the second:

As [the child] is weaned and begins to attain a certain physical autonomy from its parents, it becomes reliant on care from its parents which is no longer directly physical, but rather mediated through the work of its parents. At this stage the child can be moved around between people, for any adult can then fulfill the role of nourishing parent. As a toddler, the child still lacks knowledge, and has not developed the “memory” of its parents. (Gow 1991: 160)

Central in the transition from the “physiological” to the “nurturing” idiom is the effacement of the former as the child grows (that is, the observance of

a “raised child.” “Raising parents” seems an appropriate reciprocal for what Maizza calls *pais de criação*. For the Jarawara, children are preferentially raised by a MZ or FB, which, considering same-sex sibling equivalence in G-1, means that, ideally, kinship relations remain unchanged when a child is transferred from “true” to “raising” parents. Notably, however, when a child is raised by, say, a MB, FZ, or MM, the child will typically classify relatives through their “true parents,” at least once they are older. This means that they may marry the children of their raising parents (when these are cross-sex siblings of their true parents), and thus come to call them “father-in-law” and/or “mother-in-law” (Maizza 2014: 498–500). See also Halbmayer (2004) on the role of fosterage and adoption in creating new marital possibilities among Carib-speakers, and Fock (1963: 153–154) on the Waiwai *anton* institution.

postpartum taboos ceases to be an idiom of kinship between parent and child in later life) and the child's use of parental kin terms for foster parents. If the child starts calling the foster (or adoptive) parents by terms for "mother" and "father" and expresses a desire to live with them, this usage and desire is generative of the relation: "The idiom of caring is thus a two-way process, with the caring as a sign of love of the parent, and the use of kin terms by the child as a sign of its reciprocation of this love" (Gow 1991: 161; see also Viegas 2003).

Like the Piro, Kanamari fosterage transfers the feeding relation, but this has a different overall effect on the character of Kanamari kinship compared to the Piro case. For one thing, as we have seen, Kanamari fosterage does not transfer the use of kinship terms. What it transfers is the feeding bond and the "body-owner" category generated by this bond. The birth mother, the woman who first breastfed the child, will continue to be called *niamá*, and her husband at the time of the child's birth will be his or her *pama*. Neither, though, will be referred to as the child's *-warah* once they have placed it in fosterage. The raising parents are the ones who will henceforth be referred to as the child's *-warah*. Accordingly, children will visit their birth parents frequently, but they will always accompany the foster parents in their chores. Fostered boys will accompany their body-owner on fishing and hunting expeditions, while fostered girls will accompany their body-owner to the garden, to the river to fetch water, and so forth. Fostered children will usually eat at their foster parents' homes, although they may eat at their birth parents' house or, as they mature into adolescence, any home in which they happen to find themselves.²⁶

Why give children to be fostered by grandparents at all? There seem to be two reasons, one linked to its effect on the foster parents and another to its validation of "knowing the land" as the central virtue of kinship. Only the first is explicitly affirmed by the Kanamari: parents allow their children to be fostered in order to prevent their own parents from aging (see Halbmayer 2004: 154; Bonilla 2007: 343). The state of *atyinani*, which, as we saw above, is "to be

26. In this context, it is worth noting that Piro fosterage (or adoption) tends to apply to toddlers who have just been weaned and who hence grow up with little or no memory of their birth parents. Kanamari fosterage, by contrast, generally applies to older children, around the age of five, as I noted above, unless the birth mother or father dies when the child is very young. This fact may influence the way that kinship terms are used in each case, since "the exercise of permanent visual mentalization ... and the memory of interactions saturated with affects" is one of the cornerstones of kinship throughout Amazonia (Taylor 2015: 140).

old and useless, tossed to the side of the house,” ultimately involves not caring for anyone or anything and being dependent on others, i.e., to have a body-owner but not be a body-owner. By allowing their elderly parents to care for their grandchildren, the Kanamari keep their parents productive and avoid the *atyinani* state. Except for two very frail women who were said to be *atyinani*,²⁷ the elderly are very active in daily chores: they hunt, fish, maintain garden plots, and fetch water and firewood. In other words, the elderly continue to be body-owners and hence agents who produce food and are capable of maintaining commensal relations with others. Fosterage stalls aging by prolonging agency.

The second reason for maintaining the network of fosterage can be adduced from its effects on native conceptions of kinship. By circulating children, the Kanamari, like the *adyaba* with captive children or the whites with their livestock, are making themselves body-owners by feeding those who had previously been fed by others. But whereas both the *adyaba* and the whites raise “children” with the goal of betraying kinship through cannibalism, the Kanamari can foster children, make them happy, and, in the future, either return them to their parents or allow their autonomy to flourish as the feeding bond shifts to love. Like pet keeping, fosterage is proof that the Kanamari “know the land.” It establishes them as noncannibals, the inverse of the *adyaba* and the whites, as feeders who sustain rather than subvert kinship.

This might shed light on why the terms for “mother” and “father” are fixed and rigid. It seems to me that the terminological isolation and lack of semantic flexibility of the terms for “mother” and “father” in Kanamari kinship nomenclature are testaments to the woman who breastfed the newborn and the man who fed her, thus making all subsequent relations of feeding and kinship possible.²⁸

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27. One of these women was so old that she had already cared for her grandchildren, who now had children of their own. She lived in a room of her daughter's house, spending most days under her mosquito net. The other had only recently come to the Itaquáí River from the Komaronhu with her grandson. Lacking close kin on the Itaquáí and relying exclusively on her grandson, who also had to care for his own family, she was completely dependent on what he could offer her. I am unable here to describe the global symmetry of the life cycle, which makes aging adults cease to be productive as they gradually come to be fed once again. See Costa (2007: 319–323) on the associations between children and the elderly among the Kanamari.
 28. The matter of the degree to which kinship terminologies reflect social practices is, of course, the oldest controversy in anthropology (see, for example, Kronenfeld 1975; Schneider 1984) and does not seem to me to be an issue that can be settled in such a brief manner. I therefore limit myself to noting this felicitous congruence between

These will typically be the man and woman who lay down on the child's blood. Unlike the Piro, however, the Kanamari do not consider postpartum prohibitions to be an "idiom of kinship" at all: they are purging techniques that protect the kinship relations of the living. For the Kanamari, who do not capture enemies but give birth to them, only breastfeeding—the first event of which is coterminous with postpartum seclusion—creates a dependent and paves the way for the development of love. Since every child is an enemy, every birth is an adoption by capture, and every relation of fosterage celebrates the existence of the kinship relations that successfully defused the threat posed by birth-capture. It would make little sense for fosterage to dissolve or eclipse the relations that made it possible, since it is an institution that exists to reverberate their resounding success.

kinship terminology and the ineffable character of the mother and (to a lesser extent) the father among the Kanamari, without implying any causal determination of social practice by kinship terminology.

CHAPTER FOUR

Tripartite history

So far I have focused on the role of feeding in the life cycle of persons, drawing on analyses of Kanamari pet keeping and the mother–child relation. I have demonstrated that having a body-owner is a requisite for social life, while being a body-owner is necessary for growth and magnification. My argument has privileged how feeding and dependence turn into love and commensality over time. The problem with ontogenetic arguments like the one I have been advancing, though, is that it is ultimately impossible to establish the primacy of one relation over others without becoming trapped in an infinite regression. While, for instance, the love a parent has for a child emerges from a bond of dependency (and from an even earlier act of lying down on the child’s blood), a woman will only raise children once she herself is involved in relations of mutual love and care with her kinspeople—relations that, in turn, are derived from feeding bonds, and so forth.

Kanamari social theory solves this problem by positing less immediate feeding bonds that are articulated with more encompassing body-owners. These are the bonds between chiefs and followers, which frame the widest space in which feeding is operative, thereby establishing the structural preconditions for relations that occur within the province of kinship. In other words, both the feeding bonds that tie mothers to children and pets and the love that can emerge from the development of their relations are dependent on the existence of a feeding bond between chiefs and followers that is located at the origin of social life.

These bonds are much less vertical and categorical than the ones I have been analyzing thus far. Projecting the illusion of symmetry, they appear to blur into commensality. This chapter will therefore require that I describe what commensality signifies for the Kanamari and why feeding is the precondition for commensal relations to flourish. An analysis of chiefs, in turn, demands a description of the subgroup.

When I first set foot in a Kanamari village, my aim was to conduct an ethnographic investigation of their subgroups. As other ethnographers of Juruá-Purus societies have noted, named subgroups (or equivalent supralocal social morphologies) are “an inescapable theme in the region” (Florido 2013: 133). They recur in similar yet tantalizingly different guises not only among Katukina speakers but also speakers of Panoan, Arawak, and Arawan languages (Aparício 2013, 2014; Bonilla 2007: 299–314; Calávia Saez 2002, 2013; F. Gordon 2006). As I noted in the Introduction, three features are typical of subgroups throughout the region, although they need not always occur together. First, subgroups have totemic names. Second, they are localized, typically in a river basin but sometimes on a particular stretch of river or a lake. Finally, they often are (or were) ideally, if not actually, endogamous (e.g., Lorrain 1994: 136–137; Florido 2013: 132–153; Aparício 2014: Chapter 2).

My research sought to contribute to the study of these social units through an ethnography of their Kanamari variant. Prior to traveling to the Kanamari, I knew that this would involve a historical reconstruction of what subgroups used to be. Every ethnographic source available on the Kanamari agrees that subgroups are an institution in decline—“in full disorganization,” as Tastevin (n.d.a: 109) had already lamented in the early twentieth century. What this assessment conveys is that, although their names persist, subgroups are no longer endogamous and localized but, rather, exogamous and dispersed. My fieldwork originally sought to address the processes that led to this state of affairs by reconstructing, within the bounds of possibility, an ancient form of social organization and then tracing the history that had modified it. This, I believed, would suggest why the names of subgroups endure as labels in the present even though they no longer resemble their original forms.¹

1. This way of presenting the problem assumes, of course, that subgroups were in fact endogamous and geographically circumscribed in the precontact past. The Kanamari to whom I spoke unanimously asserted that this was the case, and the same observation has been repeated by every ethnographer of the Kanamari for over a century of ethnographic investigation. However, despite this uncanny

It was easy enough to obtain information about subgroup membership and even about how they were organized in the past. Most Kanamari (at least most elderly ones) could explain historical subgroups in abstract terms, and a surprising degree of fit emerged from different people's descriptions. Even more remarkably, my interlocutors described the structure of the subgroup much as it had been described to Tastevin (n.d.a) almost a century before; they also identified the same subgroups with the same river basins exactly as he had registered (see also Métraux 1948: 663). This information was furthermore confirmed by other historical sources and by subsequent ethnographers, even though they had carried out research among Kanamari who were living far apart and who, in some cases, had not visited each other in decades (e.g., Reesink 1993: 45–48; Carvalho 2002: 87–106; Neves 1996: 161, 204).

A convergence also emerged in the Kanamari replies to my questions about the history that had led to the contemporary diffusion and mixture of subgroups. But in this case, the nature of the replies initially made little sense to me. When I tried to recover the history of migrations, intermarriages, and demographic changes that I had assumed would underlie the transformations of Kanamari subgroups, I was consistently and invariably told the same story, one that at first seemed distant from the questions I was asking. The Kanamari call it “the story of Sabá” (*Sabá nawa ankira*), or “when Sabá arrived” (*Sabá wao'dyinin anin*), and it concerns their first contacts, in 1972, with the National Indian Agency (Funai), the federal department responsible for indigenous affairs. This was history, but it was not the history for which I was looking. By the time the Brazilian government came to directly impact the lives of the Kanamari, most of the changes that I wanted to explore had long since been consolidated. Nor did the story make any explicit reference to subgroups. Rather, the narrative concerned the beginnings of the process through which the Kanamari freed themselves of the debt-peonage relations imposed by the Amazonian extractive economies, saw their territories demarcated as indigenous reservations, and were legally recognized as wards of the state.

The story of Sabá only began to make sense to me when I realized its position within a historical framework in which subgroups play an important role. Indeed, I could scarcely discuss history with the Kanamari without being referred to a

agreement, all we can say with certainty is that the model of subgroup endogamy and geographical circumscription is a fundamental template through which the Kanamari make sense of their past and present.

historical narrative that situates Funai at its most recent pole. This narrative is structured as a ternary schema, a format familiar to ethnographers of southwestern Amazonia. In this schema, the past is divided into a lineal sequence composed of an initial period pertaining to the time before the arrival of the whites; a second period associated with slavery or work in the extractive economies of Amazonia (rubber, timber, mining); and a recent time when missionaries and/or government agents rescued native populations from indebtedness, establishing the present conditions of existence. Such a schema evidently reproduces as indigenous narrative the process through which the region was colonized in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. But as every anthropologist who has paid attention to this schema also recognizes, it emerges less from a passive interpretation of history than from the articulation of an exogenous historical process with native theories of history, mythology, systems of classification, and social institutions (Balestra 2013; Bonilla 2009; Gow 1991, 1993; Taylor 2007).

In Kanamari tripartite history, the “Time of Tamakori” marks the period when the Kanamari were not yet neighbors to the whites. This era is followed by the “Time of Rubber,” in which the Kanamari were involved in extractive activities, including rubber tapping and logging. Finally, the arrival of Funai marks the beginning of the “Time of Funai,” the period of history in which the Kanamari currently live. Each of these times is inaugurated by an epic story that concerns the feats of a particular hero. These heroes are, in chronological order, Tamakori, the creator of the Kanamari; Jarado, the first white person whom the Kanamari ever saw; and Sabá Manso, the Funai employee who first came to know of their existence and whose story was the usual reply to my enquiries into the histories of Kanamari subgroups. The reason that the story of Sabá was an appropriate reply to my questions about subgroups is that Funai is itself a transformation of the subgroup structure I wished to investigate, as well as being a transformation of the relations between chiefs and followers that frame that structure. Before following the trajectory of the subgroup, chieftaincy, and feeding through this historical sequence, I shall outline the ideal layout of the subgroup through the sustained example of the Currasow-dyapa (*Bin-dyapa*) of the Komaronhu River.

THE SUBGROUP

The Komaronhu, known as São Vicente in Portuguese, is a tributary of the left bank of the middle Juruá. It is currently located in the Mawetek Indigenous

Reservation, just south of the Vale do Javari. The map in Figure 16 was sketched in the Itaquáí with the help of two elderly Curassow-*dyapa* men and later plotted on the official cartography of the region.

My sources were born in the Komaronhu river basin at some time in the late 1930s to early 1940s, a time when the Kanamari were involved in extractive work for white bosses. Their reconstruction of an ancient settlement pattern is based on stories told by their ascendant kinspeople and their own experience of traveling through fallows and old village sites. In the absence of archaeological research, I have no way to vouch for the historical accuracy of the map. However, it does reveal a basic structure of the internal layout of the subgroup, one that has been confirmed by every Kanamari person I have spoken to—even if in admittedly less synthetic terms. The conceptual-historical map of the Curassow-*dyapa* is provided here as an example of how all subgroups are organized, so an accurate depiction of the location of past settlements is less important than the mapping of the settlement pattern onto the dendritic pattern of the river basin. The map thus conveys a native key in which society and hydrography are isomorphic. Since it reveals a template rather than a recoverable on-the-ground pattern, I shall describe the basic outline of subgroup social organization in the present tense, except where historical characters or events are implicated or where I wish to stress the differences between the past ideal form and present actual ones.

The main settlement in a subgroup's river basin, built on its main tributary, is a longhouse (*hak nyanin*, “big house”), which is indissolubly associated with a man whom I will call a “subgroup chief.” He and his family live in a permanent single-family dwelling near the longhouse. Although they are the only permanent residents of this settlement, they are never alone; people are always passing through or temporarily living beside them while building new houses in their own villages. Visiting Kanamari set up temporary *dyaniohak* shelters near the longhouse. They spend large parts of the day inside the longhouse, safe from the weather and mosquitoes, but it is primarily used for rituals, receiving visitors, and eating collective meals. Kanamari longhouses are not residential buildings—a fact of their ideal social structure that was corroborated in practice by Tastevin (n.d.a: 22-23) in the early twentieth century.

All members of a subgroup refer to the subgroup chief as *tyo-warah*, “our body-owner.” His name, followed by *-warah*, is synonymous with “Curassow-*dyapa*” (*Bin-dyapa*), expressing politically what the subgroup name expresses totemically. The earliest subgroup chief recalled by the men who helped me

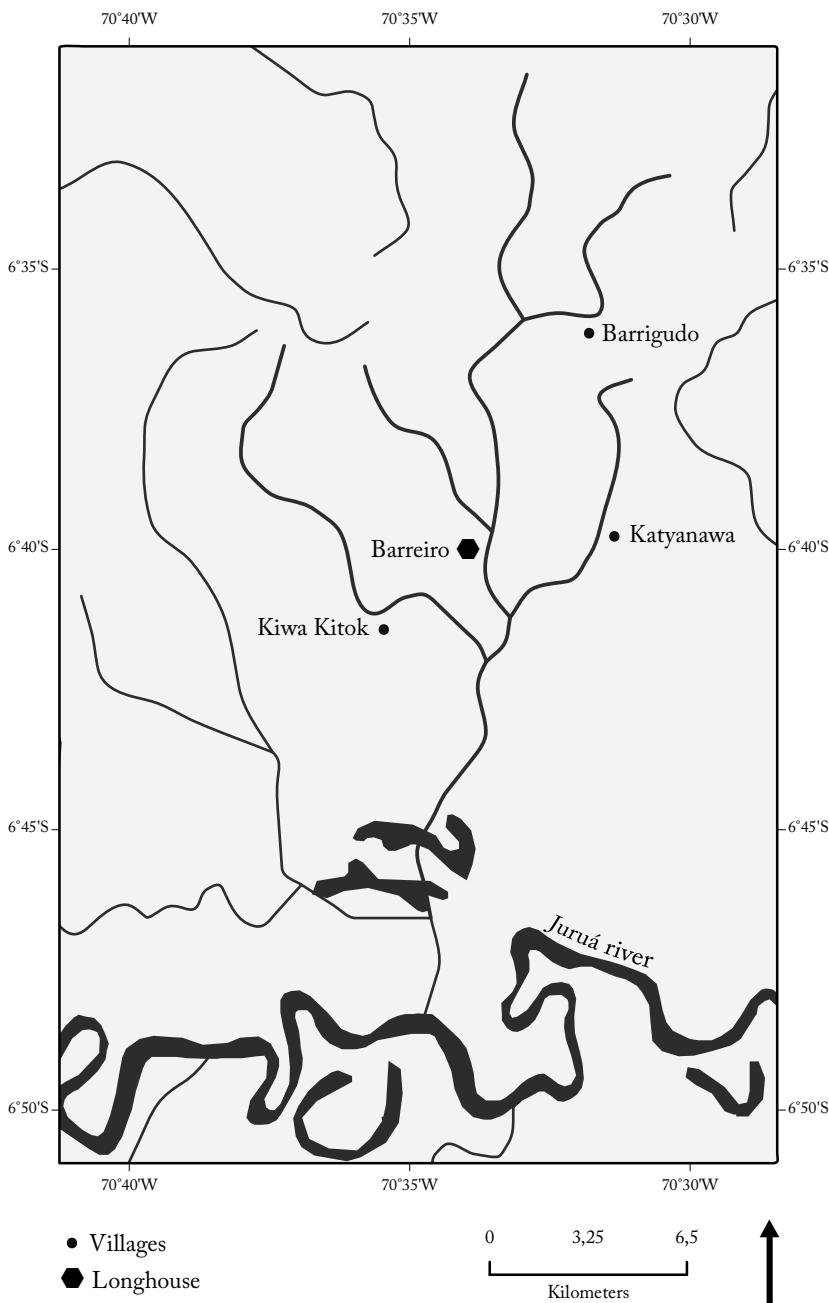


Figure 16. Location of the Curassow-*dyapa* in the Komaronhu river basin, c. 1900.

draw the map was a man named Kaninana. For the period when Kaninana was subgroup chief, the expressions *Bin-dyapa* (Curassow-*dyapa*) and *Kaninana-warah* referred to the same area and collectivity of people. The settlement called Barreiro in the map in Figure 16 was his longhouse, and it was the only settlement on the Komaronhu River itself (*Komaronhu tam*, “true Komaronhu”).

A third way of referring to the subgroup is by using a *-warah* noun phrase that incorporates the name of the main channel of the river basin. *Komaronhu-warah* is thus an additional synonym for *Curassow-dyapa* (see also Neves 1996: 204; Carvalho 2002: 87; Labiak 2007: 58–60), one that defines the subgroup via its geographical specifications.

The political and geographical registers appear to contradict my discussion of *X-warah* noun phrases in Chapter Two, where I showed that *X* grammatically possesses a body-owner but is semantically owned by whoever its body-owner is. In the forms *Kaninana-warah* and *Komaronhu-warah*, though, these grammatical and semantic determinations do not seem to hold: Kaninana is the apex of the *Curassow-dyapa*, a feeder of those who inhabit his river basin (and hence comprises their condition for living together), while the *Komaronhu* converges its streams into a singular river basin (and those who inhabit it into a subgroup). So, in both cases, we seem to be faced with an irregular form in which the grammatical possessor is also the semantic owner.

When the Kanamari are queried on the meaning of these expressions, however, it becomes clear that the political and geographical ways of referring to the body-owner are contractions of the more extended forms *Kaninana hinuk-warah* and *Komaronhu hinuk-warah*. *Hinuk* is a collectivizing morpheme for animate beings that here means “those of.” An expression such as “PT *hinuk*,” for instance, means “those of the Worker’s Party” (PT: *Partido dos Trabalhadores*), which was the ruling party in Brazil at the time of my fieldwork, designating all affiliated politicians and sympathizers. “Rio de Janeiro *hinuk*” refers to the inhabitants of Rio de Janeiro.² Accordingly, *Kaninana hinuk* means “those of

2. The plural form for inanimate objects is *nuk*. *Hinuk* seems to be similar to the Kulina morpheme *-deni*, cognates of which are found in most Arawan languages. Kulina ethnography often notes the partial overlap between the subgroup, an *X-madiha*, and the collectivizing *deni* (see Agostini Cerqueira 2015: 83–84). The former expresses a sociocentric register, whereas the latter attributes an aggregate of people to a person (a chief or a family head, for instance). One of the intriguing recent developments in Juruá-Purus ethnology has been a careful consideration of the many linguistic means of construing collectives and plurals and their sociological

Kaninana” (who recognize him as a chief) and Komaronhu *binuk* means “those of the Komaronhu” (who live within its catchment area). It is this collectivity that grammatically possesses the *-warah* and which is therefore semantically owned by Kaninana or the Komaronhu River. Thus, there is no difference between these synthetic means of referring to the subgroup through *-warah* constructs and the examples discussed in Chapter Two.

References to the subgroup chief depend on contextual cues; rarely is there any reason for referring to “the subgroup chief” as a title or position. However, the Kanamari have two generic ways of referring to the subgroup chief in order to distinguish him from other *-warah*: sometimes he is called *hak nyanin-warah*, “longhouse body-owner,” in which case he is distinguished from other body-owners and, particularly, the chiefs of communities without a longhouse; and some Kanamari say that he should be called *tyo-maita*, which they translate to me as “our trunk.” *Bin-dyapana-maita* would thus designate the subgroup chief of the Curassow-*dyapa*, irrespective of who is incumbent. I never heard the word *-maita* used to designate an actual tree trunk, which, as we saw in Chapter Two, is typically called *omam nyanin* (“large wood”) or *-warah* when its relation to the rest of the tree is brought into focus. However, the idea of the chief as a trunk is highly pertinent and explicitly affirmed by the Kanamari: the subgroup chief, like a tree trunk, is the figure upon whom everyone converges and from whom everyone branches out.³

The longhouse is surrounded by a “large garden” (*baohnin nyanin*), itself surrounded by fallows (*baohnin padya*, “empty gardens”) derived from former gardens and settlements. Both the large gardens and its corresponding fallows are said to be “inexhaustible” (*hawak nyo’imtu*). The staple of Kanamari gardens is sweet manioc, but large gardens also contain a variety of fruits and tubers. Fallow are especially important because of their palm trees, which supply fruits, leaves for thatching, and wood.

As the map in Figure 16 shows, many of the subsidiary streams that flow into the Komaronhu River are also settled. The names Kiwa Kitok, Barrigudo,

correlates, which indicate different, cross-cutting, and at times contradictory means of designating collectivities (see Azevedo 2012: 83–95; Florido 2013: 132–153; Aparício 2014: 17–40, 2015: 69–70). The precise nature of how Kanamari (and, more generally, Katukina) plurals and collectivizing morphemes combine with each other is yet to be established.

3. See Guerreiro (2015: 167–173) for a discussion of the Kalapalo chief as a “trunk” or “mainstay” of his people.

and Catyanawa refer to both the streams and the settlements. These names, like that of the longhouse, are probably an artifact of my interlocutors' efforts to make the hydrological and settlement pattern of the Komaronhu intelligible to me. The longhouse of a subgroup is usually just called "longhouse" or "*X-dyapa's* longhouse," and the stream settlements are usually called by the name of their chief (see below). Two of the names provided to me are in Portuguese, probably harking back to when the Komaronhu river basin was explored by rubber tappers (and hence, in theory, postdate the settlement pattern depicted in Figure 16). Barrigudo ("Big Belly") is a reference to the stream's large mouth, while Barreiro is one of the local names for salt licks, which are preferred hunting grounds throughout the region. The other streams seem to have idiosyncratic names: Kiwa Kitok means "decapitated paca" in Kanamari, named after the carcass of a paca once found on the stream. Katyanawa is the Kanamari pronunciation of "Kaxinawá," recalling a historical ambush suffered by the Currasow-*dyapa*. These names commemorating events are typically unconsolidated names, part of the tradition of the Currasow-*dyapa* but not of other subgroups, given that non-Currasow-*dyapa* will have limited knowledge of the hydrology of the Komaronhu, and, as far as they are concerned, the name "Komaronhu" stands for the whole river basin. Over a century ago, Tastevin (n.d.a: 11) mentioned the Komaronhu ("Cumaruuhá") River and associated it with the Curassow-*dyapa*, although neither he nor any subsequent visitors mention any of its subsidiary streams.

I shall call these stream settlements "villages," although the Kanamari have no name for them. They have no longhouse but, instead, a variable number of smaller thatched houses typically laid out in front of a patio. The Kanamari say that these ancient villages looked much like contemporary villages (see Figure 17). They normally have a surrounding "garden" (*baohnin*) divided into plots for all residents, but, unlike the "large garden" of the longhouse, these are much smaller and overwhelmingly dedicated to sweet manioc. Their composition, layout, and situation change frequently, but villages are always built on the banks of streams that flow into a subgroup's tributary, never on the tributary itself.

