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The Makushi of the Guiana - Brazilian Frontier in 1944: A Study of Culture Contact

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Prologue

The article published here was written in 1944 for *Timehri*, the Journal of the Royal Agricultural and Commercial Society of British Guiana, for the issue that marked the Society's centenary. On account of its length it was divided into two parts under the overall title: *The Makushi of British Guiana: A Study of Culture Contact*. The first, the historical section, was published in *Timehri* November 1944: No. 26, (pp. 66-77), and the second section, entitled "Culture Contact in the Present", in *Timehri* July 1946: No. 27, (pp. 16-38).

At the time the writer was living in an isolated district and cut off from communication, and so it was not possible to correct the proofs before publication. Then unfortunately, the premises and entire stock of the Society were destroyed by fire in February 1945, and *Timehri* No. 26 became virtually unobtainable. It was thought therefore that it might be of interest to present-day Carib specialists to publish a revised reprint.¹ The work now appears with its two sections reunited, with correction of typological errors; and more appropriate title and with some additional material and amplification. Many of the references appearing as footnotes in the original, have now been inserted into the text and a bibliography has been added. The photographs and negatives which had been submitted to illustrate it were destroyed in the 1945 fire.² Some of the present photographs were taken in 1949, on my return from Columbia University.³ These are noted. In this revision the

¹ Mrs Myers and I also felt strongly that the typological errors in the original ought not to be perpetuated through quotations and synopses. (A.B.C.)

² No photographs were printed with the original publication in *Timehri*.

³ See Biographical Note.

dating, unless specifically stated, refers to 1933-1944, and I have occasionally inserted the date 1944 in the text to clarify this point. Where I have additionally referred to later publications in the course of my revision, this is acknowledged in the text and the footnotes.

My study refers to the Makushi as I observed them during the period 1933-1944 and to the historical background and inter-racial contacts in the area. At that time, apart from the accounts of early travellers, the monumental work by T. Koch-Grünberg (1917, 1923, 1928), that of W.C. Farabee (1924), of W.E. Roth (1924) and the linguistic study of Makushi by James Williams (1932), little was known of the Carib groups of the area. There is now, however, a well-defined corpus of Carib ethnology, in the light of which some of my conjectures may seem naive. At the time of writing, my article was intended for the local reading public of British Guiana, in order to interest it in the Amerindians and to present them as more than the subjects of amused contempt, -the simple, childlike forest people lower in the scale of evolution, as they were then assumed to be, who appeared periodically in Georgetown, walking in single file, stepping high over imaginary tufts of grass and referred to, sometimes contemptuously and in their actual presence, as "bucks."⁴ As a psychologist and trained anthropologist, I was concerned to show the Makushi as an intelligent people with a well-developed view of the world, with valid attitudes and thought system, with an identity and culture of their own worthy of preservation, of admiration and respect, and with an adaptation to their environment superior to our own. I wanted to show "what reality looked like to them" and to indicate that in 1944, they were passing through a crisis of health, suffering neglect, exploitation and injustice, and were in need of succour.⁵ They were recovering from a number of disastrous epidemics and were at a very low level.⁶ It is interesting to compare the very full enumeration of Makushi villages for the period 1907-1913 in James

⁴ This term, applied in a derogatory sense to refer to Amerindians in Guyana, has been handed down from Dutch colonial times in the 17th and 18th centuries. It is thought to derive from the Dutch word "bok", a buck or he-goat.

⁵ There were no medical services in the interior of British Guiana at that time and, as she describes in the text, in 1944 Mrs. Myers saw the Governor of the Colony, Sir Gordon Lethem, to make a strong plea on behalf of the Makushi for a doctor to be appointed to work in the Rupununi. By 1947 a system of Medical Rangers was in place and a Government Dispenser, with Dispensary, established in Lethem. An anti-malarial campaign entailing DDT spraying of Amerindian settlements was underway and a series of medical surveys was being carried out (see Baldwin: 41). Dr. C.R. Jones, the first Medical Officer for the Interior, arrived at the beginning of 1949 and began a succession of tours to all the Amerindian communities, making regular visits to the Rupununi villages.

⁶ "These epidemics were not only malaria, but influenza, measles and an outbreak of alastrim smallpox. The latter caused a medical team to be sent from Georgetown to carry out a vaccination programme, with the consequences described in my article." (I.H.M.).

Williams' Preface (pp. 8-11) with those existing in the 1930s. By 1933 many of these villages had disappeared, others being sadly decimated.

I am indebted to the Editor of *Antropológica* for making this publication possible. My underlying thanks are due also to Dr. Audrey Butt Colson for many hours of editing, discussion and encouragement extending over several years. The suggestion of reprinting, and the impetus for its completion came entirely from her, and in a busy life she has given unstintingly of her time and effort. My gratitude must also go to her husband, Robin Colson, who has facilitated in every way the preparation of the manuscript. Miss Sheila Murphy has patiently and competently typed and retyped our various amendments. To her also, many thanks.

I must also remember those to whom the whole article is due: my Makushi friends of the region, who accepted me so good-humouredly, revealed to me some of their secrets, and taught me how to survive in an unfamiliar and potentially hostile environment and to utilise its hidden resources.

In my various journeys down the Río Branco to Boa Vista and to Manaus, the Brazilian ranchers and officials showed me always much kindness and hospitality, in days when travelling was not easy. There were then no roads, no regular river services, no aviation, no hostelries. One made one's own way, and trusted to the good will of those one encountered. This was never lacking, and I am grateful to the many (sometimes poor and humble, men and women) who helped me in difficulties and emergencies.

Introduction

Still one of the most numerous of the tribes of the Carib linguistic group, the Makushi (Macusi, Makuchi, Maeuchi, Macuxi, Macoussi) inhabit the windswept upland savannahs of the Guyana-Brazilian frontier region. They are found in an area extending from the lower reaches of the Rupununi River in the East, to the Ireng River and Pacaraima Mountains on the Northwest, South to the northern side of the Canuku Mountains and West to the Surumu and Cotinga rivers, and from there further West, to the left bank of the Uraricoera River on or near Maracá Island.

A region of distant mountains and open rolling country, where range the savannah deer, the peccary, the anteater and the puma, where the rattlesnake abounds; with rivers alternately shrunk within their wide yellow sandy beaches, on the shores of which fish the jabiru and the roseate spoonbill; then in the rainy season becoming raging torrents whose swollen muddy waters inundate the surrounding country and sweep all before them as they rush down to join the waters of

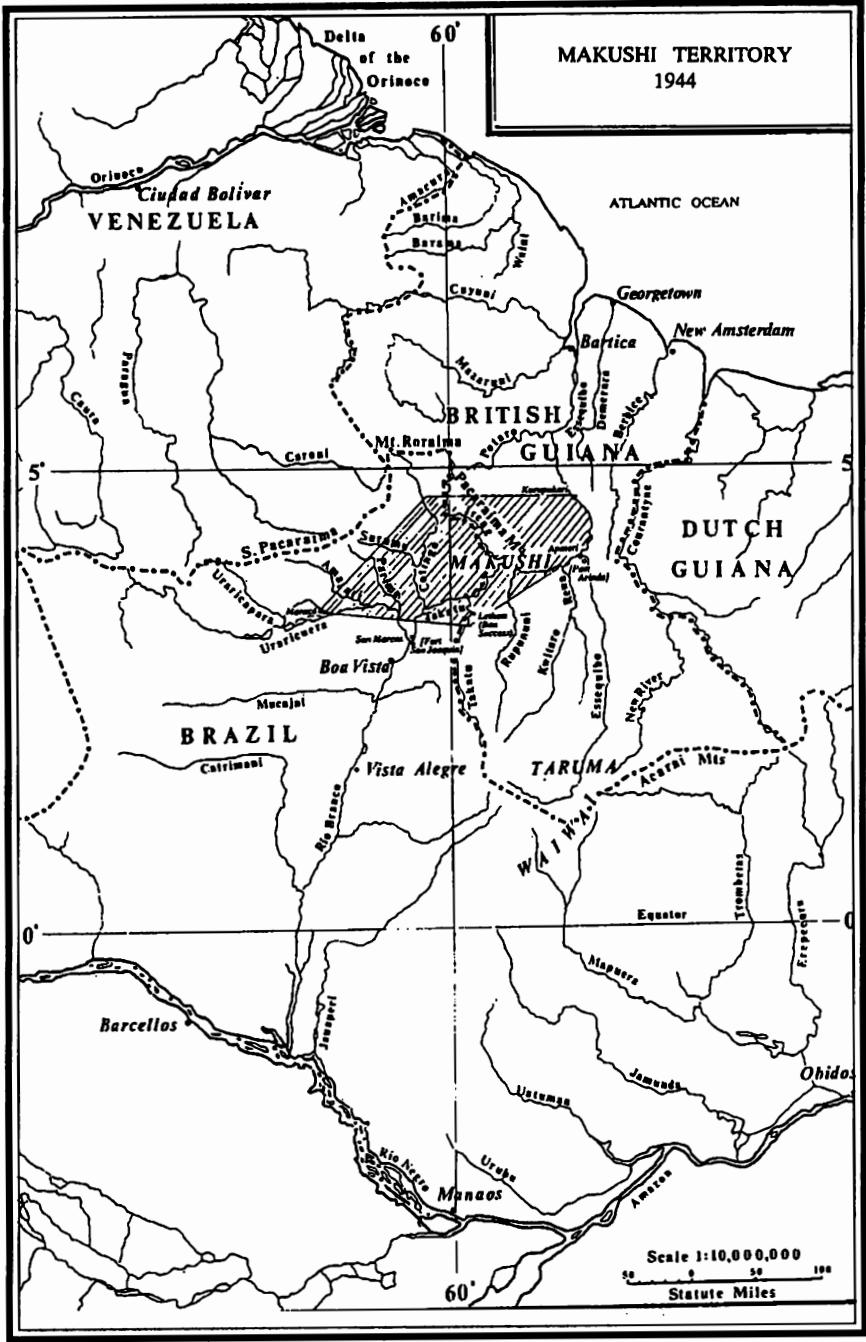
the Amazon; with lakes and streams at times becoming floods, at times drying into small ponds and watercourses, in which fish are trapped by the receding waters. A land of extremes, of drought and famine, of prodigal abundance; semi-arid in the long dry season, with water often far and scarce, it lies in the rains to a great extent under water, a sea of islands, and in places impassable swamp.

In green brilliant groves or isolated clumps, marking watercourses, springs or swamps, the ite palms (*Mauritia flexuosa*) are the most striking and beautiful feature of the savannahs. They are landmarks for the traveller, and shade for his rest. To the Makushi, as to the Warrau of the Orinoco Delta, they play an important part in material culture. Out in the savannah, there is very poor pasture grass, with scattered plants of the shrubby sandbox tree (*Curatella americana*) - the local sandpaper - wild jasmine and guava and the handsome purple-flowered paricarana (*Mimosa acacioides*), all bent before the prevailing Northeast trade wind. This wind is hot, dry and strong, and for eight months of the year blows day in, day out, ceasing only after nightfall to begin again before dawn; the sun is fierce, and there is little shade.

Over these savannahs, treading the burning sand and stony rises, men, women and children make long journeys from one settlement to another, to visit their fellows for pleasure or trade, or go in bands to dance and feast in the cashew groves, or to fish in the lakes and streams. Their mode of life has been largely determined by, and is wonderfully adapted to their environment; their material culture makes admirable use of the products with which nature has furnished them in plain and forest. But a new element has been at work modifying their reactions to the problems of their simple life, and it is this factor, the influence of a conflicting culture, the European one, that I now wish to trace in outline.

Historical

Williams visited most of the then existing Makushi villages in 1907, and a very good account of their locations is to be found in his "Language of the Makuchi Indians of Guiana" (1932: 5-11). Koch-Grünberg (1923, III: 2-3) visited the Rio Branco savannahs in 1911-1913 and published monumental accounts of his studies of the Amerindian tribes of the region. He found a branch of the Makushi (the Eliang) living on the large island of Maracá in the Uraricoera River, completely separated from the main stem of the tribe further North, and mentions several other branches, differentiated by name, dialectical variations and locality, now thirty years afterwards (1944) most of them either vanished, or surviving as a few individuals living among the main Makushi stock. Notable among these he names the Monoiko on the Surumu River,



some of whom Baldwin (1946: 16) states to be still living as a remnant among the Makushi proper of the Pacaraima Mountains. The present writer is acquainted with several individuals of Monoiko descent living in the Makushi villages of the Canuku foothills. Baldwin refers to them as "the Manaikos - miscalled Manaos," and it is interesting that he apparently considers that the Manaos or Maganouts of the Dutch records were really the Monoiko. Early Portuguese accounts, however, as Arthur Ferreira Reis (1931: 77 *et seq.*) tells us, reveal the Manaus (or Manau) as a powerful Rio Negro tribe, who, led by Ajuricaba in the beginning of the eighteenth century, were said to have been furnished arms by the Dutch of Guiana for their ill-fated revolt against the Portuguese in 1723.

The Magnouws,⁷ are mentioned by Storm van 's Gravesande in his despatches of 1764 (Harris and de Villiers 1911, II: 464) as living up the Essequibo River, and has having in 1723 been, by a political dodge of the Carib nation "so injudiciously and childishly driven away, badly treated, and for ever estranged from us, that the efforts made to enter into communication with it have hitherto proved fruitless." He had written in 1754 that in the previous year Portuguese were said to have descended⁸ the Rio Negro with the Maganouts, and taken possession of a gold mine near the Orinoco, in Spanish territory (Harris and de Villiers 1911, I: 314-315). We hear of them (Harris and de Villiers 1911, II: 414) in 1763 in a report from Post Arinda that they were dissatisfied with the treatment received from the Portuguese of Brazil, and that a strong body of them had set out to come to the Colony for the purpose of making a Treaty of Commerce with the Dutch. The Caribs, jealous of their own trade with the Dutch (they seem to have been middlemen for other tribes as well as suppliers of slaves), had assembled to prevent this. A sharp fight occurring, with heavy losses on both sides, the Manaos had postponed their visit until the next year, and had advised the Postholder to this effect. So that we can be certain of two things - the Manaos, as well as being numerous and powerful in the Rio Negro, were also apparently visiting or already settling in the Rio Branco savannahs in the eighteenth century.

The present writer considers that there is no conclusive evidence to

⁷ Mahanows, Maganouts, Magnauws, Magnouws, Magnouts, are forms also found in the literature. I remind readers that the Dutch "g" is aspirate, and, together with the Spanish "j" and the English "h", was probably an attempt to record the glottal stop so frequent in the Carib language. On the anomalies of the orthography of the Amerindian languages, see Tavera Acosta 1930: 16.

