

# About the Xinguano sacred flutes and the antropologization of the world<sup>1</sup>

DOI

<http://dx.doi.org/10.11606/1678-9857.ra.2021.186653>

Rafael José de Menezes Bastos

Federal University of Santa Catarina | Florianópolis, SC, Brazil  
rafael.data.base@gmail.com | ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1788-6050>

## ABSTRACT

This is a study about sacred flutes in lowland South America, taking the Xinguano as main subject matter. Also, it studies what I call antropologization of the world, or the inversion of the original hegemony of the *mama'e* spirits in relation to human beings. The article is an exploration departing from Clastres' idea of «against». The referred Clastres' idea has taken me to a vision of the Xinguano as disciplinary societies, according to Foucault, but against modernity according to Latour's formulation of modernity.

## KEYWORDS

Xinguano, sacred flutes, visual interdiction, antropologization of the world, Pierre Clastres

## About the Xinguano sacred flutes and the antropologization of the world

**ABSTRACT** This is a study about sacred flutes in lowland South America, taking the Xinguano as main subject matter. Also, it studies what I call antropologization of the world, or the inversion of the original hegemony of the *mama'e* spirits in relation to human beings. The article is an exploration departing from Clastres' idea of «against». The referred Clastres' idea has taken me to a vision of the Xinguano as disciplinary societies, according to Foucault, but against modernity according to Latour's formulation of modernity.

## KEYWORDS

Xinguano, sacred flutes, visual interdiction, antropologization of the world, Pierre Clastres

*Pro oblivio Maria Ignez*

## THE SACRED FLUTES IN THE LOWLANDS OF SOUTH AMERICA AND BEYOND THEM

The theme of sacred flutes in the lowlands of South America is extremely complex, all starting with an issue that affects not only this region, but all the others where they occur. This is its definition, even if merely instrumental, as the circumscribed objects are not always flutes in the organological sense (according to the Hornbostel-Sachs system (Hornbostel and Sachs, 1961[1914]), not even just aerophones, such as I myself have already made it evident in at least two texts (Menezes Bastos, 2006; 2011). On the other hand, their qualification as “sacred” or “ritual” can be seen as elusive, as the same above cited writings and many others worked. The issue complexity, however, does not end there, reaching the extent and the large magnitude spread of its occurrence in the region and many others, among which Melanesia being a classic example (Cf. Hill and Chaumeil, 2011, and the note 2 below). Due to scope and space issues, I will address here its presence only in two important sub-areas of its manifestation in the lowlands, the Upper Xingu – focusing on the Xinguano, my main study theme – and the Upper Rio Negro, limiting myself very briefly to the Tukano.

I have been studying these flutes among Xinguano peoples since 1978. Since then, however, I have only written one work specifically aimed at them (2006; see Hill and Chaumeil, 2011).<sup>2</sup> The lack of further development of my work on the subject is not an isolated fact, as it has only just begun to be seen more specifically in the lowlands from the works of Piedade (1998; 2004), Mello (1999; 2005) and Barcelos Neto (2002; 2008).

In 1978, I described the *yaku'i* flutes – this is their name in Kamayurá (alternatively, *yumiamá'e*) – discussed its position in the group's musical instrument classificatory system, and studied the relationship between their three players – the main master and the two lateral learners –, matching, on the other hand, the flutes complex, a hallmark of the male community, to female menstruation, full of taboos in Upper Xingu. This comparison was made based on aspects checking that show great parallelism between the two systems. For example, menstruating women among the Kamayura do not take immersion baths. Likewise, men, while involved in playing the flutes. Similarly, both must not cook. Finally, they shouldn't be loud – keeping their behavior discreet – nor to spread their menstrual condition, to men, this means to say that they, or any other people, should not say that they are playing the flutes. When the flutes are being played, everything happens as if there is no human making them sound.

It is observed that, in the book's photographic annex, preceded by a note about the non-presence of the *yaku'i* in execution there – but only the instruments, without

<sup>1</sup> | This work owes a lot to João Carlos Almeida, Ph.D. student at PPGAS/UFSC leading research in Alto Xingu with a focus on the Yawalapití. Also, to Ayupú Kamayurá, younger brother and long-time resident among the Yawalapití, although he is Kamayurá. Likewise, to Acácio Tadeu Piedade and Aristoteles Barcelos Neto. Thanks to Ordep José Trindade Serra, for the Latin version of the article's dedication. Also to Anthony Seeger, Mark Munzel, Jean-Michel Beaudet, Katia Kukawka and Luísa Valentini for their help. Many thanks to Paola Gibram, Sílvia Beraldo, Deise Lucy Montardo, Maria Eugénia Domínguez, Kaio Domingues Hoffmann and Izomar Lacerda – to this one, thank you emphatically – for reading and commenting on a previous version of the text. I thank the late colleague Maria Ignez Cruz Mello, to whom I dedicate the text with emotion. I am solely responsible for it. Pedro Cesarino was an editor with rare sensitivity in relation to this writing.

