



Article / Artículo / Artigo

## About Indigenous Perspectivism, Indigenous Sonorism and the Audible Stance. Approach to a Symmetrical Auditory Anthropology<sup>1</sup>

Matthias Lewy, Universidade de Brasília, Brasília, Brasil  
matthiaslewy@gmail.com

### Abstract

The present contribution aims to reveal some ideas about methods and theories in ethnomusicology on the basis of Eduardo Viveiros de Castros's (EVC) concepts in cultural anthropology. In the first part the focus is on EVC's "metaphysics of predation" and its three subdivisions of interspecific perspectivism, multinaturalism and cannibal alterity, whereby a particular focus is on "perspectivism" and the different forms of critical receptions and/or equivocations of that concept<sup>2</sup>. In the second part it will be demonstrated how, at a first glance, EVC's non fitting anthropological theory to sound, nevertheless serves for an understanding of sound phenomena when counter-interpreting some of his theoretical and methodological concepts and applying them a symmetrical auditory anthropology. Therefore, trans-specific communications between human and non-humans will be discussed when analyzing first EVC's data on Araweté war and shaman songs and later, my own data on Pemón songs and magic formulas. This analysis aims to reveal how sound in its formalized mode of song defines the interaction between humans and non-humans by transcending the mythical and non-mythical

---

<sup>1</sup> The article refers to two papers, one from the 61<sup>st</sup> Annual Meeting of the Society for Ethnomusicology in Washington D.C. and the other from the conference "Sons e etnografias" at UFSC in Florianópolis. I appreciate the comments of Bernd Brabec de Mori, Ryan Koons, Anthony Seeger, Jeff Todd Titon, Wei-Ya Lin, Elliot Bates, Rafael de Menezes Bastos, Deise Lucy Montardo, Liliam Cohen Barros, Viviane Vedana, María Eugenia Dominguez, Marilia Albornoz Stein, Douglas Ferreira Gadelha Campelo, Hugo Ribeiro and Allan de Paula Oliveira.

<sup>2</sup> I adopt the term "equivocation" direct from Viveiros de Castro argumentation: "It should be stated that equivocation is not merely one among the numerous pathologies that threaten communication between anthropologists and indigenous peoples, whether linguistic incompetence, ignorance of context, lack of empathy, literalist ingenuity, indiscretion, bad faith, and sundry other deformations or shortcomings that can afflict anthropological discourse at an empirical level. But in contrast with all these contingent pathologies, equivocation is a properly transcendental category, constitutive dimension of the project cultural translation proper to the discipline. Not at all the simple negative facticity, it is a condition of possibility of anthropological discourse that justifies the latter's existence". (Viveiros de Castro 2014: 89).



worlds. In the third and last part it will be shown how the performance of Pemón magic formulas counteracts the idea of Indigenous perspectivism by proposing the concept of Indigenous sonorism at the very end.

**Keywords:** Amerindian perspectivism, amerindian sonorism, sound ontologies, Pemón, Venezuela

---

## Sobre el perspectivismo y el sonorismo indígenas, y la posición de escucha. Aproximación a una antropología auditiva simétrica

### Resumen

El propósito de esta contribución consiste en revelar algunas ideas sobre los métodos y teorías de la etnomusicología sobre la base de los conceptos vertidos por Eduardo Viveiros de Castro en el campo de la antropología cultural. En la primera parte, el foco está puesto en la idea de “metafísica de la predación” de Viveiros de Castro y en sus tres divisiones: perspectivismo interespecífico, muticulturalismo y alteridad caníbal. La atención se focaliza particularmente en el concepto de “perspectivismo” y en sus diferentes formas críticas de recepción y “equivoco”<sup>3</sup>. En la segunda parte se demostrará que aunque a primera vista las ideas de Viveiro de Castro no son adecuadas para una teoría antropológica del sonido, sirven para una comprensión del fenómeno sonoro si se ofrece una interpretación opuesta de algunos de sus conceptos y se los aplica a una antropología del sonido simétrica. Por lo tanto, serán discutidas las comunicaciones transespecíficas entre humanos y no-humanos, a partir de los primeros datos de Viveiros de Castro sobre los cantos de guerra y shamánicos de los arawaté y de mis datos sobre las canciones y las formulas mágicas de los pemón. El análisis busca revelar cómo el sonido y su formalizado modo de cantar define la interacción entre humanos y no-humanos trascendiendo los mundos míticos y no-míticos. En la tercera y última parte se mostrará cómo la *performance* de las formulas mágicas de los pemón, al proponer el concepto de “sonorismo indígena”, contrarresta la ideal del perspectivismo indígena.

**Palabras clave:** perspectivismo amerindio, sonorismo amerindio, ontologías sonoras, pemón, Venezuela

---

<sup>3</sup> Adopto el término “equivoco” directamente del argumento de Viveiros de Castro: “Es preciso destacar que el equivoco no es solamente una de las numerosas patologías que amenazan la comunicación entre el antropólogo y el indígena, igual que la incompetencia lingüística, la ignorancia del contexto, la falta de empatía, la indiscreción, la ingenuidad, la mala fe, el olvido y tantas otras deformaciones o carencias que pueden afligir empíricamente la enunciación antropológica. Contrariamente a esas patologías contingentes, el equivoco es una categoría propiamente trascendental, una dimensión constitutiva del proyecto de traducción cultural propio de la disciplina. No es una simple facticidad negativa, sino una condición de posibilidad del discurso antropológico, lo que justifica su existencia (¿quid juris?)” (Viveiros de Castro 2011: 1130-1137).

---

## Sobre perspectivismo indígena, sonorismo indígena e o posicionamento audível. Abordagens para uma antropologia auditiva simétrica

### Resumo

A presente contribuição tem como objetivo revelar algumas idéias sobre métodos e teorias em etnomusicologia a partir dos conceitos de Eduardo Viveiros de Castros (EVC) na antropologia cultural. Na primeira parte, o foco estará na “metafísica da predação” de EVC e suas três subdivisões: perspectivismo interespecífico, multinaturalismo e alteridade canibal; com atenção particular ao “perspectivismo” e às diferentes formas de recepções críticas e/ou equívocos desse conceito<sup>4</sup>. Na segunda parte, será demonstrado como a teoria antropológica de EVC, à primeira vista não voltada para as sonoridades, ainda assim serve para a compreensão de fenômenos sonoros ao deduzir campos teóricos e metodológicos específicos como parte de uma antropologia auditiva simétrica. Assim, as comunicações trans-específicas entre humanos e não-humanos serão discutidas ao analisarmos os primeiros dados de EVC sobre as canções xamânicas e de guerra Araweté e, mais tarde, os meus próprios dados sobre canções Pemón e fórmulas mágicas. Esta análise visa revelar como o som, em seu modo formalizado de canção, define a interação entre humanos e não-humanos por transcender os mundos míticos e não-míticos. Na terceira e última parte, apresentarei como a performance das fórmulas mágicas Pemón contrapõe a idéia de perspectivismo indígena ao propor o conceito de um sonorismo indígena.

**Palavras-chave:** perspectivismo ameríndio, sonorismo ameríndio, ontologias de som, Pemón, Venezuela

---

Fecha de recepción / Data de recepção / Received: febrero 2017

Fecha de aceptación / Data de aceitação / Acceptance date: abril 2017

Fecha de publicación / Data de publicação / Release date: agosto 2017

---

<sup>4</sup> Eu uso o termo “equivoco” direto da argumentação de Viveiros de Castro: “É importante sublinhar que o equivoco não é apenas uma dentre as inúmeras patologias que ameaçam a comunicação entre o antropólogo e o nativo - como a incompetência linguística, a ignorância do contexto, a falta de empatia, a indiscrição, a ingenuidade, a má-fé, o esquecimento e outras tantas deformações ou carências que podem afligir empiricamente a enunciação antropológica. Ao contrário dessas patologias contingentes, o equivoco é uma categoria propriamente transcendental, uma dimensão constitutiva do projecto de tradução cultural próprio da disciplina. Ele não é uma mera facticidade negativa, mas uma condição de possibilidade do discurso antropológico, aquilo que justifica sua existência (*quid juris?*)” (Viveiros de Castro 2015: 55).



