Interkulturelle Studien zu Ritual, Spiel und Theater
Intercultural Studies on Ritual, Play and Theatre

This is a fascinating compilation of medical, psychological and sociological papers on the spread of ayahuasca use ... in Brazil and in several European countries (Germany, France, Italy, Spain, Netherlands), as well as the USA. ... Highly recommended for serious students of this subject.

Ralph Metzner, Ph.D, Psychologist and author of Sacred Vine of Spirits – Ayahuasca

The Internationalization of Ayahuasca provides reliable information that has never before appeared in print, ranging from the rain forests of the Amazon to the churches in Western Europe. ... Like it or not, ayahuasca has left the jungle and is here to stay! Read this book and you will understand the importance of its arrival on the global scene.

Dr. Stanley Krippner, Ph.D., Alan Watts Professor of Psychology, Saybrook University

The contributors provide a detailed consideration of the legal situation of ayahuasca ... as well as a multidisciplinary assessment of the health implications of its use. The Internationalization of Ayahuasca is a must-read for anyone attempting to understand the global implications of ayahuasca today.

Dr. Michael Winkelman, M.P.H., Ph.D., Author of Shamanism – A Biopsychosocial Paradigm of Consciousness and Healing

LIT
www.lit-verlag.ch

978-3-643-90148-4

Labate, Jungaberle (Eds.) The Internationalization of Ayahuasca

Performanzen / Performances

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The Internationalization of Ayahuasca

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Contents

Tracing Hallucinations: Contributing to a Critical Ethnohistory of Ayahuasca Usage in the Peruvian Amazon[1]

Bernd Brabec de Mori

> One thing is certain: Both indigenous and mestizo shamans consider people like the Shipibo-Conibo, the Tukano, the Kamsa, and the Huitoto as the equivalents to universities such as Oxford, Cambridge, Harvard, and the Sorbonne; they are the highest reference in matters of knowledge. In this sense, ayahuasca-based shamanism is an essentially indigenous phenomenon. It belongs to the indigenous people of Western Amazonia, who hold the keys to a way of knowing that they have practiced without interruption for at least five thousand years. In comparison, the universities of the Western world are less than nine hundred years old.
>
> Jeremy Narby, *The Cosmic Serpent* (1998:154).[2]

During the evolution of modern anthropology and ethnology in the 19th century, most researchers believed, in line with their era's common sense, that whatever so-called *Naturvölker* or "primitive peoples" performed was conserved from the Stone Age and represented a pre-civilized way of living and understanding. Usually, these researchers did not assume any development beyond occidental or missionary influence (which was considered "civilization"). Thus, in 19th-century ethnology the importance of "old knowledge" in indigenous societies was defined circularly under the assumption that indigenous knowledge would be "old." Although 20th century authors from Malinowski to Narby (quoted above) provided a great development regarding the anthropologists' points of view, research methods, theories, and understanding of what they were doing, some dogmata from the discipline's beginnings are rooted so deeply in academic structures and fieldwork strategies that not every researcher could get rid of them.

Narby is not the only author writing about age-old ayahuasca traditions. In the ayahuasca-related literature one commonly finds statements like "ayahuasca is a sacred drink used for millennia by numerous indigenous groups" (Luna & White, 2000, on the book's back). In some cases, one can distinguish between analytical and somehow – maybe unconsciously – idealized statements. For example, McKenna (1999) first analyzes: "about all that can be stated with certainty is that it [ayahuasca] was already spread among numerous indigenous tribes throughout the Amazon basin by the time ayahuasca came to the attention of Western ethnographers in the mid-nineteenth century" (p. 189). However, later in the same paper he states that "the lessons we have acquired from it [the association of ayahuasca with the human species], in the course of millennia of coevolution, may have profound implications for what it is to be human" (McKenna, 1999, p. 207). Unfortunately, there is still no evidence found to back up the assumption that ayahuasca has been used since pre-

Columbian times. The often quoted "archeological evidence" by Naranjo (1986) exclusively shows that people in the Ecuadorian rainforests produced small ceramic vessels since about 2400 B.C., but there is no valid indication of ayahuasca use (see also McKenna, 1999, p. 190; Bianchi, 2005, p. 319). In a newer paper, Naranjo (1995) himself totally skips this hypothesis. Ogalde, Arriaza and Soto (2009) provide evidence of harmine in ancient Chilean mummies' hair, which the authors themselves interpret as an evidence for the ingestion of *Banisteriopsis* by these people. Contrastingly, they also tested positive in hair taken from living people who used harmine containing hair dyers – thus restricting their findings to an evidence of the *use of harmine containing preparations* by the people of the Azapa valley during the Tiwanaku horizon, which anyway constitutes an important finding. Finally, *Banisteriopsis* is not necessarily the only plant in South America containing harmine (as Ogalde et al. argue), as was shown by Lindgren (1995, p. 347-348).

With this article, I will not question the importance of ayahuasca use within indigenous and mestizo societies, or within spiritual contexts in Brazil and in the globalizing world. Acknowledging its qualities, I am going to challenge only the assumption of millennial knowledge in the case of ayahuasca use. I also have to make clear that I refer to the currently known formula of the ayahuasca brew, that is *Banisteriopsis* in combination with *Psychotria* or *Diplopterys* (with optional additives). Therefore, I will distinguish between "ayahuasca" (referring to the hallucinogenic brew) and "*Banisteriopsis*" (referring to the vine). I am not going to treat the use of *Banisteriopsis* vine without the mentioned combinations, nor the use of other psychoactive plants in fairly ancient times. My aim is to show that the current global spreading of ayahuasca use is not new to this substance, but rather a logical consequence of its prior spreading within the Amazon basin. Among most researchers (e.g. see Zuluaga, 2004, p. 132) there is a consensus that an "origin" of ayahuasca, however remote it may be, should be located in the western Amazonian lowlands around the Río Napo, and it probably was discovered by western Tukanoan populations or their predecessors. From this region, it is thought, ayahuasca use has then spread among other peoples and regions. It is beyond the scope of this paper to treat all parts of the whole Amazonian-Caribbean region where today ayahuasca is being used in a way commonly referred to as "traditional." Although I doubt that ayahuasca has been used "for millennia" in general I cannot claim to have found its "origin" neither in time nor in space. In this analysis, I am going to show that in the already fairly large area of the Peruvian lowlands south of Iquitos (where I conducted fieldwork, mainly in the Ucayali valley) the use of ayahuasca is probably less than 300 years old.

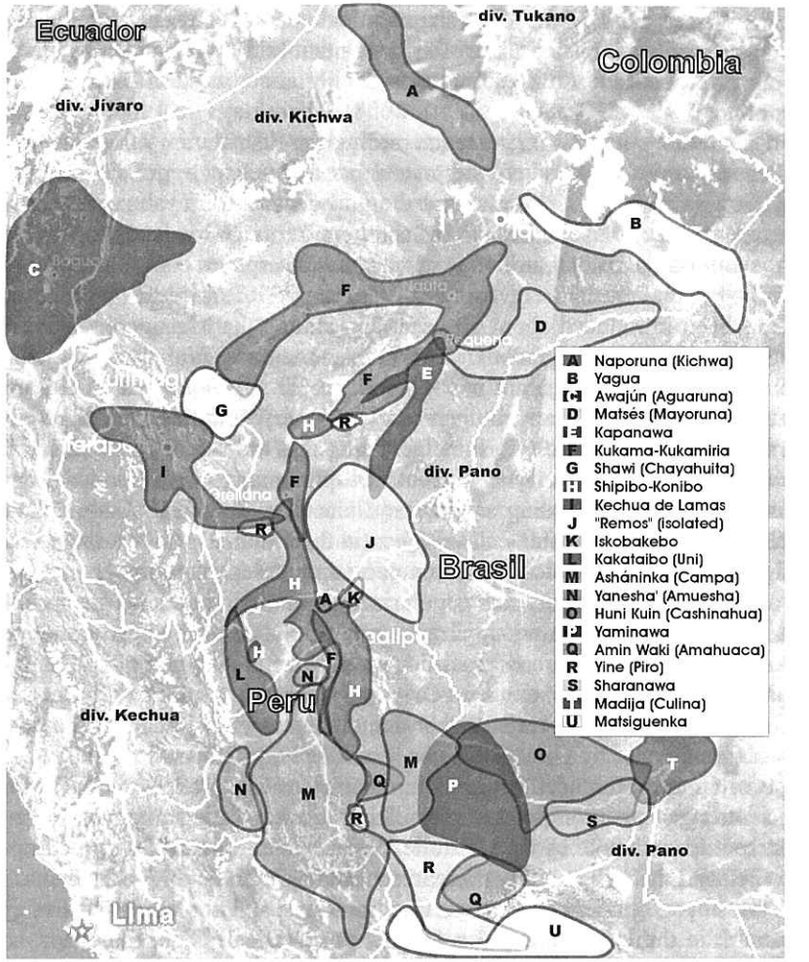

Figure 1: This map shows the areas occupied by indigenous groups mentioned in the text in a simplified and approximate manner. There are many more groups which are not shown. Andine Quechua and mestizo populations can be found mainly within the cities and along the big rivers. Mestizo settlements (*caseríos*) are found also within "indigenous territory." The map is taken from Google Earth®, indications by the author.

