



INSTITUTO
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How Forest and People Resist Together: Modes of Coexistence in Indigenous Amazonia

Hanmin Kin

Doctor of Anthropology

Supervisors:

Doctor Antonio Maria Pusceddu, Researcher, Researcher at Iscte -
Instituto Universitário de Lisboa

Doctor Andréa Carvalho Mendes de Oliveira Castro, Associate
Professor, Federal University of Paraná (UFPR)

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Department of Anthropology

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Hanmin Kin

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Jury:

Doctor Miguel de Matos Castanheira do Vale de Almeida, Full Professor at Iscte - Instituto Universitário de Lisboa (President)

Doctor Susana de Matos Viegas, Researcher at ICS - Universidade de Lisboa

Doctor Júlia Otero dos Santos, Professor at Universidade Federal do Pará (Brazil)

Doctor Rodrigo Lacerda Fernandes, Researcher at CRIA - Centro em Rede de Investigação em Antropologia

Doctor Ruy Jesús de Llera Blanes, Researcher at Iscte - Instituto Universitário de Lisboa

Doctor Antonio Maria Pusceddu, Researcher at Iscte - Instituto Universitário de Lisboa

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Preface

I start with a confession, not the lightest one for an anthropologist: I was more interested in and concerned about the Amazon forest—its flora and fauna—than its human inhabitants. I flag this point since it reflects a common thought pattern: an appreciation of Indigenous people tied to their protective role in Earth's most high-profile rainforest. In the wake of planetary ecological crisis, including climate change, and the dire conjuncture of today's tropical forests, the people's role and contribution are garnering worldwide attention, but unfortunately, not necessarily deepening our understanding of them. Amerindians suffer arguably one of the most deeply rooted biases, and as an anthropological observer of one of the groups, I cannot say that I have completely overcome my own preconceptions. Agreeing with the core tenet of Karen Barad's agential realism (2007)—which I draw on throughout the thesis—that observation and the agencies of observation are not independent but entangled, this project is a challenge that begins with my best efforts to unsettle my preconceived notions and assumptions.

At least I was fortunate to have direct encounters and close dialogues with the people, which served as an eye-opener. The first opportunity came to me in August 2019, when news of the Amazon fires in Brazil broke headlines in international media. Although forest fires were a seasonal affair in the region, their unprecedented scale and anti-environmental policy (Brando et al., 2020), bolstered by the then-President Jair Bolsonaro, combined with heightened concern about the climate crisis, hit a nerve with the global public.¹ It prompted reactions from the civil society, including the environmental justice NGO I was working for. As the director considered launching a campaign in Amazonia, I volunteered for a scouting trip. Being familiar with the Indigenous peoples' widely touted role as champions of biodiversity conservation and “forest guardians,” (without knowing exactly what that meant) I drafted a plan to identify Indigenous groups willing to develop a campaign that protects both the forest and people's livelihood. In this plan, Indigenous people were deemed “gatekeepers” or “obligatory passage points” to achieve a bigger goal of mitigating the climate crisis. Still, what drove me to the Amazon was not so much a human concern as an environmental one.

¹ The on-line spat between Bolsonaro and the French President Macron added fuel to the issue, and the recent fire of the Notre-Dame de Paris drew analogies between destruction of “human” and “natural” heritage.

Against this background, I paid my first visit to the Karipuna people's forest village that October. The encounter was a product of half-chance, half-necessity: I was looking for an Indigenous community most affected by deforestation, seeking external support and partnership to protect the forest, and a couple of local experts recommended the Karipuna, among several other groups in Rondônia. So there I was, in Porto Velho, the capital of the state of Rondônia, accompanied by their headman, Andre Karipuna, and a guide specialized in the area. As our rented jeep departed the city and hit the BR-364 highway through endless pastures, I was struck by a bizarre sense of not seeing any of the lushness I had imagined in a region that, according to the map, belonged to the Brazilian Legal Amazon (Amazônia legal). Most of the landscape resembled an exotic, barren golf course, with cattle, soy, and sporadic palm trees.

After almost three hours, my guide pointed out to the distant horizon, saying, “You see the forest over there? When you've got that green, you have Indians.” Andre, the chief, nodded in approval. Indeed, the path to the Karipuna's forest was like approaching a green oasis in the middle of a desert full of dusty roads, barren pastures, and *fazendas*: the polar opposite image of a tropical rainforest. That was the moment when the question struck me: “How come this forest survived? If it is thanks to the Indigenous people, *how* did it happen, exactly?” This thesis is my answer to this question, by thinking with the Karipuna people. It is also a quest to understand how humans and forests are entangled in a way that they cannot be explained separately.

Acknowledgments

First and foremost, I wish to thank the Karipuna people and community members, especially my interlocutors—Aripã, Rita, Katiká, Batiti, Adriano, Andre, Andressa, Eric, Railander, Carlos, Manoel, Leni Paula, Ivanilsa, Raimundo, Ivanildo, and Marques Figueirôa, among others—for their generosity and patience in dealing with my presence and endless questions. I am grateful to my supervisor, Antonio Maria Pusceddu, for your openness and for always encouraging me to find my own way of thinking, and also to my co-supervisor, Andrea Oliveira Castro, for your close readings, advice, and thought-provoking feedback. I am grateful to Wesley Nascimento dos Santos for being available and sharing expert knowledge of the Kawahiva language. I am grateful to Emílio Sarde Neto, Amanda Villa Pereira, André Luiz Santos de Souza, Sanha Kim, Chloë Chesney, and Karin Kaufmann for helpful exchanges and feedback, which helped to improve my thoughts. I also want to thank those who helped me conducting this research in so many different ways: Leonil Junior, Adilson Siqueira de Andrade, João Paulo Denófrio, Susana de Matos Viegas, Patrícia Alves de Matos, Rodrigo Lacerda, Edumundo Peggion, Gilberto Azanha, Auxiliadora Sa Leão, Betty Mindlin, Inês Hargreaves, Adnilson Almeida Silva, Adilson Siqueira de Andrade, Ricardo Gilson, Cristiano Alves, Tatiane Checchia, Carolina Rodrigues, José Oswaldo de Paiva, Rafael Ademir, Josélia Gomes Neves, Mary Gonçalves Fonseca, Selmo Cassupá, Luis Cassupá, William Fisher, Caissa Revilla-Minaya, Gard Vangsnes, Bernat Bardagil, Altair Algayer, Amaury Viera, Fabricio Amorim, Maria Vandy, Clevaneide da Costa, André Oliveira, Ivan Canabrava, Edimar Antônio Tozzo, Luis Fernando Cassupá, Neidinha Bandeira, Dora Salvodi, Mauro Rentao, Edson Kayapó, Miguel Vale de Almeida, Manuel João Ramos, Lara Carregã, Isabel Cardana, Miguel Araújo, Hyunjung Kim, Soo Hwan Kim, Heyoon Chung, Nam-see Kim, Alexa Ranaldo, Douglas Santos da Silva, Vanessa Amorim, and Emilio Dantas. Special thanks to Richard Zenith for your friendship and the support from day one of this journey, and also to my family: my parents, Solha, Jahan, Keechang, and my in-laws. My last thanks to my companion Goeun for all the support that is impossible to truly appreciate in words.

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Abstract

Against the backdrop of planetary ecological crises, the indispensable role of Indigenous people around the world in protecting tropical forests and mitigating climate change is increasingly emphasized. Although the people's environmental contributions are widely recognized, empirical studies still struggle to articulate them. This thesis investigates the ways in which Indigenous people coexist with the forest environment, cultivating a mutually thriving, entangled relationship. Focusing on the Karipuna people in Rondônia, and their multifaceted relationship with their forest, now known as the Karipuna Indigenous Land located in the Western Brazilian Amazon, this study aims to improve our understanding of Indigenous contributions to the forest environment. By using coexistence as an analytical lens and viewing the forest as a lifeworld and socio-ecological process in which humans and nonhumans emerge in co-constitutive relations, the research seeks to differentiate its approach from explanatory models that hinge on eco-nobleness, radical alterity, or mechanistic explanations. It employs an ethnographic and holistic approach to examine the intricately intertwined socio-historical, political, and ecological life of the Karipuna people, both within and beyond their forest, which faces daunting external pressures. As the main argument, the thesis foregrounds four particularities of the people—namely, their targeted resistance movement against the forces of deforestation and dispossession; their characteristic openness to the Other; their facet of not doing certain things (*adynamia*); the collective's internal heterogeneity—, which might be considered as “background conditions,” as key factors conducive to human-forest coexistence and responsible for their remarkable co-survival amid innumerable adversities.

Keywords: coexistence; resistance; human forest relationship; Indigenous; Karipuna, Amazon

Resumo

No contexto das crises ecológicas planetárias, tem-se vindo a destacar cada vez mais o papel indispensável dos povos indígenas de todo o mundo na proteção das florestas tropicais e na mitigação das alterações climáticas. Embora as contribuições ambientais destes povos sejam amplamente reconhecidas, os estudos empíricos ainda têm dificuldade em articulá-las. Esta tese investiga as formas como os povos indígenas coexistem com o ambiente florestal, cultivando uma relação de interdependência mútua e próspera. Focando-se no povo Karipuna de Rondônia e na sua relação multifacetada com a floresta, agora conhecida como Terra Indígena Karipuna, localizada na Amazônia Ocidental brasileira, este estudo visa melhorar a nossa compreensão das contribuições indígenas para o ambiente florestal. Ao utilizar a coexistência como lente analítica e encarar a floresta como um mundo-de-vida (*lifeworld*) e um processo socioecológico no qual humanos e não-humanos surgem em relações co-constitutivas, esta investigação procura diferenciar a sua abordagem de modelos explicativos que se baseiam na nobreza ecológica, na alteridade radical ou em explicações mecanicistas. A investigação emprega uma abordagem etnográfica e holística para examinar a vida sociohistórica, política e ecológica intimamente entrelaçada do povo Karipuna, tanto dentro como fora da sua floresta, que enfrenta pressões externas avassaladoras. Como argumento principal, a tese destaca quatro particularidades do povo—nomeadamente, o seu movimento de resistência contra as forças da desflorestação e da desapropriação; a sua característica abertura ao Outro; a sua faceta de não fazer certas coisas (*adynamia*); a heterogeneidade interna do coletivo—, que podem ser consideradas como «condições de fundo», como fatores-chave propícios à coexistência entre o homem e a floresta e responsáveis pela sua notável co-sobrevivência perante inúmeras adversidades.

Palavras-chave: coexistência; resistência; relação humano-floresta; indígenas; Karipuna; Amazônia

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Orthography and translation

All non-English translation (Portuguese, Kawahiva) is my translations unless otherwise indicated. I use italics to distinguish non-English words, except proper names, and the abbreviation “Kw” is used to indicate that the source language is Kawahiva. Spelling conventions of Kawahiva vary, not only among its speakers (with notable differences among groups) but also among researchers writing about the people. The orthography used in this thesis is largely based on the phonetic system for Kawahiva used by dos Santos (2024b, 2019), while also taking into account the orthography used by Betts (2012) and some of my Karipuna interlocutors. The following are some notable pronunciations in Kawahiva.

nh	/ɲ/ like <i>aman<u>h</u>ã</i> in Portuguese
k	/k/ like <i><u>c</u>asa</i> in Portuguese
g	/g/ like <i>game</i> in English
h	/h/ like <i><u>h</u>at</i> in English
j	/j/, /dʒ/ like <i>joy</i> in English
ã	/ã/ but /ɲã/ in the sequence <gã>
u	/u/ like <i><u>u</u>so</i> in Portuguese
y	/i/ (link to pronounce)
,	/ʔ/ light pause, glottal stop

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Introduction

A resisting forest

“How scientists debunked one of conservation’s most influential statistics,” reads the headline of an article in the *Guardian*, September 2024, covering a recent publication in *Nature* (Fernández-Llamazares et al., 2024). The statistic in question claims “Indigenous peoples comprise less than 5% of the world's population but occupy 22% of global land area, which is home to 80% of the world's biodiversity” (Fa et al., 2020; Fletcher et al., 2021; Garnett et al., 2018). Dubbed as the “5-20-80” reference, it gained explosive traction not only in academia (more than 186 citations in peer-reviewed scientific papers) but also across policy papers of prominent institutions such as the UN, and discourses of Indigenous activists, especially in international arenas where key Indigenous agendas are discussed, to argue that Indigenous people are the best guardians of forests and biodiversity.² The publication exposed this widespread reference as a “baseless statistic” unsupported by any data. The authors stressed that “the 80% claim is based on two assumptions: that biodiversity can be divided into countable units, and that these can be mapped spatially at the global level. Neither feat is possible” (Fernández-Llamazares et al., 2024). For those who pay close attention to Indigenous advocacy, especially in the Amazonia, the implications of this “controversy” were not insignificant, since recently, Indigenous contributions to forest preservation and biodiversity have been one of the strongest points to justify and rally support for their land tenures in the world's most biodiverse rainforest. Although the authors emphasized that their criticism should not “detract from the essential and verifiably considerable part that Indigenous Peoples play in the conservation of the planet’s biodiversity” (ibid.), the incident revealed the challenge of conceptualizing that “considerable part.” In fact, although it has become commonplace to acknowledge that Indigenous ways of life contribute to conservation,³ there is less consensus than meets the eye about what that contribution entails. This resonates with the question that struck me when I visited the Karipuna people in their Amazon forest village. I was in awe that a small group of people managed to resist the formidable pressures of deforestation, but I was unable to articulate

² This phenomenon was also called “the rule of Indigenous environments—where there are Indigenous peoples with a homeland, there are still biologically rich environments” *Nietschmann (1992, p. 3)*. It was also corroborated by the mapping initiative by the World Wildlife Fund and *Terralingua* (Harmon, 1996).

³ Which is a considerable progress from the previously influential perspective of “fortress conservation” (Brockington, 2002), whose proponents accuse Indigenous people of environmental destruction.

exactly what they did to achieve this feat. Although quantitative research is helpful for grasping the extent of Indigenous contribution, the path to quantifying it is fraught with challenges, as the aforementioned case shows, and it also offers limited insight at the human level. Ethnographically grounded, qualitative approaches can be no less effective to illustrate particular human conditions that allow forest preservation, and this is what this thesis will try to do: by analyzing the multifarious ways in which the Karipuna people's struggle to defend their land, I aim to articulate how a group of Indigenous people contribute to human coexistence with the forest and its many nonhuman inhabitants.

*

In 2023, I was in a bus leaving Porto Velho, accompanied by a Karipuna friend who was heading to Ji-paraná to meet his cousin. As our bus passed through vast cattle pastures, I asked him, “What do you see in that landscape?” His answer: “Destruction.” That single word was enough to encapsulate his view, as an Indigenous person facing the pressure of deforestation in his land. As for the owner of those pastures, the landscape might evoke words like “development,” “prosperity,” or “profit.” If a “landscape tells, or *is*, a story” (Ingold, 1993, p. 152), the same landscape tells different stories, or *are* entirely different landscapes, for different people. Fairhead and Leach's influential research, *Misreading the African Landscape* (1996), showed that an erroneous interpretation of a landscape can mislead policy: African policymakers were accusing the land's inhabitants of driving forest degradation, when the people were actually contributing to conserving it. “That a landscape could become subject to such conflicting readings invites—even demands—consideration of the worlds which have generated them.” If Fairhead and Leach showed who and what was responsible for deforestation, my objective is to understand who is responsible for the forest being alive, considering the worlds that generate a particular landscape called a forest. It starts with reading the landscape, with those “who dwell therein, who inhabit its places and journey along the paths connecting them” (Ingold 1993, p. 156)—particularly the Karipuna people in the Brazilian Amazon.

My Karipuna friend, who saw destruction in the rural landscape, what does he see in his own forest, the landscape he inhabits? I can say that he sees a “taskscape” (ibid.). It is where he was born and where he has spent most of his life organizing his socio-economic life. Yet there is another huge task always at the back of his mind: dealing with invasion. The Karipuna's current

struggle—what they call *luta*—is not about calling for demarcation of their land: that much is already done. It is about the constant pressure of the surrounding society that they must fight against: land grabbers, illegal loggers, other invaders, all trying to take away their land (and resources) to convert into exploitable commodities. Their struggle is to defend it, not as an empty space but as a living, standing forest (*floresta em pé*), as they say. And the Karipuna have a name for this struggle: “resistance.” Andre, the young headman of the community, told me, “Resistance is what we always do. We stay strong. We fight,” adding that he had chosen the name when they launched a territorial defense campaign in partnership with two NGOs (Figure 1). The Karipuna frequently use the term to describe their struggle in public discourses, often portraying themselves as the “people of resistance” (*povo de resistência*). In his public lectures, Andre's brother and another Karipuna leader, Adriano, expounded: “Existing requires resistance”; “We resist to exist!”⁴ This resistance is not for existing alone, but to exist as a group, with their land, with their forest.



Figure 1. A drone photo of the “Resistance” campaign launched in 2018. (Copyright: 2018 Greenpeace)

Satellite images show how the Karipuna's forest survived pressures of the expansion of deforestation surrounding the area from 1985 until 2020 (Figure 2). The Karipuna's struggle influences my reading of the landscape. Furthermore, considering the “temporality of the landscape” (Ingold, 1993), especially, the historically expanding “commodity frontier” (Moore,

⁴ This phrase is used by many other Indigenous activists.

2015) fiercely converting forest into cattle pasture, trees into timber, Indigenous lifeworld into salable plots, the static overtones of “survival” sounds like an understatement: it seems like the forest actively *resisted* formidable pressures of land conversion encircling it. In the sense of describing something as “water-resistant,” the land appears to be “deforestation-resistant,” impermeable to the expansion.

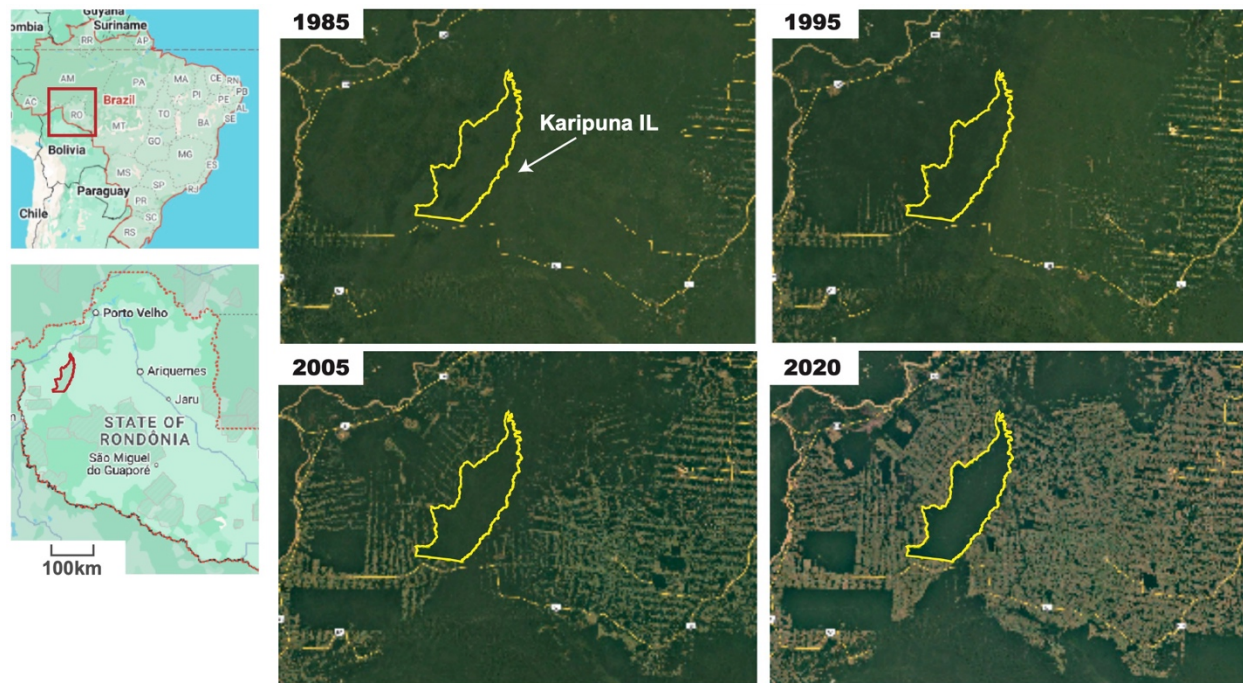


Figure 2. Deforestation around the Karipuna Indigenous Land (yellow outline) between 1985 and 2020. (Source: Landsat/Copernicus via Google Earth, redesigned by the author from an image in <https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/>)

The more I delve into the matter, the more it seems that reading a landscape through the people's struggle is not just one interpretation among many. The resistance of this forest *cannot* be explained without the resistance of these people. As we will see (Chapter 1 and 4), there is sufficient evidence to say that the people's presence is *the* single biggest enabler of this resistance, especially when we compare their forest to the adjacent area, the Jaci Paraná Extractive Reserve, which is also legally protected but completely deforested. Without its Indigenous inhabitants, the Karipuna's forest would have, in all likelihood, met the same fate. Just as the expansion of the commodity frontier is a product of capitalist modernity, the resistance of the forest is not merely a product of natural or environmental processes but also a result of a socio-political process whose protagonists are the Karipuna.

The people's presence in the region harkens back centuries, but reliable records emerge around the 19th century. Pressures to develop the area—starting with the construction of railways and roads, followed by rubber extraction and government-sponsored migration—began to intensify around that period. It was the conflicts between the Karipuna and these migrant settlers that prompted the authorities to issue a prohibition on entry to the forest in 1988,⁵ which led to the area's demarcation a decade later (1998). Suffering numerous raids and massacres from the white people, and subsequent deadly epidemics introduced by them, the Karipuna narrowly escaped being wiped off the map. At their lowest point, in the 1980s, there were only five adult survivors. Many believed they would join the path of innumerable other Indigenous people who disappeared behind history, barely documented. Yet the Karipuna made a remarkable comeback, now numbering nearly 60 people, safeguarding their land amid daunting challenges. If these people have depended on the forest to survive and thrive since time immemorial, at least since the past half-century, this particular forest—the demarcated area of 153,000 hectares, aptly named “the Karipuna Indigenous Land” after the people—became so heavily dependent on its human inhabitants that, without their presence, it could face imminent demise at any time. Such strong interdependency allows us to say that the people and the forest share a common fate, existing together in an **entangled** way. The objective of this thesis is to understand this entangled relationship through the people's resistance and articulate Indigenous contributions to forest conservation.

Resist to exist *with*

As my fieldwork progressed, however, resistance proved to have limited explanatory power as an analytical lens for the case. I found that the identification of people's resistance was increasingly obscured by preconceived notions of it. My observations tended to prioritize the people's easily observable activities directly related to their struggle, while unaccounting for what did not seem to fit the category of resistance, which was a huge part of their everyday life. Such ethnographical flattening risked simplifying or essentializing the Karipuna's social life and the reality they face. Again, I relied on the Karipuna people's thoughts. Adriano had said the Karipuna “resist to exist.” If resistance describes their struggle, its purpose is existence, which is not about existing alone but

⁵ By decree PP 1093/1988, due to the need to guarantee the physical and territorial integrity of the Karipuna and other isolated Indigenous people there (CIMI, 1998).

to exist with the forest: not a mono-existence but a co-existence. So, it will not be a stretch to paraphrase that the Karipuna “resist to *coexist*,” especially with their forest land. If we focus on the “*with*,” and read the landscape of Karipuna's resistance, vis-à-vis the pressures of deforestation, as an expression of their will to exist together with the forest, we can view things with a slightly different awareness. Imagine a Karipuna person who might not necessarily be “resisting” or even doing anything in particular to grab the ethnographer's attention, yet *is* there, existing with the forest. This person is likely not just barely surviving, but may also be enacting different commitments (political, ecological, etc.). In fact, many Karipuna think that staying in the forest village itself is one of the most fundamental acts that contribute to their struggle. Paying attention to this “being-with(-place)” opens one's horizons to view the people's struggle as a process of espousing different ways of *coexistence*, in which resistance is one of its multiple dimensions.

To some observers, coexistence and resistance may seem distant, if not antonymous, notions. While coexistence evokes images of openness and inclusivity for others, resistance elicits opposition and refusal. In fact, the two common ways of describing Amerindians, to whom the Karipuna people belong, may seem in contrast. On the one hand, the Amerindians, whose societies' “foundation (or lack thereof) is the relationship to others and not self-identity” (Viveiros de Castro, 2011, p. 17), are characterized by their “openness to the Other” (Lévi-Strauss, 1995, xvii; Vilaça, 2014, p. S322, 2015, p. 16; Viveiros de Castro, 2011, p. 16) or the “very openness at the core of their existence” (Oakdale & Course, 2014, p. 24). On the other hand, Amerindians are widely known as fiercely resistant to some kind of otherness (e.g., colonialism, territorial dispossession), hence the popular phrase “500 years of resistance,” widely adopted by Indigenous movements. However, if one delves deeper, it will not take long to realize that any “discrepancy” between resistance and openness exists only on the surface. For the Karipuna, these two different ways of organizing life are imbricated with one another. If resistance is the umbrella term to articulate their struggle against the forces of deforestation, coexistence describes their *modus vivendi* that constitutes everyday life and enables their social reproduction. Coexistence is not only the purpose of resistance, but also what enables it. To be coextensive with the forest, they need to coexist with human and nonhuman entities and forge alliances or partnerships for their struggle. All this requires the enactment of different modes of life to coexist *with* and *in* the forest. In short, they resist to (co)exist and simultaneously need to (co)exist to resist. “Coexistence with the forest” and “resistance against deforestation” are not just flip sides of the same coin, but also constitute “intra-

active” (Barad, 2007) dynamics in an entangled relationship. Borrowing the terms⁶ from forest ecology, I would summarize the reading of the Karipuna landscape as follows: while the “over-story” is resistance, the “under-story” is much about coexistence.

Modes of human-forest coexistence

I define coexistence as the various forms of “being-together-in-place” (Howitt, 2006, p. 49) and “being-together-in-time,” in ways that are amenable to human and nonhuman otherness. If resistance is one of the multiple dimensions that shape Karipuna's coexistence with the forest, what are the other dimensions? Based on my ethnography with the people, I identified four⁷ modes of existence that *enact*, or are *conducive* to, human-forest coexistence. To coexist with the forest, people need to engender lifeways that are **enmeshed** in the forest; they need to **resist** specific pressures that complicate such coexistence; when resistance is not the answer, they need to **cope** with the conditions to secure the basis of survival; sometimes, they also need *not* to engage and **let** specific things **be**. All these modes of existence enable human-forest coexistence.

1. *Enmeshment*: pursuing, approaching, and willing engagement and negotiation with human or nonhuman others who are deemed helpful or useful to the existence in and with the forest; openness, hospitality, and expression of preference toward these actors; interacting, mingling, and getting entangled with them. [MESH]
2. *Resistance*: confronting or fending off enemies; opposing, refusing, struggling or holding ground against certain people, activity, pressure or power that threaten human/forest coexistence; enduring, being unaffected by hardship or adversity. [RES]

⁶ Overstory (canopy) is the upper layer or strata of a forest; understory consists of vegetation growing beneath the overstory.

⁷ This is different from the four modes of coexistence proposed by Nechansky (2016): conflict, hierarchy, independence in niches (no-interaction), cooperation. Since coexistence is neither always peaceful nor synonymous with an absence of conflict, conflict is included in my scheme, under the category of “resistance” or “coping.” Although “hostile” or “functional” coexistence exists, the degree of the conflict matters. At the minimum, neither party must avoid engaging in activities that attempt to destroy or eradicate the other to constitute coexistence. I do not view total war or submission as forms of coexistence, since they actively manifest the very denial and undermining of it. These are better understood as the opposite of coexistence, such as “othercidal” war (see Chapter 6) or slavery, which involves one party completely dominating or devaluing another.

3. *Coping*: managing, overcoming, dealing with challenges by accommodating or adjusting oneself to live in and with the forest; being flexible and compromising; reluctant acceptance or acquiescence. [COP]
4. *Letting be*: letting, allowing, or giving way that are conducive to human-forest coexistence; non-confrontation, non-interference; setting aside, deferring, withdrawing, leaving something unsolved/unaddressed; not doing or omitting; tolerating, not trying to dominate or eradicate others. [LET]

For instance, a Karipuna person using shamanism to negotiate with nonhuman animals for a better hunt, is enacting *enmeshment*; a Karipuna leader denouncing the government to urgently enforce law and hold the illegal operators in their land accountable, is *resisting*; when a Karipuna begrudgingly accepts cohabitation with white people for lack of a better choice, it is *coping*; a Karipuna leaving “pest” animals foraging in his garden instead of trying to eradicate them is *letting* the nonhumans *be*. The cumulative effect of these four modes enables human-forest coexistence. Through ethnography, I observe and trace thinkings and doings that enact different modes of existence conducive to the Karipuna's coexistence with the forest. I will use [TAGS]⁸ with a three- or four-letter code enclosed in brackets to indicate such modes whenever the respective enactments are explicit. Yet coexistence cannot be reduced to a simple sum-total of these modes. As I suggest the four modes based on my ethnographical understanding during a specific timeframe, the list is not exhaustive; there can be other modes or “in-between” ones. Neither does the classification suggest that every enactment of coexistence can be neatly classified into one of these categories. When a feature of a particular enactment gains prominence, it can be classified as “enmeshment,” “coping,” “resistance,” or “letting be,” but in practice, enactments usually display multiple modes existing together in compounded ways. So, the composition of each mode depends on the dynamics and proportions of the enactments that constitute it; therefore, it is susceptible to change. That being said, these four modes will serve as guidelines for articulating the enactments of Karipuna's human-forest coexistence, spanning their social, political, historical, and ecological life.

⁸ The idea of tagging draws from the method of Bruno Latour's project: *An Inquiry into Modes of Existence* (Latour, 2013).

Beyond compartmentalization

The literature on coexistence spans various areas. In the social sciences, coexistence research typically examines how different groups live together,⁹ whereas in the natural sciences, coexistence studies are emerging within a vast body of literature on human-wildlife interaction that has focused on conflict.¹⁰ Although both fields share a common concern with resolving conflicts, interethnic and interspecies relations are seldom addressed together. Understanding Indigenous coexistence with the forest requires a holistic approach for various reasons. First, most Indigenous people do not conceptualize nature as external to society, and the Karipuna struggle *against* the expansion of the commodity frontiers grounded in such externalizing logics. “Nature/Society binary”¹¹ is directly implicated in the colossal violence, inequality, and oppression of the modern world; and that the view of Nature as external is a fundamental condition of capital accumulation” (Moore, 2015, p. 14).¹² Considering the historical processes—aptly defined by Malcom Ferdinand (2022) as “modernity’s colonial and environmental double fracture”—which threatens human-forest coexistence, it is necessary to adopt a more encompassing scope. Second, Indigenous coexistence with the forest calls for our attention to the people’s spatial coexistence with their land (and also with the urban environment to a degree), but, as aforementioned, the entangled human-forest relationship is not just an environmental process but also a socio-political one, as the people’s struggle came to predicate the extent of the forest’s resistance. So, analyzing the Karipuna’s political engagement with partners and alliances in public arenas is indispensable. Equally important is to account for the social (interethnic) coexistence with different groups of

⁹ For instance, Coexistence Cultural Coexistence Theory (CCT) draws on the work of Frederik Barth (1956/1965) and John Bennett (J. W. Bennett, 1969/2017), who studied interhuman interactions in shared landscapes.

¹⁰ Coexistence means a “sustainable though dynamic state, where humans and wildlife co-adapt to sharing landscapes and human interactions with wildlife are effectively governed to ensure wildlife populations persist in socially legitimate ways that ensure tolerable risk levels” (N. H. Carter & Linnell, 2016; Pooley et al., 2021). Also see (IUCN et al., 2026).

¹¹ Widely criticized in anthropology, including critiques of the Great divide (Descola, 1994, 2013) and Amerindian ontology as inversion of nature/culture dualism (Viveiros de Castro, 1998); also in human geography (Swyngedouw, 1996), where “co-production of society with nature” (Swyngedouw, 2013, p. 16) was recognized; social-ecological system (SES) studies also consider the separation artificial (Berkes et al., 2000) and adopt frameworks to analyze them conjointly (Schoon & Leeuw, 2015).

¹² For James Moore, Capitalism is neither an economic system, nor a social system, but “a way of organizing nature” and the commodity frontier theory implicates “that nature and ecology do not exist outside of the process of extracting surplus value” (Moore, 2010).

people, the temporal coexistence of modern and traditional lifeways, and the coexistence of different onto-epistemologies.

Yet stressing socio-political dimensions should not exclude the nonhuman domain. It is widely known that Indigenous sociality extends beyond anthropocentric boundaries, and the Karipuna are no exception. Their coexistence with flora and fauna (wildlife), and their spiritual coexistence with nonhuman forest entities, are crucial dimensions that show how the Karipuna deal with otherness. While I do not presuppose a homology in the ways people deal with human and nonhuman others, similar patterns are worth analyzing. In fact, the people's understanding of the forest is an entry point to overcome compartmentalized thinking: just as we can rethink the natural environment (forest) as a social arena, an ecological disaster can be a security (military) crisis, a politico-ethical stance can be an economic (subsistence) strategy, and so forth. All these intricately intertwined dimensions offer reasons to embrace a holistic approach, expanding our focus well beyond a single domain. In this regard, I will often draw on insights from fields outside anthropology that explain coexistence (e.g., conservation biology, philosophy, political ecology, and coexistence studies) and offer their own respectable contributions to understanding this complex relationality. Thinking coexistence through different spheres is not “forcing them together, collapsing important differences between them, or treating them in the same way, rather it means allowing any integral aspects to emerge (by not writing them out before we get started)” (Barad, 2007, p. 25), since “[w]hat is needed is an analysis that enables us to theorize the social and the natural together, to read our best understandings of social and natural phenomena through one another in a way that clarifies the relationship between them” (ibid.).

Rethinking Indigenous contribution

The ultimate objective of thinking about the human-forest relationship through coexistence is to offer an alternative explanation of Indigenous environmental contribution. As an outcome, the contribution is already defined: it is the Karipuna Indigenous Land as a “standing forest” (*floresta em pé*), as the Karipuna explain the desirable state of their forest, which has resisted formidable waves of deforestation thanks to its inhabitants. The contribution in question is about the process: What did the people do (and are doing) to bring about this result? Articulating this facet of contribution requires, first, not only overcoming the popular tropes of the “ecologically noble Indian” (F. Carter, 1986; Elk & Neihardt, 1988), but also recognizing the limits of the academic

explanations (Krech, 1999; Redford, 1991, among others) of it. Since I prefer to present the empirical and ethnographic corpus *before* discussing how my arguments relate to precedent literature, here, I limit myself to briefly summarize the four recurrent ways Indigenous contribution is explained (for an elaborated literature review, see Section Introductions II, III, IV, V, and Conclusion): 1) “**eco-essentialist**”: assuming a certain essence of the people that is inherently benign to the environment, such as “eco-nobleness,” in historical continuation to their indigeneity; 2) “(radical) **otherizationist**”: attributing the contribution to a “radical alterity” (or “incommensurability”) enacted by Indigenous onto-epistemology or Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK); 3) “**mechanist**”: articulating it through an identifiable mechanism of environmental resource management; 4) “**epiphenomenalist**”: attributing it to chance or lack. All these strands certainly have merits, but they also have limitations. The 1st strand risks essentializing Indigenous peoples as static or monolithic agents; the 2nd strand can be misleading if a presupposed alterity does not reflect the reality of the people; the 3rd strand is prone to fail to account for contributions that do not pertain to a visible set of practices that evidences a mechanism; the 4th strand risks devaluing contribution by assessments fraught with ethnocentric biases. These four strands also risk misreading the landscape by overlooking the historical and socio-political drivers.

Granted, this is a simplification of complex models, but my aim is not to provide a comprehensive literature review; it is to identify an adequate framework for answering a question, grounded in my empirical experience with the Karipuna. Thinking with coexistence can help us to complement, or possibly overcome, the limitations of such views. In the case of Indigenous land tenure, as we briefly examined with the Karipuna, the people's political resistance can be the most direct driver of environmental contributions, yet what drives and enables such resistance can be coexistence, and vice versa.

The second move required to rethink the contribution is reworking on causal explanation. Following the pluralist interpretation of causality which embraces multiple causes (Psillos, 2008) and Barad's (2007) reworking on causal affairs with the concept of “intra-action”¹³ where entities (e.g., forest and its inhabitants) are not separated from their relation, it is possible to establish that

¹³ While interaction presupposes the existence of pre-defined entities independent to each other, Barad's neologism “intra-action” denotes the co-constitutive nature of entangled entities that emerge from their dynamic relationship.

“cause and effect emerge through intra-actions. Agential intra-actions are causal enactments” (Barad 2007, p. 176) and “causality is recast as entangled” (Everth & Gurney, 2022, p. 51). Focusing on such entanglements allows us to identify the “entanglement of background conditions (i.e., the context which is not considered causally relevant at a particular moment) with causal processes (i.e., how particular elements interact as part of causal processes)” (Hertz et al. 2025, p. 3), and foreground what usually tends to fade as background conditions, contexts, or configurations, which are marginalized as having no effect on the phenomenon in question or worse (ibid., p. 8), dismissed as “epiphenomena.” By tracing these entangled conditions in their particularity, we can offer a different explanation. Again, drawing from the insight of Fairhead and Leach (1996), who argued that “environmental management ... depends—and has always depended—less on community-level authorities and socio-cultural *organizations* than on the *sum of a much more diffuse set of relations; a constellation more than a structure* [emphasis added]” (1996, p. 285), it is this constellation, or diffuse set of human-forest, inter-species and inter-ethnic relations which I aim to trace.

Besides, to offer an alternative explanation of Indigenous contributions to the forest, we should also pay attention to how we conceptualize it. For instance, the term “environmental management” presupposes or evokes an intended, designed practice or intervention. Likewise, whenever we credit someone for a contribution, we tend to articulate it in the active voice. Tim Ingold criticizes “the assumption that whatever goes on in the world is the effect of a cause, namely the ‘agency’ that produced it, ... which is embedded in the grammatical categories,” where “[t]he subject acts, the object has an action done to it,” under the “orthodox distinction between active and passive voices of the verb” (as cited in, Meloni et al., 2018, p. 247). In such orthodoxy, the only way to value something is to describe it as a *proactive* subject, possessor of full agency, and *producer* of results. Hence, the human (subject) acts, and the forest (object) has an action done to it. In this model, the task is simple: identify the action, for instance, credit someone who actively plants trees. It is equally easy to identify a negative contribution: discredit someone who actively cuts trees. Such an active-passive model, however, can hardly account for other, less observable actions or non-actions (not-doings) and does not speak to the ways in which many Indigenous people contribute to the forest, which is neither designing forest management plans and executing them, nor is it passively leaving forests untouched so that they form purely by themselves. Indigenous forest inhabitants engage *in* co-constitutive processes; both shaping the forest and

being shaped by it. This is corroborated by numerous studies (Clement et al., 2015; Heckenberger et al., 2003; Schmidt et al., 2023) that demonstrate profound human impacts on the composition of the Amazon forest dating back to the pre-Columbian era, debunking the previously common view of the “pristine” forest. Still, “the size and complexity of pre-1492 Indigenous societies in the Amazon are hotly debated” (Goldberg et al., 2024, p. 1), producing a range of expert interpretations. I contend that taking the position of the other extreme to argue that the entire Amazon was manufactured and all “produced” by humans (Mann, 2006), not only lacks evidence¹⁴ but also relapses into the active/passive binary, reinforcing the “agential bias” that validates agency insofar as it fits active, observable, preferably intentional, action. This is a view I also intend to avoid. Such a view, “if taken literally, depicts a simple dichotomy” (Bush & Silman, 2007) of pristine/man-made. I agree that a more nuanced “middle path” (ibid.)—viewing parts of Amazon with heavy anthropogenic impact and other parts with little to no human influence as coexisting—is possible.¹⁵ More importantly, what is often left out of these debates is the urgent question “to what extent will biodiversity persist in regions that are currently being affected by deforestation and degradation” (Barlow et al., 2012, p. 48). Neither side of the debate denies the existence and power of a sustainable form of human *participation* in the forest's constitutive process, which underpins this thesis. Our task is to articulate this contribution in a way that is *not* subsumed by the active/passive binary.

Forest as a verb, in the middle voice

To avoid such a binary and narrow attribution of agency, we can benefit from the *middle voice*, which is neither passive nor active. According to Emile Benveniste, what distinguishes active voice from middle voice is the *position* of the subject, in relation to the process denoted by the verb (Benveniste, 1971, p. 147-9). In the middle voice, the verb indicates a process in which the subject is *inside* it; in the active voice, the verb indicates a process in which the subject is *outside* of it. As the process is clearly accomplished by the subject, the active voice separates the doer from the deed. Whereas “[i]n the middle voice, what I do is being done in me. In other words, I am inside

¹⁴ Amazonian Dark Earths account for a tiny fraction of Amazonia's total area (Barlow et al., 2012); Denevan's assessment of pre-Columbian peoples reads: “sometimes they did; sometimes they didn't” have sustainable resource management (Denevan, 1992, cited in Barlow et al., 2012, p. 47).

¹⁵ Not over-generalizing is also important since our case concerns the Western Amazon where pre-Columbian population was likely sparser than central and eastern Amazon (McMichael et al., 2012). Yet one must be cautious to make any conclusions since “many regions of Amazonia are still on the ‘classificatory-descriptive’ stage ... particularly acute for certain regions, e.g., the Western Amazon” (Iriarte, 2024, p. 236).

the action, inside the verb, not in front of it. The action is my becoming, my life” (Ingold, as cited in Meloni et al., 2018, p. 247). As linguistic history shows, the currently predominant passive voice emerged later than the middle voice. If we reverse this trend, resetting the comparative voice pair from “active vs. passive” to “active vs. middle,” we can view the relation between doers and deeds in a different light. The language emerging in the opposition between the active and the middle voice does not foreground intention or will, as Koichiro Kokubu (2017/2019, p. 115) points out.¹⁶

Therefore, I propose using the word “forest” as a verb,¹⁷ in the middle voice, to better articulate the Indigenous human-forest relationship and contribution. The transitive verb “*to forest*” already exists, meaning “to cover with trees or forest” (Merriam-Webster, 2025), but it warrants expansion. It may seem tautological to say that a forest *forests*, but what does it mean when I say, “a human forests”? Foresting, in the middle voice, denotes the subject being *inside* the process of forest constitution, in entangled relations, frequently exemplified by Indigenous people. Whereas deforesting, in the active voice, denotes the subject being outside the process, where s/he is undoing the forest, exemplified by the deforesters. So, depending on the subject's position vis-à-vis the process, humans can forest in the middle voice or deforest in the active voice. Forest as a verb in the middle voice can be redefined as *all the doings and not-doings conducive to the process of engendering forests, enacted within, or in the middle of it, in an immersed way*. Saying that a Karipuna *forests* is different from saying the person is “living in harmony with nature” or is an “environmentalist.” It allows us to view a forest and its human inhabitants emerging in co-constitutive “intra-actions” (Barad, 2017)—a constantly transformative phenomenon where “phenomena are the ontological inseparability of agentially intra-acting components” (ibid., p. 33) and “relata do not preexist relations” (ibid., p. 140). What becomes important is their concrete enactments and positions regarding the process. To be a subject of foresting, one need not be active nor passive, but must be *within* the process, becoming the place where the process takes place, i.e.,

¹⁶ Citing Hannah Arendt's observation that “the ancient Greeks did not know of the will” (cited in Koichiro, 2017/2019, p. 120) nor had a word for it.

¹⁷ “We should replace our nouns for naming things with verbs: ‘to stone,’ ‘to tree,’ ‘to mountain,’ ‘to human.’ At once the world we inhabit, and that we share with so many other things, no longer appears ready-cut, into things of this sort or that, along the lines of a classification. Instead, we find ourselves pitched into a world in which things are ever differentiating from one another along the folds and creases of their formation. Everything has— or, better, is—the story of its differentiation.” (Ingold, 2020, p. 7)

being in the position of both shaping and being shaped. If what I do to the forest is also being done to me, foresting is my becoming, my life.

Other conceptual clarification

In continuation, I clarify some of the concepts I frequently use throughout the thesis.

Forest

Using “forest” as a verb means understanding that a forest is more than just a space with a bunch of trees in it. Agreeing with Eduardo Kohn's “Amazonian notion of the forest, as a vast ecology of communicative selves [which] discloses aspects of the living world our inanimate idea of nature fails to capture” (2022, p. 402), I define forest as a phenomenon and process of engendering life, encompassing the spatial, temporal, material and immaterial dimensions. Although deforestation is widely understood as a socio-ecological phenomenon or process that presupposes human participation, its antonym, “forestation,” comes across as less familiar and is not necessarily considered as a process entailing human agency. Forestry terms divide “forestation”¹⁸ and “afforestation,” understood as anthropogenic management, from “forest formation,” considered a purely natural phenomenon. For the Karipuna, the forest is both natural and social, unseparated from human presence: it is a world, or, more precisely, a “lifeworld” (Ingold, 2000) or a “lived world” (Gow, 2001; Viegas, 2007), where humans and forest beings emerge in co-constitutive intra-actions (Barad, 2007).

Ontology

I understand ontology as theories and questions of being and reality, which is an “account of what there is” (Lloyd, 2012, p. 59) and “investigation and theorization of diverse experiences and understandings of the nature of being itself” (Scott, 2013, p. 859). Often traced back to Hallowell's (1960) articulation of alterity and difference of Indigenous people, on which the proponents of the “Ontological Turn” ascribe larger significance (Graeber, 2015, p.19), ontology is now widely appropriated “as a replacement for the notion of culture” (Vilaça, 2015, p. 3) and extended to broader contexts, such as in political ontology, which focuses on “conflicts involving different assumptions about 'what exists'” (Blaser, 2013, p. 547), whether it is a metaphysical entity, animal, plant, or ecosystem. Although the ontologists' contribution to opposing the anthropological

¹⁸ Defined as “tree planting” or “the process of restoring damaged forests or growing forests on currently unforested land, which includes forest restoration, reforestation, and afforestation” (Hayman, 2024).

tendency to “reduce other people’s cosmopraxis to so many ‘worldviews’” (Viveiros de Castro 2021, p. 395) or “belief systems” should be fully recognized, the reification of ontology and its blurry boundary with reality (and culture) should be constantly monitored (see Carrithers et al., 2010; Graeber, 2015). In the thesis, I do not automatically assign a determined ontology to a group of people, nor assume a one-ontology-to-one-group correspondence; the emphasis is on “explor[ing] who agrees with whom and on what” (Ross, 2023, p.2) on a case-by-case basis, within and across people, and even an individual. Also, the boundaries between ontology and epistemology (understood as the theory of knowing) are not viewed as stable but rather “entangled” as a “material-discursive phenomena” (Barad, 2007, p. 43: “question[ing] the traditional Western philosophical belief that ontology and epistemology are distinct concerns”). By way of stressing we, as a part of the world, never obtain knowledge outside from it, I adopt Barad’s neologism “onto-epistemology,” which is the “study of practices of knowing *in* [emphasis added] being” (ibid., p. 185) where “knowing is a material practice of engagement as part of the world in its differential becoming” (ibid., p. 90). Onto-epistemology is not something that is automatically or inherently given, but contingent upon enactment and commitment.

Enactment

Enactment is the “praxiographic” process by which realities are brought into existence through practices and techniques, rather than being fixed, pre-existing objects, following Annemarie Mol’s employment of the term (2002). Mol deliberately chose the term instead of “performance” to avoid its conceptual baggage, including the Goffmanian (1956/2021) connotation of a backstage setting “where the reality is hiding” (Mol, 2002, p. 32). In cognitive science, enactment, or “enaction” (Varela et al., 1992), is already widely employed to explain the co-constitutive relation between organism and its environment: “Organisms do not passively receive information from their environments ... [C]ognitive systems ... participate in the generation of meaning through their bodies and action often engaging in transformational and not merely informational interactions; *they enact a world*” (Stewart et al., 2014, p. 39). In both definitions, the subject of enactment can be both human and nonhuman: the key of shifting to enacting is to preserve the dynamic and instability of enacting, without reifying it into a static object, so “that the present itself is and remains unstable. There is a here and now, in which ‘doing’ happens, but it is ‘not’ explained by what went before—there are patterns and routines, but there is also always the possibility of surprise” (Mol in Martin et al., 2018, p. 297). Although the usage of enactment in

this thesis is mainly in line with Mol's employment, I expand it to include certain non-actions or not-doings, in the sense that it can also bring about a particular outcome or reality. For instance, not waging war (or a *ceasefire*, literally) can enact peace (Fry et al., 2021); not logging forests can enact conservation of its biodiversity (Fedrowitz et al., 2014), etc.

Methodological considerations

This research is the result of accompanying the Karipuna's struggle from 2019 to 2026. Most of the sources cited in the text are drawn from my ethnographic materials produced during approximately eight months in total (three months in 2022 and 2023; almost one month in 2024 and 2025 each) of multi-sited ethnography in their village, *Panorama*, and the nearest city, Porto Velho, where the Karipuna frequently stay. It includes ethnographic materials from shorter but intensive periods in Lisbon (2022) and Brasília (2023), where key activities took place, and also an auto-ethnography (Chapter 8). These are combined with “personal documents”¹⁹ and “life histories” (Grimshaw, 2020; Langness & Frank, 1981; Zeitlyn, 2008), which I collected, to understand the construction of temporality and historicity of the actors. The temporal scope of the study contours the current Karipuna group's lifespan, spanning roughly three generations, marked by coexisting temporalities or “plurality of times that exist side by side” (Little, 2001, p. 2). The life history of the elders covers from the late 1950s or early 60s (when the elders are estimated to have been born) until today. So, although the Karipuna's coexistence with their currently demarcated forested land likely dates back centuries, our scope largely spans the past half-century.

Unfortunately, the Karipuna still remain vastly understudied, as the existing literature and archives,²⁰ as well as background documentation from earlier periods of the Kawahiva people, are hampered by scant records and limited precedent studies. The lack of scientific literature on the fauna and flora of the forest in question also limits research aimed at gaining a better grasp of the nonhuman side. Due to insufficient data on the forest, the actual effects of the Karipuna are examined through their generated impact, drawing on qualitative ethnographic data. Inquiries into

¹⁹ A record, not necessarily in written form, that refers to “any expressive production of the individual that can be used to throw light on his view of himself, his life situation, or the state of the world as he understands it, at some point in time or over time” (Oakdale, 2007, p. 3; Watson & Watson-Franke, 1985, p. 2).

²⁰ In the academic milieu, besides a geography PhD thesis (Sarde Neto, 2018), MA theses on linguistic analysis (Denófrío, 2014) and oral narrative (Da Silva, 2013), and journal articles on educational history (Neves et al., 2023) and the impacts of hydroelectric plants (Ademir O. A. et al., 2025), there is no published PhD-level anthropological thesis exclusively dedicated to the Karipuna.

the people's past events, historicity, and traditional (ecological) knowledge rely heavily on the oral accounts of the two surviving elders, Katiká and Aripã, who have extensive life experience during this period. Although some of their accounts resemble biographical narratives (Oakdale & Course, 2014), the scope of many accounts extends beyond descriptions of/by an individual. These were complemented by interviews with key non-Indigenous actors (e.g., staff of Indigenous agencies) who were available. Interviews and conversations were nondirective, open-ended, and “person-centered” (Hollan, 2005), emphasizing the interlocutor's emic view by encouraging spontaneity over pressing consistency in details (Langness & Frank, 1981). However, I frequently followed up my interlocutors' comments after a few months or years by reminding the person of their own previous remarks, while acknowledging that opinions can always change.²¹ In this way, I tried to avoid giving the impression of judgment when eliciting accounts in which apparently “contradicting” ideas coexisted.

The language used throughout the research was predominantly Portuguese. Every member of the community speaks Portuguese, while active Kawahiva speakers are limited (only three elders are more fluent in Kawahiva than in Portuguese). When I needed in-depth communication or verbatim understanding from the elders, I sought translation assistance from their family members, who were compensated for the service.²² In these cases, Portuguese served as a pivot language, since every text in the thesis was translated into English (see Orthography and Translation). It is widely agreed that translation exceeds language, as it implies all forms of “social traductions” (Hanks & Severi, 2014, p. 8), which is “itself the basis for understanding” (ibid., p. 3) from which we “constitute our objects and how we make claims about” others (ibid., p. 2). More than just finding equivalent words, translation compares distinct ideas that constitute different worldings.²³ Some Amazonianists highlight the centrality of language (“kin are defined as people who talk in the same language”: Taylor, 2007, p. 162-3, n. 16), or the incommensurable differences between “standard Western conception ... and the native concept” (Vilaça, 2016, p. 5), but just how much of a problem translation poses for each people is highly relative. Among the Karipuna—

²¹ The installation of 24 hours access to internet in the village (since 2022), combined with the younger generation's familiarity with digital media and online communication, enabled complementary remote inquiry such as status-updates, follow-up questioning, and cross-checking. Even when I was unable to pay visit, I maintained regular contact with my interlocutors throughout the years to refresh my knowledge.

²² While the elders understood these more intensive exchanges as a teaching or sharing opportunity, the offsprings considered it as a part-time job and an effort to “rescue culture” (*resgatar cultura*), an expression often used by the Karipuna, apparently influenced by non-Indigenous discourse.

²³ Therefore compels us to think beyond Eurocentric terms that often frame environmental politics (see High, 2025).

especially now, as Portuguese-speaking intermarried families are predominant—kinship is not defined by language, nor do translation concerns arise frequently (unless prompted by researchers). Translation seems less an onto-epistemic concern than one oriented towards practicality. This does not mean, however, that translational issues can be glossed over, nor that notions/concepts of the source language can be assumed to have the same significance in the target language. Rather, key concepts require double-checking and adjustment to avoid misunderstanding (e.g., “story”: in Chapter 3). Yet at the same time, one must be wary of overinterpreting such differences. In cases where I identified certain differences that the Karipuna did not problematize (e.g., translating “God” in Chapter 13), my attention was redirected to how such issues are (*un*)*dealt* with among the people, which pertains to my overall concern with avoiding the exoticization of alterity.

Additional considerations

The current configuration of the Karipuna community, comprising various ethnicities, requires clarification about exactly who I am referring to whenever I describe someone as “Karipuna.” My quick answer is: “those whom the Karipuna consider as Karipuna.” Most Karipuna consider a person Karipuna if their father or mother is considered Karipuna. That is, identifying a continuity and filiation with the historical subgroup of the Kawahiva-speaking people. Although a few people consider only patrilineality legitimate, and another few include non-Karipuna spouses as Karipuna, I follow the aforementioned majority's understanding. Regarding the non-Karipuna members of the community, whom the Karipuna consider “family,” I call them “community members,” adding an adjective “Indigenous” or “non-Indigenous” only when analytically necessary. My main, in-depth Karipuna interlocutors were ten (all adults) and mostly reside inside the Karipuna IL. With another eleven adults, including community members, I maintained average communication.

Another consideration addresses a descriptive and analytical challenge: how to anchor Karipuna's various modes of existence to one side of binary categories (sylvan/urban, nonmodern/modern, active/passive, resistance/non-resistance, etc.), when it is the *in-betweenness* where people's features and dispositions tend to emerge? Also, such movement is not always an oscillation between opposite poles/terminals. From the way the Karipuna organize subsistence and earn a living, to how they mobilize alliances to advance their cause, they do not always oscillate between lifeways but might as well navigate along the in-betweenness itself—“midstreaming,” as

termed by Tim Ingold.²⁴ Such in-betweenness is further accentuated by the people's considerable internal diversity despite their relatively small scale. Given the community's size and characteristics, I find ethnography well suited to describe “within-group heterogeneity.”²⁵ Both in the phase of ethnographical data collection and during the process of representation, I pay heightened attention to plurality and range, trying to be as inclusive as possible of multiple and often contrasting voices, rather than filtering different voices out as “noise” to construct clarity and coherence. However, allowing pluri-vocality is not about going to the other extreme, to over-represent diversity, nor intentionally sacrificing unity when unity is due. For example, the Karipuna's clear consensus concerning their territorial struggle deserves its due representation. I am also aware that giving voice to disagreements or dissents about various issues can produce unexpected, unwanted effects. This is why I anonymize individuals to protect privacy and avoid preconceptions about them whenever there is any perceivable concern, although I was granted permission to use the content and names of my interlocutors.

Chapter summary

This thesis consists of fourteen chapters, organized into five “Parts,” followed by a Conclusion and an Annex. In order to interweave the empirical, ethnographic corpus with the theoretical arguments more tightly, I divided the literature review into four “Section Introductions” (II, III, IV, and V) and added a complementary section (“Positioning the research”) in the Conclusion, instead of placing it in the front as a single chapter. Each Section Introduction is oriented by the four main factors which I identify as responsible for the Karipuna's coexistence with the forest, namely: resistance, openness to the Other, *adynamia* or not-doings, and internal heterogeneity.

For each chapter's title, I used the aforementioned [TAGS] to indicate which type of enactment (among [RES], [MESH], [COP], and [LET]) relates to the chapter's theme, and I ordered them by frequency of appearance so the reader can see which enactment is most prevalent.

In **Part 1** (Overview), I first sketch an outline of the research in Chapter 1, by offering basic historical and demographic information about the Karipuna people and their forested land

²⁴ He distinguishes in “between” and “in-between”: the former “articulates a divided world that is already carved at the joints ... a bridge, a hinge, a connection, an attraction of opposites” (Ingold, 2015, p. 147), while the latter is “a movement of generation and dissolution in a world of becoming where things are not yet given but on the way to being given. ... in the in-between, movement is the primary and ongoing condition” (ibid.).

²⁵ Rather than combining it with quantitative surveys (Revilla-Minaya, 2024; Ross, 2023), in this case.

they inhabit. Chapter 2 offers a panoramic depiction of the Karipuna's contemporary everyday life in their forest village, whose patchy dynamic previews the coexistence of sylvan/urban and Indigenous/non-Indigenous dimensions. Chapter 3 attempts to conceptualize the multifarious significance of coexistence from the Karipuna's point of view, drawing on their characteristic narratives, *nhĩmũa*, combined with the people's interpretations of human-nonhuman boundaries.

Part 2 focuses on the Karipuna's resistance against the forces of deforestation and dispossession (FDD) and the expansive surrounding society. It starts with Chapter 4, which highlights the importance of anchoring physical presence (“staying”) in their struggle amid the increasing need to distribute time/space between the forest and the city. Chapter 5 addresses the Karipuna's most visible, public-facing expression of resistance: their politically organized territorial defense campaign, *luta*, which consists of discursive activities and on-the-ground monitoring to address the daunting issue of rampant invasion. Chapter 6 traces the Karipuna's historical resistance in warfare against various enemies, identifying two types of warfare that are more and less conducive to coexistence, respectively.

Part 3 addresses the Karipuna's openness to the Other, which denotes both a desire and a necessity to incorporate alterity into their social constitution, situated within the wider context of Amerindian scholarship. Chapter 7 describes the Karipuna's turbulent process of accepting and experiencing intensive cohabitation with non-Karipuna people, which, from an Indigenous standpoint, is viewed as a mutual pacification project (“taming the white”) for coexistence. Chapter 8 shows the newly emerged phase of the Karipuna's *luta* against the FDD, where the emphasis of forest protection extends beyond the geographical forest area and Indigenous interests, increasingly appealing to the shared world and common concerns, opening the process of struggle to co-creation with multiple partner-allies. Chapter 9 deals with Karipuna shamanism—without a shaman, yet with distributed agency (“a little bit shaman”)—as cosmological expression of multiplied/augmented coexistence: how the people *people* their world with nonhuman others and make sense of it via shamanic conceptions and practices.

Part 4 concerns *adynamia*, or not-doings, an apparently privative and invisible yet significant facet of the Karipuna's mode of existence that is conducive to coexistence. Chapter 10 suggests refraining as a non-performative form of resistance, including deliberate omissions that benefit the forest. It features the Karipuna's anti-logging policy and its initial distancing from the

carbon project, whose recent development shows the dynamic nature of refraining. In Chapter 11, I describe their tendency to deal with wildlife concerning gardening and animal domestication as “giving way,” which is another dimension of the Karipuna's not-doing that does not necessarily involve volitional decision-making, but brings about no less significant effects that are amenable to human-forest coexistence.

The final **Part 5** explores the internal heterogeneity of the current Karipuna group and its effect on their coexistence with the forest and its wildlife. Chapter 12 examines the micro and macro ecological impacts of the Karipuna people on their forest's flora and fauna, without projecting the frame of environmentalism or conservation.” By unpacking the different ways people treat trees and animals, and the shamanic influence on their behavior, I investigate how onto-epistemological diversity can affect diverse forest life forms (biodiversity). In Chapter 13, I analyze cases where different ontologies coexist within a person, which is associated with the Karipuna's propensity to bracket “objective reality” (Maturana, 1988) and not to impose “primary organizing principles” (Hage, 2017) onto others, partially nurtured by their pragmatic tendency and subaltern positionality. I show that multiple ontologies, when combined with external influences that are conducive to human-forest coexistence, can produce ecologically positive effects on the forest.

After the **Conclusion**, in which I offer a comprehensive summary of my arguments, the final part of the literature review, and conclusive remarks about the thesis's contribution, follows the **Annex**, in which I add the list and full versions of the Karipuna narratives I cite in the text. To facilitate the reader's location of the narratives, I numbered each narrative with the number of the chapter it is cited in, and then a number representing its order within the chapter (e.g., “Narrative #3-2” means the narrative is cited in Chapter 3, appearing as the second one). Also included in the Annex are the list of Karipuna war accounts that I have collected, the research permission issued by the APOIKA (Associação dos Povos Indígenas Karipuna), the Karipuna Indigenous People's Association, and the Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) for participation in the research, signed by my main interlocutors.

I. Overview

1. Setting ^[RES] ^[MESH] ^[COP]

1.1. The people

1.1.1. Origin

Who are the Karipuna people of Rondônia? They are the Kawahiva, or Tupi-Kawahiva (and Portuguese) speaking people residing in the Karipuna IL in Rondônia, who formed the larger group of “Kawahiva” peoples.²⁶ In the entry about the Kawahiva people in the *Handbook of South American Indians* (1963), Nimuendajú notes, “Cawahib (Kawahib, Cawahiwa, Cabahiba...) is the 18th- and early 19th-century name of a people who later split into some six groups or tribes, among them the Parintintin and the Tupi-Cawahib” (1963, p. 283). Among the scant information available about the people, the oldest reference dates to 1797 (ibid.). Both Nimuendajú (ibid., p. 284) and Lévi-Strauss (Lévi-Strauss, 1963, p. 299) suggest that it was the expansion of the Mundurucu people that pressured the Kawahiva to move further south: “since 1750, they have expanded mainly at the expense of the Cawahib” (Nimuendajú, 1963, p. 284), and continued to persecute the Kawahiva “until the beginning of the 20th century” (ibid.). Below is how the Karipuna explain the process of disbanding with other Kawahiva people and occupying their current land around the Jaci Paraná River basin. While they affirm the westbound migration, they attribute the push factor to the war with non-Indigenous people.

[Narrative #1-1] “The Arrival”²⁷

The Kawahiva people started to move. Walk towards the Amazon. They moved. Eating fruit, cutting down trees, cultivating gardens, and encountering people, the white. I don't know if they were American. I don't know. You know they came from a long way. They knew the sea and crossed it. Until they arrived on this land by canoe, eating the fruit, fishing. Little by little, they divided into groups, having war, fighting with other non-Indigenous people, with Americans. I don't know if they were American. They came like that. The Piripikura stayed in Mato Grosso, the Tenharim stayed in the Amazonas, the Parintintin stayed further there, the Jiahui further here. We walked from there to here, going up. We crossed the Humaitá River, we came by closer, until we arrived at the edge of the Madeira River. We came eating fish, killing animals. We made a village here in the

²⁶ Now divided in eight groups: Karipuna, Uru-Eu-Wau-Wau, Amondawa, Tenharim, Parintintin, Juma, Jiahui, and Piripikura. Approximately, they total 1070 individuals, with 560 Kawahiva speakers (dos Santos, 2024a, p. 2).

²⁷ This was narrated in continuation with Narrative #3-1, in one act.

waterfall, where we stayed. We lived for a year or so, eating fish. Porto Velho didn't exist at that time. We lived there, but on the other side. And then we went up the Madeira River. We got there in the headwaters of Jaci Paraná River, and We crossed over on the other side. During all this, Tenharim stayed behind. Jiahui and Juma followed us up here. They got there, right in front of the Karipuna village. I think Uru-Eu left too, and also Amondawa, to the side of Jaru. But this was many, many years ago, eating fish. And then it was only Pitanga's relatives who stayed with us. Then they left, and only the Karipúna and Juma were left. The Juma. We were different people. There weren't many, but we were another group. We were... we are from the Tucan [clan], mixed with the Mutum [clan]. So, the ones who stayed with us were the Mutum. And the Juma killed all the mutum. They cast a spell to each other. *Macumba*, you know? They didn't like [each other], so they started to do harm to each other. ... That was our history, of the emergence of the Karipuna.

In either case, forced dislocation is deemed responsible for the disaggregation of the Kawahiva. It is believed that the Karipuna came to occupy the Jaci Paraná River basin around the beginning of the 19th century, some settling on the headwaters of the Capivari River²⁸ and the others in the basin of the Mutum Paraná River to the north (Meireles, 1984, pp. 117-9). The Kawahiva's bifurcation, either “to the tributaries of the Madeira River (northern) ... [or to] the upper Machado River²⁹ (southern)” (Bertolin, 2014, p. 36), forms the basis of the now common classification of the southern Kawahiva (“Kawahiva meridional”: Uru-Eu-Wau-Wau, Amondawa, Karipuna) and northern Kawahiva (“Kawahiva Setentrional”: Parintintin, Tenharim, Jiahui) (Peggion, 2005). Denófrio et al. argue that the current Karipuna group “are likely descendants of the Bocas Pretas,” who were “part of the northern Kawahiva collectives who continued their western migration along the right bank of the Madeira, ascending this river” (Denófrio & Franciscato, 2015, p. 11), but the current Karipuna group associates themselves more closely with the southern Kawahiva than the northern.

In fact, regional ethnohistory is fraught with confusion about the present-day Karipuna and other groups called by similar names. They should not be confused with the Pano-speaking Karipuna (of Amapá) or “Caripuna,” although both seemed to have occupied the right bank of the upper Madeira (ibid.) as observed in 1865 (Nimuendajú, 1924). This confusion is also apparent in Carneiro da Cunha (1992, pp. 239-40) and Leonel, who only recognize the Pano-speaking group: “For the Caripunas, there seems to be no doubt. They are a Pano-speaking group ... identified on

²⁸ For the Karipuna, those who occupied the Capivari river were other Kawahiva called “urubu” (vulture). Their last member was the interpreter of FUNAI, Pitanga, who after briefly cohabiting with the Karipuna, lived with the Karitiana people until his death in 2022.

²⁹ The current Ji-Paraná river.

the Ethno-Historical Map of Nimuendajú and by the Rondon Mission” (1995, p. 41); “The Caripunas, on the Madeira River; the Sanabós, on the banks of the Mamoré and Madeira, 'the rival of the so-called Caripuna' ... Of these, it is only possible to identify the Caripunas, who speak Pano” (ibid., 45). Some academics argue about a phonetic approximation between the two (Neves et al., 2023, p. 13), but the vocabularies stated in the study show stark difference between the Pano and Kawahiva languages.³⁰ These linguistic sources were collected during the period of constructing the Madeira-Mamoré railway, when the Karipuna allegedly “attacked the railway workers, [and] were brutally repressed and forced to work for the rubber barons” (Branford & Torres, 2019). But the current Karipuna people do not acknowledge any memory associated with the railway. At least three explanations are possible: a) the current Karipuna and the Pano-speaking “Caripuna” were two different groups, who lived in relative proximity in the 19th century, whom the whites erroneously gave the same name; b) The two were descendants of the same people affected by the railway, but the former belong to a subgroup that was not directly affected by it, therefore don't recognize continuity; c) the former are simply misremembering, or the information was not transmitted to them. The second hypothesis is unconvincing due to the language difference, and the third also seems unlikely, since considering the current elders were born around the 1950s, the period of the railway construction overlaps with their parents' and grandparents' life span, which is usually within their scope of memory. As for the current name, the Karipuna explain that it was given by an agent from FUNAI (Fundação Nacional dos Povos Indígenas), the Federal Indigenist Agency, who misunderstood the name of a person called “Jaripuna(ga)” (who was the brother of the current elders, Aripã and Katiká) as “Karipuna,” which remained as the group's official name.³¹

1.1.2. Survival

In the 19th century, newly arriving Brazilian settlers entered the Karipuna's territory to exploit rubber, forcing them to move to the vicinity of the Mutum Paraná River. However, as the expansion of the extractive economy kept widening, clashes became unavoidable. Conflicts between the newly settled rubber-tappers and Indigenous people [RES] prompted FUNAI to initiate a series of

³⁰ I compare in the order of what the authors call “Caripuna language 1” with Pano (Noke Koï) and Kawahiva, respectively: tschii/ txii/ tata (fire), baari/ vari/ kwara (sun), ursche/ oshe/ jahva (moon), cannati/ kâti/ vyrapara (bow), pila/ pia/ u'yva (arrow), auana/ awa/ tapi'ira (tapir), tschassu/ txasho/ y'hua (stag). It is clear that the alleged Caripuna language resembles Pano, not Kawahiva.

³¹ Such impromptu naming was frequent in the epoque: Another Kawahiva group Amondawa received its name by the whites who thought the expression “a village over the hill” was their name.

expeditions to interact with the Karipuna in the mid-1970s. One of the clearest historical documents of the current Karipuna group in the “pre-contact” era—i.e., before these expeditions, although contacts with non-Indigenous people precede the date—is a publicly available video filmed by a Japanese crew (aired in a Polish TV program) when the Karipuna welcome the FUNAI team visiting their village in 1976 [MESH].³² We can see that the Karipuna consists of a formidable group of approximately 30+ people strong (the Karipuna affirm the existence of many more people, including other groups). However, diseases introduced through continuous contact with non-Indigenous people started to decimate their population. Witnessing the tragic deaths of many family members, the few survivors eventually decided to cohabit with the whites by settling down in the FUNAI attraction post (now “Panorama village”) [COP]. Unfortunately, they were already severely reduced by then. In 1983, there were only five adults (Mindlin & Leonel, 1983, p. 70). This genocidal experience is entrenched in Karipuna’s collective memory, evoking deep-rooted concerns of extermination. Not coincidentally, the idea to “increase” (*aumentar*, a verb they frequently use, with a positive connotation), whether it means procreation or social reproduction, has become increasingly central. There is one Karipuna chief, Abytukuga, who is probably the only historical figure widely regarded as a hero without any mythical connotations. Responsible for the heydays of Karipuna, this legendary chief is credited with increasing the population, a crucial achievement.³³

The one who increased our roots was Abytukuga. He was an Indian, a shaman, and one of us, the Karipuna. He was very short and called Abytuku'ia. His name was Abytukuga. He was the one who increased our people. (In Narrative #1-1, “The Arrival”)

Occurrences of warfare were another reason the Karipuna needed reliable manpower. Even when they were not experiencing depopulation, their group size seems not to have been large enough to confront the enemies on their own. In the case of warfare, they would form a larger group with other Kawahiva people. But were the Karipuna always relatively few? If so, why? The Karipuna only offer an answer embedded in an often-omitted detail in their story of origin (Narrative #3-1)³⁴: When all the Kawahiva came out from under the rock, Bahira³⁵ made each

³² Museu do Índio (1976) *Expedição aos Índios Karipuna*, <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1WptAmU-VaTVoe3JtIR4oohg7zpYjP65g/view?pli=1>

³³ The Karipuna Association Abytuku APOKIA (founded in 2006) also honors his name.

³⁴ This detail was only mentioned when I heard the story for the fourth time.

³⁵ *Bahira* or *Mbahira*, the legendary shaman who appears frequently in Kawahiva narratives. Bahira lives with his people inside rocks in the forest. Although Bahira refers to the heroic inventor featuring in stories, it can also

group to choose an item. The Tenharim people chose a stone, representing indestructibility, which made their collective large and sturdy. Whereas the Karipuna chose a tree, a relatively fragile material. That's why the Karipuna are few now. This comparison can also be read against the backdrop of contemporary contexts. While the Tenharim, although a much larger group (almost 300 people versus the Karipuna, about 60), suffer from illegal cassiterite mining (“stones”), the Karipuna suffer from rampant illegal extraction of trees, so their imperative became defending the forest against deforestation.

1.2. The forest

Whenever I say “the Karipuna's forest,” the forest in question means the Karipuna Indigenous Land (Karipuna IL, hereafter), demarcated in 1997 and subsequently homologated (1998) with a total area of 152,930 hectares. The dense vegetation, particularly rich in chestnuts, rubber trees, and palm groves, is characteristic of the typical Amazonian *terra firme* forest, and the seasonal ebb tides of the Jaci Paraná River shape dozens of perennial lagoons teeming with birds, reptiles, and fish (Sá Leão et al., 2005, p. 29). It is located in the Western border of the state of Rondônia, between the municipalities of Porto Velho, União Bandeirante, and Buritis, extending across the Jaci Paraná River Basin and bordering the Extractive Reserve and Guajará-Mirim Park. The demarcation of the Karipuna IL resulted from the group allowing regular contact with FUNAI, beginning in 1976. During this period (1970-80s), the migratory flow in Rondônia had reached uncontrollable proportions. This was the consequence of the Brazilian government's policies of progress and development toward Amazonia that emerged in the early 1900s, which soon became dominant in the postwar era. Led by the president Getúlio Vargas (served between 1930-1945 and 1951-1954), a series of government-sponsored development projects and settlement programs distributing land attracted migrants from the Northeast and Southeast of Brazil to the region. These settlers (*colonos*) depended on extractive activities (e.g., rubber-tapping) in the forest and begun interacting with the Indigenous people in the area, including the Karipuna. We can observe how this migration manifested geographically in the characteristic “fishbone” (“backbone”) patterns of deforestation in the region, as seen in satellite images, which are particularly apparent from the 1970s to the 1990s in Rondônia (NASA, 2012). “What is most surprising is that even INCRA

indicate a group, “people of Bahira” living in a village. The Karipuna are not sure if the Bahria is a god or demigod. They think he is not human since he is immortal. Some equate Bahira with their forest spirits *mirangã*.

[Instituto Nacional de Colonização e Reforma Agrária], an agency created specifically to solve the problems of landless migrants from the Northeast, announced its support for the agro-industrial model for Amazon development ... prepared to sell, 21 million hectares of federal land in the Amazon to large logging and livestock companies” (Davis, 1978, p. 143), leading to more conflicts and damage of Indigenous people. In 1974, during the military dictatorship, the rationale of development was further pushed through the “growth poles” by the Poloamazônia (Programa de Pólos Agropecuários e Agrominerais da Amazônia) plan. In the “Generals’ Plan: slicing up the Amazon basin” (Hecht & Cockburn, 1989), Rondônia is classified as “agriculture and livestock in frontier area (No. 9).”

Massive urbanization and agricultural expansion brought more settlers into the region and increased demand for land. Aware of this trend and having established contact with the Karipuna in 1976, FUNAI organized a Working Group³⁶ in 1981 to identify the Indigenous Territory, which maintained the previously proposed limits (1978) for demarcation. “No further steps were taken until 1988, when the president of FUNAI interdicted a total area of 195,000 hectares. Yet that same year, the southern limit of the Karipuna IL started to be invaded” (Sá Leão et al., 2005, p. 22). In 1994, FUNAI set up a Technical Group (TG) to produce studies to identify and demarcate the Karipuna IL. Inês Hargreaves, an Indigenous expert and activist who participated in this TG, told me in an interview that in 1996, the pressure on the land was already significant: the southern part of the Karipuna's occupation overlapped with the BR-421 road, already occupied by 184 settlers. After a negotiation between INCRA and the State of Rondônia, the decision was made—*without* consulting the Karipuna—to “liberate” this area, leading to a significant reduction of the size of the Karipuna's land, from the originally proposed 195,000 to 152,930 hectares (ibid.), despite the opposition of some members of the TG. Hence, the current dimension of the Karipuna IL.

However, even after demarcation, pressures around the Karipuna forest only increased. A former FUNAI agent, Amaury Viera, who closely accompanied the Karipuna's demarcation project, explained in an interview that, timewise, the Karipuna were relatively “lucky”: had the geopolitical situation and pressure of development encircling the Indigenous land been like that of today, the demarcation would have faced more stringent resistance from agricultural lobby groups, complicating the process. In 1999, just one year after the homologation of the Karipuna IL, the

³⁶ Directives No. 1.106/E of 15/09/81 and 1.141/E of 9/11/81.

municipality of União Bandeirante was founded, which would rapidly grow to become one of the epicenters of extraction from (and invasion into) the Karipuna IL. In fact, the establishment of União Bandeirante was itself based on dubious legal grounds:

On the eastern and western borders there are illegal occupations of protected areas; to the east, the Jaci Paraná RESEX has been invaded from Buritis; and to the west, from the illegal nucleus of União Bandeirante – illegal since it comprises a “spontaneous” settlement within a zone classified as “2.1” by the State Zoning Law, which does not permit low cropping of the vegetation, which has been occurring systematically. (Sá Leão et al., 2005, p. 32)

This unscrupulous trend in the region continues: from 2010 onwards, geographical research shows the Karipuna IL is at the heart of one of the fastest-growing livestock-based agribusinesses³⁷ in Rondônia (Mota Santos & Cereda Gomide, 2015), as well as “agro-banditry”: “organized groups (...) act through coordinated invasions to seize Indigenous land, trying to make Karipuna IL a laboratory for agro-banditry in the Amazon” (Costa Silva et al., 2020, p. 266). As a consequence, in the early 2020s, the Karipuna IL has become one of the most deforested and invaded Indigenous territories in the nation.³⁸ Illegal logging, rampant land-grabbing, and aggressive expansion of extractive “commodity frontiers” (Moore, 2015) are destroying their forest at an alarming rate. This expansive operation consists of two categories of determined action: 1) Deforestation, defined as a large-scale and thorough clearing of a previously forested area (not including small-scale, traditional and seasonal clearing for gardens by the Indigenous people); 2) Dispossession of land and other rights, including illegal appropriation of them, because the “environmental” destruction of deforestation entails ampler consequences on the socio-economic and constitutional rights of its Indigenous inhabitants. “Accumulation by dispossession” is the capitalist practice of accumulating wealth by dispossessing public or private entities and seizing resources from marginalized groups (through privatization, land grabs, illegal exploitation of legal loopholes, etc.) (D. Harvey, 2003; West, 2016). As the two actions are enacted hand in hand, I will term the social pressures as the “**forces of deforestation and dispossession**” (FDD, hereafter); the illegal operators who create the FDD as “invaders” (*invasores*: land grabbers, loggers, prospectors) and their “enablers” (landowners, lobby groups, financiers and politicians, usually belonging to the Bancada Ruralista, the ruralist agribusiness caucus). Although the term *invasores* draws more

³⁷ Between 1990 and 2018, the cattle population in Rondônia grew by 736% (Costa Silva et al., 2020, p. 260).

³⁸ In 2019, the Karipuna IL was listed as the 7th most deforested ILs in Brazil (losing 1,100 hectares in just two months) ; In 2022, it was the most deforested IL around BR-319, among the 69 others. (Bispo, 2023)

attention to the operators on the ground and less to their enablers, I employ it far more often, reflecting the Karipuna people's frequent use of it as a catch-all term.

Given the pressure of the FDD from all fronts, the Karipuna's forest is uniquely positioned to demonstrate the role of Indigenous Land in forest preservation. As if history wanted to conduct a controlled experiment to further prove the case, another vast forested area sharing the eastern border with the Karipuna IL—called the Jaci Paraná Extractive Reserve (RESEX, hereafter)—was demarcated at a similar time (1996) and of a similar size (197,364 ha), with almost identical protected statuses³⁹ and geographical attributes (Figure 3).



Figure 3. Comparison of the Karipuna Indigenous Land (Left: yellow outline) and the RESEX (Right: orange outline).
(Copyright: Environmental Investigation Agency, in 2022 EIA report “Deforestation in the Driver's Seat”)

³⁹ “Self-sustainable exploitation by the extractive population, without prejudice to the conservation of natural resources existing in the area” (Art. 2, Law No. 692/1996).

While the Karipuna IL resisted to this day, the RESEX was devastated by illegal invasions during the same period, leaving barely any patches of greenery.⁴⁰ The sole significant difference between the two is that the RESEX is not Indigenous Land, which shows that protective legislation alone does not guarantee forest preservation in remote areas where law enforcement is virtually absent. The difference is whether there are actual people inhabiting and defending their land. The contrast is stark in the satellite images of the wider area in Rondônia. Not only the Karipuna IL, but most of the other remaining forested areas are also other Indigenous lands. The dark green Indigenous forests are encircled by cleared land for cattle pasture and soy plantations, as if they were fortresses withstanding the fierce pressures of deforestation. If we examine other macro factors surrounding the Karipuna's forest that contribute to land-use change (geographical access, roads, population, development pressure, etc.), we come to the conclusion that nothing explains the survival of this forest better than the presence of the Karipuna and the protective legal rights that they *achieved* [RES]. If the people had not managed to resist despite all the challenges and invasions by showing their presence and making their voices heard, the federal government would not have had the motivation or obligation to act on their behalf.

⁴⁰ “More than 60% of the original forest cover has been converted to cattle pasture, with roughly 100 km² of forest being cleared annually in recent years, making it the third most deforested protected area in the entire Amazon” (EIA, 2022, p. 6).

2. Everyday coexistence in Panorama ^{[MESH] [RES] [COP] [LET]}

2.1. Sense-opening to the forest

This chapter offers a panoramic depiction of the Karipuna's contemporary life in their only forest village, Panorama, located on the upper reaches of the Jaci Paraná River. It aims to give the reader a sense of everyday life of the people and to show how coexistence with the forest entails coexistence with other dimensions. I walk the reader through the main pillars of Karipuna's quotidian life (provision, education, marriage, and healthcare), while also exploring other aspects, loosely following the chronological order of a day.

Before I begin, a brief description of the village's surroundings and vicinity may be helpful. Unlike modern urban cities, where the pursuit of spatial isolation and impermeability has become so prevalent, in the rainforests, permeability and porosity are the norms through which nonhuman coexistence manifests. Not just because the living organism's exhalation and inhalation through their pores/membranes form a denser tropical atmosphere, but also due to the near impossibility to isolate/insulate oneself from the effects of the forest ^[MESH]. In the Karipuna's forest, **water** permeates: Nothing and nowhere is waterproof. Rain batters and enters wooden walls (or rather “fences,” since their breaches are so wide), dampening and rotting every material. Even cemented structures do not take long to erode due to dampness, heavy precipitation, storms, floods,⁴¹ insects, and mycelium. **Sound** permeates. Nowhere can one unhear the bustling of macaws, cicadas, and frogs. The dogs bark frantically day and night, easily agitated by the noises of shadowy beasts constantly lurking in the nearby woods. It is impossible for an ethnographer to avoid noise when recording an interviewee. **Heat** permeates. During the day, there is nowhere to escape the effect of the scorching sun, except the shaded creeks in the woods. No object remains cold, except those inside the refrigerators. **Critters** penetrate.⁴² Any unsealed food is an invitation to ants, cockroaches, and rodents, while millipedes find ways into tightly sealed nets. Cracks between haphazardly carpentered wooden house planks are also wide-open gates. The river is not a refuge for those suffering incessant bites of black flies, gnats, and bees, as they swarm more aggressively in the riverbed. Under water, one is in the company of stingrays, electric eels, caimans, and

⁴¹ In 2014 and 2023 summer, large-scale floods engulfed the Panorama village and severely damaged the supporting structures of the houses. In October 2024, a tempest tore up the roof of newly built houses.

⁴² For the omnipresence of animals in the Amazonian societies, see (Erikson, 2012).

anacondas. The Karipuna both tease and warn visitors who enjoy river baths to beware of them, as well as tiny fish that can enter one's genitalia, although these are certainly not the only living organisms keen to invade the human body: Amazon botflies (*Dermatobia hominis*) deposit larval eggs under human skin, and “*lambe-olhos*” bee (*Leurotrigona muelleri*) enters the pupil.

Beyond the vicinity of the village, deep in the woods, awaits another level of biodiversity. Whether one is on the ground or underwater, there is simply no way to escape the coexistence of sylvan effects. Urban visitors (like me) try to avoid such unavoidable coexistence. We do our best to perpetuate a “state of denial,” that is, a constant attempt to create a safe, protective distance from the nonhuman threats of the tropics. These efforts (of making the forest external to humans) involve using innumerable artifacts: repellents, mosquito nets, anti-bug gear, sun-blockers, portable electronic fans, a series of drugs and vaccines ingested or injected into arteries to build immunity walls, bottled water, and purifying filters, etc. I was also given this water prescription by a physician specializing in tropical diseases, but a Karipuna friend gave more apt advice after observing my skin covered with insect bites and lesions: “Just drink water from here. Your blood will smell like us, and biting will stop.” In short, coexisting with the forest is not so much *opening* one's senses to it as abandoning the futile effort to *close* oneself from it. Because coexistence will be forced upon one, regardless of one's will. Of course, all of these are simply mundane conditions of forest life for the Karipuna. “There's no other way. You must get used to it, you adapt. Like you, born in your land in Asia, which is very cold, you got used to it. If I went there, I wouldn't get used [to it]. If I were born there, with cold weather ... I would get used to it. Same for us here, Indigenous [people] living in the forest,” said one Karipuna. Although they do not consider such life challenge-free or have an aversion to urban convenience (e.g., when they find air-conditioning in the city, they enjoy it), they make a feeble effort to implement “barriers” against the permeating forest, since they internalized a mode of living so enmeshed in the environment [MESH].⁴³

2.2. Starting the day

According to Adriano Karipuna, a typical day in the Karipuna's forest village begins with bathing in the river [MESH].

⁴³ In part, this is because Indigenous bodies are already equipped with some *necessary* barriers, such as immune systems to certain endemic diseases (Couto-Silva et al., 2023), but they also suffer tropical diseases such as malaria, dengue, among others.

In our culture, we wake up early and go to the river to take a cold bath. Even children go. This bath is not just to wash the body, but also to wet the head, a complete bath. This bath is very important to purify the body from sleep, nightmares, sleepless nights, to have a good day. After this, everyone goes to do their activities, hunt, prepare gardens, gather fruits. (Karipuna, 2021, p. 19)

Many Amazonian Indigenous people cultivate a relationship with the river by taking daily morning baths (Stang, 2009) and during the day, which dictates the tempo in daily routines in sync with the rhythm of the riparian forest. But in Adriano's case, his description is a recollection of his youth, as it has been decades since he last resided in the city to pursue his studies. Fast forward to now, it is rare to observe a regular morning bath. The Karipuna (especially children) still enjoy river bathing, but it's usually done in the afternoon around 3-4 p.m., to cool down or to do chores. Using, drinking, and bathing in river water are still fundamental ways to coexist with the forest, but how they use it has changed. The Karipuna used to fetch water from the river, but the potable water system exempted them from this arduous task, since the company Santo Antônio Hydropower Plant (Usina Hidrelétrica Santo Antônio: UHE SA) installed a water supply system in 2011, providing running water for households, as part of a mitigation project caused by the dam construction. Some still do laundry in the river or in the creek, but most people have a small washing machine and a spin dryer for the long rainy season. The SESAI (Secretaria de Saúde Indígena), the Indigenous Health Institution, provides regular water hygiene maintenance, so the Karipuna can pay less attention to the matter. However, they are attentive to the river's pollution levels and fish population, as fish constitute an important part of their subsistence. Earlier, people took showers in the river or in a tiny, shared shower/toilet booth. Since the flood of March 2023, new houses have been constructed on the hill, increasing the distance from the river. In 2024, potable running water was made available in every household, so people use bathrooms inside their houses. Water became (partially) “privatized,” so many prefer to take showers at home or go to the nearby creek.

People usually wake up around 7 to 8 a.m. and have a morning (cloth-filtered) coffee and a light breakfast (crackers, bread, porridge with milk), if any. Almost everybody (barring the elders) starts the morning by checking their smartphones, as 24-hour internet is accessible in some houses and spots. Some turn on cable television. Between 8 and 8:30 a.m., when the village teacher rings the bell to summon students, everyone is occupied with their own task. Men vanish to the woods (mostly to hunt) or go fishing; women do their chores; those who tend the garden take advantage of the morning to avoid the sun. Except for state employees who follow their respective duties on

fixed schedules, activities are autonomous and untethered. Those who began to stay in the city for extended periods found significant differences in the temporal rhythms between the two places.

My biggest shock with the city was the issue of time. In the village, everyone has their own time. I can go to the garden to work whenever I want, and come home when I feel like it's time. In the city, it's not like that. We have our own time and the time of others, the time of places. We have a time to arrive and leave work and school. Balancing these times is difficult because I have my own time, which is highly valued in my culture, while in the city, other people's time is valued. (Karipuna, 2021, p. 19)

2.3. Provisioning

2.3.1. Hunting and fishing

Eduardo Kohn observed that the Runa people in the Ecuadorian Amazon did not buy food.

“Almost all the food ... came from their gardens, the nearby rivers and streams, and the forest. Getting food through hunting, fishing, gathering, gardening, and the management of a variety of ecological assemblages involves people intimately with one of the most complex ecosystems in the world.” (2013, p. 5)⁴⁴

The Karipuna currently buy a substantial amount of food. Their diet underwent a dramatic change since the whites' food was introduced to them in the 70s. However, they largely maintain their list of edible animals (for non-edible animals, see: Chapter 12). Their most preferred bushmeat remains the white-lipped peccary (*Tayassu pecari*) and collared peccaries (*Pecari tajacu*), followed by tapir (*Tapirus terrestris*), paca (*Cuniculus paca*), agouti (*Dasyprocta punctata*), curassow (*Cracinae*), tinamou (*Crypturellus cinereus*), and various fish. Like many other Indigenous people, their need for *mistura* (animal protein in meals) is absolute. It is unthinkable to eat a single meal without *mistura*, since “it makes a hole in the gut,” as they say.⁴⁵ Therefore, hunting and fishing still comprise key subsistence activities, especially for many men, making them dependent on the forest, albeit in different ways and to varying degrees. Although the Karipuna mostly prefer bushmeat, fish is also a reliable subsistence source. The dependence increases in the rainy season when it becomes difficult to hunt terrestrial mammals. The meat they

⁴⁴ However, they purchased goods (shotguns, ammunition, clothing, salt) from the markets (Kohn, 2013). Kohn spent four years (from 1996) with the Runa in their forest. I wonder how their purchase list changed ever since.

⁴⁵ They dislike vegetables, expressing especially strong distaste of “salads,” like leafy greens (just like the Yukaghir Indigenous people of Siberia, as described in Willerslev, 2007, p. 78).

purchase from the market is usually frozen chicken or processed salami,⁴⁶ whose shelf lives are short, and they always want an extra supply. Nowadays, if one randomly opens a refrigerator in a Karipuna's house (every household has at least one), it is easy to find food supplies from both the forest and the markets: e.g., a part of a skinned wild animal lies between a pack of milk or water bottles. The staple Karipuna diet consists of a portion of *mistura* (meat or fish) from the forest, accompanied by *feijão* (a go-to side dish, made with puréed beans and thickened with cassava flour) and rice (or pasta)—resembling a typical Brazilian diet easily observable in suburban regions, as they adopt many things from the surrounding society (especially the *ribeirinhos*⁴⁷). Now, the Karipuna depend less on the “forest products” than ever before. The items bought from supermarkets during their stays in the city include chicken, eggs, beans, pasta, coffee, milk, bread, rice, biscuits, powdered juice, oil, sugar, salt, onions, garlic, and other sweets, all deemed indispensable. For instance, every Karipuna adult starts the day with a cup of coffee and milk. Some studies found that Native Americans are generally lactose-intolerant⁴⁸ (Mihesuah, 2003), but Katiká says she suffers stomachache if she drinks coffee *without* milk. When it comes to instruments, the predominant use of shotguns for hunting makes them dependent on regular cartridge purchases. Yet old and new gear coexist [MESH]. Some older people still use bows and arrows for fishing, alongside artisanal tools (forks, or *zagaia*, introduced by *ribeirinhos*) and modern fishing gear (rods, poles, nets). They say that the increasing use of refrigerators does not alter their hunting patterns, but that having cool storage allows them to store more meat and buy more from the city.

2.3.2. Other subsistence

Since the Karipuna settled in the village, the traditional swidden pattern changed. They still slash and burn, but do not rotate around vast areas. They just alternate between nearby garden plots and fallows. They harvest various vegetables (bitter manioc, sweet manioc or *macaxiera*, sweet potato, corn) and fruits (açai, buriti, banana, *pupunha* palm) from the gardens, but levels of self-sufficiency vary by household. Employed people have little time to tend gardens except on a small scale. They

⁴⁶ When I asked if there is any reason why they do not consume bovine meat, they simply say: “It's too expensive.” Nobody approved the idea of conscientiously rejecting cattle product due to its impact on deforestation. This kind of consumer awareness is unheard of, or deemed luxurious concern among the urban wealthy.

⁴⁷ They used not to eat turtles or eggs but acquired the habit from their *ribeirinhos* and now consider it a delicacy.

⁴⁸ A 1977 study revealed that 100 percent of Natives tested were lactose intolerant.

once produced a considerable amount of manioc flour and corn, among other crops, so they sold the surplus in the market, but swidden production became less intense due to difficulties securing outflow transportation and regular buyers, diminished incentives as prices dropped, and increased food purchases. What has become routine is the seasonal collection of nuts from Brazil nut trees (*Bertholletia excelsa*) around November. The current form of nut collecting is not traditional. Apart from commercialization (which they learned from the whites), they used to harvest more unripe (*verde*) nuts than ripe ones for cultural use and consumption. Now they view Brazilian nuts more as an additional source of income than as a source for local consumption. The same goes for the açai fruit, which they learned from the whites to consume and collect (also sell, albeit less).

2.3.3. Earning

Currently, every Karipuna household in the village has at least one source of regular income in the form of state employment or benefits: whether one is an employee of SESAI or SEDUC (Secretaria de Educação), the State Department of Education, or entitled to retirement coverage (*aposentadoria*), or a recipient of social security benefits due to a physical disability. Some are eligible to receive benefits from Federal social welfare programs (*Bolsa Família*, a poverty-reduction program that provides an allowance for many low-income families, about R\$ 670 a month: 2025). Nobody receives benefits solely based on having an Indigenous identity, contrary to unfounded belief. The Karipuna's dependence on state employment and benefits began at least in the late 1990s, when older members started receiving retirement benefits, rather than relying solely on subsistence activities in the forest. In a 2001 interview, Osnir Schwippe, then head of the Karipuna Indigenous Post (FUNAI agent since 1987), reports: “The productive activity in the area has been greatly reduced, since there's only one family, Aripã and Rita, who live off their own production or extractive activities taken from the Karipuna Land. The rest are retired or employees, and this new generation, tomorrow or later, when they reach adulthood, will hardly want to remain in the village as Indians and live like this. I mean, live from gardens, planting rice, coffee, cassava, making flour, corn, the normal life of Indians, like in other villages.” Schwippe's prediction turned out to be only half-true. Many Karipuna still remain living in their forest. If one asks a Karipuna what the biggest advantage of living in the forest is, one of the most common answers will be “not needing money.” What they really mean by this is: “not needing *much* money,” since they don't live solely “off the forest,” but also consider it vital to secure a source of income. Apart from a large share of the food supply being purchased, they need to pay bills for internet, cable TV, and

mobile phone service, and make monthly payments for smartphone purchases, scholarly items for children, clothing, birthday presents, etc. The meager prospects for earning push them into a constant search for ways to access money.

2.4. Educating

2.4.1. Language

I learned to say “*Coema*” (good morning- Kw), but one hears “Bom dia” much more often. Of the two coexisting languages in Panorama village, Portuguese is predominant. A linguistic study reported there were ten Kawahiva speakers among the Karipuna in 2019 ([dos Santos, 2019, p. 109](#)). In 2024, three of them moved out to the city. Currently, I could not identify any active effort to teach or learn the Kawahiva language among the group [LET]. This trend, described as “vulnerable” and “endangered” (*ibid.*), seems to have begun when FUNAI-hired teachers taught Portuguese to Karipuna adolescents in the village, thereby suppressing their own language (I could not locate written records of the exact date). The most active Kawahiva-speakers among the Karipuna are the three elders. Some other Kawahiva-speaking parents say they are interested in teaching the language to their children, but so far, there is no indication that these ideas are materializing. This is why one Karipuna elder remarked, “We resist for the land, but not for culture or language.” Unless there is an effort to reverse this trend, the Karipuna may become virtually monolingual.

2.4.2. Learning and growing up

In the morning, teachers, children, and some adult students go to the school, but the Karipuna's broader learning consists of three different regimes: learning a) at the village's school; b) around the village; c) in the forest. In the village or at home, people usually learn general social skills and knowledge, as well as cultural/horticultural practices. In the forest, the focus of learning is on survival and subsistence skills. In both situations, the teachers are parents or older kinspeople, but much is learned autodidactically, too. Most knowledge transmission does not take the form of “lessons” consisting of a question-answer dialectic. Apart from oral storytelling, things are supposed to be learned even if they are not taught, through observation and embedded, *in situ* learning opportunities. I often observed this in father-son interactions during their daily hunting and fishing activities. Beginning at the age of 8 or 9, Karipuna children start to accompany their fathers or uncles to the forest and river. On the surface, fathers seem a little harsh. The children should quickly figure out what he should do in each situation, since the fathers rarely teach things

in explicit ways (e.g., laying out instructions), except sporadically giving short orders such as “hold this,” “fetch that,” yet when the child fails to deliver what the senior person had expected, he is scolded. Many adult male Karipuna told me that they learned to hunt and fish almost autodidactically, through interactions with the forest environment in daily activities [MESH]. Such understanding in practice can be understood as a form of “enskilment,” a learning “inseparable from doing ... embedded in the context of a practical engagement in the world” (Ingold, 2000, p. 416), or “situated learning” (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

Traditionally, the rite of passage, including an approximately one-month seclusion called *imbyahu*, is required for *ipitangia* (a young Karipuna novice -Kw) to become an adult—a puberty ritual for *ipitangiahêa* (adolescent girls -Kw); a post-war ritual for *ipitangiga* (young male -Kw) warriors. Although the Karipuna describe seclusion in health-related terms rather than in pedagogical terms, it can be viewed as an Indigenous mode of formation, a process of “people-making” (Santos-Granero, 2012), where “specific human bodies” (Vilaça, 2005, p. 242) are produced: *imbyahu* involves observing behavioral (e.g., staying still in a hammock, not whispering, not prying into others' business, etc.) and alimentary restrictions to make one's body *ipy* (soft -Kw). I have witnessed several times a Karipuna attributing a kin's alleged “problem” to a faulty seclusion, showing that the rite is deemed critical in a person's formative years. Currently, no initiation rites are observed, due to changing social organization and decreased availability: either the adults are too busy, or the children leave for the city.

Between 1992 and 1994, two teachers from JOCUM (Jovens Com Uma Missão), an evangelical missionary church, stayed in the village to “exchange languages.” Sarde Neto (2018, p. 116) reports that JOCUM, “with the imposition of evangelization and Western standards, contributed to the almost total oblivion of the practices of religion and ancestral culture.” But the Karipuna say that catechism was not forced. The missionaries introduced the Bible, but they focused on language exchange. The missionaries' more pervasive influence was encouraging young Karipuna to pursue higher (which necessarily means urban, to them) education.