⁸ The Portuguese would, in actual fact, have *ascended* the Rio Negro and, probably, entered the Orinoco basin via the Cassiquiare River, the connecting channel between the two water systems.

enable us to decide whether the Manaos of the two localities are the same or two different people - one being, according to Baldwin (1944⁹ and 1946:14) the Monoiko, a branch, as Koch-Grünberg points out, of the Makushi. It is interesting and perhaps significant to state that *-go*, *-ko*, *-gong*, *-kong*, - are Makushi and Carib suffixes meaning "people." An old Makushi informed me that the Monoiko could be (though they are not in practice) called *Monoï*. *Monoï*, *manai* in Makushi signifies a twin, one of a pair, so that Monoiko, (Manaiko) means "the twin (or branch) people," the name bearing out Koch-Grünberg's statement. Makushis of the Canukus who knew the few remaining Monoiko told me that their language is the same as the Makushi tongue, being pronounced slightly differently.

Humboldt (vide Harris and de Villiers 1911, I: 185) may be quoted in this connection "The Majanaos (Maanaos?), who are still found in our days to the southeast of Lake Amucu, [i.e., near Pirara, I.M.] have been confounded with the Manaos (Manoas) of the Jurubesh" [i.e., the Urubaxi, a tributary of the Río Negro].

Personally the writer thinks that there was no confusion, and that the Manaos were not the Monoiko, or any other but the Río Negro tribe, which is known to have emigrated from the Río Negro after their unsuccessful revolt against the Portuguese and the death of their leader Ajuricaba, in 1723. They evidently reached the Río Branco savannahs, from which they have now completely disappeared, leaving, unlike the Paraviang and the Yaios, no oral tradition among the Makushi of their passing. A study of the migrations of the Amerindian tribes of the Guianas and Venezuela has yet to be exhaustively made. It is certain that even today the distances covered by travelling Indians are surprisingly great, and that there are Makushi living in the Canuku region whose fathers came from the Río Negro, and married into the tribe.

Of the villages mentioned by Williams (1932: 8 *et seq.*) as existing in 1907, many have disappeared, as he predicted. A similar fate has overtaken many of the settlements found by Koch-Grünberg in 1911-13. There has been a diminution in numbers, and a redistribution of the remaining population. Along the Canuku foothills, now one of the principal remaining Makushi areas, many of the original dwellers have died and their place has been taken by others who have come over from Brazilian territory. There is a continual contact between the Amerindians on British soil and those on the Brazilian side of the frontier, where groups of Makushi are to be found still along the foothills of the Pacaraima Mountains, following the line of the Ireng River. For some years past, because of the pressure of increasing settlement on

⁹ First published as a news sheet in "The Argosy" in 1944, Baldwin's material was republished with additions as *The Rupununi Record* in 1946.

the Brazilian savannahs, the migration has tended to be one-way, to the British side, determined by the habitual Indian reaction of flight from any difficult or complicated situation.

While some of the old villages have vanished, many are still in existence, and in some instances new ones have arisen. Groups still exist at Annai, Korasabai, Tipuru, Echilbar, around Eupukari, on the Nappi, Cumu and Moco-moco creeks by the Canuku Mountains, along the banks of the Takutu River from its junction with the Ireng southwards to the Canukus; a few individuals still live at Kusad, further up the Takutu. Several sites were seen by the writer from the air in the Upper Ireng. In the Rupununi River, above and below Apoteri, there are still a few settlements in forest clearings¹⁰ and a few families were in recent years living on the Essequibo River near Kurupukari. These, however, were savannah Indians who had found it more convenient to live near their work as boat-hands of the District Commissioner.

The Makushi are predominantly a savannah tribe, whose domain today is chiefly confined to the area between the Canuku Mountains on the South, and the Pacaraima Mountains on the North, with perhaps still a few families living on the outskirts of this area, in localities where there were formally populous villages, whose inhabitants have died out or retreated before advancing settlement of their ancestral territory.

Their numbers, estimated by R.H. Schomburgk (1840: 50) in the first half of the 19th century as 1,500 in British Guiana and 3,000 in all, and by Koch-Grünberg (1923: III: 2) and Williams (1932: 11) as still approximately 3,000 in the first decade of this century, were stated by Baldwin (1944; see also 1946: 8, 53) on the basis of the 1943 vaccination records, which include Indians from both sides of the border, to be 1,700. As not all Makushi presented themselves for vaccination (though the response was surprisingly great) and as there must have been a few groups outside the area reached by the vaccinators, there were probably about 1,800 members of the tribe at the time of writing (1944).¹¹ There is no indication of sex-ratio, but in the absence of exact figures, it does not appear to be far from normal. In some groups, men complain of a lack of girls for wives, and preadolescent girls are taken as partners; in others, the girls complain of a lack of suitable husbands. (It

¹⁰ The District Commissioner, R. Baldwin, informed me (1944) that these settlements were increasing and that they were formed of balata bleeders -the local Creole term for collectors of the wild rubber obtained from the bulletwood tree, *Manilkara bidentata*.

¹¹ Baldwin (1946:53) gives a Makushi population of 1,576, based on the monthly reports of Government Rangers over a period of three years up to, and including, 1945. More recent estimates show a great increase in population. In 1969 the Amerindian Lands Commission calculated 5,530 Makushi for the Rupununi District, Guyana, and Miglazza, quoting for the same year for the Rio Branco area of Brazil, gives 3,750 (see Butt Colson 1983-84: 79).

must be remembered however, that choice is also restricted by the customary cross cousin marriage). There is, in any case, a serious diminution in numbers, and one which gives cause for alarm to those interested in the welfare and the future of these Amerindians. The infant mortality rate is high. The writer estimates it as exceeding 50% in the Canuku villages. There is also, as the malariologist Dr. Giglioli¹² found on a visit of investigation, an alarming mortality among young adults. Malaria, one of the principal causes of death, would appear, from oral tradition, to have been introduced into the region since the beginning of the century, becoming with increased communication gradually diffused from the settled areas - Boa Vista in the case of Brazil, the coastal area in the case of British Guiana. (See Koch-Grünberg 1923, III: 26, 330). Respiratory diseases, chiefly bronco-pneumonia, also take a large toll. The fact that the death-rate is not even higher, in view of the absence of any treatment or control, speaks hopefully for the vitality and resistance of this so heavily handicapped people.

Koch-Grünberg (1923, III: 2-3) considers that the first contact of the Makushi with Europeans took place about the end of the eighteenth century, but there is evidence to suppose that it may have occurred even earlier.¹³ Reis (1931: 57) states that the Rio Branco was entered at the beginning of the eighteenth century by the Portuguese Francisco Ferreira, who explored the Uraricoera River, the Takutu and the savannahs on various occasions, taking down batches of Amerindian slaves ("descimentos"), to the Portuguese settlements on the Rio Negro, principally to the village of Aracary. In 1736 Christovam Ayres Botelho suc-

¹² Dr. George Giglioli was Medical Adviser to the British Guiana Sugar Producers' Association and Hon. Government Malariologist. He records that the control of malaria through the virtual eradication of its carrier *Anopheles darlingi* in coastal towns and village, was achieved in British Guiana within four years, 1944-1948, and that equally spectacular effects were obtained in the interior, in mining towns, prospectors' camps and Indian villages. This was carried out through the systematic application of D.D.T. to the interior of houses, and not by antilarval measures as, he points out, surface water control would have been impractical in a country with such an enormous extent of surface waters (see Giglioli 1946: 46-52; 1948: 5-8). The success of the anti-malaria campaign in the Rupununi District can be judged from the fact that the Medical Officer for the Interior, Dr. Cenydd Jones, found no malaria amongst either the Makushi or Wapishana during regular visits between 1949 - 1956 (Personal Communication). When however, after Independence in 1966, the Medical Ranger Service declined, the mosquito vector re-invaded the unsprayed settlements and malaria returned. In 1984, 2,500 malaria cases were reported from the Rupununi and North West Districts. The parasite has unfortunately become resistant to the drugs in present use.

¹³ Martins (1947: 5) states on the authority of earlier records, notably Ribeiro de Sampaio, that there were incursions by the Portuguese into the region in the seventeenth century. He mentions especially, those of 1670 and 1671.

cessfully repeated this exploit, to be followed by José Miguel Ayres in the middle of the century. We know that Horstmann passed through the region in 1739, but he does not report having encountered Portuguese, though he did meet an Indian fugitive from the village of "Aricari," on the Río Negro, who was very probably one of the Río Branco Indians enslaved by these gentlemen and returning to his own territory (Harris and de Villiers 1911, I: 174).

The most notable of the Portuguese expeditions was that of Lourenço Belfort and Francisco Xavier de Andrade in 1740 who, leading a large band of raiders, ascended the Uraricoera, penetrated to the neighbourhood of the Sierra Parima, and took back many slaves to Maranhão (Reis 1931: 58). In 1911-1913 Koch-Grünberg, as already stated, found Makushi living on Maracá Island in the Uraricoera - though Coudreau states (1887, II: 392), that in 1787 the Makushi were recorded from the Ireng to Makarapan Mountain only and on the same river to the North of the Majary, as well as on the lower right bank, and from there along the Takutu to the mouth of the Surumu. It may therefore have been that the Makushi came into contact with these early marauders, self-styled "redeemers" ("resgates"), and were even included among the slaves.

Im Thurn (1883: 173-174) considers that the Makushi were immigrants from the Caribbean Islands, perhaps crossing over from Trinidad to the country about the mouth of the Orinoco, thence passing up the banks of the river, where they were living, as Robert Schomburgk (1970: 78 note 1) has asserted, probably as lately as Sir Walter Raleigh's time, and from whence they passed inland to the savannahs.¹⁴

It is interesting to read in the introduction to Storm van 's Gravesande's Despatches (Harris and de Villiers 1911, I: 189) that "in Raleigh's time there was already a settlement of Indians (*teste* Keymis they were Iaos) on a great lake occasioned by the overflowing of Lake Amucu." Lake Amucu has been located by Horstmann, (Harris and de Villiers 1911, I: 168-174), Schomburgk, (Richard Schomburgk 1922, I: 307-308), Humboldt (Harris and de Villiers 1911, I: 183-184) and other writers, in the periodically inundated savannah near the old site of Pirara, between the Rupununi and Ireng Rivers; and the "Iaos" were possibly Makushi, as the writer will presently show.

Raleigh in his description of Trinidad (1970: 4) enumerates diverse nations as then resident in that island, among them the Iaio around Parico. De Laet¹⁵ in 1640 refers to a statement by Keymis that the Yaio

¹⁴ du Val d'Abbeville's "Map of Guiana" (Paris 1654) shows "Muchikeriens" as inhabiting the country between "Lac Parime" and the head of the Essequibo (see Harris 1928: opposite 140).

had been driven by the Spanish from Trinidad and the Orinoco, and speaks of them as being found in Cayenne.

Robert Harcourt (Harris 1928: 80, 86-87, 95, 120), who in 1609 explored the Guiana coast from the Oyapock to the Maroni, with expeditions by himself or his assistants considerable distances up these two rivers, mentions the Yaïos as inhabiting the Oyapock below the falls, the headwaters of the Maroni, and other localities in what is now Cayenne. He formed an alliance with a Yaïo chief called Leonard, who had formerly been to England with Raleigh, and had aided him against the Caribs, thus winning his friendship. He speaks very highly of this tribe, naming them with the Arawaks as superior to the other Indian tribes with whom he came in contact.

In Appendix II of the Hakluyt Society's edition of Harcourt (Harris 1928: 172 *et seq.*, especially 177-183), we find in what is supposed to be a report by Harcourt's nephew, Unton Fisher, of his expedition up the Maroni River, an account of a conversation with an ancient Yaïo, who had come down from the head of the Surinam River in a canoe with four others to trade with the Dutch for axes. The old Yaïo said he had been born in the Orinoco region, whence he had fled after being ill-treated by the Spaniards. He had known Sir Walter Raleigh and spoke much of him. He gave Fisher a detailed account of the mountains and plains at the head of the Essequibo. He described how gold nuggets could be seen glistening on the ground in the savannah after the surface soil had been washed away during the rainy season. This is a phenomenon which has in very recent years (1940 *seq.*) been observed by prospectors exploring for gold in the same general region, but within the Brazilian border. In fact, in the rich finds of gold and diamonds in the Ireng and Cotinga areas from the late 1930s on, we have some confirmation of the old Indian stories of mineral wealth in the inland savannahs of the Guianas. He showed him a gold "eagle" of about eight or nine ounces troy weight, which he had brought to trade for axes, and said that at the head of the Surinam and Maroni Rivers (he lived seven days overland from the head of the former), there were to be had many of the gold "half-Moones" with which the English were apparently acquainted. The very interesting point is that he is reported to have called these half-moons *Unnaton*.

Now *unnaton* (*unaton*) is a Makushi word meaning "my nasal septum" and we know from travellers' reports that such ornaments were worn by various Guiana tribes in the perforated nasal septum. Im

¹⁵ In his "l'Histoire du Nouveau Monde o Description des Indes Occidentales" p. 580 de Laet states: "...les Yaos...se son retirés là l'Oronoque [i.e. à Cayenne], de l'Isle de la *Trinidad* ou les Provinces de l'Oronoque: chassés por les Espagnols ou craignans leur cruauté..." The Yaïo vocabulary given by de Laet on pp. 582-583 shows this tribe to belong to the Carib linguistic group, as do the Makushi, some of the words being identical with present-day Makushi words for the same objects.

Thurn (1883: 198, Fig.4) gives an illustration of such nose ornaments, and says that the crescent-shaped ones were proper to the Carib tribes, (among whom are the Makushi). Makushi men have told the present writer that when they were boys, they frequently saw these crescent-shaped ornaments used by old people, made however, no longer of gold (*caracari*) but of silver, from beaten and reshaped coins. They are now no longer seen.

The old Yaio spoke also of Manoa, which he described as being by a salt lake which the author of the report says he called "*Parroowan Parrocare Monoan*." Makushi to whom the present writer read the phrase immediately translated it "There is plenty of *paracari* in Manoa." *Paracari* is the fermented cassava drink used by the Makushi especially on their more important festive occasions.¹⁶ *Parroowan* is obsolete but still at once comprehended for *moroman*, "there is." *Monoan* (accented on the last syllable) is the place name. There is to the present day - not far from the Canuku Mountains - a Makushi village called Manawá near the left (Brazilian) bank of the Takutu, on the Igarape do Milho, and strangely enough, some miles to the South, near the Igarape do Arraia, a lake called Mucu (from *mucu*, a semi-aquatic plant growing nearby) the water of which, my informants tell me, is salt in the dry season, being the only one nearby with this property. In the rainy season it extends enormously, and is no longer salt.¹⁷

The Makushi of the Canukus have oral traditions of the former presence in the district of a tribe called Aios (pronounced by them ai'os, as in English "eye"). They told the writer that the word *aio* signifies a large black hunting ant, the bite of which is used as a charm (*murañ*), to give prowess in hunting. They also point out that part of the treatment for hunting prowess consists in the scoring of a deep crisscross of V-patterns on chest, back, nape of neck and arms of the candidate, so deep that visible scars are left, and into which magical plant juices are rubbed. It is perhaps significant that the Yaíos are mentioned by early writers as distinguished by cicatrices on face and body, and that my Makushi informants had no doubt that the name Yaio indicates skill in hunting.

Whether the Yaíos (Iaios) were Makushi, or a related branch of the

¹⁶ *Paracari* is made of special, thick cassava cakes, soaked in water and laid on a layer of wood ashes, with a fresh layer of pounded leaf sprinkled between the cakes. A sweet stage is followed by a fermented, strong one, when the mass is broken up, diluted with water and put in gourd containers and left a day or two to get stronger. This is a drink much used in feasts.