<sup>2</sup> | In this book – an important reference for the theme as a whole –, there are texts that have special interest nowadays, including those by Piedade (2011), Mello (2011), Prinz (2011), the one by my own authorship (Menezes Bastos, 2011), in addition to the Introduction (1–46) to the book. My 2011 text is an English revision and version of the 2006 text.

performers - there are two pictures of them. The note says that the lack of players was due to an indigenous recommendation, adding that a woman's vision of the male flutes performance would be something inelegant and dangerous for both. In the 1999 edition of *A Musicológica* (cf. Menezes Bastos 1999), in the annex the flutes no longer appear in photographs, the note, however, remaining the same as the original edition. In 2006 (cf. Menezes Bastos, 2011 - for the reviewed version in English), based on the analysis of an extremely sensitive episode that happened in the 1950s - the group rape of one of the village chief's wife named by me *Pele de Reclusa*<sup>3</sup> -, I expanded my interpretive framework, studying the reality of Kamayurá senses and their relations with the political environment, gender relations and violence, which over time proved to have great results, as shown below.<sup>4</sup>

The works of the three colleagues mentioned above, since their inception, have substantially changed what was known about sacred flutes in the Xinguano environment, also reaching great interest in relation to other areas, in the lowlands and beyond them: the flutes - as the Xinguano mythology said regarding them - are actually masks of spirits that before the great cataclysm constituted by the emergence of light in the world lived in the darkness of the underground level, together with humans and other beings.

The light emerged through the twins work, Sun and Moon - sons of demiurge Mawutsini and masters of Xinguano shamanism - anthropomorphic sons of *Onça* [jaguar] and of the anthropomorphic *Mulheres de Pau* [wooden women] created by the demiurge enchantment. The entities, yerupoho (in Wauja) - which after the cataclysm came to be called apapaatai -, called itseke in Kuikuro and mama'e in Kamayurá, at the moment when the light appeared they built masks and dressed them to protect themselves, because the light burned their skin. A crucial aspect that the thesis by Maria Ignez Cruz Mello (2005) clarified that women cannot see the flutes, but must listen to them. Thus, it should be noted that typically the female ritual repertoire of Amurikumã - studied by Mello (cf. 2011, in addition to his thesis) - it is integrated by songs that maintain a similar relationship to the transposition in the musicological sense of the instrumental pieces of the yaku'i, thanks to the female effort of listening to the flutes' music, put them into their memories and turn them into mnemonic models of their vocal music<sup>5</sup>. Note that mythology says, an aspect I have known since at the time of my 1978 book (Menezes Bastos, 1978), that the aforementioned flutes had originally been stolen from the mama'e by women; men, however, having stolen from them later. Regardless, whether women or men were the ones who turned them into exclusive and distinctive possessions, the flutes under study are, according to the Xinguano mythology, the result of the creator cataclysm nowadays, a result that points to an anthropologization of the world, a human victory - male or female, both, however, always being in constitutive conflict - against spirits. From then on, they constitute a strategic power object, to control the visual interdiction in comment.

3 | "Pele de Reclusa" [Recluse Skin] is the literal translation of Manga'uhet, a term that indicates the female age group of those women who were immediately ex-pubertal inmates, to which the chief's cited wife had recently belonged.

4 | See Mello's thesis, quoted above. See also McCallum (1994) and Junqueira (1998).

5 | For the Kamayurá and Xinguano people in general, the head - symbolically the memory -, through the ear, works as magnetophonic recorders, fixing what they capture. It seems that all the other senses - like, sight, smell, touch - have the same kind of performance.

As for the Upper Rio Negro, the works, among others, by Hugh-Jones (1979), Piedade (1997; 1999) and Hill (1993a; 1993b) were the starting point of my view on the sacred flutes in the sub-region, as I said briefly. Hugh-Jones' text, today a classic along the one by his wife, Christine Hugh-Jones (1979), became paradigmatic in relation to the ethnographic sub-region, for elaborating a theoretical-ethnographic model with a structuralist background to unveil the indigenous environment, typically its cosmopolitics. In the sacred flutes and trumpets case, the first text (Hugh-Jones, 1979) stressed the existence of what he calls a secret male "cult" – with explicit female exclusion – spread throughout the sub-region, linked to a complex set of musical instruments, especially flutes and trumpets. I prefer not to adopt the term "cult" for the knowledge field and practices related to the flutes and trumpets under analysis, taking into account the contentions raised in relation to the idea of religious worship in the lowlands region as a whole by Viveiros de Castro (1992: 6). I noted that this flute and trumpets universe is known throughout the Upper Rio Negro region through the word Yurupari, in general language or Nheengatu.

Piedade's works (1997; 1999) pointed out the connection of these sacred instruments to a symbolic male menstruation, which also happens among the Xinguano – particularly the Kamayurá –, as I said in my 1978 book.

This way of looking at the subject has developed a great deal in the literature on Melanesia (cf. Hogbin, 1970; Herdt, 1981; 1982). I recall that in Upper Xingu there is an explicit inversion between male and female rituals, former linked to the sacred flutes, the latter being linked to the rite of the Amurikumã and its family, as discussed by Mello (1999; 2005). According to Piedade's second text, "the absence of the ability to become pregnant among Tukano men would be symbolically make up through their ritual power to put together men in the male initiation ritual" (: 4). The Wakuenay, Arawak people from the same sub region, also share this model (Hill, 1993a; 1993b).

## THE XINGUANO FLUTES ROUTE

Next, I will study some events involving Xinguano flutes – in this case, Kamayurá – now under study, episodes that has put and still puts in interaction with myself, some relatives – partner, sons, daughters and others –, colleagues and students who work or worked with me, and some Kamayurá indians, including Ayupú – who lives among the Yawalapití –, younger brother of Takumã, the late Kamayurá chief who gifted me with the flute. The scenery of the events encompasses Brasília, London, Florianópolis and the villages of the Kamayurá and Yawalapití – places where these peoples live. They began in 1981, in the Kamayurá village, when its chief gifted me with a yaku'í. It has been the study of the referred events has helped me to have the comprehension of the yaku'í that I present here.