Dona Efigênia ... was the one who picked me up from Funai and took me to her home, where she raised me and gave me the opportunity to study. She supported me and encouraged me to study. ... She would tell us: “Be someone! In the future, those who don't have an education will have a lot of difficulty.” (Karipuna, 2021, p. 16)

For Adriano, the imperative to “be *someone*” became an important motivator in his pursuit of higher education. However, the flipside of such apparently positive and benign encouragement is that it assumes a hierarchical value system which ranks institutionally educated citizens over ordinary, uneducated forest dwellers: someone vs. no one. As Adriano recalls: “Just like Dona Efigênia, when I was a child, ... School was about becoming a doctor, physician, professor... a very common idea at the time. A small farmer was not valued. ... I had the idea of becoming a doctor. To have money, or to be an airplane pilot... I still want to be a pilot” (ibid.). The clear emphasis on individual achievement and success apparent in this discourse is not always compatible with Indigenous values. One Indigenous friend of the Karipuna, from a different group, whom I met in the village, shared her criticism of non-Indigenous education: “I don't like education! What is all this fuss about it? Why must everyone go to the city to study? There's plenty to learn here [in the forest].” However, her view belongs to a minority. Among the Karipuna, education is one of the most legitimate reasons for somebody to leave the forest. However, the experience of the urban education system often serves as a reality check for Indigenous students. “During classes, I realized that school was not for me to become a doctor; it was not for me to learn. I was very offended. ... It was a struggle. The students fought and cursed each other. They made obscene gestures and humiliated each other. I realized that it was not for me. I didn't want to study anymore, I didn't pay attention to anything. I had no intellectual development” (Karipuna, 2021, p. 16). On top of such a hostile environment, belonging to an Indigenous minority often exacerbates the maladaptation. “I got into a lot of fights with my classmates. They humiliated me. They said I was an animal because I was Indigenous, that I ate poop... When I swore in my language, they said I didn't know how to speak properly.” (ibid.) Many Karipuna share similar school experiences in the city. Some survive humiliation and find ways to adapt, while others give up and return to the forest. Most of the Karipuna are skeptical of Indigenous/non-Indigenous coexistence in conventional urban educational settings, but scholastic education in the village is not considered a solution either. In 1998, the Karipuna Indigenous School (Escola Indígena Karipuna, EIEEF) was created in the village by the State, as a formal Indigenous educational institution. Despite the title, the curriculum resembles standardized Brazilian education programs. Beyond lacking Indigenous components,⁴⁹ its repetitive curriculum and limited capacity leave many students and parents dissatisfied with the

⁴⁹ “[D]ifferentiated education’ [which] is a right of Indigenous peoples guaranteed in the 1988 Constitution as well as in various decrees” (Virtanen, 2012, p. 70).

program. Arguably, the biggest grievance is that the school only covers up to the 5th grade. People who pursue higher education have no option but to leave the forest. A common perception is that the more education one receives, the longer one remains in the city. In fact, I have followed three cases over seven years that have confirmed this trend. The longer one stays in the city, the higher the level of education one has, and the lower the chance of returning to the forest. There are also people who return, but although the sample size is too small to generalize, every returnee was a dropout. So far, no one with a higher degree (beyond high school) resides in the forest village. In terms of school education, it seems that the coexistence of forest and city education is only possible until a certain age. As adolescents mature, it is almost inevitable that they must at least experience the city for some years to decide how and where to live. In this sense, urban experience in youth *is* a new form of initiation.

2.5. Healthcare

Currently, three Karipuna SESAI employees go through their daily rounds. Usually, there is someone in need of health care services in the city. Barring immediate fixes that only require taking pills available in the village storage called the “pharmacy,” almost all healthcare is provided in the city, or during SESAI's regular visits. When the Karipuna started to have intensive contacts with the whites in the 1970s, it was the deadly diseases introduced by the whites that impacted the Karipuna most, even more than the warfare with enemies. They had no resistance against alien pathogens (measles, smallpox, influenza, or unfamiliar food-related illness). Neither did their plant medicine, *mohanga*, seem to work, nor were there any shamans alive to help. The forest spirits-curiers, *mirangã*, whom they used to depend on for healing diseases, were also gone with the shamans. During this period of massive losses, the Karipuna began to use, or allowed, “white's medicine,” such as vaccines, to be administered. It was no longer the forest but the outsiders who were the source of both death and cure. This was in the 1970s. It took less than two decades under FUNAI's tutelage to completely change the way the Karipuna deal with sickness, but in the beginning, there was resistance against urban healthcare [RES], as Katiká recounts:

Now I even find it funny. When I went to the city the first time, I was scared because those who went to the city didn't come back alive. Until one day, they had to carry me tied up, because I was pregnant, and I had a very serious problem. People said that white performed surgery to remove the child. That's why I was afraid. ... I gave the health workers a lot of trouble because I was afraid. My relatives died. Even though I was pregnant, I didn't want to know anything about [the city].

Since then, I've been afraid to go to the city, even today, because everyone who went sick never came back alive.

Although impressed by many things from the whites, the city represented death for her. When she got pregnant, she wished for a traditional delivery, but there were no other female kin who knew how to assist the process. She was the only Karipuna adult woman. Finally, when signs of labor had begun, she had to be brought to a hospital in Porto Velho. From then on, the Karipuna became ever more dependent on the urban healthcare system. When someone fell seriously ill or was bitten by a snake, they were brought to the city. In 1981, almost nobody was using the *mohanga*, although most adults were still knowledgeable about it.

The SESAI's base⁵⁰ in Porto Velho serves more than 20 different ethnic groups and is always saturated with patients. SESAI staff explain that Indigenous patients are getting sick more frequently and seriously than before, a phenomenon they attribute to “modern diseases” and lifestyle change (e.g., consumption of processed food, alcoholism, sedentarism). The Karipuna also reflect this trend, and because private services are unaffordable, they depend entirely on public healthcare. In addition, because they lack the means to get to the city, they rely on the SESAI to pick them up and drop them off. Due to high demand, it is difficult to find slots for booking appointments and transportation. Very long queues are expected, with wait times of up to months. When hospital appointments are arranged, they are communicated at the last minute, leaving them no choice but to reorient their plans around the given date [COP].

Tensions between Indigenous and modern medicine (Kelly, 2011; Teixeira & Garnelo, 2014) and the health institutions' denial of Indigenous medicine (Langdon & Garnelo, 2004) are well-documented phenomena widespread in Brazil and beyond (Foster & Anderson, 1978). But the Karipuna's concern is not enacting “medical pluralism” (Ngokwey, 1995)—coexistence of different healing methods; their concern is to be well attended by SESAI. However, it will be erroneous to assume that they embrace modern medicine uncritically. Most of their critiques are directed at the service rather than at modern medicine or the healthcare system itself: poor attendance, long waiting lists, unkind staff, etc. Most of the Karipuna claimed some sort of mistreatment during medical consultations, which they frequently described with the term “prejudice” (*preconceito*). On the occasions I accompanied them in hospitals, it was easy to

⁵⁰ This is not a hospital, so patients who need proper medical treatment are allocated to relevant hospitals.

observe the staff and Indigenous patients talking past each other. Not being fully informed of the diagnosis or prognosis is one of the most common grievances.

Although healthcare is one area where the Indigenous way of life has been largely replaced by other modes, the Karipuna's general perception of health issues is still being shaped relative to the positive past. Their current situation is assessed in a negative light, since most people are dealing with some sort of chronic disease,⁵¹ often attributed to urbanized life, especially the diet. “Forest food” is considered clean and healthy, leading most to think that their forebears had better health. In 2023, I visited the Karipuna's old neighbor, the *ribeirinho* Senhor Lourenço, with Batiti. Sr. Lourenço has been living in the area for more than 50 years and finds himself in good terms with the Karipuna. Batiti praised Lourenço's health and longevity, saying, “He only eats things from the forest. That's why he's healthy.” In this context, Batiti saw no difference between the lifeways of *ribeirinhos* and Indigenous people: if they live off the forest, they become healthy. He thought the Karipuna are too accustomed to unhealthy habits adopted from the city, and deemed Lourenço's lifestyle untenable for younger people. Similarly, there are many instances where the Karipuna's negative perception of health status finds expression in nostalgia. Katiká misses the *mirangã*'s service. Whenever she has abdominal pains, she recalls how they cured her (Kin, 2024, p. 350). This does not mean the Karipuna were always happy with their own shaman-doctors. Despite the nostalgia, they admit there were “bad shamans” who deceived patients, did not cure, or even cast malicious spells. The difference is, now, the Karipuna have no choice but to rely their health on those who might have deep-rooted prejudice towards them. The Karipuna's negative perception of the actuality and their relative trust in their own medicine do not translate into avoidance or detachment from modern medicine, nor into a return to the latter. Although both coexist on the ontological level, only the former is enacted on the clinical level.

2.6. Family-forming

Few things show the Karipuna's mode of worlding conducive to coexistence with others more clearly than the composition of their family. Conjugal partnership, the formation of the smallest human unit of social coexistence, became a serious problem for the heavily reduced Karipuna, which could not be resolved by themselves. Although they started living with strangers in

⁵¹ For example, cerebrovascular Accident (CVA), cardiovascular disease such as arrhythmia, kidney stone disease, diabetes, stage 1 or 2 cancer, eye infection fill the list.

Panorama village, the (official) contact generation were averse to the idea of marrying whites [RES], and so were the FUNAI agents. In 1982, among the five surviving adults, four were men. The only woman, Katiká, was married to one of them, leaving the others with no choice but to find someone from outside. The FUNAI premise in Porto Velho was the center of encounters among Indigenous people. Apart from having daily interactions with different groups, they were nudged into relationships by FUNAI agents who encouraged intertribal marriage and discouraged miscegenation with white people. As a result, all three Karipuna men married other Indigenous women. As uxori-local residence was respected by many, men moved out to their respective Indigenous lands. As a result, Kaipú settled permanently in the Arara IL near Ji-Paraná, Tiu traveled to the Piripikura IL near Mato Grosso, and Aripã went to live with his wife from Guajara. A profound change in marriage patterns hit the next generation. There were basically three Karipuna in marriageable age: two women (Angelica and Tuberinha) and one man (Batiti). Every one of them met white spouses, facing opposition both from kins and FUNAI agents. All three managed to marry, but the process was painful for the pioneering couples [COP]. Batiti and Leni account for their suffering of going against the disapproval of their marriage. The FUNAI agents were more insistent in rejecting both Batiti's marriage and Leni's presence in the village. They warned Batiti, "If you marry a white, she will rob your land!" Being young (only 17 or 18), he believed those words, but in the end, he paved his own way by bringing Leni to the village. From Batiti's point of view, he had to struggle against the white's institution *and* his own tradition to get married [RES]. As the couple set a precedent, intermarriage soon became an accepted, inevitable reality. Indigenous resistance to (white-)intermarriage⁵² (Vilaça, 2010) abruptly ended ever since. In the next generation, everyone except one—Carlos Karipuna, who married a Tikuna person—married a non-Indigenous spouse. Now, the community comprises diverse levels of affinities (Karipuna, Piripikura, Uru-Eu-Wau-Wau, Tikuna, Karitiana, and whites) that coexist [MESH].

Indigenous couples usually end up living on one partner's demarcated lands, so although configurations and compositions change, it is not a totally unfamiliar world. Whereas marrying a non-Indigenous person normally means moving to the city, unless the partner is committed to living in the forest (a rare case). While the two married Karipuna women established themselves in the city and did not return, Batiti and his wife, Leni Paula, came to reside in the Karipuna IL,

⁵² It persists among some Kawahiva groups, such as the Amondawa and Juma (W. N. dos Santos, personal communication, Jan 2026).

making an exception. Eric, the first son of this couple and actual President of APOIKA, gave credit to his mother for the current state of the community: “In fact, it was a non-Indigenous who really helped us to survive. She brought the structure. If it were not for my mother, we wouldn't be where we are now.” To my question about what he meant by “structure,” Eric replied, “giving birth to four Karipuna men” when there were very few. It is true that Leni Paula's contribution was crucial, but it was also inevitable that intermarrying with white spouses radically altered Indigenous marital patterns.

This change was glaring when I tried to make sense of the clan lineage based on exogamic moiety, characteristic of the Kawahiva people. Barring the elders, most people either did not know it well or could not explain the kinship system with ease. But even the elders were not orthodox in their view of the importance of such kinship. When I asked Katiká, she said that, even in the past, moiety exogamy was “not a religion like Tenharim.” For her, the Tenharim were too strict, whereas the Karipuna were more flexible in terms of marriage, yet insofar as marriage happened between Indigenous people. Despite her dislike of non-Indigenous intermarriage, none of her offspring followed her wish. Alongside Leni Paula, another noteworthy non-Indigenous member is Francisco, a.k.a. Chico Onça, who was a neighbor *ribeirinho* living near the village. In conventional circumstances, he would not be allowed into the community, since he was neither a Karipuna nor married to one. But he later married an Indigenous woman whose father was married to a Karipuna, so the authorities eventually accepted his presence. More importantly, Francisco had many daughters, among four who married Karipuna men. Some of them got divorced but left their children. In the current village, non-Indigenous lineages account for roughly half of the community. Only a few people still use the term “pure Karipuna” (*Karipuna puro*)—meaning both parents of a person identified as Indigenous and Karipuna in a patrilineal way—a notion widely deemed outdated and “doesn't exist” anymore, as one Karipuna explained. Issues of ethnic identity rarely surface unless explicitly prompted. Since almost every household is formed through intermarriage, the sense of ethnic majority/minority is weak. There is no single, unmixed “Karipuna core” overwhelming the others. Sometimes, it even feels the contrary, that the Karipuna are the ones being overwhelmed by non-Indigenous presence in their own land. This decentering social fabric also contributes to creating an “opening to the Other.”

2.6.1. Oyo'ayut: Polygyandrous unions

Today, the Karipuna are monogamous, but they had a polygyandrous relationship called *oyo'ajut*,⁵³ which means living together (*morar juntos*) or entering into “partnership” (*socio*). Some Karipuna say that it meant both polygyny and polyandry, while one interlocutor said that *oyo'ayut* mostly consists of polyandry. At least among the known cases, there were many more polyandrous ones, that is, sharing a female partner with bachelor kin (probably due to the high sex ratio): “If the woman is married, and the brother [of her husband] likes her, they can enter in 'partnership', as you whites say. Having two husbands. ... Let's say I'm married and I have a nephew, cousin, brother or relative without a woman, I feel pity for him. I say to my wife, 'You see, he's pitiful. What about entering into a partnership with him? Do you accept?'“ If the wife agrees, thus starts *oyo'ajut*, explained a Karipuna. *Oyo'ayut* seems to be more akin to “spouse sharing” (Viveiros de Castro 1992) or “polyandrous arrangements” (Laraia, 1963) than “partible paternity” (Erikson, 2002; Walker et al., 2015), since its emphasis was given in “not leaving anyone [adult] to be without a partner.” Lévi-strauss offered an early reference to the “Tupi-Kawahib” who “combine polygyny with polyandry in order to resolve the problems set by the chief's prerogatives” instead of practicing homosexuality, such as the Nambikwara (Lévi-Strauss, 1961, p. 353). The continuity between this Tupi-Kawahib group and the current Karipuna collective is unverifiable, but the latter neither recognizes such prerogative of the chief nor do the people consider it the driver of *oyo'ajut*. The Karipuna do mention the disadvantages of this custom: disputes usually triggered by a jealous male partner alleging unfair treatment. To address these issues, there were rules to maintain *oyo'ajut*. Depending on mutual agreement, the woman would sleep only with a designated person on a determined day (or week), “rotating” (*fazer rodizo*) partners. Even then, problems would occur. “My father says [*oyo'ajut*] was not very good. My grandmother had two men, and the older one was very jealous. He didn't let the young go far away with his wife. So, the two had to date, hiding in the woods, or inventing excuses to be together.” How do we explain the maintenance of this form of cohabitation despite anecdotes fraught with complaint? If Lévi-strauss's explanation (the chief balancing his privilege or concentrated power by lending his wives) does not explain the Karipuna's case, could it be a social mechanism for alleviating male sexual desire, hence a pre-emptive form of conflict resolution? (Laraia, 1963, p. 72). What is clear is that *oyo'ayut* was a

⁵³ The Amondawa have a similar system called *oko gârê* (him) or *oko nharê* (her), translated as “lovers, companions, liking-each-others” (A. P. Villa, personal communication, May 2024).

fairly common practice until it ceased to exist as the “whites came, with criticism and racism,” according to Batiti. Not only them: Even the same kin started to judge the practice, criticizing it as “ridiculous.” Nevertheless, some wanted to maintain the tradition, and in a way, they managed to do so until recently [RES]. But as people became increasingly aware of others' prejudice, they no longer articulated it as *oyo'ayut*.

2.7. Other aspects

2.7.1. Housing

The Karipuna's traditional hut (*oca*) was observed in 1976, when the FUNAI agents visited their village located on the west side of the Jaci Paraná River (Benamour in Vaz et al., 1991, p. 5-6). After settling in Panorama village, they began living in typical Brazilian suburban wooden cabins, but until around 2004, they still had palm roofs (Figure 4). Ever since, the palm roofs have been replaced with steel roofs, but the style and materials remain the same, including the newly built houses in 2024,⁵⁴ which have two rooms, a living room, a kitchen, and a toilet.



Figure 4. The Panorama village and Batiti in 2004. (Photograph by Gilberto Azanha)

⁵⁴ This “project” was financed by the German Embassy's donation, following the flood in 2023 that engulfed four houses and caused extensive damage.

When I visited Kaipú, one of the few Karipuna who remember how to build traditional houses, he showed a palm roof he built in the Arara IL, where he resides, explaining that palm roofs require maintenance but are cooler. In traditional Indigenous *oca*, roofing was one of the key factors that dictated the choice of site for gardens and houses, since people needed to have an abundant source of palm trees (the species used for roofing) nearby to construct the roof, and replenish it regularly (Descola, 1994, p. 139). Now, when the Karipuna need house repairs or small-scale construction (e.g., installing toilets), they usually seek support from their partners (NGOs) to contract others to carry out the work. A teacher who spent more than a decade in the village said, “I never saw them [Karipuna] building houses.” To be precise, they did when Abagaju and Tiu were alive. Also in 2024, when seven new houses were built, many people participated in the construction, mainly as unskilled laborers, while the process was led by technicians (contracted by partner NGOs). All the building materials—bricks, wood, cement, sand—were imported from the city by trucks.

2.7.2. Clothing and tattooing

According to reports from 1977 to 1978, the Karipuna's tendency to wear Western (regional) clothing had begun, largely replacing their previous clothing made from palm leaves and tree bark: “All the Indians who visit us come already dressed and continue to ask for clothes. They have stopped using feathers on their arms as well as on the [penis] sheath” (Fontes, 1978, p. 2). However, the SESAI nurse Vandy, who visited the village in 1981, said that Aripã, who had been traveling alongside the FUNAI agents, was wearing a Bermuda that had been given to him, while others were still “nude.” Yet by 1984, she observed every Karipuna dressing in regional style, a practice that continues to this day. Vilaça reports that “the Wari’s use of white’s clothing and consumption of their food are both effective modes of transforming into whites that ... do not imply a unique identity and, far from being a process without return, are founded precisely on this oscillation of positions” (Vilaça, 2016, p. 9; Vilaça, 2010, 2016). At the “face-level,” it is difficult to find such “oscillations.” Besides the two elders, nobody has a facial tattoo characteristic of the Karipuna.⁵⁵ This is commonly attributed to the lack of personnel specialized in tattoos, but even if there were a specialist, the people told me they would not do it on the face. They saw the elders with facial tattoos being ridiculed by Brazilians, and in some cases, even their own kinsmen kept their distance

⁵⁵ Occasionally, they do bodypainting for special events, which include facial painting.

from them, allegedly out of shame (This is why one elder prefers not to visit these family members in the city). But it might also be that they prefer having different “positions” or options available rather than “implying a unique identity” that forecloses the ability to “oscillate” by “a process without return”—a fixed facial tattoo.

2.7.3. Special events

Few cultural events or ceremonies are held in the village. The most important traditional festival, called *Botawa* (or *Mbotawa*, is still celebrated by the Tenharim: Peggion, 2005) has ceased to take place since settling down in the Panorama. While Katiká misses *Botawa*, she acknowledges that it takes “too much work.” It also requires a well-organized collective effort, which she thinks is impossible within the community's current social fabric. Arduous female labor was mobilized to prepare huge amounts of food that were an indispensable part of such feasts. To pound Brazilian nuts into powder to mix them with boar meat, she had to work painstakingly, sometimes even overnight, all alone. In the absence of traditional events, some national events, such as the “Day of the Indians” (Dia dos Indios) or “Mother’s Day” are celebrated, usually organized by the village teachers from SEDUC. Due to the current configuration of the village, there is no designated *terreiro* (central plaza) for collective gatherings or activities. They use the school classroom or the little yard in front of the health post to organize events. Upon request, the Karipuna seniors perform a song or dance using the traditional bamboo flute, *taboca*, with a simplified version of body decoration. The bamboo flute dance, *onhimbu yei*, was a male performance to celebrate a warrior who killed the enemy. Since the original context of these cultural forms has been removed, these performances have become simplified demonstrations of Indigenous identity that only a few Karipuna can explain their meanings. Yet, it would be erroneous to conclude that they have “let their culture die,” as some Karipuna lament. I have witnessed, more than once, that, whenever one assumes that a certain cultural form is “dead,” they are enacted, out of a sudden. The *taboca* dance was also not performed for many years, despite frequent encouragement from outsiders (including paid offers), only to be resumed when a handful of actors simply felt ready to perform. It is true that many practices appear to be dormant, thus more sophisticated, elaborated forms may be difficult to reproduce, but some of them can be rekindled and resurge when the conditions are met [RES].

2.8. Nocturnal life

2.8.1. Lighting and energy

At sunset (18h), each family prepares dinner at home. After the village moved uphill in the wake of the 2023 flood, the energy regime shifted to near-complete dependence on solar power. Each household received an individual solar plate powering electricity installed on each roof. This grossly improved energy supply enabled people to use more electrical appliances, such as LED TVs, refrigerators, and fans. Energy supply is not unlimited, since the battery sets the limits, but it seems to meet all basic needs. I never observed people intentionally rationing energy (e.g., leaving TV sets ON while nobody was watching). Wireless internet is available 24/7, since some people installed Starlink service, whose service charge is much higher than the market price due to the distance from conventional service areas. Those who cannot afford this have to “free ride” on others' coverage, who pay the bill, which is considered an unpleasant dependency. Earlier on, electricity was generated by a single diesel generator (paid for by the health agency SESAI), which lit public areas and made the internet available for only a few hours. During that time, people would gather under the light to connect and chat online. Due to the individualized solar energy regime and privatized internet, there is now no centralized gathering place where people can interact and bond organically. The village also appears darker at night. In the beginning, there was a discussion about installing lights outside the porches of each house to light the village collectively, but the plan was not strictly followed.

2.8.2. Before and during sleep

It is very rare to have a communal meal, and such a dinner is even rarer. At night, except for some men occasionally going nocturnal hunting (targeting paca), most people stay at home to rest and avoid mosquitoes. Even into the late 90s, pre-bedtime⁵⁶ was dedicated to storytelling, not only as a means of transmitting knowledge but also as a source of entertainment. The younger generation, now in their 20s to 30s, recall these evenings when they would lie in their hammocks and have elders tell stories until late, usually about forest beings or a famous Karipuna *pajé*. Today, late-night storytelling is almost gone, making the Karipuna children even less acquainted with their

⁵⁶ The Karipuna used to sleep in hammocks; now, hammocks are used more during the day, and most people sleep in their beds or on mattresses.

own stories. Only two elders and one middle-aged man are able to tell stories,⁵⁷ without any successor in sight. One storyteller expressed concern about the situation: “I’m worried. If I die, it’ll be over. Nowadays, youngsters don’t know how to do...” Most of the houses have their own TV set connected with cable TV service, whose various programs people watch are of common Brazilian preference (soccer, telenovela, daily news, etc.) and little to do with their immediate surroundings (except some programs about survival missions in forests, or a TV series about forest spirits, *Curupira*, 2024).

My Kariipuna interlocutor describes that in the 1990s,⁵⁸ it was common to hear older men singing Kariipuna songs in the evening. I never heard anyone singing traditional songs in the village except during special events, where they are asked to give cultural demonstrations. Now, from dusk to evening, it is common to hear Brazilian pop music, *sertanejo*, *forró*, or *pisadinha* (popular music and dance genre from the northeast), or the sound bites of Instagram feeds or Youtube shorts, or electric sounds of children’s home video games connected to TV sets that almost every household with a child has. Music is often connected to large, portable amplifiers. These instruments do not allow acoustic coexistence but dominate the soundscape by flattening it with a single tune (also hindering interviews and recordings). I found that it is mostly the non-Indigenous village members who prefer such genre and volume choices, while the others are not huge fans. These grievances are not expressed but endured or tolerated [COP][LET], except in one case: when Katiká’s husband passed away in 2025, she asked the community members to respect the mourning period and not to play loud music or drink alcohol [RES]. In usual circumstances, sounds of the forest (e.g., chirping of birds and insects) are masked by noises of TV sets or social network services until around 11 p.m., when they are finally turned off. Several people told me that they suffer from sleep problems due to the concern of the *invasores* attacking at night. This concern heightened especially during the Bolsonaro administration (2019-2023) and the COVID-19 outbreak, when the government’s anti-Indigenous rhetoric emboldened the *invasores*.

⁵⁷ The possibility that the people do not tell stories because they do not feel entitled to do so, as Gow (2001) describes the Piro storytellers (pp. 84-8), is slim. Even those who were willing to share with me only knew few, which were simplified versions.

⁵⁸ Anthropologist Pierre Clastres describes his experience of living with the Guayaki hunters (in the 1970s), who sang nocturnal solos every night (“they all sing together, but each man sings his own song”: (Clastres, 1974/1987, p. 102). Viveiros de Castro also describes a similar experience among the Araweté (in the 1980s): “I heard emerging from the silence a high, solitary intonation, sometimes exalted, sometimes melancholic, but always austere, solemn, and, to me, somewhat macabre. It was the shamans singing ... the music of the gods” (1992, p. 13).

2.9. Conclusion: Patchworking different modes of life

After the turbulent era of intensive contact with the whites that started in the 1970s, the Karipuna's everyday life underwent a significant transformation. The fundamental question of “how to live” was up for grabs. From the way they eat, organize subsistence, form marital union, upbringing people, etc., almost every aspect of quotidian life needed some form of reorganization, if not reinvention. The Karipuna had to learn how to live anew, not exactly from scratch, but on unstable grounds, surrounded by unfamiliar circumstances. Some earlier modes of life were replaced by newer ones, but often, seemingly obsolete modes were not completely discarded. As a result, one can observe a living example of coexistence in everyday life: forest and urban, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, traditional and new modes of producing people and livelihoods exist side by side. The Karipuna's four main pillars of daily life (subsistence, marriage, education, and healthcare) pertain to different levels of coexistence: While subsistence and marriage show a higher degree of coexistence, institutional education (including language) and healthcare show a diminishing trend of coexistence.

Thinking through coexistence enables us to circumvent the much-criticized frames of acculturation and “rescue anthropology” (Gow, 1991, 2001) in analyzing Indigenous societies, as it attends to concrete and diverse configurations of Karipuna daily life rather than sweeping details under the big tent of a single trend. The Karipuna show that there are undercurrents that defy such generalizations, even as there are considerable megatrends towards modernization and urbanization in many areas. The Karipuna often express nostalgia about the old ways of doing things (e.g., traditional medicine), but it is rare to see proactive initiatives to “rescue” their culture. Neither do the elders bother to impose or insist on the traditional way. Peter Gow, discussing the Piro elder's apparent “indifference” to the transmission of knowledge, says:

I do not presuppose that the Piro lived world is necessarily marked by a concern to transmit tradition or reproduce itself in self-identical form over time. ... a concern with transmitting tradition was imposed by anthropologists on many of the peoples they studied without their ever bothering to find out if the latter cared about it, or even if it actually happened. (Gow, 2001, p. 27)

Each and every Karipuna is worlding in their own ways, to “constitute the world around them in ways that are intrinsically meaningful to them” (Gow, 2001, p. 303), embracing many aspects of change. As a result, the Karipuna sociality became a “patchy” (Tsing et al., 2019) process of formation of coexisting differences. Now, as the Karipuna observe their 4th generation since the

“official contact,” their everyday life appears relatively stable compared to the more tumultuous periods (from the 1970s to the early 2000s), but it remains an ongoing project “in the making.” Considering such a dynamic of the Karipuna's daily life, we cannot be certain about what form it will take in the not-too-distant future. It is a reality that warrants constant, close observation of even the minutest changes and the intricate dynamics of their consequences.

3. A narrative philosophy of coexistence [MESH] [LET]

Conventionally, this could be a place for theoretical discussions of the literature on the thesis's theme. I postpone the literature review (to Section Intros and Conclusion) and instead, foreground the Karipuna's point of view on coexistence. Although the Karipuna do not offer a clear-cut definition or a full-blown philosophical theory of coexistence, and none of my interlocutors wished to engage in in-depth metaphysical discussions to construct one, this does not mean they do not philosophize about it. The closest notion to coexistence may be *ojowereko* (to be/live/go together - Kw), which applies to both humans and animals. They also make pithy remarks that encapsulate their idea of coexistence. One leader said, "Coexistence is living together and learning to live." When I asked him, "Together with whom?" he replied, "Other people, water, animals, river, birds." One elder explained coexistence by evoking shamanic concepts: "Nothing exists alone. Everything that has life is somehow empowered. They all have protectors or owners. They all communicate (*conversar*) with others." A common way the Karipuna philosophize or explain non-empirical, conceptual matters is by referring to their stories. The word designated for "story" in Kawahiva is *nhĩmũa*, used indiscriminately for narratives about events or mythical themes. The "blurring of mythic thought and historical agency" (Vilaça, 2010, p. 8) characteristic of Amerindians is not confined to such linguistic indiscrimination but also to the way they understand *nhĩmũa*. Whenever I ask, "Is this a story, or did it really happen?" I receive diverse responses: "I don't know, but that's what happened in the old days"; "It really happened. It was an event (*acontecimento*)"; "It's just a story."⁵⁹ Some narratives show the crossing of what may be considered "myth" and "event" within a single sequence. In this ambiguous *in-betweenness* lies the Karipuna narrative, defying the dichotomy of myth and history (Overing, 1997), compelling us to understand *storying* as a dynamic way of constructing historicity rather than a static oral delivery of fixed content. Most importantly, telling and listening to stories has long been how the Karipuna make sense of and acquire knowledge, usually about the past and origins, though not limited to them. Below is how Batiti Karipuna, a storyteller and authority on the people's cultural and historical knowledge, explains what a story is to him.

⁵⁹ *Nhĩmũa* is indiscriminately used for mythical narratives and historical ones. Some are semantically distinguishable due to "evidentiality," the grammatical markers that denote the absence of witness (dos Santos, 2024b, p. 95), but in practice, these can be frequently omitted.

I was always curious. ... How did the ancestors live? How was the birth of things? As I asked [elders], “How did the peccary come into being?” “How did the tapir emerge?”, they told me about Kandabuhua, Bahira, and all the rest. How they lived, how things emerged, how animals came into being. Like that, telling stories so that I could learn, so that I could tell children, passing it on from father to son, as my father did to me. There were many [stories], more and more... It was my curiosity. Why did the animals have those colors? White, black, spotted, red, purple. But why? How did the animals get those colors? That's why they told stories. It was my curiosity. I would dig deeper. How did the Kawahiva emerge? How did people first emerge? [It's] like the Bible, right? How did humans come into being? Wasn't it Adam and Eve? Same with us.

So, we can say that the Karipuna's narratives show how they conceptualize things and events. When combined with their contemporary interpretations, it is possible to outline how they conceptualize coexistence. Since *nhĩmũa* does not necessarily entail the strong fictive connotation of “myth,” I will replace it with “story” or “narrative” interchangeably.

3.1. In the beginning was coexistence

How did the Karipuna come into the world? If they could discuss with Martin Heidegger, who described the existential condition as being “thrown” into the world (1927/1996), they might disagree. Rather, they might find the neologism “thrown-togetherness” (Massey, 2005) more agreeable, since from the very beginning, they were not by themselves but always coexisted with others. More precisely, according to their origin story, they were not thrown but *opened* into the world. Bahira opened the way out for the underground proto-people to come out and be.

[Narrative #3-1] “The first Karipuna”

It says that in ancient times, God made a couple: a man named Bahira and his wife. He stayed there, cleaned up the land, built his little house, and there was no one in that place. Bahira went out of his house to his garden and started producing corn, papaya, banana... things like that. Every time he looked at his garden, things had disappeared: some fruits and vegetables, such as a banana, papaya, or cassava, things like that. He realized people were messing around in his garden. He walked all around his village to see if there were any tracks. He thought it was another Indian, but there was no clue. No trace. Nothing, nothing, nothing. He said, “Well, then, who is eating my garden? There are people who are eating my garden.”

He talked to his wife, “Today I'm going to catch the person who is messing with my garden. They are eating papaya; they are definitely eating my corn. Today I'm going to see who's messing around.” He went around and around searching for the person, but again there was no one. Only traces remained of the people who disturbed his garden. Until one day, he went to the garden at night. There was a big hole in the ground. A huge rock, with a stone lid covering it. Inside the hole, he could hear people talking. He ran right back to home and said to his wife, “I found out who is eating our garden. They are people. They are living inside a hole, a stone hole, but it has a lid on

top of it. We have to go there to see if we can get these people out of there.” The next day, he went there with his wife, during the day. They took out a stick to suspend the stone. It was a big stick. They put it under the lid and lifted it. When they lifted the stone lid just enough, people started coming out of the hole.

First came out the white people. They said, “I am white.” Then, others started to come out, saying “I’m Indian.” These Indians said the names of their tribes, identifying themselves. Everyone who came out came with their clan. In other words, the macaw clan came with a macaw on its arm, the *curica* [*Amazona amazonica*] clan with a curica, the eagle clan with a harpy eagle, the parrot clan with a parrot, and the curassow with a curassow on his lap, holding a curassow, “I am a curassow.” The *arara* [*Anodorhynchus hyacinthinus*] people said, “I am Arara,” “my clan is Arara.” Like that, people came out, came out, came out. The Kawahiva people, coming out. The Tenharim, Parantintin, Uru-eu-wau-wau, every Kawahiva people. Then, lastly, it was our people [Karipuna]. We are all Kawahiva and speak the same language. Then they say, there was one beautiful girl in the middle. She forgot her sieve, so she went back into the hole to get her sieve. As the rock was very heavy, Bahira could no longer hold it to avoid covering the hole again. The girl took a long time to get back. As Bahira got tired, the rock slipped from his hands and covered the mouth of the hole. The most beautiful girl remained inside. That’s why our people don’t have very beautiful girls. We only have nice ones. The prettiest was left behind. Our hand was also just one thing, like a duck’s foot. So, the shaman started cutting the hands. Cutting and dividing the little hand, as it is today. It wasn’t like that. The fingers were all stuck together like ducks. The shaman kept cutting, cutting, cutting. So, the hands changed, from a foot to one with normal fingers. Then, staying there, the people, lots of people, made villages. Each group sang their own song, just like Tenharim, Parintintin, Uru-Eu-Wau-Wau, when they sing their songs differently.

Embedded in this narrative is the origin of Kawahiva’s mode of social organization in exogamous moieties, named after bird species with contrasting characteristics. “The local groups, territorially located and politically independent, had a social organization based on a dualism represented by clan moieties called *Mutum* [curassow] and *Gavião* [eagle]. These two halves organized the marriage system, which was carried out in the form of an internal exogamy to each of the groups” (Peggion, 2022, p. 5).⁶⁰ The Kawahiva not emerging alone, but with their respective bird-pair represents a world in which humans always exist alongside nonhumans. From the beginning, the Karipuna coexisted, not only with other Kawahiva with different bird moieties and songs, but also with the whites who arrived first. The supposedly “first couple,” Bahira and his

⁶⁰ Each Kawahiva person is associated with, on one hand, belonging to a *Mutum* clan as the basis moiety, and on the other hand, a non-*Mutum* bird clan: *Arara* (a kind of macaw), *taravé* (red-headed macaw), *kwandú* (eagle), *kanindé* (blue/yellow macaw) (Paiva, 2005). Each Kawahiva moiety corresponds to an exogamous patrilineal group. Individuals belong to their father’s moiety and can only marry someone from a different moiety, although the strictness of adherence to this rule may vary depending on the group.

wife, are not alone either.⁶¹ Somebody was stealing their garden crops, which led to an investigation and subsequently, the “becoming-together.” Bahira's noticing of coexistence marks the origin of the Kawahiva people and others. The couple does not create or procreate the others; they *uncover* them into existence.

However, coexistence is also portrayed as a challenging task from the beginning. If Narrative #3-1 demonstrates the coexistence with different kinds of people as an original condition, another narrative⁶² shows the formation of the world marked by the deity's escape from undesirable cohabitation. Whether it is kin, affine, or others, living with others is viewed as a challenge fraught with conflicts. The origin of the world is also the origin of the difficulties of communal life and the desire to escape from it (and build a new homeplace).

[Narrative #3-2] “The Flood”

They say that God, Pyreapinga used to live with us, the Karipuna. After many fights with us, Pyreapinga decided to leave with his family. First, he looked into the subterranean, but it was occupied by the *anhangã* [malevolent spirits]. Then he looked into the rocks, but there the *bahira* were living. Finally, he found that the sky was adequate to live. He made up his mind to go to the sky and announced it, but nobody believed his words. So, one day, Pyreapinga climbed up to the top of his house's roof and started singing. As he sang, the house started to move. The house took off, and from the holes where the pillars were grounded, water slowly began to seep out. As the house went up, Pyreapinga kept singing on the roof. Singing, singing, singing. The house, as well as the water level, kept going up. In the house, there were a lot of things. They had a fan, a sieve, a pestle, etc. When the house was already about 20 meters high, the fan fell into the water and became a piranha. The sieve fell into the water and turned into a stingray. The pestle fell into the water and turned into an electric eel. The wooden roof's ridge, where he was sitting, fell and turned into a caiman. And the house kept going up. The water kept rising, rising, rising, rising. Until the world ended. In the middle of this, there were people who held onto the palm tree branches. The water flew with great force, leaving cut marks on their hands. That is why today, we, the Karipuna people, have marks on our hands, left over from this event. The water filled, filled, and stayed there, until it slowly started to dry up. Another month or so passed. Then came the frog, which is called *yiabua*. He dived to see whether the water was deep or shallow, and whether it was drying out. Then a bird arrived, which we call *orócoroa*. *Orócoroa* drank water and went up to the sky, very high. There, he spouted out water from his belly. Where lots of water fell, it became rivers; where only a little water fell, it became streams. Until the land dried up, the people stayed on the other side of the river, which was the size of the Madeira River.

⁶¹ In Tupi narratives, the hero does not emerge alone but usually with brothers or as twins. God creating an “original couple” also reminds the Bible, whose influence is observable in Kawahiva narratives (see [Menéndez, 1987](#)).

⁶² The order between the two genesis stories is unclear, or, nonlinear, in the Karipuna's timeframe.

From the beginning of the world's formation, coexistence is a given, unchosen condition, and its conflictive nature can be such that it prompts the deity Pyreapinga to actively seek escape. One version of this story, narrated by an elder, described how certain “children” maltreated Pyreapinga, prompting him to leave, whereas another storyteller described how the Karipuna wore him down through infighting. In either case, wherever Pyreapinga finds a place, it is occupied by someone. Coexistence is ubiquitous and unavoidable. Finally, he finds refuge in the sky world, which is also not unoccupied. Telling this story, the Karipuna elder expounded that the sky world is full of animals: not just animals to hunt and consume, but also others such as the celestial jaguar and caiman, etc., comprising an entire ecology, far from an empty space devoid of life. No matter which habitat (terrestrial, celestial, subterranean) one chooses in Karipuna cosmology, people require nonhumans, especially animals, to constitute worlds: a world without these others is simply inconceivable.

3.2. Coexisting with/in the forest

Narrative #3-2 is supposed to explain how the world was created. It explains how the river, creeks, and certain animals were created, but not about the world itself. No Karipuna could (or were interested in) explain the creation of “the World” itself. And the same goes for the forest, which is understandable since we could say that, for the Karipuna, the closest word for World was forest,⁶³ *kayra*.⁶⁴ They were not familiar with worlds that are *not* forested. They have much less to say about the sky world, *yvaga*, and even less about the savannah areas (the biome now known as *cerrado*), *nhuã*, which they have probably known during the early era of dislocation. They say that some ancestors traveled far enough to see the sea (for which they have no term), but nobody remembers more than one narrative featuring a vague allusion to marine space. Their world was first and foremost a forest, including rivers and creeks. The Karipuna's forest, conceived as a lifeworld, was not some kind of landscape “out there” external to humans but a socially integrated “taskscape” (Ingold, 1993). Their perspective was a “dwelling” one that “treats the immersion of the organism-person in an environment or lifeworld as an inescapable condition of existence” (Ingold, 2000, p.

⁶³ Paraphrased from Ursula Le Guin's novel *The Word for World is Forest* (1972), in which she described an invented extraterrestrial tribe the *Athshe*.

⁶⁴ To be more precise, their world was a *riparian* forest. Although they lived in areas that are now classified as *terra firme*, they were always familiar with the river, *paraná*. The concept *kayra* does not necessarily include the river, but they viewed the aquatic world inseparable from the forest, rather than as a distinct “third world” (e.g., as the Achuar people do: Descola, 1994, p. 271).

153).⁶⁵ In the dwelling perspective, inhabiting a landscape is inseparable from experiencing it (ibid.), as the landscape becomes home for its inhabitants “through the incorporation of its features into a pattern of everyday activities” (Ingold, 1996, p. 116): humans “enter actively into the constitution of their environments. They do so, however, from *within*” (ibid., p. 57). Saying that the Karipuna coexist with the forest also means that the people actively participate in the constitution of the forest from within, rather than positing humans and their environment as separate. One story highlights this inseparability. It is not a transmitted narrative, but a fairly recent episode:

April 2014. On his first trip to Europe, Adriano Karipuna’s flight landed at Frankfurt International Airport. He was invited by a coalition of NGOs, including Greenpeace Germany, to participate in various events to urge protection for the Amazon forest. At the customs, he was stopped by the police, who instructed him to accompany them to a corridor. As a first-time flier, Adriano followed, wondering why. The officer made him wait for a long time in an empty room until a translator arrived who spoke Spanish (not Portuguese, which was Adriano’s working language), but he understood enough to realize the context: the authorities had an issue with his “hat.” Adriano was wearing a *cocar*, a traditional feather headdress. “Why? What’s the problem?” he asked back. The translator explained: “Because it was made of feathers. In German law, it is prohibited to cross the border with an unauthorized wild animal product. Adriano still did not get the point. “The officer is asking to remove it from your head,” the translator said. Adriano put his *cocar* on the table, but as the police officer reached out his hand to inspect it, he quickly warned, “It’s sacred, don’t touch!” The officer briefly halted but slowly took the object. (Adriano said that the officer was trembling with fear, but that part seems exaggerated.) After closely examining it, the police announced the verdict: the object is made of real avian feathers, not fake ones; therefore, it may constitute an “environmental crime.” Having been explained, Adriano cried in disbelief, “What? Environment? Well, *I am the environment!* (*Eu sou ambiente!*)” [MESH].

⁶⁵ Ingold draws the notion of dwelling from Heidegger, who explains *Dasein*, as dwelling, as a conception of being-in-the world and being inseparable from the world, in his essay “Building Dwelling Thinking” (1951).

Adriano's identification with the environment ⁶⁶ unsettles understandings of the environment as everything that surrounds the subject, yet not including it. In this conception, the environment includes the subject in question, not viewing the two as separate entities. It goes without saying that “being one” with the environment does not mean literal inseparability,⁶⁷ but rather a deeper connection and relatedness that are difficult to disentangle. So, entanglement with the environment should not be equated with *no* boundary but a different kind of boundary: a blurrier and more porous boundary than that of one who posits nature as external to humans. I find an explanation of the boundary between human and forest in the accounts of getting lost in the woods. Although expert sylvan wayfarers, more than one Karipuna told me about their intermittent experiences of getting lost. When lost, they recount, a baffling sensation of “becoming one” with the forest strikes them, which I summarize as follows: *When you lose your way in the forest, wandering for days without washing, your scent becomes the same as your surroundings. You smell like the forest, like a tapir or a peccary. Surprisingly, these animals, who would never come close to humans in normal circumstances, approach or pass by nonchalantly, within arm's reach, as if you were a tree or bush. Strangely, although you may not have eaten well, and even if you have a shotgun, you feel no desire to kill.* This peculiar experience, in which the boundaries between humans and forest beings collapse [MESH], is an exceptional situation. Humans literally becoming one with the environment (or animals, plants) is an accident that should be avoided. To properly coexist with the forest, one needs a functioning boundary that *prevents* one from becoming the other. Humans can *forest*, and be entangled with it, but are not, and should not become one.

3.3. Conditions for coexistence

3.3.1. Appropriate distance from the other

Coexisting with the forest entails coexistence with a variety of humans and nonhuman others. The otherness in the Karipuna narratives is most commonly represented as an animal and, to a lesser degree, as *anhangã* (malevolent spirits -Kw). What is an animal for the Karipuna? They did not have an overarching category equivalent to “animal”; rather, they denoted each species (the same

⁶⁶ I often use “environment” interchangeably with “forest,” as when the Karipuna refer to the environment, they are usually addressing their forested land (not some random environment, much less urban environments) as in this case. Obviously, when they use the term in a broader sense, I take account of it.

⁶⁷ For instance, consider the case of conjoined twins whose existence relies on indivision (and whose lives bear mortal risk even in a sophisticated surgical separation).

with plants). The closest term could be *batera*, but it has much broader meanings (thing, object, food, animal -Kw). Except for semantically distinguishing *tekuatea* (forest animals, wildlife -Kw) and *ogipebahea* (animal of the house, reared in the village -Kw), my Karipuna interlocutors did not provide a definition of animal (they hardly define things verbally). Although they certainly distinguish animals from humans, they did not specify the difference. At least the difference was not defined by the possession of fire (see section 3.4.1), nor by a spiritual dimension, since many animals are considered to have souls or spirits (although not exactly the same “types” as humans: Chapter 9). In the Karipuna narratives, animals always coexist, interact, and intermingle with humans, yet represent the other. This is different from the indistinguishability between human and animal, which, for Claude Lévi-Strauss, characterizes Amerindian narrative.

If you were to ask an American Indian [what is a myth?], it is extremely likely that he would answer: it is a story from the *time when humans and animals did not distinguish themselves from one another* [emphasis added]. This definition seems to me to be very profound. (as cited in Eribon, 1988, p. 193)

The Karipuna's answer to this question would be: a story from the time humans and animals *communicated* with each other. It is possible to observe both divisions and indivisions between humans and animals in Karipuna stories, but before that, we need to first establish, if, or to what extent, animals in the narratives actually represent animals. Some scholars argue that animals featured in Amerindian narratives are not actual animals but fictive figures. Descola considers these animals as “humans with animal names,” whose “appearance was human, and only a few clues, such as their names and their strange behavior, indicated what they were to change into” (2013, pp. 131-2). This is not exactly how the Karipuna generally understand animals in narratives. For instance, contrary to a Kawahiva narrative about the origin of fire (featuring vultures) which recounts, “the vulture were people, they had hands” (Pereira, 1980, p. 561; Parantintin version), my Karipuna interlocutor explained, “the vulture was indeed an animal, but it spoke like a person.” Animals in narratives may appear as less-than-perfect *prototypes*, lacking certain attributes, yet are not viewed as humans with animal names; they clearly display their distinctive features, marking physical and behavioral discontinuities⁶⁸ with humans. Since these animals often act like humans, intermingle with them, and communicate directly, even forming kinship relations [MESH], the

⁶⁸ A frog (oozing out liquid from its back: Narrative #3-5) or an eagle (feathered, flying, eating monkeys and sloths, living in a nest, in Narrative #3-7), etc.

discontinuities are considerably blurred. Still, animals are considered distinguishable from humans, belonging to the “other” category, not as inferior or lesser beings, but as *significant* others. Barring some exceptions (e.g., Narrative #3-4), the prevailing view of the human-animal relationship in most of the Karipuna narratives is symmetrical. This is possible because the shared condition between humans and animals is personhood rather than animality (Viveiros de Castro, 2000). In contrast to anthropocentric human exceptionalism, whose fundamental axiom is “that *personhood as a state of being is not open to non-human animal kinds*” (Ingold, 2000, p. 48), the Karipuna, like many other Amerindians, recognize that personhood “*is open equally to human and non-human animal (and even non-animal) kinds*” (ibid.), although not to every species. The Karipuna refuse the “dualism of humanity and animality, and the entailed restriction of personhood to human beings ... [which is] not, of course, that they fail to differentiate between humans and animals. To the contrary, they are acutely concerned about such differences” (ibid., p. 49). One solution they devised to address these differences is metamorphosis (usually via shamanism). In fact, the constantly lurking possibility of mutual transformation, usually informed by narratives and shamanism, keeps destabilizing whatever discontinuity that divides humans and animals. We can say that many animals are ex-humans and humans, ex-animals.

Below is a story that narrates the origin of the mainly hunted animals, which shows that discontinuities clearly exist, positing animals as others, but always open to potential metamorphosis. The story appears to fall into the typical narrative genre of offering an explanation of the origin of some animals (“*pourquoi* tale”), but it is also about maintaining an appropriate distance through metamorphosis, implicating what the animal position means for coexistence.

[Narrative #3-3] “Bahira with warts” (*summarized: full version in Annex)

Bahira, as a little boy, was maltreated by his brothers and the village people. When people beat him, a lot of blood came out of his body full of warts. One day he messes up with his older brother who was fabricating arrows. Violently beaten by his brother, Bahira decides to leave the village, taking only his old grandma, whom he transforms into a young woman, to live with. The villagers manage to find the new house of Bahira, who is now a grown man. When they ask whether he will live in the place, he replies, “Yes, I'm going to live here for good.” But when the people return after a month, there is nobody. In fact, Bahira was there, but hiding from the people to cast a spell to transform them. This time, he turns them into howling monkeys. When the other villagers came to the same place next time, all they found were howling monkeys. After a while, the people managed to find Bahira in another place. Like this, the same pattern repeats. Whenever he is asked, Bahira says he will stay there for good, but disappears soon after and opens up a new place in the jungle. The people keep tracking after and find him, but get easily distracted by some kind of food, such

as fruit, fish, crops, near Bahira's residence, and end up being transformed into different kinds of animals: wolly monkeys, giant otters, river dolphins, collared peccary, agouti, screaming piha [*Lipaugus vociferans*], and finally, a bird called *uru-anhangã*.

Bahira features as a maltreated boy whose body is covered by warts. He constantly tries to avoid his persistent relatives who “want to rescue him,” as my storyteller describes. Bahira uses his shamanic power to transform the tenacious neighbors into various animals *not* to live with them. Turning former humans into animals means, in the story, the good riddance of the burden of cohabiting with unwanted company. It seems possible that, with Bahira's power, he could cast much more malicious spells or resort to assault sorcery to eliminate his pesky neighbors. Yet Bahira repeatedly chooses to animalize them, which allows him to coexist while maintaining distance from the distressing villagers. Here, animals represent beings humans can have around *without* living in close proximity, offering a hint for explaining the difference between cohabitation and coexistence. If the former means intimate, day-to-day enmeshed co-living (conjugal family, relatives, close neighbors) [MESH], the latter includes the former but also means the act of sharing a much wider place such as a forest, recognizing mutual existence yet maintaining a distance, having little or no interaction, not doing anything that existentially threatens the other party—representing one of the main ways the Karipuna coexist with wildlife: *letting be* [LET]. In short, some animals are good to coexist with but not necessarily so to cohabit with. If we remind ourselves of the Amazonian Indigenous people's general aversion towards animal domestication (Carneiro da Cunha, 2019; Descola, 1994), animals are generally deemed as beings that are supposed to maintain a certain distance from humans rather than to be domesticated or to cohabit with (except as pets: see Chapter 11). Just as Bahira's grandmother, whom he transforms into a young woman, some humans need a certain degree of modification or adjustment to live together in a close relationship. Otherwise, it is better that they become animals (as his tiresome kinspeople), whom the Karipuna don't mind existing with, but prefer not to cohabit with. Both in this story and in Narrative #3-2, it is notable that interhuman relations are posited as a challenge that can be overcome either by leaving and finding a new place uninhabited by other humans, or by transforming humans into animals. Whereas, animals, or more precisely, the animal status or condition (since they can be ex-humans), do not pose the same coextensive challenges, since they are the *necessary* others, who are supposed to coexist, albeit at a certain distance.

3.3.2. Un-cohabitable beasts, productive coexistence

So far, the Karipuna narratives seem to instantiate the fluid boundary between human and animal. When an adjustment is necessary to pursue coexistence or cohabitation, transformation is presented as a solution. However, in the narrative below—a story about how the people acquired garden crops—, not only does the boundary emerge rather clearly, but a particular form of transformation justifies the denial of coexistence.

[Narrative #3-4] “Origin of garden crops” (*summarized: full version in Annex)⁶⁹

In the past, the Karipuna did not know garden crops, such as corn, pepper, sweet cassava. One day a girl went to the forest and swallowed a snake's egg, thinking it was a fruit called “*pama*.” This was prohibited for virgin girls to ingest. She felt pregnant, but even after nine months she did not give birth. The village women grew jealous of her, suspecting that she had an affair with their husbands. Every time the girl went to the forest alone, she would return with lots of hunted animals and chestnuts, which was only possible if a man helped. The women grew more suspicious, until one day, they followed her path to the woods. When she arrived under a chestnut tree, she lay down. A big snake came out from inside her genitalia, and climbed up the tree, collecting nuts for her. The women ran back home and told the villagers, “This girl is not a person. She's an animal!” When the girl came back with a basket full of chestnuts, the villagers had already decided to kill her. She said, “If you kill me, don't bury me. You burn my body. Then, you must leave the village.” They killed her, and move away, building a new village. A month later, when the people returned, the former village had become a beautiful garden, where unknown plants grew: corn, cassava, pepper etc. Whenever the people stood in front of a new plant, wondering what it is, birds and beetles came by, telling how to use them. For example, the japim taught to make chicha with corn, and a beetle taught about pepper. This is how they acquired garden crops.

In the old days, the Karipuna refrained from eating eggs because it was believed to make a person lazy or to prematurely age one's skin. But in this story, the prohibition of the fruit that resembles snake eggs only applies to unmarried women, which is unwittingly violated by the protagonist. By swallowing the egg, she falls into an ambivalent state: being pregnant without being able to give birth. But then she becomes empowered by giving birth to a snake, who serves as both her child and her husband: child, because it is conceived and born through her body; husband, because the snake does what Karipuna husbands do for wives, providing food. While the snake-husband raises the neighbors' suspicion, as only a mature suitor can offer such provision,

⁶⁹ A similar story is shared among other Kawahiva people. In the Parintintin's version, the protagonist is an old woman, burned to death by her grandsons and turned into many crops cultivated by the people (Kracke, 1973, p. 82). In the Karipuna's version, the protagonist is a young woman (“virgin”), which marks a key difference since it raises suspicion of other women about possible adultery committed by their husbands, fueling the persecution of the snake-woman. The Tenharim's version resembles Karipuna's story more (Silva, 2006, p. 112).

the snake-child (exiting and entering her body) places the woman in a problematic position between human and animal. As the villagers pry into the girl's private life, they are struck with a revelation: her “groom” was a snake, not a human. The moment the snake is identified, she immediately becomes subject to a death sentence, not even worthy of expulsion. The explicit phrase (“That woman is not a person. She's an animal!”) clearly shows that her human identity fused with a snake disturbs the people, justifying the harshest measures and postulating a clear division between human and animal. Other factors, such as jealousy among the kinswomen, contribute to the story's buildup but seem secondary. The storyteller explained that the expression “animal,” in this case, would be *batera*, which means animal, beast, game, food, or *bateranohua*, which means “animal of bad,” “false or fake animal” (denoting animals that the Karipuna do not eat: caiman, snake, monkey, capybara, etc.) In a way, she falls into the status of “false human” as soon as she is associated with a snake, a false animal. What the narrative clearly shows is a perspective in which coexistence with a being in an ambivalent state (between human and animal) is rejected. Considering that wholesale transformation is a frequent and unproblematic narrative solution for allowing coexistence, it seems that being neither fully human nor fully animal (by begetting an animal) is the unsettling point. If, in Narrative #3-3, humans transformed into animals are at least coexist-able (but not cohabitable), for a human ambivalently entangled with an animal, neither option is possible,⁷⁰ hence the execution. Even the victim solemnly accepts the harsh sentence without protesting. Does this narrative represent an exceptional perception? Among the relatively comprehensive corpus of oral stories I collected, it is indeed a rare case in terms of erecting a clear boundary between humans and animals, but it would be misleading to dismiss such a perspective as a mere outlier. Some explained to me that, in the old days, when they criticized inappropriate sexual conduct (e.g., promiscuity, incest), they used to draw analogies with the behaviors of certain species, e.g., by comparing somebody's sexual behavior to tapirs or curassows,⁷¹ which they find repugnant (*dá nojo*) state of *batera*, since their alleged behavior (fornicating with their own offspring) is deemed inappropriate and unthinkable for human beings. Although these animals form an important part of the Karipuna's everyday life, both symbolically and practically, a clear perceptual division separates them from humans.

⁷⁰ It goes without saying that this does not apply to special agents such as shamans, who are supposed to have the capacity to transform into animals.

⁷¹ Such negative connotation is not applied when curassow represents a moiety.

In the larger context, the girl's unwitting transgression of the human-animal boundary and her giving birth to the improbable snake-child/husband lay the groundwork for bearing positive results (garden crops). Whether the transformative and creative power—crucial for any cultural invention—is enabled by an ambivalent state exemplified by the snake-human, or by making a radical cut from it (killing the woman) remains an open question, but the logic of the narrative signals that it is the killing of both the foundation (girl) and her “product” (snake) which ultimately brings about horticultural abundance, since without sacrificing her life such change would not have been possible. In sum, although the Karipuna's perception is usually not based on a nature/culture dichotomy, and the boundary between human and animal is generally fluid, we can also find boundaries that clearly mark discontinuities. However, even in such cases, discontinuities serve as a constitutive element, yielding transformative outcomes, such as the acquisition of garden crops. And yet again, in the process of acquisition, they are aided by birds and insects, whose guidance is crucial. One of the most consistent factors throughout numerous narratives is the presence of some kind of animal serving the people in their pursuit of an enriched life.

3.4. The constitutive other

3.4.1. The animal as transformative power

What is generalizable throughout almost every Karipuna narrative is the prevalence and irreplaceability of the animal other's presence, especially as the source of transformative power. Whenever human protagonists need to produce difference—whether for vengeance, acquisition of cultural elements, creation of tools or life-forms—they draw from the capacity (and materiality) of animals or form a human-animal “assemblage” to deliver. Far from being just a source of subsistence, the animal is viewed as a significant other, inherently constitutive to the Karipuna society. This explains their will to coexist with the forest, including all its inhabitants. Below is the Karipuna's fire acquisition story.

[Narrative #3-5] “Origin of fire”

The river dried up and people stayed on the other side. People killed fish, put them in the sun. They rotted. There was no fire. The shaman Bahira thought, “I'm going to get fire from the vultures.” He made his body rot. He laid there, until the vulture came down, *urubu pebuhua*, as we call the black vulture. It came down, ate a piece and took it up to the sky. The fly went up there with him, and called the vulture, saying, “*Pirapa-Birup*”, the vulture didn't understand. “*Pirapa-Birup*” “*Pirapa-Birup*.” He didn't understand... until he did. *Pirapa-Birup* meant, a *piaba* [*Leporinus obtusidens*] is

dying over there. The vulture understood and descended to eat rotten fish. It came down with fire. One descended, two descended, and the shaman was there lying down, the Bahira. The vulture started to make fire. When the fire was high, Bahira picked up the vulture's fire and ran away. He went into the tree, into the coconut tree, as the vulture chased him. He went into the rock, and the vulture still followed him. He ran away and the fire was already dying out. He went into the little vine called *tatayba* and left the fire there. When he got home people were asking, "where's the fire?" Bahira said to his son, "Son, go get the vine that's over there, and bring it for me." The boy went there, cut the vine, peeled it and brought it to him. As he brought it, Bahira started rubbing it over the fire saying, "*Orerata corendyia*," until the ember came out. Fire was being made. The people on the other side saw this. "Look, the people have fire." They made fire to warm up. Now, what to do to take the fire to the other side? They called the crab. They tied a fire torch to the crab's back. The crab swam and swam and died. Now they called the snake. The snake also swam and swam but didn't get halfway and died with a fire torch on its back. Then they called the shrimp. They tied the fire with firewood to the shrimp's back, it swam and swam... it died. The frog was there, in his house, making his arrow. They called the frog. "Frog, can you take the fire to the other side?" He said, "Me? Okay, then, I'll try." But he didn't show off like the others. They tied the fire to the fire torches on the frog's back. So, they tied it, and he jumped into the water with fire. He swam and swam, and a lot of people were watching, curious, "He's going to take it, he's going to take it, he's going to take the fire." He swam, swam, swam, swam, swam, swam, swam... the river was big, he was carried away, he rested in the middle of the river, then he was carried away, swimming, swimming... [from his back came out water that stopped burning] until he reached the other side where the people were. They threw a piece of wood, a tree branch close to the frog and pulled him to the edge and received the fire. The frog stayed there on the riverbank, lying down. They invited him to drink *chicha*. He said, "No, I'll stay here to cool my back." When the people returned, he had already turned into a frog. Thus ends the story of the fire, how we discovered fire.

In many Amerindian narratives, fire originates from animals. Both in Tupi-Guarani and Tupi-Kawahiva narratives, fire is initially possessed by vultures (*urubu*) from the sky world (Fausto, 2012, pp. 89, 300), while humans eat sun-dried meat. Carlos Fausto interprets, "the theft of the fire owned by vultures makes humans become eaters of cooked meat in opposition to necrophagy" (Fausto 2008, p. 338). In analyzing the Kawahiva's version, Kurovski (2014, p. 128-9) also views the theft of fire as marking the nature/culture opposition, evoking the Lévi-straussian culinary triangle. A similar logic is observed in Turner's (2017) analysis of the Ge people's fire-acquisition story, in which the jaguar is the original fire possessor. In the Kayapo's perspective, Turner argues, the central point of the narrative is "how animals and humans became fully differentiated from each other, thus giving rise to the contemporary differentiation of nature and culture" (ibid., p. 224). The human protagonist's theft of fire from his adopted jaguar father is interpreted as "inaugurat[ing] the separation between humans and jaguars according to their predatory and dietary modes" (Fausto, 2012, p. 294). However, the narrative does not contain any

explicit emphasis or mention of the jaguar's *return* to eating raw.⁷² Also, in the Kawahiva narratives, there is no mention of the vulture after the robbery of fire—whether in the widely cited Kawahiva version (Pereira, 1980, p. 561-3) or in the Karipuna version. Still, Kurovski concludes, “[t]hanks to the theft of fire, the Kawahiva started eating roasted and boiled. The vulture, from then on, became enemy of the Kawahiva, since being deprived of fire, it was forced to eat rotten” (p. 179). Although it is easy to make such an assumption (“vultures now eat rotten flesh raw since their fire was stolen”) since many narratives tend to conclude by explaining the current status of an animal,⁷³ the Karipuna storyteller explicitly rejected such a reading: “for us, the urubu continues to have fire. When he descends, he makes noise just like the fire. He continues to have fire. It’s not that because the urubu was stolen fire, it eats raw. No. Urubu keeps having his fire.” So, although a necrophagic animal conceived as the original holder of fire may not be incidental, the Karipuna clearly did not interpret humans’ acquisition of fire as a symbol of the nature/culture division, as some commentators suggest. Although there is a fleeting allusion to dried meat being less desirable, the Karipuna’s view prevents us from assuming that the stealing inverts the position of human and animal or inaugurates a divide between them. The Karipuna’s focus seems to lie more on a horizontal, expansive movement of *distributing* fire, which triggers the mobilization of key nonhumans. The narrative specifies that Bahira hides the stolen fire inside a particular tree *tata’yba*, which is the tree used by Kawahiva to preserve and reproduce fire. After Bahira’s son brings the fire back, the shaman not only rekindles it but also makes it replicable and distributable by demonstrating the rubbing (hand-drilling) technique. When one listens to the story in its entirety, the quick shift of focus to the distribution of fire (in which animals play irreplaceable roles) seems to render the frog as the main hero, even over Bahira. The way the frog is described—his nonchalant behavior, concentrating on his own duties (i.e., fabricating bows and arrows), his unassuming attitude (“The frog didn’t brag that he will. He simply said he will try”), his perseverance and endurance, and his natural corporal singularity that enables him to carry out the mission (“poison came out from his back and put off fire”)—sums up highly esteemed qualities among the Karipuna, also notable in other narratives. The frog’s heroic accomplishment is placed precisely where the narrative’s gradual build-up culminates. In sum, for the Karipuna, the acquisition of fire seems to signify less of a human-animal divide than a process of acquiring a

⁷² In any of the various versions of the narrative collected by Turner (2017).

⁷³ Nor could I find any similar mention in other versions collected from other Kawahiva groups.

commonly desired effect (replicability and shareability of fire) *together with* nonhuman beings [MESH]. The importance of distribution also does not stress the distinction between human and animal, since, first, vultures share fire among themselves, and, second, animals offer their transformative agency to achieve the fully operative state of a key cultural acquisition. Other narratives about key cultural acquisitions, such as garden crops (Narrative #3-4), or bows and arrows, also show that they originate from, or are delivered by animals, without the human-animal division being emphasized.⁷⁴ Although such acquisitions may mark a rupture between its users and non-users, this is nuanced by the animals' notable contributions as helpful, resourceful cohabitants or constitutive partners. Whereas the creation of life forms marks no rupture with animals at all. This is well expressed in the story about the origin of chestnut trees (Brazilian nut trees).

[Narrative #3-6] “How the chestnut tree was created”

It was Bahira who had planted it. The chestnut tree by Bahira was really tiny—not even two feet tall. So, the agouti would come and eat the chestnuts. Since it was so short, the agouti would pluck them a lot. Bahira said, “This agouti keeps plucking my chestnut tree. I must figure out how to stop him from stealing chestnuts. I know what to do—I’ll call the spider.” Spiders have webs. They spin webs. Bahira told the spider, “You need to make the chestnut tree grow taller. Grow upward so the agouti can’t pluck the chestnuts.” The spider grabbed the tree. It didn’t pull the tree out of the ground, but stretched it with its web. It stretched and stretched and stretched, until the chestnut was really tall. The spider said, “Now the agouti won’t eat chestnuts anymore.” But it turns out that the agouti keeps eating them, because the chestnuts fall down. So, the agouti eats them anyway. So that’s how the chestnut tree was created.

This story is not shared as widely as others, but it clearly shows the animals' crucial role. Although Bahira is a creator, he is not omnipotent: his creation is imperfect and in need of improvement. The presence of animals both prompts this improvement (agouti) and provides a solution for it (spider). This story explains how the Karipuna acquired chestnuts (a crucial element of festive activities) without marking any rupture with animals; it acknowledges that animals always coexist with humans and are also co-users of what humans depend on.

⁷⁴ Among the narratives I collected, one of the most symbolically explicit marking of the nature/culture divide can be found in the Narrative #3-1. The prototypical Kawhiva appear with webbed hands and feet, “just like ducks”: this is an imperfect state which requires an intervention by Bahira to cut each and every one of them, and shape the current human physiology. This cut—both a literal slit between fingers and a metaphysical separation from the previous state resembling animals—may announce human’s breaking point from nature. Still, the division does not indicate a clear discontinuity, since humans are not the only species with un-webbed hands and feet.

3.4.2. Incorporating the enemy other

The enemy other is probably the least desirable target for coexistence. But narratives of warfare (Chapter 6) show that not all enemies were treated equally. While fighting off or fleeing enemies was crucial for survival, some were more *coexistable* than others, as they also shaped parts of their societies. The enemy was not always a fixed entity, but rather a position subject to change. The constitutive nature of the enemy other and its dynamic of positionality are well observed in arguably the most popular story among the Karipuna, which interweaves kin and enemy, human and animal, showing how antagonism can be used to construct sociality.

[Narrative #3-7] “Cocoria”⁷⁵

Today I'm going to tell you the story that the old man told me. The story of harpy eagle. Cocoria is the name of the story. In the old days, Cocoria, the harpy eagle, had a nest near his house, in a kapok tree. And there he had two brothers, one younger, the other older. The older one was married, and the younger one was single. But in that, the younger one had sex with his sister-in-law. ... Because he would go up there every month to see if the harpy was feathered. Because we only take the chick out when it's feathered, to take it out, to raise it. Every month, the younger one would go up, the older one would stay below. And then the older brother said to the younger brother, “Go look, see if eagle has feathered yet.” He went up there. When he got up there, the one below shouted, “So, how's eagle?” The one who was up there, the younger brother, replied: “Eagle is still naked, just like your wife's prey.” Then he got angry, “Ah, he's eating my wife. That's why he saw my wife's vagina naked.” Then the one below, the older one, got angry with his brother, cut his ladder. He cut, cut, cut, cut, left his younger brother marooned in the eagle's nest to be eaten. The older brother left his brother unable to come down, because he cut the entire ladder and stayed there. He sat there under the scorching sun, waited under the rain. He said, “Now, what am I going to do?” Then there comes a harpy eagle with a monkey in his beak to feed his children. He hid there. The eagle circled, circled, circled, came down on top of the nest. When she was feeding the chick, she looked to the side and saw the person there, the human. The eagle said to him, “What are you doing here?” The man said, “I was going to take your son. But my brother cut the ladder and I'm staying here.” “Okay. So now you're going to become an eagle,” said the eagle to Cocoria, who became an eagle. The boy's name was Cocoria. The harpy eagle began to blow. He made his beak on his beak. He made his nails, then he pulled out her rocks, and put them on him. Then he became an eagle. Then he was the one who hunted for her to kill monkeys, deer and brought them to the eagle. Meanwhile, the brother in the village was happy, “Ah, the eagle ate my brother. He was talking nonsense about my wife. Now the eagle ate him.” A month and a bit passed, the man was already an eagle. He said to eagle, “Shall we kill him?” Then they started circling over the village, circling. Circled, circled and descended. Then the people said, “Look at the two harpy eagles, above the village. Look!” And the eagle flew close to the other one, asking, “That one?”, “No”, “That one?” “No.” Until when he arrived quietly, the boy went outside to see the eagle, who was on top of the

⁷⁵ I have recorded three versions of the same story by different tellers but present the following one which is most complete.

house. Then he grabbed the boy, his brother, boom! He grabbed his brother, took him, took him, took him, got him on the stick. That's why today the tree is red. Where there is a red tree, it's his brother's blood.

They ate the meat, gathered the brain, eyes, faith, blood, everything. They threw a feast, calling all the animals, peccaries, deer, pacas, agoutis, little birds, curassows, macaws ... The peccary arrived. He painted the chin of the peccary. That's why the peccary has a white chin, because it was brain. He put brain on the chin of the peccary. He painted the peccary like this, that's why it has a stripe on its neck. He painted the deer with blood, that's why the deer is red. He painted the curassow, the curassow's beak, with blood, that's why it's red. He painted the curassow's foot red, the curassow's tail with brain. Toucan with iron mixed with brain, that's why its eyes are kind of purple. That's how he painted all the animals. ... That's why today everything is painted. Paca, curassow, jacu, peccary, deer, everybody is painted, because it was the eagle who painted the animals. The Peccaries have white chins, the caititu has parts of white and black because the Eagle painted it with a tum, it has a red beak, because the eagle painted its beak. The curassow's foot and tail are white because he put meat on its tail. And that's how the story ends.

Like many other stories, the story Cocoria exemplifies the Karipuna's ontological fluidity, in which the subject's humanity is unstable and malleable, open to metamorphosis, and the enemy's position is also unstable. The fact that his brother left him in mortal risk (possible to starve or be devoured by a predator) is sufficient motivation for Cocoria to integrate into a radically different, nonhuman mode of life, in order to take revenge on his sibling (although Cocoria's mischievousness was the initial trigger of everything). If we interpret Cocoria's relation with the eagle as affinal (implicit in his “service” to his adopter-eagle, resembling a typical bride service), we may read this as a case where affinity eclipses consanguinity (Viveiros de Castro, 2010, p. 241-2). Given that the boundary between human and animal others is fluid and transgressable, as shown by Cocoria's transformative journey, there is no inherent reason to assume that boundaries between allies and enemies should be any more rigid. If we juxtapose the fratricide of Cocoria and the account about the raid of Karipuna's enemy *tapy'ynhahua* (Chapter 6), a similar narrative structure is found: the rift between siblings prompting one to take revenge of another by mobilizing the external influence of a former (common) enemy. It is possible that such openness to (becoming-)other comprises the dynamics in which Karipuna sociality was actually constructed. Anthropologist Ghassan Hage, citing Viveiros de Castro, questions “the very notion of society [that is] normalized in our culture, as a network of social relations that attempt to remain ‘identical with themselves’ ... contrasting this societal ideal type to Arawate society as a society that is continuously open to its own otherness and ‘with a dynamic that dissolves those spatial metaphors so common in sociological discourse: interior, exterior, center, margins, boundaries, limen, etc.’”

(Viveiros de Castro, 1992, p. 4, as cited in Hage, 2012, p. 296). To this list, two more pairs of non-spatial metaphors can be added: humans/animals, allies/enemies.

Last but not least, it is noteworthy that the story culminates with the protagonist throwing a banquet, inviting all the forest animals, including the birds that correspond to the Kawahiva moiety: curassow, macaw, toucan, etc. The protagonist, who has already established himself in his “bride's family” (i.e., uxorilocal residence) and is the incumbent leader and a proven warrior, represents the harpy eagle clan on his own, ready to court another bird (clan) to procreate and expand his kin circle. So, inviting all the birds can be explained by the Kawahiva moiety system as a formation of one's own group.⁷⁶ As for tattooing (used interchangeably with “painting”), we consider it could imply war and the forging of alliances, or an act of constructing personhood and identity, as it always serves to reinforce a sense of belonging to a group. In the narrative, each animal gets its own painting (hence the color of its fur), but both the act of getting and receiving a tattoo constitute a socio-cultural activity among kins.⁷⁷ The tattoo giver, Cocoria, has been trained and initiated as a true harpy eagle by his adopter and became the great chief *tabijarahua*, fully qualified to produce his own people and construct his own society. His banquet, the ceremonial bodily consumption of the enemy captive followed by a vendetta warfare, unambiguously described as *toryba* (the Kawahiva's anthropophagic ritual feast, which takes place after a warrior returns from successful war expedition with an enemy captive), not only marks one of the highest socio-cultural moments in Tupi societies, but also an exemplary manifestations of the Amerindian constitutive other, which is not so much the consumption of substance as the incorporation of the condition or perspective of the enemy (Viveiros de Castro, 1992, 2011). By combining the appropriation of the (animal) other to take revenge on the (ex-kin) enemy other, the formation of a group through tattooing, and the anthropophagical incorporation of the enemy, Cocoria exemplifies a defining foundation of the Karipuna way of coexistence: their structural *openness to the Other* [MESH].

⁷⁶ This fits better with the Parintintin version where only birds are invited.

⁷⁷ “The Kawahiva social universe is classified based on this moiety system, in which acquisitions after contact are attributed more strongly to eagle moiety. The Tenharim and Amondawa defined membership in the moieties through physical attributes and, in the past, also through *body painting*. Furthermore, in rituals, members of one moiety must always paint individuals from the other” (Peggion, 2005, p. 87; Kurovski, 2005, p. 73).

3.5. Conclusion: Coexistence as a necessary and sufficient condition

According to the Karipuna's narratives, which are the people's principal source of knowledge-(sense)-making and constructing historicity, their concept of coexistence is multi-layered. First of all, it is postulated as a given, original condition, which exists from the very beginning. There is no way to completely avoid coexistence with someone and something; as a Karipuna said, "nothing exists alone." Every being is thrown into, or better, opened into, some form of coexistence, especially with nonhuman others. Second, the recurring image of undesirable coexistence, fraught with internal conflicts and problems, shows that the Karipuna do not idealize coexistence as a peaceful state of living in harmony with others. They clearly understand that "social life is not just a matter of peace and harmony. Danger, violence and disharmony also exist, whether actually or potentially, and need to be dealt with" (Overing & Passes, 2000, xiv). This resonates with Judith Butler's notion of "unchosen cohabitation" (2012), the earthly condition in which one is not given the choice of whom to inhabit a shared world with. However, viewing such coexistence as a primordial condition does not mean that one must always passively accept the state as it is. The form of coexistence can be shaped and negotiated, to a certain degree, through adjustments, transformations, or dislocation. All of this requires certain enactments. What stands out is the ways in which the Karipuna postulate the otherness involved in achieving a preferred form of coexistence. The other, whether human or nonhuman, is not objectified as something to be eliminated or eradicated. Nor do they try to dominate the other, or force the Other to become identical to the Self. The other is not even viewed as always external to the self, or framed in the "us/them" binary. Otherness can be generated within the "we": kins can become an (enemy) other and vice versa, as one of their favorite stories Cocoria exemplifies (also corroborated in another narrative depicting a historical event about the *Tapanhahua*: see Chapter 6). The otherness is valued for its transformative power and constitutive potential, thus actively pursued and appropriated in various ways to constitute one's own sociality. So, many times, coexistence with others is achieved not by erasing otherness, but by incorporating or negotiating it. In such processes, the significance of coexistence is preserved, as opposed to mono-existence. The Karipuna rely on this particular approach to otherness, which is conducive to coexistence: not only to fend off enemies who threaten one's survival, but also to constantly incorporate otherness into society for various reasons: to forge alliances, to enlarge the group, to acquire beneficial elements, etc. The

sources of conflict can be just as internal as external, and external forces can be mobilized to resolve internal issues, shaping the dynamics of organizing sociality.

Another noteworthy dimension in the Karipuna narratives is the animal as the primordial condition of the other. The ways in which the animal other is perceived bear another implication of coexistence, in terms of differentiating interhuman and interspecies coexistence. Cohabiting with different humans is perceived as a challenge, which is resolved by dislocation or by transforming the problematic human beings into animals. We can argue that the underlying common assumption is that animals are good to coexist with but not fit for intimate cohabitation. It is precisely their difference that translates into the distance that should be kept (which also partially explains the Amerindians' well-documented paucity of animal domestication). As the Karipuna's narratives are not just fictive stories but also inform the present, their recognition of the importance of maintaining such difference/distance in narratives can indicate how they conceive of their co-inhabitants when they navigate the forest. While they are immersed in the environment, they need to maintain a distance, since becoming one with forest beings would constitute an "accident" (such as being lost). They need a mode of existence that allows both enmeshment in and differentiating from the forest. In other words, it is necessary to draw limits that *work* in the forest. As the saying goes, "Good fences make good neighbors,"⁷⁸ they need to have just the right form of differentiation, or amount of distance, that would enable coexistence with their significant nonhuman others, without becoming one of/with them: an onto-epistemology compatible with sylvan life, where coexistence is an imperative. So, when the Karipuna say, "I am the environment" (Adriano's aforementioned claim), it is an emphasis on the connect-ability or relatability, rather than literal inseparability. In other words, it is a way of manifesting how co-constitutive their life with the forest is.

⁷⁸ From the often-misquoted poem by Robert Frost, *Mending Wall* (1914). What the poet was trying to say seems to be more an indictment against the collective failure to be hospitable to others than a eulogy of keeping others at bay.

II. Resist to (co)exist

Resistance is the name of the Karipuna's struggle against the forces of deforestation and dispossession (FDD), and an integral part of their enactment of the modes of coexistence. It encompasses their contemporary political advocacy, everyday struggles, and historical struggles, including warfare. The Karipuna often use the term resistance interchangeably with *luta*, their struggle, which encompasses a broad range of actions/non-actions and is encapsulated in the maxim set by Adriano Karipuna: “We resist to exist” (which I rephrased as “resist to coexist”). Resistance is widely used to entitle Indigenous and subaltern place-based struggles, especially in South America, where its manifestation is entrenched in the vocabulary of Indigenous movements across the continent: many activists adopt the slogan of “500 years of resistance,” and many countries commemorate days of Indigenous people under the term.⁷⁹ Also, an array of academic studies on Indigenous struggles employs resistance, focusing on land-based struggles, ethno-political movements related to processes of territory demarcation, or contentious relationships with surrounding society (Ferreira, 2007; Little, 2003; Oliveira, 1998; Rival, 1999, among others).⁸⁰ Discussing Latin American resistance (focusing on Brazil and Mexico), Gledhill and Schnell stress that “‘resisting’ is often what our research subjects say they are doing when they struggle, to defend their lands, culture, or religion, or to achieve new rights and social dignity in situations of inequality and discrimination” (Gledhill & Schell, 2012, p. 2). Due to such generalization, many studies use the term as a title or slogan rather than a concept. Having a broad range of concepts of the different ways people resist enriches our understanding of resistance, but studies that neither provide a definition nor engage in conceptual analysis of resistance underexploit its analytical power. In some cases, reification or homogenization of the notion is also observed. Some critics point out that, in Indigenous Amazonia, “the use of the notion of ‘resistance,’ ... has become quite uncomfortable today. In this sense, several authors have developed a relevant critique of the ethnographic reductionism of a certain ‘resistance-centrism’ (Olivier de Sardan, 1995, p. 69) that, paradoxically, tends to obscure, with its rhetoric, the specificity and subtlety of the logics and

⁷⁹ “Día de la Resistencia Indígena” (12 October in Ecuador, Mexico, Nicaragua, Venezuela), “Dia de Luta e Resistência dos Povos Indígenas” (19 April in Brazil), among others.

⁸⁰ Many recent studies in Brazil use the term “retaking” (*retomada*) to indicate Indigenous struggles to recover land rights (Alarcon, 2020; Lacerda, 2021; Oliveira-Castro & Pissolato, 2023). The Karipuna's case is not about retaking, since they are constitutionally entitled to their demarcated land since 1998. Although the threat of a possible “Time Marker” legislation is lurking (Chapter 8), their struggle is a *post*-demarcation resistance, which requires an indefinitely prolonged process of counter-hegemonic negotiation.

forms of 'agency' proper to social actors" (Albert & Ramos, 2000, p. 14). I also find it wanting that many of these studies using resistance have little dialogue with the broader literature of resistance studies in social science, whose scope has expanded since the 1950s-70s, when its focus was on "avoided questions of oppression and conflict" (Cabral, 1979; V. Turner, 1995). While analysis of resistance and power tended to gravitate towards Foucault's dictum ("resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power": Foucault, 1978) or Abu-Lughod's inversion ("where there is resistance there is power": Abu-Lughod, 1990), and the notion has historically been associated with macro, emancipatory movements with a tendency to privilege the overt, subversive actions, the attention shifted onto more covert, subtle forms of resistance, influenced by James Scott's seminal works (1985, 2008), counter-hegemonical analysis (Gramsci, 1971), feminist theory (Mahmood, 2006), and post-colonial culture studies. Another notable contribution is the reflection on the preconceptions of resistance entangled in the European colonial expansion, which warrants attention to "[h]ow not to use the West as a point of departure" (Gledhill, 2000, p. 8) in the analysis of power dynamics. For instance, Gledhill revisits Pierre Clastres's thesis (Clastres, 1974/1987), which views stateless societies as "hav[ing] *resisted* the emergence of the form of political power which generates the state (and social inequalities)" (2000, p. 12). One can benefit from these reflections to offer a better examination of the connection-discrepancy between what is regarded as resistance and what the subject perceives as such.

In political ecology, influential studies dealing with Indigenous resistance tend to articulate the discrepancy or difference between subaltern resistors and oppressive forces with the notion of "incommensurability"⁸¹ (Martinez-Alier, 1995a), especially when the focus is given to conflictual dimensions of human-environment relations about access to natural resources, hence "ecological distribution conflicts" (Martínez-Alier, 2002). *Against* the notion that the subalterns are "too poor to be green" (Martinez-Alier, 1995b), proponents of political ecology advance the "environmentalism of the poor" (Martínez-Alier, 2002), which includes Indigenous struggles, seen as defending not an abstract "nature" but an entire "life project" embodied in their land (Escobar, 2001). Indigenous territory embeds the people's ecological, economic, and cultural practices (Escobar, 2006, p. 130) and cultural "difference" (Escobar, 2008, p. 305), hence the profound people-place tie and the struggle (Escobar, 1999, 2006, 2008). Firmly anchored in political

⁸¹ Denotes the absence of a common standard to compare different options and preferences.

commitment to Indigenous struggles, emerged political ontology, or “third-generation political ecology” (Blaser & Escobar, 2023), which questions the “basic premise of reasonable politics—an already existing factual world—and its capacity to adjudicate who and what can be part of the political in terms of their adherence to this particular version of factuality” (Blaser, 2016, p. 552). Both in political ecology and political ontology, the emphasis is placed on difference—not just any differences but radical or incommensurable ones—positing that different peoples do not just have different worldviews or cultures but inhabit distinct or even “incommensurable” realities or worlds (Blaser & de la Cadena, 2018).

However, placing too much emphasis on difference, by framing it as incommensurable or radical, may risk preferring a particular subject of resistance who fits best to highlight the difference, raising “the issue of possible bias on the part of resistance theorists regarding the types of actors and movements deemed worthy of investigation” (Gledhill & Schell, 2012, p. 2-3). This can lead to romanticizing, or “pathologizing and exoticizing,” the resisting subject (Theodossopoulos, 2017). In fact, “we have been taught to imagine resistance in highly particular ways” (Reid, 2024, p. 17), and “conceptualizations of resistance are characterized by a predetermination of form that particular actions or actors must assume to constitute resistance” (Hughes, 2020, p. 1). “Favor[ing] the analysis of, and solidarity with, radical actors fighting against the capitalist development model” (ibid., p. 340; Fontaine, 2007, 2009) may be the reason why, for instance, “Indigenous people who do hold a 'special relationship' with the environment ... *and* [emphasis added] welcome oil extraction in their territories, are rarely part of the analysis” (Dayot, 2023, p. 336). In this light, Sherry Ortner's (1995) observation of “ethnographical refusal” in studies of resistance on marginalized, oppressed people is pertinent: she criticizes ethnographers' tendency to produce simplified, “politically sanitized” (p. 176), “thinning” (p. 180) representations of resistance, instead of engaging with more complex understandings of reality. Consider an example: the words of an Afro-descendant activist engaged in territorial struggle, quoted in (Escobar, 2018, p. 71): “[N]obody is willing to leave her/his territory; 'I might get killed here, but I am not leaving.' Such resistance takes place within a long history of domination and resistance, and this is essential for understanding territorial struggles as ontological political practices ...”

While this description highlights the activist's laudable courage and determination,⁸² without in-depth ethnographic backing, it curtails the complexity beyond the defiant subaltern resistor. Ethnography can address this possible gap, for instance, showing how someone who leaves their territory or is unwilling to risk life can relate to resistance. This is particularly relevant in the Karipuna's case. People may leave their territory, choose “exit” over “voice,” or avoid confrontation; they may behave “inconstantly” (for an observer who projects a predetermined form of resistance). Yet when viewed from a more holistic viewpoint, they may be contributing to the struggle, too. Let us remind, once again, what I use as the Karipuna's definition of resistance: “We resist to exist.” The purpose of resistance is to exist, not the other way around. However, to exist, people need not only to resist forces that complicate existence but also to engage in processes of accommodation and negotiation, which, on the surface, appear to have little to do with resistance. For instance, the Karipuna's historical resistance against their enemies did not always entail armed warfare but strategic evasion or engagement. So, although the overt frontline of a group's resistance may consist of resoluteness and unity, the inner workings are likely to involve more complex, diverse, or even messy processes, as we will see in the following chapters. But because socio-historical conditions constantly push the subaltern into positions of resistance, observers are prone to elide complexity to avoid compromising the struggle (or “give ammunition to the enemy”). This is why well-meaning anthropologists or activists committed to defending Indigenous rights may subscribe to “strategic essentialism” (Spivak, 1988) as they “fe[el] obliged to overly essentialize the group and avoid discussion of the inevitable gaps, conflicts, and ambiguities” (Engle, 2010, p. 11), providing “overly stereotyped and unrealistically coherent stories” (ibid., p. 12).

When certain resistance becomes an expectation, James Scott's concept of the “hidden transcripts”⁸³ of resistance (“discourses that take place 'offstage' beyond direct observation by powerholders”: 1992, p. 4) can be inverted: what becomes available for observation is the official, standardized, and thinned discourse—the “public” transcript of resistance. Whereas what does not appear to pertain to resistance becomes “hidden.” Defining Indigenous resistance as a *counter-hegemonic process of negotiation*, my working definition, can help illuminate the multifariousness

⁸² Also, Escobar does recognize the problem of homogenizing resistance: “[T]o speak of 'communities in resistance' does not imply an essentialist or homogenizing vision of the community ... It means understanding how, despite communities' fracture and fragmentation, communal actions might reveal 'transitional paths'” (ibid., p. 182).

⁸³ As opposed to the “public” discourse (the “open interaction between subordinates and those who dominate”: ibid. p. 2).

of resistance without compromising the struggle or falling into ethnographical refusals. It can help account for the subtleties of the difference between the target of resistance and the resisting subject, as well as the complexity within and of the subjects. Defined as such, resistance retains its multifariousness intertwined with different modes of existence: it is not situated in opposition to coexistence but rather as a constitutive part of it.

In the following chapters, I will pay ethnographical attention both to the imbrication of resistance and coexistence and the multifaceted constitution of resistance, trying not to reduce the complexity into a resistance/non-resistance dichotomy to “examine complex interactive situations where 'resistance' seems to involve complicity, and collaboration implies resistance, where action is halting and fragmentary, and voices multivocal” (Wilson, 2007, p. 251). The discussions of the diverse and complex inner workings behind the *luta* will be continued in Section V.

4. Staying power ^[MESH] ^[RES] ^[COP]

4.1. Coextensive with a forest

Every existence is a coexistence. Every being exists among other beings, human or nonhuman. At the same time, every coexistence involves a sharing of a space. If coexistence means more than a simple reminder of this truism—nobody exists in a vacuum—, it should stand for the more *mindful* state of being-together with others, as well as the conscious state of *where* such being-with takes place. For instance, there is a difference between a person who just physically happens to be in the same coordinates with a place (city, village, forest, etc.) and someone who coexists with (or in) it. One important difference is whether the coextensiveness results from a transient stop-off or fleeting sojourn, or a long-standing residence. Coexistence is the latter: about entities that are here to *stay*. However, time alone may not suffice to tell the difference. It is necessary to observe the “place-awareness” of the subject. A good indicator is how the person responds to a change imposed on the place. If the subject is unaware, inattentive, indifferent, or oblivious to the “being-there-with-place” and its changes, probably the person or group just *happens to be* there, not necessarily *coexisting with* the place.

In the case of the Karipuna, it is straightforward to determine whether they are coexisting with their forest. First, they have been in the forest for at least several centuries, if not much more; second, we know for a fact that they are not indifferent to the changes occurring there. On the contrary, they are determined to keep the forest as it is (“standing”), by actively resisting the pressures that attempt to radically transform or destroy it, championing their own place-based struggle, *luta* ^[RES], which leaves no doubt that they coexist with the forest, not just physically present. In fact, this is a unique period in the Karipuna's history in which their determination toward this particular coexistence is so explicitly manifested, accentuated by the equally unprecedented level of external pressure trying to undermine it.

4.1.1. To stay: a fundamental contribution

“What would be the single most important thing that contributes to your struggle?” To this question, Karipuna leader Eric gave a succinct answer: “Staying is the most fundamental thing to do.” When I asked other Karipuna people for their opinion on Eric's remark, nobody disagreed. In this context, to stay (*ficar*) means staying put in the forest, a permanent residency in the Karipuna's forest village,

Panorama, although not excluding traveling outside. Staying also means a form of struggle, since it is the enactment of their constitutional (birth-)right as Indigenous people in Brazil, to occupy and usufruct of the land they are entitled to. Another leader expanded the meaning of staying through his all-encompassing use of the word *luta*. According to him, whether it is forest monitoring, hunting, or garden working, or even just staying at home, almost everything he does in the forest is “part of the *luta*” [RES][MESH]. This echoes Deborah Bird Rose's comment on settler colonization: to get in the way of the colonizers, all the native has to do is stay at home (cited in Wolfe, 2006, p. 388).⁸⁴ The meaning of staying becomes even clearer when juxtaposed with what the Karipuna often use as an opposite notion, “giving up” (*desistir*). To give up, in this context, is to leave their land and no longer care about the *luta*.

A non-Indigenous community member who has been living with the Karipuna for almost 30 years is a living example of the centrality of staying: if one stays long enough, one can become part of the Karipuna community. As a long-time observer, he encapsulated the importance of staying: “I believe that Karipuna will not lose because I never saw a white *invasor* staying put in Indigenous reserves. So, the Karipuna will have to fight, but they will win. They will not lose,” because they stay. In response to my following question, “So, staying *is* resistance?” he gave an affirmative [RES]. In his view, staying in the forest is a difference-maker that separates the Karipuna from outsiders.⁸⁵ The latter may aim to exploit their forest but are unable and unwilling to live *with* it, unless they forcibly grab the land or convert it into a space no longer recognizable as forest. This highlights another important meaning of staying: it is not just occupying a physical space regardless of its status; for the Karipuna, staying is co-existing with the forest, without completely changing (deforesting) it.

Yet in day-to-day practice, staying in the forest is more complex than meets the eye, since even to defend it from intrusion, it is not sufficient to simply stay put. People need to go outside, to forge alliances and engage in the *luta*. Furthermore, it is not just the external pressures and push factors created by the *invasores* that complicate staying. In contemporary socioeconomic contexts,

⁸⁴ The threat befalling the Karipuna is a combination of settler and franchise colonization (*sensu* Wolfe, 2006), since the FDD not only attempt to rob their land but also try to benefit from its conversion (e.g., to arable land.) and exploitation.

⁸⁵ It also separates the Karipuna's neighbors—*ribeirinhos*, former rubber-tappers, who also stay in the forest and coexist with them—from loggers, prospectors who only stay temporarily and leave as soon as extraction is done.

it is becoming increasingly difficult for Indigenous people to organize subsistence purely in the forest. Along with that, perceptions of forest life are also diverging. So, for a variety of reasons, the Karipuna, like many other Indigenous people in Brazil, find themselves living *between* staying in the forest and leaving for the cities (Alexiades, 2009). In this chapter, I will describe the Karipuna's spatially enmeshed relation (coextensiveness) with their forest, and examine how such a mode of life was set in motion, shaping their current forest life with increasing mobility. I will also discuss the changing perceptions of forest life as they navigate multi-dimensional circumstances where coexistence with the forest also requires coexistence with urban environments.

4.2. Becoming together in place

4.2.1. The beginning of staying

Let us start by sketching how the Karipuna first began to stay in this area and form the particular human-forest coexistence, which I described earlier as entanglement. When we describe Indigenous history, we typically explain how a certain group of people came to “occupy” a certain land, but it is necessary to constantly remind ourselves not to equate occupation with a static, sedentary dwelling.⁸⁶ Although it may sound counterintuitive, given the etymology of the term “Indigenous” and “native” (literally “sprung from the land”), most Indigenous Amazonians were not bound to a fixed place but rather took advantage of expansive, vast areas. Like every Indigenous group that moved or has been forcibly dislocated to their current respective territories at some point, the Karipuna moved through extensive areas, often under pressure from external forces, until they came to the area now belonging to the state of Rondônia. Their westbound migration along the Madeira River and eventual disaggregation from the Kawahiva collective, described in Narrative #1-1, dates back to the 19th century or earlier (Chapter 1). Even after establishing themselves in the region, their constant movement formed a wide, decentralized meshwork of *malocas* (camps or villages), rather than a single fixed base. The Karipuna explain that they would set up a *maloca* to stay for a couple of years and then move away for horticultural reasons or warfare. New camps were continuously opened, while previously abandoned ones and fallows could also be reused. Accounting for the various *malocas* used during the current elder's

⁸⁶ Human beings don't occupy but “inhabit the world around them” (Ingold, 2007, p. 200).

lifespan will suffice to prove the impressively expansive grounds the Karipuna used to cover. The various villages—named “Itapemehua,” “Jabutia,” “Imongirupabuhua,” “Nhãumohua,” “Purakehua,” “Jacambirehua,” “Ogohua,” “Bojohua,” “Utuhua,” “Jandepaumuhua,” “Akukuhua”—span over the headwaters of the Jaci Paraná River to the Mutum Paraná River in the west (including the current area of União Bandeirante), and stretch out to Guajará-Mirim, Lage, and further south, where tensions with the Wari people impeded venturing farther. As the elders are estimated to have been born around the 1950s or a little bit earlier, they can memorize things approximately from then onwards; it is likely that the Karipuna's previous coverage was even wider. The Karipuna recall that before being approached by the FUNAI agents in 1976, there were about four different groups of them, residing in different villages yet loosely connected to one another. They also maintained contacts with other Kawahiva groups, such as the Uru-Eu-Wau-Wau people residing on the southeastern side, to forge alliances whenever necessary. In sum, we can safely say that the Karipuna have been inhabiting and using a much larger sylvan land [MESH] than the area that is now officially demarcated as their the Karipuna IL.

The vast grounds covered by the Karipuna largely correspond to the northwestern region of Rondônia. Followed by the first Amazon rubber boom (started in the late 1870s), the construction of the Madeira-Mamoré railway (1907), and the creation of Porto Velho (1914), Rondônia began to suffer urbanization and agricultural expansion led by white people (see Chapter 1). Still, studies show that in 1986, the state's forest cover was approximately 90.9% (Goebel et al., 2025),⁸⁷ which is only a decade after the Karipuna started to established a relationship with the FUNAI agents (in the mid-1970s). From this, we can deduce that until the early 20th century, most of the area of Rondônia was virtually a forest⁸⁸ with limited urban presence and strong Indigenous presence, including the Karipuna. The prevalence of the forest environment in these early days was almost absolute, so it seems only logical that the Indigenous inhabitants' mode of life was deeply enmeshed in the forest. In fact, everything the Karipuna hunted, gathered, consumed, fabricated, shared, disposed, and dreamed was all intricately intertwined with the forest, and every aspect of their life at ever stage operated *in* and *of* the forest, making it unimaginable to describe their world without it [MESH].

⁸⁷ By 2020, it dramatically declined to a staggering 62.7% (ibid.).

⁸⁸ Consisting of 99% tropical forest and 1% of savannah (*cerrado*) (IBGE, 2004; Soler et al., 2014).

However, from the 20th century onward, the Karipuna added another crucial spatial dimension to their equation of coexistence with the forest: the city. The white people whom they considered enemies began to surround their *kayra* and close in. First, it started with a group of rubber-tappers, then came the roads, which became more and wider roads, and then more people, vehicles, and machines entered to fell trees, set fire, and clear land. In this historical process, which involved numerous violent encounters and massacres, the Karipuna were pushed further into deeper, limited forest areas, suffering genocidal depopulation. As the “last” group of the Karipuna contacted by the FUNAI agents finally came to live in a fixed area, now known as Panorama village, their once-vast, boundless lifeworld became bounded and separated from other forests inhabited by other Indigenous peoples. They were literally encircled by a “surrounding” urban society, inside a forest demarcated as the Karipuna IL. Although the people began to travel to the cities, they lacked a term to designate these unfamiliar spaces. So, they used the word “*idade*” (their pronunciation of the Portuguese word “*cidade*”) or simply referred to the name of a specific city, such as Porto Velho or Ji-Paraná. One Karipuna person taught me another, less common expression for the city: *tapy'ynha kayra*, namely, “the white's forest.” Although the Karipuna were unfamiliar with these new spaces, they allege that they were aware of their creators long before making contact with them. The Karipuna's forest spirits, called the *mirangã* (Chapter 9), who were already familiar with these pale folks, informed them about their advent. What the Karipuna were unaware of and unprepared for was how dominating a force the whites would become, to the point of overwhelming their hitherto boundless forest and radically changing their modes of living.