¹⁷ Various earlier writers, including Lobo d'Almada (see Martins 1947: 7) have mentioned these salt lakes and ponds, which are occasioned by the drying out of the widespread inundation of the rainy season, the receding water being trapped in depressions in the land surface. Many of these evaporate completely in the dry season, leaving areas of salt earth from which salt was formerly extracted by the Indians. Others remain as marshy areas, fringed by stands of *mucu-mucu* (*Caladium arborescens* Vent. *Montrichardia aculeatum* Cruea). Such an area at Pirara, on a tributary of the Ireng in Guyanese territory, has traditionally been identified as the site of Lake Amucu, Raleigh's location for the mythical El Dorado. (See Humboldt in Robert Schomburgk 1931: vii-viii.)

Carib stock, as they seem at least to have been, must apparently still remain a mystery, but it is certain that they were in contact in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries with the English, Spanish and Dutch, and that they already prized iron implements so highly that they made long and perilous journeys to trade for them.

Whether or not the Makushi had any actual contact with Europeans as early as Raleigh's time, it is at least very probable that iron implements must soon have reached them by trade with tribes who were in touch with the coastal regions, and certainly from the beginning of the eighteenth century onward there was increasing direct contact with both the Portuguese of the Amazon basin and the Dutch of Guiana.

In 1739 Horstmann passed through what is now Makushi territory, and though he does not speak of this tribe by name, he does record Parahans (Paravilhanas) on the Essequibo some days paddling distance below the Rupununi mouth. Present-day Makushi informed me that according to tradition, the Paraviang (Paravian) were a branch of the Makushi tribe living in the Pacaraima Mountains, who as renowned runners used to run to plant their fields in the Canuku Mountains, returning to their homes on the same day, a feat which seems impossible except in legend. My Makushi informants told me that the word Paraviang "meant" ("quer dizer" - Portuguese) "great runner", but here we encounter the semantic problem of the meaning of meaning,¹⁸ and the pitfalls which await the field-worker in attempting to translate from one language to another based on a completely different background and attitudes to experience (vide Carson 1979: 60). Certainly the idea of running skill seemed to be the first attribute associated with the Paraviang in Makushi minds and their reputation in this respect was confirmed by Neil Hawkins, an American Protestant Missionary among the Waiwai in the Upper Essequibo and among the Makushi of the Surumu Valley, who stated in the early 1940s "Our Indians in the Surumu tell of the Paraviang from nearby Mt. Marari, who were great runners, lion-like men" (Private Comm.).

Of course, as in the case of the Yaios, we cannot be sure that oral tradition of tribal identity means more than that they were related peoples of Carib linguistic stock. Koch-Grünberg (1923, III:110) refers to the "Paravilyána" ("Palawiyáng") as a Carib tribe formerly widespread in the Río Branco area, but now extinct. He reminds us that the Schomburgk brothers encountered a few at Waraputa Mission on the Essequibo in the period 1840-44. In fact, one of them was Sororeng, the

¹⁸ However, the Makushi word *parawi* means capybara (*Hydrochaerus capybara*). Does this mean that the Paraviang are "the Capybara people," and that they are possibly Carib immigrants who at some earlier stage arrived by the waterways?

Paravilhano who had accompanied Robert Schomburgk to London in 1839. Richard Schomburgk (1922, I: 246) says: "Sororeng was one of the few survivors of the once very powerful tribe of Paravilhanos whose district extended into the environs of the Río Branco." They must have been formerly quite numerous, for Antônio Martins (1947: 5) tells us that the Río Branco region was at one stage called Paraviana. First recognised by the Portuguese in the early 17th century, by the early 18th century slave raids ("descimentos") were in operation and settlement had begun. Reis (1931: 140 note 21) records that in 1798 in the time of the governorship of Lobo d'Almada, there was a serious uprising of the Paraviana and Wapishana against the settlers and the Carmelite Missions, which was put down by a military expedition in 1799.¹⁹ What happened to the rebels is not clear, but Koch-Grünberg (III; 110 note 2) quotes von Martius, as saying that Paravilhanas and other Indians were taken by the Portuguese to their new colonies in the Río Negro and Amazon from early in the 18th century. Since the Taulipang told Koch-Grünberg that the Palawiyáng were all forcibly taken away by the Whites, perhaps this also happened in 1799, and in large part explains their virtual disappearance between 1799 and 1835, when Robert Schomburgk was first in the area.

Storm van 's Gravesande (Harris and de Villiers 1911, II: 616-617) mentions the Makushi on several occasions, writing in 1769 that Jansse, the Postholder of Arinda, then at its final site at the mouth of the Rupununi River, had hired a Macoussi interpreter to accompany him to the Wapishana tribe living near the Crystal Mine (the Calikko [Canuku] Mountains).

Cattle ranching was begun by the Portuguese at the mouth of the Uraricoera River in the last quarter of the eighteenth century, and seems to have developed rapidly. In 1776 the Portuguese, alarmed by Spanish incursions into the Sierra Parima, and as a measure against Dutch penetration of which there were continual apparently unfounded rumours, inaugurated colonies at several points along the banks of the Uraricoera, Branco and Takutu rivers, in the same year founding Fort São Joaquim on the left bank of the Takutu just opposite the mouth of the Uraricoera (Reis 1931: 125, 136). This fort was visited by Richard Schomburgk nearly seventy years later, by which time there must have been numbers of cattle ranches spreading up the Uraricoera, the first river to be extensively settled. Schomburgk, when he visited Pirara after Youd's Mission had been seized by the Brazilians, found Makushis living there in contact with the soldiery from the Fort, and records a case of miscegenation which had a dire sequel (Richard Schomburgk 1923,

¹⁹ In fact there were two uprisings: that of 1780 also involving the Carmelite Mission (see Diniz 1972: 29-31) and that of 1798.

II:249).

During the whole of the nineteenth century there was growing settlement on the Brazilian side of the frontier, and increasing acquaintance with the region by travellers and explorers of both British and Brazilian territory. This subject has been discussed by Baldwin (1946: 35-36) and the present writer will pause only to emphasize special mention in the literature relating to contact with the Makushi tribe.

Barrington Brown (1876) in 1868 and succeeding years, and im Thurn (1883: chap. 2) in 1878, travelled in tribal territory. The latter records Makushi as working on the cattle ranch attached to Fort São Joaquim, and says that the last Brazilian ranch lay at the junction of the Takutu and Cotinga (i.e., the present Surumu), rivers in what we know to have been Makushi country. Coudreau, several years later, in 1884, visited the Rio Branco, and in the Atlas (Plate VI) accompanying his account of his journeys shows the Uraricoera considerably settled, with a Makushi village far up the river above its junction with the Majary; a ranch (presumably the one visited by im Thurn), at the mouth of the Surumu River, and Makushi territory along the left bank of this latter river. This means that Makushi must have had dealings with the owners of this ranch, as well as with the settlers further South on the Uraricoera.

At the time of im Thurn's visit there were, though he does not refer to them, several British settlers in the savannahs (Harris and de Villiers 1911, I:121). In 1860 John Bracey, a Creole, settled at Dar-awow among the Wapishanas, perhaps the "James Percy" referred to by Coudreau (1887, II:291) as living at the same place. Barrington Brown (1876: 314) mentions him as residing in this village. Barrington Brown also encountered a white man named Christy trading for hammocks in the area (Barrington Brown 1876: 303, 316). In 1870 a Negro, Christopher Davis (commonly known as Christy, but evidently not the person mentioned above), settled near the Ireng (Mahu) River, and married a Makushi woman. He was still alive in 1944, and has a number of descendants. An extremely religious man, of the mystic type, he had always strenuously endeavoured to impart Christian principles to the surrounding Makushi, but with what success is doubtful, as he told Evelyn Waugh in 1933 (Waugh 1985: 65).

There are two settlers mentioned by Coudreau (1887, II:291) as living in the Canuku Mountains, but he adds that they had not had any noticeable effect on the lives of the Makushi and Wapishana of the Takutu, whom he describes as much less civilised than those of the banks of the Río Branco who were in contact with the Brazilians. I am indebted to the late John Ogilvie,²⁰ resident in the Southern Rupununi savannah for many years, for information which clarifies these scat-

²⁰ See Baldwin (1946: 37) for details concerning Ogilvie's association with the Rupununi.

tered references in the literature. In a private communication of 19th December 1944, he wrote: "in 1860(?) Mr. and Mrs. de Roy, Creoles of Dutch extraction settled at Ruru-wow. John Bracey, English, settled at Sand Creek [i.e., Southern Canukus]: coconuts planted by him still growing in 1927: a prospector-trader, could not get a foothold in Wap[ishana] country owing to de Roy competition. He and Holmes - white creole - were in partnership at times in prospecting. Both died and are buried at Quimatta where I saw the remains of their old house in 1900. Neither had much influence in Rup[ununi] — I fancy these are the men who Coudreau mentions 1887 in the Kanakus."

It is noticeable up to the present day that the influence of Brazilian culture contact has been much more profound and far-reaching than that of the Anglo-Saxon culture-complex, and this has been due to a fundamental difference in attitude of the two peoples to the subject race. Influenced by the early Jesuit policy of uniting Indians in village groups ("aldeiamentos") for civilising and catechising purposes, the Portuguese in their colonisation of the Amazon Basin consistently pursued the same method. This method was joined to another, at first in the hands of the Church but later taken over by the civil authorities, of bringing Indians down from the interior to the growing towns, nominally for a period of ten years to "civilise them," in reality to permanent enslavement.

The practice of "aldeiamento" gave so much trouble to the Portuguese in the Rio Negro, that they do not seem to have adopted it to any extent in the Rio Branco, save that from 1941 to 1944, the Protector of Indians inaugurated an attempt to concentrate and civilise the remaining Indians of the region, already full citizens and liable to military service, the place chosen being the National Fazenda of São Marcos at the mouth of the Uraricoera River. Another policy, that of taking Indians into households for training and service, seems to have been the one adopted in the Rio Branco, though since the abolition of slavery in the Province of Amazonas in 1884 there can have been no question of enslavement.²¹ A system of guardianship of Indian children is pursued, the parents being encouraged to place their offspring at an early age in some Brazilian household, thus isolating them from tribal influences and ensuring that they are brought up in Brazilian ways. The householders become the "godparents," or the foster parents ("pães de criação"),²² and in after years, when the children have reached maturity and returned, as often, to their own people and the Indian way of life, are given surprising loyalty and affection. This training has such deeply modifying ef-

²¹ A law of 1755 had prohibited the so-called "resgates", in reality slave-taking expeditions, but in practice these continued illegally well into the nineteenth century, as the Schomburgk brothers testify (Robert Schomburgk 1931: 130-131).

²² This ingenious practice is still in operation, see Diniz 1972: 123.

fects on the Indian psyche that many of the individuals so brought up are more akin to the simple Brazilian ranchers of the region than to their own folk, speaking Portuguese much better than their own tongue and preferring the civilised way of life to that of the "maloca." It must always be remembered however, that contact of two peoples is a two-way process, and that here, while the Indian has taken over some of the ideas and customs of the "civilizado", the latter has greatly modified his own way of life because of association with the indigenous race. This applies equally to the Amerindian, the Brazilian and the British settler, all of whom live in frequent communication modifying each other's ideas and material culture. Each adopts what is found to be useful in the systems of the others, using one language, Portuguese, as a "lingua geral",²³ becoming acquainted with each other's way of life and, especially in the case of children, being profoundly influenced. It might be added here that without the cooperation, willing or coerced, of the savannah tribes, with their skills, their knowledge of the area and its resources, the European invaders would never have been able to establish themselves in these upland plains. We owe a great debt of esteem to these peoples, among whom the Makushi have often been given special mention by earlier travellers (e.g., Koch-Grünberg 1923, III: 111).

Notwithstanding this interplay, the predominant factor modifying the Makushi world view has been the Brazilian one, as in Coudreau's time. The British, except where there has been definite proselytising by missions, have because of their settled policy of interfering as little as possible with aboriginal modes of life, caused less specific change in the ideology and habits of this people (Appun 1871, II: 41). However, there is constant coming and going of the Indians across the border exactly as in pre-Columbian days, without any regard to a boundary which is less real to them than that between their own and Arecuna or Wapishana country. Consequently, the Makushi, even those on the British side of the border in so far as they have adopted European ideas, are on the whole more Brazilian than English in outlook, though they prefer for the moment to live under British rule, finding the doctrine of "laissez faire" more comfortable.²⁴

So far as we have seen, until the time of Coudreau's visit in 1884, there was practically no Brazilian settlement recorded in Makushi territory (in the region from the mouth of the Surumu East and South as far as the Canuku mountains, then territory contested by Great Britain and Brazil).²⁵ In 1878 Michael McTurk had been appointed Special Mag-

²³ *Lingua geral (nheengatu)*, surprisingly, though in general use in the Rio Negro in the nineteenth century, does not seem to have been used in the Rio Branco. Hamilton Rice (1928: 117, footnote) also records this.

²⁴ Since the Rupununi uprising in January 1969 this trend has been reversed, with Makushi from Guyana going to live across the border in Brazil.

istrate and Superintendent of Crown Lands and Forests of Essequibo (Harris and de Villiers 1911 I: 125), his jurisdiction including what is now the Rupununi District, to which he made various expeditions. In the ten years following Coudreau's report, settlement of the Surumu, Ireng and Takutu rivers seems to have developed rapidly. In 1896 came complaints that the Brazilians had established cattle ranches on the East (British) bank of the Takutu. In 1900, John Ogilvie informed me, there was already a Brazilian ranch at the present Government station at Bon Success (see also Baldwin 1946:37). There were Makushi, years later, living in the District who had worked as boys on this ranch, when it was still in Brazilian hands.

Friction arose between the rival national claimants, and it became necessary to define the frontier. The question was submitted to the King of Italy for arbitration, who gave a decision in 1904, allocating to Brazil the lands between the Surumu and the right bank of the Ireng, together with the whole of the left bank of the Takutu, and to Great Britain those between the right bank of the Takutu and the left bank of the Ireng to the Rupununi River. Of the Brazilian ranches on the now-declared British territory, some were abandoned and their lands incorporated within the bounds of existing grazing sections; others were acquired by British owners (see Baldwin 1946: 37). Increasing settlement continued on the Brazilian side of the frontier, and many Makushi entered the households as servants. On the British side settlement has not been so intensive, and the individual grants of land cover much greater areas so that the population potentially affecting the Amerindians is less, and its standard of life higher - extreme poverty sometimes being encountered on some of the smaller Brazilian holdings. Meanwhile, from about 1888²⁶ (Williams 1932: 391) H.P.C. Melville had been gradually acquiring interests in the District, increasing the stock on the British side, and most of the existing ranches were, (in 1944), in the hands of his descendants. Created Land Officer and Travelling Magistrate for the District in 1905, and District Commissioner in 1911, he was energetic in protecting the local Indians against the abuses of settlers and vagabonds.

