

## First Contacts, Slavery and Kinship in North-Eastern Amazonia

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The Trio, Wayana and Akuriyo are Carib-speaking Amerindians of the border regions of Brazil, southern Suriname and southern French Guiana.<sup>1</sup> We have carried out field research since 2003 in southern Suriname, in a predominantly Trio village shared with a number of Wayana and most of the surviving Akuriyo. A relationship of asymmetry has evolved between the Trio and Akuriyo since the late 1960s, although arguably from a native point of view these two populations have engaged in a relationship of mutual avoidance as far back as people can remember. Despite, or perhaps because of, the memory of prior encounters between them, the Trio and Akuriyo would probably have maintained their mutual avoidance longer, had it not been for the intervention of evangelical missionaries.

These missionaries, and in particular a Baptist pastor named Claude Leavitt, who had established himself and his family among the recently contacted Trio a decade earlier (Conley 2000), organized a series of contact expeditions to the remote area around the headwaters of the Oeremari River near the border with Brazil in search of an elusive group of Akuriyo hunter-gatherers then known as *wajiarikure*, a Trio ethnonym used to refer to wild, semihuman beings living in the forest (Forth 2008).

Trio people generally consider forest dwellers to be barbaric in everyday practices such as cooking and the treatment of their bodies, but they also fear them for their fierceness and predatory capacities (these capacities are known as *ëire* in Trio, a word also used to describe the aggressive, magically strengthened bodily state of a warrior). The Trio feel ambivalent towards wild people, considering them individuals of reduced capacity for socialization who nonetheless enjoy superhuman predatory and transformational aptitudes. This helps to explain the way Trio-Akuriyo relations unfolded after contact, and particularly how this relationship came to be considered mutually beneficial and construed in terms of ownership and

tutelage. As we shall describe, the Akuriyo became the Trio's property through capture and then became the creatures of the Trio, in the sense that the latter endeavoured to make them into 'real people'.

In 1968, the first of a series of Trio and Wayana expeditions led by North American missionaries located a group of Akuriyo. On subsequent expeditions, some Trio remained with the Akuriyo to gain their confidence and learn their language. After various sedentarization schemes (including planting fruit trees and manioc, and starting a Maroon-run manioc 'farm' to encourage trade) had failed and progressive contact had led to major health problems among the Akuriyo, the missionaries decided to cut their losses and make the Akuriyo settle in Tëpu with the Trio (Crocker n.d.; Yohner 1970; Schoen 1969, 1971; Conley 2000: 393).

This was not the first time Leavitt had embarked upon a contact expedition; as a member of the Unevangelized Fields Mission, he had gained some experience in southern Guyana with the three Hawkins brothers, who had founded the mission of Kanashen among the Waiwai in the early 1950s. It was in southern Guyana that the technique of 'cumulative evangelism' (Grotti 2009) was developed, whereby resident missionaries accompanied by converted Amerindians organized expeditions to contact other groups and encourage them to sedentarize alongside the indigenous expedition members. This procedure worked well among the populations of the central Guiana region, which at the time were typically constituted by relatively mobile extended cognatic groups. The process of cumulative evangelism involving the Waiwai was well documented by Catherine Howard (2001). Howard describes the Waiwai perspective on these expeditions to contact those whom they referred to as the 'unseen tribes'. She stresses in particular that the Waiwai's willingness to take part in these expeditions reflected an enthusiasm for the capture and assimilation of other people, and that both capture and assimilation were expressed through the missionary idiom of evangelization.

The men who embarked on these first contacts were all in the prime of life. Without exception they were young heads of households, most of whom had developed a special relationship with the missionaries, making them their *jipawana*, their friends or trading partners. All later rose to become prominent elders as plant and chant healers, village leaders or pastors. In the Trio case in particular, the initial search for trails or camps in the forest and the establishment of first contacts were solely a male enterprise.

During the initial interactions between the Trio and Akuriyo, the hunter-gatherers expressed restraint and a desire to cut bonds by moving on and trekking back into the forest. The Trio expedition members nevertheless immediately took the initiative to develop a form of ongoing interac-

tion, and some stayed for months with the Akuriyo, following them on their treks between camps and communicating with the use of a portable radio.<sup>2</sup> Almost immediately after the first contacts, the missionaries stood back and let the Trio engage in most transactions with the Akuriyo. From catalysing and organizing the first expeditions, they went on to provide logistical support. As three main groups of about thirty people each were contacted between 1968 and 1971 (Jara 1990: 17), Trio men also tracked down the entirety of the remaining scattered nuclear families.

