

*Hidden, Sacred and Magical Semiotic Landscapes: Interdisciplinary Perspectives.
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**Hidden landscapes and the images of the 'unseen':
from north-west Amazonia to the Middle Sepik region of New Guinea**

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Comments are most welcome!

'The wonderful has deep roots in the real and for that reason is able to use the surreal to create metaphors and images of the real that come to feel more real than reality, more truthful than the truth'. Salman Rushdie, 2021. 'Gabo and I', p. 127 of his *Languages of truth. Essays 2003-2020*. London: Jonathan Cape.

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1 Preamble

The traditional world of numerous indigenous groups stretches beyond what can be seen with the eyes of an ordinary living human. What does the 'unseen' look like? And how accessible, or well-hidden, are the hidden landscapes? To address these questions, we turn to two societies across 'Melazonia'.

As Gregor and Tuzin (2001: 1) put it, 'the question of the sources and the theoretical implications of remarkable similarities between societies in Amazonia and Melanesia' constitutes 'an intriguing, enduring mystery of culture history'. The parallels include similarities in mythological and cosmological systems, men's cults, and flexibility in the composition of local and descent groups (the focus of chapters in Gregor and Tuzin 2001, especially Bonnemère 2001 and Hugh-Jones 2001). These similarities — further emphasized by Descola and Taylor (1993: 14) — underlie the concept of Melazonia— an imaginary complex of beliefs and attitudes.

Our focus is on two societies — the Tariana of the core Vaupés River Basin Linguistic area in north-west Amazonia (§2) and the Manambu of the Middle Sepik in New Guinea (§3). The groups in question share some of the aftermath of the Colonial impact, but differ in terms of how it is internalized.

2 'Another world': a view from the Vaupés River Basin in north-west Amazonia

In §2.1, we start with a brief outline of the Vaupés River Basin Linguistic and cultural area and the place of the Tariana in it. We then turn to the classification of living beings in §2.2, and to the spaces they occupy in §2.3.

2.1 The Tariana within the context of the Vaupés River Basin Linguistic area

Tariana is spoken by about 70 people in two villages (Santa Rosa and Periquitos) within the linguistic area of the Vaupés River Basin in Brazil.

The multilingual Vaupés River Basin in north-west Amazonia spans adjacent areas of Brazil and Colombia. This is a well-established linguistic and cultural area known for its institutionalized multilingualism based on the principle of language-based exogamy between speakers of Tariana and its East Tukanoan neighbours (including Tukano (or Ye'pâ Masa), Piratapuya (or Wa'ikhana), Wanano (or Kotiria), Desano, and Tuyuca). Its major social feature is obligatory societal multilingualism which follows the principle of linguistic exogamy: 'those who speak the same language with us are our brothers, and we do not marry our sisters'. Language affiliation is inherited from one's father, and is a badge of identity for each person. There is a traditional inhibition against mixing languages, viewed in terms of using recognizable loan forms, especially from Tukano or any other East Tukanoan language. The few borrowings from East Tukanoan languages are fully assimilated and no longer recognizable as foreign.

Intensive language contact between Tariana and East Tukanoan languages has resulted in the diffusion of numerous structural patterns. Comparison between Tariana and closely related Arawak languages outside the area helps distinguish features diffused into Tariana from Tukanoan languages and those inherited from the proto-language.

The Tariana used to be fluent in several East Tukanoan languages. Throughout the history of the Vaupés linguistic area in Brazil in the twentieth century, Tukano — the majority East Tukanoan language — has spread at the cost of other indigenous languages (including Tariana). Currently, Tukano is effectively the main indigenous language of the region, and all the extant Tariana use it on a day-to-day basis. In the 1990s and early 2000s, older and traditionally oriented Tariana spoke Tariana with their children. Now that most

elders are gone, the majority of ethnic Tariana speak Tukano at home most of the time; those who have moved to São Gabriel da Cachoeira — the capital of the Federal Territory of the Upper Rio Negro, which encompasses the Vaupés Basin — also speak regional Portuguese.

The exogamous network encompasses the East Tukanoans and the Tariana. They constitute the **core Vaupés River Basin Linguistic area**, based on societal multilingualism, intermarriage, and shared lifestyle and beliefs. They live on the riverbanks and share numerous cultural features, including slash and burn agriculture and fishing more than hunting (see Brüzzi 1977, and a summary in Aikhenvald 2010, 2022a). They divide into hierarchically organized clans (also called 'sibs'). The internal hierarchy of clans is traditionally determined by the creation myth and the order of the emergence of each clan (Chernela 1993, 2011 and p.c. on the Wanano; Aikhenvald 2003: 14ff on the Tariana, Hugh-Jones 1988 on the Barasano).

The River-dwelling Indians of the core Vaupés co-exist with a cultural group of indigenous peoples who live away from the main river — the so-called 'Makú'. Members of the 'Máku' cultural complex (including the Hup and the Yuhup) used to be essentially nomadic hunters and gatherers (some have recently acquired slash and burn agriculture from their Tukanoan-speaking neighbours). They do not participate in the marriage network based on linguistic exogamy, are considered inferior by the members of the core Vaupés and

oftentimes described as their 'servants', or 'soldiers'.¹ In particular, the Hup and the Yuhup do not have institutionalised multilingualism based on multilingual exogamy (since East-Tukanoans and the Tariana do not marry them). At present, the Hup and the Yuhup are developing new multilingual patterns with varying degrees of knowledge of Tukano (the major lingua franca of the region) and also of Portuguese (depending on the community:

¹ See Aikhenvald (2012: 75-83, 2022) and references there. Additional restrictions on marriage alliances in the area may be partly explained by the common origins of some groups. The Tariana do not intermarry with the Desano (perhaps due to the putative Arawak origins of the Desano).

The Vaupés River Basin area was first mentioned in a short paper by Sorensen (1967/72) who addressed just the East-Tukanoan-speaking Colombian side of the area without taking account of a more diverse situation in Brazil (and further regions of Colombia). Sorensen's short paper opened a window onto some of the basics of the Colombian side of the multilingual Vaupés River, but provided only a partial view. A half-century later, the area of the study has been extended into Brazil and other parts of Colombia, covering the entire area. Sorensen's work is **of historical interest**; it has been superceded by more inclusive and detailed analysis (see Aikhenvald 2010, 2012, 2022a, and other work).

The Hup are outside the language based exogamous network of the Vaupés area and are not their typical representatives. Epps has some expertise on the Hup and other languages of the 'Makú' cultural complex, but scarcely concerning the whole Vaupés Linguistic area and especially the core Vaupés of which the 'Makú' people are not members (Epps 2006, 2008a). Her work is blemished by fanciful grammaticalization paths, due to a failure to recognise tonal differences between morphemes: Epps 2008b, see the criticism in Aikhenvald 2018d).

From a linguistic perspective, groups traditionally referred to as 'Makú' fall into two genetic units, not demonstrably related: (1) Hup and Yuhup, spoken off the rivers Papurí and Tiquié (tributaries of the Vaupés, in Brazil and Colombia), and Dâw (Martins 1994, 2004, Martins and Martins 1999), spoken outside the area, on the Upper Rio Negro (see Epps and Bolaños 2017, on genetic relationships between these languages), and (2) Kakua, or Bará, spoken between the Papurí and the Vaupés rivers, mostly in Colombia, and its close relative Nìkak (or Nukak), spoken in the vicinity of the Inirida and the Guaviare Rivers in Colombia (further away from the Vaupés: Epps and Bolaños 2017).

Marcelo Carvalho, p.c.). The traditional basis of their interaction with East Tukanoan peoples is preparing arrow poison, and exchange of forest produce for manioc and other fruits of slash-and-burn agriculture. Members of the exogamous marriage network, East Tukanoans and Tariana, have no knowledge of the 'inferior' 'Makú' languages which they mock as reminiscent of animal cries. Members of the 'Makú' cultural complex are never included in origin myths.²

The interaction between the 'Makú' and the River Indians in the Vaupés River Basin area does not involve institutionalised multilingualism, nor even full proficiency in the other group's language. There is some unilateral diffusion of patterns — from individual East Tukanoan languages into Hup, Yuhup, and Kakua. This is quite unlike the patterns of language interaction within the core Vaupés languages bound in a multilingual network of language-based exogamy and ensuing multilateral diffusion (see a summary in Aikhenvald 2022a, for a summary of linguistic diffusion within the core Vaupés area and beyond it).

We now turn to the world of humans and non-humans through the prism of Tariana, a typical core Vaupés language.

² See Silva and Silva (2012: 71-3, 77) for a comprehensive discussion of the intra-clan exogamy and the issue of clan hierarchy among the Yuhup and other groups within the 'Makú' complex; Silverwood-Cope (1990: 121, 127) on clan hierarchy and marriage patterns among the Kakua; see Reid (1979: 112), and also Epps (2008a: 14-15) on relationships between clans among the Hup. Silva and Silva (2012) discuss the recent development of slash-and-burn agriculture among the Yuhup and the Hup; Carvalho (2020) addresses the mythology of the Hup. The Arawak origin of the term 'Makú' (which is pejorative in the area) is discussed in Aikhenvald (2022a).

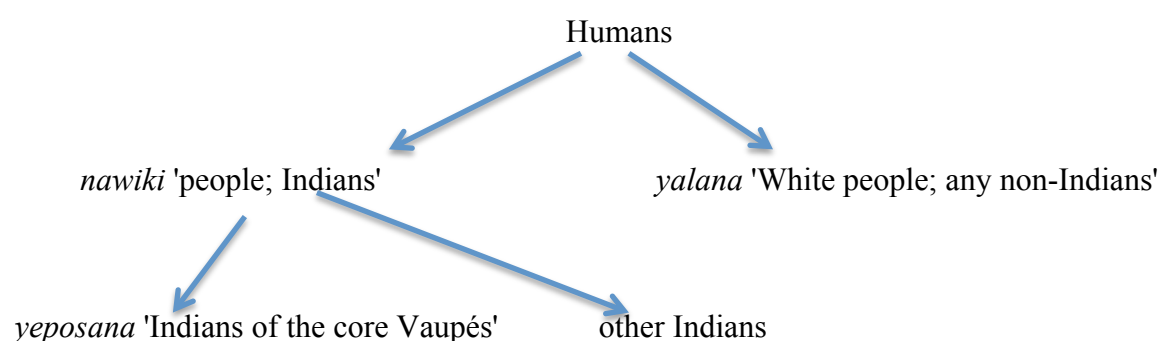
2.2 The world and its inhabitants

The indigenous peoples of the core Vaupés River Basin share the spaces in which they live with other groups — White People, or non-Indians, animals and spirits, who inhabit the jungle. In §2.2.1, we start with those whose basic nature is human.

2.2.1 The world of humans

Humans are divided into two groups summarised in Diagram 1. The terms are given in Tariana. The classification is the same across the core Vaupés languages. There is no generic term for all humans.

Diagram 1. Categorization of humans in Tariana and the core Vaupés area



The notion of *nawiki* covers all indigenous peoples, within the Vaupés area and beyond it, including the Baniwa of Içana-Kurripako (an Arawak-speaking group close to the Tariana) and also more remote tribes, including the Yanomami. The term *nawi-ki* (people-SINGULATIVE) has a robust Arawak etymology (from Proto-Arawak **nawi* 'people').

The *nawiki* divide into the Indians of the core Vaupés Linguistic area termed *Yeposana*. This is also the term for the Kubeo Indians (speakers of an East Tukanoan language within the core Vaupés) (Aikhenvald 2013: 60, Brüzzi 1977; the same principle is reflected in the Wanano terms for Indians in Waltz 2012: 31). A Desana will be a *nawiki* and

a *Yeposana*. A Yanomami will be *nawiki* but not *Yeposana*. All the *Yeposana* are related. The Tariana are considered consanguine relatives, and other *Yeposana* will be affinal relatives (with the exception of the Desano who are considered 'younger siblings' of the Tariana).

What defines humans across the board is language. The status of the 'Makú' people, *ma(:)ki-ne*, is ambiguous. They are never considered *yeposana*. Some younger speakers say that they belong to the class of *nawiki* (usually in the context of the membership of indigenous organizations). Most traditional speakers do not consider them *nawiki* and refer to them as *itsiri kayu-peni* (animal like-ANIM.PL) 'animal-like ones'. Members of the core Vaupés mock the speech of the 'Makú' (the Hup and Yuhup they are exposed to) as unintelligible sounds like the noise of birds and of animals (see also Biocca 1965, Brüzzi 1977).

The notion of *yalana* covers all non-Indians and roughly correlates with what is referred to as 'White people'. Asians and Afro-Brazilians are also considered *yalana* (as is evidenced in Tariana stories). In the stories, the Yalana appear as overbearing bosses (cf. the A=S ambitransitive verb *-yalana-ta* (white.person-CAUS) 'boss someone, be the boss (of someone)'). The term *yala-na* consists of *yala*, from Língua Geral Amazônica *yara man*! and the collective suffix *-na* 'people of'. This is one of the rare borrowed forms no longer recognised as such. Língua Geral Amazônica Nhêengatú, a Tupí-Guaraní-based lingua franca was formerly wide-spread in the area, and was familiar to older speakers of Tariana (a comprehensive discussion and references are in Aikhenvald 2013, and Stradelli 1929). The same root *yara* appears in the terms for 'white man, boss' across East Tukanoan languages of the Vaupés, e.g. Wanano *ñara-iro* (white.man-masc.sg) 'white man, patron' (Waltz 2012: 166).