In 1981, when I was doing fieldwork in Yawaratsingtùp, Kamayurá village also

known as Ipawu, the late chief Takumã, my host, gave me a yaku'i. I had asked him for one of them to give to a relative. Back in Brasília – where I lived – that's what I did, giving it to one of my relatives. It was not uncommon for visitors to the Xingu National Park – originally managed by Orlando Vilas-Boas –, today the Xingu Indigenous Land, to return to their places of origin with, among other items, one of those distinguished objects of the Xinguano universe. It did not seem to have on these flutes the same type of restriction on the female vision prevailing among the indigenous peoples in the case of their vision by non-Indigenous outside the limits of the indigenous area. This kind of loosening restrictions also happened in other domains – for example, outside these limits, Xinguano eating fur animal meat could happen, which by no means happened domestically. Perhaps, instead of assuming a loosening of restrictions, it would be the case to think that the way of being Kamayurá would admit external diversity in relation to internally adopted customs, the referred diversities being sometimes very large.

It should be noted that, at that time, I didn't know much about these flutes, whose topification took place, as we have seen, only much later in ethnological literature in the lowlands of South America. I knew that women should not see them, under penalty of group rape. I had no hypothesis about the reasons for this ban, but the findings that the woman who saw them was in danger – of group rape. Its equation, on the other hand, to female menstruation – which I established from a Melanesian inspiration (as originally Hogbin, 1970) – it did not take me very far. As I said, this situation began to change with the research of these three colleagues, Piedade (2004), Mello (1999; 2005) and Barcelos Neto (2002; 2008) – which I had the pleasure to follow – and the thoughts of my unpublished ethnographic work, my published papers, starting with that of 1978, as well as the knowledge gained through my ongoing reach out, in the field or not, in cities like Brasília, São Paulo and others, with the Kamayurá and other Xinguanos. In 1978, I described the flutes, studied the relationship between their three players – the main master and the two lateral learners, matching, on the other hand – as mentioned above – the flute complex, a hallmark of the male community, to the female menstruation, full of taboos in the Upper Xingu.

Despite this expansion of the interpretive framework, on the current empirical plane, my approach remained almost the same as the in beginning. So I asked myself: what were the yaku'i, why should women not see them and why and how did they reflect a trinity? I note that this last point was described by me in 1978 based on the regulated kinship relations between the members of the trio players, namely, of affinity and consanguinity between ego, the maraka'ùp, "musician master", always at the center of the choreographic formation, and its "learners", respectively to the left (affinity) and right (consanguinity) of ego.

Also in the 2006 text, I had the insight that the group rape of chief Kamayurá's wife – in a love affair with Leonardo Villas Boas – was provoked by her seeing the

flutes, which triggered the transformation of her boyfriend and the Kamayurá men in a yaku'i community, under the rule of their ethics, fierce towards women's views. Manga'uhet and Leonardo Villas Boas had their dates, witnessed away by anyone in the village, in Leonardo's house. A trio of yaku'i had been placed in the house, turning it into a tapui, "house of flutes", while turning Leonardo himself into a flute.

The issue of placing the flutes in Leonardo's house is complex and delicate, putting their very nature in perspective. I have already dealt with it, although initially, in my 2006 text, and now I elaborate on it a little more. It all starts, I think, in dispelling the simplistic and prejudiced idea that we are here in the face of a passion crime, perpetrated by an allegedly jealous Kutamapù against an alleged traitor wife and her supposed boyfriend. It should be noted that Leonardo was expelled from the village, Manga'uhet having been the victim of a savage—it is worth remembering the etymology of this word, "beast"—group rape, from which she was expelled, going to live among the Karajá, on the Bananal Island, where she got married and still lives, occasionally going to Kamayurá village to visit her kinship. In 2000, I had the opportunity to meet her in this village.

One version of what happened is that the flute trio was placed at Leonardo's house at the request of Kutamapù, so Pele de Reclusa would see it when she went there to date Leonardo. Several interlocutors, however, say that the trio went there on their own. In any case, the chief had been the victim, according to the Kamayurá, of an act of war, as stealing women, something that demanded revenge. As I put it in Menezes Bastos (2006) and now I do over, marital infidelity on an interethnic level is an act of war, as stealing women. Unlike what happens at the intra-ethnic level—when it is easily resolved, almost like a raid—in the inter-ethnic field it is seen as an extremely violent attack coming from an external enemy. Thus, the rape of Pele de Reclusa was a revenge of the Kamayurá peoples through their men, turned into a fierce yaku'i community.

As already mentioned, the work of the above-mentioned colleagues changed what was known about yaku'i flutes: The appearance of light by the work of Sun and Moon caused the burning of the yerupoho skins, who after the cataclysm started to wear masks. Thus, the first and crucial point of my ignorance about the flutes was fixed - the yaku'i were actually masks inhabited by spirits, they have a fish shape, are skilled musicians and fond of their own music, which should not be performed with mistakes, under pain of its rage. I remember that the repertoire of Amurikumã's female ritual is made by songs that are like vocal transpositions of the sacred flutes respective songs.

The question remained, however: why the ban only on the viewing of flutes by women? Why women and not men? Are women and men on the same ontological and political level? What does it mean to see for the Wauja? And listen? Note that mythology, which I had known from the time of my 1978 book, pointed out to me that

women had originally appropriated these flutes; men having stolen them later. In any case, whether women or men were the ones who turned them into exclusive and distinctive possessions, the flutes under study are, according to the mythology, the result of the cataclysm from which the current's world started, humans going to the illuminated surface while the *mama'é* stayed on the lower level, only occasionally making incursions to the surface, when they began to cause illness and death to humans. Such is the meaning of this anthropologization: the human's hegemonization in relation to *mama'é*. From then on, flutes will constitute a strategic object of power; the genre that appropriates them will have an advantageous position, however, always contested.