Close investigation of oral histories reveals that what the Kanamari express as a single settlement (a "village") may be a cluster of settlements situated close to each other. What unifies them conceptually is the fact that they are all on a single stream and all have the same chief. They are called by the name of their chief, whom I shall label a "village chief," followed by *-warah*. To refer to a "village chief" in a generic way and to distinguish him from other *-warah*, the



Figure 17. The Kanamari village of Kumaru on the Itaquaí River (Photo: Luiz Costa, 2004).

Kanamari may call him *baohnin-warah*, “the body-owner of a garden.” When the evidential determiner *na* is used, a specific garden (and its corresponding chief) is referred to (*baohnina-warah*). For the residents of the village, he is simply *tyo-warah*, “our body-owner,” and his name, followed by *-warah*, is how nonresidents of the village refer to the chief, to his followers, to the village and its gardens, and to everything else associated with it, that is, as X (*binuk*)*-warah*.

The subgroup is the limit and extent of kinship. All members of a subgroup are *-wihnin*, “kinspeople,” to each other, and no one outside of the subgroup is a kinsperson.⁴ However, the stream order hierarchy and its corresponding settlement patterns also introduce a difference between “true kin” and “distant kin.” In general, all of the people who coreside for most of the year with a village chief on a stream are “true kin” (*-wihnin tam*) to each other. Any two

4. I should reiterate that I am referring to an ideal model, and that, as we shall see shortly, historical changes have made the redundancy between subgroup and kinship much less straightforward. However, the pertinence of the equation remains. In my experience, despite the fact that *-wihnin* and subgroup are not coterminous (at least not any longer), the easiest way to find out a Kanamari person’s subgroup is to ask him or her, “Who are your kinspeople?” (*naitan no-wihnin kotu?*). The answer is almost always the name of a subgroup.

coresidents of Kiwa Kitok, for example, would therefore be “true kin” to one another. The village chief will refer to those people who reside in his village as “my people” (*atyá tukuna*) or “my children” (*atyá opatyn*). In contrast, any two people who reside on different streams within the same river basin (e.g., in Kiwa Kitok and Barrigudo) are conceptually “distant kin” (*-wihnin parara*; also “spread-out kin”).⁵ These people will call different village chiefs “my body-owner.” Marriages, in fact, should occur between distant kin: that is, they should be village exogamous but endogamous to the subgroup. People from other subgroups should never be counted among *wihnin*. Although there are different ways to refer to members of other subgroups (see below), the expressions *wihnin tu*, “nonkin,” and *oatkuna*, “other people,” are synonymous and synthetic ways of referring to all people who are not from one’s subgroup/river basin.

Just as kinship is bound by the subgroup, so the distinction between true and distant kin remains internal to the river basin. People who live in separate villages/streams within the Komaronhu may be distant kin, but they are still kin precisely because, within the Komaronhu basin, there is a longhouse on the main channel associated with a subgroup chief whom they all call “my/our body-owner.” The subgroup chief, for his part, always calls everyone in the subgroup “my people” or “my children.”

Kin distinctions thus replicate the ramifications of local hydrology and chieftaincy. The name of a tributary of the Juruá, such as “Komaronhu,” is co-extensive with a subgroup kin unit and expresses the unity of the subgroup. The longhouse, built on that river, effaces distinctions internal to the river basin by converging them in the form of the subgroup chief whose name contains the different villages—just as, in a hydrological key, the main channel conjoins all its affluents into a singular unit. However, the river basin/subgroup body-owners conceal within themselves the hydrological and kinship distinctions revealed by focusing on the streams. At this scale, a single tributary fractions into many streams, and a kinship unit divides into aggregates of true and distant kin. This is so because the name of each village chief (or stream) followed by *-warah*

5. *Parara* is a word that I rarely heard in nonkinship contexts, but it always transmits the idea of dismemberment, as in a unit that is fragmented into many pieces. A heavy storm tore down an old, abandoned house, and the next morning the Kanamari noted that *him naparara-tiki hak tyo*, “the rain caused the house to spread out,” i.e., to break into smaller parts. This is how the word functions in relation to kinship: *-wihnin parara* are kinspeople who have been “spread out” within the confines of the river basin.

only contains those residents of the river basin who live with him (on the same stream), while that of the subgroup chief contains its totality.

THE TIME OF TAMAKORI: COMMENSALITY AND KINSHIP

This model of the subgroup, which the Kanamari associate with the precontact past, is the legacy of Tamakori and his brother Kirak. The Time of Tamakori, which the two brothers inaugurated through the Journey, reveals the subgroup's ideal form (see Chapter Two on the Journey). Tamakori invents the subgroup when he discovers that the Kanamari whom he created had grown in number and were bickering constantly. He decides that they should live apart, some on one river, others on the next, and so forth. Tamakori then imbues these subgroups with a positive content by decreeing that, within a river basin, people should "know the land," i.e., they should not be "angry" (*nok*) toward each other (Costa 2007: 239–241). Tamakori makes no provision for identifying any unit larger than the subgroup.⁶

As the unit of kinship, constituted by the value of "knowing the land," the subgroup is a domain in which relations of commensality are ongoing. In this section, my aim is to describe in greater detail what commensality is and how it operates within the subgroup, before showing how the village chief and the subgroup chief are feeders who make commensality and kinship possible.

The Kanamari word for "commensality" is *da-wihnin-pu*. This term can be decomposed into the verb *pu*, "to eat," proceeded by *da-wihnin-*, which the Kanamari gloss as "together" (Portuguese: *juntos*). We have already seen that *-wih(nin)* is the Kanamari word for "kinspeople." In *da-wihnin*, the suffix *-nin* subordinates *wih* to the aspectual marker *da-*, a perfective prefix. *Da-* marks for durative aspect (Comrie 1976: 41–44), which indicates that an action occupies a set period of time, having the general meaning of "for a while," "for some time," in contrast to an unspecified duration designated by unmarked verbs. When

6. The Journey separates the Kanamari into proto-subgroups in the process of separating all the peoples of the world (e.g., the whites, the Kulina, Panoan speakers) into their respective territories (see Chapter 5 and Costa 2007: 259–262). This stress on multiple equivalent units at the expense of any greater totality is a recurring feature of societies of the Juruá-Purus that are organized into subgroups. Pollock (1985: 38), for instance, writes that Kulina *-madiha* subgroups are their "highest level of social organization."

da- inflects the verb *pu* directly (*da-pu*), for example, it has the meaning of “to snack” rather than “to eat.”⁷ When *da-wihnin-* precedes a verb, it signifies that two or more participants carry out the action of the verb in unison within the duration specified by the aspectual marker. *Da-wihnin-pu* can be literally translated as “to eat together (for the duration of a meal),” but it can also be rendered as “to eat as kin (for the duration of a meal).”

Commensality is the result of the productive and consumptive activities of people who produce all the food required of them by the Kanamari sexual division of labor: adult men hunt, fish, and clear gardens; women gather forest fruits, harvest and replant garden crops, butcher game meat, and cook. People who produce food and share meals should live together harmoniously through an ethic of “knowing the land” that has “love” (*wu*) as one of its central virtues. Commensality is both the condition for and expression of a group of kinspeople, a *tukuna-wihnin*.

Although I have been translating *-wihnin* as “kinspeople,” it has a wider semantic scope. *-Wihnin* can designate a raceme or a cluster, as in a “cluster of bananas” (*bari-wihnin*), and it forms the collective nouns for gregarious animals, such as a “herd of peccaries” (*wiri-wihnin*), a “school of fish” (*dom-wihnin*) or a “swarm of bees” (*munhan-wihnin*). In these instances, as in a *tukuna-wihnin*, the suffix *-nin* subordinates *wih-* not to an aspectual marker but to a proper or common noun. Although *-wihnin* typically refers to groups composed of individuals of the same species, it can also apply to heterogenous sets so long as those things thus grouped can be referred to a shared characteristic, usually provenance or coordination. When calling an aggregate of fish *dom-wihnin*, for instance, the Kanamari recognize that these fish are related in some fundamental way, normally morphologically (e.g., fish of the same species) or through spatial contiguity (e.g., fish that inhabit a single lake or watercourse or that migrate at the same time) and, preferably, in both ways at the same time. In nominal forms, *-wihnin* thus designates an aggregate that includes a number of elements of a single category or type, and/or a number of elements hailing from a single place. To convey these wide applications, I will translate *-wihnin* as “cluster.”⁸

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7. *Da-* has a similar effect on other verbs: “to sleep” is *kitan* but “to take a nap” is *da-kitan*; “to give” is *nuhuk* but “to lend” is *da-nuhuk*.
 8. I have elsewhere translated *-wihnin* as a “bunch” in the restricted sense of a joined collection of things of the same kind (e.g., Costa 2016: 94). However, “bunch” may cause confusion since it can also be used informally to mean merely a large or jumbled quantity of things. “Cluster” also has the advantage of indicating an

The essential nature of *-wihnin* can be gauged through a contrast. The expression *ayuhtunin* means “many” or “a lot.” When I started to learn the Kanamari language, I assumed it was synonymous with *-wihnin*. However, when I used *tukuna ayuhtunin*, “a lot of people,” to refer to coresidents of a village, the Kanamari corrected me: I should say *tukuna-wihnin*, “people-cluster.” Similarly, when many hunters returned to the village with animals of different species, hunted at different sites, and I remarked at the *bara-wihnin*, “game animal-cluster,” they corrected me: I should say *bara ayuhtunin*, “many game animals.” I thus learned that while *-wihnin* designates an inherent relation, *ayuhtunin* implies that those things that are actually and/or discursively gathered have no necessary common denominator of identity, or at least that any such identity is irrelevant or weak.

The etymology of the word *ayuhtunin* makes this clear. It is composed of *ayub*, which we know to signify a necessity and here functions as the verb “to need,” followed by the negative particle *tu* and the morpheme *-nin*, which registers the construction’s dependence on an external argument. If we focus on its etymology, *ayuhtunin* can be glossed as “that which is together but does not need to be together.” For example, *wiri ayuhtunin* can mean many peccaries from different regions or seen on different occasions, where no common characteristic other than the name of the species matters to the discursive context. To say that there are many peccaries spread out in the forest or to refer to the many peccaries one has consumed on different occasions and over a long time, one would refer to *wiri ayuhtunin*. In contrast, *wiri-wihnin* is the Kanamari term for a herd of peccaries that travels together with their chief. The difference between *-wihnin* and *ayuhtunin* need not be an absolute or substantive difference. It may depend on the context or the perspective of the person identifying the aggregate. But what always defines *-wihnin* in the eyes of any speaker is the recognition and relevance of a constant and essential trait over and across any differences. What defines an *ayuhtunin* is either the absence or irrelevance of any point of commonality.

What enables a *-wihnin* to exist—what makes a contingent aggregate into an intrinsic “cluster”—are feeding relations. These may be immediate intraspecific relations, such as those between a peccary chief and its accompanying herd; or they may be more mediated and deferred, such as the relationship of certain

essential relation across a range of different domains (clusters of people or kin; clusters of animals; clusters of fruits; and so forth).

fish to humus-rich areas of the forest where they gather to feed (see Chapter Five). Within the subgroup, as explained by the Kanamari, these relations were established by village and subgroup chiefs. The village chief made possible the quotidian commensality of true kin, while the subgroup chief provided the basic raw materials from which relations of commensality could be extracted.⁹

The village chief was primarily associated with his garden and with his role as a (re)distributor of animal and fish meat. Although the garden plot was cleared collectively and divided into subplots associated with each household in the village, the Kanamari say that the garden was the chief's, because it was his initiative that mobilized people to clear it and it was thus his initiative that enabled the residents of a village to "coreside" (*-wihnin-to*, literally "to live as kin"). The village chief's house was also the place where game was preferentially butchered and the hub from which meat and fish were redistributed. All of the game animals brought to the village were to be laid on the floor of the chief's house, where they were skinned, butchered, and parceled out (Costa 2012; see also Kracke 1978: 43–45; Rivière 1984: 89; McCallum 2001: 102). The chief's house was furthermore a place where some cooked meat was usually available and where hunters gathered at dawn to eat and make themselves "strong" (*waman*) before setting out on hunting trips, permitting them to "withstand" (*kima*) the hardships of the hunt.

The commensality that characterizes day-to-day meals was therefore made possible by the village chief: his garden drew a village together; it was his garden that was divided into household plots that fed the village; it was in his house that game was transformed into pieces of meat to be cooked; and it was the abundance of food in his house that supplied hunters with the strength to procure game. Any commensality between the coresidents of the village was the outcome of the consumption of food that the chief's activities made possible. Indeed, the discontinuity of "commensality," indicated by the perfective *da-*, could only be converted into regular acts of sharing meals through the chief's continuing ability to feed those who lived in his village. Through his ability to feed, the chief not only created the conditions for commensality to occur; he also converted acts of commensality (*da-wihnin-pu*) into a state where

9. I revert to the past tense here and in subsequent sections because, although the meanings of *-wihnin* and associated kinship vocabulary still hold, the details of intra- and intersubgroup relations have changed significantly, as will become clear shortly.

coresidents could be “true kin” (*-wihnin tam*) to each other. In achieving this feat, he singularized the village through his name, deriving commensal relations from his capacity to feed.

Kanamari villages converged on the longhouse, and the members of a subgroup converged on the subgroup chief. He was the subgroup’s sociocentric horizon, the summit and provenance of its kinship relations.¹⁰ During Tastevin’s (n.d.a: 108) fieldwork, “the chief had no insignia that distinguished him from others,” but the Kanamari assured me that he once wore a larger mother-of-pearl nasal crescent (*tyiropru*) than other men, as well as more bands of beads across his chest. They were always described as “large people” (*tukuna nyanin*) and “truly beautiful/good” (*abaknintam*). Perhaps because of the subgroup chief’s association with beauty and the good, the one element incompatible with becoming a subgroup chief was *baob* shamanism.¹¹ Although *baob* shamans could become village chiefs, they could never become subgroup chiefs. Instead, all subgroup chiefs were *Pidah nohman*, “Jaguar chanters,” because they had detailed knowledge of the songs for the Jaguar-becoming ritual. Many were also *marinawa* herbalists, who today prepare the ayahuasca (*rami*) brew and guide the songs performed while under its effect.¹²

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10. Since the Kanamari subgroup is sociocentric, any member of a subgroup will be *-wihnin* to all the other members of the subgroup and will not be *-wihnin* to anyone else. Logically, then, a grammatical construct such as *X-wihnin*, where X is the name of any member of a subgroup, could be used to designate the subgroup as a whole. When I tried to confirm this with a few Kanamari, they acknowledged the soundness of my argument but denied that this is how the subgroup should be referred to. They claimed that only the subgroup chief could represent the subgroup in this way because he fed all the others (*ayuh-man drim*, “because he feeds [them]”), I was told.
 11. Although shamans could not become subgroup chiefs, Tastevin (n.d.a: 108) reports that, in the 1920s, shamans played an important part in choosing a subgroup chief, although it is difficult to tell exactly what role they played in this process. Among the neighboring Marubo, *romeaya* shamans, who are similar to the *baob*, are likewise unable to become the chiefs of longhouses. Their centrifugal orientation is always an obstacle to gathering people in a single settlement. According to Welper (2009: 169–178), João Tuxaua, the source of the current lineage of the Marubo chiefs with “good talk” (who supplanted the war chiefs of the past and their “death talk”) could only become a “longhouse owner” (*shovo ivo*) after he abandoned his activities as a *romeaya* and became an herbalist, whose centripetal actions prefigure his ability to gather and maintain people in his orbit.
 12. Ayahuasca is a hallucinogenic brew common in Western Amazonia, the primary ingredients of which are the ayahuasca vine (*Banisteriopsis caapi*) and the chacruna

Since most of the histories I collected concern a period in which subgroups were not localized units, the death of a subgroup chief was often described to me as resulting in a scattering of people who left their river basin in search of new places to live. Not only was there no form of institutionalized succession of subgroup chiefs, there was also no mechanism in Kanamari society that could ensure this sort of vertical transmission.¹³ By all accounts, becoming a subgroup chief was achieved rather than ascribed, contingent on processes of magnification that depended on becoming the body-owner of many things or people. Indeed, the one recurring feature of all descriptions of ancient subgroup chiefs was their ability to feed their “people.” Two contexts emerge most clearly: their ownership of the large gardens and surrounding fallows, and their knowledge of the ritual means of reproducing the forest flora and fauna.

The large garden surrounding a longhouse played a crucial role in Kanamari subsistence. When a village was abandoned, the large garden sustained those who previously coresided there while they decided their future course of action. Likewise, it was from among the cultigens planted in the large garden that the residents of a future village chose the varieties to be planted in their new gardens. The large garden was thus a condition for the smaller village gardens, composed mostly of crops taken from the former (Costa 2009: 160–162, 2010: 180–181). While everyone managed the garden and ensured its upkeep, it was explicitly linked to the subgroup chief as “his garden.”

shrub (*Psychotria sp.*), although each specialist adds their own botanicals. By their own admission, the Kanamari did not consume ayahuasca until quite recently. It was introduced into the Itaquáí region, probably sometime in the 1960s, by two men who learned how to prepare it from the Kulina. The latter, for their part, had learned to prepare ayahuasca from the Kaxinawá. Everything in the culture of ayahuasca points to this foreign origin. Many of the ayahuasca songs are in the Kulina language or in a Kanamari-Kulina pidgin; a few of them are in Kaxinawá. Even the word for the ayahuasca vine, *rami*, with an irregular word-initial voiced trill, seems to be derived from the Kaxinawá word *dami*, which means “to transform” (Lagrou 2011: 70). Traditionally, the *marinawa* was an herbalist and singer who could cure diseases not caused by *dyohko* spirits. The latter were the purview of the *boah*, as described in Chapter One. Today, however, the *marinawa* is almost exclusively an ayahuasca specialist. The literature on ayahuasca in indigenous, *mestizo*, and urban contexts is expanding vertiginously. The texts I have consulted most often are Luna (1986) and Beyer (2009).

13. As we saw in Chapter One, the vertical transmission of familiarized spirits between shamans results not in the magnification of the receiving shaman but in the weakening of the spirit.

Equally important were the subgroup chief's fallow plots that radiated out of the large garden. These were not only a source of food and wood (particularly from palm species), but they also played an essential role in Kanamari ritual life (Costa 2007: 79, 182–184). The subgroup chief's ability to feed his subgroup was revealed most fully in his capacity as a "Jaguar chanter" (*Pidah nohman*) and his knowledge of the "Jaguar songs" (*Pidah owaik*) and the "Jaguar-becoming" (*Pidah-pa*) ritual (see Chapter Five). This ritual drew in the people from all the villages of the river basin to the longhouse. The Jaguar-becoming ritual is a life-giving ritual that ensures the continuity of the subgroup by renewing its natural resources. In the past, the ritual also marked a period during which abundant crops from the large garden and fallow areas, as well as the meat obtained from collective hunting and fishing expeditions, enabled large communal banquets to be held, involving everyone in the subgroup. These banquets, like all meals, were made possible by the existence of feeding bonds. While the village chief fed the people of his village, the subgroup chief fed everyone in the subgroup by ensuring, through his ritual knowledge (or, in the words of Santos-Granero [1986], his control over "the mystical means of reproduction") that the basis of Kanamari sustenance and the raw material for making kinship were available to all those who, through commensal acts, continued to be kinspeople to each other. If the subgroup defined the domain in which kinship operated, the subgroup chief, a hyperfeeder, was at once the source and the extent of kinship.¹⁴

THE TIME OF TAMAKORI: RITUAL FRIENDSHIP

As Fausto (2012b: 33) notes, the Amazonian owner "is a double-sided figure: in the eyes of his children-pets, a protective father; in the eyes of other species (especially humans), a predatory affine." So far, I have been focusing in this book

14. The Kulina, whose social organization into subgroups is virtually identical to the Kanamari (see Chapter Five), also associate ancient chiefs with the garden and ritual knowledge:

The relationship between leadership and ritual ownership is so fundamental that great leaders of the past are primarily remembered for being great planters who had large gardens and a wide variety of cultigens which they shared generously in ritual and non-ritual contexts. . . . Truly great leaders are said to be a thing of the past, but the importance of a leader is still evaluated in function of the size of his gardens, and the ownership of manioc beer rituals is still a manifestation of his leadership. (Lorrain 1994: 53)

on the owner's relation to his children-pets, but to grasp how the subgroup chief embodies the subgroup, we need to turn to those relations that bind subgroups to each other. When our analysis shifts to these relations, it becomes evident that subgroup chiefs are not only feeders of their people; they are also the public face of a subgroup in a social landscape populated by a potentially infinite number of other subgroups. Tastevin (n.d.a: 107) clearly states the subgroup chief's role in hosting foreign guests: "Inside the longhouse, the chief's place was at the western-facing door or, at least, on the side which faced onto the river. He would customarily receive foreigners, decide where they should tie their hammocks, and give them something to eat."

By stressing the vertical integration of intrasubgroup kinship at the expense of intersubgroup relations, my approach has been somewhat eccentric. Most studies of supraregional social morphologies in the Juruá-Purus have privileged the horizontal ties between named and localized social units over their internal organization. Rather than an analytical preference for one angle of analysis over another, this has been compelled by the nature of the ethnography. While a totemic name and geographical circumscription are basic features of what Lévi-Strauss (1966: 115) called a "pure totemic structure," marital endogamy, which is predominant as an ideology throughout the region, contradicts this notion. A pure totemic structure demands a rule of exogamy at the level of totemic classification that integrates totemic units into a global system (Lévi-Strauss 1964: 11; see also Descola 2010: 220). In the absence of marital exogamy, ethnographers of the Juruá-Purus have had to search for other mechanisms—ritual, trade, warfare—that integrate subgroups into something larger than self-enclosed and atomized groups. It was necessary to find the relational matrix that characterized Juruá-Purus society as a regional system.

For the Kanamari, subgroups are not the fixed and finite segments of a larger unit. It is not possible to tally subgroups and arrive at the sum of Kanamari society. I often asked the Kanamari about hypothetical subgroups, named after a wide variety of animal species followed by the suffix *-dyapa*. At no time was I told outright that any subgroup thus named did not exist. Instead, five types of answers are common: (1) the subgroup exists and it is associated with the name of a known river basin, even if, at times, these basins are distant places that the Kanamari have only heard of and never visited (e.g., different informants locate different subgroups on the Pauini, a tributary of the Purus River that no one seems to have ever visited); (2) the subgroup existed in the past,

but its members have died out or been absorbed by other subgroups; (3) the person who answered my questions had never heard of a given subgroup name but admitted that it might exist (and often suggested I should ask someone else about it); (4) the subgroup in question did exist, but it was a Kulina, rather than Kanamari, subgroup; and (5) a particular subgroup name was how the Kanamari called another Amerindian people, such as the Matis (*Kiwa-dyapa*, “*Paca-dyapa*”), the Panoan Kulina (*Kodak Padja-dyapa*, “King Vulture-*dyapa*”), or the isolated Panoan speakers known in the region as the *Flecheiros*, the “Arrow People” (*Warikama-dyapa*, “Capybara-*dyapa*”).

Such statements contain a wealth of information about subgroups. For one thing, the Kanamari clearly envisage Kulina -*madiba* subgroups in continuity with their own, and they classify some (but not all) indigenous peoples into analogous social units. This open-ended character of Kanamari social theory raises a number of questions about the complex and little-known history of the Juruá-Purus region and the ancient forms of interaction that may have integrated its peoples. It also reveals a nonequation between language, “ethnic group,” and social organization, which seems to be a characteristic of the region. These themes deserve greater attention, but they lie beyond my current remit (see Aparício 2011a, 2011b, 2013, 2015; Calávia Saez 2016; Gow 2011).

I wish to focus solely on Katukina-speaking subgroups associated with a specific, known locale, ones that fall under the first type of answer to my questions. Recognizing a people as being a subgroup with an “X-*dyapa*” name and a corresponding territory is tantamount to saying that these are people with whom positive relations of exchange and mutual visiting can be maintained, even if, at any given time, hostilities are more frequent or likely. Hostility or alliance are, in fact, the only two relations available, since the very possibility of the existence of a subgroup—say, one whose name I made up—is enough for it to enter the Kanamari imagination as possible sorcerers or future allies. There are no neutral or indifferent subgroups.

Some relations of enmity are old and sedimented. The Curassow-*dyapa*, for instance, have long been enemies of the Otter-*dyapa* (*Kotya-dyapa*) of the Jutaí River. Or, rather, they believe themselves to be the victims of the malicious intent of the Otter-*dyapa*. The Kanamari do not have an all-purpose word for “enemy” (although they do have names for specific and constant enemies, as we shall see in Chapter Five), but they do have an expression that means “those who make enemies of us” (*ityowa todioki*). In other words, they believe

themselves to be the victims of aggression rather than the instigators.¹⁵ When a Curassow-*dyapa* person falls ill from sorcery, the Otter-*dyapa* are the usual suspects.

Other intersubgroup relations assumed the form of ritual alliances. These alliances were established by subgroup chiefs, who met in buffer areas between their respective river basins and engaged in a kind of ceremonial dialogue (*hokinin*, a “conversation”) in which both began to call each other *-tawari*. This moment was crucial, since ceremonial dialogue was an alternative to open hostilities between groups previously at war with each other (Tastevin n.d.a: 110). By coming to call themselves *-tawari*, subgroup chiefs were paving the way for (potential) warfare to transmute into ritual. Once established between subgroup chiefs, *-tawari* alliances became institutionalized between the members of the subgroups in question. *-Tawari* is a male-male, self-reciprocal, and symmetrical term of address and reference, traditionally used between men of allied subgroups. It can sometimes be substituted by the term *-bo*, “brother-in-law, same-sex cross-cousin” [m.s.], although the inverse is impossible: *-bo* (i.e., cross-cousins or actual brothers-in-law) can never be called *-tawari*.

