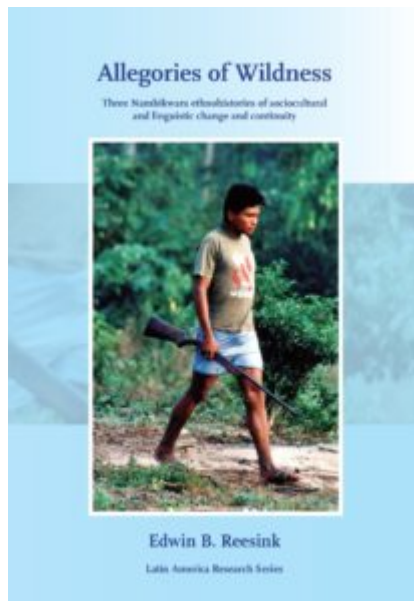


# Allegories Of Wildness ~ Converging Histories: Rondon, Myth, Ideology And Petty Domination



## *Myth and history*

Before I return to Rondon as the major figure in Sabanê and Northern Nambikwara history viewed from both sides of the ethnic divide, I would like to discuss an interesting and, from an outside point of view, curious aspect of Sabanê ethnohistory. During a conversation with Manézinho about the Sabanê view of their own history, the elder asked me and my colleague if we were *American*. Ideas and beliefs about Americans arose mostly from contact with the people from the Summer Institute of Linguistics[i] (SIL) who operated in the region as early as the later 1950s. Prior to this there was an American Protestant mission, the *South American Mission* in the region. Some of its members in Utiariti were killed by Nambikwara only a few years before Lévi-Strauss's visit to Nambikwara land. The Indians' motivation for killing the unprepared and rigid Protestant missionaries is unclear and the details of incident are not quite clear. Perhaps it has to do with the conviction that disease and death are often caused by nefarious human intervention. Lévi-Strauss supposes that a missionary gave a sick Indian medicine and when that Indian died, the others took the medicine to be poison and believed the missionaries to be murderers (1984: 342-3). Hence the notion of *Americans* may even date as far back as the thirties or possibly earlier with Roosevelt's expedition. Lévi-Strauss discussed the situation and the events of the killing with the Indian perpetrators on the Parecis Plateau, so the participants in this drama were unlikely to be Sabanê. Yet, somehow the fame of the so-called *Americans* reached this people too. Manézinho related the following story as told to him by his great-grandfather, a man who lived at a time before the introduction of clothing[ii] (this account is edited for the present purpose):

*After the Sabanê left the stone/hill in which they had taken refuge when the primordial sky threatened to fall on them, the cosmos was slowly transformed into pre-contact world in which they lived in their own land on their own terms, in their own "style". Every people has its own thoughts and conceptions about the world, as for example seen in the differences of the Sabanê myth with the myth of the origin of domesticated plants of the Nambikwara. This period ended when the "American" emerged on the scene. His great-grandfather and his father told him about it. His great-grandfather walked about naked. The American lived in a large fortified house made of the white man's material that could not be penetrated by the Indians. He also chased the Indians through the bush in order to cut their heads off and he killed many Indians. Some succeeded to run to the bushes where escape was possible because when passing through this vegetation the American's height slowed him down. The Sabanê decided to take revenge. They lied in ambush, waiting for the American to go out. Many people on both sides died and the Sabanê decided to leave in search of a more tranquil place to live. This was the first time they moved. Only later they were harassed by other Indians and decided to move again.*

Thus, after the cosmos gained its definite shape and inhabitants populated the earth, the first time the Sabanê entered into a conflict their enemy was an apparently non-Indian *American*. The American lodged in a fortified house and, although a human person, the narrative shows him as a monstrous anti-social entity who inflicted heavy losses on the Indians. The murderous conduct of the American reminds one of the general behaviour of the *evil spirits* that permanently display a disposition to persecute humans with illness and death. The entire Nambikwara ensemble seems to share the conviction of the permanent dangerousness of the spirits and may allow a comparison with myths from the Nambikwara do Campo. In their myths human encounters with the evil spirits are common and are fraught with danger (as illustrated in several myths, see Pereira 1983)[iii]. The fact that the Americans are seen as the impetus that first moved the Sabanê out of their homeland is surprising, but still makes sense. Real American missionaries generally tended to be thoroughly repulsed by Sabanê and Nambikwara cultures which they deeply misunderstood. One may say that some pursued the Indian's salvation and, let us say, take their spiritual heads around with the same gusto as the mythological American sought the decapitation of their real heads. Lévi-Strauss thought, in effect, that the missionaries in Utiarity were utterly unprepared to deal with such *savages* and in their straightforward

self-righteousness created serious conflicts. Even if this is an educated guess, the basic premise that strangers bring death and endanger survival is certainly substantiated by history.

At this point Rondon comes into history. Pushed on by Indians into new lands after the flight from the *Americans*, the Sabanê followed Rondon. Rondon had an important significance for the Sabanê and was a key symbol for both sides in the kind of conflict of interpretations that always follows the *pacification* of a previously autonomous and *untamed* people. Manézinho's remarks permit my conclusion that the dislocation of the Sabanê from their position as a northern neighbour of the *Nambikwara* did not occur before Rondon's advance into what is presently Rôndonia. This event caused serious apprehension about an attack by Rondon and the Sabanê thought about the possible necessity of a pre-emptive attack on the Mission. The Indians first observed and evaluated the advancing strangers during the construction of the Telegraph Line. They noted their different speech, always the preliminary criterion to classify a stranger and consider the possibility of contact. The first scouts returned home without any other action. Armed with arrows, two villages allied themselves in order to investigate the truth of this apparition as some Indians did not believe the story. A new large group set out to verify the situation and found that *the road* already had passed. They spied on the passage cut through the wilderness and when the strangers went by again they watched from afar. After another retreat, they inspected the place where the path was being cut and wondered about what kind of ax these strangers used. Then three courageous men met the party and fired some arrows, they nearly killed Rondon but the arrow did not penetrate him owing to his *iron* attire. The Sabanê interpreted this as a miraculous escape. They believed that Rondon had special armor, a unique and particular trait, that rendered their own weapons useless. In other words, Rondon was thus particularly affiliated with iron and the Indians believed they were defenseless to his advancements through their territory[iv].

This story circulated among the Northern Nambikwara and the iron garb of Rondon impressed all of them (Mané Torto among the Latundê recounted a similar Tawaindê version). In fact, Rondon left iron instruments and gifts on the spot and this also is registered because the men left the arrows behind and the most courageous among them appropriated gifts like machetes, small knives, and axes. On their return, the general drift of opinion in the village favoured the

decision that they should not kill Rondon and the more courageous men continued to collect presents. However, they threw the clothes and blankets into some water because of the bad smell and the fear of contagious diseases. Thus, as often happens in the beginning of contact, the Indians refused one of the items the Whites most valued as the hallmark of setting them on the *road to civilization*. Actually, the Indians were wise in not accepting clothes for, in case of the outbreak of diseases, bathing with clothes and wearing wet clothes resulted in more deaths. Rondon, in the Sabanê view, followed the same template of constructing an alliance discussed above. They considered the same mode of interaction to prevail as had been the case between the Sabanê and the peoples like the *Nambikwara* or the Tawaindê, whom, in the beginning, also did not like them. Manézinho conceived a parallel between the *pacification* method employed by Rondon and the Indian way of establishing a relationship of sociability between peoples of different languages: *in the same way as Rondon became accustomed to us*. It is interesting to remember that Rondon received counter-presents during all of the time of his travels with Roosevelt through the savanna. The pressing of these presents on to Rondon might indicate the desire to conform to this template. True to the mode, Rondon did not want to kill the Indians, contrary to some members of his parties to whom the narrator relates instances of shooting (and possibly killing, sometimes his explanation is not completely clear and the account may require revisions in the future)[v]. Rondon pursued a friendly relation and it is said that he also wanted to send the Indians to school. At least some of Rondon's intentions seem to have carried over to the Sabanê and they decided that he should not be assaulted. They also appropriated the metal tools left. Rondon, for unknown reasons, did not construct any Indian Post at this time. He restricted his action to installing the telegraph and its infrastructure and initially may have thought these novelties and their personnel fulfilled the *civilizing* role.

Manézinho claimed that the Sabanê did not enter into direct personal relations with Rondon and kept their distance. The Sowaintê, on the contrary, did so, and the father of Manézinho's Sabanê wife, Dona Ivone recalled his encounter with the famous White. When the Telegraph Line passed through their lands and through the Northern Nambikwara complex, Rondon interfered with their way of life. A boy at the time, her father recounted that he travelled with Rondon when he distributed clothing, axes, machetes and *everything*, and the day he *descended* he also *made a village*. That is, he headed towards the south uniting the Indians in

large villages because of the danger of the Cinta Larga. The Indians lived all spread out over the region, practicing their slash-and-burn horticulture. The pattern of occupancy consisted of scattered villages and village clusters of the same people. Rondon concentrated them near the Line, possibly with the promise of the further distribution of free commodities. As such, he is remembered as a very generous person that always handed out gifts throughout the entire region and to all Indian peoples and villages he encountered. By virtue of his policy of gratifying people with all these commodities, for a time he may have succeeded in congregating the diverse peoples in larger villages (a list of these goods also features objects like necklaces and sickles). Like the Sabanê most, if not all peoples, lived in various villages. Of course, this project of intervention is coherent with the notion that the Indian's occupancy of the land was wasteful of resources and modernization could provide them with a more than sufficient substitute for their itinerant horticulture and mode of life that many considered semi-nomadic. The *general* probably always preferred larger permanent villages just like he enticed the Paresi too to move to the telegraph stations. The attraction of ample distribution assured *that the Indians would not kill him*. On the other hand, the story that the *general* did not dress in ordinary clothing is confirmed by her father, who affirms he put on *steel clothing*. With these extraordinary attributes Rondon initially may have accomplished his aim to gather the Indians in larger villages near the Line, but this influence was temporary and it was not long before the old pattern resurfaced.

The real impact of Rondon is in the world view of the affected Indians. Just like for the Paresi, his figure impressed itself forcefully on history and the Sabanê not only *followed Rondon* into the Roosevelt-Tenente Marques area, they transformed their world view with Rondon in the primordial role he cast for his own public persona. Again I follow the Manézinho's account. He narrated the myth on two occasions. The myth accounts for the birth of Rondon, the *Whites* and the characteristic objects they possess. Myths refer to the origin of the cosmos, the changes that occurred afterwards and the way the major outlines of the realities of the current world came about. One might say the domain of mythology to be both the production of sociocultural meaning by means of 'total social narratives' and thoroughly articulated with the other domains of the real world (from ritual to all daily activities). Myths expound the sociocultural categories of the conception and the interpretative schemes of experiential practice (Silva 2000). The narratives in effect are recurring in a transformative mode that re-elaborates

older myths into newer versions or generates new myths that accommodate the experience of phenomenal change[vi]. In this sense, the myth that is recounted below places the White man and his foremost head figure within the origin stories. Although to an outsider this may seem like a new myth, it likely reuses the main notions and underlying principles of older narratives. Manézinho's narrative permits a glimpse of the Sabanê view of historical change (the following account is edited from the two separate versions; I try to remain as true to his language as possible):

*This Rondon, he was born from a family here. An old man lived alone in a house and his wife lived in another house some distance away, just as from Vilhena to Aroeira [roughly 20 km]. Another woman lived here. There is another village with Indian inhabitants. An old man of ours lived here and two women. The two women were beautiful. The old man waited for the women to arrive who told that the man was one of them and when he heard laughter went to have a look he would kill the visitors and they ate that people [the beginning is somewhat confusing, especially the role of the women but not the fact of anthropophagy] [vii]. So the old man raised this boy. He took the node that is located under the armpit and a protuberance just like the node that is located under the tongue and put them into the ashes of the fire and the node exploded and they turned into people [as if making popcorn]. Thus he created two little boys and raised them. Then he told, look, the husband of that wife lives over there at that place, they kill people, they eat people too. Oh, sure. They went to play at the savanna. You know how children play in the savanna don't you? He went to play and met him. The Ocelot [jaguatirica]. He is the same as an Ocelot but he is human. The boy played near his house and encountered the Ocelot. He met these children and he wanted to kill him. Do not kill me, I am your grandfather, he said. This Ocelot he was a person. He took them to his home. He gave them food, started to make arrows, do everything.[here in fact it seems that the old man met the children and engaged them; the mention of the Ocelot was interspersed by soliciting comment from the narrator]. So they went to kill this man here. The man with the things, the Ocelot. On a feast day, one or two days of travel. He went to sleep there. He arrived at night. The people, the children, they already had grown into men when they arrived at the house of this man.*

*Then it started, because in the past, before this Rondon was born, he was located at the side of a stream. His house was constructed in the savanna. He [the Indian] made it all, but only with a cover. He took some limestone and that bark, that*

stone, the fine stone. They took the bark of a jatoba [a large tree used to make coffins], ten pieces of bark. Some ten Indians went after him. They take ten pieces of that bark, of that stone, the fine one, that fine stone. Some five pieces of bark, some other five of stone. He put it on the path. Then they turned into animals, into bats. They stayed there. So, of old when this Rondon was born, there were no matches, no use of matches. One used what the Indians also used, this little branch. The one to whirl. So this guy he comes in from over there. He has an ax, the only one to have an ax, machete, hoe and sickle, it seems. They have a gun. They went up to the top of the house, on the central beam. When early in the morning, his uncle told him, look, when he has got a gun, I will take care, when I go this way he will shout. When he gets up, he will fire a shot but don't be afraid. When he fired a shot, he shouted, he already woke up and walked around. When the sun rose he fired and when he was on the path he fired again. Then he arrived at the house.[in one version someone swept the plaza before his arrival]. I will make a fire, I will go down and get some fish. He likes to eat only fish. So he started out. He lived near the river and set fish-traps in the river. One man, a Whit man. The fire won't light. So he says, well it won't light I will leave it and I will go and fish first and then light it. These people up in the house, they ordered that, the Indian ordered so he goes right away to the stream. So he leaves it and goes down to the river. He is naked, he does not have any clothing. He does not wear clothing but he possesses these things, ax, machete, hoe, all of that but not other things. The Ocelot he is naked too. At the river he dives and works his trap full of fish. When he dove under again they all jumped down from the house, all of them jumped down, armed, all of them turning into people again. When he came up again to the surface they sent their arrows and killed him. They killed him, took him out of the water and left him there.

They went for the trap with the fish, lighted a fire, roasted the fish and ate them. Then they grabbed the gun, broke it into pieces and threw it in the water [or burned it]. Then they got the ax, the machete, the knife, the hoe, the sickle, all of it. One old man, a little older, said, now, I want the ax. Well, no, I will take the ax you do not know how to handle it, no, I want it to cut trees. One thing for everyone, he does not use two things you see. They collected everything, left it, they all sat down to eat the roasted fish. They ate everything. He said, well, one gets the hoe, another gets the machete, another the sickle, the older one took the ax and put it near him when sitting down to eat. Then they cut up the body into pieces and threw it into the water. The others all got their thing, at the house, the

*knife, machete, everything they only did not take the ax, the older man forgot it. It seems that God made him forget this ax, you see. So they did not take the ax, left it, forgot it. After walking like from here to over there [one or two kilometers], the younger one, more intelligent, asked where is the ax? Ah, I forgot it. Did I not tell you, don't forget the ax? Now go back and listen, they already turned into people, you can go back and listen over there, they already turned into Whites. The younger more intelligent man said, I told you not to leave it, to take it. They almost took everything.*

*So they hurried back and when they got close by they listened. But there are people, working at the fields, felling forest, yelling, children crying, women crying, yelling, men felling forest and talking. All White. That one he was alone, now there are over twenty people. Already they transformed, at that time, engineer Rondon was born. You see. My great-grandfather who told me. Then the Whites multiplied over there. This iron that he left, the ax, that turned into people. So he returned and listened. On arrival they already were transformed. I told you to take it, you did not take it because you did not want it. So they left and went away. They arrived and slept. That what they took they threw in the water, killed it too. That was it. So they arrived and the other day they went away to the sky. They went away, to turn into God. So this Rondon, he was born in this way, in the beginning he was not there. We were born first, then he was born second. That is the way the old people told the story. The one born from the ax turned into White men. That is the way they told me all, if they took all of the instruments, they would be born, the engineer [Rondon] would not be born. In no way he would be born. The number of Whites grew, they went to Rio de Janeiro to build a city and houses.*

*There in Rio de Janeiro he was born. The engineer Rondon was born. He was born there afterwards. He comes this way and things turn into cities, the city of Rio de Janeiro, making São Paulo, he comes to Cuiabá, he came over here and then they say he made this Brazil a city. All of this was Rondon. So Rondon came this way. He does not come right away, it takes a lot of time still. When there are many people, they grew to large numbers, then he comes over here. The Whites were born here, constructing houses, cities, cultivating, planting food, planting rice, beans, they say he came eating all of that. Rondon made a road, descending, with soldiers and with many people, constructing houses and stations. From here to Rio he went making houses, São Paulo, Brasil, Cuiabá, making homes, stations...*



*Vilhena, Três Buritis, Melgaço and he continues descending, all of this was him. When he passed, we also passed this way. We joined up with others, we stayed together. We waited for Rondon to pass and we passed too. We only stopped because we met this other group and could not go any further [in the other version it seems that Rondon already was born with the Whites and then went to found the rest of the White man's land] When he made the Line we ran. My great-grandfather said they ran in this direction. Afraid other Indian will kill us. Here in Três Buritis we encountered others. Not there, there nobody spoke with them. No one knows that he will come this way, because the Whites were born over there, so nobody knew who was born there. So other Indians attacked us and we came coming this way. Afterwards when we forget, no one knows, he comes this way. The Engineer Rondon passed here. No one saw him, never saw him. They did not get close. When he started giving things we started taking them, spying on the Line, taking things there but he did not meet Rondon, only his personnel. My great-grandfather only looked from afar. He thought he was a evil spirit. They thought they were evil spirits and wanted to kill the Whites in the beginning.*

This condensed history is inserted in larger frame that comes from the origin of the Sabanê, the myths of the primordial times when people and animals were transformable into one another and the time when the Sabanê barely survived a large flood. Embedded in this unfolding of a 'total cosmological ethnic history' that is myth, the appearance and place of the White man and Rondon occupies a prominent role. This ethnohistory frames the most significant events of the Sabanê and captures the most relevant observations of places and the predicates of people, animals, and objects. Even if the myth above is not clear on certain points, the main lines set out the parameters of the way the Sabanê view their origin, their migrations, and the appearance of the White man (*katatali*). One of the recurrent features in myth refers to the fact that most if not all peoples or prominent cultural objects once were owned by one *owner* (or guardian, some animals, like the white-lipped peccaries continue to be under the command of a guardian until today). The connection of the myth of the master of the objects Ocelot, one of those persons that were human/animal before *God* ordered an end to this transformability, and the old White man is obvious in this respect[viii]. The first White man and Ocelot are the same as this man is the stingy owner of an important part of the cultural commodities that define whiteness. All owners, or masters, of culturally relevant items, did not share their possessions willingly and this seems to the case here. At the same time, the owner is characterized by an

anti-social behavior that in another myth causes its shameful practitioners to be transformed in animals who will eat inferior food. Anthropophagy is condemned and the old White man also eats only fish. In this belief system, you are what you eat, a constitutive relationship. Other masters, like that of the primordial fire, escaped alive from the events that took the original objects of their possession but they were always corporeally transformed for the worse. In this case death is his justified punishment for murder and the consumption of human and improper flesh.

A superficial analysis of this myth already demonstrates that the birth of the White man took place under very particular circumstances. On the one hand, the emphasis lies on the original nearness of the first old White man. Not really close neighbours but definitely close enough for some forms of interaction. The White man did not conform to the template of contact, of constructing alliance and friendship but is a most dangerous person, one of those perilous beings that seem to surround the Sabanê since their origin. His elimination should serve the Indians in pursuit of both a safer place to live and the material gains of the steel tools. In a way the old man is at a dead end, socially speaking. Old, living alone, married to a wife who lives at a considerable distance, the social and physical reproduction of the *Whites* seems unlikely. The original White man appears doomed to extinction. It is, perhaps, not without significance that the man owns only part of the full normal repertoire of his people. Anti-social, unreplicative, limited in resources, the White man is not a complete predecessor of the current White people. The narrative and the comments abound in stating the limits of this being, as a person and a mode of life. The identification with a carnivorous feline, high on the food chain represents this man's solitary and dangerous nature. Thus it is actually by virtue of the subsequent action of the Indians reacting against the anti-social nature of this somehow incomplete person that the existence of the White people comes about. Sufficiently intelligent to kill the old man and appropriate his food and instruments, in the end they left without the kind of object that so strikingly characterized White people. An older Sabanê imposed himself on the younger (the age difference is expressed in terms for elder and younger siblings) and gets his way with the ownership of the ax. Respect is shown by the younger more intelligent man, in accordance with a hierarchical inclination founded on age, but his warning goes unheeded, the ax is forgotten and the *White* nation is born. It seems if the ax is the synecdoche of the power of multiplying and the attendant substance of the *White* people. Perhaps the remark in the time

of Rondon's construction about the astounding caused by the steel ax, as the foremost object that got the Indian's attention in comparison to their stone tool, is true and finds expression in this myth. The steel instrument is a much more efficient and versatile tool as it permits the multiplication of garden products or the production of the same amount of harvest with much less effort. The *White* people came from the transformation of one steel ax and the amazing multiplication afterwards. In a way the Whites are the Ax People, or maybe the Steel People.