I was first drawn to Peru by the musical practice accompanying ayahuasca sessions. Therefore, I do understand many researcher's attraction to this fabulous substance because it allows us to take a glimpse at the *médico*'s[3] (usually invisible) activities even after a single session involving the ingestion of ayahuasca – and to begin understanding them by participant observation. However, when staying in the field without looking for "shamans" or ayahuasca, one becomes aware of a multitude of complex relations between cosmologies, arts, storytelling, conviviality, and medicine, as un-

derstood by large parts of the "non-shaman" indigenous or mestizo population that explicitly refrain from ayahuasca use.[4] It seems that both "shamanism" and ayahuasca have been significantly overestimated in studies about western Amazonian people since around 1970 (cf. Brabec de Mori, 2008). Therefore I feel inclined to analyze some of the ethnohistorical processes regarding the distribution of ayahuasca usage in the Peruvian rainforests. There are precedents for such an approach, most remarkably by Gow (1994), who suggests that the introduction of "ayahuasca shamanism" (the therapeutic use of ayahuasca) to the southern Peruvian lowlands took place relatively recently via missions, urban areas and mestizo settlements. Shepard (1998, p. 326) indicates that the current formula of mixing *Banisteriopsis* with *Psychotria* leaves has been introduced about 50 years ago among the Matsigenka of Manú. He recounts that in both Matsigenka and Asháninka societies, *Banisteriopsis* seemed to be known and used, although not in conjunction with *Psychotria* and therefore without or with very limited "hallucinogenic" or visionary qualities. The same observation is shared by Bianchi (2005), thus indicating that the use of many plants including *Banisteriopsis* may well be ancient. Despite many well-founded arguments regarding plant usage including several psychoactives, it appears that ayahuasca as we know it today is not as old. Calavia Sáez (in this volume) stresses that exactly the visionary and thus communicative (often quoted as "telepathic") quality of the compound ayahuasca has led to its vast popularization among indigenous groups.

One may criticize that I am skipping the indigenous point of view on the phenomenon, despite many indigenous practitioners who refer to pre-Columbian roots of ayahuasca use. I do so consciously because it a known issue in anthropology that creation myths refer to the present rather than to "history" as understood in the West, as shown for example by Gow (2001) or Illius (1999, p. 128). Also, indigenous protagonists often use references to pre-Columbian roots as a (well-working) strategy to obtain a stronger position in the globalizing world. This strategy is now well-documented, for example by de L'Estoile, Neiburg and Sigaud (2005) or López Caballero (2008). Finally, I actually do represent the opinion held by indigenous people who do not engage in the commerce around ayahuasca. After some years of systematic research in the Ucayali area (on topics not specifically connected to ayahuasca use, mainly musical and other artistic practices) it became clear to me that the majority of locals does not consider ayahuasca as something necessary besides its key function in attracting tourists, researchers and development projects in present days (cf. Brabec de Mori, 2008).

Why to Provide a History for Ayahuasca

When I first presented my arguments to fortify Gow's hypothesis in Austria at the 2005 National Latin Americanists' Conference, and especially in December of the same year in Lima,[5] many discussants rejected the idea, in some cases in fairly emotional terms. The same happened at the 2008 Heidelberg conference, from which the present volume emerged.

Let us briefly consider the reasons why so many serious researchers are doubtful about a recent distribution of ayahuasca. Of course, one is ever to be skeptical about

things one learns in the field. After all, there are a lot of tall tales going around. One reason appears to be the bias mentioned earlier, namely that Westerners still – perhaps even unconsciously – tend to connect "old" with "precious" and specifically "indigenous," and correspondingly, "new" with "invented, constructed, copied." Within indigenous groups, the perception appears the other way round. Chaumeil (1998, p. 15-31) describes recent developments in Yagua medical practices, stressing innovations like telephones, parabolic antennae, and syringes as being used by present-day Yagua "shamans" for communication with spirits, for spiritual operations, and so on.[6] If today's Yagua perceive everything new as interesting and powerful and thus pursue implications of these items into their ways of living, it is probable that they did this in the past too.

Another reason, however, seems to be the seductive image of being able to glimpse into a phenomenon which allows us to understand certain processes but which is also framed in the West as drug abuse, so that we feel the urge to "justify" it vis-à-vis the rest of the West. It makes a difference indeed whether we report to the public that we are investigating a hallucinogenic drug that was spread relatively recently through Catholic missions and by rainforest mestizos, or whether we report that we are researching a traditional remedy that has been used by forest indians for at least five thousand years. The crucial point, I fear, is not what anthropologists and ethnohistorians think about the issue, but rather the opinion held by the public, the drug and biopiracy policy, and in the end, even by some research funders.

Another aspect grows just out of this public opinion, namely the "Globalization of Ayahuasca." This process developed since Burroughs and Ginsberg's *Yagé Letters* (1963), but grew to an important issue only during the last two decades. There is increasing ayahuasca tourism, and ayahuasca healing ceremonies are held throughout the Western world (see e.g. Tupper, 2009; and various contributions to the present volume). Here, ayahuasca receives a new role in therapeutic and psychosocial processes which it never had in the western Amazon.[7] "Modern ayahuasca shamans" (or "plastic-medicine-[wo]men," see Tupper, 2009, p. 125) and users usually attribute "curing power" to this plant preparation without acknowledging that in the western Amazon ayahuasca represents but one small aspect of a highly developed system of medicine and conviviality. This system does not depend on ayahuasca (e.g. for the Shipibo-Konibo, see Tournon, 2002; Leclerc, 2004; Brabec de Mori, 2007, 2008, 2009).

In the 21st century, ayahuasca is often taken out of its context and is presented as a cure-all (which it definitely is not). Although the present volume shows that the discourse around current uses of ayahuasca is not as simple, in the course of romantic popularization it might acquire a status comparable to LSD, which was attributed similar qualities by many enthusiasts among Timothy Leary's followers. In the face of these tendencies I think it is necessary to wipe the slate clean and reconsider the following issues: (i) where did the hallucinogenic compound ayahuasca come from, (ii) when was it actually discovered, (iii) how did it spread among "numerous indigenous groups," (iv) what was its role in indigenous and mestizo conviviality and (v) what is its role nowadays. In this article, I am going to treat mainly the issue of its spreading – thus, we will perhaps not even answer the first question, but we may stimulate the debate around the topic.

Preliminary Observations

Beforehand, we should distinguish between two styles of ayahuasca use that are popular among western Amazonian people, and which are mutually exclusive (save rare exceptions): first, the use of ayahuasca by a specialist (about 95% male), who then uses his clairvoyance for curing, manipulation or sorcery, while his patients, victims or audience do not ingest the drug. This is what is commonly referred to as "ayahuasca shamanism." Mainly the indigenous groups living on the big rivers and in easily accessible regions prefer this style, as do riverine mestizo *médicos* (*vegetalistas*). Urban "ayahuasca shamans," however, often also administer the brew to some of their clients.

The second way of using ayahuasca takes place within a group, usually men, in order to experience the effects like an entertaining cinema, to strengthen group identity, to acquire certain abilities or to summon success for warfare and hunting. This second usage is found mainly with backwood groups, the Awajún and the Mai Huna in the north, and in the south the Asháninka, the Amin Waki, Sharanawa and the Madija, for example. Curing and sorcery among these groups is done by a specialist, usually without using ayahuasca.[8] Notably, this style reached the Brazilian peoples who created the *Santo Daime*, *Barquinha* and *União do Vegetal* churches (cf. Labate, Rose & Santos, 2009). Bianchi (2005) builds his argument in favor of a more relative view on ayahuasca usage in the Peruvian rainforests upon exactly this distinction between "curanderos" occupied with healing (our first group) and "shamans" concerned with woodland magic (in our second group). In my opinion, the fact that ayahuasca was used either in curing ceremonies performed by specialists or in identity-strengthening social events even adds to the theory that it was distributed within multi-ethnic missionary *reducciones* or rubber camps, where many minority groups suffered from identity problems, while other groups even performed their curing rituals there.[9]

Within both missions and rubber camps, Christianity played an important role. In my master's thesis (Brabec de Mori, 2002, p. 143-145) I tried to distinguish mestizo and indigenous styles of conducting ayahuasca sessions by the amount of "Christian camouflage," which seems more present in mestizo than in indigenous settings; corresponding to Gow's (1994) observation that:

> one of the most remarkable aspects of the ayahuasca curing session is the way it implicitly parodies the Catholic Mass. This is most dramatically evident in the way in which the shaman blows tobacco smoke over each little cup of ayahuasca before it is given to the drinkers. (p. 107)

This is but one instance of "Christian camouflage." To give another example: I observed in almost any ayahuasca session that co-drinkers, patients, and present relatives at some point of the session (collectively and/or individually) received a similar "sacrament" by the conducting *médico*, as he blew tobacco smoke or perfume over the persons' head, body and – often folded – hands. All this "Christian camouflage" does not seem to have emerged from the intention to disguise the ancient ayahuasca practice within contexts dominated by Christian dogmata, but rather indicates that the practice evolved entirely within these contexts. I will not go into further detail here because Gow (1994) has already provided a profound analysis.

When Gow (1994) writes that his "analysis is somewhat speculative and suffers from a lack of hard data to back it up" (p. 92), he touches upon a crucial point. The ethnohistory of western Amazonia is very complicated and poorly documented. Researchers who gathered broad comparative data in the course of extended journeys, like Tessmann (1930) or Girard (1958), were not interested in analyzing a particular people's past, also clinging to common dogmata of their time. From Girard until now, most ethnographers in the western Amazon concentrated their research on a single community, and sometimes even on a single village or family.