The *-tawari*’s partial overlap with the relationship term for “brother-in-law” should not be interpreted as an expression of the possibility of marital alliances, since, as we know, subgroups were endogamous in the Time of Tamakori. Rather, it exemplifies an idiom of supralocal relations widespread in Amazonia, where a term denoting symmetrical affinal relations functions as a far-reaching sociological operator in the absence of actual marital ties (Lévi-Strauss 1943; Descola 1993; Viveiros de Castro 1993). It is an example of a type of relationship term, common in many Amazonian languages, that crystallizes positions of meta-affinity. Such terms “are not characterized by a mere exteriority to the field of kinship, but articulate with this field in varied ways” (Viveiros de Castro

15. This is a common theme in the ethnography of the Juruá-Purus, the societies of which tend to conceive of themselves as the victims of aggression—as prey—rather than as the instigators—as predators. The theme was first observed further west, among the Huaorani of Ecuador, by Rival, who refers to their “victims of predation” syndrome” (1998: 635; see also 1996, 2002), and by Bonilla (2005, 2007) on the Paumari. It has also been the object of comparative studies (Balestra 2013, 2016; Cepek 2015). I would argue that the identification with prey is a corollary of the theme of dependence—the difference between being fed and being fed on is a small one, as we saw in Chapter One.

1993: 178).¹⁶ Most of these terms define bonds between specific individuals, who are twinned as privileged partners (Taylor 2015: 143). For the Kanamari, by contrast, a bond between subgroup chiefs precipitates among all members of the subgroup, such that the men of one subgroup collectively became *-tawari* to the men of another. The map in Figure 18 shows some of the *-tawari* relations that were consolidated among the subgroups of the left bank of the Juruá at the start of the twentieth century.

An equivalent term exists that refers to the relations between women of different subgroups whose chiefs have established a *-tawari* alliance. These women should call each other *-tawaro*, a term that likewise overlaps with *-tyanhuan*, “sister-in-law, same-sex cross-cousin” [w.s.]. I assume that the *-tawaro* relationship is the mirror-image of the *-tawari* relation, but since I know very little about the topic, I shall limit my observations to the male-male *-tawari* relations between subgroups. There is no consistent term used between people of the opposite sex from different river basins. Such people were typically called by their names, if these were known, or just *tukuna piya* or *tukuna anya*, “man” and “woman,” respectively. However, in the context of some of the cross-sex ritual interactions, men called or referred to the women of the other subgroup as *hwa dyaba* (“worthless ancestress”), while women called or referred to the men of the other subgroup as *paiko dyaba* (“worthless ancestor”). I return to these usages shortly.

-Tawari used to hold *Hori* ritual gatherings with each other.¹⁷ *Hori* is an onomatopoeia of the sound of the ceramic horn, also called *hori*, that mediated the

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- 16. This should not be interpreted to mean that there was no sexual undertone to the *-tawari* relation. Although intersubgroup marriage was prohibited, sexual liaisons were common and even expected during ritual gatherings. The use of a term otherwise applied to the actual brother-in-law captures not only the meta-affinal content of intersubgroup relations but also, perhaps, registers the sexual relations that are expected to occur with a *-tawari*’s “sister.” For other examples of institutionalized meta-affinity in Amazonia, see Rivière (1969: 77–81) on the Trio *pito* relation, Howard (1993) on Waiwai *parwana* relations, Taylor (2015: 140–143) on the Jivaro *amik*, Killick (2009) on the Ashéninka *ayompari*, and Fausto (2012c) on the Parakanã *-pajé*. Santos-Granero (2007) and Taylor (2015) provide detailed comparative reviews of these relations.
 - 17. During my fieldwork, no *Hori* rituals were held because there were no actual *-tawari* relations in place, although the *-tawari* continued to exist as a category of social classification (see below). My ethnography of the *Hori* is therefore based on reconstructions. A couple of years after my fieldwork, the Kanamari held a *Hori* in the Itaquai area as part of a “Kanamari cultural festival,” organized with the help of

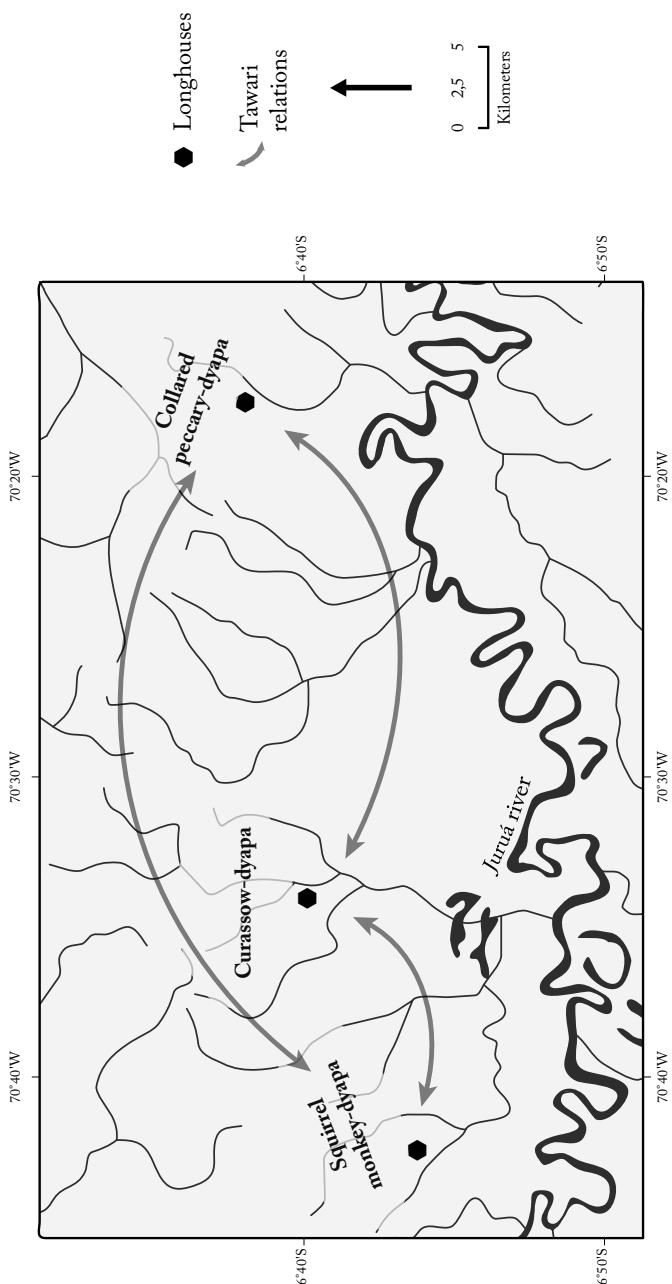


Figure 18. Map of *-tawari* relations on the left bank of the Juruá, c. 1900.

festivities. The ritual visit was preceded by an invitation mission (*tukuna hikna*, “to go fetch people”) organized by one of the chiefs. The mission approached the foreign longhouse blowing on the ceramic horn so that the guests knew it was their *-tawari* arriving (Figure 19). The travelers and their hosts then deliberated on when the *Hori* would be held and who would perform the functions of hosts and guests (since *Hori* were reciprocal affairs, these positions would be switched in the succeeding *Hori*).¹⁸ The members of an invitation mission called the horn they blew as they arrived “our body-owner’s horn” (*tyo-warah nawa hori*) or “our horn” (*ityowa hori*). Before they departed, they left their horn with those they were visiting, to be given back once the feast took place. This part of the ritual is called either *ityowa hori pakana* (“to leave our horn there”) or *tyo-warah nawa hori pakana* (“to leave our body-owner’s horn there”).

Though festive occasions, *Hori* were always tense affairs. The visitors would carry weapons into their host’s longhouse community, and their first act would be to walk silently past their hosts and drop their weapons at a designated point (Tastevin n.d.a: 114). *-Tawari* may have been preferential nonkin to each other, but they were still mostly people infrequently encountered outside of ritual happenings. One of the main events of the *Hori* was a ritualized mutual flagellation with a whip made from manatee leather called either *mokdak*, “tapir skin,” or *omamkom*, “small stick,” in reference to the stick used as the whip handle (Figure 20).¹⁹ Hosts would also metaphorically try to “kill” (*-ti*) their guests with copious amounts of manioc beer, and the latter tried to consume as much

the NGO Centro de Trabalho Indigenista (CTI). The photos used to illustrate the *Hori* were taken by employees of CTI, whom I thank for allowing me to reproduce them here.

18. In the early twentieth century, Tastevin often found himself a pawn in these invitation missions:

The invitations are transmitted from clan to clan [i.e., from subgroup to subgroup] through the intermediary of voyagers. When I was among the Bald Uakari-*dyapa*, the chief of the clan [i.e., the subgroup chief] charged me with insisting that the chief of the White-Lipped Peccary-*dyapa* come and visit him. The latter lived more than one week’s walk as the crow flies from the longhouse of the Bald Uakari-*dyapa*. (Tastevin n.d.a: 110)

19. Although the whip is preferably made from manatee leather, the Kanamari call the ritual lashing a “tapir skin” in reference to a myth that establishes that the manatee was once a tapir, before it left to live under water. When leather whips are unavailable, the Kanamari use palm leaves. For an ethnography of the tapir-skin mutual flagellations in the present and a reconstruction of its past forms, see Costa (2007: 83–90) and Tastevin (n.d.a: 110–114).



Figure 19. Man blowing the *hori* horn on arrival at a guest's village (Photo: Pollyana Mendonça, CTI archives, 2010).

as possible without fainting or becoming incapacitated. The ensuing drunkenness often resulted in sporadic fighting, and the possibility of the resumption of generalized hostilities was always latent.

The ritual gathering was framed as a meeting between the two subgroup chiefs, who acted collectively for the subgroup as a whole. Indeed, the ritual was later recalled by the name of the subgroup chief whose horn had been left during the invitation mission. For example, one memorable *Hori*, which established a truce between the Oropendola-*dyapa* and the Collared Peccary-*dyapa*, was known as “Oki’s horn” (*Oki nawa hori*), since it was the horn of chief Oki of the Collared Peccary-*dyapa* that had been left with the Oropendola-*dyapa* chief. When the Oropendola-*dyapa* later undertook the journey to the Toriwa River where the Collared Peccary-*dyapa* lived, they were said to be *Oki nawa hori-wa-na*, “following Oki’s horn.”

During the Time of Tamakori, the *hori* ritual was the largest collective event in which the Kanamari participated. It brought together two “people-clusters” subsumed under their body-owners, temporarily united in the same place by a symmetrical relationship of ritual alliance. At the conclusion of the ritual, the host people-cluster was expected to remain with their body-owner, while the guest people-cluster was expected to return with their body-owner to their river basin.



Figure 20. Tapir-skin fight between *-tawari* (Photo: Pollyana Mendonça, CTI archives, 2009).

For this reason, *Hori* rituals did not involve reciprocal feeding and consequently did not produce kinship. In no situation did the chief of the hosting subgroup “feed” his guests. Unlike the Kaxinawá (McCallum 1998: 133) or the Trio (Grotti 2007, 2009), the Kanamari did not “create” or “fabricate” the bodies of guests with food in order to make them more like their hosts. In fact, the only act reciprocally done to the bodies of both hosts and guests was scarring through tapir-skin ritual flagellations (Figure 21). Guests were instead expected to take large amounts of food with them to their *-tawari*’s river basin. The invitation mission that preceded the actual *Hori* was in part intended to encourage the travelers to produce the surplus food they would need, typically sweet manioc and smoked meats and fish. It was this food, prepared in one’s subgroup by kinspeople, that sustained the guests while they remained in their hosts’ river basin.



Figure 21. Injuries resulting from a tapir-skin fight (Photo: Pollynana Mendonça, CTI archives, 2009).

The absence of feeding relations between nonkin is particularly visible during the *Hori*, but it was a feature of all encounters between people of different subgroups, even on those occasions where food was actually transferred from host to guest. Some close subgroups, particularly those from adjacent river basins, became almost prescribed *-tawari* through a long history of ritual alliance. Such close *-tawari* might visit each other on nonritual occasions, following footpaths that linked the two basins across the watershed.²⁰ On these informal occasions, guests would usually be offered something to eat and, if they

20. The two subgroups that exemplified this close, informal relationship most clearly were the Curassow-*dyapa* and the Squirrel Monkey-*dyapa*. As we can see in Figure 18, the Mucambi stream, occupied by the Squirrel Monkey-*dyapa*, is a tributary of the Komaronhu stream, where the Curassow-*dyapa* live. The confluence of these streams is rarely discernible, however, because access to the streams requires traversing a waterlogged floodplain. Since the middle course of the Juruá River is notable for its vast flood fringe, the Kanamari classify the Mucambi and the Komaronhu as separate affluents of the Juruá. Nonetheless, in the past, the close geographical link translated into close sociological proximity in which ongoing relations were more lax than those with distant *-tawari* (Costa 2007: 63–69).

knew their host well, they would almost certainly accept. Tastevin's observation, quoted early in this section, captures the role of the subgroup chief in coordinating such receptions, steering guests through the settlement and offering them food. The Kanamari will readily say that nonritual guests "eat something" (*wa-pu*) or that the host (or his wife or a kinsperson) will "get food" (*tyawaib-mini hina*) for them. Significantly, in no case that I recorded did the Kanamari ever say that a host thereby "feeds" (*ayub-man*) a foreign guest. This is unsurprising, since feeding is not the simple transferral of food but the creation of dependence through a unidirectional transferral. Having described in Chapter One how *ayub-man* designates certain acts that we would not immediately or literally interpret in terms of "feeding," we here find a case in which certain food transactions that we might intuitively call "feeding" elide or dissimulate Kanamari definitions of *ayub-man*. Furthermore, the structural position of nonritual guests is similar to that of livestock (as discussed in Chapter Two): both are beings that have a certain free passage through the settlement, and both eat food from their hosts without thereby being "fed" by them. Indeed, after decades investigating how proximal living is generative of kinship relations, it is perhaps time for Amazonian anthropology to investigate anew the structures of hospitality that generate informality and proximity without thereby merging with the processes of making kinship.

Although food transfers during these nonritual visits were informal and dis-simulated, during the *Hori* ritual, by contrast, they took the form of stylized and jolting modalities of antifeeding, which always occurred within the scope of cross-sex relations between hosts and guests. Only three types of antifood were transferred: forest fruits; drinks made from palm fruits (which might or might not have been fermented); and manioc beer. Antifeeding involved either wild foods or those from semidomesticated fallows, or else a "wild" (fermented) form of a quotidian food. The aim was furthermore to violently force-feed people of the opposite sex from different subgroups, an act called *-ti*, "to kill, strike" (and never "to feed"). Where forest fruits were involved, only women (hosts or guests) force-fed men (of the opposite subgroup). A group of women ambushed a man, pinned him down, and crammed fruit into his mouth until he managed to escape. With palm fruit drinks, men and women lined up to be served by their cross-sex friends, but the aim was to make the other *pohan*, "full," to the point of being incapable of proceeding. The same single-file layout framed manioc beer drinking, which also occurred first with women serving men and then men serving women. The aim was not to satiate hunger, but to "kill" the members of the

opposite sex and subgroup by making them “drunk” (*pori*) and “crazy” (*parok*). These states increased the risk of violent outbreaks. Beer is an antifood that has the inverse effect of commensality: some Kanamari say that they avoided manioc beer altogether during *Hori* rituals for fear of being poisoned by the hosts.²¹

In ritualized antifeeding, the women who are being force-fed called the men who are force-feeding them *paiko dyaba*, “worthless ancestors,” while the men being force-fed called the women force-feeding them *bwa dyaba*, “worthless ancestresses.” The term *dyaba* is the same term used for the worthless ogres (*adyaba*, “worthless ones”) who fed Kanamari children in order to later eat them. As we saw in Chapter Two, the worthlessness of the ogres derives from their use of feeding not to produce kinship but, instead, to produce food for their own consumption. During the *Hori*, the worthlessness of force-feeding lay in the fact that antifood was forcefully transferred in a way that resisted feeding and its effects, and the fact that it was used to “kill” current allies, who were always potential enemies. The worthless ancestor and worthless ancestress were antifeeders who evinced the lack of kinship between subgroups during the *Hori*. It was no accident that antifeeding was played out in cross-sex relations: as they provided the model for commensal relations within the subgroup, so they became the axis along which the lack of kinship between subgroups was thematized (Figure 22).

The terms I translate as “ancestor” and “ancestress” denote all men and women of the second ascending generation (G-2) or above. When preceded by the prefix *a-* (third person singular, implying generality) they also mean “male” (*apaiko*) and “female” (*ahwa*). The use of terms denoting ancestrality requires some comment, albeit a thorough investigation of the place of ancestrality among the Kanamari must await a future study. The *Hori*, like the Jaguar-becoming discussed in Chapter Five, was a ritual of alliance through cosmic fertility: people of different subgroups reciprocally ensured the regeneration of the forest in each other’s river basin. In this sense, while no intersubgroup feeding

21. The only partial exception to the antifeeding of the *Hori* occurred in ritual gatherings that concluded with a Jaguar-becoming ritual. This was a possible outcome of the *Hori*, one common between subgroups that had a long history of friendly alliances, but it was not a necessary part of the ritual gathering. When Jaguar-becoming rituals took place, members of the two subgroups ate collective meals in the village patio (formerly the longhouse). However, the pertinent distinction was no longer between members of different subgroups but, rather, between the Jaguar and Human performers, hence the feeding relation pointed to the cosmological conditions for earthly life. Although *Hori* are no longer held, Jaguar-becoming rituals continue to be essential (see Chapter Five).

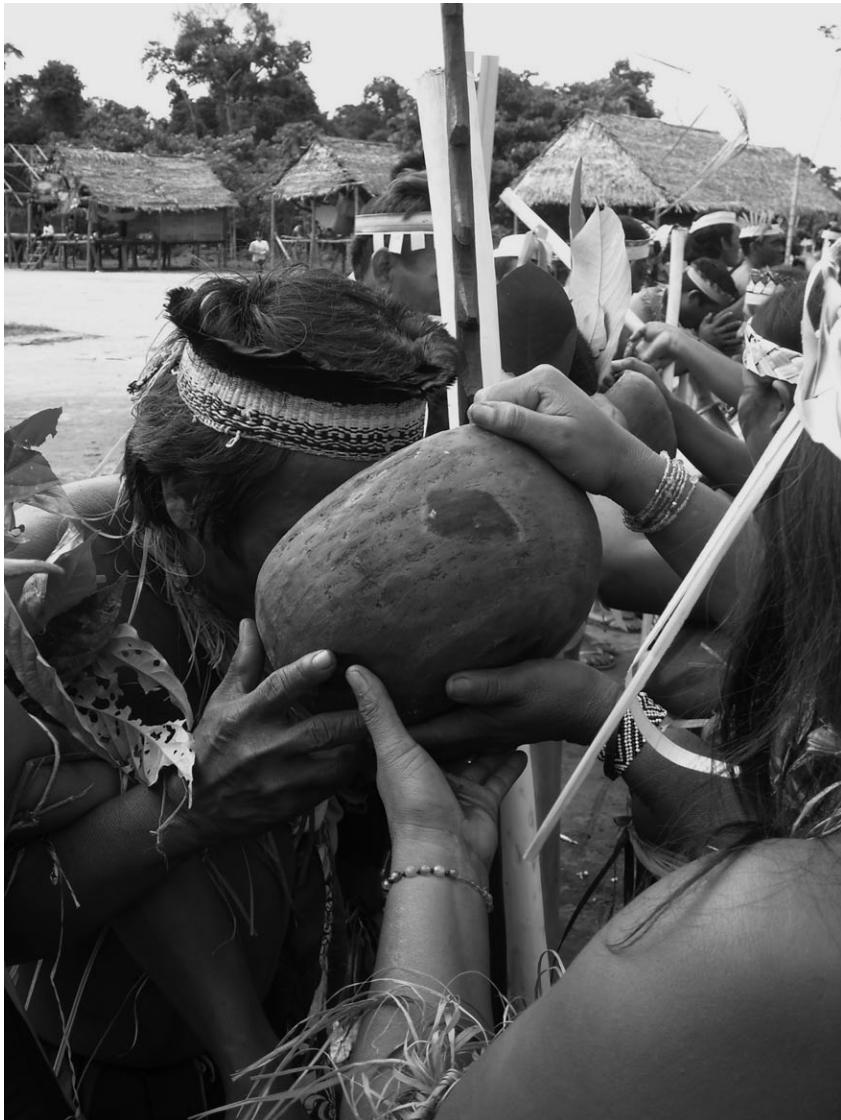


Figure 22. A row of “worthless ancestresses” serving manioc beer to male guests
(Photo: Pollynana Mendonça, CTI archives, 2009).

took place, each subgroup nonetheless rendered the forest fertile for the other, thereby making future feeding possible for their *-tarwari*. The regeneration of the forest was linked to the subgroup chief’s relation to the *mowarahi*, “the long-ago body-owners,” ancestors who are still physically manifest in fallows

and palm tree groves. The *Hori* was thus traversed by this idiom of ancestrality, which established ties of continuity between those who created the forest and groves and those who benefited from it (and who would ensure its continuity into the future). The perpetual regeneration of the forest requires that nonkin be engaged and that reciprocal ritual relations be maintained. Worthless ancestors, in brief, are those ancestors whose actions toward their affines benefit their affines' descendants rather than their own (see Erikson 2007).²²

Alongside cross-sex antifeeding, regular interactions between same-sex people of opposing subgroups were characterized by relations of *hom*, "exchange" (Tastevin n.d.a: 111–114). -*Tawari* exchanged things with each other, typically items of native or foreign material culture, such as arrows, baskets, metal knives, and glass beads (but never food or women). As we know from Kanamari relations with the whites described in Chapter Two, exchange is a means to inhibit the establishment of kinship relations. In this sense, *hom*, "exchange," is a reciprocal trade-off between nonkin, different from both *ayuh-man*, "feeding," a unidirectional provisioning that creates kinship, and *nubuk*, "giving/sharing" among kin (as in commensal relations, for example). Consequently, although *Hori* were able to bring together a very large number of people, these were not referred to as *tukuna-wibnin*, "people-cluster," but *tukuna ayuhtunin*, "many people," since no single person was capable of subsuming and singularizing their differences. By actively inhibiting relations of feeding and kinship, the *Hori* ritual foregrounded the contingent and nonintrinsic interactions of those assembled in the host village.

It was in this space, at the confluence of the metafilial relations of feeding (described in the previous section) and the meta-affinal relations of exchange that the subgroup was integrated into an operative institution. While the -*warah* delimited ties of kinship within the subgroup, couched in an idiom of asymmetrical consanguinity, the -*tawari* was a tie of nonmarital alliance between men, couched in an idiom of symmetrical affinity. The Kanamari subgroup can thus be defined as a social institution articulated at the vertically farthest point where feeding is possible (in fact, the point where feeding yields to predation, as we

22. Although "ancestrality" is usually seen to be inapposite to Amazonian sociologies, this generalization ignores vast swathes of western Amazonia where ancestrality is a component of theories of reproduction and regeneration (e.g., C. Hugh-Jones 1979; S. Hugh-Jones 1979; Erikson 1996; Chaumeil 2001; Rival 2002).

shall see in the next chapter) and the horizontally nearest point where exchange relations become viable (in fact, the point where relations of giving and sharing yield to relations of exchange and warfare).

THE TIME OF RUBBER

Recall that subgroups were created by Tamakori and that the model I describe above is a native sociology of the Time of Tamakori. Having created proto-subgroups, Tamakori and Kirak finally left the Kanamari, traveling downriver toward Manaus and then beyond to Europe. In the Journey, the two brothers also created the whites in Manaus (see Chapter Five). The Time of Tamakori, along with the social forms associated with it, came to an end when the first white people decided to leave Manaus and travel up the Juruá River.

The first white person that the Kanamari saw was a man they call Jarado, who traveled with his entourage into their territory from Manaus on his massive barge. As he journeyed toward the Kanamari, he created the future cities and rubber storehouses. He encountered the Kanamari on the banks of the Juruá, away from their settlements. Jarado called the Kanamari *-tawari* and was in turn called the same by them. They offered him pieces of smoked game and, in exchange, Jarado gave the Kanamari metal fish hooks, clothing, and machetes. These exchanges are narrated as examples of *hom*, the term for exchange during the *Hori* visits held between *-tawari*. Jarado then left the Kanamari and continued his journey back to Manaus, never to be seen again.²³

Jarado marks the beginning of the historical epoch that the Kanamari call “the Time of Rubber,” and he was quickly followed by a number of rubber bosses and tappers. It is difficult to establish a date for the arrival of Jarado. The exercise is probably futile, since Jarado’s arrival has many of the trappings of mythical discourse (Jarado spoke the Kanamari language, he was invulnerable to the arrows of the Panoan-speaking enemies of the Kanamari, and so forth).²⁴ At any rate, Jarado synthesizes the Kanamari engagement with the

23. For a full transcript and analysis of Jarado’s story, see Costa (2007: 56–60).

24. When I first heard the name “Jarado,” I assumed it must be the Kanamari pronunciation of the Brazilian name “Geraldo.” Subsequent study of the available documents on the history of the Juruá revealed no one of that name. However, I am now quite certain that “Jarado” is borrowed from the Tupian lingua franca of the Juruá, where *jara* means “master” or “owner.” Indeed, some Kanamari contract

rubber economy, which I estimate to have begun, timidly at first, at the end of the nineteenth century. Tastevin (n.d.a) reports that some Kanamari were involved in rubber extraction in the 1910s, but the majority only actively participated in the extractive economy after the heyday of the rubber boom had passed, sometime in the late 1920s.

The Kanamari often divide the Time of Rubber into two subperiods: “when the bosses were good” and “when the bosses were bad.” In the first period, the relation between Kanamari chiefs and white bosses was modeled on the *-tawari* relationship between subgroups, just as it had been when Jarado first arrived. Rubber was tapped by the Kanamari and given to chiefs, who then exchanged it with bosses for Western merchandise in interactions often described as a “type of *Hori*” (*ohori*).²⁵ This first subperiod thus maintained—in its basic outlines, at least—the subgroup institution into the 1920s. In the second period, this mediation by native chiefs collapsed, probably for a number of reasons, including the death of certain key subgroup chiefs, and the Kanamari began either to exchange with bosses in an *ad hoc* manner or else to work directly for them (Costa 2009:166–167). The result was a centrifugal movement that drew the Kanamari toward the rubber-tapping camps and away from their villages. This trend was certainly consolidated by the early 1930s and lasted until the arrival of Funai in 1972. I should like to draw attention to three effects of this process.

First, the fact that members of different subgroups moved away from their tributaries at roughly the same time, toward the same rubber estates dominating the Juruá basin, meant that Kanamari who had previously been nonkin to each other as members of different subgroups began to coreside and intermarry. This process resulted in the creation of novel kinship configurations. When the Kanamari speak of this period, the concepts of “true” and “distant” kin cease to have precise meanings. Instead, they say that people from different subgroups became “sort of kin” (*-wihnin nahan*) to each other.