## Introduction

The idea of an auditory anthropology was introduced in several symposia by Bernd Brabec de Mori and myself. The term is published in an article about an applied auditory anthropology in a museum context, where it is defined as a concept of sound ontologies. These sound ontologies are based on sound perception and sound production from the human audible stance in comparison and interaction with the non-human one (Schoer, Brabec de Mori, and Lewy 2014).

An auditory anthropology goes beyond human organized sound as it includes non-human sound perception and production in relation to indigenous ontologies. This topic can be found also in several publications of the last few years in ethnomusicology (e.g. Brabec 2012, Lewy 2012, Brabec and Seeger 2013, Brabec, Lewy, and García 2015). Furthermore, it needs to be mentioned that the field of theorizing about musical or sound phenomena is defined as a multi-theoretical science adapting theories from the humanities, whether sociology, anthropology or linguistics, from semiotics to performance studies, discourse analysis, actor-network theory, most kinds of “turns”, and so on<sup>5</sup>. In most cases, *logos* is understood as a corresponding induction, which is applied as a method of theorization by generating narratives that show how “non-musical” or “non-sound” theories serve for explaining music and/or sound phenomena and their “contexts”, produced or perceived by humans.

During my work with Amerindian sound phenomena over the last ten years<sup>6</sup>, I realized that applying corresponding theories from other fields is more and more difficult for an understanding of the question: “Why and how do these people sing or just do music?”, a question which is still my main one, referring to the groundbreaking work of Anthony Seeger (1987) and the performance studies as the key for an understanding of indigenous sound ontologies.

In this article the theories of Amerindian perspectivism, multinaturalism and cannibal alterity are presented. On the one hand because these concepts produced a real eureka effect when applying them during my first reflections about my field data. On the other hand, I realized the difficulties of applying them to the mentioned sound interactions inside ontological collectives<sup>7</sup>. This latter point refers to a method of using theories which are not fit to the mentioned field of “corresponding induction”, but which are very helpful for an understanding of the cosmological and ontological basics of Amerindian thinking.

To make a virtue out of necessity, I would like to present this method under the term of symmetrical auditory anthropology. In comparison with all other music/sound related terms (anthropology of music, musical anthropology, ethnomusicology, musicethnology, etc.) the

---

<sup>5</sup> See also Miguel García’s editorial about “Some Questions Related to Musicology and its Methods”, in: <http://ppct.caicyt.gov.ar/index.php/oidopensante/article/view/8005/9042>. An interesting contribution with regard to Brazilian Ethnomusicology was recently published by José Alberto Salgado e Silva (2011).

<sup>6</sup> I have realized field research among the circum-Roraima people. The Carib speaking groups named Taurepán, Arekuna, Kamarakoto and Makuxi are subsumed as Pemón living across the borders of Northern Brasil, Southern Venezuela and Guiana.

<sup>7</sup> The term “collective” is used for describing the interactions of all relevant entities (humans, plants, animals, ghosts) as part of a general taxonomy of a human group, following Philippe Descola (2013).

audible stance of a human being is the phenomenon which has to be analyzed. And therefore the mentioned non-humans have to be included, an intent of symmetrization which refers to Latour's (1993) approach to a symmetrical anthropology. Another axis of symmetry passes between sound production and sound perception. The latter point is less than another word for sound studies or soundecology as it refers more to an ontology of listening when reflecting on the process of generating an "epistemological truth" or, with other words, an auditory certainty<sup>8</sup>.

Thus, we have two symmetric axes: one axis refers to human and non-human interactions and the other axis focuses on listening and sound production by the mentioned collectives of humans and non-humans. In addition, it must be emphasized that within the framework of symmetrical auditory anthropology, less corresponding philosophical, anthropological, sociological and other theories are applied to music/sound phenomena, but are confronted with non-corresponding theories taken from Philosophy, Anthropology, Sociology, etc. The aim is to reveal cultural concepts of sound perception and production of people's ontologies (human/non-human) by methods like counter interpretations<sup>9</sup> and/or supplementary induction.

It is complicated in several directions since it must be dealt with different ontologies in terms of a distinction between senses and apperceptions that produce different kinds of epistemologies and knowledge transmissions. As an example, this paper documents the theories and concepts of Eduardo Viveiros de Castro (EVC) to question, but also to apply, them.

### **Indigenous perspectivism, multinaturalism and cannibal alterity**

Viveiros de Castro (2014:50) introduces an alter-anthropology of indigenous thinking with three aspects –indigenous perspectivism, multinaturalism and cannibal alterity. All three aspects are based on the axiom of the "importance of an economy of corporeality"<sup>10</sup> (Viveiros de Castro 2014: 54) as well as on a "non-marked or generic status of the virtual dimension or 'soul' of existents" (Viveiros de Castro 2014: 55).

To get straight to the point, when focusing on sound then it needs to be asked: Where or in which part of that dichotomous segmentation are the perceptions of sound and voice located? Are they part of the economy of corporeality or are they part of a "soul" (virtual dimension) or do they appear in both, or is there something completely different to reveal?

EVC uses the term "perceptive" as a disposition of the soul<sup>11</sup>, but a response to the sound

<sup>8</sup> In a former article (Lewy 2015a) I introduce the concept of an auditory certainty in relation to Wittgenstein's (1970) "On Certainty", saying that in Pemón ontologies the process of becoming certain about "what others are" lies more in the auditory stance than in a visual perspective.

<sup>9</sup> Counter interpretation refers to Paul Feyerabend's (1963, 1970) counter induction. It can be understood as reversing a one-dimensional logic of induction for producing a scientific pluralism. Counter-induction in musicology is mentioned in publications by Sans (2011), Spencer (2011), and García (2016), the intention of applying Feyerabend's concept to a historical narrativity in music is announced by Mendivil (in press).

<sup>10</sup> EVC clarifies the differences of an indigenous anthropology and 'our' anthropology concerning that point. Thus, he writes: "...an indigenous anthropology formulated in terms of organic flux, material codings, sensible multiplicities, and becoming-animal instead of in the spectral terms of our own anthropology, whose juridical-theological grisaille (the rights, duties, rules, principles, categories and moral persons conceptually formative of the discipline) simply overwhelms it" (Viveiros de Castro 2014: 54).

<sup>11</sup> The interpretation that he locates the "perceptive" as part of the soul is deduced by his argumentation: "The ethnography of indigenous America is replete with references by diverse type of actants, human or otherwise-gods,

perception and/or audible stance we would not receive since it is not his intention either. However, it seems clear that the visual part of perception refers to a “soul” as an intra- and interspecific phenomenon:

This interspecific resemblance includes, to put it more performatively, the same mode of apperception: animals and other nonhumans having a soul ‘see themselves as persons’ and therefore ‘are persons’: intentional, double-sided (visible and invisible) objects constituted by social relations and existing under a double, at once reflexive and reciprocal—which is to say collective-pronominal mode (Viveiros de Castro 2014: 56).

The argument that all humans and non-humans see themselves as persons includes the fact that “all things can be humanized”, as my Pemón teacher Balbina Lambos (2016)<sup>12</sup> confirms her “perspectivist” thinking. In the words of EVC it is said: “...All animals and cosmic constituents are intensively and virtually persons, because all of them, no matter which, can reveal (transform into) a person” (Viveiros de Castro 2014: 57). From this, one can conclude that personhood of all species—due to the apperception of “seeing” themselves as persons—is related to a soul or interiority of an entity. If so, how can we distinguish between species? To approach the question, the concept of multinaturalism, which includes the role of the myths in “savage” minds, comes into play.