The status of the *yalana* is ambiguous in yet another way. On the one hand, they are not considered the same as *nawiki* 'people, Indians', within the human classification. On the other hand, they are being incorporated into the Origin myths.

What does this mean? Each *Yeposana* 'core Vaupés Indian' group has their own myth of origin which reflects the order of emergence of each clan and establishes the clan hierarchies — which clan appeared first and how (see Hugh-Jones 1979, 1988 on the Barasano, Chernela 1993 on the Wanano, Brüzzi 1977 for the traditional cross-core Vaupés patterns, oriented versus the Tukano; and Aikhenvald 2003: 12, 2013).

Across the Vaupés area, myths are not fixed in stone, and they do change and transform to incorporate changing realities. As aptly put by Hugh-Jones (1988: 141), 'for the Vaupés Indians, and presumably for many other tribal societies too, myth and history are not mutually incompatible, but co-exist as two separate and complementary models of representing the past'. The White people have been incorporated into the Origin myths, as one of the groups of the Tariana and of other *Yeposana*.

The myths state that, due to their 'knowledge', the Yalana managed to get hold of the gun and clothing, and understand the value of money while other groups (e.g. Tariana, Kubeo, Desano, Piratapuya) were helpless, 'like children' (see Hugh-Jones 1988, on how the White people were incorporated into the mythological cycle of the East Tukanoan group Barasano, and the description of the integration of the White people within the clan structure of the Tukano by Lima Barreto 2013: 62, based on the information obtained from his father, a Tukano shaman). That is, due to their cunning and quick reaction, the Yalana (White people) acquired the riches that they now possessed, outdoing the ancestors of the Indians who got little.³

As Hugh-Jones (1988: 151-2) puts it, 'White People are integrated into myth at levels which range from the off-the cuff parallels drawn between new phenomena and elements of myth through to higher-level contrasts and oppositions between whole myths which

³ These innovations in the Tariana origin myths can be dated to the early 1990s (Aikhenvald 2013). They were absent from earlier versions (documented in Brüzzi 1994: 69).

emphasize the differences between White and Indians and systematize the relations between them'. At the same time, 'White people are not simply the equivalent of another Indian group'. As we saw in Diagram 1, they remain separate in human classification. At the same time, they are integrated into the complex of human-like entities as target of transformations by shape-shifting entities. This is what we turn to now.

2.2.2 Shape-shifters: animals, jungle spirits, and creatures from 'another world'

A feature that permeates most if not all Amazonian communities is 'a basic animistic ontological stance whereby humans and animals who share their interiority (*anima*) but differ in their physicality form part of a shared relational frame of interaction' (Carlin 2018: 315). This is captured under the notion of Amazonian 'perspectivism' (see Viveiros de Castro 2013, and further references in Aikhenvald 2022b). At the beginning of time, various entities shared a general human condition. Throughout the mythological history of creation and the ensuing disruption, the varied types of humans — especially those who 'misbehaved' — transformed into animals and jungle spirits. The 'continuity between species' manifests itself in the integration of humans, animals, and spirits into a 'community of similars'. The Amazonian perspectivism operates on the basis of spiritual unity, of humans on the one hand, and of animals and other jungle-dwellers, on the other hand. Within the transformative world of Amazonians, a spirit can change its 'clothes' (a typically Amazonian term for 'outer appearance') and appear, to a human eye, in a disguise of an animal or of another human. The title of an oft-quoted paper by Rivière (1994) 'What you see is not what you get' captures this idea of fluidity of disguise and unity of nature. The integral connection between 'people' and animals and spirits is reflected in their shape-shifting nature. With one proviso — high-ranked shamans are the only humans with the capacity to shape-shift. The integration of animals

within the world of humans is corroborated by a few grammatical features across Amazonia (including noun categorization and kinship systems).

Animals (*itsiri*) and most bigger birds (*kepiria*) are believed to be former *nawiki*. So are the jungle spirits (a classification and terminology is in Table 10, Aikhenvald 1999: 36). They form the following hierarchy, in terms of their potency and hostile behaviour.

1. *ñamu*, a most dangerous spirit who can enter 'the clothing', or the outer shape of a person (typically a big white woman) or a jaguar, and is prone to 'stealing' the heart, or the essence, of a person (as addressed in Aikhenvald 2022c). One knows what not to do, so as not to annoy a *ñamu*. He reacts adversely to small children crying, pregnant or menstruating women, the smell of burnt food in the jungle, eating cold food at night (in the jungle especially), and even to people doing work (e.g. hunting) on a Good Friday. It can only be overpowered by a shaman.
2. *waliru*, a dangerous spirit, also a shape-shifter who can appear in the shape of people or animals; but can be overpowered by a human.
3. *ñaki*, a minor spirit who can take the shape of a person, a white deer or a tapir; can be overpowered by a human.

Other, less dangerous, spirits are *ka-wana ka-hña* (REL-call REL-eat), a scary but harmless one who scared people with his shout; and two 'servants' of *ñamu* and *waliru* — *salu* 'a large armadillo' and *hurinari* 'a wild cat'. All are potential shape-shifters which appear in an animal disguise (but usually not as humans).

A further group of shape-shifting entities are the Fish-like Indians, called *Kuphe-ne Nawiki* (fish-PL.OF.ASSOCIATION Indian). They are categorized as *nawiki*, but do not share their living quarters with people or former people of any sorts (including animals and jungle spirits, former *nawiki*). They live underwater in a world of their own, *pa:-ehkwapi* (one/another-CL:WORLD).

Fish-like people have shape-shifting propensities. They can appear to the human eye as fishes, snakes, crabs, and also as mammals, especially tapir and deer, the two animal-targets of shape-shifting jungle spirits (see, for instance, Reichel-Dolmatoff 1985, on the status of the tapir in north-west Amazonia). The alternative term for this group reflects their non-human disguise: *Mawali-ne Nawiki* (snake-PL.OF.ASSOCIATION Indian) 'snake people'.

The *Kuphene Nawiki* can take on a human shape. In their first appearance to a human in trouble, they are seen as big handsome white women or men, that is, disguised as *Yalana*. They lure unsuccessful hunters (Tariana *husaite*, Portuguese *panema*), or 'men not loved by women' (referred to as *ina meninite*) to 'live' with them in their beautiful big underwater houses hidden from the eyes of ordinary humans (Aikhenvald 1999: 33).⁴ These hidden spaces, and the status of the *Kuphene Nawiki*, the Fish-likes, and their relationships to the *Nawiki* 'Indians' and, as one of their visible shapes, to *Yalana* 'White people', are the main focus of this section.

Kuphene Nawiki can come up into people's spaces — river surfaces, the jungle, and even people's gardens — to lure them down below, threaten them, and on occasion help them out. Their status is ambiguous. They appear to be a type of *nawiki* 'indigenous people', and yet they are something else. This echoes the reference to the *wa'i-masɨ* (fish person), plural *wa'i-masa* 'fish people' in Tukano as 'an intermediary state of a Tukano person ('estado intermediário do *ye'pa-masɨ*'; Tukano.cultural.hero-person: Ramirez 1997: 209, 241).

The special status of the Fish-like people can be seen through the grammatical make-up of this term in Tariana. This is what we turn to now.

⁴ Of more than 120 Tariana stories, more than half contain a mention of the Fish-like people.

2.3 How humans are special: the grammar of human referents in Tariana

This section — unlike our discussion in §2.2 and in §2.4 — reflects the facts of the Tariana language only. The existence of special features of the class of humans and the treatment of the 'Fish-people' in the neighbouring East Tukanoan languages remains an open question.

In Tariana, as in many languages, human referents form a special subclass of nouns (see Aikhenvald 2015: 87-8, for some general features). Nouns with human referents can be used with the human classifier *-hipa* with number words and can take gender-sensitive derivational suffixes (Aikhenvald 2003: 69, 89).⁵

What further differentiates the subgroups of humans and non-human animates is number marking. Individual animates, humans, and a few culturally important items have a bipartite number system, as follows:

- (i) singular: formally unmarked;
- (ii) plural: marked in various ways (depending on the semantic group of the noun's referent).

The majority of nouns with animate reference (other than kinship terms) and culturally important items (underived) mark their plural with *-pe*, e.g. *yawi* 'jaguar', *yawi-pe* 'jaguars', *panisi* 'house', *panisi-pe* 'houses', *pedalie* 'old man', *pedalie-pe* 'old men'.

Subtraction is used for two human nouns (*i:naru* 'woman', *i:na* 'women', *maliēri* 'shaman', *maliē* 'shamans'), and subtraction and vowel addition is used for one noun, *tsiāri* 'man', *ātsa* 'men'. Kinship terms have several plural markers, *-pe*, *-nipe*, *-sini*, *-kanape*, *-ne-ne*, and also *-ne*. Their choice depends on the kinship term itself.

⁵ All animate referents require the classifier *-ite/ita* and the demonstrative *hĩ* (see Aikhenvald 2003: 89 for further discussion of classifier use in Tariana). Classification of all animate nouns as animates (rather than based on their shape) is the outcome of areal diffusion from East-Tukanoan languages (as outlined in Aikhenvald 2010).

A tripartite number system is a feature of collective terms with human, or human-like, referents. The values are: collective, singular (with a distinction between masculine and feminine), and individuated plural. There are two sets of markers, (I) and (II).

- (I) collective *-na* or *-pe* (COLL:PEOPLE) 'people of a group'
 singulative *-seri* (MASC.SINGL) 'masculine singular'
 singulative *(i)-sa-do* ((INDEF)-spouse-FEM.SG) 'feminine singular'
 plural (referents individuated) *-seni* (HUMAN:PL) 'individuals of a group'

This technique applies to a number of ethnic groups, namely, the Tariana, the Desano, and the Yeposana (also the term for the Kubeo) — see example (1).

- | | | |
|------|--|----------------|
| (1a) | Taria-na Tariana-COLL:PEOPLE 'Tariana people' | <i>Tariana</i> |
| (1b) | Taria-seri Tariana-MASC:SINGL 'Tariana person (male)' | |
| (1c) | Taria-(i)sa-do Tariana-(INDEF)-spouse-FEM.SG 'Tariana woman' | |
| (1d) | Taria-seni Tariana-HUMAN:PL 'Tariana individuals' | |

The origins of each of the ethnonyms are not known (there are some hypotheses concerning potential Quechua origins of the name *Taria-*).⁶

The ethnonyms or group names of the second type contain a noun — a name of an animal or a substance — with which the group is associated.

- (II) collective *-ne* (PL.OF.ASSOCIATION) 'people of a group, similar to the head noun'
 singulative *-ne-seri* (MASC.SINGL-PL.OF.ASSOCIATION) 'masculine singular'
 singulative *-ne-(i)-sa-do* (PL.OF.ASSOCIATION-(INDEF-spouse-FEM.SG) 'feminine
 singular
 plural (referents individuated) *-ne-seni* (PL.OF.ASSOCIATION-PL.INDIV 'individuals of a
 group'

An example is in (2). The Tukano people are associated with *yase* 'toucan', as 'people of toucan'.

- | | | |
|------|---|----------------|
| (2a) | Yase-ne toucan-PL.OF.ASSOCIATION 'Tukano people' | <i>Tariana</i> |
| (2b) | Yase-ne-seri toucan-PL.OF.ASSOCIATION-MASC.SINGL 'a Tukano man' | |

⁶ There are further intricacies for a few other groups in this type of number marking. For instance, the term for the Wanano (Kotiria), *Pa-numa-pe* (one-mouth-PL), does not take the collective *-na*.

(2c) Yase-ne-(i)sa-do
 toucan-PL.OF.ASSOCIATION-(INDEF)-spouse-FEM.SG
 'a Tukano woman'

(2d) Yase-ne-seni
 toucan-PL.OF.ASSOCIATION-PL.INDIV
 'Tukano individuals'

The same sets exist for other groups of Yeposana, e.g. *Surupe-ne* (clay-PL.OF.ASSOCIATION) 'the Tuyuca' (lit. clay-likes) and *Wiri-ne* (aphrodisiac-PL.OF.ASSOCIATION) 'the Barasano' (lit. aphrodisiac-likes).

The Tariana are believed to have originated out of a drop of blood shed by Thunder (*Enu*), their ancestor. The auto-denomination of the Tariana is *Iri-ne* (blood-PL.OF.ASSOCIATION) 'the Tariana' (lit. the ones associated with blood). The same marker *-ne* (PL.OF.ASSOCIATION) appears in the names for the Tariana subclans (see Aikhenvald 2003: 12), e.g. *Yawi-ne* (jaguar-PL.OF.ASSOCIATION) 'the clan of Jaguars', *Kali-ne* (creator.of-manioc-PL.OF.ASSOCIATION) 'clan associated with Kali, the creator of manioc'.

The Tariana of Periquitos refer to themselves as *Enu maki-ne* (Thunder Makú-PL.OF.ASSOCIATION), literally, '(those) associated with the Makú of Thunder'. We saw in §2.1 that the Makú were traditionally considered servants of the core Vaupés people. This denomination of the Tariana of Periquitos reflects their subservient in connection with their ancestor, the Thunder.

The terms for the Fish-like people are formed in a similar manner. The term for the animate entity they are associated with takes the set in (II). In (3), the term is *kuphe* 'fish'. We saw in §2.2.2 that the other term in the same construction is *mawali* 'snake'.

