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The Body as a Battleground: Embodiment and Sorcery in Shamanic Tourism

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Introduction

This chapter looks at the embodied complexity of sorcery in the context of shamanic tourism in the Peruvian Amazon (Fotiou 2020). While shamanic tourism initially tended to 'sanitize' ayahuasca shamanism or to at least deprive it of one of its most real dimensions, which is the manipulation of violence, its inherent power inequalities have exacerbated sorcery-related discourse and accusations and allowed them to enter the global arena. Approaching sorcery as embedded in particular social and geographical locations, the paper places it in the midst of Western modernity.

The chapter is based on data collected between 2003 and 2015 in and around Iquitos, Peru – the center of ayahuasca tourism in the Peruvian Amazon – while working primarily with mestizo *ayahuasqueros* (i.e., healers working with ayahuasca) who work with both western visitors and locals (Fotiou 2020). In addition to participation in rituals, I worked closely with some of the healers with whom I discussed at length the ideas presented in this paper. Since 2013, I have been working with a Spaniard, whom I will call Juan. He has trained in the Amazonian tradition for fifteen years and works as a shaman. Sorcery has played a pivotal role in his life, and he has shared many of these stories with me over the years. He and his teacher were often attacked during ayahuasca rituals. I was present during several of these attacks. In this context, I observed that shamanic tourism and the influx of Westerners training to be healers in the last decades have increased competition and accusations of sorcery.

When I first met him in 2005, Juan was not entirely ontologically committed to the existence of sorcery. Back then he shared an emotions-focused approach with me, one that attributed harm to people's negative feelings toward another. Although this did go a step further from the common Latin American belief that emotions can cause sickness in the person who has them (Rebhun 1994, 360), he essentially shared with me that sorcery existed because so many people believed in it. This implied what has been argued in the literature, that belief in sorcery causes a stress response that can have negative physiological effects (Burbank 2017,286). This belief is not uncommon among Westerners for whom personalistic explanations that attribute disease or misfortune to

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an outside agency are less palatable. It has, in fact, been suggested in the literature that Westerners tend to explain sorcery using medical diagnoses such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD),[1] thus building a bridge between Western and non-Western epistemologies (Gearin and Labate 2018, 193).

Today, Juan's position has changed in that he attributes many of his misfortunes to sorcery mostly inflicted by local shamans. During the last three research trips, he routinely reported attacks during rituals. I learned to recognize the signs: he would start calling certain protective and combative spirits and often lost strength during the ceremonies. Over time, I became interested in the embodied aspects of sorcery (i.e., the ways that Juan subjectively experienced these attacks). Juan's way of conceptualizing sorcery has oscillated between embracing a psychological explanation and adopting a personalistic explanation that attributes disease or misfortune to an outside agency (Foster 1976, 773). Through our discussions over time, he also emphasized bodily sensations and seemed to be developing an embodied theory of sorcery. This embodied experience provided for him more certainty in the existence of sorcery as he "felt it in his own flesh" (in his own words).

Scholars have discussed how empirical observation or rational deduction – the mainstays of science – are equally prevalent in magic and witchcraft (Lévi-Strauss 1966; Hviding 1996; Brown 2014). Similarly, I approach sorcery as another knowledge system among others and will discuss embodied knowledge acquisition in Amazonian shamanism. As has been argued, the study of sorcery and magic went hand-in-hand with colonial domination and the legitimation of the "imperial domination of the West" (Kapferer 1997, 9). It remains a challenge to find ways to approach sorcery in the twenty-first century, since most anthropologists have distanced themselves from this heritage. The paper is not about the rationality of sorcery, or lack thereof. Rather, it is about how sorcery is weaved into the practice of a Western shaman "as a form of discourse whose practice is simultaneously and in varying degrees verbal, emotional, psychological, sociological, and cultural – in a word, real" (Whitehead 2002, 40).