Thus, reliable ethnohistorical comparative data is relatively rare. Although the "hard data" to back up Gow's "somewhat speculative analysis" is still not available and, due to Amazonian peculiarities in historical evidence, perhaps never will be, let us discuss a number of further indications, call it "soft data," that point towards a relatively short history of ayahuasca use at least in the Peruvian rainforests.

Parting Point: the Shipibo-Konibo and their Teachers

> A very powerful healer from downriver, his name was Agustín Murayari, after his death transformed into the ayahuasca liana. His wife, Maria Luisa, who had knowledge of all the medical plants, after her death converted into the chakruna bush. That's why you have to use them together, they are husband and wife.[10]

For most of the time that I spent in the field I lived and worked with Shipibo-Konibo people. I participated and tape-recorded many ayahuasca sessions with Shipibo-Konibo *médicos*. Beside my high esteem for these experts' mastery I was soon confronted with some problems that did not fit into the picture of a millennial ayahuasca tradition.

First, a very prominent figure, known in almost any study about the Shipibo-Konibo, is the *meraya*, a legendary master healer. Today, very few or no *meraya* are alive or active.[11] The *meraya* is described as a person who disposes of direct connections (*kano*) to the spirit world and is thus able to transform into an animal or a spiritual being at will. The common picture of a *meraya* performing a curing session is that he stays within his mosquito net (*bachi*) while patients and audience are sitting outside. The *meraya* smokes or ingests a tobacco preparation and starts to sing in a highly valorized falsetto voice (*wirish*). Then, some curious boy would lift the mosquito net and would be scared because he could not see anybody inside but everybody could hear the "spiritualized" *meraya*'s voice. The *meraya* does not have to drink ayahuasca to accomplish such transformations.

Second, a highly renowned *médico* told me a story (quoted above) about where ayahuasca came from. In this story, a man called "Agustín Murayari" transforms into the ayahuasca liana after his death. His last name, Murayari, besides sounding very like Shipibo-Konibo in its consonance with *meraya*, is of Kukama origin and until today very common in Kukama and thus in riverine mestizo populations. This goes together with the numerous cases of Shipibo *médicos* telling me that they had been instructed by Kukama or mestizo teachers.[12] Kukama-rooted mestizo populations can

be found along the whole Ucayali river, but people who identify themselves as indigenous Kukama exclusively dwell in the region of Puinahua on the lower Ucayali. Kukama are generally perceived as very powerful and dangerous *ayahuasqueros* by the Shipibo.[13] The upriver Asháninka, on the other hand, are both admired and feared by most Shipibo for their abilities as herbalists, rangers, and warriors. Asháninka *brujos* are regarded as powerful but due to their vast knowledge of plant[14] and animal magic. However, the Shipibo do not connect them to ayahuasca. I have never heard of any renowned *ayahuasquero* on the Ucayali river who had been instructed by someone from upriver, say, from the south, or from more remote areas. A survey of recent individual migrations of *ayahuasqueros* in the Ucayali valley reveals that almost without exception, the teachers came from downriver, and the students traveled towards the bigger settlements to meet them. After having learned how to use ayahuasca, the students traveled upriver again, or returned to more remote places where they carry out their practices.

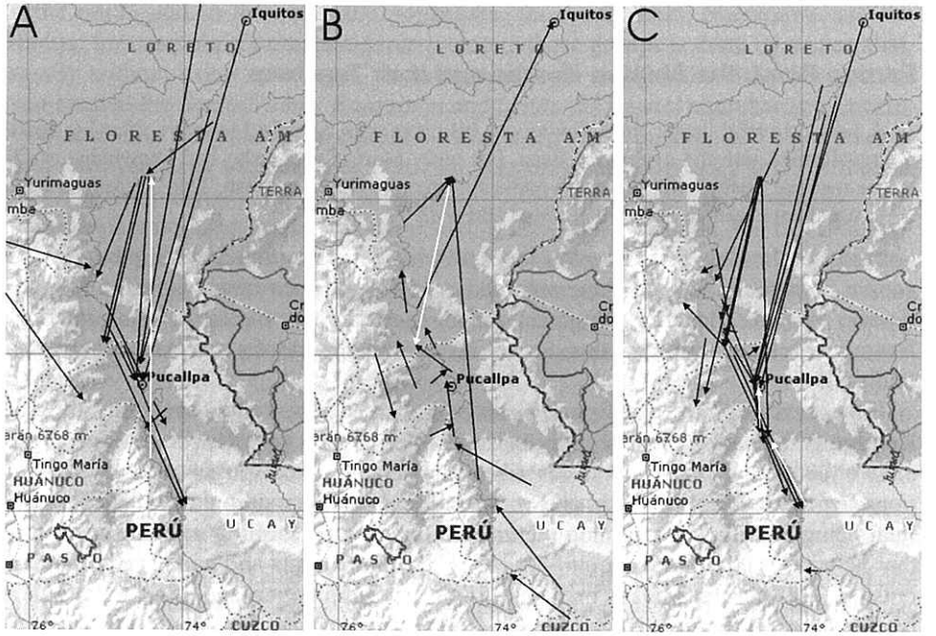

Figure 2: These maps show migrations with respect to the careers of ayahuasqueros of distinct ethnic origin (in case they migrated at all): Map (A) shows the migrations of my informants' teachers from their birthplace (if known) to the place where they taught the student. All of them (except one who travelled north due to family reasons [white arrow]) came from downriver, and in four cases from Lamas, Río Napo or Iquitos, respectively. Map (B) shows the migrations (if undertaken) of my informants from their birthplace to the place where they were instructed in *ayahuasquerismo*. The general tendency is going downriver or toward the river (the arrow at the left is from a very remote area to the town of Aguaytía. Only one student travelled upriver, also due to a migration of his whole family [white arrow]). Map (C) shows migrations of my informants from the place where they were instructed to their current place of residence, with another clear tendency of going upriver and in some cases away from the river toward more remote places. Only two Shipibo *ayahuasqueros* travelled downriver from the upper Ucayali (white arrows). Besides the mentioned tendencies, the three maps highlight a certain importance of the Puinahua region. The map is taken from MS Encarta®, indications by the author. The data was obtained from interviews with 56 *ayahuasqueros* during 2001-2006.

Recent Introduction of Ayahuasca

In order to analyze the history of ayahuasca, it should be reconsidered in which groups ayahuasca use is assumed to be "traditional" and in which groups it is not, i.e. where people do not use it or still remember when they started to. Among the first group, we find most indigenous and mestizo populations of the Peruvian north; and also the groups on the big rivers (Marañon, Huallaga, Ucayali): the Awajún, Quechua de Lamas, Kukama, Shipibo, Asháninka, and Yine, for example.

"In between" we may consider the Yanesha', Sharanawa and Amin Waki, as well as the Kaxinawá (Huni Kuin) and Matsigenka, and many groups in Madre de Dios. Among these groups, there can be heard at least some stories about an introduction of ayahuasca use from neighboring groups. Calavia Sáez (in this volume), for example, recounts that there were stories collected in 1925 among the Kaxinawá that indicate that they had learned about ayahuasca from the Yaminawa. Santos-Granero (1991, p. 117-121) relates that Yanesha' people are aware of the introduction of ayahuasca from downriver mestizos.[15] Gray (2002) and Alexiades (2000) present details about the recent adaption of ayahuasca among the Arakmbut and Ese Eja in Madre de Dios. Among the Kakataibo and the Madija populations, ayahuasca has been in use for less than 50 years. The Iskobakebo in Ucayali apparently never used it.

These facts alone seem sufficiently convincing to draw a picture in which ayahuasca had traveled from northwest of Iquitos via llamas and the Cushabatay passage up the Ucayali river and then reached the better connected groups in the south. In the late 19th or early 20th century it then crossed the Brazilian frontier into Acre, where Indians and *seringueiros* started to use the brew, before the *Santo Daime* church was founded in 1930. Groups which then remained isolated came in touch with ayahuasca only recently, that is, after their (renewed) contact to riverine societies.

The few Iskobakebo[16] who live on the Río Callería (who had been deported by missionaries in 1959 from the upper Río Utiquinía) told me in unison that as far as they know neither their ancestors nor their neighboring backwood groups ever had any knowledge of the ayahuasca brew.[17] According to Momsen (1964) and Whiton, Greene and Momsen (1964), the Iskobakebo's forefathers (usually referred to as "Remos") seem to have been in contact with Shipibo and missionaries, although these authors hardly mention any exact dates. There are reports of a large population of "Remos" on the Callería river in 1690, and mentions of sometimes violent contacts between Shipibo and the proselytized (!) "Remos" in a *reducción* on the Callería river around 1790. As indigenous people from different families, villages, or groups were forced to live together in these *reducciones*, there was extensive cultural ex-

change among them. However, despite a potentially decade-long contact between Shipibo and "Remos" by 1790, today's "Remos," the Iskobakebo, have never heard of ayahuasca.

A similar observation can be made with respect to the Kakataibo on the Río Aguaytía. I could not observe any traces of ayahuasca use except for Don Emilio Estrella, who had learned ayahuasca drinking together with his father among the Shipibo on the Río Pisqui. Emilio, when drinking ayahuasca, sings in Shipibo language and style. He said that Kakataibo magical and medical songs were of no use with ayahuasca.[18] Frank (1994, p. 181) confirms that the Uni (Kakataibo) do not use ayahuasca. This is amazing because he presents a compelling ethnohistory of the Uni, who, as he reconstructs (Frank 1994, p. 143-150), began to separate from the riverine Pano during the 18th century. From 1790 on, when the Franciscan mission in Sarayacu was founded, they were described as cannibals, and as such avoided by both the Shipibo and the missionaries. Stigmatized in this way, they retreated into the woodlands between the Pisqui and Pachitea rivers and developed as a "separate ethnic group." If the Shipibo people at the *reducciones* of Manoa (Río Cushabatay) and Sarayacu had used ayahuasca for generations, then it would seem very strange if their one-time close relatives, the Kakataibo, fleeing into the woods, had completely abandoned its use and forgotten about it.