EVC mentions a quote of Lévi-Strauss and Èribon (1991: 39, in Viveiros de Castro 2014: 65) with reference to Lévi-Strauss’ answer to a question of what a myth is. Lévi-Strauss says that it is a story of the time before men and animals became distinct beings. Furthermore, EVC writes:

[...] myth proposes an ontological regime ordered by a fluent intensive difference bearing on each of the points of a heterogeneous continuum, where transformation is anterior to form, relations superior to terms, and intervals interior to being. Each mythic subject, being a pure virtuality, “was already previously” what it ‘would be next’ and this is why it is not something actually determined.

The extensive difference, moreover, introduced by post-mythic speciation (*sensu lato*)-the passage from the continuous to the discrete constituting the grand (my)theme of structural anthropology-is crystallized in molar blocks of infinitely internal identity (each species is internally homogeneous, and its members are equally and indifferently representatives of the species as such). These blocks are separated by external intervals that are quantifiable and measurable, since differences between species are finite systems for the correlation, proportioning, and permutation of characteristics of the same order and same nature (Viveiros de Castro 2014:67).

Finally, it is the body that defines the *point of view* between the species within these ‘finite systems’:

The capacity to occupy a point of view is doubtless a power of the soul, and nonhumans are

---

animals, the dead, plants, meteorological phenomena, and often artifacts as well-equipped with the same general ensemble of perceptive, appetitive, and cognitive dispositions: with the same kind of soul” (Viveiros de Castro 2014: 56).

<sup>12</sup> Personal communication with my Pemón teacher Balbina Lambós, Piedra Canaima 2016. We discussed her opinion about EVC’s theories of Amerindian perspectivism.



subjects to the extent to which they have (or are) a mind; but the difference between points of view—and a point of view is nothing but a difference—is not in the soul. The latter, being formally identical across species, perceive the same thing everywhere. The difference, then, must lie in the specificity of the body (Viveiros de Castro 2014: 72).

These are the basic argumentations which lead to EVC's mentioned concept of multinaturalism using a counter-axiomatic system to multiculturalism and its scientific variant of cultural relativism. When taking into account, that the perspective is in the body, then, it is not a representation because representations are “properties of mind, whereas a point of view is in the body” (Viveiros de Castro 2014: 72) while cultural relativism “presumes a diversity of partial, subjective, representations bearing on an external nature, unitary and whole, that itself is indifferent to representation” (Viveiros de Castro 2014: 72). Thus, the differences can be described on one hand with the European multiculturalism/cultural relativism and its axiomatic system *culture/mind/representation*, and on the other hand the *nature/body/perspective* axiomatic system of multinaturalism—the body defines the world(s) by “seeing”.

Moreover, it needs to be stated that the dichotomy soul/body is different in both worlds, in the mythical or infinite world and in the non-mythical or finite world. In addition, the deduced axiomatic system relating to a *point of view* is the basis for EVC's induction of an indigenous “metaphysics of predation”.

Typically, and this tautology is something like the degree zero of perspectivism, humans will, under normal conditions, see humans as humans and animals as animals (in the case of spirits, seeing these normally invisible beings is a sure indication that the conditions are not normal; sickness, trance and other “altered states”). Predatory animals and spirits, for their part, see humans as prey, while prey see humans as spirits or predators (Viveiros de Castro 2014: 76).

It needs to be noted that animals and spirits see themselves also as persons. This typology of predation—*who sees whom as what*—is deduced by ethnographic literature (Stolze Lima 1999 [1996], Århem 1993, Baer 1994 in Viveiros de Castro 2014: 57, and Viveiros de Castro 1997, Weiss 1969, Grenand 1980, EVC 1992, Osborn 1990 in Viveiros de Castro 1997). The argumentations are based on observations and describe that, for example, jaguars see blood as manioc beer, and vultures see the worms in rotten meat as grilled fish (Viveiros de Castro 1997 and 2014).

Very critical observers might complain about the lack of quantity when looking at the evidence for the derivation of a theoretical concept, but it is absolutely not my intention at all, since doubts about EVC's typology of predation come from another direction.

### “Perspectivism” and “Amerindian Perspectivism”

A kind of equivocation can be generated by a counter-interpretation of EVC's axiomatic system. It deals with his third aspect of the indigenous alter-anthropology which is—next to perspectivism and naturalism—the cannibal alterity. EVC's argumentation for this “cannibal alterity” is revealed by rethinking meanings of warrior cannibalism and shamanism, referring to the question whether or not super divine entities are involved in “sacrificial rites” as main motivation for anthropophagy in indigenous Amazonia. EVC argues that this motivation is on the

relation of affinity and the special role of hostility when Tupinamba anthropophagical practices are considered (Viveiros de Castro 2014: 139-41)<sup>13</sup>. Thus, he asks about the very special role of “what was really eaten in this enemy?” (Viveiros de Castro 2014: 139-41). The answer is that it is the “condition as enemy” that is eaten to assimilate the signs of alterity of the victim and to reach his alterity (Viveiros de Castro 2014: 142-3). It follows his argumentation about the role of singing in an Araweté context where killing and singing appear as similar practices for becoming the other.

All this first dawned on me while pondering Araweté war songs, where the warrior, through a complex, anaphoric use of deixis, speaks of himself from the point of view of his slain enemy: the victim, who is in both senses the subject of the song, speaks of the Araweté he has killed, and speaks of his own killer - the one who “speaks” by singing the words of his deceased enemy - as a cannibal enemy (although among the Araweté, it is words alone that one eats). *Through* his enemy, that is, the Araweté doing the killing himself *as* the enemy. He apprehends himself as a subject at the moment that he sees himself through the gaze of his victim, or, to put it differently, when he declares his singularity to himself through the voice of the latter. Perspectivism (Viveiros de Castro 2014: 143).

What seems difficult is the word “perspectivism” here. Not because it is not understandable that the *point of view* of the Araweté singer is defined by its victim through the process of *Other-becoming* (Viveiros de Castro 1992: 245). The problem lies in the very simple fact that there is no difference in “seeing” the world(s) between the victim and the killer.

The enemy song (*awi maraká*) is the entity which produces the *Other-becoming* by referring to the Parakanã victim who killed *Maria-ro* or/and *Moiwito* and/or *Koiarawī* and who was killed by the singer *Yakati-ro-reme* (Viveiros de Castro 1992: 243). The term used here is “point of view” by EVC. But it is less of a *point of view* as it is a soul which becomes another one through another enemy soul by “music”, perceived and realized by the audience when the singer changes the deixis “I” in the song lyrics. Furthermore, EVC confirms that in an etymological way, when noting that the term for “enemy” is “future music” (Viveiros de Castro 1992: 242). What is expressed here, is the idea that anthropophagy can only be realized by structured sound or “sung words”.

It can be summarized that it is the voice of the singer and the ears of the listeners and not the eye which cause the *Other-becoming*, a naive critic which can be relativized as a kind of equivocation (*point of view/audible stance*), what EVC describes very clear:

He apprehends himself as a subject at the moment that he sees himself through the gaze of his victim, or, to put it differently, when he declares his singularity to himself through the voice of the latter (Viveiros de Castro 2014: 242).

Thus, it needs to be noticed that it is not “perspectivism” in the described sense of Indigenous perspectivism which is defined as “seeing the world(s) differentially due to the body which defines the *point of view*”. Otherwise, it can be argued that the singer and his victim were both part of the

---

<sup>13</sup> When discussing Tupinamba practice of treating captives before the execution ritual it can be stated that the enemy and victim is treated as a brother-in-law as he receives a spouse. The executioner-officer would not eat the captive but starts to mourn. “He entered, in other words, into a process of identification with this opponent” whose life he had just taken” (Viveiros de Castro 2014: 141).



same species –“human humans” or “real humans”. That would explain why neither see the world differently. Anyway, the term “perspectivism” represents another meaning here and therefore an equivocation, when taking into account that “it is words alone that one eats” and, it is “words” that eat “souls” in the process of *becoming*. In other words, when leaving the visual *pars pro toto* for all kinds of perceptions we can deduce that it is not a question of a visual perspective but of an *auditory stance*.