At the same time, starting in the late 1930s, some Kanamari women began to marry white men, and some Kanamari children either were given to the rubber bosses to be raised or else spent a considerable amount of time in their storehouses, away from parents whose involvement in rubber extraction demanded

the name “Jarado” to “Jara,” which is also how the neighboring Arawan-speaking Paumari and the Biá River Katukina refer to all whites (Bonilla 2007:86–95; Deturche 2009:91). Jarado is hence someone akin to a “master of the whites” who was later followed by his minions.

25. See the discussion of the morpheme *o-* in Chapter One.

a more itinerant lifestyle. This process had a corollary effect: as new kinship ties were created, old ones began to dissolve, and some of those who had previously been kinspeople (of the same subgroup) drifted apart. They, too, became “sort of kin.” The net result was a widespread climate of suspicion. Neither the tentative kin ties being created nor the old kin ties being undone provided a haven of safety in a social environment undergoing rapid change.

The second effect of the Time of Rubber I wish to stress here is that long-houses ceased to be built and gardens were gradually abandoned. Consequently, the Kanamari came to rely on the gardens of the rubber storehouses to obtain the same crops they had previously planted in exchange for the rubber they were now tapping. As the rubber trees along the Juruá became depleted, rubber tappers began to establish camps on the tributaries where the Kanamari lived, thereby cementing changes in residence patterns. Throughout much of the Time of Rubber, the Kanamari stopped making gardens and, as a consequence, their mobility patterns both intensified and became less predictable than they had been in the Time of Tamakori (Costa 2009:165–169).

Finally, rather than systematically and collectively submitting to the authority of specific rubber bosses, thereby recreating, in a modified form, the body-owner bond that characterized the internal workings of the subgroup prior to contact, the Kanamari expanded their debts and multiplied their relations through a series of dyadic pairings. Because their debts and bonds were individual and conflicting, the Kanamari were forced to move erratically—either toward new bosses or away from those to whom they had become indebted.

This last fact is crucial, since the defining feature of the extractive economy in Amazonia is its constitution through relations of debt peonage, which tend toward forms of debt bondage or slavery. This economy is therefore fundamentally hierarchical. In other parts of Amazonia, the hierarchy of debt bondage provided the basis for processes of identity formation through the agglomeration of previously dispersed peoples and their communal work for a boss (Gow 1991:66–68). How is it possible, then, for the contemporary Kanamari to express an image of the Time of Rubber that stresses its horizontal character, explicitly rejecting or underplaying the collectivizing function of subordinate relations? Or, to phrase the question in terms of Kanamari sociology, why did they not make bosses into body-owners in order to curb their chaotic dispersal?²⁶

26. The Kanamari refer to their former bosses as *nossa patrão* when speaking in Portuguese. They never call them *tyo-warah*, “our body-owner,” with one ambiguous

I believe that this less hierarchical image of interethnic relations in the Time of Rubber is not a retrodiction but actually reflects the social processes in motion during the period.²⁷ Two factors seem to have impeded the collective and sustained submission of the Kanamari to bosses during this time. The first, briefly mentioned above, is the almost simultaneous death of certain key subgroup chiefs in the late 1920s and early 1930s. Due to the historical impact of the rubber boom and the lure of work on the rubber estates, the Kanamari were unable (or perhaps unwilling) to establish new subgroup chiefs at the time. The ensuing process was one that the Kanamari call *ino-na*, a “scattering,” which implies disordered movement away from former body-owners (Costa 2009: 166–167). Lacking chiefs capable of mediating submission to a single boss, collective relations gradually fragmented into varied and diverging ties.

Second, the fact that the Kanamari seem to have participated in the rubber boom after its peak, only really engaging with extractive economies after the 1920s, meant that they missed out on working for the wealthy and dominant bosses still operative in the early 1900s. With the erosion of the Amazonian rubber economy in the first years of the twentieth century, culminating in the ultimate and definitive collapse of the price of rubber after the Second World

exception. A number of Kanamari began to work for a boss named Júlio Tavares sometime in the 1950s. When Tavares decided to move to the Javari River, far to the north of the area then occupied by the Kanamari, these people moved with him. Many of them, along with their descendants, currently live on his former estate. I had limited contact with these Kanamari, and I never directly asked them how they addressed Tavares. But the Kanamari of the Itaquá occasionally referred to him as *ma-warah*, “their body-owner” (i.e., the body-owner of those who moved with him and their descendants). Tavares died soon after settling in the Javari, and the experience of these Kanamari, as narrated today, seems to me like the contingent actualization of a latent possibility. Its ultimate failure, after Tavares’ death, is certainly more salient in the memory of the contemporary Kanamari than its limited success (Costa 2007: 130–133).

27. Native Amazonian reminiscences of ancient bosses often oscillate between images of symmetry and asymmetry. According to Barbosa (2007: 138–147), the Carib-speaking Aparai and Wayana of northern Brazil sometimes refer to former bosses by terms that mean “trade partner,” stressing the reciprocal character of interactions between Amerindians and white bosses, and at other times as “owner,” stressing their asymmetrical capacity to care for (i.e., to supply) their “subordinates.” In the latter contexts, the Aparai and Wayana refer to the subordinates of a boss as, respectively, “their *poeto/pëito*,” words with cognates across all known Cariban languages, meaning “captive,” “servant,” “child,” etc. On the cognates of the Carib *poeto/pëito*, see Rivière (1969: 77–81; 1977) and Grotti and Brightman (2016).

War, the powerful bosses left Amazonia, and their successors had to find novel ways of keeping relations of debt in place (Almeida 1992: 34–41). Indeed, Kanamari oral histories make it clear that they were engaging with a diversified economy that included the extraction of some rubber along with other forest products, incipient lumbering, as well as hunting and farming for local bosses. This made it much more difficult for the Kanamari to maintain ongoing and durable relations of submission to a single boss, since few or no bosses were capable of maintaining large numbers of people for longer than it took to accomplish a specific task. As a result, they sought out a range of small-time bosses based in different estates in order to obtain the goods they desired during the period. This process had clear parallels with the strategies of neighboring peoples during the same time, such as the Arawan-speaking Paumari of the Purus River (Bonilla 2007).

When considered in light of the social structure in place during the Time of Tamakori, we could say that the Time of Rubber marked the demise of the asymmetrical body-owner ties that organized relations within the subgroup. Without subgroup chiefs, subgroup identities were suspended in favor of generalized, chromatic, and symmetrical ties that ranged from provisional *-tawari*-like alliances to enmity. Since subgroups were inoperative, these ties did not organize stable units in a systematic manner but, rather, cut across and turned previously existing relations inside out. The Time of Rubber made former kin into enemies or *-tawari*, former *-tawari* into kin or enemies, and the whites into either kin, *-tawari*, or enemies.²⁸ Any asymmetrical relation that could be established was short-lived and lacked the aggregating and collective character of the *-warah*, which ensured that people were grouped into villages and villages into subgroups. Consequently, the kinship and nonkinship relations that could be established in this social landscape were themselves purely provisional and precarious in the absence of the vertical integration guaranteed by the *-warah*.

28. *-Tawari* here was redefined as a nonkinship relation of alliance rather than one of ritual friendship. *-Tawari* relations during the Time of Rubber must have been very different from those of the Time of Tamakori, since they could not have been set up by the now nonexistent subgroup chiefs. Nonetheless, the Kanamari recall having participated in many regional *forró* music parties sponsored by the bosses in their estates, and these are generally remembered as having been fun but also tense affairs where copious alcohol was consumed and fights were frequent. No one called these dances *Hori* (or even *ohori*, “a type of *Hori*”), but they certainly shared the convergence of liveliness and tension that typified the ritual.

Although Jarado is remembered as one of the good bosses, the excessively processual nature of relations during the Time of Rubber is prefigured in his doings. By acting as a powerful *-tawari* ally and later being followed by other powerful *-tawari*, Jarado drew the Kanamari into a world in which symmetrical relations prevailed. These excessively unstable and desultory symmetrical relations ultimately overwhelmed the body-owner structure with which they were previously articulated, stretching the blend of symmetrical and asymmetrical relations that prevailed during the Time of Tamakori toward its horizontal breaking point.

THE TIME OF FUNAI

All of this changed on one fateful day, February 12, 1972, when Funai arrived among the Kanamari in the person of Sebastião Amâncio da Costa, known locally by his nickname, Sabá Manso.²⁹ Sabá was first seen by my Kanamari grandfather, Poroya, who was building a canoe for a local boss. According to Poroya, Sabá told him to stop working for the bosses with the following words: “Today your body-owner has arrived. The whites will no longer get you. It is Funai alone who will take care of you now.”³⁰

Sabá had brought all kinds of goods with him, including machetes, axes, fish hooks, fishing nets, clothes, and canned foods, all of which he distributed, at first asking for nothing in return. Later, he said that the timber they cut, the rubber they gathered, and the items they produced for the bosses were to be given directly to Funai, who would trade the produce fairly on behalf of the Kanamari. Sabá’s subsequent report to his superiors in Brasilia captures both the joyous incredulity of the Kanamari and agrees, in spirit, with Poroya’s succinct version of events:

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29. While “Manso” is a contraction of the Brazilian surname “Amâncio,” it is also the Portuguese word for both “tame” and “mild.” This happy coincidence was not lost on the Kanamari, since, as we shall see, Sabá Manso was something of a “civilizing” character who “tamed” the deleterious effects of the Time of Rubber. The Kanamari also appreciate the irony of the homophony since, as they recall, Sabá was always very angry with the whites.
 30. *Bati wao'dyi no-warah tyo. Kariwa na-man tu idiki wa bo. Funai ti na-tokodo idiki wa bo.*

Now, with the presence of FUNAI, the morale of the Kanamari is palpable, everyone is euphoric—with what they will be able to buy with their production and desirous of working, they told me that they will now summon all of their relatives spread out along other rivers, so that they may henceforth remain together, for they now possess a father and protector with the presence of FUNAI. (Da Costa 1972:10)

Sabá traveled upriver to the Kanamari villages that still existed, where he was greeted by women singing the *haihai* songs and offering peach palm fruit drinks. He ate with them in their villages and left to begin the process of demarcating the Vale do Javari Indigenous Reservation.³¹

Jarado, by contrast, never visited a Kanamari village. He remained on the main channel of the Juruá and, like a *-tawari* ritual friend, “exchanged” (*bom*) with the Kanamari at the mouth of the tributaries in which they lived. Sabá went to the villages of the Kanamari, drank and ate with them, and “gave” (*nubuk*) them merchandise, asking in return that they channel their productive output toward Funai. He thus acted as a Kanamari chief, someone who would pool game meat or garden produce to redistribute among his people, either in quotidian contexts (the village chief) or ritual events (the subgroup chief). In fact, the Kanamari explicitly say that Sabá “fed” them with merchandise—merchandise that, in the case of rifles, ammunition, fishing gear, axes, and machetes, actually gave them the material means to once again feed themselves (to make gardens again, for example) and to cease relying on the bosses.

This does not mean that Sabá, by behaving and speaking like a chief, restored the balance of asymmetry and symmetry that characterized the Time of Tamakori, as though his presence could simply erase the effects of the Time of Rubber. Subgroups had already become mixed, intermarriages and new residential

31. Sebastião Amâncio da Costa is an infamous former employee of Funai. In the mid-1970s, he suggested setting off bombs near the northern Amazonian settlements of uncontacted Waimiri-Atroari to frighten them away from a planned highway and into the arms of Funai. His name has recently resurfaced during the Comissão Nacional da Verdade (National Truth Commission) inquiry, established by President Dilma Rousseff, into the atrocities committed against Brazil's Amerindians during the country's military dictatorship. I should emphasize here that my discussion of his role among the Kanamari only concerns the very short period of his activities in the Vale do Javari, which predate his direct involvement with the Waimiri-Atroari. It goes without saying, of course, that the Kanamari's esteem for Sabá is limited to his activities with them.

arrangements were consolidated, and kinship had been haphazardly generalized and diluted. Instead, his presence had the inverse effect of the arrival of Jarado. Whereas the latter inaugurated a period where very powerful foreigners multiplied horizontal relations, Funai, through Sabá's initial actions, emerged as a very powerful body-owner who tipped the balance of Kanamari social organization from an intensive "symmetrization" toward an equally intensive "asymmetrization." As would be expected from the predominance of the body-owner, in the Time of Funai there were no *-tawari* and no people called by the terms of ritual partnership, just as there were no body-owners in the Time of Rubber.³²

The precarious and volatile kinship of the Time of Rubber—always "sort of," always contingent, never complete—is now made to endure through Funai's feeding of all the Kanamari. As far as we can be certain, no equivalent to this figure existed in the Time of Tamakori, when the most encompassing body-owner was the subgroup chief of each subgroup, whose activities made all members of the subgroup kinspeople to each other but who had no means of integrating different subgroups into a singular unit. Funai is so powerful that it can rectify the intersubgroup unions that took place during the Time of Rubber. Since Funai is the chief of all the Kanamari, all of them are able to transform the "sort of" kinship of the Time of Rubber into stable and enduring kinship, so long as Funai continues to "feed" them with merchandise. If Jarado created a world with an excess of nonkinship relations that interfered with the discrete kinship categories of the Time of Tamakori, then Sabá created a world with a surfeit of kinship, where people from different subgroups can be related to each other, and where nonkinship relations are marginalized.

32. The *-tawari* has disappeared as a social relation but not as a category. The Kanamari of the Itaquaí today sometimes call the Panoan-speaking Matis, who live on a tributary of the Itaquaí River, "our *-tawari*" (*tyo-tawari*). This usage differentiates the Matis (also called *Paca-dyapa*), who are considered harmless by the Kanamari, from other Panoan-speaking people, most of whom are classed as *ityowa todioki*, "those who make enemies of us." While this terminology indicates the potential for alliances between the Matis and the Kanamari, perhaps indicating where new horizontal relations might develop in the future, it does not register any sort of ongoing, institutionalized relation in the present. The Kanamari only meet the Matis sporadically in the nearby town, and mutual visiting was nonexistent during my fieldwork. The term *-tawari* is also currently used nonreciprocally, since the Matis, who do not understand the Kanamari language, do not call the Kanamari by this term. Some indications suggest that *-tawari*-like relations between the Matis and the Kanamari may be significantly older than these contemporary interactions (Erikson 2007).

The idiom through which Sabá conveyed his powers was immediately translatable into the terms of Kanamari sociology. It is no accident that, while Poroya, speaking in Kanamari, attributes the phrase “today your body-owner has arrived” to Sabá, the latter, writing in Portuguese, relays to his superiors that the Kanamari were euphoric with the presence of their “father and protector.” Both are transmitting, in a language commensurate with (and expressible as) “metafiliation,” the eventful (re-)appearance of the conditions that each considers essential for Kanamari livelihood: kinship for Poroya, state tutelage for Sabá. The latter’s observation that the Kanamari would summon all of their kinspeople, spread out along various rivers, to live together with Funai is not just a commentary on the perceived political benefits of state tutelage. It also resonates with, and perhaps unwittingly incorporates, Poroya’s understanding of Sabá as a “body-owner,” someone who spoke in an idiom of care and protection and who promised the removal of the people who had made proper kinship relations impossible, thereby enabling everyone to be kin by living together in one place.

The convergence of Poroya’s and Sabá’s enthusiasm, and their use of categories that appear to be translations or versions of each other, should not be understood as some sort of “objective” identity between the idioms of metafiliation and state tutelage but as an example of the sort of “equivocation” that haunts interethnic contact in general (Viveiros de Castro 2004, 2014: 84–91). Both Poroya and Sabá foresaw a time in which asymmetrical relations between them would exist, but while the former saw in Sabá a source for the re-creation of the kinship undone by history, the latter saw Poroya and the Kanamari as future wards of the Brazilian state. Each one interpreted the event according to their categories and interests, and, although these may fortuitously appear to converge in a working consensus, closer inspection reveals their equivocal approximations.

BECOMING FUNAI

Funai’s presence has had a marked effect on how the *-warah* articulates social structure through its transformation of the village chief and the subgroup chief. The former has been reinvented under Funai’s auspices. Every Kanamari village has one (in some cases, more than one) chief whom the Kanamari now call *chefe*, *cacique*, or *tuxaua* (*totyawa* in Kanamari pronunciation). The latter two terms are, respectively, words of Arawakan and Tupian origin that have been in circulation since colonial times and were adopted by federal agencies and Amerindian

peoples as part of the jargon of interethnic contact in Brazil. In contrast to the Time of Tamakori, village chiefs are no longer unequivocally identified as feeders of their settlements. In smaller villages where the chief is the head of the dominant household, he will often be the feeder and body-owner of his household/family, but this is not necessarily generalized to the peripheral inhabitants of the settlement. Although the chief's house is still where game meat is preferentially taken, and although the chief is still associated with the garden, often being the settlement founder, the Kanamari do not say that he "feeds" his coresidents, and, consequently, he is no longer referred to as the *-warah* of his village—not even as an *X-warah* by residents of other villages. Functionally, the contemporary chiefs seem to be very similar to, if not identical with, the village chiefs of the past, but the implications of their actions are resisted at the level of discourse by a refusal to identify them with body-owners of the settlement.

This is all the more remarkable for the fact that other deictic means of referring to villages through its *cacique* are still employed. Each village has a name (a Funai requirement for its census data), but, when speaking among themselves, the Kanamari rarely make use of them. Instead they call the village "the place of X" (*X natatam*), where X is almost always the name of the *cacique* (unless a specific person's relation to the village takes precedence within the discursive context). So the *cacique* continues to operate as a *-warah*, even though the Kanamari avoid referring to him as such.

This discursive displacement of the village chief by categories promoted by Funai should be interpreted in light of the fate of the subgroup chief. The subgroup chief of individual *-dyapa* subgroups has been replaced by Funai, which is at present the only chief that all of the Kanamari, irrespective of any subgroup identity that they may recognize, regularly call *-warah*. Sabá was only the first in a long line of Funai agents from Brasilia, called *Brasilia (hinuk)-warah*, to visit the Kanamari after 1972. They are *kariwa baknintam*, "truly good/beautiful whites" who "know the land," and, more significantly, who continue to feed the Kanamari: to distribute merchandise, particularly fish hooks and rifle shells, and to provide some food and, occasionally, shelter when the Kanamari are in Atalaia do Norte. They are also enemies of the Kanamari's enemies, enforcing laws that prevent the invasion of Kanamari lands and arresting those invaders who are caught.³³

33. Not all the relations between Kanamari and Funai have been positive. See Costa (2016b: 121–123) on some of the difficulties that the Kanamari encountered after

This convergence of *-warah* and Funai has produced a skewing effect on Kanamari social structure and settlement pattern. Strictly speaking, no long-houses exist any more in the Itaquaí region, although the largest village, Massapê, contains Funai's outpost house, which is always inhabited by an employee from the federal agency (see Figures 20 and 21). The Kanamari generally call Massapê by the Portuguese term *comunidade* ("community"), and I have also heard it called a "longhouse" (*bak nyanin*), although no such structure ever existed in the village. It is the only settlement referred to in this way. This makes sense since, although native subgroup chiefs no longer exist, Massapê is where Funai, the contemporary subgroup chief, maintains a physical presence.

This presence is partial, however, since it is no more than a pale realization of the transcendent power of Funai emanating from the mysterious and exotic city of Brasilia, which controls all its local branches. None of the Kanamari had been to Brasilia at the time of my fieldwork, although they were well aware that bureaucrats in Brasilia gave orders to the Funai employees who interacted with them. They sometimes call this Funai "true" or "prototypical" Funai (*Funai tam*), to distinguish it from the local refractions with limited power with whom they are more familiar in their everyday interactions. During my fieldwork, I often heard that the "true Funai" was then-president Luiz Inácio "Lula" da Silva, chief not only of all Indians but also of all Brazilians.

Sabá's departure. I should also briefly address how the sociology of the Itaquaí in the Time of Funai contrasts with the harmonious description of social relations within subgroups in the past. The Itaquaí is today home to people who identify with at least eleven *-dyapa* subgroups, but relations between these people exclude *Hori* gatherings and tend to be based on mutual visits typical of intrasubgroups relations as described by the Kanamari (or with informal, non-*Hori* visits between nonkin in the same period). However, there are also tensions, and some villages are openly suspicious of others in the same river basin. This is expressed in the continued existence of subgroup names, which ideally draw some kinspeople closer than others, and the enduring use of the category of "sort of kin," which (purportedly) emerged during the Time of Rubber. While everyone readily claims that all residents of the Itaquaí are kinspeople (*-wihnin*), all also admit that some are more kin than others. In this way, although Funai created a space in which intersubgroup mixing became meaningful, the result is not a bloated subgroup. Of course, we do not know how subgroups actually operated in the past, only how the Kanamari claim that they operated, and so our contrast must be based on the distinction between, on the one hand, an ideal template and, on the other, the vicissitudes of history and actual social relations. Although I do not discuss these matters in this book, I have done so elsewhere (Costa 2007: Chapter 3).

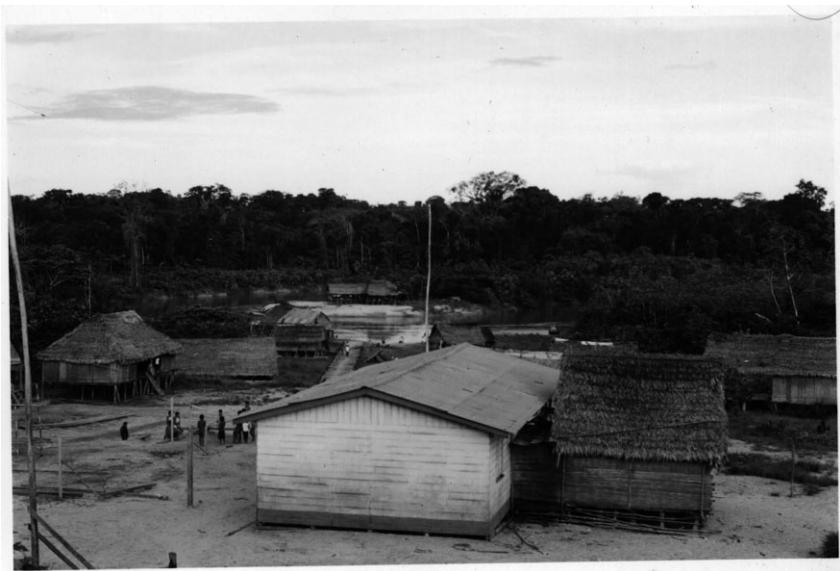


Figure 23. Village of Massapê with Funai's outpost house in the foreground
(Photo: Luiz Costa, 2003).



Figure 24. Funai's outpost house in Massapê (Photo: Pollyana Mendonça, CTI archives, 2006).

Although “Funai” is a word borrowed from the lexicon of the Brazilian government, in Kanamari usage it operates as a blanket term for all government institutions or decrees, including any institution that is ranked hierarchically and perceived to be linked to the government—as is made evident in the association of Funai with the presidency. This includes, among other institutions, the National Health Agency (Funasa), the Brazilian army, the different police institutions, and the National Institute of Colonization and Agrarian Reform (Incra), as well as nonindigenous nongovernmental organizations that operate in the region, such as the Centro de Trabalho Indigenista (CTI), which evidently need to work with the government in order to implement their projects. All of these institutions and organizations are “Funai,” which functions as their synthesis. Though less common, some Kanamari use the words “the Federal” or “the Federal Government” as synonyms for Funai. In Kanamari conversations about the Brazilian government and in their interactions with government agents, Funai thus designates both the National Indian Agency and other government or nongovernmental agencies as well as, more generally, the hierarchical structure of the Brazilian government and its upper echelons.

We have already seen how Funai (in this expanded sense) has succeeded in transforming the contingent and haphazard kinship relations of the Time of Rubber into a situation where all the Kanamari of the Itaquaí acknowledge that they are kinspeople to each other. It has also mostly been successful in overturning the harmful mobility of the Time of Rubber by situating the Kanamari within the Vale do Javari Indigenous Reservation. Funai has thus retroactively validated the intersubgroup alliances that emerged during the Time of Rubber. Indeed, subgroups have become much less exclusive and determining, and many people say that they are members of more than one subgroup. Subgroups now no longer delineate kinship units but, instead, index clusters of alliances that have become stable over time, pointing to the intersubgroup configurations that provided relative safety during the Time of Rubber and which have now become consolidated. Belonging to more than one subgroup is unthinkable in the logic of the Time of Tamakori, so the current usage evinces Funai’s ability to turn contradiction into a virtue by attributing a positive meaning to an historical process. The Kanamari answered my questions about the subgroup with the story of Sabá because Funai makes all subgroups converge on itself. In the process, it has made subgroups into little more than names that retain the model of an ancient form of social organization but which can no longer account for the patterns of feeding/dependency that organize the present.

Inasmuch as Funai is a hypostasized *-warah*, its effects must apply not only to positions of chieftaincy but also to everyone who becomes kin through the feeding relations that it sets in place. A Kanamari chief is not a *sui generis* individual but a feeder of many whose acts created villages and subgroups in the past and who today creates “the Kanamari.” It is therefore not surprising that village *caciques* have ceased to be *-warah*: lacking the precise coordinates of the Time of Tamakori, their function has now been swallowed up by the much more encompassing and determining feeding capacity that radiates from the nation’s capital in Brasilia. There is no place for local feeders in a world where an absolute horizon of feeding necessarily draws the Kanamari toward its center of gravity.

Instead of endogamous subgroups with their recursive forms of chieftaincy, we now find a generic and collective project which the Kanamari call “becoming Funai” (“We are becoming Funai”; *Funai-pa adik [anin] tyo*; Portuguese: *estamos virando Funai*). They say that they are “becoming Funai” in the most varied contexts: when explaining to an anthropologist the historical events that brought them to their present predicament; when contrasting the past to the present in discussions among themselves; or when speaking to government agents about their current projects and their hopes for the future. Some Kanamari have effectively sought and obtained employment in the agency; others have tattooed the word “Funai” or some word or insignia associated with the agency or the federal government, on their arms or chests (Figure 25). Quite a few Kanamari wear clothing or baseball caps displaying Funai crests, regardless of whether or not they have worked for the agency. One village had a large sign by the riverfront with the words “FUNAI COMMUNITY” written in capital letters for everyone approaching the village to see. In most Kanamari villages, people have stopped working in their gardens or procuring food on Sunday because (as they say) “Funai does not work on Sundays.” Many Kanamari are named after employees of the agency who have passed through their villages, and a few are named after a rank that they associate with the agency’s hierarchy (e.g., “General” or “Capita,” an abbreviated form of *capitão*, “captain”)³⁴ or after one of the

34. Military ranks are not actually part of Funai’s official structure. They are, however, informally used by Funai agents, particularly those who take part in the militaristic expeditions to locate the vestiges of uncontacted Amerindian groups, a number of which are located in the regions surrounding Kanamari villages. A few Kanamari have participated in these expeditions. The nearby town of Tabatinga houses a garrison, and the military base of Palmeira do Javari is an enclave within the Vale do Javari Indigenous Reservation, all of which strengthen the military language of government operations in the region.