Don Joaquín, an old Madija, told me[19] that his brother Manolito was the first among the (Peruvian section of) Madija who tried ayahuasca together with Sharanawa peers. Initially most Madija were skeptical and thought Manolito would die, but then got disabused and nowadays many Madija "know how to drink ayahuasca." Manolito drank it for the first time around 1975-80. Pollock (2004, p. 209) mentions ayahuasca use among Brazilian Culina (Madija), but stresses that they consider it as having been introduced from Panoan neighbors.

Distribution via Missions and Rubber Camps

Ardito Vega (1993, p. 17-18) recounts that starting from Quito, Jesuit missionaries established missions from 1636 onwards in what was then called Maynas, but only the missions on the Napo, Pastaza, Marañon and Huallaga rivers could be held for a longer time. There they tried to establish Quechua as a common speech, a *lingua franca* (Ardito Vega, 1993, p. 69), which is spoken with variations by many indigenous populations in those regions ever since.

The first mention of ayahuasca in written accounts that I know of[20] is given by the Jesuit Pablo Maroni (1737; cited in Naranjo, 1986, p. 120), probably from the Napo region: "For divination, they use to drink a [*Brugmansia*] juice [...] and others, from a liana they vulgarly call ayahuasca, both very efficient for depriving of the senses (author's translation)." The Jesuit Franz Xaver Veigl (1768, p. 189; cited in Tournon, 2002, p. 51) reported: "Among the harmful plants one finds the so-called ayachuasca, which is a bitter reed, or more specifically, a liana. It serves for mystification and bewitchment [...] The indios constantly drink a preparation of its juice and within an instant lose their minds (author's translation)." Both authors do not mention the place of their observations, but it can be assumed that Maroni around the Río Napo, and Veigl somewhere in Maynas, maybe in Lagunas on the Marañon river or, as the southernmost possibility, in Xeberos on the lower Huallaga. Anyway, both authors' observations were made within the context of missionary *reducciones*.

About 1800, when the forefathers of the Kakataibo and the Iskobakebo were already outcast from the riverine society, is the earliest date when ayahuasca may have been used among the peoples on the banks of the whole Ucayali river and may have reached some of the Asháninka and Yine populations who already were in permanent contact with missionaries or "Conibos" (of course, this does not include the entire Asháninka or Yine groups). Weiss (1975) recounts the probable first mention of ayahuasca use among Arawakan people by Samuel Ocampo in 1884 on the Urubamba river: "Last night the Campas took an infusion of *camalampi*, which they say produces in them an effect like that of opium or, rather, that of hashish" (p. 476).

During the 19th century, the mission of Sarayacu and the numerous travelers passing by there provided a first set of ethnographic observations. Tomás Alcántara, for example, describes a curing session performed by a Shipibo sucking specialist (Tournon, 2002, p. 70). However, there is no plant mentioned save the omnipresent tobacco. In 1861 Ernest Grandidier observed a curing session where the "demiurgo" used "piri piri"[21] and describes a ritual process very close to what we see today among Shipibo, but does not mention any hallucinogenic or narcotic drug. Saint Cricq, during his expedition 1843-1847 (cited in Tournon, 2002), observed that "*yubués* or doctors in magic [...] pretend to have secret conferences with their protector *yurima* during a lethargy produced by a narcotic (author's translation)" (p. 80). He is the only one who mentions the use of a "narcotic" drug, though many other travelers obviously observed curing sessions and often provided exact descriptions.

The indigenous groups "in between" then got exposed to this new cultural practice by the second big wave of migrations, the infamous "rubber boom" between approximately 1860 and 1920. These groups were likewise concentrated in the rubber camps together with workers from downriver and thus exchanged their cultural values (cf. Taussig, 1987 for the Putumayo region). We must keep in mind that during the few decades of the "rubber boom," demographic mass movements swept repeatedly from Iquitos to Madre de Dios in rapid successions and these alone would have had the power to spread a cultural item like ayahuasca use from the Río Napo to the Río Madre de Dios. Yet, groups isolated by then remained untouched by ayahuasca.

The Words: Ayahuasca Terminology

I presented the above ethnohistorical review to underline and introduce my argumentation, which is in fact based on the comparison of the present-day's terminologies and musical styles. To start with the etymological approach, I must admit that I am not a trained linguist. However, it quickly became obvious to me that many terms used in the Ucayali valley in the context of ayahuasca curing were loan-words, unlike the terms used for processes of curing without using the brew. The following terminological analysis is far from complete, but helps to highlight certain tendencies.

Let us begin with the central term, "ayahuasca": Most groups present "emic" terms to denote either the liana, the brew, or both. However, there are many peculiarities to be observed. The Kukama term is *chichipu*, from *ichipu*, a term including any liana from the woods.[22] Shipibo-Konibo call both liana and brew *nishi*, which is again the term for any liana. Most Panoan groups use the same (or a comparable) term, as e.g. *nishi pae* (liana-drunk) with the Kaxinawá. However, Panoan groups also call the brew *oni* (*huni*, *'uni*), meaning "person," perhaps referring to the ayahuasca creation story mentioned above, which in many variations can be heard throughout the Peruvian lowlands.

The Asháninka word is *kamarampi*, which is also found among the Yine (*kamalampi*) and the Matsigenka (*kamarampi*). Its etymology is rather unclear: Weiss (1975, p. 246, 470) derives it from *kamarank*, vomit, poison. Gow (personal communication) assumes that it is more likely rooted upon *kamaara-* (khaki-colored) and *-pi* (elongated object).[23] My Asháninka informant César Caleb translated it as "dead-liana" from *kama-* (dead-related), though he could not confirm *-rampi* as "liana."[24]

Besides their "emic" terms, all ayahuasca-using groups also use the Quechua[25] word "ayahuasca," even in mother-tongue discourse and songs. The terms south of Iquitos are very imprecise. Shipibo-Konibo language, for example, has exact terms for almost every usable plant, which are never as indifferent as *nishi*, the same being true for Kukama and Kaxinawá. Although very doubtful, the mentioned "emic" terms may be interpreted as direct translations from Quechua aya-huasca (dead-liana) or from one of its components.

Second, the names for the specialist *médicos*: This area is far too complex to be discussed in detail here, but it seams sufficiently clear that many names are connected to the use of tobacco (Asháninka *sherepiaari* or Yine *monchi*, for example), but none to ayahuasca. The indigenous terms derived from the "Spanish" *ayahuasquero* probably are secondary formations, e.g. *nishi xeamis* (Shipibo: liana-drinker), or *nishi pae wanika* (Kaxinawá: drunk by liana). One more detail may be mentioned here: as was hinted at before, the Panoan *meraya* or *mukaya* seems to be derived from the Kukama last name Murayari (historically a clan name, and also a plant name).[26]

The Kichwa terms *supay*, *shitana* and *banku* are known and used in the whole Peruvian lowlands, also in mother-tongue discourse and song.

Regarding the various techniques in direct connection with ayahuasca, we encounter similar processes. Of course, in the northern Kichwa-dominated regions, a rich corresponding terminology is provided. However, there are certain terms understood throughout the lowlands. The omnipresent *ikaro* is a good example, as Luna (1986) derives it from Quechua, where it is supposed to mean "to blow smoke (in order to heal)" (p. 92). However, this is not beyond doubt. Muysken (personal communication)[27] assures that it is not a Quechua word. Rivas (personal communcation)[28] suggests that the term seems to be of Kukama origin (therefore pertaining to the Tupí linguistic family), confirming my own observation: the Kukama of the upper and central Ucayali explained independently of each other, but explicitly, that any song in Kukama is called *ikara* and the corresponding verb was *ikarutsu* "to sing," while the specific ayahuasca songs were either referred to also as *ikara* or, on the central Ucayali, as *mariri*.[29]

Some more Kichwa terms are known by all ayahuasca-users, especially in song-related terminology: *warmikara* ("woman-*ikara*," love magic song), *shitana* (witchcraft song) and *manchari* (from Quechua *machariy* "to get frightened": a song for curing the *susto*-syndrome), in particular. *Arkana*, the protection or protection song, derived from Quechua *arkay* "to block" by Luna (1986, p. 100), may also have Tupí roots as suggested by Rivas, or may even be of European, spiritualistic origin (*arcanum*).

It can be seen that etymology is a highly complex issue in the region, and besides causing much confusion, we can only isolate one tendency, which is clear: many ayahuasca-related terms that are known in the Peruvian south are rooted in the north and none used in the north come from the south. The predominance of Kichwa and to a certain extent Tupí/Kukama points towards two movements in the course of which these languages have been carried from the north to the south: the Jesuit expansion and the rubber boom.

The Music: Ikaro

At this point, I will present what I, being an ethnomusicologist, consider the most convincing argument: the music.[30] Generally, in western Amazonia, music production is strongly connected to social events like drinking feasts, puberty rites and curing sessions. There is very little to no evidence of working songs and lullabies, for example. Since during missionary history, most of these events were forbidden, the oral transmission took place in a subcultural setting. Today, due to efficient religious conditioning in a vast part of the population, new economic orientations and of course the Peruvian laws (e.g. in case of clitoridectomy or warfare), these events are only rarely performed outside a tourist context. The main area for publicly practicing, transmitting, composing and performing songs is nowadays defined by the omnipresent ayahuasca sessions. Also, songs which have nothing to do with curing or ayahuasca, as well as curing songs which are not related to ayahuasca sessions are often performed, though much less openly.