A steel ax transformed into a whole group of completely normal reproductive people. The fertility of this nation is astonishing and after their birth they expand to occupy vast tracts of land and build various cities. The steel ax is associated with notions of durability, hardness, efficiency, fertility and growth, much more so than the Indians, and its descendants outgrow them completely. Manézinho's story repeatedly asserts that the man who left the ax behind is responsible for the origin of a people that overwhelmed the Sabanê when they returned under the command of the *engineer Rondon*.<sup>[ix]</sup> Rondon as the man clad in iron or steel represents in this respect the substance of the White people as he carries its essence on his impenetrable body. Rondon is the steel man who constructed roads and built cities, in this way, he is the most prominent White man, veritably the culture hero of the Steel People. He is also the man who is named whereas the old man in the story remains nameless as a prototypical *White* man without a specific identity. It is proper that Rondon should lead the *Whites* in their penetration of Northern Nambikwara territory; he pertains to a kind of supernatural realm and the question whether the White people identify with evil spirits also refers to the fundamental Nambikwara proposition of constant supernatural danger that may assume the form of human appearances. Initially the Sabanê thoroughly mistrusted the *White's* foremost head figure and his presents. His actions intended to appease the Indians and manifest friendly intentions by means of a parallel to the template of interaction between initially hostile peoples abated their fears. On the other hand, it is interesting that the Sabanê accepted only the steel instruments and not the other gifts. The other objects significantly were thought to potentially bear diseases and thus, in effect, supernaturally dangerous. Note that the mythological old man only owned necessary objects and did not have the clothing considered so outstandingly important by the Whites (or even the blankets, fairly unnecessary at the time when most people slept beside the fire). Steel does not propagate disease, in the myth the Indians do not suffer from

contagious sicknesses. The descendants who so much appreciate being clothed on their return to the forest did bring various deadly diseases. In that way the return of the White people really may be the equivalent of a massive influx of evil spirits.

The notion that Rondon was a cultural hero was shared by a part of the Brazilians along with the myth of his enlightened leadership and progressive humane treatment of the *Indians*. This ended up in the national pantheon and ideology. Eventually the disciplined military man won such symbolic capital that the government choose to appoint him to the rank of *marshall*, one of very few in history. Marshall Rondon appeased the national conscience obscuring and eclipsing the genocidal record of the long trajectory of death and subjugation characteristic of Brazilian history ever since the *discovery* by Cabral (Reesink 2005). The national myths of Brazil's permanence and justly treated *Indians* who willingly physically merged into the new *mixed-race* tolerant Brazilian proceeded to be shaped particularly from the nineteen thirties onward. Rondon, of course, worried himself with the destiny of Indian peoples and certainly entertained better intentions than many other parts of the elite in the country for whom the savages mostly represented an obstacle to be removed for their free access to riches. At the end of his life Rondon recognized the failure of the *integration policy* and believed isolation and minimal contact would have been far better (Zarur 2003: 269). But before this reexamination, *the great peaceful encirclement* (Lima 1995) projected by Rondon was suffused with the ideals of progress and the absolute notion that he and the positivists knew beyond doubt that *evolution* stands for the inexorable road to the future. They *knew* what was the unavoidable past, present and future and acted accordingly. Clearly a streak of authoritarianism inheres in any kind of ideology that is convinced of absolute rightness. The project of the enlightened guidance of the *Indians* by the National Indian Service from the beginning shared the general unquestioned assumption that the elite and the state must conduct and direct a process whose course was as *natural* as the laws of nature. Perhaps they thought that this leadership was a manifestation of a natural law. Such presumptions always lead to an almost certain appeal to power and the use of force if the reality does not conform to the expected and desired change. Rondon adhered to a military hierarchy and discipline. This was evident in the formation of camps. He set up his camp with his immediate aides, surrounded by the military participants. This was separated from the camp of the ordinary laborers. As mentioned previously, at one occasion the civilians wanted to revolt. Apparently this was due to a policy of

discrimination and hierarchy. Rondon preempted the movement, discovered the leaders and punished them with fifteen lashes and dismissal from his service (this according to a Paresi Indian who worked with Rondon; Machado 1995: 283-5; at one earlier occasion, in 1894, a punished soldier died of his wounds because of complications; Zarur 2003: 269).

Discipline in the wilderness is no luxury and an efficient measure towards diminishing the negative effects of, for example, unlimited intruding visits and other liberties committed on the Indians. The usual ethnocentric ideological imagery of regional people and local laborers impregnated them with the sentiment of a *superiority* that justifies many actions which would be considered to be immoral if taken towards their own people. Unsurprisingly, after the onset of the laying of the Line, the sentiment of superiority never faded and the position of potential dependence, armistice, or factual independence between station personnel and Indian groups were never actually accepted as an index of an equality of level of *civilization*. The generalized stereotypes of *nomadism*, *poverty* and the notion of possessing *no real property* – an idea that may be thought of as ‘the absence of a possessive attitude in the occupancy of the land’ –, configured a permanent persistence of the attribution of the predicate *very primitive* people. The Nambikwara represented a kind of quintessential poverty and wildness. To Lévi-Strauss such apparent poverty must have seemed obvious after comparing them with the rich material expressions of peoples like the Bororo and Kadiweu whom he had visited before. This was compounded by the fact he never visited a real village. To the diverse types of personnel of the Telegraph Line who always dealt directly and indirectly with the Nambikwara the comparison with their society never stirred any doubt about the validity of their stereotypes and assumptions. The variety and amplitude of their slash-and-burn horticulture was neglected, even in contradiction to the initial reports of the Commission and Roquette-Pinto. Most external observers conceived the Nambikwara mental life only in condensed stereotypical form. Rondon, for example, followed the canon of the day and wondered what sort of *fetishism* comprised their religion; the missionary perceived the devil in the shamans or established a word for *God* by picking the name of a mythological culture hero. Combined with the positivist framework of the SPI and its evolutionist premisses, the *Nhambicwara*, this forged entity called a *Nation* by Rondon, could only be portrayed as one of the poorest and most backward *Indians* under their care. *Stone age Indians* always call for the benevolent action of the *responsible authority* which is absolutely sure it

knows best for such *ignorant* people unable to fend for themselves. All bureaucratic agents normally felt free to set the course of *development* on their behalf. It probably never happened that this framework of postulates is examined and that the Indians might be fully human conscious adult persons, with their own ideas about the value of their mode of life, their right to the pursuit of happiness, and self-determination.

In the twenties and thirties the directives and studies of senior SPI bureaucrats illuminate both the inspiration of the military ideas of the military in the vanguard and the use of a military vocabulary (*attraction, pacification*, even *Indian Post*) applied to the whole process[\[x\]](#). It is easy to discern the foundations of a colonialist and conquering regime of action where the assumptions plainly justify the active direction of the process of *natural change*. One key concept in this regime of conquest was the plan to *sedentarize* the Indians, especially the *nomadic* or *semi-nomadic* peoples. That is, to ordain a place of permanent residence where the colonial regime could implant its project to transform the Indian into *a useful national laborer*, simultaneously liberating the rest of the land from their occupancy and incorporating this people into the national economy. Accordingly, the founding of the Post in Espirito Santo by the SPI functionary Afonso França corresponded to precisely this setting into motion of all the social machinery of control of these groups. Such Posts attempt to regulate the relation with the encompassing *national society* and determine the mode of *integration*. Designated *Post chief* (a relevant choice of words), França initiated his work attempting to aggregate as many peoples and groups as he could. Manézinho claims that he enlisted the help of the Mamaindê to gather information about the rest of the Northern Nambikwara and to invite them all to come and move to the Post. Paul Aspelin, the ethnographer of the Mamaindê economy, asserts that the Post, even though situated at a mere twenty kilometers north-northeast of the Mamaindê, exerted little influence upon this people. The employee confided to him never to have visited the village and to have maintained only slight contact. One of the reasons for this social distance concerns the unfriendly relations with the Manduka people on whose land the Post was built (Aspelin 1976: 21). My sense of this is that the Mamaindê wisely maintained their distance, their autonomy and only traded when convenient. However, this group is the southern branch of the Mamaindê people and not the part that used to live in the region of Vilhena (the reconstruction by Aspelin of the sequence and the locations of their former village sites confirms this). Recall that a Mamaindê survivor accused the

southern group of being responsible for their near extinction of the northern component. The southern group occupies the Guaporé Valley basin (the Cabixi runs south), while the northern group belonged to area occupied by the Northern cluster, centered at the headwaters of the Roosevelt and Tenente Marques Rivers which run mostly north (Vilhena lies on the watershed).

Aspelin conversed with the government agent but initially did not investigate the particular situation of the Indian Post Espirro. Afonso França also left his work at the Post in 1968, some time before Aspelin's arrival. As Aspelin's thesis was concerned mainly with horticulture, the economy and its changes since contact, he described the situation dispassionately: "*This post was responsible for the introduction of many new crops and tools and other changes into the lives of the Nambicuara in its vicinity (...)*" (Aspelin 1976: 21). Talking to the responsible agent may have revealed something of what this *introduction* and *changes* in effect signified to the Indians living for twenty six years at this *Post*. The employee did indeed introduce new crops like rice, beans, sugar-cane and appropriate installations for processing of the harvest followed suit. New tools became available and conduct modified. However, the *fraternal protection* proposed by Rondon to be exercised with respect to the Indians slowly degenerated into an oppressive regime to enforce changes on them. Although such ideals may be lofty, in practice they entailed imposing what were held to be the necessary practices and suitable conceptions and conducts of *civilization*, in complete disregard of any concept of Indian sovereignty. The fraternity gave way to the certainty of righteousness and despite the good intentions, or more likely exactly because of these good intentions, no deviation from the pre-fixed path toward the objective needed be tolerated. Rondon and his personnel expected to be apprehended as if endowed with intrinsic *authority*. They believed that the inferior people would voluntarily accept the validity of their *superior knowledge* and thus willingly embrace the instructions of the *civilized*. When no such automatic recognition was offered, as was always the case, then the end justified the means. Guidance by consent changed into enforced compliance with the dictates of *civilization*. So the civilizing project of Rondon and his collaborators almost always transformed the differential power base into the real foundation of inducement to change. One may argue that this shift was intrinsic to the ethnocentric premisses of the project of Rondon and his Indian Service. Hence the imposition of the disciplinary colonial regime of petty domination often became unavoidable.

The way things worked in Espirito is a case in point. Perhaps Afonso França set out with the best of intentions, although Price (1975-6: 57) concluded he did not comprehend the Indians nor wished to do so. Anyway, now his name is associated with a regime of harsh and unjust petty domination of entire peoples or groups of one people. In the beginning, with the aid of the Mamaindê, he invited all the Northern Nambikwara and Sabanê to settle in Espirito and enjoy the luxury of a ready supply of the coveted commodities that Rondon was the first to hand out freely. Most of the time about an average of 55 people lived there (França recorded monthly and yearly reports of which only one large book survived a fire; Price 1994: 63). More people died than were born. Regularly França had to procure new laborers and Price suspects only the demoralized accepted. França came to write that: "*These Indians (...) are quite perverse and sluggish at work*" (cited in Price 1975-6: 58). With hindsight, Manézinho now assumes that the enticement of a false promise of a steady flow of steel instruments that lured several groups to the Post was a trap. Eventually the access to goods became subordinate to the goal to make *Brazilians* and *laborers* of people perceived as unfamiliar with *work* and lacking the proper bodily and mental disposition to real labor. The *needs* at socioculturally established level of the domestic mode of production did not predispose to work in the manner of *civilized* discipline (to borrow Sahlins' famous expression). Hence the failure when the agent is unable to appeal to authority or to induce the desired rhythm of body and dedication to the job by means of non-relevant incentives. The so-called *volatility* and the *undisciplined* nature in relation to labor always exasperated the agents of *education*. In the end most officials do not conceive of any other means than the imposition of *discipline* by enforcing the work rhythm they chose as the only correct one. This was the path of Afonso França, revealing the authoritarian regime underpinned by the positivist ideology but mostly hidden after the screen of key words characteristic of the magic realism supported by the rockbed of unquestionable belief in natural progress. Dona Ivone offered the following statement (edited for clarity):

"The people of my father were many, I don't know how they ended up with no one. My father said that the village was quite large, really large. Then the Indians got killed, dying, killing one another, many died, this went on and on, the measles attacked. So many died and a few were left. Many still lived in Espirito, there used to be many people and they did not end suddenly. I don't know how this came about, there were many people there, it seemed it would never end. There was a



time that they killed people. Faustino killed the Mamaindê captain. The people of Ana [one of the few survivors of the northern branch] killed a certain lieutenant, I don't know and they killed a leader because of a woman, for the White of the past, they liked the Indian women. So he, they took this woman that the White wanted and ran away because of the heavy workload. You see nobody could fall ill, people with a newborn child could not stay home, pregnant women could not stop. You had to work pregnant and with children. So they got angry, fled but they went after them and killed them. Captain Paulo, the father of Marieta [living in Aroeira] and then they killed the captain of the Mamaindê and everyone became very upset. So they killed them, Faustino himself at the orders of Afonso [França, father-in-law of the first] Even my father was to be killed but his compadre did not let them, a White man, and Faustino did not either, but they were going to kill some four or five [the White baptized his child and that is a serious religious obligation]. Because of this the Mamaindê got angry too. So they died one by one. Every day. So that is how they ceased to exist. And when they fell ill, well Afonso never let them, you could never stop unless you died. So that is why they went on dying. He only ordered them to work, never took any care, beat the Indians. Why did the Indians not kill Afonso? The Indians were stupid too. They labored while being punished, ill, and so the people died out while there were many of them. These bad people are all dead now but in the past the Indians suffered. Nowadays the Whites work with the Indians but they don't do that what they used to do. They ordered everybody to wake up very early in the morning, illuminating them to get them to work. The women worked separately from the men, the women here the men over there. A group went to clean the rice, another to harvest the beans, another to extract manioc to make flour, and another to move the rice, the maize." [contrary to common belief, this indicates plentiful harvests, the only thing Dona Ivone was proud of].

The Post at Espirro gradually ceased to be a point of *fraternal assistance* and *education* of new tools, crops and practices, some of which were quite appreciated. The unfailing resistance of the sociocultural interpretations and practices imbued in the Indian peoples brought about an escalating spiral, a social schismogenesis of growing opposition and misunderstanding. A harsh regime of discipline was imposed that was backed up, in the ultimate instance, with recourse to open violence that culminated in murder. The Indians suffered enormously from a petty domination that recalled what Goffman called a total institution. In such a situation the lives of the inmates are thoroughly controlled:

time and energy is spent according to the directives of the *superiors* and demeanor is imperative when addressing the *Post chief* or being addressed by a superior[xi]. Obviously the Indians' autonomy and independence as a group and as individuals represented an obstacle to the completion of a project of imprinting inferiority, of acceptance of new superior values, and of creating the dispositions of being a dependent person, a client in a clientelistic relation. The latter basic hierarchical template and the notion of the patronizing of the good patron were attempted to be inculcated in peoples who conceived personhood as consisting essentially of equality, or at the very least, embracing the principle that the person is not to be subjected to the exercise of power. Thus the *civilizing project* is intrinsically an exercise in subjugation and domination. In this case petty domination by petty employees at the service of the larger aims of the encompassing colonizing state whose profound convictions of superiority created a totalizing institution. The sociocultural, economic and political situation produced in Espirito Santo by far outgrew the original purpose of contributing to the war effort with the production of rubber. Not restricted to work alone, the work discipline necessarily expanded into an attempt to control the entire lived worlds of the subjected Indian peoples and groups. In this sense, the work regime gradually transformed into a kind of total institution. Of a different but not dissimilar situation, already in 1843 Marx wrote: "*A brutal state of affairs can only be maintained by means of brutality*" (Marx 1975: 205).

The whole situation of contact actualized in this colonial rule conspired to render the Indians into dependent subjects. It represents an attempt of socially producing what one party conceives of what the other ought to be. In the sense of Goffman, in the social artifact of two parties constructing their relationship, those attributes of the relationship that one side approves of are productive in creating a manageable order out of the relative chaos of reality. This preconceived image leads to neglect the contradictory facts of real life. In this relationship the notion of the *self* of each person constrains what the individual purports to be, but, simultaneously, imposes a pattern in the relationship with representatives of another social category: "(...) *people tend to imprison each other, for directly, or indirectly through the self claimed, one signals something about what the other ought to be*" (Hannerz 1980: 212). The very purpose of the 'totalizing social situation' in Espirito Santo concerns the sociocultural construction of what the *Indian men and women* ought to be. Namely, fundamentally inferior human beings, who, *for their own benefit*, must obey the orders of the civilizing agents. Then, through

following this civilizing regime, the subject, which is its object, really may become what the imposed image mandates that they should be. Through conscious and unconscious manipulations the more powerful constrains the weaker into assuming the role of what he is conceived to be and this affects his conception of self (cf. Hannerz on Goffman). It is also certain that this kind of domination creates an impression management by the less powerful simulating the appearance of compliance in face-to-face interaction with the powerful. At the backstage, amongst one's own people, the subjugated usually tend to sustain a critical stance and perspective in defence of their own notion of themselves (to use some other Goffmanian concepts). However, the 'total situation' never fails to leave a mark on the subordinate and especially on the formation of the self-conception of the children who never experienced autonomous life and were not privy to a more positive self-image[xii].

In accordance to the general SPI policy of occupying the Indian lands with *productive citizens*, França arranged for the presence of a relatively large number of rubber tappers dependent on the Post for their access to the trees, and, undoubtedly, framed in a patron-client relationship. These men and their families were meant to become an example to the Indians of what civilized work should mean. At the same time, the regime of the *barracão* – the Post warehouse, like the trading post of the *seringal* where normally they must sell their *products* and buy their *merchandise* to the profit of the intermediary – created a firm obligation towards the Post *chief*. Thus, the indigenous area became a White *seringal* and agricultural work camp for the Indian. The presence of dependent tappers, obviously partial to all the usual stereotypes, served as an ultimate guarantee, if necessary, to the recourse of violence to maintain *order*. They were an auxiliary force to be called into action when the Indians revolted or escaped. Maybe the absence of a violent Indian reaction to humiliation is not so surprising but a realistic assessment of the forces at play. In sum, here one sees the actualization of the positivist motto written on the republican flag after the military coup against the monarchy applied to the case of one Indigenous Territory: *ordem e progresso* (order and progress). The order of a totalitarian work camp; the progress of autonomous human beings to subordinate workers in the great chain of production. At the time most agricultural production could not be transported to the market as, for example, Vilhena did not yet exist as a town. Rubber, comparatively, could be, and this must have produced some profit. Commodity production, sale of produce and monetary income also complied with the

orientation of the Service (during most of its existence). The presence of the outsiders in the Indigenous Territory thus satisfied various aims of the Indian Service that clearly put its bureaucratic aims in the first place together with the least possible *costs* to the treasury. In other words, the Indians and their resources should also pay for the bureaucratic expenses made *on their behalf*. Such attitudes definitely do not consider the point of view of the *protected* under *tutelage*.

With the information gathered from the Mamaindê, França invited the Sabanê occupying their lands at the Tenente Marques and Roosevelt and succeeded in convincing some to settle at the Post, while another part preferred to continue in the home area. This caused a significant distinction in the historical trajectories of the people. One part remained independent, assuring their access to steel goods by way of the station at José Bonifácio. The other part began suffering from the colonial rule with its work regime imposed by the Post. Manézinho commented as follows (again, this is edited in the interests of brevity):

*"It was the Post. So he united the Indians to tame them, to work. He went over to the village to get them, to bring them over here. By invitation. He went to the Sabanê village to invite them to work and to learn Portuguese, but there was no school. So he brought them here to work with him, at the time of the Indian Service. A part went, a part did not. They had a great leader, one that did order a lot, sent them off to hunt, fish, fell forest for the field and plant. He did not fight, he treated his people well. At the Post the Indians did not receive anything. Indians were there to work only not like the leader who ordered to work so we could eat and raise our children. Captain Lima thought we should not stay because an Indian does not want to be chastised, does not want to be bothered, and he only wanted to order to labor and Saturday and Sunday they hunted, fished, and searched for honey. The Indian is fast. But someone who did not go to the fields was punished. Afonso was wild. He was untamed. He only wanted to command the Indian to work. He invited the Dawaindê [older people often use Dawaindê for the Tawaindê or Tawandê] and he bossed everyone around in the same way to go to the fields, to fell the vegetation in three days and plant much sugar-cane, manioc, maize, rice, oh very much. They harvested rice, beans, they made manioc flour and sugar products. And then when the women worked to clean the harvest, he would send it to the rubber tappers, sending rice beans and manioc flour to the tappers to gather the latex. The tappers worked for him. The Indians ate food. Part of the produce was for them to eat, part went to the*

tappers. They planted, harvested and the food was sent to the tappers, the Indians eat the rest in order to work the fields. They kept cattle that was killed to give meat to the Indians to be able to work. The children took care of pigs, chickens and cattle. The children took the cattle to the pasture, locked them up and milked them for the Indians to drink milk. They did not sell anything, the only small town was Campos Novos with the boss of the seringal called Marcos da Luz [a famous seringalista on the whole region especially on the Plateau, see Costa 2000)]. Few Indians were there and many tappers were, that was Nambikwara land. Afonso was still young when he arrived. It was him that ordered our captain to be killed. We did not live there. We went to have a look first, worked to gain iron to labor at our fields and went off again. We cannot stay. Captain Lima, who was my brother-in-law, married to my sister, was the chief of the village where we lived with some fifty people. There at Espirro lived some two hundred people. The Manduka people, the Dawaindê people, a group of Sabanê and the people of my wife, the Sowaintê. Many people really. It was like this. Captain Paulo was a great leader, Sabanê, and Manalaisi was another great leader. They worked for Afonso and the Indians were chastised a lot, even women and children. So when Afonso went to Cuiabá to purchase merchandise for the Indians, they went away [Afonso travelled mostly by the Line apparently passing through Campos Novos]. This captain Paulo sent the word that they were leaving. So they walked and walked for ten days. When Afonso came back, he rounded up the tappers, went after them until he found them and killed them. They killed captain Paulo, they killed captain Manaliasi. Afonso ordered both chiefs to be killed. A tapper killed captain Paulo. He wanted to live here, to live in our village, he did not want to work anymore. Afonso was too much, he gave them work but beat them, chastised them and they got angry. They fled. Then the tappers overtook them, all armed. They killed only the two leaders, the rest of the people they brought back to Espirro. Those who got away went away to village. When they arrived in Espirro they beat them up a lot, men, women, everyone. A part escaped and went away."