We might say that from 1890 onwards the influence of colonisation

²⁵ According to Coudreau (1887, II: 394) there existed two groups of Makushi in 1884. They were those of the East who inhabited the Mahu (Ireng), the Takutu and Cuandu Cuandu (Canuku Mountains), and those of the West who inhabited the Uraricoera, the Amajari and the Maracas.

²⁶ It has so far proved impossible to give an exact date for the arrival of H.P.C. Melville in the Rupununi. However, John, the eldest child by Melville's first Wapishana wife Janet, was born in 1888, so that 1887 is most likely the latest date for his arrival; (Private Communication from Mr. Edward Melville). H.P.C. Melville first settled in the Ireng area and later at Dadanawa.

on the Makushi of the Rupununi District and adjoining Brazilian territory has been bearing with increasing force, modifying and disorganising their mode of life. With the foundation of the two local Missions, the Anglican Mission at Eupukari in 1908, (Williams 1932: 3)²⁷ and the Catholic Mission at St. Ignatius on the Takutu in 1909, (Baldwin 1946: 25)²⁸ a conscious and directed effort to modify their beliefs and customs may be said to have been re-initiated.

Culture contact in the present (1944)

Primitive man is a being delicately adjusted to his environment both physical and social, and if the balance is disturbed by any new factor, the repercussions are wide, and often deleterious.

The adoption of the white man's tools has sometimes led to a serious deterioration in native art and craftsmanship through the very fact of the added facility brought to the process of manufacture; while the extra time afforded neolithic Man by the use of iron implements in agriculture is often no longer purposefully employed because of the confusion occasioned in his mind by the clash of conflicting ideologies. The force of the current is overwhelming, and preliterate man, unable to evaluate or understand the influences bearing on him, except in the light of his own limited experience, goes down before the stream.²⁹ His ideological and social disorientation adversely affect his will-to-live. He has no acquired immunity to introduced diseases, which take terrible toll, and so his numbers diminish, as much from psychological as from physiological causes.

This seems to be true of the present-day (1944) Makushi who have been, for some unknown reason, less able to adapt themselves successfully to changing conditions in the savannahs than their neighbours the Wapishana, now seemingly increasing and prospering.

The infant mortality rate is high. The writer estimates it as exceeding 50% in the Canuku villages, and, as before stated, the malarialogist Dr. Giglioli found on a visit of investigation, there is an alarming mor-

²⁷ An earlier Anglican mission, founded by the Rev. Thomas Youd in 1838, had been seized by a Brazilian military expedition in 1839 (see Robert Schomburgk 1931: 187). It was reoccupied in 1842 (see Richard Schomburgk 1922, I: 300-305) and then abandoned owing to an Agreement between Brazil and British Guiana not to colonize the disputed zone until a settlement of the position of the frontier should have been achieved.

²⁸ An account of the expedition made by the Roman Catholic Bishop Galton and Fr. Cuthbert Cary-Elwes to the Rupununi at the end of 1909, the choice of site for the mission at St. Ignatius and Fr. Cary-Elwes' decision to stay on and begin the initial works, is given in the latter's book Ms. entitled: "Among the Amazon Valley Indians."

²⁹ Students of social psychology might well comment that neither does Western, literate man fully understand or evaluate the extent to which his own individual and mass behavior are determined by ideological and technological change.

tality among adults.³⁰

Life is becoming increasingly a difficult and irksome business to the Makushi, saddened by their awareness of what is happening to them, and by their frequently expressed sense of being a doomed people, continually restricted in their activities by the decrease in their numbers, and the loss of the most effective members of their small communities. The fall in numbers by at least 50% since the beginning of the century, should stir us to action if we do not intend to allow this interesting and still potentially valuable element of our population to become extinct.

In the following pages the writer aims to indicate some of the material and psychological factors which have modified the life of this people, and to show some of their reactions to these factors.

Gordon Childe (1964:28) reminds us that "material culture is ...largely a response to an environment." This is strikingly so of the material culture of the Guiana Amerindians, among them the Makushi, who make ingenious and admirable use of the predominant plants of savannah and forest and of other accessible natural products in the manufacture of objects to supply their chief needs (see Roth 1924). In many cases these have been replaced by European articles serving the same purpose, causing their manufacture to be abandoned: for instance, the introduction of the now indispensable cloth has led to the virtual disappearance of the beautiful basket trays and mats used for holding cassava bread, a piece of cloth now being used instead. At times the occasion for the making of an object has disappeared with changing habits and the falling into disuse of old customs- as the use of clothes has caused the making of the bead apron to be all but forgotten, and the beautiful headdresses and ornaments have passed with the passing of the old ceremonies and dances. Concomitant with the increasing social disorganisation, there is a degeneration in the art and skill with which objects still in daily use are made. The bow and arrow, still the preferred weapons, are rarely so exquisitely made and decorated as formerly; the trays, sieves and baskets, essential for domestic use by Indians and settlers alike, are not so neatly finished. This falling off in craftsmanship is partly due to a displacement of these objects in

³⁰ When the present writer first arrived in the Savanna in 1933, there had been a recent virulent outbreak of malignant tertian malaria which, apparently new to the district, had assumed epidemic proportions. It is not clear how this was introduced into the Canuku area, though of course the Rio Branco region was known to be widely malarial (see Braz Dias de Aguiar, map facing p. 125). The Indians had no immunity (though the malariologist Dr. Giglioli considered that a certain amount was built up in ensuing years), and there were many deaths. The survivors, themselves debilitated by recurrent attacks, were grieving the loss of many relatives, among them heads of families and key figures in the community, and there was widespread mourning and a feeling of doom.

the scale of values, European objects apart from indispensable ones, such as knives, which are used as a matter of course, being regarded as articles of wealth and display, and a sign of modernism (the writer has heard a Makushi boast of being "modern"), and the indigenous things as old-fashioned.

There are certain introduced things which have been at once adopted because they represent an evolutionary step upwards in man's methods of confronting his environment, and have since prehistoric times always supplanted or complemented any other methods with which they have come into contact. Such are the use of iron and steel implements, and the employment of pack and draught animals.

A neolithic people at the time of the discovery, the Amerindians at once saw the advantages of iron, and it at once became an article of value for trade- so rapidly in fact that Columbus on discovering the island of Guadeloupe on his second voyage in 1493, recorded the finding of an iron pan in the island, supposed to have been obtained in a raid on Hispaniola, where he had left settlers the year before (Churchill 1704, 2: 607). Knives and axes must have soon become diffused through the islands and have rapidly reached the mainland. In Harcourt's time, one hundred and sixteen years later, we find that an old Yaio had come down to the coast from seven days beyond the savannahs to trade for axes (Harris 1928: 177-181. See above).

The Makushi must have been using these implements 250 to 300 years ago if, as the writer supposes, they were related to the Yaios, or if they were by any chance the Muchikeriens shown in d'Abbeville's map of Guiana, Paris, 1654, (Harris 1928: facing 140), as inhabiting the savannahs around Lake Parime at the head of the Essequibo River. They have been thoroughly incorporated into the Indian economy, and this introduction, when one thinks of the laboriousness of cutting with stone knives and axes, can only have been beneficial. Stone implements (knives, scrapers and axes) are plentifully found at certain sites, apparently factories, in the Rupununi District, and it is probable that they continued in use alongside the imported tools until fairly recent times, except perhaps axes. Iron axes were so important and revolutionary an innovation for the cutting of timber for field-making and building, that the stone ones were probably discarded as soon as possible. Especially is it likely that the women continued to use stone scrapers and knives for domestic purposes, and the writer has picked them up on an old house site, their purpose being at once evident. These objects, axes, hoes, hammers and saws, are so valuable to the Makushi that they are rarely displayed or traded, but kept out of sight, and bequeathed at death from father to son.

In the early eighteenth century we hear of trading with the Dutch for firearms. This is a trade which has continued to the present day, Indians of one tribe obtaining from trading partners of another tribe

when not directly from European sources. The hoe is now indispensable in cultivation. The iron griddle or pan has replaced the old stone or earthenware one in the manufacture of cassava products. Wartime scarcity of these articles was, in 1944, causing considerable difficulty to the Makushi in the cultivation and preparation of their principal foods.

Cloth has usually been obtained by the sale of cassava meal to the settlers, there being a traditional price of five yards per basket of 56 lbs. This trading dates from the not far distant time when there were no shops in the region, and each rancher was obliged to be his own shop-keeper, importing suitable goods by river from Manaos or Georgetown. Since the severe drought and famine of 1939-1940 the settlers have felt it more secure to plant their own cassava fields, usually in manured corrals. In addition the great rise in price of cloth and other goods due to World War II, has made trading with the Indians an unsatisfactory business to both sides - the European feeling that he has to pay too much for cassava and other provisions, as well as for services: the Indian that the white man has for some obscure reason suddenly become parsimonious. Consequently, money payments are rapidly replacing barter in the District. However, at the height of the dry season, when the stock of goods at the only store in the Takutu is running out, the Makushi will not accept money, saying contemptuously: "I don't want 'leaves'," ("*fôlhas*" - Portuguese).

The problem of food supply has become a very pressing one to the Makushi, who is practically always in a state of semi-starvation. The cultivation of the fields is interfered with by periods of service for the settler, who usually calls for help at the times vital for tribal agricultural operations. Ill-health, especially chronic malaria, saps the energy of the cultivators and leaves them more inclined to lie in a hammock at home than to walk long distances to their forest fields to weed and plant. The despair felt at overwhelming circumstances which they are powerless to control, and the rapid dying out of the tribe, has led to an increase in "paiwarri" drinking, which means that a large portion of the cassava goes in its manufacture. One frequently hears as an excuse:- "I am not going to leave my field to be enjoyed by others. I shall at least have some pleasure from it before I die." The appearance of praedial larceny among this formerly so honest people is also a large factor in the increasing unwillingness to plant, as also the ineffectiveness of the rough wooden fences which now need to be erected in forest clearings for the purpose of keeping out cattle. A vicious circle is formed - sickness and despair leading to hunger and malnutrition predisposing to disease.

Game and fish, apparently adequate before the white man brought with him his more exhaustive methods of the chase, are becoming scarce in regions where tradition says there was formerly plenty. In the

general degeneration and forsaking of old practices, the careful training of the valuable hunting dogs, who formerly slept tied on platforms and were carefully rationed and treated with magical remedies, has been abandoned. The Makushi dog is usually now a mangy thieving cur, whose staple diet is human and animal excrement, and against whose depredations a continual war must be waged. A valiant aid in the battle for food has thus been lost; though there are still a few noted dogs who go out regularly alone and return with armadillos and agutis to supply their owner's larder.

With the difficulty in obtaining animal food, except when streams and lakes are drying, and fish is cut off and trapped, there is increasing protein hunger, and the writer thinks that this is one of the factors underlying cattle stealing. Another such factor is the resentment of what is felt to be usurpation of Makushi rights to unrestricted possession of their ancestral domains.

For the treatment of sickness and disease, the Makushi have a wealth of herbs, roots and barks from which infusions were, and still in some cases are made. These, as far as the present writer has seen (and used) them, seem to contain the same principles as our common remedies, balsamic barks and seeds for coughs, astringents of tannin type for intestinal troubles, bitter barks (probably cinchona?) for malaria, a number of stimulants and mind-altering drugs as well as sedatives, teas having diuretic action for the bladder complaints so frequently a concomitant of malaria. Wood ash is used as a styptic and disinfectant for wounds, and drunk mixed with water as an aid in expulsion of the afterbirth. The women also know various contraceptive plants (Koch-Grünberg, 1923, III: 132) and have many plant remedies for children's ailments. Some of these medicines also have magic properties apart from their definite remedial ones. A bark used for colds is also itself a "piaiman" (*piatzán*),³¹ as was explained to me by an old follower of the profession. The great magic remedy is of course pepper (*Capsicum* spp.), which is still used for many prophylactic purposes. It is used in the eyes for instance when passing pictographs in certain falls in the Essequibo River, lest these maleficent drawings should inadvertently be

³¹ "Piaiman" is Guyanese creole for the Makushi (Pemon) *piatzán*, the shaman. The bark in question is *maipaimá* (*Mespilodaphne pretiosa*), referred to also as *amapaima*, *mapeima*, and as the "casca pretiosa" of the Brazilians (see Williams 1932: 334 and Appun 1871, II: 440-441). *Maipaimá* is invoked by the *piatzán* in his healing ceremonies, in a rhythmical chant accompanied by beating on the ground bundles of leafy twigs and taking copious draughts of tobacco juice, until a state of trance is achieved. In sessions I have attended, the *piatzán* then enters into supposed communication with departed spirits who, speaking through him ventriloquistically, give a diagnosis and recommend treatment. Diniz (1972: 104) cites several other plants, notably *mororó* (*Pauhinia forficata*), as being used in the ceremony of "bate folha" or "leaf beating").

seen; it is rubbed into longitudinal cuts on legs and arms as a magical disinfectant (literally "frightener") for any kind of sickness, and applied in the anus as a corrective charm (*murañ*) for lazy or unmanageable children.³² The effect of the latter use is doubtless more mechanical than magical, and after a few such terrible applications all but the most incorrigible children become alert and obedient; but it is the magical power of the pepper which is believed to bring this about.

In common with other American Indians in both North and South America, the Makushi have a widespread knowledge of mind-altering plant drugs, intoxicant, aphrodisiac and sedative. They know and utilize various fish and animal poisons and stupeficients which in recent years have been of exciting interest in the West, and which it is increasingly urgent to study before both habitat and experts in their use disappear. In the present mad rush for "development" and "assimilation" much is already falling into disuse. The Canuku Makushi had apparently a reputation in the past as poisoners, and told the present writer of hallucinogenic and even lethal drugs being secretly administered for revenge, but I heard of only one specific case rumoured to have occurred within living memory. Most remarkable is their technical skill in the manufacture of curare, still in 1944 made by the Ireng Makushi. And of course, there is always tobacco (*kawoi*), grown in their fields, used in their shamanistic ceremonies, and smoked by the men in all their pow-wows, in cigarettes still often wrapped in the inner bark of a tree, (*Lecythis ollaria* Linn.). Most of the men carry round with them the apparatus for cigarette-making, but they do not appear to smoke to excess. There is no chain-smoking. A cigarette is made, lit and handed round among a group of men. The younger men, when they have wages, often buy cigarette papers and sometimes matches, though they prefer the simple, familiar "isqueiro" (Port.), a flint-type lighter, which, in their rough working conditions is more reliable than matches. Unlike some of the other tribes they do not appear to chew tobacco; and they do not seem to suffer dire effects attributed to tobacco smoking in the West.