In many of the relevant languages there are fairly exact terms for such curing songs outside the ayahuasca context. The Yine know songs they call *kamchi pirana*, which will protect somebody from spirits, dead persons, or bewitchment. There are love magic songs for seducing women or men (*galuklewlu shikale*), and also neat medical songs, for example a song for healing furuncles (*janolewlu pirana*). All these curing songs are considered to work through thorough singing and putting *fé* (faith) into it – the singer does not have to be especially initiated and does not have to drink ayahuasca. There are songs for *toé* (*Brugmansia sp.*) ingestion (*gayale shikale*), but there is no term for ayahuasca-related songs except *ikara*.

In the Shipibo-Konibo language there are also many names for different kinds of curing songs, like songs for curing *susto* shock (*ratetaki iká*), songs for love magic (*nexati*), songs for protection (*paanati*), for example; there are terms denoting songs for "curing" a boy to become a good hunter (*mechati*), for "curing" people to perform better in inventing art designs (*kené onamati*), songs for enhancing physical appearance to the opposite sex (*metsati*), and many more which are specifically em-

bedded in Shipibo "curing." Although these songs are nowadays often performed under ayahuasca influence, they are still regarded as effective if also sung or whistled by an experienced *médico* during daytime and without ingesting anything.

The ayahuasca-lacking groups Kakataibo and Iskobakebo also have their terms for medical songs, in the Kakataibo case *xonkati* ("xuuncati" in Wistrand Robinson, 1976, p. 6), with many sub-terms for etiologies and effects (ibid, p. 9). The Iskobakebo call their tobacco-related songs *yoamai*. My Iskobakebo informants also told me that besides tobacco, their *médicos* (called *yoshíya* or *janebo*) occasionally used *toé* in their sessions.

With the Asháninka terminology I encountered many inconsistencies between what my informants and translators told me and what is found in the literature. Weiss (1975, p. 471) refers to *imarentakána* as "sacred songs" performed while in ayahuasca inebriation, and Kindberg DeJonge (1976) defines as follows: "Ishicoroti: is a vocal form sung by men that can be heard when they drink masato at their feasts or when they drink ayahuasca (author's translation)" (p. 1). I never came across the terms *imarentakána* or *ishikoroti*. In my recordings there appear songs with religious character called *weshiriantsi*, which were also registered by Weiss (1975, p. 470) as *oveširianci*, and which have nothing to do with ayahuasca. All medical songs were described as *ikára* sung by the *sherepiaari* (the *médicos*) when they licked tobacco juice or drank ayahuasca.

Awajún people in the Peruvian north, for example, know the magical songs *anén*, which are only vaguely connected to the usage of ayahuasca, which is ingested collectively there (cf. Brown, 1985).

Medical or magical songs are obviously common in the groups I worked with, and have also been in use without ayahuasca ingestion. These songs usually involve elements in their musical structure that are embedded in the respective group's aesthetic framework so that they cannot be easily recognized as medical songs unless one analyses their lyrics and performance context.[31] Also, these "emic" curing songs hardly ever imply loan-words from Quechua or Spanish but are usually performed exclusively in mother-tongue.

Within an ayahuasca context, a different picture emerges: among the Shipibo, there is one song category that does not sound like other Shipibo songs and which is exclusively used in ayahuasca sessions: *ikaro*. Implementations of Quechua lyrics are restricted to this category. Something similar happens in Yine sessions: songs exclusively performed in an ayahuasca context, which are called *ikara*, do not *per se* fit into the Yine aesthetic framework. Yine *médicos* usually sing in Quechua, Spanish, or even Asháninka during ayahuasca sessions, but hardly ever apply their mother-tongue.[32]

The musical structure of *ikaro* is the only song structure compellingly similar between the Río Napo and the Río Urubamba. There are three musicological factors that support the theory of a relatively recent integration of ayahuasca within the groups south of Iquitos: (i) the mentioned intercultural redundancy in *ikaro* structure, holding against (ii) the high pace at which the respective groups develop their very different musical traditions, and confirmed by (iii) the extremely high degree of interconnectedness of ayahuasca with *ikaro* throughout the whole complex.

If ayahuasca would be in use for centuries or even millennia among the mentioned groups, as it is often assumed, or these groups even discovered the principle of ayahuasca independently (as is suggested by some authors and practitioners), it would appear rather illogical that especially the music connected to ayahuasca sessions would be the only music fairly similar among all the groups. The assumption that local groups did not communicate among themselves before being "civilized" by missionaries cannot be held anymore, and interethnic contact was an important issue also in pre-Columbian times. Santos-Granero (2007) shows the high importance of non-kinship, long-distance friendship in the western Amazon. Many of my informants also told me that they had participated at drinking feasts in different indigenous groups. However, the music related to drinking events is by no means interculturally redundant as is the music of ayahuasca sessions. The only reasonable explanation for this phenomenon is that this music is rather new and was distributed among these groups from the same source. The musical structure of *ikaro*, though alien to the aesthetic criteria of the Ucayali people, does fit into intraculturally defined frameworks of musical structures in the northern Peruvian, Kichwa-speaking indigenous societies.

The main indigenous groups which were mentioned in this paper are represented in the following seven commented transcriptions of *ikaro*, which are sorted geographically: Río Napo, Iquitos, lower, central and upper Ucayali.[33] For space reasons, I can only present a single sequence out of the usually very long songs. During a singing performance, these sequences are repeated with minor variations in musical structure; usually a sequence remains virtually unchanged until the end of a song, though performed each time with new lyrics.

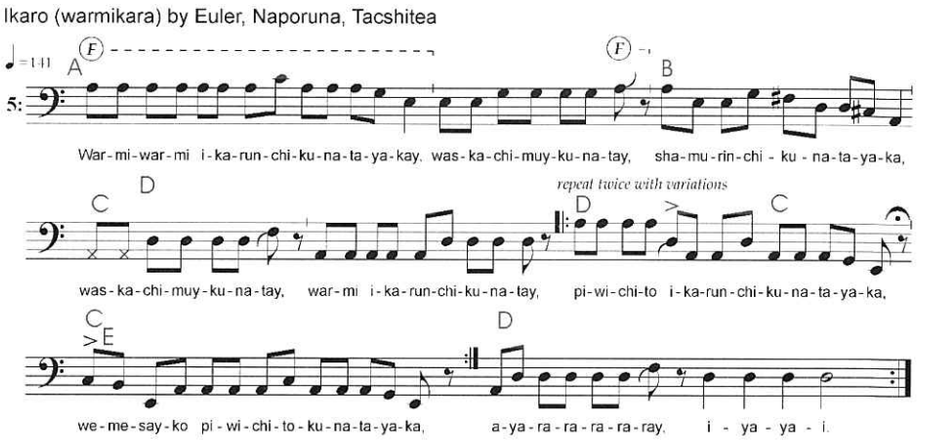

Figure 3: recorded in Tacshitea on 06-02-2005, in a demonstration setting without ayahuasca ingestion (D 5450); A song for attracting women, sung by Euler (*1966), a Naporuna who lives in Tacshitea on the central Ucayali. He declared that he had learned singing from his father, who emigrated around 1960 from the Río Napo and who learned ayahuasca curing there. The lyrics are in Kichwa, and Euler (throughout

the whole long song) only uses syllabic vocable singing in the last phrases of the sequence. The structure is a bit complicated, regarding the varying repetitions not shown in the transcription, so I have marked the major features of the ikaro's Gestalt: the introductory phrase A shows a typical two-level structure, starting at a. The second level lies at g, divided by a higher tone, usually a third up. The descending transitional passage B here shows semitonal progressions, which Euler avoids in the other sequences. The second part is made up by a "dialoguing" form, switching between the deep voice phrase C with the minor melodic peaks in D, until ending the song "flattening out," shown in E.

Ikaro (various purposes) by Solón, mestizo, Iquitos.

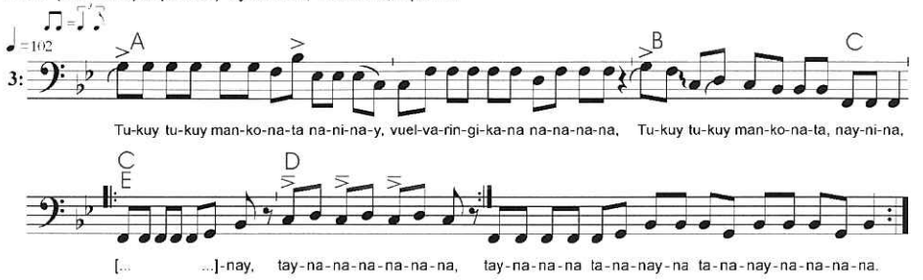

Figure 4: recorded in Iquitos on 02-03-2001, during an ayahuasca session (D 632); Don Solón (*1919) usually performs this very long ikaro (42 min) when beginning an ayahuasca session. We can observe features similar to Euler's song– the two-level phrase A, a melodic descent with phrase B, then a dialogue-like switching between C and D while flattening out in E. Don Solón often does not sing the phrase D exactly as shown, but rather like Euler's phrase D in the end of the sequence transcribed in Figure 3. Note that many additional phrases involve syllabic singing.