4.2.2. Forest life, set in motion

The Karipuna witnessed all these vertiginous changes happening during less than half a century. While these changes significantly reduced their territory compared to their prior coverage, it did not diminish the people's mobility. In a way, it enhanced it and expanded the geographical range of their activities to unprecedented levels. After just a few years, a “micro-trend” of leaving their land and spending substantial time in other Indigenous lands or in the cities began. It started with the three remaining Karipuna male members being recruited by FUNAI, to spend multiple years outside their land. Part of FUNAI's intention in mobilizing them was to use the Karipuna as interpreters to “pacify” the then-uncontacted Uru-Eu-Wau-Wau people in their Indigenous Land; another part was to find possible suitresses for the bachelors (who then lacked women to marry and form families). The case of Aripã calls for attention. Not only did he go to the Uru-Eu-Wau-

Wau Indigenous Land to join the FUNAI's pacification team,⁸⁹ but he was also sent to the Tupari IL, where he took part in a police operation to combat invaders. After the operation, he was placed in a military barracks in Porto Velho, where he trained and stood guard alongside other soldiers. He said he was paid for his service during that time. It is well-documented that during the military dictatorship in Brazil (1964 to 1985), forcing Indigenous people into military institutions was a common “integration” program. Although Aripã cannot provide the exact date, his military experience likely coincided with that period. But that was not the end of his journey. Arranged by FUNAI, he traveled around Brazil: Brasília, São Paulo, Manaus, Roraima, Amazonas, Minas Gerais, Rio Branco, Acré, Cuiabá, Ji-Paraná... Trips happened in a similar pattern: he would always receive a (radio) call from the FUNAI base in Porto Velho, in which an official would inform him, “Aripã! We got your tickets ready. You’re going to city A.” By plane or bus, he toured most major cities in Brazil, visiting and staying at the respective FUNAI bases, or sometimes at hotels. Although the objective of these trips is unclear, Aripã's comments imply that FUNAI was trying to find him an Indigenous spouse. Aripã's case shows the notable mobility of Indigenous people. He probably traveled much more than an average Brazilian resident in rural areas. Nowadays, it has become increasingly common for the Karipuna, especially those in leadership roles, to participate in various events and travel frequently, even abroad; however, long before this trend, Aripã had already accumulated remarkable travel experience.

However, his mobility also raises questions. What was the real purpose of all these trips organized by FUNAI? Although he agreed to participate, they do not seem to be his initiative. If the objective was to find a conjugal partner, were all the trips to faraway cities really necessary? Weren't there other options? At that time, when only four adult Karipuna men existed in the world, three of them were absent due to FUNAI's plan. It goes without saying the importance of male presence in Indigenous societies, especially for the upbringing of boys. While Aripã left home, his son Batiti felt abandoned, as he recalls. Furthermore, it seems even more irresponsible to expose recently contacted Indigenous people to poorly organized, highly risky police operations dealing with armed invaders, without any proper training. Although Aripã recollects the experience with pride, that the Karipuna (he and his cousin Tiu) were the only Indigenous people who bravely confronted the invaders while others ran away, it is difficult to find any justification to involve

⁸⁹ To his understanding, his role was a hunter, not an interpreter. He hunted various animals for the Uru-Eu-Wau-Wau people “to feed them,” as he explained. He said he was paid for that service.

them in such a mission. When I inquired with a former FUNAI official about this issue, he denied knowledge of such an operation.⁹⁰ However, another former official (not directly linked to the Karipuna) told me that it was a common practice of FUNAI at that epoch. Eventually, Aripã was sent to Guajará, where he got married to a Wari woman. Due to a misunderstanding, they soon separated, and Aripã then married another Wari person, with whom he separated again. In a similar period, other Karipuna men met and married other Indigenous spouses and moved to their lands, following uxori-local traditions. One of them ended up settling down there (in the Arara Indigenous Land) permanently, while another person traveled between the Karipuna land and Piripikura Indigenous Land (his wife Rita Piripikura's land), until he died by accident near the latter place. Later, Aripã married Rita. Since Rita was contracted by FUNAI to stay at least several months in the Piripikura IL to maintain contact with her two remaining relatives, who had only recently been contacted by FUNAI, the couple began traveling constantly between the two lands, a pattern that continues today.

The post-contact generation increased their mobility further, in different ways, from an earlier age. As explained in Chapter 2, the main drivers for travel to cities are education, marriage, healthcare, and employment. The young Karipuna were better equipped with fluent Portuguese, which they picked up from their white cohabitants or learned from missionaries. Some enrolled in schools in the city, and some sought work opportunities in urban areas. The earliest forms of employment were working for FUNAI or other state institutions related to Indigenous affairs. Some began to get involved in social movements or to engage with NGOs. Those who became involved in their *luta* began to travel even further, sometimes even abroad. Other Karipuna men and women traveled to or stayed in Porto Velho or other towns in search of employment or to gain access to money. Some worked as blue-collar laborers on construction sites, or as *picolé* vendors in the streets of Porto Velho. The younger generation did not need FUNAI to arrange marriages, nor did the institution have the same presence or resources to support trips like before. Most of them married white people (only one married an Indigenous woman from the state of Amazonas), creating more reasons to stay in the city. Traveling to nearby cities (usually Jaci or Porto Velho) became commonplace if not an imperative [COP].

⁹⁰ Most of other responsible personnel are now either deceased or unavailable for comments.

4.2.3. Margins of the city

Like most Indigenous communities whose everyday lives are entangled with the urban dimension, the Karipuna needed to arrange a place to stay temporarily in the city when necessary. For the Karipuna and other communities in the nearby region, the former FUNAI premise, Casa do Índio, serves this purpose. Built in 1982 in Porto Velho, it is within five minutes' walking distance from the Legislative Assembly of Rondônia. Since the FUNAI headquarters moved to Ji-Paraná, the premises have been abandoned and are currently occupied by the Karipuna and Karitiana people. The lack of proper waterworks or sewage system, humidity and infiltration, cracks in the walls, broken ceilings, and piling garbage make the living conditions precarious, unhygienic, and even “inhumane,” according to a Karipuna person, who added, “but it's the only option we have” in the city. Another person explained how much he suffered from the smell caused by passers-by urinating at the other side of his room's wall.

FUNAI has been called out to resolve this situation since 2013, including by the local prosecutor's office (Ministério Público Federal de Rondônia, MPF), which recommended immediate evacuation due to the risk of collapse. In 2014, when FUNAI announced a demolition plan without presenting an alternative, they faced staunch resistance from the occupants. This prompted the MPF, at the time, to recommend FUNAI to postpone the demolition until it found another location for the residents (Globo1, 2019). That limbo state continues until today. Most Karipuna people (except the few who are married to a resident of the city with alternative accommodation) find shelter in the few rooms on this premise, where they spend most of their urban sojourn.⁹¹ As the price barrier of transportation impedes their access to many parts of the city, this is the facet of the city with which they interact most intensely. In general, the city does not treat them very well. Apart from the poor conditions, there are abundant anecdotes of facing “racist” treatment, including violent assaults in the streets.

⁹¹ Until the early 2000s, there was another small place in the town of Jaci, where they could stay when they had to visit the city, but they have lost access to the place around 2014, for inexplicable reasons.

4.3. Challenges to stay in the forest

4.3.1. Staying vs. giving up

When it comes to the Karipuna's ongoing *luta*, or place-based struggle to protect the forest, it is widely assumed that staying in their land is an imperative, the most fundamental contribution to it, as mentioned above. The single most important obstacle that stands between the *invasores* who try to grab the Karipuna's land and the people is none other than the Karipuna's physical presence. The political enablers try to justify illegal land grabbing and squatting by trying to create a narrative that denies the existence of the people (Chapter 5). By firmly anchoring themselves in the village, the Karipuna enact their legal rights and compel the authorities to enforce the law on their behalf. Unfortunately, their calls for law enforcement either fall on deaf ears or come too sporadically to effectively reverse the situation and resolve the root cause. Intermittent operations by the authorities might check the tick-boxes of their to-do list, but the problem persists if not worsens. The intruders simply retreat for a while, only to come back. If few people are held accountable, they are usually petty felons who are easily “bought” and replaced. Therefore, the people know that the FDD is not going anywhere soon. As soon as the Karipuna cease to resist, the forest will be quickly converted into a monocultural landscape. So, the struggle goes on, as long as the people manage to continue. A Karipuna leader sums up the outlook of this uphill battle: “the *luta* is constant. It never ends,” and also vented, “at some point you get tired, you know? Sometimes you want to give up.” Giving up, as mentioned, means leaving the forest and disengaging from the *luta*. But they know all too well that this is precisely what the enemy wants them to do. They are trying to wear down the Karipuna: “They [invaders] are killing us by wear and tear (*cansanço*)!” Because of the never-ending nature of the *luta*, “staying power,” defined as “the capacity to continue without weakening,”⁹² is of paramount importance. It speaks directly to the meaning of the Karipuna's resistance, which is translated as *ita* in Kawahiva, meaning “stone,” “rock,” “hard,” “strong,” “tough.”⁹³ Like an unwavering and unbreakable rock, the Karipuna must literally stay and stand on one's (forest) ground [RES], constantly empowering and motivating oneself to continue, embodying the power to stay.

⁹² In *Merriam-Webster.com dictionary*. Retrieved March 22nd, 2026, from <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/staying%20power>

⁹³ When one says, “Indigenous people are resilient” (“*ita kawahiva gã*”, or “*kawahiva gã ita*”), *ita* is used as an adjective. In this case, the meaning of *ita* is extended to resistance.

4.3.2. A place-based struggle—out of place

However, increasingly, activities related to the *luta*, but carried out outside the forest, are gaining much strategic importance. A large portion of the support (media coverage, donations, projects) the Karipuna has garnered so far has come from external partnerships and networking, largely made possible by the awareness-raising activities carried out in metropolitan areas. As much as a Karipuna person can contribute to the struggle simply by staying put in the village, the Indigenous Land is surely not the only stage for defending their forest. There are so many more outside jobs to do, mainly consisting of building concrete political pressure on the authorities to fulfill their duty to protect the forest, which the Karipuna usually term “*cobrar*” (to hold accountable). This requires a comprehensive set of organized activities, including raising awareness of the issue and the Karipuna's profile, identifying and contacting key stakeholders, and participating in key meetings to deliver messages in public arenas. Arguably, some of these diplomatic activities are more important than activities done inside the forest.

Since many of the external activities are carried out by the Karipuna leaders, it is important to recognize how they acquired the political/diplomatic abilities and communication skills necessary for such engagements. Without exception, they were developed by intensively interacting with people from outside, or by living in the city. Many prominent Amazonian Indigenous activists or intellectuals known to the public have had their own periods of extensive interaction or external residence. Davi Kopenawa, the Yanomami shaman, recalls his adolescence when he desired to “become white” (*virar branco*), taking a job in the FUNAI outpost (Kopenawa & Albert, 2013, pp. 211-6); Ailton Krenak, the Indigenous thinker who made a key contribution to the monumental Brazilian Constitution of 1988, also grew up among the whites, mastering the discursive skills—just to mention a few. Some of the activists return to their forest life, but many continue to live in the city and sustain their activism. This also applies to the Karipuna leaders. But contributions from outside are not always appreciated as much as the contributors would like. I have heard, from multiple Karipuna, who actively engage in the *luta* and reside in the city, expressing regrets or being saddened by some village people who allegedly underappreciate their contributions. One leader residing in the city confessed that he often feels his work is more appreciated by outsiders than by his own people. He stressed the importance and necessity of harnessing the struggle from outside. In fact, the very reason why he decided to leave the forest was to study so that he could help secure the Karipuna's legal rights to exist with the forest. When

I inquired about the subject matter to the villagers, I was met with contrasting comments. Some people would express favorable opinions about their “representatives” in the city, that they are proud of them; some expressed a mixture of admiration, envy, and doubt. What was unmistakable was the sense of distance. Some lay villagers did not agree to the logic that one needs to leave the forest to defend it; they thought that one can always engage in the struggle while staying in the forest.

When a person moves out, it's usually considered that the person chose that path. If it is a matter of education, the person will return, but by experience, they know many do not come back. That is why one must at least spend significant time in the forest village, not to become a visitor. For instance, I never heard a critical opinion about the current chief having to spend a considerable time outside the land to participate in many external meetings and to take care of his family members temporarily living in the city due to study. This understanding was attributed to various reasons. Some had genuine trust in his dedication, considering him “very busy doing his job”; some recognize that he tries his best to stay in the village as much as possible; some respect his role or authority as a headman. The key seemed to be that people had a clear idea of what the chief was up to. The underappreciation of external contributions was also attributed to the lack of communication. It is true that the city-dwelling people put in meagre effort to share exactly what they do for the *luta*, apart from brief updates or whereabouts on their social media channels. Most of the Karipuna are well connected in popular online platforms, so they might see someone participating in an event or giving a public lecture, but superficial online posting unaccompanied by actual conversations can deepen the communication only so far. For an average community member, it is easy to miss or misunderstand a city-dwelling Karipuna's contribution to the struggle from outside. In this sense, the fact that communication is more fluent between the leaders partially explains why there is considerably more understanding among them. In general, no matter how much a city-resident Karipuna may contribute to the *luta* and enact “virtual” coexistence with the people and forest, the gap that the villagers sense from him/her not staying, thus not sharing daily experiences, is glaring, no less than the geographical distance between the forest and city. Physical coextensiveness with the forest matters, to a high degree [MESH].

4.3.3. Different perceptions on forest life

If the Karipuna coexist not only with the forest but also with the city, how does living between multiple worlds impact their perspectives on forest life? As I offered a description of daily life in Chapter 2, here, I will focus on the perceptions. Before I start, it might be worth stressing that the Karipuna's life that I am discussing is not something that is *evenly* distributed among two different lifeworlds. Although some Karipuna permanently reside in the city, the majority of their lives still remain anchored in the forest. During 2022-2025, approx. ten among the fifteen Karipuna households resided in the forest village. Among the five others, two members (breadwinners of their households) expressed willingness to return to the forest, provided they secure a source of income. In fact, among the Karipuna, it is easy to identify a general willingness to stay in the forest. When I asked a forest-residing Karipuna, who said he likes spending time in the city, about whether he can picture himself staying permanently in the city, he replied: "Live there for good? Never!"

Even if they understand that coexistence with the forest requires their physical presence, everybody in the community accepts the dramatically changed reality and the ever-increasing need to go to the city. Nobody envisions a life confined to the forest, nor is anybody expected to spend every single day in the village. If marriage, education, healthcare, and employment are the biggest factors that drive some people away from the forest for a long period, other necessities (hospital appointments, food purchase, attending meetings, collecting monthly subsidies, etc.) compel every forest resident to regularly pivot towards the city, albeit requiring less staying time. The divergence lies in how each person distributes time among the two spaces. From Panorama village, there is no regular public transportation to urban areas, especially to the nearest city Porto Velho, but trips are frequently arranged, usually more than one per week. Although activities in the city are an integral part of the Karipuna's social life, leaving the village for an extended period is perceived differently. They distinguish between people who stay in the forest most of the time and those who do not. There is no clear-cut, objective, or quantitative criterion for defining a time limit for staying, but there is a broad consensus on who is staying and who has left (for good). The time spent in the village is not the only criterion, but it is an important factor in determining whether a person is a legitimate member of the village. Sometimes, it can also be interpreted as an indicator of how much the person cares about the fate of their land. Due to the rather vague criteria, issues can surface when they receive some form of benefit collectively. As a rule of thumb, donations are supposed to be shared between families who reside long-term in the forest, and any household

absent at the moment is usually excluded. However, when the accrued benefit is substantial, voices of grievance are raised among the excluded. Currently, there are discussions to establish a (first-ever) written rule of the village community to serve as a guideline of conduct, called “a protocol of the people,” as the community considers committing to a carbon credit project, which entails long-term, regular benefits for the villagers (Chapter 10).

Since commuting between dual modes of living became the norm for the Karipuna, they became keenly aware of the pros and cons of each. Now, it is common to observe mixed views on the desirability of forest life. To highlight the difference among multiple views, I juxtaposed two opposing groups of opinions as follows, based on numerous conversations with the Karipuna adults during 2022-2025.

[View A] Life in the forest in a positive light:

- Living is cheaper and requires less money.
- The living environment is pleasant, clean (e.g., “the air is pure”), and familiar.
- One can have one's own house and can freely open gardens.
- One can freely hunt, fish, and make use of what the forest gives for free.
- Life is easier, safe, peaceful, and stress-free. (e.g., “You can leave your door open”)
- One can dictate one’s own tempo of life, etc.

[View B] Life in the forest in a negative light:

- It lacks key infrastructures or facilities: e.g., healthcare, education, employment etc.
- Difficulty or impossibility of meeting spouses.
- Life is more challenging since it lacks urban conveniences (fast internet, air conditioning).
- Natural hazards, limited diversion options, etc.

These different views often coexist inside the same person. So, depending on the question and context, the same individual may give different answers. In some cases, such “contradictions” can be made explicit in a single sentence. Comparing forest and city life, one Karipuna man said, “Well, life in the city is... good and not good.” Perspectives also depend on the person’s current position. A person living in the forest is likely to consider his/her life more challenging than those in the city, and vice versa. The comments the Karipuna make about their longtime city-dwelling

relatives are along the following lines: “S/he never really lived in the forest,” “S/he just loves to stay in the city,” “S/he doesn't have the patience (to live in the forest),” “S/he cannot put up with slow internet.” In these conjectural remarks, forest life was presented as something to *endure* or to cope with. Whereas the Karipuna living in the city counter these opinions: “They have no idea how difficult it is in the city,” “Life in the forest is easy,” “Here, nobody helps you,” “You must earn every bit [because] nobody gives you for free,” “[In the forest] You are always stuck (*fica preso*) in the same mentality.”

Despite differing standpoints, not a single Karipuna person picked living in the forest environment per se—as among all the forest beings and hazards—as a major challenge. The vast majority have spent critical periods of childhood in the forest, becoming perfectly familiar with their environment and mastering various ways of subsistence through hunting, fishing, gathering, and gardening [MESH]. Although there are increasing reports of the mainly hunted/fished species diminishing, allegedly due to illegal invaders, the forest and river are still perceived as abundant with edible resources.⁹⁴ However, a generally favorable view of forest conditions does not mean they are entirely immune to the mundane inconveniences caused by the environment. One can also hear a Karipuna complaining about the heat, certain animals (such as biting flies, mosquitoes, and rats), climatic events, or other nuisances. Perhaps they tend to mention them more in conversations with outsiders to identify common ground or appeal for support, but these issues rarely amount to more than secondary details or trivialities. It can be an issue when they choose spouses. One Karipuna man explained that he chose his wife because “she likes to live in the forest ... she endures (*aguenta*)” [COP]. In his case, whether his spouse is disposed to coexist with the forest determined his matrimonial decision. In his multiple marriages, his spouses always liked forest life.

You have to ask if she likes nature, if she likes animals. Do you eat wild animals? [If] she says, “I like eating turtle, paca, monkey, I'm used to it, I like wild animals, living in the forest,” you must choose a woman like that. There are women not like that. “Too many animals, pests, mosquitoes, black flies. I want to sleep in air conditioning...” That one is not going to live in the forest, not good to marry an Indigenous person. The same goes for men ... You have to tell [her] about your life, tell the truth. That you don't have a house in the city, you like living in the village.

⁹⁴ The deeply entrenched “environmental determinism,” understanding Amazonia as a harsh tropical “protein desert” or “counterfeit paradise” (Meggers, 1996; Steward, 1946), does not fit well with the Karipuna's case, as in many others.

It is noteworthy that coexistence with nonhuman animals is brought up as a primary concern. For the Karipuna, coexistence with sylvan wildlife can be a nuisance for outsiders but is not deemed a significant issue or challenge for them. While in conservation biology or biodiversity studies, the concept of coexistence denotes the phenomena of humans and wildlife sharing the same environment,⁹⁵ usually fraught with tensions and conflicts over space and resources, the Karipuna very rarely share such concerns. One Karipuna said: “Living together with animals is easy ... compared with people.” Most people view coexistence with wildlife as necessary and advantageous because they depend on it for subsistence. In fact, the presence of the animals they mainly hunt is considered one of the main reasons why they protect and want to coexist with the forest. They acknowledge that certain species (e.g., snakes, rays, jaguars) pose risks: for example, there were a few incidents where some predators killed domestic animals, and few cases where a jaguar attacked people, causing an injury, but these cases were very rare and their responses to such incidents were mostly tepid (Chapter 11). Regarding the snakes, people are cautious at night and kill them when they are spotted inside the village. But they do not attempt to eradicate them or engage in any systematic “pest” control activity, as is the case in many other places (Knight, 2013; Nyhus, 2016). The Karipuna understand the inherently diverse nature of forest coexistence, which is inclusive not only of the nonhumans that they regularly consume but also of the potentially risky others. They recognize and accept the existence of all these creatures as a condition, not as a removable option. In sum, coexistence with wildlife is deemed part and parcel of forest life, embedded, if not appreciated, in their longstanding mode of existence [MESH]. For the Karipuna, life in the forest is considered advantageous and desirable. It entails hardships that require coping, but by and large, positive perceptions outweigh negative ones.⁹⁶

4.4. Increasing mobility to stay

4.4.1. The quest to improve access

One day, I went to meet a Karipuna friend at the former FUNAI premise, in the room he occupied. Being on the phone, he half-noticed me but did not say hello. His tone was elevated, face flushed. I never saw him fuming like that. On the other side of the phone was an officer of an Indigenist

⁹⁵ Defined as “a sustainable though dynamic state, where humans and wildlife co-adapt to sharing landscapes and human interactions with wildlife are effectively governed to ensure wildlife populations persist in socially legitimate ways that ensure tolerable risk levels.” (N. H. Carter & Linnell, 2016; Pooley et al., 2021, 2022)

⁹⁶ Adding to that is the more recently built consciousness that living in their land is their fundamental legal right.

Agency where he was currently employed. “So, are you saying that you’re going to throw me in the forest and leave me to die of hunger? Is that what you want? What I’m asking is just a damn lift. What do you suppose me to do? I had something to do here [city], and now I must go back. You didn’t even get me a car [to come here]. I came on my own. Now you don’t even want to give me a lift [back]?” He repeated the expression “throw me in the forest,” several times. One may wonder: What is wrong with leaving a forest person in a forest? Isn’t that precisely how forest people are supposed to live? But we already learned that their lives have changed: there are numerous factors that pull them to the city, and push them out of the forest. In this case, the issue is mobility. The person wanted to stay in the forest, but had to come out. Due to the scarcity of transport, he had to take a lift; now, as he lacks the transport to return, he was being accused by the officer of abandoning his workplace. Logistically speaking, mobility is a combination of access and transport. Since the Karipuna live in a remote forest, access is limited, and because of the poor access, there is no public transport they can afford. Hence, the dependency on external support.

In the 1970-80s, the travels from the Karipuna forest to the nearby towns or cities was much more difficult. It took three or four days by boat via the Jaci Paraná and Madeira River. The dry season was especially difficult when the river became too shallow and unnavigable. People had to stop to push and carry the boat until there was sufficient depth. Sleeping in the boat overnight, fending off mosquitoes was part of a routine. Following the opening of the BR-364 in 1961, more roads and highways were built or expanded, improving access from the forests to urban infrastructure. In the 21st century, the accelerating pace of social change and the improving means of transport changed the way the Karipuna realize trips to the nearby cities. Some people acquired boats with outboard motors as donations from partner organizations, and some bought motorcycles with the money they earned. Still they mostly relied on intermittent transportation provided by state institutions or their NGO partners, as nobody possessed a car (except for a short time, when the hydroelectric company UHE SA bought one as part of the flood compensation plan) until 2024. Although the road conditions were still far from ideal,⁹⁷ trips became incomparably faster. Even during the years when I regularly visited their village and forest, notable changes ensued. In 2024, the road connecting Panorama village to nearby towns was finally expanded. Now, in optimal weather and road conditions, the quickest terrestrial trip from Porto Velho to Panorama village in

⁹⁷ In rainy seasons, even jeeps could easily get stuck in the muddy roads, making the riverway more reliable, although it takes more time.

a well-maintained 4x4 jeep driven by an experienced driver can be done in three hours (a fluvial trip takes 3½ hours from the town Jaci of to the village). In short, a one-day return trip (*bate-e-volta*) became possible, which was unthinkable a decade ago. Never in the history of the Karipuna did the city exist this close to them. As they began to *commute* between the forest and in city on a regular basis, urban mode of life became an integral part of their lifeworld [MESH][COP], starting to coexist alongside the sylvan mode of life.

The Karipuna's quest to secure terrestrial access to the city has a history. Since the authorities were always reluctant or negative about approving road construction projects, due to the lack of budget and the land's protective status (risk of facilitating invasion), the Karipuna had to take the initiative into their own hands, in the literal sense. It coincided with the time when the company UHE SA was due to make a contribution for the impact caused by their dam construction, one of which was constructing a school inside the forest village. The Karipuna seized the opportunity to hire a technician who helped plotting the nearest way to the inroad, and two Karipuna community members volunteered to open a 14 km long trail (*picada*) through the forest following the coordinates, which took about a week of arduous work, using machetes. Unlike the *invasores* who make *picadas* to extract resources *out of* the forest, the people's objective was the polar opposite: to secure a better livelihood *in* and *with* the forest. This monumental manual labor paved the way for better access. Later, the company took advantage of the Karipuna's preliminary work to build a road to transport construction materials, which would have been much more costly if they had relied solely on aquatic transportation. That was how the Karipuna started to improve terrestrial access to the city.

4.4.2. Double-edged accessibility

In the section above, I mentioned the road expansion in 2024. This was not a construction project “given” by the State, but hard-earned by the Karipuna, after relentless appeals to the authorities. In 2023, as I approached Panorama Village, I noticed extensive forest denudation along the roads. The road had a totally different outlook from what I remembered from the previous years, when it was covered with thick vegetation, keep scratching both sides of our jeep. My initial suspicion was that the wider road was the product of invaders, but I was wrong. It was the clearing stage of the state government's road expansion project. The Karipuna people explained that the construction was much solicited, since the previous narrow path jeopardized the entrance of vehicles and easily

created muddy paddles that could bog down cars. In the rainy season, it was common to have terrestrial access completely blocked, forcing them to rely solely on aquatic transportation, which is not only more time-consuming and inconvenient but also more expensive and difficult to procure fuel. Hence the logic: the wider the road, the more sun can enter to dry it, preventing such incidents. That was why the Karipuna not only requested but actively “fought” (*lutar*) for a wider and safer road for a long time.

While everybody in the village seemed happy that the road expansion work, which had taken years of pleading, was finally taking place, almost every outsider I spoke with about this issue (those familiar with the issues of Karipuna's *luta*) expressed concerns. One Brazilian academic, well-versed in Indigenous issues, said, “The improvement of road conditions is a double-edged sword. It will bring more invasion.” It is widely known that road access is one of the biggest drivers of urbanization and, consequently, deforestation. The construction of major inroads near the Karipuna IL contributed to the increase in invasion in their forest. “The survival of the Karipuna was harmed by the construction of BR-421, which connects the cities of Ariquemes, Vila Nova, and Guajará-Mirim. ... The area of the Karipuna has been invaded by prospectors from the region” (Sarde Neto, 2018, p. 91).⁹⁸ According to this view, improvement of access is inevitably at odds with the Karipuna's struggle to fend off invaders from their land. The assumption, implicit in such reasoning, is that the Indigenous people are still able to live off a largely autarkic economy. This is precisely why such concerns (that represent the rationale of many non-Karipuna people who support the *luta*) do not resonate with the Karipuna. It is not that they are unaware of such risks; for them, invasions keep happening regardless of the road situation. So far (2026), this proves to be the case. After the construction was completed, deforestation and intrusion of land did not increase or decrease significantly. Yet, the wider road palpably improved access, as it became easier and safer to travel by car. The Karipuna view road expansion pragmatically, as an infrastructure improvement that brings higher standards of living, which is crucial to staying in the forest. Trying to contain illegal invasion is certainly one of the key conditions to coexist with a standing forest, but the people embrace a more holistic view. One might assume that defending the forest consists of opposing all the main factors that contribute to forest removal. Yet the example of road expansion shows that while the Karipuna are determined

⁹⁸ Since 1986, the Karipuna IL had been invaded by approximately 132 families, according to a FUNAI report in 1993 (Sar de Neto, 2018, p. 93).

to protect their forest, their approach is open and pragmatic, compared to the state government or the pro-Indigenous outsiders who are reluctant, concerned, or unfavorable to certain ideas of “modernization” or “development” of the people's living conditions. The Karipuna were not fighting against but *for* the construction and expansion of these roads [COP][RES]. Although they recognize that such changes harbor double-edged consequences, it is deemed a small price to pay, since it is a path they want to take, or, more precisely, a path they see no other choice but to want, *in order to stay* with and in the forest.

4.5. Conclusion: Staying with the trouble

Adriano, a Karipuna activist currently studying in the city, told me how many times he had to face people who challenged him with the preconception, “the place of an Indian is the forest.” The still persistent idea that Indigenous people should stay in the forest, pursuing their traditional self-sufficient mode of living, is an outdated vision, misrepresenting a huge part of reality in the Brazilian Amazon. A permanent and uninterrupted residency in the forest should not be a default condition to be taken for granted, nor imposed on anybody, including the Indigenous people. An array of difficulties of living in a remote forest, combined with powerful pull factors from the cities poses a unique challenge to forest life, whether one is Indigenous or not. If staying in the forest means permanent distancing or isolation from urban society, the Karipuna people cannot and do not pursue such a way of life. Although they have a way of life largely coextensive with and enmeshed in the forest, which they continue to view as favorable and desirable—to the extent that some even suggested whether a person could live (“endure”) in the forest as a key criterion for choosing a spouse—, another conspicuous dimension stands out: the necessity of urban life. As both realms comprise their lifeworlds, negotiating the balance between the two became crucial. To sustain their sylvan mode of existence, which they know best, one must stay in the forest; yet to lead and earn a contemporary living, one must also be “off” the jungle to a degree.

The Karipuna's utmost priority, defending their land, depends on their physical presence in the forest. Hence, “staying” is the most fundamental contribution to the *luta*. However, even such a struggle depends, increasingly, on work that can only be done in the cities. So, even for an Indigenous person born in the forest and whose entitled land is a forest, human-forest coexistence does not automatically happen if the outside world simply leaves the person alone. It requires various conditions to be sustained: personal and collective motivation, considerable will, effort,

know-how to sustain (and sometimes endure) this particular mode of living, the ability to overcome the challenges and pressures that make some people leave, and last but not least, the necessary infrastructure and social support that any denizen deserves in this century.

On the one hand, there are Karipuna who try to maximize their time spent in the forest; on the other hand, there are other Karipuna whose city life became so large that they permanently moved out. In between this spectrum, every Karipuna has already committed at least a part of their life to the city, to varying degrees. If the people's will to defend and coexist with their forest is absolute and consensual, the degree to which such coexistence is spatially (and temporally) distributed is a more relative, case-by-case matter. The Karipuna need to calibrate the extent of their physical coexistence with the forest. Being anchored in the forest yet hitting just the necessary amount of city dose to meet their crucial needs requires a smart maneuver to balance one's life inside-out the forest. Managing this under conditions that lack means of transportation is not an easy task. The Karipuna may not appear to practice a visible activity that can be classified as “forest management” in a conventional sense, aside from irregular monitoring. But perhaps we could say that the skill of managing the right distribution of time and space between the city and the forest constitutes a form of forest *life* management, since this is what sustains their daily lives as well as their ongoing struggle to exist with the forest.

5. *Luta*: War waged on forest-home ^[RES] ^[LET]

5.1. War: More than an analogy

If staying in the forest is deemed crucial to the Karipuna's struggle to coexist with it, then directly engaging in their *luta* is no less important. In fact, the two are not separated, since, as mentioned, staying itself—which encompasses many facets of everyday life— comprises the *luta*. But *luta* also connotes a more official, public form of struggle, namely, their territorial defense advocacy campaign, and it is this dimension that I will discuss in this chapter. Usually referring to place-based struggles for territorial rights, *luta* is a generalized term of the Indigenous resistance movement in Brazil that combines political articulation, legal action, socio-cultural mobilization, and resistance. For the Karipuna, it means all-encompassing advocacy, a comprehensive campaign to protect their land and constitutional rights from the FDD.

5.1.1. Guardians of the home

From the state policy standpoint, the general meaning of protecting Indigenous people in Brazil in the 1980s was “to reconcile the predominance of civilization with respect for the essential conditions of existence of the Indian peoples ... referring specifically to the conditions of physical survival, which must be distinguished from the conditions for ethnic or cultural survival” (Souza Lima, 1991, p. 245). When the Karipuna began to familiarize themselves with the notion of protecting land during the 1980-90s, as they started to deal with increasing encroachment in their territory together with the FUNAI agents with whom they recently established relations, protection was still more about defending themselves from the hostile white *invasores* than about protecting their forest environment. It was relatively recently, in the 21st century, when the framing of socio-environmental notions of protecting land and forest became salient under the name *luta*. By adopting environmentalist discourse/rhetoric and engaging in activities predicated on environmental terms, their contemporary *luta* may seem distinctively environmental. There is indeed a significant overlap between the Karipuna's effort to protect the forest and the environmental movement. Some articulate this intersection as a “middle ground” (Conklin & Graham 1995) in which “Indigenous Amazonian people and Western environmentalists [are] situated as natural allies in environmental conservation” (High & Oakley, 2020). However, it is important to recognize the difference between these two “protections”: the former protects the forest to defend one's foundation of life to coexist with it, while the latter protects it for

environmental or ecological reasons. When the Karipuna developed their *luta*, they were much less of “forest guardians” (and even less “environmentalists”) than guardians of forest-home and participants of the process of *foresting*, whose particular ways in which they *use* the forest foreground their interest in protecting it. Therefore, when one asks a Karipuna “Why protect the forest?” one of the most common answers one will hear is, because the “forest gives animals to hunt,” followed by the mention of other sources (fish, garden crops, etc.) they depend on. It is only when a serious offense is waged on that foundation—such as the current attempts to destroy and dispossess it—that they *become* guardians: “What would you do if someone invades your house?” asked back a Karipuna, when I asked why the protection. In short, forest protection is more of a security issue, both for physical integrity and livelihood, than an environmental one (in the narrow sense). If we compare it to an autonomous nation, it would be classified as a concern of national security, thus a military issue. This is why some Karipuna describe their *luta* as a war. For example, when a Karipuna leader Adriano visited the city of Lisbon in 2022, during his lectures and interviews, he repeatedly mentioned the term “war.”

Why only Ukraine or Palestine? There is a war going on in the Amazon, too. I’m serious. Indigenous people are dying. Indigenous leaders are being murdered. [Indigenous] girls are being raped. Land is stolen. There’s so much suffering. But nobody is doing anything. The Indigenous people, we are left alone!

It is important not to take this as a mere analogy, for various reasons. First, historically speaking, the Karipuna view their current status as a continuation of the 500 years of Indigenous struggle against the colonizers. Like many Indigenous people in Brazil, the war has already been waged since 1500, when the Portuguese colonizers first stepped on the eastern coast. In the countless wars and massacres committed by the European *Conquistadores*—also called “the great dying” or the “First Great Modern Extinction” (Danowski & Castro, 2017, p. 104)—that wiped out tribe after tribe from the map, every violent clash certainly counted as warfare. If getting nearly vanquished and demolished by foreign brute force (by guns, knives, arson, or whatever weapon they used) does not qualify as war, what would? Second, the Karipuna face existential threats in their everyday lives. Although quotidian life appears to be calm and uneventful, there is always a danger lurking behind due to the presence of *invasores*. When the emboldened *invasores* committed arson on the former FUNAI post in the Karipuna IL (section below), the former local prosecutor Daniel Azevedo Lôbo of the MPF denounced the criminal act as a sign that the Karipuna are facing a “risk of genocide” (Aranda & Farias, 2018). The ones who become

particularly exposed are the Karipuna leaders who face existential risks to their physical integrity, since they appear in local and national media showing their identity in public. Apart from receiving anonymous death threats—one leader told me that after his denouncements, he received a message saying: "You'll wake up with your mouth full of ants,"—the leaders are always conscious that they might have a bounty on their heads. Thirdly, the war comparison makes even more sense if we consider the Amazonian Indigenous people's renowned facility to shift perspectives and take the nonhuman's point of view, widely understood as perspectivism (Stolze Lima, 1999). In a perspectivist angle, war can be waged against and among nonhuman beings, too. Reportedly, the Juruna people think that when they hunt peccaries, the animals see themselves in a war situation (ibid.). From the nonhuman perspective, it is not difficult to understand why many Indigenous people liken the total decimation of their sylvan territory to a state of war.



Figure 5. The destroyed part of the Karipuna forest akin to an aftermath of intense artillery bombardment. An image obtained during monitoring. (Photograph by Eric Karipuna, 2023)

Figures 5 and 6 show the devastation on the ground level in the Karipuna IL. The deforestation methods that “bomb” the forest with pesticides and brutally “wipe out” the entire ecology leave a scenery unrecognizable as a forest, which literally resembles a ruin of artillery war, and in a temporal sense resembles “war of attrition” in that *invasores* strategically try to wear down Indigenous inhabitants by enduring aggressive actions. It can also be viewed as an “othercide” (see Chapter 6: and also as an “ecocide”), since it destroys myriads of nonhuman others, to convert it into a monoculture, hence pursue mono-existence. Although not every Karipuna uses or agrees

with the term, it is not an exaggeration or merely an analogy; the assault on their forest can constitute a war, warranting a heightened level of protective intervention.



Figure 6. Aftermath of the pesticide “bombs.” The Karipuna explain that the invaders spray pesticide by airplane or drone to kill vegetation and facilitate clearing, as a new form of land grabbing. (Photograph by Eric Karipuna, 2023)

5.2. Deforesting society and its enemies

If there is one thing the current Karipuna community strongly refuses to coexist with, in order to coexist with its forest, it is the *invasores*. The reason is clear: because these people are not coming for any other reason but to destroy, exploit, and leave (corresponding to the “boom-bust-quit looting pattern” of the capitalist commodity frontier: Monbiot & Hutchison, 2024). A typical justification from pro-development politicians in the region is that those who are entering Indigenous lands are innocent, landless small-scale farmers. The Karipuna, who do not oppose such farmers, deny this hypothesis: they are not farmers but illegal operators and pawns of the land grabbers. Additionally, the Karipuna have already conceded a huge chunk of their land to some farmers who illegally settled inside their territory during the demarcation process, but invasions never stopped. The intermittent operations of IBAMA (Instituto Brasileiro do Meio Ambiente e dos Recursos Naturais Renováveis), the Federal Environmental Police, expel some invaders, but they return soon after. The Karipuna know that these encroachments have no foreseeable end,

unless they surrender and abandon their land. From the *invasores'* standpoint, the Indigenous people are obstructing the path towards economic prosperity. They justify their illegal activities by often portraying the Indigenous population as inherently “lazy,” “free riders,” if not passive “pawns” manipulated by the NGOs, environmentalists, or Western influences. So, simply by surviving and inhabiting the forest, thus upholding their rights, Indigenous people become public enemies of this pro-deforestation society. But who are the actors constituting this circle, propagating these discourses, and how do they operate?

5.2.1. *Invasores*: The operators

The FDD are enacted by two groups of actors. First are the operators on the ground, *invasores*. As these people engage in illicit action, I was never able to meet any of them.⁹⁹ According to the Karipuna, different kinds of *invasores* engage in three interconnected processes: the extraction of high-value trees, land grabbing, and total destruction (conversion from forest to pasture). These can occur overlappingly or independently, but usually in the following order. 1) Extracting trees: illegal loggers (*madereiros*) locate high-value noble trees (such as *ipê*, *mogno*) inside the forest and start clearing strategic narrow paths (*picadas*) near the main road or river to facilitate timber extraction and transportation. Subsequently, they felled other commercially valuable trees.¹⁰⁰ 2) Land grabbing: landgrabbers (*grileiros*) recruit a ground team to plot the land in the forest (Figure 7), who are usually low-income, unskilled workers or ex-farmers who are familiar with the region. When a determined area is plotted, these people fell the trees. Soon after, fire is set to clear the area and facilitate pasture grass growth, rendering the land “productive.” Meanwhile, in the city, the employers of the ground team handle the bureaucratic side, which involves obtaining the Rural Environmental Registry (Cadastro Ambiental Rural, CAR). Applicants can easily acquire CAR through self-declaration. Contrary to common-sensical assumptions, authorities seldom cross-check the information registered by applicants in the CAR system to prevent claims being staked to public lands, making it an easily exploited loophole for land grabbers.¹⁰¹ “Without deforestation, there’s no land grabbing because this is the main way to gain control of territory. The person [land

⁹⁹ The Karipuna leaders strongly discouraged me from approaching them, even for purely academic purposes, explaining that it can pose risk to the security of the community and myself.

¹⁰⁰ Some say that they deliberately mix with semi-felled trees to slow down the deforestation alerts generated by satellite sensing.

¹⁰¹ “The CAR system was created in 2012 to gather information on rural properties, but was subverted into a tool to facilitate land grabbing” (Torres et al., 2021).

grabber] will later use this to show that the land is ‘productive.’ In other words, what one government agency sees as an environmental crime is seen by ‘land legalization’ programs as proof of occupation” (Wenzel, 2023).¹⁰²



Figure 7. Coordinates marked on a tree by invaders plotting an area (to illegally grab land) next to a makeshift camp found inside the Karipuna IL. (Photograph by Eric Karipuna, 2025)

3) Converting land (forest to pasture): After timber extraction is completed, the intruders take advantage of the fertile soil offered by the freshly cut down forest to grow crops (e.g., soybeans). If the topsoil is completely washed away by intensive cultivation (in less than a decade), the land is converted into a cattle pasture. When this cycle is completed, new clearing expands, cutting deeper into the forest. The scale of these operations varies: sometimes it is small-scale under a hectare; sometimes, much more. During Bolsonaro's administration in 2022, emboldened *invasores* set fire to and cleared hundreds of hectares of Karipuna land, just 14 km from the

¹⁰² Deforestation encouraged by government programs in Brazil in the 20th century (also during the dictatorship) includes “general tax policies, special tax incentives, the rules of land allocation, and the agricultural credit system, all accelerat[ing] deforestation in the Amazon” (Binswanger, 1991).

people's village. The end result of all three processes is identical, causing severe degradation and destruction of forests, impacting countless human and nonhuman lives.

5.2.2. The enablers

Most of the operators on the ground are believed to be recruited by other, behind-the-scenes actors, who pull the strings. Although there are also individuals who exploit legal loopholes to gain land ownership, the Karipuna think it is impossible for small farmers to carry out invasive operations on their own. The real perpetrators are deemed much more powerful and wealthy.

In 2016, the invasions stopped. There was an [police] operation. It hit their pockets, so they stopped for a while. When the arrests happened, the people who invaded the forest moved away and organized themselves to bring more people. If they arrest someone, they pause. They wait for the dust to settle. They prepare more people to invade. That's how it works. When they hit their pockets, they stop. Judging by the extent of the degradation of the forest, you can see that they are not ordinary people. They build roads through the virgin forest with tractors. Fuel is expensive, preparation for the felling, the labor of the sawing, the labor is expensive, and food for all of them... By just opening the forest, they have already spent approximately 60,000 *reais*. Then they plant pasture, which is also not cheap. There is maintenance of the pasture, pesticide... When they build the fence, the wires are not cheap. You can see that it was not a hard-working person who saved money to do this. It was not someone who worked for twenty years and saved money. This is no ordinary people. It happens by the support of big guys. It doesn't take a week to do it. It's not just one person. There are several. Those who steal public land are not ordinary folks. They are people who have influence in banks, are colleagues of authorities. It's those in power who set this precedent. The invasion is done by workers, but those who give orders are not ordinary people and never have been. (Karipuna, 2021, p. 14)

Since the nature of these operations is clandestine, it will require a level of police investigation to uncover the trail to the “masterminds.” However, Adriano's argument is not based on mere speculation. Rare evidence shows how the FDD can be organized in political arenas. An anonymous source shared a group message, dated 23rd Oct 2022, sent by a person who supposedly represents a pro-Indigenous organization (Direitos Humanos Dos Indígenas Do Brasil). Yet, the content reads: “Yesterday's meeting at the Special Secretariat for Social Policies of the Presidency of the Republic, held at the Planalto Palace,” to “discuss the issue of creating a Crisis Committee to resolve the issue of the right to housing and the right to property of the residents of the town of Bandeirante, in the Municipality of Porto Velho,” concerning the “disrespect that the residents have suffered, under allegations of invading an Indigenous reserve, an environmental area, or an area belonging to the Union.” Although lengthy, I cite the key parts, as it explicitly shows the rationale that justifies actions against the Indigenous people:

The Government, by making this decision to illegally expropriate, disrespecting the federal constitution, human rights, and the natural rights of human beings, is committing a crime under the allegation of protecting an area belonging to the Union, under the *allegation of being an Indigenous reserve* [emphasis added]. And with respect to the issue of being an Indigenous land, the federal constitution states in its article 231 that in order to be a permanent Indigenous reserve, there must actually be tribes and Indians living permanently in that area, following their customs and traditions, living as natural Indians. The issue of the right to be considered an Indigenous reserve, an Indigenous area, loses the right to be so, *from the moment the Indian becomes socialized, he loses his Indigenous status* [emphasis added]. No longer a *natural Indian*, being only an Indian in his origin, he becomes a socialized Indian, subject to the common laws of civilization. According to the information and evidence sent, there are no natural Indians in that region; the *few Indians that still exist are already socialized* [emphasis added]. Because they live and coexist as civilized people, and in this case, they lost their Indigenous status, and their area was no longer considered an Indigenous reserve, by losing its Indigenous status. Therefore, this area becomes an Environmental Protection Area (APA), as it always has been. And because it is an APA, or environmental reserve, the federal constitution gives residents the right to live in an ecologically balanced environment. ... Because the accusation that is being made against the residents who live in this village, who work in this village, of being land grabbers, is unfounded, since they have been living in this area for more than five years, a fact that disqualifies them from being land grabbers. Before they occupied these areas, there were already residents and owners, such as rubber tappers, who worked in their areas. This makes it clear that, if there was illegal land grabbing, it was in the past, at the beginning of everything, when the government of the time coexisted with and did not interfere to prevent the invasion of the property, and that the current residents cannot be held responsible for a crime they did not commit. Land grabbing is a crime, and it must be prevented at its inception. This is not the case for the residents of this village.

The message goes on, listing “the agencies that participated in this committee” and “should be invited to the proposed committee,” which includes the Special Secretariat for Social Policies of the Presidency of the Republic, Ministry of Justice, INCRA, FUNAI, IBAMA, and 18 other institutions. The limited space does not allow me to elaborate on this text, but among the abundance of incorrect information and misleading rationales, it is notable that the person uses the “Indian statute”—the outdated and narrow definition of Indigenous people, which perpetuates a dichotomy of “socialized Indian” (civilized, inauthentic) versus “natural Indian” (original, authentic)—to justify land grabbing activities in the Karipuna IL.

Just as land grabbing is schemed and executed both on administrative levels and on the ground (field) level, these socio-political pressures are put forward both in the administrative branches in Brasília, as above, as well as in the local constituencies. In 2019, the MPF indicted nine individuals and two companies for the crimes of criminal organization, fraud, invasion to occupy federal lands, deforestation without authorization, and money laundering, after an

investigation into invasions within the Karipuna IL. According to the complaint, a geo-referencing company called Amazon Gel organized criminal land grabbing within the Karipuna IL, by receiving 9.5 thousand *reais* per lot (in addition to monthly fees) through the Association of Rural Producers of Boa Esperança (ASPRUBE) in the district of União Bandeirantes for the provision of services of land ownership (Rondoniagora, 2019). In an openly available video, one can observe how the representative of Amazon Gel, Ediney Holanda Santos, in a meeting with rural producers of União Bandeirantes, details the procedures for obtaining land ownership documents within Indigenous Land and advances anti-Indigenous discourse (Notícia Rondônia, 2019). Entities such as Amazon Gel do not need to employ new tactics, but simply resort to the conventional “recipe” of land grabbing in the region:

Creation of an association that seeks the regularization of territories within Indigenous land or conservation units; employment of a “specialist” in georeferencing to promote the division of lots with establishment of boundaries; appeal to legal instruments ... which would give the appearance of legality and convey the idea that possession was in the process of being regularized; co-optation of interested parties who would pay for the purchase of lots, regularization services, and georeferencing and placement of markers on the lots. (CIMI, 2019, p. 4)

Perhaps the difference would be the surprising scale of the crime. It was revealed that Mr. Santos used the same schemes in Rio Pardo, Nova Mamoré, Ouro Preto do Oeste, and Floresta Nacional do Bom Futuro. It is by no means a baseless conjecture to associate these emboldened moves with the political atmosphere created by the then-Bolsonaro administration, which openly encouraged them. The *invasores* and their enablers form a strong, massive local constituency that propagates pro-development discourses and anti-Indigenous sentiments to add fuel to the already kindling fire. This is the context in which the Karipuna people exist and resist the FDD.

5.3. Enacting the *luta*

Now, I turn back to the Karipuna's side and examine what their *luta* consists of. We can distinguish two activities: political advocacy on the one hand, and work on the ground to monitor illicit activities on the other.

5.3.1. *Denunciar*: political advocacy

As the pressure of deforestation kept increasing since the mid-2010s, the Karipuna witnessed their land frequently invaded and exploited by *invasores*. Finding direct action on the ground largely ineffective and risky, they began to opt for indirect approaches, which can be termed political

advocacy, which consists of public-facing campaigns, engaging in diplomatic encounters with the key stakeholders and actors (authorities, institutions, media), pressuring and holding competent authorities accountable (*denunciar e cobrar*) for territorial intrusions. Since there is no permanent law enforcement station on their land, and authorities are not readily available by phone, the Karipuna need to mount political pressure to compel the authorities to respond to their pleas. As their community is too small to organize impactful protests, they try to “make noise,” as they say, through various media platforms or by directly appealing to higher offices in Brasília. Only then might a law enforcement team be dispatched to address territorial intrusion.

By the end of the 2010s, reporting or denouncing incidents to authorities and pressuring them to take measures had become the standard practice of the Karipuna's *luta*, taking shape as a more organized territorial defense campaign [RES]. Building concrete pressure requires a set of tactics and strategies, including raising awareness and the issue's profile, identifying and engaging stakeholders, and organizing and participating in key meetings or public arenas to deliver messages. All this cannot be done only by the Karipuna but needs co-production with their partners. The reason their resistance has gained visibility in recent years is the relentless appeals issued by the Karipuna leadership, denouncing intensive exploitation and intrusion on their land. But the credit also goes to their partners. In addition to helping the Karipuna leaders continue to denounce cases of intrusion to the authorities, they helped present their case on influential national and international platforms. It is also worth mentioning the role played by the Karipuna commoners, those who do not belong to the leadership. Since the group is small, every adult in the community has multiple experiences of participating in external meetings on behalf of the people. Porto Velho, and the administrative capital, Brasília, are the most common destinations for these external activities,¹⁰³ but meetings or events also took place in international settings.¹⁰⁴ In 2018, the Karipuna leaders took the global center stage to denounce illegal operators and weak law enforcement in their territory, in the United Nations (UNHR, 2018). In April, Adriano spoke in the 7th Session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) in the United Nations Headquarters in New York:

¹⁰³ These meetings have sponsors since the Karipuna usually cannot afford the trips. Depending on the sponsorship, it can be air traveling or bus trip (e.g., two-days bus trip between Porto Velho and Brasília).

¹⁰⁴ Andre and Adriano participated in meetings in Ecuador, Bolivia, the USA and in several EU countries.

The situation is very serious. In addition to the extensive environmental damage, there is a strong and imminent risk of being attacked within our land by invaders. The possibility of a massacre and genocide against my people is real. Deforestation has already reached just a few meters from our village. (CIMI, 2018)

In October, Andre spoke in the 4th session of the Open-ended Intergovernmental Working Group (OEIGWG) in the United Nations, Geneva: “We have no peace in our own land. If the Brazilian government does not protect our territory, invaders can exterminate us to appropriate it for themselves” (Greenpeace, 2018). The Karipuna attest that what put their struggle on the map were international interventions. “In Brazil, our complaints had very little impact. But after the international repercussions, everything changed,” recalls Adriano.

5.4.1.1. Impacts of campaigning

Globally, the shift towards diplomatic campaigning seems to be paying off, at least in pragmatic terms, as their efforts have borne tangible results. The Karipuna built a network of national/international journalists, foreign institutions, including multiple European Union embassies, NGOs, and individuals who support their struggle, including researchers such as myself. Notably, the visit of the German Ambassador to Brazil to Panorama village (2022), and the Karipuna community's visit to the German Embassy in Brasília (2023) led to substantial donations, which enabled the construction of new housing after the flood in 2023. As mentioned, the Karipuna's consistent effort in monitoring and improved documentation skills helped present their case vividly to the stakeholders. Most recently, after years of delayed promises, the company Santo Antônio Energia visited the village (March 2025) to reinstate the compensation process for the 2014 flood, which had remained pending.

The immediate goal of mounting these campaigns—making the competent government authorities enforce law and take necessary action (prosecution, confiscation, etc.)—also yielded some results. Among a number of joint operations that took place, notable was the “Operation SOS Karipuna,” launched in June 2019, which involved eight federal and state law enforcement institutions and resulted in five preventive arrest warrants, 15 search and seizure warrants, and 22 other restrictive measures, aside from the seizure of assets of those investigated worth more than 46 million *reais* (MJSP, 2019). Another significant mission was the recent “Operation Karipuna” in June-July 2024. More than 20 federal agencies participated, including the execution of 99 actions, the destruction of 23 illegal camps, and the destruction of 18 bridges of illegal access

within the land (Agência Gov, 2024). This operation resulted from the Supreme Court's decision, which mandated that federal agencies propose and execute a plan under a strict deadline. The court's decision would not have been possible without the relentless campaigning of the Karipuna [RES], which managed to enlist themselves among the six Indigenous lands that require the most urgent intervention.



Figure 8. The team of “Operation Karipuna,” visited by the President of FUNAI. (Photograph by Eric Karipuna, 2024)

Although these operations show the magnitude of the invasion in the Karipuna's forest, they fell short of achieving the ultimate objective: guaranteeing tangible security for the people in their own land. Operations may stall invasion for some months at best, but as soon as the authorities withdraw, *invasores* return, forcing the Karipuna to repeat the same, exhausting campaign all over again. In some ways, these sporadic operations could even exacerbate the situation, since they could provoke retaliatory actions of the expelled or fined people. In the vacuum created after the authorities' withdrawal, they are left to face the *invasores* without any help. In 2024, the Karipuna were so concerned about these repercussions that they had to issue a statement (Chapter 10). Not even a month after the 2024 operation, touted as the most extensive and successful one so far, the Karipuna shared a message and photos about activities of *invasores* not far from the village. Astutely aware of this repetitive cycle, they are calling for a permanent law-enforcement base to be established. At the same time, they know their request is a far cry, that they will probably be left on their own.

If we examine the last decade, the Karipuna's *luta* taking place outside the forest stands out as one of the most effective concerted efforts to harness their resistance against the FDD. This

endeavor requires some people to spend more and more time outside the forest. Although the campaign's idea is place-based and anchored in their forest, the nature of the work requires them to travel regularly. These commitments become especially frequent when one is part of the leadership. In some cases, some leaders have to spend an entire month outside due to continuous meetings and commitments.

5.3.2. Monitoring

Today, for the Karipuna, protecting the forest is synonymous with territorial management and maintenance of the geographical boundary to ensure their land rights and security. It is being vigilant and deploying actions against invasive pressure, executing monitoring activities or subsequent actions to repel the *invasores* [RES]. Here, I confine monitoring to its relatively new form: the more conscious and systematic efforts to check and report illegal invasion in their forest. There are two types of monitoring: first, indirect, unorganized monitoring conducted during subsistence activities in the woods. During these daily routines (done individually or by 2-3 people), villagers may find traces or signs of invaders. Usually, it is when they venture a little farther out of their usual hunting grounds that they find more irregularities or suspicious activity; the second is direct, planned, organized monitoring, with an explicit goal of checking out a specific area, usually organized after finding a lead. As the Karipuna became equipped with computers, internet, and drones,¹⁰⁵ they are able to use satellite imagery software such as Google Earth, Global Forest Watch, or data from INPE (Instituto Nacional de Pesquisas Espaciais), among other programs, to identify real-time deforestation inside their territory. These planned monitoring, which involves more people and covers longer distances, usually happens when there are external partners teaming up (e.g., federal authorities, partner NGOs, or journalists). Taking advantage of these external presences is deemed beneficial, since the more manpower the excursion team can count on, the safer the activity becomes; secondly, it enables covering remote areas only reachable by boat, which would otherwise be unaffordable (due to fuel costs) for the Karipuna.¹⁰⁶ These trips very rarely extend beyond a single day. Although indirect monitoring is a by-product of regular subsistence activity and covers a limited distance (never more than a half-day by foot), the accounts

¹⁰⁵ In 2022 and in 2024, they received a donation of drones which helps monitoring from distance. Internet was available from 2020. Considering the remote condition, it is now relatively fast and stable.

¹⁰⁶ In special occasions, the leaders accompany journalists in small aircrafts to conduct overflight on the land.

collected suggest that it yields more findings. This also means that deforestation is encroaching closer to the village.

5.3.2.1. *Confronting and its consequences*

Nowadays, direct encounters with the *invasores* are very rare since these people, knowing the illegality of their own actions, tend to operate clandestinely. The more common case is finding traces of people during monitoring. Even in these cases, the Karipuna usually do not react on-site. Instead, they document the findings and return to the village, either to summon a larger group to ensure safety during direct engagement or, more commonly, to report to the authorities by sharing the documentation. In the former case, they are equipped with arms (traditional bows, arrows, shotguns) exclusively for self-defense.¹⁰⁷ They know they need to approach these sites with extreme caution, as the invaders may react violently, and it is difficult to maintain control in such tense situations. There have been countless reports of ambushes and gunshots in disputed lands around the Brazilian Amazon (APIB, 2020).

A rare incident of direct confrontation happened in 2018 [RES]. This action, which I did not witness, is documented in a 30-minute video, filmed by a linguistic researcher who was present in the village at the time. That day, Batiti was off to his morning routine on the way to *Cajui*, one of his usual hunting grounds, approximately 40 minutes walking distance from the village. He noticed a *picada* (a small man-made aperture in the forest that indicates the presence of invaders) and followed it. From a distance, he silently observed a makeshift camp and a few men conversing. Already from last year, there was a significant rise in invasions within the Karipuna IL. This was by far the closest one to their village. He quickly returned to the village and rounded up all the men, about ten. People armed themselves with shotguns, bows, and arrows (even fishing harpoons) for self-defense in case something happens. Some wore traditional head dressings, *cocars*. Batiti led the way with his father—70 years old but still robust Aripã—following right behind him. When they carefully approached the camp, the men were caught off-guard, having lunch. Batiti exchanged a few words and asked the people to identify themselves. Meanwhile, Aripã searched for arms and took possession of the rifle he found. One man argued that they paid for the land. Batiti asked, “How much did you pay?” Everyone maintained a low voice, as if having a normal

¹⁰⁷ There was not a single violent attack by the Karipuna people to any outsider inside the territory since they entered in contact with FUNAI.

conversation. But both parties knew they were walking on thin ice: one subtle move could quickly escalate. One can observe that the Karipuna were handling the situation with a calm, poised manner. Batiti repeatedly told them to take time to finish their meals before packing their things. These little gestures suggest that even when the Karipuna are enraged by these illegal invasions, they rarely show aggression or hostility towards the individuals. Although tensions existed, violence was avoided as much as possible, while preventive measures were preferred. Aware of being outnumbered, the *invasores* did not express any qualms, except that the “leader” of the group kept claiming dubious legality of his ownership. Batiti did not directly challenge his claim. As they finished their meal, packed their things, and left the tent, the Karipuna immediately set the camp on fire (Figure 9). A clear message was sent: Do not return.



Figure 9. Invaders and their makeshift camp are being burned. (Screen capture of a video by dos Santos, 2018)

A few days or weeks later, in February 2018, the FUNAI post that was built approximately 10 kms away from the village and scheduled to get inaugurated that year, was destroyed. The windows were shattered, and the entire edifice was burnt. The Karipuna are adamant that it was an act of retaliation to their actions, that there couldn't be any other motivation for this arson. Even though this incident was widely covered by the local media, there was no thorough police investigation following suit, nor were any measures taken by FUNAI. The already weakened agency became literally nonexistent and simply abandoned the facility. Until now, only ruins remain. In the middle of the jungle, the destroyed FUNAI post stands in ashes, like a monument to the lack of law enforcement (Figure 10).



Figure 10. The former FUNAI post inside the Karipuna IL. (Photograph by By the author, 2022)

This time, a message was clearly *received* by the Karipuna. From that moment on, direct engagement with the invaders did not take place. Whenever intrusions occurred, they opted not to send messages to the intruders themselves. Instead, the standard practice became reporting to the authorities without direct action. In January 2019, when the Karipuna identified approximately 20 invaders on their land in a place called Piquiá, they avoided confrontation [LET] and reported them to the authorities. Whereas the *invasores* did not stop invading and kept finding ways to remind the Karipuna of their presence. In 2022, a message was chalked on the wooden door of a house that the Karipuna built on the northern edge of the Formoso River, with financial support from a partner NGO. It read: “Hey neighbor, we are all good, right?” I asked if it was not a friendly gesture. Andre Karipuna vehemently denied. “Someone friendly never writes like that on somebody's door.” This house was supposed to be a strategic post to help contain the invasive pressure from the Northern part. More importantly, near the house, there was a completely burnt and felled forest, almost half a hectare. Again, the message could not have been clearer to the Karipuna: these invaders were not going anywhere.

Another more recent message from the *invasores*, in 2023, was even more explicit. Placated on the road that connects the village to the town of União Bandeirantes, a wooden sign stated

flagrantly: “PLEASE, DON’T TOUCH MY TREES” (Figure 11). Adriano was particularly upset by their outlandish lie to claim false ownership of trees.



Figure 11. Adriano Karipuna pointing to the invader's signboard. (Photograph by Adriano Karipuna, 2023)

While there are direct consequences for the Indigenous people when they confront illegal intrusions, consequences rarely befall the side of the *invasores*. Although all these incidents are duly recorded, documented, and shared with the authorities (and most of them find at least several news outlets through the network of media agencies with which the Karipuna keep in contact), very few people are held accountable since then. This impunity also reveals the limit of the authority's investigative power to identify clandestine intruders in the middle of the jungle. Six years after the arson, it seems extremely unlikely that the culprits will be identified, or that FUNAI will revitalize its presence in the area. To avoid violence and adopt a safer method of monitoring, the use of drones became instrumental. This became a possibility since 2023, as they forged an alliance with environmental and human rights NGOs, and received donations of the equipment and basic training. The recent installation of new solar panels, which provides a more stable energy supply, enabled them to charge the quickly draining drone batteries. One of the notable drone monitoring activities was when Eric Karipuna, after familiarizing with the equipment, produced images of the devastating flood that occurred in March 2023 (Figure 12) and swiftly shared them with local media outlets, prompting reaction from the civil society, already concerned about the impacts of the Santo Antônio Hydropower Plant (UHE SA).¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁸ From the beginning, there were concerns about the impact of the plant, as Karipuna IL is located about 100 km from the project site. Dam builders failed to adequately consult with Indigenous people as required by law. The



Figure 12. Drone image of flood in Panorama Village. (Photograph by Eric Karipuna, 2023)

5.4. Conclusion: Strategical, fine-tuned resistance

Regarding the *luta*, the often polyphonic Karipuna form a unanimous voice and a united front of resistance [RES]. One Karipuna leader's remark, in an interview with a Brazilian newspaper in 2019, sums up this unity: “We are few, but we are more united. We always pursue the same goal: protecting our land,” which the journalist directly quoted in his article. In this chapter, I described how the Karipuna view this struggle, against whom they fight, and what the *luta* consists of. For some people, the struggle to coexist with the forest is paramount to engaging in a war waged on it,

owner of the Hydropower Plant, Santo Antônio Energia carried out certain mitigation projects in the Karipuna village, constructing a health post, school, and housing for technical personnel from SEDUC.

assaulting their entire foundation of life. The vast and continuous destruction of their forest and death threats to the leaders put their very existence in peril. The culprits of these unscrupulous acts are the illegal operators, whose roles are divided between executors on the ground (*invasores*) and their enablers, mounting the FDD from various angles. These people may operate clandestinely, but when political conditions permit, they surface, openly encouraging civilians to grab land or to commit emboldened acts, such as the arson on the former Indigenous agency premises.

Dealing with these conditions with limited manpower and often unavailable law enforcement, the Karipuna need to make strategic adjustments to render their struggle more effective, while suffering the least damage. So, while the overarching code of the *luta* is resistance, enacting that resistance requires a process of constant negotiation. As a result, currently, the Karipuna's struggle is buttressed by two pillars. On the one hand, the groundwork consists of monitoring activities in the forest that focus on documenting and informing rather than taking direct action. On the other hand, political advocacy—attending meetings and press conferences, giving speeches or lectures, issuing denunciations of illegal activity in their forest to the authorities—is usually conducted outside the forest. If staying in the forest construes the existential, day-to-day part of their struggle, the *luta* comprises “realpolitik,” which entails broad engagement with various actors and brings about real changes in their struggle. Although the Karipuna's *luta* continues to face an uphill battle, it is managing to make strides both in national and international arenas and yielding concrete results. This owes to the valiant leaders who harness the struggle by putting their own lives on the line, as well as the participation of many other commoners.

6. Sylvan warfare [RES] [COP] [LET] [MESH]

6.1. Understanding Karipuna warfare

6.1.1. Defining war, identifying enemy

In this chapter, I will examine the characteristics of the Karipuna's historical warfare by focusing on oral accounts and discussing its implications on coexistence. The analysis of war is complicated by the difficulty of objective documentation and its highly messy nature. Before we begin, I want to be clear that this analysis is not based on comprehensive, detailed historical data on the Karipuna's history of war. I acknowledge the limits of collecting such data: the only reliable sources of Karipuna warfare are the elder Aripã and his son (Batiti), who learned from him and other deceased elders. Aripã's firsthand experience is also limited, as he participated in only a few raids; he draws most of his knowledge of war from what he was told by his parents and relatives. In his accounts, temporalities are estimated very loosely and lack clues to infer exact dates or orders, making it difficult to establish a robust record of war in chronological order (e.g., as in the case of the Kayapo: Verswijver, 1992). Aripã's account of war consists of ten oral narratives and testimonies ("List of wars": in Annex), on which I base my analysis. This is not an exhaustive list of war narratives, but more than most of the current Karipuna people are aware of. It seems that memories of war are neither discussed frequently nor widely shared. Even more so, Aripã's narratives are invaluable sources for examining the Karipuna's perceptions of war situations and the ways they construct past experiences.

In *Warfare and Shamanism in Amazonia* (2012), Carlos Fausto emphasizes the inadequacy of conventional definitions of war (primarily based on binary typologies) for analyzing Amazonian Indigenous societies, where "only transitional and hybrid forms [of war] appear to exist" (Fausto, 2012, p. 5). Especially unfit are the public vs. private, individual vs. collective dichotomies, since the limits of such divisions in kin-based societies are all but clear. Vendetta, one of the leading motivations for Amerindian war (Carneiro Da Cunha & Viveiros De Castro, 1985), was both a public and a private concern and was perceived simultaneously as a personal motivation and a shared burden. How can we define the Karipuna's warfare? The Karipuna's notion of war is loose, broad and encompassing, which is perhaps the reason why they did not have, or need, a specific term designated for war but instead, had a set of verbs related to the act of killing: "*oho upiara mo*"

means “to go to combat (with enemy)”; “*oyo juka juka*” stands for “killing each other.” Since so many events could be considered war depending on the subject's point of view,¹⁰⁹ what seemed to be important is not a strict, abstract definition, but the character of the action itself. Now, the Karipuna use and appropriate the Portuguese term for warring (*guerrear*) expansively, and any action involving collective armed conflict could be considered war. Their case is in line with Fausto's argument that the Malinowskian definition (“armed conflict between politically independent units”) or other models (e.g., viewing warfare as the unit of public affairs to define the largest polity: Langness, 1972, p. 925, cited in Fausto 2012, p. 6) are inadequate. The Karipuna could mobilize alliances with other Kawahiva groups for some armed conflicts, but also operated as an autonomous and independent political unit. So, neither can war alone define polities, nor can the boundary of the war-unit be easily fixed. As for the scale of war, the Karipuna also account for “raids of one, two, or three dozen archers against an enemy village, a frequent pattern in Amazonia in the twentieth century” (Fausto, 2012, p. 6) as an important part of their warfare, so it would be nonsensical to exclude small-scale conflicts. Reflecting these points, I take Fausto's definition of the war event, adding a slight correction by not confining war to affairs among Indigenous people or humans, nor to physicality: the Karipuna warfare means “any and all encounters between ~~Indigenous~~ [human and nonhuman] (emphasis added) groups who perceive themselves as enemies and that results in ~~physical~~ violence, irrespective of the size of these groups or the scale of the violence” (ibid., p. 7).

6.1.2. Tapy'ynha: More than white, less than enemy

Defining war also entails defining the boundary between us/them, friend/foe, ally/enemy. Like many other Indigenous communities in the region, the Karipuna's groups were transient, and member mobility was relatively high due to fissioning. That said, when my interlocutors discuss past wars, it is clear that the Karipuna people to which they refer are politically autonomous groups with which they identify a continuity. The boundary that separates ally and enemy seems to largely overlap with the limits of a collective larger than the Karipuna, namely, the Kawahiva people. Although the Karipuna can be ambivalent about the exact boundary between the Kawahiva—sometimes deeming them one big, same group; other times, emphasizing difference and

¹⁰⁹ I remind the reader about the other dimension of Karipuna warfare, that war is not perceived to occur exclusively among humans (e.g., destroying forest can be war: Chapter 5; animals can be warring: Section below).

independence—they tend to view them as an umbrella group in which both alliance forging and intermarriage are possible. The accounts, such as Narrative #6-3, show that those who speak Kawahiva are not considered enemies (One exception is when the Juma people *become* enemies, which is deemed a rare infighting: Narrative #6-4). Everybody outside the boundary of the Kawahiva people was a potential enemy. Before interacting with white people, the Karipuna's usual enemies were the Wari (Pakanova), Munduruku, Nambikwara, Surui, Cinta Larga, Pirahã (*Ubing'ha* -Kw), and Tupari.¹¹⁰

When there was war, when we went to war with the Oro-mone, Oro-wari-schen, we always called the Uru-Eu-Wau-Wau and Amondawa¹¹¹ who were closer... to fight with other relatives, other Indigenous people. So it was, we killed Indigenous people, and they also killed us, the Karipuna. (in Narrative #1-1, “The Arrival”)

Many of the war accounts I collected feature these non-Kawahiva Indigenous people. When the Karipuna waged wars with rivals that required a sizable army, they forged alliances with other Kawahiva groups [RES][MESH]. For the Karipuna, there is no exact Kawahiva equivalent for “enemy.” The closest term would be *tapy'ynha*. The term is commonly known and translated as “white people,” but throughout the accounts of war, it also designates non-white Indigenous adversaries.¹¹² This is notable in Narrative #6-1: When the *guerreiro* first kills an Indigenous enemy, he cries, “I killed a *tapy'ynha*!” which my storyteller first translated as “I killed a white,” later correcting it as “Indigenous enemy.”

6.1.3. Self-image in warfare

From the Karipuna's perspective, they never initiated war. “We didn't attack first. The others always attacked first, and then we paid back”: such is their statement. Mostly, they were in a defensive and reactive mode rather than trying to conquer, dominate, or eradicate others. There is no evidence that shows they ever subjugated or colonized others with brute force. Except for two (out of ten) exceptional cases, in which they seem to have triggered warfare, every other account of war starts with the Karipuna being attacked first. They also seem to have lacked one of the key

¹¹⁰ According to Batiti, the list is slightly different: Wari, Cinta-larga, Surui, Ikanã, Nambikwara, Xingu, Kayapo.

¹¹¹ The Juma and “Urubu” (a.k.a. “Capivari”) are also mentioned as allies. The size of such alliances seem to be larger than the idea that the Kawahiva “[w]ar parties never exceeded 20 men” (Nimuendajú, 1963, p. 290).

¹¹² While none of my Karipuna interlocutors agree to translate *tapy'ynha* as a general category of “enemy” or “foreigner” (such as *wijam* in Wari: Vilaça, 2010), some researchers affirm it: e.g., “The designation for Kawahiwa means “our people,” in opposition to *tapy'yn*, “enemy” (Aguilar, 2017, p. 149).

conditions for waging war proactively: a sizable population. The Karipuna oscillate between the nostalgia of an aggrandized society (e.g., “We were hundreds of people”) and the acknowledgment that, for a long time, they maintained a relatively small population. The bottom line is that they assume the current state results from a much more populous original group that underwent steep depopulation in the past. As for the actual group, they affirm that they were relatively small, with limited manpower to engage in heavy warfare, so they needed to forge alliances when dealing with larger adversaries. This partially explains why they often portray themselves as underdogs, and also why their self-image differs from that of larger, renowned Indigenous groups, who are depicted as “doubtless extremely bellicose” (Tupinambá: Viveiros de Castro, 1992, p. 376), “fierce warriors” (Yanomami: Chagnon, 1968), or as having “passionate liking for warfare” (Tupi-Guarani: Clastres, 1974/1987, p. 194). The Karipuna retained proud and fearless warriors who shone in wartime [RES], but they distanced themselves from warmongering or war addiction. Their relationship with the enemy is likened to a hostile relationship between two ant species.

Tapia'ia is a type of ant that fights with arara'a. Arara'a is also a type of ant with a large head. So, Tapia'ia is like a small tucandera and arara'a is an ant that anteaters eat. So tapia'ia goes to war, to kill arara'a. They say that it was through this tapia'ia that we emerged, as if we were going to war with white men, or with another people. They say that tapia'ia, this is real, is an ant that moves in large groups. Tapia'ia is a little black ant, smaller than a tucandeira. Arara'a is a big ant, with a big head. Then they go, blowing bamboo flutes. *Comcom, comcom, comcom*. We don't hear it, but they say that in their eyes, it's like that. *Comcom, comcom*, blowing bamboo flutes on their way towards Arara'a. Then the Tapia'ia attacks Arara'a, at dawn, five in the morning, or sometimes two o'clock in the morning. They kill Arara'a. To us, tapia'ia is an Indian. Tapia'ia use arrows. Now, arara'a is the white people, *tapy'ynha*, for us. Arara'a shoots at tapia'ia. Sometimes tapia'ia dies. Sometimes, arara'a kill every tapia'ia, who are for us, Indians. Now, arara'a is white. Arara'a shoots at tapia'ia and kills tapia'ia. They die. And so, every time we see [these ants], people say, “We're going to be like that, we're going to attack the village of our relatives, maybe the wild Indians, or maybe the white men, like this”, like attacking arara'a, at dawn, sometimes we go, in the same way, in big groups. That's why our people went to war, like this ant, tapia'ia.

Through this “perspectivist” (e.g., “to the ant's eyes, they blow flutes”) analogy, did the Karipuna observe the permanence of war? Or did they find a basis of explanation that made sense of their life in which war was an inevitable part? Did they simply recognize similarities across the species border? The only explanation they offer for this analogy is that they “learned *with* the animals” about war.

6.2. Coexistable war vs. othercide

If we accept that coexistence is “commonly understood as relationships between persons or groups in which none of the parties is trying to destroy the other” (Kriesberg, 1998, p. 183), war may be a form of other-destruction, therefore antithetical to coexistence. However, as we have seen, war can have different meanings for different people, and so can its implications for coexistence. Based on the implications of coexistence and relations with the enemy, the wars the Karipuna experienced (in which they were usually on the defensive) can be distinguished into two kinds, according to their objectives. The first category is Amerindian (intertribal) warfare, which is an armed engagement aimed at achieving a specific goal against enemies. Although “Amazonianists disagree on how to best interpret lowland South American warfare,” (Rival, 1999, p. 62) it has become widely accepted that the various sociopolitical reasons to wage war, for Amazonian Indigenous people, were not so much functional (Fernandes, 1952/2022) as they were driven by vendetta (Carneiro Da Cunha & Viveiros De Castro, 1985, p. 205). Amerindian war in the Amazonia also attempts to exert a certain degree of control over the other, but does not necessarily intend to exterminate the enemy or make the other into the self. It is based on the recognition, not negation, of the existence of the other, therefore not necessarily antithetical to coexistence. The Karipuna actively engaged in such warfare. The second type of war is a form of annihilation whose end goal is the enemy's cessation of existence, or the obliteration of the other. It points to the denial of the enemy's existence and therefore demands its total removal, which is a mode of *mono*-existence that only accepts and tolerates the self. As this kind of war is an explicit attempt to undo the very foundations of coexistence, it becomes incompatible with coexistence to the extent that its objective is achieved. I term this war “othercide,” as coined by decolonial thinker Malcom Ferdinand, who defines it as “the refusal of the possibility of inhabiting the Earth in the presence of an other, of a person who is different from a 'self' in their appearance, their social affiliations, or their beliefs” (2022, p. 29). For Ferdinand, othercide is the principle of “colonial inhabitation,” and “the massacre of Amerindians ... a true enactment of the principle of othercide” (ibid., p. 32). Othercide encompasses genocide and ethnocide.¹¹³ While Amerindians, including the Karipuna,

¹¹³ According to Pierre Clastres, genocide is “the will to exterminate a racial minority” (Clastres, 1980/2010, p. 103), while ethnocide is “the systematic destruction of ways of living and thinking of people different from those who lead this venture of destruction” (ibid.) and “a project of reducing the Other to the Same” (ibid., p. 108) which “results in the dissolution of the multiple into One” (ibid.). If “genocide assassinates people in their bodies, ethnocide kills them in their minds” (ibid., p. 103).

actively engaged in warfare,¹¹⁴ most of them seem to have been disinclined toward othercidal enterprises.

Distinguishing different types of war does not mean that every war features a clear-cut difference, thus neatly classifiable. Yet it is possible to discern the different orientations of wars—however subtle they may be—by the ways in which people conceive and deal with their enemies. So, while some wars can be conducive to coexistence, some wars can be more averse to it than others. Although Amerindian warfare also had damaging consequences to varying degrees, the Karipuna treated it as part and parcel of their survival. They were known adversities, posed by familiar adversaries. This familiarity allowed them to build a sustainable counter-mechanism in response. The limited data does not allow to verify if the Karipuna needed “the war machine to *motor* [emphasis added] the social machine,” as some scholars argue discussing Amerindian wars (Clastres, 1980/2010; Deleuze & Guattari, 1986), but they certainly had social motivations (e.g., vengeance, security reasons, intertribal relations, etc.) that made war a part of social life. So, if these wars were not only militarily manageable but also socially necessary, and people knew their enemy and could predict their patterns to a certain extent, war and enemy carry a different significance: “War is not a question of killing just any kind of other. The other had to exist as a particular subject for the act of killing to prove productive” (Fausto 2015, p. 5). This carries an important implication for coexistence. If it is inevitable and imperative to engage in war in a particular way for a group's own socio-political objectives, then one *needs* the enemy other to exist; there is little incentive to develop othercidal tendencies (wars of conquest and extermination, or indiscriminate carnage), since what is envisioned is not a total erasure of the other, but a particular form of coexistence. Even if eradication could make its way onto their “wish-list,” it seems it was mostly considered untenable. These familiar Amerindian wars, the Karipuna responded with armed resistance [RES].

In contrast to such intertribal wars waged by the familiar *tapy'ynha*, wars waged by the unfamiliar *tapy'ynha* befell the Kariyuna as othercide. The raids of the enigmatic *tapy'nhahua*, the massacres of the white *tapy'ynha*, and the contemporary war waged on the forest are all unfamiliar

¹¹⁴ Pierre Clastres explained that Amerindians used their “centrifugal apparatus of war” (Viveiros de Castro, 2010b, p. 32) to deliberately sustain “societies against the State,” where the political leader remains devoid of coercive power, and war-warriors submit “to the suicidal pursuit of ever greater glory” (ibid., p. 13). The lack of political coercive power centralized to chieftainship is consistent with the accounts of the Karipuna, but detailed examination of this thesis goes beyond our scope.

wars waged by “strange enemies” (Vilaça, 2010), without a comprehensible logic, motivation, or pattern that the Karipuna were familiar with. They were also distinguishable in their scale and impact, ending up inflicting damage that amounts to genocidal results. Overall, vis-à-vis these othercides, the Karipuna had practically no answer [COP]. They had to either repel or escape from these incomprehensible enemies at all costs, otherwise they would cease to exist. By trying their best to survive the overwhelming, lopsided power, the Karipuna finally managed to repel the *tapy'nhahua* (after considerable damage was inflicted) and painstakingly made peace with some whites, but still continue to grapple with the destroyers of the forest [RES][COP].

6.3. Coexistable enemies

Thinking of war in terms of coexist-ability allows us to view certain wars differently. Amerindian warfare, which the Karipuna treated as an integral part of life and managed to survive without being significantly impacted, was a more or less manageable challenge that they had to *live with*. This is not romanticizing warfare. The Karipuna do not express any penchant for war; wars were mostly defensive and reactive, as they stress, and they preferred to avoid it, if possible. Still, some Karipuna people seem not to have minded engaging in war, if not outright preferred it, especially when revenge was due [RES]. These folks are whom the Karipuna now call “warriors” (*guerreiros*). Like shamans, a Karipuna warrior can have a broad range of meanings, from a specialist in warfare to a lay person who assumes the role of a warrior in wartime. However, a “real warrior,” the former, was a person with incomparable strength, perseverance, discipline, and dedication,¹¹⁵ who always keeps his bows and arrows in arm's reach, even during sleep. The “professionalism” of warriors was such a level that, the Karipuna say, even when they go to wee during the night, they did not forget to carry their arms. During war, a warrior never expresses pain even when arrows pierce him through. These warriors owe their existence to wars. Below is a rare account that focuses on the heroics of an individual in wartime.

[Narrative #6-1] “The Karipuna warrior” (*summarized: full version in Annex)

During a familial hunting trek, called *cuepé*, a Karipuna person spots an Indian (which he identifies as *tapy'ynha*) and kills him with his arrow. He retreats and warns the others that retaliation is underway. Half-suspiciously, the people wait for the enemy, ambushed near their own village. A legendary warrior named Ubucuia, who was hunting alone, hears the news and prepares his arrows for war. Instead of joining the group, he goes in another direction and encounters the enemy who

¹¹⁵ Women also participated in wars, carrying clubs, but only men were considered “real” warriors.

were encircling the village. He engages in a fierce battle, exchanging countless shots. He manages to kill many enemies, but gets severely wounded. Even though he was hit by arrows all over his body, he refused to surrender and fought until the very end. Finally, he falls, and the enemy takes his dead body to eat. The Karipuna people decide to take revenge. They raid the *tapy'ynha's* village and kill many people. Some ran away. They set houses on fire and return.

The account does not provide sufficient detail to determine whether the Karipuna warriors shared the kind of “death-drive” that Clastres describes as the pursuit of permanent glory (1980/2010, p. 302). Instead, it shows a typical pattern of a revenge war and the warrior's role in it. The *cuepé* trip, “far away from the village,” hints that the Karipuna were venturing beyond their usual range: a ripe condition to encounter an enemy. What is unusual is that the Karipuna are the ones who first trigger a revenge war by killing an enemy before suffering any attack. It is also a rare account of them raiding an enemy's village. Still, this was not a planned war, but rather a consequence of an action committed by the first Karipuna killer. Nobody blames him, since it seems that when one spots someone who is not kin nor ally, even relatively far from the village, a common response was to shoot. But the killer immediately realizes what he sparked and hastens to urge the people to retreat and prepare for imminent retribution. A recurrent behavior, and probably a “code of conduct” of war, was to flee as swiftly as possible from the scene after a kill: a form of hit and run.¹¹⁶ Predicting the inevitable counterattack, they at least tried to buy time to brace for it and minimize damage, rather than being immediately tracked and attacked on the way back. The paths the Karipuna used on their return after a raid were not the conventional routes, but rather less exposed ones through dense forests to prevent easy tailing. Quick return, varying evacuation routes, and dislocating/rebuilding a new village in a more remote, safer place were some of the key post-war measures to make war manageable, while avoiding the worst.

6.3.1. Revenge and proportionality

Even though the Karipuna tend to identify themselves as generally pacific and reactive warriors, they shared similar codes of conduct in warfare with many other Tupi groups, particularly regarding vengeance. Most wars started in response to a prior killing. At least in the old days, before the white people started to invade their forest, whenever a Karipuna person was killed by an enemy, they seemed to have responded without exception. A Karipuna's phrase, “We do the

¹¹⁶ This behavior is also reported in Yanomami wars: “When a raiding party strikes, ... as many raiders as possible ... shoot the victim or victims from ambush with their arrows and hastily retreat, hoping to put as much distance as possible between themselves and the enemy before the victim is discovered” (Chagnon, 1988, p. 987).

same as you done to us. We make you cry,” summarizes their vendetta ethic. Whenever a revenge war succeeds, it culminates in a post-war ceremony called *akagwera toryva* (“feast of trophy head” -Kw), which confers honorary status on the warrior returning triumphant by giving them a new name. The warrior performed a dance, *onimbu’yi*, highlighted by the finale of blowing the enemy captive’s skull with a *borduna* (wooden club). While the victorious killer entered seclusion, the rest of the village followed suit with an anthropophagic feast. All this is similar to the war patterns and post-war rituals of other Tupi people. However, one of the differences is that the Karipuna deny any customary capturing (or enslaving) of enemies, not even women or children. What they brought for *toryva* was usually the head of the enemy, and in the very rare case a captive was brought alive, it was for immediate execution.¹¹⁷ Rather, the Karipuna often identify with war victims, recalling multiple cases of becoming captive or being kidnapped.

By engaging in a vendetta war, the Karipuna cultivated enmity in the region. Among the many other ethnic groups with whom they profess to have engaged in war, clashes with the Wari, whom they called “*u’ybahea*” (people with arrows -Kw),¹¹⁸ are confirmed by both sides (Vilaça, 2010, pp. 72, 74, 81, 186): “The OroTarakom are the Karipuna (Tupi-Kawahiv), who, the Wari say, lived near the headwaters of the Jaci-Paraná River. They warred especially with the OroMon and OroWaramXijein on the affluents of the Laje and used to trek through this region” (ibid., p. 72). According to the account below, it was OroNao’s village that the Karipuna raided after suffering an attack from them.

[Narrative #6-2] “Oro Nao people” (*summarized: full version in Annex)

As Borehã, a Karipuna single mother living in the distance from the village people, was collecting crabs in the creek, she was shot dead by the Oro Nao people. The Karipuna villagers, led by Borehã’s son Birega, track the murderers of his mother and kill them. No Oro Nao person escapes. The Karipuna bring a head and throw a *toryba* feast. Birega is happy to have paid back. The people move to another place and rebuild a new village. One day, Abytukga, a Karipuna man, was on his way home from hunting when he saw traces of the Oro Nao. The enemy was already ambushing near the village to attack. As he shouts out to prevent other Karipuna from getting shot, an arrow pierces him, but he is only injured, not dead. The Oro Nao ran away. The Karipuna decide to pay back. This time, not just an assault, but a raid on their village, and “finish” them. Many Karipuna join the raid. They arrive at Oro Nao village, where the people are having a feast. After waiting until dawn, they sneak into their hut. After disarming them, they start a war. Many Oro Nao people

¹¹⁷ They did not keep the captive for a long time, feed him, or let him marry. Nor do they have any memory about any dialogue (Viveiros de Castro, 1992) between the killer and the killed during the *toryva* ceremony.

¹¹⁸ A curious name since the Karipuna also had arrows.

die; some flee to the woods. The Karipuna burn the house and wait until some remnants return, and kill more enemies. They hear the Oro Nao crying for their dead relatives. Birega, one of the raiders, says: “See, you made me cry for my mother, now I’m the one who makes you cry!” On the way back, they use the infrequently used paths so they won’t be tracked. They almost encounter another group of Oro Nao but manage to divert and return home. They throw a feast again. Then ends the war. The enemy doesn’t appear anymore.

As the ending suggests, the account might be describing the Karipuna’s last war (among the many) with the Wari. The most recent intertribal attack, which occurred during the current elders’ lifetime, was also by the Wari, when a Karipuna woman (Katiká’s aunt) narrowly escaped their arrows. The Karipuna kept these misfired arrows and later showed them to the FUNAI agents who visited their village as proof of the Wari’s attack. The Wari were indeed a familiar enemy. Although they did not share the same language—an important marker that draws the boundary between ally and enemy—they had similar behaviors (“when we arrived at their village, they were doing *toryba*,” “they were imitating the sounds of those they killed”). At the same time, even in the briefest moments, the Karipuna did not miss the different details they observed (“They didn’t sleep in hammocks but on the floor,” “They had their doors open”). The familiarity was most notable in the behavioral **pattern** of revenge war: a killing of an individual triggering a raid, a careful retreat, a post-war *toryba* feast, the dislocation of a village, yet another attack, another payback mission, and so on. Each party knows what will happen next, and their predictions are largely accurate, as if there were a tacit “protocol” of jungle warfare. One thing that stands out in this war is that their warriors—even after a successful raid in the enemy’s village, which is already above the level of usual engagement—go an extra mile. They keep ambushing nearby to kill the remnant returners, showing their determination to “finish off” the enemy. This, however, seems different with the intention of a genocidal extermination. Although this war involves a massacre and is carried out more thoroughly than usual, it is clear that the Karipuna are aware of the impossibility of wiping out the Oro Nao. From their hastened return, their carefully picked retreat path, and the sub-episode where they actually spot a group of Wari (probably not the same group) from whom they flee immediately, it is evident that the Karipuna knew that the group they killed was just a fraction of the Wari. What they might have really wanted to finish was warring with the Wari itself, of which they were being increasingly wary. After the first raid, they had already dislocated far enough to rebuild the village and start anew, but the Wari somehow located them again. Fed up with these tenacious enemies, they tried to send a strong enough message to stay away, or at least delay the opponent’s revenge as long as possible [RES]. It proved to be effective,

since, for some reason, the Wari stopped coming. Still, being very much conscious of the Wari's thorny presence, the Karipuna say they tended to avoid venturing too far to the southern “border.”¹¹⁹ Based on the time frame, it is possible to hypothesize that such a response was a rare case, driven by mounting pressure from white people who were increasingly encroaching on the forest and disrupting the geopolitical landscape of Western Rondônia at the time. The usually ample buffer zones between the groups may have shrunk, putting unprecedented spatial pressure on both sides.¹²⁰

6.3.2. Enemies within

As in any society in the world, internal feuds among group members were not uncommon, from fratricides to mariticides, or uxoricides (killing one's husband or wife). Conflicts between kins did not easily escalate into wars, since they occurred between individuals and usually resulted in a group's fission. The account of Birega, following Narrative #6-2, shows the delicate tension between a group and a fissioned group, how people navigate the boundaries, and how potentially incendiary issues do *not* degenerate into war.

[Narrative #6-3] “Birega” (*summarized: full version in Annex)

Birega was living among the Karipuna, but his brother, Urubuga, who lived in a separate group, wanted him back. One summer day, when Birega was in the forest looking for *jatoba* fruits with other people, Urubuga, hiding in a *sacupemba* tree, secretly whispered to Birega, “Hey, your [other] brother is dead. So, I came to take you home. I'll come back tomorrow morning.” Birega pretends to have found a trace of *tapy'ynha* (here, it refers to Oro Nao) and tells the Karipuna people that he will track them tomorrow. The day after, Birega leaves alone early and does not return until dusk. The people become worried and suspect that the *tapy'ynha* killed Birega. They organize a big group and set off to take revenge. They eventually arrive near a village where the traces lead. Ambushed, they hear a familiar language from the villagers talking. They understand what happened. “Let's leave him. They are not *tapy'ynha*. His relatives took him,” said the people of the expedition, who returned without war. Birega lived together with his own relatives and never returned.

When I first heard this account, I did not understand why Urubuga, a Kawahiva-speaking person considered a Karipuna, had to be so stealthy in communicating with his own brother. The Karipuna explained that, as Urubuga left the community to form his own group, there was a possibility of a violent eruption. Although the reason Urubuga left his people is unknown, it was

¹¹⁹ From this, we can deduce that conflicts with Indigenous groups such as Cinta Larga or Tupari, if any—who occupied the areas further south—might have occurred in the more distant past.

¹²⁰ It shows what Ferguson calls “warrification,” which is the general fomenting (intensifying or engendering) effect concerning the European war-contacts with the Amerindians (1990, pp. 238-9).

likely not a pleasant departure. Noteworthy is the case of Birega, the son of a single mother who was expelled from the community according to custom. Instead of staying with his mother, he comes to live with the community, fully integrated to participate in raids. Regardless of his mother's status, the Karipuna brought him up as a legitimate member. There is no detail to identify the exact kin relation of these people, except the fact that Birega and Urubuga are brothers, among other siblings who appear to have died. This death prompts Urubuga to seek out his brother, Birega, and claim him back. The narrative does not tell whether Birega was unhappy in the community, but his quick decision to join his brother indicates a possible preference for consanguinity over affinity. However, trying not to alert his kinsmen, Birega behaves discreetly, using the *tapy'ynha* as an excuse, which immediately triggers a revenge war response of his people. However, the expedition quickly faces a conundrum. The perceived “enemy” turned out not to be a *tapy'ynha*, but a former group member and kin, speaking the same language. So, the Karipuna accept Birega's family reunion and retreat without him or warring [LET].

Although it is possible that there were other underlying issues between Urubuga's fissioned group and the mother group, in this account, it did not change the status of kin into that of an enemy. Although rare, infighting among kins could, in some cases, intensify into warfare. One common expression of the Karipuna's internal feud was assault sorcery. Sorcery was practiced widely, even among non-shaman people. When such an assault was employed, they fabricated specific mockup dolls made of palm leaves and cast malicious spells on specific individuals. On the surface, people acted normally, being kind, laughing, and joking, but behind the scenes, they could secretly plot someone's death. The effect of assault sorcery was such that it could develop a full cycle of revenge feud. When someone died, the cause was often attributed to sorcery, and the family of the deceased felt obliged to retaliate against the suspect. When counter-sorcery was insufficient or ineffective, it could overspill into physical clashes. An extreme case was the hideous feud caused by two Juma men, which the Karipuna consider infighting, since they regarded the Juma as the same Kawahiva.

[Narrative #6-4] “The Juma¹²¹ Saga” (*summarized: full version in Annex)

It was a time when the Karipuna lived together with the Juma people. For some reason, two Juma men cultivated hatred towards all the villagers, including the incumbent chief, Tabijaraga, whom they hated most, and plotted a massacre. As they were outnumbered, they used the forest as a trap

¹²¹ At that time, the Juma group was called Tuvurangã, a subgroup of Kawahiva.

to kill people *incognito* in smaller numbers. For instance, they took advantage when people left the village for a trekking trip called *cuépe*. They ambushed these people and killed them one by one and returned to the village as if nothing had happened. In this way, they murdered many villagers. In a nearby lodge, where the Karipuna used as a basecamp for *cuépe*, they succeeded in killing everybody except one Karipuna woman named Wararo'iaba, who was a *pajé*. She broke Juma's weapon (*borduna*) with her powerful blow. During a brawl, Wararo'iaba injures her chin but manages to escape twice while the two Juma men murder everybody else in the village. They notice the ultimate survivor running away into the forest and chase her. After running in the woods for night and day, sleeping inside Xecumbaba trees and hearing spirits of her dead kinsmen, she manages to arrive in another, distant Karipuna village to seek help. Astonished by the atrocity, the villagers immediately organize a group to track the two Juma, who were following the woman up to a point but retreated. They followed the tracks of these two men to the mouth of the Jaci Paraná River, where they eventually lost them and gave up.

This is likely an exceptional case (perhaps such stories tend to be transmitted more easily due to their exotic nature), but it shows the startling amount of destruction that infighting can cause: a massacre of an entire village. As many other accounts, the trigger or root cause of the mass-killing is not clear but alludes to a deep-rooted hatred. The Karipuna usually attribute the motivation for infighting to hatred: e.g., “A and B just hate (*não gosta*) each other,” “A is angry (*tem raiva*) at B.” But the fact that contempt can grow to the point of destroying a whole community is clearly exceptional. “Exiting” rather than “voicing” (Hirschman, 1972) is a recurrent behavior presented in multiple Karipuna narratives. The Karipuna's genesis story, in which the god Pyreapinga escapes from his people (Narrative #3-2), or the story of Bahira, who keeps escaping from his neighbors' persistent pursuit (Narrative #3-3), shows that they consider “exit” as a legitimate solution to undesirable cohabitation. However, cases such as the Juma saga show that hatred can outweigh the solution of such social distancing: some people are determined to see the enemy's dead body and gloat over it. As for the current Karipuna community, the people seem to prefer “exit” over “voice” in conflictive situations. Although people would occasionally express hostile emotions and intentions in tense situations, they almost never escalated into serious or fatal results, at least so far [COP][LET].¹²² The Karipuna are well aware that they are now living with others in different circumstances, where modern law rules and violence can be punished.

In the narrative, the antagonism clearly pits the Juma against the Karipuna, as the two people who massacred the whole village are the Juma. However, the “good” and “evil” sides are

¹²² However, in a rare violent altercation with another Indigenous group in the early 2000s, individuals of both sides ended up with injuries. An elder also called this incident “war” (*guerra*) [RES].

not depicted in a black-and-white dichotomy. The narrator stresses other factors that exacerbated the infighting. The Karipuna chief Tabijara, who performed sorcery not only against the Juma but also against his own people, is called “stupid,” deserving his bad reputation for his indiscriminate witchcraft, plotting to kill both. The almost comical, satirical tone of the narrator, who teases the Karipuna victims' clumsiness, is also unmissable. The female shaman and heroin Wararo'iaba is the only person who holds a respectable place throughout the narrative, who must have narrated all this from her own point of view, as the only survivor of the massacre. Lastly, the final part, where the other Karipuna group pursues the two Juma killers, shows how the Karipuna recognized the territorial boundaries of other groups and maintained operative contacts with their Kawahiva allies, on whom they could rely in such emergent situations. Yet allyship can be fluid and circumstantial, as the account shows. After separating from the Karipuna, the Juma eventually established themselves with the Uru-Eu-Wau-Wau (since 1998), occupying a small territory and integrated with the larger collective through marriages. Today, there is no lingering animosity between the Karipuna and the Juma, except for some elders expressing a dislike. Although the Karipuna recognize the mercurial nature of allyship, other Kawahiva people are considered kins and allies, not enemies.

6.4. Othercidal enemies

If the familiar *tapy'ynha* (other Indigenous people) were enemies whom the Karipuna could withstand and exist with, the unfamiliar *tapy'ynha* (the whites) were impossible to coexist with, unless a radical adjustment was made. Practically, three options existed: a) **fight** until the end, risking death, and if very lucky, repel the enemy and survive; b) **flight** endlessly, to the most remote pockets of the forest; c) **change** oneself, become one of the enemies. Otherwise, only perishing awaited. Resisting and containing the other while maintaining their modes of existence (which worked in intertribal relations) was no longer an option with this type of enemy. Unlike their familiar foes, these “strange strangers” were equipped with unknown weapons or tools and harbored incomprehensible intentions. The advents of these unfamiliar enemies presented different kinds of ultimatums to the Karipuna, who were underprepared for such new challenges. Before the (white) *tapy'ynha* drove the Karipuna into the most turbulent times, there were already various fleeting mentions about them scattered around in different accounts. Many of these mentions came from the Karipuna shamans, who predicted and advised on how the people should deal with these

strangers. Interestingly, most of them tried to talk the Karipuna *out* of warring [COP]. But the shaman's clairvoyance exerted ever less power vis-à-vis the new brutalities. A radical societal change seemed to be imminent and inevitable.

6.4.1. Tapy'ynhahua: deathly headhunters

Much earlier than the white *tapy'ynha* entered the scene, an enigmatic enemy was terrorizing the Karipuna. They were called the *tapy'ynhahua*, translated as “big (tall) white people” or “big enemy.” The Karipuna suspect they were “Americans or Portuguese”: the same description used for the unidentifiable non-Indigenous people the Karipuna fought against when they migrated westward. However, the Aripã's descriptions about *tapy'ynhahua* give a different impression.