From this narrative the basic outline of the different histories of the minority and the majority of the Sabanê are outlined. There were those who maintained their freedom, but most of the people were *attracted* by the flow of promised goods but instead ended up in a colonial regime of forced labor. The violence in itself and the killing of leaders must have cowed the Indians into submission. This traumatic experience shows how *protection* can go terribly awry. It is no coincidence that a free Sabanê like himself preferred to obtain *iron* or *steel* tools working at the

telegraph station. José Bonifácio also signifies the area's incorporation into the larger framework of the *nation* with the attendant expropriation of Indian resources but its main purpose was different from that of the Post. The officials established a different relation to the surrounding Indian peoples. It is this time of the independent village of his childhood and youth that Manézinho takes to symbolize the *true Indian* life to which he wants to return (at the time of these conversations, more on this below). It is not so much the work in itself the autonomous Indians or their dependent compatriots oppose, it is particularly the injustice of being bullied, forced, or physically punished with a whip or with beatings[xiii]. It is a treatment reminiscent of slavery, where the dominated only had the right to work, to be worked, and in no way had the right to dispose of the produce of their labor[xiv]. The abundance created by their effort fed them and the rubber-tappers, integrating the two parallel modalities of production into one system under the overall controlling aegis of the agent. The surplus of non-marketable crops produced by the Indians in a transformed mode of their own sustenance economy supported commercial crop production[xv]. Under the regional prevailing circumstances, it is hard to imagine a better alternative for this system of outright exploitation.

As seen above, Aspelin neutrally reported this situation when he wrote the first article that revised the question of Nambikwara nomadism. When he reviewed the existing reports on Nambikwara agriculture he reexamined the historical sources and then he discussed the documents written by França himself and those around him. França's letters suggest a competition for the labor force of the Indians between SPI, missionaries and rubber patrons near Espirito Santo or in the region. In the first two years he used the villages that remained on the Roosevelt with their very large gardens to provide the food for both the Nambikwara he had attracted to the Post as well as for the Brazilian employees. The correspondence cited refers to 1943, 1946 and 1953 and is complemented with two other sources. The picture portrayed is telling:

*"Afonso's information here should also be placed in the context of his continual griping about the difficulties he had in persuading the Indians to work in the roças at the Post. Most of them complained, few would work very steadily, many fled and had to be chased and brought back (...) Many were bound, beaten and whipped and he had at least three killed for not working for him or enticing the others to flee his persecution, according to an anonymous document submitted to the directors of the SPI in Cuiabá and to the Indians' account as well (Anonymous*

1955). In spite of his complaining, Afonso succeeded in making them work, as witnessed by the report of his supervisor's visit to the Post in 1946 (Monteiro 1946). Although severely criticizing Afonso for this lack of attention to other aspects of supervising a SPI Post, Monteiro found its land to be fertile, the game plentiful, the Indians hard workers, and the farms both well kept and very large in proportion to the number of Indians" (Aspelin 1979a: 35).

In brief, Aspelin's analysis addresses another question and the clear systemic domination was mentioned only obliquely (he (1982) certainly does not mince words about domination and its disastrous effects in a paper for a different public). In his letters and reports França enumerates the difficulties and his solution to the labor problem. As far as can be concluded from the available evidence, the visiting supervisor Monteiro did not express concern over França's brutal methodology. The anonymous document from 1955 did not prompt the Service to take any action to curb the obvious excesses. The denunciation confirms the accounts of the Indians and shows the cruelty and violence which França engaged in to keep the system functioning (without forgetting that some compliance also emerges from the stories, this relates to the general proposition that in such a situation there is often some acceptance by the victims). Possibly the internal reports partly exposed the methods but veiled the harsher aspect of this reality. Doubtlessly the results of this exploitation did not enter the publicly *taking stock* of the *official protection* by the Service. This case demonstrates that the actions undertaken transformed the notion of *civilizing* into the forceful participation in the internal market. It also highlights the persistent reality of expropriation and exploitation characteristic of the entire previous history of interethnic relations (see Lima 1995: 185-6). Rondon's legacy is a central theme in the meshing of histories[xvi]. The story of *iron* and *steel* brings to mind the steel-clad military and the iron hand of domination. In fact, on the occasion of a rebellion around 1894, Rondon stifled a rebellion and physically reprimanded the guilty. In this largely unknown incident one of the leaders of the soldiers died as the consequence of an infection caused by the whipping. Such incidents are conspicuously absent in hagiographies that elaborate his peaceful reputation (Zarur 2003: 268-9). The army later abandoned these punishments and although this does not necessarily relate to Afonso França, the discipline he imposed does have a precedent in Rondon's behavior. This contrasts to Rondon's metaphor characterizing the method of *peaceful encirclement*, a process more aptly described a, possibly violent, siege, an envelopment or enclosure leading to

conquest and harsh discipline[xvii].

*The Sabanê's near-disintegration and their integration in a new village*

The system put in place in Espirito Santo ended with França's withdrawal in 1968. In the 1950s and 1960s, Indians believed to be Cinta Larga were putting increasing pressure on the remainder of the independent Northern Nambikwara, Sabanê, as well as people at that station that constituted the hub of their access to commodities and the channel of knowledge of the outside. Just as the appeal to learn Portuguese was a motive to move to Espirito Santo, the station, as noted above, encouraged multilingualism. It was here that, by observing and listening, Manézinho first learned some Portuguese. Then the federal government encouraged another major influx to the *West* at the time of the creation of Brasília. The goal of this city and general government was to encourage people to move to the interior. This led to the construction of the federal highway BR 364, a road extending from Cuiabá to Porto Velho. In the southern part of the Nambikwara region the road was constructed by a major southern Brazilian contractor firm, Camargo Correia. They finished the part of the road up till Vilhena and, in doing so, interfered with the regional society and Indian peoples already in place. When president Kubitschek officially opened the road to traffic in 1960, he flew in a helicopter around Vilhena and took the foster-father of Dona Teresa with him in the aircraft as the representative of the presence of the former state enterprise that originally penetrated the region. Symbolically linking his visit and the construction of the highway to the mythical forerunner and the recently deceased Rondon, the president contrived to continue in the same spirit of patriotism and indigenism. Both men adhered to the same ideology of *progress* and *development*. The building of Brasília was portrayed as a major step towards the integration of the huge hinterland into the progressive thrust of the cities on or near the coast. The whole idea of building a capital in the interior was a positivist suggestion from the initial days of the Republic and incorporated in the constitution by a politician sympathetic to this small group (Enders 1998: 7).

By taking the functionary of the Telegraph Line with him, the president intended not only to present the face of continuity but also the face of promising change. Without doubt the idea prevailed that the Line itself was outdated and was to be superseded with new technology, yet more *progress*. From then on the entire Nambikwara ensemble entered into a new phase of expropriation. The road enabled the region to become reconsidered as a promising source of bounty to be



exploited by the Brazilian citizens migrating from the south and northeast of the country. The old dream of Rondon of enormous progress that had disintegrated with the undesirable soil of the Parecis Plateau and the phantom of the goldmines of Urucumacuan, gradually returned in full force[xviii]. From then on, the people established in the region were drawn further into the control of the new stronger federal central government and its designs and plans for the future. One of these plans was to entice *settlers* to occupy *empty* or supposedly underutilized lands. It is uncertain whether at the instigation of the president who, according to Dona Teresa, showed concern for the *Indian question* or not, but one of the high level managers of the contractor firm took measures to allocate land to the Indians. At a certain time, still according to her testimony, he reserved land at Marco Rondon (literally “Rondon-landmark”) for the Northern Nambikwara and Sabanê. Around the same time the epidemics returned with full force too: Manézinho’s village was almost exterminated, apart from *four or five* survivors. Other peoples must have suffered the same fate. The combined effects of depopulation and the attacks of the Cinta Larga finally undermined the capacity of the remaining fragments of these peoples to stay in the region. The administration of the Telegraph Line abandoned the José Bonifácio station and transferred the personnel to other stations at the Line. One group of families, including that of Dona Teresa, moved to Abunã, at the opposite far western end of Rondonia, near the border with the state of Acre. Other people like Manézinho, a bachelor with very few living close relatives, chose to find their own way in the national society. A number of people retreated to Marco Rondon to work with Crusoé – a White man married to a Nambikwara woman – for even if the area had been set apart for the Indians on terms unrelated to the authority of the SPI, the manager apparently still believed they needed non-Indian guidance. At least the comments about this man characterize him as lenient. It was a situation very different from Espirro in the exercise of dominance. In addition, Marco Rondon is either within the original Northern area of occupancy or on the borders, so migration to this place was not as dramatic as it was to Espirro.

Therefore, due to unbearable pressures, the peoples and villages in the northern region disintegrated into fragments of various sizes, groups of families, families, and individuals. No one, according to the stories, renounced their homeland on their own volition. Obviously, some may have wandered out into the national society for their personal reasons, but such people are not easily traceable. For those wishing to stay, no official assistance whatsoever materialized to secure

their birthright. Presumably, the SPI, a miscreant institution that collapsed during a 1968 corruption investigation did not act. If the Service was involved, it would probably have continued concentration the Northern Nambikwara in Espirito. Maybe some people migrated to the Post in search of safety but there are little indications about such movements. The employees of the Line were of diverse origins, mostly Paresi, there were a few Whites some of whom married Lakondê among other nations. Their new assignment on the other end of Rondônia and the persistence of this migration to a place so far away hampered continuing contacts with the dispersed peoples of their origins. Only Dona Teresa returned to the region around Vilhena with her White husband. Few (if any) others did the same. The older generation of these migrants who were speakers of the Lakondê (some of whom also spoke Sabanê) even when put into a total minority position in a strange land attempted to continue speaking their language. However, immersed in this new environment, the children did not tend to learn their elders' languages well and abandoned its ordinary use in favor of Portuguese. Possibly, there still are some native or secondary language speakers alive (Dona Teresa tried to maintain contact but she does not know much about the fate of the group). Socially speaking, the contact with these people is largely lost and the descendants, judging from the little news available, are assimilating into national society. The relocation of the group of functionaries and their families affiliated with the Line significantly diminished the number of native speakers, particularly Lakondê. Where the station in the center of the Northern Nambikwara region stimulated language acquisition, incorporating Portuguese into the repertoire and creating the conditions that stimulated speakers to speak several languages, the subsequent enormous distance between the homeland and the other end of the state had the opposite effect. It provoked isolation from the main groups of their peoples, assimilation into the national society and gradual language loss. The group was too small and diversified to succeed in language maintenance. It seems unreasonable to expect anything other than further integration into regional society.

The few Lakondê staying in the Northern Nambikwara region seem to have made their living in Marco Rondon or at Cachoeirinha. Both places are located on the road between Vilhena and Pimenta Bueno. The Post at Espirito ended its role as a major point of concentration of Indians when the agent França retired to Cachoeirinha. It is commented that a successor took charge but the official himself moved to a *seringal* that became known under the name of his son-in-law as the

*seringal do Faustino*. In the absence of any archive material it can only be noted that he established himself and his family in a new property just when the Service disintegrated and reappeared under the name Fundação Nacional do Índio (FUNAI)[xix]. In Espirro the various groups of different peoples began to intermingle and frequently married outside the group. When the Sabanê were autonomous, any women captured in a Sabanê raid were forcibly integrated; endogamy is said to have prevailed alongside a small-scale exogamy. The fact that everyone was subjected to the same work camp regime in Espirro caused the diverse ethnic backgrounds to become less significant than the imposed ascription *Indian*. In this situation, the people learned that this dominating regime considered them all *the same*. Their most basic identity as defined by the ruling powerful people consisted of all of the *primitives* being generalized *Indians*, an ethnic category with a commonly racializing tendency. In that sense, the end of endogamy coincided with the generalizing identity foisted on the distinct peoples. On the practical level, close interaction laid down during several years and population imbalances like the one that probably dictated the fusion of the Sabanê and Sowaintê contributed to an increased possibility (or even necessity) of intermarriage. This does not mean that the ethnic differences ceased to exist; rather they were harder to maintain. As a result, many interethnic marriages took place. As far as I can verify, the practice of mixed marriages did not bring about a shift to Portuguese by the generations born in this colonial situation. Instead, some spouses learned their partners' language or acquired some passive understanding of it. It is said that Afonso França allowed native languages to be spoken. So a situation emerged where the native disposition to multilingualism prospered and prevailed over a shift to the Portuguese of the encompassing dominant Brazilian society. It must be remembered that the Post inhabitants lived in a region practically devoid of towns and larger agglomerations of *civilized people*. People who grew up under the circumstances of the penalizing regime usually speak at least one native language. This, by the way, contrasts to SPI's general policy of repressing native languages and encouraging Portuguese acquisition.

In effect, the phase of disintegration that started with the dismantling of the telegraph station and a transfer completely ignorant of and indifferent to the interests of the local Indians or of the conditions of perseverance of their peoples continued with the retirement and setting up of a private agricultural enterprise. Afonso França did not just hand over the Post, he also needed manpower for his

new activities. He was not known for his own labor efforts but limited himself to what euphemistically can be called management. Therefore he *invited* part of the Indians to resettle at his new place. A number of Indians moved with him, mostly Tawaindê and their spouses (some of other peoples). Mané Torto of the Latundê grew up here. Although Mané Torto's evaluation is that this group did not suffer a particularly harsh domination, he cannot verify this from personal experience. Indeed, others compare it to slavery. The floundering of the SPI on the scandals that came to light aroused national and international attention to the *plight of the Brazilian Indians*. In 1970 a medical Mission of the International Red Cross evaluated the results of the aftermath of the creation of the Funai. For the most part, the result disappointed them and the situation of the Nambikwara of the Seringal of Faustino struck them as especially precarious: "*a wretched state (...) of complete dependence*" (cited in Hanbury-Tenison 1973: 170). The hard work convinced the women not to bear children because they would not be able to take care of them properly. A bark extract was commonly used to induce abortion. A year later Hanbury-Tenison, particularly wanted to see them and verify any changes. He heard from several sources in Brazil, Europe and America that the group "*(...) lived in a state closely resembling slavery*" (Hanbury-Tenison 1973: 166). Such was the notoriety of França and his family that the account of his past circulated as follows:

*"The story was that in the late fifties one Alfonso de França was the SPI man at an Indian post called Espirro, some ten miles east of Vilhena. There he had been responsible for the group of Nambiquara known as Tauandê, whom he was said to flog, torture and shoot as the mood took him. When his daughter married Faustinho he 'gave' him sixty of the Indians as a wedding present [the Indians pronounce the name Faustino]. They had been moved to the farm we were now visiting and although most of them had died from a measles epidemic in 1963, the survivors were still there. When the SPI was disbanded Alfonso's crimes came to light but he could not, apparently, be prosecuted as the only witnesses who could testify against him were Indians. They, under the law, are minors and cannot testify. Instead, he moved away from the post, which has not since been manned, and settled with his son-in-law"* (Hanbury-Tenison 1973: 167).

This concurs broadly with Manézinho's testimony and his reputation was well deserved. The understanding that the Indians cannot be legal witnesses because they are technically minors embodies a gross misunderstanding of the law and probably reflects ideas circulating among the Whites. The Indians' perceived

inability to give evidence reveals the prevailing prejudice of the Indians as absolutely incapable. Even today it is quite common when the 1973 law 6001, the *Estatuto do Índio*, is misinterpreted: it classifies the Indian as relatively incapable, what enables the Indian person to exercise his rights and responsibilities as a citizen in accordance with his degree of understanding of the national society. It was very convenient here to avoid judging the crimes committed. This conception denies the main victims the right to testify about their suffering, impeding the voicing and redressing of social suffering with a fair judicial process. Very rarely has any such a crime been brought to court, this lends the false impression that such behavior is more justified and less grave than similar crimes within the regional society. The naturalness of his acts are evident in França's conversations in which he complained that he had to retire because of poor health and that caused him to lose his right to a pension. He needed to work until his seventieth birthday for this right and wanted to get back in the Service. He wanted to know if his visitors and Hanbury-Tenison could help him get his job at Espirito back. He needed not to have worried so much, according to his official service record the state awarded him a pension in June 1971[xx]. During the course of his short visit, Hanbury-Tenison also managed to meet Faustino, of whom he obtained an unfavorable impression. He also learned that the work of the Indians was rewarded with clothes and some ambiguous monetary compensation. On the whole, Hanbury-Tenison thought the Indian village of twenty six people presented a downcast and abnormal character. Even the child he saw was apathetic and uninterested in the visitors. Faustino himself had a *condescending and bored* attitude towards the Indians and there was no typical small talk usual for people who have known each other a long time. He was embarrassed to be obliged to shake hands with the leader of the village (this should be Mussolini, the man who raised Mané Torto). In brief; "(...) *I tried particularly hard not to prejudge the situation, but the atmosphere of gloom and despondency was inescapable. Without having seen any direct brutality or oppression, as we left I could not help feeling that civilization was at a very low point at the Seringal de Faustinho*" (ib.: 170). Three days after the visit of Hanbury-Tenison the Red Cross released their report on the situation in 1970 to the press. It had been sent before to Brazil and the then FUNAI president commented in the press that measures had been taken a long time before. He affirmed that Faustino was being prosecuted on the basis of a FUNAI inquiry and the Indians moved to another post. This particular president was known for his general impatience and contentiousness with *foreign* interference on *Brazilian Indian* affairs. Such conduct for a long time exemplifies

the policy towards the Nambikwara ensemble.

Around the time of the Tawaindê's predicament, the Sabanê mostly ended up in Marco Rondon although certain individuals and particular families tried their luck separately. Hanbury-Tenison heard about these people but could not travel onwards to visit them. Without the opportunity of verification he nevertheless thought his information to be sufficiently secure to mention the contrast:

*"Another forty-five miles up the road there was another farmer with a group of dependent Indians. These, I was told on good authority, were well treated and cared for, thanks to the generosity and humanity of the Brazilian patron. Although utterly dependent on him, it was said that he paid fair wages and protected them from exploitation and abuse."* (ib.: 170).

There is hardly any doubt that the above refers to Marco Rondon, as indicated by the distance and the relative close concurrence of the information furnished by contemporary testimony. The major point of divergence concerns the implication of the patron being the owner of the land. Meanwhile, not everybody left the reserve. A few people stayed at the Post in Espirro. Finally, as to the last possibility raised by the dispersal of the peoples of this epoch, it may be mentioned that recently there have been a few sightings of an unknown group in the Roosevelt area. It is speculated that they are people who fled to the forest during the epidemics. Perhaps the survivors formed a viable group and now live *isolated*. As for Manézinho, he left the forest, ventured into the outside and lived as a migrant. While living a near-nomadic life in regional Brazilian society, he learned many trades ranging from gold prospecting, and farming, to cattle handling. He also held various menial jobs in the city and worked in a seringal. He was lucky enough to establish a friendship with a Brazilian man with whom he joined forces and migrated within a region stretching from Acre to Cuiabá. His adventures and his adaptation to the national society is in itself remarkable for an Indian who grew up in an exclusively monolingual Sabanê village. The same capacity to adapt and accommodate into the niches offered to the poor laborers can be discerned in other personal and family histories. At this time of maximum dispersal of the Sabanê people such capacity implies a large possibility of permanent integration into the regional society of those Indians who for some reason did not stay with one of the groups. Consequently, some Indians and families may never return to an Indian community and this part of the population siphons off the national society; in the dispersed Sabanê groups of diminished

populations this represents a serious loss.