- (3a) Kuphe-ne *Tariana*
 fish-PL.OF.ASSOCIATION
 'Fish-like people'
- (3b) Kuphe-ne-seri
 fish-PL.OF.ASSOCIATION-SINGL.MASC
 'a Fish-like man'
- (3c) Kuphe-ne-(i)sa-do
 fish-PL.OF.ASSOCIATION-(INDEF)-spouse-FEM.SG
 'a Fish-like woman'
- (3d) Kuphe-ne-seni
 fish-PL.OF.ASSOCIATION-PL.INDIV
 'Fish-like individuals'

The Tukano people are associated with toucans, but they are not toucans, as we saw in (2a-d). Similarly, the Fish-people are not fish. They are associated with fish, and appear as fish in one of their disguises. The meaning of the plural *-ne* is that of similarity and association with the head noun.

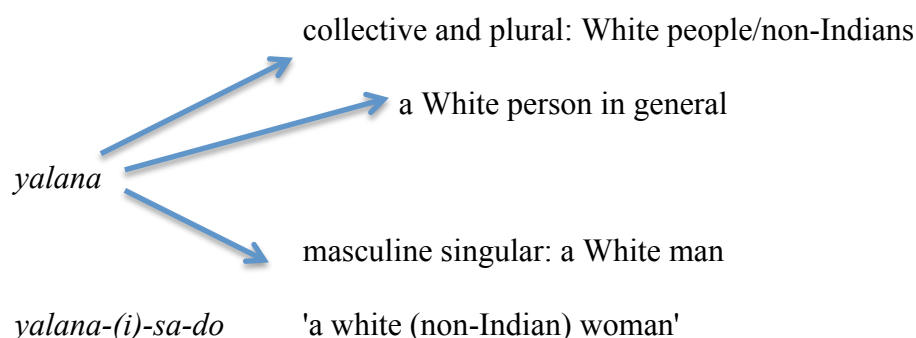
From a typological perspective, the plural *-ne* in its meaning of similarity and association with the head noun is unusual. We mentioned above that *-ne* is a straightforward plural with a few kinship terms all of which have a bipartite number distinction, with the singular ending in gender sensitive *-ri* 'masculine' or *-ru* 'feminine' versus plural in *-ne*, e.g. *nu-daki-ru* (1sg-grandchild-FEM.SG) 'my granddaughter', *nu-daki-ri* (1sg-grandchild-MASC.SG) 'my grandson', *nu-daki-ne* (1sg-grandchild-PL) 'my grandchildren' (see Aikhenvald 2003: 167-8). Its 'likeness', or 'association' meaning is limited to ethnonyms and clan names with a tripartite number system (as shown in (2) and (3)).

contact with Carib). For example, the Trio form *witoto* means 'a human being'. If it takes the 'facsimile-similative' suffix *-me*, the combination *witoto-me* will refer to something that appears to be a human being but in reality is not, as when a spirit manifests itself as a human. We can only hypothesise that just like the similative marker in Carib languages, this unusual meaning of plurality of association in Tariana, can be considered a manifestation of Amazonian perspectivism in grammar (cf. Aikhenvald 2022a).

In essence, the non-singular or collective marker *-ne* in ethnonyms containing a common noun signals that the group referred to is associated with that common noun. In the case of the Fish-like people (*Kuphe-ne*), *-ne* reflects the fish-like-hood as one of the outer forms of the human-like entities (which are not human in their essence).

The term *yalana* 'White people' stands apart from other ethnonyms and names of groups of people in its number marking. The form *yalana* has a collective reference, in agreement with the meaning of suffix *-na* it contains as a formative (cf. *-na* in *Taria-na* in (1a)). The form *yalana* can also refer to a non-Indian person (or man, as a masculine generic). It can combine with *-(i)-sa-do* (INDEF)-spouse-FEM.SG) yielding *yalana-(i)-sa-do* 'a white (non-Indian) woman'. But it cannot take the masculine singulative *-seri* nor the individuated plural *-seni*. This is schematically shown in Diagram 2.

Diagram 2. Plural and collective forms of *yalana* 'a White person'



No other noun with human, or non-human, reference behaves like this. Historically, this aberrant behaviour of the noun *yalana* could be explained by the fact that *yal-* in *yalana* is a nativised loan.

2.4 The images of 'Another world': how to get there and what happens then

'Another world' (*pa:-ehkwapi*) is the prerogative of Fish-likes people, the *Kuphe-ne Nawiki*. Their alternative name *Mawali-ne* (snake-PL.OF.ASSOCIATION) 'snake-likes' reflects their transformation whereby they acquire the outer appearance of snakes. The Fish-likes live in houses underwater. They appear to humans (mostly men, occasionally women) who are in trouble. As mentioned in §2.2, their typical targets are men who cannot get a wife, *i:na meninite* (women NEG+be.loved+NCL:ANIM) '(one) not loved by women', or are unsuccessful in fishing and hunting (*husa-ite* 'be.unsuccessful-CL:ANIM) and thus unable to feed their families. The special prominence of 'a man not loved by women' in such stories reflects the traditional scarcity of marriageable women (especially in view of the traditional polygamy, now gone).

We now turn to the typical steps in getting to and from 'Another world', and its appearance and repercussions.

A. Getting there. The male hero is typically unhappy, angry and desperate at his failure to catch fish and game, and/or to get a wife. He goes to a rivulet (sometimes with an intention to call it quits and commit suicide), saying to himself in his mind (6) or (7).

(6) mawalinu-na di-hña-tupe di-a-pidana dihmeta *Tariana*
 snake 1sg-OBJ 3sgnf-eat-MALEF.IMPV 3sgnf-say-REM.P.REP 3sgnf+think
 'May the snake eat me (to my detriment), he said in his thoughts' (lit. he said he thought)

- (7) ka:-de nu-a nu-pa-niki di-a-pidana dihma
 in.vain-FUT.1p 1sg-go 1sg-rot-COMPL 3sgnf-say-REM.P.REP 3sgnf+think
 'I will rot for nothing, he said in his thought' (lit. he said he thought)

He keeps aimlessly floating on the water surface (*di-rahta di-a* '3sgnf-float 3sgnf-go), usually in the direction of a hidden sleeve of the rivulet. In some instances, the man hears underground noise whose origin he does not quite understand. Then there appears a Fish-like Indian seen by the man as a big and handsome *Yalana* 'a non-Indian'. This can be a young man (*nawiki walikiri*) or a big woman (*i:naru hanuma*) on a canoe. The Fish-like person asks the man what's wrong, and says to him: 'You are probably feeling bad in this world, come with me, I will take you'. Then, the Fish-like throws dust (or sap, or white liquid, in other versions) into the man's eye, or takes his head, and instructs him to close his eyes firmly, and then open them quickly. This is sometimes accompanied with the noise of the Fish-like person hitting the surface of the water.

A typical description is in (8).

- (8a) dihwida-naku dhupa pima-sa-niki *Tariana*
 3sgnf+head-TOP.NON.A/s 3sgf+take 2sg+close.eyes-TIGHTLY-COMPL
 du-a-pidana
 3sgf-say-REM.P.REP
 'She grabbed his head, 'close your eyes tightly completely', she said'
- b haw di-a-pidana dima-sa-niki
 yes 3sgnf-say-REM.P.REP 3sgnf+close.eyes-TIGHTLY-COMPL
 'Yes, he said, and closed his eyes tightly'
- c da:pi-kha-ne du-yã-pidana u:ni-se
 liana-CL:CURVED-INSTR 3sgnf-say-REM.P.REP WATER-LOC
 'She hit the water with a curved liana'

- d hala di-eku di-a
 open.space 3sgnf-run/do.quickly 3sgnf-go
 'An open space appeared quickly'
- e pa:-ehkwapi-se-pidana di-uka di-dia-niki
 one/another-CL:WORLD-LOC-REM.P.REP 3sgnf-arrive 3sgnf-return-COMPL
 'He arrived in another world'
- f kuphe-ne-ya-ehkwapi-se-pidana
 fish-PL.OF.ASSOCIATION-POSS-CL:WORLD-LOC-REM.P.REP
 di-dia diha
 3sgnf-return/get he
 'He got to the world of Fish-like (people)'
- g yakale-pasi-nha hiku
 settlement-AUG-PAUS appear
 'There appeared a large settlement'

Several comments are in order.

FIRST, the verb *-ima* has two meanings, 'close one's eyes' (as in (8b)) and 'sleep'. The two related meanings are differentiated by their occurrence in serial verb constructions and thus essentially the type of conventionalised event they take part in. In its meaning 'sleep', the verb *-ima* has to occur in a serial verb construction specifying a sleeping posture (hanging in a hammock, or lying down, or, occasionally, standing upright), e.g. *dima di-kwa* (3sgnf+close.eyes/sleep 3sgnf-hang) 'he slept hanging (in a hammock)'. This is consistent with the semantic and pragmatic role of serial verb constructions and their correlations with typified events in Tariana and in general (for more information on the role of serial verb constructions across the world's languages, see Aikhenvald 2018b: 178-185 and references there; serial verbs in Tariana are discussed in Aikhenvald 2003). In its punctual meaning

'close one's eyes', *-ima* never forms a serial verb construction with a posture verb, as there is no typical position associated with closing one's eyes.

SECONDLY, the manner of action of 'closing one's eye' is specified by the Aktionsart enclitic *-sa* 'firmly, tightly' (Aikhenvald 2003: 349, 355). This enclitic is used with a wide variety of verbs of action, but never with any posture verb nor with *-ima* in the meaning of 'sleep'. To iconically express the firm and sudden closure, the form is pronounced with a primary accent on it and high intensity. In other contexts, *-sa* is pronounced with a secondary accent, similar to an unstressed suffix, e.g. *duha isa dita-sa di-a-pida* (wound 3sgnf+close.up-TIGHTLY 3sgnf-go-PRES.REP) 'her wound reportedly closed up'.

In other similar stories, the man opens his eyes as abruptly as he closes them. This is expressed with a serial verb construction involving *-eku* 'run, do quickly', or the newly emergent Aktionsart enclitic *-wasa* 'jumpingly, suddenly' (from the verb *-wasa* 'jump').

After the Fish-like hits the surface of the water, the water opens up, as if coming across a clearing in the jungle. This is expressed with the stative verb *hala* 'be open, appear as an opening'. In lines e-g in (8), the speaker explains that the man had arrived in another world, the world of the Fish-likes.

B. What does 'another world' look like to the human? As soon as the man opens his eyes and finds himself in 'another world', he sees a big settlement (*hamu-yakale* (big-CL:SETTLEMENT)) with big houses (as shown in (8g)). Some stories explicitly say that there are dwellings like White people's houses (*yalana-ya-dapana kayu* (White.person-POSS-CL:HOUSE like)). In another story, 'another world' is described as abounding in cars, as shown in (9). This story was told by Leo Brito, one of the few representatives of the older generation of Tariana speakers, and the one exposed to the semi-urban environment of the mission centre

Iauaretê and the urban environment of São Gabriel da Cachoeira, the main city in the Federal territory of the Upper Rio Negro, where many of the Tariana reside.

- (9) ka-koloka-whyha-pe di-yena-kha di-a, *Tariana*
REL-roll-CL:TRANSPORT-PL 3sgnf-exceed/pass-AWAY 3sgnf-go
'Cars went by'
- pa:-whyha di-yena-kha di-a,
one-CL:TRANSPORT 3sgnf-pass-AWAY 3sgnf-go
'one car passed by,'
- pa:-whyha di-koloka-ka di-ñu di-a,
one-CL:TRANSPORT 3sgnf-roll-SEQ 3sgnf-go.up 3sgnf-go
'one car rolled up,'
- pa:-whyha di-yena-kha di-a,
one-CL:TRANSPORT 3sgnf-pass-AWAY 3sgnf-go
nemhani-ka-pidana
3pl+travel-DECL-REM.P.REP
'one passed, they traveled'

The human man arrives in this new world poor and destitute, wearing torn trousers and no shirt or shoes. Before he is to meet the chief of the Fish-like's village (often the father of the one who had brought him into 'another world'), he is given a White person's outfit of good quality into which he is told to change — complete with black shoes, white socks, and a jacket (like the one a soldier will have), and also a watch. This is described in (10). In one of the stories, the man is given a golden ring (*hiwaru-puhwi* 'gold-CL:ROUND.RING.LIKE').

Portuguese terms are in bold>.

- (10)a Haw, diwesewya-nuku wasã-pita, *Tariana*
OK then-TOP.NON.A/S let's.go-again

yarumakasi phiepanita-si-pita, du-a-pidana.
 clothing 2sg+change-PROX.IMPV-AGAIN 3sgf-say-REM.P.REP
 'OK, then let's go again, change your clothes here, she (the Fish-like woman) said'

Ai-mha yarumakasi phepanita-nipe du-a-pidana.
 here-PRES.NON.VIS clothing 2sg+change-NOM 3sgf-say-REM.P.REP
 'here is the clothing for you to change (into), she said'

b Du-dia, diha dhepanita-pidana,
 3sgf-return he 3sgnf+change-REM.P.REP
 'When she (the Fish-like woman) returned, he (the human man) got changed',

hĩ kwaka hĩ matsa-peri pi-ña-mhade phia,
 this whatever this good-COLL.PL 2sg-wear-FUT you
 'you will wear these good ones',

hĩ **sapatu** kada-peri, **meia** hale-peri pi-ña-mhade,
 this shoe black-COLL.PL sock white-COLL.PL 2sg-wear-FUT
 'black shoes (Portuguese), white socks (Portuguese) you will wear',

ai-naku **paleto** diha,
 here-TOP.NON.A/S jacket he
 sirura ka-dite, **kamisa** thuya,
 soldier REL-have+NCL.ANIM shirt all
relogio, nha keri-da-pe pi-erita-mhade phia.
 watch they sun/moon-CL:ROUND-PL 2sg+put.on-FUT you
 'here is a jacket like the one soldiers have, shirt and all, a watch you will put on' (said the Fish-like to the man)

Once the human man is dressed up, he is described as looking like a real White person (*yalana-tsuniri*). This is described in (11).