Tapy'ynhahua killed many people. They have arrows. They used to carry knives that cut rubber trees. Machetes. When people have tattooed skin, they don't like. They kill them. They shoot them with arrows, cut their heads off and eat them. Young people. They carry them and take away. They took young women to marry, with *Tapy'ynhahua*'s children. Many Karipuna were taken away. They are definitely Karipuna [and] Tapy'ynhahua [mixture]. ... That was a long time ago.

The use of bows and arrows, headhunting, and anthropophagy do not match Euro-American characteristics.¹²³ However, other accounts (Narrative #6-6, “Tebegahêa”: in Annex) mention that the *tapy'ynhahua* possessed white's arms (shotguns) and tools (metal pans).¹²⁴ In the narrative, the Karipuna and *tapy'ynhahua* seem to understand each other's language, suggesting a common Indigenous origin. If so, one of the candidates can be the Munduruku people, known as the “head cutters” (Henrique & Oliveira, 2021), whose migration took place from the Tapajos river to the Southwest, clashing with the Kawahiva.¹²⁵ Aripã, however, rejected this thesis, pointing out that the Munduruku lack *yuta'arohua*, the elusive “vehicle” (flying object or meteor) that the

¹²³ They used swords, arquebuses, halberds, crossbows, lances, pikes, attack dogs, cannons, and armored cavalry. Rita Piripikura (Aripã's wife) told me that the white ate Indigenous people, but their head hunting as a sustained practice and usage of Indigenous language make it unlikely that the *tapy'ynhahua* were white people.

¹²⁴ The possession of firearm can link the *tapy'ynhahua* to the Portuguese conquerors, but there is no more evidence to back this up. Aripã's account of Tebegahêa (#6-6, Annex) is somewhat confusing, since it shows the *tapy'ynhahua* did not use guns (only bows and arrows) during raids, but also mentions Tebegahêa witnessing *tupangã* (guns -Kw) in the *tapy'ynhahua*'s village, which was one of their artefacts that they feared that others might steal from them. One possible explanation is that it was not an arquebus, a 15th-century heavy matchlock gun usually fired from a support, which they acquired from the Europeans. Since it was not readily usable in raids, it stayed in their village.

¹²⁵ According to Nimuendajú (1924) and Menendez (1981), the Kawahiva's westbound movement resulted from their relationship with other Indigenous groups. “Nimuendajú argues that the different groups that migrated to the Madeira and Machado River would be fragments of the large group *Cabahiba*, mentioned in the Tapajós River region since the end of the 18th century. ... the second migration (early 19th century), is when the Kawahiva were destroyed by the Munduruku, and group fragmentation happened, some migrating to Madeira River (northern) and others to the southern Machado River.” (Bertolin, 2014, p. 36)

tapy'ynhahua used upon arrival, creating a thunderous noise. Regardless of who they were, it is clear that the *tapy'ynhahua* caused existential threats and massive casualties to the Karipuna. If most intertribal warfare is depicted as relatively symmetrical battles (exchanging attacks and defenses), there is a sense of overwhelming power in dealing with the *tapy'ynhahua*, who crushed the Karipuna with superior physicality and weaponry, devastating the group through murder or kidnapping. The Karipuna had next to no familiarity with them (e.g., where they live, how they behave), and many things remain a mystery. They did not dare to execute revenge raids either [COP]. The *tapy'ynhahua*'s indiscriminate aggression (unprovoked, repetitive massacre), specific aversion towards difference (“hated and killed all tattooed people”), and forcible integration of captives (“took kids and girls to marry”) show features that can constitute an othercide. In many aspects, the *tapy'ynhahua* were not the kind of enemy that the Karipuna could afford coexistence, but had to either evade or repel, if they were to survive. Fortunately, the Karipuna finally managed to ward off this formidable foe [RES], which took a legendary effort, although the *tapy'ynhahua* disappearance from the scene probably owed to other issues. One account of the *tapy'ynhahua* worth mentioning is

[Narrative #6-5] “*Tapy'ynhahua*” (*summarized: full version in Annex)

Cotijaraga, a Karipuna man, spots a group of *tapy'ynhahua* approaching during a hunt while his brother, Boretabaga, sleeps inside the *tocaia* (a small Indigenous makeshift hut made of palm leaves -Kw). Cotijaraga flees, abandoning his brother, whom the *tapy'ynhahua* take with them. Years later, Boretabaga returns, but together with the *tapy'ynhahua*. He has become one of them and is searching for his brother, who is hiding on the top of a longhouse. Boretabaga's rage towards his brother and determination to take revenge (apparently for abandoning him) are strong. Although born and raised as a Karipuna, Boretabaga has completely transformed into an enemy. In the end, Boretabaga cannot find Cotijaraga, and the Karipuna finally manage to repel the *tapy'ynhahua*.

This account shows how such forced integration can be effected, resulting in a Karipuna captive's affinity with the *tapy'ynhahua* overriding his consanguinity. It bears a striking similarity to Narrative #3-7 “Cocoria,” evidencing the centrality of revenge (even at a personal level) as a cause of warfare, and the dynamic nature of the ally(kin)-enemy relation, which can bring about such unpredictable forms of warfare. My Karipuna interlocutors explained that such fratricidal behavior was rare but possible.

6.4.2. Avoiding wars, absorbing the *tapy'ynha*

It is difficult to date the exact first time the Karipuna had a direct encounter with the white people. Some sources indicate the period when the Madeira-Mamoré Railway was being built in Rondônia.¹²⁶ The construction project clashed with “native resistance” (M. R. Ferreira, 1981), allegedly including the Karipuna: “Among the ethnic groups most affected by the construction of the Railway are undoubtedly the Karipuna, whose territory was literally cut through by the railway” (Sarde Neto, 2005, p. 88).¹²⁷ Although some researchers assume sharp depopulation of the group began at this time (Meireles, 1984; Sarde Neto, 2018), the current Karipuna collective does not acknowledge any direct experience associated with the Railway. Direct clashes with white people may coincide with the first rubber boom (at the end of the 19th-century) or the second (circa 1940s), when millions of Brazilians migrated from the Northeast, intensifying the white-Indigenous conflict in Western Rondônia (Vilaça, 2010, pp. 116, 127-128). During this period, the *tapy'ynha* are synonymous with the rubber-tappers (*seringueiros*) who settled between the Formoso River, Capivari River, and Mutum Paraná River, overlapping with the Karipuna's stronghold. Numerous incidents of violent contact involving white people started to be observed: raids, attacks, kidnappings, and consequential retributions [RES]. The account below vividly describes a case that shows how the Karipuna dealt with these new enemies.

[Narrative #6-7] “Son of the White” (*summarized: full version in Annex)

On one ordinary day, two white people came to the Karipuna village. The villagers saw “no bad [intention] in them. They arrived with calm voices.” It seems this is not the first time the Karipuna have encountered white men. The two strangers set a camp nearby and visit the village regularly, eventually taking two Karipuna women to the forest and having a sexual relationship with them. This was against their will. “Out of fear, her husband let her go into the forest, with the white. Out of fear that they [white] would do something. They just trusted and believed them, but they were afraid.” However, the husband could not stand it anymore and decided to take action. “I’m going to kill this white man who’s taking my wife to the forest.” However, the then chief Abytukuga dissuades him. “Don’t go after the white man to kill him, no. Let him take her, have sex. If you are going to kill him, it will be very dangerous.” In fact, the girl whom the white took to the forest was Abytukuga’s daughter-in-law, but he still advised against killing the intruders: “it’s better to let them have sex rather than coming and killing us all. Let the girls stay with them ... I assure you that this won’t hurt any more than them massacring us all.” So, the woman continued accompanying

¹²⁶ 1907-1912, during the rubber boom (the initial stage of construction began as early as in 1872). Its objective was to connect the Mamoré and Madeira River to transport latex production to the Atlantic Ocean. In the Mutum Paraná region, Indigenous people maintained permanent contact with railway workers.

¹²⁷ Evidence attests to the occupation by the Karipuna of a vast area with the Capivari River as its eastern limit.

the strangers “because she was afraid that he would do something to her”, but at a certain point, both get sick and tired and refuse to go (one of them realize she got pregnant). The Karipuna fear retaliation. “Look, [they] aren't coming after the girls. I think they are going to kill us. It's strange because they arrived here with calm voices, giving things to us, as if they were good people. That's really strange. And now they don't appear anymore. I think they are going to kill us.”

Until one day, one of the two white men, whom they named Tebiboga, returns, which prompts suspicions: “He didn't bring anything for us, alone? How strange... Did he come to give us some warning? To see if we are still here, to kill us?” Tebiboga did seem to warn them to leave, otherwise they were going to cry and going to die. However, the Karipuna just laughed at him, and nobody took it seriously. Then one night, around dawn, an invasion happens. White men attack the village, shooting and setting fire everywhere. Many Karipuna are shot dead, while others escape into the woods. The whites take two pregnant women as hostages and try to lure the Karipuna to rescue them, but they realize it was a trap and decide to leave. When the escaped people rebuild a new village, the woman (who also managed to escape) who had previously been pregnant by Tebiboga gives birth to a boy named Juribaga, who has blond hair and light-colored eyes. The community embraces the baby: “Okay, leave him, we accept him so that he doesn't die young. The child is not to blame for anything. Let him live with us.” According to Pitanga, it was Juribaga's father who told him that he had a child with the Karipuna, and gave instructions to him to locate the Karipuna group.

This account reveals a significant change in the Karipuna's attitude towards the enemy. Instead of enacting the usual code of conduct of sylvan warfare, there is a more careful attempt to discern friend and foe. The role of the legendary chief Abytukuga (Chapter 1), responsible for the heydays of the Karipuna and credited with increasing the population, is critical. Let us remind that in the war against the Oro Nao, it was Abytukuga who courageously foiled the enemy's attack (despite being hit by an arrow). During his lifetime, he encountered various types of enemies, and his approach was no less varied. Against the Oro Nao, Abytukuga participated in the forceful revenge war; against the white, he chose a strategic, non-confrontational, almost acquiescing path [COP][LET]. It is difficult to imagine him making the same decision, had the Wari or other familiar enemies done the same thing to Karipuna women, as the white men did. In contrast to the image of the fearless warrior portrayed in the war against the Wari, here he stands as a pragmatic, diplomatic leader making calculated choices and showing openness to the Other, which, retrospectively, seems beneficial to their long-term survival. Still, why did the Karipuna not just oust the two strangers instead of letting them take their women?¹²⁸ One Karipuna interlocutor

¹²⁸ Could it be that they had a certain “cosmic template which framed the arrival of a stranger from beyond as a source of magical power and fertility” (Candea & Da Col, 2012, p. S7) which prompted Polynesian women to have sexual relationship with Captain Cook's sailors (Sahlins, 1985)? The Karipuna interlocutors denied any of such cosmological interpretations.

explained that they were afraid of retaliation because the white people possessed guns (Although no living Karipuna had firsthand experience to attest to this incident, his explanation was echoed by another Karipuna when asked the same question.). The element of transactional interest cannot be ignored either. The Amazonian people's interest in gifts offered by white people is well established (Londoño Sulkin, 2013; Vilaça, 2010), and these gifts are not confined to material goods but also include services. The white intruders hunting animals for the Karipuna is a language they understand and appreciate, implying hospitality and good intentions. Yet all these interactions seem possible because the Karipuna were exploring uncharted territories with an unknown type of strangers. They were either trying to follow the advice of their shamans, who warned against warring with them, or giving the benefit of the doubt, waiting to see how things pan out.

Evidence of the Karipuna's remarkable openness or inclusiveness to the Other does not stop there. Even after suffering a devastating attack, they accept the child (whose father is white) into the group. In commenting on this, my storyteller/translator offers her opinion, considering the “enemy's” point of view.

Maybe the white didn't want to do any harm to the Indian girl. At the time, when they invaded the house, they burned everything. I don't think that man meant any harm. It was the others [who did it]. Sometimes, out of ten or twelve people, just three or four are bad. I mean, only three or four are good, and the rest are bad. It could be that Juribaga's father didn't want to burn down the house and kill everybody. He must not be [bad], because he tried to help.

This is a contemporary interpretation of the distant past, but it may be indicative of how the Karipuna actually perceived whites when confronted with them. Contrary to the simplistic distinction of “us” and “enemy,” they seem to consider empirical, processual details (“That man didn't mean any harm”; “He tried to help”) to reach conclusions that are inclusive of others (“The child is not to blame. We accept him”). In the liminal space created between the boundaries, the “son of white,” Juribaga, eventually became fully integrated with the community, even receiving his own *mirangã* spirit, Onimboerebiga [MESH].

The Karipuna's poise and civility, or strategic restraint, in dealing with enemies, stands in stark contrast with the white's merciless massacres. In another account of white people's raid (Narrative #6-8, “The Return”: in Annex) on an old Karipuna village named “Itapamehua,” which I cannot cite here due to limited space, the Karipuna lose their esteemed chief Abytukuga. Although the survivors from the attack manage to reunite and rebuild a new camp, the traumatic incident

still saddens the Karipuna. Yet it represents only one of the many othercidal brutalities waged by unidentified white people, whom the Karipuna now suspect as rubber-tappers.¹²⁹ Another case is Narrative #7-1, “Seu Rui,” where the Karipuna prepare a feast to host some white visitors, only to be attacked by (likely a different group of) whites, who ruthlessly murder their kinswoman and children. This cruelty stands out among other accounts of warfare, where women and children were usually taken hostage, or at least not described as being killed that way. The whites’ overwhelming firepower also caused greater damage and heavier casualties. Besides the lopsided power of arms, the Karipuna mention the effectiveness of torchlights used in nocturnal raids, which provided visibility for the perpetrators while compromising the victim’s vision through flash blindness.

6.5. Conclusion: Resisting othercide

Can warfare be conducive to coexistence? Relatively speaking, my answer is positive. Throughout history, the Karipuna engaged in countless wars, but most were familiar Amerindian warfare, in which the logic of self-defense or revenge for a previous attack organized raids. These wars were deemed perennial and inevitable, yet largely manageable. Rather than posing severe, existential threats to the people, they were a constitutive part and parcel of their existence. Although the Karipuna were mostly responsive, not aggressive or attacking preemptively, in waging wars, they actively participated in the vendetta cycle and incorporated the enemy through anthropophagic rituals. However, probably after the 16th century, when Portuguese explorers exerted pressure on the Indigenous people to displace farther west, the Karipuna began to face various unfamiliar enemies, first the *tapy'ynhahua* and then the white *tapy'ynha*. It may not be a coincidence that among the Karipuna’s many enemies, these two—the former resembling or influenced by the latter—are treated very differently, which I describe as othercidal and un-coexistable. These overwhelming enemies inflicted unparalleled damage, and their technological dimension (adopting different methods and weapons) also contributed to the war’s unprecedented violence. Unlike the *tapy'ynhahua*, whom the Karipuna finally managed to repel, the Karipuna eventually realized that the white *tapy'ynha*’s presence was not an event but an irreversible condition. They

¹²⁹ Massacres on Indigenous people organized by “rubber bosses” were common in the region at that time (Vilça, 2010, pp. 72, 206-7).

had to find a way to turn the uncoexistable into the coexistable, which was finally achieved through bilateral pacification.

If the Karipuna's reaction to these white enemies strikes us as relatively more measured, or even passive, than with their Indigenous enemies, it might be because they either feared the white's military superiority, or were still undecided about what to do with them. Although the Karipuna had heard about the white people and made fleeting observations, they began to have real, face-to-face interactions only relatively recently, probably at the beginning of the mid-20th century. Unsure whether these white strangers were friends or foes, they explored different options in ways that distinguished them from their previous intertribal interactions. This uncertainty quickly turned into tragic and sanguine results, exemplified by the violent clashes and massacres. Yet we can clearly observe evidence of the Karipuna's openness to the Other: curiosity and positive interpretation, combined with inclusiveness. This does not mean they were always open or remained unaggressive or intimidated vis-à-vis the white, but in most cases, the Karipuna operated on the lines of strategic and realistic calculation, preferring reactive or evasive measures rather than engaging in unmeasured offensives. This refutes certain stereotypical images of Indigenous people as bellicose warriors or simplistic agents of resistance.

However, as events unfolded, the white people's hostility and unwillingness to coexist became ever more apparent. It was tragically symbolic that the chief Abytukuga, who represented the Karipuna's pragmatic and diplomatic approach, was killed by the whites during an unprovoked massacre. Although his death was proof that the whites could not be trusted, the Karipuna found themselves running out of options other than to fight or flee. But fighting, as they used to in intertribal warfare, no longer seemed a viable option, as they were being encircled by ever more white invaders from more fronts. In various aspects, the Karipuna realized that the war waged by the white *tapy'ynha* was not intended to maintain a power balance or check an enemy; nor was it a vendetta war familiar to them. Even more incomprehensible and overwhelming than the fearsome *tapy'ynhahua*, some of the white *tapy'ynha* seemed to seek complete devastation or extermination of the other (othercide), i.e., pursuing mono-existence over coexistence. In recent decades, this particularity is expressed in a different form, where some white people waged yet another type of war, this time on the Karipuna's forest itself: invading their land and causing massive destruction, only to grab it or impose monoculture on it. This can also constitute acts of

atrocities and war for the Karipuna, against which they are building resistance until the day. The enemy was always an important element in constituting their sociality, but with the white *tapy'ynha*, a new mode of appropriation had to be reinvented if they were going to resist against being subsumed by the enemy.

III. The openness to the Other

The existence and recognition of the Other are preconditions for coexistence. Considering the Other as constitutive to the Self and maintaining a longstanding social tendency to be open to otherness are conducive to coexistence. This is what anthropological literature of Amerindian “openness to the Other” suggests. The idea was coined by Lévi-Strauss in association with his thesis of Amerindian “unstable dualism” (Lévi-Strauss, 1995, p. 231) or “perpetual disequilibrium” (ibid., p. 239)—in contrast with European “closedness”—in which a “series of bipartitions where one term demands its opposite” (Vilaca, 2016, p. 20) hence the wanting of the Other. Generally understood as the people's structural necessity and willingness to incorporate otherness in constituting sociality, it also means “the regimentation of alterity for the production of identity, assimilating one's enemy as a mode of reproduction,” (Carneiro da Cunha, 2007, p. xii) or “local systems show[ing] a constitutive incompleteness to be filled by whatever is exterior to them: enemies, spirits, gods,” or a “centrifugal tendency”¹³⁰ (Viveiros de Castro 2011, p. 31). Such openness can be expressed in various forms, such as “inter-ethnic welcoming techniques” (Fausto, 2012, S199), strategic (gift) exchange, predatory appropriation, or interest in adopting the other's perspective, among others.

The findings I present throughout the thesis, and in the following chapters in particular, confirm the thesis: the Karipuna demonstrate openness to constitutive exteriority by acknowledging the fundamental desire to be(come)-with the Other, whether human or nonhuman, thereby laying the foundation for coexistence. However, such openness cannot be equated with “complete openness”: a naive, unconditional inclusiveness or hospitality. I find the apparent contrast between Amerindian openness and their equally notable penchant towards resistance (mentioned in Introduction) resonating with the paradox of hospitality postulated by Derrida: “at the heart of hospitality, for Derrida, is the impossible pairing of the necessary ethical requirement of absolute openness to the Other, and the equally necessary exclusionary sovereignty, which simultaneously gives the former its reality and yet negates its aspirations” (Candea & Da Col, 2012, p. 54). Hospitality invariably faces the risk of latent hostility. The impossibility of unconditional hospitality forever haunts its conditional realization, and vice versa. Hence: “the law of hospitality

¹³⁰ “The capture of alterities outside the socius and their subordination to the 'internal' social logic, through the prototypical apparatus of matrimonial indebtedness” (Viveros de Castro, 2011, p. 31).

is founded upon ambivalence” (Pitt-Rivers, 2012, p. 513). Understanding this ambivalence is, for instance, understanding the reality behind the dramatic welcoming of the Karipuna, with open arms, dancing together with the FUNAI agents in their early encounter (Chapter 1), which was but an infinitesimal façade of a long and ambivalent process fraught with violent encounters. The Karipuna had to pay a heavy price (including genocidal consequences) for their hospitality, which was—retrospectively speaking—not conditional enough. Not that they were unaware of the ambivalent nature of strangers, but as they were forced to interact with the unprecedented encroachment of white people in their forest, things went out of control. As we have seen, when dealing with the whites, even the Karipuna's war machine (including the ways in which they incorporated enemies and foreigners as a constitutive part of society, anthropophagy of enemy being one of its manifestations) operated differently. Experiencing numerous massacres by the white invaders, the Karipuna sensed the nearing end of armed resistance. Even their shamans dissuaded them from warring with whites. There is a sense of tragic irony in the so-called process of “pacification,” where the Karipuna had to finally decide to accept the invitation by FUNAI agents to live with white people, as a *guest*, in a place inside their own home-forest. They had little choice but to brace for being plunged into uncharted territories within familiar territory, and compelled to embrace the “unchosen character of inclusive and plural cohabitation” (Butler, 2012, p. 125), hence reinvent life. Thanks to their ability to navigate and cope with such adversities, the Karipuna managed to survive and continue to exist with their forest.

However, settling down in a forest village within their now demarcated land was quickly marred by new waves of encroachment, prompting them to devise new ways to incorporate the others. To mount a concerted effort to protect land, the Karipuna forged alliances with numerous external institutions and agents, while exploring new avenues of reproducing life. In a way, it was a search for a “middle ground,” proposed by White (1991, ix) and adapted to environmental Amazonia, as “a political space, an arena of intercultural communication, exchange, and joint political action” (Conklin and Graham, 1995, p. 696). However, the ground was never “middle” in the sense of being neutral, objective, fair, just, or symmetrical common ground, meeting halfway.¹³¹ It was rather more of an asymmetrical plane, but still situated in a shared world.

¹³¹ Proponents of the middle ground focus more on the “symmetry and synergy in the relationship” (ibid., p. 342) and less on the asymmetry. This is why I prefer the term “shared world,” although I recognize many merits in this approach, such as the idea of “mutual transformation in a shared space” (Conklin, 2020, p. 344).

Grounded in the idea of a shared world rather than radical alterity or incommensurability, the Karipuna created a place-based struggle together with their significant others, marked by their signature openness. Not only is their *luta* inclusive of the various human and nonhuman others coexisting with them in their forest, but also actively co-created with their partners and extended allies. Just as they incorporated otherness through interethnic warfare, now they incorporate, or appropriate, partnership, ideas, discourses, and material/immaterial resources in their social constitution.

In the course of world-making (including the building of their struggle) amid rapidly transforming circumstances, the Karipuna show a distinctive focus on operative dimensions, or practicality. Whether it is an instrument, relation, or social vehicle, what is paramount in the process of incorporation is whether it *works* for their current case in question. I am tempted to associate this propensity with the “pragmatic maxim” defined by Charles Peirce as follows: “Consider the practical effects of the objects of your conception. Then, your conception of those effects is the whole of your conception of the object” (Peirce, 1878). Philosopher Scott Pratt (2002) argues that key North American pragmatists, including Peirce, were influenced by Amerindian onto-epistemological commitments, which he calls “Native pragmatism.” He expounds that pragmatism's roots and central commitments, predicated on social interaction, pluralism, community, and growth (Pratt, 2002, pp. 20-37) are Indigenous to North America, subverting the common explanation of pragmatism as a development on European thought in response to the “American wilderness.” Demonstrating parallels between Indigenous ideas and “central commitments” of classical pragmatism (ibid., p. 12), Pratt lays out the possibility of pragmatism being shaped by Amerindian concerns, and analyzes the native's openness to others through the lens of pragmatism. Their particular hospitality towards the threatening other (European Americans), which impressed observers, is also described as a pragmatic strategy: Indigenous people “did not set out initially to convert or exterminate the Europeans. Rather, they sought coexistence. ... [They] had alternative ways of responding to the encounter with dangerous differences, including a well-developed process of welcoming and coexisting with such diversity. In this case, the strategy of welcoming the cannibal English was chosen as the better response” (ibid., p. 96). What Pratt terms as “the Indigenous attitude,” or “certain attitudes and practices,” enabled “even dangerous outsiders could find a peaceful place in a pluralist community” (ibid.). Like American pragmatism, Amerindian pragmatism does not simply mean that “if it works then

it's true" (Boisvert, 1998, p. 31). But they both view "reality as a normative concept and maintain that reality is what works" (Kaushik et al. 2019, p. 3). If it is possible to distance from the complex baggage of North American pragmatism and its ironically "impractical" dimension (Rand, 1963) and to retrace it to Amerindian pragmatism, even expanding it to Lowland South America, it can open a way to conceive "Indigenous pragmatism," defined as an experience-based mode of analysis centered on empirical and practical effects (the effect of an object defining the concept of it) that are *conducive to coexistence*, with a general distancing from inclinations to impose objective reality on others and instead to pursue "pragmatic truth" (M. W. B. de Almeida, 2021a).

Lastly, while the discussion of Amerindian openness to the Other focuses more on enemies, strangers, spirits, deities, and animal 'masters', certain nonhuman others, such as the everyday animal remains less explicitly analyzed through the lens of openness to the Other. How does the people's openness relate to their will to coexist with the forest and all the beings within? Indigenous thinker Edson Kayapo offers an alternative conceptualization of openness, attributing specific directionality (without teleology) towards nonhuman life-forms. The rationale of his concept of "Indigenous project of involvement" is encapsulated in his pithy slogan: "More involvement, not development."¹³² In contrast to the Westerners who depend on mass destruction of the environment to achieve "development," Indigenous people learned (and chose) to coexist with it.

If development is this, [if] this is all that humanity has been producing in the West: polluting the rivers, destroying the forests, disrespecting Indigenous people and other social groups... If this is development, then it is definitely not the project that we, Indigenous people want. I conceived this idea: the project of Indigenous humanity is the *project of involvement*. It is the involvement between us, human beings, and us human beings with other forms of life, which is the Earth, forests, rivers, animals... human and non-human life. This involvement is really important. It is the involvement that matters, so that we do not run the risk of extinction of any type of life, biome, ecosystem, so that Indigenous groups and languages do not go extinct. For us to stay on track, we need to guarantee respect for life. We have to *move towards involvement, not development* [emphasis added], because development has been extremely harmful to humanity. (Personal communication, Sep 2022)

According to Kayapo's reasoning, Indigenous people view coexisting with nonhuman living beings as indispensable to sustaining life. When Indigenous people say they defend their land, it means defending their coexistence with forest, river, earth, plants, and animals: the

¹³² Note that in Portuguese, the wordplay between "*desenvolvimento*" (development) versus "*envolvimento*" (involvement/engagement)" effectively highlights the contrast of the two notions, whose effect is lost in translation.

foundations of life.¹³³ By emphasizing the centrality of nonhuman life-forms, Kayapo's concept clarifies the limit of Amerindian openness, in other words, the threshold at which openness switches into resistance, and unconditional hospitality to conditional. Yet it is not a simple binary formula: Indigenous people are not indiscriminately open to any involvement, while closed to all developments. It is an opening to specific involvement (coexistence with nonhuman life), and closure to a specific development (entailing mass environmental destruction). Hence, the common structure of contemporary Indigenous struggles, where resistance is posited as an overarching political stance against destructive extractive projects driven by profit-oriented expansionist ideals, while (co)existence is expressed as the purpose of resistance, realizing the concrete projects of involvement in quotidian life, always inclusive of nonhuman living beings. Considering what the Amazonian forest offers—an exceptional degree of diversity allowing abundant possibilities of *interspecies involvement*, an ideal place to foster coexistence— and comparing it with ex-forests converted into pasture and monoculture, the Karipuna's struggle to coexist with the forest appears to be the only logical choice for people who need to secure the maximum possibility of others for social reproduction. Here, one cannot be too open, or open to any other kind, if one wants to remain open to *more* others. “Resisting to (co)exist” means, in other words, resisting certain kinds of others to secure maximum aperture to the myriads of otherness that they need or desire. Had their focus been profit and productivity, the choice would have been very different. At this point, it is incumbent on us to think about what kind of nonhuman otherness the Karipuna need, if openness to the Other is a structural openness of a society whose foundation is marked by relationships to others. I find its richest expression in shamanism. Their shamanism instantiates a spiritual-medical institution that not only mediates people to the spiritual, oneiric domains, but also opens people's horizons to the nonhuman sylvan world where “nothing exists alone.” Besides these roles, shamanic perspectives also served as an onto-epistemological machine for grasping the unknown and the otherworldly, expanding and deepening people's views of the world beyond visible existence, multiplying and enriching their access to the Other.

¹³³ Note that Kayapo's conception specifically indicates “nonhuman nature,” which broadly denotes living organisms and “non-living” (to Western standards) things such as rocks, sand, minerals, and invisible spirits. This understanding, commonly described as animistic thinking (Descola, 2013; Hallowell, 2019; G. Harvey, 2005, 2014) is distinguished from “new materialism” (J. Bennett, 2010) in that it excludes artificially produced things (e.g., machines, devices) in categorizing the nonhuman.

7. Co-creating peace with the enemy ^[COP] ^[RES] ^[MESH] ^[LET]

7.1. Violent making of peace

1976 is a year to remember in the Karipuna's history of encounters. It was when the FUNAI agents, led by Benamour Fontes, initiated “official” contact with the people within the scope of the “pacification and sedentarization” (*pacificação e sedentarização*) project, eventually managing to get the Karipuna to settle in Panorama village. Frequently called “the contact epoch” (*epoca de contacto*) by the Karipuna, this period of risky encounters with the whites became such a defining moment for them that it gives the idea that their history is divided into two periods: before “the Contact” (B.C.) and after it (A.C.). Although this notion serves as a useful entry point for discussing historical events with the Karipuna (who are generally vague about dates), it can be misleading. As the examples in the previous chapter demonstrate, contacts with white people began well before 1976. Therefore, I prefer to term FUNAI's contact the “official contact”—official because government officials made the contact and the result was registered in official records—so as not to create the erroneous idea that the Karipuna lived in isolation before that date, nor to confuse it with other interethnic encounters.

FUNAI's objective of “pacifying and sedentarizing” the Karipuna was part of the broader Brazilian government policy that aimed to integrate Indigenous people and their lands into society and into the Federal patrimony, respectively. On the surface, the vision of pacification appears conducive to coexistence. Given the centuries of history marred by violence and massacres, pacification may be held as a significant step forward, at least in terms of diverging from previous genocidal policies. One could make a case that, had the FUNAI not intervened, the situation of many Indigenous people could have been even worse. The problem is that the assumption of pacification is that the “Indians” are bellicose, dangerous, uncivilized, and nomadic, therefore should be, a) bound to a particular area, b) “tamed” not to harm citizens, and c) integrated and assimilated as (taxable) labor force to economically contribute to the civil(-ized) society—completely ignoring to the incomparably larger violence exerted by the non-Indigenous people's side. However, anthropologists showed that—notably in the influential edition *Pacifying the White* (*Pacificando o Branco*, 2002)—from the native's perspective, the process of pacification could be understood in reverse. The co-editor Alcida Ramos explains that anthropologist Darcy Ribeiro's famous remark, “Indians tame whites” (“*índios amansam brancos*,” as cited in Albert &

Ramos, 2000, pp. 204-6), inspired the book title, which shows that, what took place during the epoch of official contacts was not a process where the Indigenous people were passively pacified by the whites; it was them who were trying to pacify the hostile colonizers. This aspect is aptly articulated by Ailton Krenak.

I believe that these 500 years of contact with the whites, in which our people tried to *pacify* the white, tried to *tame* them, tried to tell the white that it is *possible to live in another way*, [emphasis added] were years of great difficulty, of many deaths. I couldn't count how many Indigenous people were killed in these 500 years. We were approximately 10 million, living here, in this place ... We were ten million when only three canoes arrived with white people inside them. Today we are 220 thousand and the white, 130 million. What can we conclude from a history like this? Was it good for our people? (Krenak, 2015, p. 157)

Viewed in this light, the underlying logic of the Brazilian pacification policy ironically resembles a form of warfare, with othercidal intentions, geared towards mono-existence, not coexistence, to be precise. If we compare these two projects of pacification, it is apparent that one process is far more conducive to coexistence than the other, and the contrast couldn't be starker. For the Indigenous people, pacification is for living together, each in their own way. It is possible to live together *with* differences, as long as each party accepts differences and refrains from the will to dominate. On the contrary, coexistence and difference are not compatible for the non-Indigenous proponents of pacification policies (white colonial “pacifiers”), because coexistence requires eliminating just that: difference, or alterity, of the other. The Indigenous people must be either wiped out or become one of them; not on equal footing, but sufficiently “defanged” so that their alterity no longer poses a threat. Implemented in this way, pacification becomes an entirely new thing,¹³⁴ a new name for a prolonged process of ethnocide, a “slow violence” (Nixon, 2011). Likewise, coexistence or cohabitation becomes just another way of whitewashing the will towards domination and mono-existence. And, as mentioned above, the first step in that direction was to tie the Indigenous other into a reduced “park” (demarcated territory) and neutralize them, under the name of peace and tutelage.

¹³⁴ Vilaça (2010) offers a similar point: “For Amerindians, difference is structural and needs to be maintained, while for us it is conceived as dangerous and tends to be eliminated. This at least partially explains the asymmetric nature of the first encounters between Indians and whites in the Americas: while the former were interested in dialogue, valorizing the invaders precisely because of their difference, the whites strived from the outset to civilize the Indians, trying to transform them into replicas of themselves and extinguish any hint of difference.” (pp. 309-10)

7.2. Towards the end of the wars

From 1910 onwards, and soon after the construction of the Madeira-Mamoré Railway, the SPI (Serviço de Proteção ao Índio), the Indian Protection Service, and the Brazilian government paid attention to the Indigenous people (including the Karipuna) in Rondônia in the wake of the increasing penetration of rubber-extraction fronts. But as the second rubber boom (1941–45) fizzled away, the Karipuna remained largely under the radar. In 1950, an employee from the “Cel. Tibúrcio” Post, then located on the Capivari River, reported subgroups of “Boca Pretas,” “one occupying the region of the Capivari River (this subgroup would be known later as “Capivari”) and the other, the region between the Mutum Paraná River and the Contra creek” (Sa Leão et al. 2005, p. 17), who were “in permanent contact with that post and others who were still 'wild', stealing tools from the rubber tappers established in the Karipuna territory” (ibid., pp. 15-6). One of these subgroups seems to be the current Karipuna group. But after 1950, no further reports about the Karipuna are found in the SPI archives in Porto Velho (ibid., p. 17).

[T]he decline in rubber exploration and the decrease in traffic on the EFMM resulted in less pressure on the Karipuna territory and, given that *these Indians were not aggressive*, [emphasis added] the SPI must have withdrawn from the region, prioritizing, already in the early 1970s, other areas where “reasons of State” required more energetic attitudes to free areas where the Indians were more aggressive towards the advance of new expansion fronts. (ibid.)

In short, there was no urgency for the SPI to pacify the already peaceful Karipuna. It is possible that the Karipuna were navigating through tumultuous times, sporadically interacting with the whites, and already suffering some invasions and violence, but I could not locate any written record of this period. What is clear is that the encroachment of former rubber-tappers and settlers began to rise again, and so did the conflicts with the Karipuna [RES]. Reports of violent incidents began to accumulate, and in 1974, SPI (by then replaced by FUNAI, in 1967) created, on paper, an “Attraction Front” to contact the Karipuna. On the Karipuna's side, they were trying different approaches to relate with the whites, and many of them were non-confrontational, non-violent, or evasive (due to their openness, appropriate fear, or other reasons) [COP][LET], which were their ways of testing pacification. However, the Karipuna had their own limits of tolerance. Certain behaviors were simply unacceptable and could inevitably reactivate the war machine. Unfortunately, it seems that some white people hit just the right button to trigger the revenge war, which was apparently deactivated towards the whites for a while. The incident, recounted in the following account, seemed to have occurred around 1975-76. On paper, it is described as “reports of a kidnapping of

white women, a crime attributed to those Indians” (Sa Leão et al. 2005, p. 17).¹³⁵ But the Karipuna people refute this information and demand that it be rectified. The account shows how potentially peaceful encounters can abruptly change course due to some people's unprovoked violence.

[Narrative #7-1] “Seu Rui”

Now I'm going to tell you how it happened. In the past, whites came to our community. They gave us gifts: hammocks, pots, machetes, mugs, and things like that. And these whites were already tame, right? They lived in the community for a month or so, hunting in the communities. And then, these whites decided to leave. They left, and then came back again, bringing gifts for the community. The same gifts: hammocks, machetes, and they stayed in the community for 2 or 3 days. And then they left. The next month they came again, until one day they left. One day, they left, telling the day they would return. In the past, they used to count moons by finger. If there were 5 fingers, it was 5 moons, 5 moons meant 5 months. As soon as they said that they left. When the day came, for the whites to return, the Karipuna wanted to prepare a party to welcome the white people. To welcome them, and receive the gifts, and give the white people food. Roasted fish, things like that.

There was a little lake nearby the village. Everyone went there to *bater timbó* to kill the fish. Then [in the village] there was only one woman left, who was the mother of the late Tiu. Her kids stayed with his brothers, a toddler, a child who was starting to hook up, and another 7-year-old and another 10-year-old. And a 14-year-old girl stayed with her mother, inside the house. Only her, this Karipuna, the mother of the late Tiu. And the people, everyone went to *bater timbó*. The people went there, to tie up hammocks, make a fire to eat roasted fish with *pamonha*, gathering fish to give as gifts to the white people. It was 7 or 8 o'clock in the morning. She said, “I'm going to stay here for a while, put my daughter to sleep and organize things here. As soon as my daughter wakes up and finishes organizing, I'll come after you.” That's what she told the community. So, Tiu's mother, she stayed at home.

Then people heard gunshots from the village. Pei! Pei! Pei! Pei-peipei-peipei! Lots of shots. The people asked, “Who stayed at home?” They said, “It's so-and-so who stayed at home.” I don't know her name. The people ran and got there. There was only the dead Indian woman, Tiu's mother, with her legs open, and they, the white men, tore her apart. They tore her apart like a cow. And the child, the size of my little baby here, they tied her upside down, and they tore her apart too, tore her apart, and another child, too. And the 14-year-old girl, they grabbed her and messed with her. I don't know if they abused her, if they put a stick in the girl's genitalia. They left her with her legs open. And they left. The white men. They killed the Indian woman and left.

The Karipuna, gave up fishing. There were fish but they ran to that village and found the dead Indian woman. They took their relatives, the mother of the late Tiu, and buried her and so on. Her husband said he was going to pay for this, they wouldn't get away for this. No, they won't. He was going to pay for this. Just like the white man made him cry, for his wife and his children, he was also going to make the whites cry for their daughters and sons. For the same amount, they had killed Karipuna. So, they planned to go kill, revenge, kill the white man. My father went too, who

¹³⁵ This is also stated in the ISA page, which needs correction (ISA, 2005).

was, I think, 12 or 13 years old. They went along the path where the whites came from. They walked and walked, until they got there. They found a house, but it didn't belong to the guy who had killed the Indian woman, I think, it belonged to someone else. They waited on the path, and the white man didn't show up. They heard some whites talking, chatting. But I don't think they were those whites who killed the Indian woman. They stayed there, doing *tocaia*. “*Tocaia*” means waiting, ambushing. One day, 5 or 6 o'clock in the morning, a woman decided to look for a fruit called “*piquiá*,” carrying her child in her arms, one 7 years old, another baby, and a girl of 14 years old, I think, more or less. The one who saw the Karipuna was the 14-year-old girl. She started screaming and when she screamed, people started shooting arrows at her. She fell down, then they shot the children. They killed a 7-year-old child and a girl in the arm. The girl ran away, but one man ran after and caught her. He brought her, tied up, to take her, and make her marry a *parente*. But since she didn't understand Indians, she started biting him. They killed her on the way and left her behind. To this day, the whites and others still say that we “stole” one of Mr. Rui's daughters. No, nobody was stolen. Nobody was kidnapped. She was killed, out of anger, out of revenge. I think the conversation rolls, and I think Rui went to the city, taking the arrow to show FUNAI. FUNAI asked him, “Where did it happen?” The Indians had killed his wife. And that's when FUNAI started looking for us, the Karipuna.

The raid featured in the account is one of the few in which Aripã participated, so although the account was told by his son, we can consider it as a firsthand testimony.¹³⁶ It is another clear piece of evidence that shows that Aripã's group was actively interacting with the whites before the official contact. Most remarkable is the Karipuna's entirely hospitable and faithful attitude towards the other, manifested in their preparation to receive guests. Of course, this is not blind hospitality or unconditional openness, but rather a comportment cultivated through reciprocal relationship-building [MESH]. The Karipuna explicitly say, “these white people were already tame,” which means that they were not behaving aggressively (like others did), therefore could be trusted. However, instead of being reciprocated, their goodwill had to face horrendous and inexplicable hostility: a brutal murder and possible rape of a woman and children. Remember that the Karipuna already suffered multiple massacres (Chapter 6), but instead of engaging in a never-ending revenge war, they retreated farther to the deepest woods to rebuild and start anew [COP]. Yet, it seems there was already no place where white people did not exist. It is evident that the Karipuna still resumed interaction with some whites, even after going through all the pains. They kept distinguishing friends from enemies, once again. Unfortunately, this rational approach was answered by brutality, reconfirming how utterly misleading the idea is that the “savage” Indians need pacification, when in reality, it was the whites who triggered and initiated violence: invading their territory, raiding

¹³⁶ Allegedly the only time they actually captured a female captive for intermarriage purpose, although they killed the girl because she kept biting people.

their village, murdering people, raping or kidnapping family members, destroying, pillaging, and burning their houses and possessions. The Karipuna simply reacted to these aggressions, and not even to every attack. They tried to pay back when they deemed it reasonable, but not in an unmeasured way [RES]. They seem to have followed their usual code of conduct, even trying to match the proportionality of vengeance: “Make the white men cry for their daughters and sons. The same amount they killed Karipuna.” Sometimes, they admit that they have chosen the wrong culprit, as we can surmise in the case of Mr. Rui. Indeed, identifying the aggressors with precision in the forest environment, especially when the enemy looks alike, was not easy. But we should also not lose sight of the Karipuna's efforts to try to avoid further violence and retreat into more remote forests. From their perspective, history seemed to repeat a familiar pattern: they get attacked first, hence the payback and flight. Except this time, it did not repeat. Their revenge, probably the last one, prompted FUNAI to intervene, and the rest is history as we know it. The last war was the first step towards pacification. On the Karipuna's end, it also marked the failure of their project to pacify the white in their own way.

7.3. Entanglement with whites

Now, it has become imperative for FUNAI to respond. Benamour Fontes tried to locate the Karipuna's settlement via aircraft, and in August 1976, his team held a successful first encounter with them. FUNAI's typical method to initiate contact with uncontacted Indigenous people was luring them with useful gifts such as pans, pots, and knives. This tactic was a kind of trap-setting through entanglement, in the sense that it entrap people in long-term relations of socio-material investment, care, and maintenance (Hodder, 2012, p. 67). When Fontes's expedition threw gifts from the airplane or hung them on lines near the Karipuna's village—to express their benign intention, that the objects were intentionally given, not accidentally left behind—, and the moment when the Karipuna picked them up, an entanglement between the two different peoples emerged. It marked a moment when the Brazilian state assumed permanent responsibility towards the Karipuna, and the Karipuna entered a long-lasting dependency on the State. Regarding the relation with the new material goods, the Karipuna saw no way back from then on.

After that date, the FUNAI expedition visited their village multiple times, one of which was accompanied by a Japanese film crew that produced a short documentary that vividly shows the Karipuna's well-maintained costumes and the layout of the village. The people's hospitality

and openness towards strangers are also evident. Even though it was probably just the third encounter with the FUNAI agents, the people greeted the visitors with open arms, inviting them to dance together [MESH]. Through these direct encounters and more gifts, FUNAI established a working contact (pacification). Now was the time to establish a base to attract people and tie them to a specific location (sedentarization).

The location chosen for the base was the settlement called “Panorama”, owned by rubber tapper Sebastião Amora, located on the left bank of that river, about four hours by speedboat above the mouth of Fortaleza creek. It was in this location that the first group of Karipuna, established on the Contra Creek, appeared to receive gifts in September 1976. (Meireles, 1984, p. 109)

FUNAI purchased the settlement area and renamed it the “Panorama Post.” However, the increase in contacts resulted in an epidemiological tragedy. During the visits, the Karipuna contracted the flu virus introduced by non-Indigenous visitors. Many fell ill, and more than ten people died within a few years. They suspected the Japanese crew, who were coughing, transmitted the disease, but did not take it as a ground to accuse someone specifically, nor refuse interaction with the FUNAI team. After the installation of the Panorama Post, the Karipuna were persuaded to visit the place frequently. Some answered by visiting regularly, or even staying for a prolonged period [MESH]. However, interacting and partially cohabiting with white folks turned out to be more problematic than the Karipuna imagined, and in some cases, even fatal. In the post, it became a routine to receive or take food. After consuming untreated bitter manioc, many Karipuna fell seriously ill. The same thing happened after being served with cooked beans (*feijão*). Some people were taken to city hospitals, but many died. After the losses, the remaining Karipuna “escaped”—as they express—from the post and disappeared into the forest. They traveled until the Mutum Paraná River area seeking refuge, and stayed there to avoid further interaction [RES]. Some died during this long trip, and some upon arriving in their village.¹³⁷

The Jaci Paraná Attraction Post sent some Indians to Porto Velho for medical treatment (reports indicate at least three of them). All of them died, either in Porto Velho or in the village after their return. In a report dated July 1978, Francisco de Assis (now acting as Benamour Fontes’ replacement) reported that on June 12 he received a visit from the Indian Abaigai-ubá (from Mutum Paraná, apparently), who reported to the interpreter Pitanga six deaths in his maloca (five due to “accidents”), and that one of them was that of an Indian (named “Karipuna”) who had been treated in Porto Velho. (Sa Leão et al. 2005, p. 19)

¹³⁷ Reportedly, this camp was inhabited by fifteen Indians and seven “recent” graves were found there (Da Silva, 2013, p. 54).

The five deaths in their *maloca* due to unspecified “accidents” may indicate the manioc or *feijão* incident. The continuous deaths of the Karipuna during or after their trips to the city created an image of the city as a place of death, which might have fueled more anxiety among them about whether they can trust these strangers anymore. Yet, some eventually returned. By 1982, “the majority of the Karipuna were already living in the vicinity of the post. Only one family from the Mutum Paraná group remained ‘in the forest’” (Sa Leão et al. 2005, p. 20).¹³⁸ In the same report by the chief of post, Francisco de Assis, it mentions that a Karipuna named

Abaigai-ubá also announced that on the next “moon” he would bring “all his people” to the conclusion that “the news of this mass visit to the Attraction Post made us overjoyed, because it proves that, even with the deaths, they do not show resentment towards us” (Sa Leão et al. 2005, p. 19).

“Abaigai-ubá” may refer to Abagaju, the Karipuna man who became Katiká's husband. In any case, the “overjoy” of Francisco de Assis was based on a simplistic assessment. The Karipuna may not have shown resentment at the moment, but such silence is deceptive, as they often refrain from expressing themselves. The Karipuna clearly remember that some whites offered food that was proven to be poisoned. “It's strange that later when I ate beans, they tasted delicious, but at that time they tasted very bitter,” Aripã recalled, suspecting a certain person “who did not like them” offered the food with bad intentions. Another Karipuna accused the FUNAI agents of being “irresponsible” for their absence and for not overseeing the entire incident. But then, what made them announce their return to the post? It is likely that they did not blame their losses entirely on FUNAI, or the situation became so dire that there were simply too few options left [COP]. The positive mood of FUNAI personnel was further tarnished. Two or three years fast forward, and the entire Karipuna group was reduced to eight people (Mindlin & Leonel, 1983, p. 70).

7.4. Accepting cohabitation

The process leading to the Karipuna's settling in Panorama from the Karipuna's standpoint is documented in *The Karipuna saga: an oral narrative of personal experience* (Da Silva, 2013) based on the account of Aripã. As Aripã and Katiká lived in the same villages and moved together, the siblings' accounts of this period largely overlap. But if Aripã focuses more on chronological

¹³⁸ Before the group established in Panorama, “the Karipuna lived in two large huts, one on the Contra stream and another on the Mutum Paraná river, but only the latter was visited by FUNAI employees, by Benamour Fontes in 1977, and by Francisco de Assis in 1978” (Sa Leão et al., 2005, p. 17). However, the Karipuna elders say the group from Mutum Paraná area was never visited by Fontes.

progress, Katiká's perspective, as elaborated in the account below, also offers invaluable insight into the psychological and emotional dimensions.

[Narrative #7-2] "Pitanga and white people"¹³⁹

When I saw Pitanga, we said, "There is a person who speaks our language among us. He is a good person. Don't attack," the chief ordered. If there wasn't someone who spoke our language, he would have already attacked, but since there was, we were scared at first but quickly lost fear. We were not prepared when they first made contact. It was noon. They brought a lot of things, clothes, pots, knives. Pitanga arrived. It was summer, a long time later, collecting chestnuts. My grandfather saw the white man's footprints... They brought a lot of game for us. Funny thing is that they also brought monkeys, which in our culture don't eat. Pitanga said, "I'll come back more or less on such and such a day." We went a week without eating anything, because he promised to bring food. He did bring the food, but it took him a while to get there. Because it was very far away, it took him time to get there. Then, for the third time, Pitanga came and said: "You have to go to the bank of the big river, you have to take the straight path, there are lots of gifts there, pots, knives." We went there and got them. After that, we spread out. Since we already had a lot of things, we didn't need him anymore. We went further away. We had to build a new village, because even though Pitanga spoke our language, we didn't trust him. Because we suffered a lot of attacks. That's why we went further away. The place where Pitanga made contact wasn't safe anymore. So, we went further away without leaving a trace, all hidden in the forest. A lot of time passed, and we made another village, gardens, cassava, potatoes, papaya. We planted everything again.

After we built a new village and a lot of time passed, I think three years, my uncle said, "I'm going to fish on the bank of the river where Pitanga lives," which is over here, in Panorama village. Kaipú also went with him. They walked three days and nights to get here, and they found Pitanga. Pitanga was living there. Pitanga spoke to the white men, "Two Karipuna men have arrived." He introduced his chief and translated for the Karipuna, "He is my chief." "Why didn't you go to our village?" [they asked]. Pitanga said, "My chief didn't authorize it. Only that one time." Pitanga asked, "Do you people still live there in the same place?" Two Karipuna said, "No, we went much further." Pitanga said, "I'll go to your village with my team. No problem. It can be five nights, ten nights. Because that's my job."

Tomorrow, very early, they left, all together, at 5 in the morning. And until 7 at night, walking all day. Kaipú said, "You guys sleep, I'll keep walking." [interruption because of battery change of recorder] After two and a half days, almost arriving there, they killed a lot of game, unnecessarily. Upon arriving at the village, Pitanga shouted in the middle of the forest, "I'm bringing him." The Karipuna heard this. "Boy, he's coming back, but very heavy, bringing a lot of game." The people thought that the white had killed our relatives and were already preparing to fight. But it wasn't like that at all. Pitanga and the white men killed monkeys unnecessarily. Our people don't eat monkeys. We greeted them. Everyone came out of their houses and welcomed Tiu,

¹³⁹ This account of Katiká was recorded in Panorama village (August 2022), translated by Adriano.

who was the chief and a white man, and Pitanga. Pitanga left the game on the ground. It was neither cooked nor raw. Monkeys too.

Now I understand what Pitanga was doing. He was counting our people one by one, making the gesture with his finger. Then he asked, "How many people died?" We told each of their names. Jaripuna... each of the dead people. Pitanga translated this for the white man, Assiss. He asked, "What was he like? Fat, thin, tall?" I joined in the conversation too, "My daddy is no more, only my mommy. My uncle is dead." Then Pitanga said, "Everyone is dying here. Let's leave here. My boss is coming to get you." When he said that, the whole community felt sad. Pitanga passed on the message from his boss, "The white man is going to pick up everybody." Hearing that, everyone became sad. I was sad too. The concern was not only about the place, but because having to leave everything behind. Our gifts, cotton, all the plantation. We had to leave everything behind. Pitanga said, "You have to leave with us, otherwise everybody is going to die." "Well then, let's go." My mom, uncle, grandfather, great-grandfather, boyfriend... I was still young, and I liked him a lot. We obeyed Pitanga's word. We brought nothing, just the essentials, water and fire. We all came here, to this village we live in today [Panorama village]. Adriano's father [came] too, but I wasn't married to him yet. The little Batiti, too. There was a white man, Assiss. Pitanga said, "I have another message for you. Assiss is saying that you shouldn't go back, it's too dangerous."

We slept one night. They ate monkey, we ate curassow. We walked for a day and a half and arrived [in Panorama]. There were many white people to greet us. It was very strange to be among the white people. At that time, there were no telephones. There was only a radio. The great chief arrived by boat, quickly. At that time, it was Benamour, who was the chief of the forest, and another chief was in the city, Apoena Meireles. Apoena, the great chief, is a very good person. He takes care [of us]. [During] the 3 years, 20 people had died. Apoena and Benamour held a meeting and told Pitanga to translate, "They say not to return [to your old village], it's too dangerous." The one who held us back was Pitanga, because he was the only one who spoke [our language]. The next day, the chief went to the city and bought a lot of food, a lot. Many boats arrived and brought clothes, biscuits, pots, hammocks to sleep in, and even fishing lines. We didn't know how to use them. We only fished with arrows.

My boyfriend couldn't take it anymore. He ran away at night alone. He only took a lighter. When people found out, Pitanga suffered pressure. His chief said, "Where is he? You are responsible!" He went far away, heading for the old village. They searched him in vain. He was already gone. He was a warrior and wasn't afraid. My uncle said, "Calm down. We'll look for him later. Be careful because he has a lot of arrows. He is a warrior and will kill us and will not recognize [us] because he doesn't want to be among the whites." ... The next day, Pitanga went after him. He only saw the trail but couldn't find him. He walked for another hour and found him. Pitanga told him, "Why did you leave? You must return. You are alone, without any kin. You must go back." He said, "I don't want to." He was not used to eating cooked beans. That's why he left. In the end, he listened. So, he stayed here. ... People started to get sick. The first time, when we went to the city with Abagaju. We were not together yet. My grandfather went with a nurse, and he didn't come back with life. My uncle, too. My aunt too. My father-in-law died, my mom died, my stepfather died, my uncle died, and my sister died. Seventeen people died in one month. People kept dying, dying in the city. Me, Aripã, Kaipú, little Batiti, my daughter, and I lived. Only five were left. I

don't want to say much. It makes me very sad. Here, where I'm talking, there are many buried bodies.

Throughout the relationship-building process, the crucial role of the Kawahiva-speaking Indigenous interpreter Pitanga cannot be overstated. The reason the Karipuna did not attack the FUNAI people hinges on his presence, or more precisely, on his language. He spoke perfectly because he was a Kawahiva descendant and a former member of a group called “Urubu,” a.k.a. “Capivari.” If Pitanga did not stand at the forefront of the FUNAI expedition, speaking directly to the Karipuna, violence was likely to ensue. The Karipuna explicitly say that they were prepared to shoot whenever it was deemed necessary, but refrained because of Pitanga's language. They wondered in amazement, “How is it that he speaks our language?” They later understood that Pitanga was working on behalf of his white “chief,” Benamour Fontes, as an intermediary of the Other. In fact, Pitanga was the missing piece of the puzzle that the Karipuna tried to fix countless times in their previous failed attempts to interact with the whites. So far, every interaction has depended entirely on speculation and conjecture (if not on the shaman's advice and prophecy), and, as the results show, misunderstandings have proliferated. So, it is understandable that the Karipuna were impressed and relieved by the presence of an interpreter. Finally, the conditions were met to build a better, more functional relationship based on mutual understanding. However, what strikes me as less comprehensible is the speed and degree with which dependency was created. Consider the comment that the Karipuna “went a week without eating anything, because he [Pitanga] promised to bring food.” How is it possible that an autonomous group relies on their most basic needs that heavily on a verbal promise by an outsider whom they have only met a few (two or three) times? At least in this context, waiting a week for Pitanga's gifts without procuring food seems to be the *only* plan, not a contingency plan. They were putting total trust, entirely relying on their counterpart to keep their word. Even if Pitanga was considered kin, shared the same language and had gained considerable trust, he was still an outsider, clearly siding with potentially risky whites. Co-creating essential conditions of everyday life on the premise of a stranger's promised input is a quintessential example of “societies whose foundation (or lack thereof) is the relationship to others” (Viveiros de Castro, 2011, p. 17). If we remind all the Karipuna's relatively recent tragic experiences with the whites, their ability to re-trust and open up again to the other [MESH] does not cease to impress.

At the same time, there was a catch. While the Karipuna readily took the gifts and food offered by the FUNAI agents, “[a]fter that, we spread out. Since we already had a lot of things, we didn't need him anymore. ... because even though Pitanga spoke our language, we didn't trust him.” So, my interpretation that the Karipuna put complete trust in Pitanga should be further nuanced. Genuine trust and distrust *coexisted* in their approach. This fact, that heavy dependency could exist in parallel with strong suspicion, offers a snapshot of the complex and ambivalent nature of the Karipuna's pacification process, whereby they finally agreed to dislocate and integrate. When Pitanga urges the group to join him, which he presents as the only alternative to avoid collective death, the Karipuna express profound sadness and vulnerability, as if they are accepting the fate of joining the whites as an unfortunate destiny [COP]. In this reaction, we can sense anything but resistance, which is a notable shift in tone from the resoluteness just prior to that, when they were “preparing to ... fight with the white people, whom they thought to have killed Karipuna men.” We must remember that, for the survivors, this was a stage of life when so many aspects of their lives were beginning to crumble, and many lifetime decisions had to be made amid so much confusion. It is highly likely that they were in a prolonged state of shock, grief, and despair, witnessing massive numbers of family members and relatives passing away in a span of months. This could have demoralized¹⁴⁰ them, conditioning them to develop dependency on external aids relatively quickly. However, the Karipuna's decisions and moves should not be reduced to fatalism. Doing so will ignore all the previous and in-between acts of defiance and resistance that may not be fully apparent in Katiká's account, except for the briefly mentioned incident involving her then “boyfriend,” Ari, who tried to escape [RES]. The undertaking of establishing themselves in the Panorama post (now “Panorama village”) was far from a one-off incident, but a messy process of countless back-and-forths. No doubt it involved countless internal discussions, as well as discord among members over whether they should join the whites. Sarde Neto (2018) reports a behind-the-scenes tension among different groups:

The Indians who came into contact with Benamour's team, impressed by the gifts left along the trails, moved away from the others to join in; they are the ones who are in permanent contact with the surrounding society. The elders say that at the time of their contact with the attraction team, they were *threatened by the leaders of the other Karipuna villages* [emphasis added] who said that

¹⁴⁰ Consider the demise of the Inca, when epidemic was accompanied by psychological collapse (Crosby, 1997).

there would be no turning back and that they would be killed if they came into contact with the FUNAI members and returned. (p. 113)

If this information is correct, we can say that the current survivors managed to survive precisely because they chose the path of coexistence with the whites rather than the path of resistance. Whereas the other group, who presumably resisted until the end (even threatening other Karipuna for mingling with the whites) [RES], may have either ended up in collective demise or formed a group of “*isolados*” (uncontacted Indigenous people), allegedly still inhabiting the southern forests of the Karipuna IL. My Karipuna interlocutor said I could say that “the more aggressive Karipuna are all dead and the tamer ones survived.” Nonetheless, concluding that the resisters did not survive, while the survivors did not resist, might be too simplistic. Not only because my Karipuna interlocutors could not provide more information about the other group(s) (in addition to the unclear status of the *isolados*: Chapter 8), but also because each group had to walk a tightrope between resistance and coping for survival.

7.4.1. The Wild Wild West

When the last group of the Karipuna survivors established itself in the post for good, around 1980-81, there were only five adults (Katiká, Aripã, Abagaju, Kaipú, Tiu) and three children (Batiti, Angelica, Tuberinha). Inhabitants of the post were the FUNAI agents, including the chief of post, Assis Gubejarim, and others whom he brought together: some Indigenous people who settled down after participating in the pacification project (Pitanga Capivari, “Bira” Tupinambá, individuals from the Gavião, Cassupá, Suruí group, and a family of Karitiana) and a few non-Indigenous residents from the nearby town of Jaci. It is not clear why FUNAI had to create an environment of such a mixture, but the Karipuna were thrown in the middle of this motley group of people whom they had no choice but to live with. Whatever the intention, FUNAI's experiment of this “laboratory” of intercultural mixture did not go smoothly. Having visited the post for some time and having brief experiences of residing there, the Karipuna were not unfamiliar with some of the co-residents. But day-to-day living in proximity was a totally different matter. This period of time is rarely described in a positive note. Although the post provided basic sustenance, material goods, and security against white invaders, the FUNAI people or other ex-residents of Jaci proved not to be easy neighbors. Even inside their new “home,” physical integrity was not guaranteed [COP]. Time and again, certain white residents would threaten the Karipuna with their 38-caliber shotguns. They would shoot into the air instead of aiming at people, probably to give a warning, but such

actions intimidated the Karipuna. Even now, the Karipuna do not understand the motives behind those intimidations, but they guess it could have been their behavior of taking things (e.g., metal pans) without asking permission, which they explain as a habit cultivated during contacts with FUNAI, when goods were always given for free.

Yet this was only one side of the cohabitation problem. Living with the Indigenous people from other groups turned out to be as challenging as living with the whites. Some of them behaved even more aggressively towards the Karipuna [COP]. One Karitiana person used to “run after us to cut, I mean, to kill. I think [it's] because he didn't understand us,” but “nobody knows why they were so angry [at us],” said Aripã. For instance, one day, a Karitiana woman was giving birth to a baby, and she was screaming because of labor pains. But her husband, who was in the garden, came running and tried to kill Aripã, “without knowing, thinking that Aripã was going to kill her.” Aripã ran to his house, grabbed his bow and arrow, and chased the aggressor. Then, the Karitiana man ran to his own house, grabbed a shotgun, and started blasting. Fortunately, the fight did not end with casualties, but this individual seems to have developed vicious feuds with the Karipuna. Aripã said that Kaipú was the main target, while others were disturbed as well. When Abagajú made a *tocaia* to hunt, the Karitiana man would find it and destroy it; when Karipuna men were trying to build a traditional house (*oca*), he would ruin their work by cutting out the palm leaves. Although the Karipuna were annoyed and angry, they tried to avoid confrontation since the man possessed a revolver. Besides, the fact that he was not the only Karitiana but a member of a family of about ten people, occupying an area just across the creek close to the post, made it tricky to take revenge. Skirmishes did not happen exclusively with the Karitiana. A Cassupá man threw hot cooking oil (being used to fry fish) onto a Karipuna person's leg. Even Pitanga, a kinsman who speaks the same language, started to have issues and express hostility. If one wonders what FUNAI was doing amidst all this mess, that was precisely what the Karipuna were asking themselves too. Many times, FUNAI was simply absent. After creating such risky circumstances, most of the agents moved to Porto Velho, leaving a management vacuum behind. This is another reason the Karipuna criticize FUNAI for being irresponsible during that period.

The lack of reliability and the undesirable (almost forced) relationship were two of the many reasons the Karipuna did not want to live in the post in the first place, and why they had “escaped.” Yet, when they came back to the Panorama village, they stayed for good. It is

noteworthy that, after all that happened, the Karipuna not only remained [COP] but also refrained from further violent escalation [LET]. Would it be the factor of intimidation, as they explain, or does it reflect their commitment to a new form of life? What is certain is that there was no going back (as history shows). However, as much as they were invested in this brand-new chapter, they could not help but relapse into their old ways of life, simultaneously. One of the things they tried to do to stabilize the tumultuous situation in their favor was what they used to do in infighting: rely on assault sorcery. Some of the Karipuna were “a little bit shaman,” being aware of certain shamanic techniques to cast spells on enemies. The problem was that to successfully implement a sorcery on one's enemy, it required the person's bodily substance: his/her hair. In the old days, the Karipuna would snatch one's hair while the person was cutting hair, sleeping, or otherwise distracted (which reminds one of movie scenes where people try to secretly obtain someone's hair for DNA testing). It strikes me as similar to the shamanic dream technique *omongó* (Chapter 9), in which the *pajé* stealthily cuts out hair from a potential prey while dancing with the animal, to mark the future victim and facilitate its hunting in real life. When I asked, “Wasn't it possible to get the hair while pretending to make jokes or play around with the person, just like in the *omongó* dance?” the Karipuna's answer was that these people were “too wild (*bravo*) to do those things.” In short, they were not even worthy of such “civilized” shamanic interaction! Neither Aripã nor Kaipú elaborated further on whether they managed to secure the enemy's substance or what they did thereafter. They were either dodging my question or forgetting. Instead, Aripã simply said that the person in question soon fell ill, all by himself, and then died. “There you go,” that was all Aripã said, implying a possible effect of the spells. On this note, Aripã's son Batiti offered a Karipuna proverb for contextualization: “*Opyra eroi e'yba hea omano*” (The one who is too wild, dies. -Kw). Apparently, in some “wild” cases, pacification could only be achieved through death.

7.4.2. Between pacified and pacifying

After the most problematic individual passed away, another family member of his fell ill and died. As the Karitiana family decided to move out, other Indigenous people, including Pitanga, left the Panorama village one by one. The white people also left. Finally, the tiny Karipuna group became the majority, for the first time in their own village, and a handful of remaining Indigenous people were peaceful cohabitants. There were also some friendly *ribeirinhos*, who lived along the banks of the Jaci Paraná River and helped the Karipuna when their boat needed urgent repairs. Some of these *ribeirinhos* visited the Panorama village regularly, and later even became members of the

community. There were no longer latent wars, such as sorcery, either. Things were starting to stabilize, and the pacifying mission was about to be accomplished. This was when some FUNAI officials made a decision that, viewed retrospectively, seems controversial (Chapter 4). To carry out their next mission in the region, which was to pacify the Karipuna's neighboring group, the same Kawahiva-speaking Uru-Eu-Wau-Wau people, FUNAI recruited three Karipuna men (Aripã, Kaipú, Tiu) and took them far away to the Uru-Eu-Wau-Wau Indigenous Land, approximately 500 km from the Karipuna forest. The three men helped the FUNAI's team to approach the then “uncontacted” Uru-Eu-Wau-Wau people, as they spoke the same language. Just a few years after being “pacified,” the Karipuna were officially “pacifying” others. Aripã recounted this experience with some pride, recalling his brave and crucial role in highly tense, high-risk situations. He also says the decision to leave the Karipuna land and join the whites' expedition was mutually agreed upon, not forced upon him, and that he was paid by the agency for his service. In short, it was deemed a “business trip” that lasted years. The three Karipuna men were all single in their twenties, with no one in their community to marry (the only surviving adult woman was Aripã's sister Katiká, who married Abagajú), so they were seeking spouses. After a core part of the tiny Karipuna community left, only two adults and three children remained—practically a single household. Maybe the Karipuna felt physically safer than before, but it was only the beginning of a less visible, indirect, and prolonged process of violence that was about to unfold in the era they call the “tutelage” (*tutela*) of FUNAI. The Karipuna are reticent about this period, complicating the obtainment of details, but among their scant reports, they express clear preferences for specific FUNAI agents who were respectful, and antipathy against the abusive and violent ones. The Karipuna allege that the latter group hated and intimidated them in the same way as they experienced with the previously mentioned co-residents [COP]. The most remarkable pressure of FUNAI in this period, which could be described as “ethnocidal” (Clastres, 1980/2010), was the suppression of language. In the 90s, some teachers, allegedly hired by FUNAI, were in charge of teaching the Karipuna adolescents. In the only school (consisting of a single class) in the village, whenever the Karipuna students spoke in their mother tongue, the teachers would scold them, “Talk correctly! (*Fala direitinho*)” “Don't talk in a language I don't understand!” “Are you insulting me?” Thus, speaking Kawahiva language was punished. During multiple interviews, people said that such scoldings instilled shame for their own language and culture.

Another form of ethnocide was the work discipline FUNAI had introduced. Organized by the chief of post, the Karipuna had to adjust to a tightly scheduled routine, from morning to afternoon, mainly working in the garden and doing other subsistence activities [COP]. Unlike their autonomous, personal lifestyle, where each person decides what to do according to their own rhythm, they were assigned to collective labor focused on efficient production. Activities were announced by ringing a bell, which marked working time, breaks, and lunch. Some people were assigned to hunt or fish, and women had to cook. In that way, they produced a decent amount of cassava root flour (*farinha*), corn, banana, and rubber, among other products, so that they could sell the surplus in the towns and cities after their own consumption. All these work disciplines were external pressure vowing to turn the Karipuna into what they weren't: labor force. Evidently, as soon as FUNAI withdrew, everybody resumed their own ways of organizing subsistence. During this era, the Karipuna say they were treated like children, which was the very assumption of FUNAI's paternalistic, protectionist approach. However, the acquisition of work discipline is not viewed entirely negatively. In part, they recognize that it helped them to learn how to earn money, which was crucial for adapting to changed circumstances. With the money they earned, FUNAI bought manufactured goods, including shotguns. Aripã still remembers exactly who bought him his first shotgun and how he earned it, which he already knew how to use yet never possessed. Other adult men also obtained their own arms in the same way. Now, the Karipuna did not need to be intimidated by firearms. It was a form of empowerment, putting them in a better (and different) position to make or sustain peace. Not that they were intending to use it for any kind of offense; it would serve as what we can call an “armed neutrality,” i.e., maintaining a strong, defensive armed force to defend neutrality to protect one's sovereignty and deter potential aggression [RES]. Possessing this weapon was part of their understanding that peace is never given but only earned by exerting their own toil.

7.5. Conclusion: Co-creation of peace

The Karipuna's settling in the Panorama Post and the uneasy, intensive cohabitation with others were a complex process involving multiple key decisions: accepting gifts from these strangers, allowing interaction with the whites rather than fending them off, and sustaining the relationship. In the first tense face-to-face encounter with the FUNAI expedition, where things could easily have gone either way, there was a real chance that the Karipuna attacked the agents were it not for

the Indigenous interpreter's presence. Even if they had chosen a hostile approach, that would have had nothing to do with any aggressive disposition against the whites. By then, the Karipuna have already accumulated considerable information about them. From a series of unsolicited encounters, followed by a number of devastating massacres, costly lessons about the whites were learned. Yet despite all their experiences, they made a series of life-changing decisions that ultimately paved the way for a settlement and cohabitation with the whites in the current village. Some decisions were deeply painful, as expressed in their concerns and sorrows in the accounts. But neither were all of them forced, nor necessarily the worst option. Before the cohabitation in Panorama village started, some Karipuna people were already fairly familiar with the place and its inhabitants. It is likely that moving into that setting was envisioned as an acceptable alternative, since it was an area where they knew how to operate. Had the destination been a more unfamiliar place (e.g., urban environment) or the dislocation been forced in a coercive manner, it is likely that the Karipuna would have resisted settling down for an extended period.

It might be clear by now that pacification was a two-way process. However, the process was inherently asymmetrical in its power dynamics. Even if FUNAI's pacification policy was not outwardly violent, it was, in and of itself, undeniably risky and structurally violent, leaving irreversible ramifications. To today's standards, it was also poorly planned and executed, to say the least. One of the most critical conditions that led to the Karipuna's decision to give up resistance was the deadly epidemics and food-related diseases—all induced by FUNAI—that devastated their group, leaving them with even fewer options for survival. There were also controversial decisions by the competent authorities in dealing with matters during a sensitive period of recent contact, which could have exacerbated depopulation of the already reduced group (e.g., dispatching adult men to other Indigenous territory). The Brazilian state should be fully and permanently responsible for these consequences in both past and present terms.

At the same time, it is important to stress that the Karipuna survivors did not just passively “succumb” to the fates befalling them, nor did they merely wait for the decisions to be made by outsiders. At every moment of bifurcation, they made calculated and well-considered decisions that made the most sense to them at the given moment. The Karipuna actively participated in the process of learning to live together and in trying to make peace with their constitutive other. In this sense, it is not at all a figure of speech to say that *they* were the ones who really pacified the whites.

In all seriousness, as Ailton Krenak articulated in the aforementioned quote, Indigenous peoples, including the Karipuna, are *still* trying to complete the task of pacification. Nowadays, it is with the equally aggressive white *invasores*—who show no respect for them, nor the law—whom they are working on. In this regard, the project of pacification (of the whites) is far from being completed. If there is a difference, it is that the Karipuna are carrying it out under the name of *luta*, in cooperation with other “tamed” white partners, who seem to behave as if they know how to live together.

8. *Luta* 2.0: A shared cause [MESH] [RES] [COP] [LET]

8.1. Roots of forest protection

Putting conscious efforts to protect the forest is a relatively recent form of the Karipuna's coexistence with the forest. As I explained (Chapter 5), it was in the 21st century that the environmental notions of forest protection became salient, since such ideas had been unfamiliar to them. In 2024, Batiti explained:

In the past, there was no such thing as protecting the forest, because for us, all the forest was ours. After the whites started invading, we put that idea into our heads, that we had to protect the forest, not to cut it down, not to build farms. All this came after the arriving of whites ... because if you build farms, animals will leave. In the past, there was no such thing; the forest was all free, it was ours.

Currently, expressions such as “protecting” or “taking care” (of forest)¹⁴¹ comprise common parlance of the Karipuna, but in their Kawahiva vocabulary, there is no exact equivalent¹⁴² of such expressions, for instance, in the sense of how Tim Ingold describes:

[To] survive and prosper, have to maintain relationships with these powers, just as they must maintain relationships with other human persons. In many societies, this is expressed by the idea that people have to *look after or care* for the country in which they live, by *ensuring that proper relationships are maintained*. This means treating the country, and the animals and plants that dwell in it, with *due consideration and respect, doing all one can to minimize damage and disturbance* [emphasis added]. (2000, p. 67)

However, perhaps the notion of protection regarding forest beings was not completely nonexistent, if it means taking care and belonging to a place. *Opo 'jyka*¹⁴³ is one of the expressions that comes closest to it. It can be used generally as “*opo'jyka kayra*” (protecting the forest -Kw), but more notable is its use to acknowledge nonhuman agency. When I asked about *opo 'jyka*, Katiká used expressions such as: “The peccary, tapir, and snake protect forest,” “Agouti takes care by eating chestnuts,” “Fish take care of the river,” “Little fish (*piabia*) take care of the creek,” “Lizards,

¹⁴¹ The Karipuna use them interchangeably. Although one can distinguish that “protecting” the forest means safeguarding it from external pressure of destruction or devastation (FDD), and “conserving” the forest denotes the responsible use or management of it and the nonhuman beings in it, following how the Karipuna use the terms, I do not strictly distinguish the two, as conservation can entail protection and vice versa.

¹⁴² If there is a similar notion to protection, it denoted a specific relationship between a *jijara* (my master, onwer, guardian -Kw) and the “protected” or “guarded” counterpart (Chapter 9: *rupigwara*).

¹⁴³ The literal meaning of *opo 'jyka* or *po 'jyka* may vary: “to protect”, or “take possession of”, “claim as one's own”, “to own” (Betts, 2012, pp. 114, 220)

worms, armadillos take care of the earth,” “Giant otters protect the river,” etc. Not every animal is associated with *opo'yka*. There are those who simply exist without protecting anything, such as the bats. Worse even, the bats are deemed parasitical: “Bat live in the termite's house. They don't protect,” Katiká said. Her daughter Andressa gave her interpretation of *opo'yka*: “[For the animals], living is taking care. Living is protecting. Deers eat mud. Lizards protect the leaves and eat them. Animals eat and take care of trees and fruits.” She added, “Animals created the fruits. That's what the stories say. Humans did not create them.” From these descriptions of *opo'yka*, we can see the Karipuna's ecological perspective, in which animals are understood as self-sustaining, natural-born caretakers of their environment, endowed with the capacity to regenerate it. However, this notion of *opo'yka* is not widely shared among the current Karipuna. Some are unaware of it, and some even disagree, arguing that such ideas are personal interpretations. Even if we generalize Katiká's version of *opo'yka*, it is an idea of an autonomous, ecological process in which the forest protects itself, and forest-beings protect themselves, rather than anthropogenic or anthropocentric forest protection as understood nowadays.

So, the Karipuna were not unfamiliar with protective actions per se; their concern was centered on defending *themselves* against various enemies or hazards *in* the forest, not on defending the forest itself. The forest, as a lifeworld, was not considered a vulnerable object in need of protection. The Karipuna viewed it as unfathomably extensive and inherently abundant. The same goes with the animal inhabitants. Even if the Karipuna detect a decline in certain species, the phenomenon is seldom interpreted as an “endangerment” but is almost always attributed to migration to other areas. Nevertheless, today, every Karipuna acknowledges the need to protect both the forest (which many deem vulnerable) and the nonhuman beings inhabiting it. They also started using the term “extinction” (although when I asked its meaning, it mostly meant dispersal not a complete disappearance of a species). This speaks to a broader trend among the Karipuna where forest protection is increasingly understood differently.

8.2. Protecting forest for everybody

At a glance, the Karipuna's *luta* seems to be focused on themselves: their land, their rights, their livelihood, their plights, and so on. However, as I mentioned earlier, the Karipuna situate their *luta* in a shared world, and there is a recent trend toward the increasing prevalence of environmental discourses, such as climate change and biodiversity, in their public speech acts. In these discursive

actions, the leaders make explicit appeal to common grounds, aiming at a broader, international public, evoking the role of the Amazon rainforest in climate change mitigation: “We protect the forest not only for the Indigenous people, but for everyone. We are taking care of this heritage” (Karipuna 2022, p. 39). Viewing the Amazon forest as a heritage that concerns everyone in the world, they stress that their *luta* aims far beyond their narrow self-interest and benefits everyone, hence a higher, shared cause. This cause addresses not only all their potential allies around the world but even their enemies: “We protect the forest, for the climate balance and clean air, even for the people who are against us,” said Adriano Karipuna in his 2022 speech. In another interview, he added, “We are fighting all over the world, in 192 countries. While other countries are hardly concerned about Indigenous peoples.” He frequently mentioned the humanitarian crisis of the Yanomami people and the murders of the Guarani Kaiowá people, stressing his solidarity with other Indigenous struggles. These stances are echoed by other Karipuna leaders. By connecting with Indigenous struggles around the world, it is apparent that the Karipuna leaders view their *luta* as part of a much broader subaltern struggle against forms of oppression: an “Indigenous class struggle,” I would say. From the beginning, the Karipuna's *luta* always had the dimension of openness that requires the incorporation of the other to construct their world, yet as they develop their struggle further, the aperture is widening further, seemingly following the steps of the late rubber tapper activist Chico Mendes, who famously said, “At first, I thought I was fighting to save rubber trees, then I thought I was fighting to save the Amazon rainforest. Now I realize I am fighting for humanity.” In this way, not only is the Karipuna's struggle addressing a broader agenda and wider audience but it is also becoming ever more inclusive of others. Occasionally, they also discuss the animals in the land: “For us Karipuna, preservation [of forest] is really valuable because it doesn't just help us but everybody, all the population in the world and Brazil, because everyone needs air and oxygen. For us, not only the forest, but all life inside it, is important. And life in the forest, and in Amazon, is only possible through Indigenous people, especially here, [because] we protect not only the nature, but all that is inside the land” (Andre Karipuna in Leonil, 2023) [MESH].

8.2.1. Two coexisting views of the environment

Viewing themselves as the ultimate caretakers of a global heritage Amazon, thus providers of a planetary ecological service (not equal but similar to the notion of “ecosystem service”) to humanity, and considering the forest beings as entitled to the protection they offer and fight for, instantiates a different perspective of forest protection from what I explained above. This is why I

distinguish this phase of *luta* as “*luta* 2.0,” not as a totally different struggle, but as an updated version with an additional angle. Based on the division of “dwelling” and “globe” perspectives (Ingold, 2000), if the earlier phase of protection represents a perspective from within the lifeworld (“dwelling”), this second phase *adds* a perspective of viewing the forest from outside (“globe perspective”). I stress the additional dimension since the people keep living in the forest as a lifeworld. The difference is now, another dimension coexists, without the latter replacing the former. Not everyone, but starting with their leaders, more Karipuna people are increasingly apprehending their environment both from within as a lifeworld *and* also from outside. While their local mode of apprehension is still “based on practical, perceptual engagement with the components of a world that is inhabited or dwelt-in” (Ingold, 2000, p. 216), now, the perspective of “managing” (the environment, forest, thus the Amazon and subsequently the planet), which is “commonly described in the language of intervention” (ibid., pp. 214-5) and means “human beings can launch their interventions from a platform above the world, as though they could live *on* or *off* the environment, but are not destined to live *within* it” (ibid., p. 215), is also familiarized and coexist, to varying degrees. This newly added perspective is epistemological in the sense that it is “a discourse concerning the nature and possibility of knowledge about the world” (Graeber, 2015, p. 15). Knowledge such as the benefits of forest and biodiversity preservation, oxygen production, its role in mitigating climate change, and its implications for the global population is incorporated. At the same time, it is also ontological since it predicates what the forest (also) *is*—a vulnerable place, seen from outside, that needs to be taken care of—for the people. In short, this new perspective on forest works as a different onto-epistemology.

It is difficult to trace the exact process of incorporation of this onto-epistemology but it is likely a mixture of various changes: being exposed to different onto-epistemologies by intensive interaction with the surrounding society, regular and frequent trips to the city or long-term residency, which literally situate them outside the forest, their everyday life intricately connected to urban life via off and on-line mediums, those who are more engaged in the *luta* experience flights over their forest as a part of monitoring programs, some familiarize with drones and geo-visual technologies that view their forest from different perspectives. The Karipuna children learn the forest from living within it, but now, also from the village school, where they learn it as geometric territory, using a two-dimensional map of their land hanging alongside those of Brazil and the world. Internalizing a perspective external to the forest, as a place in need of protection

that requires human intervention from outside, may also be attributed to the experience of witnessing the *negative* intervention from outside: deforestation. They saw vast patches of forest being demolished in a span of a few days. In that way, their lifeworld has been being literally broken by external interventions. Hence, their own *positive* intervention (*luta*) to counter it. In the course of building the struggle, they have to constantly work with multiple perspectives on the forest, whether by interacting with different partners and institutions or by incorporating new technologies [MESH]. The impact of the technological dimension cannot be underestimated. For Eric Karipuna, a leader who is responsible for forest monitoring, multiple perspectives are not even a question. What he offers is a meta-critique above the two, which he explains succinctly: “I view two realities in parallel. One is being in the local, in the situation. Another is what you see through software. Want it or not, the software is powerful, but the data can be unactualized in real time ... When you see from the satellite, from the data, deforestation doesn't look very aggravated or wide, given the dimension of the territory. When you go there, fly a drone, walk on the deforested site, you see that the dimension is much larger than shown in the satellite. That's why I say it is a parallel reality.” Eric attributes the parallax between two realities to the slow actualization process and the INPE government data being “contaminated,” thus unreliable during anti-environmentalist administrations. In his case, it is abundantly clear that at least some Karipuna are no longer dwelling in the “dwelling onto-epistemology.” Now, we can say that both the ontology of dwelling and globe (Ingold, 2000) coexist in their perception of the forest and in their *luta* against the FDD.

The Karipuna's incorporation of this distinct onto-epistemological dimension into their *luta* was influenced by socio-environmental Indigenous movements, their partner organizations, and the discourse of environmental justice, among others. When Indigenous activists (with a lifeworld perspective) and environmentalist partners (with an interventionist or globe perspective) cooperate closely, their views are likely to influence each other. Some Karipuna explain that they first became familiar with the ideas of protecting the land through FUNAI agents in the 1990s and early 2000s, and further embraced these discourses from the mid-2010s as they explored direct partnerships with NGOs. This process of incorporation was selective but marked with their signature openness to the Other. Since the launch of a joint campaign in 2019 based on a partnership with a renowned environmental NGO and a religious organization, the usage of environmental parlance proliferated,

notably in the numerous interviews that the leaders conducted with prominent media outlets.¹⁴⁴ Many of them speak to the popularized image of the Amazonian Indigenous people as forest guardians and standard bearers of biodiversity conservation. The leader Adriano Karipuna's publishing of his e-book, *From the Forest to the World* (2021), epitomizes this trend, where he announces, "Among the Karipuna, I was one of the first of my generation to defend the environment" (ibid., p. 34).

8.2.2. *Isolados*: a struggle inclusive of others

In the Karipuna's discourses, no less emphasized than their environmental contribution to the global is their role as protectors, not only of the forest but also of every being within it. This inclusiveness is exemplified by their aforementioned expression regarding nonhuman animals, but there is a significant human other who frequently appears in both official and unofficial settings: other Indigenous people inhabiting their land.¹⁴⁵ These hitherto uncontacted people are called the *isolados* in Portuguese and *onharoe'ybahêa*, or simply *kawahiva* (Indigenous people or people from their ethnic group, connoting potential kinship -Kw). The issue of the *isolados* is being raised increasingly in the Karipuna's campaigns. In March 2023, when Andre and Carlos Karipuna met Joenia Wapichana, President of FUNAI in Brasília, Andre said, "We are very concerned, especially about the isolated relatives who live in our territory. The invaders are advancing. We are surrounded by land grabbers," adding that the protection of Karipuna IL "is not only for us but also for the *isolados*" living with them [MESH]. A year earlier, in 2022 (September), during meetings with the authorities in Brasília, the issue of the *isolados* was also repeatedly raised. During an interview, Andressa Karipuna said, "We are suffering a lot from invasions of farm owners, land grabbers, and men. We cannot even move around to get food in our territory. If it's like this for us, imagine how our relatives would be, who live in isolation in our land." These discourses may entail a strategic element, since the Karipuna are aware that confirmation of the *isolados*' presence could strengthen certain protective mechanisms on their land, at least in theory.¹⁴⁶ Nevertheless, it would

¹⁴⁴ For example: the BBC news (BBC, 2019) and the New York Times (Londoño et al., 2020).

¹⁴⁵ Neither the Cassupá Indigenous people who lived inside the Karipuna IL (between the late 1990s and early 2000s, but left due to logistic difficulties), nor the few others (believed to be the Oro Wari people) who still reside inside the southern division of the territory.

¹⁴⁶ One anthropologist and specialist on the issue of *isolados* told me that one of the reasons why many Indigenous communities are keen to confirm the presence of *isolados* in their land (currently, 114 cases are registered in Brazil, only counting the official ones Octavio et al., 2020, pp. 29-32) is because it enhances the chance of the government creating a permanent base into the area, on which the people can depend their security.

be completely erroneous to deduce that the Karipuna are “inventing” allegations, just to add one more justification to safeguard their territorial rights, which are already granted by the Constitution.

I describe the presence of the *isolados* as a matter of fact, since I opted to report from the Karipuna's point of view, but for the authorities at FUNAI, this is an unconfirmed allegation. This gap of views creates frustration on the Karipuna's side. While the Karipuna cannot present the kind of evidence “that will back territorial claims in a Western Court of Law” (Carneiro da Cunha, 2007, xi), they do offer other forms of evidence and testimonies. Reports of the *isolados* in the Karipuna's forest harken back at least to the 1980s. During this period, the majority of Karipuna were described as “isolated tribes” (Meireles, 1984, pp. 116-7), probably referring to the subgroups that avoided contact with government agencies. Although opinions about the *isolados'* identity may vary (some Karipuna think they could be the last survivors of their subgroup; others think that they are from other Kawahiva groups, such as the Uru-Eu-Wau-Wau, or the “Urubu” group near the river Capivari), most of the Karipuna agree that they still exist. In 1991, a FUNAI expedition confirmed numerous testimonies from rubber tappers and locals who had seen “savages” within the Karipuna IL (Vaz, 1991). While the government's interest waned, it remained unchanged among the Karipuna until the late 1990s and early 2000s (Sar de Neto, 2018, pp. 17, 20, 93, 113, 178). Then it reemerged recently due to a series of sightings that led them to take the *isolados'* presence factually.



Figure 13. Putative footprint of an uncontacted Indigenous person, “isolado.” (Photograph by Eric Karipuna, 2023)

(1) Footprint of barefoot: On October 13, 2023, Batiti found possible evidence of an *isolado* in the forest. He quickly summoned his son Eric to register a photo with GPS coordinates,

adding another piece of proof of their presence. In the photo (Figure 13), a mark of a human barefoot is noticeable, in an area where “nobody goes around barefoot”, as they say.

(2) Two naked people on the road: On August 17, 2022, Eric Karipuna witnessed two naked people on the road, approximately 2 kms from the Panorama village, while riding his bike on the way to the city.



Figure 14. The putative piece of arrow on a tapir (upper part of the right front leg) (Screen capture from a video, by Eric Karipuna, 2021)

(3) Arrow on tapir: Since 2021, the Karipuna engaged in a biodiversity monitoring program with a NGO, which consists of setting a trap camera to capture images of animals. On October 15th, 2021, a camera filmed a video of a tapir foraging at night in a mud lick. When the Karipuna reviewed this footage, they spotted something stuck in (or bulging out of) the tapir's back, which appeared to be the broken tip of an arrow (Figure 14). Many Karipuna were convinced that it was evidence of the *isolados*. “Nobody hunts with bows and arrows here,” Eric explained the rationale. To be precise, Aripã still carries his bows and arrows quite often to the woods, but it's true that he does not use it to hunt big ungulates such as tapir. So, the issue is whether the object is really an arrow or something else, which is not clear from the footage.

(4) Palm-leaf hut: In August 2021, the Karipuna found a *tocaia* or *tapiri* (thatched Indigenous hut) in the land, which only Indigenous people make and use (Figure 15). Also in 2019, when four Karipuna men went to a monitoring that ended up being almost a 10-day wandering to the remote, seldom explored outskirts of their land, they saw a very old *tapiri*, crafted in the

traditional style. Aripã saw another one relatively near the village, although he did not remember the year.



Figure 15. An old tapiri, allegedly crafted by the *isolados*. (Photograph by Adriano Karipuna, 2021)

Besides, there were multiple other incidents in which the Karipuna saw barefoot footprints on the sandbanks where people rarely go, let alone walk barefoot. Still, for the authorities, all these recurrent sightings fall short of qualifying as “authentic” evidence, and their calls for investigation keep falling on deaf ears.

“People have never believed what we say, that here in the territory, *isolados* exist. They think we are liars,” said Eric, adding, “they [authorities] don’t take us seriously. We feel it.” I asked why. “Because there is no interest in doing monitoring or expeditions.” Indeed, their appeal is not registered in FUNAI’s list of the *isolados*, not even in the “information” category,¹⁴⁷ let alone as “under study” (Octavio et al., 2020, pp. 29-32). He encapsulated his frustration in one phrase: “We are completely forgotten.” (Kin, 2024, p. 355)

FUNAI's lack of interest is not always attributed to their skepticism towards the Karipuna's claim. There are structural, internal reasons particular to the institution. Altair Algayer, coordinator of Frente de Proteção Etnoambiental Guaporé-FUNAI and an expert on *isolados*’ issues,

¹⁴⁷ “Information” means there are previously qualified reports on the presence of isolated Indigenous people in a given region, which requires more in-depth investigation; “Under study” means that there are a set of data that have undergone an in-depth qualification process and indicate such people's presence, although not yet confirmed; “Confirmed” means that such people’s existence was proven by FUNAI (Octavio et al., 2020, p. 29).

recognized that “we should not discard the possibility” (pers. comm., June 2024), but noted FUNAI’s lack of qualified personnel to execute the job, underscoring that it would take “incontestable evidence” to effectively pressure the government to act. But for the Karipuna, such proof would be difficult to find, considering the impact of recent encroachments. “Because of the invaders, the *isolados* don’t leave traces. They don’t want to be found.” Eric’s observation poses a question: if we are not underestimating the *isolados*’ ability to adapt to change (e.g., encroachment) and operate incognito. Locating an elusive small group or individual actively erasing traces in a vast forest is an extremely challenging task that would take at least years, even if the authorities were invested in carrying out the search.¹⁴⁸ Currently, it is non-governmental organizations such as Pastoral Land Commission (Comissão Pastoral da Terra: CPT) and CIMI (Conselho Indigenista Missionário) that take the Karipuna’s claim seriously and support it by including them in their regular press releases and widely circulated reports. These supports, in turn, motivate the Karipuna leaders to further raise their voice on the subject matter [RES], shaping another co-created front of *luta* for their significant others. In the end, the Karipuna’s consistent issue-raising of the *isolados* should be understood as an attempt to recognize the other’s presence in their world, rather than merely adding another reason to legitimize their struggle. It provides a window on what the Karipuna see as the just way to accommodate others [MESH].

8.3. Struggle-partners: Co-creators of the *luta*

Discussing the achievements of the Karipuna’s *luta*, I have attributed these impressive feats to the relentless work by the Karipuna, harnessed by their leaders. What should also be acknowledged is that, in the shadow of all these actions, there was an unfathomable amount of work carried out by their non-Indigenous partners. Since the Karipuna have limited access to resources for logistics, and a limited network to identify and reach out to key stakeholders, policymakers, or important public institutions and arenas (especially to international ones), there is a structural necessity to seek support and incorporate others in the *luta*. This is where the NGO partners step in and contribute the most. If the Karipuna perform and deliver their message, setting the stage, covering logistical parts, and organizing the wider dissemination of the people’s message are often the work cut out for the external partners. The history of Indigenous people in the Amazon forming alliances

¹⁴⁸ Consider the case of the Piripikura people in Mato Grosso, for which it took about 30 years for FUNAI to prove their existence, and are still burdened to prove that the survivors are alive.

with non-governmental partners dates back to the 1980-90s¹⁴⁹ or earlier, but in the Karipuna's case, it began more recently. It was around the mid 2010s, in the wake of surging deforestation and invasion in their land, and the largely inattentive government authorities, when they felt the need to explore partnerships with pro-Indigenous NGOs. In 2018, they launched an official campaign with an international environmental NGO and a national religious organization. This coalition helped raise the profile of the Karipuna's struggle and more systematically spread their urgent call for support. Currently, the leaders are well-connected to local media and have an active international network of journalists, NGO workers, activists, and academics [MESH] [RES]. Whenever there is breaking news or an important update, they mobilize this network to garner attention and put pressure on the competent authorities. However, they still rely on their closer partners on many issues to produce the *luta*. Acutely aware of this reliance, the Karipuna are keen to expand the alliance, forging more partnerships. They also try to attend to the partner's interests and, where possible, align with what they expect of them.

Conklin (1997, p. 712) remarked “the nature of contemporary eco-politics—especially its dependence on global media—intensifies pressures for Indian activists to conform to certain images,” discussing visual symbols co-produced by the Indigenous-environmentalist alliance, “because the politics of the Indian-environmentalist alliance is primarily a symbolic politics ... cultural identity is one of Brazilian Indians' most important political resources” (ibid., p. 713). This external pressure of eco-politics is present in the making of Karipuna's *luta*, yet not so much in bodily visual symbols as in their discourse. Collaborating with environmental institutions, the people tend to align with the values of conservation; while collaborating with human rights institutions, they respond with concerns centered on human rights. Some people point out the exact moment a certain vocabulary finds a place in their parlance. One Karipuna person explained that the term “genocide” was almost never heard, but after the comment of the local prosecutor in an interview in 2017 (Chapter 5), which was quoted in various news outlets, many people began to use this expression, although not every Karipuna approves it as an adequate term to describe the current situation. Another example is the expression “Mother Earth.” Not only advocates and academics (Merchant, 2012, p. 121) but many Indigenous activists, including some Karipuna,

¹⁴⁹ Since the 1990s, when the Kayapo teamed up with prominent environmental NGOs and environment-friendly corporations, it became increasingly common to create such alliances among the Indigenous communities that engage in territorial struggles (Turner, 1993).

employ the trope when they explain their struggle to protect the forest, but there are as many critics of its usage, including the prominent Lakota scholar Vine Deloria:

American Indian delegations have been active in world environmental movements, but have brought only a romantic sentimentalism as their contribution. It is totally disheartening to see Indians interviewed in the seemingly endless documentaries about the environment and find them telling us that the earth is our mother. The interviewer nods wisely, the Indian looks solemn, and the destruction continues. (Deloria, 1997, p. 213)

The Karipuna who do not agree with or use the term do not elaborate their opinions in the same pithy way, but simply dismiss or distance themselves from it, when I asked the meaning: “That doesn't exist in our culture. [S/he] invented it.” However, incorporating new terms is not a unilateral process. As non-Indigenous partners also pick up innumerable expressions used by Indigenous people for their own purposes, the feedback loop shapes a dynamic in which the logics and rhetoric in the discourse of the leaders and their partners often resemble each other to the point that it is difficult to trace the development. Considering that the Karipuna have been Portuguese speakers for over 40 years, it seems unproductive, if not impossible, to discern what is original and what is imported. Rather, the appropriation of expressions should be viewed as a process of creating a linguistic vehicle for articulation, especially in political discourse.

While developing political interventions is an open process of co-creation, it is never exempt from external pressures; the Karipuna do not deal with them uncritically or without reflection. Once, during a trip to Lisbon, a Karipuna leader was asked to pose in front of the Monument to the Discoveries (Padrão dos Descobrimentos), dedicated to the period of Portuguese exploration in the 15th-16th centuries. An accompanying person, a vocal decolonial activist, elicited the Karipuna to talk about the colonial process. I also joined, saying, “This is where everything started, the colonization and massacre of your people.” Although the elicitations were in no way coerced or intended to produce a photo-op, but rather a gentle reminder of history, I sensed we were mounting subtle pressure on the Indigenous person to respond, or even “perform,” in a certain way. The Karipuna happily agreed to be photographed and made a few comments, but from my perspective, shied away from making a more powerful commentary. On the way back, he joked that “If I put that on my Instagram, the Portuguese will be angry with me,” reminding that during a prior interview with a journalist, he already made a strong comment. Acutely aware that his speech acts can be used, or taken out of context, in short, bring repercussions, he was

cautiously gauging and monitoring his tone and manner, refining his own way of delivering [RES][COP]. Although a snapshot, this incident shows the expectations of the observers of Indigenous people and the projection of a predetermined figure of an Indigenous activist, which is almost always present, in whatever subtle form it may take. What it also shows is that Indigenous people are not unaware of the pressure, and sometimes do accommodate to it, but they neither do it uncritically nor simply cater to demand. Although the relation with their partners does not exist in a vacuum of power dynamics, nor in a symmetrical plane, the incorporation of ideas and discourses is not unilateral, and is never unfiltered. For the time being, the longstanding interaction with their non-Indigenous partners have resulted in fairly extensive alignment on various key issues, such as the controversial legislative proposal of the “Time Marker”—Marco Temporal, a legislation curtailing Indigenous rights, trying to establish that Indigenous peoples can only lay claim to land they occupied as of October 1988, when the current constitution was enacted, which means that Indigenous territory demarcated after 1988 are subject to revision (Guardian, 2023)—, the territorial invasion, the *isolados*, among others. Far from being an isolated activity among them, the Karipuna's *luta* is a co-produced cause and campaign, with the active participation of their partners, including NGOs. At the same time, the Karipuna and their closer partners being on the same page should be viewed as a tentative synchronization rather than a static, unilateral assimilation.

8.3.1. Difficulties of expanding the domain of solidarity

The process of co-creation does not come without its own challenges. The usual pattern is that NGO partners handle planning, meeting setup, and logistics, while the Karipuna participants perform and deliver. Because of this division of roles and tasks, although the Karipuna are principal agents in these activities, their NGO counterparts may consider them responsible, and sometimes, in charge of the activities. This means having a strong say, for instance, about the content: e.g., what the message will be, who will be included or excluded, etc. There is a limit to the extent I can elaborate on this issue due to its sensitivity, but at least a brief description would be necessary since a) it forms an integral part of the Karipuna's *luta*, b) it provides the reason why I was not able to produce more ethnography concerning this dimension of the *luta*. I will use auto-ethnography as a method to flag my own experience of being blocked from attending Karipuna's official meetings by one of their NGO partners, due to reasons that were incomprehensible even to some Karipuna people.