Since almost nobody admits to committing sorcery, but rather talks about others attacking them, discourses about sorcery are interpreted in the literature as a way of distinguishing oneself from the 'other' (Hayes 2011, 13-20). This challenges us to confront an unsettling kind of cultural difference. In Amazonia, since the boundaries between healing and sorcery are blurred, local societies have been ambivalent about shamans (Brown 1989, 8; Whitaker 2021, 78; Whitehead and Wright 2004, 1-20). For reasons related (in part) to a colonial view of 'otherness', shamanism was often idealized and deprived of one of its dimensions, which is the manipulation of violence, both symbolic and non-symbolic. Recent scholarship departs from this early framework (Riboli and Torri 2013; Bacigalupo 2016). Existing literature on shamanism in Latin

1 Post-traumatic stress disorder is a debilitating and often underdiagnosed syndrome "that causes extreme states of fear as the result of a deeply distressing experience" (Nielson and Megler 2014, 42). Many recent scientific studies are exploring the therapeutic potential of psychedelics for its treatment.

America (Whitehead and Wright 2004) has addressed indigenous or mestizo conceptions of sorcery but no scholarly work has delved in depth into how Westerners involved in Amazonian shamanism perceive sorcery and how they incorporate it in their worldview. I will first address local Amazonian conceptions of sorcery that inform contemporary ayahuasca shamanism and will then finish with a reflection on the subjective/embodied experience of sorcery as it is reflected in the ethnographic data.

Sorcery

As has been argued by other scholars, sorcery reveals a lot about social relations, as well as, in this case, potential social tensions. While such beliefs and accusations might exacerbate social conflict, they might also be a way to keep people in check. In fact, beliefs in sorcery have been seen as "social equalizers ensuring that people of all ages and both sexes receive the respect of others" (Lepowsky 1993, 201). In Amazonia, as well as in other cultures where social life is based on an ethic of sharing and cooperation, people depend on each other for subsistence and all difficulties are believed to be the result of malevolent action by someone (Lepowsky 1993, 201). Today, envy as well as sexual jealousy, are the most common motives for sorcery.

Amazonian shamanism is inherently ambivalent and shamans have an "ambiguous position in society" (Langdon 1992, 14). This is because they may employ power in both harmful and beneficial ways, especially when they direct it against enemies outside of their social group. On the other hand, they are often accused of misfortune among their community and shamans have been murdered because of such suspicions in recent years (Brown 2014, 49). In the scholarly literature this ambivalence has been described either as sociopolitical, in which case shamans use their powers to harm enemies on the one hand and cure members of their own group on the other, or as the product of apprenticeship, in which case shamans who fail to exercise self-control and master their emotions or aggressive desires become sorcerers (Hugh-Jones 1994, 35). As one of my interlocutors warned me, shamanic powers entail a certain risk. Not only must all shamans contend with the fact that certain spirits ask them to commit harmful actions in return for their healing powers, but novice shamans also frequently experience (and must learn to control) their own urges to harm or kill (Perruchon 2003, 189; Beyer 2009, 46). Others have argued that "illness, harm and healing are conceptualized as a balance of power managed by people and entities capable of sending magical items and beings over distances" (Brabec de Mori 2017, 2). Since "healing" is linked to magical thinking, "the one who commands the power of song at the same time wields the forces of sorcery and disaster" (Brabec de Mori 2017, 2).

In and around Iquitos, during my fieldwork, what people defined as *brujeria* (sorcery) were negative intentions directed to a person in order to harm them. The *brujo* or *hechicero* commits ritual violence often on behalf of a client; he or she sends their spirit helpers, to harm or poison a person. Plants or trees are widely used in *brujeria*. For example, if one wants to harm someone, they gather the leftovers of the food of the victim then carve a hole in a particular tree's bark and put the food there. Over time

the person will feel sick, experience pain in the abdominal area, which will swell, and the person will eventually die. In cases like this, when the *brujo* (sorcerer) introduces harmful energy into somebody's body nothing can be diagnosed by medical doctors. Often *brujeria* is suspected when someone frequently faces exceptional obstacles and bad luck, as was the case with Juan during certain periods of his life. In order to heal a patient afflicted by sorcery, a shaman often has to engage in battle with the shaman responsible for the affliction. Battles in the spiritual realm are very common among shamans with motivations ranging from stealing a rival's powers to eliminating competition. These battles take place in what Juan called the "astral plane" and I have been told by him and other interlocutors that the rival shamans do not need to be in this plane at the same time – i.e. be in a ritual or altered state of consciousness at the same time. They often will leave something – e.g. hot air or another weapon – that will await the rival shaman the next time they ingest ayahuasca and enter the astral plane. I was told that this is because time is not linear in this realm and the past and future can exist simultaneously.