In the light of subsequent developments in Western medicine following the discovery of penicillin, it is interesting that a copious use of the fermented cassava drink, *paracari*, in whose production the growth of a mould is essential, is a rapid restorative of health and strength after severely debilitating malarial attacks. Fermentation is also an important step in the manufacture of "farinha d'agua," the type of cassava meal preferred by the Makushi, who complain that the commercial factory-made "farinha seca," which has no fermented component, and which is often supplied them when working for the "civilizados," does

³² Contrary to European practice, the Makushi do not beat their children, though a ceremonial whipping of pubescent girls was formerly used as a "rite de passage."

not sustain them. This is no doubt due to a lack of the B group vitamins, giving rise to B- deficiency symptoms with continued use in a restricted diet, as Braz Dias de Aguiar found when the Brazilian Boundary Commission was working in the Guiana-Amazon hinterland (Aguiar 1943, 126-128). Living in his own village, and with a succession of palm and other fruits, many of which are prepared by partial fermentation, with nuts and fish oils, the Makushi has usually an adequate supply of vitamins. It is when he is employed for a period by the settlers that he often suffers from malnutrition.

The psychological side of medicine is provided for by the activities of the "piaiman" (*piatzán*) whose ceremonies do sometimes, as the writer has witnessed, have a marked beneficial effect on the patient - causing an acceleration of the physiological processes leading to recovery, in two observed cases as rapid as the results gained in modern medicine by the use of drugs of the sulphanilamide group.³³ Evidently we are here in the presence of phenomena analogous to those described by Alexis Carrel in "Man the Unknown" (1948: 142) as organic modifications due to certain psychological states such as extreme degrees of concentration in prayer. These interesting practices, because of propaganda and pressure by the authorities and because of the spasmodic application of the strange Regulation 9 of the *Aboriginal Indians Protection Regulations*, 1911, which states: "Any Indian practising as a puiman or sorcerer on any Indian reservation... may be required to leave the same by order of the Governor on report from the Protector..." are falling into disuse. Outspoken men of the tribe at times lament this, saying: "You white men have forbidden us to resort to the 'piajé', who was after all our doctor, and are allowing us to die out for want of one of your doctors, long promised us." In the ceremonies of the "piaiman", who has to undergo a long and very severe training, there is no doubt sometimes juggling and ventriloquism (see Eliade 1977: 87 quoting Bogoraz), but the author is convinced from her experience that trance and dissociation are at least sometimes produced, and that we are here in the presence of some of those borderline phenomena which the psychologist William McDougall (a noted pioneer in the study of the paranormal), maintained could, and should, be scientifically investigated.³⁴

The attitude of the Makushi to European remedies is contradictory.

³³ In 1944, these had recently been introduced in Amazonas. Though penicillin was already in use in the cities (Manaos and Georgetown) it could not be employed in the hinterland because of the need at the time for refrigeration.

³⁴ Since the above was written in 1944, there has been a dramatic change in the climate of opinion in the West, with the development of psychosomatic medicine and parapsychology, and many workers in the field are now prepared to concede the value of shamanistic practices.

Many of the older men, and most of the women, who are generally more conservative, will flatly refuse to take them, even when life might possibly be saved by their use. The writer remembers a scornful old man who died of an intestinal complaint, saying when a specific was offered him that he preferred to die a natural death than to be poisoned by the *paranaghieri's* medicines. If a death occurs, and European remedies were being taken, the unfortunate donor is liable to be suspected of maliciously causing the death. Some take the medicines under protest, and the householder who issues quinine may later find caches of rejected tablets in some dusty corner. Even when the precaution of seeing the dose taken is observed, the victim will often go through the motions of swallowing, really retaining it in the mouth to be later got rid of. Many Makushi have however, learned to appreciate and ask for our medicines - and many of those in closer contact with settlers have become very up-to-date in their requests for more recent drugs such as Atebrin and the Sulpha drugs. Tolerance to our remedies is less, and smaller doses are required, while conversely they seem to have a certain immunity to some of their own drugs which cause us symptoms of violent poisoning. Settlers often find the Makushi remedies more effective than Western ones for the local complaints.

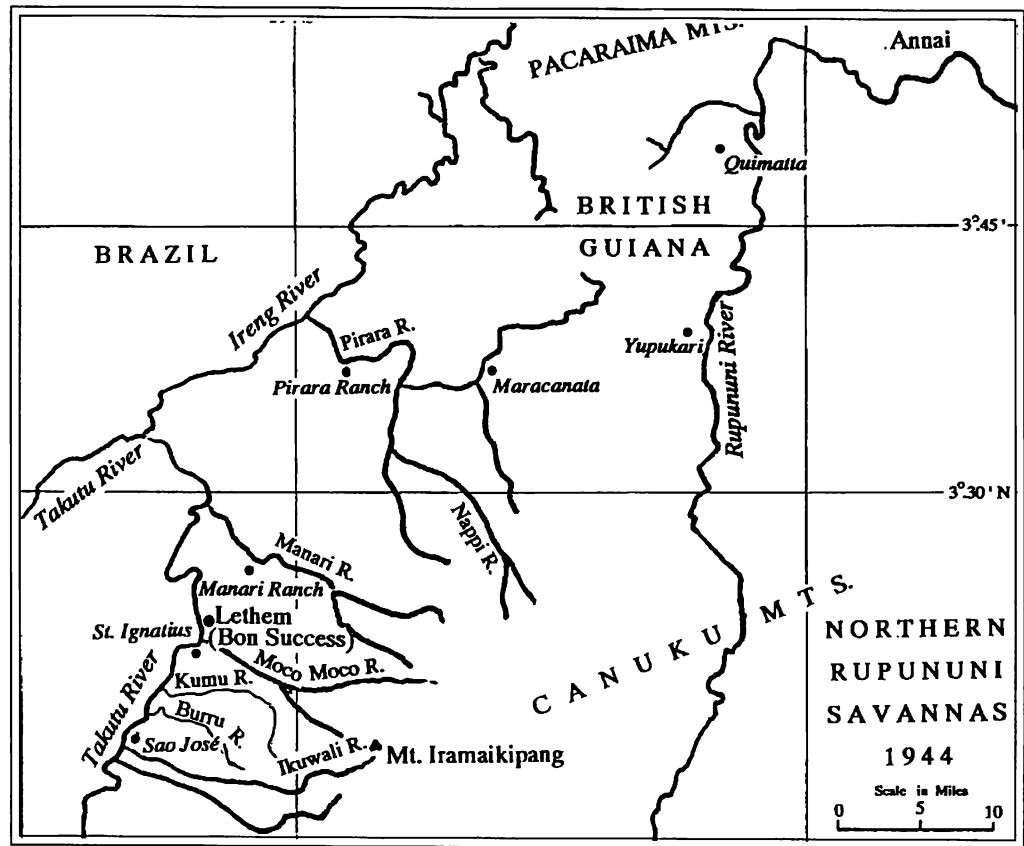
Though the use of various drugs for differing symptoms is quickly appreciated, the underlying malady is never for an instant thought of as the cause of death, which is always attributed to the action of *kenaimi*, the secret avenger, and there are always definite post-mortem signs cited as evidence of manhandling by these malevolent beings (some of these apparently merely normal signs of the beginning of decomposition). Though a Makushi may say "He died of fever," he almost invariably adds "*kenaimi* killed him."

Belief dies hard in the existence of *kenaimi*, a mysterious embodiment of active evil, always by the Makushi personified as human beings (in their own words: "*Kenaimi* are people, those of other tribes, especially Ingariko, and Arcunas"), who for their nefarious purposes of malicious sport or revenge take animal or other shape at will, and wreak harm on the unwary and unsuspecting. A widespread belief among the Guiana Amerindians, it is their own peculiar contribution to the philosophy of cause and effect, and seems to be a projection onto their universe of the uncertainties of a harsh environment and of the malevolence often displayed by human beings towards each other in the frictions and resentments of daily life. With racial memories of Carib aggression, of Portuguese "descimentos" and Spanish "reducciones", of slave raiding instigated by the Dutch, with human agency precipitating battle, murder, and sudden death, - it is not surprising that a preliterate people should have come to see human ill will as the causal factor in all untoward happenings. So strong is this conception that in-

variable sequences which would at once be interpreted by us as causal, are passed over in favour of antecedent events which might on reasoning backwards fit into the Makushi theory, the immediate cause being looked on as a concomitant effect of the action of the *kenaimi*. In a world in which young children must be taught to fear and be on the alert for the very real dangers of rattlesnakes, alligators, and boa-constrictors, not to mention pumas, electric eels, and foraging herds of "caitetu" (bush hogs, *Dicotyles* spp.), piranhas and sting rays, the fear motive from early childhood is one of the most important determinants of behaviour, and finds its most powerful manifestation in the fear of *kenaimi*. This most basic of the primary emotions is actively cultivated in the young, no doubt because of its survival value, and must be taken seriously into account in attempting to understand the Makushi mentality. We find here a group-persecution-complex which in a civilised people would be pathological, but which in this simple social environment does not seem to be abnormal (though the Makushi is a very proud and touchy person, and always ready to take offence).³⁵ It is significant and perhaps depressing that it is the fear element in doctrinal teaching which has most impressed the Makushi, and that the idea of "Hell-fire" is the one Christian conception most readily incorporated into their world view.

The economy of the Makushi has been considerably influenced by the introduction of cattle, said to have been first sent to the Rio Branco by Lobo d'Almada between 1787 and 1793, during which time he founded the "Fazenda Nacional" of São Bento (Reis 1931: 136) on the left bank of the Takutu, opposite its junction with the Uraricoera - to be followed soon by those of São José and São Marcos. The cattle increased enormously and more ranches were founded. They spread first up the Uraricoera River, where there were probably even then some Makushi living, and some of these must soon have been employed as cowboys. im Thurn (1883: 45) visited the ranch attached to Fort São Joaquim (probably São José), which he found in "joint charge of a rough-looking Venezuelan, and the most highly civilised Makusi I ever saw; and these two were assisted by the son of the latter." But these ranches do not seem to have been in Makushi country proper, (though further research into Mission archives may yield information on the distribution of the Rio Branco tribes in Colonial times). However, the ranch both im Thurn and Coudreau record on the Surumu (Cotinga) was in Makushi land, and by 1897 there were already Brazilian ranches established on the East (British) bank of the Takutu above the mouth of

³⁵ The question of what constitutes a normal or disturbed personality must be determined largely by reference to group standards of behavior. Ideas and actions which have group approval cannot be considered abnormal for that group. It is the same with criminality.



the Ireng (Mahu), - some doubtless also in the contested territory between the mouths of the Surumu and the Ireng, now adjudicated to Brazil. One ranch at least, in 1900, on the authority of John Oglivie (Personal Communication) who came to the District in 1899, existed in 1900 at Bon Success, the present Government Station of the District (see Baldwin 1946: 37). Many Makushi were employed on these ranches, becoming skilled cowboys ("vaqueiros"). There are still men living near the Canuku Mountains who worked at Bon Success³⁶ or on other nearby ranches as young boys, and these are, as in im Thurn's time, "the most highly civilised Makushis" and the most excellent stockmen we have. Oral tradition among Makushi of the District relates that the fathers and grandfathers of some of these worked on the boats which each year made the long and laborious trip to Manaus to sell cattle and bring up supplies, rowing down, and pulling themselves up along the banks on the return journey by means of forked poles ("forquilhas") and hooks ("pés de gancho"). These men, at the end of the last century, spoke Portuguese reasonably well, and were well acquainted with civilised ways. Some of them, accompanying their masters, lived at times for periods of months or years in the city, and some even settled there, becoming merged in the general population of Amazonas, predominantly Amerindian in racial type. Others brought back tales and traditions, modified ways of living which were handed on to their children and woven into the Makushi pattern of life, into which the men on returning to the tribe and marrying had to fit. This influence is more marked in the Makushi living near or within the Brazilian frontier, less so in those on the Rupununi River, who have been more entirely in contact, first with the Dutch and then with the British, and speak little or no Portuguese. Most of the Makushi living along the Canuku foothills are said by tradition to be immigrants from Brazil, fleeing before the occupation of their lands. The original Makushi inhabitants of the Canukus have disappeared except for one or two individuals, who relate that in their youth, yearly trading trips were made to Georgetown to buy necessities such as shotguns, axes, hoes, knives, cloth and salt, there being no commerce with Brazil until Brazilian settlers entered the district and brought trade goods with them. As the ranches extended into this area, the ranchers brought back goods each year from Manaus, and trade with them replaced the expeditions to Georgetown. Evidence from tradition makes this round about 1890, and this tallies with the historical records.³⁷

From refusing in im Thurn's time to eat beef, the Makushi have

³⁶ Bon Success is now known as Lethem, after the then Governor of British Guiana, Sir Gordon Lethem.

³⁷ The Brazilian township of Boa Vista do Rio Branco, declared in 1943 capital of the Território do Rio Branco, was at this time (1944) also developing as an administrative and trading centre, but was several days down river, and rarely visited by the Indians who pre-

come to find it an almost indispensable article of diet, and when employed by Europeans will, if asked whether they have already eaten, reply often in the negative, meaning that they have not eaten beef and farine, though in reality quite a substantial meal of some other food may have been consumed. Indians passing through a ranch invariably beg a strip of jerked beef³⁸ - and a great deal of surreptitious killing goes on. Milk and curds are also much appreciated, though normally constituting no part even of the children's diet. These continue to suckle until they are three or four years of age, thus having human milk along with their food. However, a man with a young child will sometimes purchase a milch cow to supplement the human milk.

Cattle and horses, the latter more recently introduced, have become highly prized though not all Makushi own them. Very few possess more than several head. An inveterate passion for trading and frequent sudden longing to eat beef prevent any increase, and unlike the Wapishana in the Southern savannah, who live in the midst of large herds of wild and sometimes unbranded cattle, they have not great opportunities for replenishing their stock. Some Makushi, after their immediate simple needs for clothing, a knife, and some salt³⁹ are satisfied, prefer to receive cattle and horses rather than money or trade goods for services or for articles of value such as hammocks. They tame these animals as pack and riding animals. Even the women, usually wary, frequently become expert in handling tame cattle, and many of them now take a pack bull, cow, or bullock to the field to bring back the load which formerly they themselves would have carried in back quakes. Makushi men (though not to the same extent as the Wapishanas) frequently ride tame cattle but prefer to walk, or to ride on horseback. The younger women and children are often seen mounted on tame bullocks. A man with a wife and young children will often put them to ride on a journey, though I have sometimes seen a man riding comfortably on a bullock, with his wife, a baby in a sling, a huge back-load, and several young children trailing after, patiently and unquestioningly coming along far behind. No one would dream of criticising this since, though the women are very independent and have a great deal of influence with their husbands, the men have precedence, and take the initiative in all

ferred a Portuguese store which had established itself on the Brazilian bank of the Takutu opposite Bon Success (Lethem), and where men would often draw payment for services on a written order from an employer.

³⁸ *Sararu*, that is, "salgado," the salted, dried beef which, with farinha (cassava meal) forms the staple -and deficient- diet of the settlers on both sides of the border (see Hamilton Rice 1928: 124, 126).