During my stay in the Panorama village in summer 2023, a group trip to Brasília was scheduled, and the Karipuna welcomed me to accompany them. Unaware of the tension that could be created between their partners, the Karipuna leaders and commoners invited me to work with them (to document their *luta*). However, as soon as one Karipuna leader informed Z (pseudonym)—a personnel of their partner NGO and co-organizer of the trip—about inviting me, “ostracization” befell me. Z strongly opposed my participation without providing a reason beyond repeatedly saying, “I don’t know this guy.” This claim was inaccurate. I briefly encountered Z during a trip to the Panorama village in 2019 and also introduced myself to Z via text message (a common way to make contact in Brazil) one month prior to the trip, explaining my motivation for participating. Furthermore, at that time I also conducted an interview with the director of this NGO (Z’s boss), during which I clarified my plans and intentions, and the director immediately offered to formally introduce me to Z, even without my request. But even to her/his own boss, Z repeated that s/he “didn’t know” me. It felt as if Z was rather unwilling to know me.

In the end, without receiving a categorical Yes or No from Z, I embarked for Brasília (on my own expense), only with the authorization and blessing of the Karipuna people. Two Karipuna leaders assured me, “I know Z very well. I will talk with Z. We understand each other well. Don’t worry,” “Just go there. You are with us. Everything’s going to be alright. There’s no problem. Besides, you are going on your own expense.” However, in Brasília, I was denied participation in the (more than ten) meetings that were otherwise open to many other media people, most of whom the Karipuna do not know or even hear of. This was the part which my Karipuna friends found most incomprehensible. “Why all the other guys we don’t know get to participate but not you, who we know well?” An intense moment occurred when Z spotted me waiting outside a European embassy where they had a meeting. As Z kept excluding me from the visitor list, I had to wait outside in the parking lot. When the meeting was over, and people came out, I greeted the Karipuna people as well as Z. In a minute-long interaction, we exchanged cordial words and pleasantries, during which I mentioned how much I appreciate Z and Z’s NGO’s work for the Karipuna. Not wasting time to express any of my qualms, I only clarified, as briefly as possible: “I would be very grateful if you could allow me to attend one of the meetings, just to observe.” Without replying to my solicitation, Z hurried to the next schedule, but since we had at least exchanged warm greetings, I thought there was a slight chance Z’s behavior might change.

However, the opposite was true. Even though I was being as cordial as I could, something in my approach, or the sheer fact that I did not give up but showed up, seemed to have angered Z. That evening, Z expressed irritation to all the Karipuna participants, accusing them of allowing me to travel with them and “bothering” their work, as Z described. Multiple Karipuna friends who did not agree with Z’s treatment of me described the intense atmosphere of this meeting in detail. I cannot disclose its contents for privacy reasons, except for one short, memorable exchange, since it encapsulates the Karipuna’s resistance to any form of coercion. When Z unfairly accused one Karipuna leader of “trying to bend to a foreigner for meager [money]” (I was being misrepresented for someone who was trying to buy my way out), the Karipuna leader retorted: “You don’t get to give orders. We decide who is going to be with us!” This was a powerful statement of self-determination, declaring the obvious, self-evident fact that Karipuna are owners of their own destiny and are entitled to shape their own way of coexistence [RES]. Nonetheless, the heated exchange did not end there, nor did Z change his/her attitude towards me. After the meeting, some Karipuna people kept asking Z in private: “Why can’t he be with us?” Z replied, “3rd party people cannot participate.” The Karipuna snapped back. “But there are a bunch of 3rd party people whom we don’t know! Why can’t we decide who goes with us?” In the end, they insisted to me: “You come tomorrow with us. We put you in.” That is how I finally managed to participate in the Karipuna’s meeting in the Lower House of National Congress (Camara dos Deputados), the only one I was able to attend. Ironically, during the meeting, one representative of Z’s organization emphatically stated, in a speech, “We must expand the field of solidarity” to help the Karipuna’s struggle. In this case, the Karipuna were, in fact, fighting against *them* to expand that very field of solidarity and coexistence.

As every Karipuna came to realize the tension, they became more reluctant to include me or share information about activities related to Z or Z’s organization, which occupied a significant portion of their *luta*. Afterward I learned that the people who were more vocally supportive of me in Brasília had to endure subtle, implicit forms of discrimination concerning the support provided by Z’s organization [COP].¹⁵⁰ Observing all this, I had no choice but to give up accompanying a significant part of their struggle related to Z’s organization.

¹⁵⁰ For instance, they were denied necessary assistance to repair their house after a flood, while others received help; they were not given pick-up services from and to the city while others were given regularly. Being excluded from these perks may seem trivial, but they could be harsh enough for people who lack such basic means.

In the big picture, the Karipuna want and need to extend partnerships. The leaders repeatedly emphasize that they are keen to have more partners to sustain their *luta*. But the extension of the domain of solidarity not only depends on them, but also to the extent of inclusiveness that their partners are willing to enact. Even if every party is on the same page about the general cause of the Karipuna's coexistence with the forest and their opposition to the FDD, each actor can act very differently. When some insist on the preeminence of an exclusive “primary organizing principle” (Hage, 2017), the Karipuna's openness to the Other can go only so far. For the time being, it seems that the Karipuna are on a learning curve, still figuring out how to navigate this dynamic. In my case, neither did they actively create space for my partnership, nor did they side with me, although I repeatedly asked the leaders for more support. If they had to pick a side, the choice was obvious. There could be no comparison between an established organization with a firm local constituency versus a late-coming, foreign student with no institutional power. Even if my intention was to help them, they could only help insofar as I accept this condition. It was clear that they were not willing to actively intervene any further in issues between their partners [LET]. One Karipuna man advised, “Don't fight between you [people]. Just do your own stuff and don't engage with others. That's how people work here.” Unless I was going to replace all the service and support that Z's organization provides, I could not ask for more help than what was already there.

Nobody knows better than the Karipuna that their *luta* requires collaboration, but they also understand that co-creation can quickly turn into coercion, my case unwittingly serving as an example. The Karipuna leader's powerful articulation of self-determination was to secure their own “room for maneuver” for other future partnerships, in this tricky terrain of coexistence.

8.4. Conclusion: co-creation of struggle

Although the emphasis of the *luta* is on large-scale territorial defense, the Karipuna are also vocal about the importance of protecting forest inhabitants, both human and nonhuman. Especially notable is their consistent inclusion of the *isolados* in their land, for whom they call for protection in many public discourses. In the course of developing the *luta*, the Karipuna actively engage in dialogue with various actors and social movements, absorb and refine their own thoughts by incorporating new ideas and expressions. Now, we can observe an increasing appeal to a broader audience by emphasizing Indigenous contributions to the planetary climate crisis, which assumes

a shared world for all. All these changes instantiate another phase of the *luta*, evolving into a more inclusive and encompassing struggle.

In the course of developing the advocacy, activities are not carried out solely by the Karipuna themselves, but co-produced with their multiple partners: authorities, non-governmental organizations, and the media, among others, who support and complement the Karipuna's effort. Had it not been these partnerships, the effectiveness and impact of the *luta* would have been largely compromised. This is the reason why the Karipuna want and need more partners, hence more coexistence. However, precisely because the *luta* is co-created, partnership can extend only to the extent the partners are open and willing to work together. Again, in this context, the Karipuna show inclusiveness to others, contrasting some of their counterparts. Although the *luta* as a political campaign is a relatively recent form, the Karipuna are far from newcomers in terms of forging alliances for socio-political purposes. In a sense, the contemporary *luta* is a continuation of their socio-historical process—including their warfare, where forming alliances and inclusion of the enemy were key components—of incorporating the constitutive other to construct their worlding. If the process is similar in the grand scheme of things, the aim is now more finely tuned and sharpened towards coexistence with the forest. The Karipuna's openness to the co-creative process of their *luta* is a quintessential enactment of this coexistence.

9. Shamanism and nonhuman other ^[MESH] ^[COP]

9.1. *Pajé*: Mediating humans with forest

When the Karipuna's lifeworld was synonymous with the forest, the way the Karipuna experienced it was similar to what Tim Ingold calls “meshworking”: navigating the web of beings and meanings that has no “boundaries, no insides or outsides, only comings and goings” (Ingold, 2011, p. 117) and harbors “fields of interrelated and symbiotic life that join places, processes, and creatures” (Wirzba, 2021, p. xx). What influenced their meshworking in the sylvan environment was their shamanic perspectives. The Kawahiva word for shaman, *pajé*, is of Tupi origin and denote agents with special spiritual powers of healing. Their principal role is taking care of the health of people, as a connoisseur of traditional plant medicine. No less important is their instructive role, responsible for the transmission of knowledge and techniques that involve sophisticated communication and negotiation skills with various nonhuman entities. In the Karipuna society, shamanism represent an established mode of thought and practice, and the shaman's role was an integral to their society.¹⁵¹ If the chief or *cacique* was a political leader, the *pajé* was a spiritual leader, advisor, cosmic negotiator, and healer. Two positions could overlap: a *cacique* could also be a *pajé*, and vice versa. Being endowed with shamanic power meant having a control over the oneiric realm, a way in which shamans acquire supernatural knowledge (Kracke, 1992). Since entering an ambivalent relationship with nonhumans that could “seem at first to offer benefits but can end up causing great misfortunes” (Paiva, 2005, p. 27), the *pajé* was not always approved by the people but sometimes deemed wicked or against the people. In any case, the shaman's capacity was widely acknowledged and evoked both admiration and fear. Especially recognized was their capacity to cross boundaries between humans and the nonhumans, by either communicating with them or going through metamorphosis in dreams.

¹⁵¹ Some Amazonianists are skeptic about the wide-ranging social influence of shamans. Descola argues, dismissing Reichel-Dolmatoff's model, that “ascrib[ing] to the person and actions of the shaman an exaggerated role in the establishment of the way in which a society tries to give meaning to the world. ... [since] in Indian America at least, the part that shamans play in the management of relations with the various entities that inhabit the cosmos may be altogether *negligible* [emphasis added]. ... It is therefore rash to affirm that a dominant conception of the world is the product of a religious system centered on one particular institution, namely shamanism, the effects of which may be restricted to a quite limited sector of social life.” (2013, p. 21) Among the Karipuna, the role of shaman—management of relations with various entities that inhabit the cosmos—was by no means negligible. It expanded way beyond “limited sector of social life.”

As the Karipuna shamans cohabited with the lay people (except in special circumstances requiring voluntary isolation, e.g., during initiations and training¹⁵² that require reclusion), they frequently interacted with and influenced them. Shamans would oversee collective healing sessions involving forest spirits. They also passed on different levels of lessons to people. Whenever their “pupils” reinstate their teachings, they were enacting shamanism, or the shamanic ways of thinking (and living). In essence, the Karipuna coexisted with shamans, who, in turn, coexisted with myriads of entities in the forest that were often invisible to non-shamans [MESH]. So, through the shamans, the Karipuna's cosmic world was not only articulated and grasped but also peopled and multiplied. Shamanism enriched and amplified the people's coexistence with the nonhuman realm. The depth and breadth of Karipuna shamanism are too broad for this single chapter to do justice. Here, I will focus on the four most salient and commonly mentioned features of it, which all show how the people constituted their social life with the nonhuman other. I will also inquire its relevance on its actuality.

9.2. *Ipaji*: Distributive shamanic power

In Kawahiva shamanism in general, the notion of *pajé* can refer to both a person (identity, occupation) and the shamanic power or quality itself. After Portuguese was introduced, the Kawahiva people started to use the expression “*ter pajé*,” mixing Portuguese and Kawahiva, whose literal translation is “to have a shaman” but means “to have shamanic power.” In their own term, they call this *ipaji*: the possession of shamanic power and knowledge, the capacity to manipulate the symbolic fields and relations with spirits, or simply “to be empowered” (Kracke 1992, p. 129). Although shamanic power is most clearly attributed to properly trained shamans, the Kawahiva people have a notion that non-shamans can also become “a-(little)-bit-shaman” (*pouco pajé*) and exercise certain degrees of shamanic power: in other words, virtually anybody “who knows how to dream is a little bit shaman” (Kracke, 1987). Therefore, shamanism is not brought forward exclusively by shamans, but rather a distributive agency enacted by ordinary people who are considered quasi or “a bit” *pajé*. If on one end of the spectrum, there are powerful “real shamans” (*pajé mesmo*), who are deemed qualified since they underwent the required trainings, mastered

¹⁵² To become a real *pajé*, one must undergo arduous training. The objective of these processes is to deepen and enhance the apprentices' connection with numerous forest beings, and gain control of their psychic powers. The trainee must pass initiations, usually requiring reclusions in the deep forests [MESH]. Unlike shamans of the circumpolar north, the position of Amazonian shamans is not a hereditary calling. In principle, any motivated individual can learn shamanism, but a “real *pajé*” is believed to be born, not made.

their knowledge, and cured people from diverse illnesses; on the end, there are the lay people who do not have a clue; somewhere in the middle is the place for “a bit shamans,” who have partial knowledge and capacity. My elder interlocutors, Katiká and Aripã belong to this category. As the Karipuna have not had an active shaman for about half a century, all knowledge of shamanism now relies on them. Once, I asked Aripã:

[*Is Abagajú (deceased cousin of Aripã) a shaman?*] Aripã: A little bit. Just a little. I'm also a bit shaman. Kaipú is also a bit shaman. My cousin Tiu, Rita's husband, is also a bit shaman. Everyone is. My older brother is also a bit shaman. My uncle, too. Everyone is.

[*What about Batiti (your son)?*] No, he isn't.

[*Can you teach someone to be a shaman*] Yes, my grandpa taught me.

Not everyone agrees with Aripã's explanation. One Karipuna considered only two of the six people he mentioned as *pouco pajé*.¹⁵³ Multiple Karipuna think that shamanism cannot be taught, because “shamans are born.” So, there are different opinions on whether (or to what extent) shamanic power can be acquired and who might qualify as a-bit-shaman. The criterion to be considered a bit shaman also varies. It can be attributed to possessing the knowledge of curing certain illnesses with plants, as is the case with Katiká. Aripã considers himself *pouco pajé* because he knows how to perform a technique called *omongó* (preparation of prey for hunting through dreaming; see section below). In the case of her late husband Abagajú, he was also considered “a bit *pajé*,” not only because he was knowledgeable in many shamanic areas, but also because he showed extraordinary resilience.¹⁵⁴ These kinds of unusual capacities are considered to evidence *ipaji*.

9.2.1. Attribution of *Ipaji* to animals

Since *ipaji* is not an exclusive power strictly restricted to a tiny circle of elites but can be widely distributed among ordinary people, it should not be surprising that *ipaji* extends well beyond the

¹⁵³ In case of Kaipú, although he might have been *pouco pajé* before, when I visited him twice (in the Arara Indigenous Land, where he is living for decades) he was unable to explain almost anything about Karipuna shamanism, saying he forgot all. It is possible that his reticence is due to his unwillingness to speak, but Aripã, who accompanied this trip also affirmed me that Kaipú forgot these things for living too long and far away from them.

¹⁵⁴ One day, he went hunting very far as he used to, and got bitten by a venomous snake which could instantly kill a strong adult. However, not only did he manage to make a miraculous comeback, but he even carried the animal he had hunted on a severely injured leg.

boundaries of the human. The most obvious cases of nonhumans endowed with shamanic power are the forest spirits, the *mirangã*, which I elaborate below, but some nonhuman animals are also considered *ipaji*. As for which animal is *ipaji*, it can vary greatly. I start with the most inclusive list of animals that are thought to be *ipaji* (Table 1), together with those who have owners or protectors, *rupigwara*, according to the elder Katiká, who applies these categories generously [MESH]. The list comprises more than a hundred species, reflecting an expansive understanding of *ipaji* among the Karipuna, but it is still by no means exhaustive. First, it includes the most powerful animals: the jaguar, the harpy eagle, and the anaconda. Other large animals such as white-lipped peccary, tapir, deer, giant anteater, giant otter, and caiman are also endowed with *ipaji*. Some small and medium-sized animals, such as most monkeys, most birds (owls, curassows, toucans, hoatzins, parrots, woodpeckers, etc.), armadillo, small anteaters, turtles, frogs, crabs, and lizards, are also *ipaji*. Bats, especially the giant ones, are definitely *ipaji*. Some insects (bees, butterflies, moths, ants, crickets, bamboo larvae, spiders, beetles) and fish (piranha, *tucunaré*, *pirarucú* or arapaima gigas, *jatuarana*, catfish, ray, electric eel) are *ipaji*. Also notable are the scorpions and fireflies, which are considered to have shamanic power.

Table 1. List of Katiká Karipuna's classification of nonhuman beings, according to *ipaji* and *rupigwara*

Kawahiva	Common regional name	Scientific name	Rupigwara	Ipaji 2024	Ipaji 2025
Yamo'ona	Samauma	<i>Ceiba pentandra</i>	Lagarta	Ipaji	N/A
Inh'uva	Castanheira	<i>Bertholletia excelsa</i>	NO	NO	N/A
Yryba	Pupunha	<i>Bactris gasipaes</i>	Pupunha girando	Ipaji	Ipaji
Byritia	Buriti	<i>Mauritia flexuosa</i>	Buriti-ubuhua: Buriti flutuante	Ipaji	Ipaji
Patiyba	Paxiuba	<i>Socratea exorrhiza</i>	NO	NO	N/A
Aya'hia	Seringueira	<i>Hevea brasiliensis</i>	NO	NO	N/A
Mohanga	Planta medicinal	N/A	Temporal, vento forte	Ipaji	N/A
Yay'tata'hia	Estrela	N/A	NO	Ipaji	N/A
Kwara	Sol	N/A	Icaundo-ba-hua (Rupigwara/protetor)	Ipaji	Ipaji
Tupã	Trovão	N/A	NO	Ipaji	Ipaji
Ya hya	Luar	N/A	NO	Ipaji	Ipaji
Eburu-hua	Temporal	N/A	Passaro tisoreiro (hemembaba)	Ipaji	Ipaji
Taja'hua	Queixada	<i>Tayassu pecari</i>	Forma de gente/bahira(mãe de mata)	Ipaji	Ipaji
Tatetu'ia	Catitu	<i>Tayassuidae</i>	NO	NO	Ipaji
Tapi'ira	Anta	<i>Tapirus terrestris</i>	Rupigwara ou hemembaba?	Ipaji	Ipaji
Y'hu	Veado	<i>Mazama nemorivaga</i>	NO	Ipaji	Ipaji
Karuvaruhua	Paca	<i>Cuniculus</i>	NO	Ipaji	Ipaji
Acutia	Cutia	<i>Dasyprocta</i>	NO	Ipaji	Ipaji
Ja'gwara	Onça	<i>Panthera onca</i>	Kayra e Tocandeira	Ipaji	Ipaji
Jabaruhua	Onça pantera (preta)	<i>Panthera onca</i>	NO	Ipaji	Ipaji
Javapytãga	Onça vermelha	<i>Puma concolor</i>	NO	ipaji	Ipaji
Jagwaria	Gato-maracajá	<i>Leopardus wiedii</i>	NO	ipaji	Ipaji
Tatua	Tatu	<i>Cingulata</i>	Lagarto	Ipaji	Ipaji
Etitingaga	Tatu Canastre	<i>Prodontes maximus</i>	NO	Ipaji	Ipaji
Tamanduhua	Tamandua-bandeira	<i>Myrmecophaga tridactyla</i>	NO	Ipaji	Ipaji
Tamanduapeba	Tamandua-mirim (Mambira)	<i>Tamandua tetradactyla</i>	NO	Ipaji	Ipaji
Tamanduai, Tamanduia	Tamanduai	<i>Cyclopes didactylus</i>	NO	Ipaji	Ipaji

Coati	Quati	<i>Nasua</i>	NO	NO	Ipaji (amigo do porquinho)
Cutibia	Quatipuru	<i>Sciurus spadiceus</i>	NO	NO	Ipaji
Agau'hua	Mucura	<i>Didelphidae</i>	NO	NO	Ipaji
Y'y'ja	Ariranhã	<i>Pteronura brasiliensis</i>	NO: Tem bahira (Iguat deles)	Ipaji	Ipaji
Eraruhua	Irara, Tayra	<i>Eira barbara</i>	NO	NO	Ipaji
Akyky'a	Guariba	<i>Alouatta guariba</i>	NO	NO	Ipaji
Kaya'hua	Macaco Preto	<i>Macaca nigra</i>	NO	Ipaji	Ipaji
Kaia'te	Macaco Prego	<i>Sapajus apella</i>	NO	Ipaji	Ipaji
Jajovaea	Porco Espinho	<i>Coendou prehensilis</i>	NO	NO	Ipaji
Aha'nha	Preguiça	<i>Choloepus didactylus</i>	NO/ protetor chuva	Ipaji	Ipaji
Jacaré	Jacaré	<i>Alligatoridae</i>	Jacaré com casca seca no ceu	Ipaji	Ipaji (se mata não tem chuva?)
Boi'hua	Sucuri	<i>Eunectes</i>	Outra forma de cobra	Ipaji	Ipaji
Boia	Cobra	N/A	NO	Ipaji	Ipaji
Tejua	Calango	<i>Tropidurus</i>	NO	Ipaji	Ipaji
Jabotia	Taracaja	<i>Podocnemis unifilis</i>	NO	Ipaji	Ipaji
Jabotia	Jabuti	<i>Chelonoidis carbonaria</i>	NO	Ipaji	Ipaji
Ararua	Caranguejo	<i>Ucides cordatus</i>	NO	Ipaji	Ipaji
Cururuhua	Sapo (Cururu)	<i>Rhinella</i>	NO	Ipaji	Ipaji
Y'o'hua	Lagarta	<i>Lepidoptera</i>	NO	Ipaji	Ipaji
Ebojia	Milhoca	<i>Lumbricina</i>	NO conversa com calango)	Ipaji	Ipaji
Kwand'hua	Gavião Real	<i>Harpia harpyja</i>	Gavião enorme	Ipaji	Ipaji
Urubu-hua	Urubu-rei	<i>Sarcoramphus papa</i>	Cabeça vermelho, muito feio	Ipaji	Ipaji
Uby'ubira	Tapena (Tesoureiro)	<i>Tyrannus savana</i>	NO	Ipaji	Ipaji
Pyretetitia	Pica-pau	<i>Picidae</i>	NO	Ipaji	Ipaji (venta)
Tucano	Tucano	<i>Ramphastos</i>	NO	Ipaji	Ipaji
Urayreoa	Cigana	<i>Opisthocomus hoazin</i>	NO	Ipaji	Ipaji
Vyra'aruhua	Jabaru /Cabeça-seca	<i>Jabiru mycteria</i>	NO	Ipaji	Ipaji
Coruja	Coruja	<i>Megascops watsonii</i>	NO	Ipaji	Ipaji
Tapi'kwara	Gavião d'anta	<i>Daptrius ater</i>	Anta	Ipaji	Ipaji
Inambu	Nambu	<i>Crypturellus cinereus</i>	NO	Ipaji	Ipaji
Kanindé-robu-hua	Mutum	<i>Cracidae</i>	NO	Ipaji	Ipaji
Ararauya	Arara azul	<i>Anodorhynchus hyacinthinus</i>	NO	Ipaji	Ipaji
Uru'anhanga	Tabaruçu?	<i>Crypturellus variegatus</i>	NO	Ipaji	Ipaji
Karapiruna	Curica	<i>Amazona amazonica</i>	NO	Ipaji	Ipaji
Vyriaôa	Jacamim	<i>Psophia</i>	NO	NO	NO
Jakupêmhua	Jacu	<i>Penelope jacquacu</i>	NO	Ipaji	Ipaji
Pira	Peixe (geral)	Fish (general)	NO	Ipaji	Ipaji
Ia'ká?	Bodó	<i>Hypostomus plecostomus</i>	Bichinho (tipo milhoca) no corpo dele	Ipaji	Ipaji
Burakea	Poraqué	<i>Electrophorus electricus</i>	NO	Ipaji	Ipaji
Javevyra	Araia	<i>Potamotrygonidae</i>	NO	Ipaji	Ipaji
Jandia	Mandi	<i>Pimelodus pohli</i>	NO	Ipaji	Ipaji
Aicangohua	Peixe-cachorro	<i>Hydrolycus scomberoides</i>	NO	Ipaji	Ipaji
Piabuhua	Jatuarana	<i>Brycon</i>	NO	Ipaji	Ipaji
Uruvia	Surubim	<i>Pseudoplatystoma corruscans</i>	NO	Ipaji	Ipaji
Picyria	Piaba	<i>Leporinus obtusidens</i>	NO	Ipaji	Ipaji
Piranha	Piranha	<i>Serrasalminidae</i>	NO	Ipaji	Ipaji
Tukudarea	Tucunará	<i>Cichla ocellaris</i>	NO	Ipaji	Ipaji (dor de barriga?)
Vainombua	Beija-flor	<i>Trochilidae</i>	Outro beija-flor (parente dele)	Ipaji	Ipaji
N/A	Pirarucu	<i>Arapaima gigas</i>	NO	Ipaji	Ipaji
Panama	Borboleta	N/A	NO	Ipaji	Ipaji
Ary'rytinga	Traça	<i>Saturniidae</i>	NO	Ipaji	Ipaji
K'yba	Piotho	<i>Phthiraptera</i>	NO	NO	Ipaji (leva gente)
Eiruba	Abelha	<i>Melipona</i>	Katiká: só ipaji/Batiti: o que fica grudado no buritizero	Ipaji	Ipaji
Tataíra	Abelha-de-fogo	<i>Oxytrigona tataira</i>		N/A	ipaji
E'hira	Mel / Casa abeilha	N/A	NO	Ipaji	Ipaji
Tocanera	Tocandeira	<i>Paraponera clavata</i>	NO (Tapiaia is protected?)	Ipaji	Ipaji
Y'nhante'i	Carapana / mosquito	<i>Culicidae</i>	NO	NO	Ipaji (por isso come gente)
Ipinha	Piun	<i>Simulium</i>	NO	NO	Ipaji
Gitegia	Mosca	<i>Metagonistylum minense</i>	NO	Ipaji	Ipaji (with smile. Joke?)
Tocura	Grilo	<i>Gryllidae</i>	NO	Ipaji	Ipaji
Nhandua	Aranha	<i>Phoneutria</i>	NO	Ipaji	N/A

Pyremua	Gongo	<i>Enema pan</i>	NO	Ipaji	NO
Enemuhua	Besouro, Rola bosta	<i>Coleoptera: Scarabaeinae</i>	?	Ipaji	Ipaji
Nhandua	Aranha d'agua	<i>Gerridae</i>	NO	Ipaji	Ipaji
Jacy'ranha	Cigarra	<i>Cicadoidea</i>	NO	Ipaji	Ipaji
Cupi'ia	Cupim	<i>Isoptera</i>	NO	NO	Ipaji (Come muito pau!)
Yabajira	Escorpion	<i>Tityus</i>	NO	paje mesmo	Ipaji
Moa'inha	Vagalume	<i>Haplocauda</i>	NO	paje mesmo	Ipaji
Cava	João-de-barro (Cava)	<i>Sceliphron</i>	NO	Ipaji	Ipaji
Anhangá	Anhangá	N/A	NO	Ipaji	Ipaji
Andyra, Andyraia	Morcego (que chupa sangue)	<i>Desmodontinae</i>	NO	Ipaji	Ipaji
Andyrahua	Morcego grande	<i>Artibeus</i>	NO	Ipaji	Ipaji
Tapanha-hua	Tapanha-hua	N/A	Morcego grande	Ipaji	Ipaji
Jawatinga/Jagwara	Cachorro	<i>Canis lupus familiaris</i>	NO	NO	NO
Inamutinha	Galinha	<i>Gallus gallus domesticus</i>	NO	NO	NO
Jawaria	Gato	<i>Felis catus</i>	NO	NO	Ipaji
N/A	Cavalo	<i>Equus caballus</i>	NO	NO	NO
Yhuranohua	Gado	<i>Bos taurus indicus</i>	NO	NO	NO

The reasons why each of them is endowed with shamanic power differ from case to case. Some are simply born to be powerful, as with jaguars, eagles, and snakes. Some have powerful masters, so the respect paid to their masters is relegated to the animals. Some are not necessarily powerful but have mysterious or extraordinary abilities. For example, curassows are generally an easy hunting target, but some of them would inexplicably evade shots, even in “point-blank” situations, no matter how much a hunter tries. These are considered to be spellbound, also a form of *ipaji*, therefore, should be left alone. Some animals are *ipaji* because of their intriguing abilities. Cicadas know how to come out exactly in August, the month that represents bountifulness for the Karipuna. They come out of their holes at the exact peak of summer and return to the ground to prepare for a resurgence in the next August – they do not die but simply repeat the cycle of retreating and returning to the ground. One might think such behaviors (“instincts” in science) are common in animals, so the threshold to attribute *ipaji* is pretty low. Although *ipaji* can be stretched to mean any kind of empowerment or even a characteristic that simply elicits curiosity, and Katiká's criteria for its attribution are quite generous, it is not attributed indiscriminately. It seems that the animal must, at the very least, fascinate people. Then, what animals are denied both *ipaji*? First, there are small “nuisance” animals, especially the insects: mosquitoes, lice, termites, black flies, etc. Curiously, the coatí are also considered a nuisance (unlike white people, who think they are cute and sometimes raise them as pets) and, perhaps for that reason, are denied the status of *ipaji*, despite the Karipuna recognizing that they are very smart and cunning. The same logic may apply to the possum, squirrel, and porcupine, who are not *ipaji* either. Another category of animals that are neither *ipaji* nor have protectors is the ones introduced by the white people. Chicken, cattle,

horses, cats, and dogs are not *ipaji*. Not because they are less smart or do not have capacities. They are contrasted with the animals “from the forest.” Only those who are born in and from the forest can be subjects of special power, whether it is *rupigwara*, *ipaji*. So, we can deduce that being born in and from the forest is the bottom line for having this special power. The white people’s animals do not have any of this, and seem to occupy the lowest echelon in the forest society: the status of a foreign animal.¹⁵⁵

As I mentioned above, the extent to which *ipaji* is attributed to animals diverges largely, depending on the person. To begin with, many people are not sure which animal is *ipaji*, so they defer to the elders. Having less knowledge about shamanism per se is particularly apparent among non-Indigenous community members, but not limited to them. In general, the younger the person, the more limited the knowledge becomes. Nevertheless, shamanism is generally respected as a “tradition” and “culture.” Holding respect does not always equate to sharing the value, though, since some keep their distance from it (“It’s a culture from the old days,” “It’s important for them” [pointing to specific elders]). There are also multiple people openly expressing skepticism (“It’s a lie,” “It’s only in his/her head”). Although the depth of knowledge is roughly proportional to age, attitude, and perception are not in proportion to Indigenous (Karipuna)/non-Indigenous identity. Some non-Indigenous members expressed a relatively high regard and strong interest, even a desire to learn, that exceeded the usually tepid interest of Indigenous members. So, even among the Indigenous members, there is considerable variation. In the most discrepant case, one Karipuna almost completely denied Katiká’s extensive attribution of *ipaji* to animals, dismissing it as “a personal view.” For this person, almost no animal was *ipaji*, not even the jaguar or the harpy eagle. The only exception was two animals: the *urubu-rei* (Chapter 13) and *tamanduaí* (Chapter 9). Since this Karipuna was highly knowledgeable in shamanic tradition, it made me reflect whether Katiká was being a bit too generous in her attribution, somehow caught up in the moment of conversation. But when I double-checked Katiká’s list of *ipaji* animals, about a year later, it was not only consistent but even more extensive than the previous one! I asked her daughter Andressa, arguably Katiká’s best “disciple,” what makes her mother view the forest so saturated with *ipaji*. Her reply captures how *ipaji* can activate and amplify the senses of coexisting with others: “For her, nothing exists alone. Everything that has life is somehow empowered. They all have protectors or owners,

¹⁵⁵ This does not necessarily mean that they are poorly treated. In the case of insects or spiders, the Karipuna would kill them without a problem if necessary, but, for instance, chickens are taken good care of.

masters. They all communicate with others.” One Karipuna person partially disagreed with this proposition and offered a more granular vision. He agreed that animals don't exist alone and some of them (peccary, tapir, some fish, etc.) have protectors, but such fluid and continuous communication is impossible since “peccary only understand peccary language, jaguars their language, tapir speak their own language.” Even shamans cannot master every language but have their own specialties, unless it is a great, powerful shaman. Even in such a case, he stressed, “shamans talk with animals in dreams, not in real life.”

9.2.2. *Rupigwara*: spiritual symbiosis

In the Kawahiva language, *rupigwara* means “the one who guides,” and *ji'rupigwara* means “my spirit which guides.” *Rupigwara* is the guardian, caretaker, and serves its owner (master: *dono*), who is usually a *pajé*, protecting him and performing revenge on his behalf when necessary. It can also be the shaman's auxiliary spirit. Through *rupigwara*, which the Kawahiva shamans form a particular “ownership” with forest beings.¹⁵⁶

A key instrument or agent of a *pajé*'s ability to cause events was his “*rupiguara*,” a kind of spiritual associate or alter ego that had a part in practically all expressions of the shaman's power. When during the *tokaia* healing ceremony the *pajé* summoned various spirits to blow on the sick person and sing over him or her, it was the *pajé*'s “*rupiguara*” that would go up to summon the animal spirits, forest demons (*anhang*), and the Sky People ... When a shaman caused death by singing over a victim's hair, the actual agent by which the death was brought about—the snake or jaguar or disease that killed the person—was the shaman's “*rupiguara*.” And when a shaman dreamed game for someone (*ohamongo*), the animals that allowed themselves to be killed by the hunter for whom they were dreamed are also sometimes spoken of as the *paje*'s “*rupiguara*.” (Kracke, 1992, p. 108)¹⁵⁷

Rupigwara may denote a single entity or a relation (usually a pair)—a kind of spiritual symbiosis. Such relationships are mostly established through shamanism and, similar to *ipaji*, expand well beyond the human domain. Nonhumans can be the *rupigwara* of somebody, as well as have their own *rupigwara*. Here are some examples of *rupigwara* pairs (inside the parenthesis are the protectors): the *samauma* tree (larvae), *pupunha* (the spinning *pupunha*), *buriti*

¹⁵⁶ Among the Parintintin, a shaman controls various *rupigwara*, although he maintains a particular relation with a specific one, since each shaman is held to be the incarnation of an animal spirit (Kracke, 1990).

¹⁵⁷ Kracke reports his conversation with a highly knowledgeable Parintintin elder, where the latter says a Kawahiva shaman can summon up his *rupigwara* in his dream and communicate with him, including giving instructions (ibid., p. 109). To Kracke's knowledge and also to my interlocutors, this kind of direct communication is an uncommon oneiric experience for non-shamans.

(*buriti'ubuhua*: a buriti floating in the air -Kw), jaguar (forest and the *tocandeira* ant), tapir (piranha, ray, electric eel, turtle: the latter carries the tapir on its back), armadillo (giant larvae), giant otter (their own *bahira*, looking like them), caiman (a dry celestial caiman that doesn't get wet), anaconda (another snake), vulture (a red-headed *urubuhua*), *bodó* (a species of worm that lives in the fish's body), etc. Similar to the case of *ipaji*, knowledge of *rupigwara* varies among people, perhaps even more so, since some have never even heard of the notion. Yet for those who know Karipuna shamanism, it was a key concept. As one may notice, not all of the *rupigwara* relations are based on observable ecological symbiotic behaviors, but rather on a particular protective coexistence as the Karipuna conceive it. “When the Kagwahiva shamans claim that a certain *rupigwara* of someone does this or that, they are not necessarily referring to the beings that we see – armadillos, jaguars, buriti palms – but to their respective doubles, that is, to the 'spirits' of these beings” (Denófrio, 2012, p. 62). According to the list above, most, if not all, animals that have *rupigwara* are also *ipaji*, but not every *ipaji* animal has *rupigwara*. There are relatively more animals that are *ipaji*, whereas *rupigwara* seems to be the less prevalent category. If *ipaji* focuses more on the agency of each animal, *rupigwara* effectively reveals the Karipuna's interest in and imagination for interspecies relations, encapsulated in Andressa's description of her mother's philosophy of coexistence: “Nothing that has life exists alone” [MESH].

9.3. *Ombojihu*: Nascent ties with others

Ombojihu is the endowment process of the soul or spirit¹⁵⁸ at birth, or a movement of the soul of an animal or person passing to a human who is about to be born. This usually happens when the person's father kills an animal or person, following a shaman's instruction. First, the shaman foretells to a person that a specific act of killing will result in the killer's future baby being born with the victim's soul; if the person enacts the killing, and his wife is conceived thereafter, that child is destined to be born with the victim's spirit. Aripã told me about an account of a Karipuna shaman who had the soul of a white person. When a Karipuna man killed a white person, which was a situation dreamed and foretold by a shaman, the killer's son was destined to be endowed with the soul of the victim: he got “*ombojihu*-ed” by a white man (Curiously, this shaman tried to persuade people away from engaging in warfare with the whites.). In the same way, a *pajé* could

¹⁵⁸ The Karipuna use the word *ra'uva*, *auva*, or *aruwera*, interchangeably translated as “soul” or “spirit” (*alma*, *espírito*).

tell who would conceive a baby, bearing the spirit of an animal. In some cases, a paranormal event could trigger *ombojihu*, as Batiti explains in the story of the Urubuga:

Vultures don't dive into the water. An Indian shot an arrow at an alligator, and the alligator died. Then a vulture came down, dove like a duck, and came out of the water, bob-bob-bob... and sat down. It was not the black vulture. It was *urubu'étéa*, the white vulture. *Urubu'étéa* came out of the water and sat down. Then the shaman told Urubuga's father: "Kill the *urubu'étéa* there, so that when your wife gets pregnant, the [baby's] spirit will be born [as] a vulture." So, the Urubuga's father went there and killed the vulture. Over time, Urubuga's father's wife became pregnant with Urubuga's mother, and a child was born. And he was just like a vulture. He did not eat raw food, I mean, fresh food. He only ate rotten food. He had to let it rot so he could eat the meat. He would also let fish rot, and would eat it with *tapuru* [muckworm] and everything. That's why he called himself Urubuga, because he was identical to the vulture. He didn't eat fresh. He only ate rotten things. No matter whether the food was cooked or roasted, everything rotten, he ate. He called himself Urubuga. He would say something like, "If I eat it raw, fresh [food], it gives me a stomachache. When I eat rotten meat, I feel good." He would say in our language, "*Yi pyraji urame o ko jirehe. Inema orame ji ho oban*," meaning, "I feel good when I eat rotten meat." So said Urubuga. Urubuga's name is Urubuga because he ate it rotten.

Ombojihu exemplifies a particular type of soul transmission. A soul can exit a human or an animal upon death and enter the body of a gestating person, or the unborn baby, associated with the person (normally a father-son relationship) who caused the death (committed the killing). How does the idea of *ombojihu* align with a widely accepted characteristic of Amazonian animist societies: a spiritual continuity between humans and animals? Viveiros de Castro argues, in the Amazonia,

[t]he world is peopled by diverse types of subjective agencies, human and non-human, all endowed with the *same general type of soul* [emphasis added], i.e., the same set of cognitive and volitional capacities. ... [T]he soul, ... is the common original ground of being; the difference is located in the body, for the body is the site and instrument of ontological differentiation. (Viveiros de Castro, 2015, p. 145)¹⁵⁹

In this explanation, the "soul is a token of the ultimate commonality of all beings, human and non-human alike: the primal analogical flow of relatedness ... is a flow of spirit" (Viveiros de Castro, 2015, p. 145). Although the Karipuna's *ombojihu* seems to resonate with Viveiros de Castro's idea, insofar as souls or spirits traverse the boundary between the human/nonhuman (as

¹⁵⁹ "[I]ndividual souls are never made, but always given: either absolutely during conception, or transmitted along with names and other pre-constituted principles, or captured ready-made from the outside. A living person is a composite of body and soul, internally constituted by a self/other, consanguine/affine polarity." (Viveiros de Castro, 2015, pp. 147-8)

well as among different human bodies), it does not fit well within his “multinaturalist” scheme, which presupposes *spiritual unity* and bodily disunity.¹⁶⁰ *Ombojihu* defies the idea of such unity: souls are not the “same general type,” much less the same. If there is no significant disunity (discontinuity) between a human soul and the souls of a vulture, a jaguar, a bat, a snake, a Karipuna, or a white person, there would be no reason for a process such as *ombojihu* to occur. As the example of Urubuga (who has a perfectly human body but feeds on rotten meat because of his vulture's soul) shows, being endowed with a specific animal's soul directly affects a human's behavior. In this case, it is not Urubuga's body that brings about difference or marks discontinuity, but rather a different soul that differentiates. Likewise, but less obviously, a jaguar soul seems to confer on a person born with it the animal's assumed attributes (e.g., “fearless,” “powerful”) via *ombojihu*. Also, having a white person's soul makes the person more generous toward white people, as in the aforementioned case of the Karipuna shaman. In sum, each soul displays a particularity, instead of unity. While the Karipuna shamanism certainly operates on the fluidity of spiritual traffic flow, in which souls are “exchangeable” or “compatible,” it is difficult to assert that souls are consubstantial.¹⁶¹

Apart from exemplifying the intricate relationship with a particular animal at the spiritual level, *ombojihu* has an important effect on the human subject at the physical level. When a person is born with their respective soul, via *ombojihu*, their life (and, consequently, death) becomes *tied* to that specific animal. For example, when a person receives a bat soul, they are advised not to kill bats, as doing so can affect the person's health. If someone wants to inflict harm on the person, s/he can do so by killing bats or casting assault sorcery on bats. By *ombojihu*, the existential fate of a human and an animal becomes interdependent, hence entangled [MESH].

Currently, I have found that the idea of *ombojihu* was shared only among certain people in the community: approximately, half of the adults were able to identify their *ombojihu*. A Karipuna man explained that *ombojihu* is not widespread now because it must be communicated by a shaman, who no longer exists. But taking into consideration that some *ombojihu* relations were announced

¹⁶⁰ “The Amerindian conception would suppose a spiritual unity and a corporeal diversity—or, i.e., one “culture,” multiple “natures” ... —a multinaturalism” (Viveiros de Castro, 2015, p. 59).

¹⁶¹ Consider a scientific fact: a pig's kidney is transplantable to human, does not necessarily mean that the two organs are the same (nor the same “type”), which is precisely the reason why the pig's kidney needs to be genetically “edited” to cancel the risky effects of such difference, and become compatible.

by “a-bit-shamans” rather than proper shamans, a revival seems possible. Some young people showed interest. One leader explicitly said that if he had the time, he wished to learn more about this aspect of shamanism. Another middle-aged Karipuna, who only recently learned his own *ombojihu*, expressed enthusiasm about his jaguar soul. More than once, I found him mentioning it when presenting himself to the public. Although none of the Karipuna a-bit-shamans claims to specialize in *ombojihu*, it seems to be a domain that can be re-enacted.

9.4. *Omongó*: Negotiating with prey

The Kawahiva shamans have a specific dream technique to facilitate hunting, called *omongó* (or *oamongó*). *Omongó* was also used to bring success in warfare through similar dreaming skills (Kracke, 2006, p. 119). In the Kawahiva dictionary, the verb *-amongo* literally means: a) to hang or dangle an object, or b) the dreaming by which one of occult powers brings animals for people to hunt (Betts, 2012, p. 34). One Karipuna explained that *omongó* is “as if one is creating an invisible line. It's like tying up an animal, for example, fixing a cow with a rope so one gains control.” This ritualized, oneiric preparation of prey to facilitate hunting (and warfare) is common among other Kawahiva collectives, although details may vary. The Karipuna's way of *omongó* is similar to the Parintintin people, as described by Waude Kracke: “When a shaman dreamed game for someone (*omongó*), the animals that allowed themselves to be killed by the hunter for whom they were dreamed are also spoken of sometimes as the *pajé's rupig[w]ara*” (2006, p. 108). Activating such dream experiences does not depend on chance but is intentionally carried out through a dream technique involving shamanic power, *ipaji*. Normally, each shaman has his own *omongó* specialty: some specialize in tapirs; others, in peccaries, and so on. There are also a-bit-shamans who obtained partial know-how to perform *omongó* on specific animals. A powerful shaman is the one who specializes in many categories, hence a “generalist.” My interlocutor Aripã is considered a-bit-shaman. He does not have mastery in curing people, but is quite knowledgeable and confident in certain *omongó* skills. Sometimes, he would proudly state to his son Batiti, “I know where the peccary's house is,” “I know where the snake lives,” “I know where the jaguar's house is.” He also claims that he dances with tapirs. One evening, Aripã bluntly asked Batiti, “Son, do you want to kill a tapir?” Batiti, dumbfounded, said yes. “Then, do it to me, now. I'm a tapir,” Aripã continued, “I'm a tapir. Now, shoot me.” He signaled to his son to imagine him as prey and simulate a shot, as if he had spotted the animal in the woods. Batiti did as he was instructed. Days

later, he succeeded in hunting a tapir. Although Aripã told him how *omongó* is done, Batiti never managed to replicate it since he is not *ipaji*, not even a little bit. Yet he remembers the lesson from Aripã, e.g., how to *omongó* a tapir:

So, [let's say] you are a shaman, and I'm not lucky enough to kill a tapir. You want to help me kill one. In a dream, you sleep and go to the tapir's house. You follow the tapir's path. You dive into the bottom of the water, passing by a snake. At the bottom of the water, you arrive at the *buritisal*, the tapir's house. When you get there, there is mud in the distance. You hear the tapir-hawk crying. The tapir, lying in its hammock, will offer you buriti juice. The tapir is huge, so it swallows the seed of buriti, but you cannot swallow it. You drink the juice and must secretly take out the seed. If you remove it in front of the tapir, it will get angry. If you pass the test, you dance together. At some point, it realizes that you will kill it. The tapir will start to sing. Now the *omongó* is done. The tapir is tied for you to kill in real life.

Now, this is how to *omongó* a peccary.

Now you want to kill a peccary. Not one, but two, three, four peccaries... The shaman dreams and goes to the sky, where the peccary's house is. They live in a house made of rocks and there's a door. The shaman has to put a lot of *ipaji*, so that the strong smell of the peccary doesn't get into his body and affect him. If he's not much of a shaman and goes there to *omongó* peccaries, when he wakes up, he can die of the *catinga* [smell], because the venom of the peccary's smell is so strong. He needs to put on a protector so that he doesn't feel the smell and it doesn't give him a stomachache when he wakes up. When he gets to the peccary's rock house, there's already a jaguar at the door. You must first scare off the jaguar and then shout out loud, "I want to see you, peccaries, come out!" ... When they come out, you dance with the peccaries. Without your partner noticing, you must quickly cut the hair off his back. You keep marking like that, one by one, those you will kill. But you must do it secretly and quickly, so that they don't know. That mark of the hair will appear in reality when you kill a peccary. It's real. Soon, the jaguar will be back, scaring the peccaries, who will rush inside and close the door. So, you must be quick. When it is done, I say "*yi acuti iaba*" [I cut the hair]!

In a similar fashion, the Karipuna say that one can *omongó* other animals: deer, jaguars, and even humans, such as white people. The principle is more or less the same: negotiating with the prey in dreams.

9.4.1. Crossing the human-animal boundary

Omongó shows one way the Karipuna address the nonhuman other with whom they need to coexist. In it, we sense an interest to build and maintain a relationship that involves cosmic negotiation, one that goes beyond a simple predator-prey chain of unilateral killing and consumption, as reflected in how they address the boundary between them and animals. When Aripã claims that he dances with a tapir, or even that he *is* a tapir, how does he cross the barrier that divides his human

self from the animal other? In animist societies, it is known that the common way to transgress the boundary and cross over to the animal domain is to transform the body (metamorphosis). This process is illuminated by perspectivist logics (Viveiros de Castro, 2015): what marks the distinction between humans and nonhuman animals is usually the “discontinuity of bodies.” As Philippe Descola also observes, “the definition of the 'other' (the alter) [is] those (humans and nonhumans) whose physicality is different” (Descola, 2013, p. 304). Bodily transformation resolves this difference, as a distinct body entails a different perspective.

In the Karipuna's *omongó*, the shaman does not undergo metamorphosis to cross to the animal side (e.g., “go to peccary's house,” “visit tapir's house”). In the case of the peccary, the *pajé* first needs to overcome the animal's notorious smell, *catinga*. When an untrained, non-shaman person inhales the smell, it can overwhelm him, and bring dangerous consequences. So, it is critical that the *pajé* insulates himself from the smell (although exactly how he does it is unclear). Yet the location where the *catinga* enters seems not limited to the olfactory organ but extends to the chest area. Aripã explained, “Our chest is protected as if it were a stone.”¹⁶² Enduring *catinga* means protecting one's vulnerability from the inevitable risk entailed in crossing an otherwise uncrossable boundary. Once the *pajé* overcomes this obstacle, peccaries will come and dance with him. During the dance, the shaman must mark his prey by cutting the back hair of the peccary as swiftly as possible, since apart from the *catinga*, another factor sets a time-limit on the duration of *omongó*: the jaguar's imminent return.

In the case of the *omongó* on tapirs, the *pajé* needs to make himself acceptable to the animal by passing a test: drinking the buriti (*Mauritia flexuosa*) juice.¹⁶³ If the *pajé* swallows the giant buriti seed in the juice, he will die; if the *pajé* refuses to drink, the host (tapir) will become angry and might refuse to dance. The only thing the *pajé* can do is pretend that he drank. If this is done successfully, s/he is accepted to dance together, which is the culmination of negotiation.

¹⁶² The chest is also the perceived “entrance” where the *ra'uv* (spirit -Kw) of the *mirangã* enters. When the *onimbote* (exchange -Kw) of the *ra'uv* happened between the Karipuna shamans and their *mirangã*, the place where the spirit enters/exits was explained to be the chest, “[w]here the heart is” (Kin, 2024, p. 351, note 28). Batiti interprets this as denoting to the location of “figado” (which is also where some *anhanga* attacks shamans). There is a story of the mighty shaman Kandabuha, where he successfully defends his chest area, by transforming the part into a rock and making it “bullet-proof” from the insidious *anhanga*.

¹⁶³ This buriti juice also appears in another story. A tapir and some Karipuna were making buriti juice. A Karipuna man was taking out the seeds, while the tapir swallowed them. “Do you take out all the seeds?” asked the tapir. “Don’t throw them away, leave them for me, I’ll swallow them all!” (Denófrio, 2012, p. 102).

This is how the Karipuna negotiate human-animal boundaries in dreams. If the body is usually the marker of discontinuity, and metamorphosis seems the easier way to cross it (given that metamorphosis is a signature shamanic move featured in the Karipuna narratives), why does the shaman bother to initiate these negotiations rather than metamorphose into the desired animal? I acknowledge that, in Amerindian perspectivism, metamorphosis denotes a broad range of bodily transformations that allow one to experience the world from another's point of view, and the notion of body is not strictly defined by its visual shape. However, it remains vital to preserve the dimension of corporeal change in metamorphosis, especially when people explicitly denote it. If we stretch the concept of metamorphosis to the point of equating it with any bodily affect, for instance, by disregarding the difference between a shaman *transfiguring into* a tapir and a shaman dancing *with* a tapir, the idea of metamorphosis loses its specific meaning and analytical power. My Karipuna interlocutor explicitly clarified that "the *pajé* does not become a peccary. Nor does he become a tapir. He just dances [with them] ... no part of the body changes" during *omongó*.

Both enduring a smell or trying *not to be affected* by it (in the case of the peccaries) and accommodating oneself to the other's specific dietary custom ("If you want to mingle with us, drink what we drink!": in the case of the tapirs) require specific behaviors and capacities that are all associated with the body but extend much further. In the Karipuna's shamanic oneiric negotiation with animal prey, more attention seems to be paid to behavioral differences than to physiological differences: put differently, to *social* skills. Given that *omongó* is a key way the Karipuna navigate boundaries with their most significant nonhuman others in daily predatory relations, the fact that shamans do not simply transform into these animals, along with the focus on behavior and social skill, underscores the importance of these cosmic negotiations. This clearly illustrates the conditions, possibilities, and risks of openness and hospitality, as imagined from the animal's point of view.

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Like many other shamanic facets, *omongó* is not widespread among the Karipuna, much less practiced. Currently, Aripã seems to be the only one who still practices *omongó* with peccaries [MESH]. Besides him, the only person among the younger generation who had a firsthand opportunity to experience the effect of *omongó* was Batiti. When his uncles, Tiu and Abagajú, were still alive, they taught him the technique. However, Batiti says he "didn't catch" the lesson:

They taught me, like, how to *amongó* the animals, how to go to sleep, they taught me. They played with me a lot. Tiu and him [Abagajú]. They said, “Look, today I’m going to take you to the peccary’s house, teach you how we do it. Let’s sleep!” Then he lay down [in the hammock]. “Me, too?” I really fell asleep. When I woke up, I said, “But you didn’t bring me.” “No, I called you. You slept a lot,” they said, “So we went alone. It was me and your brother, Abagajú. We went there. In three days, we’re going to kill peccary.” And it happened.

At this point, I asked Batiti, “Did it really happen? Just like that?” He replied:

Yes, it happened. ... It really did. Just like that, he killed tapir, deer, peccary. Everything as he said. I said I wanted to see the snake’s house, where the snake lives, in the dream. He said he was going to take me there, but I never went, because I didn’t know *pajelança* [witchcraft].

In May 2024, I confirmed whether Aripã still practices *amongó*. “Yes! The peccaries are there [near the village] because I *amongó*.” Then he added, “Abagajú used to *amongó* for us. When he died, the peccaries didn’t come. For a while. After, when I did *amongó*, they returned. When I die, it will happen again. They [peccaries] will leave.” As his son does not seem up to the task, the Karipuna *amongó* may need another heir to succeed him.

9.5. *Mirangã*: The forest spirits

The *mirangã* (pronounced /mira'upgẽ/) are the Karipuna’s “forest spirits,” curers of diseases and spiritual protectors. The *mirangã*’s principal function was healing. They lived in the forest and occasionally visited their village at the call of shamans, who needed them to treat diseases that they could not cure themselves. The *mirangã* would bring their own *mohanga* (vegetal remedy - Kw), unfamiliar to the Karipuna, but their curing method was similar to that of Karipuna shamans, involving the art of blowing and passing of plants on one’s body. To call and receive the *mirangã*, the shaman must lead a group of men in performing a ritual song in the nearby forest¹⁶⁴ (usually at night). Then, the *mirangã* would come in a group (more than twenty). They are not just multiple but also personalized beings. Each *mirangã* has a specific name, and it is attributed to each male individual in the community as their respective *jijaraga* (master/owner - Kw). Except for women and young members, practically every adult had their own *mirangã*, producing more people (at least double the number per person) and thus a multiplied coexistence. However, the spirits did not always appear together with their receivers. When the *mirangã* respond to the ritual song and appear, they reportedly enter the bodies of the receivers (the shaman and other Karipuna men). At

¹⁶⁴ When it was not for a curing session, non-shamans could also call them, according to Aripã.

the same time, the spirits of the receivers exit their own bodies and enter the *mirangã*'s body. This movement of souls, exiting one's body and entering into each other's bodies, is described as *onimbote* ("exchange," "transformation" -Kw). So, the process can be viewed as "becoming-other": the *mirangã* becoming the shaman-receiver and vice versa. Elsewhere (Kin, 2024), I highlighted the discrepancy between how the Karipuna and their observers (like me) perceive the *mirangã*. While Aripã and Katiká, the only living Karipuna who had firsthand experience with the *mirangã*, describe them as autonomous beings "just like us, flesh and bone," whom they could see, touch, and talk with, non-Karipuna observers tend to interpret *mirangã* as the same shamans returning "empowered." More so, because the Karipuna affirmed that when the *mirangã* came to the village, embodying their receivers, their looks were the same, and the receivers remained in the forest, as if they were held hostage during the *mirangã*'s stay. However, both Karipuna elders disagreed with such an interpretation and forcefully affirmed that the *mirangã* are entirely different, autonomous beings (not transformed or renewed shamans), that the receivers remained in the forest while the *mirangã* stayed in the village. What we can learn from this ontological difference is manifold, but most importantly, it indicates the paramount importance for the Karipuna of conceiving the other and preserving alterity. The necessity of *otherization* to cure people exemplifies the role of the constitutive other in their social reproduction.

In fact, the *mirangã*'s very existence emerges from their enmeshment with nonhuman others in the forest [MESH]. The *mirangã*'s direct connection with diverse forest beings and their multiplying effect are manifested in the narrative about their genesis, told by Aripã Karipuna.

Itapaumaga¹⁶⁵ is the first *mirangã*. He slept in the forest alone. He first killed a caiman and took its two legs. Then there were owls. He called them, "*Ejo kayra'vi ji poe cavo!*" [Come to the forest, protect me! - Kw]. The owls came and turned into two *mirangã*: Yptunaga [night -Kw] and Tepiaquabeumga [just a name]. He kept walking in the forest, now three of them together. Then he found *enemohua* [bamboo larvae -Kw] in the *tacuara* [bamboo bush -Kw]. He said again, "Come to the forest, protect me!" He turned three bamboo larvae into three *mirangã*: Jirokyga, Apeheymaga, and Ponhakangiga. Then he found tree trunks rubbing each other by the wind, making a noise "*niiiii-*." "Come to the forest, protect me!" He turned the sound into two *mirangã*: Jirokyga and Peaturaga.¹⁶⁶ Then he found *tapenhatinha* [termite nest -Kw]. He hit the earth, making it tremble. The spirit of the nest turned into two *mirangã*: Paiti-tinha-ibaga and Jiroaraga. Then he kept walking, walking, and walking in the woods. He found two armored catfish that turned into

¹⁶⁵ *Ita* means "stone," *pa* means "water." He represents the two essential elements of nature.

¹⁶⁶ Katiká says it was also Abakuiga, because this *mirangã* was named after a tree that makes noise ("kui, kui-").

another two. Then he collected lots of caiman eggs. Many caimans came. He turned them into six *mirangã*. Like that, he transformed creatures into *mirangã* and increased them. Then he left.

Whereas in other Karipuna origin narratives, certain humans and animals are engendered from stones or human artifacts, the *mirangã* are made from diverse forest beings. The *pajé* Atapehumaga, giving birth to *mirangã* by transforming sylvan life forms, shows a selection that shapes the forest's web of life: birds, fish, insects, reptiles, and flora. Yet not all *mirangã* originate from living organisms: some arise from a particular *sound* produced when branches rub against each other. If this story recounts how the *mirangã* are born from the forest, there is an account about a *mirangã* (named Onimboerebiga) transforming back into a forest being. When Onimboerebiga, who used to stay close to the Karipuna village, decided to leave for good, he said to the people, “Don't worry, I will transform into a leaf, so I won't be far away.” After his departure, whenever people went to the forest and saw a leaf swinging alone at the top of a tree without any wind blowing, it was meant to be him (*onimboerebi* means “something is moving” -Kw). Where others see only leaves, the Karipuna see coexisting forest spirits. The *mirangã* is a quintessential example of Karipuna's enmeshment with forest as a socio-cosmo-ecological realm [MESH].

9.5.1. Perception machine of the white Other

Another important aspect of the *mirangã* is that they seem to represent the Karipuna's “Indigenous modes of analysis” (Kirsch, 2006) for coping with white people (whom they call *kunumaga*¹⁶⁷), as they were gearing for inevitable coexistence with them [COP]. The Karipuna explain that the *mirangã* coexisted with both them and the white strangers, able to transgress the boundary between the two worlds. As the *mirangã* mingled with the whites, they became familiar with them and would even behave like them. When the *mirangã* appeared in the Karipuna's village, they looked like Indians (wearing leaves to cover intimate parts and wearing body paint), but when they left, they would take off the leaves and then dress like whites (e.g., wearing hats) to mingle with them. This liminality (between spirit/human, Indigenous/white, forest/urban) allowed the *mirangã* to play a mediating role in conflicts with whites, but they always sided with the Karipuna rather than their enemies. Being familiar with the *kunumaga*, the *mirangã* were able to inform the Karipuna about the whites and their artifacts (e.g., airplanes, guns) even before establishing contact. The *mirangã* also gave warnings about the whites, negotiated with them on behalf of the Karipuna, and

¹⁶⁷ In this word, the *mirangã* allegedly used a vocabulary different from the Karipuna, who call the white *tapy'ynha*: another exemplification of their autonomy.

even reassured them: “They [*mirangã*] said that Karipuna would have contacts with FUNAI. They said not to be afraid. Trust them. They will arrive with weapons, but no need to fear. This was how their lives would be in the future. These people [FUNAI agents] weren't going to cause harm” (Kin, 2024, p. 357). This mediator role seems to be emphasized as violent conflicts with white people increased. After the Karipuna went through the official contact period and started to cohabit with the whites by establishing themselves in the Panorama village, another kind of white strangers emerged as enemies: the *invasores* who kept invading their demarcated land, destroying and exploiting the forest, which continues to be a dire threat until today. While most of the Karipuna rely on their coalition (authorities or NGOs) to deal with them, some still summon the *mirangã* up as their protectors against them, as shown in a comment by Katiká Karipuna:

The *mirangã* are our protectors. It's not their fault that there are [invaders]. They always protect us, that's why they [invaders] never killed anyone here in the village. The invaders stay away. That's why there are no deaths. If they approach to attack us, they [*mirangã*] would never let that happen. They won't let anything happen to our grandchildren or great-grandchildren. (Kin, 2024, p. 358)

This comment shows the Karipuna's reliance on nonhuman alliance to overcome the threats to their coexistence with the forest. However, such thoughts and expressions, which can be viewed as an enactment of cosmopolitics, is not shared across the board. Some Karipuna do not know much about the *mirangã*, let alone think that they exist in this forest. At least these people respectfully disagree with Katiká, but another community member bluntly said that Katiká is “making things up,” that those things are “just in her head.” Even the only other Karipuna who have firsthand experience with the *mirangã* seemed unsure of their existence. In May 2024, when I asked Aripã—who had firsthand experience of the *mirangã*—whether he still sees these spirits, he replied with a grin, “Now, I don't know, [because of] the city... [I see them] only at night, in dreams.” The other elder Kaipú, not living in Panorama village, said he doesn't remember anything about the *mirangã*. What Aripã was trying to say by “city” probably implies both the overwhelming expansion of the urban environment and the general impact of Brazilian society. For him, “city” might be a metonym for all that stands against the forest: not only the wave of deforestation and urbanization that threatens shamanic infrastructure, but also the outsiders' skepticism towards their thoughts and practices, which rapidly permeates the younger generation, putting shamanism on the retreat. This shows another dimension of the FDD driven by the surrounding society, which severely impacts the coexistence with nonhuman others.

9.6. Conclusion: Hanging on a little bit

The Karipuna shamanism represents a quintessential way of coexisting with the other-than-human others. Whether it's the shamanic power *ipaji*, the protective ownership *rupigwara*, soul endowment *ombojihu*, oneiric hunting technique *omongó*, or the forest spirits-healers-protectors *mirangã*, the Karipuna shaman's capacity to interact and communicate with other-than-human realms brings about an “augmented ecological reality,” enriching the depth and breadth of the Karipuna's coexistence with sylvan others. It connects people to the expansive web of nonhuman agential relations, unpacking a forest of spiritual symbiosis in which no living being exists alone. It shows the Karipuna's penchant for *peopling* and multiplying their social life with various others. As we can see in the case of the *mirangã*, preserving this otherness in the human and nonhuman others with whom they needed to interact is crucial in their social constitution. Borrowing from the phrase of Viveiros de Castro, who said: “the other was not merely good to think¹⁶⁸; the other was necessary for thinking” (2011, p. 16), we can say, for the Karipuna, the other was not merely necessary for thinking but necessary to live.

Shamanism is the quintessential Indigenous metaphysics of the nonhuman other: it is born and cultivated exclusively in forests teeming with nonhuman existence, just like the *mirangã* who were born, multiplied, and summoned up in forest environments. Just as a proper shaman must train oneself in the deep woods, shamanism needs the nonhuman others “endemic” to forests, to operate properly. Although Karipuna shamanism may not have an explicit creed to “conserve” nonhuman others, nor a claim to a “stewarding” role to maintain the cosmic balance of the environment (as some shamanisms do), it implicitly signals a direction towards coexistence by necessitating the presence of the forest, including all its inhabitants. Every form of Karipuna shamanism I presented above entails deep enmeshment with sylvan nonhumans, especially animals. Without these nonhuman others, shamanism simply cannot exist, since its entire edifice hinges on the more-than-human sylvan coexistence. In other words, every expression of their shamanism is also an expression of their openness to the constitutive (nonhuman) Other.

Given this, the fact that the Karipuna's forest is being severely disturbed by unscrupulous invasions and deforestation directly affects shamanism. The analysis of Aripã, which attributes the

¹⁶⁸ Lévi-Strauss famously said some animals are “chosen not because they are 'good to eat' [*bonnes à manger*] but because they are 'good to think' [*bonnes à penser*]” (Lévi-Strauss, 1962, p. 89).

absence of *mirangã* to the city's dominant presence, speaks volumes about how shamanism exists among the Karipuna today. At present, there are no shamans, yet a few, mostly elders, practice forms of shamanism and are considered “a bit shaman.” There is also a glaring discrepancy of knowledge, approval, and onto-epistemological commitment concerning shamanism within the Karipuna community. Besides, no one is pursuing the path to becoming a *pajé*. But with or without a shaman, Karipuna shamanism persists¹⁶⁹ and may continue to be so. This is not just wishful thinking, but owing to the fact that, for the Karipuna, shamanic power is distributable and possible to be harnessed by a-bit-shamans, too. It is a form of shamanism that is not enacted exclusively by shamans, but by every *pouco pajé* and commoner who commits to it. As Abagajú's absence and Aripã's replacement concerning the *omongó* practice show, shamanism's effect is relative to its enactment. It ceases when shamanic worlding stops. In this regard, the notion of *pouco pajé* holds enormous potential, allowing anyone to take the initiative, provided one is willing to harness it. Although I collected comments from multiple young people interested in learning shamanism, it remains to be seen whether and how Karipuna shamanism will continue to be enacted in future generations. What is clear for now is that the door is not closed. It will require a serious commitment, but not necessarily a full-blown *ipaji*: just a little bit will suffice.

¹⁶⁹ Although its influence seems to be generally waning, there are reports that some Indigenous people are retaking shamanic paths, such as the case of the Gavião in the 1980s. (Brunelli, 1996, p. 243)

IV. *Adynamia*

In environmental commitments, we often fail to notice that *not* doing something contributes as much as, if not more than, doing something: e.g., mitigation of global heating involves *cutting* GHG emissions, *stopping* the extraction of fossil fuels, *reducing* flights, *abstaining* from consuming products with massive carbon footprints, among others. Likewise, there are many things that should not be done to preserve forests, such as not engaging in large-scale logging or poaching. Various terms cover slightly different grounds of this broad category of “not-doings”: refraining, forbearing, abstaining, evading, postponing, non-performance, non-interference, giving way, etc. Not-doings have also been called “negative actions” or “negative acts” in philosophy of action (Kärki, 2018, p. 365; Mossel, 2009; Vermazen, 1985). None of these notions bear a particularly positive connotation; rather, they are usually “unappreciated dispositions,” as Steve Connor (2019) aptly put. For instance, omission is defined as “a failure to do, or even attempt to do, something that in one way or another one is ‘supposed to do,’ for instance, leaving out a step in a procedure or not fulfilling a responsibility” (Bach, 2010, p. 51). Also in empirical (social) studies, a preference for overt, observable actions over not-doings is observable (Kärki, 2018). So, it is not a coincidence that human contribution to the environment— the concern of this thesis— is also commonly framed and measured to the extent that the subject proactively produces an outcome through identifiable (preferably visible and quantifiable) actions. The endless debate about whether or to what extent Amerindians have “intentionally produced” the Amazonian forest (Introduction) is one of these examples. While such an approach has its place (and is laudable insofar as intended to do justice to Indigenous contributions), it is necessary to acknowledge its limits and not treat it as the only way.

Some attribute this tendency to “an agential bias peculiar to Western culture” (Reader 2007, as cited in Kärki, 2018, p. 367), in which a “passive, incapable, constrained, or dependent” person is considered as less of a person (*ibid.*), hence the lack of attention to withdrawal, silence, and passivity, ignoring that “passivity, contingency, and dependency are just as constitutive of personhood as action, capability, choice, and independence” (*ibid.*). While there are notable efforts to expand the scope and subject of action and agency in the Western philosophical milieu (Bennett, 2010; Braidotti, 2013; Latour, 2012, among others), Eastern philosophy has a long tradition of appreciating non-actions, which indexes its “dissociation from Western ontology’s preoccupation

with a privileging of actualization” (Ng, 2023, p. 222, *sensu Jullien, 2009*). Consider the concept of *wu wei* (無為), central to Taoism—proposed by Lao Tzu and Zhuangzi and translated as “not doing,” “doing without doing,” “effortless action,” (Slingerland, 2003) “action of non-action,” (Ng, 2023) or “action through non-action,” (Van, 2025)¹⁷⁰—which means being in alignment with the natural flow, rather than pursuing a forced effort driven by ego. *Wu wei* is *not* the same as passivity or laziness, and nor does it carry any negative connotation in the Taoist vision; on the contrary, non-action or “being one with the unplanned and unpurposive is fundamental” (Ng, 2023, p. 229) to attain a high level of awareness.

Bearing this difference in mind, we can trace the root of the tendency in Western philosophy in Aristotelian metaphysics of existence, which distinguishes *energeia* (act/actuality) from *dynamis* (potential), thereby attributing superiority to the former, according to Agamben (1999, 2016). Agamben explains the relation that constitutes the essence of *potentiality*:

To be potential means: to be one's own lack, *to be in relation to one's own incapacity*. Beings that exist in the mode of potentiality *are capable of their own impotentiality*, and only in this way do they become potential. They *can be* because they are in relation to their own non-Being. (Agamben, 1999, p. 182)

Therefore, potentiality *is* impotentiality, and *to be capable is to be capable of an incapacity* [emphasis added] (ibid.). The passage from potential to actuality occurs “at the point at which it sets aside its own potential not to be (its *adynamia*),” which “is not to destroy it but, on the contrary, to fulfill it, to turn potentiality back upon itself in order to give itself to itself” (Agamben, 1998, p. 46). By conserving the potentiality instead of eliminating it, Agamben points to the possibility of a new politics projected from *adynamia*, that is, the *ability* not to do: “The capacity Agamben calls ‘impotential,’ translating Aristotle’s *adynamia*, does not mean impotence, or lack of a power, but the power, so to speak, to lack or hold back” (Connor, 2019, p. 4). If we view the

performances ... of nonperformance, that are nevertheless unmistakably actual to the point of forming the tissue and quick of social life” (ibid.), non-actions such as “humility, resignation, mercy, and remission ... [also] need to be seen as ways of withdrawing from action that nevertheless in themselves constitute positive actions. (ibid.)

¹⁷⁰ Also translated as “not-forcing,” by the writer Alan Watts in his non-fiction book *Tao: The Watercourse Way* (1975).

The politics of *adynamia* is inscribed in the notorious phrase of the literary figure Bartleby (in Herman Melville's *The Scrivener*), "I would prefer not to," which reveals a zone of indistinction¹⁷¹ "between the potential to be (or do) and the potential not to be (or do)" (Agamben, 1999, p. 19). *Adynamia* is *not* anti-dynamic, undynamic, nor static; it is a constant reminder of the aporia between action and potential action, that every doing is possible in relation to its own not-doing. I find resonance in Bartleby's negation with certain efforts of the Karipuna's to defend the forest, not only in the case of their policy to refrain from logging, but also in the way in which they explain such not-doing, for instance, when a person says, "I could sell [timber] if I wanted to," yet prefers not to. It would be a mistake to take this as disguising an intention of action. On the contrary, the remark illuminates, not just a simple absence of action, but also what the absence itself denotes, which is the conserving and fulfilling of *adynamia*: becoming potential, in the way of being mindfully capable of one's own impotentiality. In this sense, enactments of *adynamia* should be viewed not so much a definitive "never-doing" as a "not-yet-doing": paradoxically, *adynamia* always retains its very dynamic.

Recasting inability as *ability not to (do)*, and deficiency as *power to lack*, allows us to shed light on an important dimension of coexistence. As much as coexistence is about enmeshing or coping with the other, it is also about not doing certain things: e.g., imposing the Self onto the Other. In this respect, an important "power to lack" conducive to coexistence is the will towards domination. Ghassan Hage (2017) formulates the dominating mode of existence as "generalized domestication."¹⁷² Pointing out the etymological roots of the word "domestication" linked to *domus*, which shares its roots with *dominus* (ibid., pp. 91-2, reading Benveniste & Lallot, 1973, p. 243), Hage argues:

Domestication is not just any kind of homeliness, it is a homeliness obtained through domination. ... While the aggressive affects associated with "domination" are often thought of in opposition to the gentle and cuddly affects associated with the home, domestication offers us an understanding of one of the crucial modes in which we exist and where these two affects are inseparably intertwined.

¹⁷¹ The "zone of indiscernibility or indetermination between some nonpreferred activities and a preferable activity." (Deleuze, 1998, p. 71).

¹⁷² Whereas Hage uses this concept interchangeably with "mode of enmeshment" (2017, p. 82), I view its strong "associat[ion] with mono-realism" (p. 128) as denying the "multiplicity of enmeshment" (ibid.) and, consequently, enmeshment with the other itself. Therefore, such domestication is antithetical to coexistence, whereas enmeshment is conducive to it.

Generalized domestication is the fantasy whereby we make our existence viable by seeking homeliness through aggression and domination. (Hage, 2017, p. 92)

The will to domesticate both human and nonhuman others is best manifested in the projects of colonialization.

Domestication is first and foremost a mode of inhabiting the world by occupying it. Occupation here is meant in the settler-colonial sense. Indeed, from an inter-species perspective, every human occupation is an act of settler colonialism since one occupies a space that is always already occupied by other domesticators, whether insects, animals, plants or trees. Each of these inhabits the world with some degree of instrumentalization too: ... What defines human generalized domestication is the act of occupying a space by declaring one's own interest as its *primary organizing principle* [emphasis added]. As such it relates to prior occupiers of the same space according to how their being can be harnessed to the advancement of our own being. What comes in the way is excluded or exterminated. (Hage, 2017, pp. 94-5)

Discussing the “anti-domestication” tendency in the Amazonia, Carneiro da Cunha concludes, citing Hage: “Amazonian humans did *not* [emphasis added] give preeminence to their own interests, making it the 'primary organizing principle' of the forest. In that sense, their aim was *not* to colonize the forest” (Carneiro da Cunha, 2019, p. 132). Hence the Amazonians' coexistence with forests, in intra-active entanglement (Barad 2017), instead of its colonization.

What makes Amerindian ways different from human domestication in Hage's sense is that Amerindians refrain from making their organization of the land into the “primary organizing principle” of the forest. In short, one could say that they do not submit the forest to human generalized domestication. (Carneiro da Cunha, 2019, p. 132)

While I agree that “saying this is starkly different from the still-lingering tropes about Indigenous peoples 'living in harmony with Nature’” (ibid., footnote 17), I would hesitate to describe that all Amerindians always “refrained” from applying such a principle, if refraining involves decision-making, as I will use the term specifically in the following chapter. Rather, I suggest that the lack of generalized domestication can also be explained by people's *power to lack* “the passion to change others,” drawing on Humberto Maturana's notion (1985, as cited in Mignolo, 2011, p. 27). Such passion is activated when one is unable to “put objectivity in parentheses” (Maturana, 1988: Chapter 13), that is, when one cannot check one's own assumptions and recognize that objectivity can be conceived differently. The Indigenous people's widely observed tendency to understand reality in the plural can be viewed as allowing “objectivity with parenthesis” and the lack of passion to change others. This does not mean that these people do not change others; they do. But thanks to their tendency to incorporate the other *with* the otherness (without othercide)

and their *ability not to* passionately convert the other into the selfsame, they rarely enact change by ways of imposing their primary organizing principle.

Adynamia, or the potential not to, should not be equated with being anti-, but rather *preferring* not to, in line with the Karipuna's characteristic “in-betweenness” shown throughout the thesis. Their treatment of the nonhuman sylvan beings (trees, animals, etc.) shows neither an active management/stewardship, nor unscrupulous, destructive enactments. The people are oriented by loosely defined rules of thumb, which are tacit, flexible and often fraught with exceptions. Likewise, regarding the abovementioned Amerindian “anti-domestication,” the Karipuna's behavior is neither a strong anti-, nor a pro- domestication. In these ways, they produce effects conducive to forest-human coexistence that are not easily grasped with the active/passive binary, which speaks to the observation that “Amerindian notions of agency cannot be easily understood in terms of ... active/ passive dualities” (Kelly & Matos, 2019). This is where my proposal to understand “*forest*” as a verb in the middle voice can help (the middle voice denotes immersion in the process, while the active voice denotes explicitly intentional action, and the passive voice denotes being acted upon: see Introduction). Understanding Indigenous enactments as foresting in middle voice can capture what is neither active nor passive, without attributing primacy to action or will (intention). Ingold explains of the middle voice with walking: “I may of course intend to go for a walk. But once on my way, I am my walking, and my walking walks me. I carry on and am carried; I do it, but am equally transformed by it” (Ingold, 2022, p.32). Similarly, when a person *forests*, it is often not an action in active nor passive voice; rather, it is a long-term, indirect cumulative effect of subtle, tepid actions, or absence of actions, both shaping the forest and being shaped by it. We also need not attribute a narrow sense of agency imbued with intention to credit such participations and contributions: just like the scatter-hoarding behavior of agoutis is the most important nonhuman dispersal vector of the Brazilian nut tree, regardless of its intention (Peres & Baider, 1997). The intentional facet of the Karipuna's contribution to the forest is clearly expressed in their *luta*, as we covered; with *adynamia* and middle voice, we can account for the other facets that are easily obscured by a possible “(Western) agential bias” (Reader, 2007).

The lifeways of many Indigenous people have a longstanding tendency to forest, but being an Indigenous person does not always make someone to forest. Foresting is a propensity, not an essence, therefore, should be empirically addressed. Indigenous people can also disengage with

the process of foresting, just as their *adynamia* can always pass to *dynamia*. Attending to the various (non-)forms of how people enact foresting in the middle voice, with fine-grained ethnography, can bring *adynamia* to the fore, so that we can appreciate such crucial enactments of coexistence, where the people's often-overlooked contribution to the forest also lies.

10. Policies of refraining ^[RES] ^[COP]

10.1. Refraining conducive to coexistence

It is widely recognized that coexistence involves *not doing* certain things, such as refraining from aggression or retaliation, whether it concerns the human others (Fifield, 1958; Jiali & Thakur, 2004) or nonhumans (Pooley et al., 2022). Likewise, in the Karipuna's effort to coexist with the forest, a certain absence of actions appears to be more impactful than actions. Some not-doings are expressed in their policy; others are embedded in daily life. I propose to distinguish two different types of not-doings: “refraining” (avoiding or stop doing something as a decision) and “giving way” (setting aside with or without a decision). In this chapter, I will focus on the former and elaborate on the latter in the next chapter. By refraining, I mean the avoidance of action that involves decision-making. In action theory, “unlike trying and not succeeding and unlike (unintentionally) omitting to do something, when one refrains from doing something one *decides* not to do it” (Bach, 2010, p. 3). Apart from decision-making, refraining also presupposes an opportunity and the ability to take advantage of it. If one lacks both, there is no reason to refrain because one has no motivation or is unable to commit the act in the first place. Refraining also presupposes a will (desire) or temptation to commit the act in question.¹⁷³ By refraining from an action, the doer demonstrates an opposite decision, which does not necessarily mean the will or temptation ceases to exist. It may still exist, in a subdued way. So, under different circumstances, the decision to refrain may change. In the following pages, I will discuss more conscious, collective decisions to refrain, which can be considered “policies.”

10.1.1. From direct to indirect engagement with *invasores*

As we have seen in the Karipuna's history of warring with their enemy, they seem to have responded in more strategic and calculated ways than being aggressive and bellicose, especially during their encounters with the white people. Being aware of their relatively modest population size and the military superiority of their adversaries, they alternated between avoidance and small-scale confrontation, depending on the reading of each circumstance. Today, the standardized pattern of their *luta* consists of political advocacy and monitoring, and direct encounters with

¹⁷³ In this usage, it is closer to “forbearing”: “Does refraining from doing something require that one should have at least some inclination to do it? That may be necessary for forbearing, but it seems too strong a requirement on refraining” (Bach, 2010, p. 4).

invasores are rare and usually avoided. Experiencing retaliatory arson in the former FUNAI post contributed to eschewing risky confrontation. Yet, due to the Karipuna's relentless advocacy, it is only when their efforts finally bear fruit, and they manage to summon authorities to enforce the law, that the risk of retaliation increases. On the rare occasions when the authorities operate, the absence of a permanent government base leaves the Karipuna in an insecure position. For instance, the 2024 “Operation Karipuna” was a relatively thorough operation that took two months and involved more than 100 officers, including armed IBAMA police. However, as the operation resulted in expulsion of some illegal *invasores*, the Karipuna leaders decided to issue a statement on June 24, 2024, on behalf of the APOIKA, clarifying the Karipuna's irrelevance from any alleged “distortion in the process” of the invader's removal.

We clarify that the removal of all invaders from the Karipuna land, as well as from six other Indigenous Lands, was determined by the PRECAUTIONARY MEASURE IN THE ALLEGATION OF NON-COMPLIANCE WITH FUNDAMENTAL PRECEPT 709 FEDERAL DISTRICT of January 2023. “I reiterate the determination to the Union that: (i) it carries out the complete and definitive removal of such mining operations, as well as the removal of invaders from all said Indigenous lands, prioritizing those in a humanitarian situation.” The government accepting the complaint and demand from the Karipuna for so many years should be a reason for celebration for the [Indigenous] relatives, as it is a victory for all Indigenous people in this country. If there was any distortion in this process regarding whom being removed from our lands, it can be assured that *the Karipuna have nothing to do with it* [emphasis added].

The fact that the leaders sensed a need to make an announcement to distance themselves from the operation (which they solicited), shows the level of concern about potential retaliation. And understandably so. No matter how well accomplished the IBAMA's mission may be, the police were not going to be stationed inside the Karipuna IL to enforce law 24/7. Neither will they be dispatched swiftly to intervene in case of emergency. It could take months, if not years, to mobilize them again. Therefore, during this governance vacuum, it was clear that the Karipuna had to deal with all the aftermaths of the operation, without any backing from the authorities. Considering this precarity, it seems only reasonable that they make efforts to defuse the tension. Although their *luta* is predicated on resistance, what they need to enact on the ground is emitting signals and gestures of coping and coexistence [COP], even to their potential enemy.

10.2. Forest NOT for sale: Anti-logging policy

If the first example of refraining is a form of avoidance to secure the people's safety, the second case I will present is conceived to protect the forest. In fact, many refrainments can be conducive

to human coexistence with the forest and its living beings: refraining from converting the forest to arable land, refraining from commercial extractive activities, avoiding unsustainable hunting or predatory fishing, distancing from wildlife trade, abstaining from organized eradication of “nuisance” animals, etc: in short, refraining from activities that cause deforestation or forest depletion. While the Karipuna's active engagement in advocacy (*luta*) is crucial to secure forest protection on legal and political levels, one of the most impactful components of their resistance on the ground level is a form of not-doing: refraining from large-scale, commercial activities in the forest that may be lucrative but bring about destruction. The focus of this chapter will be on understanding the decision-making factors that led the Karipuna to refrain from extracting trees and selling timber.

Often dubbed as “co-optation,” unauthorized Indigenous participation in the commercialization of timber inside Indigenous territory (“Indigenous logging,” hereafter) is a widely known but highly sensitive issue rarely discussed by academics, especially in Brazil, where such practice constitutes an environmental crime. A rare reference, *Rain Forest Exchange* (Fisher, 2000), encouraged researchers to “confront the problem” instead of “sweeping it under the rug” (p. 4). But for two and a half decades, only a few academic publications of the sort followed suit (Gordon, 2006; Neto, 2010). Meanwhile, the practice did not cease. Reports in media outlets and police investigations confirm its perpetuation (L. Almeida, 2018; Gamarra, 2024; Luchete et al., 2013).¹⁷⁴ According to my interviews with multiple Indigenous people whose communities were involved in logging, Indigenous logging usually occurs in a passive¹⁷⁵ form: allowing or passing over non-Indigenous operators who retrieve timber, in exchange for a pre-negotiated commission.¹⁷⁶ Indigenous people are mostly cajoled or forced to participate by these outsiders, rather than willingly, proactively engaging. High unemployment, poverty, and lack of income to purchase basic foods and goods are among the common drivers. One person explained that the practice was led by a few leaders, while others were complicit, remaining silent in exchange for compensation; another person said the case he is familiar with involves more community members.

¹⁷⁴ For instance, the newspaper *Folha de São Paulo* (Luchete et al., 2013) identified cases of Indigenous logging in at least 15 Indigenous Lands (Amazonas, Pará, Maranhão, Mato Grosso, Rondônia), based on investigations by the Federal Police, the Public Prosecutor's Office, and reports from civil servants.

¹⁷⁵ A case in Peru, (Killick, 2020) reports active participation.

¹⁷⁶ The most common products are squared timber (“*de estaca*”), used in fences or construction, which can fetch from 20,000+ *reais* per truck, and more lucrative logs (“*em tora*”), transported to sawmills.

In the former case, disgruntled individuals (about benefit sharing) occasionally threatened to denounce the leaders, exposing internal rifts. These practices may start small-scale but can deplete the forest over the long term. One interviewee said that the practice is currently in decline because they are “running out of trees,” which did not mean just any trees, but sellable ones.

10.2.1. Perceptions on commodifying forest life forms

In contrast to these people, the Karipuna refrain from logging. As this section focuses on why and how they refrain, I will examine it based on the Karipuna's perception of Indigenous logging. Every one of my interlocutors was familiar with the practice as tacit local knowledge and made it clear that they opposed it. The chief explicated such refraining as the Karipuna's “policy.” Some Karipuna expressed criticism of other Indigenous groups' leaders who allegedly engage in logging. In a 2022 conversation, one interlocutor singled out a member of the Indigenous delegation from Brazil for the COP 27 meeting, arguing that this individual is “lying” by claiming to have “protected the forest,” even though the person's community is involved in timber sales. The Karipuna showed photos of piled-up timber, alleging that they were shared by a member of the community in question. Given that the Karipuna understand timber can generate substantial income, and given their demand to generate it (to meet their needs), their collective stance to refrain from logging strikes us as a noteworthy form of resistance [RES].

Among the few academic works on Indigenous perceptions of forest monetization in the Amazon, Gordon (2000, 2006) emphasizes the cosmological aspect, using the framework of “ontological predation” and perspectivism. However, in the Karipuna's case, I found no evidence that suggests that the people's distinct cosmo-ontological dimension motivates them to refrain from logging. This begs the question of how the people view trees, since logging entails the monetization and commodification of life forms, in other words, considering trees as a commodifiable resource. Before delving into trees, some of the data I collected show that the Karipuna understand “non-timber forest products” (NTFPs) as a resource, exchangeable with monetary compensation. From the 1980s, when they began to have an intensive relationship with FUNAI agents, they provided forest life forms (or labor to exploit them) in exchange for monetary compensation through hunting, rubber tapping, and selling harvested crops or fruits (e.g., flour, Brazilian nuts). None of these transactions were what the Karipuna used to do; they were generated solely by external non-Indigenous demands. Yet none of my interlocutors recall qualms about

being unfairly treated in such exchanges. As various NTFPs are not illegal to sell, the Karipuna have accumulated extensive experience through these exchanges, eventually learning to negotiate for better access to money. In this way, the people were already participating in the commodification process of forest life forms, finding themselves entangled in the expansion of “commodity frontiers” (Moore, 2015)—the broad and pervasive process of commodification. Although this does not mean that Indigenous perspectives are completely subsumed by the commodity frontier, at least we can say that the frontier began to permeate and coexist with them, shaping a significant part.

For the Karipuna, trees existed as having either intrinsic value (e.g., some tree-top leaves were considered a sign of forest spirits) or “use value” (e.g., for medicine, to construct canoes and houses) before the emergence of the commodity frontier. There was no inherent discontinuity between how they treat trees and other non-wood life forms, nor were trees deemed “sacred”¹⁷⁷ (see Chapter 12). So, viewing most of the trees as a resource itself does not mark a significant change. However, felling them *in exchange* for money was never practiced before the official contact era. Intensive contact with the surrounding society and the advance of the commodity frontier influenced their view to identify “exchange value” in trees. The commodity frontier à la Moore completes its “widening” by encroaching new territories and its “deepening” (Moore, 2010) on the human scale by altering and “colonizing” the perspectives and thoughts of the people who inhabit the frontiers. If so, does the Karipuna's policy of refraining from logging represent a specific resistance to forest commodification, with a focus on trees? My answer is “Yes,” but with a caveat: despite their clearly manifested policy against logging, it seems the resistance is not about the commodification of wood itself. Rather, their disapproval concerns the *degree* of the practice: massive, large-scale felling of trees that impact the forest are strongly opposed. In other words, their resistance inverts the idiom “missing the forest for the trees”: they resist forest commodification but are not necessarily or absolutely averse to small-scale subsistence logging.

¹⁷⁷ This is similar to the Kayapo people who “have no mystical sense of reverence or respect for individual trees or animals and feel no hesitation about chopping them down or taking them as game whenever their interests demand. What concerns the Kayapo is nature in the aggregate ... the survival and reproduction of a sufficient slice of the natural environment to support their traditional way of life. It was only when they realized that this aggregate capacity for regeneration was threatened by the vast scale of the destruction now being inflicted on the area that the Kayapo became aroused over the fate of the forest environment as such.” (Turner, 1993, p. 532) There are also opposite examples: the Karitiana people call many trees as “brothers-in-law,” and do not even take a bark without asking permission to some trees (A. Oliveira-Castro, personal communication, Feb 2026).

Another point of disapproval concerns the beneficiary: the benefit of logging is going to strangers. One Karipuna's remark shows their perception of unfairness: if Indigenous people ever sell trees, the person said, "it's because the whites are logging while we're not profiting at all. Only the whites are getting rich off our backs. We get nothing." Except for a handful of people who clearly refused the idea of cutting and selling trees per se (e.g., explicit disapproval by one and a strong critical comment by another), the other Karipuna people I discussed did not object to the logic or merit of tree commodification in and of itself. Contrary to the abovementioned leader who criticized other Indigenous people engaged in logging, there were also sympathizers: "I view them as poor victims. Because they are suffering. They need money. Because of that, they sell their trees ... to buy food for family, clothes ... They say, if FUNAI gave something, like before, they wouldn't sell [timber]. But they were abandoned. So, they are now selling to survive." In all these reflections on timber sales, I could not identify an onto-epistemological barrier preventing the Karipuna from treating trees as a commodifiable resource. At least, (radical) ontological alterity was not playing a central role in their refraining from logging.

Here is another example that shows how people can view sylvan life forms. In 2022, I was conversing with a Karipuna man about the upcoming Presidential election. "Are you excited about the election?" I asked, assuming that he would support Lula da Silva, ostensibly the most pro-Indigenous candidate, as opposed to the then incumbent Jair Bolsonaro, who was known for his incendiary rhetoric against Indigenous people and his threats to their lands. To my surprise, he replied, "I don't care about it. Neither Lula nor Bolsonaro." "But isn't it that Indigenous people support Lula?" I asked back. "Not really. In Mato Grosso, the government allowed Indians to lease Indigenous land, so the farmers pay rent. That's why Indians have a lot of money. They like Bolsonaro a lot." He was referring to the controversial subgroup of the Paresí people, widely known for engaging in mechanized soybean monoculture. During the Bolsonaro administration, this group was touted as the poster children of the pro-agriculture camp. My interlocutor appeared to be partially sympathetic to the Paresí but turned out to be also critical, as he added:

But I think differently. Many Indians sell their land. Here, the A [anonymized] people sell wood, the B [anonymized] people sell diamonds. They have a lot, a lot, a lot of money. But they don't invest in the village. They don't see the future. They only see the present. That money runs out. Then, what will their children and grandchildren live with? It will all be gone.

However, what seemed to be a sweeping criticism of Indigenous involvement in extractive business took a turn. He continued, “If I had the money like them, I would invest it in the village. Do aquaculture, for example, something that can generate income.” He was not opposing the economic commodification of natural beings, nor development, much less investment; they were feasible, if not desirable, paths. His concern was making a sensible investment that could generate sustainable revenue for more people. Then he resumed one of his recurrent talking points: sharing business plans with me. Alluding to my Asian ethnicity (he often joked that I must have ties to the owner of Toyota), he repeatedly told me that I should invest in his business ideas. Aquaculture and raising domestic animals were among the projects he frequently mentioned. Other ideas included selling mineral water (which he was proud to have already named “Kari-agua,” obviously deriving from Karipuna) or sand from the riverbend. As the Karipuna's land has plenty of sand along the riverbanks, allegedly needed at every construction site in the city, he argued that it was only a matter of securing an investment to rent sand-retrieving machines, which are available from the municipality of Candeias near Porto Velho. All these business ideas involving extractive activities unsettled my self-imposed assumption that Indigenous people's distinctive onto-epistemology would somehow prevent them from viewing natural things as commodifiable resources. I asked, “Can you actually do these sorts of business? Aren't they illegal?” “Well, I need authorization, but I think they [FUNAI] will give it. The problem is money. Where's the capital?” He said, making the money gesture. To steer our conversation away, I kept asking questions about protecting the forest. He did reciprocate: “If the forest is destroyed, what will we live on? I worry a lot. The money runs out quickly. Remember when we went fishing? There won't be any fish left. No, nothing. ... Money ends, but not the forest.” So, the forest was not *simply* a commodifiable resource either. Yet at the same time, it could *partially* become one, as he actively speculated on various ways of exploiting the forest to generate income.

I am not extrapolating this case to every Karipuna. As I repeatedly stress, there is notable diversity among them, and the degree to which they internalize the idea of forest commodification also varies. Yet most of my informants did not object to the logic of commodifying sylvan flora and fauna when it was small-scale, managed responsibly, and the accrued benefit was fairly shared. For instance, people have already submitted multiple aquaculture project proposals to institutions (although FUNAI reportedly rejected them due to “environmental concerns”). It is also important to reiterate that such a benefit is not about making huge profits but about meeting their immediate

needs. From my engagement with the Karipuna since 2019, I can say that their single biggest everyday concern (barring the elders who are entitled to social security benefits) is the economy, or affordability: how to get by a day, how to generate income to make ends meet: in short, pocketbook issues. Every adult was in constant need to buy things and pay bills (debts), albeit to different degrees of urgency. This is not about simplifying their social life through economic determinism, but rather about constructing a more ethnographically sound characterization of its *pragmatically oriented* facet. So, if most of the Karipuna have no objection to commercializing many forest products, and if there is no ontological obstacle to viewing many sylvan life forms as commodifiable resources, then what motivated them to adopt a policy against timber sales?

As for now, legal deterrence seems to be key. The Karipuna are well aware that their entitlement to land is limited to usufruct only, the ownership belongs to the Federal government, and commercializing timber products is prohibited. Whenever the leaders explained the Karipuna's policy against logging, they unanimously pointed to its illegality. One leader emphasized that they have no interest in engaging in Indigenous logging since "I cannot sell what is not mine. [Land] is the property of the Union." Additionally, my interlocutors seriously thought that the leader's phones were being tapped by the Federal Police. When I responded in disbelief, that such a claim might be exaggerated, they explained it could really happen during special investigations on environmental crime. Regardless of the veracity, many people thought that the police preferred taking on easy targets like them rather than tackling real "thieves," and that's the reason why some Indigenous accomplices get arrested while non-Indigenous culprits enjoy impunity.

Besides the illegality, multiple Karipuna leaders also expressed strong skepticism about the proclaimed benefit of logging. They pointed out that the so-called profit accrued from the timber business is exaggerated and delusional. They said it will ultimately bring financial loss rather than gain. "In the end, you lose the forest and gain nothing. It's deceiving. There are folks who get duped, but it's an illusion," explained Eric Karipuna. In the same vein, Chief Andre added, "Capitalism never worked. Nobody got rich. It's a lie." These remarks directly challenge the perceived notion that some Indigenous people became rich by such practices. At the same time, the leaders warned that even small-scale logging can become a slippery slope: "When a logger enters [our] land, they never come alone. It never ends with him. He comes with more people." They understand that unscrupulous activities can easily get out of control, quickly escalate into

larger devastation of the forest. Another important factor is the considerable role of Karipuna's partnership with the NGOs. Key players in these non-governmental organizations are well-connected to the community and visit their forest village regularly. In a way, their intimate presence works as a “proxy” of law enforcement, and arguably more efficient than the actual police who rarely show up. Conspicuous activities such as logging could be easily exposed to them. Once the partners learn of any such problematic activity, the Karipuna are aware that they could cut ties with them, including the benefits accrued from the partnership. As the people are likely to opt not to jeopardize the partnership, the NGO's opposition to logging also contributes to their not-doing. In sum, the refraining was an autonomous decision but also influenced, powered and sustained by the co-produced front of *luta*.

10.2.2. Inner working of refraining

As I dug deeper into the Karipuna's refraining and critical stance towards timber sales, I came to see its multifariousness. The complex relations of the Karipuna's *luta* with their reality are often not captured in their public discourses. Reaching a collective agreement to such a policy is based on more compound reasons than meets the eye. These inner workings help us to better understand the context in which refraining is situated. Some caution is necessary here: although my interlocutors granted me permission to use this content and their names, I will not disclose them or the details, not only for privacy reasons but also because of the possibility that the information I present may be used against them. Instead, I confine myself to outlining the general logics that pertain to the processes where temptations of logging or alternative views on the issue emerge.

During a conversation about the Karipuna's policy on logging and its illegality, one interlocutor made an interesting remark that was repeated multiple times: “I could sell [timber] if I wanted to,” although he opts not to. What the person meant was the accessibility of certain channels to sell timber, if only one was willing to explore the avenue. It comes from the person's firsthand experience of being contacted more than once by anonymous people who pitched logging proposals. Between this remark and the anti-logging policy, I find no contradiction. The person was simply informing that if one was determined to take the risky path, there were available methods to carry it out. What makes this practice tempting to Indigenous people is precisely such accessibility, both to the trees and to the “dark” channels. Other Indigenous leaders I have met in Rondônia invariably reported being approached by clandestine operators. So, it is not an

exaggeration to say that it is almost a phone call away to strike a deal. In this light, I view the person's comment as a *call for appreciation* of their determination amid palpable temptations. Compared to those who engage in logging, such refraining seems to constitute not only an act of resistance but even a form of sacrifice [RES]. The same person, in another conversation, mentioned how easy it is for cattle ranchers to sell meat (produced in illegally deforested areas) without proper certificates. Here again, the emphasis was on accessibility to the black market, which, in turn, highlights the value of Indigenous refraining. So, although important, illegality alone does not deter logging, since covert routes continue to tempt people to take the risk for potentially high rewards. More than mere recognition of illegality, the people's determination was sustaining the anti-logging policy.

However, as one might expect, such a policy was not unanimously agreed upon from the beginning: while many supported it, some voiced opposition or remained ambivalent. Some people not only viewed the conduct of other timber-selling Indigenous peoples as comprehensible but also found a positive aspect in it. “Okay, everyone knows they sell wood. But they share. Every money they gain [from it] is shared”, said one person. It is not only the temptation to gain monetary access but also an amalgam of being frustrated, exhausted and disillusioned by the disappointing results of years of *luta*, that fuels the desire to explore risky avenues. As mentioned, despite their countless appeals to the authorities, law-enforcement agencies made a feeble effort to eliminate territorial intrusions. Invasion simply did not stop. It was an endless repetition of denouncing, only to receive empty promises. Although largely absent when the people desperately need them to repel illegal invaders, the authorities were stringent when it came to checking Indigenous people from exploiting their own forest. One interlocutor attributed the trigger for considering timber sale to the authorities' attitude. He was among the few who contemplated logging, but, knowing that FUNAI and IBAMA would oppose it, the plan was never proposed. Then, in the early 2020s, during winter, heavy rain destroyed a wooden bridge, the only access to the city. The Karipuna reported it to the authorities, requesting repair, but no public agency came to service. Frustrated, the people offered to fix the bridge by themselves with the trees available nearby, only to be denied by the authorities, who argued that prior authorization was mandatory to fell trees in Indigenous land. That angered the villagers, shifting some of their opinions towards logging. Although logging did not occur, such frustrating experiences [COP] can easily nurture discourses that favor forbidden practices. Especially, if we take into account that these people are the ones who constantly

expressed the lack of a source of income, it should not surprise us that multiple interlocutors reason that their *luta* can coexist with a subsistent form of logging.¹⁷⁸ When survival is on the line and the only thing one “has” is the forest, small-scale commodification did not seem to pose a problem. Yet even those who had ever considered logging were not calling for large-scale deforestation. No Karipuna endorsed any idea remotely close to it. What came across as plausible to some was the idea of selling a small number of trees, without affecting the forest: just enough to secure an income to get them out of the current “poverty,” as they describe the situation. In conclusion, a combination of factors tempted the Karipuna to consider timber sales, but in the end they decided to refrain. Multiple factors and conditions are entangled in complex ways, making it difficult to identify a single pull factor or push factor. Although the decision is being upheld, it cannot be described solely as a proactive action, nor a passive reaction to the surrounding society. From the context provided by all the abovementioned materials, their anti-logging policy is clear, but not entirely immutable. In other words, it is better viewed as a deliberated suspension of logging than a permanently fixed ban.

