

dualism characterized by asymmetries and complementarities, the current Kaingang cosmopraxis could be represented by a space where two overlapping faces mediate persisting indigenous modes of Man-Nature relations, regimes of alterity, political factionalism, power struggles for control over the circulation of goods, local economy and ways of relating with the surrounding society: first (corresponding to folk Catholicism / shamanism) a continuous, holistic, and animistic moral and aesthetic based on reciprocity, which informs Man-Nature relations sustaining preservationist, particularistic and traditionalist ideals; second (the Pentecostals), a discontinuous, fragmented, objectified, developmental, universal, and secular moral and aesthetic based on the monetization of social relations and on bureaucratic rationalism.

## The Sateré-Mawé Case

### The Emperor's Garden. Modes of human-nature-relations and project collaboration among the Sateré-Mawé

It is a truism that the visibility of indigenous cultures of the Amazon on a global level is predicated on the assumption that these cultures entertain intact, i.e. "sustainable", human-nature-relations. Because of their allegedly balanced, non-predative way of life within the threatened rain forest environment they are sought out as privileged partners by Western environmental agents for collaboration in projects of sustainable development.

However, what is often neglected by idealizing Western partners is the fact, that most of the indigenous people of the Amazon have already been exposed to prolonged contact with surrounding society and have already suffered its impact. As should be well known – albeit often dissimulated by a recent environmental discourse<sup>12</sup> - this impact more often than not had disas-

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<sup>12</sup> That indigenous people are the born „stewards“ of tropical rain forest became an article of faith that was included in the agenda 21 of Rio (Radkau 2011:540; cf. Dove 2006, Hames 2007). Mark Dowie, a vehement advocate of community-based conservation acknowledges: "... not all indigenous people are perfect land stewards. Only cultural romantics believe that. And even those who were good stewards in years past may cease being so due to population growth, erosion of culture, market pressures, and the misuse of destructive technologies." (cited in Radkau 2011: 751). However, as the hype around the cinema blockbuster "Avatar" has shown, human-nature-relations among indigenous peoples still tend to be heavily romanticised (cf. Bron Taylor's website supporting his publication "Dark Green Religion" [2010] on "Avatar and Dark Green Religion": [http://www.brontaylor.com/environmental\\_books/dgr/avatar\\_nature\\_religion.html](http://www.brontaylor.com/environmental_books/dgr/avatar_nature_religion.html) ; see also l.c. 153/4).

trous results for the affected indigenous society and its way of life or cosmopraxis. Even when the turmoil of first contact (population loss, loss of autonomous capacities to subsist etc.) already dates back a few centuries as it is the case among the Sateré-Mawé<sup>13</sup>, critical developments cannot be overseen.

Although the demarcation of land and the implicit legal security as an indigenous people in Brazil has been justly celebrated as an important victory of the indigenous political movement in the 70ies and 80ies<sup>14</sup>, this victory had its price: the Área Indígena Andirá-Marau experienced from the 80ies or so onward a dramatic increase of its population (Teixeira 2004, 2005<sup>15</sup>). There have been others factors too that have shattered Sateré-Mawé capacity to maintain an adequate level of their subsistence economy (s. below), but high demographic growth has led to a situation of chronic food shortage in the villages: forest game and river fish have been all but depleted in the immediate surroundings of the ca. 100 villages of the Sateré-Mawé. Compensation is sought by buying food in the nearby cities of Parintins or Maués, but for the hopelessly underfinanced Sateré-Mawé households, this is not really a solution. Thus, inadequate nourishment has become a total ethnographic fact among the Sateré-Mawé. In short, collaboration with indigenous societies of the Amazon – the Sateré-Mawé being an example – has to cope with the fact that the cosmopraxis of the respective society may have reached a state of crisis.

It also is often presumed that indigenous world visions display a homogeneity and unity of notions and praxes accounting for a reliable quality of human-nature-relations. This “reliability” of course being a crucial factor within the course of project collaboration! Historically, a variety of external actors had a deep impact on the cosmopraxis of the Sateré-Mawé: missionaries, the turmoil of the cabanagem, various regimes of extractivism,

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13 The Tupí-speaking Sateré-Mawé, numbering approximately 12.000 people, live in the *Terra Indígena Andirá-Marau*, on the two southern tributaries of the Amazon bearing the same names, south of the provincial town of Parintins, on the boundary between the states of Amazonas and Pará. Since they inhabit the river banks, they live from fishing and hunting, and they cultivate manioc by means of slash and burn. They are also known as the original cultivators of guaraná (Pereira 1954, Lorenz 1997, Figueroa 1997, Kapfhammer 2004, 2007, 2009, Alvarez 2009). I have done several periods of fieldwork among the Sateré-Mawé communities of the Rio Andirá since 1998. I would like to thank the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG), Germany, for funding my research (HA5957/6-2) and the CNPq, Brazil, for authorizing it (010581/2009-0).