Piedade's thesis brings important advances on the women's vision case of *yaku'i* flutes and on the philosophy of vision among the Wauja. According to the author, the surface world, where humans live today, is abruptly apart from the one where *Yurupoho* spirits inhabit, in the dark lower level, an exile. Light, with vision—as well as the fire domain—constitutes in the current world a continuous and perennial reminder of the ancient hegemony breaking of the *Yurupoho* in relation to humans, which the book by Barcelos Neto (2008) also supports. With light and vision, there was the flute appropriation by humans - regardless of men or women, always politically cleaved, however, it should always be noted -, which came to seal the hegemony of these against the spirits, as I said above, an anthropologized world, with explanation at the level of power relations.

The flute I gave my relative was placed in a discreet place, a private and formal dining room, in his home in Brasília. Many years passed without me hearing about it, which only happened in 2018 – then, he came to understand that the flute was a very important object to be reduced to a simple accommodation in his house. One of my daughters – his niece –, in touch with him, reported his understanding, which led me to return the flute to the Kamayurá. Through João Albuquerque de Almeida (2019) – the Xinguano Ph.D. student mentioned in note 1 – it was taken to Ayupú, Kamayurá and younger brother of Takumã, a resident of the Yawalapití village. Both had been flutists and *yaku'i* builders, whose manufacturing involves a great mastery of the myth-music-cosmological universes knowledge of liuteria and musical perception. See that Ayupú, as a teenager, learned how to make the *yaku'i* with his father, which also happened to the late Takumã, who was a virtuoso in his execution, until the 1990s, as I was able to witness.

Being a flute performer – or of any other musical instrument – does not necessarily seem to be a fact for a person's entire life, depending on the time of his relationship with the spirits that inhabit it. I remember that from the 1970s to the 1990s, Takumã was considered a virtuoso of *yaku'i*, consecrated among all Xinguano peoples. He had the rare privilege of often playing in solo, which is unusual. In the Yawalapití village, Ayupú became the owner (in Kamayurá, -yat) of the *kuluta* flute

(in Kamayurá, kuruta), similar to the yaku'i (see my 1978 text), but without so many taboos for women. Ayupú intends to burn the returned yaku'i flute he received, then manufacture three new ones and thus become its owner and then promote its ritual. Note that he, having opened the flute that was returned to him by me, verified that it was made by the father of Takumã, also his father, the former chief Kutamapù, and husband of Pele de Reclusa.

## ANTHROPOLOGIZATION OF THE WORLD

What do I mean by anthropologization of the world, in an environment where man, specifically according to the Kantian thematization, according to Foucault's (1999) approach, has no place? In this question is the heart of this little text. I recall that Foucault points out in this classic what he calls the Kantian man thematization is produced by Kant in his famous Critiques. It is from them that the Kantian "man" comes into reality. Below, I present a brief history of this issue in my version of xinguanist. In Menezes Bastos 2013 (cf. 2012), going back to a problem that has taken me a long time, the Xinguano obsession with sensoriality, I stated that this obsession is so strong that constitutes a condition of capillary surveillance – involving all the senses – that it seems pointing to a discipline that encompasses all domains of social life<sup>6</sup>. I seriously have concluded that the Xinguano peoples could be characterized as disciplinary societies. I mentioned this inspired by Foucault (cf. Deleuze, 1996). Disciplinary societies, but, against modernity, according to Clastres' (1978) conception of refusal. Note that the emphasis on this vigilance condition is evidenced in classical Xinguano ethnographies, such as those of Quain (Murphy and Quain, 1966) and Gregor (1977) – in this book, the referred vigilance being present from the cover photo showing a pubertal recluse looking through a gap – everything going on there, as I once said, "as if to a comprehensive logic of sensible qualities (as seminally put forward by Lévi-Strauss) were added an omnipresent bio politics of sensoriality" (Menezes Bastos, 2012 ; 2013). It should be noted that the last two texts bring plenty ethnography in order to highlight this bio politics omnipresence, in counterpoint to the aforementioned Lévi-Straussian logic.<sup>7</sup>

Versions of the wauja myths collected by Mello (see especially 1999: 67-69) and Barcelos Neto (in particular, 2008: 51-68) support how the humans relationships with the yerupoho underwent deep changes with the cataclysm of the beginning of light and the set possession of fire control by the twin anthropomorphic heroes Sun and Moon, and their giving to humans. In the dark, the yerupoho were hegemonic. With light and fire control, humans have taken on that role, migrating to the surface along with animals, plants and everything else. The yerupoho remained in the dark underworld. This is the main point I would like to retain to move forward – the relationships transfiguration, typically, of power, between humans and yerupoho, soon

6 | Maria Ignez Cruz Mello, while my Ph.D student, and I talked about this topic several times. I suggested to her that she should be careful not to confuse Amerindians with modern Europeans. I say again that I am solely responsible for everything that goes into this text.

7 | I have been continuously working on this double scope (the logic of sensible qualities and the bio politics of sensoriality) from my 1978 book until the 2019.



turned into apapaatai, with the light invention added to the fire control. As stated by Barcelos Neto (2008: 65), from then on, humans lit up to the surface and the yeru-poho stayed on the lower level, turning themselves into hidden monsters, terrifying and causing disease and death to humans.