### Trans-specific communications

The mentioned equivocation is important when dealing with trans-specific communication. Thus, taking EVC’s concept as a basis with regard to the fact that every species or entity sees the world different because of its body, the question arises: How do all species or entities interact and communicate with one another in the world, and with the worlds of the other species?

Another example taken from EVC’s Araweté song collection serves for approaching an answer. It is the shaman’s song (*mai maraká*) which is not a human song, since it belongs to the spirits (*mai*). These spirits transmit their songs via dreams to the shaman who is seen as a “radio”<sup>14</sup> (Viveiros de Castro 1992: 224). The performance of these songs reflects the complexity of the perspectives. Participating in the performance are above all the shaman, the dead relatives as well as the gods themselves. The interesting point here is that the dead, the gods, the shamans as well as the listeners (and EVC’s interpreters) are able to capture every word, context and deixis without differences in perceiving the different ‘perspectives’ as a specific entity. Thus, it happens that at the moment of singing and of the use of special sound ornaments (like foot stepping which is a symbol of the presence of gods on earth), the trans-specific communication between humans, the dead and the gods takes place at the same time and in the same world. This trans-specific communication is realized by sung words.

It can be summarized, that the simple fact of “different seeing-similar hearing” (Lewy 2012) I once deduced from my own data can be applied to EVC’s data as well. This counter-interpretation should be seen as a complementary induction when it is said that the sound as an entity is capable of transcending the world(s) and of relativizing or even changing the perspectives between the species as it will be shown below.

When I tried to apply “Indigenous perspectivism” to several Pemón song practices, I found that the lyrics reflect ‘perspectivism’ in the sense of “different seeing” but the performance of singing and dancing these songs with all its ornaments resonates as a trans-specific interaction between all “virtual humans” or “souls” of the collective, whether or not they were the ones crystallized in molar blocks in a post-mythic world.

---

<sup>14</sup> Viveiros de Castro (1992: 224-5) writes: “By this comparison (shaman/radio- remark by the author), they meant that he was a vehicle and that the subject of his voice comes from elsewhere, not from within himself. The gods are not ‘inside his flesh’ nor do they occupy his body. During the dream, the shaman’s ‘ex-body’ (*hiro pe*) remains in his hammock while his *î* (soul, remark of the author) travels. But it is only when the *î* returns that the shaman sings. When the gods descend to earth with him –he being the one who ‘makes them down’ (*mo-eyi*)– they descend in person, not into his person”. A similar concept can be noted for the Pemón. Even the term “tarikirán” (radio) can be found referring to ritual leaders of the *orekotón* rituals (*areruya, cho’chiman*) as well as it is the name of a ritual house (*cho’chi*) in an indigenous community (Lewy 2011 and 2012).

Moreover, the anthropomorphic structured sound (song) has to be seen as an agent connecting the world of the “human humans” with the world of the “non-human humans” by using the flux between the mythical and the present worlds. EVC’s argues in this direction when saying that “... spirits are the proof that all virtualities have not necessarily been actualized, and that the turbulent mythic flux continues to rumble beneath the apparent discontinuities between types and species” (Viveiros de Castro 2014: 68). During healing sessions the shamans call directly the specific spirit for an interrogation (Lewy 2012). When singing and dancing before hunting it is because peccaries and tapirs hear their specific songs as “humans”. Peccaries hear exactly the songs they once gave together with a rattle to the humans in the mythical world to interact with them (Lewy 2012 and 2016). When humans sing songs from the *parishara* song cycles (hunting ritual), they interact with the mythical world in which peccaries were humans with the ornaments of still undefined animals, and also with the non-mythical world in which there are still humans in their pure virtuality or “interiority” at the very moment of the performance.

### **The Pemón multiverse’s layers and its beings**

It needs be mentioned that the mythical and post/non-mythical worlds are present in time and space. In Pemón cosmology these two worlds are defined as a world of the “beginning and the end” (Pemón: *pia daktai*) and the world of “here and now” (Pemón: *serewarö*). Both exist in the same landscape which was crystallized in Pemón cosmology due to Makunaima’s action. Pemón people describe this landscape, which is inhabited by different beings, as a multiverse which consists of different layers (Halbmayer 2010). Inside these layers beings are not necessarily human or non-humans defined by their entirety of interiority/physicality relations (Descola 2013) or multi-naturalistic dichotomy of body/soul, but also as entities that are characterized only by their interiority/soul or physicality/body. Otherwise, it can be stated that the typical beings with both characteristics (soul and body) are the most common, and the concepts of neo-animism and indigenous perspectivism can be applied. “Human humans” (Pemón) are having a body and a soul. This also applies to most animals and plants. In Pemón ontology, EVC’s Amerindian perspectivism (Lewy 2011, 2012, 2015a, and 2015b) is found between human beings, animals and spirits (*mawariton*) and *kanaima*.

The latter category is an entity which is described as a being with multiple feature connotations, and not all of them can be described here. Thus the focus is on a kind of *kanaima*, which is characterized as an entity without a soul but with a body. It is a variable mode of existence, which can be defined as *being kanaima state*. This *being kanaima state* is different from other behaviors of non-human entities, because the intention of the *kanaima* in *being kanaima state* is to kill human beings. It is the reason why Butt Colson (2001) defines *kanaima* as an anti-social entity. I prefer to define this type of *kanaima* as an anti-human being, which is part of the multiverse and plays an important role in cosmological reciprocity. *Kanaimaton* are multividuals with the potentiality of *being kanaima*, a condition in which an interiority (soul) is absent and the body aims to kill humans. *Kanaimaton* are related to the *aiyan* layer of the multiverse. It is characterized as the world of all evil which can be understood as equilibration with the world of good.

In sum, the landscape is perceived as a crystallized form with different immaterial cosmological layers. The beings of these layers can interact with one another. The degree of interaction depends on the level of knowledge. The Pemón cosmological taxonomy is based on a highly elaborated axionomy<sup>15</sup> (Menezes Bastos 1999) and only a few trans-specific interactions can be shown here for the above-mentioned argumentation with regard to sound and indigenous perspectivism.

### From the auditory stance

Things are more complicated than only dividing the perception process into “seeing” and “hearing”. If an anthropology of the environment is taken seriously (Ingold 2001), all the senses should be treated in the same way. Otherwise, the presented anthropological concepts are still dominated by a visual primacy (Lewy 2015a), which makes a comparison with the audible stance necessary. It is the field that we treat as ethnomusicologists.

Therefore, the following argumentations focus on sound interactions related to the mentioned soul/body discussion. The role of sound production by reflecting on transformation processes and the change of perspectives is also presented, aiming to elaborate a kind of indigenous counter-concept to indigenous perspectivism. Hereinafter, the interaction between entities with body and soul concepts (interiority/physicality), regarding humans and non-humans such as animals and plants is discussed. Since indigenous perspectivism refers to spirits, they are also included. First we start with a discussion about *anthropomorphized sounds* (songs). They can be called agents who are able to transcend the layers of the multiverse at the moment of their performance. It means that we have the axioms of “hearing each other as humans” and “communicating with each other” as we sing special songs. This human based trans-specific communication refers to the “virtual human”, whether in his animal physicality or in his non-physical state as spirit.