14 The Sateré-Mawé have been among the first indigenous communities to have their land demarcated (Lorenz 1992)

15 The average birth rate has reached an unmatched rate of over eight births per woman (Teixeira 2004)!

indigenist agencies, river traders, representatives of education and health programs, each one with his or her own cosmography inevitably “clashing” with indigenous cosmography.

It will be argued that external influence not only had a diverse and deep impact on Sateré-Mawé cosmology, but has become itself one aspect of it, an aspect that not only “clashed” internally with other cosmological and cosmopractical tendencies of Sateré-Mawé world vision, but one, that also has brought the traditional dynamics of Sateré-Mawé cosmopraxis almost to a standstill. A situation, which could not be more unfavourable for any kind of collaboration with external environmental agencies, as well meaning they might be.

Having been away for a decade or so, a recent return to the field to one of the bigger villages on the upper Andirá, that in the 90ies had been the hotbed of a dynamic religiously, politically and economically integrative evangelical movement (Kapfhammer 2004), made for a puzzling experience: despite continuously high pressure due to chronic shortage of food a – as I thought – readily available and lucrative economic alternative, the merchandizing of guaraná and a host of other forest products, was largely neglected by most of the struggling subsistence farmers, hunters and fishers of the village<sup>16</sup>.

In view of the proliferating symptoms of crisis the Sateré-Mawé Tribal Council (Conselho Geral da Tribo Sateré-Mawé) decided in 1995 to engage with the “Guaraná Project”<sup>17</sup>. In the words of Maurizio Fraboni, an eco-socioeconomist and member of the ACOPIAMA, an ONG that serves as an interface between the Sateré Mawé producers and international trade partners and supporting organizations as the highly publicized Slow Food movement<sup>18</sup>, “[the] project’s aim was to substantiate that [Climate] ‘Alliance’, by selling all the production at a fair price, and it took into account not only the excellent quality of the product, but also the Sateré-Mawé’s commitment to preserving the natural environment of native guaraná, in redeeming their own culture and in making sure that the social spin-offs of the project were fair. This

16 The situation for project collaboration is much better on the Rio Marau, which I could not visit.

17 The full name is “*Projeto Integrado autônomo de etnodesenvolvimento*”. It is commonly known as the “*Projeto Guaraná*”, although in 2010 guaraná made up for only slightly over 50% of the total amount of products sold to European Fair Trade enterprises. The range of products on demand by the European trade partners has expanded considerably during the last years.

18 2002 the Sateré-Mawé producers of guaraná have been the first Brazilian group to be elected as a Slow Food presidium ([http://www.slowfoodfoundation.org/pagine/eng/presidi/dettaglio\\_presidi.lasso?id=152&nz&-tp](http://www.slowfoodfoundation.org/pagine/eng/presidi/dettaglio_presidi.lasso?id=152&nz&-tp))

project was based on two assumptions: the chance for indigenous people really to organize themselves and the existence of an organized civil society of international consumers, above all European ones, interested in their product and in its social and cultural value” (Fraboni / Lenzerini 2006:360).

The main product that is commercialized is guaraná among a host of other forest products, mostly grown in so called “roças consorciadas”, an ingenious combination of traditional gardening methods and forest-garden principles.

What can be observed from that is that successful collaboration may not in the least part depend from a more or less smooth “meeting” (instead of “clashing”) of cosmographies: on the Western side fair trade ethics integrate economic demand and certain aesthetic or even moral expectations fulfilled by the product and the circumstances of its production, thus contributing to restore ecological justice in a Third World region. On the indigenous side it is important to note that participation in the project is individual. It is up to each producer how much work he invests and, accordingly, how much of his produce he is going to sell to the producers’ syndicate. The point is that the “projeto integrado” functions entirely without external funding, i.e. it functions according to the productivity of its individual producers, thus giving back each of them the sure feeling of agentivity and autonomy. On the one hand the Sateré-Mawé producer is able to create and interact with an environment, which is integrally – i.e. economically, socially, aesthetically – life sustaining, he or she is able to lead a life much like the guaraná mother *Uniwasp’i* has predicted in the origin myth<sup>19</sup>. On the other hand, the European Fair Trade consumer of Sateré-Mawé products not only consumes biologically organic products, but in a way also participates in building “a better world” over here as a counter-hegemonial alternative to the developmentalist regime. Thus, the cosmopraxis of the Sateré-Mawé producer and the cosmography of the European adherent of, say, the Slow Food movement might meet exactly at this point.