Figure 25. Kanamari man's arm tattooed with the Brazilian coat of arms. The inverted design was traced from a decal inside a window of a government boat (Photo: Hilton Nascimento, CTI archives, 2012).

acronyms of agencies that the Kanamari associate with Funai (e.g., “Sucam,” the Superintendence for Public Health Campaigns). Although some people seek to become Funai by working for the agency, by bearing its names, or by tattooing its insignia on their bodies—just as, in the past, some people would have manifested their vocation for chiefly positions in analogous ways—this kind of strategy needs to be inserted in a wider social context where becoming Funai is the proper Kanamari way to live in the present (see Costa 2016b, 2017).

But this leaves a question that still needs to be answered. In Chapter Two, I described how the Kanamari avoid becoming white by refusing to create a feeding bond with the livestock of the whites, submitting them, instead, to an exchange relationship. White people here are still interpreted in the key of *-tawari* with whom exchange relations, not kinship, is the norm. The employees of Funai are also white (*kariwa*)—in some cases, they themselves are people who have always lived in Atalaia do Norte and descend from the old bosses of the Kanamari in the Time of Rubber. But today we find that the Kanamari also seek to become Funai by becoming dependents of (i.e., being fed by) Funai, thus pointing the way to a potential future development of kinship relations. How is it possible to avoid becoming white while becoming Funai? To answer this question, we must investigate how white people were created.

CHAPTER FIVE

Old jaguars

In the last chapter we saw how Kanamari history, narrated in a ternary schema, establishes the spectrum of possible permutations of a native social institution that I have called the “subgroup.” In the Time of Tamakori, the subgroup emerges at the intersection of an asymmetrical principle termed *-warah* that comprises an example of “metafiliation,” and a symmetrical principle of “meta-affinity” or “potential affinity,” of which the *-tawari* relation is one possible manifestation. In the Time of Rubber, Kanamari involvement in the extractive economy removed the *-warah* from their social possibilities, resulting in a horizontalized world of excessive flux and erratic movement. With no *-warah* capable of integrating new relations with foreigners into a vertical model, Kanamari society fragmented. Finally, the Time of Funai reintroduces the *-warah* in the form of a government agency, establishing, through its overwhelming power, access to industrial goods, and maximal distance from Kanamari daily affairs, a vertical horizon against which the atomization of the preceding period can be rearranged as kinship. As a consequence, the *-tawari* has vanished from the range of social relations available to the Kanamari: those who would have been *-tawari* are now kinspeople, since everyone is fed by Funai.

There is one difference between the Time of Rubber and the Time of Funai that remains to be explored. In the Time of Rubber, Jarado found the Kanamari living on the tributaries of the Juruá River, where Tamakori had left them. In fact, they met Jarado precisely at the confluence of these tributaries with the Juruá. During the Time of Rubber, the Kanamari moved away from the upper

courses of the interfluvial zones and toward the banks of the Juruá, with its large estates that were later to develop into towns. They moved, as they say, “toward the Juruá” (*Wuni patona*) and “toward the whites” (*kariwa patona*).

It was as a reaction to this movement that some Kanamari decided to migrate northwest, toward the Itaquaí River, probably at the end of the 1930s. The Kanamari had long used the Itaquaí as a hunting and fishing ground, and there may have been more permanent settlements along the river before the twentieth century, but it was only after experiencing work on the Juruá, living “amidst the whites” (*kariwa wakonaki*), that the Kanamari made a definitive move. The Time of Rubber, then, starts with the lure of the whites on the banks of the Juruá and ends with a rejection of the erratic way of life that this encounter generated—a change captured in the shift from the subperiod when the bosses were good (and drew the Kanamari toward the Juruá) to that when they had become bad (and repelled them toward the Itaquaí). These movements are depicted in the map in Figure 26.

Sabá arrived in the Itaquaí region in 1972, inaugurating the Time of Funai. At this point, the Kanamari were permanently settled outside the Juruá river basin.¹ In their stories of the arrival of Sabá, the pertinent extralocal coordinates are Brasilia, where Funai is based, and Tabatinga, the town on the Amazon River from which Sabá organized his expedition into the Itaquaí. Sabá entered the Itaquaí from downriver, whereas the Kanamari had fled from the Juruá via the Itaquaí’s upper course. The Juruá is completely bypassed in the narrative of Sabá, and the Time of Funai becomes an epoch in which the Juruá is no longer central to the life of the Kanamari. Funai’s establishment of an office called an Administração Executiva Regional (Regional Executive Administration) in the town of Atalaia do Norte, where the Itaquaí meets the Javari, reoriented Kanamari spatial geometry from their former lands in the Juruá, located to the south, toward their current body-owner, whose most immediate presence was northwards, downriver from their villages. Their subsequent history is one in which they progressively migrated away from the Juruá and toward Funai’s regional office, distancing themselves from the lands they occupied both in the Time of Tamakori and in the Time of Rubber (see map in Figure 27). In sum,

1. I remind the reader that “Kanamari” here means those Kanamari that I knew in the early 2000s during my fieldwork in the Itaquaí area, which included those who migrated after the 1930s and their descendants born on the Itaquaí (along with more recent migrants from the Juruá). Many Kanamari did not make the journey to the Itaquaí or migrated elsewhere. My discussion of the Time of Funai concerns only those Kanamari among whom I conducted fieldwork.

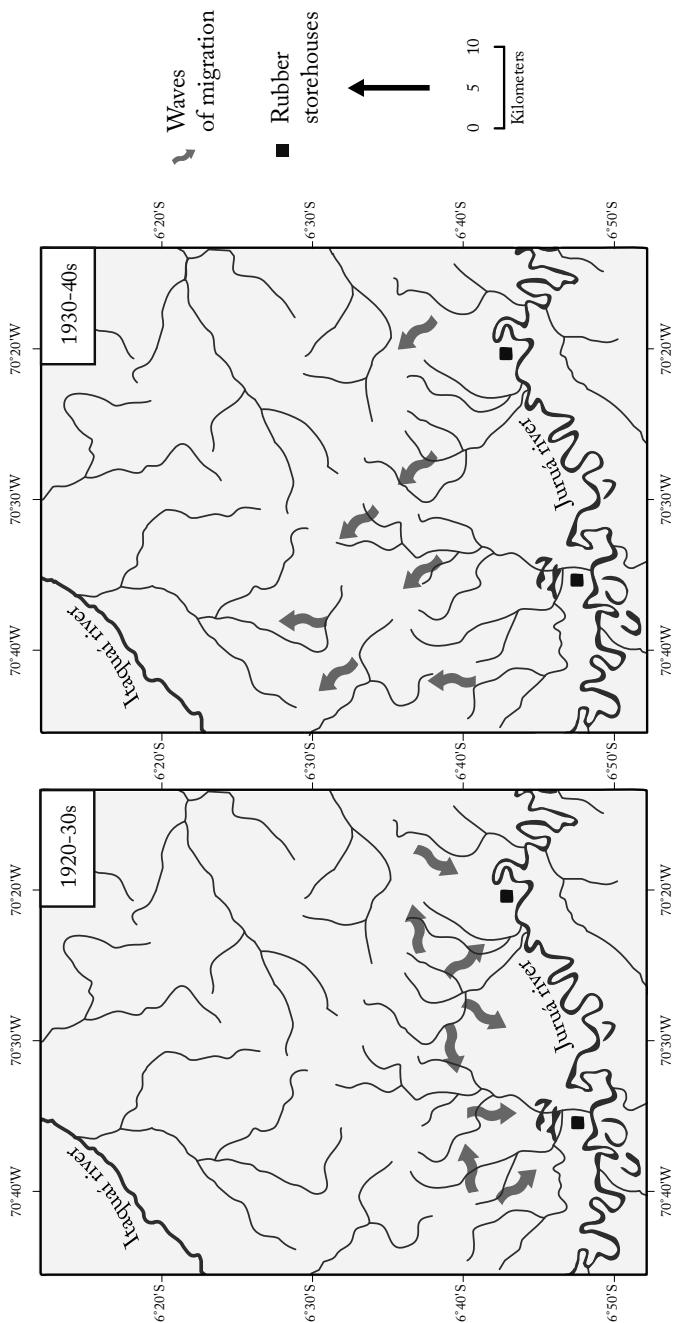


Figure 26. Maps of migrations toward the Juruá and the Itaquá, 1920s–1940.

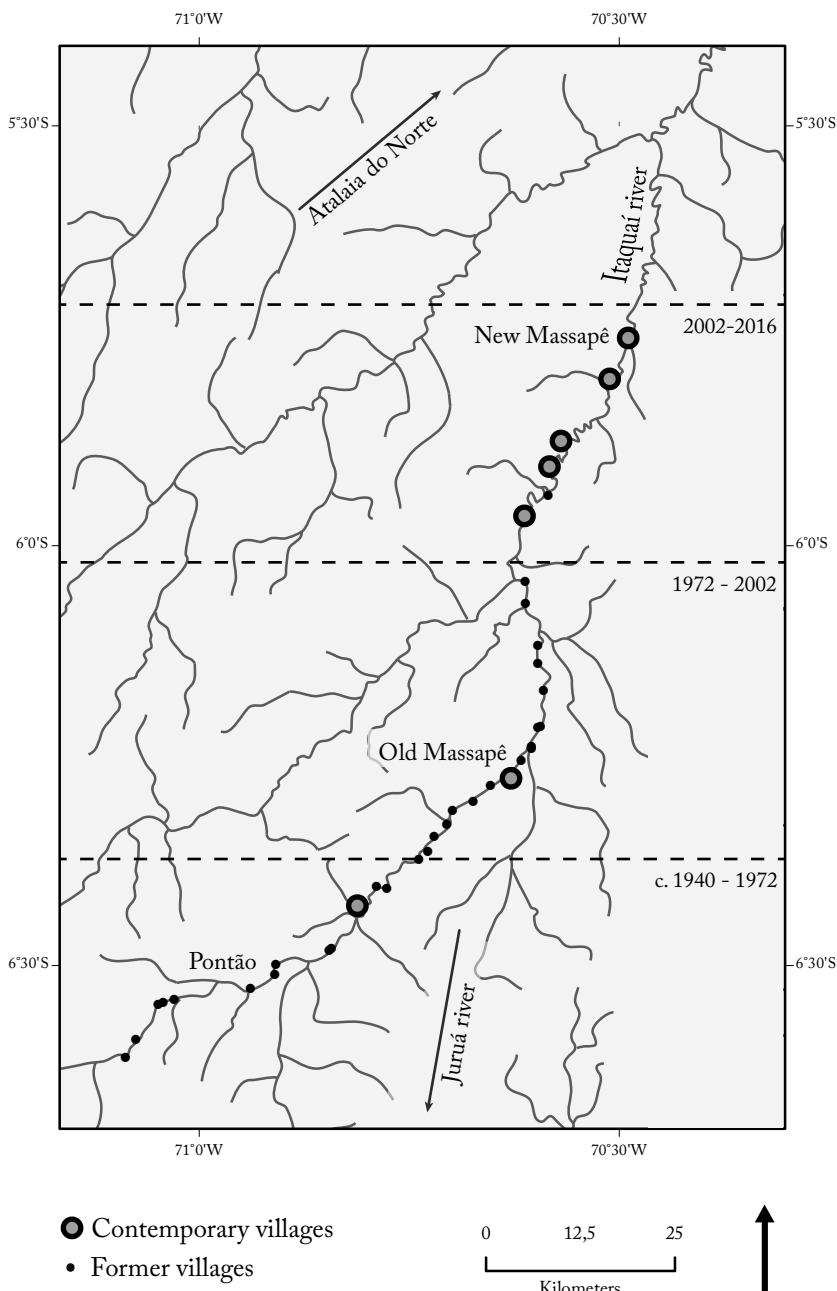


Figure 27. Location of Kanamari villages in the Itaquaí river basin, 1940s–2016.

while Jarado traveled along the Juruá and his actions remained confined to its main channel, by contrast, the Time of Funai, the present-day Kanamari era, relegates the Juruá to history by revealing a generous provider identified with just about every location available to the Kanamari geographical imagination *except* the Juruá.²

For a people who map kinship and social relations onto the hydrological system (and vice versa), this amounts to a momentous change. It effects what Fausto and Heckenberger (2007: 18) have termed “delocalization,” which they define as “the process of being able to skip local chains and build links outside the local context.” In the Time of Tamakori, the Juruá was the convergence point for the known hydrology of the world, yet it was not the site of any permanent Kanamari settlement. This absence is not just a default state of affairs, it is one that the Kanamari actively emphasize: the Juruá is “worthless” (*dyaba*), eternally meandering and constantly flooded, composed of silty water and full of dangerous insects and evil spirits. In the Time of Rubber, the Kanamari had to settle along this river, themselves becoming “worthless” in the process (Costa 2009). While it may be that, in the rubber economy, “each node of the system represented a more inclusive perspective” (Fausto and Heckenberger 2007: 18; see also Gow 1994; Carneiro de Cunha 1998), the vantage point provided by the highest node accessible to the Kanamari was antithetical to the establishment of the feeding bonds that make kinship possible. So long as the Juruá remained the conceptual vertex of the landscape, social life had to be lived at a reduced scale. Only when, in the Time of Funai, the previously insurmountable Juruá is removed from Kanamari relational geometry is kinship again created, now amplified through an all-encompassing and omnipotent feeder whose origin lies

2. For the Kanamari, the exclusion of Funai from the Juruá is an empirically attested deduction. Funai did have an Administração Executiva Regional (Regional Executive Administration) in the city of Eirunepé until 2009, when it was substituted by the Coordenação Regional do Alto Solimões (Upper Solimões Regional Coordination Office), still operated by Funai, but now covering a much more extensive area. Consequently, the number of Funai employees in Eirunepé pales in comparison to the relatively massive operation in the Vale do Javari. This operation is justified by the great number of uncontacted or isolated Amerindians occupying the Vale do Javari, which (according to Funai’s institutional imperatives) demand more stringent means for safeguarding the boundaries of the indigenous reservation. Many Kanamari from the Juruá moved into the Itaquá region during my fieldwork, their most frequently cited reason for moving being that there was either “no Funai” or “no doctor” in Eirunepé.

in a foreign land. Thus, the Juruá occupies both an apical and negative place in Kanamari geography: it is the body-owner of all the rivers traditionally inhabited by the Kanamari and the place where their own bodies fail to materialize.

In this chapter I will investigate this paradoxical quality of a body-owner capable of aggregating that which it preys on. I show that, although the Kanamari have managed to circumvent the Juruá in geographical terms, they are unable to avoid the ambivalence it conveys in all situations and contexts. Indeed, it has proven impossible to do so, because the feeding relations that make Kanamari lives possible are ultimately an unraveling of the conjunction of mastery and predation, of which the Juruá is but one manifestation.

THE ORIGIN OF FEEDING

Although it is the relational principle upon which Kanamari society is erected, feeding is absent from the world delineated in a set of ancient myths that the Kanamari call “stories of the Jaguar” (*Pidah nawa ankira*). These myths concern the doings of the “old Jaguars” (*Pidah Kidak*), and some provide exegeses of the Jaguar-becoming ritual, which comprises the main event in Kanamari ritual life, or provide songs performed in this ritual. Old Jaguars share a name with the “new jaguars” (*pidah aboawa*), the feline *Panthera onca*, which the Kanamari occasionally encounter in the forest. Like the new jaguars, the old Jaguars are “angry” (*nok*), “miserly” (*niban*), and “lonely” (*am padya*). However, old Jaguars have an additional trait: they are “owners” (*-warah*) of everything. Much of Kanamari Jaguar mythology is concerned with how Jaguars are made to relinquish their mastery over the world. This gradual concession, narrated over a number of stories, creates the conditions for the present world. New jaguars were created much later by Wah’ay (Wasp), who built them from the mud of a lakebed and blew life into them. Although the Kanamari fear these latter-day fabrications, they know that they are merely faint reflections of their primordial homonyms, who conjugate the predatory capacity of new jaguars with the asymmetry of the body-owner.

As an example of this paradoxical conjunction, I shall analyze the myth of the “Master of Fish.”

A Jaguar was the “body-owner of fish” (*dom-warah*) and lived on the headwaters of the Juruá River. It hoarded the fish for itself, killing and eating them when hungry. One day, Ancestor Heron went fishing. The Jaguar allowed Heron to

fish, but after a while he left, scared that the Jaguar would turn against him. On his way home, he heard the “hi, hi, hi” sound of the Jaguar and ran. Back in Heron’s village, his brothers-in-law were impressed with the quantity of fish he had caught. They wanted to go upriver to fish as well. But Heron warned them: “No, you do not know the Jaguar. It gathers the fish and it will kill you.” They took heed at first, but there were no fish downriver. They always returned empty-handed. Meanwhile, Heron continued to travel upriver and always came back with matrinxā [*Brycon sp.*] fish. Finally they got fed up and, while Heron was asleep, decided to take their chances upriver.

When they arrived, the Jaguar became angry at their clumsy fishing abilities and killed and ate them. Heron decided to go with his own brothers to kill the Jaguar. They speared and killed it. They left the carcass and returned to their village.

Ancestor Heron later went upriver to fish, but there were no fish left. After the Jaguar died, the fish all went downriver. The Jaguar’s corpse had become a rubber tree [*Hevea brasiliensis*] grove. Its leaves fell into the river and became piau fish [*Anostomidae sp.*], while its seeds fell and became pacu fish [*Serrasalmidae sp.*]. That is why fish like to gather around rubber trees.³

The first lesson of this myth is that, while feeding is a feature of the present world, the body-owner pre-exists it. The Jaguar is explicitly said to be a *-warah*, containing a hierarchically ordered food chain that constrains the movement of the fish it eats. At the top of the food chain is the Jaguar, which preys on the fish that constitute its body. Hence ownership is only inseparable from feeding when the creation of necessity and kinship are isolated from a wider cosmological background. Once this background is taken into account—as it must be if we are to investigate the transition from “the absolute discourse” of myth (Viveiros de Castro 1998: 483) to the world of “multiple domains” of the present (Fausto 2012b: 35)—it becomes evident that feeding, whence kinship is derived, originates from predation within a structure in which ownership remains constant.

Although the architecture of ownership is constant in both the mythical and postmythical worlds, in the former, it does not rest on the Jaguar “making the need” (*ayuh-man*) of the fish, which are likewise not “dependent” (*naki-ayuh*) on

3. The word I translate as “to gather,” here and in Ancestor Heron’s warning to his brothers-in-law that the “Jaguar gathers fish,” is *odyo*. This term connotes close proximity: *pam odyonim*, for example, means “intertwined arms,” as seen in rituals when women wrap their arms tightly around each other and dance in a single file.

the Jaguar in any way. Instead, the Jaguar “kills” (*-ti*) the fish, which “die” (*tyuku*) in order to satisfy their master. The Jaguar does not imbue any disposition toward itself in the fish, but simply transfixes them through a kind of predatory terror, directed at both the fish that compose their body-owner and the characters who crave these fish. Myth reveals a body-owner that is not constituted by the feeding-dependency relation but by the relation between predator and prey.

The emergence of feeding in the phenomenal world is precisely the transformation that the myth sets out to narrate. The predatory Jaguar body-owner is transformed after its demise into a biome that is the body-owner of the fish that it feeds. Fish are drawn to *Hevea* groves just as pets and children are drawn to their mothers, or adults to their chief. Furthermore, *Hevea* groves actually generate, through falling leaves and seeds, the fish that they then feed, this kind of generative capacity being one of the defining traits of mastery relations in lowland South America (Déléage 2009: 117–121; Santos-Granero 2009: 168–170). Through its death, Jaguar is transformed from apex predator into primary feeder—in fact, into a vegetable form with detachable parts that are its own (former) food.

This transformation from predation to feeding is also simultaneously a transition from the single to the multiple, and from stationary chaos to mobile regularity. The death of the Jaguar releases the fish that constituted it, allowing them to move from the headwaters of the Juruá to all sections of the river. At the same time, the singular Jaguar becomes many *Hevea* groves, pockets of landscape around which the fish that it had previously gathered and preyed on now only assemble seasonally to feed. Whereas the Jaguar formerly had absolute and terrifying control over the fish that composed their body-owner, its transformation into *Hevea* groves limits its ability to localize fish to certain seasons of the year and for certain periods of time only. The congregation of fish in the vicinity of *Hevea* groves to feed is explained by the fact that they are all parts of the same Jaguar. Fish caught in the same grove are hence termed *dom-wihnin*, “fish-cluster,” which share an intrinsic bond, even when they are from different species (see Chapter Four).

An analogous transformation is narrated in another story of the Jaguar, although here additional complexities are brought to the fore. I shall briefly summarize this myth, which I call “Master of Game.”⁴

4. See Costa (2007: 209–210) for a more extensive analysis of this myth.

The Jaguar used to live in a village with “other people” (*oatukuna*). It was the only successful hunter because it always knew where the game animals were to be found, so everyone in the village depended on the Jaguar for obtaining meat. For this reason, it was called *bara-warah*, “game-body-owner.” But it was always angry. One day, it killed another man for no apparent reason. The other villagers prepared a trap to capture the Jaguar, which they successfully caught and killed. They took its heart back to the village, where they cooked and ate it. But it made them feel unwell. In the morning, they returned to where they had left the Jaguar’s carcass, discovering that it had transformed into a salt lick.

Whereas in the Master of Fish, the Jaguar lived alone, in the Master of Game, it is a coresident of “other people.” But its irascible and ultimately homicidal nature makes it an antisocial loner, albeit a loner on which everyone depends. The game animals are not described as constituent parts of the Jaguar, as in the story of the Master of Fish, but its privileged knowledge makes it a master of game animals nonetheless, even if a less synthetic master. Nonetheless, the conclusion of the myth is closely aligned with that of the Master of Fish. The Master of Game becomes a salt lick, which is a natural mineral deposit found mostly in interfluvial regions and around which mammals cluster to replenish essential nutrients. As in the story of the Master of Fish, a relentless predator becomes a feeder of those on which it formerly preyed.

The Master of Game, however, makes evident three other features of the transformation from predation into feeding. The first is the need for feeding to intervene between predation and commensality. Eating the Jaguar’s heart, even after cooking it, will only make those who consume it sick. To sustain kinship relations, therefore, the Kanamari must eat the cooked meat of those beings that feed on the Jaguar’s transformed corpse (i.e., the salt licks and *Hevea* trees), accompanied by garden produce, prepared according to the sexual division of labor. Predation modulates into kinship via feeding in such a way that a maximal distance is established between the jaguar and commensality.

Second, the mythological transformation of predation into feeding does not cancel predatory activity but displaces it. In both myths, the Jaguar becomes a feeder but at the price of periodically making its former pets vulnerable to exterior predation by attracting and gathering them for short periods of time when they feed. Every Kanamari fisherman or hunter who has his favorite *Hevea* grove for fishing or salt lick for ambushing prey knows this. History has added a further layer to this conjunction of predation and feeding, since *Hevea* groves became attractors of white people in the Time of Rubber—the white rubber

tappers themselves embodying a blend of predation and feeding that draws on the terms of the relational schemas narrated in Jaguar myths.

This point seems to be an important lesson of the myth. In Chapter Two, we saw that feeding and predation are antithetical, either because one does not eat the pet that one feeds, or because one feeds a spirit in order to prevent it from preying on oneself. The relation constituted through feeding inhibits predation between feeder and fed. However, what the myths of the Jaguar are saying is that the initiation of feeding also makes the feeder/fed dyad vulnerable, exposing the couple to predation from external sources. I return to this point later in the chapter.

Finally, both myths are examples of how mythology effects the passage from the continuous to the discrete, although they exemplify this passage with a typically Kanamari stress on asymmetry. Like mythical beings throughout Amazonia, the Jaguar is a singular entity that contains a complex difference within itself, “in contrast to the *finite* and *external* differences constituting the species and qualities of our contemporary world” (Viveiros de Castro 2007: 157, original emphasis). In Lévi-Straussian terms, the Jaguar is a figure of the continuous, composed of beings that are “stages or moments in a continuous transition” (Lévi-Strauss 1966: 138), while the world created after the Jaguar’s death is a figure of the discrete. In Amerindian myths, speciation is made possible by a subtraction of certain elements in a continuous series, a subtraction that brings into relief the discontinuity between the remaining elements. But whereas in the myths examined by Lévi-Strauss (1983: 52), a “radical elimination of certain fractions of the continuum” is necessary for the remaining elements of the series to spread outwards, what is required in the Kanamari case is the radical elimination of the overarching term that conjoins and converges the world within it. The contemporary world is made possible, therefore, not by removing certain terms from a horizontal and equistatutory continuum but by removing the supplementary term that verticalizes and skews it. After the death of the Jaguar, fish and game animals make themselves distinct; through its transformed corpse they are replenished.

KANAMARI, KULINA, AND PANOANS

Most stories of the Jaguar use the Juruá as their axis or else it is the only geographical feature specified. The Kanamari call the Juruá *Wuni*, although they

sometimes refer to it as “the Jaguar’s river” (*Pidah nawa wah*). The Jaguar named all the rivers known to the Kanamari, but the Juruá pre-exists them. The others were created by Tamakori, who traveled along the Juruá and blew toward its banks, opening up its tributaries. Along these affluents, he placed aggregates of Kanamari as a means to curb their constant quarreling, thereby creating the conditions for the emergence of the subgroups.