Thus the dispersal also tends to isolate the fragments of these peoples and hinder the transmission of culture and language. Children are then raised in an adverse and highly discriminative social environment that regards the Indian languages and cultures as inferior. In the first place, the Indians and their children become very much aware of the attribution of inferiority. Furthermore, Portuguese is the daily language when in contact with Brazilians in the public sphere of social activities. The interruption of a daily communal native language ambience results in their own language's retreat into the domestic sphere. Other factors interfered, like the interethnic marriages between Indians. As far as I have been able to reconstruct the circumstances, such marriages lead to several possible outcomes for their children. One is the adoption of Portuguese and the imperfect learning of one or both of the native languages of the parents. As the disposition to language maintenance is strong and favors multilingualism, this seems to be a minimal outcome when the parents are in a position to actualize the value attached to their own languages. In an ideal situation the young child may learn both Portuguese and one native tongue or even all three languages. Interestingly though, on the basis of the little evidence available, it seems that the mother's language preponderates over the father's. A mother that uses her own language in daily interaction imprints an indelible impression on her children and, at the very least, creates a good passive knowledge of the language. On the other hand, the process of language acquisition depends on the attitude of the father towards his language and his goals for his and his children's future. In marriages that involve a *civilized* partner (usually an Indian woman marrying a White man) the disapproval of a typically assertive husband effectively discourages the use of any native language[xxi]. Dona Teresa never abandoned her heritage. On the contrary, she holds it dearly, but the White man she married treated her language and her origin as inferior. He did not allow her to speak her language to her children. This is one important way of assimilation and attendant language extinction. Dona Teresa is one of the last, if not the last, completely competent Lakondê speaker, a fact that deeply saddens her. Finally, on the other extreme, there is a case in which an indigenous foster mother raised an Indian stepchild teaching another indigenous language than the one from her father while living in the regional society. In conclusion, as far as I can understand, a number of factors enter into the successful transmission of languages with a series of possible outcomes. Generally, in Marco Rondon, the positive disposition persisted and

tended to impart in the new generation a language maintenance that ranges from passive command to active competence.

The forced labor camp situation lasted about twenty-six years, even as the regime only gradually achieved total domination. It is not difficult to imagine how such a situation would indelibly inscribe the reality of domination in the lived experience of the people who suffered. Fortunately, the older people already had an independent basic worldview of dispositions, attitudes and a conception of *self* that was not contingent on foreign dominance. It was only later that they suffered from a negative self-image subordinated to the supremacy of the powerful. This left them with the resilient autonomy of the *self* intact and emboldened their resistance to the Post and their decision to flee from its prison. They managed to endure the derogatory paternalistic image of dependent, incapable and inferior people forced on them by their masters. Unfortunately, it was not possible to obtain any first hand narrative about the repression of the Sabanê and the subsequent duress. The repercussion was severe and all who lived through this surely felt humiliated and powerless by the experience. After the Sabanê were caught and their leaders murdered, they were likely taken back to Espirro at gunpoint. The beatings they suffered must have been an intolerable invasion of the sense of personal autonomy and dignity. Individual persons and collectively as a people they were subjected to a process of inferiorization on a land not theirs in an experience that called their social identity into question. Prior to contact, the Sabanê enjoyed an autonomous life on their own land and surrounded by similar independent peoples. The neighboring indigenous peoples and the Sabanê considered themselves to be distinct, and in the words of Manézinho, each peoples' *history is different*, meaning their mythological origins and place in the cosmos differ in some significant aspects.

The notion of identity revolves about notions of self and others as defined by oneself, and by the reciprocal similar beliefs of alters with respect to oneself. The concept of collective and individual identity centers on the notion of autonomy and a fundamental kind of equality between peoples even when the neighboring peoples are held to be inferior[xxii]. Now the definition of one particular group of people that did not partake in the prior web of connecting peoples ordained new identities: dictating a basic similarity and, at a lower level, the need to find a new name for the people and the necessity of a new public name of the individual. Classifying all these peoples in the general category *Indian* acts as if the primary



selfhood of all of the people so identified is the same. The inclusive category effaces the differences between indigenous nations. However, being Indian minimizes but does not annihilate previous ethnic classifications made within entirely new context of the encompassing hierarchical structure as construed by the *superior people*, originally outsiders to the system. Although all are *Indians*, there is still need for a name for each people. On this lower level these peoples may also be hierarchically arranged by those with the power to prescribe names and rank. The experience of such exercise of power of nomination and sociopolitical subsumption must leave its marks in the subjectivity of the victims.[xxiii].

It is reasonable to suppose that the elders can refer to their autonomous experience to counter the deleterious effects and affects of what may be called the experience of conquest. The notion of conquest is exemplified by the forceful disposal of the Indian women at the desires of the White male population in Espirito Santo, depriving the Indian groups of the control of their most important human resources. The younger generations cannot rely on this mechanism in order to regain a control of themselves and construct a more assertive and positive identity, except via transmitted experience. For the first generation it remains to be seen whether this appeal to the experience of the elder generations suffices to recompose, or, better still, recreate an identity that includes a maximum of the previous conception of autonomy. The reality of oppression and humiliation resulting from the insertion in the increasingly overwhelming national society cannot simply be ignored and must enter into the practices of dealing with feelings and practical limits of impotence framed by colonial rule. Contrary to distinct but analogous situations like the forced labor camp or *l'expérience concentrationnaire* (Pollak 2000), at least some of the constraints of domination are permanent and require creative adaptation. What options did the Sabanê in Espirito Santo conceive of as realistic after the Post that degenerated into a totalitarian camp was abandoned by França? Perhaps some of the more adventurous independently ventured into regional society, where the different constraints permitted a certain degree of freedom. A few choose to stay, possibly reasoning that the worst had passed. Such Indians preferred to be somewhere familiar rather than venture to a place even more foreign. Most migrated to Marco Rondon, an alternative which, due to the much less powerful and hardly totalitarian new boss, afforded the Indian group a degree of autonomy without interrupting access to new commodities. As far as I know, no one choose to return

to the forest. In all likelihood, this has to do with the dissolution of the viable villages around the same period, the increasing expropriation of their own lands by the civilized, the presence of the Cinta Larga, and the fact that they were becoming accustomed to and partly dependent on the consumption of commodities not locally produced.

As noted previously when Afonso França withdrew to his private property he mainly attracted the Tawaindê. For the Sabanê co-habitation with him probably was not an option because they accused him of being responsible for the murder of their leaders during his previous relations with them. Despite the intimate relations between the two peoples when both were suffering in Espirro and the murders of the Sabanê, he still managed to convince the Tawaindê to move and work for him. França did change the labor regime under which the Indians toiled and, as one person of this group apparently testified recently, he abolished physical punishments and paid wages. In fact, the managing of the farm had passed on to his daughter, Dona Filhinha, and the previously mentioned son-in-law[xxiv]. They continued the exploration of the farm on the basis of paying the laborers weekly. Indian exploitation was evident in the low salary and in the fact that the landowners used the excuse of any failure to work during the whole week in order not pay them. This is confirmed indirectly with Faustino's comment to Hanbury-Tenison (1973: 168) regarding the unreliability of Indian labor. The Tawaindê Indians lived on the property in their own houses and somewhat independently from the main house. One of them was the famous uncle of the Indian married into the Latundê group, Mané Torto, at the end of the seventies (see Part I). Price mentions that this man, Mussolini, a shaman, tradition-oriented and a strong leader – a *big chief* in Manézinho's words –, was the last to move to Aroeira. In the housing and in certain practices, especially shamanism, they kept a physical and a social distance with the White management and the latter, apparently, provided some room for sociocultural expressions. It appears as if the very act of relinquishing of the former more rigorous control provided the opportunity for a less severe regime of debt peonage or weekly paid labor. Before settling in the Seringal of Faustino, the Tawaindê already felt the impact of newly created needs and the discipline instilled by the *work* forced on them in conjunction with the introduction of the concept of money. Hence this previous more forceful regime may have paved the way for a relative acceptance of the paternalistic regime in the classic pattern of the *good patron* (especially Dona Filhinha), and which is not explicitly backed up with the use of force. It would be

interesting to discover who named the Indian leader of the Tawaindê people at Seringal do Faustino *Mussolini*, undoubtedly after the fascist. The *civilized* usually simply gave the Indians names at their whim, another clear sign of symbolic domination. At a later stage, having recuperated some autonomy, the Indians sought suggestions about Brazilian names given to children that they habitually simply accepted because to them from the Nambikwara point of view, these names were merely innocuous labels and not real names (at least for the Sararé, see Part III).

In 1972 yet another international mission, visited the Northern Nambikwara area. This time the Mission visited both Marco Rondon and the Seringal de Faustino. At the Seringal, they found the Tawaindê in better spirits than their predecessors. Yet, the very fact of still finding them at the Seringal clearly illustrates the general abandonment in which they encountered the Nambikwara ensemble where the previous adverse reports did not seem to prompt Funai to take any effective action. The Mission report does not say so clearly but when they agree with Hanbury-Tenison that Funai is being *apparently unconcerned over these small isolated Nambikuara groups* and that this behavior will *let them die*, they effectively concur this can be no less than 'indirect genocide' (or, perhaps, 'passive genocide' although in this case the adjective underrates intentionality and that, as seen in Part I, actually does tally with 'normal' genocide; Brooks et.al. 1973: 41). The Tawaindê, however, even without any official assistance felt distinctively better. They were under the impression that they owned their clearings but the Mission did not know what form the agreement had or if it was legally binding[xxv]. Faustino still owned the store of goods and medicines and employed them as a labor force and thus the Mission appears to confirm that they lived under a paternalistic regime of dominance by debt slavery and without owning any land. On the other hand, the situation still compared unfavorably to that in Marco Rondon, a "*more run-down condition*". Some Indians were suffering from influenza. The Indians recounted former hardships when the measles decimated their numbers and wild *Tupis* attacked them. In other words, they mentioned the epidemics and assaults that drove the Northern Nambikwara away from their lands. They implied - not explicated in the report - that they were forced out of their home territory. That would be a reason to feel despondent and the motive for their acceptance of the situation of dependency. In such a context the impression of gaining some independence living in four houses behind barbed wire and with their own fields may have elevated their spirits. The authors'

conclusion still is essentially depressing: *"The general picture was of a melancholy little group which appears still to have no explicit protection or assistance from FUNAI despite urgent appeals in RHT's [Hanbury-Tenison's] report"* (Brooks et.al. 1973: 40).

Passing through Marco Rondon first, they found a small village of about 25 people living in six local Brazilian-style houses in a clearing with their gardens alongside the river. They noticed healthy people with a high morale. There were no frequent deaths, fair-sized gardens, neat houses, and clean clothes. The obvious problems related to poor dental health, worsened by the lack of relation with FUNAI and the limited size and the uncertain status of the land. The Mission thought the Indian clearing to be surrounded by other properties and thus calculated a future shortage of land to rotate the gardens. The presence of the school, which five Indian children, two interethnic marriages and the occupancy of Brazilian neighbors created the impression among the Mission's participants that integration into regional society was preceding fast. In fact, exempting a extraneous material proof of Indian culture, typical *baskets*, they even conclude that *"(...) the culture seems to be disappearing fast"* (Brooks et. al. 1973: 39). The reasons adduced for the group's move to Marco Rondon in 1958 included the same measles epidemics and attacks by so-called Cinta Larga as cited by the Tawaindê. Notwithstanding the sound reasons to possibly *"escape an unhealthy location"* (ib: 39) the inference drawn surprised even the Mission: *"Our conclusion generally was that this is an example, somewhat rare in our experience during the Mission, of a small Indian band which has chosen to live among Brazilian settlers and seems to be adjusting and assimilating successfully"* (ib.: 39). Such laconic deductions are partially based on the lack of background information and the lack of historical depth. These ideas may have unintentionally propagated the belief that the Indians at Marco Rondon actively sought assimilation and needed little FUNAI assistance. While it could be argued that many needed dental work and there were those who thought they required more land, overall the outsiders believed that the Indians had accepted the *natural* path to their own linguistic, cultural and ethnic demise. Such incorrect observations are countered with anthropological theory which suggests that sociocultural modes of life and of sociocultural difference are not always readily apparent. In a certain very significant sense culture is lodged in the heads of the participants and needs to be observed and investigated in an extended dialogue. Furthermore, their observations fail to take into account the reality of the political project of

this people as made in and framed by a continuum of historical context.

Most of the Manduka seem to have stayed in Espirro, which is located within their traditional territory. Thus, the three major peoples separated in this period. This separation was further strengthened by the mixed marriages, which affected the 'ethnic purity' of each local group. By 1975 relevant changes in the regional and national framework obstructed certain options for the peoples involved, vitiating, for example, the return to their homelands. Most (or all) of their territories had come to fall under INCRA's mandate, which transformed over a million hectares into the *Corumbiara Project*, in complete disregard to almost all previous settlements and claims[xxvi]. Conversely, the federal government continued to pretend to provide *protection* to the Indians, although definitely as a secondary objective and at the least possible *cost*. It was during a more protective time of Indian policy within the repressive military dictatorship that Price designed the *Nambiquara Project* to benefit the Northern Nambikwara who had fallen victim to private interests and were dispersed throughout the region[xxvii]. As was often the case in this power struggle, the Indians' interests lost to the higher aims of the *Nation* and *development*. The actual legal status of the area at Marco Rondon is unclear, although Dona Teresa asserts with certainty that it had been set apart for the use of her people and other Indians. It must also be noted that the area probably falls within the range of the original Northern Nambikwara territory (or at least very close to this land). Thus, she feels the Northern peoples like her own have a just claim to this land. Moreover, in a large part of the area the superior quality of the soil compares very favorably with the almost sandy soils of Aroeira. However, Crusoé, the man put in charge of the Indians did not wish or could not avoid the gradual invasion of the area. Apparently, the occupancy had no official recognition. Also, the Indians did not react either to the gradual invasion of the lands. This was probably a sensible decision in light of their weakness and vulnerability (a consequence of the local power relations and lack of a countervailing protective federal agency). Owing to the bureaucratic weakness of the Indians' land claim, the only solution envisioned by the Nambiquara Project personnel entailed a strategic retreat to Aroeira. They believed this would guarantee this land for their exclusive usage. With hindsight we can say this meant sacrificing superior soil and all the labor invested in the land for a territory with inferior soil quality that needed to be re-developed for occupancy.

The original idea was for the Indians to return to Espirro. By coincidence,

Manézinho appeared at the scene when some FUNAI officials visited the region in an attempt to initiate some assistance to the abandoned Indian peoples of Rondônia then being assaulted by federal agencies and a massive influx of Brazilian migrants. A FUNAI agent from Porto Velho took note of him and invited him to participate in the reorganization of Espirro and the gathering of all the former inhabitants of the Northern Nambikwara territory in this place. Such action had the consequence of relinquishing claims to the Northern homelands that were still partially occupied. Manézinho had lived alone at the time of his wanderings. During his visits to Vilhena and Marco Rondon (about which existence he had been ignorant when away) he met an older man who offered his daughter in marriage. At that time she was courting a White, much to the chagrin of her parents who preferred an Indian son-in-law. After Manézinho had been traveling for some time and came back to the region, she accepted marrying him. He then agreed to engage himself in the project of the return to the Indigenous Territory. The individual trajectories of these individuals demonstrate that the creation of more intimate relations with the regional society exposes the group to a serious threat of losing part of its social and physical potential for reproduction[xxviii]. At the same time, if relations were less stressed with the neighbors, the increasing presence of Whites in Marco Rondon signals the weakness of both the White manager and the Indians to stave off the usurpation of what was supposed to be their land. Once again the lack of official protection and the absence of legal control fostered a situation comparable to that of the North American Wild West. When Funai proposed that the Indians move back to the Indigenous Territory around Espirro and to provide the means to resettle there, the insecurity of the whole situation in Marco Rondon plus the attractive support of a renewed and better *protection* offered must have influenced the Indians to accept the change.

Funai believed that resettling the Indians was a project completely under their control. Manézinho thought the responsibility of *opening up Aroeira* as his duty and the visiting, conversing and convincing the other Indians as his doing. Of course, the support supplied enabled the Sabanê to take care of the practicalities of the move. He, however, decided to discard the old village site of Espirro and relocate the village in Aroeira because of the heavier forest cover and less sandy soil. An unmentioned advantage of this move is the psychological benefit of moving away from the trauma associated with living at the former village site. There was also a renewal of paternalistic *protection*, and so more security in land

holding and access to commodities. In many ways the previous occupation of Espirro exhausted the potential benefits of this place. Starting anew in Aroeira held the promise of inventing a different micro-world. Such inventions are common as human beings and groups always attempt to institute them according to their own image and affinities (Pollak 2000: 17). The Sabanê could reconstruct some of its previous mode of life and incorporate the now indispensable amenities of *civilization*. The idea of accepting the task to unite the Indians in a newly founded village and achieving the objective denotes the exercise of personal agency by Manézinho. The image of his adaptation and life's trajectory in the national society confirmed the capabilities inherent in his personal agency. In that sense, he continued the active life he led before, showing much initiative, when assuming command as a new *captain* (the term used at the time). Additionally, his father and grandfather functioned as leaders in their time and his comments indicate a tradition that sons of leaders are predisposed to follow in their fathers' footsteps. Socialization and experience thus prepared him to an active form of personal agency and to assume the responsibility for rebuilding the group. Given his conception of the Sabanê as a profoundly horticultural people, a belief reinforced by the national conception of *work*, he was proud to foreground his efforts to obtain all sorts of domesticated plants, to put in large efforts at gardening, and to equip the village with an abundant supply of food to receive the incoming Indian settlers.

Manézinho, the new captain, descends from the autonomous Sabanê decimated by hostile Indians and epidemics. It seems uncertain but doubtful that the Sabanê who had been subjected to the harsh camp regime could exhibit the resilience it takes to assume this leadership[xxix]. Chances are that after their traumatic experiences in Espirro and the faltering protection of Marco Rondon, the majority of the Sabanê were not ready for such a task. At the same time, notwithstanding the admirable courage and initiative shown by Manézinho, the constraints of the choices available to the Indians still derived from the dictates of the national society. The most obvious point in case concerns FUNAI's handing over the Marco Rondon area, even though its right to recognize the land officially as *Indian* not only already existed but its monopoly to determine these territories was legally guaranteed. There was no legal necessity to renounce this parcel of Northern Nambikwara land (or closely to any original territory). FUNAI followed the constraints of the military regime, the pursuit of *development* at all costs, as well as its own interest of creating the least resistance possible to its actions by

yielding to the interests of the national society of *liberating* the more fertile area. The people involved in the original phase of the Nambiquara Project had the very best intentions and generally played a very significant and positive role to the benefit of the welfare of Nambikwara ensemble. Despite the fact that the Indians gained more rights while Price was the project head, the restrictions still evinced one of the characteristics intrinsic of the typical colonial situation: namely, the colonized society's freedom is interdicted to exercise any free will to select which of the dominate society's sociocultural concepts and practices it will accept. *"L'effet spécifique de l'interventionnisme colonial consiste précisément en cette accélération pathologique du changement culturel : en mettant sans cesse la société dominée devant le fait accompli, en faisant à sa place les choix les plus fondamentaux, la politique coloniale, dont l'entreprise de regroupement représente l'expression la plus incohérente à force de cohérence, a empêché ce dialogue entre la permanence et l'altération, entre l'assimilation et l'adaptation, que fait la vie même d'une société"* (Bourdieu and Sayad 1964: 35)[xxx]. After the complete failure of *fraternal protection*, the abandonment of the Indians in national society, the desertion of those who went to work for their former tyrants, and the refusal to leave them any choice to remain where they already were, FUNAI finally adopted measures to ensure the Indians' collective survival. When it finally acted, the institution obeyed the logic of colonial interventionism by means of the renunciation of the legal task to protect these peoples by not allowing them to choose the area of settlement, its limits and its management.

The installation of the various fragments of the indigenous peoples joined here united again the same peoples as those that comprised the Espirito population, and thus the same that endured the bitter experience of domination. Dispersed through the region and without federal protection, the peoples once again enjoyed some autonomy and control over the backstage (as seen, Goffman's term referring to the secluded space created by the dominated for them to be exclusively amongst themselves and where they felt free to speak and act). From the notion obtained by the reconstruction of the degree of mastery of the traditional language by the different generations, it is likely that the decline of the native language competence was initiated at this phase. The generation that was born when the major part of the Sabanê lived in Marco Rondon is able to speak the language, although a few of them, according to Manézinho's critical evaluation are not totally competent. Counteracting the tendency to privilege an egalitarian mode of multilingualism, this situation of domination encapsulated the



protected domestic or communal Indian social sphere where the Indians attempted to maintain their language. The sheer power of domination, the concomitant devaluing of all kinds of *indianidade* ('Indianness') and the attribution of *inferiority*, bore down so heavily these people that it stimulated both the usage of Portuguese and the discouragement of the native language for public interaction. As to the standard *national language*, the Indians wanted to speak it well or suffer discrimination. Within the encompassing society, the Indian languages were viewed as *slang* or *dialect* and carried pejorative connotations. My recent trips to the region demonstrate that such a view continues to be predominant. Overall, a positive attitude towards the traditional languages of the Indians by a non-Indian Brazilian certainly did not exist among the people with whom the Indians interacted. This situation may favor the continued competence of their original language of the older people, especially if they retreat into the more private sphere. It is noteworthy that the two oldest Sabanê still alive in Aroeira (in 2000) hardly speak Portuguese, but it is equally revealing that they are the last non-speakers of Portuguese. All of the generation born from this period onward speaks at least some local Brazilian Portuguese.