³⁹ Salt was formerly extracted by the Indians from numerous dried pond beds (see note 17). Antônio Martins (1947: 7) quotes Lobo d'Almada who refers to "inumeráveis lagos de que se tira quantidade de sal montanum" as an inducement for cattle rearing. Salt is highly prized and is one of the most important trade articles, no doubt especially necessary in a tropical climate, and even seems at times to be used as a tit-bit, a pinch being treated with an expression of the greatest pleasure.

but domestic undertakings.⁴⁰

Most of the men, and a few of the younger women are experts at milking and corral work, while probably every man and boy is skilled in killing and salting beef, partly because many fathers like to put their young sons on the ranches for several years to learn ranching, partly because of illicit practice in this art. On festive occasions the height of a Makushi's ambition is to regale himself with his own or the ranchers' beef;⁴¹ and young men with a few head of cattle are much sought after by match-making fathers. Cattle in a family are often owned by husband, wife, and children separately, though the same brand may for convenience sake be used by the family group. This leads to no difficulty, since the Indian knows each of his very tame animals individually, and considers them almost as members of the family. Before death, if a man wishes to secure his animals to his wife or children, he wills them verbally. On the occasion of his death, a man of my acquaintance bequeathed his few horses and cattle to his wife. This was contested, fiercely and with fisticuffs, by his widowed sister and her son, who considered themselves as the rightful heirs, and promptly seized some of the cows, eating them as the safest method of keeping them.

⁴⁰ There is a well-defined division of labour between the sexes. Within the cross cousin marriage system, men have traditionally been chosen for their skill in hunting and fishing, and life is geared to leaving them free for these pursuits. Early Western travellers have commented adversely on the fact that they have observed the men lying around in hammocks, being waited on by the women. But it must be remembered that these men have probably been away for days on arduous hunting expeditions, or out all night fishing, on very short rations as hunger is supposed to make them keener. The care and manufacture of their weapons is also very important, and much time is expended on sharpening and aligning arrows, polishing and testing bows, and cleaning and oiling guns. The women have an investment in their male protein providers, and make preparations for their return, of which they are often advised by smoke signals in the savanna, greeting them with specially brewed cassiri, and drinks of *xibe* (farinha mixed with water). Any game or fish caught is then cooked, and a huge meal eaten to make up for the fast. In their journeys in single file over the savanna trails, one notes the men walking at the head of the file, weapons in hand, while the women laden with children and impedimenta follow. This is also a protection, since wild animals may be encountered, e.g., the puma or herds of peccary, and rattlesnakes often sun themselves in the paths. Of the deaths from rattlesnake bite the writer knows of, all were men bitten on the trail. On long journeys, hostile tribes or fear of them could also be a danger, and the men were ready to fight if necessary.

⁴¹ No doubt partly because the settler is so dependent on Indian cooperation and goodwill for survival in the Savanna, for labour and many necessary articles, (those used in the preparation of cassava, hammocks which are universally used, field produce brought in from forest clearings, wild fruits and nuts collected in season), and partly because there is an almost paternal attitude to the Indians, it is more or less philosophically accepted that some cattle will disappear in this way. It is not, however, a serious handicap to ranching, and quite often the person involved will come and state what he has done and offer appropriate payment. Only in very flagrant cases will the matter be reported to the authorities, usually absent in distant areas. Nothing more is done than a possible reprimand, though there are stories of incredibly brutal punishment in the past.

The nephew also disputed the sale of a horse which had promptly been disposed of by the widow, and came to the buyer to claim payment. The latter however, withheld payment until the two rivals should decide who was the owner, and in the meantime the animal disappeared, in all probability prudently crossed to Brazil by the widow, and there quietly turned into cash.

In the event of a woman's death, her cattle and other property would not descend to her husband and children, but would have to be divided between them and her brothers and sisters. There was an interesting example of this when a Makushi woman married to a Brazilian died, and her husband appropriated her cattle, having received permission from the Brazilian authorities on falsely representing that there were no other heirs. Her uncle and brother made a long journey to complain to the Brazilian Protector of Indians resident at São Marcos, on the Uraricoera River, who readjudicated and awarded them an equal share with the husband, authorising them to seize, by force if necessary, what belonged to them. This is a very interesting example of the attitude to cattle-owning of a people who, though until recent years cattle did not enter into their economy, have now apparently come to regard it as the chief property for inheritance, and as one their most prized possessions. Contact with European peoples of patrilineal descent has not greatly modified the old system of dividing property.⁴² A man may before death, wishing to provide for his wife and children, bequeath to them verbally his more important property such as guns, axes, tools, and farine pan (interestingly enough, all introduced items), but this is always acrimoniously disputed by his blood relations, who claim they are the rightful heirs; and there is usually an unseemly scramble to secure the more valuable objects, these sometimes being carried off by stealth. In one case, a farine pan, a very essential object for the manufacture of the staple cassava meal, was seized from the widow by the deceased's half-sister by another father; in another case the widow decamped with everything of value, refusing to share with the man's son by a previous union. This was considered highly improper, especially as the widow, cutlass in hand, defended the property of the deceased from the lawful heirs who politely retired, since the Makushi will not use force as a rule unless under the influence of strong drink.

Marriage is still predominantly matrilineal, the young husband going to live for at least a year after marriage with the girl's parents, or owing service to her father, or if he is dead to her father's brothers.⁴³ In

⁴² But a certain amount of ambivalence with respect to attribution of descent is evident in these examples. See also Diniz 1972: 88.

general, all a girl's male relatives think they have during this probationary time, a right to demand service of the young man, and if he does not prove willing and able, will very often in the process of the year say they do not want him in the family, thus putting an end to the match. In some cases, if a girl is an orphan, the marriage may be arranged by the young man's mother, and becomes patrilocal, the girl coming to reside with her mother-in-law and being under her dominion for a time. This however is not the normal pattern. After a time the young couple, usually after the birth of a child, may make a house apart, often near the girl's father's house, though if the demands on the young husband are too irksome, he may migrate with his newly-found family to his own parents. The matrilineal pattern is still so strong that if a Makushi girl marries a man of another tribe, he is expected to live in Makushi territory, and children of the union are counted as Makushi.

The attitude to the European marriage ceremony is ambivalent. The Makushi is a realist and would not dream of going to church with a woman of whose wifely qualities he had no experience. Effective marriage is still (1944) contracted in the old Makushi way, which is still looked on as the only necessary condition for matrimony, in spite of sacerdotal admonishments. During a drinking feast a young man will more or less publicly enter the hammock of the girl of his choice,⁴⁴ with the approval of her male relations, or alternatively, the girl's parents or other interested parties will watch for the auspicious moment when the

⁴³ Diniz (1972: 88) equating the word "service" with the Portuguese word "servidão" (servitude), prefers to interpret this as collaboration, which of course it is, but the invitation by the girl's father to help cut a field, and its acceptance, are the essential part of the marriage agreement. From that moment, the young man becomes a son-in-law, a *paito*, at least on probation for a year. Makushi men do not order each other about, and resent being ordered about, but it is interesting that the word *paito* (*poito*, *paitoriu* and variants), is widely used in the Carib languages to indicate a man in a subordinate position. Shomburgk (1922-3, II: 343) mentions Caribs having slaves called "pottis." The Makushi refer to male servants in settlers' houses as *paitoru*.

⁴⁴ Choice is limited by the rule of cross cousin marriage, and this was still observed in 1949 (when I made a short return visit), though gradually falling into disuse, partly through the break-up of communities, partly through external pressure to adopt a Christian form of marriage and its "prohibited degrees." The Makushi child grows up knowing who among his or her relations are potential marriage partners, since this is embodied in the term of address. Children of siblings of like sex address each other by a different set of relationship terms from children of those of opposite sex. This is reinforced by the practice of matrilocality, by which a man on marriage leaves the family group to reside in his father-in-law's village, so that his children will grow up there, while his sister's children will grow up in a separate locality, in the village (*maloca*) of her father, along with the children of her married sisters, who are classed as brothers and sisters, and may not intermarry. (This is interesting in the light of theories of commensality, sexual attraction and the development of the incest tabu.) Through the fall in numbers, and the factors mentioned above, it was often not easy to find a cross cousin to marry, but social attitudes were so deeply engrained that "modern" young men told me that to be on the safe side, it was better to choose a wife from "far away."

young people are sufficiently intoxicated, to engineer them into a hammock together. If the young man is found in the morning still in the hammock, or even if he has left it and the parents desire the match, the girl's father, elder brother, or mother (if the father is dead), will issue a formal invitation to him to cut a field. If he accepts, he remains in the house. If he declines, he must give some small present to the girl, and the matter is closed.

After the union is arranged, the young man lives for a probationary period with the girl in the house of her parents and must help the father cut a field, or do any building or other service required. If the young couple live amicably together, and he is industrious, the match holds. If he is lazy or proves to have habits unpleasant to the household, the girl or her relations may turn him out. This may be done by the father thanking him very pointedly for his help, and the implication of this is immediately understood. If he finds that on closer acquaintance he does not care for the girl or her people, or if she does not become pregnant, he may make some pretext to go away and fail to return.

In no case, is social disapproval ever shown among the members of the tribe towards any union which conforms to Makushi tradition, i.e. open life in common (see White n.d.: 46), with one or more partners of the prescribed group, and with immediate separation and division of children and property on the wish of either of the parties. Missionary disapproval and vigorous suppression of the tribal marriage system in favour of church marriage and vows of eternal fidelity to one partner have however caused resentment, uncertainty and weakening of values.⁴⁵ Though "common law" marriage is perfectly adequate still, some of the younger and more "civilised" men now feel that they have no binding obligations to a woman to whom they are not legally married, and will excuse infidelities and ill-treatment on this score; while many of the younger women, seeing that the legally married woman's lot is a hard and irrevocable one. (an awareness which has been strengthened by contact with European and Brazilian women), refuse the church ceremony, preferring either the Makushi marriage which allows them to separate without social disapproval, or else secret temporary unions. The Makushi woman has more independence and a higher standing

⁴⁵ Sororal polygyny, formerly customary, was called into question, and sternly prohibited, on the establishment of the Jesuit mission in 1909. Older men still living in 1944, remembered with regret the grief and disruption caused on being forced to give up the younger of their two wives, usually a sister of the first wife, with her young children. Widow inheritance also disappeared, though the selective term of address for a man's brother's wife still existed, and was the one used for any female cross cousin and therefore, possible partner.

than women under a patrilineal system. Though like men the world over, the men take great pride in their sons and take great pains in their education, their daughters also have status as the ones who will bring sons-in-law into the household as assistants and allies. As all earlier accounts agree, Makushi men are noticeably kind to their women; but it is cleverly built into the system that it is to their advantage to be so. Apart from natural affection, since daughters are assets, a man will protect them; a son-in-law, initially on probation, has to reckon with him and the girl's other male relations, who will back her up in any difficulty. In the case of divorce, it is the man who must leave the household. This need not even be by agreement, since the Makushi woman can herself terminate a union simply by putting the man's hammock and bows and arrows outside the door of the house. This still occasionally occurs, when the man will go away without question. The women are very fond and proud of their men, and willingly fulfil their domestic role, on which the men are utterly dependent also, but it never occurs to them that they are not free in their own right.

After about a year of life in common, if they are very much in love, or if the girl's relations press for it, as they sometimes do because of indoctrination, and for greater security, the young couple may go to church and have the legal ceremony performed. But many of the younger men and women who have been more in contact with Europeans and appreciate the permanence of the legal ceremony, fear to bind themselves by it. The old Makushi custom of divorce by mutual agreement, in which the couple agrees to separate and divide the children, girls to the mother, boys to the father, is still in force as well as the simple lapsing of unions in which there are no children. Young Makushi have seen the unhappiness caused by the stern disapproval of the authorities when separated couples have taken other partners. Many have been frankly surprised to find that they cannot be legally remarried after such separation. Others are amused at the simplicity of their more unsophisticated fellows, and think by refusing the marriage ceremony, to escape such a contretemps. It will be seen how the clash of two systems each valid in its own context, confuses an issue very vital to the survival of the tribe. In seeking to impose our marriage laws on the Makushi we have introduced into his life unnecessary and uncomprehended complications, which are helping directly in keeping down the birth rate.

The drinking spree continues to play an increasingly important part in Makushi life. It is the occasion for meeting, conversing, making business deals, arranging marriages. Nearly all of diversion and of colour in their very hard lives is contained here, even for the youngest children. The beautiful songs and rhythmic movements of the *parishara*

dance, the dance of the wild hog, *karawata*, (White n.d.: 18-19) and the accompanying dramatic wordplay between these performers and the *tukui* (humming bird) dancers who compete in humorous and friendly rivalry, embody the highest expression of Makushi art. The fine feather crowns and tippets, the tooth necklaces and bone and cotton armlets were some of the most exquisite examples of their handicraft. The old long-distance races which preceded the feasts, performed by famed runners, were an inducement to the cultivation of physical fitness and endurance.

These *paracari* festivals were formerly special occasions, performed at intervals for definite purposes such as the application of the ant frames as a manhood test for the young men, to inaugurate a new house, to return hospitality to neighbouring groups, on the occasion of a big running contest, or as a compliment to a distant chief. Great numbers of people formerly came long distances to attend them, and great quantities of *paracari* were consumed.

Nowadays, with the great decrease in numbers of the tribe, and the sadness and social disorganisation which has fallen upon them, the old dances are passing. Men, women and children still take part in them on rare occasions, but more and more frequently the younger folk call loudly for a cessation of what they consider the "old-fashioned" dances, which with their strange rhythms and melodies, their wealth of lore and poetic feeling, give place to the sounds of the harmonica reeling out insidious plaints of desire and repression, to the strains of the latest carnival hits from Rio, and the tight embrace of inebriated couples turning in the pantomimic posturings of the waltz, the foxtrot, the scotch and the samba.

The Makushi reaction to the disintegration and despair following on the rapid and alarming decrease in numbers within the present generation seems to have been an Epicurean one. The "paiwarri" spree has become almost continual, in a very degenerated form. As long as there is cassava in the fields, it is made into *paracari*, with no thought for the morrow; and in every house small groups regularly gather to drink and to dance "Brazilian" dances. Cowboys from the neighbouring ranches will attend, often taking bottles of cheap spirits, to dance and secure a girl for the night, and though marriages are still made, sprees are now more often occasions for temporary amorous adventures. The mania has become so strong that many individuals seem to live only for pleasure, and the excessive drinking and fatigue caused by hunger on these occasions help to swell the death-rate.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ See Note 30 on malignant tertian malaria.

Whatever the defects of the "paiwarri" spree may be, it is however an important motivator of effort. Even the catharsis of drunkenness may occasionally be beneficial to a predominantly introvert people. The drinking feast is certainly one of the remaining inducements to agricultural work and also a method of securing cooperative aid in field cutting, planting and weeding. The pride in display reaches its optimum in the troughs full of *paracari*, the fish caught and the game brought in, the cattle killed for the large events, the dresses and ornaments worn, the new hats and shoes, the perfume, hair oil and powder lavishly used. From the white man's point of view of the necessity of creating new economic wants, the drinking feast is a godsend. As a consolidator of what still remains of Makushi culture, and a spur to activity, its value is not to be underestimated, and its disappearance before there is something to take its place as a substitute means of satisfying some of the important instinctive urges, would accelerate the disintegration and help to kill the will-to-live of these people. The remedy for the present overindulgence in the spree is to enable the Makushi once more to feel that their life has at least some of the normal satisfactions, instead of the frustration and powerlessness they at present feel in the presence of the overwhelming processes of death and degeneration.