My reading of the Clastrian idea of (society) against the state assumes that the state is also present in this kind of society once conceived as stateless, as Clastres makes clear in his argument. That is, the state is there in potency - in this case, a prohibition or interdiction -, through the war chief - allowed to exist only during the war -, being, so to speak, exorcised at every moment when it threatens to perpetuate itself.<sup>8</sup> I work with a similar type of understanding to think about the idea of modernity, which I understand based on the Latour conceptions (1994). It is about elaborating modernity as well as a potentiality - again, in this case, a prohibition, interdiction -, always there in traditional societies, this interdiction found in hybrids proliferation control - hybrids being pertinent to both nature and culture - its possibility of achievement. I recall that Latour in his 1994 classic (1991) assumes that the concept of modernity presupposes the articulation of two distinct universes, one of them – based on the translation practice– encompassing the nature and culture of hybrid beings. The second – placed in the purification practice– establishes two different ontological zones of humans and non-humans. For him, the world of modernity presupposes the separation of these practices, purification being the activity that prevents the nature and culture of hybrids proliferation.

<sup>8</sup> | This idea has been the subject of an extensive literature, recently the dossier organized by Perrone-Moisés, Sztutman and Cardoso (2011) being an example.

In order to elaborate Latour's ideas on modernity with regard to the Xinguano reality, I begin by recalling that in 1969, the date of my first fieldwork there, the environment of modern reproduction techniques (Benjamin, 1969) was sensitively dangerous for them, this world being triggered then typically through the photographic and cinematographic cameras and the magnetophonic recorder, extremely dangerous, because they imprison the soul (ang) and the language (ye'eng). Note that "photography" in the Kamayurá language is called ang, "soul", the compound of this word, ta'angap, "image", having a special place in the shamanism world (cf. Menezes Bastos, 1985). On the other hand, the ye'eng category, "language", in Kamayurá (as I have worked since 1978) – but not only, as Montardo (2009) showed the Guaraní world, through the study of a cognate term– points to the broad sense of "language" that encompasses not only the verbal subject, but also musicality and dance, pointing to the general sense of presentification of the entities subjectivity of beings.

Turning back to my first visit to the Kamayurá peoples, in 1969, it was about the aforementioned reproduction machines caused to indigenous sensibility, real fears for both, ang and ye'eng, enthroning the copying environment as a simulacrum, absurd place to meet the full similarity with the complete difference in relation to the original, the identical (Deleuze, 1968), possessing an aura. It should be noted that today these machines were domesticated by the Xinguano and many other

indigenous groups spread across the lowlands, many indigenous people, in fact, presently including celebrated artists in the field of these arts. As I elaborated before—see also note 5 of this text—the world of senses for the Kamayurá is absolutely strategic, a fact from which I developed the theory that points to the grant of disciplines that cover all of social life there (2012; 2013). Here is the key to the whole question that this text seeks to elaborate and that I have formulated, as mentioned before, around a logic of sensible qualities added to an omnipresent biopolitics of sensoriality.

I understand that among Xinguano peoples, the expression anthropologizing the world—characterized by the inversion of power relations between humans and the yerupoho—fully carries the alliance of a logic of sensible qualities with a biopolitics of sensoriality. Gender relations are decisive throughout this environment, always cleaved, divided, in conflict—without the possibility of a zero sum—, alternatively involving human women and men and—sine qua non—spirits. As already said, in mythical time everything began with women, the human ones who first appropriated the flutes. They were soon, however, stolen by men—the irreciprocity controls gender relations since that time. This counterpoint between male and female is completely congruent with the existing counterpoint between the music of the yaku'i flutes, now male (since originally female, according to the mythology), and that of musical genres—vocal *par excellence*—linked to the female ritual of the Yamurikumã and its associated ones, as studied by Mello (see her doctoral thesis and her 2011 article) and Franchetto and Montagnani (2011; 2012; 2014).

Gender relations among the Xinguano have been studied, among others, by Quain (Murphy and Quain 1966) and Gregor (1977), Basso (1985), more recently having been addressed in studies by Mello (1999; 2005; 2011), Piedade (mainly in her thesis), McCallum (1994), Junqueira (1996), Franchetto (1996) and Nogueira and Fonseca (2013), as well as in the aforementioned texts by Franchetto and Montagnani. I have also been considering them since the beginning, but in a tangential way. There seems to be a consensus among these authors that these relationships are characterized by asymmetry, an asymmetry often expressed through irreciprocity, controlled by theft and violence, the latter having group rape as the most eloquent channel.

The exclusive and differential possession of the sacred flutes is a crucial index here. Access to shamanism only—it would be better to say predominantly—by men—is also present to show this profound asymmetry, broken, among other factors by the liberality (for men and women, indifferently) of extramarital sexual relations on an intraethnic level. By the way, it should be noted that in the affair involving Pele de Reclusa and Leonardo Villas Boas, Chief Kamayurá's complaint to Villas Boas was that Leonardo wanted his wife only for himself—the chief had nothing against the affair itself, only against the exclusivity that Villas Boas wanted to have in relation to his wife. It is worth pointing out that today the Kamayurá have a very recognized shaman, Mapulu, daughter of the late Takumã, who, in addition to being a chief, was

a powerful shaman. Note that this appears to be, however, only a case of female-exercised shamanism, as most shamans are male.

According to the present study, gender relations are not limited just at the human's level, suffering a deep cut out with the constant and constitutive incoming *yaku'i* into the scene. There is no doubt that the flutes are made of wood and, therefore, relevant to the plant domain. However, this is not enough for them, as they are masks that embed *mama'e*, "spirits" that effect their musicality. They are, thus, nature and supernatural hybrids. Note that they themselves – I mean, the spirits that inhabit them – are pure music, typically erupting from lake and river waters, as at least once I myself witnessed, without hearing anything, however (see my 2012 and 2013 texts). I understand that this flute cut out in Xinguano gender relations is primordial for the definition of its nature and supernatural hybrid essence, as seen here, the power field being primary.