Reunited in Aroeira the different peoples again commingled. The lamentable episodes of the reception of the Latundê took place in the beginning of the settlement (Part I). The people who had contacted the Latundê, particularly the Lakondê who spoke almost the same language, inflated the advantages of living in Aroeira. It seems they thought to explore their experience with the national society in the role of intermediaries and to subdue the *untamed* Indians for their women (and probably for the labor force of the men, as they knew very well the uses of disciplined labor). The fact that all of them were *Indian* and that the Latundê speak a dialect comprehensible to Northern Nambikwara speakers did not bother them, as there is no intrinsic solidarity between the different *Nambikwara* peoples. Indeed, a real fusion of the Sabanê and the Tarundê or Sowaintê would have been exception to the rule of incorporating individuals into more viable local groups, and would have been facilitated by unique circumstances. Bringing the Latundê to Aroeira occurred during the absence of the FUNAI agent responsible for the Nambikwara. Such action demonstrates the persistence of Indians pursuing their own agenda and the attempt to circumvent the interference of the outside agent. This can be thought of as a push to exercise their own personal and collective agency and to construct and preserve an uncontrolled sphere of social practice. In spite of the forced cohabitation, there

has never been any love lost between the different ethnic factions in Espirito Santo and the same appeared to be the case in Aroeira. On the other hand, the rejection of the national society threw them all together to suffer under the same stigma. They learned from this mentality and the diversified fractions of Aroeira nowadays present a united front in cases when the *community* is required to act. It was in part the colonial rule that prepared them to level out their differences in a joint political action. Furthermore, the bureaucratic logic of FUNAI deals primarily with so-called *communities* based on geographical local units, especially with the notion of *village* and *Indigenous Territory*, and only secondarily with peoples, either as wholes (when spread out) or as parts (within the same delimited area). Also, this agency created not only the *community*, based on residence, out of the generalized category *Indians* whom were already accustomed to a front stage (Goffman) dominated by Whites (the public spaces of Indian Posts and reservations), it also patronized a new dependency different from the formerly current obligation of *work* for food and access to external commodities. In the beginning of Aroeira, when the new settlement needed help to gather forces for preparing the fields and the building of the houses, every month a truck loaded with food and commodities arrived in the village. Courtesy of Tolksdorf (the man who headed the Nambiquara Project after Price lost the political conditions to administer it as he thought fit, this is also the man who is supposed to have *contacted* the Latundê; see Part I) . Incidentally, Tolksdorf is said to have paid for these goods himself, in all likelihood the institution lacked sufficient funds[xxxi].

From then on the new FUNAI style of administration produced its own form of control. After the beginning with the very generous support that possibly exceeded the Indians' needs, in the next phase beginning in the 1970s they became subject to *development projects*, known as *community development*. These projects were different from the orientations of the Nambiquara Project (see Agostinho 1996), although they generally continued in the tradition of the Espirito Santo regime, they lacked overt authoritarianism and corporal punishment. The notion of *development* and its supposed necessity is a dogma that persisted in this period and, even today, is part of the way of thinking of almost everyone involved in indigenous politics, policy makers and functionaries. The very few exceptions generate considerable friction with the adherents of the mainstream *doxa*. The point is that this development regime is cast in the terms of an iron law, worsened by the popular stereotypes that the Nambikwara are the poorest, most primitive,

and neediest Indians. Since they are too *primitive* to know what their *evolution* should be, usually everything was decided by the Brazilian policy makers. In the eighties, the World Bank insisted on a program of assistance to the Nambikwara when the road BR 364 followed a new route, right through their homelands, and was to receive the asphalt that was meant to hasten the *development of the region*. This Program consisted largely of the financing of the bureaucratic infrastructure of the various posts for the different groups or peoples with which the FUNAI expanded its institutional operations. The money to *protect* Indian interests chiefly helped the bureaucracy invest in its own expansion. It substantiated the *protection* mostly in additional manpower and new buildings. Today Aroeira has one of the most elaborate supporting infrastructures of the FUNAI Posts in the entire region. Of course, with little qualified personnel and many corrupt and prejudiced employees, the availability of ample means were insufficient if no effective policy of protection is put into practice. The rerouting and building of the road still signified the assault on Indian Territory, an onrush on their resources and an onslaught on their health. The bureaucratic emphasis and the materialization of this Program, up to the point of being in detriment to the securing and legalization of the Indian territories, demonstrate the modified but persistent constraints of the encompassing controlling framework. Observe the similarity of conception and execution of Rondon's policy. Most importantly, perhaps, is that decision-making never really involved the local Indians, even if in recent years nominal consultations of the so-called *community* are becoming the norm. During all of this period, the *projects* appear as *gifted* (the verb as is used for example by Strathern), as if presents donated and handed down from obscure sources by the agency. In this view, the Indians are expected to be thankful for the constructions and actions made for *their benefit*. With rare exceptions in recent times, they go on being treated as dependent, basically incompetent people, not as autonomous individuals capable of deciding their own future. All generations since 1942 are indoctrinated in this premise insisted on by most institutional employees (with rare exceptions).

In Aroeira, this phase appears to have resulted in a community that has thoroughly learned to be dependent on the outside initiative of periodically renewed *beneficial programmes* that are implemented on their land. They continue to be divided amongst themselves into ethnic factions as can be observed in the subdivisions of the village constructed around the main buildings. Most prominent among those main buildings is the house of the employee and the

infirmary, which function as the village center and as the centripetal force that binds the area together. The centrality is underscored by the far better quality of these constructions in comparison to the Indian houses, symbolically expressing materialized domination. Scarce resources have been introduced in the form of paid jobs for Indians that have been appointed as *education monitor* (local community educator), lay *teacher*, or *nurse*. These positions are usually offered to people after they have completed a few courses. Just like in all *communities*, these jobs are political appointments because being *indicated* by the *community* means the outcome of a complicated process of negotiations that result in the political compromise between factions and influential people. Other sources of monetary income are rare. In recent years some Indians started to sell local food crops when, with the growth of the town of Vilhena, a local market arose. Several years ago a road was built that connects the village to the town, reducing the time of the trip to around twenty minutes. The city and its attractions, shops, healthcare and the FUNAI office are visited on a daily basis with the pickup driven by an Indian and maintained by the *community*. This is remarkable but also characteristic of the created contradictions: few or no community succeeded in managing their own car (given to the *community* in the course of a development program) for over ten years. Although the formal Aroeira leader once proudly told me that the community calls for a meeting to contribute in the costs of car maintenance, the Indians also regularly solicit FUNAI to help them out and even trick institutions that are involved in some aspect with official assistance in order to circumvent expenses for fuel or repairs[xxxii]. Despite all the projects, no reliable source of monetary income exists for the large majority of the village. In 2001 an apiary project was suggested by a Funai official. Although this garnered some initial enthusiasm, there was already growing disinterest and abandoning of the project. No sufficient and permanent economic articulation with the wider economic system occurred since the commencement of the *projects*. It is commented this causes individuals to pursue own their strategies. For example, a middle aged man with two or three wives sought marriage with a widow, almost to the point of literally forcing himself on her because she had the rare right to a monthly state pension[xxxiii].

### *Reactions to the research process in Aroeira*

Simultaneously divided and unified, the people in Aroeira combine the wish for managing their own lives with the acceptance of dependency (and the manipulation of this dependency to their own advantage). The historical trajectory

sketched in the previous section, now was to be followed by a more elaborate ethnographic examination. Unexpectedly, however, Antunes' continued research of the Sabanê language and my own proposal met with certain problems. A short account of the events will illustrate some of the difficulties of fieldwork and the community's troubles. In accordance with the FUNAI rules that require that the *community* agree with any form of research, the linguist, already had presented to the community his intention to study the Sabanê language. A correct and justified exigency, except that in reality the proposal normally cannot be presented by the researcher himself. Therefore, the approval by the native community very much depends on the way the FUNAI introduces the subject to them and how the FUNAI employee directly or indirectly expresses his consent or dissatisfaction. In our case, the FUNAI regional administrator (Ariovaldo dos Santos) openly favored the research and thus convinced the local people of the Funai to support granting the authorization. The helpful attitude is far from automatic as the Funai abounds in internal factional strife and the local employees usually entertain their own notions about the Indians and research, having their own agenda and interests[xxxiv]. The authorization was granted in a meeting of a local employee with the *community*. When Antunes arrived, the Indians assembled again and they discussed the question of who he would work with. The meeting indicated the informant by means of a political process, another mediation of the relationship with the outside and in which linguistic competence is not the only factor relevant to the outcome. Additionally, the Indians did not want him to live in the village. This was no problem and Antunes made regular trips to the area to start his research.

After the first authorization, FUNAI submitted the proposal of anthropological fieldwork and the community's permission was granted. Much later I discovered that FUNAI had posed my request to do fieldwork as linguistic in nature instead of anthropological. In the second half of 2000, when all the field researchers of the Nambikwara languages Project made a very rapid visit to Aroeira, the Indians received us well but there was some distrust. A group of Manduka, together with a few affiliated others (mainly Tawaindê), were setting up a village near the border of the Pyreneus de Souza Area of Aroeira with the *Nambikwara Indigenous Territory* (the adjacent land to the east). The village was to be on the territory of Aroeira but much closer to their relatives who lived with the Kithaulu (on the other side of the boundary in the other territory). In fact, this was an attempt to recreate a more ethnically homogeneous Manduka village within the traditional

occupancy of this people. One of these elders involved in the effort spoke to me and insisted that his village had not been consulted and had not granted any permission. I reassured him that we would remain in Aroeira and not venture to his village without authorization. He did not react negatively at the end of this conversation. During a later visit made with my colleague Telles, we were met with the same attitude. Again, I answered all of the questions of one of the native health agents, to whom I explained the kind of research I would do, the intended results, and the possible benefits for the community. He affirmed he understood my intentions and added that he had been asked to pass on the information to the elders. It seemed that the informal council did not really know what they had agreed to.

When I arrived in Vilhena to carry out a short period of fieldwork, I counted on the authorization already granted, which was never withdrawn. The community did not offer FUNAI any warning about a change in their position. The local employee had spoken to the Indians about my arrival and they had expressed intentions to hold a meeting on the subject, but even the employee considered this a formality. Whatever the community's position may have been at this point, fortuitous contingencies interfered. An unfortunate incident complicated the situation. A child died in ominous circumstances, a fact which caused a profound discontent in the community and a flurry of accusations and rumors within the village. In accordance to a general feature of the culture shared by all of the peoples of the Nambikwara ensemble, the dead are feared, for one of the components into which a person disintegrates after death can threaten the living (for the components of the living and dead Nambikwara person see Fiorini 2000). Also, deaths are never natural but are generally conceived to be caused by human sorcery or shamanism (even within the local group; Fiorini 2000). In reaction to the child's death, the villagers dispersed and all collective actions were interrupted. The Funai agent asked me for patience and naturally I waited for the meeting and did not visit the Area. When the atmosphere calmed, a politically active man was seriously wounded in another accident, he had to be taken to the hospital in Cuiabá for paralysis treatment. Once more, the commotion impeded any meeting. It seems people do not believe events like this to be 'accidents'. After the incident I happened to meet the cacique whom I already knew. He assured me that he understood the nature of my work and did not present any possible complaint to me nor did he ask for any additional explanation. Time passed and Antunes arrived in Vilhena. Despite the lack of any clear negative

signs, a certain apprehension clouded the mood. Firstly, the way the meeting was arranged implied that it related to the permission to do research, which to my knowledge already had been granted. Secondly, the native speaker of Sabanê previously indicated to be the language expert by the *community* had been expelled (in their view) from Aroeira. This episode was related to the activities of one of his sons. The latter had received training as a protestant missionary by Americans missionaries working with the Summer Institute of Linguistics (such people paved the way for linguistic fieldwork and set a standard for this kind of project). Aroeira was opposed to missionary activity in the village, effectively impeding the son's residence there. When his father allowed his son to conduct some religious activity, the reactions to the events increased his existing dissatisfaction with the general social and political situation. According to him, this culminated in his decision to move from the village. Partly, this friction derived from prior political dissensions, partly, presumably, it originated in his paid work as a language expert and the attention the Sabanê language received in comparison to the other native languages spoken by other factions.

There were no overt signs of any rejection of our research before the meeting. When the meeting finally began, after weeks of postponements, things began smoothly. Both Antunes and I answered numerous questions. There were a few unexpected questions. Some wanted to know why it took so long to do linguistic research and to write teaching material for school, and what would happen to the research results. Having heard about *research* as a way to easy wealth for the researcher himself, the suspicion was born that the researcher pretends to work for the common interest of the Indians in order to get results while his real objective is personal profit. Being after their linguistic secrets this would be yet another incident of Indian exploitation by Whites. Later on, someone insinuated that I might be lying about my intentions. I reacted in the typical Brazilian fashion, firmly denying the suggestion of dishonesty and expressing a strong opinion about any such underestimation of my good faith and sincerity. The person who made the implicit accusation withdrew his remark. The belief of the exploitative nature of *research* permeated the atmosphere. Indian Organizations in Rondônia and some FUNAI employees likely propagate such beliefs[xxxv]. Botanical studies, for example, may be used as a front for lucrative pharmaceutical studies. Indeed, the Indian who charged me with dishonesty suspected that this may be my true motivation for working in the area. This distrust is the consequence of the long history of exploitation that engenders a

strong suspicion of the intentions of any *White*. When most of our answers seemed to satisfy the participants in the meeting, finally a younger man came up to me and confessed that, although the Indians present did not want to admit it, the *community* already had deliberated the day before and had decided not to allow the research in the village. This oblique way of indirect expression of negation, disapproval or dissension is characteristic of the Wasusu (Fiorini 2000)[xxxvi]. The whole event turned out to be something of a dramaturgical scene enacted as a frontstage act, apparently consenting to discuss the fieldwork, while the real decision had already been taken in the closed backstage, without any allowance of our case being heard and influence the outcome. After several hours of an actually senseless conversation, I attempted to address the revelation. I reminded the assembly that I assumed they had a moral obligation to us because of their previous assent which I considered a commitment. I told them that calling it off at last moment – after travelling so far and waiting for weeks – was unfair. Then a few apparently somewhat embarrassed Indians proposed a compromise at the end of this meeting. Among them the cacique who had refrained from participating in the previous discussions. Finally, a compromise was reached and it seemed as if we would be allowed to begin our work. The cacique warned us however that some people not present at this discussion would still have to be consulted. The outcome was not definite. The FUNAI employee finally arrived too, for some reason he had not thought it necessary to be present before, and with a clear lack of enthusiasm offered to help mediate the dispute.

We were not at all sure we finally convinced the assembly. We were right. In effect, we witnessed a mode of “impression management”. The meeting seemed to have been an attempt to avoid clear denials and direct confrontations while wanting to deny the wishes of the Funai and of a higher class member of the national society or of a foreigner. The next day the Funai agent asked for some elders to discuss the case again with him but they flatly refused to even speak with him. They alleged a breach of etiquette occurred during the meeting and that this incident had offended them. They said they found fault with the lack of respect to elders[xxxvii]. The next day the *community* sent a letter to the Funai in Vilhena, subscribed by a number of the villagers, explaining the decision to deny all access to the area and availing them of the same argument as the cause of this refusal. Not a word was said about the prior authorization, about the assembly held the day before the meeting itself, or anything regarding the real reasons for withdrawing the prior consent and rejecting our fieldwork proposal. This seemed



an expedient and astute *post factum* front to avoid revealing the political background of the decision and to uphold the semblance of unity and the appearance of consensus. In reality there was no consensus, as some of them confided later to Indians living in the city or outside the Aroeira area, although no one publicly admitted dissension[xxxviii]. In retrospect, after speaking with several knowledgeable people like Manézinho, a series of factors in the situation probably conspired against our stay in the village. Not being familiar with the village or its people we could not have had any knowledge about these reasons. First of all, there was Manézinho's particular political situation of conflict with the majority. Additionally, there is the strong suspicion that the other ethnic groups envied the study of the Sabanê languages as well as the money paid to the collaborator. The previous remark about the new village's independence, not granting any consent, likely represents the Manduka opinion. Although there are a group small in number, they can appeal to the fact of being the area's original inhabitants, the owners, and thus claim a voice in what otherwise might concern solely the Aroeira village or only one faction. The elder who questioned me at the previous opportunity is a Tawaindê, so an alliance between the two groups against the Sabanê may very well be the case. The factors of the circulation of money and prestige weigh heavily in a village with scarce means, much possible envy and disputes of prestige.

After the meeting ended, the same Tawaindê elder who had told me about the lack of consent of the new village and another older man called me to join them. Sitting on the floor, they asked in an easy conversational tone if the Aroeira Indigenous Territory was in danger of being disintegrated as Indian land. I reassured them that they had a constitutional right that may only be abolished under very special circumstances and those did not exist. The question in itself reveals the profound distrust for White institutions, which can hardly be surprising, shaped as it is by the historical trajectory of these peoples. This also underlines their lack of access to legal knowledge and rights. A deeply ingrained sense of distrust and suspicion of White society seems to surface in these events. The suspicions voiced about the rumors of exploitative research fall entirely within these expectations. This brief dialogue happened in all tranquility and even in a somewhat conspiratorial atmosphere, in sharp contrast with the rejection of our request to do research, the suspicions aroused by it and the alleged reason for refusal. Moreover, while we walked to the car, the elder complained that the FUNAI was not helping them enough and asked me to bring him some sacks for

the storage of manioc flour. I told him that I could not do much but I would try to assist him when I returned to the village. This was the same person who refused to speak with the Funai employee the next day. Such behavior brings to mind frontstage behavior according to the template of a clientelism, a model of patronage in place ever since Espirito. Perhaps, soliciting the gift was either a test to see if more immediate tangible benefits could be obtained, or else a way of subtly suggesting that an avenue of negotiation could be explored by positing implicitly the necessity of more direct material gains. A request for more direct tangible reciprocity is an entirely possible interpretation. The commodification of *culture*, including language, is developing in the region: the neighboring *Nambikwara* later demanded a payment of 50 Reais (about 25 Euros at the time) for the registration of a comparative list of fifty words. When we did not take up their offer, they informed the neighboring Kithaulu that their *community* should claim the same kind of transaction. A visibly embarrassed Kithaulu school teacher told us that he did not agree with this demand, but that he had to bow to the exigency of the *community*. On arrival in the Kithaulu village, one man shouted from afar to ask whether the health employee that accompanied us, with many years of experience in the entire region, had come to sell the land. A long history of exploitation translates itself into a sweeping fear and mistrust[xxxix]. The ensuing silence here about the experience of Espirito is, naturally, a lamentable fact that in a way perpetuates the oppression suffered and, in a way, the lack of public voice is the very result of this traumatic experience[xl].

### *The process of Sabanê language loss and the prospects for the future*

The political dissension with the majority that still pretended to achieve a complete consensus about the rejection of our request, widened the gulf with the community and the expelled elder, Manézinho. By association, Antunes and myself became increasingly associated with him. The man initially paralyzed by the accident used to stir up a lot of political unrest and his relations with the Sabanê elder deteriorated to the level of the latter negating his identity as *Indian* and expressing personal dislike (the younger man was born of one Indian parent and used to live outside any indigenous area). In fact, the political situation profoundly dissatisfied Manézinho for a much longer time and these disagreements also include troubles with other Sabanê. Within this vexatious framework, the personal interests of the so-called *educational agents* also possibly turned against Manézinho and the researchers. In the nineties some changes in the national policy towards indigenous peoples implemented new rules

and created new appointments with the purpose of altering some basic parameters regarding indigenous education. One of the novelties is the indication of local Indians as *educational agents* (as low-level teachers), and, more recently, the employment of bilingual monitors to further native language education. Although the intentions of such an undertaking are very laudable, this effort is inadequate and does little to further bilingualism (see Part I). During the first years the appointed agents exercised their professional activities in the school built in the village center. At any rate, their activities did not represent any form of bilingual education or even the teaching of any the native languages in Aroeira. In recent years the pressures of the Ministry of Education and the State Educational Board for Indigenous Education resulted in the appointment of *native language educational agents* and design language courses. In accordance with his traditional inclination, Manézinho (and most or all elders) asserts to have been attempted to stimulate the existing agents to learn the Sabanê language and commence classes to teach the younger generations. This is all the more imperative as the generations born in Aroeira do not master the Sabanê language in a fully competent active manner. Manézinho pursued the agent in question with this purpose in mind, willing to teach him Sabanê. Despite not speaking the language, he never took up the offer and Manézinho abandoned his efforts. Unexpectedly, only a short time before Antunes' return and my own visit, he requested Manézinho teach him the language. After all this time of fruitlessly insisting upon the importance of the language and courses for the children, Manézinho refused. During the community meeting with us, this agent persisted in questioning us about the utility of our research. He did not seem very friendly and in questioning us, he continuously emphasized his official position (as many low level bureaucrats emphasize their importance when possible). His opposition was clearly expressed in the letter and most likely had to do with his being officially responsible for native language education. Perhaps, in some way he felt threatened in his position by the linguistic research.