The Makushi pay great attention to the education of their children, and from birth and even before, the small being is set about with tabus and prescribed actions, all aimed at securing first, his or her physical normality and healthy development; secondly, his or her growing into a skilled and industrious member of the group. The mother is the teacher of the girls, and the father, after the babyhood period is over, of the boys. The small girl baby, as soon as she can toddle, is given miniature editions of the mother's work-things, and accompanies her in her domestic tasks. At two years she will fan the fire, carry a minute gourd of water, cry for a knife to scrape tiny roots of cassava, be taught to bring small things on command and be obedient. This is to be her life, and her training, begun before she can speak, is pursued with good humour and patience, and becomes her chief play.

By the time she is eleven or twelve, at least when puberty is reached, when she would formerly have had to undergo extremely severe initiation ordeals,⁴⁷ and then be eligible for marriage, a well-taught girl knows all her mother can teach her. Often nowadays, the parents will put her to work with a settler's family, to learn Portuguese (the lan-

⁴⁷ She would be confined in isolation on a high platform for a considerable period, on a restricted diet, after which she would be subjected to the extraordinary whipping ceremony, in which the whole community believed it was their duty to her future to rain blows upon her. This, along with the excruciating ant-frame manhood ordeal for the youths, has fallen into abeyance. I did however, come across a vestige of it in symbolic form.

guage spoken even in British households near the frontier), sewing and European cooking, since the modern young man takes a wife who can do such things. There she will also learn something of cleanliness and hygiene,⁴⁸ simple remedies and the care of children, before she finally leaves to marry and settle down, or decides that a free life is more attractive.

Unfortunately nowadays, many Makushi women have been seized with the universal craving for excitement, and no longer work very hard themselves nor teach their daughters. They go from one spree to another with their little daughters in their train. Quite small tots learn very early to dance the white man's dances, often with adult men as partners, and soon become very worldly wise. They realise that girls no longer need to have the old accomplishments to secure husbands. Girls are scarce and those who dance the best samba, and wear the brightest, newest clothes, are more likely to secure an up-and-coming modern young man than one who merely knows the traditional woman's arts.

Though a man's daughters, because of the custom of matrilocality and the system of service by the sons-in-law, have as stated above, their own value and status, and in no way feel themselves as inferior, it seems to an outside observer that the boy in the Makushi family is far more important than the girl. The man is the head of the family, and a household will consist of the father and his wife, his married daughters and adjuvant sons-in-law, children and elderly dependent relatives. In contacts with the outside world, it is he who will receive the visitors.⁴⁹

From the time a boy is born, he rules his mother, suckling when he wishes, having his slightest wants attended to. The father jealously watches to see that the mother runs at his slightest cry, and sternly re-

⁴⁸ That is, our system of cleanliness. The Makushi are very careful in the preparation of food, washing all utensils before use and scrubbing with leaves of the sandbox tree (*Curatella*) which grows all around in the savanna, rinsing meat and fish several times before adding it to the pepper pot, which must never have a used spoon put into it, for fear of contamination. Contrary to travellers' tales, their houses and the yard around them are frequently swept, partly because of the danger of lurking rattlesnakes and smaller pit-vipers, which are attracted to the warmth during the cold upland nights. As long as there is an available water supply, they will bathe several times a day, changing their working clothes after the evening dip for clean ones. To what extent this is native or acquired one cannot say, but as a vain and fastidious people they attach great importance to being presentable.

⁴⁹ It may be that contact with Western patrilineals has reinforced this. Government officials have always sought out some key male figure with whom to confer. On the other hand, it may be that we are interpreting what we see entirely through Western eyes, and projecting our perceptive patterns onto the material. It is indubitably advisable to take into account the cultural provenance and even the sex of the observer, and to allow for unconscious bias in our fieldwork. For this reason, Margaret Mead in later years preferred her graduate students to undergo a personal analysis as part of their training. See also Ruth Benedict, Abram Kardiner, *et al.*

proves her if she is not on the spot even before the cry is out. The baby soon learns with speech to give her orders and she is always his delighted and willing slave. I have seen quite a small boy bring in fish he has caught, throw them in front of his mother and order her peremptorily to cook them.⁵⁰ In a very short time the food will be placed before the young lord of creation. As soon as the baby can stagger about the father makes him a little bow and blunt-headed arrows. He learns to make use of these between two and three years of age, and from then on is practising continually, encouraged by the praise of admiring relatives. A small boy's bow and arrows are never far from hand, and his chief diversion from a tender age is aiming at all sorts of targets. Between three and four years of age he begins accompanying his father on fishing expeditions and is soon shooting tiny fish and small birds. The father consciously and proudly tries to harden his little son, training him in endurance by making him bear fatigue until he is really very tired, when he will ride high on his parent's shoulders. The Makushi man is careful to obtain magical plants (*muraŋ*), to give his son prowess in hunting and skill in catching different species of fish, each kind having its special treatment. His arms are cut in longitudinal lines, skin deep, and the *muraŋ* are rubbed into the cuts. He is treated with pepper juice to make him strong, keen and industrious, a good hunter and a good agriculturalist. If he or his sister should be lazy, the drastic treatment of pepper (*Capsicum* spp.) applied in the anus may be resorted to. It is extremely rare for a Makushi to strike his children, and the pepper treatment is not used as a punishment but as a magical and remedial conditioning, inducing alertness by the violent physical response, both active and involuntary, which it provokes, and by the fear of further applications. The Makushi has his own particular psychology of education, and fully understands habit formation.

As he grows older the boy is increasingly his father's constant companion, and learns all the latter knows, helping him at an early age in clearing and cutting a field- the smaller trees at first being given to him to cut down - in planting and weeding and in house-building. He delights to make arrows when his father is doing so, and learns to manufacture the simple basketry objects in present domestic use. Often nowadays, when he is about ten years of age he will go to work on a ranch as a corral boy, and so he learns to milk, to manage cattle and to make lassoes, hobbles, halters, and other simple but necessary articles of raw hide or leather, improves his Portuguese, and learns the way of the cowboy ("vaqueiro").

⁵⁰ Akawaio males also do this "throwing down of food", and sometimes it is a compliment paid by a competent hunter to a member of the opposite sex. (Personal Communication from Audrey Butt Colson).

A number of parents, because they have been taught by the Missions the desirability of schooling, and because they have seen that the "civilizado" has a facility which sometimes enables him to get the better of them in business deals, to add up quickly and give change which sometimes afterwards proves to be short, and to send written messages which are obviously more effective than verbal ones, very naturally wish their sons, and often also daughters, to have the advantage of this education.⁵¹ They make great sacrifices to place them in local schools, pathetically imagining that the desired skill is thus automatically assured, but the results up to 1944 were disappointing. The new knowledge is not made sufficiently automatic to be serviceable, and the excellent training normally received from the parents is foregone because of residence away from home during the formative years. Speaking Makushi, with Portuguese as a second language, the children acquire in the third and often quite unfamiliar medium of English only a parrot-like ability to reproduce auditory and visual patterns, (a facility to which their tribal inheritance of rhythmic and visual patterns in song, dance, and handicrafts disposes them), usually soon lost, with the English they never really fully understand nor learn to use. Teaching is ineffectual because unskilled. With great practical and artistic abilities so that in all kinds of handicraft they soon outstrip their teachers, the Makushi find very difficult the more abstract mental processes involved in calculation and reading, and they probably require special educational methods.

We are creating a class of detribalised younger people who know nothing of value, have not acquired the habit of work relevant to daily life, and desire only the unimportant externals of what they imagine to be the white man's civilisation, without having a glimpse of the fundamentals common to all societies. They tend to despise their own culture and their own language, without attaining fluency in another. Their idea of the good life is plenty of dances, plenty of perfume, brilliantine and new clothes, which the girls at least soon discover how to obtain without working or marrying. The process of social disorganisation has now gone so far for a tribe like the Makushi, where the effect of culture contact has been so marked, that there is an urgent need for a wide

⁵¹ The lot of the orphan among the Makushi is very different from that of the family child as described here. Whatever may have been his or her fate in more prosperous days for the tribe, an orphan is now scrambled for by the relatives, and usually made a household drudge doing all the thankless tasks, and receiving hard words and blows. No pride is taken in choosing the tasks for their training, but work is merely for the convenience of the foster parents. An orphan girl will do nothing but eternally carry a baby in a sling, receiving a sharp reprimand or even a cuff every time the child cries, and so when she grows up may have no other domestic skill. A boy will often be put to menial household tasks. (See Koch-Grünberg 1923, III: 329 on an Ihuruána orphan.)

and effective education incorporating the best of the old Makushi culture, and based partly on Makushi traditions, but also fitting to cope with the changed and rapidly changing conditions of life in the savannah. In other words, the Makushi must now be taught to understand his own problems, and be equipped by education to meet them. Some more serviceable type of education has a great part to play in the future orientation of this people, bewildered by the influences we have unwittingly or deliberately brought to bear on them.

The attitude of the Makushi to the Government and the local administration is traditionally friendly. Relations with the Dutch are recorded by Storm van 's Gravesande (Harris and de Villiers 1911, II: 616-617, 620), who enjoined his postholder to exercise great care to preserve the friendship of the savannah tribes. Friendly contact with the English goes back further than this, for there is reason to suppose that members of this tribe knew and liked Sir Walter Raleigh (Harris 1928, 179-181). After the British took over the Colony, the Dutch policy of friendliness to the Amerindians was continued, and both from tradition and from experience the Makushi are favourably disposed to the authorities. This was very noticeable on the occasion of the visit of Lord Moyne and other members of the Royal Commission in 1939, when the Makushi and Wapishana gathered at Bon Success, and fearlessly stated their needs. The old tradition surviving from Dutch days, when presents were made to the Indian tribes, cropped up when, on hearing that the Governor of the Colony was expecting to visit the District, the Makushi said they hoped he would bring guns and salt, two highly prized commodities which had become scarce under wartime conditions.

The activities of the local administration in imprisoning cattle thieves are viewed philosophically, and no ill-will is borne the Government, though the unfortunate officer who has the task of arrest may occasionally be marked out for reprisals. The Makushi has no aversion to an enforced stay at Government expense, for he eats well and is not harshly treated. No social disapproval is manifested towards law-breakers by other members of the tribe, for the law is imposed by what is looked on as an external power, and as far as the Makushi are concerned has no inner sanction. Disputes between members of the tribe practically never come to court. They are concealed from the white man.

But though friendliness is marked towards the Government, there have lately been signs of dissatisfaction and criticism, notably because of the lack of medical care and of adequate supplies of medicine. In 1938 the Amerindians of the District were promised a doctor by the Royal Commission, and they have not forgotten. Especially when a member of the family group dies, as all too frequently happens, their

acrid comments do not fall very pleasantly on European ears. There is great discontent over the scarcity and high prices of necessary commodities, due to war conditions, and there was great and irritated impatience for the setting up of a promised Government canteen, now fortunately functioning. Though this has not relieved the price situation, it is highly approved of by both Makushi and Wapishana on account of the better quality of the goods than of those obtainable in Brazilian local stores.

A great deal of adverse comment could be heard on all sides after the mass vaccination for smallpox in 1943, when a devastating epidemic of alastrim was sweeping through the whole of the Rio Branco region. Very violent symptoms were experienced by almost all individuals after vaccination; many became acutely ill, and a few died from the effects. Perhaps even a European population might have been excused under such conditions for expressing, as many Makushi did, a determination never to be vaccinated again.

Strangely enough, any habitual hostility to Europeans that is encountered is more marked on the frontier, and the writer considers it to be in part due to tribal memories of Portuguese slave-raiding expeditions in the 18th and early 19th centuries. The approach of a Brazilian visitor is still heralded by the whispered warning "Caraiwa," and he is greeted with a guarded reserve. The Dutch, who also used red slaves, obtained them through the intermediary of the Caribs, still feared in local legend, and so escaped this opprobrium.

The Makushi men are born traders, trade being traditionally by barter; but lately there has been an influx of money into the District, and the tribe is at present in the transition stage between an economy based on exchange of goods and services and one based on a money currency. They are beginning, as have all people at some stage in their evolution, to find money a more convenient medium of exchange, with the local drawback that frequently there are no goods available to be bought with the money. They are also handicapped by the fact that few of them know the values of the notes and coins they are using, and cannot calculate prices or change, and so are often cheated or make mistakes. Ridiculous prices are paid in deals among themselves, with no regard at all to real or monetary values. A certain unit becomes fashionable, this at present (1944) seeming to be the dollar, and no article however small or great its relative value, will be sold below this price. Any paper money is for the purposes of the transaction counted as one dollar (one "leaf" as it is called), and so money rapidly changes hands without much trade actually being done. All this points to the need for some simple and effective instruction in figures if the replacement of barter by currency is not to continue to confuse Makushi economics.

The Makushi economy is not communal, though there is no permanent private ownership of land. The land is considered as occupied tribally; each man is free to choose any piece of available land for field or house, and it is then looked on as his as long as he uses or occupies it. When he abandons it, his ownership lapses and it may subsequently be occupied by another individual, though an interval is usually observed before this takes place, no doubt in order to be quite sure that the original occupier has no further interest in the land. There is no conception of common as opposed to private land. The region occupied by the Makushi is definitely regarded as Makushi territory, as distinct from the areas occupied by other tribes. The action of certain Wapishana individuals in complaining of supposed infringements of their rights by Makushi has on several occasions been defended in the hearing of the writer on the ground that the Wapishana in question were in Makushi land, and should return among their own tribesmen. The rancher is also considered an intruder with no territorial rights, a person who has come with his cattle onto tribal lands and then unjustifiably sought to restrict tribal activities. This opinion is freely expressed on any occasion upon which the rancher protests against what he considers to be an infringement of his own rights by members of the tribe. The rancher as a rule seeks to interfere as little as possible with Amerindian freedom of action and movement, except for not wishing his livestock stolen, or his water-holes and streams poisoned with fish-poisons. The Makushi point of view, however, is that they are his own ancestral savannahs, ponds and streams, to do as he likes with, and that cattle are a destructive nuisance, which often, by destroying his fields and breaking down the fences they make necessary, cause him severe privation. He naturally feels no compunction in recouping himself by occasionally slaughtering one of the rancher's animals.

Individual property, - the immediate personal possessions, household effects, cattle and horses - is lightly held, and can always be immediately transferred on expressing a desire to trade (that is, to exchange for something else usually, though money enters increasingly into these deals).⁵² This exchange is rarely refused, even when the owner does not wish to part with his property, as this is a serious breach of etiquette. The desired object is at once handed over, and a return follows in due course, though delay may sometimes run into years.

⁵² An exception seems to be made for vital things of European origin such as a man's knife and his gun, which are essential to him, and which he cannot himself make. It is interesting that while most of the Guiana and Amazon tribes use derivatives of Spanish, Portuguese or Dutch names for introduced metal objects such as knife, the Makushi word for knife is *tawara*. (ssee Armellada and Gutiérrez Salazar 1981:192, who consider that *tawara* probably derives from *avara*, a species of palm with very hard wood from which Pemon formerly made their knives.)