While the Kanamari were situated on the tributaries of the Juruá during the Time of Tamakori, the Juruá itself was associated with Panoan-speaking peoples called the *Dyapa*. During my fieldwork, *Dyapa* referred primarily to the Kaxinawá and the Marubo (both sometimes called “true *Dyapa*”) but also, in some contexts, to the Matses and the Korubo. The Kanamari consider the *Dyapa* to be their constitutive enemies, whose inherent violence and ancient hatred for the Kanamari makes them axiomatic *ityowa todioki*, “those who make enemies of us.” According to the Kanamari, the *Dyapa* gradually migrated downriver from their original home on the upper Juruá, which was near the present-day city of Cruzeiro do Sul (referred to as *mawa ityonin*, “their land”), and some of them splintered off into the Curuá basin (in the Vale do Javari). The latter came to be known as the Marubo, but they are an offshoot of the same *Dyapa* who still inhabit the upper Juruá and whom the whites call “Kaxinawá.” This does not mean that the Kanamari fail to realize that the Marubo and the Kaxinawá display important cultural differences. Their joint inclusion in the category *Dyapa* is a recognition that they share three definitive and irredeemable features: they come from the Juruá, speak Panoan languages, and are people with whom alliances are impossible.⁵

Ethnologists have classified both the Matses and the Korubo in the “Mayoruna” subcategory of Panoans, associated with the Javari valley (Erikson 1996: 54–70). The Kanamari have limited contact with either. They are called *Dyapa* in some contexts but by different names in other contexts. The Korubo are a

5. Although most experts on Panoan groups would disagree with the Kanamari’s assessment that the Marubo and the Kaxinawá share a close historical identity, the Marubo have been culturally linked to upper Juruá Panoans as part of the “Central Panoan” bloc (Erikson 1996: 43–44). Unlike the Kaxinawá, who were renowned as fierce warriors, the Marubo are at present known for their diplomacy rather than their violence. However, the peaceful demeanor of the people who have come to be known as the “Marubo” is a recent phenomenon, dating to the first half of the twentieth century and linked to the agglutinating and pacifying influence of a chief called João Tuxauá (see Welper 2009). The Kanamari see Marubo pacifism as a ruse: one man told me that the Marubo may fool the whites, but the Kanamari know who they really are. On Panoan warfare, see Erikson (1986).

mostly isolated Panoan people who inhabit the interfluvial zone of the Itaquáí and the Ituí. The Kanamari often found evidence of Korubo activity, but they rarely saw the Korubo during my fieldwork. They lived in fear of Korubo raids, though, sometimes calling them *Noknin*, “the Angry Ones.” The Matses live on both the Brazilian and Peruvian sides of the upper Javari valley, very far from Kanamari villages. Their only contacts with the Matses occur in the town of Atalaia do Norte through the activities of Funai and the Indigenous Council of the Vale do Javari. But they know of the reputation of the Matses as fierce warriors who took captives, and hence many Kanamari refer to them as *Dyapa*, although sometimes they call them “Mayoruna,” the name by which they are known in regional indigenous politics. The Kanamari often discuss the origin of the Korubo and the Matses, trying to link them to attacks which their ancestors suffered in the past. In these discussions, the Kanamari invariably conclude that the Matses and the Korubo must ultimately be from the Juruá River. This conclusion is underscored by a circular logic: if Panoans are violent, they must originate from the Juruá; if they are from the Juruá, they must be violent.

I have stated previously that the Kanamari only have a term meaning “those who make enemies of us” rather than a general term for “enemy.” In fact, we might say that the closest they have to a term for “enemy” is *Dyapa*, since it designates the only people (“the Kaxinawa”) whom the Kanamari recognize as traditional and absolute enemies. Yet, as we know, *Dyapa* is also the unmarked root of Kanamari subgroup names, which take the form of the name of an animal species always followed by *-dyapa*. We saw in the previous chapter that the Kanamari classify at least three Panoan-speaking groups as *X-dyapa* subgroups: the Matis (*Paca-dyapa*); the Panoan Kulina (King Vulture-*dyapa*—not to be confused with the Arawan Kulina, to whom I shall return below); and the isolated group from the Jutaí-Jandiatuba interfluve, known locally as the “Arrow People” (*Capybara-dyapa*; Portuguese: *Os Flecheiros*). All of these peoples are either considered harmless (the Panoan Kulina) or potential or former allies (the Matis and Arrow People). The logic for classifying certain populations as *-dyapa* subgroups, therefore, is that these populations can, though need not, maintain positive relations with those who so classify them and who identify with a different *-dyapa* subgroup (and hence have no historical link to the Juruá River itself).⁶ Certainly some *X-dyapa* may be enemies, but this enmity is contextual

6. The Kanamari established a truce with the Arrow People sometime in the mid-twentieth century (see Costa 2007: 119–126). Although the contemporary

(part of the “foreign relations” of some subgroups but not of others) and contingent (temporary, liable to shift toward alliance or studied indifference), while the *Dyapa* are enemies to all *X-dyapa* subgroups.

The obvious question that needs to be addressed is: Why are subgroups named using a word that designates an enemy of all of them? The short answer is that the totemic names of subgroups do not encode synchronic and static differences but, rather, point to the origin of subgroups in the dynamic world of myth, which is synthesized in mythical Jaguars and manifested in the landscape as the Juruá, both of which combine predatory violence with mastery. The Dyapa also combine predatory violence with mastery, aligning them with the Juruá whence they came:

Tamakori made (*bu*) the first Kanamari from the seed of the jaci palm (*poro*). He did so with the help of his brother Kirak, who climbed up the palm tree and threw the seeds down onto Tamakori’s back. Kirak wanted to do the same. So Tamakori climbed up a different palm, the *karatyi*,⁷ and dropped the seeds onto Kirak, who fumbled clumsily and spilled all of them on the floor, unable to intercept a single one. From these seeds the Kulina emerged, and because the seeds spread out across the earth, the Kulina are numerous and dispersed throughout the land. Tamakori then proceeded to make the *Dyapa* from the trunk of the jaci palm tree. Because they originate from the trunk and not from seeds, the *Dyapa* are fierce and tough.⁸

Kanamari recall no past alliance with the Matis, we saw in the previous chapter that they refer to the Matis as *-tawari*, suggesting future alliances, and some evidence from Matis ethnography suggests past interactions between the two peoples (Erikson 2007). The Matis are traditional enemies of the Korubo, and having a common enemy reinforces the Matis’ position as potential allies. The Panoan Kulina were mostly decimated by Matses raids in the past (Fleck and Voss 2006: 338–339; Matos 2009: 53) and very few survivors live in villages close to Kanamari villages on the Curuçá River.

7. Very probably the cokerite palm (*Maximiliana maripa*, Portuguese *inajá*). See Reesink (1993: 147).
8. Tastevin (n.d.b: 20) heard this myth of the creation of different peoples sometime in the early twentieth century, but in the version he transcribed, only the Curassow-*dyapa* are created from the seeds of the jaci. Tastevin’s version further stresses the different origins of each subgroup, which were created from different seeds (but notably always from seeds). Researching in the Itaquá area in the early 2000s, I never heard myths with different origins for the subgroups. All Kanamari originate from the same actions of Tamakori. This raises certain questions about the effacement of intersubgroup differences in favor of a unitary “Kanamari mythology,” which is possibly a consequence of the convergence of all subgroups in the Time of Funai.

The *Dyapa* and the Kanamari originate from the same jaci palm tree and are therefore of the same kind. But the *Dyapa* are the “trunk,” *-warah*, of the jaci palm (*Attalea butyracea*), whereas the Kanamari are their “seeds” (*kom*). *Dyapa* and Kanamari are thus unequal parts of a whole. As with the Jaguar, here we encounter a body-owner that is not created through feeding but, rather, through predation: the *Dyapa* “trunk” is the body-owner of the Kanamari “seeds” that they prey on.

This relation becomes clearer once we take into account the Kulina, the Kanamari’s neighbors to the south. Although the Kulina speak an Arawan language with no putative relationship to Katukina languages (but see Jolkesky 2011), they share a basically identical social structure with the Kanamari, dividing themselves into subgroups that are named after an animal followed by the suffix *-madiha* (or *-madija*) and localized along the tributaries of the Juruá and the Purus. These *-madiha* subgroups are said to have been endogamous in the past, though no longer today (Rivet and Tastevin 1938; Viveiros de Castro 1978: 19–22; Lorrain 1994: 136–139; Pollock 1985: 8–9, 2002: 44–45). In the last chapter, I showed that the Kanamari consider Kulina subgroups to be continuous with their own.⁹

The two people have a long history of contacts, which has resulted in the diffusion of cultural traits between them. The Kulina learned to prepare manioc beer from the Kanamari, calling it *coidsa*, probably derived from the Kanamari word *koya* (Lorrain 1994: 132–133). The Kulina call a ritual strikingly similar to the *Hori* by the same term, “*Coidsa*,” and they call the *hori* horn that announces the ritual *jojori* (Lorrain 1994: 53–72; Amorim 2014: 97). Other Kulina rituals are also comparable to, when not indistinguishable from, those of the Kanamari. Both people share an almost identical shamanic complex, and the Kanamari admire the Kulina as shamans and fear them as sorcerers. In the past, this led to a situation in which some Kanamari used to seek treatment from Kulina shamans, but sorcery accusations were almost always turned against them.

9. One significant formal difference should be noted between Kanamari and Kulina subgroups, although the Kanamari do not use it as a means to distinguish themselves from the Kulina. The unmarked form of Kulina *X-madiha* subgroups is a term of identity. Thus *Madiha* simply means “the Kulina” in opposition to other Amerindians. Among the Kanamari, as we have just seen, *Dyapa* references alterity and enmity. This difference would warrant further comment, but it requires the Kulina and Kanamari subgroups to be investigated in light of other Arawan and Katukina peoples, which would takes me far from my present aim.

This simultaneous admiration and fear on the part of the Kanamari for Kulina shamanism exemplifies the ambivalence characterizing their close relationships. The Kulina consider the Kanamari to be “thick and illiterate” (Lorrain 1994: 133), while the Kanamari consider the Kulina treacherous and miserly. But none of this has prevented regular interactions. The Kanamari learned to prepare ayahuasca after visiting the Kulina, and many Kanamari rituals, including some not related to ayahuasca consumption (such as the *haihai* amusements), include songs in the Kulina language, although very few Kanamari understand it (and even fewer speak it). Furthermore, occasional intermarriages have occurred since the Time of Rubber. In fact, Ioho, whose story we followed in Chapter Two, was married to a Kulina woman and died because of the treachery of his wife’s brothers (Costa 2007: 131–132).

The myth establishes the terms of this hesitant relation. The “Kanamari” and “Kulina” emerge from the seeds of different palms and through the differential acts of each of the two heroes: Tamakori creates the Kanamari by intentionally gathering them on his back, while Kirak creates the Kulina by accidentally dispersing them. This introduces an important difference between the Kanamari and the Kulina. The first are “Tamakori’s people,” trustworthy and good, while the latter are “Kirak’s people,” deviant and conniving. However, what stands out in the myth is that the Kanamari and the Kulina are analogous peoples: if the *Dyapa* and the Kanamari are unequal parts of a whole, the Kulina and the Kanamari are different but equivalent. The relation that can exist between them is a hypostasis, therefore, of the horizontal relations that exist between nonkin, i.e., between people from different subgroups.

Accordingly, it is possible, if somewhat exceptional, for allied Kanamari subgroups to hold *Hori*-like gatherings with Kulina subgroups. One such gathering occupies an important place in Kanamari history. It was held sometime in the 1930s under the auspices of a man whom the Kanamari remember as the “Governor” of the state of Amazonas, in the Kulina longhouse on Preto Creek (Igarapé Preto), located on the right bank of the middle Juruá. The Kanamari refer to this gathering as an *oHori*, “a type of *Hori*,” referring to the Kulina who participated as the *-tawari* of the visiting Kanamari. Its culmination was a tapir-skin fight in which Kanamari men, greatly outnumbered by Kulina men, were nonetheless able to defeat the latter, in large part because of the beauty with which the Kanamari women surrounding the fighters sang their “tapir-skin fight songs.” Two songs in particular had an important effect on the success of the fight: the River Dolphin Song made the men agile and fast like its namesake, while the Caiman

Song made their skins hard enough to withstand Kulina lashes. For days the fight continued, and, one by one, Kanamari men made their Kulina counterparts flee (*ma-tadyam-tiki Koru hinuk*, “they caused the Kulina to flee from them”). The angered Kulina thought about killing the Kanamari but were discouraged by the pacifying speech of the Kulina chief Awano, who told his people that “We must only do the tapir-skin fight! This is not war!” (Costa 2007: 87–90).

This is the only interethnic *Hori* that I was told about. Although it was almost certainly not the first *Hori*-like gathering between the Kanamari and the Kulina, it was very probably the last one of any significance. The fact that it occurred during the Time of Rubber, when subgroup intermarriages and dispersals became frequent, may have been an underlying condition of the event, as was the presence of a powerful white man overseeing it. Nonetheless, this type of *Hori* clearly amplified the risk of regular *Hori*: always tense, sometimes verging on the outbreak of war, focusing more on the tapir-skin fight than on *hom* exchanges, it also excluded the consumption of any type of food or antifood prepared and offered by the opposing party. The Kanamari were clear that their ancestors were afraid of the Kulina beer being poisoned and for this reason did not drink during the ritual—something that is otherwise integral to both the Kanamari *Hori* and the Kulina *Coidsa*. The Kanamari know of many ancestors who died from Kulina poison, and eating with the Kulina is always dangerous.

The Kulina, then, are hyper-*tawari* to the Kanamari, revealing the underlying danger of all horizontal relations of meta-affinity, which shift precariously between enmity and ritual alliance and back again. The *Dyapa*, in contrast, are hyper-*warah* to the Kanamari, revealing the underlying dangers of metafiliation, which is poised on the fragile threshold where feeding reverts to predation. Although, as I have noted, the Kanamari lack a myth that explicitly establishes the origin of the subgroups, their necessity is logically posed in the origin myth of the Kanamari, *Dyapa*, and Kulina: by establishing the perilous maximal distinctions between peoples and the relationships between them, the myth exhorts the Kanamari to find ways to scale back these differences. Defined at the intersection of asymmetrical feeding and symmetrical ritual alliance, the subgroup does just that. While the *Dyapa* are the trunk of all the Kanamari (seeds), the subgroup chief is only a trunk to some of them (now subdivided into a number of village branches), much as the Jaguar is the predator of all fish and game, but *Hevea* groves and salt licks are feeders to just some of them. The single predatory unit becomes many feeding units. These units are capable of establishing horizontal relations with equivalent units situated

at short intervals (i.e., intra-Kanamari alliances) that reduce the ambivalence of the absolute horizontal contrast between the Kanamari and the Kulina (interethnic alliances).

CREATING WHITE PEOPLE

The origin myth makes no provision for the appearance of white people. For the Kanamari of the Itaquaí, whites were created as a consequence of the events of the myth of the otter-lovers. In this myth, women have sex with otters in exchange for fish, which they then cook and feed to the men, who remain unaware of how the fish were obtained. A shaman, through the intermediary of a snake spirit, spies on the women and tells the men what is going on. Furious, the men plot their revenge. As soon as the women leave the village, they prepare cage traps with which they catch the otters, kill and castrate them, and tie their testicles to the roof of the longhouse. When the women return, the men demand that the women remove peach palm splinters that they had surreptitiously inserted into the soles of their own feet. The women thereby position themselves directly below their lovers' testicles. Fat drips from the severed testicles onto the women's backs. The men then whip the women with the thorny leaves of the peach palm, after which the women and children transform into peccaries and dive into the Juruá River. They float downstream along its full length until they reach Manaus on the Amazon.¹⁰

Among the women and children transformed into peccaries were Ancestress Nona and her son Hohdom. One day, Tamakori and Kirak decide to visit them. While in Manaus, Tamakori creates the city, erecting its tall buildings and houses, opening its streets and plazas. Once he is done with the city, Tamakori herds all the peccaries into the room of a house and locks them in using tititca vines.

10. The Kulina tell an almost identical version of this myth (see Adams 1962: 125–130; Lorrain 1994: 248–249; Agostini Cerqueira 2015: 145–146), where it serves as an exegesis for a series of integrated rituals (Lorrain 1994). For Kanamari versions, see Reesink (1993: 511–513) and Costa (2007: 415–417). Variants of the myth are also found among other Katukina- and Arawan-speaking peoples of the middle Juruá-Purus, such as the Zuruhá (Aparício 2014: 89–90; Huber Azevedo 2012: 238–239), Jarawara (Maizza 2012: 49–50), and Biá River Katukina (Deturche 2009: 96 n.55). Although it is most prominent in the Juruá-Purus region, it recurs in other parts of Amazonia (e.g., Lévi-Strauss 1983: M21).

Tamakori and Kirak then meet a hunter and ask him to force open the room in which the peccaries are trapped.

"Try opening the door," Tamakori told the hunter. The hunter opened the door, and inside were the whites. The whites used to be peccaries. They were all drinking coffee.

Tamakori decided to leave. He left Hohdom behind to take care of Manaus.

The sojourn in Manaus creates the whites and also settles them in their part of the world, where they remain under the care of Hohdom, Ancestress Nona's son. Tamakori produces a document, which he hands to Hohdom, leaving him in charge of Manaus.

Hohdom is the Kanamari word for a type of catfish known as *bocão* in regional Portuguese. Many Kanamari names are taken from the names of animal species, and for some time I assumed that Hohdom was just that. It was only toward the end of my fieldwork that I learned that "Hohdom" is actually the Kanamari pronunciation of "Rondon," a reference to Marshall Cândido Rondon, who founded the Serviço de Proteção aos Índios (SPI, Indian Protection Service), Brazil's first agency for indigenous affairs and the precursor to Funai. Hohdom, Ancestress Nona's son, who became a peccary and then chief of Manaus, was also an "old Funai" (*Funai kidak*).¹¹

The fact that Hohdom is associated with both Manaus and Funai is paradoxical: Manaus is the place where Jarado and the "worthless" whites who followed him originated, whereas Funai is linked to Sabá, Brasilia, and the "truly good/beautiful" whites who come from there. Jarado's descendants are cannibals with whom the Kanamari interact through exchange in order to avoid succumbing to their twisted kinship, while Sabá's descendants are feeders to whom the Kanamari are drawn and in relation to whom they have reformed their own social institutions. While Jarado and Sabá are antithetical, Hohdom is the body-owner of both. Jarado is explicitly said to be "Hohdom's descendant"

11. This is the Kanamari variant of the well-known Amazonian belief in an Amerindian origin of white people. See, for example, DaMatta (1970), Hugh-Jones (1988), Lévi-Strauss (1996: 54–64), Lima (2005: 45–47), Vilaça (2010: 135–145), and Fausto (2012a: 263–270).

(*Hohdomna-pida*), while Sabá is said to be “Hohdom’s person” (*Hohdom nawa tukuna*).

-*Pida*, used to describe Jarado’s relation to Hohdom, is the kinship term for any man or woman of G-2 or below. In most situations it can be rendered as “grandson/daughter,” but it also denotes “great-grandson/daughter,” and so on. In chiefly speeches, it can refer to hypothetical future descendants, unknown to the living, those who will one day “know the land” inherited from present-day people (*i-pida binuk*, “my descendants”). Since the Kanamari are unconcerned with the precise genealogical relation between Hohdom and Jarado, it is probably more accurate to construe the latter as a “descendant” of the former, as I have done. Any inquiry into Sabá’s kinship to Hohdom was answered with “he is just Hohdom’s person” (*Hohdom nawa tukuna ti*). To be someone’s “person” is to be someone’s kinsperson, and, in the case of Hohdom and Sabá, they are obviously not coeval (Hohdom being “old Funai,” while Sabá is just “Funai”). I have maintained the expressions used by the Kanamari to describe the relationship of Jarado and Sabá to Hohdom in order to remain faithful to what they told me, but I see no reason to assume that Hohdom maintains a qualitatively different relation with his descendant Jarado or his person Sabá. Both are directly linked to him through unknown or irrelevant ascendant kinship ties. In contrast, their descending kinship ties differ significantly. If Hohdom is the apical white person, Jarado is the ancestor of the worthless whites and Sabá is the ancestor of Funai. The conceptual relations implied therein are presented in the diagram in Figure 28. The dark rectangle depicts the unknown and/or irrelevant links between Jarado, Sabá, and Hohdom.

Hohdom’s paradoxical quality turns out to reveal a fission internal to the domain of the “whites” (*kariwa*), which indexes distinct means of relating to them. Jarado’s descendants manifest the cannibalism of the whites; “exchange” (*hom*) allows the Kanamari to obtain merchandise while avoiding kinship with them (Chapter Two). Sabá’s descendants manifest the capacity of the whites to provide care and protection; “feeding” (*ayuh-man*) allows the Kanamari to establish kinship among themselves in the process of “becoming Funai” (Chapter Four). The former must be engaged through symmetrical relations that ensure separation, the latter through asymmetrical relations that result in familiarization.

As I noted at the end of the previous chapter, this distinction may work in theory, but in practice it runs into an obstacle. Funai’s activities in the Vale do Javari depend on a fluctuating roster of employees of nonlocal origin, all of whom are appointed by bureaucrats in Brasilia. These employees tend to assume

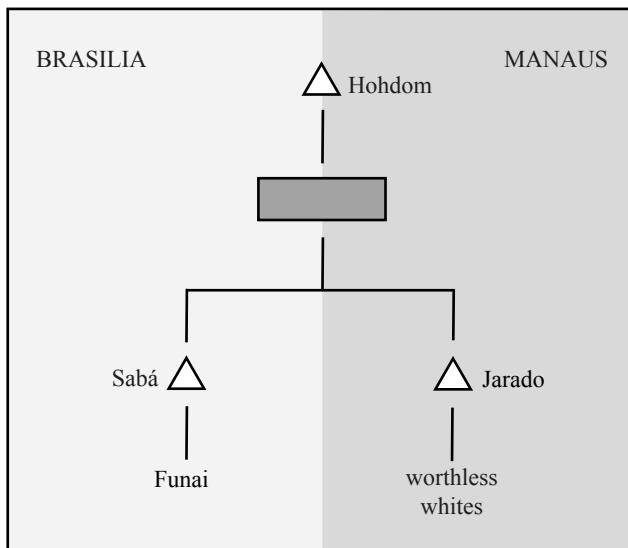


Figure 28. Conceptual relations among Hohdom, Sabá, and Jarado.

high-ranking posts in regional operations: during my fieldwork, the head of the Ethno-Environmental Protection Front was always a man from “Brasilia” (i.e., from the south of Brazil), and many of the Funai employees who operated the Tabatinga office of the Front were also from distant localities. In these cases, the link between Funai, Brasilia, and Sabá’s descendants is unequivocal.

But Funai is also one of the main employers in Atalaia do Norte, providing jobs for men and women who formerly occupied Kanamari lands in the Itaquáí region or whose parents did so. These people were born and raised in the Vale do Javari and are closely linked to the local extractive economy. They are well known to the Kanamari, often through past animosities. According to the Kanamari’s classification of white people, they should be paradigms of worthlessness, people who must be kept at bay through the logic of *aviamamento*—and yet they are employed by Funai, drive Funai vehicles, use Funai offices in the Regional Administration building, wear Funai uniforms brandishing Funai crests, and so on. The questions that the Kanamari face are these: How do they relate to people who should be worthless and with whom they should only exchange, but who are, or least appear to be, good/beautiful providers? How do they engage with people whose position in their classificatory schema is so anomalous?

The problem is compounded because most of the local people employed by Funai have relatively low-level jobs. These include boat drivers, mechanics, nursing assistants, and the outpost chief. They are those Funai employees, discussed in Chapter Two, who have the most direct dealings with the Kanamari, who spend time in their villages, and who travel throughout the Itaquaí region. Since they are natives and residents of Atalaia do Norte, where many of their kinspeople also live, they are the Funai employees who most invest in livestock, laying claim to the animals that they fatten in Kanamari villages and which they later consume, distribute to their own kinspeople, or sell to other residents of Atalaia do Norte. They are the ones most interested in this source of meat and whose work for Funai is always conducted alongside the exchange relations that swap merchandise for Kanamari custodianship of livestock. In practical terms, what this means is that those whites whom the Kanamari most actively seek to distinguish from themselves are also those Funai workers with whom they most regularly interact. This unwelcome convergence between the worthless whites and Funai complicates the binary means of relating to the former through exchange and the logic of the *aviamento* supply and debt system and to the latter through feeding and ownership.

This is a real source of distress for the Kanamari, who have resorted to circumlocutions to try and keep local Funai agents distinct from their masters in Brasilia. They use expressions such as “sort of Funai” (*oFunai*) or “this Funai here only” (*itian Funai ti*) to designate the inconstant employees whom they know most intimately, reserving “true Funai” (*Funai tam*) for operations in Brasilia or those delegates from the capital who pass through the Vale do Javari. The local manifestations of Funai are thereby seen as imperfect distortions of their ideal prototype, using the same grammatical relativization device that distinguishes “love” from “want/desire” (as we saw in Chapter One) or, similarly, the *Hori* ritual from the “sort of *Hori*” held between the Kanamari and the rubber bosses (as we saw in Chapter Four) or between allied Kanamari subgroups and the Kulina (as we saw above).

Discursive distinctions notwithstanding, the interference between Funai and the worthless whites adds a further twist to the use of *aviamento* logic as a defense against cannibalism. Since no livestock are kept in Atalaia do Norte, and since the livestock in Kanamari villages are owned exclusively by people employed by Funai (or its “subsidiary” agencies, like Funasa), Kanamari custodianship of livestock simultaneously ensures that local Funai have access to a desired source of food and removes the constitutive ambivalence of this food from

their diet. The Kanamari use the *aviamento* logic in a way that circumvents the cannibalism of animal husbandry not only for themselves, as we saw in Chapter Two, but also for those local whites who work for Funai and with whom they exchange. In other words, the Kanamari raise animals that they do not eat, all the while making it possible for Funai to eat animals that they do not raise. By purging this intermediary zone where the worthless whites and Funai overlap of its ambivalence, the Kanamari avoid the cannibal kinship of the whites both for themselves and their masters, using what they learned in the Time of Rubber to protect the expanding kinship of the Time of Funai.