All songs dealing with trans-specific interactions are transmitted by the animals, plants or spirits in their “virtual human state” to the “human humans” via dreams and/or direct intervention of shamans. The Pemón song categories of *marik* (Kamarakoto) or *murua* (Arekuna, Taurepán), and shamanic practices of *utö* (Lewy 2012) show similarities to the described Araweté *maï maraká* sound genre.

In the Pemón sound interaction, these song genres are used to communicate directly with the spirits. They are reserved only for shamans or specialists who can deal with that. The songs were also performed during festivities, when the shamans danced together. They are dangerous songs, which are avoided by normal Pemón people. The reason for this is that singing these songs means to proclaim the desire to come into contact with the spirits (*mawariton*) or even to seduce the spirits. Different sub-genres can be found, showing that every song refers to a very special spirit. When spirits are heard during shaman healing sessions, people can talk to them and even joke with and about them, but they can never see them (Koch Grünberg 1917, Lewy 2012).

---

<sup>15</sup> Menezes Bastos: “In an axionomy the taxonomic categories (taxa) are ordered from the viewpoint of a scale of values. Thus, in a axionomy not only taxa discrimination is important but also their evaluation as grades (axia) of the referred scale of values” (1999: 87).

Shaman songs define the sound interaction with the spirits who live in the table mountains (tepuy). A normal Pemón should be warned when he hears voices singing these songs. It is said that it is dangerous only to look in the direction from where the song comes because it is a sign of the imminent death for a person, which means that he or she will remain in the world of spirits.

The reason why spirits sing is the seduction of human souls. The spirits have the desire that people stay in their layer, which means a physical death of a living Pemón in the world of *serewarö* (here and now).

In addition, peccaries hear their songs (*parishara*/hunting ritual songs) because of their ability to hear like humans, since they are “virtual people”. They feel attracted because they think that they are invited by other “peccary people”. These are the Pemón singers who use these songs for the hunt of peccaries. It is the explanation why the animals fall into the trap. But it can not be assumed that peccaries are stupid, they even see that they are not chased by any peccary-people but by real human beings (Pemón hunters) who look like spirits to them. The Pemón as real humans are spirits for the peccaries and therefore, in the same way dangerous as spirits for real humans (Lewy 2012). The animals, once attracted by their songs, accept that they are now parts of that real human world.

For that reason it is often reported by *parishara* singers and hunters that peccaries are easy to kill, because they are not trying to escape. Another case confirms this point. Human hunters call the pawik (paxe paxe) bird by mimicking the rutting call of the female (Lewy 2015a).

When the bird sees the Pemón hunters, they do not try to escape. They even come closer, so that the hunters can easily kill them. (Lewy 2015a, personal communication with Bruno Illius).

Due to a metaphysical continuum of permanent transformations of bodies, it is quite difficult to be certain which kind of “soul” is part of the body actually perceived. What happens in that case is that animals see the spirits, but they are not sure what they hear. The auditory stance is the reference to certainty. The sound of the female bird imitated by human hunters convinces the birds that they are in contact with *pawik* humans and not with Pemón hunters.

In the weighing of the senses, therefore, the sound has a more important part than the visual perception in the process of certainty. The human/spirit interaction is in reverse. Humans who hear spirit sound genres are aware that they hear spirits and/or shamans. In either case, no real human (Pemón) would look or go further in the direction from which the sound is audible as it means danger.

Thus, it can be deduced that the auditory certainty generates different kinds of behaviors in comparison with all entities of the multiverse. Spirits, plants and animals hear their songs and they go to the sound source, humans have no songs of their own. Sure, what humans sing and hear is a song with anthropomorphic sound structures, but the composers are always non-humans as animals, plants and/or spirits who try to communicate with humans. For that reason humans have to differentiate what kind of song genre they hear. In case of spirit songs or in a shaman context, it means danger as both are dangerous events. Animal song genres are not dangerous for Pemón, because they attract animals for hunting or fishing.

Regardless of this process of auditory certainty, it can be stated, first, that the sound interaction with *anthropomorphic sounds* (songs) usually takes place among the “virtual persons”

of all entities. The perception and even the performance (singing) are located in the soul/interiority part. The perception of the world(s) and their layers is part of the soul, the body does not play an important role since it only contributes to the definition of the species of non-humans and humans and their belonging to the specific layer. This layer then is transcended by the used songs in the very moment of their performance. Second, while *anthropomorphized sounds* (songs) are more related to “virtual persons” and their soul/interiority, the animal sounds and the imitation of animal sounds refer to the body/physicality part of an entity.

For example, walking through the savannah, a bird sound should belong to its source, which is the bird’s body. However, if one focuses on the audible stance as the only possibility of perception, one realizes that several sources can refer to a typical bird sound. It is a sound sign with multiple meanings. Such a sound sign can be tracked back to its real body as sound source, or it can be understood as a reference to another animal or being of another multiverse’s layer. For example, it is quite known that the scream of a tapir baby is produced by this baby with the intention of calling the mother. Furthermore, a Pemón teacher told me that a jaguar imitates this tapir baby’s scream with the intention of luring the tapir to hunt him. That is why the jaguar uses the sound as seduction. Needless to mention, humans use the same mimesis technique as jaguars for the attraction of tapirs (Lewy 2015b). The Pemón hunters, on one hand, have the same intention of predation; on the other hand, they also use the sound to communicate with each other in different contexts<sup>16</sup>. When we include shaman practices, it must be noted that a shaman can transform himself into a jaguar. He can then produce a tapir sound to attract the tapir baby’s mother or other human hunters. All these examples demonstrate that sound, separated from its source, generates different meanings of entities and intentions, but every sound producer stays in his layer of the multiverse. In other words, all entities communicate in one world, because it is not known that a tapir hears a human being as something other than a human being. There is no difference in the audible stance between them. Even if we take the transformed shaman into the body of a jaguar as a reference, there is no argument that the sound is connected to the soul of the jaguar or shaman that produces the tapir’s sound. It is the body of the jaguar or shaman that mimics the tapir’s sound (Lewy 2015b).

These two arguments of the anthropomorphic and zoomorphic sound structures (songs and animal sounds) refer to entities that are categorized as “virtual humans” with a body/physicality. As already mentioned, the category of songs is more part of the soul/interiority; animal-sound productions refer more to the body/physicality, if analyzed only from the audible stance.

The third category refers to the mentioned entity of *kanaima* in the very moment of its *being kanaima state*. Koch Grünberg noted from his Taurepán and Arekuna informants: “‘Der Kanaime ist gar kein Mensch’, so heißt es<sup>17</sup>”. (Koch-Grünberg 1923: 218), because when a *kanaima* is in the state of *being kanaima*, it is not a Pemón or “human human”, but he can re-transform into a

<sup>16</sup> While I am writing those lines (October 2016) a group of Creole invaders try to occupy Pemón land in the backyard of our community in *Lomas de Piedra Canaima* (Santa Elena de Uairén/Venezuela). The community is a mix of Pemón and international families living here with the permission of the indigenous landowners. Mostly at night the indigenous fighters use several animal sounds to locate themselves and the enemy.

<sup>17</sup> “‘The Kanaime is not a human being’, it is told” (Koch-Grünberg 1923: 218).



Pemón, the question is how.

It is not so important whether a *kanaima* lives outside (Whitehead 2001: 237) or inside (Butt Colson 2001, Halbmayer 2010: 161f.) a community. If the *kanaima* is part of the village where he was born, then he mostly stays. Otherwise, if a *kanaima* once in the group has married and is suspected of being a *kanaima*, he would leave the group to live alone near the community, but that is not necessarily obligatory<sup>18</sup>. This occurs more in cases where the *kanaima* is a *non*-Pemón speaker, but a member of another indigenous language group. Family members with a kinship by consanguinity can also be attacked by *kanaima*<sup>19</sup>. Otherwise family members often try to hide or to argument against the thesis that one of their relatives is a *kanaima*.