This song does not serve a particular purpose, the singer rather uses it to open his visionary space and to call upon many allies and entities in a certain succession (see Brabec de Mori, 2002, p. 136-137 for a structural analysis of the whole song).

Ikaro (cutipado) by Manuel, Kukama, San Pablo de Tushmo

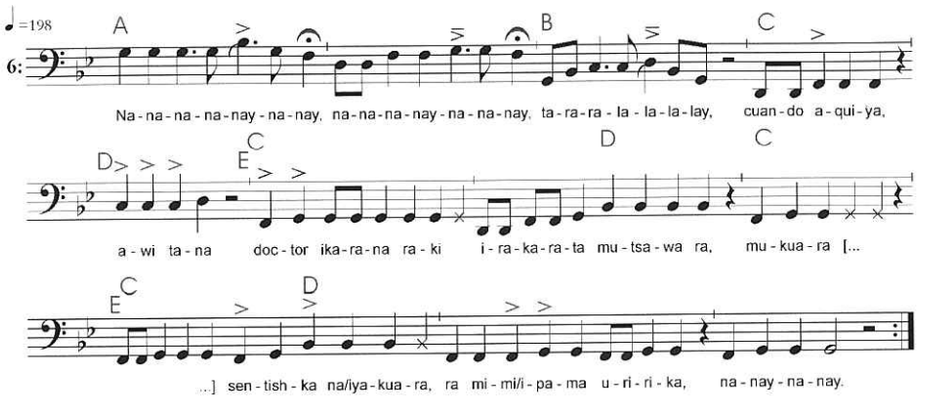

Figure 5: recorded in San Pablo de Tushmo on 31-01-2005, during an ayahuasca session (D 5443); Manuel (*1937) sings almost exclusively in Kichwa in his ayahuasca sessions but on this occasion he performed three songs in the Kukama language to please the author's request. Most Kukama médicos never sing in their mother-tongue but in Kichwa, often mixed with Spanish. We can also encounter a few loan-words here (cuando aquí, doctor, senti[r]) incorporated in the Kukama lyrics. The singer lives in San Pablo de Tushmo near Pucallpa but had learned ayahuasca curing near Nauta, where he was born and where he grew up.

Structurally, the features are the same. Phrase B does not descend directly but still builds a "bridge" between A and C. After phrase B the song very quickly becomes "flattened," but the switching between C and (the low but significantly accented) D as well as the ending cling to the ikaro form.

Ikaro (arkana) by Roberto, Shipibo, Pto. Callao

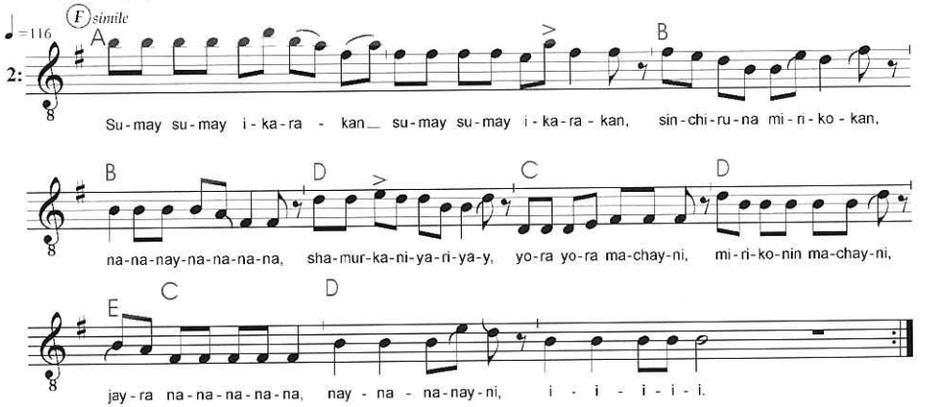

Figure 6: recorded in Puerto Callao on 19-02-2001, during an ayahuasca session (D 626); This interpretation by the Shipibo Roberto (1937-2002, born on the Aguaytía river, lived on the Callería river) excels in the high vocal range and falsetto voice, which is esteemed by Shipibo (but not e.g. by mestizos). Despite it being unusual for Shipibo, Roberto uses many Kichwa terms and filler syllables, which are employed by Shipibo exclusively as a conscious reference to downriver traditions. Roberto's teacher was a Kukama banku.

We could interpret the phrases B-B-D as one long B, leading from A to C. Thus, the structure seems a little mixed up, but slowly descending in this way it sounds better to Shipibo ears due to intracultural aesthetic criteria. However, the opening A and the switching between C and D define this song as ikaro-type, as was also explicitly mentioned by the singer. Four more Shipibo ikaros from the lower Ucayali in quite different interpretations are analyzed in Brabec de Mori (2007), revealing the same melodic structure.

Ikaro (warmikara) by José, mestizo, Pucallpa

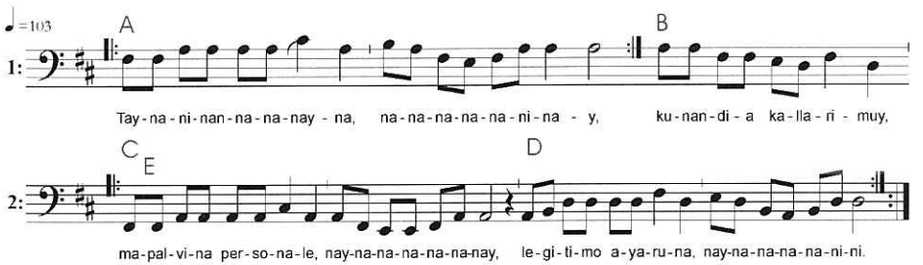

Figure 7: recorded in Pucallpa on 05-02-2001, during an ayahuasca session conducted by José and his wife Rolinda (D 613); José (1920-2003), a mestizo who was born in Contamaná and lived in Pucallpa, almost always uses in his ayahuasca songs dance rhythms from the northern Amazon region (pandilla, chimaychi, rondador) as well as dance rhythms from the Andes or the Peruvian coast (huayno, marinera). This is also true for this song, integrating the ikaro form into a pandilla-like sequence (a consequent 5-beat phrasing and congruent melodic shaping of A, C, and D, with only B differing in its transitional position between A and C). However, the ikaro features are still present and very clear.

José performed this song, as he explained, in order to summon a beautiful girl from Mapalva, Brazil, so that she may appear dancing to the singer whom she should help to construct love magic.

Ikaro (arkana) by Alfonso, Shipibo, Puerto Belén

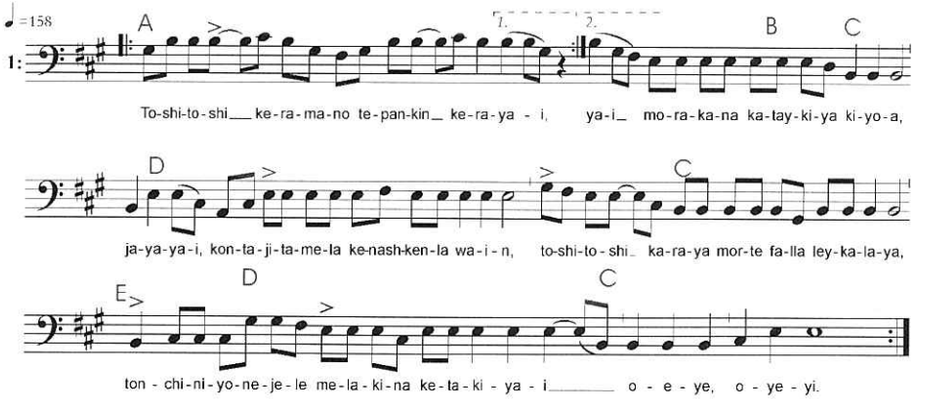

Figure 8: recorded in Puerto Belén on 15-08-2004 in a demonstration setting without ayahuasca ingestion (D 5319); This remarkable song is performed in yoshin joi, the spirits' language, by Alfonso (*1956 in Puerto Belén), a Shipibo from the upper Ucayali. Though it was sung in a demonstration setting without ayahuasca ingestion, it was perfectly pronounced, and as Alfonso repeated the song, every syllable was in the same place. He said that it would work as arkana (i.e. a defensive song) to fight the spirit of the dead. The language applied here does not show reference to any known western Amazonian language, and the singer explained that these were the spiritual entities' words (yoshin joi).

Structurally, the song does not show the mentioned features very clearly. For example, in phrase A the higher tone only ascends a second, and the two parts are on the same melodic level at b. In spite of these minor variations and a somehow chaotic progression form B to E, the features are present and the song undoubtedly sounds like an ikaro when heard.

Ikaro (warmikara) by Bernardo, Yine, CN Ramón Castilla

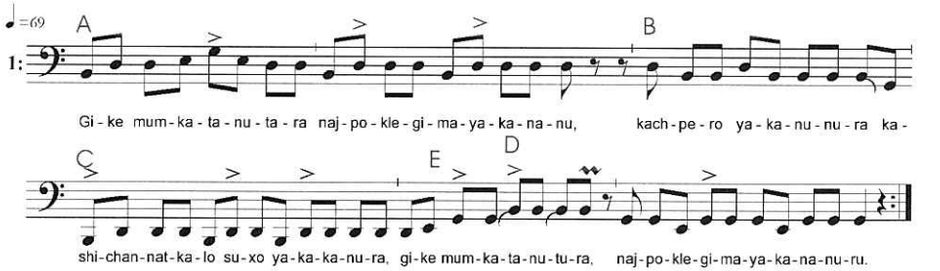

Figure 9: recorded in Ramón Castilla on 26-11-2004 in a demonstration setting without ayahuasca ingestion (D 5363); Let us finally look at this love magic song by Bernardo (*1930 in Sepa on the Urubamba river). What stands out is the extremely deep voice and also the language applied, Yine. According to Gow (personal communi-

cation, 04-02-2008), almost every Yine médico using ayahuasca would sing in Quechua, Spanish, or even Asháninka, but never in Yine. Bernardo also prefers singing in Spanish and sometimes Quechua. However, on my own request, the present example employs Yine language exclusively. Bernardo's teacher was a Kukama. The characteristic features are again not as clear as in the first examples, but they are recognizable.