10.3. Carbon credit market: Refrain or not?

One of the recent, hotly debated issues in the Amazon is the “carbon projects,” also dubbed as “REDD+ (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation) projects,” which are UN-backed climate change mitigation initiatives. Using carbon credit schemes that measure verifiable GHG emission reductions from certified (public or private) climate action projects, these projects are supposed to incentivize communities in developing countries to protect forests, by providing financial compensation for reducing emissions from deforestation and supporting community development and promoting sustainable livelihoods as alternatives to clearing forests. Many of the projects involve cooperating with Indigenous communities that inhabit carbon sink forests. In exchange for protecting a designated forested area, the inhabitants receive compensation in various forms from nations or corporations committed to the project. The idea that better-off

¹⁷⁸ Theoretically, there is a legal path for Indigenous logging when special permission is given. There was a precedent that tried to explore an alternative path for legal and responsible Indigenous logging. Once hailed as exemplary, the “sustainable forestry management” (Kaben Djuoi) project, proposed by the people of Xikrin do Cateté, was a pilot initiative that took a decade of preparation to explore legal, responsible and sustainable commercialization of timber in Indigenous land by the people themselves, in partnership with ISA (Instituto Socioambiental). However, it was short-lived (started in 2000, ended in 2003), seemingly due to the inconsistent and perfunctory approach of FUNAI (Gordon, 2000, p. 500) which exhausted the participant's good will. After the “failure” of Xikrin's case, there were no more proposals.

countries pay the “guardians of the forest” for their “ecosystem service” was proposed as a form of “green economy” in Amazonia as early as 2009, when the Suruí people first launched a carbon project in their Indigenous Land, *Sete de Setembro*. Currently, some Indigenous communities in the region have joined carbon projects; some are preparing to join; some reject them. Until very recently (early 2025), the Karipuna were poised to refrain from carbon projects [RES]. From the surface, they seemed aligned with their NGO partners, who have been explicitly voicing concerns: an activist from a partner NGO repeatedly warned that committing to these projects “is selling your land” during a conversation with the Karipuna and me. This resonated with many other activists and scholars in Brazil who share the concern about the carbon regime (Gentil et al., 2025). The reason for concern varies: its dichotomous and utilitarian conceptual basis incompatible with Indigenous cosmology, the restriction on Indigenous modes of subsistence, the long contract extending more than 30 years, incompatible with Indigenous temporalities, and even the process of “Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC)”¹⁷⁹ or public hearing—moments in which ... Indigenous people are all placed in a room listening to someone lecturing knowledge in a single event—cannot have legitimacy or legality because they are based on ethnocentric, non-negotiated, unshared epistemology” (Oliveira-Castro, 2023, p. 5). It is necessary to clarify that I also sympathize with these concerns, as I even campaigned against some REDD+ projects in Asia. I confess that I was glad to learn that the Karipuna were refraining from it. Yet, as I delved into the matter, it turned out that the reason of their refrain was different from what I had expected.

Although the details vary for each person, there were two main reasons why the Karipuna opposed carbon projects. First was the alleged prohibition of Indigenous subsistence. Every Karipuna with whom I discussed the issue during 2022-24 thought that carbon projects prohibit hunting or opening gardens: “We cannot even touch a leaf,” they would say. It was simply unacceptable if the project does not support their own mode of subsistence (e.g., hunting, fishing, opening gardens, etc.). Amid the proliferation of carbon intermediary companies, some could have made these claims, but it seems there was misinformation. When I asked for the source of such information, none of the Karipuna provided one, and when I contacted a carbon intermediary company, it denied having proposed such a prohibition. Such a prohibition is unlikely, since

¹⁷⁹ A key principle outlined in ILO Convention 169 which focuses on the rights of Indigenous and Tribal Peoples. FPIC ensures that Indigenous communities have the right to give or withhold their consent for projects or activities that may affect their lands, resources, or way of life.

Indigenous subsistence is a constitutional right. Another key reason for their refraining was the proposal's insufficient compensation. Allegedly, no proposal included a plan to account for inflation, which was deemed crucial for making a long-term commitment. “The Suruí are regretting, because they agreed with 500 *reais* per month [decades ago]. Now, it is [worth] nothing,” one Karipuna explained.¹⁸⁰ If so, what kind of compensation would be considered fair then, for protecting the forest? One rainy evening in Porto Velho in 2023, I sat down with a Karipuna friend, who was one of the carbon project skeptics. Criticizing some Indigenous people who embraced these projects, he showed a pundit's comment on social media that read “greenwashing.” But these were not the main reason for his skepticism. His biggest issue was the “unfairness” of the project, i.e., the meager compensation proposed in the plans. According to him, one of the projects suggested paying approximately 900 Brazilian *reais* per household. This amount, he reckoned, would not even work for one person, let alone a whole family. I asked how much would be “decent” for his criterion. He went on to list the essential expenses: food, groceries, education, transportation, health-related expenses, electricity, internet, and cell phone bills. By my calculation, it was already exceeding 5000 *reais* per month for a family of four. 900 versus 5000. Although calculations vary (according to my data, they oscillate widely between 2000 and 6000, depending on family size), this stark contrast captures the gulf between what outsiders deem sufficient for Indigenous people and what makes sense to them.

What was absent in any conversation I had with the Karipuna was the carbon project's risk of shaping a different relationship with the forest. According to anthropologist Courtney Work, who investigates the REDD+ projects in Cambodia, “The reason many Indigenous people around the world have protected their forests was not because of money. Market-based measures like REDD+ projects may produce short-term results aligned with the goals of governments and companies, but in the long run, they replace the traditional values of communities that have protected forests for survival with the mindset that ‘we must protect for financial compensation’. If that happens, we cannot expect the same conservation behavior from the next generation”

¹⁸⁰ This person seemed to be well-informed about the carbon issue. Surprisingly, a week later, I learned—by chance during an unrelated conversation—that he was not aware about the issue of climate change. He said he never heard about such a thing. This may not be an isolated case. Even if others have heard about the issue, it is likely that they do not understand, or are not interested about, the mechanism of carbon sequestration and its impact on climate change. The “climate literacy” of the prospective adherents of carbon projects may be overrated. The Karipuna seem to understand it broadly as a compensation in exchange for not destroying the forest.

(personal communication, August 2021). But as we examined, the Karipuna's perception has already undergone substantial change (and was never static), if associating forest protection with monetary compensation represents a facet of such change. In a 2022 interview (October), a Karipuna clearly expressed an expectation of compensation, regardless of the carbon project.

For me, I'm a protector of the land. Because I defend it, fight for it, although FUNAI says, in the document, the land doesn't belong to Indigenous people, but to the Union. The land is not ours. It belongs to the Union. It is only ceded for us to use and usufruct. ... I don't agree when [someone] says that we are taking care of it for the government. ... When it's government land, and they let somebody take care of it, then they must pay something, right? Here you go, the salary, for taking care of the land. If I have a farm, and I put you there to take care of it, I must pay your salary, right? But we don't earn anything. So, it doesn't belong to the government; it's ours.

This commentary questions the very rationale of the law, appealing to common sense. From the Indigenous point of view, being allowed to engage in traditional subsistence activities is not enough; some also need and want (and even think they are entitled) to earn income from the land. Not coincidentally, this person favored the carbon project. If the project provides a much-needed source of income while also allowing them to maintain their own mode of subsistence by protecting the forest, he found no reason to refuse it. So, for this Karipuna person, accepting the carbon scheme is not replacing any of their core values with a “green capitalist” ontology; it is a sensible way to meet their core needs while coexisting with the forest. But he belonged to the minority, and the majority opposed the project, or at least appeared to be so.

This was the state of affairs up to the 2024 winter. One year later, however, things changed dramatically. A major driver of change was the newly enacted Law No. 15.042, of December 11, 2024, which establishes the Brazilian Greenhouse Gas Emissions Trading System (Sistema Brasileiro de Comércio de Emissões de Gases de Efeito Estufa, SBCE) and a regulated carbon market in Brazil. A Karipuna undergraduate student who studies law shared this information, telling me that now they could count on a legal framework, thus able to proceed (with carbon projects) on a more secure basis. While in the previous logging case, the legal system served as a crucial inhibitor, in this context, it served as an enabler. In 2025, there were also more carbon intermediary companies knocking on their door, presenting project proposals. Slowly, the previous “carbon skeptics,” including the members in the leadership, started to examine them in a much more positive light. They eventually hosted multiple explanatory sessions with these companies at Panorama village. It was also notable that there was far fewer dissemination of inaccurate

information than last year. During the Q&A sessions on carbon project proposals, the Karipuna found some proposals sensible and interesting, as the previous concerns (alleged prohibition of subsistence activities, low salaries, no consideration of the inflation rate, etc.) were largely addressed. During my last visit in May 2025, every community member I spoke with was in favor of the project. One comment by a leader, when I asked what the carbon project means to them, sums up the shift of opinion:

For me, [carbon project] is a new method to protect the territory. I was against it because the old methodology didn't allow hunting, fishing, or clearing gardens. Today, with the law, the change of legalization, I have a different vision. ... The government is not helping more to remove the invasion. Invasion continues. So, [carbon project] is a way to protect land. It's also a source of income for the community. We need to bring more people into the forest, because many lack any support. I mean bringing Karipuna people, as many as we can, to increase, add [more people] to the *luta*. Because the *luta* is constant. It never stops.

Other people phrased their idea of the carbon project similarly, although they invariably stressed that they needed to compare at least three full proposals before reaching a final decision. The elders (usually exempt from meetings) were also asked to participate in these decision-making processes, as the companies stressed that the FPIC process be adhered to by every member. One elder explained how s/he views the project: “It is about protecting [the forest]. Not allowing to raise cattle, mining gold, logging, ... not doing anything wrong, not doing anything illegal.” In this person's vision, the project would serve as an apparatus for enforcing the law and conserving the forest. To summarize, the project was largely understood as “a project to protect the forest (from which we receive income and support).” As for the activities the project consists of, the subject was to be determined and elaborated over the coming years. Most of them thought it would be similar activities they have been doing in terms of *luta* (e.g., monitoring, documentation), yet adding community development projects, such as improving infrastructure for education and healthcare.

In July, the Karipuna had reviewed more proposals, and the leaders were about to enter the phase of mutual agreement, yet they remained hesitant because the contract required a 40-year commitment. One of the Karipuna's partners (opposing carbon projects) was seemingly unhappy with this development, cutting certain supports they previously provided and telling the Karipuna that they were “making the biggest mistake in lifetime.” The Karipuna heard similar criticism from some other Indigenous people, but they pushed back: “They criticize because they don't know

about the policies of the project. ... It lets us open gardens, sell *farinha* and Brazilian nuts. Because the project belongs to us. It's not theirs. We do what we want. Now, what is prohibited is selling game, turtles, and macaw feathers. Those are prohibited. But we can continue our work. Not knowing this, people say, 'Oh, you are being dominated by them.' No. Nobody is selling land.” In August 2025, they held a meeting, and the community unanimously decided to participate in a project [COP][RES].

I had to rewrite this section many times due to the dynamic progress concerning the carbon project. I also considered removing the content from this chapter, since the Karipuna ultimately ceased to refrain from the carbon project. However, I decided to leave it because the shift from a multi-year refraining to the current adherence shows the dynamic and circumstantial nature of the not-doing we are dealing with. Certain practices may be refrained from or suspended for now, but it is always possible to resume (and vice versa), even as I write this.

10.4. Conclusion: Dynamic policies of *adynamia*

In this chapter, I examined the Karipuna not-doings that are conducive to their coexistence with forest, focusing on refraining that involves decision-making. This dimension is often overshadowed by the Karipuna's *luta*, which is visible in their public campaigning covered by media outlets. First of all, they refrain from direct confrontations with the *invasores*, especially when an engagement can provoke retaliation. Another refrain that stands out is their policy against Indigenous logging. Although underreported, Indigenous people's participation in logging is not an uncommon practice in the region (this is how the Karipuna perceive it). Given that such illicit practices are alarmingly accessible and can generate much-needed revenue for low-income households, the Karipuna's current stance of refrainment deserves due attention and appreciation. It should be read as another clear sign of their determination to coexist with a standing forest. The Karipuna's (recently reversed) decision to refrain from carbon projects is also notable. From the surface, all these refrains are not expressed in any visible action, since what counts is precisely the absence of action. Nonetheless, their impacts on the people's struggle to protect the forest are considerable. However, the backdrop against which these decisions were made reveals that the reasoning behind the scenes is much more complex and multi-layered. In explaining the Karipuna's refraining, explanations such as ontological alterity, profound connection with the land that prevents people from viewing the forest as a monetizable resource, offer limited insight. It was

difficult to identify any inherent aversion against the commodification of trees or associating land with generating income. What mattered was the scale and extent, not necessarily an onto-epistemological commitment. The main factors motivating their refusal to log were issues of legality, relations with NGO partners, disillusionment with the alleged profit, strategic calculations of the pros and cons, etc. In the case of the carbon project, it was the conditions and details of the project's proposal (e.g., alleged prohibition of subsistence activity, insufficient compensation, inapplicability of inflation rate, burden of a long-term contract, etc.) and again, their relationship with partners who opposed the project. So, although it was an autonomous decision, many dimensions conditioned it. But neither was it a passive reaction. These not-doings were results of navigating complex micro and macro power dynamics, social relations, and economic conditions. The Karipuna recognize both the *impotential* ("it's illegal," "it's not mine") and the *potential* ("I could, if I wished to"), exemplifying the capability and power to hold back. Due to this dynamic, or *adynamic*, the Karipuna's refrainment should not be seen as a definite, fixed stance but rather a tentative one. In other words, they are likely to be "not-yet-doings" rather than "never-doings." I am tempted to attribute (at least part of) this indeterminacy, if you will, to the composition of the community, in which diverse ideas and different visions of the world coexist, usually without a single dominating, centralized public opinion. The chief and the leaders are influential and do make some decisions, but they are far from being imposing or coercive. The coexistence of different opinions, wills, and intentions demonstrates the diverse and dynamic nature of the Karipuna community. Yet the fact that some of their pro-forest policies are not a permanent stance does not, by any means, diminish the value of their efforts and struggles. On the contrary, this indeterminacy should serve as a reminder for their partners and other counterparts engaged in the struggle, not to take anything for granted. Precisely because of this dynamic and indeterminate sociality of the Karipuna, it is more crucial than ever to collaborate with and support them urgently, in a way that attends to their voices. When changes occur, they can be rapid and directions unpredictable. This became apparent in their recent adherence to the carbon project. As their key concerns about the previous proposals were addressed and legal guardrails became more secure, the internal public opinion changed swiftly. Contrary to some critics who view this move as a capitulation to "green capitalism" [COP], the Karipuna view it as an instrument to defend and protect the forest [RES], a justifiable form of collaboration that can balance forest protection and

financial stability. The path was chosen, not despite of their determination to coexist with the forest, but because of it.

11. Giving way^{[LET][COP][MESH]}

11.1. Giving way to others by not doing

In the previous chapter, I used the idea of refraining to explain the Karipuna's avoidance of action that involves decision-making. Here, I will discuss “giving way,” which represents another type of Karipuna's not-doing. The first meaning of giving way is to yield, to cede passage, or give up one's position. Steven Connor preserves these meanings but expands them to conceptualize and encompass the various “unappreciated dispositions” (2019), which include holding back, standing aside, rather than demanding one's due, asserting one's rights, and advancing one's interests. Including such meanings, I define giving way as *letting or allowing someone or something to be*. Giving way can be intentional or not; therefore, unlike refraining, it does not necessarily involve decision-making. Giving way can be enacted by doing something or by not doing anything in particular, but usually the “doing” part is subtle and hard to observe. The consequences of giving way demand attention, since giving way is not just giving up; rather, it can literally offer a way, even a solution.¹⁸¹ Understanding that giving way effectively highlights the ability not to do and the “power to lack or hold back” (Connor, 2019, p. 35)—instead of designating an “inability” to do something—allows us to imagine the act of giving way in a positive note, or at least to neutralize its negative connotation. Used in this sense, giving way can help us articulate an important dimension of the Karipuna's contribution to human-forest coexistence that is not accompanied by observable action. Nonetheless, there is a negative connotation to giving way that cannot be easily neutralized: it can also mean yielding to what is deemed wrong, unfair, or unjust. For instance, consider giving way to one's enemy who commits injustice. What I discuss in the last section of this chapter on the Karipuna's non-interference addresses this dimension. Although one may question the results that such non-interference can generate, once again, to understand the complexity of the matter, we need to unsettle our bias of giving primacy to action and devalue non-action. If we manage to do so, we may recognize a legitimate necessity, or even value, to give way, in the way the Karipuna do.

First, I will discuss giving way in relation to their nonhuman human others, and then, their human others. I begin by examining how the Karipuna's giving way can possibly contribute to

¹⁸¹ In Portuguese, the expression “*dar jeito*,” (finding a solution, resolving, managing to do something) is a combination of “giving” (*dar*) and “way” (*jeito*). This wordplay can evoke a slightly different awareness.

their coexistence with nonhuman others, in terms of enhancing the biodiversity of the forest. This is one of the few parts where I explicitly distinguish Indigenous and non-Indigenous members of the Karipuna. Although I recognize the limits of such classification, their closely adjacent gardens and contrasting approaches invite comparison and offer opportunities to examine different patterns of dealing with wildlife.

11.2. Letting wildlife go wild

11.2.1. Unforced gardens, less-than-perfect keepers

The Karipuna used to be avid horticulturalists, but they now garden less as dependence on purchased food has increased. Still, albeit with lessened intensity and regularity, most of the people continue to tend their small gardens to varying degrees: they usually grow bitter (*mandioca*), *macaxiera*, corn, yam/taro (*cara*), sweet potato, pumpkin, banana, pineapple, among other crops and fruits. On several occasions, I managed to accompany their work in the garden, from clearing and burning to planting and harvesting, giving a helping hand. One morning in 2023, Aripã was clearing his fallow near the village, a swidden where his son had felled a few trees with a chainsaw. After leaving the fallen trees to dry for some weeks, Aripã and his son had set a fire to clear vegetation (a technique called *coivara*¹⁸²). I helped Aripã remove burnt remnants in the area. While the big trees were felled, by my standards, the area was far from cleared: there was still much undergrowth and organic material covering the earth: bushes, branches, tree trunk bases, herbage, shrubs, roots, stones, etc. I was keen to know up to what point he would keep clearing and weeding. The work stopped much earlier than I expected. Although we removed some of the bigger branches and shrubs, there were still plenty of remnants. Yet, for him, it was good enough. There was no further land preparation (e.g., plowing, tilling, harrowing, or leveling) to make the space tidier and more uniform. When I asked Aripã's son about the reason why people leave undergrowth, he said, “We don't clear all the stuff and only leave soil. No. ... That's how we do [garden]. We leave a palm tree, or a trunk, other trees. ... Because it's unnecessary to remove them. Let them rot there, so that they conserve earth, give manure, so plants come out well” [LET]. So, they could have cleared it more thoroughly if they had wished and had the necessary tools to do so, but they deemed it

¹⁸² An agricultural technique for preparing land for planting, consists of cutting and burning the vegetation on a plot of land to clear it and fertilize it with the ashes, used in traditional communities such as Indigenous, *quilombolas* and *ribeirinhos*.

unnecessary because the land had *already* been sufficiently prepared. Without hesitation, Aripã opened a package of pumpkin seeds he had gotten from another villager and began sowing. It was difficult to read his planting pattern. In fact, there seemed to be no fixed pattern at all. It seemed he was sowing in “free style,” by hand, digging small holes here and there without a clear “mental map,” unless I was unable to decipher it. It did not take a long time to finish the sowing. When he was done, he took a short break, saying that he disliked working under the sun. That was why he called me around 7:00 a.m. to kick off an early day. He seemed less patient compared to his formidable endurance during hunting. His wife affirmed that he is more of a hunter than a farmer.

On the way back home, he said, “Bahira gives banana,” passing through a banana garden. Besides certain fruits, the Karipuna consider Bahira to be responsible for creating fertile black soil (*terra preta*), although researchers are uncovering evidence that Indigenous people produced much of it (Balée, 2006, 2013). Later, when I asked Aripã’s son, he agreed that Bahira had created dark earth, not their ancestors: “People don’t make *terra preta*. We just need to find them.” To find the right sites with *terra preta*, suffice to find the indication of *urucuri* palm trees (*Attalea phalerata*). Where *urucuri* trees grow, the soil is likely to be rich. It is no coincidence that in these soils pottery fragments are easy to find, since they are usually former swiddens. The Karipuna are unsure whether these fragments are from their ancestors or from Bahira. One person left the question in between: “It might be one of the two things.” Searching for an adequate garden site with *terra preta* is no longer a big issue since settling in Panorama village. Their fixed position limits the opening of garden plots to the vicinity. They still rotate between active gardens and fallows, but as the total demand has decreased, there is less need to clear new, primary forests (*mata bruta*) for gardening. According to Aripã, even after pacification and settling down in the village, they maintained large gardens in the early years, when they worked collectively under FUNAI’s tutelage. During this period, the FUNAI agent (called “chief of post”) led the people to work in gardens under a highly regulated work regime, in stark contrast to the way the Karipuna used to work. In a way, the state apparatus was disciplining Indigenous people to make farmers out of them. For a period, the people lived up to FUNAI’s mandate by producing a surplus of the harvest and selling it in markets. So, the Karipuna know what it is like to work and produce like the whites. When I accompanied Aripã to his previous gardens during that period, some of the places were much farther from the village, in contrast to most of the current active gardens, which are within a one-kilometer boundary. As the FUNAI’s regime came to an end, the Karipuna returned to their old

way, or to be precise, in a de-scaled, less regulated, and more relaxed way, but not exactly to their past, “pre-(official) contact” ways of gardening, since now they had different tools, necessities, and availability.

Carlos Karipuna, who grew up when the influence of FUNAI was already diminishing, is known as one of the most diligent garden workers among the Karipuna. Compared to others, his garden is small, since he lived for more than a decade in the Tikuna IL near Tabatinga, only to return in 2023. I accompanied him in 2024 as he planted bitter manioc and realized his work pattern was similar to Aripã's. The clearing of his garden was slightly more thorough (yet not as tidy as the neighboring non-Indigenous members' plots), but he also sowed in a scanty way. This time, I could ask how he plans to plant when opening a new garden. He said he only has rough plans, and things are decided as the course of action unfolds. He did not affirm any fixed pattern. Paraphrasing Ingold's explanation of walking in middle voice (2022), “once on his way, he is his gardening, and his gardening gardens him.” Carlos added that, in the case of his main crop, manioc,¹⁸³ there is little to do, since “they grow alone, by themselves” [LET].



Figure 16. A Karipuna's cleared garden. (Photograph by the author, 2023)

¹⁸³ “Manioc cultivation does not depend on intensive and constant labor input, nor on strict control of the plant’s reproduction—it is cloned, not sown” (Fausto & Neves, 2018, p. 1610).

Having only a rough or vague plan was identical to the case of another Karipuna when I accompanied him on clearing work in 2023 (Figure 16). He was almost finalizing the clearance, but still pondering what he was going to plant. The state of which he deemed the clearing “complete” was also more or less akin to the criterion of Aripã. There was no thorough land preparation or uniformization either. Months later, he planted some crops but failed to harvest them due to his busy schedule as a leader (with many appointments in the city), which could occupy him for weeks, sometimes months. “What happened to his crops then?” I asked a villager who had a nearby garden, in the owner's absence. “Well, it's for the animals to eat,” he said.

The same year, in April, I accompanied the same person while he worked on another garden. This time, it was a place far from the village, where he strategically built a house to establish a human presence and deter invasion. It took a 20-minute motorboat trip. He had brought the seeds from the city: lemon, mango, orange, *graviola* (*Annona muricata*, soursop), *inga* (*Inga edulis*), etc. He said lemon, tangerine and mango do not grow well together. Apart from that rule, he was planting without a pattern, just giving some space between them, using a metal seeder. He was intercropping, but not in the usual way (in the space between rows), but almost randomly scattered. On our way back, I asked when he plans to return. “When I have enough fuel,” he said, explaining that fuel prices have risen dramatically. It seemed likely that another of his gardens might become a feeding ground for wildlife.

The approaches shown in these examples stand in contrast with how other non-Indigenous community members work. In general, the latter is organized in a more uptight and controlled way. With clearly recognizable linear rows (almost Euclidean grids), planting is deliberately organized to maximize production per space. Although not entirely mechanized (there is no tractor in the village), the clearing is fairly thorough. Also, the size of swiddens is more ample, and keeps expanding, although incrementally due to limited workforce. The type of crop or fruit is more predictable and yields more production. There is also relatively higher market integration, as more products are sold in the city. Of course, we cannot extrapolate this contrast to generalize a simplified Indigenous/non-Indigenous difference. For instance, the Achuar Indigenous people in Ecuador are very uptight with their gardens, even described as an “anti-forest” approach.¹⁸⁴ The

¹⁸⁴ “Weeding is indispensable ... the *fanatical perfectionism* [emphasis added] goes well beyond a simple gardening technique. A well-kept garden is characterized essentially by the degree of mastery shown in the destruction of all that is natural. Its smooth, slightly sandy soil, dotted here and there with manioc stalks, looks like the impeccably

Karipuna's garden is much more “pro-forest.” However, not every Indigenous member will agree with my characterization of their gardening practices, especially when I mischaracterize it in a judgmental way. Once, I inadvertently offended a Karipuna by asking why he doesn't take care of his garden, as meticulously as his neighbor. Predictably, he defended his caretaking and kept asking who spread that kind of “falsehood.” This person and his family had invested considerable time in their garden, so he had every reason to be upset by my erroneous and foolish question. But I must also note that the words slipped out of my mouth because another Karipuna had told me his garden was unimpressive in terms of caretaking. In this case, a favorable judgment on others' garden was predicated on tighter maintenance (*bem arrumado*). However, such comparisons were rarely brought up, and in general, they considered relatively less-tended gardens also totally acceptable [LET]. More importantly, with respect to other criteria, having a wide diversity of plants (typical of Indigenous gardens) was also highly valued, both for aesthetic reasons and for utility.

Another factor that contributes to the particularity of the Karipuna gardens is societal change that limits their time available for garden work. Regular commutes and commitments in the city, or state employment, do not allow people to dedicate much time or apply consistent care to gardens, which is indispensable to horticultural endeavors. Note that non-Indigenous members rarely participate in activities concerning the *luta* that take place outside the village, as it is exclusively designated for members considered to have an Indigenous identity. At least for the foreseeable future, there is little indication that this trend will change. As their territorial struggle (which requires frequent external engagement) has no sign of lessening, and more villagers are seeking employment, the Karipuna's “loose” gardens are here to stay for a while. If so, it will likely continue to benefit the uninvited nonhuman visitors.¹⁸⁵

11.2.2. Pests: “Weed out” or leave out?

The Karipuna's gardens flourish with animals. As the Karipuna are not avid “garden hunters,”¹⁸⁶ although they may occasionally hunt animals when they happen to spot them in their swiddens, it

raked path of a formal French garden. No sprig or clump of grass must be allowed to spoil this orderly space, which asserts itself, ... as the anti-forest.” (Descola, 1994, p. 172)

¹⁸⁵ In both Indigenous and non-Indigenous gardens, pesticides or fertilizers are not used. “Nobody even knows how to use,” they say [LET]. They also cannot afford the expense, as only few of garden products are sold in the market.

¹⁸⁶ Swiddens are the Ka'apo people's frequent hunting grounds that some researchers call them “game farms” (Posey, 1985); also for the Achuar, it is said that “the whole garden functions to some extent as one big lure” (Descola, 1994, p. 166); some Indigenous people even deliberately plant crops just to attract game.

was easy to observe traces or sometimes, actual animals. Among the multiple nonhuman foragers and predators, the usual suspects are the white-lipped peccary, collared peccary, lowland paca, agouti, and Amazonian brown brocket (*Mazama nemorivaga*), which are commonly found in agroforestry ecosystems throughout Latin America (Emmons 1997). Others are the capuchin monkey (*Sapajus*), Brazilian porcupine (*Coendou prehensilis*), tayra or *irara* (*Eira barbara*), crab-eating foxes (Cachorro-do-mato: *Cerdocyon thous*), giant Amazon scarab beetle (*Coprophanaeus lancifer*), and many other snakes, small birds, and hawks whose species I couldn't identify.¹⁸⁷ Some community members see these animals as “pests” because they can damage crops or harm domestic animals. I previously referred to conservation studies (Pooley et al., 2022) that affirm human-wildlife coexistence entails not-doings, such as refraining from retaliation against animals. How do the Karipuna respond to these nonhuman intruders? Do the Karipuna retaliate, take active measures to expel, or get rid of them? In the summer of 2024, I was walking in the forest with a Karipuna person. As we passed by a fallow, a former manioc garden not in use for years, she said, “This is where A (pseudonym) killed the peccaries.” I remembered this much-discussed incident. A, a non-Indigenous community member, had killed many peccaries (some say more than eight) that came to feed on his garden. He left the carcasses to warn other peccaries to stay off. Later, I was shown a peccary skull still lying there, as if it were a message of vendetta. His warnings to chase off the animals worked temporarily, but not without repercussions. Near his garden lay a clay pit (*barreiro*) that attracted animals to lick minerals in the mud, a precious hunting ground for Karipuna hunters, but after his killing, animals disappeared. People criticized him (probably not openly, as they tend to be non-confrontational), not for the excessive killing per se, but for his short-sighted behavior that ruined the common source of livelihood, jeopardizing others' hunting. Moreover, leaving a dead carcass in or nearby *barreiros* is also deemed careless—not because it offends the animal or spiritual beings, but since the “smell of blood” allegedly makes animals avoid the area, it thus complicates hunting. A, who stirred this whole discussion, seemed oblivious to criticism, if he took notice of any. After the incident, the only change he made was doubling down. In his other, larger manioc garden, he installed an apparatus devised by his son that would shoot animals that stepped inside. Some Karipuna found this kind of trap dangerous because

¹⁸⁷ It is possible that the higher visibility in these cleared areas facilitated the spotting of animals compared to dense forests. It is known that high-canopy species, large-bodied and/or slow-reproducing species, and forest-interior specialists are rarely found in swiddens (Linares, 1976; Naughton-treves, 1997; Thiollay, 1995).

children could accidentally step into it, but nobody challenged him. A's determination to get rid of, or scare off “pests,” reminded me of how he reacted when a margay (*gato-maracajá*) once snatched his chicken. The day after, he took the time to ambush for two nights in a row until the feline re-approached and finally managed to take his revenge. He proudly showed the margay's dead body, saying that he could sell the hide.

Contrary to this aggressive approach, three Karipuna interlocutors with whom I discussed this issue deemed such retaliation futile. One person said, “Animals eat in the garden. There is no way [to avoid it].” This does not mean that these people are happy with the animals eating in their gardens, nor that they never take revenge. On some occasions, they say, punishing the animals is necessary. For example, once, a jaguar attacked a Karipuna hunter who was with his dogs. It snuck up from behind and tried to bite his neck, but his dogs quickly interfered. The jaguar killed a dog and ran away. The person chased the jaguar, although he lost track and gave up [LET]. Explaining this incident, however, he said it would have been ideal to locate and kill the jaguar: “One must pay back; otherwise, he will keep killing dogs.” So, the Karipuna also retaliate against animals when they can, although they seem to do so relatively rarely and less actively than their non-Indigenous counterparts. I have found very few anecdotes of retaliation, and most of them targeted snakes. When a snakebite occurs, they try to locate the snake immediately and kill it to prevent further bites. But otherwise, to my knowledge, no Karipuna has ever set up those kinds of traps to eliminate unwanted animals from gardens, or ambushed multiple nights to punish carnivores. That would be an extra mile that they would rarely go. Unlike A, who invests considerable time and energy to “weed out” pests, they generally exhibit lower intensity and tenacity. Yet it would be an overstatement to say that the Karipuna exhibit “anti-eradication” behavior or that they consciously refrain from retaliation. Rather, they seem to lack the “passion” to do it, tending to go only halfway, resulting in a weaker overall retaliation [LET]. They simply do not see eradication as a viable option; hence, the recurring reaction: “There is no way.” In short, they were giving way to animals because they thought there was no way to stop them from doing what they always do.

To summarize, compared to non-Indigenous members, the gardening methods (or “non-methods”/“method-free” approaches) of many Karipuna people wind up giving way to diverse plants and animals to thrive in various ways: a) the less-than-perfect way they clean and weed the swidden, b) the sparse and scanty way they plant seeds, c) the way they frequently leave the

gardens unattended due to various social commitments, d) the relatively loose way they keep vigil on swiddens, concerning wildlife “pests.” Due to the small population and limited garden size, what the Karipuna do in their swiddens may not have immediate, large-scale impacts on the broader biodiversity picture in their forest. However, it instantiates a particular Indigenous mode of subsistence that is conducive to coexistence. The Karipuna do not intentionally leave crops for animals to eat or actively refrain from retaliating against nonhuman “raids,” but their tendencies of giving way create a cumulative effect: among the in-between breathing space-times created by these permeable gardens in the thickets of a jungle, diverse plants emerge that attract diverse foragers along with their diverse predators. This is very different from saying that the Karipuna leave the forest “untouched” or “undisturbed”; it is the degree and ways in which they disturb it, by giving way to various processes of foresting in the middle voice, that allows fertile ground, thus fostering the coexistence of different living beings.

11.2.3. Hiatus of Indigenous fishing

One of the traditional practices that the Karipuna ceased to practice is *timbó* fishing, an Indigenous method of beating the water’s surface with branches of barbasco (*Derris elliptica*), a venomous bark that depletes the water of oxygen, asphyxiating all living beings in the lakes. Once widely practiced as a method of subsistence when there were many mouths to feed, it has now been almost a decade since they practiced it. There was no collective, conscious decision to stop *timbó* fishing. It just happened, as the demands and necessary conditions for it faded away, and also because they gave way to different, more individual methods of fishing. When I asked the reason for the cessation, various answers were given: “It wastes,” “It kills everything”, “It catches too many fish,” etc. These claims appear to express ecological concerns, and the cessation indeed has ecological implications. There is a shared view among the Karipuna that fish in general have diminished. Although predatory fishing by illegal *invasores* is singled out as the biggest cause, they recognize that what they do can also make an impact. While Indigenous subsistence fishing is not prohibited during the *piracema* (the critical annual upstream migration of freshwater fish, during which certain fishing bans are observed to ensure a sustainable population, normally from November to February), they try not to fish beyond necessity, which explains the cessation of *timbó* fishing. In fact, one Karipuna complained that there are no more fish in a previously abundant lake, attributing the cause to “some people used too much poison,” referring to *timbó* fishing. Interestingly, he added, “The fish don’t come anymore, because the last group left there, telling other fish that ‘this

lake sucks!’ That’s why all of them disappeared and went somewhere else.” For him, fish are also deemed capable of communication, conscious action, and agential decision-making. As the Karipuna never equate the disappearance of animals with extinction, they are bound to return if conditions improve. All humans have to do is give a little way, so that the aquatic web of life can regenerate itself.

However, when I inquired further, social and motivational issues proved no less important: the large amount of work involved in the activity, the futility of such effort, and the lack of purpose (“What for?”) also speak to the lack of demand for such a demanding event. Since *timbó* fishing is a collective activity buttressed on social cohesion, unless there is a strong initiative or an amiable atmosphere, it is deemed pointless labor, whose outcome is also undesirable [LET]. The lack of clear decision-making prevents us from concluding that the people refrained from the practice for good. Twice, during my stays in the village, when the people were animated and the atmosphere was jovial, I heard a few people propose doing it “someday.” Although it did not materialize, there is a possibility for it to be reactivated if the conditions are met.

I am not suggesting that it is “good” that the Karipuna do not practice *timbó* fishing. As a part of their traditional way of fishing, the method should be respected. Setting aside the incomparable damage done by illegal fishers, there is a shared perception among the Karipuna that *timbó* fishing is not compatible with the current circumstances, at least at this juncture. What is important is that the Karipuna view tradition or culture as malleable and adjustable, not as a static form or fixed set of thoughts and doings; hence, they ceased the practice the moment it became unnecessary and no longer made enough sense to them. Neither was there any management plan designed to conserve aquatic fauna, nor any external coercion to stop the practice. If any external pressure existed, it is the status of fish caused by illegal fishers. Otherwise, other partners encouraged them to do it. Autonomously and organically (albeit for different reasons), the Karipuna adjusted their subsistence practices to achieve a better ecological outcome for the forest. Although the scale of the activity is small, the implications are significant. This case of not-doing evinces that the Karipuna are fully capable of making timely adjustments, without going through collective decision-making procedures, without expressing explicit intentions to conserve species or biodiversity, and without insisting on a single way of reproducing life (one’s own “primary organizing principle”: Hage, 2017). From the surface, they may appear to be giving *up* a cultural

form, but what they are doing is giving *way* (and time) for the forest to regenerate, hence an enactment conducive to coexistence.

11.2.4. Halfway-domestication

It is widely known that Amazonian Indigenous people did not engage in the active domestication of animals (Descola, 2013; Erikson, 1987), a pattern some scholars describe as an “anti-domestication” tendency (Carneiro da Cunha, 2019). The Karipuna do not say that they are against or uninterested in animal domestication. One example is the harpy eagle. As many other Kawahiva collectives, the Karipuna snatched younglings from the nest to rear in wooden cages and pluck their plumes to fabricate artifacts. They fed the bird by killing monkeys, but did not try to reproduce, so it may not constitute full-blown domestication. As for other terrestrial wild animals (*tekuatea*), such as peccary or tapir, when they found or captured an orphaned youngling while hunting, usually after killing its parent, they tried to raise it many times, to no avail. One elder explained that the peccary were difficult to domesticate because they could bite when they grew up. Neither would the animals survive, explained another Karipuna interlocutor, as they inexplicably “became sad, and die. There's no way [to raise these wild animals].” However, no Karipuna expressed any “repugnance felt for the domestication of animals that are usually hunted as game” (Descola, 2013, p. 381). They viewed it more as a lack of a method than of will, as he said: “It was not because we didn't want to. It was pointless because they died.” At least, the will seems not strong enough to invent a method. In the case of tapirs, it is extremely difficult to find a baby to begin with. One Karipuna who had lived more than 50 years in the forest said he had never seen a single baby tapir. But before the official contact, some Karipuna managed to raise these ungulates in a loose way: the animals were reared in enclosures but liberated to copulate in the forest during mating seasons, because the tapir had a habit of returning home. Upon return, they could be slaughtered and consumed if meat became scarce. Yet tapirs were too big, making them incompatible with the people's frequent changes of villages.

Although some reared wild animals could end up in a pot intermittently, orphaned baby animals were usually kept as pets, called *emymbava* or *ogipebahea*. So, these cases were not so much a recurrent form of domesticating practice as intermittent experiments that seemed to fail more than succeed. Apart from these species, the Karipuna also keep animals they occasionally find or capture in the forest. The range is wide, from many fowl, curassows, to rodents such as

paca or agouti, to aquatic animals (e.g., tortoises, fish, even *pirarucú*). When they keep pets, they take avid care of them, even bringing them along on long trips to the city [MESH]. But barring macaws and parrots, parakeets, and many others either escape or die. In my observation, these escapes are due to relatively loose vigilance: most are not caged, and even when they are, the enclosures are usually not tightly secured. So, unwittingly, it gives way for the animals to make their own decision between staying and fleeing [LET].

Before the official contact, the Karipuna kept tapir-hawks or parrots as *emymbava*. They were also used as alert mechanisms of intruders. Now, the Karipuna coexist with a range of domestic animals such as dogs, chickens, and ducks, which they adopted from the whites. During the contact period, it is said that the forest spirits, *mirangã*, warned about the dogs. Before the Karipuna sneaked into rubber-tappers' houses to steal tools, the *mirangã* warned, "Beware of the dogs!" and a Karipuna man almost got bitten. But they quickly appreciated the canines and adopted them ever since. Dogs are only partially used in hunts since they can provoke the wild boar's aggression. Chickens also serve as pets, as some Karipuna consider them "pretty," which was the initial reason for their adoption. These birds roam freely during the day to forage, but also feed on animal feed bought from the city. During the night, they are caged to protect them from predators. Pets are not considered edible, but there are always exceptions. Some people consider chickens pets, while others consider them domesticated animals for consumption and egg production. In either case, they can be consumed if they die or meat becomes scarce. In sum, pet keeping cannot be viewed as a form of meat storage (Lyon, 1974, as cited in Erikson, 1987, p. 124), but I cannot confirm the thesis of pet animals as a major obstacle to domestication (Erikson, 1987, 2000) either. When I asked why they don't domesticate more animals, they pointed to the "lack of resource (which meant financial resource)," "lack of initiative," "lack of technical orientation." I could not collect any expression denoting aversion to the idea itself. The Karipuna proposed "projects" to their partners several times to domesticate animals (chickens, ducks, or domestic pigs) and to pursue aquaculture, but these proposals did not materialize because FUNAI disapproved of them due to possible "environmental damage." However, one Karipuna explained that their idea of aquaculture included the protection of diminishing species, thus viewed as intersecting with conservation. In sum, the Karipuna may not be firmly "anti-domestication," but they do not actively engage in domestication either. What is clear is that they do not make an effort to impose a "primary organizing principle" on animals, seemingly lacking the "passion to change" them.

They treat forest animals in an unforced, flexible, and under-constrained way, exempting most species from domestication, and allowing them to fulfill their own core needs: a mode of human-nonhuman relations highly conducive to coexistence with wildlife.

11.3. Coping with potential enemies

11.3.1. Suspicious “neighbors”

I have already described that concerning the *invasores* lurking in the Karipuna IL, the people prefer informing the authority and avoiding direct confrontation. This was partially developed in the course of making adjustments from experiencing retaliation from previous confrontations (Chapter 5). Sometimes, they would explicitly distance themselves from law enforcement activities occurring in the IL (Chapter 10), which can also be viewed as a move to prevent retaliation. On the ground, how to deal with *invasores* is less explicit, but the tacit code of conduct largely shared by the people is: not engaging, registering the situation, and informing the authorities.

One morning, I accompanied a Karipuna father and son while they fished in the Jaci Paraná River. We had been there for two hours, but there was not much biting. The Karipuna man attributed the lack of fish to the illegal fishers in the area. The river is a part of their territory, so they should not be fishing here. In extreme cases, these people use explosive methods that are prohibited. Just about 10 minutes after he mentioned this issue, we encountered three—supposedly illegal—fishermen in a boat approaching us. All of them wore caps and sunglasses, thus not identifiable, but they were certainly strangers, not the few *ribeirinho* neighbors who reside on the other side of the river. As we were within talking distance, one of them said hello and asked how we were doing. “Only piranhas!” my Karipuna companion replied in a friendly tone. After the boat had distanced itself away, I asked, “But aren’t they the ones who take your fish? They are like your enemies, right?” He replied, “What can I do? I am not the police. I can’t do anything.” Even after the incident, I heard him repeating the phrase: “What can I do? There's no way” [COP][LET]. On another occasion, while I was on a boat heading to Jaci with another Karipuna person, halfway there, we met three fishermen in a boat who asked for help due to a sudden problem with their outboard motor. Although they were not fishing at the moment, they had all the fishing gear and were inside the Karipuna's territory: in short, it was obvious that they were illegally fishing. But my Karipuna companion casually greeted them and shared his valuable reserve fuel. He even declined their offer to pay for the fuel. When I asked how he could be so generous to those who

are inflicting harm on the community, he said, “In the forest, you must help. Nobody knows what will happen to you.”

Although one must be careful not to overgeneralize these incidents, I observed similar cases in which the Karipuna showed behaviors of non-interference, a form of giving way, to people they occasionally encounter in the forest or river, even when their engagement in illegal operations is conspicuous. One may wonder if these actions constitute a form of giving way to the unjust: the negative side of giving way. The assumption of this proposition is that their lack of aggression will embolden the perpetrators, resulting in more invasions. However, from the Karipuna's point of view, it is not their direct action that can stop illegal activities, but proper law enforcement. So, how they act with individual invaders matters less in the grand scheme of things. Furthermore, the motivation of avoidance should not be reduced to a fear of retaliation. In these instances, the Karipuna were enacting a form of inclusiveness towards “neighbors” as a rule of thumb for navigating social life in the forest, knowing they had to put up with different people, even when conflicting intentions may exist [MESH][COP]. Although these people may belong in the category of “enemies,” in face-to-face meetings they are humans, sometimes viewed as pawns of more powerful, the real culprits, as I have shown in the rare encounter with the *invasores* (Chapter 5). In fact, some Karipuna disagree with calling them “enemy” at all: “For me, *invasores* aren't enemies. Fishers either. Fishers are just earning their living, fishing and selling fish... Some people from Jaci are unemployed and without any source of income. Because there were only fish on our side of the lakes, they would fish inside Karipuna land. So, they aren't enemies. When they invade our lakes to fish, they talk with us, and we chat with them. If they were enemy, we would be killing, shooting each other. ... The same with *invasores* of land. They're looking for land to support their family, to plant and harvest. ... They're not enemies. We know them.” This 'minority' view stands in contrast with other more common views: “They are enemy because they want to take our land ... because they are finishing off the fish,” another Karipuna said. But it offers an explanation for why they cope, even with “neighbors” with dubious intentions. For the previous interlocutor, what matters is how Indigenous people treat these strangers. He attributed the recent violent incidents in the region, at least partially, to the Indigenous people who aggressively reacted to invaders, persecuting them on their own: “Karipuna don't do that. That's why they don't mess with us. We don't harm them either ... If we messed with the *fazendeiros* or loggers who live near our land, we were already dead.”

The tendency to avoid confrontation also shows up outside the forest. Batiti recalls his painful memories of youth when he went to school in the nearby town. He was a calm and quiet student but suffered bullying by his classmates. He was always picked up for being the only Indigenous person in class. Multiple students would hold him while others beat him. He showed a scar that still serves as a reminder. Despite all the brutality, he never reacted [COP][LET]. Batiti's schooldays were formative, as he took the lessons from his then “stepfather,” a *ribeirinho* called Salles, seriously. Whenever he returned home beaten up, Salles would advise: “Son, you can't react, you can't hit anyone, you can't kill, you can't steal, you can't mingle with drinkers ... He taught good things,” recalls Batiti. Indeed, it is rare for a Karipuna person to show aggressive behavior, especially when among outsiders. Whatever resentment they harbor, they would prefer to endure or express it in indirect ways. Part of this may be being aware of the consequences. “Today, people are concerned about the law, about being arrested, about suffering. You know that the family suffers when one goes to prison. So, better keep quiet,” Batiti explained, adding: “If I were aggressive, a lot must have already happened.” A couple of other Karipuna people report an unconflictual attitude similar to Batiti in their adolescent school experiences, but not everyone. For instance, it was not replicated by his cousin or his son. They both responded to school bullying by countering. Either way, the result was the same: it was always the Indigenous students who were reprimanded and punished. What can be generalized is a shared sentiment that direct confrontation with white people usually does not bring positive results. Whether it is the authorities, education institutions, or even *invasores*, the people feel they are in a position where their actions bear real consequences, while actions done to others go unpunished.

11.3.2. Disagreements behind no-interference

Although the current tacit code of conduct on the ground could be described as non-interference, not all Karipuna are happy with this approach. I had an opportunity to observe internal differences. October 16th, 2022. The Karipuna recently identified an invader's makeshift camp not far from the Panorama village. Aripã, who first spotted it, took me to the site, and Andre, who had just arrived from a meeting in the city, joined us. As a chief, he had to check out these suspicious activities. When we arrived at Igarapé Cruz after a one-hour walk along the road, we entered the thick forest. Andre gestured for me to be silent because we were about to enter a “crime scene” involving illegal operators who might be lurking nearby. I was trailing Andre, observing him carefully as he approached the camp. The three of us meticulously observed the site and took photos. After

carefully examining the objects of the *invasores*, he did nothing in particular and left everything intact [LET]. His gestures were careful enough that, had the invaders returned, they wouldn't even notice our "visit." I wondered why he was not doing something. What kind of action was I expecting? Confiscate the objects? Put a warning placard? Set a fire? Or at least leave a sign, showing that we were here? Something along the lines, perhaps. None of that happened.

On our way back, we saw markings on trees ("#2" and "#6"), presumably plotting marks by the same invaders who set up the camp. This indicates, Andre explained, that "roads will soon be open." Both Karipuna were quite sure that the *invasores* came from the nearby town União Bandeirante. Aripã found these illegal operators "unbearable" (*não aguenta mais*) and said they should be killed. Andre seemed concerned that I would take this comment literally, which might create a bellicose image and misrepresent the Karipuna. On occasion, Aripã's candor would even surprise his family, as he would express these thoughts in public. Once, during a meeting in Brasília, he said (in Kawahiva), in front of government officers, that the cattle and their owners illegally occupying the Karipuna land should be eliminated. This prompted his son, who was serving as his interpreter in the meeting, to tone down his father's words in Portuguese. However, Batiti was not concerned whether his father would commit such an action. He would jokingly say, "There are just words." Indeed, it is unlikely that Aripã's words materialize. While it does show the Karipuna's warrior ethos (consider that Aripã is the only Karipuna in the village who actually participated in warfare), since the 1970s, after the official contact with FUNAI, there have been no publicly reported violent assaults by the Karipuna. Although Aripã has aged, he is still able to engage directly with an enemy but chooses not to, though he might sometimes feel the urge.

As we approached the village, Andre left us to check out his garden. Alone with Aripã, I asked why they hadn't done anything about the invader's camp. "Isn't it better to at least leave a message?" I am not sure if Aripã understood my question perfectly, but he replied that the young people are "afraid." Then he repeated his talking points about what the invaders deserve. He made his characteristic simulating gesture of shooting an arrow. "So, you will use an arrow?" I asked. "No," he replied with a grin, "shotgun." It seemed that, in his body, the two different ways of shooting (with a gun / with a bow) coexisted, as if representing different ways of approaching. If the arrow-bow could be used both for war and hunting, the shotgun is only for hunting. In relation to humans, the gun is only for defense, not for offense. Just like his son, I am convinced that Aripã

will not put his words into action, since he gave way to the more prevalent way of handling the *invasores*. But just like his embedded double gesture (showing an arrow shooting but meaning a gun firing), it is not entirely replaced by the new way; it stealthily coexists. Aripã's hawkish words and Andre's absence of action highlight the contrasting perspectives on the same incident. I later learned that this represents different opinions about how to deal with *invasores*. In general, the majority of the Karipuna accept approaches of non-interference, which have become more or less the standard way of dealing with these situations, but beneath the surface, there were dissenters. While more people considered it as a thoughtful and strategic move, since direct action can provoke the invaders to retaliate, others thought it risks sending a weak message, giving way to more invasion. The latter did not endorse measures that involve violence, either, but deemed at least some visible action necessary. Despite this heterogeneity of opinion, the majority were inclined toward the indirect path, taking steps to appeal to the authorities and the media.

11.4. Conclusion: Giving way for the greater good

One of the Karipuna's modes of existence conducive to their coexistence with the forest is giving way to human and nonhuman others. By literally offering a way (also space and room) for others in various ways, the Karipuna allow multiple forms of life to flourish. I observe this feature in their horticultural activities (the ways in which they tend gardens, and deal with the uninvited animals) and their propensity to “end up” not domesticating wild animals. Such giving way is not necessarily enacted with intention or by design, nor by a particular action. More often, it happens by not doing something: not giving preeminence to a primary organizing principle, only going halfway, or not viewing certain choices as choices, hence their recurrent expression “There is no way,” which I would paraphrase as “there is no way but to give way.” Although these not-doings are limited in scale to affect their entire forest, they serve as snippets for understanding the effect of the Karipuna mode of foresting—in middle voice, neither active nor passive—which appears to be at least partially responsible for the thriving wildlife around them.

The Karipuna's approach of giving way in relation to human others is not very different from their treatment of nonhumans. Even though they clearly recognize the threat of their contemporary enemy, the *invasores*, when they happen to come across them in the forest, they tend not to take proactive or aggressive measures, but rely on a twofold operation: on the one hand they cope with the situation, sometimes even showing friendly gestures; on the other hand, they try to

inform the authorities to enforce law. Some observers may view this approach as risky, literally giving way for illegal operations to proliferate, and, among the Karipuna, other opinions exist concerning the non-interference approach. However, for a group of people who not only lack the authority to enforce action, but are also outnumbered and poorly equipped, it is practically impossible to deal directly with the potentially risky *invasores*. In a remote forest environment lacking law enforcement, non-interference appears to be the sensible and strategic choice.

This facet underscores the importance of competent authorities intervening to enforce the law against such illicit activities. It calls for a more immediate, stringent, and comprehensive response from the authorities to protect both the environment and the people who protect it. At the same time, it is necessary to note that some Karipuna view their non-confrontational approach to their neighbors as precisely what brought about their coexistence, since, had they reacted aggressively, they could be “already dead.” Even taking constrained measures in the past resulted in violent repercussions. These experiences further dissuade people from taking direct engagement and orient them towards de-escalation. Similar to the way the Karipuna think retaliating to “pest” animals is futile, they find trying to act upon the *invasores* a high-risk-low-reward approach, pointless, and unpragmatic. As they know the *luta* does not have an end in sight, not taking direct measures against the *invasores* is, in a way, an indirect form of bracing for the long-term fight. Although they might give way to the adversary in a single battle, what they aim to win is the war.

V. Internal heterogeneity

Thinking about coexistence with Indigenous people starts with conceptualizing a collective. In Indigenous Amazonia, “community” became a prevalent term for conceptualizing groups of Indigenous people, whose societies underwent turbulent changes over the last century: many small-scale, kin-based, mobile societies, including the Karipuna, underwent transitions to become legally recognized, sedentary “communities.”¹⁸⁸ Such transformation attributed new connotations to communities, including the “widespread perception that the community is a sort of vehicle: a set of knowledge practices and symbolic techniques ... require[d] for funneling resources and living well” (Buitron, 2020).¹⁸⁹ In short, the community also became one of the “technologies” that the Indigenous people adopted to navigate through non-Indigenous realms. Especially when they engage in place-based struggles, community tends to be characterized as a *united* front against common adversaries (e.g., “Eco-communities”: Conklin & Graham, 1995, p. 697). Representing communities as “sites of consensus and sustainability” (Li, 1996, p. 501) is often motivated to “strengthen the property claims of potentially disadvantaged groups ... Though idealized, such representations have provided a vocabulary with which to defend the rights of communities vis-à-vis states” (ibid.). Although all communities are, to a certain extent, “imagined” of what binds the members together (ibid., Anderson, 1983, p. 15), due to recurrent conflictive situations (territorial disputes), Indigenous groups are often portrayed as a unitary, monolithic group based on a common telos (fighting *for* a common goal or *against* a common enemy) or on common properties (land, ethnicity, language, ontology, socio-cultural institutions, etc.).

Many philosophers problematized the notion of community being defined by what its members own in common (Agamben, 1993; Blanchot, 1988; Nancy, 1991, 2000).¹⁹⁰ For Jean-Luc Nancy, “every form of project seeking to establish a political community, whether a community of abstract universal human subjects or a community based on particular national, ethnic, or religious

¹⁸⁸ Various anthropologists have stressed that the “community” as a corporate group and as a collective decision-making body seems to have been introduced from the outside and forced upon Lowland South American sociality—while being assumed to be already there (High & Costa, 2024, p. 646).

¹⁸⁹ “Sometimes the community is simply a channel to access external wealth ... a means towards the cultivation of new economic attitudes” (ibid., p. 63) or “become an end in itself.” (ibid.)

¹⁹⁰ “[A]uthors such as Giorgio Agamben, Alphonso Lingis, Jacques Rancière, Alain Badiou, and Roberto Esposito emphasize that the conception of community as a unity will always go hand in hand with exclusion, with a forgotten community that is not counted among these communities that are one” (Bax & Heiden, 2019, p. 4).

identities, risks enacting the logic of effectuation or totalization that immanentism presupposes” (as cited in James, 2019, p. 19), thus coexistence or being-with-one-another “cannot be put in the service of, or assimilated as a founding principle for, a determinate politics or political project” (ibid., p. 16).¹⁹¹ The problem of defining communities with what their members have in common is that “there is always a community that remains outside of this definition, namely the community composed of those who do not share in the properties that define these communities —‘a community of those who have nothing in common’” (Bax & Heiden, 2019, p. 4). Even if a community is united under a common cause, as is the case with the Karipuna, reducing people to a single, determined commonality risks overlooking the “outside within.”

The emergence of ontology-inspired bodies of work also influences how communities are viewed, especially in Indigenous Amazonia (whose anthropological literature has foregrounded the Ontological Turn), where ontological premises often mobilize broad categories (e.g., “Amerindian,” “Animist societies,” “Amazonians,” “nonmoderns,” etc.). Discussing polarized categories (e.g., animism/totemism) that are used to explain animist ontologies and perspectival cosmologies, Stephen Hugh-Jones questioned “our tendency to treat such pairs as mutually exclusive: society A is animist, society B is totemic; the X’s ‘have’ horizontal shamanism, the Y’s ‘have’ vertical shamanism” (2012, xiii), stressing these are just ideal types. Yet there is a tendency in which “ontologists often construct a single, homogenized, and exoticized conceptual perspective for ‘nonmodern’ peoples by ignoring or deforming much of the material available for ethnographic analysis” (Cepek, 2016, p. 625).¹⁹² In works that show such a tendency, if a given community technically belongs to a particular category, it is often assumed that its people share the same ontology associated with it. Even though the dynamic and diverse reality of Indigenous communities often defies conventional ontological topology and delineation, “non-Western (and Western) ontologies are often described as unified, homogeneous worlds ... mask[ing] the conflicting and contradictory narratives commonly encountered in ethnographic research” (Revilla-Minaya, 2024, p. 3). Assigning a homogenous ontology or generic categories to groups can be doubly problematic in Amazonian societies, where the relation between the individual and

¹⁹¹ Community is not “in any general way a productive or operational project—nor is it a project at all” (Nancy, 1991, p. 15).

¹⁹² For similar critiques concerning ontological flattening, see: (Bessire & Bond, 2014; Erazo & Jarrett, 2018; Graeber, 2015; Hunt, 2014; Nadasdy, 2021; Tym, 2024).

community is not understood in dualistic terms. What is commonly observed is a general antipathy to conventions (coercive constraints, rules) and emphasis on individual autonomy on the one hand; the embodiment of mutuality of sociality and intersubjectivity, this is, the “embodied community,” on the other hand (Overing & Passes, 2000), prompting Amazonianists to adopt concepts such as “dividual”¹⁹³ (Strathern, 1988) to understand personhood in relation to a collective. Yet deconstructing the dualism between community and individual can only go so far in addressing the aforementioned issue. I argue that it is necessary to suspend the attribution of a single ontology to a group and to account for the *internal (within-group) heterogeneity* through ethnographic efforts. Although growing voices have sought to draw attention to the diversity and differences within groups (Hastrup, 1995, p. 31; Nadasdy, 2021, p. 361), few studies explicitly address this issue with ethnography (Ross, 2023; Revilla-Minaya, 2024). By being inclusive of plurality, the lens of coexistence allows us to observe variations both *among* and *within* groups (even at the individual level) and to avoid flattening different voices, including those deemed “noise” or “cacophony,” which are often excluded or silenced.

Paying attention to within-group variation does not assume equal weight or space among the multiple onto-epistemologies. The plane of coexistence is more often asymmetrical¹⁹⁴ (although no single ontology is supposed to be too dominating to extinguish others, which will be mono-existence). To account for the asymmetry, I draw from the concept of “motley,” or *ch'ixi*,¹⁹⁵ developed by Aymara scholar Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui. Differentiating from the notion of hybridization,¹⁹⁶ synthesis, or fusion, *ch'ixi* “expresses the parallel coexistence of multiple cultural differences that do not extinguish but instead antagonize and complement each other” (Cusicanqui, 2012, p. 105). *Ch'ixi* does not overlook the asymmetry in the coexistence of socio-

¹⁹³ Multiple person formed by relations that can be detached and incorporated by others (Vilaça, 2015a, 2016).

¹⁹⁴ On the human level, this dimension can be best known through ethnographical endeavor: only by following and spending enough time with certain people in their community, one can develop a keen sense of perceived difference by the people: about the different weight of each diverging opinion and the subtle tilting of the balances.

¹⁹⁵ In Aymara, *ch'ixi* means “a color that is the product of juxtaposition, in small points or spots, of two opposed or contrasting colors ... *ch'ixi* combines the Indian world and its opposite without ever mixing them” (2012, p. 105).

¹⁹⁶ Hybridity connotes infertility, and “assumes the possibility that from the mixture of two different beings a third completely new one can emerge, a third race or social group with the capacity to merge the features of its ancestors in a harmonic and as yet unknown blend. But the mule is a hybrid that cannot reproduce.” (Cusicanqui, 2012, p.105) It also risks flattening asymmetrical differences, lending to justification of the subordination of marginalized identities.

cultural forms,¹⁹⁷ but criticizes the official narrative of multiculturalism, which postulates harmonious confluence and imaginary fusion between the Indigenous and Colonizers, whose underlying assumption is white dominance and directionality towards whitening. Distancing from neoliberal multicultural reforms (“cultural mosaic”) of the nineties, it questions political-state projects or multiculturalist legislations as “concealing mechanism par excellence for new forms of colonization” (Cusicanqui, 2012, p. 99) and “a friendly liquidation of the past” (Van Cott, 2012).¹⁹⁸ *Ch'ixi* sums up an effort to find affirmative possibility, a space of affirmation for the mixed, both modern and ancestral, urban and non-urban, and reveals other possible directions ignored by convenient narratives of mixture, where traces of contradictions are wiped out. It is about “com[ing] to terms with the daily contradiction of living between community and individual personhood ... not to overcome this contradiction but how to live with it, how to inhabit it” (Cusicanqui, 2023, p. 116). Thinking with *ch'ixi*, one is able to conceive a decolonizing concept of coexistence that “allows [indigenous people] to coexist between different beings, whilst still maintaining the radical nature of the difference” (ibid., p. 117), yet be constantly aware of the asymmetrical power dynamic between the colonizing forces and the subaltern subjects.

As the reader might have noticed throughout the previous chapters, internal heterogeneity is pervasive among the Karipuna community. The people often show considerably different onto-epistemological understandings among them, and sometimes even evincing multiple ontologies within a person. In the following two chapters, I will attend to the gradations of difference, focusing on the Karipuna's onto-epistemological commitments in their everyday dealings with sylvan nonhuman animals and their ecological implications.

¹⁹⁷ Since it draws from René Zavaleta's concept of motley society (*Sociedad Abigarrada* 1986), in which multiple modes of production (capitalist, pre-capitalist, non-capitalist), historical temporalities, and perspectives coexist, without one entity expelling the other. It “stresses how Indigenous socio-cultural formations are asymmetrically articulated with, rather than separate from, relations of colonialism, capitalism and modernity” (Anthias, 2017, p. 269).

¹⁹⁸ It is also critical to the academic projects of multiculturalism such as that of “Mignolo and company [that] neutralizes the practices of decolonization” (Cusicanqui, 2012, p.104).

12. Onto-diversity and biodiversity ^[LET] ^[MESH] ^[RES]

In this chapter, I will examine the micro- and macro-ecological impacts of the Karipuna people on the flora and fauna of their forest. To break from the dichotomy of “environmental heroes or villains” (Fisher, 2000, pp. 1-2), I will examine the various environmental perceptions and impacts of the people through an ethnographic inquiry. I reiterate that each anonymized person represents a member of the Karipuna community, and all the information is based on interviews and conversations.

12.1. Inconstancy of the “eco-Indian” soul

A group of people protecting their forest, and by doing so, protecting other living beings in it from the effects of deforestation, is easily equated with a move toward environmentalism or conservation. However, although the Karipuna resist large-scale deforestation on their land to protect human-forest coexistence, they do *not* oppose small- to medium-scale developments that entail a certain degree of forest clearing. Neither do they consider all natural beings “sacred”¹⁹⁹ or equally worthy of conservation. In that sense, they differ from Western “deep ecologists” (e.g., tree-huggers) or “eco-centric” non-Western people such as the Bishnoi (Reichert, 2015) or the Jain (Panikar, 2010), who center their lives on defending other living beings, to the extent of refraining from killing and consuming them, or even sacrificing human lives to save animals or trees. Yet, the idealized, romanticized image of Amazonian Indigenous people as “ecologically noble savage” or “eco-Indian” still persists, especially as “political rhetoric” (Hornborg, 2024, p. 26), although academic commentators have been criticizing the notion for decades.²⁰⁰ In anthropology and other social science disciplines, it was initially skeptics who sought to debunk the alleged nobleness as unfounded and misleading (Buege, 1996; S. Krech, 2005; Redford, 1991; Stearman, 1994a). Then followed criticism both on the skeptics and proponents of eco-nobleness, for perpetuating essentialist notions that distort the reality of Indigenous people (Kuper, 2003; Nadasdy, 2005). Examining the problematic assumptions incorporated in environmentalism and conservation, Paul Nadasdy (2005) expanded his critique even on studies that offer relatively nuanced definitions

¹⁹⁹ Spiritual relationship with the forest exists but its perceptions and impact highly vary per individual.

²⁰⁰ The persistence has many reasons, one of which being the Indigenous people themselves tapping into the discourse (Conklin & Graham, 1995; Turner, 1993). In a way, the image is a product of co-creation, but with significant “equivocation” (Viveiros de Castro, 2004b) that is not necessarily “controlled.”

(Alvard, 1993; Brightman, 1987; Hames, 1991) as being “extremely problematic” (Nadasdy, 2005, p. 294): “regardless of how subtly or precisely they have been defined ... by ignor[ing] the fact that the concepts of conservation and environmentalism are of Euro-American origin to begin with” (ibid.), and simply by posing questions whether the Indigenous people are conservationists or environmentalists, Nadasdy argues, “scholars necessarily commit themselves to judging Indigenous peoples’ actions in accordance with Euro-American cultural assumptions” (ibid.). Therefore, he concludes, “we must refrain altogether from using the Euro-American ideal of ecological nobility to evaluate Indigenous people’s actions and focus instead on the specific social relations and cultural assumptions that underlie their actions in particular circumstances” (ibid., 295). Aymaran scholar Cusicanqui finds the root of the perpetuating “eco-Indian” figure in

the notion of origin refer[ing] us to a past imagined as quiet, static, and archaic, which allows us to see the strategic recuperation of Indigenous demands and the neutralization of the decolonizing impulse. A discussion of these communities situated at the 'origin' denies their contemporaneity and excludes them from the struggles of modernity. They are given a residual status that, in fact, converts them into minorities, ensnaring them in indigenist stereotypes of the noble savage and as guardians of nature. (2012, p. 99)

At least partially owing to such staunch criticism, academic production explicitly framed by “eco-essence” has been scarce since the mid-2000s, but this does not mean the end of the discourse. “In the global arena, the savage as a Western reification or the 'savage slot,' ... has not disappeared from scientific and political discourses. ... it has been taken up again in the context of climate concerns and transformed into an 'ecologically noble Indian’” (Uchôa, 2024, p. 18). Despite not using these tropes, prominent anthropologists such as Viveiros de Castro hail Indigenous people as standard-bearers of a sustainable future amid planetary ecological crisis: They are “masters of immanence” (Viveiros de Castro, 2013, p. 36), “entrusted with the Amazonian Grail, inadvertent warrantors of planetary salvation” (ibid., p. 29), influencing other thinkers. “[T]he Indigenous remains the privileged site and the original instance of this subversive principle of multiplicity, seen as embodying some kind of an absolute Other to the statist ideas of history and modernization that imperial Europe epitomized” (Chakrabarty, 2023, p. 84). Emphasizing Indigenous people's role and contribution in the ecological crisis is timely, important and necessary, insofar as essentializing depictions and “denial of coevalness” (Fabian, 2014) are avoided. Otherwise, it ends up reproducing clichés of eco-essence or nobleness. Indigenous societies cannot be overgeneralized as pertaining to the latter side of the proposed dichotomy of

“to modernize, or to ecologize” (Latour, 2007), nor are their communities simplistically classifiable as “non-moderns” (Danowski & Castro, 2017; Latour, 2017) since they coexist with both modern and non-modern lifeways.

In his renowned essay, *Inconstancy of the Indian Soul* (2011), Viveiros de Castro assembles accounts by Jesuit missionaries in mid-16th-century Brazil, who were deeply perplexed and troubled by the capricious behaviors of the Tupi-speaking Indians. At first, they appeared to be surprisingly easy to convert, only to disappoint the catechists by their sudden “regression” towards savage practices, especially the intra-ethnic warfare culminating with “abhorrent” cannibalism. For our contemporaries, it is not difficult to note that the Tupi people were erroneously judged by an unfair projection of the Eurocentric notion of constancy. The idea of “ecological noble savage” is another form of such projection, which “retain[s] an imperialist perspective insofar as they continue to evaluate Indigenous people’s actions according to a Euro-American ideal” (Nadasdy 2005, p. 293). Ecological constancy, if such a thing exists, is based on idealistic assumptions that do not speak to Indigenous reality.

12.2. Overview of the Karipuna's impact on flora/fauna

Adding to the gap between Indigenous ways of life and Western notions of environmentalism, I noticed an explicit aversion towards the label “environmentalist” (*ambientalista*) among some Karipuna people. In 2024, when I spoke with two Karipuna in the village, each in their own house, I was struck by the coincidence that both expressed critical views on another member who was “going around in public, saying he's an environmentalist”: he was labeling himself as an “environmental activist” in his social network profiles and on other occasions. As I asked what was wrong with that, one person said: “It's creating an image that doesn't exist.” In another unrelated conversation, another Karipuna defined environmentalists as those “who *don't* protect the environment.” When I asked whom he referred to by that term, he replied: “people like IBAMA (environmental police),” who are supposed to protect the environment but fail to do so. In general, “environmentalist” did not carry a positive connotation, adding yet another reason why the frame is inadequate for explaining the Karipuna's protection of the forest.

If the Karipuna protect the forest and argue that they also protect animals and biodiversity within it, yet should be differentiated from “environmentalists” or “conservationists,” how can we understand their impacts on wildlife? We know that they have heightened awareness of and

attention to the forest beings, and care about animals as the foundation of their livelihood, which is one of the primary reasons they protect the forest. But how do they consider other living forms, including those they do not consume? One Karipuna explained that each living being has an ecologically indispensable role: “the tapir serves for natural reforestation. They eat and poop far away, up to three kilometers. There, it throws the seed, and it sprouts. The capuchin monkey serves to increase wild planting, because it eats fruit and keeps dropping it” (Karipuna, 2021, p. 9). I have also presented Katiká's view of animals as intricately intertwined in the web of life, endowed with *ipaji* agency (Chapter 9). Beyond these, however, it was difficult to find someone articulating the animals' ecological *raison d'être*. When asked explicitly, they would agree that all kinds of wildlife are an inherent part of (*faz parte*) the forest. We can also deduce, from their behavior toward animals feeding on their garden, or the vast majority of wild animals that they do not domesticate, that they understand the forest as a broad and complex ecological entanglement, not as a simple sum total of things in which they can selectively choose some elements and remove others. Although I could not identify what would be widely considered a collective practice or intervention *designed* to conserve wildlife, from a broader perspective, there is no doubt that the Karipuna's *luta* itself has a net-positive impact on the countless nonhuman inhabitants in the forest, as they are committed to protecting a biodiverse forest that extends over 150,000 hectares, hence the contribution to conservation in the region [RES]. If they keep succeeding in protecting their land, that alone will be a pivotal shield for its innumerable forest beings. Yet the question is: is this indirect, trickle-down effect of territorial protection the only point of Karipuna's ecological contribution, or is there more than that?

Before we start, we must first recognize that, from the Karipuna's perspective, there was no reason to be concerned about conserving animals or biodiversity. At least until recently, no Karipuna remembers any serious decline or lack of animals. Granted, they recognize fluctuations in hunting results, especially during the rainy season (from December to March) when heavy precipitation impedes hunting. There could be some days when they spot fewer animals, or it could take longer than usual to find them, but eventually animals would return by the dry season. Overall, animals have always been more than enough to subsist on. In recent cases (since 2020), as more people have recognized a notable decline in certain species (e.g., jaguars, harpy eagles, *pirarucú*), the decline has been attributed not to them but to pressures from deforestation, rampant invasion,

illegal logging, and fishing.²⁰¹ Apart from these external factors, there was little reason to be concerned about conservation to begin with; therefore, it should come as no surprise that I was not able to identify any specific practice designed to conserve certain species. Yet this does not mean that their practices are not conducive to conservation; the opposite is true. One Karipuna practice that likely contributes to the preservation of wildlife is their relatively narrow range of prey: only a few species are targeted for hunting, compared with other Indigenous peoples or Kawahiva collectives.²⁰² They do not eat any kind of monkey, caiman, armadillo, capybara, coati, snake, or otter, which are classified as *bateranohua* (false animals), in contrast to *batera*, which denotes edible animals or food (Chapter 3). They say it is simply a “custom,” not a food taboo, since many of them have been tasted. The reason for refraining from consuming them is not to conserve them: a Karipuna explained that armadillo evokes “disgust” because they feed on termites, and monkeys are avoided because they “look too much like humans.” Regardless of the reasons, the Karipuna end up sparing a myriad of lives simply by letting them live [LET]. It can be said that they form a symbiotic relationship with these untargeted animals—as a form of commensalism²⁰³—since these animals benefit from the Karipuna's forest protection, while the people do not directly benefit from them. Additionally, the few animals they target, except the tapir, are mostly adaptable, fast-reproducing species: peccary, paca, agouti, and curassow. So, the Karipuna's ecological position in the sylvan trophic cascade is not so much an external depleter of the food web as an integrated top predator [MESH], which is a good example of how people *forest*.

Also, from a purely quantitative standpoint, there is a convincing case that the Karipuna's hunting practices on fauna have a benign impact. To my knowledge, no biological study has been conducted, nor have comprehensive quantitative data on fauna been collected within the Karipuna forest, making it impossible to attest to its precise biodiversity status (a notoriously difficult task even if data were available: Fernández-Llamazares et al., 2024). However, by combining the generic formula for population-per-space metrics with my rough data on hunting yield, we may get a sense. Generally speaking, recent evidence shows that in most kinds of tropical forests

²⁰¹ As stated above, even in these cases, the Karipuna view that the outsider's activities scare the animals off to other, more remote hinterlands, not as species going extinct.

²⁰² Fausto explains the Parakanã's restrictive diet (Fausto, 2012, pp. 183–4), but it seems that the Karipuna eat even less species, although not as strict as the Parakanã.

²⁰³ A form of symbiotic relationship between multiple species in which one species obtains food or other benefits from the other, without either harming or benefiting the latter.

worldwide, large animals are highly valued as “game” and are depleted where human population densities exceed one person per square kilometer (Mulder & Coppolillo, 2005, p. 93; Robinson & Bennett, 2000), even in traditional or Indigenous areas (Peres, 2000). Since the Karipuna number no more than 30 people living in a 150,000-hectare forest, the population density would be around 51 km² per person (153,000 ha = 1530 km², based on 30 people) or, i.e., less than 0.02 person per square kilometer. Even this is a higher estimate, since during my research, there were fewer than ten active hunters among the people, who, according to my non-comprehensive, approximate data, hunt fewer than twenty peccaries and two tapirs per month. Additionally, their increasing dependence on food from the city is further lessening hunting pressure. In these circumstances, anthropogenic overhunting will be extremely unlikely unless the Karipuna suddenly begin organizing regular, large-scale hunting raids, which has never happened before [LET]. In sum, if we exclude the uncontrollable factor of possible invasions by illegal poachers, we can say that the internal pressure created solely by the Karipuna is, and likely to remain, considerably light.

Having established that, I reject the view of reducing a group of people's contribution to biodiversity to a simplified explanation of lighter impact (e.g., low population, rudimentary technology). When there is no identifiable customary mechanism or behavioral pattern that fits into the frame of sustainable management or conservation, explanations tend to resort to such reductionism. For instance, in conservation biology, the Karipuna's case is likely to be termed as “epiphenomenal conservation” (Hunn, 1982). Besides the other problems of these reductionist explanations (see Conclusion), these approaches cannot account for the people's broader mode of intra-acting with the forest and its nonhuman inhabitants, nor for the impacts of not-doings. It suffices to note that the Karipuna do *not* organize mass hunting raids or engage in anti-conservationist activities such as the regular wildlife trade²⁰⁴ (especially the latter, which is widespread in the region), *despite* being highly effective and savvy hunters. They use shotguns and know how to use other destructive hunting/fishing methods. They might not readily possess all the instruments at hand, but they do have access to them. In short, the Karipuna are not *incapable* of engaging in those activities, but they choose not to, or *prefer* not to, since they do not view such action as necessary, sensible, or viable [LET]. In Chapters 10 and 11, I have elaborated this dimension of *adynamia* and “not-doings” which have a considerable impact on wildlife. Here,

²⁰⁴ Reportedly, there few individuals seem to have engaged in small-scale bushmeat trade of turtles and pacas, which raises concern from the majority who condemn this action.

I will show another dimension that may be one of the other drivers protecting their flora and fauna, although not intentionally designed to do so.

12.3. Diverse treatments

Unlike the Karipuna's *luta*, where their discursive messages and advocacy are not only strategic and organized but also unified and consensual across the board, the ways they treat forest beings are difficult to describe in the same way. In addition to the challenge of identifying a single mechanism or set of practices that protect forest beings, it is also difficult to generalize a more or less uniform “Karipuna approach” across flora and fauna. While a loose rule of thumb is identifiable, what stands out is the broad diversity. At least during the period I have collected information, each person seems to treat wildlife differently and has a different impact on it. However, collectively, the cumulative effect of such diversity seems largely conducive to people's coexistence with wildlife in their forests.

12.3.1. Trees

In Chapter 4, I showed the Karipuna's will to pave and expand roads (which entail a certain level of forest removal), in contrast to the concerns of their observers, who saw this as increasing the risk of intrusion. That is one of many examples showing that the Karipuna do not necessarily oppose development; it depends on the scale and purpose of each case. What is clear is that nobody endorses large-scale deforestation: “We have limits. We don’t cut down many [trees]. Cut many for what? We learned to cut down a lot with whites, because they cut down for cattle. We cut down just to make gardens,” said a Karipuna. To this point, there is consensus. But at smaller scales, internal diversity is common. Let us start with a person. Although I disagree with the idea of “ecobleness,” if someone insists on describing Katiká Karipuna with it, I understand the temptation. She finds shamanic power in myriads of animals; she shows due respect toward forest spirits, she warns against harming *ipaji* animals; her knowledge of the forest and medicinal plants are abundant; she is fluent in the “grammars of animacy” (Kimmerer, 2013, p. 56) both in narratives and songs [MESH]; she vehemently opposes deforestation and criticizes *invasores*, etc. In short, Katiká provides sufficient “data” to construct a figure of an “ecologically noble Indian.” I share a vignette: In April 2023, when I told Katiká that I was going to join the villagers to harvest açai, she frowned. I did not understand her negative reaction until later. What made her uncomfortable was the felling of trees. The method she approves for açai extraction is climbing up the tree. When

I shared her concern with another Karipuna, he brushed it off as unrealistic. “There's no other way. Nobody climbs trees [nowadays].” When I asked, “But isn't climbing the traditional method?” the person replied, smiling, “Consuming açai isn't traditional.” He explained that the Karipuna only began harvesting the fruit after their white neighbors. People used to climb, but after someone fell and injured his back, nobody has been doing it since.²⁰⁵ Instead, the standard practice became cutting down trees. Although the felling is not indiscriminate but selective (targeting only a few trees), Katiká disapproved [RES]. She could not climb up by herself after her arm got paralyzed, but thinks young people could easily do it. For her, felling a tree to get *açaí* falls under unnecessary destruction.

This is only one of the many ways in which Katiká's ecological concern is expressed. Yet, even with her, there were incidents that left me scratching my head. One such experience occurred when the huge mango tree (*Mangifera indica*) in the *terreiro* (a central place in a village where social activities take place) was cut down. It was a huge, old tree—much bigger and probably more significant than a random açai tree that was cut down—whose presence was conspicuous to anyone who visits the village. People would rest and chat under the tree. The reason it was cut down was unclear, but everyone knew who was responsible. In fact, the person who was “ordered” to cut it was an Indigenous worker from another ethnic group, hired by the Karipuna's partner NGO to construct a couple of toilets. A person from this NGO, who regularly visits the village, told him to cut the tree. Contrary to my assumption, almost nobody expressed any grievance, let alone interest [LET]. Unexpectedly, Katiká's reaction was also one of indifference. Only one Karipuna told me: “That *mangueira* was really old, from the contact period. But it was cut because [the person] ordered it. There was no consultation with the community. [S/he] simply decided it because [s/he] thought it would fall over [her/his] house. I don't see any danger. The tree was there for hundreds of years.” Although there is no prohibition on cutting trees, and there could have been a risk of the tree falling, the fact that no Karipuna felt the need to take action while an outsider allegedly made a unilateral decision that changed the configuration of the village seemed more than a triviality. This incident needs to be considered within the broader context of external influences, rather than through an environmental lens. It must be noted that Katiká views this person as someone who frequently makes decisions related to the village, thus capable of giving orders. I heard Katiká

²⁰⁵ Yuqui of Bolivia felled whole trees just to get the fruit, once they lost the labor of slaves who used to do the dangerous work of climbing for the harvest (Stearman, 1994a).

calling the person “boss” (*chefe*) multiple times. The person in question gained influence over the community regarding who received which benefit, because the NGO represented by him/her intermediated multiple external donations to the community. Analyzing the micro-power relations around the community will be another topic. An important takeaway in this case is that even Katiká, who appeared most readily describable as an “ecologically noble,” could show various treatments and attitudes toward nonhuman beings (also see the case of giant otters in the section below). I repeat, therefore, that instead of trying to identify a certain constancy stemming from an observer's projection, we need to empirically account for the diversity as it unfolds.

12.3.2. Animals

In multiple public speeches, a Karipuna person described his people's behavior as follows: “We respect nature, which is our mother earth. We ask for permission before entering the forest ... When we hunt and see animals with offspring, we don't kill. Same with fish. This is very sacred for us.” According to my ethnography, there is a tacit rule of thumb among the Karipuna that one must: a) kill only to consume, b) not kill too many, c) not waste a kill, d) not injure animals by misfiring. “I never kill many. [It's] just for consumption,” stressed a young hunter, which is a common comment to hear. Yet, to be precise, the criteria for “too many” may vary. As they prefer to hunt alone, an individual usually hunts one or two peccaries (their preferred targets), but occasional exceptions show that the criteria are rather circumstantial. On a rare occasion, when two hunters killed more than five peccaries at once (March 2025), when I asked if that amount was considered “too many,” the hunter explained: “It's about not wasting. I brought every kill and consumed all. Didn't waste anything.” In this case, consuming the kill and not wasting seems to override the quantitative component. As for the reason for d), opinions vary: some say, “because the animals die after many days,” pointing to the animals' suffering, while some say it is because it is deemed a failed attempt, a wasted opportunity. As for “asking permission,” except for the person who presented the idea (who explained that he learned it from his deceased father), others did not understand exactly what it meant. One Karipuna speculated it might refer to the fact that the people do not hunt excessively. Another Karipuna explicitly disagreed with the expression of “asking permissions” or “respecting animals,” saying “That doesn't exist,” but agreed that they hunt in moderation. I could not find any Karipuna asking permission when entering the forest or to hunt, in any form. Although the shamanic dream technique *omongó* may be viewed as an implicit way to express respect, there was no pattern such as the Desana's shamanism that expresses direct

bearing on conserving or managing animals, according to Reichel-Dolmatoff (1976), nor, as an Achuar hunter, who “takes care not to shoot wild sows that are pregnant or accompanied by young, in order to preserve the reproductive potential of a peccary horde” (Descola, 1994, p. 237). One experienced Karipuna hunter deemed such selective hunting impossible: “Tell me, how are you going to guess a pregnant boar, in the middle of twenty boars, running, when you shoot? You’re not going to know it. ... We don’t know if they are pregnant or are full of food because they are all fat-bellied. It’s not possible to specify if pregnant or not.” Another hunter echoed his words: “Sometimes you kill it without wanting because there are so many.” Yet one Karipuna hunter said he hates to kill baby animals or pregnant ones. In general, most Karipuna hunters' behavior seem to incline more to the Piro hunters who “did not altruistically limit their harvest of easily overhunted species such as tapir and monkeys. Nor did they avoid killing females or adult animals of prime age” (Townsend, 2009, p. 32).²⁰⁶ When an animal with a baby is killed, both are usually consumed, or the orphan can be raised as a pet.

Previously, certain customary principles appeared to embody an implicit hunting ethic. For instance, killing a tapir was associated with the risk of the hunter's child falling ill. The explanation is that the spirit (*rupigrwara*) of the tapir carries a stone (a metonymic symbol of the tapir's heavy weight, which can hurt a person who carries it) and places it on the child, causing a headache. The solution: any hunter who kills a tapir must fabricate a small basket, put a stone in it, and hang it beside the child's hammock to deceive the spirit. This may indirectly moderate a hunter from hunting more than he can carry. But aside from its implicitness, it has been a long time since anyone enacted this custom or made such baskets. Besides, the weight of the kill limits hunting when it occurs in the forest, whereas when hunters kill multiple peccaries, it usually occurs near the village, from a point where they can make multiple short trips. In rare cases, when the kill is made near the open road, they can also use a motorcycle to carry it.

Regarding the “non-game” animals, treatment varies as well. Consider the jaguar. Generally speaking, the Karipuna do not kill jaguars. They certainly do not have a habit of hunting or consuming them. But this is different from saying that the Karipuna protect or conserve these felines. First of all, although most members do not actively hunt jaguars, each has a different reason

²⁰⁶ Or the Yuqui people who hunt “aggressively and opportunistically without regard to the size or sex of the animal” (Stearman, 1994b, p. 3)

why. Some are against killing because they think jaguars have shamanic power or guardian spirits; some think those claims are personal imaginations, but they also do not hunt because jaguars are difficult to find and dangerous; some do not hunt because they consider it illegal, some due to lack of motivation or habit; some do not like hunting to begin with. Yet when one assumes that at least people agree that jaguars are not hunted, there is a community member with a familial reputation for killing jaguars. If one tries to ignore this case as an outlier on the basis that the person is just a community member, not an “authentic” Karipuna, then one discovers that an undeniably “authentic” Karipuna not only killed jaguars but also sold its hide, although it was a long time ago and a rare case. Besides, every adult whom I asked would not hesitate to kill a jaguar if the animal posed any threat to them or domestic animals. To conclude, the Karipuna neither actively hunt nor conserve jaguars. There is no unitary custom or shared ontological commitment that prevents its hunting, but as a collective, they do not habitually hunt them either. This trend is likely to continue if the current circumstances are maintained (which is precisely what they are trying to do, by protecting their forest through *luta*). However, if a dramatic change occurs—e.g., if the Karipuna fall into poverty and an accessible and lucrative market of jaguar hide or meat emerges (such as in the nearby frontier region in Bolivia); if the jaguars become aggressive to humans—, there are meager internal obstacles to prevent engaging in hunting.

Such in-betweenness and circumstance-dependency apply to many other animals, including emblematic species. Consider the harpy eagle. Similar to jaguars, the Karipuna usually do not kill them. But as a recent case (in 2025) shows, it happens. The hunter was a non-Indigenous community member, but when I discussed the kill with a Karipuna elder, he corrected my assumption that the Karipuna traditionally don't kill harpy eagles: “No. We kill. I killed. Their meat smells very bad.” Other Karipuna had different opinions. Some think the birds should be protected; others think capturing them is okay, since it is “tradition,” but killing is unnecessary. Similarly, there were diverging opinions about giant otters (*Pteronura brasiliensis*), which the Karipuna do not consume. Some argue that they are nuisance animals who kill too many fish, putting them in direct competition with human fishers. Otters are also notorious for messing with fishing nets. People with negative perceptions of otters try to kill the animals whenever they spot them. Others say that these allegations are untrue, that they should just leave the otters alone. What interested me was Katiká's opinion. She usually opposes killing “non-game” animals and thinks many animals have their own guardian spirits or shamanic power, thus deserve due respect. Therefore, I

assumed that her position about the otters would be along the line of the “pro-otter camp.” Except she wasn’t. She reiterated the talking points of the “anti-otter” bloc, that otters kill too many fish, and added, “Otters don’t even eat everything [they catch]. They waste.” In fact, she was consistent in applying the same (ethical) standards to nonhumans as to humans. She repeatedly criticized some community members who killed peccaries and wasted the meat. For her, animals were not only capable of wasting, like us, but also attributable of responsibility, therefore subject to criticism (hence the punishment). But since the Karipuna traditionally do not eat giant otters and have stopped using their teeth to fabricate decorations (and perhaps also because Katiká considered otters to have a little bit of shamanic power, *ipaji*), I erroneously assumed that killing them would fall into her category of unnecessary killing. Perhaps the more unexpected reaction was that of another Karipuna person, who usually expresses opinions that could be classified as “anti-conservationist,” sided with the otters this time. He denied the allegations of otters killing too many fish. For him, culling otters was pointless and unnecessary. He added that he would never kill otters unless they attack him first. His opinion struck me as curious because most other “pro-otter” people were young and seldom hunted or fished. It was easy to explain why they do not bother to kill otters. Whereas this person was a prolific hunter/fisher. Yet he was offering an apology for the otters, in contrast to my hitherto most “constant” ecological interlocutor, Katiká, who supported otter-killing. However, even if the few individuals who sporadically kill otters are actually depleting the population more than they allege, it is still unlikely to affect the entire population, given the rarity of such hunting. This is also because of the way they do it. As I observed, they might shoot one otter, whose first blast scares the others away, causing them to disperse. They do not track them down to eradicate, nor destroy their holt. They never organized any concerted, sustained effort to cull otters, nor is there any plan to do so. The Karipuna's impact is nowhere near the far greater impact of illegal fishers, who use motorboats and destructive fishing methods that disturb the otter's habitat and deplete its foraging grounds. All things considered, the Karipuna spare far more otters than they deplete, despite these various treatments.

12.3.3. More social, less environmental factors

To say that the Karipuna's treatment of the flora and fauna varies considerably does not mean that their treatment is unbridled, much less destructive. Quite the contrary, even without a strict rule or uniform practice, they tend to act in moderation. Excessive, indiscriminate hunting is generally viewed negatively. In the village, I witnessed multiple cases where people expressed discontent

about others, because they “killed too many” white-lipped peccaries or tapirs. This appeared to me to be a concern about conservation, but as I examined the reasons behind their discontent, other dimensions emerged. To begin with, one of the reasons why unnecessary/excessive killing—including leaving dead animal bodies to rot instead of consuming—is viewed negatively is because it is considered “waste.” The Karipuna shared numerous incidents of observing non-Indigenous hunters leaving behind their kills either because they lack enough flesh, or fishers indiscriminately killing fish, discarding half on the riverbed. These deeds are invariably criticized. However, the problem of waste can also be a pointless investment (e.g., effort, time, shotshell), not necessarily the expenditure of a life (or waste of “cosmic energy”). Similarly, critical judgment of excessive hunting/fishing is usually predicated on social rather than ecological relations. Almost every criticism I heard about killing too many animals hinged on the fact that the person in question did not *share* the result (meat) properly. Although the Karipuna say that everybody shared a kill in the old days, sharing is not considered mandatory now. Yet it is still an appreciated gesture, especially expected when someone hunts abundantly. For example, one morning in the summer of 2023, I met a Karipuna elder who looked unusually upset. I asked why. He said it was because somebody killed too many tapirs. It happened a few days ago, but he was still visibly disturbed. “How many tapirs?” I asked. He said two. I asked why he was angry about that. His reply was, “Because [he] never shares. Not even a chunk (*pedaço*)!” Although I tried to redirect his attention to other possible reasons, he kept returning to the same critique of the person's failure to share. (When the issue of sharing is raised, waste also becomes a secondary factor. I encountered this pattern various times: if the hunter shares well, the quantity of the hunt or the issue of waste was elided.)

This case can be analyzed through the lens of mutual causation, as explained by José Antonio Kelly and Marcos de Almeida Matos (2019), in which people are the causes of each other's acts and constantly alternate their roles between the “cause” of an action and the “agent” executing it. The Karipuna elder's distress was exacerbated not only because the tapir hunter's inconsiderate act initially *caused* it, but also because the social norm widely shared by the Karipuna *failed to cause* the hunter to act properly, i.e., the norm had no influence. These dimensions remind us, once again, that it is important to treat issues that appear to be about conservation/environment, and about people's behavior towards the nonhuman world, in a broader, relational context. The social, ecological, ethical, political, and economic facets should not be analyzed in isolation.

12.4. The impacts of shamanism

In this section, I focus on the role of shamanism. The shamanic relationship with animal others should also be distinguished from the idea of “ecological nobleness,” since it does not necessarily imply a conserving approach towards these living beings. For instance, the Karipuna's dependence on animals and their need to negotiate with them are expressed in *omongó*, and certain orientations toward treating animals endowed with *ipaji* or tied by *omboihu* manifest the Karipuna's sense of establishing relationships with nonhumans. But whether these shamanic practices or conceptions have any actual conserving effects on animals in real life is a different question. The Karipuna shamanism also distances itself from the “cosmic balance” model found among some Amazonian peoples. Reichel-Dolmatoff argues, for the Desana people (1976), the world is a homeostatic system where humans need to pay attention not to upset “the general equilibrium of this fragile system” (as cited in Descola, 2013, p. 12) and never use “energy without rapidly restoring it by means of various kinds of ritual operations.” In this cosmology, the shaman serves as the “bookkeeper” (ibid., p. 12) of energy input/output who is “seemingly knowledgeable manager of an ecosystem, and the whole collection of religious beliefs and rituals into a kind of practical treatise on ecology” (ibid., pp. 12-13). This is not Karipuna shamanism. Some narratives (Narrative #12-1) suggest that shamans might have had a penchant for advising against hunters' greed, but I did not identify any emphasis on constraint or balance-making, as Reichel-Dolmatoff asserts.

12.4.1. The *Ipaji* effect?

Since Karipuna shamanism was developed way before the ongoing large-scale deforestation started to take place, it is difficult to account for how it would have responded to such a macro-scale environmental destruction. What we can examine is whether shamanic power, *ipaji*, has any current effect on the protection, conservation, or preservation of certain species. Does the recognition of *ipaji* have any managing or limiting effect, or does it orient people to different treatment towards animals? Does it make a Karipuna hunter reflect, hesitate, or even refrain from killing animals in certain situations? We know that when the notion of *ipaji* is attributed to animals, it means they have considerable power, capacity, or quality to reckon with, or a special relationship with other spirits, which deserves attention. Once, when I was on my way to the Panorama village with three Karipuna people on a boat in the Jaci Paraná River, our boat suddenly entered a mangrove. They said the boat needed refueling, so they would “park” in the shade of the trees for

a few minutes. Under the trees, we could see hundreds of water-striders busily gliding on the surface. I asked one person, Andressa, pointing at the insects.

[Me: *Do they have a name?*] Andressa: Yes, they do.

[*What is it?*] *Aranhas d'agua*. (“water spiders”)

[*I see.*] They have *pajé*.

[*Oh, do they? Do they have a master?*] Yes, they do. Because of that, you shouldn't harm (*maltratar*) them.

[*Right.*] (Andressa pointing to two water-striders) One is on the top of another, teaching to swim.

[*I see. Who taught you all this?*] My mom. She is the one who taught me.

Before Andressa's mother, Katiká, was struck with a cerebrovascular accident (CVA) and was able to freely roam around the forest, she taught endless lessons about the forest beings to her daughter [MESH]. This is a typical way a Karipuna child becomes familiar with the other-than-human world,²⁰⁷ including shamanic knowledges. This example shows that being *ipaji* can affect the treatment of certain animals, as Katiká's lesson to her daughter explicitly states: one “should not harm.” What about the regularly hunted animals, on which they depend for their subsistence? Does the fact that some of them are considered to be *ipaji* or have spirit owners (*rupigwara*) make any difference in hunting behaviors? The immediate answer is negative. Being *ipaji* does not automatically guarantee a protective status or moderate attitudes, and, as we have seen (Chapter 9), the attribution of *ipaji* varies too much to yield a consistent effect. The notion assigned with a clearer emphasis on protection is a different category called *rupigwara*.

Consider the white-lipped peccaries. If the Karipuna have to choose the most important animal of the forest, it might be them, simply because they cannot think of living without eating them. *Ipaji* is attributed to them and their masters, *rupigwara*, or *tabijara* (commonly known as the *curupira* in Amazonian folklore). What follows is the story about the peccary masters:

[Narrative #12-1] “Master of peccaries” (*summarized: full version in Annex)

In the past, there was no meat, and people only ate fish. Bahira's son, being anxious to eat meat, urged his father, a shaman, to do something. Determined to create an animal, Bahira found a big rock, on which he cast a spell. By persistently singing and poking [with a wooden stick] the rock,

²⁰⁷ Perhaps terming it “more-than-animal” world would be more adequate, in the sense that some animals being *ipaji* means they are more than “just” animals.

he manages to create a tapir, whom the Bahira's son tries to kill immediately. Bahira dissuades him, saying that it is better to leave it to grow and become fat. But his son disobeys, kills the tapir. The meat is quickly consumed, gone. The son grew more anxious, desiring more meat. Under renewed pressure from him, Bahira decides to create peccaries. With a similar spell, but with dozens of little stones on top of the rock, he creates a band of peccary. Again, he tries to talk his son out of hunting them prematurely, but to no avail. His son keeps killing, and killing, until one peccary turns him into a *curupira*, joining the band. To rescue his son, Bahria pursues the fleeing peccaries but fails. This is how Bahira's son became the *dono* [master] of peccaries.

Here, animals are created by a special human (shaman), using materials from the forest. At the same time, some humans become nonhuman (ex-human), such as the master of peccaries, as a result of transgressing a certain ethical boundary. In another connected story, the bones of Bahira's son transform into an animal (*cutia*) after committing the same mistake: killing too many animals despite his father's warning. In fact, this is one of the rare stories with a relatively explicit moral (and ecological implication). At the end of the narrative, the storyteller added, "If you mistreat the peccary too much, it [*curupira*] will appear." The story's depiction of an insatiable desire for meat suggests limits to the exploitation of animals. Animals are not considered expendable objects existing *for* humans, whose unlimited use humans are entitled to. To coexist with these beings, it is considered necessary to keep certain limits. Every Karipuna hunter I conversed with asserted the existence of *curupira*. In some cases, I found that cohabitation with non-Indigenous members has even reinforced some Karipuna's views, as they also shared thoughts about the spiritual being (This resonates with Mauro Almeida's observation about the existence of *caipora*, a similar yet distinct spiritual forest entity, among the *caboclos* and Indigenous peoples: [Almeida, 2021](#)). So, *curupira* does represent the rule of thumb not to kill too much, waste, or misfire. However, asserting the *curupira*'s existence does not seem to have a tangible effect on the hunters now. Except in one case,²⁰⁸ no Karipuna hunter reported that the thought of *rupigwara* or *curupira* influenced his hunting behavior before, during, or after the activity. One Karipuna explicitly told me about "losing faith" in the peccary's master after witnessing a non-Indigenous hunter (who affirmed the existence of *curupira*) routinely disrespecting the entity, yet never facing any consequence. In this case, we can observe a decoupling between the ontology and its effect, since the person did not lose faith in the spirit's existence but in its *effect*. There is a case in which *ipaji*

²⁰⁸ In this case, two hunters heard unidentifiable "voices" (*misura*) when they hunted two peccaries. They think it was a *curupira* and attribute its "warning" to the fact that they cut the animals' heads and left them behind. They were supposed to bring the entire body. Instead of carrying the heads, one person turned the peccary's head to face the sky, which he thinks is the trick to calm down the spirit's anger.

is supposed to make people abstain from killing a specific animal (*urubu-rei*) since it may bring nefarious consequences (Chapter 13), but neither was it a frequently targeted animal like the peccary, nor was the “rule” strictly upheld.