In 2013, Juan led a ritual for a small group of friends at an abandoned building of what he said used to be a drug detoxification center on the *carretera* – the road that connects Iquitos to the town of Nauta. Juan had recently returned to Peru after a long absence and was hoping to find a permanent space where he could hold ayahuasca rituals for clients. Someone was letting him use this building for the night and had discussed the possibility of building a ceremonial *maloca* on the land near it. During our conversation after the ritual, Juan explained that he had been attacked and that the attackers, in an effort to disrupt the ceremony, were preventing him from singing. During the attacks, he was surrounded by darkness as they were attempting to "tumble" him. He asked them to leave us in peace, promising that we would leave after the ceremony, but not before it ended. He thought that the attacker was a local shaman who clearly did not want him to work there, and it became clear that he was not going to be able to build his *maloca* at this location. If he did, his problems with this person would never end. He said that "it's someone working around here, and he does not want anyone else to do so. Yes, ayahuasca is like that. Ayahuasqueros are like that."

Embodiment and sorcery

The shaman's body is both a battleground and a weapon against sorcery. First, it is changed by the shamanic apprenticeship during which knowledge and power are literally embedded in the shaman's body. For the Achuar, shamanic apprenticeship involves "a change in the ecology of his physical system" (Descola 1997, 338). This is achieved through "ascetic discipline" involving purging and a strict diet (Descola 1997, 338). At the end of a Desana shaman's training, a closing ceremony leaves the knowledge acquired dormant in the initiate's body; therapeutic spells are placed in his brain, while evil ones reside in his belly (Buchillet 2004, 125). For the Siona, a substance called *dau*, which is the root of the shaman's power, forms and grows in the shaman's body as he continues

to ingest *yagé*.[2] This accumulation of knowledge in his body makes a shaman vulnerable and in need for continuous protection to avoid potential damage to his *dau* (Langdon 1992, 48). A similar process is present with the shamanic phlegm and *virotes* (darts) found among the Shuar (Harner 1973, 17) as well as mestizo shamans in the Peruvian Amazon today, who still practice fasting and sexual abstinence during their apprenticeship.

In several Amazonian cultures, the training of the shaman often requires fasting, vomiting, and sexual abstinence (Mezzenzana 2018, 287) and the novice must obtain several spiritual weapons and tools of the trade. All this is done while spending long periods of time in the jungle in isolation from the community and building relationships with the spirits from which they learn. In the Peruvian Amazon, the apprenticeship is a vital part of a shaman's credentials and the lineage to which healers belong is important. What is transmitted through the lineage is esoteric knowledge specific to the practice of the lineage – especially in regard to the spirits that they work with – ceremonial practices, and other spiritual 'property' or powers that reside in the shaman's body. Some of these powers are passed on by teachers to students. An example of this is the *yachay* (knowledge phlegm), which resides in the shaman's body and needs to be fed with tobacco (Freedman 2015, 73). A relationship with certain plant spirits is also expected; a respected shaman is someone who has received powers from his teacher as well as directly from the spirits of the plants. Some of the shamans with whom I worked started their apprenticeship after a life-threatening disease healed by a shaman. A central theme in the stories of the shamans I interviewed was the physical, spiritual, and psychological cleansing that preceded the beginning of the apprenticeship. The future shamans had to purge all dark and negative elements before they could accept the spirits of the plants and their teachings in their bodies and become healers. Juan, who was a drug addict before his first ayahuasca ceremony in Spain, says that he vomited large quantities of a black and malodorous substance during his first ayahuasca experiences. Others have reported a similar process involved in shamanic apprenticeship involving several stages during which the body is purified, intuition and sensitivity are developed, the body is strengthened, and finally the body is protected (Jauregui *et al.* 2011, 739).