- (11) Diha-sini yalana kayite-ka-pidana diha-sini, *Tariana*
 he-TOO White.person like+NCL:ANIM-DECL-REM.P.REP he-TOO
 matsa-peri yarumakasi ka-ña-kali-ka-pidana diha-misini
 good-PL.COLL clothing REL-put.on-PAST.PART-DECL-REM.P.REP he-too
 'He too was like a white person, he too was dressed in good clothing'

The terms for the items of clothing are from Portuguese. Usually, if a speaker has to code-switch and use a Portuguese word, it will be accompanied by the oblique *yalana yaku-nuku* (White.person speech-TOP.NON.A/S) 'in White person's language'. In the stories dealing with Fish-like people, this convention is breached, as we see in (10). The Portuguese word *relogio* 'watch' is translated into Tariana (*keri-da-pe*).

The language the Fish-like people speak is, against what the audience might expect, not 'the White person's language' (*yalana yarupe*). The big White Fish-like woman who encountered the man and took him into another world spoke Tukano to him in the first place. The man was surprised. The description of their first encounter is in (12).

- (12)a Ne-pidana inaru-pasi du-daki hale-ma-pasi *Tariana*
 then-REM.P.REP woman-AUG 3sgf-body white-CL:FEM-AUG
 'Then (there was) a big woman, white body,'

du-sale-maka-napi yalana-sa-do-pasi.
 3sgf-hair-CL:SPREAD-shoulder white.person-spouse-fem.sg-AUG
 'the mane of her hair on her shoulders, a big white woman'

- b Kani-sika du-nu duhua hĩ, di-a-pidana.
 where-INTER.INFER. REC.P 3sgf-come she this 3sgnf-say-REM.P.REP
 'Where has she come from, he (the human man) said',

Duha yaseniku-pidana du-sape-pidana
 she Tukano.language-REM.P.REP 3sgf-speak-REM.P.REP

'She spoke in Tukano',

Kwe-mha yalana-sado yaseniku
 how-INTER.PRES.NONVIS white.man-spouse-fem.sg Tukano.language
 du-sape-mha,
 3sgf-speak-INTER.PRES.NONVIS
 'How come a white woman speaks Tukano'

kwaka-mha yaphini-mha di-a-pidana.
 what-INTER.PRES.NONVIS thing-INTER.PRES.NONVIS 3sgnf-say-REM.P.REP
 'what sort of thing is this, he said'

This point is reiterated further on in the same story — that the Fish-like people did not speak White person's language, they spoke their own language, which is now Tukano. This replicates the current patterns of what is happening in the Brazilian Vaupés — people, including the Tariana, use Tukano more and more.

(13) yalanaku-nuku ma-sape-de-pidana *Tariana*
 White.man.language-TOP.NON.A/S NEG-speak-NEG-REM.P.REP
 'They did not speak the White man's language,'

na-yarupe-ne na-sape-ka-pidana
 3pl-language-INSTR 3pl-speak-DECL-REM.P.REP
 yaseniku-ne, yaseniku-ya
 Tukano.language-INSTR Tukano.language-EMPH
 'they spoke their language, Tukano, Tukano really,'

hi kasina alia-peni na-sape-nipe na-sape-ka-pidana
 this now exist-PL.ANIM 3pl-speak-NOM 3pl-speak-DECL-REM.P.REP
 'they spoke the language (the way of speaking) of those here now'

The new world is rich — replete with White people's food (usually hard to afford for Indians).

This is described in (14).

- (14)a Ne-nuku nha na-ira, pa-hña-nipe-ka-pidana, *Tariana*
 then-TOP.NON.A/S they 3pl-drink IMPERS-eat-NOM-DECL-REM.P.REP
 yalana yarupe pa-hña-nipe thuya-ka-pidana
 White.man thing IMPERS-eat-NOM all-DECL-REM.P.REP
 'There they drank, there was their food, all White people's food'

- b Nhua pumeni-peri nu-ira nhua **fanta**-nuku
 I sweet-COLL.PL 1sg-drink I fanta-TOP.NON.A/S
 di-a-pidana diha-misini
 he-say REM.P.REP he-too
 'He said, I will drink sweet (things), fanta'

Haw du-a-pidana dhuta du-nu.
 Yes 3sgf-say-REM.P.REP 3sgf+take 3sgf-come
 Yes, she said (and) brought (it)'

- c Kwaka-pasi pi-hña-mhade du-a-pidana.
 what-AUG 2sg-eat-FUT 3sgf-eat-REM.P.REP

Nhua **pao**-de nu-hña di-a-pidana.
 I bread-FUT 1sg-eat 3sgf-say-REM.P.REP

'What big thing will you eat, she (the Fish-like woman) said. I will eat bread, he (the man) said'

Alia-ka-thuy-pidana-ta, yalana-ya yakale-ka-pidana,
 EXIST-DECL-ALL-REM.P.REP-AGAIN White.man-EMPH settlement-DECL-REM.P.REP
 There was everything, it was a White people settlement'

The Fish-like people drink *cerveza* (from Portuguese *cerveja* 'beer') and prefer game meat to fish (game is rarely eaten by the core Vaupés Indians, because it is expensive to buy in shops,

and also because it is hard to get by hunting, as it is becoming more and more scarce). Similar to White people, they eat a lot of fruit.

The food eaten by the Fish-like people is the White person's food which is considered 'status food'. But not everything in the Fish-like people's world is what it looks like, especially to a human. This is where perspectivism chips in again. The human is ordered to throw the bait (worms) he happened to have with him into the water. He then sees numerous sword fish (*Trichiurus lepturus*, *Tariana murutu*) and their smaller subtypes coming to the surface. The Fish-like people kill numerous fish and eat them. For the Fish-like people, these fish are *kalaka* 'chicken', high status sought-after food in the Vaupés area, associated with White-people-like affluence. It was now time for him to be taken to the head of the Fish-like village. What does this encounter look like?

C. The encounter. As the man finds himself in *pa:-ehkwapi*, the other world of the Fish-like people, he is introduced to the *E:ni* 'chief' who is very often the father of the Fish-like woman who had brought the man to their world. She repeatedly warns the man that the Chief (or her father) and her other blood relatives (*du-kesi-pe*) are angry and can be unfriendly. What the man sees is snakes hanging around in hammocks. A large snake — the Chief — comes to greet the man, sliding over his body, licking it, and beating his tail over the man's thighs. Then his wife comes out, also in the shape of a snake, and then their daughters. By and by, the snakes acquire human shape. In all the stories, the man thwarts the potential danger of snakes by keeping still and doing what he is told.

Tariana stories always contain a statement of a location where the events take place. However, in stories about Fish-like people, the exact locations of the Fish-likes dwelling and of the locations where the humans are taken from are left vague. These locations are referred to as *Mawali-dapana* (snake-CL:HOUSE) 'Snake house', *Mawali-nai* (snake-CL:LAKE) 'snake

lake', or *Mawali-keru-nai* (snake.be.angry-CL:LAKE) 'angry snake lake'. Story-tellers sometimes give an approximate indication of the whereabouts of a reported happening (as we will see below, the stories are always cast in reported evidential). For instance, the story of a young girl kidnapped because of her misbehaviour is said to have happened downstream from São Pedro (a settlement on the Vaupés River). The encounter described in (13) and (14) is said to have taken place not far from *Itana-taku* (or *Itali-numana*, or *Ita:-taku*) known in Portuguese as 'Loiro' (the name under which it appears on the Brazilian maps; for a list of traditional placenames, see Aikhenvald and Brito 2000: 62).

D. Getting back. Getting back to the world of humans is simpler than getting to the underwater world of Fish-likes. The Fish-like person may simply leave the human where he or she had taken him from, and the human comes up on the water surface. Or the Fish-like person puts sap into their eyes (once or three times in different stories). The human closes his eyes firmly — the action marks with the enclitic *-sa* 'firmly' as in (8)a, and finds himself in the same place where the Fish-like person has taken them from. This is described in (15).

- (15)a *diha-da* *iri-da-nuku* *dhuta-pidana* *Tariana*
it-CL:ROUND sap/blood-CL:ROUND-TOP.NON.A/S 3sgf+get-REM.P.REP
'She (the Fish-like woman) took the round (container) of red sap'.
- Du-nua-pidana-pita* *ai-ne-nuku* *madali-piu*
3sgf-pour-REM.P.REP there-LOC-TOP.NON.A/S three-times
peme-se-ne-nuku *madali-piu*
one+side-LOC-INSTR-TOP.NON.A/S three-times
'She poured (it) there (into his eyes) three times, one side three times'
- b *Dima-sa* *di-eku* *di-a,*
3sgnf+close.eyes-FIRMLY 3sgnf-do.quickly/run 3sgnf-go
'He (the man) closed (his eyes) firmly quickly'

te diha ũi diha di-ñu-mi di-a-pidana
 until he/it port he 3sgnf-go.up-NOM.LOC 3sgnf-go.up-REM.P.REP
 di-ema
 3sgnf-stand.
 'until he stood at the port, the place where he had gone upstream'

c Duha-sini alia-pidana walikasu
 she-too exist-REM.P.REP at.the.beginning
 duha duhta-mi-nuku.
 she 3sgf+take-NOM.LOC-TOP.NON/AS
 'She (the Fish-like woman) had been there, too, at the place where she had taken (him)'

Diha itawhya di-rahta-pidana
 he canoe 3sgnf-float-REM.P.REP
 'His canoe was floating'

All the White man's attire is left behind, as the human is ordered to take it off. Sharing the experience of the Fish-like people's world with others is fraught with danger. In one story, the man and the Fish-like person go on a fishing expedition to punish the woman who had not liked the man (by catching her in a fish trap and drowning her). They hear his mother cry for him, and the Fish-like man suggests he could go up and see the mother. He does this, and tells his mother he had now married a beautiful White woman (sic!). And then he summons his newly-wed Fish-like wife (by making a sound with a plate). The wife comes into the house: to the man she looks like a beautiful White woman. To the mother, she looks like a big snake. The mother collapses and dies.

The man — the human character — is always warned not to tell his mates about where he had been. In one story, he breaches the promise, gets sick, and dies. In another story

he does as he was told, becomes a successful hunter, manages to pay off his debts (to a White patron), and lives happily ever after.

E. The gender issue. A typical character of a Fish-like people story is a man who is feeling destitute and ventures alone on a fishing (or hunting) trip (or wishes to commit suicide). In the Vaupés tradition, women do not fish, let alone on their own. Women feature in Fish-like people stories on two occasions.

SCENARIO 1. This involves a Fish-like person trying to be helpful to a destitute woman, but failing to do so because of other villagers. Here is an example.

A poor destitute widow (who may or may not be accompanied by her small son) goes round crying. One day she goes to her garden and starts digging for worms as bait, planning to go fishing. She hears noise underground, as if there was a stream there; she digs more and more and finds a real stream full of all sorts of valuable fish. A big white man appears and tells her to catch one when she and her son want to eat. He tells her to take as many as she needs, not more than ten, and not tell anyone. And then he disappears. The villagers keep wondering where she gets such good fish. True to her promise, she tells no-one, until such time as her husband's brother keeps the child and starts interrogating him, promising to kill him if he does not tell where they get the fish. Incidentally, this resonates with the motive of 'a bad paternal uncle' across many story-telling traditions across the core Vaupés.

The frightened child takes him to the garden, where they see the stream full of good fish. The bad uncle and the other villagers kill a lot of fish, not paying attention to the widow imploring them not to, on behalf of the Owner, the Fish-like man. Villagers put on a feast, and the Fish-like man comes and tells the widow to keep away from the villagers. Meantime, the villagers get drunk and the following day were lying asleep in their hammocks. In the middle of the night, the widow and her son who had stayed out of it all day hear rumbling

underground — that was the sounds of ground splitting and the village caving in. The widow and her son got down from their hammocks and went to the jungle where they stayed all night. As she walked, she had to step over a split in the ground, which was getting larger and larger until it subsumed the whole village, with all the people and their houses. The next day she came back — the stream with fish was gone, and so was the village with only one old man remaining to tell her what had happened. Following the etiquette of the core Vaupés, the woman is an outsider in the village (she is from another, marriageable group). Her fate is different from that of those from her husband's village — she survives, and they perish.

SCENARIO 2. This involves Fish-like people punishing a misbehaving young girl for breaching a taboo. When a woman menstruates, she is ritually unclean and dangerous (*puaya* 'different, adverse': more on this in Aikhenvald 2003: 601-2). A girl who is having her first period has to be placed into ritual seclusion. Once upon a time, one such girl escaped and decided to go bathing at the port. As soon as she got into the water, a canoe with a motor — like the ones mostly used by White people and coveted by the locals — came up. There were three Yalana (White-people) — one with a very white body, one black, and blackish. This shows how Afro-Brazilian are incorporated into the category of *Yalana* — non-Indians. In another version of the story, the third man is said to be 'yellow' (presumably, an Asian non-Indian). They grab her (despite her protest), put her into the canoe and take her upstream to their Snake-house (*Mawali-dapana*). They close her eyes tightly. The action is marked with the enclitic *-sa* 'TIGHTLY', as we saw in the example (8) above — and, similar to other arrivals in the world of Fish-likes, as soon as she opened her eyes she finds herself in another world. Her father goes looking for her and sees her washing her clothes in the middle of the stream on a heap of stones. He calls her, but she does not answer; instead, she jumps back into the river and dives down. The father realises that she no longer exists as a person: she married a

Fish-like, and became a Fish-like woman. She is said to be seen washing her clothes in that stream on a heap of stones as a bad omen.