When diseases started to spread, the Akuriyo were eventually flown in a light aircraft to Tëpu, where they were settled, each family unit closely supervised by a Trio expedition member. The Akuriyo families were to provide services such as hunting and wood fetching for the families of their ‘captors’, and in return they would be taught how to live as the Trio do. As captive wild people, the *wajiarikure* became Akuriyo, after the name for one of the Akuriyo groups, Akuriekare (or agouti people). In this new, domesticated guise they were incorporated into village life as children: they were given the front benches in Church and were encouraged to go to school, were taught how to make gardens and prepare manioc bread and manioc beer, and were shown how to cook (and eat) ‘real food’ – thoroughly cooked meat stew eaten with manioc bread. The Trio held that all of these activities wrought bodily change upon the Akuriyo, but they most obviously and visibly changed their bodies by cutting their hair and plucking their eyebrows the way the Trio do.<sup>3</sup>

### Partial Familiarization

The Akuriyo were domesticated by the Trio but have never been fully assimilated by them, in contrast to comparable cases in the region.<sup>4</sup> The reasons for this seem to lie in Trio narratives of Akuriyo identity, which emphasize their barbarity. Primarily because they were nomadic hunter-gatherers, the Akuriyo were considered particularly wild and inhuman by their captors – indeed, were it not for the influence of the missionaries, the Trio and Wayana would not have contacted them at all for the purposes of trade or alliance. Although the Akuriyo had deliberately and completely isolated themselves, hoping to exclude themselves from the Janus logic of war and trade (the one giving way to the other),<sup>5</sup> the result was a prolonged Hobbesian war – effectively a ‘cold’ war with a constant (though rarely realized) threat of violence.

This account of the capture of some Akuriyo, told to us by one of the Trio expedition members in Tëpu, shows how this threat of violence crystallized into fear:

Then we searched for them, they ran and hid, they went this way and that way, they went running off again. We looked for them on the path, they ran. Silawo and his mother were frightened of us, and they ran on the path. Muloto ran alone, she got lost in the forest. During the night she ran and also stayed there in the forest because she was frightened of us. Epoti waited for her, with the others in the little house: 'She is coming', said Epoti. Polowpa waited for her too; Muloto was still frightened of us. Then Polowpa and Epoti hid to catch her. She came back to look for fire, it was almost evening, she was all alone, that's why Polowpa ran towards her to catch her, but Muloto ran to the river. Then, Polowpa caught her. 'No, no, let me go', said Muloto. 'No, we won't do anything, we won't hurt you', I said. But we didn't know how to speak their language. Their language is different from ours. ... We brought them all back; we had already caught the other two ... Silawo was really scared of us; he defecated because he was so afraid of us.

The sudden transformation of the relations between Trio and Wayana on the one hand and Akuriyo on the other from those of enemy-strangers to those of coresidents has had far-reaching consequences. The Akuriyo in Tëpu today are effectively servants of the Trio. Akuriyo nuclear families live away from each other in different parts of the village, each attached to the household of a Trio family. Although they are spoken of as children, Akuriyo men are also often treated in some respects as though they were sons-in-law, implying as subservient a relationship as is possible between adults in traditional kinship terms, but also implying indebtedness.<sup>6</sup> Despite this, it is rare to find an Akuriyo man actually married to a Trio woman.<sup>7</sup>

This situation of partial familiarization, or domestication without assimilation, is extraordinary in a region where coresidence usually leads to social absorption. Domestication of the Other in Amazonia is of vital importance for the constitution and reproduction of the group, its identity and its vital energy (Fausto 1999a; Santos-Granero 2009; Vilaça 2002). Such a state of affairs therefore cannot simply be attributed to missionary activities. It can instead be partially understood through narratives of identity that have defined certain 'peoples' as fierce and cannibalistic. Since sedentarization, these narratives have come to differentiate 'superior', riverine, sedentary, horticulturalist, trading people from 'inferior', forest-dwelling, foraging people. But the narratives also mean that the domestication of such peoples differs in character from the domestication of other horticulturalist peoples (Howard 2001).

Akuriyo are in a constant state of becoming, but partly as a result of this they are also reduced socially. The special advantage of the relationship with the Akuriyo, from the Trio's point of view, is that the Akuriyo can still be rendered their agency when they go into the forest, where they can become powerful hunters who can 'see' as no Trio can. With Akuriyo to hunt for them, the Trio are therefore able to concentrate on

cultivating their familiarity with the more powerful knowledge held by white people.

The Trio's aversion to marriage with Akuriyo may be due to the contrived nature of their coresidence, which resulted from outside influence – as we have mentioned, the Trio would never have shared the same villages with the Akuriyo had it not been for the intervention of missionaries.<sup>8</sup> An ordinary alliance would not have occurred between Trio and Akuriyo because the Akuriyo lacked the quintessentially humanizing food, bitter manioc. The Akuriyo may have had gardens and bitter manioc in the past, and they were, long ago, allies of other *jana* or historic subgroups who cannot have considered them fierce, but these facts appear irrelevant to their current unequal alliance with the Trio. Even though they are now learning to grow and process manioc, the Trio still portray them as hunter-gatherers whose ignorance of this vital cultivated food is the ultimate evidence of barbarity, compared to which the inferior knowledge of Christianity is a mild stigma.