According to my interlocutors, warfare between shamans is very common and can take many forms. While combating sorcery in order to heal patients during the ceremony, the shaman is vulnerable to attacks. Shamans find different ways to attack their rivals. For example, if a client has drunk ayahuasca with a rival shaman and that person drinks with someone else afterwards, the rival tries to interfere in the ceremony through the person who was previously their patient. Their interference might manifest through the body of the patient making noises that are distracting for the rest of the participants or directing negative energy to the rival shaman.

In warfare, shamans need to have weapons. In several Amazonian traditions, including the mestizo shamanism of the Northwest Amazon, the weapon of choice that

2 This is another word for ayahuasca.

shamans use is the magic dart or *virote* (Brown 1989, 8; Harner 1973, 17). Much like the medicine substance, *virotes* are stored in the phlegm that resides in the shaman's body and he can retrieve them as necessary. Shamans project *virotes* to make someone sick or to attack another shaman and they can be removed from the body of the victim by sucking. I was also told that *icaros*, the songs sung in ayahuasca rituals, which are passed down from teacher to apprentice and often directly from the spirits, live in the healer's body. "The *icaros* come from inside the shaman's body", Juan told me once showing his abdomen. For these tools to retain their power, shamans need to practice discipline and keep their bodies clean and strong by avoiding the ingestion of things that can weaken them, such as pork and alcohol. During periods when Juan experienced frequent attacks, he would recruit the help of a local shaman to cleanse and fortify his body.

The practice of a *dieta* often serves the same purpose when shamans ingest specific trees or plants for protection and fortification of the body. During this time *dieteros*[3] follow a limited diet without salt. This was the case with Juan who in 2014, decided to diet the *ayahuma* tree to fortify himself because he was experiencing attacks by other shamans during his ceremonies. His teacher had taught him that the spirit of *ayahuma* was very powerful and that it was a very good guardian. The spirit of *ayahuma* is believed by locals to be a headless man dressed in black that can teach one sorcery, a necessary step in learning how to protect oneself from it. The *dieta* consisted of drinking an infusion of the *ayahuma* bark on the first day and bathing with the pulp of its fruit on consequent days to protect the body.

In addition, Juan shared the importance of discipline to keep himself protected and able to deal with attacks. As someone who struggled with his weight throughout his life, his weakness was food and he often struggled with abstaining from things that would weaken his body, such as alcohol or processed foods and meat. If he broke the diet or succumbed to temptation, he was more vulnerable to attacks during ceremonies. He commented that his weakness was the way that rival shamans could 'enter', in a sense it was as if it opened a doorway that allowed them to attack. In all the years that I have known Juan, he has been in a constant struggle with himself by trying to maintain a discipline and occasionally failing and paying the price. After one of the ceremonies, during which he was attacked, Juan shared that the spirit of ayahuasca told him not to drink again until he is completely healthy. If not, he would not be able to bear the attacks. On another occasion, he had a stern conversation with someone who wanted to be his apprentice. The man was a Peruvian named Jaime[4] who, after a ceremony, started retelling the story of a business endeavor that had failed due to sorcery. Juan interrupted him. He said:

> I will now tell you something and forget about all this. That is over. If you had been correct, like God commands, that wouldn't have happened. You know well what you have done with your body and everything. You abandoned yourself. Wasting money and beer, beer, beer,

3 A *dietero* is someone undergoing a *dieta*.
4 This is a pseudonym.

> beer, beer, wasting money. You must look into that. Forget it, if you are like you are now, they can't do anything to you. If I were like I used to, I wouldn't have been able to sing today, and they would have toppled me over.

He also maintained that outside interference usually aimed to disrupt the flow of the ritual and that continuing to sing the *icaros* during an attack was extremely important to prevent that from happening. For a while, he had a Russian apprentice, whom I will call Sergei. He had very different ideas from Juan about ayahuasca shamanism in that the local reality had not sunk in yet. He had used several types of drugs in the past and had numerous times, in the eyes of Juan, approached ayahuasca in a disrespectful way, which was often a point of conflict between apprentice and teacher. I have witnessed several ceremonies during which Sergei was disruptive either because he was not singing in sync with Juan or because he talked or made other noises. Juan had to repeatedly chastise him for his behavior by saying that he was "cutting" his energy or the energy of the ceremony, which Juan considered dangerous. In some ways Sergei's behavior was that of a child who could not help himself and was unaware of the potential consequences of his actions.