We have seen that the outcomes for women are perhaps not as drastic as for men, unless they involve a punishment for breaching a rule. Kidnapping a woman (often on mutual agreement by the relatives) used to be a common practice across the Vaupés area. The Fish-like people behave in a way similar to Indians.

F. Environmental message. Fish-likes also have an environmental message for a man they take to their kingdom. One reason why the Chief of the Fish-likes is angry with the man is because people kill too many fish and spoil the environment — as the Fish-like woman says to the man, in (16).

(16) nhuaniri pi-na i-na hanipa-naka kerua *Tariana*
 1sg+father 2sg-OBJ 2pl-OBJ big+ADV-PRES.VIS be.angry

hia dakida wha wa:-nipe wa-hña-nuku
 you.pl always we 1pl+do-NOM 1pl-eat-TOP.NON.A/S
 i-nitu i-hña-naka ihia du-a-pidana
 2pl-steal 2pl-eat-PRES.VIS you.pl 3sgf-say-REM.P.REP

'My father is very angry with you (singular), with you (plural). You always steal-eat our food, she said'

The Fish-like woman who had brought the man to the underwater world further admonishes him saying 'this is what you all do, never kill as many, kill two or three, four, five, and that's all. You spoil a lot, you always kill our food. Stop doing it, and tell your mates to do so'. The man says 'yes'. This dialogue is in (17).

(17)a Pi-ka-thada-pada, hi-naka i-ni ihia, *Tariana*
 2sg-see-FRUST-DOUBT-COUNTEREXP this-PRES.VIS 2pl-do you.pl

du-a-pidana

3sgf-say-REM.P.REP

'It is finished, stop it, you will say this to your relatives, she said'

Haw, di-a-pidana, diha-misini.

Yes, 3sgnf-say-REM.P.REP he-too

'Yes, he (the man) said'

This environmental message — not to kill too many fish and to take only as much as one needs — is repeated from one story to the next. A widow (Scenario 1 in E above) is explicitly told not to take too many fish from the magic fish-hole, and when her co-villagers do so, they perish. A Jungle spirit would provide similar advice: not to over-fish and also not to work — hunt or fish — on forbidden days (such as the Good Friday, *Yapirikuri di-ñami-ni-kada* (Creator 3sgnf-die-PASS-CL:DAY) 'the day the Creator died').

The Fish-like people stories partly serve as cautionary tales about what not to do. The Fish-likes and the spirits of the Jungle safe-guard their living quarters from misbehaving humans, and also keep people in line with the rules, punishing them if they breach a taboo or a promise.

2.5 On some linguistic aspects of the stories about Fish-likes

A notable feature of the languages of the Vaupés area (including the core Vaupés and the members of the 'Makú' cultural complex) is a system of obligatory evidentials which mark information source on which a statement is based (a comprehensive discussion of this category is in Aikhenvald 2004, 2018b and chapters in the same volume, and a summary in Aikhenvald 2021a; see also Silva and Silva 2012 on Yuhup, Marcelo Carvalho p.c. on Hup, and a summary with further references in Aikhenvald 2022a).

Similar to East Tukanoan languages, Tariana has five evidentials — visual, non-visual, inferred, assumed (and general knowledge), and reported. Evidential markers are floating enclitics which attach to either the predicate or a focused constituent. The use of evidentials correlates with the type of story — this is known as a 'token' of a genre (Aikhenvald 2004, 2021a: 59-62 offer a general perspective).⁷

- Stories which relate someone's personal experience — what one did and what one had visual information for — are cast in the visual evidential.
- Stories about what one cannot see with the human eye— including actions and attacks by the spirits of the jungle and actions of shamans — are cast in nonvisual evidential.
- Traditional culturally important stories — passed on from generation to generation — about the creation of the world and the travels of the Tariana ancestors, and also translations from other languages, are cast in the assumed and general knowledge evidential (see Aikhenvald 2023).
- Tales about animals, gossip, and whatever one knows from someone else are couched in reported evidential.

All the stories dealing with Fish-like people are invariably couched in reported evidential (as one can see from the glosses in examples (5)-(16)). This makes them sound less important than traditional stories cast as 'general knowledge'. They are sometimes even mockingly referred to as *mēda-peri kalisi* (in.vain-COLL.PL story) 'stories for nothing, just stories'. Does this use of reported evidential reflect the fact that no-one who had ever

⁷ Further details on genres and evidentials in Tariana can be found in Aikhenvald (2021a: 59-61, 2021b: 199-205). Aikhenvald (2019) focuses on the use of nonvisual evidential for supranatural experience. No information is available for evidentials in stories about Fish-likes in other languages of the area.

experienced the Fish-like people will ever dare recount their experience and thus use the visual evidential? It may well be so.

A further feature of the stories about Fish-like people is a proliferation of Portuguese insertions. In stories recorded in the 1990s from the same speakers, Portuguese terms were used less than in the 2000s and at present. For instance, a story told in 1999 by Leo Brito contains three tokens of Portuguese words. A similar story told in 2012 by the same speaker contain fifteen, all in the descriptions of the White-person-like underwater world (perhaps, as a result of Leo's, and others', growing acquaintance with the mainstream Brazilian reality). Following the speech etiquette in the Vaupés, Leo usually avoids Portuguese loans (or code-switches) in his speech and in stories of other genres (in which he is proficient). We hypothesise that the similarity between the world of the Fish-like people and the White-people's world warrants almost unlimited use of Portuguese, the White man's language.

A third feature of the stories dealing with Fish-like people concerns a linguistic aspect of Amazonian perspectivism. What one sees as a 'snake', someone else will see as a 'big White person'. What is chicken to the Fish-likes, appears as 'sword-fish' to a human. The outer appearance depends on the perspective and the perceiver. This can be shown in two ways. The man who married a Fish-like woman sees her as a big woman — (18)a.

- (18)a di-ka-ka-nuku inaru-pasi-pidana *Tariana*
 3sgnf-see-SEQ-TOP.NON.A/S woman-AUG-REM.P.REP
 'For him looking, it was a big woman'

His human mother sees her as a snake — (18b).

- (18)b diha ha-do-ne du-ka-ka-nuku
 he parent-FEM-FOC.A/S 3sgnf-see-SEQ-TOP.NON.A/S
 mawali-pasi-pidana
 snake-AUG-REM.P.REP

'For his mother (not anyone else) looking, it was a big snake'

The topical non-subject marker *-nuku* marks the non-main clause 'as he/she looked' as a contrastive topic. Within the non-main clause, the focussed subject *-ne* marks the 'perceiver'.

Another option is to include the subject in the non-main clause and omit the verb of 'seeing'. The subject of the non-main clause is then marked with the contrastive subject marker *-ne* (expressing the role of the subject in the elliptical non-main clause) and is followed by the topical-non-subject *-nuku* which marks the role of the erstwhile non-main clause in the sentence. An example is in (19).

- (19)a diha-ne-nuku sidua-na-pidana *Tariana*
 he-FOC.A/S-TOP.NON.A/S arrow-CL:VERT-REM.P.REP
 'For him (not anyone else) (looking), it was an arrow'
- b nawiki-ne-nuku mawali-pasi-pidana
 3sgnf-see-SEQ- FOC.A/S-TOP.NON.A/S snake-AUG-REM.P.REP
 'For the man (not anyone else) (looking), it was a big snake'

The sequence *-ne* (focussed subject) and *-nuku* (topical non-subject) represents an instance of double marking of syntactic function in *Tariana*: *-ne* marks the function of the NP in the embedded clause, while *-nuku* marks the function of the clause itself. *Tariana* appears to be unusual even for an Amazonian language in that it has this special construction reflecting different perspectives of different perceivers (discussed in Aikhenvald 2003: 160-1, and especially Aikhenvald 2022b: 434-5). This double case marking involving multiple perspectives can be used in various circumstances other than stories about Fish-likes (including time differences between Australia and Brazil and different ways of saying things in different languages). The overwhelming number of tokens is attested in stories about Fish-like people and comments on them (at present, 420 out of 510 tokens).

Tariana stories about the Fish-likes thus stand apart from stories of other kinds. We now turn to interim conclusions and an areal perspective.

2.6 The Fish-like people in a transformative world: Tariana and beyond

The Fish-like people occupy a special place in the transformative world surrounding and encompassing human beings for the Tariana — a typical member of the core Vaupés area.

FIRST, the Fish-like people belong to the category of *nawiki* 'Indians, indigenous people'. They behave like Indians. We saw, in (12) and (13), that the Fish-likes are said to speak Tukano to the human man and also among each other, just like many Indians do nowadays. In the Tariana stories, they consistently address the human men as *nai*, a vocative form for a marriageable cousin (mother's brother's son or daughter), who typically comes from another language group. The marriage practice by Fish-likes involves kidnapping a woman, congruent with the traditional Vaupés practices (as mentioned in E in §2.4). They fish and hunt just like *nawiki*, Indians (using bow and arrow and fish traps).

SECONDLY, the Fish-like people have their own habitat not shared with humans or spirits of the jungle (former humans, as we saw in §2.2.1). Their habitat — 'another world', *pa:-ehkwapi*, lies underwater (especially under small rivulets). The water surface appears to serve as a boundary between the world of the humans and 'another world' of Fish-likes.⁸

Vulnerable human men can be taken there by Fish-likes. In order to survive there and especially when they get back to the human world, they have to follow the rules imposed by the Fish-likes.

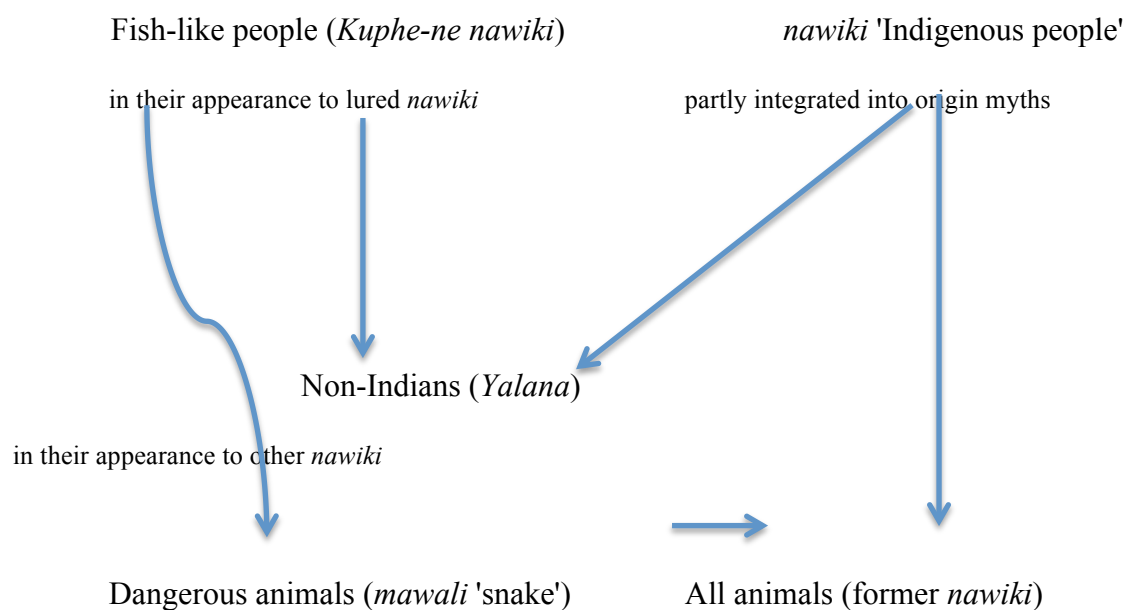
⁸ I am grateful to Anne Storch for pointing out similar beliefs among some societies on the East African coast (covering the Mijikenda and the Swahili) whereby spirits live underwater, and the watersurface serves as a boundary between the world of humans and the world of spirits. Similar to the Tariana, the world of underwater spirits is not the world of the dead; and the contact with the underwater world is sought after for the healing purposes.

THIRDLY, the Fish-likes appear in varied disguises, seen differently depending on the perceiver. They appear in the disguise of young and handsome White people (*yalana*) to those *nawiki* whom they are about to take to their world. To others, they appear in the disguise of dangerous animals, typically *mawali* 'snake' (sometimes others, such as *sa:ru* 'an anteater'). The objects they use and the food they eat can also appear as something else to humans: for instance, what is an arrow for a Fish-like looks like a snake to a human. The Fish-likes can try and be helpful, but they can be dangerous, especially for those who do not do as they are told.

And LASTLY: The world of the Fish-likes as seen and described by *Nawiki* has the best of the riches of the *Yalana*, the white people. This complements and completes the outlook of the Fish-likes as *Yalana* 'White people'.

The Fish-likes span the potential dichotomy of *nawiki* and *yalana*, including the world of animals (former *nawiki*). Their interrelations and transformations are schematically shown in Diagram 3.

Diagram 3. The Fish-likes and their relationship to humans



The world of the White man (a non-Indian *yalana*) is integrated into the way in which the Fish-likes are seen to live. The whole world is interconnected as one social space, through shape shifting and different perspectives of different perceivers. The White man is not integrated into the world of the *nawiki* (a *nawiki* who tries and speak and behave as if they were a White person is ridiculed: examples in Aikhenvald 2010: 200-201). The image of a White man offers an additional dimension for the disguise of the inhabitants of another world (*pa:-ehkwapi*).