The Trio see the Akuriyo as fitting into categories that imply transformation and domestication. Carlos Fausto (1999b) has argued that a mode of social interaction and transformation central to native Amazonia is 'familiarizing predation', whereby 'other' people are ritually transformed into kin through a process of domestication following capture in warfare in the case of humans, or capture during forest expeditions in the case of pets. Put another way, the dialectic of predation and familiarization allows the production of persons and the reproduction of society. It provides the mechanism and the reason for domesticating the Other through nurture. The object of familiarizing predation is treated as a consanguine and referred to like an adoptive child (rather than a son-in-law, a distinction we will discuss shortly). Fausto (2008, 2012) has shown that the relationship also constitutes a form of ownership or 'mastery'. Today, the Trio refer to the Akuriyo attached to their households in terms of ownership, or *entume*: they say that they 'own' (*entume wae*) an Akuriyo. Ownership and mastery are in fact synonymous: *entú* signifies 'leader/owner/master' as well as 'source' or 'base of mountain', and *entume wae* means 'I own/control'. Akuriyo call their Trio masters *Tamu* – a word with a set of meanings that overlaps with those of *entú*, for it corresponds closely to the category of 'master/owner' that Fausto has identified across Amazonia. It signifies consanguineous asymmetry and is most commonly used to address both paternal and maternal grandfathers. It is also used to address a village leader or any senior man familiar to the speaker. In the possessive form, *itamú*, it is also the term used to refer to the spirit masters of animals. The significant point here is that the Akuriyo use a term of consanguinity to address their Trio masters. The latter treat their Akuriyo as servants

and do not address them using kinship terms; instead, they address them by name (which they never do to each other) or as *jahko*, a neutral term meaning something like ‘comrade’ whose use appears to be an outcome of the Trio’s sedentarization in large villages where they frequently come into contact with affines. They also refer to their Akuriyo servants with an affinal term, *pëito*, which we shall now discuss.

## Familiarization, Subjugation and Affinity

The Trio appear to see the domestication of the Akuriyo as a form of familiarizing predation and to treat them as a form of ‘pet’, following a pattern found elsewhere in Amazonia, according to Fausto (2008). The Akuriyo themselves say that they regard themselves as children in relation to the Trio, and that the Trio teach them about living in a civilized way, much as fathers teach sons. Yet the Trio also refer to the Akuriyo as their *pëito*, a word associated with affinity. In Wayana (many Wayana living in Tëpu have intermarried with the Trio), it means ‘son-in-law’. It is also the equivalent of the Carib *poito*, which was commonly used by both Caribs and Europeans in the colonial period to refer to ‘red’ or Amerindian slaves, for which European demand peaked in the eighteenth century (Whitehead 1988: 181). Neil Whitehead (1988: 181) explains the relationship between slavery and affinity in terms of warfare and trade:

Amerindian slaving can be understood as an extension of Carib trading activities, for only by trade and intermarriage would those populations from which the captives were taken be defined as *poitos*. Thus the Caribs would have stood in an affinal relation to the people they raided in virtue of the fact that they married the women and sold their ‘brothers-in-law’.

The Trio’s use of *pëito* seems to be a recent adoption from the Wayana. The corresponding Trio term *pito*, which has less asymmetrical connotations, is also still used today. Commenting on these words and their cognates among different Carib groups, Peter Rivière (1977: 40) notes that they ‘ha[ve] variously been translated as slave, servant, client, brother-in-law, son-in-law, and sister’s son’, adding that ‘this range of meanings covers a continuum from the potentially equal (brother-in-law) to the totally inferior (slave) ... however, slave and servant are concepts that are out of keeping with the nature of Carib societies as we know them today’. Whitehead also emphasizes the historical variation in the intensity of the asymmetry of the relationship with *poito*, underlining that ‘the “slave” status of the *poito* became more pronounced under European influence, both on account of the enhanced exchange value of such captives and because of the political advantages that accrued to the Caribs through their Euro-

pean alliances' (1988: 181) Whitehead further argues that this effect was especially strong in the Dutch colonies because the Dutch relied more heavily on trade to maintain 'access to, and control of, the Amerindian population', lacking the 'manpower and religious infrastructure of the Spanish' (184).