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19 According to the narrative the son of primordial woman *Uniwasp’i* was killed by his mother’s brothers. *Uniwasp’i* took the eyes of her son and planted them into the ground, out of which grew the first guaraná plant. She heralded her son’s new form of existence by prophesying his outstanding role in creating a harmonious society. Indeed, the ritual consumption of guaraná has traditionally been the precondition for deconstructing potentially conflictive relations. The Sateré-Mawé of today originate from the buried body of the guaraná child and thus consider themselves as “sons of guaraná”. “*Filhos de guaraná*” is also the name for saplings of wild guaraná from the forest used to be replanted in the guaraná plantations (Kapfhammer 2007, 2009).

As has been said, the Guaraná Project, at least on the Rio Andirá, could not yet fulfil the high expectations an earlier generation of political leaders has invested into it in the 90ies. What concerns the political ecology of the AI Andirá-Marau, that project in recent years has come under considerable pressure from at least two sides. For one, the multinational big group AmBev, which dominates agro-industrial cultivation of guaraná in the region of the provincial city of Maués, tried to “modernise” guaraná cultivation. By way of introducing genetically modified guaraná clones guaraná production should be optimized. In the context of this so-called “Maués Project” the prefecture of Maués also tried to introduce clones into the nearby indigenous area, thus not only threatening the existence of the only genetic pool of guaraná plants, but also putting at risk the certification of the indigenous product as organic (Fraboni / Lenzerini 2006: 363). Internally, the demise of a generation of charismatic leaders, whose religiously inspired universalist rhetoric has carried much of the enthusiasm invested in the guaraná project, gave way to internal frictions of interest groups, some of them co-opted by regional (also indigenous) actors in order to gain control over the seemingly lucrative fair trade business<sup>20</sup>. Although efforts to install a rival project of commercializing guaraná have failed, the political conflicts immobilized the Tribal Council (CGTSM), which actually should have operated the guaraná project. Although the political impasse has been overcome by the foundation of a producers’ syndicate (Consórcio dos Produtores Sateré-Mawé, CPSM), in order to be more independent of political manoeuvres, the amount of quantitative participation in the project certainly suffered a negative impact.

Although the political situation on the Andirá hampered the developing of a viable alternative to the regional economical system, a market for indigenous products was there under conditions heretofore unseen in regional economics with demand exceeding by far the supply allocated by Sateré-Mawé producers. Yet, the situation in Vila Nova on the Andirá, where I did fieldwork, was not exactly that people were literally hindered by any political forces to participate in the project, what I found was more a situation of a generalized mood of inactivity, disillusion and depression.

It is argued that the long term effect of specific external relations has to

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20 The situation compares to a general backlash suffered by international alliances of indigenous peoples of the Amazon in favour of a certain re-regionalization or re-nationalization of political affairs (cf. Conklin 2002).

be accounted for, relations that had a traumatizing effect on Sateré-Mawé capacity to autonomously act and produce. Cosmologically speaking this historical trend triggered by external relations ran contrary to the dialectic dynamics of Sateré-Mawé cosmopraxis, grinding these dynamics almost to a halt. These internal dynamics of Sateré-Mawé cosmology, however, became most visible, when evangelical proselytization started in the 60ies (Kapfhammer 2004, Wright/Kapfhammer 2004).

The dynamics of Sateré-Mawé cosmology and the human-nature relations therein must be seen within their structural and historical framework. The two main economic cycles – the production of manioc and the production of guaraná – are strongly embedded into the ecology of alternating dry and wet seasons, each one triggering a differential social aggregation or regime: during the dry season there is dispersion, when each extended family is working separately in the manioc gardens, during the rainy season, when guaraná is processed, the population concentrates in the village. Each socio-economic regime is carried by a differential cosmopraxis: Particularistic dispersion during the manioc season reflects the mythic split-up of original Sateré-Mawé society into exogamous clans, a fractionation that today is ritually constructed during the initiation ritual<sup>21</sup>. The universalistic concentration of society during the guaraná season on the other hand reflects the regime of a primordial *Urgesellschaft*, the *anumareria*, living in unity and harmony before the origin of clans. The periodic re-union of the latter is constructed by rituals surrounding the cult object *puratĩg*<sup>22</sup>, whose main constituent is the ceremonial consumption of guaraná.