During my 2016 visit they were planning to buy a small plot of land to build an ayahuasca retreat that would be financed by Sergei. Juan had mentioned several times that he did not want to advertise and preferred to attract clients by word of mouth. I felt that he wanted to avoid unwanted attention but the reason behind this became clear later. During that time, Sergei would often go to the town to buy supplies, where he would meet people and inadvertently talk about their plans. During the ceremony after one of those visits, Juan was under attack and had a rather hard time repelling the attackers. After the ceremony he severely chastised Sergei. He attributed the attacks to the fact that he had attracted the envy of local shamans due to Sergei revealing their plans. He forbade him to talk to strangers when going to town and asked him to stop talking about their retreat plans.

After knowing Juan for many years, I was able to tell when he was losing his energy during a ritual. He would sing slower and less energetically. Often his throat would appear to close, which would interrupt his singing. Over the years, he told me that it is extremely important to continue singing no matter what in order to deflect attacks. Having memorized enough of the *icaros* myself, I often sang along not only to support him but also because I found it enjoyable. I made an extra effort especially when he started calling particular helper spirits – such as a giant – which he called in the case of an attack. During those times, I felt how much energy singing for several hours required and there were times when I found it impossible to utter a single sound. He often thanked me for my support after difficult ceremonies and encouraged others to sing along, although if someone was not following the melody of the *icaro* by singing out of tune he would ask them to either stop or correct it. He believed that this either allowed sorcerers to enter and to disrupt the ceremony or that it was the result of a rival shaman trying to interfere.

In 2014, about three hours into one of the rituals, I realized that Juan was calling his protective warrior spirits, including the giant that was one of his defensive spirits. This is the portion of the *icaro*[5] calling the spirit of the giant:

Gigante, gigante mamancuna llamuicuna callari
Gigante mamancuna llamuicuna callarириri
Legitimo guardiancuna…
Batea,[6] *batea guaguancito* […]
Batea, batea guaguancito ninini

In between singing, he blew forcefully as if he was trying to send something away. Knowing what this meant, I became concerned. In the recording, Juan's voice is steady and calm during that time but it is clear that he does not have much energy. Nevertheless, he was able to continue the ceremony without disruption. The only other indication that something was wrong was that he mentioned that he was not well soon after getting up to blow on my head and hands.

The way that Juan described the attacks after they had happened also demonstrates the embodied nature of sorcery. During a particularly difficult ceremony, unable to continue, he laid down for a while and his apprentice tried to tend to him. While he was lying down, Sergei held his hand and massaged his fingers while singing and whispering something that I could not hear. The moon was full, and I could observe that Sergei, clearly worried about his teacher, kissed his hands and at times his face and chest. After the ceremony was over, Juan was very stern with his apprentice because he did not feel that he had supported him during the ritual. Rather, Sergei had acted in a way that was disruptive either because of ignorance or because Sergei's weakness allowed for outside interference. He said that he had been viciously attacked and almost died – he had been stabbed in the chest and almost stopped breathing. He kept repeating that he felt the sorcery "in his own flesh."

Since 2013, according to Juan, sorcery has played an instrumental role in his life and often changed his life's course. Since we decided to work on a book together, he often experienced sorcery attacks during ceremonies and he was not able to complete any of his projects – e.g. a retreat center. During the attacks, he would often comment that "they don't want us to write the book." In 2014, I got severe diarrhea almost immediately after arriving in Iquitos and subsequently (probably due to dehydration) got a bladder infection, which went undetected until my body started shutting down. I had no desire to eat and had no energy to do anything. At that point, Juan took me to the hospital where I was diagnosed and was given antibiotics.

Because of these events and the fact that we were close, as well as because I had started perceiving certain things during ceremonies, Juan suggested that we both diet the *ayahuma* (*Couroupita guianensis* Aubl.) tree to fortify ourselves. His teacher had taught him that the

5 *Icaros* like this one are in a mixture of Spanish, Indigenous words, including Quechua, as well as incomprehensible words sometimes referred to as 'spirit language.'