The case of the Trio's subjugation of the Akuriyo shows that since Rivière's own fieldwork, things have changed in ways he did not anticipate. More recent scholars of the Trio have struggled to understand the relationship between the terms *pito* and *pëito* as used by the Trio in the wake of these changes. The linguist Sergio Meira (1999: 590) disagrees with Rivière's suggestion that *pito* is a cognate of the widespread Carib term denoting 'slave' or 'servant', on the grounds that there is a more convincing case for arguing that *pëito* is the Trio equivalent, and thus *pëito*, not *pito*, would derive from the ancient Carib word *poito*. Meira does not seem to have been aware that *pëito* was a recent introduction in Trio. However, even without this knowledge, he might not have doubted that the two terms had a common origin had he been aware of the relationship between social subordination and affinity in Guiana Carib societies. *Pëito* means 'son-in-law' as well as 'follower/servant' in Wayana, and the Trio seem to have adopted the term from them in recent decades (indeed, after Rivière's fieldwork) during which the two groups have had sustained close contact including coresidence, mixed villages and intermarriage. Among the Trio, *pito* can refer to brothers-in-law as well as sons-in-law, and even to fathers-in-law. This is related to the traditional ideal of marriage with one's sister's daughter (Rivière 1969), which blurs the distinction between symmetrical (brother-in-law) and asymmetrical (son-in-law) relations. In other words, the differences between traditional Wayana and Trio marriage practices and political relations correspond to the differences between *pëito* and *pito*. The two terms in Trio and Wayana play equivalent roles, taking into account the greater emphasis on endogamy and individual autonomy among the Trio.<sup>9</sup>

*Pëito* was thus adopted from the Wayana to enable Trio people to express – and reproduce – new, more asymmetrical kinds of relationships. It is interesting that Rivière believed that the more extremely asymmetric forms of meaning for *pito/pëito* cognates on the continuum he described were more likely to be 'postcontact adaptations of indigenous ideas modified by European influence' than reflections of 'an earlier, more complex, and more hierarchical form of society that has now disappeared', although he recognized that these two explanations were not necessarily mutually exclusive (Rivière 1977: 40). This belief may seem to be supported by the fact that the capture and subordination of the Akuriyo (which resulted in the clearest example of asymmetrical relationships in Trio society today) would almost certainly not have happened without the missionaries' inter-

vention. On the other hand, Santos-Granero's recent study of indigenous Amazonian forms of slavery (2009 and this volume) shows that the pre-contact thesis should not be dismissed too lightly.

One might expect that carrying out fieldwork among the Trio would make Rivière more alert to the more 'equal' end of the continuum of meanings of *pito/pëito*. Yet he recognized that 'in all Carib societies the relationship between affines – and specifically between parents-in-law and their children-in-law – is always asymmetrical in nature, and this being the case, affinal relationships offer the best idiom for expression of political relationships that involve domination and subordination' (1977: 41). Here, then, we have the social category which allows the domestication of the *wajiarikure*, the wild people, and in the Trio's case *pëito* seems to have been adopted to refer to the new and exceptionally asymmetrical relationship with the Akuriyo.

It is worth noting that this shows that familiarizing predation among the Trio seems to be constituted affinally as well as consanguineally, rather than in unequivocally consanguineal terms. This difference may be partially explicable in light of the symbolic importance of the father-in-law among the Trio. In many myths a Trio man meets a jaguar or another forest person who entices him to marry his daughter, and only by avoiding eating the food of his host does he escape turning into a jaguar himself. Of course such myths express affinity, but they also express the dangers of marrying distant Others – one risks losing one's human perspective and in some cases may even have to attack and kill one's own former kin. They also express the ideal of marrying close, in which consanguinity and affinity shade into each other. And the risk of losing one's own perspective, as attested in numerous cases from all over Amazonia, derives from the fact that commensality and conviviality can lead to becoming kin: as Fausto (2007) has pointed out, by eating *with* each other (rather than eating each other), we come to share the same perspective. Indeed, as Lévi-Strauss argued in his article on the Nambiquara brother-in-law relationship (1943), the term (equivalent to *pito*) for the brother of a potential wife serves to create kinship relations between previously unrelated groups.

What is occurring in the case of the Akuriyo is precisely the opposite: they have been domesticated and made into servants, but neither marriage nor kinship relations have been created. That they are referred to as *pëito*, but never as *pito*, seems significant for understanding this. Santos-Granero (2009: 174) notes that slaves eventually tend to intermarry with their masters: 'captive slaves, servant groups and tributary populations were integrated, and eventually assimilated, into their masters' societies', yet '[e]nemies are equated to affines and game meat, whereas captive children are associated with consanguines and pets'. On one hand, the Akuriyo engage in a constant attempt to assert themselves as consanguines, de-



scribing themselves as being like the children of the Trio and thus implicitly bidding for their eventual integration into Trio society. On the other hand, the Trio maintain them as affines, placing them in a category, *pëito*, which demands service, and meanwhile withholding the only means by which Akuriyo may be familiarized as kin: intermarriage. They never call Akuriyo *pito* because this term would imply the potential, if not the realization, of marriage. In the Akuriyo case, intermarriage has not occurred in the forty years since their capture, except in certain rare cases. When such marriages have occurred, the relationship has always favoured the Trio. Trio 'ownership' of Akuriyo always trumps the usual behaviour expected of wife-givers and wife-takers, and if an Akuriyo should become a father-in-law to a Trio then it is the Akuriyo who performs services for his son-in-law, in a reversal of the traditional practice of bride service. Even when intermarriage occurs and affinity in this sense is thus realized, the relationship of mastery persists.