This structural framework is heavily influenced by historical

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21 According to the myth on the origin of clans a cannibalistic jaguar once threatened to extinguish a primordial community living in harmony called *anumareria*. Only an old woman dared to deal with the monster. While the remaining *anumareria* managed to escape by hiding in different places of the forest, the old woman soothed the jaguar to sleep in her lap and killed him by jerking a stick into his ear. The old woman summoned the survivors and named each group according to the place where they have been hidden, thus creating the (plant- and animal-) names the exogamous Sateré-Mawé clans. As the story goes, primordial harmony has come to an end and the clan groups immediately engaged in bloody conflicts. The embedding of young adult males into this highly ambiguous network of affinal relationships is one of the main functions of the *waumat* initiation ritual. This vernacular “*dança da tucaadeira*” culminates in the painful ordeal of the adolescents of sticking their forearms into a woven “glove” full of stinging ants.

22 Actually a flat-bladed ceremonial club reminiscent of Guianese war clubs of the 17th century, the *puratĩg* is considered a sacred object handed down from mythical times. The incised design on the object is considered as the “writing” of culture hero *Wasiri* who took down the words revealed to him while on the way home from a fight with a demon. This “text” refers to political authority and the construction of social consensus. It was the prerogative of great *tuxauas* to be able to “read” this “text” (Kapfhammer 2004).

conjunctures: while elements of the indigenous particularistic regime may have articulated with and exacerbated through external contacts with regional non-indigenous society, thus contributing to critical processes, an evangelical counter-culture that has established itself since the 1960ies drew heavily on key elements of the universalistic regime: the notions of a peaceful and harmonious society as it was mapped out in the mythology of the *puratĩg* and *guaraná*<sup>23</sup>. During the 1990ies the evangelical movement was carried by charismatic leaders, who not only legitimated their political activities by way of a revitalization of the *puratĩg*-*guaraná* complex, but also put great hope into the fair trade project of *guaraná* commercialization. The evangelical leaders' attempt of integrating religion, politics, economy and ecology within a single universalistic regime should have countered the particularistic indigenous-regional regime, that was made responsible for the in the leaders' view deplorable state of Sateré-Mawé society (Kapfhammer 2004, 2007, 2009).

However, as has been said, recent fieldwork has shown that this universalistic utopia has not quite realized. Following the death of the charismatic evangelical leaders, the evangelical movement has lost much of its integrating power. While it consolidated as religious community, it has largely retreated from any political and economical involvement. The subsequent younger generation of *tuxauas* has not been able or willing to tie in with the universalistic project of gaining greater political and economical autonomy. Instead, key figures of the indigenous political scene have been even more co-opted by the regional political system.

Recent field work has also shown that although the alternation of particularistic and universalistic regimes is still in force, this structural dichotomy is actually overruled by a regime with seemingly overwhelming historical vigour: **the politico-economic regime of extractivism within the regional framework of the *aviamento* system** (cf. Meira 1996).

It is argued, (1) that the differential social regimes can be associated with

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<sup>23</sup> The evangelical movement drew heavily on the symbolism of the *puratĩg* complex. Icons of the object virtually replaced representations of the Christian cross; the text of the Bible, translated into Sateré by missionaries of the Wycliffe Bible Translators, is considered by the *crentes* as analogous to the "text" on the ancient *puratĩg* (Kapfhammer 2004). The consumption of *guaraná*, which traditionally accompanied a ritual of conflict resolution involving a "reading" of the *puratĩg*-*text* is still part of the Baptist cult. The resolving of conflicts is also an important element of this evangelical ritual.

specific modes of human-nature-relations and (2) that these modes of human-nature-relations account for the viability of project collaboration in the one way or the other. (3) In a complex way these modes of human-nature-relations are connected with specific religious affiliations among the Sateré-Mawé.

Narratives collected about the time when river traders dominated external relations or cycles of extraction of forest resources in typical boom-and-bust manner swept through the region, reveal the curious fact, that the narrators stress access to an abundance of merchandise, while remaining silent on the social and ecological disasters this mode of external relations almost always went along with.