What is a *kanaima*? Each shaman is potentially a *kanaima*, which seems ambiguous, but an explanation can be given. Firstly, if every shaman knows all magic techniques, then he knows also the *kanaima* techniques. The question is always whether he uses them and how often. During the training of young shamans, the older shaman teacher performs a test to check the quality of the beginner's soul (*yekaton*). The task is to kill a bird. If the novice does it, then he is a potential dark or bad shaman. And if not, he is potentially a light or good shaman. But it does not mean that things can not change. Secondly, there is also a category of *kanaima* that are *kanaima* by birth or by abnormal behavior. That can happen by chance, for example, when teenagers try *kumi* (magic plant) or *kawai* (tobacco). In all those cases the *kanaima* is in his "state of being *kanaima*" and he is addicted to kill entities with life, primarily Pemón.

It can be noticed that *kanaima* is a mode of existence which depends on different circumstances and intentions. It is said that *shaman-kanaimas* kill to sacrifice a human (body/soul) for the 'nature' or, better said, for the *aiyan* layer. This layer stands for the bad part of nature, which must be reassured by human sacrifices. The reflexivity of the Pemón cosmology describes *kanaimaton* (plural) as necessary, since they ensure an equilibration of the multiverse. Shamans have to work with spirits (*mawariton*) and the virtual masters (*enek*) of plants and animals, all of which are associated with the *aiyan* layer. The good shamans ask them for help in most of the cases when they seek and save human souls. But the other part of their business is to deliver human bodies as an act of reciprocity.

It is not always the same shaman who sacrifices and heals. This explains why there are some "good" and some rather "evil" shamans. It is also necessary to ask the extent to which the "good" is good, if he leaves the job of reciprocity to the so-called "evil" shamans or the *kanaimaton*.

Anyway, if a *kanaima* kills, he changes into another being and, at that moment the soul is absent. *Kanaima* songs do not attract the victim, as might be suspected in the consideration of the aforementioned practices of the attraction of animals or spirits. However, the songs can attract other *kanaima*. This is more an intra-specific communication. In addition to songs, the connection between *kanaima* members is made by using tobacco. Two different types of *kanaima* songs can be noted. One refers to the process of re-transformation from a *being kanaima state* to a human being; the other points to the forms of reflection. In this case, the singer sings about what he has

<sup>18</sup> For security reasons, I am not mentioning the specific area or the people.

<sup>19</sup> I do not agree with Thomas who says that family members are not attacked (Thomas 1982:235, Halbmayer 2010: 161).



done in the *being kanaima state*.

Looking at the first form of *kanaima* songs, it becomes clear that the transformation practice is an indication of the understanding of *kanaima* from the position of the audible stance. The lyrics (fig. 1) of an *amanawui* song (Line 2, fig.1) reflect the process of re-transformation from the heat and desire to kill, into a human by cooling down. Therefore, the *kanaima* changes into a siren that floats in the ocean. It is just a preliminary condition before it is re-transformed into a human with body and soul. The song is a kind of agent, as it cools the singer. It is also self-referential; the *kanaima* tells other *kanaima* what he is doing and is therefore, connected with them.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Parau saru uyau</li> <li>● tuma sewasurumai tunakoto<sup>20</sup></li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. In the ocean current,</li> <li>2. at the place of the water, I transformed myself into a siren</li> </ol>
---	---

Figure 1. *Amanawui* song

Another cool down technique aiming to re-transform a *kanaima* into a real human is to eat a piece of the femur from the victim's body. It is an act of direct anthropophagy. A similar practice is mentioned by Whitehead (2002) who writes that *kanaima* sucks the juice of the buried victim.

This kind of cannibalism is a similar practice in comparison to the described Tupinamba and Araweté (EVC) practices. The *kanaima* is not only changing his "perspective" or audible stance. He re-humanizes himself by practising anthropophagy, because he wants to retain his human "I". This cannibal act can happen either through the actual ingestion of "human human" bodies, or, vicariously, over the singing of these kinds of songs.

### How sound changes the perspective of the *other*

The *being kanaima state* leads to another performance practice which demonstrates how *kanaima* transform themselves into something other than human bodies, especially into animals or monsterlike hybrid phantasy beings. The main vehicle for transformation is a magic formula (*tarén*), a performance that needs to be learnt by practising over several years. There are different forms and practices of *tarén* (Lewy 2015a). Important to know is that a magic formula consist of a few 'magical' words, belonging to a ritual language. In case of *kanaima* these words have to be thought first, then they have to be blown and muttered over a glass of water, *kumi* or *tabac* and consumed by the *kanaima*-Pemón who is able to change into the *being kanaima* state. The magic formula for *kanaima* ensures that a shaman and/or a *kanaima* is transformed into a jaguar or a snake. But this transformation is not caused by a physical one. Transformation means here, changing the perspective of the other.

Furthermore, at the very moment of killing the *kanaima* heats up and enters into a state of rage changing his body into a kind of phantasy monster animal, which is seen by all entities. After killing he needs to cool down himself to be re-transformed into a human being again as it was mentioned above.

<sup>20</sup> The song's metadata are not quoted due to source protection.

The performance of magic formulas is an indigenous counter-theory to EVC's indigenous perspectivism. Following EVC's mentioned hunting paradigm, then a *kanaima* is like a predator animal; that means that he would see humans as prey animals. But following the explanation of my Pemón teacher, then it needs to be mentioned that what a *kanaima* really sees is humans as humans, and in reverse, humans see *kanaima* transformed into a body which is defined by the magic formula. It is the magic formula used by a *kanaima* to change his body –but only from the human's *point of view*. The *kanaima* sees himself as a human. Only when two *kanaimaton* (plural) turn into jaguars, both see themselves as jaguars, but each *kanaima* sees himself as human. At the very moment of killing (*being kanaima state*) a *kanaima* sees nothing clear, due to the absence of his soul. It can be summarized that it is not the *kanaima* body which is transformed and makes the humans see the *kanaima* different from his normal humanlike shape –it is the magic formula which lets the others (in that case the humans) see the *kanaimaton* differently. They are now seen as a snake, jaguar or “monster” by Pemón people.

Another *tarén* demonstrates how magic formulas change the view of the world which predator animals have. Thus, a human can be saved from a jaguar attack by using a specific *tarén*. For this, it is necessary to know that a hungry jaguar sees humans as prey, but if the human uses the few special magical words of *tarén* as described –thinking, blowing, murmuring– it has the effect that the jaguar will see the human as fire. The act refers to a myth which tells us that the Jaguar and the Fire had a battle which the Jaguar lost. That's why the Jaguar respects fire<sup>21</sup>. When I asked my Pemón teacher Balbina Lambós what would happen if we were going through the forest and the jaguar was not hungry, she told me that in this case he only sees us as human beings and leaves us alone. That would also happen if we had not made a *tarén* before. It can be stated that the mentioned argument that the *tarén* defines the perspective of the other, in that case the perspective of the hungry jaguar, is also found here.

We can deduce that the position predator/prey can be changed by a sounding magic formula, at least in the Pemón context. It needs to be underlined that the perspective is flexible and part of the denominator's body (jaguar) and emotions. Anyway, if a hungry jaguar sees humans as prey and a not hungry jaguar sees humans as humans but not as prey, the perspective of the jaguar is defined by human humans using the magical words of a *tarén*.

These magic formulas refer to the mythical world. This means that the used words make *changing views* possible. Through the performative acts of thinking and murmuring the words, existing agencies in that mythical world are contacted with which human can interact. The hungry jaguar then is part of that mythical world, his *point of view* is changed, whether he wants it or not.

In other words, the sound production (including the inner voice of the *tarén* thinker) transforms the world the hungry jaguar sees by transmitting his visual perception to the mythical world. The human prey is transformed into fire from the point of view of the denominator (jaguar) by a sound of imagined and murmured words.