Antunes' research had already started, and now it was being jeopardized by a number of leading figures who imposed a *consensus* on the community. If the *monitor* seemed to be one of them, this has to do with the value attached to the language by outsiders, combined with the knowledge of the official re-evaluation of native languages by national and state authorities. Not being able to pursue any study of the language with Manézinho, the Sabanê agent should still be motivated to invest in learning his ancestral language by procuring other

teachers. Such new interest and effort is very much needed. So far the educational facilities in Aroeira never have been put at the service of the any serious teaching of the various languages of the distinct peoples. On the other hand, the schools' curriculum includes Portuguese and other more common subjects. In itself, if the fieldwork aided in stimulating this kind of reaction it is a novelty for almost the entire younger Sabanê generations, including the *agents*, in Aroeira. Therefore, the very presence of researchers with the means to engage collaboration in the study of the language may revitalize the younger generations' interest in the native language. This positive effect did not preclude that the contingent conditions and interests of some factions and of particular Sabanê impeded the continuity of research in the village itself. The potential contribution to Sabanê language revival and maintenance, in the appraisal of the opponents, did not outweigh other negative factors[xli]. However, while prohibited to pursue the research in the Indigenous Territory, people in the town and elsewhere did not feel obliged to comply with such rulings. With some orientation of FUNAI in Vilhena, partially an equivocation, we searched for native speakers in town and ended up at Dona Teresa's house. The Funai agent told us she was Sabanê, but she immediately clarified that she was Lakondê. However, having learned Sabanê at a very early age, she speaks this language as a native speaker. Feeling very sad about the demise of Indian languages in general, and the Lakondê as a people with their own language in particular, she accepted to *teach us* Indian languages and the former ways of living. As Manézinho, Antunes' language informant, was temporarily unavailable, Antunes took this opportunity to continue his research and work with Dona Teresa.

In the beginning I worked jointly with Antunes and later I worked alone on my specific research. A delegation from Aroeira tried to dissuade her continued involvement but Dona Teresa also felt too strongly about the incurred losses, the lack of any records about her people, and she also had her own troubles with the villagers. Furthermore, she derived a great satisfaction in expressing her worries and lamentations about the loss of language and culture to an attentive audience. Manézinho, whom we encountered later on, immediately was prepared to continue his collaboration and did not intend to let the village dictate his actions. Most of the information about the Sabanê and Northern Nambikwara in this Part derive from the conversations with these two elderly persons[xlii]. Their first-hand knowledge can help researchers better assess the seriousness of the state of the Sabanê language. Antunes (with some involvement by myself) used his data to a

map the linguistic competences of the current Sabanê people, especially those in Aroeira at the time, as that should be the optimal viable social ambience favoring language maintenance. The census following below thus derives from the Indians who are now on sometimes difficult terms with the people in Aroeira and do not live there any more. Manézinho and his wife, however, lived for a long time in the area and know all of its inhabitants very well. Dona Teresa also lived there and regularly visits the village and re-established contact after some avoidance by the Indians caused by her refusal to interrupt our *lessons*. Therefore, the general picture provides us with a fair estimate of the state of the language and the language shift occurring. It permits the expectation that it will likely be extinct soon if nothing happens to motivate their traditional speakers to take it up again and guarantee transmission to the non-speaking younger generations. The summary below substantiates this unfortunate assessment.

Please note that for simplicity, I include information in the following format: Name (estimated year of birth, languages spoken). All birthdates are approximations as they are notoriously difficult to ascertain exactly and may be subject to future revision. Also, I employ the following abbreviations for languages: *Sab* for Sabanê, *Lak* for Lakondê, *Taw* for Tawaindê, and *Por* for Portuguese. I also use *M* for male and *F* for female. The following summary provides indication of the process of the intergenerational transmission of the native language. It was organized by taking the members of the older generations and their conjugal families as the focus. Each point draws a conclusion about native language transmission.

### *Family 1*

- Dona Teresa (1945, Lak, Sab, Por)
- White ex-husband (Por)
- Two children by ex-husband who speak only Por
- Sabanê current husband (1930, orig. Sab)
  - Although his mother tongue is Sab, after his parents died, he was raised by Whites. He now claims to have forgotten Sab (although he occasionally remembers the language)
  - Too old to be active in language transmission
- Adopted Indian daughter (Por)

Diagnosis: No transmission

### *Family 2*

- Manézinho (1942, Sab, Por, Taw, Mamaindê)
- Wife (1960, Northern Nambikwara Sowaintê, Por, Sab)
  - She learned Sowaintê from her father, and was young when she learned Por. She acquired Sab as an adolescent.
- All children were born in Aroeira. All other children apparently only Por
- Oldest Son (passive Sab)
- One Daughter (active or semi-speaker of Sab)
  - Her son was exposed to Sab when living with grandparents, but he was pre-linguistic.
    - Her son is spoken to in Sab at night and may learn some but as they live now in the Tubarão area (see Part I), transmission may be difficult.

Diagnosis: Very deficient transmission with a slight chance of some maintenance in youngest generation.

### *Family 3*

- M (1945 , native Sab, some Por)
  - Presently physically disabled; one of the oldest Sabanê alive in Aroeira
- Lakondê wife-1
- Son of father and his Lakondê wife (1962, Por, passive Sab)
  - Considered Sabanê.
  - He was born prior to their arrival in Aroeira and must have some Sab ability to communicate with his father.
- Sabanê wife-2 (1960, Sab, Taw, Lak, Por)
  - Just because parents are polyglots, does not ensure that the children born in Aroeira have fluency in an indigenous language.
- Children of father and Sabanê wife (various ages, Por, most have passive Sab although the youngest (1988) has very little ability)
  - One child married a Mussolini's Tawaindê son and her children are Tawaindê.
  - Two sons married a Manduka and their children will be Sabanê

but all speak only Por.

Diagnosis: Transmission only to passive Sabanê competence to the second generation and no transmission for those born in Aroeira.

#### *Family 4*

- Tawaindê man (Taw)
  - Community elder
- Sabanê wife
- Oldest Daughter (1960, Sab, Por, Lak)
- Sabanê son (before 1970, mainly Por)
  - Son married to two women:
    - Wife1 (1970) mixed parentage (mother Lakondê, father Sabanê)
      - Children are Sabanê, but Portuguese speakers
        - The eldest already have children who are also Sabanê, but Portuguese speakers
    - Wife2, much younger, also mixed parentage (mother Lakondê, father Tawaindê)
  - Adopted Sabanê son (1970, Por)
    - Married Manézinho's daughter (family 2)
      - All children only speak Por
    - This man spoke of his desire to learn Sab. As he has often heard the language, this may be possible, but it seems he has made no real effort to enlist the help of his father-in-law Manézinho. He is not officially engaged in education

Diagnosis: Transmission to children born prior to, but not after, moving to Aroeira. There is a slight possibility that the adopted Sabanê son may aid in recuperation.

#### *Family 5*

- The eldest son of the older couple in family 3
- The polyglot daughter from family 4
  - Although both speak Sab (he understands it), none of their children can.

- The first child was born in 1980 in Aroeira.
- All children speak only Por.

Diagnosis: No transmission.

### *Family 6*

- Sabanê M (±1955, Sab, Taw, Mamaindê, some Por)
  - This elder was one of the few who remained in Espirro after 1968.
  - Father of the current cacique (as of 2001)
    - This suggests the tendency for leadership to be passed on, as this son is the grandchild of a famous cacique.
- Sabanê (?) wife (1960)
  - This woman is the daughter of the murdered captain Paulo.
  - Generally she is considered as part of the Sabanê group, but some of the older people consider her to be of Sowaintê ascendancy.
- Son (1973, Por)
  - Cacique has two wives:
    - Tawaindê Wife1
    - Sabanê Wife2
      - All children speak Por.
  - This son's sister is married to the cacique's brother-in-law (Por)
    - This husband (the cacique's brother-in-law) has a Tawaindê mother and only came to live in the Indigenous Territory as an adult. This is the injured man

Diagnosis: No transmission

### *Family 7*

- Sabanê woman (1956 Sab, Taw, Por)
- Tawaindê husband
- Sabanê children (the first of whom was born in 1972)
  - All children and grandchildren are monolingual Por speakers.



Diagnosis: No transmission

#### *Family 8*

- Sabanê man (1975 Por)
  - Mixed parentage: Lakondê mother, Sabanê father
  - Has two Tawainde sisters for wives
  - All children speak only Por.

Diagnosis: No transmission.

#### *Family 9*

- Sabanê (?) Mother (Lak, Por)
  - Sabanê father, Lakondê mother
  - Window of a Sabanê
  - One of the few good Lak speakers aside from Dona Teresa (her maternal aunt MZ)
- Brother1 (1971 Por)
  - Married to two Tawaindê
  - Tawaindê children
- Brother2 (1981 Por)
  - Married to Mamaindê
  - Sabanê children speak only Por
- Younger siblings of brothers speak only Por.

Diagnosis: No apparent transmission

#### *Family 10*

- Sabanê woman (1953 Sab, Taw, Lak, Por)
  - Sabanê mother, Negarotê father
- Tawaindê husband
- All children are Tawaindê.

Diagnosis: No transmission

#### *Family 11*

- Sabanê woman (1930 Sab, passive Por)
  - Oldest Sabanê woman living in Aroeira

- Rarely leaves her home
- Widow of the last Lakondê leader, Dona Teresa's shaman brother.
- Children show the diachrony of language shift.
  - Eldest daughter (Sab, Por) married a White and then (after a divorce or becoming a widow) another.
    - Lives away from Indigenous Territories in the town of Pimenta Bueno and thus she lost most contact to the Sabanê and it is unlikely that her children will learn Sab.
- Son 1(1962 Por, likely passive Sab)
  - Wife 1 (1965, Por, passive Sab)
  - Children all monolingual Por speakers
- Son 2(1965 Por)
  - Married into the regional society and is not involved in indigenous life.

Diagnosis: Note that the first generation are speakers of the Indigenous language, the second has some degree of bilingualism, and the third is generally monolingual in Por. This points to language shift and no transmission.

This summary appraisal of the year 2000 provides the basic map of the Sabanê language in Aroeira and includes Manézinho's family. Although they live outside of this particular indigenous area they maintain close ties to the village. Some information is be lacking but the overall tendency of language shift is obvious. Members of the younger generation are sometimes only mentioned in passing and a few have been omitted for simplicity and to avoid redundancy. All the of youngest generation are native speakers of Portuguese. Thus it is unnecessary to enumerate them. There remains the question of the important amount of Sabanê who live in the town of Vilhena (or in the region and in Rondônia). Two or three of the older people in this situation may be native Sabanê speakers. This dispersal draws away a relevant number of possible native speakers and very likely augments the number of Portuguese speakers in the more recent generations. A few of the latter group probably were on the way to complete assimilation but are now registered on a list of the Funai office. Although the people living in Aroeira know them, the Sabanê and their descendants in town and in the region tend to be immersed in the regional society. Pending further research, these people do not play a major role in language maintenance as Portuguese dominates and their network of social relations with Indians does not seem to be intense enough to

counteract the dispersal (for example, living in different parts of the town adds to the material costs of relationship maintenance). Given that in the Indian village the shift is evident, in the town, where conditions probably demand a higher level of commitment to the traditional language for its maintenance, the demise of the Sabanê language is even more likely.

The survey permits some further observations. The oldest generations of Sabanê mainly consists of native Sabanê speakers, most of whom learned another Nambikwara language or Portuguese as a second (or even third) language. The habit of learning the native language first and a disposition to multiple language acquisition was very strong in this period. I noted above that several people born around 1960 still acquired more than one language, although there is already an exception to this generalization. The oldest members of the generation born in Aroeira are thought of as native speakers of Portuguese only. In fact, as expected from a linguistic situation in transition, when the older generations still speaks one or several languages marriages between Sabanê partners or mixed marriages between Sabanê and non-Sabanê partners may contribute to the maintenance of active or passive knowledge of the traditional language. Manézinho's standards are high and, therefore, in his sense, all the generations born in Aroeira are not fully competent Sabanê speakers. However, at other moments, when he relaxes his austere norm, he sometimes concedes some limited measure of competence to the older part of the those born in Aroeira, like, for example, in the case of the cacique. Dona Teresa does the same. In other words, the generation that now has growing children (a few already have grandchildren) posses a certain familiarity with the language that could facilitate an eventual learning process. In principle, all accounts agree upon the fact that their children definitely do not enjoy this advantage and to them the implementation of a Sabanê language teaching program would be equivalent to learning a second, a foreign language. The measure to which the last generation has been exposed to native languages remains uncertain. Hence, if exposed to native language use by grandparents or, very occasionally, by their parents, the acquaintance with the sounds and perhaps the knowledge of a few words may occur. Additionally, this situation has only been ascertained indirectly and so there is still the possibility of an unexpected surprise. A more profound sociolinguistic research would have to take into account observation of linguistic interaction within the context of daily life, language proficiency tests and a more long term perspective (Dorian 1980). Nevertheless, the possibility of some fortunate surprise aside, the result of the

survey is probably fairly accurate. To illustrate, Manézinho once used Sabanê to ask a young man returning from a hunt what he caught. The question “what did you hunt” was met with a blank stare.

The practice of interethnic marriages diminished the possibility of Sabanê language transmission. As the cases above show, the marriage with White men is consistently detrimental to the native language. A positive attitude towards their own and other native languages precluded the falling into disuse of the Sabanê language until the sixties. It was around this time that Portuguese became the language of contact with the increasingly impinging surrounding regional society but it did not yet not predominate absolutely in the sphere of internal interactions (where, in analogous cases, native languages were also still being learned). The traditional point of view about multilingualism was driven home by an important Tawaindê elder (according to my notes, this is likely Federico) who on our first visit to Aroeira candidly expounded: you must know languages to explain yourself to other peoples in order to be able not to go to war with them (approximate transcription). According to the template of alliance, in order to establish real friendship some people of each distinct group begin to learn the other’s language. In a way this is what happened to Portuguese, tying an alliance with the people of Rondon implied learning their language. In this sense, Brazilian Portuguese did not pose a threat to the original languages. The reciprocal occurrence of the Whites learning any Indian language never happens and the normal Brazilian attitude is to regard the Indian languages as primitive, possibly not even fully human. They believe that they are of too little value and mostly too difficult to bother. All in all, these inferior languages are considered to be superfluous and not worthy of any effort of preservation. Afonso França did not prohibit the native languages in Espirito Santo but it is unlikely that he held them in any high esteem and it is certain that all interactions with the inferior Indians were in Portuguese. The tappers present in the Indigenous Territory disdained the indigenous languages, a feeling that the Indians doubtlessly noticed. The labor regime did not prohibit the native languages and overall sociocultural change, except work discipline, did not seem to be that high on the agenda. Yet it is obvious that the most common language of all was Portuguese, the lingua franca used for economic and social purposes in the social center. It also became the language of domination and the language which the reality of colonial rule promoted as the superior language. The decade of the sixties was a crucial phase for the language shift and the fate of Sabanê. After the arrival of the road, the dismantlement of the telegraph station,

the epidemics, the end of the autonomous village(s) and the abrupt ending of the camp regime generated the fragmentation of indigenous social life and an elevated degree of contact with the booming and increasingly overwhelming regional society. In the 1970s the encirclement of Rondon was more than finished, its effects multiplied and the impact of the colonization of Rondônia became more strongly felt.

In the end, the Northern Nambikwara and the Sabanê lost all their original lands and went to live in Aroeira, the homeland of a Southern Nambikwara group, the only place where these diverse peoples united to create an Indian village (to put it in Brazilian geographical terms, they were expelled from Rondônia and exiled in Mato Grosso). The relocation in Aroeira also signified a flight or a retreat from the insecurity resulting from the pressures and heightened contact with the encompassing regional society. The choice of accepting the offer of the Nambiquara Project derived from the larger framework of the expropriation of their lands. The Indians probably perceived this forced alienation as an inescapable fact. If the people in the Seringal do Faustino officially were on someone else's land, the people in Marco Rondon may also not have been certain about their land rights[xliii]. Furthermore, the extended duration of a variant of conquest and colonial rule of the sociocultural and economic development regime that many Sabanê and Northern Nambikwara suffered left as its structural effects previously unknown notions about the world and new sociocultural dispositions. This long term context with the inculcation of the social classification of the opposing ethnic groups with the pair superiority/inferiority was reinforced by the metal instruments (and more violently by the metal parts of the shotgun). The 'Ax People's' imposition of sociocultural superiority is a necessary condition for the comprehension of the language shift among the generations born in Aroeira. Take as an example Manézinho, his spouse, and their children raised in Aroeira. This was one of the few families where both parents spoke Sabanê. Both parents reiterated on various occasions that they attribute a great importance to their cultural tradition and native language. Their children perhaps perform some degree of language competence, the best being possibly a semi-speaker. This compares favorably with similar families. They actively promote maintenance (like with their grandchild) combined with the general disposition to multilingualism (of which they are the very example). They confessed being disappointed with their children's competency. Not even with the retraction within the sphere of the family, functioning as a separated context of domestic language maintenance, did

the parents retain the capacity to resist the external pressures. The domestic domain was ineffectual to full traditional language maintenance. One of the children's answers to the mother's push to learn Sabanê was to say that it is *too difficult*. They are not convinced by their mothers' argument that she herself learned Sabanê as a second language from her stepmother when she was a young. In fact, this answer resembles the stereotype circulating in the national society about the complexity of Indian *dialects*, reinforced by belief that these are not worth the investment in time and energy. It bespeaks of the influence of national stereotypes within the natural locus of the language maintenance of languages other than the predominant *national language*.

Manézinho also holds his cultural heritage in high regard. For example, although he is not a practicing shaman anymore, he still exercises some shamanic powers. One such ability includes dreaming to visit to other places, a skill that allows him to investigate the health situation of people far away. He recounted the myths and other histories to his children, with the provision that he did not have a complete knowledge of the repertoire of stories or the complete version of these myths. Perhaps in some of the myths an additional explanation may be found about the apparent efficacy of outside definition of the native language as inferior. After all, research reveals that children up to seven easily absorb two languages as native speakers[xliv]. Therefore, the parent's disposition to language maintenance and multilingualism could have produced a bilingualism in separated spheres of social interaction. Apart from the external impingement of inferiority of language and culture, it would be logical that some elements of the traditional Sabanê culture provide an internal dimension of the transformation (Gow 2001). One of the myths Manézinho told his children refers to a concept that may elucidate some of the internal conceptions at play. It is a myth about the origin of animals where some trace of the indigenous notion of transformation may be discerned (edited here for clarity from two versions; even so, again, sometimes the subject referred to is unclear):

*Some young adults used to go visit the neighboring village of an old man and enjoy food like meat and fish, just like in the old days up to now. Well, not really until now, today they don't do that any more, those people in Aroeira seem to have turned into Whites already. When one lives in the forest, one hunts a lot, catches fish, collects honey, there are these good things, that is the way it used to be[xlv].*

*Let's go and get a necklace. The two young men went to take a bath with the two beautiful young granddaughters of the old man but they were smart and did not sleep with them. If you slept with them you would become drunk, tipsy, and then he [the old man] would kill and eat you. The young men stayed for the feast but they did not fall asleep. If you slept you would die. They killed [the guests] for eating, even if they hunted [too] because they were shameless. At night the men ate, got a necklace, and went home. Another man observed them but they did not tell anyone about the visit [in their own village]. Then the other man [from the village of the young men] made up his mind to go by himself. When he went to bathe with the girls, he slept with them and he went sleepy, quite weak, and the people [of the other village] said, well, we are already in for it. The old man was glad. He told some stories by the fireside and the other man laid down his head to rest on the buttocks of the old man[xlvi]. When the young man slept, they took a pestle and cut his neck. Everybody joined in, happy, and went to the plaza. There were many people and so they cut him into small pieces and ate all of him. The two villagers observed that this man did not return and knew that he had gone to other village without saying anything and had been eaten. When it was around midday, they went to the other village again. They liked to go around visiting, gathering feathers, eating. When they arrived the other man really had been killed. The old man was beating the bones to pulverize them, to eat the powder with manioc cake. He hid the bones and they talked. By this time the girls had already gone to the forest out of shame, out of fear. What are you eating? Nothing, I am just playing, cracking nuts. Where are the others? Ooh they went to gather patawa palm fruits. Well I want them to gather lots and to turn into animals [seems to be visitors speaking]. After talking, they left and went to get something to eat. When they were chewing something like meat and manioc cake in the houses they hear toc toc toc. Then one said to the other, let's turn them all into animals, put them out [out of the village into the surroundings]. When they returned to the old man, the old man ran out into the savanna and turned into a seriema [a bird that lives and runs on the ground]. Go and run, from now on your food shall be grasshoppers [injunction by the visitors who now are the subjects who direct all actions]. They went up to the sit on the main beams of the house and one blew fuuu towards the Indians in the forest and they called them to the village. He blew on all of them, fuuu [this sound indicates blowing tobacco smoke, a shamanic act], they turned into animals, I don't want anyone around here anymore. The other one told him to blow into the heart, all of them had eaten this other man. They called them to the village but they already were animals, tapir,*

*pigs, anteater, monkeys, everyone from the village, without exception. The monkey first was people. The young men were intelligent, both were shamans, they transformed them into animals, snake, jaguar, all kinds. From the village they all spread out, you go that way and you that way to go and live in the wild. Before there were no animals in the wild.*

*These people were all turned into animals. Everyone with his name, they told them their names. I will tell this rapidly [an example about the process naming and the determination of each one's food]. A bee. His name, to make chicha for a feast [chicha is a special drink known in other parts of Amazonia as caxiri or caissoma]. Aah, I want them to make lots of honey. I too want to drink honey [one of the people to be transformed]. They misled him, he turned into an irara. You shall eat only honey [this is a weasel-like animal that loves honey]. He yelled two times to call them and a little later they arrived, the tapir in front, everyone arrived filling up the plaza. When they were all gathered on the plaza, they sent them all on their way. You shall eat filth, rotten things, raw patawa [a palm], all sorts of ants, that's what you shall eat. Don't be shameless anymore. They were transformed and never will turn into humans again. He told each what to eat. They went away, the young men descended and returned to their village. This is what my father told me.[xlvi]*

The myth deals with the internal sociocultural parameters of what constitutes disapproved conduct and the consequences of such behavior. The key notion that transforms the villagers into animals (in the case of the girls even before the action of the two shamans from the other village), is *shame*. In these small scale communities the major force of social control is usually conveyed by the public opinion and the threat of ostracism. Shunning someone implies in the negation or retrieval of recognition of the other as a person, a social *persona*, the ignoring of his social existence or even his presence (particularly within the kin group; see, for example, Fiorini 2000: 100-1; 105). Shame signifies here the assumption by the perpetrator that the conduct broke an injunction and anticipates the public rejection and withdrawal of approval. Shame is more generally thought of as to contain an emotional content of "(...) a kind of lowering of one's own feeling of self-worth. Ashamed of oneself as a result of having one's action rejected, one experiences oneself as being of lower social value than one had previously assumed" (Honneth 2001: 44). Or as Marx (1975: 200) already observed in 1843: "Shame is a kind of anger turned in on itself". This shame can concern oneself but



essentially is produced in interaction with others. Although in the story the old man of the myth does not seem very sensitive to the moral norm, all the others retreat into the forest. Old people among the Valley Nambikwara are considered to be closer to the spirits, on a continuum between old age and the world of the spirits. The old people may consume foods not eaten by young people (Fiorini 2000). Thus, if, as is likely, the same idea prevails here, in a sense the old man is already less human. His transformation is, in a way, to be expected, but, by remaining in the village, he seems to feel less shame than others.