From the perspective of the Sateré-Mawé a mode of human-nature-relations predominates within the “regime of extractivism and aviamento”, which is based on the notion of non-reciprocal, unconditional extraction of resources. Interestingly enough there seems to be a historical continuity of that mode from seemingly “archaic”<sup>24</sup> notions of unconditional extraction of forest resources (mostly game), to the extraction of merchandise during the boom-cycles of extractivism, up to recent developments like the unconditional extraction of public aid money.

According to that, in Sateré-Mawé cosmology the environment can be a giving one. This kind of relationship can be said is based on “trust” - trust not in the contractual, Hobbesian sense, but in the sense of “Urvertrauen”, “basic sense of trust” (cf. psychoanalyst Erik Erikson). Here, the forest is a parent who unconditionally provides food to her children. The Sateré maintain this kind of non-reciprocal relationship to a person called “miat ehary”, the “mother of animals”. The ritual mediation of this consuming relationship was carried out by the shaman (paini). According to the narratives no reciprocal relationship is established between providers and consumers. Instead, the ritual of summoning up the animal-mother resembles what has been called “demand-sharing” (Peterson 1996), the pressure for generosity. Consequently, the caring stance of the “mother of animals” or her mediating contact person, the shaman, is stressed. Insofar the Sateré-Mawé, albeit horticulturalists, seem to fit well into the scheme of hunter and gatherer onto-cosmologies as elaborated by Bird-David for the Nayaka in India.

But the environment of the Sateré can also be a nasty or even “toxic” one.

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24 Cf. the neo-animism debate, especially the work of Nurit Bird-David on foraging societies (1990).

In Western projection the Amazonian forest is still devoid of any place pathology, the people living there enjoy “healthy” relations with their environment.<sup>25</sup> However, Sateré-Mawé ontology and epistemology actually demands a rather disillusioned stance towards the extra-human cosmological domains that we would subsume under the term “nature”. As in many horticulturalist groups the transition from childhood to full personhood as an adult requires a ritual. In the case of the Sateré-Mawé the adolescent boys are treated with the painful stings of poisonous ants. The symbolism of the rite could not be more explicit: the ants originate from the vagina of an ophidian woman of the aquatic underworld. The unconditioned, caring-sharing relationship with miat eary, the animal-mother, gets disrupted, only to be replaced by the reciprocal, dangerous, and violent relation to Uniamoire’i, the Snake Woman. Quite contrary to clichéd Western convictions for the Sateré-Mawé to reach full personhood means to construct the phantasm of a “toxic” nature!

Thus, the adult Sateré person is entangled in a web of affinal and reciprocal relationships; his (or her) ontological status will always be precarious, demanding constant support of the shaman’s manipulation of trophological and nosological relations with non-human domains. This insight in “cost-intensive” human-nature-relations is opposed to the salvational promise of a new consumer culture: Cost-intensive human-nature-relations demand constant support through the shaman’ ritual manipulations and call for an everyday ritual routine of managing trophological and nosological relations with non-human-domains. According to the humoral logic of Sateré-Mawé theory of sickness and death, the contact with or consumption of certain animals or plants classified as “cold” amounts to a cosmological descent into the pathogenic underworld domain of the Great Snake (moi’ok), a relation that inevitably causes illness. The correlative contact with or consumption of things classified as “hot” makes a cosmological re-ascent, i.e. a return to a sound physical status, possible again (Figueroa 1997).

This epistemologically and aesthetically demanding regime of human-nature relations thus upholds the addressability (Halbmayer 2010) of nature (or

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25 In an alternative Western cosmography the feeling of loss and discomfort in the wake of environmental degradation, global warming and nuclear disasters has been called “solastalgia”. This key word of the sub-discipline of eco-psychology means some kind of place-pathology: “... a pain experienced when there is recognition that the place where one resides and that one loves is under immediate assault ... a form of homesickness one gets when one is still at ‘home’” (Smith 2010).

rather: with non-human beings) and therefore can be considered as a stabilizing factor of human-nature-relations. This regime, sociologically based on balanced reciprocal exchanges with the communicating domains of the cosmos, and represented as notions on psycho-physical well being mediated by a daily routine of trophological and nosological prescriptions and precautions, comes close to what Reichel-Dolmatoff (1976) paradigmatically has described as “cosmology as ecological analysis”; a world vision, as it were, whose implicated environmental ethics keeps attracting Western agencies as potential partners for collaboration in sustainable development projects (cf. the Baniwa case below).