6 In this, he is asking the giant to hit the attackers to protect the ceremony and himself.

spirit of *ayahuma* was very powerful and that it was a very good guardian. It could teach one sorcery, which is necessary to learn how to protect oneself from it. Juan's apprentice, Sergei, had just finished a long diet with *ayahuma* and felt extremely strong. In his lineage, the *dieta* also involved immersing oneself in water every morning, eating very little bland food, not talking, or coming into contact with people, and avoiding direct exposure to the sun.

Juan also had me diet *camalonga* (*Strychnos sp.*), which I took on the second day of the *dieta*, in order to heal. During one of our conversations, he said that it would help me accept the sickness and its larger significance. For him, everything that happened to the body, including sickness, was not merely a biological event but had wider implications. He said:

> The gift (of the illness) is to contemplate the negative parts that it brings you. Meditate, feel, think about it. Why are you here? What is the gift that you are bringing me? Whether it is physical, mental or what the disease is. What does it create in you when you think about the disease? What patterns of behavior? […] Because the root, if it is a gift sent to you from above, the root is not here. It is not in the physical. Even if it looks to me as if it's here. But the root [...] you see the tree, but the root you do not see (Interview by author, June 18, 2014).

In 2015, I was once again in Iquitos ready to head to the jungle to begin a series of ayahuasca ceremonies, when my purse containing my passport was stolen on the night before we were scheduled to leave. Putting this in the context of the attacks Juan was experiencing, as well as my illness during the previous year's visit, he determined that shamanic intervention was needed. He was concerned that our work on the book was not welcome by local shamans and that they were trying to stop it. He decided that a powerful purging followed by a protective bath was necessary to cleanse and fortify my body against future attacks. The protective bath contained tobacco, *toé* leaves (*Brugmansia suaveolens* (Humb. & Bonpl. ex Willd.) Bercht. & J.Presl) and *patiquina* (*Dieffenbachia spp.*). The latter is generally known in the area to be a protective plant. Other friends in Iquitos have commented on its protective qualities and often people plant it near a house door for protection. This course of action had worked for him in the preceding year when he was experiencing repeated attacks. He said:

> [during that time] I learned about plants that sorcerers dieted but could be used as protection as well. Dieting these plants for long periods of time could become a means to do evil. It is ideal to diet them for short periods of time, so they become protectors. After my diet with tobacco and the baths with *patiquina*, tobacco and *toé*, I started feeling better and the ceremonies became more lucid. I felt much stronger, safer, and protected. The attacks did not end, but I dealt with them better (Interview by author, June 7, 2015).

To induce the purge, he procured the resin from the plant *ojé* (*Ficus insipida* Willd.), which is a plant that is mentioned in the literature as a powerful plant teacher (Luna 1992, 237). The plant is often ingested to get rid of parasites, but I have seen it used before to cleanse the body before taking ayahuasca. A local mestizo shaman, who was also present and administered the cleanse and protective bath, told me repeatedly that I would feel stronger after the cleanse and that I would "glow." For him, none of this was

a metaphor. Instead, it was based on his own experimentation with plants and the effects he had observed in his own body. Taking such local ethnobotanical knowledges seriously has been a persistent call in recent anthropological literature (Daly *et al.* 2016, 6; Daly and Shepard 2019, 17). On that day, I ingested the tree resin and spent the rest of the day by the riverside drinking gallons of water. This induced vomiting and diarrhea. By late afternoon, I was exhausted and hungry, after which I rested and had a light meal. In the following days, we had several ayahuasca ceremonies. This last ethnographic example is typical of how people use plants alongside ayahuasca in contemporary ayahuasca retreats and the types of interventions used to manipulate the body.

Conclusion

In the last decade, numerous Westerners have flooded the Peruvian Amazon seeking to apprentice with a 'shaman' and to become shamans themselves. Their motivations and the challenges they face in immersing themselves in a worldview so radically different from their own are equally numerous. Some recount stories of a spiritual crisis similar to shamanic initiation stories in Indigenous cultures. Some are in pursuit of healing and sometimes become healers themselves. This has clearly changed the landscape and has increased competition and accusations of sorcery. While sorcery has been a part of traditional Amazonian shamanism, some of my interlocutors were concerned that shamanic warfare has increased because of tourism.