While the Nambikwara of the Guaporé Valley, and in particular the Wasusu, do not socially value the enfeebled elderly, they do treasure their knowledge. The old are seen as being ambivalent humans, less human than the young are. For the younger people, vigorous and fully human, the mythical template attributes shame to the consumers of human flesh and this subsequent shame of the villagers induces them to a lower self-esteem that precedes their transformation into animals. In this myth, shame is associated with transformation into another ontological being. Interestingly, the concept of *shame*, or in Portuguese, *vergonha*, is a relevant issue in Brazilian, Portuguese, and Mediterranean culture, and recurs in the literature. In these cases, shame intertwines with notions like honor in a configuration of concepts that mutually determine each other's significance. The Sabanê lack such a sociocultural semantic configuration but the possibility of the analogy and the translation of the Sabanê concept with this word by Manézinho in Portuguese is quite interesting. An important difference is likely to be that shame, like the personal actions taken because of it in the myth, is personal and no one is responsible for the shame of someone else. If the notion prevails that every person is responsible for himself – as noted in myths and history (see also Part III) – than individual action causes shame and may lead to collective shaming and shunning of a particular person (Kensinger 1995: ch. 5). Shunning and social ostracism entails the same exclusion from collective social life as turning into animals[xlviii]. It does not seem accidental that the most frequent answers by elders about the reason for their children not learning the traditional languages is that *they are ashamed*. Speaking Sabanê might be like the audible token of transformation into an inferior being, of being like the animals today; those beings have their own characteristic sounds but have lost the use of human language. And, as this is the personal experience of the young people, the individual will not be prevailed upon by the elders.

It is not totally clear how and why the language is continually understood to be inferior within this Indian village. It is uncertain what are all of the reasons that such negative message affected the domestic sphere or, in general, the Indian backstage. Some reasons may be adduced. From the beginning in Aroeira the language of contact was Portuguese. In that sense it always was the dominant language of the Post, of the symbolic and material core of the Indian Land and of the people who had provided the opportunity to build a village here. This was the place and the language of the buildings of the Funai and of the goods and commodities regularly distributed as donations or under the guise of *projects*. The education started in this period only employed the dominant language. Portuguese was the language associated with power, with the mediation with the external powers, and it gained further ascendancy with the completion of the *encirclement*: the transformation of all of the physical and social landscape around the Indigenous Territory into towns and large farms. The Indians even had to struggle for a while to remove invaders from the reserved area. Also, the village gained a much easier access to town facilitated by the donation of a car. Portuguese in all of this period must have appeared to the younger generations born in the village as the language of dominance and prestige. It was a language full of potential for their personal future, contrary to the traditional languages. The overwhelming material power of the dominant outsiders and their disdain for the indigenous culture, ultimately led to the feeling of inferiority, which is, also according to students of another continent, at the basis of their resistance towards the maintenance of the language of their parents: "*The decision to abandon the own language always derives from a change in the self esteem of the community*" (Brenzinger, M., B.Heine and G.Sommer 1991: 42). However, this conclusion still is contradictory with the prestige attached to tradition and language by the elders which is still visible today. All elders in Aroeira, as far as known to us, are traditionally minded and stress the necessity of their cultural and linguistic heritage, even when this is to be realized in the new setting within which the multifaceted *community* now finds itself constrained. Other observations indicate that the same process of linguistic loss happens among the Tawaindê[xlix]. Among the Manduka, as commented upon by our interlocutors, language extinction appears to be immanent.

The preliminary impression one gets from the political process as it takes place within the *community* testifies to a predominant role of the informal council of elders. As in the case of the consult about anthropological fieldwork (by a man

with daughter going through seclusion), the younger men, even when officially the appointed leaders, always defer to the opinion reached by *the old men*. If this is true, the predominant influence of the oldest men stands out as deviant from the normal pattern of Nambikwara leadership. Normally the old men partake of the ambivalence of the prestige of knowledge and the devalued physical vigour and the leaders are the younger mature competent men of vitality and vivaciousness (see Part III). Maybe the fragmented and complicated nature of the different people's history explain this predominance[1]. Be that as it may, in this sense the language death in course is more remarkable as it happens against the wishes of the old people: a change contrary to their desires is not comprehensible by external factors alone, although in one similar case a much more thorough analysis of the general sociocultural premises and actual behavior explained why this could occur (Kulick 1997)[li]. The message of the myth and the pressure exerted by *shame* provides an additional social force to the external coercion to speak Portuguese well. In a way, the younger generation thus imitates a template of transformation: being ashamed of being a *backward Indian*, of speaking an *inferior* language, and being sensitive to the risk of speaking a broken Portuguese with Brazilians. Speaking the Portuguese language well relieves, in the eyes of the regional society, the Indian of a salient part of his negative stigma. Not to mention the practical fact that fluent mastery diminishes the risk of being deceived and tricked. The Sabanê's history is replete with various manifestations of reprehensible disrespect. Perhaps most serious is the physical abuse they suffered (a concept particularly foreign to a people who never so much as hit their children). One may suppose such invasion of the person and his autonomy to affect one's confidence in oneself. There was also the moral disrespect in the negation of land rights and structural domination as well as the evaluative disrespect as evident in the belittling of their way of life and attendant language (Honneth 2001). Shame sums up the situation of the extraneous attack on the value of one's self and its primordial identification with a people. It is a sentiment that causes a palpable generational gap between those who grew up before contact and those who did after. Being a native Portuguese speaker partially resolves the search for the experience of social recognition as a human being. This accomplishment elevates the status of the speaker because he performs at the same level as his interlocutor. A common phrase like *he is Indian but speaks Portuguese well*, attests to this partial recuperation of esteem and self-esteem. It certainly takes away the shame of not being able express oneself properly in the dominant language. In effect, speaking Portuguese well avoids not just a source of

shame but eliminates one of the foremost chances to suffer humiliation in interaction with regional Brazilians. One of the worst effects caused by colonial conquest and domination is a mode of repression and cultural alienation that generates a particular kind of shame: (...) *those who, subjected to whatever form of symbolic domination, are doomed to this supreme form of dispossession that is the shame of the self*" (Bourdieu 2004: 619).

Perhaps we can extend this analysis. Anthropophagy denotes treating humans as game, eating the wrong food, as if the human Sabanê neighbors were animals to be killed and eaten. This equation in fact concerns an error of perspective because human beings hunt and consume animals and never mistake humans for game whereas animals eat other animals. A very common assumption in Indian societies concerns the shared tenet that personhood is produced through the consumption of determinate foods and it comprises a very salient dimension in the production of bodily substance. The food consumed thus constructs the substance of the person and "you are what you eat" (but you do not eat what you are). Consuming humans is the consumption of one's own kind and thus incompatible with social life. Hence the solution in the myth to flee to the forest and the intervention by the shamans transforming the faulty people into animals (note that this occurred in the time when humans and animals were not neatly separate and animals were still both human/animal Persons)[lii]. The result of the myth avoids the consumption of identity and restores the essential difference between consumer and consumed. Then the shamans condemned the flawed humans to be transformed into non-humans and determined that they shall eat only their own inferior foods. This transformation implies transubstantiation, a change in internal substance; effectively highlighting the strict correlation between what one is and what one eats. Eating different food literally substantiates a new bodily substance of the animals, liberating their flesh to be fit for human consumption. The food consumed is a fundamental statement of the kind of being one is. This is exactly what Manézinho said in his critique about Aroeira in his prelude to the myth, to him hunting and consuming game is essential to the very being of a Sabanê, even to being *Indian*. The Whites, by comparison, are composed of their dietary staples, rice and beans (and meat from domestic animals), and as the Aroeira Indians are similarly nourished, they become less Indian. Poor in game, as is Aroeira, means being poor in proper food of the traditional way of life. From the time of Espirro, the Indians consume much Brazilian foods and the notion of *food* applies here too to the non-traditional foods

(as seen above in Part I). Despite his childrens' preference for Brazilian fare, Manézinho opts for the traditional diet of game and manioc in line with the substantive logic of his sociocultural origin.

According to the myth's logic, shame impels a massive transformation into another external bodily form; and changed food habits could be indexical to transubstantiation, the change of the internal content. Accordingly, in the actual flow of life of the subjectivity of the people in Aroeira transpire elements that characterize them as transformed in the direction of the image of what it means to be *White*. The adoption of the Portuguese language in this way might be interpreted as the most significant feature of a transformation along the parameters set by Sabanê culture. On the other hand, this remains an uncompleted transformation, unlike the origin of animals who are beings at a position of one degree removed from mankind. Assimilation, in the sense of the dissolution of difference, is out of the question. Unlike the mythical fluidity of former times the *Whites* do not change their *iron* nature and the Indians are socially in a double bind. Even though they adopted Portuguese and in their own cultural sense modified their nature, diminishing the cultural distance with the regional society and reducing the visibility of the outer signs of stigmatization, the *Whites* refuse to consider them equals: for them the substantial nature of *indianidade* did not change and the Indians remain *others*. Worse, while the extinction of native languages has always been actively pursued, when a group switches to the Portuguese language, they become vulnerable to the charge of not being sufficiently *Indian*, and unworthy of the State assistance and protection.

For Aroeira this danger is less than has been verified historically for the Indians in the Northeast of Brazil but the accusation is never far away (Reesink 1983). The danger of interruption is less for a number of cultural practices, especially religious conceptions and rituals persist and may serve as diacritical features (despite a prior decline observed by the Sabanê of the seclusion of girls reaching menstruation, a practice being partially reassumed; cf. Price 1989a). As for the Sabanê side, maybe the hypothesis about the conception of an uncompleted transformation needs a complement too. In spite of the transformational processes construed, the final conception of themselves might not be a notion of the complete transformation into another being. In fact, the people in Aroeira still hunt and, as far as I know, still love to eat game. Game, as noted, is the primary food of human beings. Possibly, if the opportunity presented itself, people prefer

to consume foods like rice and beans in combination with game (as the Latundê). Game is now especially hunted for rituals, like at the occasion of the exuberant meals of the young woman's first night after ritual seclusion. Such observations could imply a preference for the consumption of the key symbolical foods of both peoples (game and beans; in the next Part I will discuss the Southern Nambikwara denomination of the *Whites* as the *Bean People*). Perhaps, then, the actual conception is not only one of no total transformation but of the partial transformation into *Whites* while retaining some aspect of Sabanê identity. This leads to the new prevailing possibility of simultaneously being Sabanê and White. Viewed in the larger context, the hypothesis matches a larger sociocultural perspective on Indian societies which lends some weight to its confirmation.[liii]. When Manézinho characterized the Indians in Aroeira as no longer Indians, he may be emphasizing one part of the equation. It is interesting to note that while the assertion matches the *Whites'* type of accusation, the symbolic premises differ profoundly. The existence of identical concepts like *shame* in the two languages is very unlikely. Such a translation may mask the true meaning of each concept. Concepts signify in the context of their respective symbolic logic and these differ greatly from one another. Although it is possible or even likely the Indians and the Brazilians think they are saying the same word with the same meaning and connotations, they are not. The use of Portuguese may facilitate communication but it still may be partially miscommunication.

When the Sabanê ex-captain who led the construction of Aroeira, Manézinho, complained about the *indianidade* of his former *community*, this must be seen as the expression of longstanding dissatisfaction with the course of events in the village. One of the consequences of uniting fractions of different peoples in the same *community* is that the subsequent demographic recuperation enlarges the population far beyond the normal pre-contact standards, which averaged around 25 to 30 people per village, with the possible exception of larger Sabanê villages in the remoter past. Such quantitative concentration creates tension that adds to the ethnic oppositions. The official Aroeira cacique, Paulo, once proudly told me that around 220 people live in Aroeira, the majority of whom are considered Sabanê. Rumors and gossip flourish in this sort of environment, often with negative consequences, as occurred after the death of the child mentioned earlier. Some of the gossip accused the mother of negligence. Such occurrences contributed to a gloomy public mood that did not predispose the *community* to accept outside strange visitors. Manézinho dislikes this crowded atmosphere, the

frictions caused by different ethnic origins and the resulting convoluted politics. Overall, he disapproved of the current living situation in this village. This, added to the poor ecological conditions of an area that puts the Sabanê on foreign territory, was an impetus of his plan to return to his homeland. The land of his birth, youth, and the territory of his people called him back after a prolonged exile. After moving out of Aroeira this project assumed a further significance. Backed up by his son living in town, he got Funai to negotiate a return to the land between the Roosevelt and Tenente Marques Rivers[liv]. This land already is the southernmost tip of the Aripuanã Indigenous Park occupied by Sabanê's customary enemies, the Cinta Larga. At the time of my fieldwork, the prospects of succeeding were fairly good but still uncertain (in 2001). In reality this vision encompasses a design for a Sabanê revival. It was not just a return to land where his father and grandfather died, and where he was born, a land that he rightfully apprehends as his homeland from which only the adverse circumstances of history drove him away but, simultaneously, envisioning a Sabanê community that not just reclaims the land but also recreates a viable, ethnically Sabanê, village. In other words, if realized it signifies the rebirth of a predominately Sabanê village in traditional Sabanê territory[lv].

It is unclear how such events may influence the future. The timid signals captured in Aroeira to improve Sabanê language competence both on individual and on a educational basis are insufficient to expect language revival. The "dead weight of history" (to use another famous expression) suggests that the sediment of many years of domination and language shift cannot be undone without a very strong internal counterforce and an impulse from the same dominant society. The major risk is that the bilingual education now actively stimulated is not geared to turn the language into a living language but into a decorous usage of a vocabulary, with perhaps a few catch phrases, subordinated to the impression management of being dutiful teachers and *real* Indians[lvi]. Still, the new settlement in the old Sabanê territory could create a entirely new situation if a few of latest native speakers contribute to a critical mass of speakers to keep the language alive. Manézinho and his wife serve as an example in educating their grandson during his stay in their house. Unfortunately, a series of factors militate against such a positive outcome: some kind of Sabanê linguistic and cultural revival embedded within the lived micro-world of everyday life of a Sabanê village. Although initially the Aroeira community decided to participate in the return from exile and important families promised to relocate to the Roosevelt River, the plans fell

through after some political complications that dangerously increased the rift between Manézinho and the *community* (mid-2002; personal communication by Antunes). When the *community* decided to disallow the research, they took the trouble to visit Dona Teresa and Manézinho (both of whom lived outside the village). Both refused to take this advice and this further strained relations, but not irreversibly. The different life experiences in White society prepared them to look with a different eye and, autonomously, to pursue their own agenda. Later, further tensions led to a break that represented a near-rupture in ties. For some time only very few families and individuals from Aroeira still adhered to the project of founding the new village and some of them were not Sabanê. Some of the children and families of the leader were amongst those engaged and scheduled to participate.

Prospective exercises comprise the attempt to projection along the lines of various probabilities. For the moment I assume as the most likely scenario that the conditions arousing the interest in the Sabanê language are very unlikely to produce more than a revival of Sabanê as a symbolically significant language in interethnic relations, as a token of *indianidade*, but not as a fully socially operative living language. Manézinho almost single-handedly pursued his dream of the Sabanê village, believing in its feasibility. For a time the leading couple was homeless, later on they lived on and cultivated a piece of land adjacent to the Aripuanã Park bordering the Roosevelt. Here they decided on the site of the new village within the limits of the Indian Land. In August or September 2002 they transferred to the Indigenous Park and began building their house and felling trees for gardens in order to settle definitively in their homeland. With their firm intent and the support of the Funai now (end of 2002, beginning of 2003) the new village promises to be a permanent settlement. Several unfolding scenarios are now possible. The future of the language is largely tied in with the ability of the Sabanê couple to attract other Sabanê speakers and aggregate these people into a viable village[lvii]. The problem concerns not so much the existence and permanence of the village, after a slow start the increasingly favorable conditions encouraged a number of families to join. The chances of survival of Sabanê depend, however, on the presence of Sabanê Indians and the capacity of these people to speak the traditional language. The village may prosper in its own specific way, but the effect of this success for language maintenance still may not suffice. A situation conducive to language maintenance demands a reasonable group, a social core of older Sabanê speakers amidst the majority of non-



speakers, of passive or partially competent speakers. The language must be spoken in daily life, reinforcing any favourable attitude towards the perpetuity of peoples' linguistic and cultural heritage. The renaming of this village from *Roosevelt* to *Sowaintê* signifies the aspiration to place the new village as the successor of the villages encountered by Rondon and an attempt to shape the future with the memory of the past.

Unfortunately, Antunes observed in the course of recurrent visits at the end of 2002 and the beginning of 2003, no 'critical mass' of Sabanê native speakers exists and the language is hardly spoken in the normal interactions of daily life. Little communication in the native language takes place when any non-speakers are present and, consequently, the Portuguese language is the easiest and most efficient medium of expression understood by all participants. Therefore, up until today the sociocultural conditions exclude a reversal of language loss among the younger generations. The objective of language maintenance necessitates additional appropriate measures to raise the prestige attached to the native language to a level that motivates the younger generations to learn the language and attain a higher degree of its usage in daily village life. The reversal from disdain for other languages to the exigency of the Indian language on the part of significant social actors in national society and the presence of a few Sabanê speakers is lacking. Only considerable educational and symbolic investments by the group itself, aided by the proper national institutions could possibly change the tendency. Even under these more fortunate circumstances it takes a concerted and determined effort to maintain the language as a living language. The realization of any optimistic scenario requires the presence of a number of native speakers, the gradual construction of local infrastructure with educational facilities, learning material for bilingual education (produced jointly by linguists and the Indians), a complete resurgence of collective self esteem, self confidence and the conviction of the value of own culture and language. The autonomy of inhabiting their own village and managing their own affairs while occupying the Sabanê homeland creates the necessary conditions for the actualization of this scenario. Only after these objectives are achieved can the younger generation be expected to invest seriously in their ancestral language.

The most likely scenarios for the future predict language death. The final most recent information by Antunes (2004: 3-4) is most serious. He reports that from the eight native speakers in 2000 the number decreased to three in 2004[lviii]. As

the only method to save the Sabanê language is outlined in the previous paragraph, and most Sabanê Indians of the *community* of Aroeira withdrew from participation in the new village, the possibility of revival is extremely unlikely. The political division of the factions in the old village is possibly at a high point. A sign of internal turmoil is the fact that in 2002 hardly anyone in Aroeira cleared gardens and planted as usual[lix]. Ethnic allegiances are shifting too. In the absence of clear rules on ethnic affiliation the children of mixed marriages in a mixed village becomes a matter depending on a variety of factors. One of the Indians affirmed that the boys join the fathers' group, the girls that of their mother. However, in reality ethnic affiliation is more complex than this apparently unique idea of double parallel descent (as among the Nambikwara do Campo, also without a fixed rule and subject to political considerations; Costa 1992: 8). As a result, submerged identities may resurface. To the surprise of Manézinho, one man he considers as belonging to his own people, a speaker of Sabanê, according to his son (the cacique who also adheres to his fathers' identity), asserts to be *Iakakolorê*[lx]. In other words, this concerns the historical subsumption by some peoples of formerly independent other groups, i.e. individuals or small groups of people originally belonging to other peoples that became incorporated in the larger surviving peoples (like the case of Sabanê and Sowaintê, habitually by marriage). The lack of definite rules of ethnic affiliation leaves space for reclaiming previously subsumed identities and the very magnitude and the cohesion of the *Sabanê* group may be affected by fracturing into different ethnic segments. At this moment in history, Aroeira passes through a phase of a precarious sociopolitical situation and a fluidity in the sociocultural field. For now, Aroeira continues to be a village of strife, tension and sociocultural modification.