The built-in ambiguity of relations within this cosmography, however, contributes to certain instability of the system itself, mostly due to a high degree of conflictual and violent content. Sateré-Mawé mythology most clearly shows the violent background of creative forces within the cosmos: the origin of life-sustaining plants, which provide either staple food (manioc) or ritual alimentation (guaraná) is the outcome of an escalating conflict between affines: a primordial being is killed by a hamu, ideally the WF, due to cross-cousin marriage at the same time the MB (cf. Leacock 1973). Out of the body parts of the slain victim grow the useful plants. In the myth that recounts the origin of manioc (and of the capacity to produce it) the hero has to cope with a cannibalistic jaguar, addressing him as hamu nokap (father-in-law / enemy). He finally outwits him triggering a series of killings as transformations whose end result is manioc, the life-sustaining staple food of the Sateré-Mawé<sup>26</sup>

Thus, the conflictuous *hamu*-relation is the momentum behind Sateré-Mawé cosmological dynamics. These violent tendencies in Sateré-Mawé society are prone to exacerbate under unfavourable external relations<sup>27</sup>, which finally contributed to a situation of generalized crisis. In this sense, given the specific historical conjunctures, the cost-intensive mode of human-nature relations, albeit the regime that most closely resembles the reciprocal and balanced system of human-nature-relations of Western projection, cannot be said to be favourable for project collaboration of the design delineated above.

The answer of Sateré-Mawé society to their cultural crisis has been twofold: for one, the development of an evangelical counter-culture from the

26 The term *hamu* is also used to denominate a evil sorcerer (Figuroa 1997).

27 The ethos of balanced reciprocity may work within a largely closed cosmological system, but once enmeshed into the fringes of the regional Amazonian political system it falls easily prey to clientelism and corruption.

1960ies onward and reaching a peak in the 90ies. Today; the evangelical movement may have lost its integrating effect due to the loss of charismatic leaders. It has disappeared from public stage to consolidate within the intimacy of parochial life. While the “universalist utopia” (see above) may not have realized, what has happened is a kind of internal “super-pacification” with “love” and “forgiveness” as its highest values. The first wave of evangelicals still distanced itself rigorously from the prevailing (cost-intensive) system exactly because of its symbolic, ritual and everyday violence (Kapfhammer 2004). Thus they took the loss of addressability of nature, contributing to a growing outward orientation and furthering affective and emotive alienation from the forest environment and its resources valorised by Western environmental cosmography and Fair Trade market interests. Meanwhile, a new wave of evangelicals increasingly critiques “civilization” and its “contaminating” effects, reacting, rather than returning to the cost-intensive system, with an “edenization” of forest space.

As has been said, in recent times some evangelical pastors have been entertaining a new environmental discourse, which spatially relocates the “toxicity” of the “wilderness” as it is established in the initiation rite. The pathogenic substance *satek*, poison, is no longer associated with cosmological domains that used to be manipulated by the shamans<sup>28</sup>, but with the space of “civilization”, that is the village (*tawa*), where the “contaminating” impact of the local fringes of Western culture makes itself felt<sup>29</sup>. This new “toxic” space is now pitted against a “safe and sound” forest (*ga’apy*), an edenic realm of purity. This novel discourse with its nativistic undertone may have the potential to re-politicize and re-ecologize the evangelical movement.

There is a certain irony in the fact that the (politically) quietistic bearers of this rather subdued discourse are hardly ever taken into account as interlocutors or collaborators by international providers on the project market, among the Sateré-Mawé however, the evangelical background of staff members of the guaraná enterprise makes itself felt.

Beyond the new moral space created by the evangelical communities, however, the larger environment of the Sateré-Mawé, including the space of

28 The aquatic domain of *moi’ok*, the Great Snake (Kapfhammer 1996, Figueroa 1997).

29 This novel classification as *satek* ranges from the palpable contamination of village space with garbage, and indiscriminate consumption of low quality DVDs with violent and/or pornographic content, to the alarming degree of alcohol and drug abuse among youths.

Western consumer culture, is still largely demanded to be a giving one.