In this context it can be said that sound not only transcends the different layers of the

---

<sup>21</sup> There is a myth “The jaguar and the fire” told by the Taurepán Mayuluaípu and published by Koch-Grünberg (1916: 129). The publication was not known to my Pemón teacher. She learnt the myth and the *tarén* from her brother.

multiverse, it can even change the layers for a specific entity.

## Conclusion

The answer to the question of where sound perception and production can be applied to a body/soul dichotomy is not easy to find. The main problem is the diversity of the ontologies across the Amazon, especially in the Guyanas. In applying concepts of indigenous perspectivism, multinaturalism (EVC) and animism (Descola 2013) a soul/interiority or “virtual human continuum” is a firmly anchored axiom, which is the base for the presented argumentations of the mentioned reverse anthropologies –*soul/representation/multiculturalism* (EVC) and *naturalism/different interiority/similar physicality* (Descola 2013) versus *body/perspective/multinaturalism* (EVC) and *animism/similar interiority-different physicality* (Descola 2013).

As I have already written elsewhere (Lewy 2012 and 2015a), the concept of a hunting paradigm is found in Pemón myths and song lyrics. But when trying to apply it to a deeper concept of sound practices, things become complicated. The first argument, about the singing practice of shamans and hunters, reflects the concept that specific songs are agents used to interact with all inhabitants in every virtual layer of the multiverse, in particular with spirits and prey animals. Therefore, it can be stated that songs as anthropomorphic sounds transcend these layers to make trans-specific communication possible.

This trans-specific interaction happens between the “souls” or “virtual humans” referring to a mythical world in which all is “human”, thus communication between these “virtual-humans” as shamans, animals and spirits takes place. But when focusing only on animal sounds and mimesis the imagined body is not always the real sound source. Indigenous informants can give a chain of associations that explain which body and/or soul has the potential to produce which kind of sound. Thus, the symbolic character of those sound signs refer to a kind of *schizophony*.

When looking at songs and animal sounds as a performance of trans-specific communication, an audible stance can be derived that counteracts or supplements the visual hunting paradigm, the most popular core of EVC’s Amerindian perspectivism:

1. Humans see humans as humans, prey animals as prey animals and predator animals and spirits as predator animals or spirits –they hear humans as humans, prey animals as prey animals or humans (in case of songs) and predator animals/spirits as predator animals/spirits or humans (songs); spirits are also perceived via sound index (in particular birds).
2. Prey animals see themselves as humans, humans and spirits as predator animals, they hear themselves as prey animals or humans (song), humans and spirits as humans (song) or prey animals (sound imitation of animals) or as predator animals (animal sound).
3. Spirits/predator animals see themselves as humans and prey animals and humans as prey animals –spirits hear themselves as humans, humans as humans and prey animals as humans; predator animals hear themselves as humans (song) or predator animals (animal sound), humans as humans (song) and prey animals as humans (song) or prey animals.

The mentioned typology (Lewy 2015b) is not concluded since all types of body transformations are not discussed with regard to *schizophony*. But this first excerpt, however, shows the complexity of the differentiated perceptions, here in particular from the auditory stance, which create a further ontological framework, which is different from the ontologies based on visual perception of the world(s).

Furthermore, EVC's perspectives are defined by sound with powerful meanings in the Pemón context (magic formulas). The perspective of the body is defined by the *other*. This *other* is part of the *mind/soul/interiority* complex. The body defines the world which is seen at a certain moment, but this world is manipulable and definable by the *other* through sound. Then the question is: Who denominates all those definitions? In approaching an answer to this question, one can say that it is always negotiable since everything depends on the intention, emotions, etc. of the *other*. These are attributes which are mostly part of the body, but the manipulation by the *other* is practised in the mind. Pemón speaks of mind control when talking about their behavior during war, even if they are confronted with Creole enemies. But they do not transform themselves into the bodies the enemy sees. What they transform by thinking (inner voice) and muttering formalized sounds (magic formulas) is the perspective of the enemy.

When going beyond human and non-human dichotomy –as these categories are defined by the mentioned body/soul axiom– a different concept can be found. It is the anti-human *kanaima* in its *being kanaima state*, which has no soul but who acts with a body and who is associated with other *kanaimaton* through this body. It is a counter-concept to a “good shaman” as his soul leaves his body and travels through the various layers of the multiverse and tries to keep in touch with the spirits. A *kanaima* changes his body by transforming the perspective of the other. At the moment of killing, he leaves the universal human condition, since he loses his soul which is necessary to serve for the *aiyan* layer. At this moment of *being kanaima state* he is categorized as an anti-human, but also as a necessary entity with regard to reciprocity and equilibration within the whole collective.

He needs to be re-humanized using several practices, and among others the singing of *kanaima* songs is one of the most important ones. It is a reverse technique compared with the techniques for contacting spirits practised by good shamans. This “*good shaman state*” never leaves its human characterization. The soul is separated from the body because it is the main part of the shaman for contacting the spirit's world. The *being kanaima state* is the opposite, because the spirit is lacking a savage, barely controllable and hot body, which must be “revived” by a performance.

Finally, if magic formulas are defined by the mind/soul, then, it is not the body that defines the perspective, a concept similar to Araweté war songs. EVC writes that the “I” creates the point of view through the song of the other when he explains virtual cannibalism, he notes: “it is words alone that one eats”. Thus, it is the soul in co-existence with the song of powerful meaning (EVC's “words”) that defines the existence of the other. In both cases, it is the sound produced with powerful meaning (song, magic formula), with which the perspectives can be controlled. The sound transcends, defines and structures the interaction between all entities of Pemón multilayers. It even re-animates souls into bodies, as illustrated by the *kanaima* example.

In summary, the flow is less an interaction of “anterior/posterior”, “crystallized or recrystallized”, but an interaction between souls on a third level or layer that connects all multiverse layers via sound. For the description of this theory, I once suggested the “Indigenous sonorism” (Lewy 2015b), which can be taken as a kind of counter-interpretation and/or complementary induction to Indigenous perspectivism and multinaturalism.

## Bibliography

- Århem, Kaj. 1993. *Ecosofía Makuna*. In Correa, Francois (ed.), *La Selva Humanizada: ecología alternativa en el trópico húmedo colombiano*, pp. 105-22. Bogotá: Instituto Colombiano de Antropología.
- Baer, Gerhard. 1994. *Cosmología y shamanismo Matsinguenka*. Quito: Abya-Yala.
- Brabec de Mori, Bernd. 2012. “About Magical Singing, Sonic Perspectives, Ambient Multinatures, and the Conscious Experience”. *Indiana* 29: 73-101.
- Brabec de Mori, Bernd and Anthony Seeger. 2013. “Introduction: Considering Music, Humans, and Non-humans”. In Brabec de Mori, Bernd (ed.), *The Human and Non-Human in Lowland South American Indigenous Music. Ethnomusicology Forum* 22 (3): 269-286.
- Brabec de Mori, Bernd; Matthias Lewy, and Miguel García. 2015. *Estudios Indiana 8: Sudamérica y sus mundos audibles*. Berlin: Gebr. Mann Verlag.
- Butt Colson, Audrey. 2001. *Itoto (Kanaima) as death and AntiStructure*. In Rival, Laura M. und Neil L. Whitehead (eds.), *Beyond the Visible and the Material*, pp. 221–235. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Descola, Philippe. 2013. *Beyond nature and culture*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Feyerabend, Paul. 1963. “How to be a Good Empiricist”. In Baumrin, Bernard (ed.), *Philosophy of Science, The Delaware Seminar 2*, New York.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1970. “Against Method”. In *Minnesota Studies in the Philosophy of Science. Theories and Methods of Physics and Psychology*, pp. 17-130. Minnesota: University of Minnesota.
- García, Miguel. 2016. “Some Questions Related to Musicology and its Methods”. *El Oído Pensante* 4 (1). <http://ppct.caicyt.gov.ar/index.php/oidopensante/article/view/8005/9042> (Accessed: December, 30 2016).
- Grenand, Pierre. 1980. *Introducción à l'étude de l'univers wayãpi. Ethnoécologie des indiens du Haut-Oyapock (Guyane Française)*. Paris: SELAF/CNRS.
- Halbmayer, Ernst. 2010. *Kosmos und Kommunikation. Weltkonzeptionen in der südamerikanischen Sprachfamilie der Cariben*. 2 Volumes. Wien: Facultas wuv.
- Koch-Grünberg, Theodor. 1916. *Vom Roroima zum Orinoco. Ergebnisse einer Reise in Nordbrasilien und Venezuela in den Jahren 1911-1913. Vol. 2*. Berlin: Dietrich Reimer.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1917. *Vom Roroima zum Orinoco. Ergebnisse einer Reise in Nordbrasilien und Venezuela in den Jahren 1911-1913. Vol. 1*. Berlin: Dietrich Reimer.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1923. *Vom Roroima zum Orinoco. Ergebnisse einer Reise in Nordbrasilien und Venezuela in den Jahren 1911-1913, Vol 3*. Stuttgart: Strecker und Schröder.
- Latour, Bruno. 1993. *We have Never Been Modern*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.