THE JURUÁ REGIONAL SYSTEM

For a long time the Juruá was the largest river known to the Kanamari, as well as the central processor of the world's hydrology—a true body-owner of everything, from which other rivers branched out or else paled into insignificance. For today's Kanamari, the length of the river is associated with two populations, one in each direction: upriver are the fierce *Dyapa*, downriver the worthless whites from the Time of Rubber. This is framed by the two urban reference points at each end of the river: the upriver city of Cruzeiro do Sul in the state of Acre, which the Kanamari say used to be a *Dyapa* longhouse, and Manaus, created by Tamakori and left under Hohdom's care, on the Amazon, downriver from the mouth of the Juruá. Midway between these extremes, on the middle Juruá, were the Kanamari and the Kulina, the former along the tributaries of its left bank and the latter along those of its right bank.¹²

Each of the extremities of the Kanamari world reflects a monstrous body-owner configuration, although their natures differ. Downriver, in Manaus, are those white people (and their counterparts, the *adyaba* ogres) who jumble predation and feeding. Although they are incapable of making kinship, their recognition of feeding as a relational schema (even if it is a feeding betrayed by

12. In addition, some Kanamari live on the tributaries of the right bank of the Juruá, below the city of Eirunepé. However, the Kanamari of the Itaquaí originally came from the tributaries of the left bank of the Juruá, which are still inhabited by their relatives. These tributaries make up the Mawetek Indigenous Reservation. The Kulina are spread throughout the Juruá and the upper Purus river basins, but the Kanamari of the Itaquaí engaged more directly with those who lived opposite their own tributaries, in what is now the Kulina do Médio Juruá Indigenous Reservation.

subsequent predation) is evidence of their creative capacity. Indeed, this capacity is manifested in their remarkable merchandise, which the Kanamari have learned to obtain without being affected by the cannibalism of the whites. Although the worthless whites are equally remembered for their violence, particularly for the organized massacres of indigenous people (including Kanamari populations), establishing exchange relations with them is a conceivable, sometimes unavoidable, risk—one the Kanamari had to take during the Time of Rubber.

Upriver from the Kanamari are the *Dyapa*, who are body-owners of the Kanamari and their predators. The *Dyapa* do not recognize feeding as a relational schema, and hence do not make kinship (not even an antikinship like the whites). The *Dyapa* “do not know the land” (*ityonin-tikok tu*), and no positive relation with them is possible. What is necessary is for the predatory continuity they embody to be converted into discrete feeding intervals. This is what the positioning of Kanamari subgroups on the tributaries of the Juruá achieves. The Kanamari cannot live on the Jaguar River, and thus establish themselves at one remove from it. The location of Kanamari subgroups within the hydrology of the Juruá transforms predation into feeding, inscribing in the landscape the same movement as found in the myths of the Jaguar Masters and in the relation between the *Dyapa* enemies and the *-dyapa* subgroups.

The antipodes of the continuous Juruá contrasts with the discrete intervals *between* its tributaries of either bank. The Kanamari inhabit the northern affluents on the left bank (going downstream) of the middle Juruá, and interactions between these subgroups range from *Hori* visits between *-tawari* and relations of enmity, mapping a horizontal dynamic of distance and proximity. Across the Juruá, inhabiting the southern tributaries of its right bank, are the Kulina, who hold analogous rituals (*Coidsa*) with each other. The Kulina do not appear to have a term equivalent to the Kanamari *-tawari* that would identify allied subgroups in contradistinction to enemies. Instead, the expression *madiba ohuaha*, “other people,” covers all people of other subgroups, whether allied or not. Semantically, it is identical to the Kanamari *oatukuna* “other people,” or *-wihnin tu*, “nonkin.” Nonetheless, the basic structure of Kulina intersubgroup alliances reflects that of the Kanamari: *madiba ohuaha* is a reciprocal (though nonexclusive) means of referring to those subgroups who are, at a given moment, *Coidsa* partners, and it is hence partly congruent with the *-tawari* (see Lorrain 1994: 136–139).

Furthermore, these sets of horizontal relations separated by the width of the Juruá can converge in such a way that the Kanamari and the Kulina stand

as hypertrophied subgroups vis-à-vis each other. Movement across the Juruá is different, therefore, from movement along it. The former magnifies the horizontal relations between subgroups, converting regular *Hori* into hyper-*Hori*. The latter leads to two complex asymmetrical configurations, one involving predatory ownership, with which the only possible relation is warfare, and the other predatory kinship, with which the only feasible relation is calculated exchange (see Figure 29).

The grouping of seeds together into higher-order alliances through *-tawari* relations also solves the problem of how to avoid excessive vulnerability to predation. Recall that the myths of the Masters of Fish and of Game describe the transformation of predation into feeding, but the result of this transformation is the creation of niches—*Hevea* groves and salt licks, respectively—where those who feed on the ex-Jaguar are left exposed to exterior predation. Salt licks are the favorite hunting grounds for all inhabitants of the region, and hunting typically involves traveling to a salt lick and waiting for prey. *Hevea* groves are prime fishing areas, and they have also become associated with the worthless whites, who had set up their estates or camps in their vicinity during the Time of Rubber. Subgroups, too, are units of feeding that, left to their own devices, remain susceptible to predation from the *Dyapa*. Kanamari narratives make this vulnerability abundantly clear. Stories of *Dyapa* raids on a subgroup's river basin invariably result in the death of Kanamari men and the kidnapping of women and children. The Kanamari reaction to these raids was typically to disperse, particularly if they resulted in the death of the subgroup chief. Subgroups that suffered devastating attacks would thus move to other river basins to live with other subgroup chiefs, gradually being adopted by the hosting subgroup.¹³ *-Tawari* alliances, by contrast, provided protection, composing small archipelagos of relative security in a river of predation. In fact, they may even have been

13. I have not described the dynamics of subgroup fissioning and fusing in this book, although I have done so elsewhere (Costa 2007: 90–91). Indeed, although some subgroups appear to be quite ancient, maintaining a close and enduring association with the same river basin for about one hundred years, others died out or their survivors became absorbed by different subgroups (see Tastevin n.d.a: 15–18 for some examples). This was often the case after massacres perpetrated by the whites or the *Dyapa*. The important factor for the demise of a subgroup was the death of its chief, as Tastevin (n.d.a: 109) had already surmised in the early twentieth century: “It is probable that the clans disbanded at the death of a chief, and it is also possible that, on some occasions, the hosting clan was less numerous than the adopted clan, although they maintained the advantage of possessing a chief.”

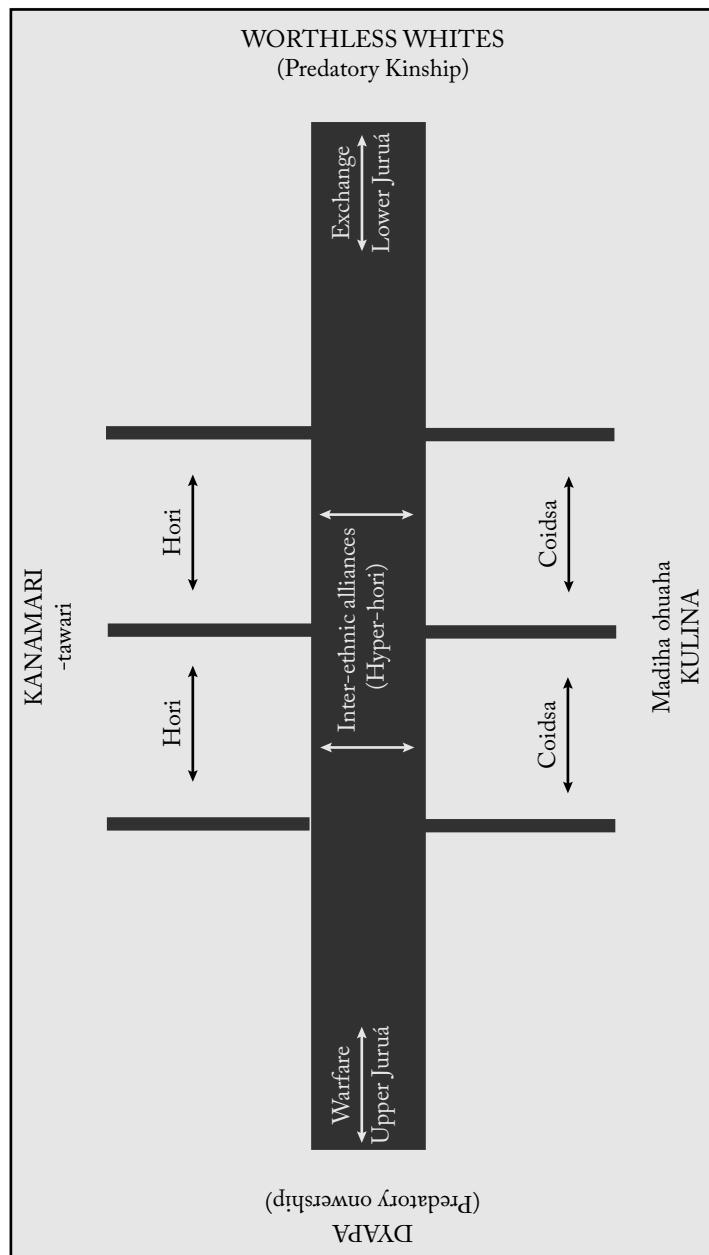


Figure 29. The Juruá regional system.

the springboard for organized, multisubgroup retaliatory attacks against the *Dyapa*, as occurred on occasion during the 1930s (Costa 2007: 113–116).

The obvious absences from this world are Funai and Brasilia, which have no relation with the Juruá. Bypassing it completely, they are body-owners capable of containing all the Kanamari through relations of feeding, making kinship possible across subgroup intervals. We now know why Funai *has* to circumvent the Juruá—lacking any trace of predation, it is a body-owner that only ever provides. This is a social configuration completely alien to the Juruá, and it could never materialize along its axis, much less be contained within the limits of its hydrography.

But the fact that the Kanamari have turned their backs on the Juruá does not mean they have succeeded in removing the Jaguar from their lives. Having relegated the Juruá to an obsolete landscape, the Kanamari restricted their interactions with the Jaguar to ritual activity, through which they ensure the fertility of the world.

KAIAPURUNA'S SONG

Many of the stories of the Jaguar include, at some point in the narrative, songs called “songs of the Jaguar” (*Pidah nawa waik*), “Jaguar song” (*Pidah owaik*), or simply “Jaguar.” These songs constitute a fixed repertoire established by Jaguars in mythical times. This does not mean that new Jaguar songs never come to exist, but the Kanamari always say these songs are very old, even if they were never heard before. The songs are either said to have been sung by ancient Jaguars a very long time ago or else they were sung by other (non-Jaguar) beings but were heard by the Jaguars, who learned them and became their owners. In fact, the actual participation of characters described as “Jaguars,” as either the enunciator or audience of a song, is not a prerequisite in Jaguar mythology. Since the Jaguar is the very fabric of these ancient times, its songs may appear in the context of the narrative without there being any definite, identified subject singing it. The narrator of a story of the Jaguar simply stops his narrative at a certain point, sings the relevant Jaguar song, and then picks up the story where he left off. Jaguar is a quality of the ancient world, and Jaguar songs are a constitutive aspect of it.

I was able to record many Jaguar songs. Some of my recordings occurred during evening singing sessions, which the Kanamari greatly enjoyed, particularly

when I played the recordings back to them. In these sessions, it became clear that, like myths, the lyrics of songs told a story, although I was usually unable to understand what exactly the story was about. For many reasons, the songs remained obscure to me, not least of which was my limited knowledge of the Kanamari language. But a better grasp of the Kanamari language would not necessarily have been all that helpful, since Jaguar songs are sung in the “Jaguar language” (*Pidah koni*). This language has some grammatical forms that are idiosyncratic in the Kanamari language, as well as many words that, while identical to words in ordinary Kanamari, have different referents. Since my understanding was always compromised, I needed to speak with the Kanamari about the songs I recorded in order to try and obtain exegeses of them.

This strategy reinforced my conviction that Jaguar songs told a story, but I could only really comprehend a Jaguar song when I heard the myth with which the song is associated and could thereby place the song in its proper context. Indeed, when I inquired about a specific song, the Kanamari would usually reply with a highly schematic version of its corresponding myth that tended to highlight those aspects of the myth which were left unsung. Contextualizing Jaguar songs in terms of its mythical narrative and vice versa was an exercise that came naturally to those Kanamari who had heard the myth before, even if they had never heard the song, or to those who knew the song but were unfamiliar with its corresponding myth.

Although the myth allowed me to understand the meaning of the song, the relationship between a myth and its song remained elusive. It was clear to me that songs synthesized the plot of its associated myth, digesting the theme of the story and rendering it compact and melodic. A Jaguar song is thus a concise version of the myth rendered as song. Yet when we focus on the syntagmatic relation between narrative and song—that is, when we focus on the specific part of the narrative in which the song appears and its relationship to the narrative as a whole—we find that the song actually prefigures those parts of the narrative yet to be narrated. In other words, the lyrics sing about what has already happened prior to the moment in the myth when the song is sung, as well as about events that are yet to happen and which the song therefore predicts.

As an example, we can analyze the myth of Ancestor Parawi and the song associated with it, as narrated and sung by Kodoh in the village of Bananeira in 2004. Kodoh narrated the myth to me (and my minidisc recorder), but he was surrounded by his kinspeople, particularly by children whom he called his *-pida*, “grandchildren” or “descendants.” This is a classic setting for telling myths

in indigenous Amazonia, where the myth is suspended across the “span of the life cycle in this lived world” (Gow 2001: 89). While mythic plots thus depart from ordinary experience, their telling is very much anchored in relations of kinship.

Parawi was a man who argued with his brothers-in-law and left his village to live alone in the forest. While he was building his house, he saw some macaws in the distance and killed them with his arrow. But when he went to collect the felled prey, he found only Jaguar footprints. He did not know it then, but Kaiapuruna, daughter of the Jaguar Ru’iai, had stolen the birds to make macaw feather headdresses. As soon as the narrator reveals this fact, he begins to sing the following song, which he later called “Kaiapuruna’s song”:

1. Au, au, au, au, au, au, au (x2)
(Jaguar sounds) (x2)
2. *Atya pama am tobowa Ru’iai, tyanin, tyanin.* (x2)
My long-time-ago father, Ru’iai, in the distant past, in the distant past. (x2)
3. *To-Arawia-tya nokopuru owiro owiro nyumda-dyi.* (x2)
The tail feathers of the Macaw, thirsty, swirling, swirling, it comes toward me. (x2)
4. *Pidah n-a-ma’am katu idik wa bo, Kanore.* (x2)
The Jaguar will also get you, Kanore. (x2)

In order to understand the relationship between Kaiapuruna’s song and the myth of Ancestor Parawi, we can analyze it in terms of three registers. The first one is a syntagmatic register internal to the story, focusing on the place of the song in relation to the narrated events. The second is an interactional register, which sets down the expectations of the audience vis-à-vis the narrator-singer with regards to the code (myth/song) in which the narrator is communicating. The third is a denotational register, in which the speech event when the song is sung and the myth told is placed in relationship with the events that are being sung and narrated (Silverstein 1976: 13–15; Agha 2007: 29–31). In other words, the denotational register concerns how the interactional register articulates with the syntagmatic register and how the meaning of myth and song is transmitted to its listeners. The effect of the Jaguar song in all of these registers is as follows: in terms of the syntagmatic register, it disturbs the temporal series of the events recounted in the myth; in terms of the interactional register, it disturbs the ontological status of the narrator-singer; and in terms of the denotational register,

it disturbs the deictic relations between the narrator-singer and Jaguar-singer and, consequently, between syntagmatic and interactional registers.

The first verse, in which the Jaguar sounds are sung, assures the listener that the enunciator is a Jaguar. The second verse establishes that Kaiapuruna is the daughter of Ru'iai, but, at the same time, it brings about an interference between the temporal and ontological axes in which the syntagmatic and interactional registers play out. *Am tobowa*, which I have translated as “a long time ago,” is a tense marker associated with a genre of stories that exceed the experiences of the contemporary Kanamari, designating knowledge transmitted to them by their ancestors. Since the myth concerns the doings of a Jaguar, any direct speech or song attributed to Kaiapuruna should be framed as having occurred *am tobowa* but should not include *am tobowa* in any of her utterances. Here, however, the Jaguar is singing lyrics that index a temporal tense suitable to the interactional register, since it stresses the distance between narrator-singer and Jaguar-singer, but not to the syntagmatic register, since it positions the Jaguar-singer in the past vis-à-vis events that are occurring to it in the present. This paradoxical temporal deixis is further stressed through redundancy by the repetitive use of the word *tyanin*, which I translate as “in the distant past,” but which is basically synonymous with *am tobowa*.¹⁴

Concurrently, the effect of the song on the temporal axis articulates with its effects on the ontological status of the narrator. His audience expects him to use deitics like “a long time ago” and “in the distant past” to frame Kaiapuruna’s actions and words, not as quoted speech or song from Kaiapuruna. So the fact that the song, when apprehended as a moment in a narrated sequence, uses the “wrong” tense for Kaiapuruna’s singing also means that it attributes the “wrong” identity to the narrator-singer in the interactional register. This paradox affects the denotational register: the song is sung by a Kanamari man in the present as if he were a Jaguar in the past, dislodging the interactional register toward the syntagmatic register.

The syntagmatic register, however, also has a jumbled internal logic, for the song is sung during a part of the narrative sequence where it retraces events previously narrated (the appearance of the Jaguar Kaiapuruna and her macaw

14. In this sense, note that the excessive past tense of verse 2 leaves no doubt as to what is placed in the past. It is not Ru'iai that existed long ago but, rather, the relation of filiation that links Ru'iai to his daughter Kaiapuruna, thus shifting the whole frame of the singing to the distant past.

feathers) and predicts events that are yet to happen, which Kaiapuruna would have no way of knowing about (but which the narrator, of course, knows beforehand). Verse 3 mentions the tail feathers of the macaw that Kaiapuruna has just stolen from Ancestor Parawi and the headdresses she is making. These events are situated in the present vis-à-vis Kaiapuruna. However, the song also tells of their use in a Jaguar-becoming ritual that has yet to happen in the narrative. The scene described in verse 3 involves a Jaguar, thirsty for the manioc beer served by the women, adorned with the macaw feather headdress that swirls as it moves in the patio. It is an image of an event that lies in the future in terms of the song's localization in the sequence of events established by the narrative.

Furthermore, close attention to the verse reveals that the enunciator of Kaiapuruna's song here switches from Jaguar to human: the macaw feathers, worn by the Jaguar, come "toward me." The suffix *-dyi* is a spatiotemporal deictic that determines that an action is occurring toward the enunciator. Since the Jaguar is the one who dons the macaw headdress, the humans are the ones who see it "swirling, swirling." In this way, verse 3 is the mirror-image of verse 2, dislodging the syntagmatic register of the Jaguar toward the interactional register of human kinship.

The enunciator of the final verse is ambiguous. No grammatical clue allows the listener to pinpoint whether it is sung by the Jaguar referring to itself in the third person (as it often does in myths) or by humans, the distinction between these two positions being meaningless at this point. However, the verse predicts the tragic outcome of a specific ritual event situated in the future in relation to the protagonists of the myth. Kanore is the name of a woman who, the song tells us, the Jaguar will harm. Again, there is an anticipation of what is to come, as the particle *wa* marks for the future tense. Indeed, the narrator finishes the song and resumes the narrative, developing the story into precisely what Kaiapuruna's song had predicted.

The overall effect of the Jaguar song is to converge the syntagmatic and interactional registers along the dimension of the denotational register. In effect, the song oscillates between past and present perspectives, but also between the perspectives of the Jaguar enunciator-singer and the human narrator-singer. The song thus transforms humans in the here and now into Jaguars in mythical time.

From the analysis of the Master of Fish, we know that mythical Jaguars compress the differences of the world into their own body. Here we see the Jaguar song do something equivalent: in its verses, it compresses the difference between Jaguars and humans, thereby reducing the distance between the primordial and contemporary worlds. The songs are *quanta* of the Jaguar

(see Fausto 2004), precipitates of myths that exist so that humans may transform themselves into the primordial body-owner.

JAGUAR-BECOMING

The Kanamari perform a number of related rituals that they collectively label *Pidah-pa*, “Jaguar-becoming.” Some of these rituals are associated with a specific subgroup. The “High-Up Jaguar” (*Pidah Kodohyan*), for instance, is said to have been a Curassow-*dyapa* ritual that diffused to other subgroups during the twentieth century. It is mainly distinguished from other Jaguar-becomings by its songs, which speak of the mythical Jaguar resting on the branch of a tree (hence “high up”). Today, the High-Up Jaguar, along with other minor Jaguar-becoming rituals like the “Skinned Jaguar” (*Pidah Poa*), are frequently performed as a warm-up or rehearsal for the “Large Jaguar” (*Pidah Nyanin*), using one of the Kanamari names for the spotted jaguar. This is a major ritual, not associated with any specific subgroup, although some of its songs may be said to form part of the traditional repertoire of a subgroup. Large Jaguars were traditionally performed when subgroups came together, particularly by close-*tawari*, subgroups that inhabited neighboring streams and had a long history of interaction. They are therefore possible (but not necessary) developments of the *Hori* events that follow from the alliance of subgroups. At present, in the Itaquaí, they are performed when people who inhabit different villages come together during the dry season.

Before describing the ritual, I should note that the Large Jaguar can be performed as the final stage of mourning, thus linking death and fertility in the context of intersubgroup relations (see Chapter Four). However, it can also be performed in nonmortuary contexts, which are the only situations I was able to observe in the field. A discussion of Kanamari eschatology lies beyond the scope of this book (see Costa 2007: 363–392). Isolating the Large Jaguar from other Kanamari rituals is a heuristic option taken in the context of this book’s argument. Most ethnographers of the Kanamari refer to a single ritual cycle, divided into named phases, culminating in the Large Jaguar. The complete ritual cycle is called *Warapikom*, “Wild Fruit,” which refers to its regular timing when wild and semidomesticated (typically palm) fruits begin to mature (see Carvalho 2002: 327–345; Labiak 2007). The Kanamari of the Itaquaí did not use the word *Warapikom* as shorthand for the ritual cycle. Although some Kanamari did

suggest that the rituals should be performed in a certain order, on the whole, they do not appear to conceive of their rituals as forming a coherent progression.

The Large Jaguar involves the performance of Jaguar songs that, like Kaiapuruna's song, are associated with myths. The Large Jaguar ritual cannot occur without a ritual specialist as its sponsor. This man is known as *Pidah nawa nobman*, which the Kanamari translate as "Jaguar's chanter," or *Pidah-warah*, "Jaguar-body-owner." He has the responsibility of organizing collective hunts and gathering garden produce. For this reason, in the past, when very long and large rituals were held, the Jaguar's chanter was always the subgroup chief. For humans, this is the only man to be designated *nobman* during the ritual. The Jaguar, however, may refer to all humans as *atyá nobman*, "my chanter."¹⁵

The basic structure of a Large Jaguar is simple. At least one week before the start of the ritual, the women prepare manioc beer and the men go off to hunt and fish, smoking or salting whatever they catch. One or two days before the ritual, the men move to a small clearing in the secondary forest just outside the village (or, in the past, the longhouse). This clearing is called *Pidah nawa hokanin*, "the Jaguar's clearing," where they start to manufacture the ritual vestments called *wakwama*. The vestments for the Large Jaguar cover the entire body and are made from strips of inner bark from the envira tree (*Guatteria sp.*), known in Kanamari as *pohtokodakbi* (Figure 30). Women do not wear ritual vestments, although they should wear the *kita* headbands and paint their faces.

At dusk, after the vestments have been prepared, the men enter the village patio. They enter in a row, their arms interwoven, singing a Jaguar song. A row of women greets them (Figure 31). During the ritual, the men, covered in *pohtokodakbi* vestments, will become Jaguars, while the women remain human. The number of Jaguars and women participating in a Jaguar-becoming

15. Among the Biá River Katukina, *nobman* is the name for the chief who occupies a position structurally equivalent to the subgroup chief among the Kanamari, i.e., a chief with greater remit and ritual knowledge (Deturche 2009: 169–191). For the Kanamari, the term *nobman* is only used in the context of the Jaguar-becoming rituals, where it replaces the designations *-warah* and/or *maita* (see Chapter Four). Matos (2014: 151, n. 104) notes that the *cuedenquido* spirits of the Panoan Matses call their human ritual "doubles" by the term *noshman*, which they gloss as "man," "soul," "person," or "brother." However, she observes that *noshman* seems to be a foreign word in the Matses language. She suggests that it may have been cognate with the Kanamari *nobman*, tantalizingly pointing to the contours of past ritual relations, like those proposed for the Matis and the Kanamari (Erikson 2007), that may have articulated the Javari river basin with the Juruá.



Figure 30. Men wearing palm-bark vestments during Jaguar-becoming ritual
(Photo: Pollyana Mendonça, CTI archives, 2010).



Figure 31. Women learning songs from Jaguar performers (Photo: Pollyana Mendonça, CTI archives, 2010).

is variable: in the past, I was told, there would be a great many people, but I saw Jaguar-becoming rituals performed with as few participants as a couple of Jaguars and three women. The Jaguars sing to the humans in a falsetto voice called “the Jaguar tongue” (*Pidah koni*), while the women listen and learn the songs, at first timidly repeating a few verses but progressively growing more assured in their interpretation.

The encounter reaches its optimal climax when both women and Jaguars sing the song in unison. After some time singing in a unified register, fusing human and Jaguar “tongues,” the Jaguars return to their clearing, uttering their *bibibi* cries. The women remain in the patio, singing the song they have just learned from the Jaguar, sustaining the pitch and register they had achieved with them. Some time later, the Jaguars return to the patio, singing a new song, and the process begins again. This pattern may be repeated during several nights. The longest Large Jaguar I witnessed lasted six nights, but in the past, I was told, they could have lasted up to a month (although in these cases, it may have been combined with other rituals).

Once the song is sung in harmony by Jaguars and humans, the Kanamari say that it has been “magically captured” (*hu'man*), the same term used to refer to the shamanic familiarization of *dyohko* spirits (Chapter One). *Ma hu'man niama mawa Pidah*, “they magically capture their Jaguars,” the Kanamari say of the moment when women and Jaguars sing in perfect unison. As with the *dyohko* spirits, this familiarization rests on a constitutive ambivalence built into the very nature of the songs. As we saw in the previous section apropos Kaiapuruna’s song, the status of the enunciator and the tense of enunciation constantly shift between Jaguar and human, past and present, thus creating a superposition of images that makes the process of becoming effective but which prevents us from knowing for sure whether Jaguars become humans or humans become Jaguars. In this sense, the familiarization of songs in the Jaguar-becoming ritual is a hypostasis of the familiarization of *dyohko* spirits in shamanism: whereas the latter involves a tense alliance that allows the shaman to control the spirit, the former involves a tense superimposition in which control gives way to mutual determination.