In a narrative that explains the unequal distribution of goods between the Sateré-Mawé and the White People it is Grandfather Emperor (*ase'i imperador*<sup>30</sup>) who leads his people out of the inhospitable “paradise” *Nusoken*<sup>31</sup>. He asks the Sateré to go ahead down to the river bank where he will be waiting for them to take them with him on his ship. Halfway along the trail the Sateré-Mawé get distracted by palms ripe with fruits, forget about time and miss the boat. The Emperor leaves without them, taking along only two frogs who become the ancestors of black and white people. The Emperor now is the master of all the industrial commodities, while the Sateré-Mawé are put off by the Emperor’s promise to send them merchandise every once in a while.

This narrative is of course an elaboration of the historical experience of extractivism and regional *assistencialismo*, an experience that has developed into to a downright *cargo*-stance: a passive, albeit unconditioned, demanding of western commodities. The “demand-sharing” mode of human-nature-relationships carries over from the relation between shaman and animal mother, to the relation between *tuxaua* and river traders, to the relations of recent political leaders tapping the funds of government agencies or international NGOs, and finally to the relations of common people as beneficiaries of social benefits<sup>32</sup>.

However, this kind of “salvation” has to conceal the historical fact of asymmetric and hierarchic relations, of violence and exploitation during the era of extractivism. What is more, it also has to dissimulate the disruption with local environment by dislocating the source of salvation to the exterior. What has been lost in the historical shuffle is the capacity to produce, i.e. the capacity of “producing production”:

“The essence of fully developed [Kayapó] culture ... is rather described as the

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30 Probably a reminiscence of Dom Pedro II.

31 *Nusoken* is a space only of stone (*nu*). Sometimes it is represented as a house of stone wherein stony effigies or prototypes of game animals are kept by the animal mother. Legendary shamans are said to have managed to get there and demand game animals.

32 In a paper on animal masters among the Runa of Ecuador Eduardo Kohn (2007) recently stated, that “thinking about beings that exert control over the forest” is also “a way to understand how interaction with them reflects the impact of history”. As is well known Descola defined as “animism” the way animals, their masters and people all interact among themselves and with each other according to the same logic of sociability. And it is exactly the impact of colonial history that has moulded the “animistic” logic of interaction.

ability to produce these things, and most importantly, what this ability further implies, *the reflexive ability to produce the process of producing them, as a generalized and infinitely replicable form of activity*” (Turner 2009:20; emphasis his).

The dynamics of Sateré-Mawé culture, ensuring productive transformation, have almost come to a halt under the weight of well-meant external donations<sup>33</sup>. The state, whose aid money makes up for about 80% of the yearly revenue floating into Sateré-Mawé territory has become the biggest competitor of the Guaraná Project, generating only 20%. Reliance on an unconditioned flow of goods from outside has colonized the minds of many Sateré-Mawé to an extent where literally the capacity to “produce” has been lost and people fail to grow manioc on their fields or have stopped this activity altogether.

In 2009 the indigenous guaraná company reinvented itself by founding the *Consórcio dos Produtores Sateré-Mawé* (CPSM) in order to regain space lost in political conflicts with post-charismatic leaders of the younger generation<sup>34</sup>. Along with its business endeavours based on global Fair Trade ethics the CPSM now actively endorses a cosmological change of perspective referring to a specific reading of the myth of “Grandfather Emperor”. This reading traces back to one of the deceased leaders of the charismatic type: instead of fuelling hope on *cargo* from the exterior, this version constructs the mandate of the Sateré-Mawé as stewards of the “*sateré-mawé eko ga’apyiat waraná mimotypot sese*”<sup>35</sup>, the “ecological and cultural sanctuary of the guaraná of the Sateré-Mawé”. However, this novel kind of “stewardship” may only be sustainable culturally, if it is accompanied by an aesthetic and affective “re-embedding” of relational epistemology and ontology. In other words: when human-nature-relations are re-sacralized.

We are afraid it might be impossible to achieve this goal by revitalizing the grand, but “disenchanted” (see the Baniwa case) rituals. The *waumat*

33 This does NOT mean that Sateré-Mawé get rich on welfare money. On the contrary: the habit of spending money indiscriminately and on the spot, when in town, makes things only worse. Besides that, welfare money is responsible for a variety of social disruptions: paradoxically, pensions undermine hierarchical relations of respect between elders and youths, when the young simply take away the money from the formers hands to go on a spree. Also a serious matter is the aid package for mothers at childbirth, given the already alarmingly high birth-rate. To be fair, many Sateré-Mawé succeed to manage an eclectic economic regime, creatively combining opportunities such as traditional subsistence, odd jobs, production for the Fair Trade project, and welfare money.