In general, while *ipaji* may form the basis of people's thinking and align with the rule of thumb in hunting, it appears to pose little obstacle to a hunting target being harmed, killed, or overkilled, whether during hunting activities or in daily life. Although a tiny example and unrelated to hunting, I share a vignette that illustrates this dimension. One day, I was talking about the matter of *ipaji* with Katiká (who attributes it most generously to animals). The dialogue covered a whole array of animals, including spiders. And precisely during this conversation, a black spider passed by. Alarmed by the specific species (venomous, according to her), Katiká pointed out the arachnid, signaling me to do something. While I was reluctant to kill the spider, someone nearby quickly finished the animal. Right after this incident, I asked, “Why kill the spider, if it is *ipaji*?” She simply replied, “Because they bite us.” So, the spider is *ipaji* but should be killed because it poses a risk to humans. Although a trivial case, it shows that there is no formula such as “*ipaji* = no kill.” Another good example is the snakes. Regardless of whether they are considered *ipaji* (and some people also have *ombojihu* ties to snakes), they are killed immediately when spotted. Barring a few animals that they never kill under any circumstances (e.g., hummingbird, tapir hawk),²⁰⁹ being *ipaji* or having a *rupigwara* does not guarantee protection. To summarize, while *ipaji* recognizes the agency of animals, not only are there discrepant ideas among the hunters about the extent to which animals are *ipaji*, but even when an animal's shamanic power is consensually recognized, the impact of that knowledge on individual conduct is variable and contingent.

12.4.2. Other shamanic ecological impacts

Conceptions and practices such as *ombojihu* and *omongó* (Chapter 9) exemplify how the Karipuna perceived enmeshed relationships with animal others in the forest via shamanism. Their hunts regularly relied on *omongó*; the particular ties with animals made by *ombojihu* were treated seriously, even used in assault sorcery. Negotiating predator/prey relation and conceiving inter-species spiritual ties represent the Karipuna's perception of the fluid human-animal boundary, their recognition of the importance of such forest beings, and their will to attend to the relations they

²⁰⁹ Both birds are deemed helpful because they alert to the approach of other humans. The tapir-hawk used to be raised as a pet (in the pre-contact era) and also indicates the tapir's location, helping people find and hunt the animal.

build with them. However, neither of them shows a clear ethical component or bearing on the conservation of the respective animals in real life. While *omongó* “prepared” the target animals prior to the act of killing by the shaman's dream, in this preparation, for example, there is no “desubjectification,”²¹⁰ in which the shaman renders an animal edible—the equivalent of undoing the animal's *ipaji*, in the Karipuna shamanism—as some people observe. Additionally, *omongó* is currently practiced by only one person, and most others are unaware of it. Even that person denied any shamanic or spiritual constraints of hunting. Neither is there any ritual or practice involved in hunting that expresses a form of “respect” paid to the prey. *Omongó* does show recognition of otherness and the necessity of negotiating hunting, but the emphasis is clearly on facilitating hunting rather than on limiting or moderating it. As for *ombojihu*, in principle, it ties a person's fate to an animal, but in practice, many of the animals supposedly connected to people are killed. But even if *ombojihu* constituted a strong taboo against killing certain animals, such a narrowly personalized, specific restriction, limited to a few individuals, would have very little impact on the overall state of the fauna.

12.4.3. Potential countereffects on biodiversity

If the protective or limiting effect of *ipaji* (to hunt/fish in moderation) is ambivalent, its influence may be faltering even more in recent years, ever since the demise of the Karipuna shamans. However, the *ipaji*'s inverse effect on conservation—the recognition of shamanic power informing and motivating the active persecution of an animal—seems to persist, relatively stronger, even without the shamans. For instance, most of the Karipuna think that the silky anteater (*Cyclopes didactylus*), or *tamanduái*, brings bad omen. Sightings of the animal are extremely rare, but whenever they spot this arboreal mammal in the forest, they are supposed to kill it by drowning it in the water until its body does not float up (or alternatively, burying it in sand), because the animal is known to possess dangerous pathogen or “fire” (*karowara* - kw) which should be put off. Otherwise, the encounter with *tamanduái* can bring serious illness or even death to the child of the seer.²¹¹ The silky anteater “weighs only 250g, lives in the crowns of tall trees ... never comes down

²¹⁰ Which “is accomplished by neutralizing the spirit, transubstantiating the meat into plant food or semantically reducing the animal subject to a species less proximate to humans” (Viveiros de Castro, 2004, p. 476, also 468).

²¹¹ This is similar to the widespread belief about giant anteaters (*Tamandua tetradactyla*) in the Amazonian region among the *caboclos* who believe, when one sights this animal, the only way to cancel the bad luck is to kill it (Catapani et al., 2024). Unfortunately, this belief is contributing to a considerable amount of deliberate killing of this vulnerable species.

to the ground, never vocalizes and is active only at night” (Lisboa, 2018), thus very rarely spotted even by the forest residents, but encounters are reported. In every incident that I know, the animal was killed according to their “culture,” as they say. One person who had the experience of killing *tamanduaí*, affirmed he would do the same thing if he encountered the animal again, to prevent harm occurring to his family. Multiple others agreed with him. Since the silky anteaters' regional population status is not yet classified as “vulnerable” or “endangered,” and given the rarity of the sightings of these elusive species, these occasional killings are unlikely to affect their population in Karipuna's forest. Moreover, animals that are killed because of being *ipaji* or possessing *karowara*, are just two or three out of hundreds of species, so the global impact may be negligible. It does not, however, contribute positively to conservation, nor would it help build a case for *ipaji* to be considered a mechanism that champions biodiversity by respecting all living beings.

I noted, however, a subtle perceptual difference among the younger generation. While most Karipuna, regardless of age, affirm that they would kill the *tamanduaí* if spotted, a young leader (the only person among the under-40 generation who spotted the animal and killed it), described the incident as “unfortunate,” in which he found himself “without choice, since it's our culture.” Also, when I was trying to get details about the *tamanduaí* with Katiká, who was explaining the *karowara* of the animal, my young interpreter, who previously affirmed that one should kill *tamanduaí*, abruptly cut Katiká's lengthy explanation short, saying: “No, my mistake. We don't kill the animal.” I can only speculate about the reason for his deliberate omission, but as he is familiar with the discourses of environmental activists and pro-conservation NGOs and aware of my interest in wildlife, it is possible that he tried to avoid giving any negative impression. It is well known that many Indigenous people tap into environmental discourses for various reasons, including strategic and political ones (Conklin & Graham, 1995), as they participate in the co-creation of their public image. This dimension should also be considered when examining the ecological effects of Indigenous practices. To summarize, across the cases above, in today's circumstances, shamanism seems to work in both directions: to motivate the protection of animals as well as their elimination. Although commitment to the latter seems relatively more intense, the effect of the former is much broader, as it encompasses many more species.

12.5. Conclusion: An indeterminacy conducive to sylvan coexistence

In 1990, at an international seminar on ecological problems in Amazonia, in Belem, Belize, President of the Union of Indigenous Nations (UNI) Marcos Terena exhorted:

Why do you whites expect us Indians to agree on how to use our forests? You don't agree among yourselves about how to protect your environment. Neither do we. We are people just like you. Some of us view nature with a great sense of stewardship, whereas others must perforce destroy some of it to obtain what they need to eat and pay for expensive medical treatment and legal counsel. (Low, 1996, p. 372)

Terena's words resonate with the Karipuna people. As we have seen throughout the chapter, the ways in which the Karipuna treat nonhuman beings vary, and it is difficult to identify a strict rule or uniform “code of conduct” that applies universally. At least they do not show the consistency of an organized, sustained protective effort observable in their *luta* to protect their forest. Although some may view this non-uniformity or indeterminacy as a lack or liability, and it might be relatively more vulnerable to circumstantial changes, it also has at least two potentially positive implications for conservation. First is the weak (or inexistent) internal unity to organize destructive actions in the forest or to persecute animals. Second is the high likelihood that external influences play a pivotal role in attributing a directionality to such an indeterminate state. The aforementioned *vulnerability* to change can be an ability, an *openness* to respond to change. This condition opens up opportunities to co-develop conservation-friendly joint initiatives or projects, to which the Karipuna appear to be highly receptive at this moment.²¹²

Most importantly, even though the Karipuna's concern for sylvan flora and fauna may not necessarily be expressed in visible practices or stable mechanisms, nor in a constant, unified treatment, in the vast majority of cases, the Karipuna tend to end up conserving much more than they don't. Not only do their light pressure on the wildlife, but also their various treatments of it signal that their ecologically positive effects on wildlife largely outweigh the negative effects. Such positive outcome and their internal heterogeneity both prove to be consistent factors. Diversity of treatments itself, by definition, can go either way. In general, the Karipuna neither actively

²¹² However, any external party willing to form a partnership to conserve wildlife with the Karipuna (not limited to them, but with any Indigenous people in Amazonia) must be careful to avoid any form of top-down approaches. There is a saying circulating among the Karipuna that “if a jaguar kills a human, it's okay. But if we kill a jaguar, we get arrested.” Legally speaking, this is not entirely accurate, but it reflects a common sentiment among forest residents regarding current environmental legal restrictions.

protect/conserves nor actively persecute most forest beings; they enact foresting in the middle voice, creating in-between spaces where each actor engages with forest life forms in different ways. However, when combined with the people's other particularities, such as their targeted resistance, openness to the Other, and *adynamia*, this diversity almost invariably produces net positive results while avoiding most negative ones. This is why—although I interpreted that, in some cases, such an outcome is possible *despite* internal heterogeneity—I am inclined to say, overall, the positive outcome is possible *thanks to* it.

13. Multiple onto-epistemology in person [LET] [COP] [RES]

13.1. The disease multiple

Throughout the chapters, I have demonstrated considerable heterogeneity of conceptions and practices coexisting among the Karipuna people. In this last chapter, I discuss the coexistence of multiple ontologies *within* persons and their ecological implications. I will argue that such coexistence can be explained by a particular mode of analysis, or non-analysis, which tends to put “objectivity into parentheses” (Maturana, 1988). I understand such a propensity as a form of pragmatism and argue that it can be conducive to accommodating not only other ontologies but also other life-forms. In her critical reading of Descola's model of ontological change (2013), Vilaça (2015b) showed that the Wari people's partial conversion to Christianity suggests a complex process between ontologies, that cannot be described as a linear transition from animist to naturalist ontology. Agreeing with her core argument, I argue that we can observe multiple ontologies of people that are not necessarily in transition to one way or another but simply hanging together.

Let me start with one incident in 1984. A Karipuna interlocutor was hunting with his father in the forest. After they had hunted a tapir, they spotted a *urubu-rei* (king vulture: *Sarcoramphus papa*) on a tree. The son aimed his shotgun at the animal and triggered but the bullet only scratched the bird, which flew and sat on another nearby branch. This time, he used his arrow to shoot down the animal on the ground. When he approached the barely alive vulture, it spat green phlegm, which landed on his abdomen. “You will be sick!” his father lamented, and he proved to be right. After two days, he trembled with fever, so he had to be hospitalized in the city. He attributed the cause to *ipaji* (shamanic power) of the vulture: “If a *urubu-rei* spits green phlegm at a person, not only does he become sick, but could even die. That's why people don't kill it much.” Generally speaking, he is rather skeptical (or conservative) about attributing shamanic powers to animals. He thinks most of the animals are not *ipaji*, unlike some others kins. Nevertheless, in this incident, he attributed the cause of illness to the *urubu-rei*, or more precisely, the *karowara* (pathogen -Kw) in the bird's phlegm. However, as I kept asking him, his explanation became twofold. He said he *also* got malaria at the same time. As he is aware of the power of *urubu-rei*'s *karowara*, he interprets it as the cause, but simultaneously, he thought malaria was *also* the reason. In his causal analysis, two potential causes coexisted in his body, not exclusive to each other.

But why did he think he had malaria, too? Because the hospital's medical staff informed him so. Typically, malaria is detected by reporting a set of symptoms, accompanied by microscopy or rapid diagnostic tests (RDTs),²¹³ whereas the detection of urubu-rei's *karowara* is typically based on reporting a set of symptoms combined with a specific breach of taboo. A particular action coinciding with a particular outcome can construe causality, especially when it matches an explanatory model familiar to him. While one pathogen (*karowara*) is determined by Karipuna's onto-epistemology, the other one (malaria) is determined by modern medicine. He is more familiar with the former but also familiar with the latter. He cannot explain the inner workings of shamanism since he is not a shaman, nor does he understand the mechanisms of modern medicine (just as many other patients). However, as he knows that these two different ways of determining/treating disease *work*, he participates in both processes of “enacting disease” (Mol, 2002), hence the cause is simultaneously malaria *and* *karowara*. When I pressed him further about what he thinks was the “real” reason, he said he would “just leave it there” [LET], preferring not to delve into the matter.

In her influential book *Body Multiple* (2002), Annemarie Mol argued that different people (practitioners, patients, staff, etc.) enact different versions of diagnosis and treatment of what is nominally understood as the same disease, atherosclerosis. A similar pattern occurred with the Karipuna man: the medical practitioners interpreted his illness very differently compared to his father. What is remarkable is that a single person was enacting different versions of the same symptom and disease in his own body. Much has been discussed about ontological “tensions” or “clashes” between different groups of people inhabiting different “worlds,” for example, Indigenous people versus “moderns” or “Westerners.” Such emphasis on incommensurate ontologies was, in part, a critical response (Verran, 2018, p. 113) to the previously dominant assimilationist view that a dominant ontology was meant to weaken non-modern, non-Western ontologies or cosmologies. I agree that describing Indigenous social life as a unidirectional process of integration into a dominant culture is way too simplistic and problematic, the Karipuna's case being a good example. Yet we also learned that although ontological differences between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people exist, each individual member can differ from one another, making it difficult to neatly delineate an ontology along conventional boundaries or categories.

²¹³ A recommended method by the WHO as prompt malaria diagnosis. Microscopic examination of blood films is the gold standard for laboratory confirmation of malaria parasites (CDC, 2024).

Therefore, assuming one ontology per ethnic group may be grossly misleading. This case compels us to think not only within-group ontological multiplicity but also within a person, where different ontological enactments “hang together” (Mol, 2002), neither clashing with nor contradicting one another. Some scholars called the phenomenon of people “believing” things in different ways in different contexts without having a single mode of understanding the world, “Balkanisation of the brain” (Veyne, 1988); others termed the way mutually contradictory modes of thinking coexist alongside, as “multimodality of belief” (Tarlow, 2010). While “multiple ontologies” (Harris & Robb, 2012) would be the closest term for our case, I will use it alongside “multiple ontologies,” since ontology and epistemology often emerge in entangled ways.

Of course, multiple ontologies within a group or a person themselves should not be surprising. Perhaps the puzzlement reveals more about the observer. For the enacting subject, there might be no reason why the two enactments should be thought of as “incompatible” to begin with. Some studies have tried to understand the inner workings in cases where incompatibility is more salient, such as Indigenous people converting to Christianity (Vilaça, 2015b) or evolutionist scientists' personal relationships with their own religions (Ecklund & Park, 2009). But in anthropological literature, especially after the Ontological Turn, ontological multiplicity is usually instantiated among groups, and cases within a group or a person are seldom discussed, especially with ethnographic backing. For instance, Descola acknowledges that multiple ontologies can coexist and “permeability is possible” (2023, p. 147), but considers such cases “episodic,” arguing that “the institutions that provide the framework for their existence and the automatic behavior patterns ... are sufficiently inhibiting to prevent such episodic slippages into other schemas from eventually endowing them with an ontological grid” (Descola 2013, pp. 233-4). As we will see, in our case, such inhibiting institutions seem to be considerably weak, if not virtually inexistent, and ontological grids are increasingly flexible.

13.1.1. Different ontologies, hanging together

Although ontological multiplicity is more important than mere “episodic slippages,” it is true that an observer rarely has access to someone's inner composition of ontologies, especially when such multiplicity is “asymptomatic” (e.g., not creating inner conflict or cognitive dissonance). Had I not asked, the Karipuna man's case would have easily remained unnoticed, too. But although not easily observed, his case is far from the only example that shows how a person can enact not only

different opinions, cultures, and worldviews, but also onto-epistemologies. Below are some examples that show the multifaceted ontological mindscape.

[Deity and origin of forest, animals] Karipuna narratives explain some origins (river, creek, certain animals), but not about the forest or world per se. When I asked how the forest emerged, if it was created by someone, my interlocutor A first told me he doesn't know how to explain since he was never told. When asked about trees, e.g., the emblematic Brazilian nut tree, he gave me the same answer. But when I asked him in a different way, alluding to his religion, he said: "For me, I think God created the forest ... also the nut tree." It is possible that to the previous questions, he answered on behalf of his people, and the latter, as an individual, which is a typical way the Karipuna explain things. When I asked about the origin of garden crops and game animals, whose origins he explained with respective narratives (Narrative #3-4, #12-1), he said he "still believes" them, and without my prompting, listed the items he believes to be created in the way the stories tell: corn, cassava, pepper, yam, potato were "created by the woman who swallowed the snake's egg"; white-lipped peccary, tapir, capuchin monkey, dogfish, collared peccary, agouti, jaguar, giant otter, river dolphin by "Bahira who transformed them, or a human into animals." Those he had a "Karipuna explanation" for, he stuck with; when the Karipuna ontology did not offer an explanation, the "gap" was filled by another ontology. Hence the multiple ontologies coexisting in him. Whereas interlocutor B said she thinks God created everything, barring some exceptions (e.g., forest spirit *mirangã*, master of peccary), which she sticks with the Karipuna version of explanation. So, two different ways of grasping existence coexisted, yet in a relatively asymmetrical way. Like her, many Karipuna equate their god *Pyreapinga* with the Christian God (whom they are also familiar with due to missionaries, strong regional presence of Christian institutions, or by conversion): "Pyreapinga is God. He is Jesus. The same." Yet when discussed in detail, they recognize the differences: while the eternal, uncreated, monotheist Christian God exists without beginning or end, *Pyreapinga* has his own parents, family and kins (with whom he has conflicts, prompting his departure to the sky world: Narrative #3-2). There also seem to be other deistic entities that precede *Pyreapinga*, which pushes their "religion" closer to pantheism or polytheism. However, if I press for inquiries about such differences, they seem to defer the conclusion to me or prefer to "rest the case" [LET]. The Christian converts also showed disinterest in splitting hairs about differences and similarities. What is clear is that both the existence of the Christian God and *Pyreapinga* are affirmed. They can be one entity or two different things; the

same yet *also* different. None of my interlocutors asserted only one existence by denying the other. What may be incompatible (even contradictory) to some, coexists “peacefully” within them.

[Forest] How some Karipuna understand the forest (Chapter 8) is also similar to the case above. The same person who views the forest from within can view it from an external viewpoint; one can think it as an animated entity (deeply connected with humans and their mode of existence), and also view it, at least partially, as a commodifiable resource. I will elaborate on this in the last section which explains the ecological implications of multiple ontologies.

[Science] April 2023, when I was walking in the forest with a Karipuna hunter, I saw various little mounds above the earth. I asked what they were. He said it was where the cicadas come out. Cicada nymphs (*Fidicinini cicada*) make a mud chimney over the hole where they emerge to the surface. In winter rainy seasons, “They go into the hole, shed their shells and only come out in August.” He understood the cycle as a continuous one and said that the same cicada comes in and out, living for about 50 years. He added that some butterflies can do similarly, although for less time, around 20 years. I asked, “Is that Indigenous knowledge?” “No,” he said, “it's white people's knowledge. 'Biology,' right? The hole part is Indigenous [knowledge]. The 50-year time [span] is from whites.” From a biological standpoint, some of his observations (e.g., cicada's life expectancy and his argument that nymphs crawl back *into* their chimneys) seem inaccurate. It conflicts with scientific data indicating that nymphs live for 7 to 17 years, most of the time underground, and only crawl *out* onto the ground to mate and lay eggs, then die shortly after. But for him, the cicadas crawling out each summer *were* the same ones of the previous year. Regardless of the accuracy of the information, he attributed one part of his understanding to a foreign onto-epistemology (“biology”) and the other to a familiar one (TEK). Since my interlocutor did not show much interest in the subject of cicadas, I was not able to work on it further. But it shows that multiple explanatory models can hang together (roughly half TEK and half biology) without tension, merging into an encompassing knowledge. Multiple onto-epistemologies can allow different knowledges not only to coexist but also to complement each other.

[Animals and shamanism] A case of a Karipuna hunter. In some cases, he makes comments that fit the model of “animism” in that he identifies a continuity of interiority between animals and humans (Descola, 2013). But his explicit denial that “animals do not have culture” hardly fits

Amerindian multinaturalism (Viveiros de Castro, 1998), which posits one single "culture" shared by humans and animals. Most of the time, he hunts for subsistence, but he occasionally does so to earn extra cash, including animals that the Karipuna do not usually kill. In these cases, he seems to view animals as organisms that provide benefits (e.g., exchange value) to humans, not very different from, say, a modern Western hunter's view. Although he affirms that he ceased the practice some time ago due to legal prohibition, when killing an animal to sell, he says he does not have any reservations nor feel any inhibition. Except for the legal prohibition, there seems to be no ontological obstacle to hinder him from viewing the animal as a killable object with exchange value. His stance on shamanic power is also ambivalent. He acknowledges shamanism's importance in the past, but ever since the demise of shamans, its effect has faded out. During hunting, he said, he does not think about shamanic power or narratives about animals. He knows about the dream technique *omongó* used for hunting, but like other shamanisms, *omongó* is gone, and nobody does it. But when I asked, "What if there's a shaman who can do *omongó* for you?" he replied, "That would help, help a lot." When I asked the same question years later, he replied. "It may help but [it's] unnecessary because hunting isn't difficult. There are lots of peccaries." As for the master of peccary: "Whom I think really has a master is the peccary, because even whites, rubber tappers, *riberinhos*, say if you misfire a peccary and waste his flesh, the *curupira* will charge you ... So, yes, I believe." In this case, his perspective was reinforced by an onto-epistemological intersection between the whites and the Indigenous people. I think we can say that this person is enacting different ontologies hanging together, none of them completely dominating or being replaced by another. What stands out in all these cases is that even if there is a "stronger" ontology, the "weaker" counterpart also continues to exist without being invalidated, replaced, or discarded (I presented only the cases with ecological implications, but there are many more—especially in religion, where such multiplicity is salient, which I curtailed due to lack of space). Although such "side by side coexistence" (Viegas & Feijó, 2017, p. 19) is *not* uncontemplated by the Karipuna, neither do they try to determine preeminence of one over another; rather, they accommodate both.

13.2. Leaving arguments there

To find an explanation for such accommodating behavior, I draw on a well-known episode about an Indigenous Piro person in Peru, as shared by Peter Gow.

A mission teacher in [the village of] Santa Clara was trying to convince a Piro woman to prepare food for her infant child with boiled water. The woman replied, “If we drink boiled water, we catch diarrhea.” The teacher, laughing in mockery at this response, explained that common infant diarrhea is caused precisely by the ingestion of unboiled water. Without being flustered, the Piro woman answered: “Perhaps that is true for the people from Lima. But for us, people native to this place, boiled water gives diarrhea. Our bodies are different from your bodies.” (as cited in Viveiros de Castro, 2013, p. 34)²¹⁴

This example is used to explain perspectivism, but I focus on the Piro woman. While the teacher exhorts her for being unobjective, if not ignorant or uneducated, the Piro woman partially concedes (“Perhaps that’s true [for you]”), only asking for her view to be considered without invalidating her counterpart. If her ontology is a “world that fits other worlds,” oriented by plural compatibility, the teacher’s is “the one and only World to which other worlds must fit,” driven by a conviction of exclusive objective reality. The latter only allows coexistence insofar as the other accepts being governed by a single, non-negotiable Truth; this is, only allowing mono-existence. Noteworthy is the fact that the Piro woman does not engage, at least in this vignette, in verbal contestation about an “objective rational argument,” (Maturana, 1988) based on “the implicit or explicit pretense that the other cannot refuse what our argument claims because its validity as such rests on its reference to the real” (Maturana, 1988, p. 26). Recognizing the possibility of other realities may offer an opening to accommodate other ontologies more easily, without replacing one’s own.

Although not as clearly encapsulated as in this example, I experienced numerous similar cases where the Karipuna preferred not to engage in discussing (much less debating) hair-splitting arguments about which rationale represents objective reality more accurately, including the case of the Karipuna hunter of *urubu-rei*, who also preferred to “leave it there.” When I tried to press in-depth inquiries on cosmological and metaphysical issues, most of my interlocutors would become reticent. This is partly due to the lack of a shaman, who is supposed to be the specialist/authority to elaborate on such matters. But their reticence was discernible from a general

²¹⁴ This episode “serves as an example of a ‘conceptual world,’ in this case Amazonian multinaturalism” (Tym, 2024, p. 268). But such theorization (by Viveiros de Castro) actually “evinces a troubling aspect of anthropology’s ontological turn” (ibid.), “end[ing] up deepening the incommensurability between Westerner and Indigenous Other. While founded on taking others seriously, ontological anthropology reinforces the delimitation of the relevance of Indigenous people’s claims, thereby further reducing the latter’s ‘discursive authority’ ... The Other’s world may be conceptually rich, but those concepts cannot responsibly be taken to inform on matters, like infant diarrhea, of real substance.” (ibid., pp. 267-8)

unwillingness to engage. They were available, kind, and willing to explain things. It was when the ethnographer started to split hairs on specifics—in short, doing the annoying things anthropologists do! —that they would withdraw. If I keep insisting, at some point, my interlocutors prefer to defer to me, suggesting that I know enough to formulate my own idea. Of course, a tendency not to quibble on gory details, not get into the bottom of things, or avoiding metaphysical queries (e.g., Hegelian “dialectical sublation”) is by no means a distinctively Indigenous or Amerindian particularity. Neither am I suggesting that the people inherently lack intellectual curiosity or are somehow less capable of such engagements. I vehemently oppose such views. To begin with, I can affirm that the Karipuna's intellectual curiosity is clearly expressed through storytelling. The only non-elder storyteller, Batiti says, became knowledgeable because he was the only young person with intellectual curiosity who “sought knowledge” by asking the elders questions (Chapter 3). However, asking a series of probing, cross-checking, open-ended questions to stimulate critical thinking and uncover underlying contradictions, guiding the interlocutor toward deeper truths, exemplified by the Socratic dialogue method, is definitely not the Karipuna way of acquiring knowledge or making sense of things. Batiti explained that once a story is told, he does not pose further questions, since, for him, the stories sufficiently addressed his doubts. For some observers, the contents of Karipuna stories may appear fraught with fantastical or illogical narrative flows or “poetic license,” yet they seem to largely assuage the inquirer's intellectual curiosity. Otherwise, any remaining doubts are on the listener to figure out by themselves. This may be why Batiti expressed uneasiness and was unable to elaborate when I repeatedly asked questions after he told a story. “A story is a story,” he replied once, “You are asking about things that don't exist!”

Secondly, the long list of Indigenous scholars abundantly proves the people's intellectual curiosity and capacity. If they wished to, and given the conditions, they can excel in conventional academic settings, just as anybody. The point I wish to shed light on is that, despite being more than capable, there is an observable tendency (among the Indigenous people I shared time with) *not* to engage in pedantic arguments or to articulate scrupulous differences between perspectives. Even in purely academic contexts, which are perhaps arenas where such dialogues are most encouraged, a tendency to avoid the “process of polarization of difference or, more exactly, the process of turning difference into a polarity” (Hage, 2017, p. 98) is observable. Since the Karipuna currently do not have established scholars in academia to refer to, I draw an example from a respected Tukano Indigenous scholar, João Paulo Lima Barreto, who exposed glaring

discrepancies between actual Tukano knowledge and anthropological production about it, through his theses (Barreto, 2013, 2021). Although some academics describe his work as “criticism on perspectivism” (High & Costa, 2024, p. 18), Barreto confines himself to laying out the differences in the least critical way. Although his points speak powerfully for themselves, he seems uninterested in harnessing them to sharpen his argument and highlight his contribution vis-à-vis conventional theory. Given the same material, I can easily imagine a non-Indigenous scholar devising a full-blown critical counter-theory. Instead, Barreto reaches an uncontentious conclusion, couched in deferential language: “I do not intend to oppose or propose a debate with Amerindian perspectivism, a subject, as I said, already brilliantly discussed by Eduardo Viveiros de Castro” (2021, p. 149). Although I cannot offer an academic example from a Karipuna person, I can assure the reader that the people clearly do not lack any critical capacity, not to mention that some students are performing well at higher education levels. It should be clear by now that Indigenous people's intellectual curiosity is not in question at all, regardless of whether they are formally educated or not, or to what level. My point is that there is an observable propensity not to engage in meticulous, discursive contentions. Vilaça, reading Wagner, who allegedly suggested “differentiating societies, such as tribal peoples, for whom contradiction has a non-problematic place” (as cited in Vilaça 2015b, p. 12), offers an interpretation that “these societies base their inventive process on creating alternatives to convention ... creating a dialectical process between convention and invention that enables the coexistence of diverse alternatives” (ibid.). The 19th century Japanese ethnologist Shinobu Orikuchi uses the term differentiation in a very different way. He argued that human intelligence possesses two tendencies: “differentiation” and “identification”: the former refers to the intellectual tendency to distinguish differences that separate things, while latter tends to discover commonalities between seemingly dissimilar things and to perceive them as a single phenomenon (Nakazawa, 2005, p. 103). Orikuchi argued that identification represents the way of thinking of ancient people (whom he believed he could understand better due to his “unusually developed” identification ability). The easier one identifies similarity and commonality over difference and discrepancy, the less likely contentious onto-epistemological arguments would persist, since there is not much to hair-split about, to begin with. Could the Karipuna's apparent facility for accommodating multiple ontologies stem from a tendency to find common ground rather than differences that separate things?

13.2.1. Bracketing objectivity

Although the knack of identifying common ground and general agreeability may play a role, perhaps the better way to describe such a tendency—*not* to engage in “objective rational arguments”—is to say that some people tend to put “objectivity in parenthesis,” as conceptualized by Humberto Maturana.

When one puts objectivity in parenthesis, all views, all verses in the multiverse are equally valid. Understanding this, you *lose the passion for changing the other* [emphasis added]. One of the results is that you look apathetic to people. Now, those who do not live with objectivity in parentheses have a passion for changing the other. So they have this passion and you do not. For example, at the university where I work, people may say, “Humberto is not really interested in anything,” because I don’t have the passion in the same sense that the person that has objectivity without parentheses. And I think this is the main difficulty. To other people you may seem too tolerant. (Maturana, 1985, as cited in Mignolo, 2011, p. 27)

The “lack of passion for changing the other” is present in the case of the Karipuna man as well as that of the Piro woman. Uninterested in discerning objective reality, and having the *power to lack* the passion to change (others' opinion on it), I find they prefer to “bracket” such endeavors. What happens when people are able to put objectivity in parentheses?

[I]f the others also put objectivity in parentheses, you discover that disagreements can only be solved by entering a domain of co-inspiration in which things are done together because the participants want to do them. With objectivity in parentheses, it is *easy to do things together because one is not denying the other* [emphasis added] in the process of doing them. (Maturana, 1985, as cited in Mignolo, 2011, p. 27)

When the other is neither denied nor deemed to be changed, differences are allowed to coexist, creating an environment for collaboration. This speaks to a practical, operational dimension that is crucial to understanding the process by which multiple ontologies come to coexist.

How can people live with so many different ways of being? Quite easily, apparently, moving without too much thought among contexts in which different forms of practice are underwritten by different ontological assumptions. Tensions may arise when one tries to apply a single set of evidential criteria to all situations, but the degree to which societies feel compelled to insist on ontological uniformity varies a great deal. (Harris & Robb, 2012)

The Karipuna seem to be uncompelled to insist on ontological uniformity to others. In every example I have laid out, we can see that they incorporate different ontologies into their ways of worlding, not by replacing their existing ontology, but by adding new ones. Some are externally

imposed, others are adopted by choice, and some require more work than others. According to Descola, adopting new technical objects is easier since they perform the same functions (just more effectively), thus only requiring adjustments in taxonomies, but adoptions that require serious reorientation in the modes of relating are far more difficult since they entail modifications of one's ontology (Descola 2013, p. 385). But the Karipuna have not only been adopting new tools, machines, and techniques, but also those that may have required significant ontological reorientation, such as healthcare regimes, legal systems, foreign-language communication, and ways of knowledge-making. They did so since it was deemed useful, necessary, or, for the lack of a better alternative. Such processes of induction, in which a different ontology is added alongside the conventional one, are dynamic. So, saying that multiple onto-epistemologies hang together, not necessarily denying or clashing with each other, does not mean there is no tension, conflict, or competition during the process. Rather, the process undergoes cycles of stabilization, un-stabilization, and re-stabilization. Although it is challenging to investigate such processes in which one perception of reality gives room/way for another, I can affirm one thing: neither is it a blind acceptance, nor a modulation closed to one's external world. It pertains to the openness to the Other and the capacity to be influenced by the other, but not without careful examination of the import and its value.

13.2.2. Testing onto-epistemologies

To explain the process in which the coexistence of different onto-epistemologies occurs and stabilizes, I find it helpful to observe the people's experimenting attitude. Instead of mindlessly accepting or resisting different onto-epistemologies (what they call under the sweeping rubric of “culture”), they seem to selectively *test* their effects and consequences. In the infamous “drowning experiment” in Antillas, illustrated by Lévi-Strauss,²¹⁵ the Amerindians allegedly observed for days whether white prisoners' corpses decayed underwater. According to Viveiros de Castro, they were testing if the whites had the “same body,” an inversion of the 15th-century Valladolid theological debate about whether Indians had the “same soul.” But there is no way we can be certain about the Indian's intention. Instead of such symmetrical inversion based on mind/body

²¹⁵ “In the Greater Antilles, some years after the discovery of America, whilst the Spanish were dispatching inquisitional commissions to investigate whether the natives had a soul or not, these very natives were busy drowning the white people they had captured in order to find out, after lengthy observation, whether or not the corpses were subject to putrefaction.” (as cited in Viveiros de Castro, 1998, p. 475).

duality, I view their act as a general experiment on how (dead) humans react, or how cause-and-effect works, as they know it. This approach is similar to Karipuna's experiments, which I will present, in that they try to understand not so much the inner workings or mechanisms of things as to gain a grasp of the input-output patterns of the unknowable “black box.” My view is that they focus on how the “box” works, while questions of its inner mechanism are bracketed.

When it comes to tools and technology, such as shotguns, chainsaws, drones, etc., it is clear that the Karipuna tried them out, found them useful, and therefore adopted them. As for the onto-epistemological dimensions, cases are less obvious, but examples exist. If some people deliberately experimented to see if a perceived idea actually works, others just *happened* to conduct tests, by unwittingly breaking certain perceived rules or witnessing them being transgressed. Based on these test results, they incorporate what works and filter out what does not, re-stabilizing their onto-epistemologies in a renewed composition. One example: a Karipuna person, after witnessing a non-Indigenous member habitually disrespecting the “master of peccary” by hunting peccaries indiscriminately but not facing consequences as it is supposed to be (Chapter 12), gradually became disenchanted with what she was taught. When I delved deeper, I found that she still did not deny the existence of the spiritual entity, but thought it had lost its power. So, shamanic ontology still partially coexisted despite her disillusion, without being discarded, but it was significantly weakened unless another life-experiment changes her perception again. Although this was not a conscious test, conducted indirectly by a 3rd person, it produced a similar effect, as it was empirically experienced through cohabitation with different people who enact different modes of existence.

Another example is the practice related to Brazilian nut collecting. The collecting usually takes place around mid-October to November, just before the rainy season, when some of the hard shells called *ouriços* have already fallen on the ground, but many remain hanging above. The falling of *ouriços* could cause serious injury and even death when they hit people's heads. Annually, there are reports of accidents and casualties. The Karipuna have a little spell to resolve this problem: upon arriving at the site under a nut tree where they will work, they take the first *ouriço* they spot on the ground, pop the stem off the top, and reverse the shell upside down. That is all one has to do to avoid an accident. Every Karipuna I discussed this practice with was committed to this onto-epistemology, not because it was their tradition, since they learned the knowledge from white

people (*ribeirinho* neighbors), but because the “trick” works. The proof? After collecting for years, there was not a single injury in the Karipuna forest, while so many other people in the region keep suffering accidents.

Experiments do not always target newly emerging ontological premises, but also their own (although they may be testing them since a newly induced one instilled doubt on their own). One apparent area of such experiments is evident in food (and sexual) restrictions, including what may be designated as “couvade,” whose underlying logic is that one's actions are entangled with harmful consequences for one's spouse, revealing intricate connections between human conduct and the nonhuman world. In case of negligence of these perceived rules, hazardous consequences befall. According to the Karipuna couvade, a man should not hit trees because “it's like hitting your wife's cervix,” which causes miscarriage. When the husband hunts a peccary, he cannot cut the body or break its pelvis, because it can cause the pregnant woman's pelvis to break, thus miscarriage. When a child is born, the parents cannot have extramarital sexual relations, otherwise the child will spit things out of his mouth, “as if the sperm goes into the child's mouth.” In these examples, some form of isomorphism between input and output seems to be at play, since the man's action figuratively assimilates the result. But other couvade examples are entanglements of unrelated actions: during a wife's pregnancy, men cannot eat paca, piranha, buriti, *pupunha*, or touch feathers like those of toucans. If one eats a piranha, it corrodes the child's skin, and the child cries excessively. The toucan's feather is considered toxic and makes the child refuse breastfeed or even cause abortion.

The Karipuna's couvade is one of the few traditional practices that are still relatively widespread. As these taboos are related to the person's and his child's health, testing them is considered reckless by their spouses. Nonetheless, multiple Karipuna men told me they tested. One person explicitly “wanted to know if it was true.” The conclusions were positive. They—at least most of them—work. Every time he broke a rule, his wife got sick. But as soon as he rectified his deeds by doing the right things, the symptom stopped. This refreshed his respect for the rules. The same person also tested food taboos on his own body by daring to eat forbidden foods at forbidden times. As a result, he fell ill, quite seriously sometimes, having to be hospitalized or undergo surgeries. For him, taboos and couvade are time-tested principles. Another Karipuna had a similar story to tell, although his testing was not deliberate. His mishaps

(e.g., touching a toucan feather, eating piranha during his wife's gestation) ended up causing the foretold effects. To reverse this, he followed the rules (e.g., using traditional medicine and drinking twice as much warm water), which also worked, as he reports. Every example of the Karipuna's test shows that whenever a form of onto-epistemology is validated, it is neither because it is a "belief system" to which they blindly adhere, nor because there is a convincing analytical explanation of the logic. Rather, it is because they are backed by **empirical** evidence, first-hand experience, and often grounded in concrete **practicality**, which helps them navigate everyday life. As they explain these cases with confidence, "It works indeed!" the Karipuna are assertive about the effect of certain onto-epistemologies not so much because they believe them as because they *work*. It can be understood as a "pragmatic truth" (M. W. B. de Almeida, 2021a) that may contain partial observations and does not perfectly map a universal metaphysical reality, yet successfully interacts with reality within a given context, thereby coexisting with competing logics and serving as "the common ground of multiple ontologies" (ibid., p. 24). Can this be a form of "Indigenous pragmatism"? (See Section Intro III).

13.3. Multiple ontologies as a subaltern condition?

If a Karipuna mode of analysis, marked by a pragmatic propensity, pertains to the formation of multiple ontologies, there is another important dimension to consider: such multiplicity was not cultivated voluntarily, nor in a power vacuum. Suffice it to remind the historical process where colonial forces pressured the Indigenous people, imposing on them to live and think in a certain way, if not outright decimating them. Also caught up in colonial entanglements, the Karipuna were placed in positions to make tough lifetime decisions, situated within asymmetrical power relations that entail onto-epistemological hierarchies. In the aftermath of wars, massacres, and forced dislocations, they were often coerced to accept certain realities or pressured to make choices for lack of better options (Chapter 6 and 7). So, it would be grossly mistaken if we take Indigenous pragmatism to assume that the people were always given a choice between viable options. On the contrary, we can say they were frequently forced to focus on the practicality, subduing other important dimensions of organizing life. What multiple ontologies highlight is precisely these dimensions. Consider modern medicine, which has almost replaced traditional ones (Chapter 2). To survive the alien diseases brought by the surrounding society, the Karipuna had no choice but to rely on equally alien ways of treating them. But closer observation shows they still sense a

significant healthcare gap, which is believed to be addressable by Indigenous curing (Kin, 2024, pp. 349-50). As with this, even when a dominant ontology appears to have replaced another, that is not necessarily the case. Being imposed a different ontology—thus giving it room and accommodating it, but not discarding their own ontology—may be a typical response pattern in a counter-hegemonic onto-epistemological negotiation. In such a structural asymmetry, coexistence is “not the comfort with which you take on and tolerate the aporias, the flagrant contradictions of life. It is rather ... inhabit[ing] the contradiction” (Cusicanqui, 2023, p. 117) itself.

What if we universalize the Karipuna's features (focus on practicality, bracketing of objectivity, coexistence of multiple ontologies) in a broader context, as a **subaltern** condition in which most Indigenous people are still situated? For countless subaltern subjects navigating ontologically hierarchical societies, harboring/enacting multiple ontologies is often hardly a choice, since it is virtually impossible not to accommodate the dominant one to some degree. When a majority regime forcibly advances a specific onto-epistemological ideal, allowing no option but to internalize it, the only remaining question is not whether, but how and to what extent, one accommodates it. Consider language: while users of majority languages are less motivated to learn foreign languages (Duff, 2017), thus generally more monolingual, subaltern minority language speakers are commonly bilingual, as they (are virtually forced to) acquire the language of the colonizers. The vast majority of contemporary Amazonian Indigenous people are also bilingual, as is the case with the Karipuna (100% bilingual). In the same way, the inhabitants of the “One-Word World” or OWW (Law, 2015), which “present[s] itself as exclusive, cancels possibilities for what lies beyond its limits, embodying the idea that there must be only one world” (Blaser & de la Cadena, 2018, p. 3), only tend to know and operate in one mode, while the subalterns learn the others' modes of existence. As a result, the subaltern is conditioned to be more inclusive of otherness; in other words, the minority is structurally positioned to ontologically encompass the majority. Whether language or onto-epistemologies, although a minority, multiple-ontology enactors are able to cover the OWWers since they understand where the OWWers are coming from, regardless of whether they agree with it or not; whereas the OWWers bother less to apprehend or encompass the other, because the asymmetry generates much less motivation to make the effort. In such asymmetry, the subaltern faces a stark choice: one should either deactivate/discard one's own onto-epistemology, or do one's best to keep it alive in coexistence. But when colonial ambitions of domination and mono-existence are activated, ontological “resistance” can only go

so far. Any notion of idealized resistance is impossible to attain in contemporary settings, dominated by capitalist, industrialized, urbanist modernity. Even in countries with different social systems, it is nearly impossible to live a life immune to these hegemonic regimes. The same goes for the Indigenous subalterns in forest environments: it is inevitable to depend on and accommodate the logics of the dominant surrounding society, whether directly or indirectly [COP]. Even an isolated group of Indigenous people in the remote Amazonia relies on the governance to maintain its *relative* isolation from outsiders. In short, resistance can constitute a dimension of social life but cannot encompass the human mode of existence due to the array of necessary negotiations and accommodations it entails. This is more apparent in the cases of subalterns, since by definition, they find themselves stuck in uneven power dynamics. The modality I adopt to explain the Karipuna sociality—resistance as a political stance and coexistence in everyday life—may be fairly generic.

13.4. Ecological implications of multiple ontologies

In this chapter, I presented cases of multiple ontologies coexisting among the Karipuna and offered a possible explanation for their formative process. What kind of ecological implications can this have on human-forest coexistence? Are multiple ontologies conducive to fostering multiple forms of life (e.g., biodiversity)? Let us first revisit the case of the vulture (*urubu-rei*). Even though *urubu-rei* is *ipaji* (thus killing is taboo), the Karipuna killed it. Was the person's skepticism of *ipaji* the reason? Not exactly. Although he is skeptical about endowing shamanic power to animals, there are a few exceptions, and *urubu-rei* is one of them: he is adamant that *urubu-rei* is *ipaji* and has no doubt about the nefarious effect it can bring. This is one of the few cases where the *ipaji* of an animal explicitly warns him against killing. Adding to that, the fact that people usually do not kill vultures (nobody eats necrophagic birds) adds to the expectation of refraining. Nevertheless, he killed the bird. Was he testing its effect? He denied the hypothesis. Nor was it a mistake by a lapse of memory. He was aware of the risk. His first explanation was this: sometimes people kill vultures for their plumes to fabricate arrows. Yet he denied this was his case. His behavior is difficult to explain within ontological frameworks where ontological logics should be taken seriously, if not literally (Blaser & de la Cadena, 2018; De la Cadena, 2010). If the animal is endowed with shamanic power for him, unlike, e.g., a Western hunter who views it as “game” animal, the bird *is* a different being for him, not just *viewed* differently (hence an ontological

situation). But while he confirms the ontology, he killed without reservation. Why does his ontology seem to have little bearing on his own behavior? Put differently, how important is *his* ontology to *him*? Could it be that he is not taking his own ontology as seriously as his observer? Rane Willerslev's argument (2012)—the observer should take ontology seriously but not “too seriously,” and try to adjust the seriousness to the extent expressed by the observed—may be helpful. When I pressed him again, he bluntly said he “killed just for fun.” This alleged “recreational” hunting was done right after killing a tapir (which provides abundant meat), confirming that it was not subsistence hunting. If so, could this be yet another onto-epistemology he inhabits, meaning that, for him, an animal can be a shamanic agent *and* an object for recreational killing? During this conversation, he simply explained his deed without defending himself, and understandably so, since the caution against killing *urubu-rei* is not a sacred law that he disobeyed. Remember his description (“That's why people don't kill it much”) and his choice of the word “much: even if it was a customary taboo, it denotes a matter of degree. As I asked him whether he would do the same thing now, he said, “Probably not,” adding that he does not find it entertaining anymore. When I asked if he “learned a lesson” from falling ill, he said he was too young and careless, that he shouldn't have approached too close to the bird (shot down but still alive). In his interpretation, the “prohibition” of killing was but a warning to modify behavior (be careful not to get spat on), not actual refraining from killing.

This case is consistent with the largely feeble effect of shamanic ontology nowadays (Chapter 12), and the conclusion that he will “probably” not kill in the future resonates with the possible positive effect of the “indeterminate” state (Chapter 10 and 12). Yet this case does not show whether the other ontological approach (represented by recreational hunting) was influenced by external factors. In some cases, we have a clearer picture. In Chapter 8, I explained that the Karipuna view the forest as a lifeworld (“dwelling” perspective: Ingold, 2000), but some of them have internalized a different perspective (“globe” perspective, *ibid.*) on the environment, which can be viewed as an onto-epistemology. As a result, they view the forest as a lifeworld from within, and at the same time, from outside of it. I explained the transformation of this ontological configuration as resulting from intensive interaction with the surrounding society during the *luta* to protect the forest. Although this is also a foreign ontology, whose “environmentalist” label may be rejected by some, the Karipuna incorporated its underlying logic (of forest protection) into their struggle, hence the active cooperation with their partners and the co-creation of the *luta*. At the

same time, at the people's onto-epistemological level, this “environmentalist frontier” competes with the expanding commodity frontier, encroaching on their perception as well (Chapter 10). So, if the forest used to be exclusively a lifeworld full of beings, now, the people are accommodating views that consider these beings as in need of protection, *as well as* commodifiable things. These two external onto-epistemologies may stem from the same “naturalist” ontology, which identifies nature as external to the human and the social (Descola, 2013). In any case, it seems that such an internalizing process does not necessarily clash with or replace the people's existing onto-epistemological commitments.

The case of the carbon project offers a window to observe this accommodating process. The reason for their initial refusal was largely twofold: first, the alleged prohibition of their mode of subsistence was unacceptable. Although some may depend less on the forest for their provision, hunting, fishing, and gardening are what they understand as life; the second reason was insufficient financial compensation. Each of them represents an onto-epistemology of the forest: the former predicated on use value, among others, while the latter on (commodifiable) exchange value. In negotiating the carbon project, the Karipuna were mobilizing both onto-epistemologies to inform their decision. Contrary to some of their concerned observers who view adhering to the carbon credit project as incompatible with Indigenous ontology (hence the criticism of “selling land” in pursuit of profit), the Karipuna were not “giving in” to a foreign logic represented by the carbon project. Many of them had already incorporated the external ontology to varying degrees. More importantly, for the Karipuna, the project *is* an alternative way to protect and coexist with the forest, which is being rapidly degraded by external pressures. When asked, every interlocutor affirmed their unwavering commitment to defend the forest and their mode of life in it. The carbon project is deemed an instrument to realize that goal. A possible hypothesis is that they adhered to the project *despite* their ontology for economic survival, which often occurs on the asymmetrical plane that subaltern subjects navigate. However, reducing their clearly expressed onto-epistemological thoughts to a mere justification of economic determinism would ignore how they actually think, make decisions, and accommodate ontological configurations to reality. Responding to criticism, one Karipuna made it explicit that the project is “not about money but about life.” It was certainly a pragmatic decision, but not just because of its financial benefits. While there is no doubt that the onto-epistemology of the carbon project is not built on an Indigenous one, if it clashed with their own or required them to undergo an ontological “overhaul,” they would have refused. In fact, that

was a reason why they refrained from it until recently. But since it required only a certain degree of adjustment and modification of pre-existing ontologies, still fitting the greater cause (e.g., defending land and Indigenous mode of life) while meeting fundamental needs (e.g., secure livelihood), ontological issues are cast as an **and/both question**, rather than either/or question. Enactment of multiple ontologies is much more about including, absorbing, and adding than subtracting or replacing.²¹⁶ Note that, as in most cases, the Karipuna's overall tendency leans towards enactments that are inclusive of, therefore, also conducive to the coexistence with the forest.

In one small case, I observed contrasting ontological attitudes reaching a compromise and drawing an environmentally positive conclusion. During a village meeting where a carbon intermediary company presented its proposal, the issue of hunting was raised. The company noted that while “Indigenous hunting” is allowed, “unsustainable activities” need to stop. Turtle bushmeat was brought up as an example, which has been an issue for a while, as some members allegedly sold it to urban buyers despite the prohibition. I interviewed a person who was unhappy with this constraint, which was one of the reasons he opposed the carbon project, since the practice was a potential source of income he desperately needed. He said he voiced his objection to the company [RES], which made me a bit perplexed. Last year, when I was planning a conservation project with the Karipuna in collaboration with an NGO, he had voluntarily proposed a turtle conservation project. I knew he consumed turtle meat, but he was consistent in his interest in conservation, at least to secure his own consumption. So, I did not expect him to openly express approval of the possible monetization of the animal, which can harm the species. His point was that the currently abundant turtle population is not affected by meager catching, which can be easily balanced with some conservation efforts. In his view, imposing limits is only necessary when there is a palpable decrease.²¹⁷

There is a possibility that he was untruthful in one of the attitudes, but what interests us is that he oscillated between different yet fairly consistent ontological modes: for him, the turtle was

²¹⁶ It is the additive “AND”: “It is not the elements or the sets which define the multiplicity. What defines it is the AND, as something which has its place between the elements or between the sets. AND, AND, AND—stammering” (Deleuze & Parnet, 2007, p. 34).

²¹⁷ “So long as we have not directly experienced the negative impact of the environmental transformations we induce, it is very difficult for us to project ourselves into the future, which we always perceive as uncertain and whose tragic character we unconsciously try to deny.” (Descola, 2023, p. 156)

a being worthy of conservation, and at the same time, a monetizable resource. This time, the situation was forcing him to commit to one onto-epistemology. In the end, he withdrew his objection when another carbon project was proposed months later. Although the new proposal also prohibited wildlife trade, it addressed other concerns. Not that his qualms about turtles were relinquished, but he concluded that the benefits outweighed the drawbacks. It was beneficial that he had multiple ontological “receptors” to accommodate his thoughts. If turtles were not worthy of conservation for him, it would have been harder to make the adjustment, but since he was already (at least partially) committed to the onto-epistemology of conservation, it was easier to recognize the advantages of the proposal and give way. Notable in his self-debate between competing ontologies (each predicating what the animal is, to the person) is that the issue was more between the idea of conserving animal population for sustainable consumption, and the idea of monetizing living organisms, which may appear to be polar opposites but probably share the same “naturalist” root. Although the person also showed, elsewhere, some attitudes that fit “animist” ontology (attributing *ipaji* to some animals, recognizing the peccary master), in the process, I could not identify any of these at play; rather, the dialectic of these two supposedly foreign ontologies contributed more to reaching the conclusion. If so, the person was making sense of the situation through relatively recently internalized onto-epistemological analyses. In fact, turtles and tortoises, including many aquatic species, have an ambiguous status in the Karipuna's understanding of animals,²¹⁸ since there is no concrete orientation toward them. Even the practice of consuming turtles was “learned from the whites,” as the Karipuna explain.

This case reveals another implication of multiple ontologies. First, the paucity of an ontological orientation towards certain animals in Indigenous ontology can create an ontologically grey area in which many species belong. These animals may be the most neglected, but precisely because they lack a clear place in the shared world among people, they can benefit most from co-created conservation approaches. Secondly, it shows that by inhabiting multiple ontologies, one is better able to understand other perspectives and accommodate oneself when change becomes necessary [COP]. This capacity stands in stark contrast to insisting on the preeminence of one's own “primary organizing principle” (Hage, 2017) and nurturing the passion to change others. In fact, the fundamental significance of coexisting with a standing forest is living in/with it, *without*

²¹⁸ As in many Amazonian ontologies as they are often domesticated (Descola, 2013, p. 382) and attributed less or no personhood thus treatment akin to an object.

changing it too much, but rather *changing oneself* to a degree [COP]. Most people living outside the forest are incapable of this because they can only live with the forest insofar as it ceases to exist, since they must *transform* it into an unrecognizable state to make it habitable. Only a few people have proven capable of enacting this subtle coexistence, and Indigenous people are among the champions.

13.5. Conclusion: Multiple ontologies fitting multiple life-forms

Throughout this chapter, I have explained that most of my Karipuna interlocutors hold and accommodate different onto-epistemologies that coexist without one replacing another. Such “parallel processes of accommodation ... do not entail passivity nor, conversely, resistance, but rather indicate that one should use the categories with which we experience our world to make sense of new and often exogenous forms of integrating our own condition in the plurality of the world” (Viegas & Feijó, 2017, p. 21). I suggest that such accommodation is possible because the Karipuna tend not to discern the preeminence of any particular onto-epistemology or objective reality, a tendency oriented by what I describe as “Indigenous pragmatism.” The process of incorporating an ontology often involves experiments that focus on whether a particular piece of knowledge or connection *works* rather than on its underlying mechanism. This pragmatic tendency explains how different, even apparently contradicting, ontologies can be espoused together. Yet, incorporating an ontology does not mean it is imported in an “intact” form, as if it were a thing. Ontological topologies are rather patchy than neatly delineable, and in the process of internalization, they can be appropriated and transformed, thus always incomplete. It is also possible that even though the ontology is expressed in the same language, meanings can differ. However, such “equivocations” also occur within the allegedly same ontological groups. What I am arguing is that we cannot assume more discontinuity between “us” and “them” (in this case, non-Indigenous and Indigenous people) than among them, nor among us. Ontological variations between people, among people, and within a person exist, and likely always existed.

At the same time, it is important to constantly remind us that multiple ontologies are shaped through historical processes in which the Indigenous people were positioned in subaltern conditions. More often than not, people were required or forced to internalize the onto-epistemologies of the dominant society, without other options, and this trend continues today. So,

the very coexistence of multiple ontologies, instead of a new one replacing the existing one, is a proof of their ontological resistance and resilience.

The multiplicity of ontological coexistence also has ecological implications. Inhabiting multiple ontologies can help a person recognize and work on the shared world and dialogue and forge alliances with different people to achieve a desired goal, in this case, protecting their forest. Such accommodating, unimposing behavior is highly conducive to co-creating a productive partnership. The Karipuna's coexistence with the forest and its innumerable life-forms is possible, not so much because their ontology is in and of itself “ecologically noble,” but rather because of their unique ability to live in and with the forest without imposing too much change on it, hence their standing forest. Instead of insisting that change be imposed on others, or giving preeminence to one's own “primary organizing principle,” if change is deemed necessary, they know how to accommodate themselves and accept others as they exist. This is how the coexistence of multiple ontologies fits multiple life forms.

14. Conclusion: Rethinking Indigenous contribution to forest

In the beginning of the thesis, I shared a simple question that initiated the whole research—“How did this forest resist?”—prompted by my first encounter with the Karipuna people in their forest encircled by cattle pastures and soy plantations. In response, I can reiterate that the forest owes its existence to its Indigenous human inhabitants, as the two share a fate in an entangled relationship. This is further corroborated by the almost completely deforested adjacent land (RESEX), which shares multiple socio-geographical characteristics, including an identical legal status as a protected area, except for one crucial difference: the absence of Indigenous human presence. In many aspects, the Karipuna's case verifies the now commonly accepted thesis that Indigenous presence can be conducive to preserving the forest environment, that natural landscapes should be understood as lived-in landscapes with humans *in*. This is indeed a significant corrective to the previously prevalent ideas (e.g., “fortress conservation”) that deemed human presence detrimental. Despite the broad academic consensus on Indigenous peoples' positive role in environmental protection, there is less consensus and clarity about exactly what about them brings about such an impact. In conclusion, I argue that in the Karipuna's case, their forest continues to maintain its form (“standing,” as the Karipuna say) because its Indigenous human inhabitants have embraced coexistence with the forest as a lifeway since time immemorial and, more recently, as a cause. They formed a co-constitutive, entangled relationship in which they keep *foresting*, in the middle voice—i.e., shaping the forest and being shaped by it—while resisting to deforest, in the active voice. Coexistence, as an analytical lens, attends to the various enactments of the Karipuna, which are conducive to, and responsible for, the being-together-with the forest, which I explain in four modes, namely, enmeshment, resistance, coping, and letting be. Using these interconnected modes (which appear in combined or overlapping ways) as guidelines, I analyzed the Karipuna's intricately intertwined dimensions of socio-cultural, political, historical, and ecological life. As a result, I identified four factors, or conditions, that I consider most responsible for the Karipuna's coexistence with the forest.

14.1. Resist to coexist, coexist to resist

I begin with Karipuna's resistance, which denotes a specifically targeted struggle: enacting against the recent onslaught of the forces of deforestation and dispossession (FDD) that threaten the people's coexistence with the forest. Termed *luta*, or resistance, by the people, the Karipuna's struggle is well manifested in their organized territorial defense campaign, which mainly consists of political advocacy and engagement with authorities and the media, spearheaded by leaders but also carried out by other community members. Some people expand the meaning of *luta* to “war” by evoking its continuity with 500 years of Indigenous resistance against Western colonizing forces. The recent threats of the *invasores* who try to grab land by using aggressive means, including death threats and arson, justify such a comparison. Comparing resistance to warfare also highlights the war-like aftermaths caused by destroying the forest, which is a more-than-natural, socio-cultural realm for the people. Such a perspective prompts the observer to connect and compare the Karipuna's struggle to their historical warfare. Among the countless wars they have survived, I found Amerindian intertribal warfare much more conducive to coexistence than the more recent wars waged by the white people, which show othercidal tendencies. Throughout these wars, the Karipuna's self-image was, and continues to be, that of “underdog warriors” who react to enemies' provocations, rather than as bellicose people proactively waging war. Also, the people were mostly engaged in strategic, specific tactics akin to hit-and-run, hardly aiming to dominate, colonize, or wipe out the enemy. These aspects were accentuated when they had to deal with unfamiliar enemies, such as the newly emerging white people, *tapy'ynha*. Instead of automatically resorting to armed conflict, the Karipuna employed a mix of strategic approaches to evade or negotiate with the enemy, depending on their assessment of each situation.

Mixing hardline resistance and accommodative negotiation to societal change continues to be the Karipuna way of resistance. While their *luta* as an organized campaign would be the most rigorous contemporary form of resistance and consensual expression of the people's will to coexist with the forest, besides the predominantly discursive actions—communicating their plight in national and international arenas and mounting pressure on the competent authorities to enforce law in their often-lawless forest, fraught with illegal invasion—which is complemented by irregular on-ground monitoring activities, readily observable practices or actions that could fall into the conventional category of resistance are not plenty. Instead, there are many actions or non-

actions that appear not to fit such a notion but, nevertheless, produce important resisting effects. Consider the example of staying (residing) in the forest, which many Karipuna consider as a fundamental contribution to the struggle. Some even equate staying with resistance, as it entails enduring the manifold pressures from the *invasores* and constant negotiation with hardly avoidable pull/push factors (e.g., difficulties and inconveniences of forest life) that prompt oneself to leave the forest. Rather than simple resistance or enduring against the pressures of the surrounding society, the Karipuna balance and distribute time-space between urban and sylvan environments to organize life and meet their daily needs to coexist with the forest. As a narrow concept of resistance (usually requiring visually observable oppositional actions) proved inadequate to grasp the multifaceted ways in which the Karipuna struggle against their enemies or the FDD, I reformulated the working concept of resistance as a “counter-hegemonic process of negotiation” to account for this complexity. The Karipuna mode of resistance to exist *with* and *in* the forest, is both a constantly grinding, perseverant endeavor (as they etymologically compare it with rocks and stone) and malleable at the same time. Just as their timely political advocacy proved highly effective in safeguarding their land and rights, the Karipuna have been enacting resistance at crucial moments, in measured ways, managing to secure their survival amid countless massacres and adversities while always enabling their coexistence with the forest. Such selective and targeted resistance is, I argue, directly responsible for their remarkable feat (protection of their forest and livelihoods), amidst so many Indigenous people being stripped of their lands and rights, if not entirely wiped off the map.

14.2. Foregrounding background conditions

Apart from the Karipuna's resistance, I identified three other key features—openness to the Other, *adynamia*, and internal heterogeneity—that can offer an alternative explanation of the people's longstanding coexistence with the forest.²¹⁹

²¹⁹ I also examined and dialogued with other possible hypotheses and conceptual models, which I found having limited explanatory powers. I elaborate this in the third section of this chapter.

14.2.1. Open to co-foresting

I argue that the Karipuna's openness to the Other is one of the responsible factors for their longstanding coexistence with the forest. I started by showing that such openness, characteristic of Amerindian societies, can be traced in the Karipuna's narratives and in their warfare, indicating that their significant others (enemies or nonhuman animals) are constitutive parts of their society. What is remarkable is that even after experiencing various massacres by the white others, it seems that the people did not switch to a "closed" mode of suspicion towards them. This sustained openness is exemplified in the turbulent process of "pacification," where the Karipuna's ability to cope with uneasy ways of cohabiting with Indigenous and non-Indigenous strangers was in full display. The people were capable of showing remarkable openness to (quasi-)strangers, as evidenced by the account of the FUNAI agents who convinced them to settle in Panorama village, among other examples. Even in tense or conflictive situations facing others who pose threats—their enemies, unchosen co-residents, or even contemporary *invasores*—, it is possible to observe a Karipuna way of openness, rarely resulting in violent actions to expel the other. In general, they oscillate between "conditional and unconditional hospitality" (Derrida, 1999b): conditional, since if their hospitality is not reciprocated (or unjustly retributed), they could become motivated and feel justified to pay back, yet inversely, even if they are in attack-mode, if the supposed enemy turns out to be sharing common attributes (e.g., language) or demonstrates acceptable gestures (e.g., offering gifts or service), they could switch to activate hospitality (or defer hostility); not strictly conditional, since there is no firm or fixed, socially convened threshold designed to exclude strangers. The degree of opening is decided by selective, case-by-case calculations in the course of experiencing (and experimenting with) the other, not by predetermined schemes of exclusion. All around, boundaries between "us" and "them" are malleable, the other is more often taken in than out, and downright hostility is rare. The inclination towards inclusiveness could reach the extent of being a "hostage" or "guest at one's own home,"²²⁰ "giv[ing] up the mastery" of one's own space and home (Derrida, 1999, p. 70), which is a tendency that continues to be observed to

²²⁰ Explaining Levinas's concept of subjectivity: "The host is a hostage insofar as he is a subject put into question, obsessed ... persecuted, in the very place where he takes place, where, as emigrant, exile, stranger, a guest from the very beginning, he finds himself elected to or taken up by a residence before himself electing or taking one up." (Derrida, 1999, p. 56, also pp. 42-3)

this day. Without such openness to coexistence, the Karipuna's survival would have been seriously jeopardized, if not impossible.

What all this openness highlights, by contrast, is how exceptional their will to protect their forest is. The people are resolutely *unopen* to the pressure from others who seek to destroy their forest; they are determined to resist it as long as they can. So, this may be one of the most important conditions they postulate when dealing with the other: openness is activated insofar as it does not conflict with their desired ways of living in and with the forest. Of course, such a staunch, uncompromising stance is self-explanatory, as one Karipuna leader's pithy remark (“What would you do if someone invades your house?”) suggests, but the will to coexist with the forest means more than just defending the home from intruders. The Karipuna explicitly want that homeland to maintain a particular form, as a *standing* forest: this is why I prefer the term “forest” over “land,” since what the people want to defend and protect is not a simplified, flattened, deforested land. They know that only a healthy forest, recognizable as a forest and functioning as one, can provide home and livelihood for them and many different nonhuman others they need. The standing forest is a bottom line, a limit at which aperture and hospitality can be shifted into closure or hostility. To be open to certain kinds of others, they have to be closed to certain others; if they want to coexist with the forest, they need to resist what jeopardizes it.

Their keen interest in the various components of the forest clearly shows what kind of otherness they want to be open to: it starts with the nonhuman living beings, i.e., the flora and fauna on which they depend their lives. But the life forms they do not use also form part of the people's broader web of interspecies relations, which finds rich expression in shamanism. Karipuna shamanism is enacted by shamans (*pajé*) or people with partial shamanic power (*ipaji*), who can blur the boundaries between human and nonhuman worlds. Shamanic concepts or practices such as *rupigwara*, *ombojihu*, and *omongó* are rich repositories that instantiate the diverse ways in which people deal with nonhuman others, both in reality and in oneiric realms, and are deeply enmeshed in the forest environment. The forest spirit *mirangã* epitomizes how the Karipuna necessitated nonhuman otherness to cure and reproduce life and how they made sense of foreign others who posed unprecedented challenges.

The Karipuna's openness, which embraces the nonhumans that come with the forest, is certainly extended to many humans as well. This is immediately evident in the diverse kinship relations of the current community in Panorama village, shaped by intermarriage, and in the presence of other Indigenous inhabitants who were either invited or tolerated on their land, not to mention the potential presence of *isolados* inhabiting their forest, which they are calling for attention to. For the Karipuna, coexisting with the forest means being inclusive of all these beings. A forest is certainly not just a space with a sum total of entities, but also a vital process and phenomenon teeming with life, in which human and nonhuman are entangled in a transformative and co-constitutive dynamic. Precisely to reproduce this way of life, which I call foresting—using the word forest as a verb—the Karipuna know that it is necessary to be open in how they organize their *luta* against the FDD, which threatens their coexistence with the forest. Resembling their previous war alliance with other Kawahiva people, they actively forge partnerships with various governmental and non-governmental actors, making their cause an open, participatory process. In doing so, the Karipuna have developed a sense of protection for their land and legal rights, which would later also gain strong environmental connotations. Such co-creative undertakings situate their struggle in a shared world and extend their scope and audience. Now, the horizon of their cause is broadening beyond local territorial defense, as their messaging on *luta* and forest preservation is increasingly emphasized as a means of mitigating climate change and providing clean air and water for humanity proper on a planetary scale. In sum, openness to the Other enabled the Karipuna people to survive and thrive amid existential crises. Mixing strategic and intuitive decisions, they relied on incorporating the constitutive other into their society to forge functioning alliances to resist adversities targeting their forest and to reproduce the social fabric within it. Otherwise, it would not have been possible for them to either exist as a group or coexist with the forest, retrospectively speaking. Being open to otherness is directly implicated in the co-created cause of forest protection, in other words, *co-foresting*.

14.2.2. Dynamics that *adynamia* allows

Another key dimension of the Karipuna's contribution to human-forest coexistence is what I describe under the rubric of *adynamia*: it encompasses the not-doings, omissions, lacks, or lettings-be, which can be just as effective and beneficial as doings or haves for coexistence. The moment we cease to attribute negative value to people's apparent lack of management practices when

examining their contribution to forest preservation, it becomes possible to enlist the various “powers to lack” (Connor, 2019) rather than making a “list of absences.” Fully grasping this often-overlooked facet requires unsettling our own preconceived bias towards visible, intentional actions, as well as questioning our tendency to assess action and agency within active/passive binary. Evoking the middle voice allows us to break from such a binary and reposition enactments that are easily considered as passivity or absence of action. In the logic of the middle voice, the subject denoted by the verb is positioned inside the process, inside the action, so that the subject becomes the place where the process transpires. In this sense, the Karipuna are disposed to posit themselves *in* the process that is foresting, physically, existentially, and effectively. Nothing represents this better than their coextensiveness with the forest, which physically places the people immersed inside the process. The subject may not appear to be doing anything other than merely *staying*, yet still contributing to the foresting process, in middle voice; that is, foresting a forest, as s/he lets the forest forest her/him: a co-foresting. So many not-doings, omissions, and letting-be of the Karipuna can be effectively considered foresting in the middle voice, rather than being deemed passivity, neglect, or lack. If the Karipuna's refraining, such as disengagement in mass-scale deforestation activity, anti-logging policy, or their tendency to cope with potential adversaries and avoid conflicts are more overt, deliberated approaches based on strategic, pragmatic calculation or intuitions, there are also more covert, implicit, and unintended “giving ways,” such as their cessation of practicing the *timbó* fishing method or the relatively tepid control exerted on their gardens as well as on their “pests.” These various forms of *adynamia* create breathing rooms and breeding grounds that are favorable to the flourishing of diverse life forms. The Karipuna's tendency of “halfway domestication” is also better grasped with the middle voice. The people do not actively seek to domesticate animals, but neither are they “anti-domestication” nor do they have repugnance towards the enterprise. While they recognize the merits of the practice, they find it challenging and thus not sensible or worthwhile enough to invest the required time, energy, and resources. However, if conditions are met, for instance, if external support is provided, many people express interest in exploring the avenue. In short, they *prefer not to* domesticate in the current circumstances, remaining in-between active commitment and passive disinterest, yet preserving the potential to change. The overall effect of such a proclivity tends to result in exempting almost all wild animals from domestication, thereby relieving the forest of destructive forms of animal agriculture (e.g., cattle)—once again, becoming the place where the process of

foresteering occurs. The Karipuna's "ability not to do" is epitomized by their propensity not to impose their own "primary organizing principles" (Hage, 2017) on both human and nonhuman others in the reproduction of social life, thereby helping to create the conditions for coexistence. From this, I can say that the Karipuna embody what the philosopher Hans Jonas termed the "ecological imperative," understood as "act[ing] in such a way that the effects of [one's] actions are compatible with the permanence of genuine human life on earth" (Jonas, 1984, p. 11), yet *without* conceiving or treating it as an imperative, but as a lifeway.

14.2.3. Diversity and in-betweenness that fits diversity

I quoted a Karipuna person's comment: "We are few, but we are more united. We always pursue the same goal: protecting our land," which is an accurate assessment, as it specifies the unity around a prioritized cause: *luta*. However, as I immersed myself in the community, I also often heard people confiding in me about a certain "disunity" among them. Of course, these complaints would be followed by a truistic remark, "Every community in the world has issues, right?" as if to nuance any unintended negative impression. Indeed, it would be misleading to think the current Karipuna community is un-united; they *are* united, especially in terms of their determination to defend their land and coexist with the forest. Yet when diverging opinions, interests, (in)actions, and onto-epistemological commitments are accounted for, it would be inaccurate to generalize their social fabric as "harmonious" either. Unpacking this other-than-harmony(unity)-coexistence requires attending to diverse features without flattening or exaggerating differences.

Internal heterogeneity among the Karipuna is notable in almost every category of enactment I examined,²²¹ presenting a situation where "even within small, supposedly homogenous groups, there are many voices available to the ethnographer ... who confronts a plethora of voices from which to choose" (Little, 2001, x). Instead of fixing a choice or preference to a certain type of interlocutor, I tried to be as inclusive as possible of diversity, and as attentive as possible to the types and proportions of each diversity, to offer a sounder ethnographical characterization of the actuality of the people. I found that many descriptions, labels, or tropes commonly attributed to Indigenous people in Amazonia offer limited explanatory power to grasp the Karipuna's relationship with the forest and their contribution to it. Whenever I employed a

²²¹ Except the accounts of past warfare, which I had to rely heavily on an individual's life history.

concept or notion to describe people's conceptions and practices, I often needed to use formulations such as “(n)either A (n)or B” between given categories. For instance, the Karipunas' lives are mainly anchored in their forest village, but pivoting to urban areas has become an integral part of daily life due to their needs for higher education, healthcare, marriage, and commercial activities, among other reasons. So, they are neither “forest dwellers”²²² nor urban residents, as they inhabit both sylvan and urban environments, harboring at least two different perspectives (“dwelling” and “globe”). The same goes when one tries to identify a certain pro-environment, eco-centric feature, often presumed to pertain to Indigenous societies. Ideas such as “environmentalists,” “conservationists,” or “ecological nobleness” were found inadequate frames, if not outright rejected by the people. This does not mean, however, that they do not conserve. On the contrary, many Karipuna do consider themselves “protectors” of the forest, as many other Indigenous people do, a claim substantiated by their track record of forest preservation. From an onto-epistemological standpoint, the Karipuna show commitments that align with widespread explanatory models of Amerindian societies (e.g., perspectivism, animist ontology) but, at the same time, demonstrate considerable differences from them and also vary among themselves. Besides, their perspectivist or animistic sides often coexist with other ontological commitments. For instance, while nonhuman forest spirits could mark an important presence among some Karipuna, others could be skeptical, dismissive, or unversed about them. Therefore, neither can we conclude that they are distinctively animist/perspectivist, nor can we deny the existence of such dimensions. Put differently, “radical” ontological alterity is not present across the board, but it is not entirely absent either. In terms of resistance, the Karipuna have developed a consistent front of *luta* against specific pressures (the FDD) for the past decades, but they also opt to accommodate, cope with, or evade in many other areas. As one Karipuna summarized it, “We resist for the land, but not for culture or language,” resistance is selectively deployed, based on strategic thinking and priorities, also varying per person. In sum, the Karipuna are neither forest dwellers nor urbanized; they are actively engaged in resistance for the cause to defend their forest, but are not militant “resistors” in daily lives; they are partially animists, to varying degrees, but also inhabit other contrasting ontologies that coexist; neither are they constantly ecologically noble nor are they ignoble; they are not “admirably constant in their inconstancy” (Viveiros de Castro, 2011, p. 102) either. However, this does not mean that nothing about them is definable or determinable. While inherent,

²²² “Forest residents” may be more accurate, insofar as residency entails freedom of movement, change of location.

unchanging essences or cores are hardly identifiable, widely shared characteristics or propensities conducive to human-forest coexistence exist, which consistently lent to my observation or documentation during the research.

My conclusion is that the Karipuna's features and dispositions tend to emerge in in-between categories such as sylvan/urban, non-modern/modern, human/nonhuman, Indigenous/non-Indigenous, harmony/disunity, etc. Yet the Karipuna's movement is not always an oscillation between opposite poles or terminals either. From the way the Karipuna organize subsistence and earn a living to the way they mobilize alliances to advance their cause, they do not always oscillate between lifeways but might as well navigate the *in-betweenness* itself—"midstreaming," as termed by Tim Ingold.²²³ Such characteristics can be situated at the intersection of anthropology and social science's long preoccupation with embracing polyvocality (Abu-Lughod, 1991; Behar, 1993; Campbell & Lassiter, 2014; Clifford & Marcus, 1986/1986; Lassiter, 2008; Letiche, 2010; Tsing, 2015) and in-betweenness (Basu, 2017; Boccagni, 2016; Giesen, 2010, 2017; Ingold, 2015) within reflective and collaborative knowledge production. Although it is possible that some of my descriptions of the Karipuna may come across as "exceptional," I suspect this reflects more about my approach, i.e., the analytical strategy I deploy: paying closer attention to internal heterogeneity and treating it as one of the key particularities of the society. Evidently, I cannot speak for other Indigenous peoples in Amazonia, but I can imagine different voices finding no less multifarious expressions in other Amazonian collectives if one applies the same approach. Such "plethora of voices" (Little, 2001, x) is not something an observer "gives" but requires special attention not to flatten.

What interests us more, in terms of Indigenous environmental contribution, is the effect that the Karipuna's heterogeneity or decentering tendency (and its concomitant indeterminacy or ambiguity) can bring about. According to my empirical data, the effects are largely beneficial to their forest. To briefly summarize, most low-diversity (high-consensus) situations, corresponding to few cases such as their *luta*, their anti-logging policy, and commitment to a carbon credit project,

²²³ He distinguishes in between and in-between: the former "articulates a divided world that is already carved at the joints ... a bridge, a hinge, a connection, an attraction of opposites" (Ingold, 2015, p. 147), while the latter is "a movement of generation and dissolution in a world of becoming where things are not yet given but on the way to being given ... in the in-between, movement is the primary and ongoing condition" (ibid.).

etc., resulted in outcomes that favor human-forest coexistence. The very rare cases in which near-consensus generated negative effects were too sporadic and small-scale to have any significant impact, such as the practice of killing specific animals with *karowara*. The high-diversity (low-consensus) situations, which correspond to most cases, also tend to bear outcomes that are either forest-friendly or at least undamaging. Lacking a centralized, concerted effort to deforest or persecute life forms spares the forest from detrimental outcomes and therefore shapes a foundation conducive to biodiversity. Even in the rare cases where I identified potentially negative individual behavioral patterns (e.g., bushmeat trade), there was no evidence of a widespread or scaling-up trend that would amount to any consensus. I would go so far as to suggest that such behaviors remain largely isolated because people are not *too* united to organize more impactful collective action in that direction. In fact, given that this small group is most likely to produce perceptible outcomes through aligned efforts, if the few existing concerted efforts are predominantly oriented towards foresting, and an appropriate amount of diversity or heterogeneity serves as a buffer against deforesting activities, from an outcome-oriented standpoint, we can conclude that the Karipuna's internal heterogeneity works, more often than not, in favor of foresting. This environmentally positive result stems from the fact that people's diversity is combined with the other aforementioned factors (their openness to the Other for co-foresting, *adynamia*, and resistance. Such diversity is not any kind of diversity, but one that relates to the people's tendency to put objective reality in parentheses, rarely seeking dominance over others. It is also a form of diversity based on the recognition of a shared world, making necessary negotiations and adjustments possible, as shown by how the people come to terms with adhering to certain conservation principles within the scope of the carbon project. All in all, we can say that the socially divergent tendency seldom contributes negatively to the ecologically diverse life forms. Rather than despite internal diversity, but *thanks* to it, the Karipuna are nourishing coexistence with the forest: in other words, (internal) diversity allows (bio-)diversity to take its own course.

14.2.4. Reworking and explaining causality

To conclude, the Karipuna's coexistence with the forest is enacted in at least four main modes of existence: ways of life that *enmesh* with the forest; that *resist* against specific forces that threaten the coexistence; that *cope* with others that enable the coexistence; that *let* things *be* to take their own courses and not do certain things. The cumulative effect of these modes of (co)existence

sustains people's existence alongside a standing forest. The enactments of these modes also constitute (not in one-to-one correspondence but in interconnected, combined ways) four features: resistance, openness to the Other, *adynamia*, and internal heterogeneity. Conventionally, these features (especially the last three ones) may be considered “background conditions” (Hertz et al., 2024), thus relegated as secondary “contexts.” Yet by reworking on causality itself and viewing the forest as a process and the Indigenous human-forest relationship as a form of entanglement, I argue that these features or conditions are entangled to the causal processes of how a forest (as a socio-ecological phenomenon) shapes its Indigenous inhabitants and is shaped by them.

Reworking on causality starts with breaking with linear, mono-causal explanations. The conventional explanatory models of causality is still “causal monism” (Salmon, 1994; Suppes, 1970)—also dubbed “linear monocausal causality” (Barad & Gandorfer, 2021, p. 59), or termed in the analogy of “straightjacket” (Psillos, 2008) or “billiard-ball causality” (Barad & Gandorfer, 2021, p. 60)—, which is “the view that there is a single, unified and all-encompassing metaphysical story to be told as to what causation is” (Psillos, 2008, p. 1), predicated on “Newtonian meta/physic” (Barad & Gandorfer, 2021, p. 59). The centrality of identifying contribution through a mechanism based on intentional action is a manifestation of causal monism. But just as there is no inherent reason to prioritize mechanism, causality need not be reduced to monolithic answers.

[T]here is no such thing as the causal relation ... One factor can contribute to the production or prevention of another in a great variety of ways. There are standing conditions, auxiliary conditions, precipitating conditions, agents, interventions, modifications, contributory factors, enhancements, inhibitions. (Cartwright, 1999, p. 119)

Causation “varies from context to context, that there are different types of causal inquiry, and that there isn’t a single concept of causation to be found but rather a cluster of related concepts” (Vayda, 2009, p. 6). Against this backdrop was proposed “causal pluralism,” which views causation “very much like the common cold: a rather loose condition with no single underlying nature” (Psillos, 2008, p. 2). What are commonly considered as “(competing) characteristics of causation, viz., regularity, counterfactual dependence, probability raising, presence of a process, presence of a mechanism, are symptoms of causation,” (ibid.) and

[c]ausation comprises whatever conditions in fact exist in the general region corresponding to causal talk. But this talk is diverse and variegated, and there is no conceptual or linguistic pressure to have a theory of causation that ascribes to it a single and deep underlying nature. (ibid., pp. 2-3; also see Anscombe, 1971)

If so, we can ask, “What happens when multiple causes coexist? (Can we think the inseparability of multiple causes? Or the inseparability of cause and effect? Or a notion of causality where cause doesn’t precede effect?)” (Barad & Gandorfer, 2021, p. 60). Also, “[w]hat happens in the midst of a phase change is that multiple forms ... coexist and you have things happening on multiple scales at once”? (ibid., p. 58) In Barad's reworking on causal affairs with the concept of “intra-action” (2007), where entities are not deemed separately from their relation, the entity is viewed as “relata-within-phenomena,” not a preexisting relation, and “cause does not precede effect. Instead, cause and effect are mutually constituted through intra-action, which holds them together and separates them at the same time” (Murris, 2021, p. 71). In the logic of entanglement, causality does not necessarily follow the linear order (A happens, therefore B happens) but occurs in entanglement (A happens as B happens, and vice versa). An entangled affair is an identification of a particular coexisting pair of inputs/outputs that are described in dependence on each other's state. If “cause and effect emerge through intra-actions. Agential intra-actions are causal enactments” (Barad, 2007, p. 176) and “causality is recast as entangled” (Everth & Gurney, 2022, p. 51). Explaining the socio-ecological implications of entanglement-oriented analysis,²²⁴ Barad evokes a case study of avian flu (Wilbert, 2006) which rethinks causal inference through intra-action: from the conventional tracing of migratory routes of wild birds to revealing broader entanglements (e.g., assemblages of poultry industry, transnational veterinary system, global transportation system), the study sheds light to

the ways in which natures—cultures—technologies are always already mixed up and mixing up—intra-acting—in what we might better describe, think of and practice as technonatures or socionatures, bearing in mind that these mixings can happen in disparate ways, depending upon the different forms of intra-action involved. (Wilbert, 2006, p. 7)

Such entanglements cannot be explained by “an orthodox account of causation ... because as part of this account causal relations are thought of as specific relations between isolated elements” (Hertz et al., 2025, p. 8). But tracing entanglements is not confined to scaling up. Whether it focuses on “global connections” (Tsing, 2005, pp. 2-6), or ground/human scale, or on physical or non-physical realms (ideas or institutions), what matters is tracing the material-discursive practices that traverse across perceived borders. These are “specific iterative

²²⁴ Barad draws from quantum-entanglement, a phenomenon where multiple particles are linked together and exist in pair, regardless of the distance between them. When one quantum acts, another one acts too, without a fixed, determined, linear cause-effect relation between them, coexisting regardless of the distance.

enactments—agential intra-actions—through which matter is differentially engaged and articulated” (Barad, 2003, pp. 822-3).²²⁵ Drawing from Barad's causal theory, sustainability science scholars proposed “process-relational perspectives (PRP)” (Hertz et al., 2024, 2025), focusing on the “entanglement of background conditions (i.e., the context which is not considered causally relevant at a particular moment) with causal processes (i.e., how particular elements interact as part of causal processes)” (Hertz et al. 2025, p. 3). One example is reinterpreting causality of the much-discussed case of the 1992 collapse of the Northwest Atlantic cod fishery, which shows how the “bifurcation of Nature” (Whitehead, 1920) sets the scene for a subject/object distinction, and based on it, “models and approaches of more disciplinary nature that joined hands constitutes modern fishery” (Hertz & Mancilla Garcia, 2021, p. 6). In this analytical approach, what usually tends to fade as background conditions, contexts, or configurations, that are marginalized as having no effect on the phenomenon in question or worse, dismissed as “epiphenomena,” are brought to the fore, demonstrating “how background conditions need not be considered as given” (Hertz et al. 2025, p. 3). If we foreground the Karipuna's four features as a diffuse set of entangled relations, or, better, as *constellations* (not as separate background conditions), this can shape the idea of Indigenous environmental contribution. As “ideas are to objects as constellations are to stars” (Benjamin, 1985, p. 34), “the constellation emerges discloses itself ... At that point, a meaningful image jumps forward from the previously disparate elements, which from that point onward can never be seen as merely disparate again. In this way, the phenomena are rescued from their status as phenomenal or fragmentary, without simultaneously sacrificing the phenomena in the name of an abstract concept” (Pensky, 1993, p. 70). As a constellation is difficult to undo once perceived, we can trace the entangled relations in their particularity, how they are stuck in deep involvements that are uneasy to dissolve.

One last thing to mention is that although entanglements are enacted through different material-discursive practices, they do not necessarily take the form of identifiable action nor

²²⁵ “The relationship between the material and the discursive is one of mutual entailment. Neither is articulated/articulable in the absence of the other; matter and meaning are mutually articulated.” (Barad, 2003, p. 822).

require human intention or will.²²⁶ Agency should not be assumed as a “property” or “something” that someone or something “possesses” or “attributes”; it is rather an intra-active

enactment, a matter of possibilities for reconfiguring entanglements. So, agency is not about choice in any liberal humanist sense; rather, it is about the possibilities and accountability entailed in reconfiguring material-discursive apparatuses of bodily production, including the boundary articulations and exclusions that are marked by those practices. (Barad, as cited in Tuin & Dolphijn, 2012)

This conceptualization allows us to broaden the scope of human-forest coexistence to encompass myriad other modes of existence that are not readily identifiable as actions “imbued with agency” (see section Intro IV. *Adynamia*). Subjects that seem “just existing” in an environment, without performing a visible action, may still be enacting or enabling effects on it. In these enactments, visible actions or clearly defined, a priori intentionality can be absent, or may come into existence in the course of co-constitutive (intra-active) processes. Therefore, visibly active, intentional performance is not a necessary condition for constituting a contribution. Even without action or innate design, considerable effects can be produced, hence the contribution.

14.3. Positioning the research

In this section, I will lay out how this study is situated within the broader academic literature on Indigenous environmental contributions. I have postponed this contextualization to the last chapter to advance my empirical and ethnographic engagement with the Karipuna people, and also because this order mirrors how I developed my analytical approach. I did not first address the Karipuna with a robust, a priori theoretical framework. Although there were circumstantial reasons for such an approach (e.g., paucity of preliminary information), part of it was intentional, to leave space for a dialogical, collaborative way of research. Many theoretical references were consulted *afterward* to complement and contextualize my dialogue with the people, grounding analytical endeavors firmly on the empirical. Still, a loose set of preconceived ideas (guidelines and key questions indispensable to conducting any research) oriented my inquiry, requiring continuous adjustments and corrections whenever they clashed with reality in the field. Below are the four recurrent ways of explaining Indigenous contribution by which this research is influenced, but at the same time distances itself from.

²²⁶ “[W]ill is, in Western culture, the apparatus that allows one to attribute the ownership of actions and techniques to a subject” (Agamben, 2016, p. 62).

14.3.1. Differentiating from eco-essence and radical alterity

First is the “eco-essence” strand. Surprising as it might be, the figure of a wise, egalitarian, and ethical “noble savage” still persists, for almost five centuries, harkening back to its origin in 17th-century Europe (de Montaigne, 1580; Pope, 1734; Rousseau, 1754).²²⁷ If the environmental dimension of this native subject—living in harmony with nature in the pristine tropics—constituted the backdrop of this imagery in this early stage, the Indigenous people partaking in the global environmental movement in the 20th century brought the human-forest relation to the fore, morphing the “nobleness” into “ecological nobleness.” In the Amazonia, coinciding with heightened international media attention, as mega-development projects started to proliferate and deforestation soared in alarming rates, key Indigenous figures captured the imagination of the global audience, championing the figure of the “ecological warrior” such as the Kayapo people who resisted the construction of the Belo Monte dam complex in the Xingu River. The Kayapo's international acclaim and the following controversies added fuel to the debate of the presumed “eco-Indian” (Conklin & Graham, 1995; T. Turner, 1993). Some Amazonian experts contributed to reinforce this idea by connecting Indigenous cosmologies and shamanic rituals with regulative mechanisms and commitments to environmental protection (Reichel-Dolmatoff, 1971). The “ecological Indian” debate among historians and anthropologists were “most intense from the late 1970s to the late 2000s, reflect[ing] a genuine concern about alternative ways of organizing human-environmental relations” (Hornborg, 2024, p. 25) and “reached an impasse ... towards the end of the 2000s” (ibid., p. 30). Although now it is widely understood that such eco-nobleness is but a product of external projection, the idea “continues to provide Native Americans and other Indigenous people with a politically compelling platform” (ibid., p. 30).

In the apparent decline of the eco-Indian debate, the currently accepted form of explaining Indigenous ecological wisdom, or difference, that produces environmentally beneficial outcomes, is largely being absorbed by the vast literature of Indigenous or Traditional Ecological Knowledge (IEK or TEK, see: [Moran, 1993](#); [Ventocilla et al., 2010](#)), or albeit indirectly, being conceptualized in continuity of a distinctively Indigenous *ontological* alterity. From the late 1990s, successive publications by Descola, on revisiting the Great (nature/culture) divide (1994, 2013), and Viveiros

²²⁷ French philosopher Michel de Montaigne's *Of Cannibals* (1580) about the Tupinambá people of Brazil; The English poet Alexander Pope's *An Essay on Man* (1699); Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *Discourse on the Origins of Inequality Among Men* (1754/1999).

de Castro (1998, 2015), on Amerindian perspectivism and multinaturalism, marked “the moment when anthropology turned the ontological corner” (Holbraad, 2013, p. 470) and the enterprise became “Amazonianize[d]” (ibid., p. 469) to a degree. These two founding theorists devised the alterity of Amazonian conceptions into radical ontological apparatus (“bomb”: Latour, 2009), by inverting Western-modernist ontological premises (e.g., Viveiros de Castro), or by provincializing Eurocentric onto-epistemological norms rooted in the “Great divide” (e.g., Descola). Yet the focus of these theories is not the actual ecological effects of Indigenous ontological alterity in real life. Viveiros de Castro's perspectivism does not argue that Indigenous people's facility to think from nonhuman points of view makes them “protect” nonhuman nature. Likewise, Descola does not argue that Indigenous people do not view themselves separately from nature and attribute kinship to plants; therefore, they are more likely to “conserve” forests or animals. Nonetheless, these theories are commonly viewed as entailing a profound critique of (capitalist) modernity, which is widely deemed responsible for the current ecological crises. For instance, Descola's thesis of ontological difference (“modes of identification”) offers an explanation for why “naturalist” societies are more prone to develop exploitative extractivist projects and “animist” societies tend to oppose them; perspectivism inspires theorists to devise non-anthropocentric ethics (Dyke, 2021; Idelber, 2013; Lapworth, 2021). Viveiros de Castro himself offers influential critiques on the planetary ecological crises and the Anthropocene, in which he evokes Indigenous ontological difference (Conty & Viveiros de Castro, 2025; Danowski & Castro, 2017; Viveiros de Castro, 2013; Viveiros de Castro & Hui, 2021). In fact, ontological analyses so profoundly shaped Amazonian anthropology on the human-environment relationship that it is simply impossible not to take them seriously.²²⁸ However, when applied to this research, I found two important cautionary points: first, the extent to which Indigenous peoples actually have (profound) TEK and/or a (radically) different ontology must be carefully examined, and second, even if they do, the extent of commitment of such onto-epistemologies should also be empirically examined on a case-by-case basis: e.g., how such difference translates into practice, how much effect it has on the environment, such as in opposing destructive development projects. As some anthropologists cautioned, discrepancies between (theoretical) knowledge and practice is common (Holy & Stuchlik, 1983 cited in Kalland,

²²⁸ To some, it has “gained a surprisingly inflated dimension” (Ramos, 2012, p. 482). For criticisms on the Ontological Turn, see (Bessire & Bond, 2014; Graeber, 2015; Heywood, 2012; Laidlaw & Heywood, 2013; Reynoso, 2015).

2003, p. 12), so the possible incongruency between knowing/doing, ontology/practice, political stance/everyday life cannot be assumed, but must be investigated through ethnographical endeavors.²²⁹ In short, the relevance of ontological alterity depends on the extent to which it is relevant to the people in question. Unless ontological difference is prevalent among the people or affecting their behavior, generalizing isolated cases risks privileging a certain type of subject that fits the theory better and “reduce[s] social and cultural life and relations to nothing more than idealized types” (Vindal Ødegaard & Rivera Andía, 2019, p. 6). So, the ethnographer must be explicit about the context in which such alterity is situated and be wary of theoretical extrapolation. Favoring selected interlocutors who demonstrate certain radical alterity while silencing the others who do not fit the narrative comprises cherry-picking and ethnographical refusal (Ortner, 1995). The relevance of ontological alterity, whether such differences actually make a difference, is especially important when we examine Indigenous struggles and their ecological implications.

In the case of the Karipuna, the people generally exhibit remarkable TEK and certain aspects of ontology that can be classified as “animist,” but the breadth and depth of actual onto-epistemological commitments vary considerably from person to person. There is also notable coexistence of different ontologies, hanging together without obviating each other. Regarding the effects of onto-epistemologies, I observed considerable gaps between knowing and doing (enacting), prompting the observer to wonder, “How important is their ontology to themselves?” More importantly, when it comes to making decisions that actually produce different effects on the forest, their motivations were rarely expressed in the form of (radical) ontology or alterity. It was different from the cases reported in the multiple-worlds thesis²³⁰ or political ontology,²³¹ which postulates radically different worlds, instead of a single World with different worldviews. Consider the example of Blaser (2016), where the Innu Indigenous people were in a conflictive situation with the Canadian state apparatus seeking to conserve animals: here, the animal in question is a radically different entity for each party (“*akitu*” vs. “caribou,” respectively), creating

²²⁹ Although scarce, some ethnographic works report substantial gaps between perceived ontological conceptions and reality in contexts involving ecological effects (Dayot, 2023; Revilla-Minaya, 2024; Vangsnes, 2025).

²³⁰ Inspired by the “Ontological Turn” (Blaser & de la Cadena, 2018; de la Cadena, 2010; Henare et al., 2007; Holbraad & Pedersen, 2017; Viveiros de Castro, 2015). Also, the “pluriverse” thesis of Arturo Escobar (2018).

²³¹ It addresses “conflicts involving different assumptions about ‘what exists,’” (Blaser, 2013, p. 547), whether it concerns metaphysical entities, animals and plants, or ecosystems, it questions the “basic premise of reasonable politics—an already existing factual world—and its capacity to adjudicate who and what can be part of the political in terms of their adherence to this particular version of factuality” (Blaser, 2016, p. 552).

“incommensurable” ontological gaps. Similarly, de la Cadena (2015) reports a struggle between the Turpos Indigenous peasants and the Peruvian state over a Mountain, which is a radically different entity (the sacred, animated earth-being “Ausangate” vs. “piece of rock, suitable for mining”). I agree that notable onto-epistemological differences should be taken seriously, but one should not assume that they construct independent worlds predicated on incommensurability: doing so would require a significant stretch, defying the sharedness of reality. Proponents of multiple world theories rely on the notion of “partial connections” (Strathern, 1991) to explain such sharedness and communicability, but perhaps the differences are partial. Does this imply the existence of a single World “*out there*,” as a self-contained and “independent stand-alone entity” (Nadasdy, 2021, p. 359)? In societies that surrounds the Indigenous people, there is certainly a strong pressure to view the world as a “One-World world,” or OWW (Law, 2015). The concern of the OWW perpetuating the illusion of a homogenous world is legitimate, but constructing many counter-worlds or splitting into a pluriverse does not seem to be the solution to dispel its mirage (see Nadasdy, 2021). Rather, I would endorse the idea of conceiving multiple “lifeworlds” (Ingold, 2000) or “lived worlds” (Gow, 2001; Viegas, 2007) based on concrete, experience-near lives, but not a proliferation of worlds that imply onto-epistemological entirety or completeness. My ethnographical experiences with the Karipuna do not support the multiple-world thesis or a single-container universe²³²; more often, they signal a recognition of a *shared* world, expressed in diverse ways through open engagement and enmeshment in their enactments of human-forest coexistence. One Karipuna made it explicit:

For me, the world is one. Now, each person has a mode of life of one's own. Everyone has their own different thoughts. You have different thoughts; I have different thoughts. That's how it is. The world is one, but everyone has different customs and thoughts.