Fausto (1999a: 949) writes that 'to be powerful, shamans and warriors must ensure that the subjectivity of their wild pets is preserved, which means that they can never become entirely tamed'. This ambivalence is at the heart of mastery. But it seems that a similar ambivalence lies at the heart of asymmetric relations of control – an ambivalence that can itself take the form of chronic slippage between the two forms of asymmetry, consanguineal and affinal, in native Amazonian social relations.

## Nurture

The Trio mastery over the Akuriyo can also be read in terms of feeding and nurture. The image of the prestation of manioc – the quintessential humanizing food, associated with maternal nurture – constantly recurs in the contact narratives of missionaries and Amerindians alike, and is the key image in the idiom of 'care for the Other' as constituting the driving force behind contact (Crocker n.d.; Schoen 1969, 1971). Certainly Amerindian and non-Amerindian views on this idea of 'care', the word used by missionaries in their accounts, differ in a way that reflects diverging views about the nature of these other people and the underlying reason for their need for care. The missionary notion of care found resonance in a set of Trio processual kinship practices that we can understand in terms of nurture. Nurture in this sense implies a relation that engenders regressive control because it places contacted peoples in the social position of children who need to be fed and educated.

The 'domestication' or 'taming' of other groups occurs throughout the Guianas. The Waiwai, following their contact expeditions to sedentarize and 'domesticate' neighbouring groups (Howard 2001), maintain

their relationship with these groups through various prestations clearly expressed in the institution of the alliance feast, at which the exchange of manioc beer or bread plays a key role. These alliance feasts today differ significantly from those recalled in oral narratives of the more distant past. For example, when the Apalai, having had enough of war, decided to accept the equivalence of the Wayana's culture, they exchanged both beer and women with them (Barbosa 2002: 180–82).<sup>10</sup> In contrast, the Waiwai and the Surinamese Trio and Wayana, as Christian converts, were convinced of the superiority of their newly modified way of life; therefore their prestation of manioc was not to be reciprocated. Their expeditions to contact other groups were not for the purpose of alliance in the conventional sense. Their purpose was evangelical, and as such it was to give culture, not to receive it; correspondingly, they were to give manioc,<sup>11</sup> not receive it. The result was integration, or in the case of the Akuriyo, incorporation and subjection: an unequal alliance. This should be seen in conjunction with the fact that in such cases knowledge, in the form of evangelization, is also primarily passed from manioc-giving hosts to manioc-receiving guests, reversing the usual direction.<sup>12</sup>

Although they were not 'tamed' by the Trio or Wayana in the same sense in which other Amerindian groups were, it is useful to compare the case of the Maroons – the descendants of slaves who escaped Dutch plantations in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and were, for over a hundred years, the Trio's privileged trading partners. The Trio say that Maroons, like the Akuriyo, do not 'know about' manioc (although in fact they do grow it); also like the Akuriyo, Maroons are not considered suitable marriage partners. The modalities of the relationship between categories of people are thus expressed in the reciprocal or nonreciprocal prestation of beer and women: 'real' people gave manioc to Akuriyo and Maroons, who are classified as 'lacking' manioc; this marks them out as unsuitable wife-takers.

During our field research Trio people often contrasted their past life in the forest, characterized by warfare and spirit attacks, with their present living conditions in large, sedentary villages near rivers, where former enemies intermarry and live in peace with one another. In this new way of life they attach great importance to a capacity for extended socialization, the quintessential symbol of which is manioc production and processing. But additionally, in the eyes of our Trio interlocutors, wildness implied greater exposure to the spirit world and to body-strengthening techniques that the Trio gradually gave up as a compromise to live in larger sedentary settlements. So the Akuriyo did not represent an Amerindian version of the intellectually inferior Aristotelian natural slave who could be captured with ease, but rather an ambivalent, highly transformative Other whose wildness had to be carefully controlled. In accounts of first encounters, whereas the missionaries emphasize the Trios' willingness

to tell the recently contacted hunter-gatherers about the Bible and God, the Trio remember the importance of handing over manioc bread and teaching the rudiments of garden clearing and manioc planting – manioc being the substance from which the bodies of ‘real people’ are made. In short, whereas the missionaries wanted to humanize the Akuriyo by inculcating Christian knowledge, the Trio wanted to socialize the Akuriyo by inculcating moral convention through action on their bodies rather than on their minds. Both cases, however, entailed an insistence on caring for these wild people as a motivating force.