In previous articles (2012: 18; 2017), thinking about the priorities of a research agenda for the ethnology of the South American lowlands, I stressed the importance of the concatenated study of ritual universes, with their respective intersemiotic chains, all linked to the sound-musical perception and intersensoriality approach, as I called the bio politics of sensoriality. Finally, I also recorded as a priority the process of musical variation – which I have dealt with, as well as Piedade and Mello – with its interception with the concept of transformation as defined by Lévi-Strauss. Last but not least, I recorded the strategic interest of investigating the sound-linguistic-musical communication processes, which not only involve "humans", but also have a trans-specific scope, including "animals", as well as "inanimate beings" and "spirits".

Then I raised some questions that immediately came to mind: "what exactly is what I referred to earlier as "a kind of perfect pitch"? What is the hearing threshold among Amerindian groups in the lowlands of South America? What hearing perception is this that not only receives but intentionally tracks and picks up sounds?"<sup>9</sup> I note that already in the summary of this text I pointed out "the urgent need for further research in the region on acoustic-musical perception (and perception in general), the universe of ritual and its connections with the power and politics environment" In 2013, participating in a memorable collection where Amerindian perspectivism was primordial (Brabec de Mori and Seeger, 2013), I developed and reinforced what I developed in 2012, emphasizing the strategic importance that politics should have in studies on perspectivism. It is clear that this study on the *yaku'i* has in the political level of relations between men, women and spirits, its most elementary foundation, which the pioneering studies by Mello, Piedade and Barcelos Neto – widely used here – looking forward much of what Sztutman (2020) elaborates.

In this text, this author elaborates the bases for a political perspectivism approach, pointing richly to an Amerindianization of politics itself. I consider this perspective very important and understand that politics in its indigenous

<sup>9</sup> | I notice that questions like these have guided my research since 1978. I explain that "perfect pitch", a phenomenon that seems rare in the West, is the ability – or limitation, depending on the listening point – to hear and represent diatonically what was heard.

elaborations abundance, from Patagonia to Alaska, has been an absolutely strategic field for Amerindian peoples, even more when is associated with the ritual and musical developments explored by me in several works.<sup>10</sup>

**Rafael José de Menezes Bastos** is Full Professor, retired, volunteer, of the Department of Anthropology at the Federal University of Santa Catarina (UFSC).

**AUTHORSHIP CONTRIBUTION:** Not applicable.

**FUNDING:** CNPq 1B Scholarship, scholarship and examination board fees

#### BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES

ALMEIDA, João Albuquerque de. 2019. *Entrevista com Ayupú sobre suas intenções para a flauta yaku*, i. Manuscrito.

ALMEIDA, João Albuquerque de. 2020. *Comunicação Pessoal*.

BARCELOS NETO, Aristóteles. 2002. *A Arte dos Sonhos: Uma Iconografia Ameríndia*. Lisboa: Assírio & Alvim.

BARCELOS NETO, Aristóteles. 2008. *Apapaatai: Rituais de Máscaras no Alto Xingu*. São Paulo: Editora da Universidade de São Paulo.

BASSO, Ellen. 1985. *A Musical View of the Universe: Kalapalo myth and ritual performances*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press,

BENJAMIN, Walter. 1969 (1936). "A Obra de Arte no Tempo de suas Técnicas de Reprodução", in: VELHO, Gilberto (org). *Sociologia da Arte*, IV. Rio de Janeiro: Zahar, pp. 15-47.

BRABEC DE MORI, Bernd; SEEGER, Anthony (org). 2013. "Introduction: Considering Music, Humans, and Non-humans" *The Human and Non-Human in South American Music*. *Ethnomusicology Forum, Special Issue*, v. 22, n. 3: 269-286. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/17411912.2013.844527>

CLASTRES, Pierre. 1978 (1974). "A Sociedade contra o Estado". In: CLASTRES, Pierre. *A Sociedade contra o Estado: Pesquisas de Antropologia Política*. Rio de Janeiro: Francisco Alves, pp. 132-52.

DELEUZE, Gilles. 1968. *Différence et Répétition*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.

DELEUZE, Gilles. 1996. "Un Nouveau Cartographie" ("Surveiller et Punir"). In DELEUZE, Gilles. *Foucault*. Paris: Minuit, pp. 31-51.

<sup>10</sup> | Allow me to briefly consider my own work, done since the beginning, in 1969, with the Indigenous. I remember that *A Musicológica* has been published for 42 years, its copyright having been shared with the Kamayurá. See Jacques (2016) for an extensive review of this book in his forties. It is worth considering that this work resulted in a dissertation, a thesis, two books (I note that "A Festa da Jaguatirica" was launched in the Kamayurá village, simultaneously about 50 copies of this book having been donated to them) and about one hundred and ten articles, but also in a long-lasting phonographic collection, most of the times of excellent acoustic quality. An entire copy of it was donated to the Indigenous. Unfortunately, a major fire that burned six residential houses also ignited the complete copies of the approximately ninety CDs on which the collection was recorded. Soon after, I provided another copy, donating it to the Kamayurá again. It is worth to mention that, fortunately, in the late 1990s I had donated the original recordings of the aforementioned collection to the Osvaldo Rodrigues Cabral Museum at UFSC under the care of my colleague Deise Lucy Montardo. Dr Montardo scanned them fully, they collection being integrated into the Museum's documentation. Recently it was anthropo-archivistically arranged and organized by colleague Luisa Valentini, having been the subject of one chapter of her Ph.D. thesis at USP, defended in 2019 (Valentini, 2019). Finally, it is important to report that between May 12 and 19/2019, Luisa Valentini, and the Kamayurá leaders Mayaru Catão Kamayurá, Auakamō Kamayurá and Marcelo Kamayurá came to my home in Florianópolis to talk about this collection and its connections with their own world. It was a set of highly relevant meetings to deepen knowledge of the collection and the indigenous perception and destination of it.