One further dimension of interrelations between the inhabitants of various world is reflected in the shamanic transformations. Tariana shamans form a hierarchy, depending on their powers and degrees of initiation. The most powerful of the Tariana shamans can transform into a *Yawi* 'jaguar' and fly to the sky and magical realms at night. Shamans in disguise never visit the world of the Fish-likes.

The interrelations between the Indians, the White people, and the rest of the universe are characterized by an ambiguity and shifting representations of the reality, shaped by a combination of traditional views and the impact of the Colonial invasion. As we saw throughout this paper, there is a dynamism in these representations — as speakers acquire more and more acquaintance with the world of the *Yalana*, they transfer their knowledge into a description of the world of the Fish-likes — Indians in *Yalana* disguise with unlimited access to the delectable parts of the *Yalana* life-style.

Tariana stories about the Fish-people are highly likely to be the outcome of diffusion from East-Tukanoan groups. No such stories (nor concepts) have been described for the neighbouring Arawak-speaking groups outside the Vaupés River Basin Linguistic area, including thetsBaniwa-Kurripako and the Piapoko (close genetic relatives of the Tariana, whose languages belong to the same subgroup), and other Arawak groups who are believed to share a common origin. The concept of 'Fish people' or 'Fish-like people' is shared across the

whole of the Vaupés, going beyond the core Vaupés. The closest match is Tukano *Wa'i masa* (fish people).

The first source to address the shared beliefs concerning *Wa'i masa* 'Fish people' (Portuguese *Peixe(s)-gente*, or *manjuba*) among the various peoples of the core Vaupés was Brüzzi (1977: 320-1). His materials were collected in 1947-8 and in 1952-3. His consultants, from various groups (both Tariana and East-Tukanoan), told stories about how Fish people turned into fish and then reacquired their human form. In every instance, people would provide precise information about the timing and the location of such events. They would typically appear as dolphins and turn into beautiful women or handsome men, and then seduce Indians. The stories share striking similarities with what we saw for Tariana. In one story, a woman ate forbidden food after giving birth and went to the river port with an intention to run away from her violent husband. There she met a handsome young man (a Fish-person) who took her into his underwater realm — a big town, with beautiful houses, silk cloths and gardens. The presence of silk cloths — the produce associated with White people's riches — is reminiscent of the White people's riches in the world of the Fish-like people in the Tariana tales. Similar stories are known among other groups, including the Tukano, the Wanano and the Piratapuya (as reported to me by my Tariana teachers and their Tukano, Wanano, and Piratapuya wives).⁹

The Fish-people appear in the mythological cosmos of the two closely related representatives of the Makú cultural complex, the Húpd'äh and the Yuhupde. According to the

⁹ Lima Barreto (2013: 15, 65-71) describes the human and the fish-like disguise of the *Wai-masa* and their aggressive behaviour against humans who may be seen as a threat. His description is based on the information from his grandfather, a powerful shaman called Ponciano Barreto (Ponciano *Yai*). There is no description of their underwater dwellings. The existence of Wanano stories on the fish-people was confirmed to me by Kristine Stenzel; however her limited corpus does not contain any stories about them.

tradition of the Húpd'äh documented by Carvalho (2020: 97, 114), the Fish-people (Hõp Húpd'äh) live in the river and are dangerous to humans (as they can inflict illness, especially onto vulnerable babies). The 'blessing' shaman thwarts the dangers of aggressive Fish-people. In their essence they are snakes. Along similar lines, the Fish-people (*hõp-uy-rehts'*fish-INTERROGATIVE-COLLECTIVE'), are a group of beings who live in the waters and attack humans (Silva and Silva 2012: 186, 413, Cácio Silva. p.c.).¹⁰

The stories about human-like entities — Fish-like people — reflect projections of the habitat of the indigenous people and their ways of life. In their disguise as White people, the Fish-people straddle the boundary between humans and other entities — simultaneously presenting a threat and a lure to the real people, the Indians.

¹⁰ All the information about the Fish people in the Hup and Yuhup traditions comes exclusively from Marcelo Carvalho and Cácio Silva respectively. Patience Epps told me that she never documented any of these stories in Hup and only 'heard of them'. Other groups of the core Vaupés offer a somewhat different picture. A mythic cycle of the Barasana, an East Tukanoan group in Colombia, identifies the Jaguar as an ancestor of White people thus presented as 'powerful, murderous and predatory and as being outside the bounds of civilized society' (Hugh-Jones 1988: 143). According to Hugh-Jones (1988: 153), 'by the logic of the Barasana myth are on a par with the spirits of the dead, an inference supported by Barasana accounts of the exploits of the shaman-prophet leaders of last-century millennial cults. These men are said to have made regular visits to the world of the dead, a world described as being identical to the towns of White people'. This is reminiscent of the pattern of integration of White people into the cosmology of other regions, including the Sepik in New Guinea. The presence and the power of White people within the context of a myth has been documented for the Jivaro (a large nation at the Andean foothills in Peru). The mythological first shaman is believed to be a white-skinned man living underwater in a house formed by upright anacondas, capable of transforming into anaconda and supplying spiritual helpers to other shamans (Harner 1984: 154-5).

It would be fascinating to know how the dwellings of the Fish-likes were presented before the White Invasion and whether such stories existed at all; but no such information is available. At present, the stories about Fish-likes by the Tariana evolve and incorporate more and more accoutrements of White people's habitat, as the Tariana acquire further knowledge of the outside world.

3 'The ghost villages': a Middle Sepik angle

We now turn to another instance of invisible yet well-known landscapes — the dwellings of the dead among the Manambu of the Middle Sepik.

3.1 The Manambu of the Middle Sepik: a snap-shot

The Sepik River Basin is the locus of immense linguistic diversity, unparalleled even within New Guinea itself. The area is home to about two hundred distinct languages, grouped into at least ten families, plus about a dozen isolates. Geographical features of the area (mountains, waterways, and swamps), differences in means of subsistence, patterns of contacts and interactions between group are among possible reasons for this diversification. The lives and livelihoods of the people of the Middle Sepik are closely linked to the spirits of various kinds (as aptly put by Falck 2018: 107-8). A further trait is what Bateson (1935: 181) described as 'schismogenesis', or 'complementary differentiation' whereby distinct groups try and be as different from each other as possible, at the same time maintaining 'reciprocal patterns of interaction'. This makes each group potentially special. In contrast to the people of the Vaupés, one needs to be careful in defining any trait as 'typical' Sepik.

The people roughly divide between those who live on the banks of large rivers, or River People, and those who live inland — Dry-land, or Jungle people (more on this in Aikhenvald 2009, 2018b). The Manambu and the Western Iatmul (or the Ñaura) — speakers

of closely related languages of the Ndu family — are River-dwellers. They are in a symbiotic albeit not too friendly relationship with the Dry-land people, who include Kwoma (Kwoma-Nukuma) and the Yalaku (Ndu).

The relationships between the Manambu and the Western Iatmul are somewhat strained and ambivalent (more on this in Aikhenvald 2009, and also Harrison 1990: 20, 1993). Both groups live on the banks of the Sepik River. The Iatmul are more numerous and used to be ritually more powerful (for instance, many of the Manambu rituals and incantations were acquired from the Iatmul). The Manambu and the Iatmul — the two powerful groups of River-Dwellers — live in the same natural environment, and share means of subsistence, warfare, social structure and, to a large extent, their ritual system and values. At the same time, they are rivals; contacts between them used to be accompanied by outbursts of overt military conflict. And in times of peace, the attitude of the Manambu — a smaller group — towards the Iatmul is that of suspicion and distrust. This type of contact-conflict relationship tends to motivate divergence rather than convergence, and further exemplifies the idea of schismogenesis (see also Bateson 1936/1958: 175).

The Manambu language is spoken by about 3,000 people in five villages, of which Avatip is by far the largest.¹¹ Each of the three exogamous clan groups of the Manambu (see

¹¹ The other traditional village is Malu (located closely to Ambunti, and the locus of the first encounters with early German explorers); a smaller village called Apa:n is an offshoot of Malu. Dialectal differences between Avatip and Malu are very minor (see Aikhenvald 2008: 620-1). When the Sepik river changed its course in the mid-nineteen eighties, most of the Avatip people moved from a place called Yentchangai to the present location of the village (Harrison, 1990: 13; and plate 1 in Aikhenvald, 2008); some stayed behind and formed the Yawabak village; see Bragge (1990) on the history of Yuanamb (Yambon) village, and Aikhenvald (2018b) on Manambu within the Ndu family. My corpus of Manambu contains over 30 hours transcribed stories of various genres, and conversations and fieldnotes (from participant-observation-based work). I started working with the Manambu people in 1995.

§3.3) have their own ceremonial partners among the Dry-land peoples (see Harrison 1990: 10, and an updated version in Aikhenvald 2009: 45). Indications are that numerous Dry-land people must have been absorbed into the Manambu as a consequences of intertribal wars for access to land (Aikhenvald 2009: 45, 2018b: 207). The linguistic complexity of Manambu may be due to the numerous substrata from the languages of the subjugated peoples (most of them unknown). Harrison (1990) offers a comprehensive account of the totemic structure of the clans and initiation rituals. At present, many of them are known only partially, and performed less and less, due to encroaching dominance of Christianity, out-migrations of the people, the growing presence of outsiders in most villages, and the gradual demise of initiation rituals (following the establishment of the Australian control in German New Guinea). Nevertheless, many of the beliefs and attitudes remain — especially among those who still live on their ancestral lands. A major feature of the Manambu, and other peoples of the area, is totemic ownership of names (Aikhenvald 2008, forthcoming, Harrison 1990). Names of people and of important objects are owned by each clan and subclan. The Mortuary ritual *Keketep* (lit. consuming for the last time) which involves material compensation continues to be performed (albeit in a shorter version compared to what was documented by Harrison 1982, 1990). We now turn to the spirits and their transformations, in §3.2. The place of the White people in the Manambu cosmos is discussed in §3.3, before we turn to 'ghost villages' in §3.4.

The bulk of the corpus was collected during four lengthy periods of fieldwork in Avatip and surrounding villages in 2001-2016. This corpus is being constantly expanded by on-going interaction with speakers of Manambu. Aikhenvald (2008) is a comprehensive grammar of Manambu; Aikhenvald (2009) deals with the impact of language contact on the Manambu and related languages. Examples are in practical orthography (note that the stops *b*, *d*, *g* and the affricate *j* are prenasalised and pronounced as [ᵐb], [ᵐd], [ᵐg], [ᵐj]).

(21)a Vya-de-k, tabu-n da-ku, *Manambu*

hit-3masc.sg-COMPL.DS run.away-SEQ go.down-COMPL.SS

yakya,

OK

'After he (the man) hit (the Jungle spirit Apawul), he (Apawul) having run away (and) gone down, OK'

wun menawa geñer ñamus ma:m

I you.masc+COMIT later younger.sibling older.sibling

du te ma:n ya, wa-ku,

man be NEG EMPH say-COMPL.SS

'I won't have a sibling relationship (lit. younger sibling-older sibling man) with you, having said (to the man)'

keda tabu-n da-n, da-ku,

DEM.PROX.MASC.SG.REACT.TOP run.away-SEQ go.down-SEQ go.down-COMPL.SS

'he (the Apawul) having run off, having gone down,

kedika kwarbam mirem

DEM.PROX.MASC.SG.REACT.TOP jungle+LOC up+LOC

kwa-kwa-na-di, ke-di apawul.

stay-HAB-ACT.FOC-3pl DEM.PROX-pl Jungle.spirit

'these stayed in the jungle on top (of trees), these Apawul'.

b Kwa-da-kereb, kep sekab te-bana-di.

stay-3pl-AFTER:DS just far+at have-1pl-3pl

'After they (the Apawul) stayed (there), we only have them at a distance'.

The *apawul* (as a category) and the totemic haze *baw* where they live have special names owned by each subclan (Laki and Aikhenvald 2013; the common names for the *apawul* are Apingali and Maimgawi). That is, the *apawul* do not belong to just one subclan (in contrast to White people). The *apawul* consistently play tricks on people. An *apawul* can appear as a

woman to a human woman (*meya ta:kw* 'real woman'), and tries to tickle her baby making it cry, trying to steal it. In another story, an *apawul* tries to get a human man into trouble by luring him into the jungle. The man and his mates fight the Apawul and make them run away. The Apawul look as if they were people, but they are not. This is how the late Yuawalup described this.

- (22) la ta:kw vyakata ta:kw ma:, *Manambu*
 she+DEM.DIST.FEM.SG woman good woman NEG
 'That woman is not a good woman',
- kuprape takw-a-l, ta:l,
 bad woman-3fem.sg stay+3fem.sg
 kwarba-ke-l-al, apawul-a.
 jungle-POSS-fem.sg-3fem.sg Jungle.spirit-3fem.sg
 'she is a bad woman, a woman from the jungle, she is an *apawul*'

Apawul steals fish, shrimp, and children. A woman is looking for her child, and then realises that *Apawul* has stolen her baby, as in (23), also from a story told by Yuawalup.