Securing the Akuriyo well-being implied both healing and educating them. Upon being sedentarized, the Akuriyo were exposed to many infectious diseases for the first time. Adding to the trauma of their radical change of lifestyle, health problems had a major impact: about a quarter of those contacted died within the first year of their sedentarization (Kloos 1977a, 1977b). The wives of Trio expedition members got involved in caring for the Akuriyo, especially by treating them for their illnesses. This was very much encouraged by the missionaries, who considered this form of dedication a true demonstration of the altruistic potential of the Trio, revealed by their conversion to Christianity (Schoen 1969; Yohner 1970).

Educating was as important as healing. When we asked our host why he went to the Akuriyo, he answered that it was because they did not know how to live properly and needed to be taught. When telling us this, he used the words *enpa*, which the Trio use to describe the kind of education that a father gives to his son (see also Kloos 1977a), and *arimika*, which describes the nurture of children by mothers. While the notion that the Akuriyo needed to be taught how to live might well owe something to missionary influence, its expression in the idiom of consanguinity is at least consistent with the principle of familiarizing predation. Bringing up a child among the Trio is associated less with doing than with undoing: *arimika*, the word for a mother’s upbringing of her child, means ‘to undo the spider monkey’, as at birth the ontological status of an infant is still indeterminate; consequently, any traces of wildness have to be gradually undone to secure it as a human and a relative.

After their incorporation into Trio social networks, the surviving Akuriyo appeared more than ever to have this need to be cared for. In both Amerindian and non-Amerindian discourse, the predator gradually becomes a carer who secures the well-being of his prey. This change evokes the relationship between control and protection underlined by Fausto, who observes that ‘the owners control and protect their creatures, being responsible for their well-being, reproduction and mobility. This asymmetry implies not only control but care’. He goes on to comment that ‘from the perspective of whoever is adopted-captured, being or placing oneself in the position of an orphan or a wild pet is more than just a negative

injunction: it may also be a positive way of eliciting attention and generosity' (2012: 32). As if to confirm this view, an Akuriyo hunter described to us that he considered himself to be like a child, and that when he and his kin lived in the forest they were ignorant of the things they were now being taught in Tëpu. However, this version of Trio-Akuriyo relations exemplifies only one dimension of a complex web of relations; one may see it as the 'official line' given in discourses in which Trio or missionaries are present. When alone, our host's Akuriyo helper abandoned the discourse of the child benefiting from education to complain bitterly about the rough treatment inflicted upon him daily and tell about intimidation, beating and theft.

From the missionaries' point of view, the mere fact that these discourses of nurture were still repeated to non-Amerindians like ourselves thirty years after the Akuriyo were brought to Tëpu shows that something has gone amiss and the process of assimilation has in effect stalled into mere incorporation. These peculiar 'children' never became civilized but remained servants undergoing a perpetual nurturing and humanizing process, neither processual kin nor attractive marriageable partners. Trio themselves consider the Akuriyo effort to adopt Trio social conventions as a failure in many regards. Today they still see Akuriyo gardens as primitive and unproductive, their cooking and manioc processing as dangerously incompetent, and their treatment of their bodies as far from sufficient to make them 'proper'. But whereas their socialization has failed, their wildness has allowed them to maintain a certain supremacy in the world of the forest. Hunting and gathering remain their domains of excellence, something the Trio candidly admit they cannot be as good at simply because their bodies are not as strong and fierce anymore. They associate this 'softening' with their sedentarization and their conversion to Christianity.

Predators of unerring strength and skill, the Akuriyo are a unique source of services and goods for their Trio guardians, who enjoy increased influence and status through them by enlisting their services. At times of large-scale celebrations in particular, they rely on Akuriyo hunting skills to provide game for the participants. Trio men with trading partners in the city enlist Akuriyo hunters to obtain game, which the former can send to the market by air for a considerable profit. Yet the Akuriyo remain marginal and subject to the Trio's surveillance and control, although their mistreatment at the hands of the Trio is somewhat restrained by fears that they may put powerful curses on their tormentors. In short, from this perspective the Akuriyo typify a form of servitude that presents aspects of a situationally reversible asymmetry – a form of reciprocal hierarchy that depends upon the social surroundings, with the village at one end of the spectrum and the forest at the other.

## Conclusion

The modes and effects of the nurturing relationships that were sealed at the time of contact and have evolved up to the present day between expedition members and contacted ‘wild people’ – that is, the relations between captors and captives, between carers and cared for – can shed light on the expression of a peculiar form of Amerindian ownership that may have resonance elsewhere in native lowland South America. This is especially clear from Santos-Granero’s work on captive slavery, which is based on a study of multiple early sources that was undertaken in such a way as to exclude the possibility of European influence on the practices described (2009; also see Santos-Granero this volume). In his analysis of the ‘process in which slaves shifted from a marginal condition as recent war prisoners to their integration as subordinates and, eventually, to their (or their descendants’) assimilation into their masters’ kinship networks’, Santos-Granero (2009: 200) equates wildness with lack of humanity, arguing that wild or enslavable Others are treated like game that can be preyed upon – they are ‘total strangers uncontaminated by links of consanguinity, with whom ... one does not marry but rather makes war’. Captives were treated much like pets, except that they were to be turned into people and ultimately into kin. Their role was not merely material but more importantly allowed the reproduction of society. It was ultimately more concerned with the creation of sameness rather than the maintenance of otherness – slavery was about the conquest and acquisition of symbolic vitality (207).