Although the Karipuna's struggle also runs against multiple adversaries with whom they have multiple disagreements, they are mostly articulated in terms of their inherent (constitutional) rights, legality, and common-sensical logics (“What would you do if someone invades your house?”) that they share with others. Besides their concern for the *isolados*, whose very existence is doubted by many authorities, there were a few cases in which radical onto-epistemological

²³² I never observed any abstract effort by the Karipuna to apprehend a “totality” of reality. “We only ever know sections of the infinite. An overview of the whole is impossible” (Gabriel, 2015, p. 82).

difference created a chasm between “us” and “them.” The Karipuna's biggest grievances with state officials stem from negligence, unresponsiveness, or insufficient law enforcement, rather than ontological difference or incommensurability. If people inhabit their own worlds and communication is only possible through partial connections fraught with equivocation, negotiating with the myriad actors to organize concerted efforts to fight deforestation would be infeasible.²³³ What the Karipuna were doing was, rather than erecting radically different worlds, seeking solutions *within* a shared world by addressing arguably the most pressing issue of our time, which needs Indigenous engagement: the global ecological crisis. In doing so, they appeal to common understandings or mutual benefits of protecting the forest, and forge working alliances with different partners with whom they share concerns and co-create approaches to achieve their goal. At least part of this co-production of *luta* is possible, since they share, or were capable of incorporating other ontologies that now coexist with their own. Such ontological coexistence is found to be helpful in engaging in this open process of collaboration, since the Karipuna are able to make changes or adjustments when they deem it necessary. They are leading by example, that

if we are to escape the catastrophic effects of climate change and further environmental degradation, we may need to consider the idea of a “world not predicated on essential difference of Indigenous peoples but on our shared capacity to transform ourselves.” (Bessire, 2014, p. 227; Vindal Ødegaard & Rivera Andía, 2019, p. 19)

14.3.2. Distancing from mechanism and epiphenomenalism

Indigenous contributions to the environment are being widely recognized in scientific areas such as conservation biology or environmental studies. Although breaking with “fortress conservation” (Brockington, 2002; Mahalwal & Kabra, 2023), whose proponents accused Indigenous people of environmental destruction, faced “vigorous opposition” (Mulrennan & Bussi res, 2020, p. 288; Terborgh, 1999), now, the vast majority in academia support community-based solutions inclusive of the coexistence of Indigenous and local inhabitants. Nevertheless, such approval of Indigenous people's role in conservation is not unconditional: “Indigenous stewardship” usually indicates a necessary condition for the people to engage in some form of observable, consistent activity, such as management programs, customary regulations, cultural institutions, in short, something

²³³ “In a pluriverse, after all, no one is ever compelled to question their own knowledge of the world. Why should they, when their views and practices are perfectly valid and consistent within the world they inhabit?” (Nadasdy, 2021, p. 365).

considerable as a mechanism to be credited for the positive outcome. In this strand of thinking (which I call “mechanist”), mechanisms are deemed as “the causal scaffolding that holds things together, the so-called ‘nuts and bolts’ of explanation” (Walters & Vayda, 2020, p. 643). However, even these experts on causal explanations of environmental impact question the prioritization of mechanism over other possible causal explanations, such as causal processes or event sequences (ibid., 644). The prerequisite of mechanism concurs with the requirement of intention and action. Smith and Wishnie, an influential reference in conservation biology, assert that “to qualify as conservation, any action or practice must not only prevent or mitigate resource overharvesting or environmental damage, it must also be *designed* [emphasis added] to do so” (2000, p. 493). Although some experts admit that “identifying the intentionality or design behind purported conservation actions can be especially challenging within the myriad of cosmologies and worldviews that comprise customary conservation” (Mulder & Coppolillo, 2005), it is the difficulty of identification that they recognize, not the notion of intention/action itself that is being questioned.²³⁴ Although these “requirements” may project the observer's own criteria based on ethnocentric assumptions, even some prominent Amazonianists assess “how conservation-oriented are” (Carneiro da Cunha & de Almeida, 2000, p. 323-6) the Indigenous people, by applying the category of ideology (cosmology) and action (practice). If we do not question the underlying assumptions of action, intention, and agency, whenever an apparent lack of mechanism or intentional action is detected, the conclusion can easily revert to another strand of explanation, which I call epiphenomenalism.²³⁵

The design criterion is key and was first brought to the attention of anthropologists by Hunn (1982). He distinguished *epiphenomenal* [emphasis added] (or side effect) conservation from true conservation. Epiphenomenal conservation is a consequence of a human population’s inability to cause resource degradation or a simple observation about long-term equilibrium with resources. It may be a consequence of low population density, limited technology, or consumer demand. (Raymond, 2007, p. 180)

According to Hunn's logic, authentic conservation consists of one's intentional action and ability, whereas inauthentic conservation results from one's inability, lack, or mere chance. From

²³⁴ It is not a coincidence that one can find similar “requirements” in the discussions of defining resistance. For any act to constitute resistance, resistance studies also tend to presuppose some kind of “action” and “intention” as minimum pre-requisites (Hollander & Einwohner, 2004).

²³⁵ Different from epiphenomenalism in cognitive science, which is the view that mental events are caused by physical events in the brain, but have no effects upon any physical events (Robinson, 2018).

this logic, positive outcomes in environments inhabited by Indigenous people are commonly interpreted as a collateral effect of a combination of a sparse population, rudimentary technology, a lack of economic enterprise, and a lack of productive will. Epiphenomenalists such as Hunn deem them an inferior form of conservation (hence the idea of “true” “authentic” conservation), since none of them are perceived as “ability” or “designed action.” Some of these characteristics, such as a relatively sparse population, are observed in the Karipuna's case, but I not only refuse to reduce Indigenous contribution to these elements but also disagree with the interpretation of factors “inabilities” or “lacks” (and “agency”) per se, as I elaborated above with the notion of *adynamia*. So, although epiphenomenalism does not entail romanticism or an idealized notion of Indigenous people, it fails to do justice to their contribution by unquestioning the underlying assumptions of agency and intention. As Hunn's argument reveals, the ultimate direction of such an approach is bound to reduce and trivialize, if not downright devalue, Indigenous contributions.

Focusing on modes of coexistence to explain Indigenous contributions to the environment distances itself from approaches that presume a certain ecological essence, ontological alterity, observable management practices (mechanisms) based on intentionality and innate design, or one's “inability” or “lack” (epiphenomenalism). Such distancing is important not only because these approaches risk essentializing, romanticizing or reducing Indigenous contribution, thereby prone to reproducing stereotypes, but also because it helps to provide a sounder ethnographical characterization of the Karipuna people.

14.4. Conclusive remark: Contribution, limits, and future research

14.4.1. Contributions

In this final section, I will lay out the contributions and limits of this study as well as possibilities for further research. This study aims to improve our understanding of Indigenous contributions to the forest environment against the background of the planetary ecological crises, highlighting the indispensable role of Indigenous people in protecting tropical forests and mitigating climate change. To begin with, this study addresses a research gap of a group of Indigenous people, the Karipuna, who remained highly understudied, lacking sufficient previous studies to build upon. By offering thick descriptions of the people's conceptions and practices from the past and present (being the first anthropological PhD thesis exclusively dedicated to the Karipuna), it contributes

to the anthropological and regional knowledge-making communities, including the Karipuna themselves who wish to raise awareness of their struggle and have their historical/cultural accounts registered, or to “rescue culture,” as they commonly describe. Although this thesis lays groundwork for further research on the Karipuna, my focus lay not in ethnological data collection itself, but rather in the “generative processes that contribute to knowing and how these emerge in ecological engagement” (Kohn, 2002, p. 403). My struggle to conceive a proper framework to carry out such a task, which would do justice to the Karipuna's complex reality, eventually led me to investigate the inner workings of human-forest coexistence. In this step of setting up the framework also lies the study's analytical contribution, since it diverges from many theoretical frameworks that explain Indigenous people's tendency to protect the environment, which includes viewing it as a resistance movement or stemming from certain eco-essence or radical ontological alterity, if not explaining it through mechanistic or epiphenomenal lenses. Focusing on human-forest coexistence and unpacking the Karipuna's various modes of existence conducive to it, I offer and analyze rich empirical inputs, demonstrating the ways in which the Karipuna enact coexistence with human and nonhuman others. This departure itself contributes, not only to the body of resistance studies in social science that are increasingly calling for de-romanticization and de-pathologization to better grasp contemporary resistance, but also to finding breakthroughs from the long-standing debate of articulating the ecological “nobleness” or “stewardship” of Indigenous people, which may have succeeded in relinquishing reductionist, neo-Darwinian models but still wanting concrete empirical articulations of Indigenous contribution. Through the analytical lens of coexistence, I identified key characteristics of the Karipuna—their inclusiveness to otherness, power to lack or not do, heterogeneous composition—as *more-than-context* factors to explain their hitherto successful coexistence with the forest. These main findings contribute not only to the amply explored topic of “constitutive alterity” in Amazonian anthropological literature (Taylor, 2007, p. 159, no. 1), but also to other areas as diverse as environmental studies, conservation biology/ecology, and the vast scientific literature that grapples with the issues of human-wildlife coexistence. For instance, appreciating different kinds of agency with *adynamia* allows us to conceive exit-strategies from the ecological crises of the Anthropocene, which is a manifestation of excessive anthropogenic agency turned into a destructive geophysical force. Valuing a different form of human agency, in middle voice, resonates with the emerging concepts in conservation practices such as “proforestation” (allowing existing forests to achieve their ecological potential

for biodiversity and carbon accumulation by minimum management: Moomaw et al., 2019) or “rewilding” (“restoring self-sustaining ecosystems, with interlinked ecological processes that promote and support one another while minimizing or gradually reducing human interventions”: Perino et al., 2019), which focuses not only on the human potential *not* to do, but the potentials *of* not-doings per se. This research also contributes to coexistence studies as it expands our understanding of the uneasy, unchosen, often treacherous dimensions of coexistence, showing how coexistence of different modes “hold/hang together” (Mol, 2002) both because *and* despite of the people “banging heads together”²³⁶ (Larsen & Johnson, 2017, p. 40), differentiating from the images of peaceful, harmonious, or united coexistence, often evoked in descriptions of Indigenous peoples' relationship with others and the environment. By departing from idealistic and romanticized coexistence, I also shed light on its socio-historical dimension where subaltern subjects embrace coexistence, more of a necessity than a choice, fully acknowledging that coexistence is “rather the discomfort and the questioning that allows us to take out everything superfluous ... that almost electric, reverberant energy, which allows [Indigenous subjects] to coexist and inhabit the contradiction” (Cusicanqui, 2023, p. 117).

Methodologically, this study contributes by introducing a different approach to the human-forest relationship by articulating the Indigenous people's mode of coexistence with the forest in a processual way: instead of rooting human and environment in a binary separation or in essentialist presumptions, I use the term “forest” as a verb, in middle voice, neither active nor passive. This helps the observer appreciate Indigenous enactments that are not readily observable and are easily overlooked in the active/passive binary. This analytical strategy of middle voice goes hand in hand with articulating the in-betweenness of the people, which cannot be captured by commonly adopted binary concepts (e.g., sylvan/urban, modern/non-modern, etc.). Instead of flattening the dynamic and often messy reality, I attend to the community's internal heterogeneity. I believe this approach can address at least some concerns among critics who worry about characterizing Indigenous groups as collectives with monolithic ontological commitments.

Last but not least, the study's more practical contribution lies in informing Indigenous and environmental policy-makers, competent authorities, and key stakeholders, calling for enhanced

²³⁶ For examples of cacophonous cohabitation, see Barker & Pickerill, 2012; Davis, 2010; Grossman, 2005; Larsen, 2003 (Larsen & Johnson, 2017, p. 186).

understanding and stringent law enforcement efforts to help Indigenous people to preserve the foundations of their lives. By offering a case that informs the possibilities, limits, and requirements of the process of co-creative engagement between Indigenous and non-Indigenous parties to achieve a common goal (in this case, containing the FDD to preserve the forest), and by showing both positive and negative sides of a well-intended partnership, it helps enhancing the capacity of governmental and non-governmental (civil society) agents to effectively engage with Indigenous peoples' ongoing struggles, also contributing to collaborative Indigenous research. At the same time, it provides a clear warning that, in collaborating with Indigenous communities, all non-Indigenous counterparts must learn to “bracket” their own convictions of interpreting objective reality, and, instead, try to tune in to how Indigenous people make collaborations work without establishing a single dominant onto-epistemology or “primary organizing principle” (Hage, 2017). I am aware that the effects of my contributions, especially this last part, remain to be seen. While the Karipuna's *luta* and coexistence with the forest continues to be their top priority, in 2026 spring, as I write these final words, the people find themselves at a juncture where different priorities emerge, such as the increased necessity to earn a living. The Karipuna never formed an unchanging “cold society,” but by responding to constantly shifting conditions inside/out their forest, it seems that they are undergoing arguably one of the most transformative and the least predictive periods in their history, as they enter a new chapter marked by the green economy, as they commit to a carbon credit project, resembling what Walter Benjamin described as the “time of now ... where every moment contains the open-ended possibility of sudden transformation” (as cited in Kirksey, 2012, p. 25).

14.4.2. Limitations and further research

This thesis firmly focuses on the human side of coexistence but does not provide in-depth empirical data of various non-Indigenous actors, especially the Karipuna's adversaries, such as the *invasores* and enablers of the FDD. This omission became a conscious choice, partially due to the difficulty of engaging with illicit informants, but also due to the strong opposition by the Karipuna leaders, who dissuaded me from approaching the *invasores* in any way, raising security concerns. Exploring innovative ways to offer a thicker description of the broader political ecology of actants, without jeopardizing my interlocutor's security, will be a task for further research. Another research gap lies on the nonhuman side of the forest. Beyond examining the general coexistence of the standing forest, I was not able to conduct qualitative analysis of its status, such as the level of forest

degradation, which includes damage and thinning out of forests, as well as removal of entire stands, and their impacts on biodiversity (there was also a lack of published scientific studies of this sort to refer to). This dimension is gaining importance as tropical forests are showing signs of a shift from global carbon sinks to sources (Brienen et al., 2015; Carle et al., 2025). Besides these points, one important and pressing theme for future research is the Karipuna's commitment to carbon credit projects, which I mentioned in the section above. Contrary to the critics who are concerned that such a form of green capitalism would sever Indigenous relationships with nature, the Karipuna understand the carbon project as a method to protect the forest and coexist with it. At the very least, they consider it a legitimate choice, given the circumstances complicating human-forest coexistence. Just recently, the Karipuna signed a contract with a carbon intermediary company. The long-term contractual commitment (40 years, beginning in 2026) will provide a unique opportunity to observe how the project shapes their political economy and changes the dynamics of relating to the forest.

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15. Annex

15.1. List of narratives

List of narratives, ordered by chapter

[1-1] “The Arrival” (Batiti, September 2023).

[3-1] “The first Karipuna” (Batiti, October 2023).

[3-2] “The Flood” (Batiti, October 2022).

[3-3] “Bahira with warts” (Batiti, June 2023).

[3-4] “Origin of garden crops” (Batiti, September 2023).

[3-5] “Origin of fire” (Batiti, August 2022).

[3-6] “How the chestnut tree was created” (Katiká, April 2026, trans. Andressa -Kw).

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[6-1] “The Karipuna warrior” (Batiti, December 2024).

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[6-5] “*Tapy'ynhahua*” (Aripã, May 2024, trans. Batiti -Kw).

[6-6] “Tebegahẽa” (Aripã, May, 2024, trans. Batiti and Adriano -Kw).

[6-7] “Son of the white” (Katiká, also Aripã, May 2023, trans. Andressa -Kw)

[6-8] “The Return” (Katiká, May 2023, trans. Andressa -Kw)

[7-1] “Seu Rui” (Batiti, December 2024).

[7-2] “Pitanga and white people” (Katiká, August 2022, trans. Adriano -Kw)

[12-1] “Master of peccaries” (Batiti, October 2022)

15.2. Narratives: Full versions

[Na. #3-3] “Bahira with warts”

Today I'm going to tell the story of Bahira, who was covered in warts, which we call “ipinha.” That's what we call warts. He was very rejected. A small boy, when people hit him, a lot of blood came out. His whole body was covered in warts and pinecones. And then his brothers beat him, his whole village rejected him. One day, his older brother went to the forest to get bamboo to make arrows. And when his brother put bamboo to inject the arrow, he blew on it, and it broke. Every time he blew on it, the bamboo broke, but his older brother didn't know why, since it was his brother blowing on it that was breaking it. Until his older brother saw him blowing on it and breaking his arrow, and hit him. He hit, hit, hit, hit, hit, hit... until a lot of blood came out. And he ordered him to mend the bamboo so he could make an arrow. That's what he did. That's why the bamboo is full of knots today. After being beaten so much, he thought, “I'm going to leave.” And his grandmother was very old, very old, very old, she didn't do anything, very old, around 90 or 80 years old, she took care of this Bahira, little Bahira.

Until one day, he got it into his head to have sex with his grandmother. He approached her as if he were a different person. She went. He said, “Grandma, I need to go to the bathroom to poop, to relieve myself.” So his grandmother took him to the bathroom. Meanwhile, he removed his pimples, which are his warts, and placed them at the base of a tree called erucutiuba, which is *mamuí*. In the Karipuna forest, there is a *mamuí* tree. That's why *mamuí* is full of thorns. And then he transformed into a big, young man. And he went there, transformed into an adult, to have sex with his grandmother. Then he had sex, and when she was having sex with him, she shouted, thinking that the boy was still in the bathroom, “Are you still pooping, my son?”, and he answered, “Yes, Grandma, I'm still here, Grandma, I'm still here, Grandma.” And then it was over, he left, went back there, took his pimples and put them on his body, and left as a child. Because he was beaten so much, he decided to run away. Only he and his grandmother, his siblings, left that place, because he was beaten so much. So he left and went to start a village somewhere else. People searched for him; they found him, Bahira. But by then, he wasn't young anymore. He took his whole family with him, and he wasn't young anymore, he wasn't a child anymore, he was an adult, and then he transformed his

grandmother into a new woman. He skinned her; I don't know what he did to her. I can't explain it. She became young again, beautiful, making chicha. Making noise in the mortar, “buf, buf, buf.” The old woman was pounding corn to make chicha. The Karipuna would go to visit him, “Are you going to live here?” “I'm going to live here for good, now I'm going to stay here.” Then, the people would come back the following month to visit, and he wasn't there anymore, only the place remained. And there, in the place where they stayed, he would blow on the people who went looking for fruit; he would blow on them so they would turn into monkeys. His family would turn into zoggy zoggy monkeys. Then, when people arrived at the thicket, the zoggy zoggy monkey would go, “hahahahaha.” They would find it funny. He would blow on them; they would become monkeys. That's why, today, when they see animals or something, they find it funny. When you go to the village, I'll show you the zoggy-zoggy monkey that laughs at the animals. There's one on the other side of the river. There's one in the village. They keep laughing. And people would search and search, and find him again. They would find him, and the old woman would make chicha. People would come back the following month, and he wouldn't be there anymore. And his people would say, “I'm going to eat najá,” which is the coconut I mentioned, that Kandabuhua killed, and the anhangá would go crazy with that. Indaia. I'm going to eat *najá*. Then, when he was picking *najá*, he turned into a capuchin monkey. Then, when the people arrived at that place, where he was, there was nobody left. Only capoeira fighters and black monkeys. Ticup, Ticup, Ticup, Ticup, Ticup! He transformed his people into monkeys.

The people searched for him again and again and found him in another village. The old woman was making chicha and such, cheerful, very young. The next month, people went there but couldn't find him anymore. Then his people saw that there were a lot of barnacles in the stream, and said, “I'm going to go into the barnacles in the river,” so they would dive to catch catfish in the river. When they dived and floated, he would blow on them, and his people would turn into otters. When people went there, there was nobody, only undergrowth and otters, making noise: Frrr, frrr, frrr! Then, people searched for him and found him again in another place. They arrived at another place and people said, “I'm going to bathe here,” his people. When he dived, and Bahira blew on him, he turned into a dolphin, turned into a dolphin, turned into a dolphin. And then people searched and searched. They found him again. Then they searched and found him, and only found dolphins there. They found the wild potato, man. It really looks like it's from the wild, not from the countryside, from nature. Then he said, “I'm going to eat yam,” his people from Bahira. Then, when people were taking the yam, he transformed his people into peccaries. Huu, huu, huu! Turned into peccaries.

Then people searched, searched, and found him again in the woods. “Ah, I'm going to live here for good. I'm not leaving anymore.” The next month, when people went there, they found only scrubland and peccaries running through it. And then, they found him again. Then people said, “Let's go eat tucumã!” People were picking tucumã. Then. When people were eating tucumã, he blew on it and turned into agoutis. Quec, quec, quec! and ran. “You're going to turn into agoutis.” Then he left that place. People went after him, searched for him, searched for him. Then. They found him again. They found him in the woods again. There. He said, “No, now I'm going to stay here for good, right here, in my spot.” When people were leaving, he moved again. He left.

Then they found him again. He stayed there. Then the people came back again. At the end, they couldn't find him anymore. They searched, searched, searched, searched, searched... and nothing. They never found him again. And then the people started shouting. There's a bird in the woods that screams like a person. Brazilians call it the “rubber tapper bird,” but it screams just like a person, “Ouuuu.” In our culture, we can't imitate, but I'll imitate it for you just to help you understand. It screams like this, “Ourururu...”

So people were shouting, looking for him. He was around there, blowing on the bird so that those people would turn into it. Then the people who shouted for him started turning into birds. We call it Uru'anghã. And then everyone turned into that little bird. That's why we can't imitate that bird, because when we imitate that bird, when we hunt in the forest, in our culture, we get lost. It screams like a person. At six o'clock, it screams. We call it the rubber tapper bird; it screams like a person, "Ourururu..." You'd swear it was a person shouting in the forest if you didn't pay attention. It's called Uru'anghã. So that's how the story ends.

[Na. #3-4] "Origin of garden crops"

In the past, the Karipuna people did not know about corn, pepper, or maniva (cassava leaves), I mean, the sweet cassava. It was our law that women, virgin girls, could not eat a fruit called "*pama*." If it fell on the ground, she could swallow or ingest a snake's egg that would harm her. There was a girl who lived in the Karipuna village, among us. One day, she went into the forest and ate the *pama* that fell on the ground. Without knowing it, she swallowed a snake's egg. Then some time passed, and she felt pregnant. One month, 2 months, 3 months, 8 months, 9 months... but no boy was born. Since the girl was single, the married women became jealous. "It's your son, you got her pregnant, you got her pregnant!" The women were jealous of her, thinking that their husbands had been having sex with her. And then every time she went to the forest, she would kill game: kill peccaries, deer, curassows, and get chestnuts. Do everything as if a man were secretly doing it for her. The women, the married women, became even more jealous. "Can't you see? Our husbands are killing game for her secretly?" There would be fights, fights within the family. Until one day, the women got together to follow her. To see if it was their husbands who were killing game for her. The girl said she was going to get chestnuts and left the village. The women went after her, went after her, went after her, went after her, entering the forest. She lay down at the foot of the chestnut tree, and a big snake came out from inside her genitalia and climbed up the chestnut tree. It got chestnuts for her. Everyone was amazed, "Man, it's a snake in her belly!" The women who followed her were all shocked. They ran back home and told the guys, "It was not our husband, who was killing game, no! This woman is not a person. She's an animal! We saw her lie down under the chestnut tree, and the snake came out of her vagina and climbed up the chestnut tree and took chestnuts for her. We also saw the snake coming back, when it finished, went inside her vagina and stayed there as if she were pregnant!" The girl came back with chestnuts on her back. Big belly, with a basket full of chestnuts, on her back. She arrived. The chiefs and villagers had already decided to kill her. She said, "Look, if you kill me, I don't want you to bury me. You cremate me. Burn my body, everything. But then you leave here. I don't want to see you here in the village anymore. You must leave. You kill me, but you must burn my body." Then, they killed her. They shot arrows at her. Tcha! tcha...! She screamed. She died. Then they made a fire, threw her body in it. And they left, as she told the people to leave that place. The people moved from the village because she said that they weren't supposed to stay there.

The community moved. They moved from the village and built another village. A month later, when they went back there, [the village] became the most beautiful garden in the world. In that place, there were things they didn't know. Corn, maniva, which is cassava, and pepper. The people went there and held the corn leaf. They wondered, "What on earth is this?" Then a woodpecker came and said: "Abati iti-iti-iti." "Ah, it's corn! How do we use it?" A japim came and said, "Cãui cobo-cobo, cãui cobo-cobo." "Ah, we make *chicha*!" Now, when the people picked up the manioc, a little bird came and said, "Mandip, mandip, mandip." "Ah, it's manioc!" Then another little bird came by, singing, "Cãui, cãui, cãui." "Ah, we make

chicha from cassava!” Then they went to the pepper plant. “What’s this here?” A big beetle said, “Cai. Cai. Cai.” “Ah, it’s pepper!” That’s how they got to know these things. And so the story ends.

[Na. #4-4] “Master of peccaries”

Bahira lived in his village with his family. In the past, there was no meat. They only ate fish, fish, fish, no animals. Nothing. Then his son spoke to his father. “I don’t want to eat fish anymore; I want to eat meat. Aren’t you a shaman, Bahira? Do something. Make meat. I want to eat meat.” His father said, “Now what? My son is pressuring me. What am I going to do?” He said, “Calm down, my son, I’ll find a way.” Then Bahira started thinking. Thinking, thinking about what his son said. He slept and kept thinking. Then he had an idea. But he didn’t say a word. He went to the woods and found a big stone. Not very big, but a big, purple one. He swept it, left it clean. It started to rain. The Bahira went where the stone was. Singing, he cleaned the stone and swept everything around, cleaned everything. Then he sang. I don’t know the song, but he sang there, singing, singing, spinning around, spinning, singing, singing, singing, in the rain. Then, he picked up a stick and poked. Nothing. He sang, sang, sang there, poked with a stick at the stone, nothing. Again, singing, singing, until one moment, he poked the stone, and the stone got up. Suddenly, it got up. It turned into a tapir. He sang, sang, poked, and the tapir stood up. He sang, sang, the tapir walked away, as if it were an animal in the yard, eating leaves, little plants. His son saw it. “Dad, dad, let’s kill it now!” “No, let him eat fruits, he’ll get fat, then he’ll have fat, right? Don’t kill him. Calm down” “But it’s leaving”, the son said, “no, he’s going to the creek, then he’ll come back, he’ll sleep here. because I made him, he won’t leave.” But the son cried, “I’m going to kill him. I’m going to kill him!” Then the father said, “Then go there, kill him now.” His son killed it. It fell. Died. He treated him, grilled him, and ate him. It wasn’t very fat because he didn’t let it get fat. In a week, it was over. The meat was gone. “Daddy, I want to eat meat again. I want to eat fish, but not. Daddy, I want to eat meat.” “Boy, there’s no way.” Then it rained again, a lot of rain. I think it was March. It rained all night and in the morning. Bahira went out, and he thought, “I turned a rock into a tapir. I’m going to turn a rock into a peccary.” He gathered small stones like this, and then he put one after the other. He put another like this, another like this, another like this around the rock. And then he cleared the first one, in the forest. He cleaned around it and swept everything. He put several little stones, the babies of the peccary, near the big rock. Then, it rained. He went there, singing, singing, singing, singing. Then he poked and sang, sang, sang. He went there again, came back, and poked with a stick. Until one day, he poked and raised three [animals] at once. He sang, sang, and kept poking. He kept raising one by one, poking small stones, and raising little pigs. Hey, hey, hey! Babies. He kept singing, poking, poking, poking. He raised everything. A lot... and I think there were a hundred... many, many pigs. Then he called them to the yard. They all came by because they obeyed. A lot of peccaries came, eating fruit all over the yard. His son saw this. “Daddy, daddy, let’s kill!” “No, let them eat, go down to the creek, drink water, eat. They will get fat.” “No, daddy, I’ll kill it now, I’ll kill it now.” “No, no, not now. Let them eat. They’ll sleep here, walk around, then come back.” Until [he conceded]. “Let’s go and kill, then!” He said, “But my son, we’re only going to kill two. You one, me one. That’s two. Because there aren’t many of us, right? We’re just a few. We only need to kill two. When we want more, we’ll kill more, keep killing.” “Okay, Dad.” His father went, and the pigs came. He killed. Cha! Cha! His son also started killing. He killed, killed, killed... until his father shouted, “Okay, my son, don’t kill anymore.” “No, I want more.” “No, my son, it’s enough.” The son killed more. More than two. Much more. I think he killed 12, 13... a lot! Bahira said, “Okay, my son, don’t kill anymore, no!” Then the peccary turned the son into *curupira*. I don’t know what the peccary did. They transformed him. The son shouted, first like a person, “Not yet, Dad, I’ll kill one more!” Then, when he shouted again, it was “Wau! Wau! Wau!” like a peccary. “My son turned into a *curupira*!” Bahira went

after him. He didn't see any more traces of him, but he saw the trail of feet, very small feet, turned backward. That's how it was. He was still a man. But he got small. "Oh my, the peccary took him." The peccary went with Bahira's son.

Bahira got back home and told his wife, "Our son is not coming back. The peccary took him. He turned into a *curupira*; he became his owner." Bahira's son became a *curupira* after killing many peccaries. "I got to get him." His father went again, after the peccaries. When he found the pack of peccaries, they would feel him and turn away. When he would run to the other side to catch the peccaries passing by, so that he would throw himself to snatch only his son, he couldn't. His son always stayed in the middle of the pigs. There was no way. It was like they were protecting him. "There's no way, let's go... he turned into a *curupira*." That's why it is still there today. People call it *curupira*, but we call ourselves "Bahira do queixada." If you mistreat them too much, it will appear. If you mistreat it too much, hurt it, or wound it, then it will appear.

[Na. #6-1] "The Karipuna warrior"

Today I'm going to tell you the story my father told me about the warrior who killed many *parente*. He says that in the past, we didn't know other Indians, any kind of other Indian. He says that the people went to sleep in the forest. We called it "*cuepé*", where we all go to the forest, hunt far from the village, and then come back to bring food home. It's called *cuepé*. The people went to *cu'epé*. To kill a game, tapir, and smoke it to bring back to their family. Then, there was an Indian who went hunting on the riverbank. He listened to a blow on the other side, outside. He listened and thought, "Are people blowing here?" He remained silent and crossed to the other side, where the blowing sound came. He stayed there listening. A little later, there it comes, stepping on the leaves. I think it was in the summer. It was making noise, "Tcha, tcha," and stopped... "Tcha, tcha," and stopped. He kept observing and observing, and here comes an Indian; he didn't know if it was the Cinta Larga, the Suruí, the Gavião, or the Arara [people]. It was just an Indian hunting. Another Indian. The Karipuna stood still, quiet. When he came really close, he shot, "Tcha"! Just one arrow in the chest, he fell. Then he ran back to the Karipuna, "Let's leave. I killed *tapy'ynha*. *Tapy'ynha* is white too, but we call the *tapy'ynha*. "I killed *tapy'ynha*. Let's get away from here. Let's leave!" "Okay", they left for the village, taking the game, and running for fear of the Indian's relatives coming back. He arrived there in the village and told the community, "I killed *tapy'ynha*. I killed *tapy'ynha*." People didn't believe it, "Where's the arrow? Where's the proof to show that you really killed the white man?" When he didn't show the proof, people didn't believe it. He said, "I killed him, I left him there, his relatives will come and kill us!" Then there was another warrior, whose name is Ubucia. He was skinny and tall; they called him "Tall Tree", Ubucia. On the other side of the village, he was also hunting with his wife, *cuepé*, too, killing game. [Meanwhile] the people said, "Since he killed the white man, let's wait on the road. They're going to come and kill us."

This Ubucia, who is a warrior, also arrived from the forest with his family, bringing a lot of game. Then he heard the news in the village, "The guy killed an Indian, so the people went to wait on the road to wait for the Indian's relative who is coming to kill us." He said, "Okay, I'm going after them. First, I'm going to count my arrows." Then he climbed up, the warrior, Ubucia, went, got the arrows, and counted them. He counted them like this: "I'm going to kill with this one, I'm going to kill with this one, I'm going to kill with this one, I'm going to kill..." He counted the arrows, and then he set off. The people who were waiting on the road for the other relatives to come didn't really believe it. So, they were joking around, thinking it was funny, "Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha." Then others said, "Shut up, guys, the water is making

waves.” There was a swell. As they looked, they saw the waves. There were Indians crossing and surrounding them because they were there. The Indians, I don't know if it was Zoró, or Surui, or Cinta Larga, I don't know. Because the people were waiting there, they heard the people and detoured them. I think they, the Zoro, said, “No, they're waiting for us here, let's go and encircle them, let's go to the village.”

Then, there goes Ubucua, the warrior. He went, I went, I went, I went, and got there. The people were there in the front, waiting there, thinking the Indians would come, but no, they encircled them, and waited for them on the way home. He, the warrior, went to meet with the people, to wait and kill together. Then the Indians attacked him. This Ubucua, alone. He was alone. The others, there in the forest, didn't even know. He started shooting arrows. He started shooting arrows, shooting, shooting, shooting. He ran, and the people followed him. I don't know if it was the Zoró, Cintá larga, running after him. Throwing, killing. He didn't miss, no. He was a warrior, and he only shot arrows in the chest. Before he died. They hadn't shot him yet.

The Indians running after him, and he coming, shooting arrows, shooting, shooting, the Indians shooting arrows too, shooting arrows at him, until they hit him. They hit him. Even being hit, he shot arrows, shooting arrows at the Indians. They're shooting arrows at him. He didn't scream since he was a warrior; he didn't scream. Tcha! Arrows, shooting arrows, shooting... and the Indians shot him too. They hit him. He didn't scream. He shot arrows, he ran, he ran with an arrow in his back, the warrior. He stopped and shot arrows at the Indians, and the Indians shot arrows; they hit him. The arrow hit him, he ran, he ran. The Indians shot arrows at him. He killed them, too. There was already a lot. The people didn't know. They didn't even know he was being shot. He shot arrows, shot arrows, and the Indians shot him. He shot arrows and killed. The Indians fell, shooting arrows, killing arrows, he killed, and the Indians shot him too... chai! everything and pee, he got shot, but he didn't scream. The Indians, chai! chai! Shooting arrows, shooting, shooting...

Until he couldn't take it anymore, because there were too many arrows in the warrior's back. Ubucua, our warrior. Until he couldn't take it anymore. Then he started shooting arrows slowly. Now it wasn't like before. His back was stuck with arrows. Even like that, he shot arrows. Then, he sat down, he got up, and he had already shot a lot of arrows. The Indians were shooting arrows. He was also shooting arrows at the Indians and shooting, shooting, shooting, shooting. And the Indians were shooting arrows at him. He was full of arrows in his back until he couldn't take it anymore. He fell, sat down, thump!, he fell. Then the Indians grabbed a club, hit his head, bang! bang! bang! bang! The Indians shouted, speaking their language, “Take it, for you, take it, take it, take it!” The others heard, screaming. He began to scream. The warrior fell and died. Then the Indians ate him. They were other Indians, I don't know if they were the Zoró, or Gavião, or Cinta Larga. We don't know. They cut off his head. They cut off his head, his arms, and took his body to be roasted. They took it.

Then the people arrived at the village. They stayed for about 3 or 4 days. “Let's go after him again.” So they went after him; they went after the Indians. They said, “Now, let's go kill in [their] village, we'll finish them off.” The Karipuna went after the Indians. They went after, they went after, and they got there. There were a lot of them. Women, men... to kill the Indians. I don't know if it was Cinta Larga or Gavião. They arrived at their village. They waited until it got dark. It got dark. Then they set the village on fire. The Karipuna killed them with wooden clubs, killing them with clubs, and with arrows. Some people ran. Killing, killing, killing. They set fire to the Indians' houses. Then the Karipuna left. The day dawned, and that's how the story ends.

[Na. #6-2] “Oro Nao people”

Oro Nao made a fire to attack the Karipuna. The woman (Borehãa) smelled it, “It smells like smoke.” There were the Oro Nao making a fire, and others were hiding behind the sacupemba tree. We used to call them Oro Nao. Today it's Oro Wari, Pakanova. In our language, we call him *Ubae*, those with arrows. “Where is the smoke coming from?” Birega's mother, who was a single mother... In our culture in the past, a woman who had a child without a husband was rejected by the community. So much so that there are those who, when a woman had a child without a husband, would bury the child. We didn't. We rejected the woman. Uru-Eu-Wau-Wau buried them. If the child cried a lot, they buried the mother together. It happened after the contact, a Uru-Eu woman was buried with her child, and she was killed. We only reject them. The woman doesn't stay in the village; she stays a little isolated. There, she makes her little house and looks for food for herself. She doesn't let that child visit the village because the child begs a lot. That's why we didn't accept a single mother having a child. Only if she gets a husband can she. Because if she has a child without a husband, the child keeps begging. He sees people eating, and he begs. That's why we reject it.

Birega's mother went looking for food for herself. Since she didn't know how to shoot an arrow, she didn't know how to fish. In the old days, it was like that. A woman who didn't have a husband would go up the creek and catch crabs out of the hole to feed herself. She carried the basket on her back. The crab is buried in the mud, so she would look for it, find it in the mud, dig, put her hand in, take the crab out, and put it in the basket. Because it's a little easier for her to feed herself. Because hunting is a man's thing. Then, this Oro Nao lifted the palm leaf like this, as she was walking along the path, she smelled smoke, and there was a boy with her. “Where does the smoke smell? I think it's here.” Then they lifted the leaf and shot her with an arrow. She ran away, making a noise with her necklace, and then, boom! she fell. She died. Then this little boy came running into the village and said, “*Itapuina, itapuina!*” “They killed my mother!” He went to warn the people of the village. The people gathered and went after the Oro Nao. The Oro Nao had run away.

The day dawned. “Let's search them. Where did they go? Let's go find the woman's body.” They went there and found the body. Birega had already grown. So, he will want revenge because she was his mother. Birega lives with Karipuna, but his mother was isolated. They buried his mother. That's why I'm saying that this boy, who was with her, I think he must be Birega's [younger] brother, because Birega [was big] and wanted revenge. They went, sleeping by the river called Yamaputanghua. It must be in Lage. Then they kept going, and they talked amongst themselves, “We're getting close to the village, their house, it's the village.” They waited there along the way. They went out on the road and talked amongst themselves, “Which way is the house?” “Is it this way or that way?” The Karipuna were confused. “I'll wait along the way.” Waiting along the way, we call it “*kotu*.” *Kotu* is not a *tocaia* [ambush -Kw]. It's different. An ambush is when you kill animals to camouflage yourself. When it's used to kill people, we call it *kotu*. Then you wait, then you spend two or three days waiting. *Kotu*, for a long time. Waiting on the path, *werupa*, “They are on the path waiting.”

Until late afternoon, nothing. “Tomorrow we will wait again.” Waiting. Then it rained. We wait. The rain passed at midday. Then they saw them, many coming. They were coming, returning to attack again, the Karipuna. They had roasted corn and were eating. They were walking with arrows, and they would catch and eat monkeys, too, along with roasted corn. On the other side, there were also Karipuna waiting. They surrounded them. Then Oro Nao passed the front. The Karipuna shot with arrows. Nobody escaped. They killed everyone. The woman also went with them. The woman was hitting Oro Nao on the head with

a club. (...) They know how to shoot arrows, but a club is easier to use. She killed a child who was in the arms [of someone]. They left the bodies there. They only took the arrows. They left bodies. They paid Birega's mother. Birega was happy because he paid his mother. Then they had a feast. The feast of the *toryba*, and blowing bamboo. *Orerupu*. They only brought one head. His grandfather, who was alive, killed Oro Nao and brought the head for the *toryba*. To make *toryba* and eat it. They were very happy.

Oro Nao also took revenge. It was the same people, but it was another group. "Let's go. Make tapiri. Clear gardens." That's how it is, because practically when we go to war in the old days, when we return to the village, we have to leave there [so that] the guys come here and don't find people. We move from here and go to another place. Because they will come. Since they killed Oro Nao, they left the village and went to look for another place to build it. They were also looking for a garden. Good land to plant, where there is that Urucuri plant. Where there is Urucuri, there's a garden, black soil. So, they searched. It can be far away, but they opened gardens. They flee one by one. Because if they all went together, then they would leave a trail. They all went far away, and then they reunited. They made new houses and made a new village. There, they built new houses and went hunting, looking for clay pits to make *tocaia* from the fruit tree and the babassu palm.

Abytukuga appeared at that moment. "I'm going hunting," he said. He killed a peccary. But when he returned, there was a creek, near the village, where he saw dirty water. Dirty water, because they, Oro Nao, were crossing the water. There were many of them, and they dirtied the water. Then, as Abytukuga came from below, the dirt flowed down. So, he saw the dirty water and the trail. Abytukuga knew that the Ubaé, those with the arrow, came. Oro Nao was already waiting on the way. When Abytukuga was arriving at the village, Oro Nao wasn't expecting someone to come from there. They were looking over here, towards the village. Then Abytukuga appeared from the forest, and they heard him. When the Oro Nao moved... Back in the day, when we spotted an animal, we'd yell, "Hua!" When you yell that, you duck, duck down, and then the arrow passes. When the Oro Nao attacked, they shot arrows. They passed over him, but because there were so many, one hit him. But he didn't get hit much because he caught an animal that was on his back. Then he ran. They shot arrows. One hit him, but he ran.

Then he returned. "Let's go after them again." Now, the Oro Nao were running. The Karipuna gathered and said, "This time, we won't kill along the way. We're going to invade their village. They went into their village and killed everyone. Kill everybody. That's what the Karipuna said in the meeting. Burn their houses, to finish them off." Many Karipuna went. They went sleeping, sleeping, sleeping. They kept going. They arrived at a path. They waited along the path. Then they heard *toryba*. Oro Nao was doing the *toryba* feast. They also played *taboca*. Oro Nao were happy. They were imitating the people's cries. All indigenous people, I don't know about the people outside of Mato Grosso, but here in Rondônia, when they killed people... you see, my father, in that video I sent you, he sings first, then he imitates. All the Karipuna are like that. So, the Oro Nao were also imitating the person whom they arrowed, screaming. The victims. For example, you kill someone, the person screams, then you're going to be happy, do the same thing the guy did. Almost all the people here on this side of Rondônia [do that].

Oro Nao had corn or cassava gardens. Since it was night, the Karipuna went to the fields at night to gather corn and cassava. They thought it was roasted, but because it was dark, they ate raw corn. Because they had to eat before the war. Then they got close to Oro Nao. One Oro Nao person got up to make fire. They didn't have hammocks. They were sleeping on the ground. The Karipuna entered their *maloca* at night, in the early morning, at two or three o'clock in the morning, and everyone was sleeping. And then they went

inside the *maloca*, the house, disarming. Disarming by cutting the bowstrings. They cut them all. (But why do they sleep with the bow?) Warriors are always like that. Even during a normal day, they keep it. (...) because in our culture, we can't leave it far away. When you get up and run to get there, it's already too late. So, you leave it close to you. Oro Nao didn't close the houses. Each person slept in their own bed, with a fire beside them to keep warm because there were no blankets. So, when they woke up, they had to fan the flames, kindle the fire. They had to fan it constantly to keep them warm. Also, for the mosquitoes. Then they started snoring. Everyone snoring. Sleeping. Sleeping. The Karipuna passed over them. Cut the bowstrings. One person said, "How are we going to kill them?" Another said, "No, let me arrow one first, then they'll come out in the dark, then we'll kill them, okay?" One Oro Nao woke up. He fanned the fire and passed over his wife to see if she was warm. He went but didn't forget the arrow; he took it with him because that's how warriors are. After he lit the fire, when he was about to lie down, they shot him with arrows. Then, with the cry, people started to wake up. Everybody woke up. The Karipuna shot more arrows. There was a Karipuna woman who went in and started hitting, "Bang!" whoever was standing up. Some ran. Some shot arrows. They ran. The finished, finished, finished. Many ran away. Then they set fire to their house to burn everything. And then they looked for *chicha*. Since they were hungry, they started looking for *chicha* to drink, since they knew indigenous people made it. There was a pot, and in the pot, *chicha*. They started drinking it all. They were looking for harpy eagle feathers to take with them. They took their arrows. "Let's wait for them, they'll come back. Maybe there are more." Indeed, they did come back. They burned their house. When the house burned down, a lot of people came out from the forest, those who had fled into the woods. The Karipuna started shooting arrows again. They hit some in the stomach, others in the back. Then they didn't come back. Then they set fire, until Oro Nao arrived again, shouting, crying. They couldn't kill those who fled, because there were too many; there were people shouting and others running, crying, over a dead person's body. Birega said, "You see? You made me cry for my mother? Now I'm the one who makes you cry." When Birega heard the Oro Nao crying for their bodies, relatives, brothers, I don't know whom, Birega, in the woods, hearing that, spoke. But he spoke out of joy. (...)

Then the Karipuna returned. Killing Jacu, they returned, killing game. They made fire, roasted, and ate. Arriving on the path, they observed. Because the Karipuna were afraid, they fled through the forest without using the open path. (...) Fleeing the war, they were returning to the village, but they didn't walk along the path; they walked through the forest, where there is no road. (...) They arrived. The Karipuna were happy. They arrived at the village. "We killed. Again!" Then they threw a feast again. Wait there, so I can eat. He was happy. We killed children, we set fire to their houses. Then it stopped, stopped, stopped. The war stopped. They opened gardens, cutting down trees. Nothing. They [Oro Nao] never came back. They [Karipuna] stayed.

[Na. #6-3] "Birega"

It was Birega who went into the woods to get *jatobá* fruit, and while he was making baskets, Urubuga, Birega's brother, arrived. Urubuga was searching for Birega. He was hiding in a *sacupemba* tree. Then he saw him. He whispered, "Brother, come here." Then he gave him the news, "Your other brother just died. That's why I came to bring you back." "Okay." "I'll come back tomorrow, I'll come back tomorrow," Urubuga said. Birega lied to other Karipuna people: "I saw the tracks of wild Indians, *tapy'ynha*." Tracks, "ipupora." We call them *ipupora*, trails. "I saw Perupi on the tracks, tracks along the path, Perupi. Tomorrow I'll go after him," says Birega. He arrived home saying, "There are *tapy'ynha* there." He was too scared to

talk to others. He had seen Urubuga; we had arranged to meet him tomorrow. The next day, early in the morning, “I will search for the *tapy'ynha*”, said Birega. Birega left alone.

People waited for Birega. They waited. He didn't come back. Then people got worried, “Could it be that the other Indians killed him?” The Karipuna were worried about Birega because he said he went after the white man. The night came. Nothing. “Okay, let's go, look for him! They killed Birega. Let's kill them again.” Everyone went, women too. They took their clubs, thinking it was Oro Nao people who had come to kill him. Then they saw his trail, it was this way. There was a lot of sacupemba there, a lot. Birega was there, came to meet his brother. Urubu-Gá came to get his brother, who is Birega. So I think Urubu-Gá took him. His brother took him. “Let's kill them then. Let's kill them,” the Karipuna said. Many Karipuna. They slept. They slept in the woods. I don't know if it was in Jaci or another creek. They arrived where they found their path. Then, they heard them talking. “They are here,” They said. They listened to the conversation. “Let's kill them!” They listened to them. They put on the fire. (...) Then they put out the fire. “Leave them alone, they are our relatives, don't kill them,” the Karipuna said. “Leave them alone.” Because they went to kill the other Indians, but when they arrived there, they heard them talking, then they said: “No, leave them alone, they are our relatives, let's go back.” [“Because they spoke the same language?” Hanmin asks) Yes. Because he was Urubuga, a relative of Pitanga. The people arrived back at the village and said, “No, they are not *tapy'ynha*. Nobody killed him. It was not other Indians who killed him; it was his kin who came to get him.

[Na. #6-4] “The Juma Saga”

The story about how Juma ended up with the Karipuna people goes like this. The Juma people lived in the Karipuna village with us. There were two brothers, and each had a wife. So, there were four Juma left. Our Karipuna relatives cast a spell on their kin, Juma's brother, a cousin, it seems. He was happy because he had killed Juma with a spell. The Karipuna had also cast a spell on another Karipuna. Then this other Karipuna, who lived in our group, said, “Look, he's happy because he's going to kill me. He's happy because he's going to see me die. But don't worry. I'll send Juma himself, if he gets upset, to kill all those people.” The shaman died. Some time passed, and Juma was already angry with the Karipuna, too, because the Karipuna were casting spells on his relatives. The first day, it happened like this. There was a village here, and our people were in another place. People would go out to fish, hunt game, and catch fish, bringing them back to their families. So, on that day, the first day that the Juma started killing people, a group of Karipuna was making flour and coconut milk to take to eat in the forest. When they went, only two Juma remained, who went into the forest to wait for them. They killed the Karipuna in the forest. But the Karipuna people in the village didn't know, thinking they had gone to hunt in the forest, because they said they would stay for 10 days or a month, fishing and hunting, and then return. So, the people thought they had gone. Then the Juma would kill people, return to the village as if nothing had happened. Then, a month later, vultures began to fly. Vultures were eating the people who were in the forest, rotting, whom the Juma had killed. Then the people said, “Look at all the vultures circling above the house, look!” The Juma went out to look at the flying vultures, and they found it funny. Ha, ha, ha. Then they said in their language, “*Ejo jipo urubua*.” They said, “We killed anteaters, that's why the vultures are eating them,” but it wasn't anteaters, no, it was the Karipuna people whom they had killed and left in the forest. “*Ejo jipo urubu*,” “Come help me, vulture,” that's how he spoke in his language. But we didn't pay any attention, thinking he was just saying it for the sake of saying it.

Then, since there were still many people in the village, the relatives of those who had died said: "My people who went to the forest, something happened to them, because vultures are flying around. In 3 days, I'll go search for them." Then another group of Karipuna gathered to go after those who had been killed. So they went, making flour and coconut milk to bring, and they went. Then the Juma entered the forest and surrounded the Karipuna. As the Karipuna came walking along the path, they killed them too. They killed the Karipuna and returned home, as if nothing had happened. And Juma was truly angry with the Tabijara, the village chief, whose name was Tabijaraga. Tabijaraga also said, "Tomorrow we're going after the people who haven't returned, and I don't know what's happening. They went to hunt to come back soon, but they haven't returned. The Juma killed the Karipuna and returned to the village. But the people who were inside the village didn't know. The Juma was angry with Tabijaraga because he had cast a spell to kill the Juma's people. So, they were angry. And the Karipuna were also angry with Tabijaraga, because he was bad too.

Tabijaraga packed his things, made flour and coconut milk to search for the people, and left. The Juma decided to hunt and waited on the path. (...) There, Tabijaraga fought hard. He fought, fought, fought, fought, fighting, fighting. Until Tabijaraga grabbed a piece of wood and wanted to stab him in the neck, in that bleeding spot. He missed. He tore his nose. He hit right here, like this, he almost ripped out the eyes of Juma's people. Tabijaraga was shot there and stayed there. The Juma arrived home in the village. One of Juma's wives said, "What happened to you?" "No, it's just that I looked up. A piece of a branch fell on my forehead and tore my face." But it was Tabijaraga who tore his face during the fight. He went to bed with his wife. His wife said, "But you smell blood! What happened to you?" "It's just a bloody smell," he said, "Nothing..." So, the people didn't know. It was because the Karipuna shaman had ordered Juma to make the Karipuna suspicious, so he would finish them off. He did some witchcraft to finish them off.

The next day. They went out pretending to hunt, but [in reality] to finish the killing of Tabijaraga. They arrived there. Tabijaraga was still there, wounded. Since Tabijaraga was a shaman, he had his *rupigwara*, which was a peccary. There were a lot of angry peccaries around him. "Hum, hum, hum..." They got angry when they saw the two Juma, who were there to finish killing Tabijaraga. The peccaries surrounded Tabijaraga, stuck their noses under his armpits to lift him up, and did what is called *opere-peré*. Fu, fu, fu. Then the Juma approached slowly with arrows and shot him. Tabijaraga screamed and fell, "buff"! He died there. Because they hated this Tabijaraga, they gouged out two of his eyes and brought them to eat. Then they arrived with that rolled-up leaf to roast the Tabijara's eye, they spoke very loudly: "Don't you want to eat the Tabijara's eye? Don't you want to eat one side of the eye?" But the people didn't even care. It was witchcraft that prevented them from knowing. Then they ate Tabijara's eye and so on. They stayed at home, as if nothing had happened. They stayed there, happily chatting with villagers, smiling, all lying in their hammocks, swaying.

Another group of people began getting ready to look for the Tabijaraga, who had gone hunting. People were preparing to find him, who had left a long time ago. They made *pamonha*, flour, to stay in the forest, where there was a camp. There was a camp that had everything there. The people got ready and went again. "Let's go after Tabijara, who went after the people, who didn't arrive. Now, we're going to find him so we can hunt game together. The people left. But then the Juma said, 'Look, tomorrow we're going to hunt in the forest, but we're going to sleep in the forest,' because the camp where the people were going was a little far away. So, they went through the forest and arrived first at that camp where the people were going. They went into the camp, stayed there. Then a group of people came, but the people were very foolish; only the shaman himself performed this ritual. When there are many people, people start talking, laughing, telling

stories, right? Arriving at the village (...) that was also foolish. All the people were coming, those who came from the village. Walking, walking, “Here they come,” he said. A Karipuna arrived at the house, carrying a large basket, a hammock, and other things. The door was low, and then the guy got his heavy pot stuck in the door. He started to groan. “Um, um.” Like that, because it was stuck. Since Juma was behind the door of the house, he hit the guy on the head. Bang! With a big club, hit the guy on the head. He died. “Pull him inside the house!” The woman and the child came. She was stupid, too. She saw the dead man's blood on the door, and she said, “Look, blood here on the door!” But being stupid, she went inside, and Juma hit her too! He killed her. He looked the way. Here comes another one, so he kept killing, killing, killing, killing.

There was a woman called Wararo'iaba, a shaman. They hit her, too. Because she had power, the shaman blew like this, “fu, fu.” She broke Juma's club and ran away. “Let's kill her, finish her off with arrows!” Running away along a path, Wararo'iaba broke her jaw. She ran along the edge of the path, running, running, running. Juma was behind her on the path to kill her. And so they went, until the Juma arrived [back] at the village first. There, they listened at the edge of the forest. Keep listening because when something happens, people talk about it. She hasn't arrived yet. When she arrives there, the people will shout, “Oh my God, what happened?” They stayed there waiting, waiting, waiting, waiting. Oh, there she comes along the path. The people shouted. “I don't know what happened to her!” That crowd of people running to see her and her with a broken and swollen jaw. (There was another shaman whose name I forgot). She arrived, and many people ran to see her. When the two Juma left, she kept pointing like that because she couldn't speak, she couldn't talk, because they had beaten her and broken her jaw. She just kept pointing like that, until someone figured it out, “He's the one who hit me.” Then the people shouted, “Why did you do that? Are you crazy? Tabijara is going to fight with you!” Then when he said, “How can Tabijara fight with me when they've been dead for a long time?” Then the people were like, “What?” “How can Tabijara fight with me when he was the first one to die a long time ago, a long time ago. You're the only ones left to finish it off.” They entered the house, grabbed another club and hit the Karipuna on the head with it. Hit, hit, hit, hit! The Karipuna fell to the ground until it was all over. (There was another shaman there, whose name I forgot). They went to hit Wararo'iaba, and the same thing happened. She just blew on it and broke their club again. She jumped away, went off, and ran into the woods alone. In the village, everybody was finished.

She ran to another village that was very far away. Those people that Juma killed were here at the headwaters of the Trindade River, up here, there's a stream called Trindade, at its headwaters, where the people lived, where they all died. And the Karipuna people, we, from another clan, lived at the headwaters of the Mutum Paraná River. It's very far, from here to there. You must pass through the Bandeirantes. There were no Bandeirantes at that time. She ran through the woods. She ran along the old path. She ran, ran, ran, ran, ran, ran, ran, ran. She ran off down the old path, she ran, ran, ran, ran. Juma was chasing after her to kill her. She ran, ran, ran, ran, she ran, ran, ran, alone in the woods. Until night fell, she slept inside the sacupemba tree. Sacupemba is a tree. She slept inside. At night, the spirits of the people knocked on that sacupemba tree. She said, “Who is there?” They remained silent. “Oh, ghosts. I'm not going to say anything.” She stayed there.

The next day, she continued. She walked, walked, walked, sleeping, sleeping, because it was so far. They went to sleep. Day broke, and she was sleeping, alone in the woods, starving. Then, when she got close to the village, in her language, she said: “*Aindobahi poji gibepoji novinha, borroi.*” Did I hear wrong, and am I going to lie? (I think I'm incorrect, but I'll say it anyway) “*Pororoi tu ri hoi ei.*” That's not what she said: *Tubyrãga omôî kamba a boi pava abui-pava*. They killed everyone. She said, “*hea.*” That's how

she spoke. Then the people said, “Yes, that's exactly what she said!” (...) The people started to speak. It was the biggest village at the headwaters of the Mutum Paraná. Then the people started to get ready to find and kill the two Juma, or four, because each one had his wife. There's always a shaman who says, “Well, in the dream I'll go ahead. I'll go ahead and see where they are.” Then the people followed him. They were sleeping, sleeping, sleeping, sleeping, sleeping. The shaman fell asleep, went ahead in the dream, and said, “Well, they came to us, half of them behind her, but they went back.” Then the people went to see where he had returned. People followed him to kill. But since he was in front, wherever he arrived, in the place where he slept, they had left early and arrived there in the other place returning. Where they made fire, the Karipuna followed and continued. They kept passing through the village to see where they had ended up. A lot of vultures were eating people. He didn't care; they went straight past. They passed by there in the opposite direction, took the head of the opposite direction. The Juma came down in the opposite direction, coming down behind them.

Wherever they slept, they also slept. But they never managed to catch up with them. But they kept going after them. They kept going until they reached the mouth of the Contra River. Then the people started to circle, circle, circle. They saw their trail heading towards the Jaci River, going down the Jaci. Then they kept walking until they reached the mouth of the Jaci River, and from there their trail disappeared. Then the people estimated that the four of them made canoes from wood, bark, and *jatobá* bark, and crossed the Madeira River. I think that's what happened. The people no longer followed them because their trail disappeared. Then the Karipuna people returned, going up the river, half along the Jaci, half along the Contra, to see if we could find any trace of them. Some of them went up here along the Jaci. And one went up along the Fortaleza River to see if he could see any trace. Nothing, nothing. They passed through here in the Panorama village, all the way to the headwaters of the Jaci Paraná River. The people were going up, a lot of the people along the Formoso River, looking for them, nothing, nothing, nothing, nothing, nothing, nothing. There were some tracks, yes, but of the Capivari people, who were Pitanga's relatives. Then there was, by the Jaci River, the headwaters of the Jaci, where there were Uru-Eu-Wau-Wau, another people. They encountered Uru-Eu-Wau-Wau, who said, “No, they didn't pass this way. If they pass here, we will kill them.” That's how the story ends.

[Na. #6-5] “*Tapy'ynhahua*”

Today I'm going to tell a story that my ancestors told us, my father told us, when the *tapy'ynhahua* appeared. They, the Karipuna people, lived in a village where they had never seen anyone in that place. And they saw a shooting star fly by, we call it *yuta'arohua*. I don't know if it was a comet or an airplane. I don't know what it was. We don't know what it is, but we know that we call it *yuta'arohua*. It flew over the village, that long thing with fire behind it, passing over the village, like this, and falling somewhere far from the village. And they [*tapy'ynhahua*] came by foot, killing the Karipuna people. They came to kill the Karipuna. They lifted their necks and saw those Karipuna who were painted [tattooed on the face], and they cut their throats with a knife. I don't even know if it's a dagger, I don't know. They cut the Karipuna's necks. The Karipuna died, and they kept killing, they kept killing the Karipuna, they kept killing the Karipuna. They kept killing the Karipuna, they kept killing. Then they took two Karipuna. A very young Karipuna, about the size of Júlia, 7 or 8 years old. They took them. These people left with the Karipuna.

Until one day, another rocket went over the village. Another *yuta'arohua*. If it's a comet, I don't know. That long thing with fire behind it came down like this. Then the Karipuna people set many traps along the path where *tapy'ynhahua* came. They made a hole, covered it with leaves, and put, we call it

tacuari, an arrow point, so that if the person falls in, they get pierced by the spike. So they dig a hole, but a lot of holes. So, each path had holes, with arrow points, so that when the Karipuna shot them with arrows, and if they ran away, they would fall into the holes and get pierced. With the *tacuari*, they made these traps. They heard the *yuta'arohua* pass over the village and said, "There they come again."

Then there were Karipuna, Cotijaraga, and Boretabaga, who went to make a *tocaia*. Cotijaraga said, "When you're asleep, I'll stay and watch you. I'll stay by and watch out." Because it was a [open] field in the woods. There, they made a *tocaia* to keep watching out far away, to see if someone was coming. Boretabaga said, "Okay, then keep an eye out there while I sleep." There were two brothers, one older than the other. One was making the *tocaia* when the younger fell asleep. And the older one couldn't see, through the gap, *tapy'ynhahua* coming towards the village to fight the Karipuna. He only saw when they spoke very close to the ambush. He left the ambush and ran, leaving his younger brother sleeping there. Then *tapy'ynhahua* came. They grabbed the Karipuna, who was sleeping, and took him. He was a boy, and they took him. Over time, they saw *yuta'arohua* again over the village. I think it was a comet, I don't know, but it was *yuta'arohua*. Here comes this boy, whose brother had left sleeping, whom the *tapy'ynhahua* had picked up and taken to... it seems the city, or I don't know, a village. He grew up in the middle of these *tapy'ynhahua* people. He was the one who came in the front. But he wanted, this boy, who was sleeping in the *tocaia* that the *tapy'ynhahua* had caught and grown up, he came back, he wanted to kill his own brother. He got to the village, and then he was already talking like a *tapy'ynhahua*. "Where's my brother?" The people lied to him. "Your brother isn't there, the *tapy'ynha* killed him a long time ago." It was a lie. When he saw his brother coming, he climbed onto the roof of the house. He climbed up there and hid. "But his spirit doesn't say anything to me, wa....", he said like that, they say, the boy who slept in the ambush, who said he was Karipuna, grew up in the middle of *tapy'ynhahua* and started talking like a *tapy'ynhahua*. His brother lay in a hammock, looking for his brother, to kill, to get revenge.

Then, [other] *tapy'ynhahua* arrived. Big fat men, there were two of them. Then the Karipuna shot arrows at this fat guy. Then the other one hid. "Where is the other? There were two." They searched and searched and searched, but they couldn't find him. They couldn't find the *tapy'ynhahua*. Until people started to find him. He was very big and he drew attention. He escaped, but then they found him and killed him. That's how it was.

The *tapy'ynhahua* came, but along with Boretabaga, the Karipuna whom the *tapy'ynhahua* took as a child. When Boretabaga returned, he had grown; he brought him, and he came along with *tapy'ynhahua* to kill his brother, to avenge him. But when he saw his brother arrive, he climbed onto the roof of the house. He stayed up there, hidden. And his brother lay in the hammock looking for his brother to kill, to avenge himself. Because he left him sleeping. You ran, ran. You left him sleeping and ran, right? So, they caught him, right? There, he grew up, in the middle of *tapy'ynhahua*. But he returned along with *tapy'ynhahua*, to kill his brother, just to kill his brother. But when his brother saw that he was coming with *tapy'ynhahua*, he climbed up there. He stayed hidden there? He kept asking, then people were asking. Asking about his brother, "How is it, my brother?" He said, "No, your brother, the *tapy'ynha* killed him." Then, as I told you, the Karipuna people made the hole. A bunch of holes with traps. Bamboo, a *tacuari*. The Karipuna shot one of the *tapy'ynhahua* there. He also helped kill *tapy'ynhahua*. That's it, you understand?

[Na. #6-6] “Tebegahẽa”

They carried Tebegahẽa away. They took her, carrying her on their backs. Took her to marry. They also took boys to marry the women there. They came out of *yuta'arohua*. The *tapy'ynhahua* has *rupigwara*, like a fire. It comes down. From that fire, the *yuta'arohua*, came out *tapy'ynhahua*. The fire is *rupigwara* from *tapy'ynhahua*. They all came together, many. Others, their kins, *tapy'ynhahua* came, and killed others. They were carrying tortoises. One *tapy'ynhahua* said to another, “Carry the tortoise.” He killed an anaconda and said, “Carry it for me.” He carried the anaconda. They took to the forest. When they arrived, I don't know how many days they walked in the forest. Talking, carrying heads. The Karipuna were watching, hidden in the bush. As the *tapy'ynhahua* passed by, carrying the heads of their relatives. They don't take bodies. Only heads. The Karipuna buried the bodies. “It's my brother, the shaman,” He said, “Let's go after them!” He was very close. They went after him. He got there. He knew, “I'm going to kill” my relative who spoke. He knew they were going to kill him. (There would be a confrontation. But there was no fight. They were there. *Tapy'ynhahua* was boiling a head in the pan. The Karipuna went very close, hidden. He saw it all, them eating the head. It was his brother's head, who was a shaman. The Karipuna said, “It's my brother.” The *tapy'ynhahua* were talking, tying up a hammock. Tebegahẽa said, “I'm going to get firewood,” to the *tapy'ynhahua*. She went to search for firelogs. There, she found the Karipuna men. She talked to them (in a low voice). The Karipuna said, “Let's kill them.” Tebegahẽa said, “Let them sleep first.” The *tapy'ynhahua* lit fire. They started conversing. Soon, the *tapy'ynhahua* fell asleep. Tebegahẽa didn't sleep. She was going to run when it starts. At one moment, the Karipuna shot his arrow. Then she grabbed fire and ran. They shot arrows several times. She said, “I'm safe!” The Karipuna said, “No, go away!” Another Karipuna woke up. They both ran. In the village, people asked, “What happened?” “I killed them all,” the Karipuna said. “How did you do it?” “I killed them while they were sleeping.” The Karipuna people said, “This *tapy'ynhahua* has been doing bad things for a long time. Killing people.” (...) They kept telling the story of how it all happened. Tebegahẽa said, “The *tapy'ynhahua* shaman has Bahira. He makes pots. He was making inventions. Made it all. Machete, axes.” “What do you mean?” “They make a house. The *tapy'ynhahua* took me down the river by boat and showed me how they do things. Machete, axe. They are afraid of others taking them, robbing them, and taking the shotgun. I don't know if they were American. They had a shotgun.”

She said they had Bahira. The *tapy'ynhahua* had Bahira. This Bahira, I think it was a factory. They made a little house. Well, this is not a story. They made a little house, and when Tebegahẽa woke up and wanted to see who was in that little house, who was clinking, “Teng! Teng! Teng!” something was thrown out; it was a shotgun. Again, “Teng! Teng!”, they threw out, it was a pot. She wanted to know who was making things inside that little house. When she went to look, it wasn't there anymore. Then she would say, “What happened?” She would look, there was nobody there. When they slept, [she said]: “I'll see who stays in that little house, in the other little house.” Every trip, they would sleep. “I will see.” When they bring the person from the little house, put them on the boat, take him out, and make their little house again. But she never managed to see Bahira. She never managed to see who was making weapons. She didn't know who he was, because when they left, there was nobody around. When she arrived at the place where she was going to sleep, when she went up onto the ground, the house was already built. And the guy was already inside, clinking things, making shotguns, pots, things like that, Bahira. Tebegahẽa said, “Wow, but I didn't see him leaving. Now I'm going to keep an eye on it.” She kept an eye on it. “Tomorrow we're leaving.” She kept an eye on it. But nothing, she didn't see anything. That's how it was. It was Bahira.

“Who is making pans? Making machetes. Making shotguns? She, Tebegahêa, wondered. “They have a machete, an axe. How is he doing it? How? He was making it in his little house, this person, I don't know if he was a mechanic or not. Like a factory, and a little house. (...) The story Tebegahêa tells is that they couldn't go through the door. They had to go by the side of the door. [Suppose] the door is here. When a pot is thrown out, they would go, pick it up like this, secretly, [storyteller imitating a creeping motion], and that's it. When you stick your face in, like this, it seemed those kinds of lightning were released: Tzzzz! So, she didn't know who was there. That's why she was curious. So, she always wanted to find out who was there, but she never saw him. She only heard noise, throwing the pot outside, a rifle, a machete, an axe, but she never saw him leaving, going to the boat, and she didn't see him going up. When she went up, he was already there, in his little house. Going up means landing and docking the boat. When she went up, he was already inside. When she would arrive, he was already inside, clinking. “I didn't see him. Now we'll keep an eye.” (...) She didn't even see him coming into the boat; she saw nothing. She knows they took him with them. I don't know if she thinks it transformed into a person, or not. Just the noise of making products and them coming out.

[Na. #6-7] “Son of the White”

In the part you want to know about, whether the Indian had a child with a white man: he had a child with an Indian. They arrived (...) a white man, actually two white men. It was a normal day when they arrived. But when they arrived, as they saw them, they saw no evil [intention] in them. They arrived with calm voices. Giving things like pots, giving those kinds of things. So, they didn't see any evil in them, in the way they spoke or behaved. So, at that time, they saw no evil in the white people who arrived in the village. It was a normal day. There were men, there were women, everybody was together. Then she [Katiká] says, “I didn't exist, neither I nor Aripã, nor the rest of my brothers didn't exist. Only my mother was there.” My mother [Katiká] told this story, a real fact, that “later I was born and met this Indian whose father was white.” She says the white people stayed in the village but didn't sleep there. I think they set up another camp. From then on, every time they went hunting, to kill something, they took the Indian woman along with him. Which, in this case, was Katsiká's aunt's mother. I mean, the woman who got pregnant by the white man. Every time they [white] went hunting, or did something in the forest, they took this Indian woman with them. There was a sexual relationship that got her pregnant, right? And she had a husband. But out of fear, her husband let her go into the forest with the white. Out of fear that they [white] would do something. They just trusted them, they believed them, but they were afraid, right? They were white, so they were afraid.

One day, her husband said, “I'm going to kill this white man who's taking my wife to the forest like that.” He decided to kill him. But then Abytukuga said... yes, Abytuku was alive. He was still alive at that time. When these things happened, he said, “No, no. Don't go after the white man to kill him, no. Let him take her, have sex with her. If you are going to kill him, it will be very risky.” Her husband's name was Atapehumaga. Atapehumaga was the husband of this Indian woman, whom the white man took for the forest, and even slept there, with white people. Because she was afraid that he would do something to her. And in fact, they were two sisters. Not just Katiká's aunt's mother. There were two Karipuna sisters who took them with them. She was also following because of fear. Sometimes she would go on her own, but out of fear. There were times when he came to pick her up from the village, to take her with him, but sometimes they went there just to leave something, and they went with these Indians. Each of the girls is with a white

person. So, two Indian sisters were with two white men. One of them was Katiká's aunt's mother, and the other was Katiká's father's mother, in this case, my grandmother. Abytukuga existed at that time because he was Atapehumaga's father. In this case, it was Abytukuga's daughter-in-law who went to the forest. As always, he gave advice to his kinsmen, not to kill the white people. He said, "No, it's better to let them have sex rather than coming and killing us all. Let the girls stay with them, to have this kind of sexual relationship better than... I assure you that this won't hurt any more than them massacring us, killing us all." One day, my grandmother went into the forest with the whites, and when she came back, she brought a monkey. Katsika said, "My grandmother brought a monkey that the Indians killed, or the white man killed, to bring for her to eat. And my aunt's mother brought a curassow. The white man killed a curassow to give to my aunt.

Time passed. They kept going with them, having sexual relationships. Then one day, the two of them decided not to go anymore. "I won't go anymore. I am tired. Every time, they just want to have a sexual relationship with us; they just want sex, only sex. I'm already tired." They said, both of them. So, from then on, they didn't go. Nor did the white come after them. They wondered. "I can't hear them coming after us. I'm not going to follow them either." The tent where they stayed was close to the village. Then one woman said, "Well, but I think I'm pregnant now." The two of them are speaking to each other, right? My mother's grandmother, and my mother's aunt's mother. "No. I don't think I'll go anymore. We won't go anymore. I think we're already pregnant." And then the white men didn't come. It was strange that they didn't come anymore. So, all the villagers gathered, everyone together, and discussed: "Look, they aren't coming after the girls. I think they are going to kill us. We find it strange because they arrived here with calm voices, giving us things, as if they were good people. So, that's really strange. And now they don't appear anymore. I think they are going to kill us." Thus, they discussed in the gathering. It's like they had a small meeting. Another kinsmen said, "I don't think so, I think, because they lost her, [because] the girls decided to come back here and didn't want to go back there, maybe that's why they got upset, why they don't even want to come after the girls anymore. They are feeling sad. It must be because of that." Another person said that one of the relatives.

One day, a white man came. It was on the clean, wide road, which they used to walk [into the woods]. They [Karipuna] were surprised, "only one guy came and looked at us and went back? And he didn't bring us anything?" That was because he would bring something every time he came, right? A knife, a machete, a pan... something. And this time, only one guy all alone. Just came to look and went back. He didn't bring anything, and they found it strange. "Wow, he didn't bring anything for us, just one guy there? How strange... Did he come to give us some warning? Did he come to see if we are still here, to kill us?" By the way, they already gave a name on this white guy, the one who came to give a look at them: "Tebiboga." His name was Tebiboga because his mouth was big. Big mouth, big lips. Then, he said a lot of things that they [Karipuna] didn't understand. Before, when he gave things, they nicknamed him because of his big lips. This Tebiboga came back again. They saw him on the road, on the path visible. By then, everyone held an arrow; everyone was prepared, right? Because they found it strange. Here he comes, arrived close to the people. They didn't understand anything, but he spoke. No one understood anything. And after the attack happened, they said he came to warn us. Because it was only he who went there and gave a sign with his hand. Speaking, signaling with his hand, "to leave, because people were going to kill you", right? He gave a signal with his hand that everyone was going to kill, and everyone was going to cry. He gave the sign with his hand that they were going to cry, that they were going to die. "You are supposed to leave," He warned. He was the only one who came to warn.

The people didn't understand anything at the time. But he made a sign. "I'm going to stand here. I'm going to watch. Go away." But the Karipuna just laughed at him. People, the relatives, kept laughing, laughing, saying that he was joking, making some kind of joke, and no one believed him. Then, they also think that... a lot of people died because... (at that time) everyone had their own house, right? Each Indian had her own little house [maloquinha]. I don't know if it's true, but they think that there was this Indian woman there who was fat. The fat woman, this Indian woman, maybe because she was jealous, or for some other reason, Katsiká told me, that she went there, influenced the white people, telling how many houses there were... But yeah, I told my mom, "I don't think the whites understood what she said." I'm not sure. They think it was she who told them how many houses there were, that everybody should be killed. I think, with the desire to leave with the white. Who knows? This woman was very fat, a relative of theirs.

Then this Tebiboga was telling everything. Katsika said that this Tebiboga was talking and warning about everything, right? He went to teach with his hand, made a sign with everything, "take all your things, everything! Take fire, go prepared!" He signaled with everything [gesture]. But the Indians didn't want to believe that the white man had come to warn them. Then one night, it was early morning when they arrived. The white people invaded everything, invaded everywhere, burning everything... shooting... Most of them [Karipuna] started running. Many were unable to run and died right away. Instantly. They were shooting, putting fire, burning everything. The houses..., everything. The villagers ran into the bushes, where they only heard gunshots. I think whoever they managed to catch, who was still alive, was shot dead. They said they only heard gunshots: "Puu! Puu!"... Shotgun shots, right?

They say that those who were pregnant, who had a sexual relationship [with the white], also ran. They managed to run away. A lot of people ran away. Her uncle ran, her grandfather ran, she ran away. A lot of people ran away. And along with them, the pregnant one also ran. Both of the girls, right? They were really pregnant. The white managed to capture three Indians. They captured three to see if the others would come back [to rescue them], those who ran away, you see? Because they knew how many people there were. So, they hold these three Indian women hostage to see if the others would come back. One person, it seems like, managed to escape... No, not escape. She tried to escape and died. She shot her right in her buttocks. Shot dead with a gunshot to her back. There were only two left. Some relatives were keeping an eye on all this, right? Among all the kinsmen who ran away, some came back to watch from afar, hiding in the forest. They say they saw this woman who tried to escape and was shot in the buttocks. The other two remained alive. These two were pregnant. So, they spent lots of nights sleeping in their village, where they were attacked. They [white people] managed to sleep. Slept, slept, and slept lots of nights, to see if they would return and rescue these Indian women whom they captured... until they saw they were not coming. They failed to attract the Indians' attention.

With two pregnant women, they decided to take them, so they left with them. They were Abytuku's child. They stayed with the white. Katiká mentioned the names of lots of relatives who died in the attack. So, there it is. They slept with them for many days, and saw that no one was coming back, and then they decided to leave. They kept talking, talking (on the way) as they took them [hostages] away. They took these two women with them. The two who were pregnant. One was just a relative, and the other was my uncle's father's mother. Both of them went away pregnant.

Then, later, the *miranga* told us that they died, that the white people killed them. Katsika told us that we really believe what the *miranga* say. Well, I told her [Katiká] just now, that's why there are still

Karipuna in the village. Because maybe... what if... I don't know. They believe what the *miranga* said, don't they? But I don't. What if the girls managed to escape? And then, since both of them were pregnant, they were just relatives. One could be pregnant with a girl, and the other with a boy. If the two managed to escape, maybe, in my opinion, [they] could have children. The boy is getting married to the girl so they can be the Karipuna who were lost inside our territory. That's what I told Katiká. Well, she said, "Maybe, but I don't think so, because the *miranga* said that the white people killed them." I told her, maybe the *mirangã* only said that so that you [Karipuna] would not try to find them, not go after them. So that no more people die. Maybe that's why they (*miranga*) said that, you see? I don't know. I told her. (...) That's why I'm just saying, there are *isolados* [uncontacted Indians] in our land. What if it's them? They were pregnant; there weren't any relatives, so they could actually get married. One was born a girl, another was born a boy, get married, and increase like that. I told her. Then she said, "I don't know, it could be." Anyway, the *miranga* said that they died like that, and I told her, maybe not. Because I think, perhaps the *miranga* wanted to preserve them [Karipuna], and prevent more death. Maybe. I don't know how it happened. They believed what the *miranga* said: that the women had died, but the babies were still born. They killed her, they killed the two of them, and the babies, too.

That's it. Then they [Karipuna] left. They set up another village, set up another village. That was before Pitanga found them. They set up another village. It would grow, and that was where Juribaga was born. The white man's son. (...) When he was born, he was blond. Very blond with light eyes. Of course, they talk about green eyes, right? As he was the son of a white man. They say, "Okay, leave him, we accept him, so that he doesn't die early. The child is not to blame for anything; let him live with us." So, he did [live with the people]. There were actually two. The other one didn't look very white, no. It could be that she was already pregnant (before engaging with White men), I think, because my mother said that the other one was normal, had straight hair, and was an Indian. It could be that this boy wasn't the white man's son. Sometimes the woman can be already pregnant at the beginning, not knowing it, and then gets involved with a white guy, then they think [the father] is a white guy. But she said he looked more like an Indian. Not in Juribaga's case. He was blond. Very blond in the eyes, of course, they talk about green eyes. White eyes, very blond hair. He was the only one who was different.

He was born, and the people let him grow. Katiká said he was a hard worker. He did garden work in a ravine, a big ravine. He could clean everything and plant. He was a very hard worker. And that was when Pitanga arrived. Pitanga met him. Pitanga said, "I only searched for you, only you, because Juribaga's father, the Indian's father, told me that an Indian woman had gotten pregnant. He indicated this place in this region. He said how you were, and then he said he had a daughter. One son, one daughter, an Indian. This white guy told me. So, through him I came to find you." They say that Pitanga talked to my mother's people. At that time, when Juribaga was growing, my mother didn't exist yet. But by the time Pitanga arrived, my mother had already been born, and Juribaga had grown up. He was becoming older. Pitanga said, "through this white man who said he had a son, and a daughter with an Indian, he mentioned the place, the location. So, I came here. It was through him that I came. I want to know who the white man's son is." So, they put the name "Juribaga." Juribaga, who was the son of a white man. So, the white man practically knew that he had made a son with the Indian woman. And Pitanga said that the man told him, so he came. Yeah, maybe, the [white] didn't want to do any harm to the Indian girl. At the time, when they invaded the house, they burned everything. I don't think that man meant any harm, don't you think? It was the others [who did it]. Sometimes, out of ten to twelve people, just three or four are bad, right? I mean, only three or four are good, and the rest are bad. It could be that Juribaga's father didn't want to burn down the house and kill

everybody. He must not be [bad] because he tried to help, you see? Afterward, he asked Pitanga to rescue them. Pitanga said the person had a son with an Indian woman in that place, so he came. And that's when he found my mother and her people, right? Those who were still alive.

[Na. #6-8] "The Return"

There was an invasion in the village, at Itapame-hua, on the Trinidad creek. It was when the whites killed the chief Abetukuiga (Now the Karipuna association's name was put after this). They took the girls, who came back after 5 moons. (means 5 months). The war happened when the whites raided at night. They were breaking everything in the houses. But they didn't shoot. Everyone ran away in fear, because it was night, and there was no way to see. The whites were with flashlights. Because of the flashlights, they could see. They killed my relatives. Everyone who survived scattered across the forest. They took two: my [Katsika's] stepmother and my husband's grandmother. Karipunas thought the white also caught the chief (who was already very old), or he had run away, too. But no, he didn't. He didn't die right away either. He was injured because the white man beat him a lot. He was left alone, had nothing, and died of cold. When the people returned after a long time, they found that the vultures had already eaten his body. All the Karipunas have scattered, and nobody remained in the village anymore.

The white took the hostages very far, crossing Igarapé Contra. A child's foot was full of thorns. The whites took care of his foot, removing all the thorns. The child was crying a lot. They slept in the woods. She doesn't know how many white people there were, but there were a lot. They set up a hammock for the hostages. They put them on the net. Only one who cried more; she says that at dawn she took off her hammock and went to tell another. He whispered: "I'm leaving, I'm leaving. I don't know what you will do, but I will." The other replied, "If you want to escape, you can go back. I may not be able to find the people. Maybe I'm not going to find my husband... maybe he is dead. I'm going to go with the white people from here." So, the boy decided to do it alone and managed to run away to the forest. The whites went after her with flashlights, but they couldn't find her. She managed to run away. Only one left. The boy came back. I don't know how she found her way, but she came back.

The other moved on. She was young, but she already had a child, a baby. The whites hunted a jacu for food. They killed it, roasted it for her, cut it with a knife, and let it cool. They explained that if she ate it hot, her stomach would hurt. They made an effort to communicate this, without being able to speak the language. She ate. Another night passed. She didn't know where it was. They had already crossed the Contra Creek. Katsika thinks she's gone to Guajara, but it's too far. They slept another night. Something was making noise. An armadillo appeared. Whites scared, shot, boom! Not to kill, just to scare. Whites made beef jerky and offered it. They cooked beans, then added meat to cook everything together. The baby was crying a lot. She understood that they said, "Don't cry, calm down, we're going to eat." Four days passed. The boy returned. Alone, in the middle of the woods. He arrived at Jabutihua, the village where it all happened, which is at the head of Formoso. There was nobody there. But he walked and found his relative. Their relatives used to say, "Anhanga arrived, white clothes, white machete...!" Everyone came to see him and asked him to tell the story of his coexistence with the whites. They gathered everyone together and enjoyed hearing how he found his relatives. They asked for her, the other one who stayed. He said she wanted to go on. He thought the white man was going to kill her because of his escape, but he didn't hear any shots. She might be alive.

Five months passed. Her relatives dreamed of her. They felt that she was alive. Meanwhile, she had arrived at the house of the white. They had a big cupuaçu plantation. The garden was full of cupuaçu fruit. There were many other white people. "You brought indians", they said. She understood (the context) more or less. The whites thought the Indian girl was pretty. They also received her daughter, the baby girl. They gave clothes, dressed her and her babies. The whites ate many things from the forest. Animals like paca, peccary, fish, that kind of thing, but she didn't eat, because she was afraid. They gave her coffee, but she didn't drink it. Now, she did eat potatoes, because she knew what they were. Corn, too. Everything she knew, she ate. She knew paca meat, but she was afraid to eat it. Even though she knew that one eats roasted paca meat, she was afraid, afraid to put it into her body. She ate flour. She put a spoon in her daughter's mouth, but she didn't eat. The white man had a relationship with his mother [Katsika and Manoel laugh here]. The white man made a sign, a hand gesture. She understood what he wanted. She was afraid, and that's why she had to accept it. [I asked: *Was it a rape?*] No, it wasn't rape. She accepted it normally. [*So she wasn't forced?*] No. [*So, was it consensual?*] Yes, consensual. But she also said that she was afraid. He wanted to "taste" the Indian; he wanted to see what an Indian is like.

One day, the girl saw the *mirangã*. They have been there with the white people. They said, "Let that Indian girl go back with her child. Otherwise, there will be more war. They are going to come after her because the *mirangã* can go where the Indians are and tell them where she is. (Katsika explained that white people could also see the *mirangã* in the old days.) The *mirangã* warned again, "Give her back, otherwise there will be more wars. They will kill you, you will kill them." The white people decided to listen. They took her to a little house. From there, the man made a gesture: "Go, you follow this way, I'll come back from here." [Katsika made lots of gestures here, passionately]. She understood what he was trying to say. They gave the girl a lot of clothes and shoes, but there was no way to take them. She gave matches, too." And what should I do now?" She spoke, because she was afraid. There were jaguars in the forest. "How do I get back, alone with my daughters? But I must go back as they are releasing me." She had two tiny daughters. One she was carrying on her lap (breast on her chest), another who could walk, Batiti's mother, the child with a foot full of thorns. They also gave her a knife. They taught her, making gestures and showing her how to cut things with a machete. She took two hammocks to sleep. She walked. And walked and walked. Halfway through, she managed to make a little house and sleep at the head of the Fortaleza River. She couldn't hunt, and she was very hungry. Rain poured... she got wet. Finally, she arrived at her old village, "itapame-hua", on the Tringida creek. When she arrived at Pedral, she was sick. She caught a white cough. She got very skinny. The village had many plantations, such as manioc. She had their house. She stayed there. She said, "I'm going to stay here because there's a lot of plantation here, they're going to come back here. Here I will wait, in an hour they will come. I'm hungry, but I'm staying here."

After two nights there, she slept, and a relative came. He looked from afar and saw the smoke she lit to warm up. The relative said, "There are people there! I think it's white." He listened from afar, and she was coughing a lot. He saw a trace of a child, and he said, "No, it's our relative they took!" he went and got to her. The girl, Batiti's mother, found the body of Abe-tuku-aga, her great-grandfather, who was still there. They could have come back. Since the time they took the girl, they haven't come back. They regretted, "He should have come back to us sooner if he had known he was alive." They only came back after five months. Don't know when he died. He took fish, fed her, and made her a little stronger. He stayed with her two more nights and then took her away, as he had already set up another village. This village is called Jabutia. He managed to take her to the village. They started to get happy, laughing and making fun of her because she

went, mingled with whites, and then came back again. Then she told the whole story, how it was, what happened.

15.3. Table: List of wars

Accounts of Karipuna warfare, based on Aripã's testimony and Batiti's explanation.

Table 2. List of Karipuna warfare.

	Name	Enemy	Kind of war	Response/ Result	Protagonist	Remark	Position
1	Escape from <i>tapy'nhahua</i>	<i>Tapy'nhahua</i>	Massacre	Escape as captive / reunion	Tebegahêa	Captive escapes and returns	Victim
2	A Karipuna becomes <i>tapy'nhahua</i>	<i>Tapy'nhahua</i>	Massacre	Fight back / repel	Brothers (Cotijaraga, Boretabaga)	Captive becoming enemy, trying to kill former kin	Victim
3	Karipuna Warrior #1	Other tribe	Revenge war	Raid to village / victory	Ubucia	Glory of warrior, huge raid, massacre	Initiated
4	Juma saga	Juma (Kawahiva group)	Massacre	Escape, failed pursuit / perish of village	Wararo'iaba (female shaman)	Destructive consequence of Infighting	Victim
5	Oro Nao	Oro Nao	Revenge war	Revenge / victory and peace	Birega	Huge raid, massacre, proportional revenge?	Engage
6	Most recent attack	Oro Nao	Single attack	No casualty	N/A	Showed arrow to FUNAI agents	Victim
7	Warrior #2	Whites	War without clear reason	Both suffer severe casualties	Karipuna warrior	Perplexing motivation: an exception?	Initiated
8	Son of the white	Whites	Massacre	Flight / regrouping and rebuilding	Tebiboga, Juribaga	strategical, not bellicose, fight < flee, tolerance on child	Victim

9	The Return	Whites	Massacre	Flight / regrouping and rebuilding	Cujauvarahêa	Help by the nonhuman spirit <i>mirangã</i>	Victim
10	Seu Rui	Whites	Revenge war	Revenge / massacre of family, FUNAI contact	Aripã and co.	Only firsthand account first and last captive	Engage

15.4. Research permission and Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC)

15.4.1. Research permission

Issued by the APOIKA (Associação dos Povos Indígenas Karipuna) from 2022 to 2025, respectively.



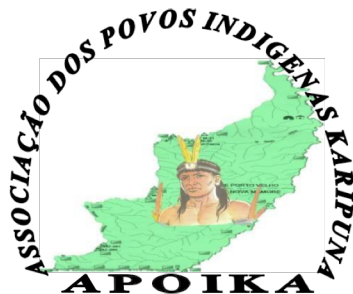
Porto Velho/RO, 24 de agosto de 2022.

Carta Convite

Em nome do povo Karipuna, nós da Associação dos Povos Indígenas Karipuna (APOIKA), localizada em Rondônia, autorizamos o ingresso do antropólogo Hanmin Kim, na terra indígena para realizar projetos práticos visando à documentação e manutenção da cultura Karipuna, bem como realizar os estudos necessários para ter base cultural para os projetos práticos.

Atenciosamente,

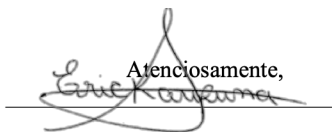

Eric One Karipuna Daveca i
Presidente APOIKA



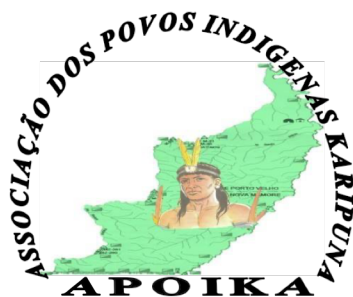
Porto Velho/RO, 08 de fevereiro de 2023.

Carta Convite

Em nome do povo Karipuna, nós da Associação dos Povos Indígenas Karipuna (APOIKA), localizada em Porto Velho - Rondônia, autorizamos o ingresso do antropólogo Hanmin Kim, na terra indígena para realizar projetos práticos, e pesquisa antropológica, visando à documentação e manutenção da cultura Karipuna, bem como realizar os estudos necessários para ter base cultural para os projetos práticos, sua entrada na T.I Karipuna esta autorizada entre os meses de março a maio de 2023.

Atenciosamente,


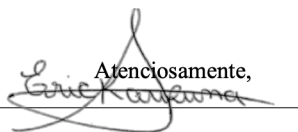
Eric One Karipuna Daveca i
Presidente APOIKA



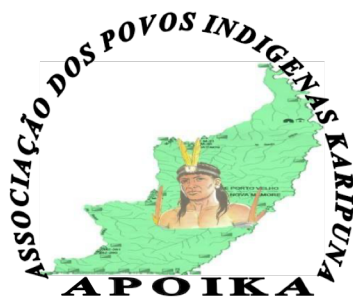
Porto Velho/RO, 05 de maio de 2024.

Carta Convite

Em nome do povo Karipuna, nós da Associação dos Povos Indígenas Karipuna (APOIKA), localizada em Porto Velho - Rondônia, autorizamos o ingresso do antropólogo Hanmin Kim, na terra indígena para realizar projetos práticos, e pesquisa antropológica, visando à documentação e manutenção da cultura Karipuna, bem como realizar os estudos necessários para ter base cultural para os projetos práticos, sua entrada na T.I Karipuna esta autorizada para este mês de maio de 2024.

Atenciosamente,


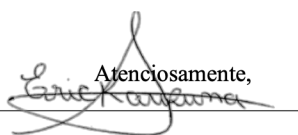
Eric One Karipuna Daveca i
Presidente APOIKA



Porto Velho/RO, 29 de abril de 2025.

Carta Convite

Em nome do povo Karipuna, nós da Associação dos Povos Indígenas Karipuna (APOIKA), localizada em Porto Velho - Rondônia, autorizamos o ingresso do antropólogo Hanmin Kim, na terra indígena para realizar projetos práticos, e pesquisa antropológica, visando à documentação e manutenção da cultura Karipuna, bem como realizar os estudos necessários para ter base cultural para os projetos práticos, sua entrada na T.I Karipuna esta autorizada para este mês de maio de 2025.

Atenciosamente,


Eric One Karipuna Daveca i
Presidente APOIKA

15.4.2. Consent

FPIC of my main Karipuna interlocutors

TERMO DE CONSENTIMENTO LIVRE E ESCLARECIDO (TCLE)

Prezado(a) informante:

Este é um convite para você participar da pesquisa denominada: "A Resistência do povo Karipuna: Luta pela floresta" de responsabilidade do pesquisador Hanmin Kim, que subscreve esse TCLE.

Sua participação é voluntária, o que significa que você poderá desistir a qualquer momento, retirando sua permissão para participação, sem que isso traga nenhum prejuízo para você.

Com a sua colaboração e de outros membros do povo Karipuna, pretendo recolher narrativas e informações históricas do povo para estudá-las, elaborar uma publicação acadêmica em que serão descritos os costumes, as crenças, as festas, as histórias, enfim, as características ou a identidade étnica dos Karipuna. Esse material será obtido por meio de conversas que mantereis com você e com os seus parentes, que aceitem deixar registrar suas falas em um gravador de voz.

Lembro ainda que em qualquer momento do desenvolvimento da pesquisa você terá o direito de obter esclarecimentos sobre todos os procedimentos utilizados e as formas de divulgação dos resultados encontrados. Você poderá fazer isso diretamente com o pesquisador.

A par da possibilidade de danos à dimensão física, psíquica, moral, intelectual, social, cultural ou espiritual do ser humano em qualquer fase de uma pesquisa e dela decorrente (Res. CNS 196/96, item V), os riscos da presença do pesquisador em sua aldeia serão mínimos dadas as características do trabalho a ser desenvolvido e a metodologia a ser empregada, bem como em termos de sua saúde já que ele, conforme consta no laudo médico e nos comprovantes das vacinas a que foi submetida por recomendação do Ministério da Saúde, apresenta boa disposição física e psíquica. Ainda assim, caso ocorra algum dano ou complicação decorrentes de sua participação no estudo que ele irá empreender, ele mesmo se responsabilizará por acompanhar e/ou buscar assessoria médica de imediato ou mesmo formas de indenização diante de eventuais danos decorrentes da pesquisa.

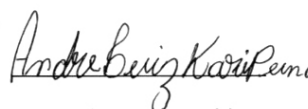
Apesar de tudo isso, o que se espera mesmo da realização do projeto são, a médio e longo prazos, muitos benefícios entre os quais o da socialização de sua cultura, a constituição de um acervo bibliográfico da sua cultura, a preservação material de seus costumes, a maior visibilidade do povo Karipuna entre seus próprios membros e a sociedade envolvente e internacional, entre outros tantos benefícios.

Conforme sua vontade, seu nome será identificado ou anonimizado, e os dados serão guardados em local seguro. Você não terá nenhum tipo de gasto por participar da pesquisa. Toda a dúvida que você tiver a respeito desta pesquisa, poderá procurar o pesquisador Hanmin Kim pelo telefone 82-10-2519-6591 (celular) ou ainda no seu endereço eletrônico: kim_hanmin@hotmail.com

Declaro que recebi, li e compreendi o termo e concordo em participar voluntariamente da pesquisa.


12 de 02 de 2023

Nome e assinatura do pesquisador responsável



Nome e assinatura do participante

TERMO DE CONSENTIMENTO LIVRE E ESCLARECIDO (TCLE)

Prezado(a) informante:

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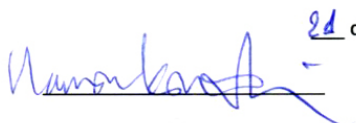
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Ao contrário de tudo isso, o que se espera mesmo da realização do projeto são, a médio e longo prazos, muitos benefícios entre os quais o da socialização de sua cultura, a constituição de um acervo bibliográfico da sua cultura, a preservação material de seus costumes, a maior visibilidade do povo Karipuna entre seus próprios membros e a sociedade envolvente e internacional, entre outros tantos benefícios.

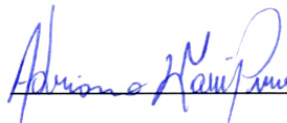
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Nome e assinatura do pesquisador responsável

21 de 05 de 2023



Nome e assinatura do participante

TERMO DE CONSENTIMENTO LIVRE E ESCLARECIDO (TCLE)

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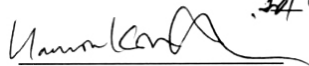
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 14 de 01 de 2023

Nome e assinatura do pesquisador responsável



Nome e assinatura do participante

TERMO DE CONSENTIMENTO LIVRE E ESCLARECIDO (TCLE)

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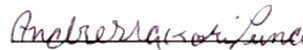
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Declaro que recebi, li e compreendi o termo e concordo em participar voluntariamente da pesquisa.

11 de 05 de 2023



Nome e assinatura do pesquisador responsável



Nome e assinatura do participante

TERMO DE CONSENTIMENTO LIVRE E ESCLARECIDO (TCLE)

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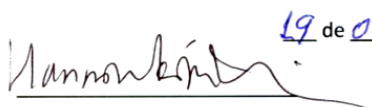
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A par da possibilidade de danos à dimensão física, psíquica, moral, intelectual, social, cultural ou espiritual do ser humano em qualquer fase de uma pesquisa e dela decorrente (Res. CNS 196/96, item V), os riscos da presença do pesquisador em sua aldeia serão mínimos dadas as características do trabalho a ser desenvolvido e a metodologia a ser empregada, bem como em termos de sua saúde já que ele, conforme consta no laudo médico e nos comprovantes das vacinas a que foi submetida por recomendação do Ministério da Saúde, apresenta boa disposição física e psíquica. Ainda assim, caso ocorra algum dano ou complicação decorrentes de sua participação no estudo que ele irá empreender, ele mesmo se responsabilizará por acompanhar e/ou buscar assessoria médica de imediato ou mesmo formas de indenização diante de eventuais danos decorrentes da pesquisa.

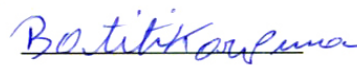
Ao contrário de tudo isso, o que se espera mesmo da realização do projeto são, a médio e longo prazos, muitos benefícios entre os quais o da socialização de sua cultura, a constituição de um acervo bibliográfico da sua cultura, a preservação material de seus costumes, a maior visibilidade do povo Karipuna entre seus próprios membros e a sociedade envolvente e internacional, entre outros tantos benefícios.

Conforme sua vontade, seu nome será identificado ou anonimizado, e os dados serão guardados em local seguro. Você não terá nenhum tipo de gasto por participar da pesquisa. Toda a dúvida que você tiver a respeito desta pesquisa, poderá procurar o pesquisador Hanmin Kim pelo telefone 82-10-2519-6591 (celular) ou ainda no seu endereço eletrônico: kim_hanmin@hotmail.com

Declaro que recebi, li e compreendi o termo e concordo em participar voluntariamente da pesquisa.


Nome e assinatura do pesquisador responsável

19 de 04 de 2023


Nome e assinatura do participante

TERMO DE CONSENTIMENTO LIVRE E ESCLARECIDO (TCLE)

Prezado(a) informante:

Este é um convite para você participar da pesquisa denominada: "A Resistência do povo Karipuna: Luta pela floresta" de responsabilidade do pesquisador Hanmin Kim, que subscreve esse TCLE.

Sua participação é voluntária, o que significa que você poderá desistir a qualquer momento, retirando sua permissão para participação, sem que isso traga nenhum prejuízo para você.

Com a sua colaboração e de outros membros do povo Karipuna, pretendo recolher narrativas e informações históricas do povo para estudá-las, elaborar uma publicação acadêmica em que serão descritos os costumes, as crenças, as festas, as histórias, enfim, as características ou a identidade étnica dos Karipuna. Esse material será obtido por meio de conversas que mantereí com você e com os seus parentes, que aceitarem deixar registrar suas falas em um gravador de voz.

Lembro ainda que em qualquer momento do desenvolvimento da pesquisa você terá o direito de obter esclarecimentos sobre todos os procedimentos utilizados e as formas de divulgação dos resultados encontrados. Você poderá fazer isso diretamente com o pesquisador.

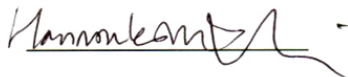
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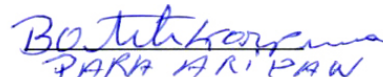
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Declaro que recebi, li e compreendi o termo e concordo em participar voluntariamente da pesquisa.

19 de 04 de 2023



Nome e assinatura do pesquisador responsável



BO TITIKARIPUNA
PARA KARIPUNA

Nome e assinatura do participante

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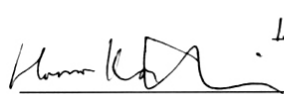
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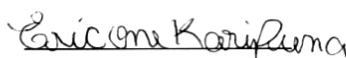
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Nome e assinatura do pesquisador responsável

13 de 04 de 2023



Nome e assinatura do participante