Aware of this ambiguity—the play of tense, perspective, and register involved in familiarization—the Kanamari also neutralize the Jaguars through manioc beer. This is the same means by which they annul the differences between sub-groups for the duration of the *Hori* ritual, as analyzed in Chapter Four. Every

time the Jaguars enter the patio, the women, their eyes averted, must serve them manioc beer. The Kanamari explicitly say that the Jaguar-becoming cannot be performed without beer, since this would put humans at risk. I was once present when a Large Jaguar was begun with little manioc beer available. The ritual started around midnight. The first familiarization was tense, and few women participated. Around three in the morning, the ritual was aborted and everyone went to bed in silence. The following day, I asked why they stopped the ritual, and a woman told me that, from the patio, they could hear the screams of the Jaguar coming from the forest. Had they continued the ritual without beer, “the Jaguars would have sucked out our brains” (*Pidah nakidamin-bik adik amtunin*).

When copious amounts of beer are available, by contrast, everything tends to run smoothly. Songs are familiarized one after the other until dawn, when the Jaguars leave. The men reappear in the patio and immediately leave for a collective hunting or fishing trip.¹⁶ The meat they bring back is laid out in the patio in bundles, and each bundle is given to a woman who danced and sang with the Jaguars. They prepare the food in their houses, but it is set on a table placed in the patio and consumed in a collective meal.

The Kanamari say that the Jaguar-becoming rituals are held “to fetch game/fish” (*bara/dom hikna ama*). The collective hunt never fails to produce lavish amounts of meat, because the Jaguar, ancient body-owner of the animals and a relentless predator, also “magically captures” (*hu'man*) game, making animals “obtuse” (*wa-tikoktunin*, literally “unknowledgeable”) and easy prey for the Kanamari. The same is true of fish. One woman explained to me that “fish follow the [Jaguar] song” (*waik motya dom niama*), i.e., they are drawn toward the Jaguar songs, just as they are drawn to *Hevea* groves. This is why, in the context of a Large Jaguar, the Kanamari use the word *bara-* (or *dom-*) *hikna*, “to fetch game (or fish),” rather than *bara-man*, “to hunt” (or *dom-man*, “to fish”). *Hikna* is the verb used for “to collect” or “to gather” what is relatively easily obtained, as when women go *warapikom hikna*, “to gather forest fruits,” which they also do during the day while the men are out hunting or fishing. The Jaguar, magically captured by the Kanamari and made drunk from the beer, thus transforms game into easy prey during the ritual, replicating the same transformation that it achieves in the myths of the Master of Fish and Master of Game. In the ritual, the Jaguar

16. In some Large Jaguar rituals, the Kanamari prefer to hold collective hunts, in others collective fishing expeditions. In some cases, both are held on consecutive days.

ceases to be a predator and becomes a feeder, while humans become supreme predators who, like the mythical Jaguar, merely gather up game animals.¹⁷

But the ritual not only guarantees abundance during the collective hunt, since regular performance of the ritual assures an abundance of game, fish, and forest fruits throughout the year. When the Kanamari say that they hold the Jaguar-becoming in order to “fetch game/fish,” they are not expressing a spontaneous native functionalism. Rather, it is the regular performance of the Large Jaguar that guarantees the abundance of the forest into the future. The Large Jaguar is a fertility ritual not dissimilar to the Piaroa *sari* or the “large gatherings” (*orreñtsopo*) of the Amuesha (Santos-Granero 1986). The collective hunt is thus not the reason for the ritual but, instead, a synthetic expression of what the Jaguar ritual does more generally. By contrast, failure to regularly perform the Jaguar-becoming makes the Jaguar “angry” (*nok*), resulting in the disappearance of animals from the forest and fish from lakes and rivers and causing fruiting trees to die.

The Jaguar-becoming is thus a fertility ritual that creates “natural abundance” (Rival 2002: 88–92). To ensure this abundance, Kanamari men must transform into Jaguars at the instigation of the subgroup chief/Jaguar chanter. They must take care for this transformation not to end tragically. First, women familiarize the songs of the mythical Jaguar in order to effect the transformation. They then pacify the encounter between humans and Jaguars by offering manioc beer to the Jaguar guests, leaving them sated and calm. Finally, they “enliven the Jaguar” (*ohiwan Pidah*), singing their songs beautifully and impeccably, so that Jaguars will familiarize the animals of the forest and reinvigorate its fertility, facilitating and guaranteeing the consumption of food and thereby making possible the reproduction of Kanamari subgroups.

The Kanamari have found a cautious way of interacting with the Jaguar. But we must not lose sight of the fact that the many familiarizations occurring in the ritual remain ambivalent and imperfect. An element of danger is always present in the Large Jaguar rituals. The predatory capacity of the Jaguar

17. As I explained previously, I often recorded nightly sessions in which songs were sung in the absence of the mythical narrative or the Large Jaguar ritual associated with them. These songs sometimes evoked an “individualistic” venatic drive (in contrast to the collective drive imbued by the Large Jaguar). Some men would finish singing late at night and head to the stream to try and catch paca or caimans. One man sang through most of the night and went hunting early the next morning, excited “because of the singing” (*waik-pa drim*).

cannot be annulled, only directed. Indeed, it could not be otherwise, since the Jaguar's paradoxical predatory ownership of the world enables the regeneration of the forest. This, of course, has its risks. The Kanamari remember many cases in which Large Jaguars resulted in deaths or injuries, as occurred to Kanore in Kaiapuruna's song, a victim of the inherent violence of the world. This danger is the inevitable price of living with kinspeople and being fed by a chief in a world that converges predation and ownership.

Conclusion

This book has been concerned with the Kanamari concept of feeding and the dependence it generates in others, a dynamic I call “the feeding relation.” The feeder becomes the body-owner of whomever or whatever he or she feeds. The body-owner is a figure of magnification: feeding enhances one’s capacities vis-à-vis others. This is true in two senses. The body-owner has productive and distributive capacities over those he or she feeds (he or she is an agent in relation to one or more patients); and the body-owner wields more influence and is attributed greater creativity than those with no dependents or those who have fewer or less capable dependents than he or she does (the feeder is amplified, exhibiting singularity).

While being a body-owner confers distinction, having a body-owner is a basic requisite of the human condition. Everyone must be fed, everyone must have an owner, everyone must be unilaterally dependent on another. This is also true in two senses. Everyone enters Kanamari social life as a dependent, and Kanamari people of all ages depend on the supplementary productivity of owners (parents, chiefs, the state) in certain contexts and situations. Persons start life as dependents and gradually acquire their own dependents as they mature; while they gain autonomy in the process, they continue to depend on others who provide the material basis for existence.

The feeding relation is located at the interface of external predation and internal commensality—indeed, it is how the former is converted into the latter. As the means for engaging with the exterior and enabling commensality, the feeding relation is the basic cell from which the more complex and morally

valued relations of kinship can emerge. Love, knowing the land, and commensality—the core values of Kanamari kinship—are only possible, therefore, within a restricted space with parameters set by the terms of the feeding relation. Commensality and love are not *sui generis* dispositions, since symmetrical orientations always reveal their asymmetrical origins in feeding.

Feeding is a versatile means of providing for another what would otherwise be unavailable and thereby establishing or perpetuating control over a dependent. As a technical operation, feeding remains formally uniform across different contexts, but its effects nonetheless vary as a function of the beings upon which it acts. While in pet keeping and the parent-child bond feeding creates a vital connection in which the feeder sustains the life of the fed, in shamanism and ritual it is but one means among various available to the shaman and the ritual specialist for extracting a desired disposition from the fed. In these contexts, feeding must occur alongside other techniques, such as magical capture, dialogue, singing, and serving manioc beer. Midway between feeding as the condition for existence and feeding as a technique for subduing others lies the relation between chiefs and followers. This bond at once delimits the space in which pet keeping, child rearing, and shamanic familiarization can occur and provides the vector through which ritual activity is organized and made effective.

Shamanism and ritual are evidence that feeding itself is only possible in a world that is extracted from violence, in which the global parameter is predation. This is clear in the ritual activities of the subgroup chief. The songs known to him are precipitates of the world of the Jaguar. The Jaguar-becoming ritual that the subgroup chief sponsors to guarantee the kinship of his “children” is a dangerous undertaking that reveals some of the precariousness of the feeding bond, poised as it is between a primordial world of universal predation and a phenomenal world of localized commensality. Commensality and kinship ultimately depend on the subgroup chief’s ability to replicate in ritual the same transformation of predation into feeding effected in myth.

My ethnography of feeding began with a description of pet keeping, the paradigmatic and inexorable feeding bond. Appropriately enough, it concluded with the subgroup chief’s feeding of his children through ritual, which is the less vertical and more mediated extreme of the same bond. While it is virtually impossible to transform feeding into commensality in pet keeping, in the Jaguar-becoming rituals feeding is enmeshed with commensality, one blurring into the other. Standing before the people of his subgroup, the chief must conduct others in singing the songs that regenerate the forest, thereby ensuring

that commensality and kinship can be sustained. After the ritual, people will return to their villages, where they will continue to hunt the animals that ritual made available, sharing the meat, supplementing it with manioc from the village chief's garden, and eating together as kin.

Lacking the more obviously visible dimensions of coercion and violence involved in pet taming, Jaguar-becoming rituals nonetheless thematize the violence that constitutes the primordial world from which the present is extracted. Irrespective of its immediacy, feeding is always both the hinge between predation and commensality and the means through which generalized predation is processed as kinship. The derivation of feeding from predation marks its ambivalence, while its orientation toward kinship confirms its necessity.

ASYMMETRICAL RELATIONS AND KINSHIP IN INDIGENOUS AMAZONIA

While the feeding relation establishes an asymmetry between two (or more) parties, it also maintains a structurally asymmetrical relation to kinship in general: all kinship (as defined by the Kanamari concept of *-wihnin*) is derived from the feeding relation, but not all feeding relations result in kinship. The dependence of kinship on a prior asymmetry is a widespread feature of Amazonian societies—one often noted in ethnographies but which has not yet received the attention it merits in comparative discussions. In some cases, the dependence is expressed through provisioning, in others through relations established with the figure of the owner. In most cases, it materializes as a conjunction of the two possibilities: an owner-master who is the ground against which kinship relations can figure, providing the means for physical and social reproduction. This is what we find among the Kanamari, who articulate synthetically what recurs throughout the region.

The same expression of ownership through the interplay of feeding and commensality is found among the Carib-speaking Trio of the Brazil-Suriname border. Vanessa Grotti has stressed the difference, for the Trio, between quotidian commensality, “cloistered within cognatic units” (Grotti 2009: 80), and “ritual nurture,” where commensality is enlarged to enable a temporary fusion of unrelated people who participate in ritual beer-drinking ceremonies. “Nurture” functions as a form of control exercised over a given group of people and is held to be distinct from practices of nonritual commensality, which have a

much more limited scope regarding the sorts of relationships they can generate (Grotti 2007, 2009, 2012, 2013). It was by using their techniques of nurture that the Trio were able to familiarize the formerly isolated Akuriyó, particularly through prestations of manioc: “Nurture . . . implies a relation that engenders regressive control because it places contacted people in the social position of children who need to be fed and educated” (Brightman and Grotti 2016: 71). In the process of feeding the Akuriyó, the Trio came to conceive of themselves as “owning” (*entume*) them. The Akuriyó at present refer to the Trio as *tamu*, a word that overlaps with the “owner” (*entu*) category and denotes asymmetrical consanguinity—although, in this case, it is used to address grandparents rather than parents (Brightman and Grotti 2016: 67).

Antonio Guerreiro’s study of Kalapalo chieftaincy further stresses the necessity of owners for the production of kinship. The Kalapalo term *ibo*, which has the core meaning of “mainstay,” defines anyone who protects and provides, including the owner of a house in relation to its other residents or a man in relation to his wife and children. An *ibo* is someone who furnishes support for others—hence a “mainstay of people” (Guerreiro 2011, 2015: 167–173). The Kalapalo chief is an *ibo* who must care for and feed those who reside with him, thereby establishing himself as a “father” and an “owner” to his “children” (Guerreiro 2015: 167). As the condition for the existence of a village composed of his children, the chief is also the source of kinship: “a chief is like a body that maintains people together, that makes them live together, just as he is a mainstay against which they support themselves” (Guerreiro 2011: 122).

Even though rarely stated explicitly, it should be uncontroversial to claim that, throughout Amazonia, chiefs make kinship possible—or, at least, that asymmetrical relations are the condition for sharing and mutuality. Even momentarily setting aside the Kanamari idiom of feeding and its implications, as well as the nested character of Kanamari chieftainship and settlement patterns, this is the inescapable conclusion of the conjunction of two widely attested facts of Amazonian societies: kinship is generated or maintained through coresidence (Gow 1991:165–167; Overing 1993: 55; McCallum 2001: 32); and a settlement is indissolubly bound to its chief (Rivière 1984: 72–73; Heckenberger 2005: 255–290; Brightman 2010: 145–147). If kinship emerges from proximal living, then the absence of the conditions for proximal living must result in the impossibility of making kinship relations (Guerreiro 2011: 119–120). Where these conditions apply, at least, we can say that there are no settlements without chiefs and no kinship without settlements.

The same point concerning the precedence of asymmetrical over symmetrical orientations has been made by Fernando Santos-Granero in relation to the Amuesha of the Andean piedmont (1986a, 1986b, 1991), although he formulates it in terms of “ideology” and “economy” rather than more directly as “ownership” and “kinship” (but see Santos-Granero 2015). For the Amuesha, the idiom of paternal filiation provides the terms in which political relations are framed, defining the relation between the *cornesha* leader-priests (“fathers”) and their followers (“children”), as well as between life-giving divinities (“father”) and the Amuesha (“children”) more generally. The relation that flows from “fathers” to “children” is called *muereñets*, “a primordial type of love, a principle of life and a moving cause” (Santos-Granero 1986b: 119). This asymmetrical and unilateral love is the basis for all Amuesha relations. But the Amuesha also recognize a symmetrical, bilateral love, called *morrrenteñets*, which is the result of human action: “*morrrenteñets* can be regarded as the feeling of mutual love that characterizes relations of ongoing reciprocal generosity” (Santos-Granero 1986b: 119). Like feeding and commensality among the Kanamari, asymmetrical love is a requisite for symmetrical love among the Amuesha, articulating an originary preconditionality with human intentionality, unilateral provisioning with reciprocal interdependence, axiomatic ownership with kinship amity.¹

What the Amuesha frame as a structural necessity, the Piro of the lower Urubamba narrate as history. In ancient times, the Piro were divided into named, localized and endogamous *neru* groups, formally similar to Kanamari -*dyapa* subgroups. But while Kanamari subgroups attained partial integration through the symmetrical friendship of the *-tawari* relation, *neru* groups “fought and hated each other,” and the Ancient Times of the *neru* are remembered as a period “of perpetual violence and warfare” (Gow 1991: 63). The violence of the Ancient Times began to erode during the Time of Rubber, which transformed the asocial world of the ancient Piro into one of expansion and exchange, introducing

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1. Among the Amuesha, filial relations also converge with the idiom of ownership in some contexts:

[*Pamo'mte*] is used to refer to the superordinate party in any given hierarchical relation, and it may be rendered as ‘owner’.... In the context of hierarchical relations it may be used to refer to the masters of the different animal and plant species who are said to ‘own’ and exercise control over the individuals of their particular species. It is in this latter sense that children refer to their parents (and particularly their father) as *namo'mte* or ‘my owner.’” (Santos-Granero 1991: 210–211)

the possibility of peaceful coexistence between former enemies (Gow 1991: 65). This opening up of the *neru* groups was rearranged and funneled during the subsequent Time of the *Haciendas*, when the Piro were all enslaved by Pancho Vargas, “the big boss of the Piro,” inaugurating a forced coresidence: “The *hacienda* was a place in which native people lived and worked as slaves for the *patrón* Vargas, who organized their lives and who was the primary link between them and the downriver cities, the sources of valuable goods” (Gow 1991: 68).

Vargas took an active role in deciding marriages, organizing work, baptizing children and sponsoring ritual: “on the *hacienda*, Vargas controlled the whole cycle of the creation of kinship” (Gow 1991: 214). As the Piro people also acknowledge, it was on the *haciendas* that they became “civilized,” stopped fearing the whites, and learned to speak Spanish. Contemporary Piro communities are the result of the breakup of pancommunal coresidence at the *hacienda* following Vargas’s death. These communities tend to be based around schools and are established as *Comunidades Nativas*, settlements legally ratified in documents granting the land to its inhabitants (Gow 1991: 211–220). As Gow sums up: “Coresidence has been transformed from a relationship between ignorant slaves and an all-powerful boss into a relationship between autonomous civilized people” (Gow 1991: 215).

Gow shows that, for the Piro, history is kinship because it frames the gradual unfolding—from violence and warfare through expansion and exchange, and universal coresidence and civilization—of a present in which autonomous persons create the conditions for living well in communities recognized by the Peruvian state. The Piro value the *Comunidades Nativas* as places where “no one gives orders, and everyone voluntarily creates kinship out of acts of caring given and received” (Gow 1991: 220). But it is also true that the *Comunidad Nativa*, as conceived by the Piro, is only possible because an earlier state of continual violence (the “Ancient Times”) has been converted into one of loving kinship between autonomous persons via the vertical integration of provisioning embodied in the *hacienda*. Although the Piro may see the *hacienda* as “a bad form of coresidence, since it involved living with someone who was disrespectful, exploitative, and violent” (Gow 1991: 215), they also recognize it as a necessary moment in the process of creating contemporary kinship. The Kanamari would doubtlessly interpret Piro history as the diachronic unraveling of the feeding relation: predation being converted into kinship via feeding.²

2. Although they abhor its violence, the Piro also acknowledge that Vargas’ *hacienda* had an advantage: namely, it solved the problem of where and with whom to live

One of the salient traits of Amazonian social theory is that the construction of kinship is constrained, when not in fact determined, by something exterior to it that must be acquired (captured, predicated, familiarized) in order for kinship to become possible. This background against which kinship is constructed is linked to affinity, which throughout the region is a transspecific relator, transcending its actual manifestations through marital relations. Affinity merges into alterity and enmity, and is hence associated with warfare and predation (Viveiros de Castro 1993). For Overing and Passes (2000: 6), this makes the relations that exist beyond the space created by intersubjective ties the converse of proper sociality, a backdrop that is nonhuman and hence amoral. For Viveiros de Castro (2001, 2009: 258–260), it provides evidence that affinity and enmity are immanent to the world, that they “belong to the fabric of the universe” (2009: 259). All these authors confirm that it is necessary to engage with affinity–enmity in order to create kinship, and the kinship created as a result is interpreted either as the negation of its source (as per Overing and Passes) or its impoverishment (as per Viveiros de Castro, e.g., 2001: 28).

These, then, are the general coordinates within which the study of Amazonian kinship has developed. On the one hand, there is the everywhereness of affinity, which “is the given because it is lived and conceived as an ontological condition underlying *all* ‘social’ relations” (Viveiros de Castro 2009: 259, original emphasis). On the other, there is the here and now of kinship-cum-consanguinity that qualifies the “aesthetics of interpersonal relations” (Overing and Passes 2000: 7). Studies of the construction of Amazonian kinship often situate it at the interval between the poles of immanent alterity–enmity and contingent identity–kinship. Even though we know that the distance between these poles is never as great as it may seem, since the process of kinship in Amazonia always involves making kin out of others (Vilaça 2002), I would argue that we need to be more explicit about the specifications and parameters that determine how

by ensuring that everyone lived with everyone else. The present-day values of Piro kinship, by contrast, are an “impossible ideal”: “one must live with all one’s kin; one must live with one’s spouse; and one must ‘know where one wants to die’ as one ages. Similarly, the community is described as a collection of kin, in the sense both that all coresidents are kin to each other, and that any person has all one’s kin in that community” (Gow 1991: 216). While *hacienda* kinship was not created from the care given by autonomous persons but, rather, by the boss’ exploitation, it nonetheless circumvented the moral dilemma of divided kin that the contemporary Piro need to navigate (Gow 1991: 220).

kinship is created. What relations are possible and under what conditions? Can anyone become any sort of kinsperson? How do Amazonians exercise choice in creating kinship without thereby creating “some disorder in the kinship they chose” (Sahlins 2013: 10)?

What I mean by this is that, although people make their own kinship, they do not make it as they please. Or, as Sahlins (2013: 10) puts it, “while people often decide what kinship relationships are appropriate to them, they do not thereby decide what is appropriate to their relationships.” Borrowing from Fausto’s (1999, 2007, 2012a) model of familiarizing predation, which articulates predation with the construction of kinship, and exploring the metafilial relations that convert one into the other, I have shown that the construction of kinship depends on the “determinate properties and codes of conduct” (Sahlins 2013: 9) of ownership and the relational patterns that sustain it. While Amazonians value their capacity to create kinship as “autonomous persons,” this autonomy is derived from pre-existing relations of dependence. Between enmity and kinship lies ownership, the means of rendering the former as the latter.

Insofar as “kinship” is a domain distinct from other domains, one with a specific content (“living well,” “knowing the land,” “love,” coresidence, commensality) created and sustained by human action and intention, it is my belief—based on my investigation of Kanamari ethnography—that kinship is only possible as a consequence of the ways in which people are brought together by being fed or owned or both. This requires tracing our descriptions of kinship as symmetrical relations of commensality back to the asymmetrical relations of provisioning whence they are derived. To frame this in terms of Kanamari ethnography, two people can only ever make themselves kin if both are, on some level, subsumed under (that is, fed by) the same body-owner.

THE DEMISE OF THE JAGUAR?

The feeding relation is only possible in a world that has extracted itself from primordial enmity and from the predatory relations that constituted it. This is inscribed in the Kanamari landscape, narrated in their myths, and performed in their rituals. If feeding is a necessary but insufficient condition for kinship, then predation is a necessary but insufficient condition for feeding. What I have described is how the Kanamari act to ensure that predation becomes feeding and that feeding becomes kinship.

There can be little doubt, however, that the presence of Funai has skewed the balance of the feeding relation away from its predatory underpinnings. The Kanamari now have an owner and provider who is immensely powerful, simultaneously situated in a distant land and in their midst, capable of subduing their former enemies and providing them with merchandise. From 2002 and 2006, when I lived with the Kanamari, the most notable effect of Funai's looming presence was the subtraction of the Juruá, the Jaguar River, from the Kanamari landscape. With the removal of the Juruá from their territory, the Kanamari could reorient themselves toward Funai's regional headquarters on the Javari River. The Juruá became a part of their past.

Yet the Kanamari did not completely rid themselves of the Jaguar. Myth continued to narrate the Jaguar's transformation from predator to feeder, and ritual continued to enact it. In this way, the Kanamari ensured that the feeding relation regenerated the forest, creating the material conditions through which their own relations of commensality became possible.

In 2015, I returned to the upper Itaquaí after a decade's absence. The village of Massapê, the site of Funai's outpost where I had spent most of my time in the field, had now been abandoned. A "New Massapê" had been created downriver. The new village inspired a flurry of movement in the same direction, and many other settlements were abandoned and rebuilt closer to New Massapê. The net result is that the Kanamari have shortened the distance between their settlements and the town of Atalaia do Norte, home to Funai's Regional Executive Administration. What was a six-day journey in 2006 now takes four at most.

Before traveling to New Massapê, I was overwhelmed by the number of Kanamari men, women, and children in Atalaia do Norte. It had not been uncommon for a few Kanamari to be visiting the town at any one time, receiving medical treatment or buying merchandise, but this would usually amount to around ten people and only exceeded twenty in exceptional circumstances. In 2015, I found more than sixty Kanamari visiting Atalaia, most sleeping in their covered canoes and cooking near the town's port. A few Kanamari had even moved to the city, and some had enrolled their children in the local municipal school. Journeys from Atalaia do Norte to the upper Itaquaí were constant. Whereas during my fieldwork, it sometimes took weeks to organize a trip upriver and the same amount of time to organize the return trip to town, a constant transit of Kanamari canoes now took place. It seemed that no more than a couple of days would pass by without people arriving in town or returning home.

One of the underlying causes for all of these movements—of villages down-river and of people into town—is the Kanamari’s newfound access to government cash-transfer programs. By 2015, all Kanamari had birth certificates and identity cards, and most qualified for one government program or another. These included basic rights formerly denied to them, such as rural retirement schemes, but also newer government programs, such as the *Bolsa Família* (“Family Stipend”), which provides basic income for families below the poverty line. The newer programs require that cash be withdrawn every three months or else the benefit is canceled, meaning that people spend little time in their villages before having to return to town to secure their benefits.

If this increased the number of Kanamari people in town, it had an even more dramatic impact on their villages. Instead of houses open at each end that were typical of Kanamari villages in the early 2000s, I found a number of houses built in the regional style, boarded up and divided into numerous closed off rooms. These houses had zinc roofing rather than palm thatch and were built using chainsaws—just a distant dream during my fieldwork but now owned by virtually every household. Instead of being woken up by axes chopping wood for the morning fire, the village now woke to the rumbling of chainsaws. Gasoline and diesel were easy to come by, everyone had motors, and a few even had televisions and DVD players, regularly featuring combat films, powered by a generator that ensured that at least some of the houses now had electricity for part of the evening.

I had taken with me some of the myths and jaguar songs I had recorded ten years previously, and the Kanamari were anxious that I play the recordings back to them. Their reaction to hearing these beautiful stories, narrated in fantastic detail, was one of complete bewilderment. No one told the stories any more. No one wants to listen. The jaguar songs were even more astounding to them. Jaguar-becoming rituals had not been performed since I had left ten years ago. Instead of listening to the stories, villagers watched late-night television; instead of Jaguar songs, regional pop music.

It was fairly easy to recognize in reactions to these recordings a certain typical response to rapid cultural change. All the same, as I only spent three weeks in the field, I remain wary of any first impressions or facile interpretations—whether my own or the Kanamari’s. But it struck me as significant that the Kanamari have estranged themselves from their remaining links with the primordial Jaguar just when they are all beginning to benefit from cash-transfer programs. I suspect that Funai has ceased to be a mystification for the Brazilian

state: the latter is now transparent to the Kanamari, an absolute provider of which Funai, it turns out, was always only a partial materialization.

As the state becomes a hyperprovider, the Jaguar fades away. Feeding, which had once been dependent on predation, is now an absolute value, seemingly self-sufficient and inexhaustible. I cannot be certain that the Jaguar has disappeared once and for all. I do not know if this is something the Kanamari would want, nor can I guess how they can proceed without it. While this book has shown that feeding is a basic moment in the creation of the world, it can offer no answers as to what a world made exclusively of feeding would look like.

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