Santos-Granero understands the capture and appropriation of persons in native Amazonian societies in terms of the renewal and reproduction of society, accomplished by making enemies into real people. It involves the creation of relations of ownership through the capture of wild Others. These relations of ownership are an effect of social reproduction, which is a process of transformation from Other into kin. But the case presented here suggests something more complicated. Before contact was established between Trio and Akuriyo, the Trio did indeed regard the *wajari-kure*, as they called them, as wild enemies rather than potential affines. After contact was established, Trio and Akuriyo each sought to fit the other into relationship categories that best suited their interests. The Trio adopted a Wayana term to affirm the Akuriyo as affines, placing them in a role that would require the Akuriyo to serve them. The Akuriyo, meanwhile, responded to the Trio’s nurturing actions by reaffirming the consanguineous relationship they implied, calling the Trio *tamu*. These distinct Trio and the Akuriyo points of view can explain why the relationship terms each uses for the other are not terms that one would ordinarily expect to be mutually reciprocated. Here, words are not exchanged for words, but for actions. The Trio address their Akuriyo captives as *pëito*,

and the Akuriyo respond with work. The Akuriyo call their Trio captors *tamu*, and are rewarded with care.

This divergence between the Trio and Akuriyo understandings of the relationship between them is precisely what allows the relationship to be perpetuated. But it also illustrates something more general about native Amazonian societies. Historical accounts of Guiana Carib slavery have emphasized the affinal relationship expressed in the term *poito*. Meanwhile, accounts of war captives from elsewhere – such as, most famously, those of the Tupinambá – have emphasized the ‘familiarizing predation’ that functions in the idiom of consanguinity. Both cases involve an openness towards alterity, which Viveiros de Castro contends does not concern ‘the creation of sameness rather than the maintenance of otherness’. He argues instead that the Tupinambá and other Amerindian societies are founded on ‘the relationship to others, and not self-identity’. He then goes on to quote James Clifford:

Stories of cultural contact and change have been structured by a pervasive dichotomy: absorption by the other *or* resistance to the other. ... Yet what if identity is conceived not as a boundary to be maintained but as a nexus of relations and transactions actively engaging a subject? The story or stories of interaction must then be more complex, less linear and theological. What changes when the subject of ‘history’ is no longer Western? How do stories of contact, resistance, and assimilation appear from the standpoint of groups in which exchange rather than identity is the fundamental value to be sustained? (Clifford 1988: 344, cited in Viveiros de Castro 2011: 17–18)

In the 1970s, the missionaries – and the anthropologist Peter Kloos – predicted that the Akuriyo would quickly become Trio, that the Trio would impose their identity upon them. This did not happen, and we might hope to find that acts of resistance performed by Akuriyo people are the reason. It is indeed gratifying to watch Akuriyo hunters as they enter the forest: they stand taller, their eyes brightening as they begin to enjoy some short-lived autonomy. Similarly, when an Akuriyo complains to an anthropologist about being mistreated by his Trio owner, we may or may not interpret this as some sort of act of resistance. However, we suspect that such resistance plays little or no role in the actual relationship between Trio and Akuriyo. When Akuriyo complain to an outsider of petty acts of violence that Trio perpetrate on them, they call for pity, appealing to the anthropologist, in this case, to engage or continue to engage in another paternalistic and nurturing relationship. Meanwhile the violence itself no doubt reiterates and helps maintain the Akuriyo’s lowly status.

The relationship between the Trio and Akuriyo is fundamentally ambivalent. From the Trio point of view, the Akuriyo are servants and bride servants without brides. They are objects of property that are to be nurtured but never allowed to become full and proper Trio persons. The

Akuriyo meanwhile cling to the potential of the Trio's nurturing role to transform them into Trio and dissolve the affinal difference between the two groups. They address their Trio masters as *tamu* and emphasize that they are to become civilized. The emphasis is on *becoming*: the Akuriyo are continually becoming kin. Trio and Akuriyo have found a way of maintaining a relationship of exchange and continual transformation that is premised upon, and perpetuates, their divergent points of view.