The seven examples discussed above constitute sufficient musical evidence that the song structure called *ikaro* is truly recognizable between the Napo and the Urubamba rivers. The examples may appear fairly different, especially as they cannot be listened to in this place. However, these differences in interpretation remain within the limits of individual freedom and thus underline that every *médico* has his own ways and usually insists that his songs are distinct from songs by other *médicos*. Therefore it is again surprising that the songs can be so similar (cf. Brabec de Mori, 2007). One has to consider how different the non-ayahuasca-related songs – from non-ayahuasca medical songs to drinking or love songs – are in the presented indigenous groups. With a trained ear one can quickly distinguish a Yine song from a Kukama song, for example, by just listening to the melodic and rhythmic features, a task completely impossible when confronted with the above examples.

Conclusion

In the preceding sections I presented a scenario of how ayahuasca probably traveled upriver. I suppose, although my knowledge is insufficient here, that in Colombia, Venezuela and Brazil very similar results could be obtained in corresponding studies.[34] Many authors agree (e.g. Zuluaga, 2004, also Gow, Illius, Santos-Granero, Mader[35], among others) that ayahuasca was discovered by some western Tukanoan people, a hypothesis that fits well into the above analysis. Regarding the Peruvian Amazon, ayahuasca use first spread from the Tukano among the now Kichwa-speaking groups that emerged from Jesuit missions in the Ecuadorian and northwestern Peruvian lowlands and among the Kukama. In a second phase it spread among the peoples in the Peruvian north, reaching southwards to the Quechua de Lamas and Shawi populations. The third phase was its journey upriver on the Río Ucayali, probably with the rubber workers, finally crossing the Brazilian border into Acre. The ultimate phase, which is still in progress, is the acceptance of ayahuasca among groups that only recently re-established contact with riverine populations, as was shown for the Kakataibo, Madija, Arakmbut and Ese Eja – and among groups outside the Amazon basin, which is the main topic of the present volume.

The line of argument that I presented is based upon my observations among Ucayali *médicos* who appear to be instructed in ayahuasca use exclusively by teachers from the north. This was followed by a review of historical data, i.e. where and when ayahuasca was mentioned, or hinted at, in missionaries' and travelers' reports. The historical data was put in coherence with the ethnohistories of populations who suffered long-lasting phases of isolation (Kakataibo and Iskobakebo). I also analyzed numerous terms connected with ayahuasca which are used among the different indigenous groups. From this I reconstructed a migration of respective terminologies from the north to the south, noting the lack of emic terms in many groups from the south who therefore apply Kichwa or Kukama words. In the last section a series of ayahuasca songs in a specific *ikaro* form were presented and compared, revealing the uniform structure of these songs throughout the Peruvian lowlands, a unique phenomenon in the region's musical landscape. This uniform structure indicates a relatively recent introduction of these songs, because other musical phenomena show very high variations between any of these indigenous and mestizo groups.

We thus arrived at a number of indications that point towards a rather recent distribution of ayahuasca use in the south-western Amazon. In their totality these indications suggest a clear tendency as outlined above, the bulk of data constituting circumstancial evidence. It is, however, still premature to precisely respond to the big question, when the Tukano or their predecessors actually may have discovered the hallucinogenic ayahuasca. Personally, I think that the assumption of millennial use cannot be held, simply because it would be rather illogical in my understanding if the Tukano would use a cultural item for thousands of years unnoticed by other indigenous groups who, in pre-Columbian times, exchanged many other ideas intensively. This is my own opinion, and for example, Luna (in this volume) who also briefly addresses the age of ayahuasca use, comes to another conclusion. However, I perceive it as much more rewarding to "enable" indigenous people to discover an important new item in colonial times, and therefore to get rid of a popular image of "traditional" indigenous people who are only "reproducing" what had been discovered by mythical forefathers in ancient times.

In essence I would like to point out that western Amazonian *medicina* is a complex phenomenon, covering social and cultural as well as ecological and philosophical issues. Communication with plants, animals, human beings, and spiritual entities is probably "old" and developed over a long period of time. It would be premature to attempt any precise estimates. During this time span, new elements always have been implemented and integrated without hesitation, ayahuasca being but one.

Providing ayahuasca with a history of its own will have no far-reaching consequences with respect to general anthropological issues, but still may shed new light on ethnohistorical interpretations around the complexes that are found in many studies, concerning e.g. cosmologies, tales, or beings that are considered as having emerged from ayahuasca usage. It may well be that in many such cases where a connection with ayahuasca has been assumed, no such connection exists.

However, there may be consequences for the popular view of ayahuasca and its distribution outside the western Amazon. One of the main legitimations of popular ayahuasca use in Western societies – including in legal trials around the world – is the reference to millennial indigenous knowledge and along with it, an almost irrational value attributed to "ancient knowledge." Moreover, ayahuasca is presented in hundreds of web-sites on the internet as well as in popular esoteric, alternative medical or neoshamanic scenes as crucial for living together healthily and ecologically in alleged "original" western Amazonian cultures. Presumedly age-old indigenous knowledge is used as an item of advertisement. The globalization of ayahuasca greatly obscures the fact that healing or curing in western Amazonia is not accomplished by drinking or giving to drink ayahuasca but by a complicated system of knowledge

involving human and non-human beings, which can be learned and applied only through years of studying and – if one so wishes – even without drinking or administering ayahuasca at all.

Let me finally consider two ethical issues that are, however vaguely, connected to the question of the age of ayahuasca use: First, in ayahuasca tourism and exotism, many times a simplistic view is imposed on the indigenous people, as if they all have been traditional ayahuasca shamans since ancient times. The ecological and socio-economic consequences in western Amazonia caused by such an overestimation of ayahuasca are generally overlooked. Such practices do not "help the poor people in Amazonia," as is very often pretended or even honestly intended by organizers of corresponding activities. The resulting cash flow rather leads to dramatic inequities in the social life within slums or indigenous villages (cf. Tupper, 2009, p. 125). Indigenous people who are not involved in the ayahuasca commerce (and who still represent a vast majority (e.g. in the Ucayali valley) in many cases suffer from exactly these inequities and have to develop strategies to cope with the situation. For example, many Shipibo-Konibo individuals do not agree with the "ayahuasca-shaman" identity concept that has been collectively imposed on them (cf. Brabec de Mori, 2008).[36]

Second, there is an urgent problem in health care: During my years in Pucallpa, I could observe many transformations and distortions of the relevance of Amazonian medical knowledge. Many *médicos* are shifting their main occupation from curing patients or producing and countering sorcery to providing spectacular experiences for visitors from the West. The change itself does not pose a problem, as Amazonian people have always been "modernizing" themselves flexibly and at a high pace, leaving behind our "modern Western society" as surprisingly conservative. However, from these shifts in medical care have emerged some serious threats. I have to insist that in the western Amazon, the terms "medicine" and "curing" are not understood in an esoteric or spiritual way but rather in a pragmatic sense of treating people who are suffering from more or less fatal problems. Within local society, many people still do not trust in, or have no (economic) access to, "hospital medicine" but have nevertheless lost faith in their *médicos* because many of them do not treat their kinspeople anymore. Therefore, many indigenous and mestizo families are nowadays trapped in a vacuum of medical care. The exclusive focus on the plant drug, as is suggested by well-paying Westerners, is seductive for many local curing specialists themselves. Younger "shamans" often do not even know how to cure certain problems. They are trying to bring to perfection the visionary experience of ayahuasca but no longer study the whole system of Amazonian medicine in order to cure the virulent illnesses among local people. In many places it seems that, without providing alternative facilities to care for the sick, a more spiritually oriented use of ayahuasca is on the way to substitute the former system of pragmatic curing; a system that was preserved, developed, and kept self-reproducing despite epidemics, conquest, missionary conditioning, and rubber slavery.

I hope to have contributed to a more relative view on the ayahuasca phenomenon. Ayahuasca usage, both in a western Amazonian setting and in Western society, has its powers and offers certain possibilities. However, getting rid of romantic images (like "traditions preserved from the Stone Age") and analyzing the role of ayahuasca in indigenous history and identity in a more critical way can be very helpful to actually concentrate on the present use or abuse of ayahuasca. In the long term, I think, there is no practical reward to be expected from romanticizing and obscuring the provenance, history, and consequences of ayahuasca use. Presenting arguments that are carefully built upon historical or ethnographical data is more effective (also in trials regarding ayahuasca use) than taking for granted poorly evidenced millennial traditions.