The occupancy of the Roosevelt homeland has been initiated with few Sabanê Indians in the composition of the village, yet jointly with their spouses and people of other groups the village has roughly forty inhabitants (as of 2004; note 117)[lxi]. The tenacity of Manézinho to found a Sabanê village in the psychological comfort of their homeland, paid off with the abundant game and fertile soil. Despite the presence of people from other groups, the village conceptually belongs to the Sabanê. Soon after the Tawaindê of Aroeira followed suit. They too were tired of living in Aroeira and had many of the same complaints as the Sabanê. Thus, they solicited Funai to elaborate an expert report about their right to occupancy in the same region of the Roosevelt River because of their

traditional homeland in the Northern Nambikwara region. They perceive the advantages and possibly conceive the same project of cultural and linguistic revitalization in an ethnically more homogeneous village. There is no doubt that the Sabanê efforts in Sowaintê are necessary to strengthen their sociocultural and linguistic lived micro-world and encourage language maintenance. Regrettably, such an outcome is not likely[lxii]. Only a very propitious conjunction of contingencies can precipitate the maintenance of the Sabanê language as an effective and fully operative sociocultural medium. A massive and sustained effort will be necessary to save the Sabanê language, and the correlated unique sociocultural *worldmaking*, to borrow Goodman's (1978) term again.

### Notes

[i] The SIL is a controversial organization because the linguistic work is *de facto* subordinated to religious aims and a desire to translate the Bible into every language. A strongly ethnocentric bias of American culture also permeates their actions. The scientific work, the official face represented to outsiders, normally is at best mediocre, with a few notable exceptions. Most linguists are suspicious of outsiders. An exception is David Eberhard who permitted the use of the SIL library in Cuiabá to Stella Telles and myself and gracefully permitted the copy of material on the Mamaindê language he himself also studies.

[ii] Although the Indians did have an occasionally wear a tassel made of buriti fiber (a palm tree) that covered the genital area. Most or perhaps all Nambikwara possessed similar attire but did not require its use and some men simply went about bare.

[iii] In one myth a shaman utilizes a *wooden sword* to decapitate the evil spirit, so, in a way, one could see a parallel with the decapitation practiced by the American and consider that he acts as if the Sabanê are the evil spirits (Pereira 1983: 49). And, perhaps, in the light of recent 'perspectivism' of Lowland South America, from his point of view this may hold true because the Indians also killed the Americans and thus may appear as his bad spirits. Given the Christian belief associating pagans with spirits and the devil, an interpretation of these people as 'evil spirits' may not be so unexpected.

[iv] As seen, the incident happened in the savanna, and, it seems to me, in the territory of the *Nambikwara*. And thus the location of the Sabanê to the north and their alliance with this group coincides with the rendering of the event as a part of Sabanê oral tradition. In fact, the incident found its way in other Northern mythologies. This is something that needs an explanation rather than being

thought of simply as an indistinctively generalized Nambikwara ensemble event.

[v] Such killings were not always committed with bullets. Manézinho described an event when people suffering from severe headaches were killed by the personnel of the *engineer Rondon*, whom later buried the ill (apparently these people were Indians). In fact, Roosevelt explains that a *negro* of the Commission induced by the Paresi reacted violently to a Nambikwara raid on a Paresi village when he killed one of the assailants (1914: 187). He also clearly expresses that not even Rondon succeeded in clearing up all of the details of the affair for the Paresi did not answer all his questions by which Rondon attempted to verify if the rule of restraint had been followed. Rondon actually faced passive resistance to his famous rule and not even his dominating figure insured compliance.

[vi] Gow (2001) addresses these problems in a very stimulating manner for the Piro but his main method cannot be replicated here except for a few tentative observations. He is particularly interesting in his demonstration of the meaning of the SIL and the gringos (of which the Americans are emblematic) as construed by the Piro themselves and the role these conceptions played in the active construction of their own history.

[vii] The problem is the assumption of different voices by the narrator and the possible pronominal confusion about whom he is speaking. Saying that “*he*” is living here and “*he*” over there is the acting person is sometimes an unclear reference as to the identity of the actor.

[viii] *God*, as is very common in post-contact cosmologies, is a supernatural figure that plays a pre-eminent role in the mythology that underpins the current cosmological foundation of the universe. In this case it is not Thunder (what would be an equivalent to the famous Tupã now found around Brazil even in non-Tupi peoples), but it remains to be seen who this conspicuous personage can be. From probing the issue it seems that it may be the Moon (*Ela*), an inhabitant of the upper floor of the sky and the Sun’s father. The Sun lives with his own family at the other side of the same tier. *God* is called *Sasakanawi*.

[ix] Much later, in a short additional comment Manézinho emphasized that the cannibalism justified all revenge and that the younger brother insisting on taking the ax was more “intelligent”. The negligence of the older man was responsible for the White people as the younger man pointed out afterwards: ‘I told you so’. Perhaps because of this Manézinho added something not told before: the Indians involved decided to go up and live in the sky, still close to the earth at this time, and turn into some kind of supernatural beings.

[x] Again, for an ample analysis and the foundations of these assertions, see Lima

1995.

[xi] Keep in mind the strongly hierarchical nature of Brazilian society during most or, probably, all of its history, and the never changing subordinated place of *Indians* in the natural scheme of things (in a Dumontian sense of the encompassing whole made up of integrated structured parts and founded on inequality). Both Rondon's relations to civilians, his protective ideology and Afonso's concrete actions reflect the same premise.

[xii] For a summary of the regimented way of life, the discipline, the assignment of tasks and the molding by the institutions of the inmate into a new self (his *moral career*), the stereotyping and surveillance by the superior bureaucrats maintaining a great distance and inequality and the subordinates' reaction with the creation of a hidden social life, see Hannerz (1980: 214-7).

[xiii] Not to mention the tension generated by living on the land of their former enemies and some continuing episodes of war on other groups like the Mamaindê who hid in the forest (according to the Sabanê). The Sabanê did not chase after them with the design to kill the assailants because the *Nambikwara* did not let them (the events left some injured people and the enemy pursued the women).

[xiv] Price was horrified by these stories. However, at the time of the Nambiquara Project he concluded that the accusations could not be verified. In this period he was too busy trying to deal with the horrors of the present (but see Price 1975-6).

[xv] Discounting the forced labor character of this production, in itself the abundance proves the Sabanê's abilities and the normal under-production of the actual potential production noted for this mode of production among Indian peoples (notably as the *domestic mode of production* by Sahlins). This is why I call it a 'sustenance mode of production' instead of *subsistence* production. Sustenance refers to the socially determined level of production set by the standards of desired consumption.

[xvi] Lima analyzed this in the papers produced by SPI and drew a similar conclusion regarding the implementation of the ideology. This case study demonstrates the point to which this internally consistent policy can develop into a local totalitarian and violent regime of the colonial rule. This result is not always the end of the development of a local instance but does appear to be the final stage as its most accomplished form.

[xvii] Note how the myth itself stresses the overwhelming numbers of the Whites and its relation to steel.

[xviii] In *Tristes Tropiques* Lévi-Strauss observed how people from Cuiabá loathed the Line because of their disappointment with the lack of promised riches that the

Line ought to have brought them.

[xix] There was a very suspicious fire during the time of SPI's disintegration that destroyed many documents. França used to keep a diary but this too has disappeared.

[xx] A copy of the service record exists in the Funai archives of Cuiabá which were being organized at the time of my visit but a copy was found thanks to the courtesy of Anna Maria Moreira da Costa.

[xxi] From the beginning of the conquest this has been the pattern. It has to do with the sociocultural conceptions of masculinity and femininity that conceive the man as active and comprehensively dominant (even to imprint his *race*) and the woman as passive receptacles. Their own women should thus be guarded against inferiors but the men can take an inferior woman as a concubine or, less common, a wife (see Reesink 2001). This is actually the process implicitly foreseen by Rondon about the genetic contribution the Nambikwara could make to *Brazil*.

[xxii] What is equality in so-called egalitarian societies is no longer accepted as obvious and needs to be demonstrated, as cited earlier (Flannagan 1989). But recall when Lévi-Strauss ended up finding *people*, he meant that although in the sense a few differentiating dimensions existed (especially gender) in a fundamental way a basic principle of equality prevailed where this dimension could be played out in the elaboration of personal characteristics by the individual members of the group. Here the point is that the person, the group and the people are seen as predicated on a primary being of autonomy (that must be realized and complemented within the mesh of kin but not in a way profoundly subordinated to each other; see Part III).

[xxiii] Subjectivity may be defined as "*the felt experience of the person that includes his or her positions in a field of relational power*" (Das and Kleinman (2000: 1); see their introduction for a summary of current ideas on the anthropology of violence).

[xxiv] He died some years after the move and his heirs remained. They have since deceased.

[xxv] My notion would be that the clearings and its produce belong to them as long as they work there but that the owner did not transfer any property rights. At the most he promised some land to be inherited.

[xxvi] They did, however, complete a survey on land properties and excepted a number of farms in several of the numerated blocs. Thus many possessions were recognized along the road, including as far as can be seen on the maps discussed in Part I, the property where the Tawaindê lived.

[xxvii] Pending documentary confirmation, I cannot affirm his strategy included the retreat to the Pyreneus de Souza Indigenous Land from the outset, although it is clear from the Funai documents that Price did not dispose of all of the relevant information when he started the job. Afterwards, it is certain the Project did get involved and around 1977 one of his main assistants spent some time as head of the Post.

[xxviii] In Espirro interethnic relations existed as the wife of Manézinho, Ivone was baptized by a White man that prevented the murder of her father. However, godparent relations often straddle social divides and do not imply equality. The effect of the removal of one woman can be serious in small groups and severely limit the choice of partners from outside immediate family. This happened to an Aikaná whose wife ran away with a White man and another who was divorced for years. The first married a daughter of Manézinho, the second married the youngest Latundê sister Fatima (Part I). In a group like the Kwazá with at the most twenty-five speakers most of whom married Aikaná and do not use the language as primary language, the recent loss of one of the very few young women of an all Kwazá family to an older White man represents the increasing likelihood of language extinction.

[xxix] As always in these cases, this is an unanswerable historical question. One runs the risk of abstracting too much from the individual to his social category or from the collective to the individual.

[xxx] The emphasis occurs in the quote. The regrouping referred to is the colonial government's forced dislocation of villages aiming to empty the countryside and thus to preempt the guerrilla movement. This comparison is not far-fetched. At about this time the federal government created rather magnanimously a large Indigenous Territory, the Nambikwara Area, but all of it on the higher parts of the Parecis Plateau, considered by the government to be nearly worthless land. Amongst others, the Southern Mamaindê were forcefully resettled in this strange and ecologically different region, to liberate the Guaporé valley. It was only at great cost that they succeeded in returning (I will return to this in Part III).

[xxxi] Information by Marcelo dos Santos, formerly Price's collaborator who stayed on and lived in the region as a FUNAI agent, working in various functions until recently (2001, personal communication). The coordinator hence used his own capital to practice this *charity*.

[xxxii] The employees do realize this (one of them told me about it), but as this particular institution is technically obliged to fund the expenses made for the transport, there is little they can do.

[xxxiii] Pensions are one small but reliable source of monthly income (see Part I and also Part III). In compensation to the small tricks played to obtain relief for the car's expenses, and quite the contrary to most other Nambikwara communities, they did not sell their timber. In part, I think, this is because the political power is still in the hands of an informal council of elders. A new leader who descends from a mixed Indian-White parentage, a contested man, with this different sociocultural background is said to be campaigning to sell to the *White* logging firms.

[xxxiv] In this case (2000), the *post chief* is an amiable person whose personal interests lie with not being perturbed with too much work. His job is easy enough. It permits him to live in Vilhena and take care of his individual activities that sometimes seem to predominate above anything else. Among the latter figures prominently his own farm for which, according to some Indians, he sometimes hires the Indians under his charge. About two years later he was dismissed from his duties under pressure from the Indians. They alleged that not only he did not dedicate much attention to the area and did not pay the Indians for their work on his farm. They accuse him of not paying any salary because he frames the work as his *teaching* the laborers to work (Antunes 2002, personal communication). In other words, old justifications also die hard. Whether used by the employee or as political accusation by the Indians.

[xxxv] This parallels a much older accusation by a faction of ethnocentric Funai agents who want to eliminate from the indigenist field any researcher critical of their authoritarianism. The anthropologist is accused of never rendering any concrete retribution to the community but in reality it is his critique of ethnocentric practices and his activities in national society in favor of a different policy that bothers this faction. That the notion of *research* has become something intrinsically suspicious could be used by FUNAI functionaries to avoid any outsiders in their region. In this case, I am suspicious this has happened at times but I do not have firm evidence. A precedent exists. Some years ago a female researcher was boycotted by local FUNAI people and had to discontinue her project.

[xxxvi] I did not have access to the thesis until after writing this chapter. Once more, this could be a practice shared by the Nambikwara ensemble but such suggestion is subject to further confirmation. The idea seems to be never to deny a request immediately to the face of the person.

[xxxvii] As nobody had informed me of this injunction, I was unaware of proper behavior. Moreover, even if they were offended, the conduct criticized did not



deviate from standard Brazilian behavior to which they were accustomed (I inadvertently raised my voice in order to be heard by everyone; the cacique, for example, otherwise would not have heard me). During the meeting nobody called my attention to the supposed fault but it was, in my view, gratefully explored. The reaction scared the functionary so much he dissociated completely from us, unwilling in any way to endanger his position by lending support in any way. His superiors did not agree but could not intervene effectively. After such an incident, the more important people from the area shunned the Vilhena FUNAI head for some time, again avoiding direct confrontations.

[xxxviii] Again a very common phenomenon in village councils (Hannerz 1980: 207). Kinship is politics too. Politics is always closely related in daily life with the constitution of community. The strategy of the major actors in politics is to obtain the delegation of the representation of the group in order to symbolically collectivize private interests and symbolically appropriate official interests (Bourdieu 2000: 120-1).

[xxxix] This is my provisional description and not a discussion of the just and fair retribution a researcher is ethically obliged to offer in return. Here I want to illustrate the feeling of fear of exploitation, the ensuing total lack of initial trust, where mentioning the possibility of land sale attests to imaging its possibility. The person who traveled with us suspected that some Funai employees were instigating the Indians to act like this because, he commented, the majority of lower functionaries would be against research. For various reasons (one being mismanagement or even corruption), they were highly suspicious of outsiders on their terrain and especially of anthropologists. The *Nambikwara* are also the main field research site of a couple of SIL linguists with many years of contact so the Indians know what linguistic research entails. The same circumstance may contribute to a commodification of language and most SIL linguist are not charmed by the presence of colleagues in their village who may influence the Indians (a possessiveness not exclusive to them of course).

[xl] I tried at some points to expose this project and engage the elders in expressing their memories and giving voice to an experience rarely spoken about Espirro and the past. Not being able to expound the proposal personally also hampered communication severely. Conversely, perhaps it is a memory socially classified as unspeakable to strangers (cf. Pollak 2000).

[xli] Although I cannot substantiate this claim, I have the feeling that one of the reasons is exactly the fact the village is not united but full of strife. Fieldworkers at the 'backstage', snooping around as it were in their own protected sphere of

social practice, might reveal too much to outsiders of the real internal social dynamics.

[xlii] Dona Teresa's information on the Lakondê will be the subject of a future publication. On our advice, Telles, who was working with the Latundê, later visited Dona Teresa, who had expressed a wish to discontinue collaborating on Sabanê and to work with her own Lakondê language. The fruits of their successful collaboration is evident in her 2002 thesis on Lakondê and Latundê.

[xliii] Dona Teresa lived near Acre when this happened. When she returned to the region and learned of the relinquishing of the lands of Marco Rondon, she tried to stop the relocation. In her view, the Indians had clear rights, conferred at the time of the company that constructed the dirt road in 1960. She used to have a closer contact to the responsible manager of the firm than the other Indians and thus was far more convinced of the claim than the others.

[xliv] The ease of becoming bilingual enters into current European debates on migration and integration: *"Because young children possess many braincells it also possible that two language systems are constructed and anchored in the brain. A condition for this realisation is that the two languages must be offered clearly differentiated to the child"*. That is, for example, at home and at school. *"Two languages fit very well in the head of a child"*. Prof. Dr. S. Goorhuis-Brouwer, in the daily paper Trouw 24/05/2002:19; my translation).

[xlv] This is a critique on the change in lifestyle. In Aroeira game is scarce, and so the traditional sharing and exchanging that went on within the group is hindered

[xlvi] Recall that Rondon showed his confidence on the plaza laying down his head on the leg of one of his interlocutors who were conversing animatedly all around him. Manézinho may have meant the upper leg but incorrectly used the word for buttocks.

[xlvii] It may be noted in passing that the corollary myth among the Savanna and Valley Nambikwara differs considerably in a number of relevant features. The latter two resemble each other much more than either is close to the Sabanê myth (see Part III for a short discussion of the first by Price 1981; the elaborate and very well told Valley Myth is reproduced in Fiorini 2000: 83-8; of course, such closeness is to be expected due to their closer linguistic and cultural affinity).

[xlviii] Shame may a useful notion to investigate further. For example, the concept "shame" in Sikuni is always semantically related to some particular person and does not occur independently. Shame makes one return to the norm by recognizing the social norm. Or else, if not repentant (no 'essential' recognition), one leaves society in the direction of nature (Queixalós 1990). One must be

cautious with such a comparison but certain parallels are obvious.

[xlxi] Perhaps in a mode that slows down the language shift. If corroborated, I think the reason lies with the fact that this people traversed the previous periods much less dispersed and more united than the Sabanê.

[l] The phenomenon already noted by Price in the seventies that the pensions of the old may change the balance of power towards the older men. Such a source of regular income is scarce and elevates, so to speak, the value of older people (apt to redistribute commodities, prestige would accrue to them).

[li] Here our aims coincide and fieldwork should be in the interest of the elders. I also proposed to assist in the possible claim to extend the Indigenous Territory for which an anthropological report is required, but this offer provoked no response among the Indians. The fact that I participate for twenty years in a civil association that contributes to the civil struggle of Indian rights also did not seem to impress anyone. For some reason such credentials or offers for collective retribution failed to be convincing or even taken into account at the crucial moment. In part the unfortunate prior circumstances expounded explain the lack of dialogue but the actual reasoning still is speculation. Ironically, without fieldwork or dialogue no more profound explanation is possible. Maybe Bourdieu (2004: 619) has got a point for us to think about: *"The final cunning of dominant culture resides perhaps in the fact that the revolt it elicits risks to forbid the one from appropriating the instruments, such as ethnology, whose mastery is the condition for the recovery of the culture of which it fostered the disavowal"*.

[lii] See the hypothesis of Vilaça (2000: 88) which (...) *is that ingestion is a fundamental classificatory operator, one intrinsically bound to the notion of predation, understood here as a relation between predator and prey. Given the basic identity between humans and animals, predation has as its aim the marking of a difference in a human continuum, or the explication of this difference which in another mode would remain masked"*.

[liii] With due reservations for future research, this supports Vilaça's hypothesis (1999) for the Wari and other Amazonian peoples about *a physiology of contact*. She reviews the showing of a video to some Nambikwara of the Indians performing a ritual (actually Mamaindê). The Nambikwara watching complained that the ritual participants were wearing too many clothes. The ritual was later redone with less non-traditional clothing (ib.: 242). Clothing among the Sabanê in rituals, from a few indications, also may be reduced to minimal use. Consequently and in agreement with her understanding, rituals may be a time of being Indian. Something by the way, that holds true for several Indian peoples in the Northeast

where, according to my hypothesis, religion and ritual are the privileged domains of persisting *indianidade* (Reesink 2000). This possible coincidence permits the hypothesis that the structural constraints and the cultural reaction of Indian peoples tend to favor this development as the result of both the framing conditions of constraining enclosure by the national society and of the particularities of indigenous agency.

[liv] This is fragile link, as the change of the correlation of forces in Funai can alter the administrators that now are partial to the project and nothing guarantees a administrative continuity in projects.

[lv] In 2002 we wrote a linguistic and anthropological report in support of this plan, if necessary to be presented to the bureaucratic authorities and lend weight to the claim (Reesink and Antunes 2002). It functioned very well to underscore the validity of the claim by Funai in negotiation with the reluctant Cinta Larga.

[lvi] Even in the United States where there are Indian schools which are very much ahead of Brazil in this aspect, schools and institutions are still absolutely dominated by English (Zepeda and Hill 1991).

[lvii] The Manduka attempt to found a separate village practically floundered by 2002: the latest reports assert only two families still live there.

[lviii] He adds that the Sowaintê village is inhabited by some forty Sabanê and three Tawaindê. In total the Sabanê number around a hundred people in Aroeira. Of all these people only two have learnt the language fluently (Dona Tereza who is not even Sabanê and Manézinho's wife). Fewer than ten are known to have some limited proficiency but are not real speakers.

[lix] It is unclear why. Speculation by outsiders mention the arrival of a large sum of money for a development project on the bank account of an Indian and that people discuss how to spend the money disregarding the Project's official aims – when the harvest proves insufficient the claim for help shall be directed to the impoverished Funai. It must be noted too that a person working for the agency responsible for Indian healthcare commented that Aroeira is the only Indian village where the institution occasionally verifies cases of malnutrition.

[lx] There are several new cases of people registered by Funai as Sabanê who now wish to correct their identity card and officially assume another ethnic identity.

[lxi] The fact of the people of Aroeira withdrew participation will decrease willingness to let certain of them to settle there in the future.

[lxii] Barring the possibility of some sudden unforeseen change, the last native speakers will die in less than two decades. There will be very few semi-speakers

and the language will technically be extinct.