- Lévi-Strauss, Claude, and Didier Èribon. 1991. *Conversations with Claude Lévi-Strauss*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Lewy, Matthias. 2011. *Die Rituale areruya und cho'chiman bei den Pemón (Gran Sabana, Venezuela)*. Doctoral thesis, Freie Universität Berlin. [http://www.diss.fu-berlin.de/diss/receive/FUDISS\\_thesis\\_000000025007?lang=en](http://www.diss.fu-berlin.de/diss/receive/FUDISS_thesis_000000025007?lang=en)
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2012. "Different "Seeing" - Similar "Hearing". Ritual and Sound among the Pemón (Gran Sabana, Venezuela)". In Halbmayr, Ernst (ed.), *Animism, Perspectivism, and the Construction of Ontologies, Indiana* 29: 53-71.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2015a. "Más allá del punto de vista: sonorismo amerindio y entidades de sonido antropomorfas y no-antropomorfas". In Brabec de Mori, Bernd, Matthias Lewy, and Miguel García. (eds.), *Estudios Indiana 8: Sudamérica y sus mundos audibles*, pp. 83-98. Berlin: Gebr. Mann Verlag.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2015b. "Resonance and Theorizing in Ethnomusicology. Thinking, Singing, and Murmuring in Pemón Sound Ontologies". In *Encontro Nacional da Associação Brasileira de Etnomusicologia, Anais do VII ENABET / VII Encontro Nacional da Associação Brasileira de Etnomusicologia*, pp. 267-279. Florianópolis: PPGAS/UFSC.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2016. "The Transformations of the World(s) and the Becoming of "Real Humans". Amerindian Sound Ontologies in Guiana's songs and myths". In Feirrerá Corrêa, Antenor (ed.), *Music in an Intercultural Perspective*, pp. 49-60. Brasília: Strong Edições.
- Mendivil, Julio. in press. *Historias fabulosas. La música incaica y la formación de la música andina como objeto de estudio etnomusicológico*.
- Menezes Bastos, Rafael J. de. 1999. "Apùap World Hearing: On the Kamayurá Phono-Auditory System and the Anthropological Concept of Culture". *The World of Music* 41 (1): 85-96.
- Osborn, Ann. 1990. "Eat and be eaten: animals in U'wa (Tunebo) oral tradition" In Willis, Roy (ed.), *Signifying Animals. Human Meaning in the Natural World*, pp. 140-158. London: Unwin Hyman.
- Salgado e Silva, José Alberto. 2011. "Notas sobre Descrição, Diálogo e Etnografia". *Música e Cultura: revista on-line de etnomusicologia* 6 (1). <http://musicaecultura.abetmusica.org.br/artigos-06-1/MeC06-1-Jose-Alberto.pdf> (Accessed: May, 23 2017).
- Sans, Juan Francisco. 2011. "Musicología popular, juicios de valor y nuevos paradigmas del conocimiento. In Sans, Juan Francico and Rubén López Cano (eds.), *Música popular y juicios de valor: una reflexión desde América Latina*, pp. 165-194. Caracas: Fundación Celarg.
- Schoer, Hein; Bernd Brabec de Mori, Bernd and Matthias Lewy. 2014. "Towards an Auditory Anthropology. The Value of Human / Non- human Soundscapes and Cultural Soundscape Composition in Contemporary Research and Education on American Indigenous Cultures". *The Soundscape Journal* 3: 15-21.
- Seeger, Anthony. 1987. *Why Suy'a Sing. A musical Anthropology of an Amazonian People*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Spencer Espinosa, Christian 2011. "Ser o No Ser, he ahí el dilema. Reflexiones epistemológicas



- en torno a la relación entre ciencia y musicología. In Sans, Juan Francisco and Rubén López Cao (eds.), *Música popular y juicios de valor: una reflexión desde América Latina*, pp. 25-64. Caracas: Fundación Celarg.
- Stolze Lima, Tânia. 1999 [1996]. "The Two and Its Many: Reflection on Perspectivism in a Tupi Cosmology". *Ethnos* 64 (1): 107-131.
- Thomas, David J. 1982. *Order Without Government. The Society of the Pemón Indians of Venezuela*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- Viveiros de Castro, Eduardo. 1992. *From the Enemy's Point of View, Humanity and Divinity in an Amazonian Society*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1997. "Die kosmologischen Pronomina und der indianische Perspektivismus". *Société suisse des Américanistes*, Schweizerische Amerikanisten-Gesellschaft, *Bulletin* 61: 99-114.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2011. *Metafísicas canibales. Líneas de antropología postestructural*. Conocimiento. Buenos Aires: Katz Editores. Kindle-Version.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2014. *Cannibal Metaphysics*. Minneapolis: Univocal Publishing.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2015. *Metafísicas Canibais - Elementos para uma antropologia pós-estrutural*. São Paulo: Cosac & Naify.
- Whitehead, Neil L. 2001. "Kanaimà: Shamanism and Ritual Death in the Pakaraima Mountains, Guyana". In Rival, Laura M. and Neil L. Whitehead (eds.), *Beyond the Visible and the Material*, pp. 235-247. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2002. *Dark Shamans. Kanaima and the poetics of violent death*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Weiss, Gerald. 1969. The cosmology of the Campa Indians of Eastern Peru. Doctoral thesis. Michigan: University of Michigan.
- Wittgenstein, Ludwig. 1970. *Über Gewißheit*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.



### **Biography / Biografia / Biografia**

Matthias Lewy is an anthropologist and ethnomusicologist. He received his PhD at Free University Berlin (Germany). At the moment, he is research fellow and lecturer at the Universidade de Brasília (UNB/Brasil). Over the last 12 years he has realized several field researches among the Pemón people in Southern Venezuela and Northern Brasil. His research focus is on Amerindian sound ontologies, theory of ethnomusicology, music and ritual, music and economics, ethnohistorical sources as well as music and language. He also works and publishes about sound in museum contexts and has arranged exhibitions about Amazonia sounds at the Humboldt Lab in Berlin, and the Ethnographic Museum in Geneva (MEG). He is co-editor of the book *Sudamérica y sus mundos audibles* (with Bernd Brabec de Mori and Miguel García, 2015).

**How to cite / Cómo citar / Como citar**

Lewy, Matthias. 2017. "About Indigenous Perspectivism, Indigenous Sonorism and the Audible Stance. Approach to a Symmetrical Auditory Anthropology". *El oído pensante* 5 (2). <http://ppct.caicyt.gov.ar/index.php/oidopensante> [Web: DATE].