## Coda

During field research in 2011 we discovered that a group of Trio men from Suriname had visited a remote group of Zo'é, a Tupi-speaking group living in isolation in a remote part of the Brazilian state of Pará, under the protection of FUNAI, the Brazilian Indian agency. The Trio delegation took trade objects – fishhooks, metal tools, clothes. They brought a young Zo'é boy to visit their home villages in Suriname and took video footage of his adventure with their mobile phones. Stories circulate about other isolated groups and further plans for contact expeditions. According to the missionaries still active in Suriname, the Trio, of their own initiative, are carrying out their own evangelical missions to reach uncontacted peoples with the goal of converting them to Christianity. While this may be true, we hope that we have shown that this missionary zeal is founded upon a more ingrained desire to embrace alterity – that is, to help Others to become Trio and thus to become white themselves – for the Trio relationship with the Akuriyo, and perhaps in turn the Zo'é, reproduces that of the missionaries with the Trio themselves, in which nurture and alterity are perpetuated together.

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## Notes

This chapter is a synthesis of the authors’ separate contributions to the workshop, ‘Relações (Im)próprias’, which we co-organized with Carlos Fausto at the Museu Nacional in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in 2010. An early version was presented at the Research Seminar on Anthropological Theory at the London School of Economics in March 2013, convened by Matthew Engelke. We are grateful for the comments and suggestions of participants on both occasions. We are immensely indebted to our Trio, Akuriyo and Wayana friends and hosts. We also wish to express our gratitude towards Peter Rivière for sharing with us unpublished documents from his personal collection.

1. There are just over 2,000 Trio and just under 2,000 Wayana. The Akuriyo number less than 40.
2. Radios were clearly an important tool for the contact expedition. Unfortunately the missionary accounts offer no indication of how the Akuriyo thought of these objects, although one may easily imagine that they perceived them as powerful and mysterious. What we can say is that today, Akuriyo people, in contrast to their Trio neighbours, do not use the radio, for two reasons. First, there are few Akuriyo in other villages, and Akuriyo travel little except in the forest – they therefore have virtually no kin, trading partners or friends to speak to on the radio. Secondly, speaking on the radio requires adoption of a ‘strong talking’ idiom and confident deployment of protocol such as the English term ‘over’, or the Trio *‘meta’* (‘you hear’ [i.e. ‘do you copy?’ in radio protocol]). The Akuriyo are extremely reserved and timid; to adopt this mode of speech would be almost unthinkable for them.
3. At the time, the characteristic Trio hairstyle was long at the back and sides with a short, straight fringe. Today this remains the hairstyle of choice for older Trio men who wish to affect a traditional appearance. Then as now, the most respected Trio men pluck all of their body hair, including not only eyebrows but also eyelashes.
4. Particularly the Waiwai, see Howard (2001).
5. Prior to missionization, the Trio were by their own account engaged in more or less constant war with their neighbours in cycles of vengeance alternating between shamanic spirit attacks and warrior raids. They thus maintained a form of negative reciprocity with their enemies. The *wajarikure*, in contrast, isolated themselves, remaining mysterious and frightening to the Trio, who in turn avoided making contact with them.
6. A key institution in Trio kinship (though ideally cancelled out by marrying ego’s sister’s daughter) is the practice of bride service: marriage tends to be uxorilocal, at least for an initial period during which the new husband carries out services such as building canoes and houses, clearing gardens, hunting and fishing for his parents-in-law (see Brightman 2007 and Rivière 1969 for further discussion).
7. In one or two instances Akuriyo men have married old Trio women, and Trio men have married Akuriyo women, but otherwise no intermarriage has occurred. In practical terms, it is favourable for a Trio man to be married to an Akuriyo



- woman because he can hardly be obliged to carry out bride service for an Akuriyo father-in-law. In exactly the same way, the Makú, whom the Tukanoans treat as servants, only intermarry with Tukanoan men: ‘Whilst Tukanoans sometimes take Makú wives, Makú men do not marry Tukanoan women’ (Silverwood-Cope 1972: 200).
8. See Keifenheim (1997) on ‘wild’ Mashiku Indians ‘pacified’ by the Kashinawa: their status is ambiguously poised between ‘brother-in-law’ and ‘slave’.
  9. We are grateful to Luiz Costa (pers. comm. 14 July 2010) for his detailed comments and notes on this point. For further discussion see Brightman (forthcoming).
  10. The exchange of women and food to end conflict is a recurrent theme in Wayana mytho-historical narratives (Chapuis and Rivière 2003: passim).
  11. Protestant missionaries, unlike the Catholics in Missão, have attempted to eliminate the production of beer wherever they have had influence (among the Wayana, Trio, Waiwai and Wapishana). They have completely succeeded only in the case of the Waiwai, who replaced it with a non-alcoholic alternative also made from manioc that is called *pënkulpë* by the Trio, who therefore also call the Waiwai *pënkulpësawa*, ‘drinkers of *pënkulpë*’ (C. Koelewijn, pers. comm. 2004).
  12. Knowledge of the forest, hunting skills and shamanic knowledge are passed from guest to host under such circumstances. We observed this in the case of the Trio-Akuriyo relationship, as did Howard (2001) in the case of the Waiwai and the ‘unseen tribes’.

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