34 As mentioned above an indigenous political group active in the region has attempted an “unfriendly takeover” of the guaraná enterprise.

35 Literally: Sateré-Mawé / custom / forest space / guaraná / esteemed / very

initiation ritual at best has become a folkloric representation of identity rather than a means to reproduce society. A possible approach to spiritually “re-connect” with the environment might be on an aesthetic or poetic level.

Older Sateré narrators, for instance, used to weave a poetic language called “*sehay poti*”, “the old words”, into their rendition of myths. Using mythological metaphors and metonymic phrases to connote other-than-human beings of the forest, for instance palm trees, made procuring their fruits a poetic act, an interaction with animated, enchanted beings (Ingold 2000). The gathering of palm fruits amounted to an immersion into the mythical world. In one of the major cosmogonic myths – on the origin of water – a violent, yet creative conflict between a mythic personage and his *hamu* (see above) gives rise to the riverine landscape of the Sateré-Mawé. *Sururí tunug* (Snake / Thunder), the Master of the Water, creates a new spatial order: using his shamanistic paraphernalia he transforms an indiscriminate flood of water into a river with two river banks. By blowing tobacco he creates the sinuous line of today’s rivers, his rattle and feather-sticks become the *patawá*- and *burití*-palms that dominate river banks today. The blood of a boy, whose bursting body had started the excessive flood, transformed into the much appreciated *assai*-palms.

On the one hand relations between human beings and this enchanted landscape do have their costly side (see above): The blood is the rain of the wet season, known to bring sickness and death, the serpentine form of the river further alludes to the fact that this is the domain of the Snake Master and his powerful, but pathogenic substance *satek* (see above). On the other hand the shaman’s paraphernalia that transformed into useful and life-sustaining palms metonymically stand for productive transformation itself: the autonomy of production – of “producing production” (Turner 2009) – that is transmitted in the narratives and written into the places human beings interact with to re-produce themselves<sup>36</sup>.

The version of the *Imperador* narrative that establishes the Sateré-Mawé as stewards of an “ecological and cultural sanctuary” does so by way of a cosmographic re-orientation of spatial relations: while the “cargo” version allocates the means of production towards the exterior<sup>37</sup>, the “stewardship” version

36 The opening of a *roça consorciada* is not only due to economic incentives, but can be considered a life-sustaining work: it not only ensures adequate nourishment (“*aqui não tem carência alimentar*”), but also contributes significantly to an aesthetic upgrading of village surroundings.

37 Dwelling on the topos of unequal distribution of goods and the means of their production between

re-appropriates “production power” for the Sateré and their florestal environment. It is fitting that the website of the CPSM catches the eye of the viewer with the headline “Nossa luta é produzir”!

Recently, in order to cosmographically “re-connect” the Sateré-Mawé with their environment, the “*projeto integrado*” makes effort to re-vitalize the poetic or aesthetic involvement (Ingold 2000) of environmental praxis having created a sub-project called “*Livre Academia do Wará*”<sup>38</sup>, “*wará*” - as in *wara-ná* or *guaraná*, economically and cosmologically the central item of Sateré-Mawé cosmography (Kapfhammer 2007, 2009) - meaning “truth”. The idea is that only autonomous production of Sateré culture in a material and non-material sense amounts to an ontologically autonomous Sateré-Mawé person, which Western environmental cosmography so often takes for granted.

## The Baniwa Case

### ‘Sustainability’ in the Northwest Amazon: on ‘success stories’ and their limitations

“If I am your partner, I think that I have to keep you informed of what I am doing, discussing, and not creating exclusivity in the region - *we have to prioritize all the regions.*” [Current President of the FOIRN, 2011 interview]

”The only thing that affects the region is when pilot projects are elaborated covering the whole region, and the communities (like ours) are not contemplated when the project is approved.” [capitão of Ukuki Cachoeira, R. Aiary, interview with Robin Wright, 2010]

This case continues the discussion of issues raised in “Arte Baniwa: the Baniwa Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Sustainable Development” (2009). Here, I seek to make further constructive criticisms on the issue of “sustainable development” among the Baniwa people of the Northwest Amazon. I argue that current policies and practices have created a situation of inequity

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Indians and whites

<sup>38</sup> Compare *Malikai Dapana*, the Baniwa shamans’ school, but also the Pamaale educational complex by evangelical Baniwa (see Robin Wright’s contribution).