- (23) a-de apawul-ad *Manambu*
 DEM.DIST-masc.sg Jungle.spirit-3masc.sg
 ñan nak kure-d.
 our child take-3masc.sg
 'It is Apawul who took our child'

The *apawul* are shape-shifters, not unlike Amazonian jungle spirits. They can appear in the shape of humans to the villagers, and share living quarters with the real humans. Otherwise, they can see humans, but humans cannot see them. It is their behaviour and their bad

intentions that betrays them. None of them appear in the shape of white people.¹³ We now turn to the 'White people' in the Manambu cosmos.

3.3 The White people in the Manambu cosmos

The world-view of the Manambu is constantly evolving, open to establishing new links and absorbing new developments. Europeans, or 'White people', have been incorporated into the Manambu clan structure.

The Manambu are divided into three exogamous clan groups, *Wulwi-Ñawi*, *Nabul-Sablap*, and *Gla:gw*. Each are associated with their own sets of totems, personal names, and names for important objects. Exogamy between clan groups is based on patrilineal descent. This is observed quite strictly: if someone marries 'wrongly', this creates a problem in the family, and may result in 'reassignment' of clan allegiance for one of the members of the married couple.

The *Gla:gw* are associated with everything dark, including the jungle, the earth, and dark-feathered birds. The *Wulwi-Ñawi* clan group is associated with sun, moon, stars, and everything bright and white-coloured, including the white pelican, and birds and plants of light colour. Members of the clan group are held to have a lighter skin colour, in contrast to the *Gla:gw* who are held to be darker. The skin colour and the objects associated with the *Wulwi-Ñawi* are referred to as *ñiki-ñiki* (blood-blood) 'red' or *wama-ka-wa:m*

¹³ Harrison (1982: 227) fleetingly mentions the *apawul* as a 'land spirit'. The Manambu *apawul* shares some behavioural similarities with *wiji'bu-lakwa* 'spirit-woman' mentioned as such by Jendraschek (2007, and in stories and textual examples in 2008, 2012). His work does not contain any detail about the beliefs or the spirits of the people. An alternative term for a wayward and larrikin *apawul* in Manambu is *mess*, likely to be cognate to Iatmul *masamdi* 'spirits' (Jendraschek 2008: 53). The shape-shifting properties of the *apawul* are reminiscent of the Amazonian 'perspectivism': but see Telban (2015) on the fundamental differences between Amazonia and New Guinea in this respect.

(white.cockatoo+LINKER-ADJ white.cockatoo) in contrast to the *Gla:gw* whose colour is held to be 'black' (*gla-gel*, or *gla-ka-gel*). The *Nabul-Sablap* are said to be an 'in-between clan group'; they have no colour assigned to them. Their totems include various birds, e.g. *tapwuk* 'chicken' and *ga:j* 'pelican'.¹⁴

The *Gla:gw* are held to be the autochthonous people of Avatip, the major village of the Manambu. The ancestral origin of the *Nabul-Sablap* lies to the west, to the presumed source of the Sepik River which is held to have been carved by the two brothers from that clan (see Aikhenvald 2008: 12). The ancestral area (*wa:gw*) of the Wulwi-Ñawi clan group lies to the east, at the believed terminus of the Sepik river, from where the sun and other heavenly bodies (the totems of the group) rise.

The 'White people' referred to as *ñiki-sep* (blood/red-skin) or as *wama-sep* (white.cockatoo+LK/white-skin) are considered to be members of the Wulwi-Ñawi clan group. So are all the attributes of White people including clothing and writing (including the corresponding implements). The areas to the east, including Australia, are considered among the *wa:gw*, the ancestral area, of the Wulwi-Ñawi.

¹⁴ The name can be interpreted in two ways. Some speakers explain it as a compound 'black-water', with an underlying form *gla-gu*. This contains the combining form *-gw* for 'water' (attested in a few other combinations, e.g. *tepa-gw* (coconut-LINKER-water:combining.form) 'coconut water', *masa-gw* (betelnut+LINKER-water:combining.form) 'spittle from chewing betelnut'). Alternatively, the term may go back to the root *gəl* 'dark' with the fossilized plural marker *-gw* (attested in a few forms: see Aikhenvald 2008: 11, 130-1, and also Harrison 1982: 179). The etymology of the names *Wulwi-Ñawi* and *Nabul-Sablap* is unknown. Based on his extensive work in the late 1970s-early 1980s, Harrison (1982: 179-80) mentions that at that point the colour 'white' was associated with the Nabul-Sablap clan group. This wasn't the case in the 1990s when I started my fieldwork. The incorporation of White people into the Wulwi-Ñawi clan group offered to Harrison (1982: 179-80) was further justified by the fact that both are 'immigrants' to the Avatip region.

The eastern wind (the south-eastern trade) *Wali-mag* (east.direction-AFF) is a totemic belonging of the Wulwi-Ñawi clan group. The alternative term for the White people and everything associated with them contains the root *wali-* 'east'.¹⁵ Europeans, or the 'White people', are referred to as *wali-du* (east-man) 'white man' or *wali-ta:kw* (east-woman) 'white woman', or *wali-neb* (east-dryland.people) 'white people',¹⁶ and alternatively also called *ñiki-sep* 'red-skin' or *wama-sep* 'white-skin'.

Everything to do with the White people contains the term *wali*, e.g. *wali-kudi* (white/east-language) 'Tok Pisin'; 'English'; *wali-na:gw* (white/east-sago) 'biscuit'; *wali-gus* (white/east-paddle) 'outboard motor'; *wali-gu* (white/east-water) 'alcohol', *wali kañts*(white/east-bamboo.stalk) 'gun'.

A store-bought object will be distinguished from a similar traditional object by the form *wali-* compounded with it, e.g. *bag* 'large machete-type knife', *wali-bag* 'a store-bought

¹⁵ The two researchers working with the Manambu, anthropologist Simon Harrison and myself, have been adopted into the Maliau subclan of the Manambu and given names of the clan. Simon Harrison's name, *Yua-seseg*, contains the typical Maliau totem *Yua-* 'green snail shell'. My name *Ñamamayrata:kw* is the name of a powerful ancestress (also referred to as *Apa-wulwi-ta:kw* ('Strong-Wulwi-woman')). Harrison (1982: 180) reports that two further subclans of the Wulwi-Ñawi, *Ambasarak* and *Sarambasarak* (which appear to be no longer recognised as separate from the *Sarak* subclan: Aikhenvald 2008: 12) claimed Queen Elizabeth II 'as a joint totem of theirs', on the basis that the emu (interpreted as a cassowary, the specific totem of their subclan) 'appears on the crest of the Australian government'. This does not seem to be the case for the contemporary Manambu: things are in flux.

¹⁶ On occasion, the terms *wali-du* and *wali-ta:kw* are applied to non-Papuans no matter what their skin colour. In 2004, we had an impromptu visit of a group of Médecins sans frontières in Avatip, which consisted of a mixture of White people and African-Americans; these terms were used to refer to them. See Falck (2016: 51) on the cognate *woli* in Ñaura. A similar use of the term *wali* 'east' was listed in the Western Iatmul wordlist (Jendraschek 2007, in *wali-ni'ba* (east-people) 'white people' and *wali-kudi* 'English, Tok Pisin'); but no explanation has been provided in the sources.

big knife', *ka:m* 'knife', *wali-ka:m* 'a store-bought knife', *yæj* 'traditional frying pan', *wali-yæj* 'store bought frying pan', *mæj* 'thread', *wali-mæj* 'wool, store-bought thread or wool'. The combining form *meya-* 'real' can be used to distinguish the traditional objects from the 'white-introduced' ones, e.g. *meya-mæj* 'traditional thread (used to make string-bags)'. Similarly, *meya-kamna:gw* (real-food) 'indigenous food: sago, kaukau, smoked fish, etc.' is in opposition to *wali-kamna:gw* (white/east-food) 'White people's food' which some people shun.

All the Manambu are Christians and have a baptismal name. The term *wali-sə* refers to the 'Christian name', as opposed to traditional names, *tep-a-se* (village-LINKER-name) 'village name' which are divided into numerous categories described, from a linguistic perspective, by Aikhenvald (2008: 75-6, 2018c), and, in general terms, by Harrison (1990: 59-62). The term *wali* in Manambu does not bear any connections to 'spirit' or 'ghost'. In contrast, in the closely related Yalaku a somewhat pejorative term for 'non-indigenous' or 'white' person is *kaba* whose other meaning is 'ghost', or 'spirit' (Aikhenvald 2018b; see Bowden 1997: 42, on similar uses of *gaba* 'spirit, soul' in unrelated neighbouring Kwoma from which the Yalaku form was borrowed).¹⁷

¹⁷ Falck (2016, 2019) describes how she was consistently taken to be a spirit of a dead ancestor who came back to the Ñaura village of Timbunmeli as a white woman. My experience with the Yalaku of the Middle Sepik has been somewhat similar. I was taken to be the returned spirit of the mother of one of my major teachers, Yafa Mark Chupandu (my classificatory son), who bestowed his mother's name Holengitalkwa on me. Other Yalaku people — all of them devout Christians — had an ambivalent attitude to this. This representation of White people has not been attested among the Manambu. This resonates with Lohmann's report about the Asabano of the West Sepik province (2019: 156): 'In the early days of contact, Asabano elders suspected that European people were returned dead people — ghosts — possibly of their own people... These whites were haunting presences to the Asabano and other Melanesians who first beheld them. Hence recurrent speculations reported in Melanesia that the location of the land of the dead might be the countries where

The fact that the ‘White people’ have been incorporated into the clan and the totem system is concordant with the ‘importing’ nature of the East Sepik peoples (echoing Margaret Mead’s 1938 observations concerning the Arapesh). But access to the perceived opulence and the goods available to the White people goes beyond a person's lifetime. We now turn to the unseen ‘ghost villages’ and their representations.

3.4 ‘Ghost villages’

In Manambu, a human has three facets — *sep* ‘physical body’, *mawul* ‘mind, understanding; literally, the inside’, and *kayik* ‘spirit’.¹⁸ When a person dies, their *kayik* lives on, leaving the body and transforming into a *wudeb* ‘a spirit, ghost’. These move to a *wudeb-a tep*, ‘ghost village’ or a village of the dead. Village of the dead, or ghost villages, are said to be located underground.¹⁹

In the stories and descriptions I listened to and recorded, the inhabitants of the village of the dead have been sometimes described as ‘White people’. One speaker commented in (24) (addressing me).

white people come from’. See also Lohmann (2005) on how the ancestor of the Asabano had white skin, similar to the belief of the Orokaiva, of Oro Province, that the spirits of dead people sometimes return to life in white-skinned form (Bashkow 2000: 314). This representation of White people has not been attested among the Manambu.

¹⁸ See Aikhenvald (2015) for a full description and analogies in other Sepik groups, including the striking similarities between the Karawari *wambung* (Telban 1998: 59) and the Manambu *mawul*, and between the Kwoma *mayi* (Bowden 1997: 124) and Karawari *anggindarkwanar/kwanma* (Telban 1998: 61) and the Manambu *kayik*; further information on the Ñaura concepts and terminologies is in Falck (2016: 48-58).

¹⁹ Falck (2016: 51) mentions that the place of the dead for the Ñaura is believed to be associated with the eastern wind *woli* (see also Wassmann (1991: 200), which occurs in various terminologies for White people and their associated goods, and is cognate to the Manambu *wali-* (see §3.3).

(24) ñena-pek-adi

Manambu

you.fem.sg-LIKE-3pl

'They are like you (feminine)'

The underground location of the 'village of the dead' was described in several lengthy stories by the late Gaiawaliwag, one of the most knowledgeable Manambu female elders and the wife (and later the widow) of a powerful medicine man. Her stories deal with a common topic in the Manambu lore: orphaned children are left destitute at the mercy of their mean paternal uncle and his wife who is even meaner. Realizing how destitute they have become, their dead mother comes up from the underground (in some versions, her grave in the cemetery) and helps them out providing them with a tree on which money grows and saying that she has got plenty of money down there in the village of the dead. She travels in a car, which is seen as an utmost luxury (there are no cars in Avatip and very few in the local regional centre Ambunti). The mother describes her big white-people-style house and the white people's food she eats every day, but refuses to share any food with her children, saying that only dead people are privy to this.

Here is another example. In September 2013, we stayed in the house which belonged to Yuakalu (Joel) Luma, the widower of the recently deceased Ruth Nebekaru. Pauline Yuaneng Luma Laki, Yuakalu's elder sister, insisted that I should not be in the house on my own. As Pauline went off to make the arrangements for the upcoming launch of the Manambu grammar, Kamibau and I sat together on the veranda of the house. Kamibau told me about the signs of Ruth's presence she had heard during the night, and then started talking about the 'village of the dead'. She pointed in the direction of the house of Susan Motuway, a retired schoolteacher, saying that the village is right there, underground, but that it is better for us not to visit that place. According to Kamibau, the *wudeb*, or the 'dead people', live in big

underground houses with plenty of White people's food (*wali-kamna:gw* 'white/east food'), especially rice and valued tin fish. Someone was even reported to have seen tins around that location; but the tins had then quickly disappeared. She then added that the *wudeb* had other *wudeb* working for them, namely those for whom no Mortuary Festival (Keketep) had been performed. Her words are quoted in (25).