- FOUCAULT, Michel (1999 [1999]). *As palavras e as coisas: uma arqueologia das ciências humanas*, tradução brasileira, 8ª ed. São Paulo: Martins Fontes.
- FRANCHETTO, Bruna. 1996. "Mulheres entre os Kuikuro". *Revista de Estudos Feministas* v. 4, n.1: 35-54. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1590/1981-2525x>
- FRANCHETTO, Bruna; MONTAGNANI, Tommaso. 2011. "Flûtes des Hommes, chants des femmes Images et relations sonores chez les Kuikuro du Haut-Xingu". *Gradhiva*, v. 13: 95-111. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4000/gradhiva.2052>
- FRANCHETTO, Bruna; MONTAGNANI, Tommaso. 2012. "When Women Lost Kagutu Flutes, To Sing Tolo Was All They Had Left: gender relations among the Kuikuro of Central Brazil as revealed in ordeals of language and music". *Journal of Anthropological Research* v. 68, n. 37: 339-355. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3998/jar.0521004.0068.303>
- FRANCHETTO, Bruna; MONTAGNANI, Tommaso. 2014. "Langue et musique chez les Kuikuro du Haut-Xingu". *Cahiers d'Anthropologie Sociale*, v. 10: 54-76. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3917/cas.010.0054>
- GREGOR, Thomas. 1977. *Mehinaku: The Drama of Daily Life in a Brazilian Indian Village*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- HERDT, Gilbert H. 1981. *Guardians of the Futes: idioms of masculinity*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- HERDT, Gilbert H. (Org.). 1982. *Rituals of Manhood: male initiation in Papua, New Guinea*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- HILL, Jonathan D. 1993a. "Metamorphosis: Mythic and musical modes of ceremonial exchange among the Wakuénai of Venezuela". In: KUSS, M. (Org.). *A Universe of Music: a world history*. Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press.
- HILL, J. D. 1993b. *Keepers of the sacred chants: the poetics of ritual power in an Amazonian society*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press.
- HILL, Jonathan; CHAUMEIL Jean-Pierre (eds). 2011. *Burst of Breath: Indigenous Ritual Wind Instruments in Lowland South America*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.
- HOGBIN, Ian. 1970. *The Island of Menstruating Men: Religion in Wogeo, New Guinea*. Scranton: Chandler.
- HORNBOSTEL, Eric. M.; SACHS, Curt. 1961 [1914]. "Classification of Musical Instruments" (English Version), *Galpin Society Journal*, v. 14: 3-29. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.2307/842168>
- HUGH-JONES, Stephen. 1979. *The Palm and the Pleiades: Initiation and Cosmology in Northwest Amazonia*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- HUGH-JONES, Christine. 1979. *From the Milk River: Spatial and Temporal Processes in Northwest Amazonia*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- JACQUES, Tatyana de Alencar. 2016. "Relendo 'A Musicológica Kamayurá', de Rafael José de Menezes Bastos: 40 Anos Para Além de uma Antropologia Sem Música e de uma Musicologia Sem Homem". *Gesto, Imagem e Som: Revista de Antropologia*, v. 1: 280-289. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.11606/issn.2525-3123.gis.2016.116379>
- JUNQUEIRA, Carmem. 1998. "O Poder do Mito", Intercâmbio. *Revista do Programa de Estudos Pós-Graduados em Linguística Aplicada e Estudos da Linguagem*. vol 7. pp:103-111.
- LATOUR, Bruno. 1994 (1991). *Jamais fomos modernos: Ensaios de Antropologia Simétrica*. Rio de Janeiro: Editora 34.

MCCALLUM, Cecilia. 1994. "Ritual and the Origin of sexuality in the Alto Xingu". In: HARVEY, Penelope; GOW, Peter. (eds.) *Sex and Violence: Issues in Representation and Experience*. London: Routledge.

MELLO, Maria Ignez Cruz. 1999. *Música e Mito entre os Wauja do Alto Xingu*. Florianópolis, Dissertação de Mestrado, Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina. <http://repositorio.ufsc.br/xmlui/handle/123456789/80830> (Acesso em 30/03/2021)

MELLO, Maria Ignez Cruz. 2005. *Iamurikuma: Música, Mito e Ritual entre os Wauja do Alto Xingu*. Florianópolis, Tese de doutorado, Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina. <http://repositorio.ufsc.br/handle/123456789/102877> (Acesso em 30 de março de 2021)

MELLO, Maria Ignez Cruz. 2011. "The Ritual of Iamurikuma and the Kawoká Flutes". In: HILL, Jonathan; CHAUMEIL, Jean-Pierre. (orgs). *Burst of Breath: New Research on Indigenous Ritual Flutes in Lowland South America*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, pp. 257-276.

MENEZES BASTOS, Rafael José de. 1978. *A Musicológica Kamayurá: para uma antropologia da comunicação no Alto Xingu*. Brasília: Fundação Nacional do Índio.

MENEZES BASTOS, Rafael José de. 1985. "O 'Payemeraka' Kamayurá: Uma Contribuição à Etnografia do Xamanismo no Alto Xingu". *Revista de Antropologia* vol. 27-28: 139-178. Disponível em: <http://www.etnolinguistica.org/biblio:bastos-1985-payemeramaraka>. Acesso em 30 de março de 2021.