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1 I would like to thank Elke Mader, Fernando Santos-Granero, Anthony Seeger and Bruno Illius for encouraging me to work on this topic, and for the valuable information they provided. Very special thanks to Peter Gow for kindly discussing with me the whole topic and academic reactions to "River People." I also want to thank Bia Labate and Henrik Jungaberle for their feedback at the Heidelberg conference and on the manuscript, and Roxani Rivas Ruiz, Pieter Muysken and Eduardo Viveiros de Castro for helping me with etymologies. The Vienna Phonogrammarchiv provided technical support for my recordings which are also archived there (recording references in the text are given as Phonogrammarchiv signatures, e.g. "D 5576"). Christian Huber kindly helped in correcting the manuscript. Last but most heartily, I would like to thank Euler Papa Siquihua, Cristóbal Solón Tello Lozano, Manuel Tamani Pacaya, Roberto Mori Valera (R.I.P.), José Fatama Odicio (R.I.P.), Alfonso Inuma Rosendo and Bernardo Rengifo Díaz, who are the authors of the analyzed songs.

2 Narby also formulates more explicitly: "According to the archeological evidence gathered by Naranjo (1986), Amazonian people have been using ayahuasca for at least five thousand years" (Narby, 1998, p. 164).

3 Although these *médicos* are commonly referred to as "shamans," I prefer not using that term because of the many popular associations attached to this concept and because of its etic imposition. I prefer *médico*, which is the (nevertheless reinterpreted) term most often used by both mestizo and indigenous locals in the Ucayali valley when speaking Spanish. However, during my fieldwork, I have noticed that some *médicos* consider themselves *chamanes*, especially if talking to tourists or researchers.

4 Cf. the volume edited by Overing and Passes (2000) regarding everyday conviviality in Amazonia. Medical processes outside the ayahuasca context are well described for example in Tournon (2002, p. 329-416), Lacaze and Alexiades (1995), Arévalo Valera (1994), or Brabec de Mori (2007, 2009).

5 "Investigaciones Interétnicas. Algunas novedades sobre los Shipibo-Konibo y sus pueblos indígenas vecinos. Perspectivas desde la etnomusicología." Colloquium given by the author at the *Facultad de Letras, Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos* (Lima, Perú, 2005-12-14).

6 This is also true for many other groups in the Peruvian lowlands. Illius (1992) or Luna (1986), among many others, present several examples how new technologies are incorporated and integrated into existing systems.

7 This is a complicated issue that cannot be treated extensively in this paper. However, I may point towards therapeutic applications in cases of drug addiction, psychosocial disorders, spiritual progress, and also towards uses for artistic purposes (cf. Luna & Amaringo, 1991), which are all secondary items appearing when ayahuasca meets western concepts and health problems; the same is true for the Brazilian ayahuasca churches (from a western Amazonian point of view). There are many indications (cf. Calavia Sáez, 2000; Gow, 1994; Bianchi, 2005; Brabec de Mori, 2008) that very probably the main use of ayahuasca in western Amazonia consisted (and in more remote communities still consists) of producing and countering witchcraft. Tournon (2002, p. 392-401)

also eludes that even many "psychosocial" problems within the indigenous societies are treated without applying ayahuasca.

8 Cf. Weiss (1975, p. 243-244) on the Asháninka or Santos-Granero (1991) for the Yanesha'. As for the exceptions mentioned, in Matsigenka curing sessions, all present men use to drink the brew (Baer, 1992, p. 87). The latter practice is found also among the Kaxinawá (Deshayes & Keifenheim, 2003, p. 78, 234).

9 This somewhat speculative hypothesis may be strengthened through an analysis of rubber-camp populations, taking into account that the people preferring the "group-style" were mainly backwoods groups who lacked "ethnic" identity due to kinship-based identity structures, while the "shaman-style" users belonged to the dominant riverine groups who during the rubber boom already perceived themselves as ethnic (tribal) groups after decades or centuries of ethnogenesis in missionary influence. Thus, it also seems logical to assume that the *seringueiros* in Acre, where the Brazilian ayahuasca churches emerged, and which consisted of mainly backwoods Indians and workers e.g. from Pernambuco, "caboclozized" in the camps, also preferred the "group-style."

10 Highly abridged, translated (by the author) story about the origin of ayahuasca as told by Benjamín Mahua in 2006 (D 5576).

11 Personally, I met two Shipibo *médicos* who were considered *meraya* by their peers. Both practiced curing without drinking or administering ayahuasca, one of them even without using tobacco or any other substance.

12 Let me mention just one example out of many, suggesting an interesting path: Hilario, a young Shipibo *médico ayahuasquero* living in the upriver community of Ahuaypa, works in a "classical" Shipibo style. I knew him by recommendation from his teacher and uncle Tito, who lives in San Francisco near Pucallpa. Tito told me that his own teacher was called José, a mestizo who at last learned his art from Solón, an old mestizo *médico* born and living in Iquitos, who works in a "classical" iquitino mestizo style.

13 This fits well with Gow´s (1994, p. 96-97) observation that among Piro and Campa on the lower Urubamba river, downriver *ayahuasqueros*, starting with Shipibo-Konibo, are generally considered more powerful than locals.

14 Shipibo-Konibo often insist that the Asháninka have knowledge about certain "piripiri" that give them the power to make themselves invisible, make them see in the dark, or even to disable guns pointed at them.

15 Santos-Granero (personal communication, 2007) also pointed out that this was about 80 years ago at maximum.

16 The Iskobakebo represent only a small group, but Krokoszyński, Stoińska-Kairska & Martyniak (2007) present evidence of a relatively big population of probably related indigenous groups that still live in voluntary isolation along the frontier of Peru-Brazil.

17 Recorded interview, 29-03-2004 (D 5220).

18 Recorded interview, 09-07-2004 (V 1751).

19 Recorded interview, 25-06-2005 (D 5456).

20 Chantre y Herrera (1901: p. 80-81) describes a scene involving the ingestion of "ayaguasca", but he neither specifies year, place, or group of this observation, nor does he declare his source. The compelling similarity of wording in the Spanish original texts suggests that he actually copied this passage from Maroni, whom he knew. Note that Chantre y Herrera lived from 1738-1801. He never left Europe and his tome is compiled from secondary sources only.

21 Today, in the Ucayali valley, "piri piri" denotes *Cyperus spp.* in regional Spanish. However, in the 19th century, "piri piri" was used all over the world to denote diverse "witchcraft powders" and the like. Therefore it can not be said with certainty that Grandidier observed *Cyperus* use.

22 Roxani Rivas, email to the author, 29-03-2008. Rivas also had learned among Kukama that ayahuasca was a new hallucinogen to them, email to the author, 15-10-2008.

23 Email to the author, 04-02-2008. Santos-Granero, in an email to the author, 02-03-2008, could not confirm the suffix "-pi" but pointed out that the word's root could also be "kamaari," demon.

24 Recorded interview, 24-01-2006 (D 5570).

25 As noted above, Quechua was established in the northern Peruvian rainforests as a common speech among many indigenous people who today consider themselves e.g. Kichwa del Napo or Kichwa del Tigre. Also, as can be seen, there is a distinction between Quechua (or Kechua) which is spoken in the Peruvian and Bolivian highlands, from Kichwa, which can be found in the Ecuadorian, northern Peruvian and southern Colombian lowlands. Some researchers (e.g. the Summer Institute of Linguistics, see http://www.ethnologue.org) interpret Quechua and Kichwa as two different languages pertaining to the same linguistic family.

26 Roxani Rivas, email to the author, 29-03-2008.

27 Pieter Muysken, email to the author, 2008-10-07.

28 Roxani Rivas, email to the author, 29-03-2008.

29 The Kukama were "reduced" very early, yet with difficulties, by the Jesuits during the 17th and 18th centuries, which not only explains how the term *ikara* spread among the north-western Peruvian kichwa-learning peoples but also accounts for the fact that it is nowadays regarded as kichwa-rooted. This would be the only migration of an ayahuasca-related term northwards.

30 I have done research about musical practices outside the ayahuasca context as well as related to ayahuasca sessions. As for the latter practices, see Brabec de Mori (2002, 2007, 2009).

31 For example, the Kakataibo's *xonkati* shows many similarities with other "incantation type" medical songs, as e.g. reported for the Brazilian Suyá by Seeger (1987) or by Hill (1993) for the Venezuelan Wakuénai. It seems, though this is still premature, that this medical "incantation type" singing is a truly Pan-Amazonian phenomenon.

32 One might perceive the abundance of loan-words as part of a broader trend, namely considering such "foreign" words as stronger or more powerful. This appears logical in the case of the Spanish (the dominating class) and Quechua (the legendary Incas' language) words that are actually in use. However, as I have pointed out above, such words are almost exclusively applied in ayahuasca-related songs but not in curing songs or magical songs outside the ayahuasca context. Thus, this broader trend of using "foreign" words may rather be included in newer ayahuasca curing than outside its context. This also goes well with Calavia Sáez' observation (in this volume) that the use of the visionary ayahuasca played a great role in – historically younger – interethnic and thus polyglot communication.

33 There is no example for Asháninka *ikaros* in the list. However, Juan Flores, a famous Asháninka *ayahuasquero* is present in several websites, e.g. http://scanr.net/2007/12/06/ayahuasca-icaros-by-juan-flores/ (visited 07-02-2009). Flores' teacher was a Kukama. His published songs exhibit a structure and lyrics that also could be performed without any alteration e.g. by a mestizo from Iquitos. The mentioned example is very similar to Fig. 7 in this paper.

34 Taussig (1987) points towards that direction in his study about the interdependence of colonialism and healing/witchcraft in southern Colombia.

35 The latter four authors told me in personal communication, 2007 and 2008.

36 See for example the quotation by Narby in the introduction to this article, or the website http://www.amazon-indians.org/page14.html which is entitled "The Shipibo Indians: Masters of Ayahuasca." There are many of such identity-imposing (re-)presentations of Shipibo culture to be found on the internet and in the literature.