- (25) wudəb-a təpa:m a-di kəkətəp *Manambu*
ghost-LK village+LK+LOC DEM.DIST-pl Mortuary.ritual
kui-ma:r-na-di du ta:kw yawi
give-NEG.SUBORDINATE-ACTION.FOCUS-pl man woman work

kur-kwa-na-di

do-HABITUAL-ACTION.FOCUS-3pl

'In the 'ghost' village, those men and women, for whom the Mortuary ritual had not been given, do the work'

I asked her what the inhabitants of the 'ghost villages' looked like. She replied:

- (26) du-adi ñana-pek *Manambu*
men/people we.pl-LIKE
'(They) are people, like us'

The term *du* 'man' in Manambu refers to a person or people in general (or even to a person's body: Aikhenvald 2015). Kamibau's explanation in (26) appears to imply that the inhabitants of the 'ghost villages', or the villages of the dead, may not be white; they were just like any people, except that we do not see them and they have access to all the goods and luxuries.

I then told Kamibau about Christiane Falck's work with the Ñaura who use mobile phones to talk to their ancestors and to dead people, and asked her if the inhabitants of the

Manambu 'villages of the dead' did any such things.²⁰ Kamibau looked at me with slight contempt and replied negatively.

- (27) ma:, atawa akes kur-kwa-na-di, *Manambu*
 no thus NEG.HAB do-HABITUAL-ACTION.FOCUS-3pl
 Ñaura day-adi ja:p-adi
 Ñaura they-pl thing-3pl
 'No, they do not act like this, (these) are things of the Ñaura'

To my question whether the inhabitants of the village of the dead have mobile phones at all, Kamibau replied that they have many things, all things White people have.

To sum up: the spirits of the dead, *wudeb*, live in their own villages supplied with White people's goods including technology. Their location is underground and is vaguely known (it may or may not be connected with cemeteries). The question of race of the *wudeb* is vague and perhaps irrelevant. In agreement with the inclusion of White people into the clan and totem system, no question of race arises. We are faced with the projection of the habitat and ways of life — real or coveted — of the White people onto the hidden realm of the dead, the 'ghosts' in their underground abode from which they may come and visit, but whose riches they are not entitled to share with the living.

3.5 Beyond the Manambu: White people in the world of the dead in Papua New Guinea

Across Papua New Guinea, the locations of the dead are often associated with where White people come from — America and Europe. For the Eastern Iatmul of Tambunum the village

²⁰ The role of technology in communication with the dead and with the spiritual world in general is shared by the Ñaura with the Karawarri (Telban and Vávrová 2014 offer a general perspective).

of the dead (*wundumbu ngai*)²¹ 'resembles a vibrant city, full of cars, packaged food, technology, commodities, and money. "Now we think the dead live in America", said one man in the men's house to much agreement' (Silverman 2012: 124, 2013: 245-6). When the dead visit, they appear to visit on 'a shimmering, supernatural ship' which resembles — as people say — the former tourist ship *Melanesian Discoverer* (Silverman 2013: 246). This has distinct overtones of the cargo cult, and is also concomitant with increased expectations from the White people themselves, including anthropologists (more in Silverman 2013: 248).

The *undumbu-ge* (spirit-village/house) of the Ñaura (Western Iatmul) of Timbunmeli appear to be located within the Ñaura environment. The islands of Timbunmeli and Wondunumbuk are 'in their invisible appearance, "Japan" and "Poland". The invisible realm that the spirits of the dead inhabit is conceptualised like a parallel world within Timbunmeli's life world — walking paths are said to be highways on which cars drive, seating platforms are workshops, and the water of the Chambri lake, where the village is located, is a city. Graves are the doors to the houses of the dead through which they can travel between the different realms of the living and the dead' (Falck 2019: 84). This is reminiscent of the itinerary of the mother in Gaiawaliwag's tale. Falck (2019: 84) adds to this that 'not only spirits of the dead

²¹ The forms in Eastern Iatmul *wundumbu* in *wundumbu ngai* and Ñaura (Western Iatmul) *undumbu* in *undumbu ge* (ghost village) are cognates to Manambu *wudeb*. The noun *tep* 'village' in Manambu is cognate to Yalaku *tepa* 'village'. The form *gay* occurs in some ethnonyms in Manambu. The cognate term *wudubu* in Iatmul is translated as 'spirit' in the construction *wudubu yi-* 'die, lit. spirit go/become' (Jendraschek 2007), and as 'ghost' in Staalsen and Staalsen (1973). The same root (probably, borrowed from Iatmul) occurs in Karawari *wundubunar* 'spirit of a dead man, male ghost, ancestor' and its feminine equivalent *wundu-ma* (Telban 2019: 40). A spirit of a dead woman *wunduma* is considered 'good', while the male *wundubunar* is considered 'bad' — 'wrathful and capable of striking even his own children or brothers' (Telban 1998: 164-5). In the ghost villages of the Eastern Iatmul, the newly deceased are said to be 'boiled in water to slough off their black skin so they appear white' (Silverman 2012: 123).

are believed to live in cities, but also bush- and water-spirits live in villages and cities, drive cars and ships'.

In numerous instances across Papua New Guinea societies, the realm of the dead is associated with having access to European goods. In some instances, this has overtones of a cargo cult — a set of beliefs in a new blessed age signalled by the arrival of goods and riches from supernatural sources (especially goods associated with Europeans). In the early 1950s, a dismissed policeman Kesali returned home to his village and set himself up as the 'king' of the Gogodala. He tried to base 'his activities on dreams in which his ancestors, who were living in the 'village of the dead', promised him that they would send great quantities of European goods to the Gogodalas and told him that he had been appointed to lead his people to a new era of prosperity' (Weymouth 1984: 280). For the Asabano of West Sepik, one hears the noise of high-technology airplanes in haunted places, or the hidden cities of the dead (Lohmann 2019: 149).

For the Kamula of Western Province, Australia is believed to be the place where the dead live, and from where they sometimes return as Kamula Europeans and help their living kin. Travelling to Australia has the potentiality of removing the cultural hero's (Yolisi) prohibition on the dead returning, and even reverse death (Wood 2023: 311, 315, 321). The lands of the White people — Australia, Europe, and North America — are the realm of the dead who enjoy the coveted goods and riches associated with the Whites (see also Falck 2016: 83-84, 2019). These lands remain invisible and hidden: the peoples who profess such beliefs have never travelled too far from their native villages. This does not apply to the Manambu, maybe because they are too worldly and too familiar with the Western world. Many have travelled to Australia and the UK. The White people are integrated into the clan structure; yet their hard-to-obtain riches remain hidden in the ghost villages of the dead.

4 To conclude. The images and the landscapes of the 'unseen' in Melazonia

In the two focal points in Melazonia the worlds of people coexist and interact with the worlds of spirits as their lived realities and 'basic orders of being' (resonating with Harrison's 1990: 55 idea of two 'paths').

For the Tariana and other representatives of the core Vaupés River Basin linguistic area, the spirits of the jungle are former humans in animal disguise. The Fish-like people live underwater. They are shape-shifters. The humans see them in the shape of White (that is, non-Indian) men and women, or as snakes — which is what they appear to be in their essence. The world of the Fish-like people in the traditions of the Vaupés River Basin reflects typically Amazonian transformations — 'what you see is not what you get'.

Moving into the Fish-like people's world is stepping into a different reality, which the Tariana call *pa:-ehkwapi* 'another world'. Their world is unseen for the story-tellers. And it would have been dangerous to describe it as an experienced reality. The stories are always couched in the reported evidential, in contrast to personal experiences with spirits which are treated as 'non-visual'. The reality of the Fish-likes has some of the accoutrements of the traditional Indian world, and the unseen locations are placed next to where the story-tellers reside (as mentioned in §2.4 and §2.6). At the same time, what one finds in the dwellings of the Fish-like people reflects the White people's goods and life-style (including silk cloths, big cities with large houses and cars, foods and clothing). The more exposure the story-tellers get to the urban environment of non-Indians, the more details are included in the descriptions of the hidden world of the underwater people. The alternative reality of 'another world' — essentially hidden from human eye — is a lure and a danger at the same time.

For the Manambu of the Middle Sepik in New Guinea, the worlds of spirits coexist with that of humans. A spirit can appear in an animal disguise (especially the crocodile: §3.2) The jungle spirits *apawul* used to live together with people, and are now invisible to them but

can still appear in human disguise and be harmful (§3.2). The disembodied *kayik* 'spiritual essence, spirit' of deceased people live in a newly embodied form in hidden unseen villages underground — *wudeb-a tep*, 'ghost village'. The world of the dead constitutes an alternative reality, not available to the human eye. Their racial allegiance is ambiguous (in contrast to other Papuan groups who equate spirits of the dead and ghosts with white people). The hidden villages cannot be seen with the human eye, and humans have no access to the riches they contain. The inhabitants of the hidden villages can come to the world of the living and even help them, but they cannot share what they possess: to eat their foods one has to die first. The villages have many of the accoutrements of White people's riches — including cars and coveted tin food, not unlike the Fish-like people in Amazonia. The locations of the ghost villages are known, but only approximately: it is too dangerous to come close to them let alone put them on a map.

The Manambu view of the alternative reality of the dead resonates with a number of instances across Papua New Guinea where the land of the dead is equated with the lands of the White people (or Europeans) — Australia, Europe or North America, or viewed as hidden villages with access to White people's goods. A special feature of the Manambu cosmology is consistent incorporation of the White people into the Wulwi-Ñawi clan group whose totems are associated with the eastern direction and thus the location of the White people, and everything white and shiny.

The way in which cosmology of the core Vaupés encompasses the White people is only somewhat similar. Across the core Vaupés River Basin area White people are partly incorporated into the origin myths, on a par with Indians, *nawiki* (Diagram 1 in §2.2.1). White people, *yalana*, stand apart from the *nawiki* in many ways. They are the ones who enter the shape of the spirits, the Fish-like Indians (Diagrams 2 in §2.3 and Diagram 3 in §2.6). White people are viewed as one of the visible transformations of the shape-shifting Fish-likes. White

people are like humans, but not equal to them. Among the Manambu they are the same as other humans, with their clan allegiance and designated totemic areas, *wa:gw*. This is a major point of difference in our two focal instances from Melazonia.

What do the unseen landscapes of the shape-shifting Fish-like people in the Vaupés and the Manambu underground 'ghost villages' of the dead have in common?

FIRST, the stories about the Fish-likes in the Vaupés and the villages of the dead (or the ghost villages) among the Manambu describe the worlds which can be talked about but are beyond what a human can see. They reflect projections of desired assets and objects and ways of life associated with the White people and their perceived riches (and out of reach for many).

SECONDLY, the verbal images and the representation of the unseen underwater dwellings in the Vaupés and underground villages for the Manambu incorporate the evolving experience of the surrounding world. This is what we see through narratives, gossip, and casual remarks. The alternative, unseen, realities expand to absorb new technologies and new material values, linked to what is brought in by the 'Whites'.

THIRDLY, in both cases, the hidden worlds — the underwater and the underground ones — are dangerous, alluring as they are. They are unseen, and — at least in the Vaupés context — those who had been exposed to it better keep it quiet. Within the Vaupés context, these are partly cautionary tales — a warning not to want too much and to stick to one's own rather than reach out for the riches of others.

The flow of each narrative and each stretch of conversation — told in the traditional languages — reflects the dynamics of people's interactions with each other and the outside world, and their aspirations, hopes, and visions as they evolve. And this is what we can discern behind the hidden landscapes. The dwellings of Fish-like people and the villages of

the dead incorporate the evolving perceptions of the desired aspects of the surrounding world, and evolve as their exposure to it grows.

Encounters with what lies beyond the human eye and perhaps the human life represent an alternative, lived reality in the Vaupés and among the Manambu. Hidden as they are, they are part of the overall view and the overall landscape, stretching beyond a dichotomy between 'real' and 'surreal'.

Abbreviations

| | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| 1, 2, 3 first, second, third person | FEM.SG feminine singular |
| ACT.FOC action focus marker | FOC.A/S focused subject |
| ADV adverbial | FRUST frustrative |
| AFF affix | FUT future |
| ANIM animate | HAB habitual |
| AUG augmentative | IMPERS impersonal |
| CAUS causative | INDEF indefinite |
| CL classifier | INTER.INFER.REC.P interrogative inferred recent past evidential |
| CL:ANIM classifier for animates | INSTR instrumental |
| CL:FEM classifier for females | INTER.PRES.NONVIS interrogative nonvisual recent past evidential |
| CL:VERT classifier for vertical items | LK linker |
| COLL collective | LOC locative |
| COLL.PL collective plural | MALEF.IMPV malefactive imperative |
| COMIT comitative | MASC.SINGL singulative masculine |
| COMPL completive | NCL.ANIM noun class 'animate' |
| COMPL.DS completive different subject | NEG negation |
| COMPL.SS completive same subject | NEG.SUBORDINATE negation in a subordinate clause |
| COUNTEREXP counterexpectation | NOM nominalisation |
| DECL declarative | NOM.LOC locative nominalisation |
| DEM.DIST distal demonstrative | O object |
| DEM.PROX proximal demonstrative | OBJ object case |
| DS different subject | |
| EMPH emphatic | |

| | |
|---|---------------------------------|
| p person | PROX.IMPV proximate imperative |
| PASS passive | REACT.TOP reactivated topic |
| PAST.PART past participle | REDUP reduplication |
| PAUS pausal form | REL relativiser |
| PL plural | REM.P.REP REMOTE PAST REPORTED |
| PL.ANIM animate plural | SEQ sequential |
| PL.COLL collective plural | sg singular |
| PL.INDIV individualised plural | sgf singular feminine |
| PL.OF.ASSOCIATION plural of association | sgnf singular non-feminine |
| POLITE polite command | SINGL singulative |
| POSS possessive | SS same subject |
| PRES.NONVIS present nonvisual | SUBJ subject |
| PRES.VIS present visual | TOP.NON.A/S topical non-subject |

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