MENEZES BASTOS, Rafael José de. 1999. *A Musicológica Kamayurá: Para uma Antropologia da Comunicação no Alto Xingu*, 2ª. Edição. Florianópolis: Editora da UFSC.

MENEZES BASTOS, Rafael José de. 2006. "Leonardo, A Flauta: uns sentimentos selvagens". *Revista de Antropologia* v. 49, n. 2: 557-579. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1590/S0034-77012006000200002>

MENEZES BASTOS, Rafael José de. 2011. "Leonardo, the Flute: on the Sexual Life of Sacred Flutes among Xinguano Indians", In HILL, Jonathan; CHAUMEIL, Jean-Pierre. (orgs) *Burst of Breath: New Research on Indigenous Ritual Flutes in Lowland South America*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, pp. 69-91.

MENEZES BASTOS, Rafael José de. 2012. "Audição do Mundo Apùap II – Conversando com "Animais", "Espíritos" e outros Seres. Ouvindo o Aparentemente Inaudível, *Antropologia em Primeira Mão*, v. 134: 5-21. Disponível em: [https://antropologiaprimeiramao.paginas.ufsc.br/files/2012/11/134\\_rmbastos\\_audicao.pdf](https://antropologiaprimeiramao.paginas.ufsc.br/files/2012/11/134_rmbastos_audicao.pdf) Acesso em: 30 de março de 2021.

MENEZES BASTOS, Rafael José de. 2013. "Apùap World Hearing Revisited: Talking with 'Animals', 'Spirits' and other Beings, and Listening to the Apparently Inaudible", In *Ethnomusicology Forum* v. 22, n. 3: 287-305. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/17411912.2013.845364>

MENEZES BASTOS, Rafael José de. 2017. "Tradução intersemiótica, sequencialidade e variação nos rituais musicais das terras baixas da América do Sul". *Revista de Antropologia* v. 60, n.2: 342-355. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.11606/2179-0892.ra.2017.137312>

MENEZES BASTOS, Rafael José de. 2019. *A Festa da Jaguatirica: Uma Partitura Crítico-Interpretativa*, 2ª Ed. Florianópolis: Editora da Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina.

MONTARDO, Deise Oliveira. 2009. *Através do Mbaraka: Música, Dança e Xamanismo Guarani*. São Paulo: Edusp.

MURPHY, Robert F.; QUAIN, Buell. 1966. *The Trumai Indians of Central Brazil*. Seattle e Londres: University of Washington Press.

NOGUEIRA, Isabel; FONSECA, Susan Campos (org), 2013. *Estudos de Gênero, Corpo e Música: Abordagens Metodológicas*. Goiânia/Porto Alegre: Associação Nacional de Pesquisa e Pós-Graduação em Música. Série Pesquisa em Música, vol. 3. Disponível em: <https://www.anppom.com.br/ebooks/index.php/pmb/catalog/view/3/4/24-1> Acesso em 30 de março de 2021.

PERRONE-MOISÉS, Beatriz; SZTUTMAN, Renato; CARDOSO, Sergio. 2011. Apresentação Dossiê Pensar com Pierre Clastres. *Revista de Antropologia*, v. 54, n. 2: 555-556. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.11606/2179-0892.ra.2011.39638>.

PIEDADE, Acácio Tadeu de Camargo. 1997. *Música Yepê Masa: Por uma Antropologia da Música no Alto Rio Negro*. Florianópolis, dissertação de mestrado, Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina. Disponível em: <https://repositorio.ufsc.br/xmlui/handle/123456789/77236>. Acesso em 30 de março de 2021.

PIEDADE, Acácio Tadeu de Camargo. 1999. "Flautas e Trompetes Sagrados do Noroeste Amazônico: Sobre Gênero e Música do Jurupari". *Horizontes Antropológicos* v. 11: 93-118. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1590/S0104-71831999000200005>

PIEDADE, Acácio Tadeu de Camargo. 2004. *O Canto do Kawoka: Música, Cosmologia e Filosofia entre os Wauja do Alto Xingu*. Florianópolis,

Tese de doutorado, Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina. Disponível em: <https://repositorio.ufsc.br/handle/123456789/86556> (Acesso em 30 de março de 2021)

PIEDADE, Acácio Tadeu de Camargo. 2011. "From Musical Poetics to Deep Language: The Ritual of the Wauja Sacred Flutes". In HILL, Jonathan D; CHAUMEIL, Jean-Pierre. (eds.) *Burst of Breath: New Research on Indigenous Ritual Flutes in Lowland South America*. Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press, pp. 239-256.

PRINZ, Ulrike, 2011. "Spirits, Ritual Staging and Transformative Power in the Music of the Upper Xingu River". In Jonathan D; CHAUMEIL, Jean-Pierre. (eds.) *Burst of Breath: New Research on Indigenous Ritual Flutes in Lowland South America*. Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press. pp. 277-300.

SZTUTMAN, Renato. 2020. "Perspectivismo contra o Estado. Uma política do conceito em busca de um novo conceito de política", *Revista de Antropologia* v. 63, n. 1: 185-213. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.11606/2179-0892.ra.2020.169177>

VALENTINI, Luísa. 2019. *Arquivos do futuro: relações, caminhos e cuidados no arranjo preliminar da documentação pessoal de antropólogos*. São Paulo, Tese de Doutorado, Universidade de São Paulo.

VIVEIROS DE CASTRO, Eduardo. 1992. "O mármore e a murta: Sobre a inconstância da alma selvagem". *Revista de Antropologia* v. 35: 21-74. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.11606/2179-0892.ra>

---

Received on June 29, 2020. Accepted on March 24, 2021.