From the perspective of the sorcerer, sorcery is sometimes an attempt to gain power within the societal chaos. In Amazonia, among the locals, often it is the financially successful shamans who are considered sorcerers and it is often believed that these shamans have managed to be successful with outsiders due to the assistance of powerful spirits. At the same time, financially successful shamans also attract sorcery attacks by envious rivals. Even though Juan does not fit the profile of the successful shaman, he claims to experience attacks, perhaps because of his status as an outsider or his perceived inherent privilege as a European. The challenge remains of how to approach sorcery from the perspective of the receiver of attacks and a cultural outsider. For the purposes of this paper, I chose the lens of embodiment to honor the way that my interlocutor described his subjective experiences. My aim was to provide an empathetic picture of how spiritual practice is informed by larger societal processes and I approach sorcery and shamanism as "lived religion" (Whinfrey-Koepping 2008, 2) – in other words, as situated where society and the individual meet, amidst mundane concerns of life, as well as "embodied practice" (Stoller 1997, xvi).

My focus here has been in the "corporeality" and "materiality" of sorcery (Kapferer 1997, 12). Embodiment in medical anthropology is often used to refer to the "sensations, perceptions and experiences bounded by the interior, frame, and flesh of an individual" (Greenway 1998, 148). This is significant for a couple of reasons. The body has generally not been central to Western epistemologies – with exceptions like Merleau-Ponty and feminist scholars who have focused on the corporeality of knowledge (Santos 2016, 26).

For the purposes of this paper, bodies are understood not as isolated subjectivities but instead as intersubjective milieus (Csordas 2002, 244) attending to the bodies of other subjectivities. In addition, by focusing on the subjective, corporeal experiences of my interlocutors, I approach shamanism as another knowledge system relying on empirical observation, thus, demonstrating, as others have, that shamanic ontology is not radically different from Western ones (Campbell 1989, 67).

Amazonian sorcery has been shaped by particular historical and cultural circumstances and can offer insight into suffering inflicted by colonialism and more recently by the inequalities shaped by global capitalism and neoliberal economic principles. Others have made the connection between sorcery and the "violence of economic and political 'development'" (Whitehead 2002, 8-9; Taussig 1980), although not in the context of shamanic tourism. Sorcery, including *kanaimá* as an example of ritual violence (Colson 2001; Janik 2018; Lewy 2018; Whitaker 2017; 2021; Whitehead 2002), is not only directed at locals, but also towards outsiders that are encroaching through shamanic tourism. It has been argued that bringing foreigners into the discourse on sorcery and making them susceptible to it might be an attempt to render them less threatening (Whitehead 2002, 38), but this has mostly not been analyzed from the perspective of the recipients of such ritual violence, such as my interlocutor Juan. While sorcery and witchcraft have often been described as ordinary for ethnographic others (Olivier de Sardan 1992), this has not been the case for Westerners. Discussing Amazonian sorcery as a part of modernity alongside the Internet and iPhone – will contribute to a reexamination of Indigenous or local forms of knowledge and urge us to think beyond hybridity and toward translation, traversing dichotomies between self and other, the rational and the irrational, modern and traditional, or global and local. My data shows that sorcery is not a relic of pre-modernity, but with its own rationality and embodied experience, it can give shape to the nature of the contradictions of capitalism (Kapferer 1997, 21; Taussig 1980). At the same time, it creates potential spaces of resistance to oppressive globalization as it attempts to address some of the contradictions and power relations inherent in shamanic tourism. Ultimately, their embeddedness in global spiritual tourism circuits might be a way for Amazonians to be liberated from the role of underdeveloped 'others.'

Finally, I showed that sorcery in ayahuasca shamanism is an embodied cultural process. During ceremonies, it manifests through several somatic events, such as purging, pain, weakness etc. When seen in the light of the ideologies I discussed in this chapter, these subjective experiences reveal the body as the locus of power as well as a battleground. Indeed, in the words of Thomas Csordas "the body is the existential ground of culture" (Csordas 1990, 39), never taken for granted and always in need of some form of manipulation.

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