One of the great Makushi diversions is the collection of these debts, which are never repudiated, though payment may sometimes be deferred by a courteous evasion. The Makushi in his business deals is most scrupulously honest, and the rare defaulter calls upon himself strong social disapproval.

Contact with the white man has however, taught the Makushi that not all desired objects can be obtained merely by proposing a deal, and that there are some things the civilised man will not part with for any consideration. The response to this has been the universal appearance of petty thieving. Experience has taught that the surest method of obtaining is to carry off any desired object left conveniently to hand. Knives, cutlasses, cow-skins, cups, plates and spoons, are frequently missing after a party has passed through a ranch, along with occasional eggs, chickens, strips of dried beef and even young sucking pigs, which can easily be hidden in a back-quake. The practice, unheard of until recent decades, has extended so greatly that even in visits among themselves, the house owner or his wife must keep a wary eye on the movements of the guests and the whereabouts of domestic objects.

The rigid doctrine of *meum* and *tuum* has here as in other societies given rise to the thief; but the sense of guilt has not yet developed, and punishment seldom comes to the offending one. Tribal solidarity protects against the inquiries of the authorities, and within the tribe rigid etiquette prevents a direct accusation of theft.

The results of this change due to contact with our so different type of society have been disastrous to the Makushi economy. Whereas twenty or thirty years ago Makushi houses could be left open, and nothing touched during the absence of the owners, now everything must be securely closed, in spite of which houses are entered, and even locked trunks skilfully opened and rifled. Thus necessary and sometimes irreplaceable tools, implements and personal articles are lost, causing increased poverty and cynicism towards property.

Even at the present time of economic disorganisation for the Makushi, field products are willingly shared with the needy; catches of fish and game are always divided. A poor family will go and live with some relation or friend and be unquestioningly received and supported until their own field is bearing and their crisis over. But notwithstanding this open-handed generosity and the facility of trading, so that there is no real need to steal, the Makushis have now discovered the advantages of what Gordon Childe (1964: 167) refers to as the "oldest labour-saving device" of stealing, especially the labour-saving of stealing from each other's fields. The terrible social disadvantage, the resulting unwillingness to plant for others to rob, with its far-reaching economic and social consequences, is appreciated by more intelligent members of the tribe, but in the absence of any attempt at control,

praedial larceny and robbery continue to be among the most potent factors contributing to the degeneration in Makushi standards of subsistence. There are no penalties for petty theft. If a man hears that someone has rifled his house or robbed his field, he may merely shrug his shoulders and feel very angry. He may go and complain, to have the theft just as politely denied; it may be admitted, especially if the thief is caught in the act, but will be explained as merely an un-negotiated purchase which will of course be paid for. Such an explanation must, by the rules of good behaviour, be accepted.

Cattle-stealing is widespread. The cattle are stolen, in the opinion of the writer, partly because of hunger, especially protein hunger, as fish and game are scarce at certain seasons, partly in revenge for the trampling of fields and because of general annoyance or dissatisfaction with the rancher. The penalties of the law have so far been powerless to stop it, and this would point to some deep-seated defect in present-day Makushi economy, which must first be remedied, perhaps by ensuring ownership of sufficient and increasing livestock to family groups.

Though profound social modifications have been caused by the teaching of the Church concerning such significant questions as that of polygamy, and by its refusal to accept tribal marriage and divorce customs, and though the conflict between the two coexisting systems of morality is profoundly perturbing at least to the younger Makushi, introduced doctrinal teaching has not been incorporated to any great extent into the world-view of the individual.⁵³ In spite of several decades of teaching, the Christian conception and way of life has been little comprehended. In a people so largely dominated by fear (see the belief in (*kenaimi*)), it is not surprising that it is the fear motive in Christian doctrine, rather than the one of love, which has impressed them. The infrequent religious observances are performed partly from fear - of a literal "big fire," or of the anger of the missionaries - partly it seems from self-interest, and very rarely it would seem, from faith and conviction. The men in particular are very critical of mission activities, and quite frankly admit to each other in conversation the dependence of their services to the Church upon an adequate supply of trade goods as payment. They will, on the other hand, lament the degradation of those

⁵³ In the 19th century the Makushi had evolved their own adaptation of Christianity - the Alleluia cult, a charismatic form built around the tribal pattern of song and dance on festive occasions. This spread all over the Rio Branco savannas among neighbouring tribes and finally attained its highest development among the Akawaio in Guyana (see Butt 1960). It was sternly suppressed by the clergy among the Makushi on the British side of the frontier. They, however, occasionally danced it still in the 1930s in the Canuku foothills. My informant swore me to the greatest secrecy. Since then, with the new climate of ecumenism in the West, the cult has been admitted as a recognized Church by the Guyanese authorities and the Guyana Council of Churches, and the civil authorities have given it all the facilities of a valid sect, with its own organisation.

members of the tribe who make a habit of hanging around the missions and trading on the compassion of the priests without giving any adequate return in goods or services. They are, of course instances of genuine faith, but they are very much in the minority. The writer has for example, recently observed a striking character-change in a turbulent individual who numbers homicide among his other misdeeds, a change attributed by the man himself to an experience which must be called sudden conversion.

The categories of Makushi virtues cut across, and do not necessarily coincide with the Christian virtues, nor are our vices always vices to them. Charity and gratitude do not emerge as a Makushi reaction to the situations of daily life. Great courtesy, a rigid code of hospitality, always returned, and a resignation in the face of human suffering take the place of these two virtues. Nothing is given or expected without payment, which is always punctiliously made, and so no further obligation is felt. The Makushi will not nurse his sick, for it does not occur to him that sickness is curable by this means, and he has in common with most primitive peoples an acute fear of the magical influences supposedly at work in anything abnormal. But since he believes that all sickness is caused by *kenaimi*, he will do his best to call in a "piaiman", and would formerly in event of death have gone on an avenging expedition as himself a *kenaimi*.

Truth-telling and lying seem to be in a world-picture beyond his ken. Words are for other purposes; they are means to an end, and lying is merely, in a people who normally react to an unpleasant situation by running away, just another convenient means of evading the pain-principle of reality. Stealing is not stealing; it is a form of acquiring, which can always be amicably adjusted by an appropriate payment. Chastity is unimportant beside the capability and amiability, even the sexual capacity of the chosen partner. To be industrious, generous, a good provider, these are important Makushi virtues for both sexes. Women must be patient, frugal and hard-working; men must have physical endurance and hunting prowess. Homicide and infanticide, crimes to us, have always their explanatory reasons, - the man killed was a *kenaimi*, the child exposed was born with some real or imaginary defect, or had no father (that is, the father had refused to acknowledge his responsibility by living openly with the mother) - and no difference is made to the perfect courtesy with which the perpetrators are received in Makushi society.⁵⁴

⁵⁴ Their rules of social intercourse seem to be tailored to avoid confrontation. They have, however, a strong moral sense and censure each other often *in absentia* for infringements of their own code. An interjection very frequently heard in conversations of Makushi men is the word *chia*, an exclamation expressing all shades of disapproval from faint amusement to the uttermost contempt, according to the length to which it is drawn out and the emphasis with which it is spoken.

There are serious faults - to refuse to share one's fishing catch, to be mean with food or other possessions, to fight in *cassiri* sprees, to beat one's wife; for the women, to let one's husband's game rot for lack of prompt treatment, to be lazy or a scandal-monger, to eat secretly from the common family store - a serious vice in adults and children alike, and one about which action is promptly taken on account of the privation it can cause in people living very near the starvation line, and whose fresh supplies can only be obtained with delay and great labour.

The Makushi faults and virtues are their own, and have not been appreciably influenced by our efforts to make them over to our pattern. They are essentially social virtues, evolved in the course of working out an effective adjustment to the human and biological environment. In so far as the Makushi has acquired new faults, he himself attributes it to our emphasis on the negative aspects of the Decalogue, which he alleges suggest to him new and unthought of ways of misbehaviour.

Conclusion

To sum up, it will be seen that the social organisation of these Amerindians has been and is increasingly being profoundly modified by contact with Western customs and ideas. In a few cases materially, as in the introduction of iron, this contact has been beneficial. In others purely artificial wants have been created to the detriment of tribe and individual. Socially and morally, contact has led to disorganisation, disintegration and deterioration, partly through the disruptive influence of conflicting standards, partly through the great decrease in numbers caused by introduced diseases. The old traditional virtues of endurance, industry, and scrupulous honesty are disappearing and their place has not been taken by any corresponding Christian virtues. Theoretically the Government's intentions with regard to Indian health are good. Actually, far too many strong individuals in full adulthood and far too many young children, die for lack of simple and timely treatment. Education as it is available today (1944) is ineffectual, and even actually harmful, since it prevents the child from gaining the practical home preparation for life, and gives him no lasting or serviceable knowledge in its stead.

In no way have we enabled the Makushi to be more self-supporting. In fact, by calling him away for labour at periods vital for field-cutting and planting, we contribute to his destitution. The goods he obtains with the proceeds of his labour are often unnecessary ones, soon squandered or traded away to his friends and relations. We are giving him false standards to suit our own convenience and our own preconceived ideas, and because of our need for his help we are undermining his social and economic life.

We must decide now whether we want a race of "peones," a fate to which the Amerindian has never readily lent himself, or whether it is not our duty to these people to encourage them to be once more prosperous and self-supporting, enabling them among other occupations to rear livestock on a small scale alongside of their other agricultural activities. To divorce the Amerindian from his land will be to sign his racial death-warrant; and it would seem that it will be as a small proprietor pursuing mixed agriculture that he will finally adjust himself as a member of Guianese society.

Makushi ill-health seems largely due to introduced diseases, chiefly malaria and worm infestation. There is no noticeable difference in the sex ratio, though there is an increasing aversion to the responsibilities of marriage, and complaints by both sexes that there is not enough choice of suitable marriage partners (that is, within the prescribed marriage class). This is no doubt due to the fall in numbers of the tribe as a whole. The birth rate is high, though this is offset by the shockingly high child-mortality rate. It seems that with an energetic medical programme and instruction in hygiene and infant welfare, this tribe could still be saved, and put again on the road to increasing its numbers.

Education on a sound psychological basis, and incorporating the best in tribal culture, with emphasis on practical training, could do much to redeem the young from further degeneration. The stage has been reached when a definite policy of education is necessary to supplant the now disappearing education in the family group.

With the prospect of increased opening up for settlement of the hinterland, there is need for a clear conception of our policy toward the Amerindian, especially with regard to his tenure of land. In view of his propensity for moving further on before pressure of settlement, we should see to it that adequate territory, with sufficient water supply, agricultural, hunting and fishing areas are secured to him, as well as land suitable for grazing for the cattle-loving tribes such as the Makushi and Wapishana. It must also be borne in mind, that though these people love to travel in groups over long distances in the savannahs to visit friends and relations in other villages, they are in no sense nomads. They have a deep affection, expressed in song and dance, for their own particular areas,⁵⁵ and are often very disturbed on entering

⁵⁵ A clear indication of the affection which they have for their own territory can be seen in the text of an Address drawn up by Makushi for presentation to the Governor of British Guiana, Sir Walter Egerton (Williams 1932: 125-126). An Amerindian Amendment Act of 1976 granted land titles in accordance with the Amerindian Lands Commission Report of 1969, although some groups -among them the Akawaio of the Upper Mazaruni and some Carib communities- were excepted. [The Akawaio were finally, in 1991, given legal title to a sector of their traditional lands in the Upper Mazaruni basin. A. Butt Colson.]

other territory. It must not be assumed that they can be moved around to suit our convenience without suffering the serious traumata of up-rooting.

The Amerindian is a person not so very different from ourselves in his needs and desires, in his reactions to the fundamental situations of life. He differs mainly in being in the pre-literate stage, and so he cannot put his point of view before us. Nevertheless, with his intelligence and astuteness, his knowledge of river and forest, and his skill in agriculture, he has a valuable contribution to make to our social pattern.

The process of modification in a tribe like the Makushi has gone too far to be halted. The Amerindian in Guiana must now, with great urgency, be enabled to adjust himself to the rapidly changing conditions. With proper direction there is no reason to suppose that he cannot ultimately take his place, as the Amerindian has done in many instances elsewhere throughout the Continent, alongside the other elements of the community, sharing with them the full rights and duties of citizenship.

Postscript

Since 1930, I had travelled extensively in the Caribbean and hinterland of the South American tropics with my husband, the entomologist John Golding Myers, who had been commissioned by the British Government to study the possibilities of the biological control of tropical insect crop pests.⁵⁶ As a psychologist and trained anthropologist, a student of William McDougall in his Graduate seminars at Harvard, and of C.G. Seligman and of B. Malinowski at the London School of Economics, my own interests had been in the differing human groups we encountered.⁵⁷ I had been able to do a preliminary survey of the Warrau Indians of the Amacura River in North West District of the British Guiana - Venezuelan borders, but it had not been possible to continue this study and I felt my material was too slight to publish.⁵⁸

I first came to the Rupununi District in mid 1933 when, leaving the Coast of British Guiana, I accompanied my husband up the Essequibo

⁵⁶ For an account of the research and career of Dr. J.G. Myers, see Biographical Note.

⁵⁷ With respect to the London School of Economics Mrs. Myers notes: "Melanesia and Africa were the two prevailing fields of reference at the time. No-one (except myself) was interested in American Indians -because of my American contacts and an admiration since childhood of the 'Red Indian' heroes." In a letter of 26th September 1980 she refers to "A.R. Wallace's 'Travels on the Amazon and Rio Negro', which I have loved since a child. Many of the things he mentions I have found exactly the same today in parts of the Amazon I know, mostly small details of daily life, attitudes, and so on."

⁵⁸ In another sector of her notes, Mrs. Myers records: "I had also met Fray Bernadino de Olea at the Capuchin Mission on the Amacura, and he had presented me with a published copy of his very complete 'Diccionario de la lengua Guarauno', which really made

and Rupununi Rivers, across the savannah dividing the Essequibo and Amazon (Rio Branco) watersheds to the frontier area of the Ireng and Takutu Rivers, and to the Canuku Mountains which form the division between the northern (Makushi) and southern (Wapishana) savannahs. It was then a remote and isolated area, difficult of access, reached from Georgetown by an arduous and hazardous river journey of weeks of travel in open boats, during which there were numerous dangerous falls and rapids to be negotiated. Boats, supplies, and even lives were sometimes lost in the falls.⁵⁹

We travelled up river in convoy in a number of long, narrow open boats with retractable outboard motors, each manned by crews of highly skilled and experienced river-men, able to paddle -which was quite often necessary, to pull the boats over the various rapids and who were expert in dealing with the variety of falls, cataracts and shallows encountered on the ascent into the hinterland. It was the very beginning of the wet season and the river was difficult. We camped out at night in suitable areas along the river banks, cooking our rations of rice and salt fish, slinging our hammocks under the trees. The journey could take a month or even more, according to the season and the amount of water in the rivers. Our particular journey took just under a month -with two capsizes in the Gold Falls near a balata station named Kurupukari,⁶⁰ with considerable loss of valuable equipment and goods, both ours and of the Boundary Commissioners who were taking up stores for their work on the southern borders of the interior, and with whom we were travelling.⁶¹ Whilst boats proceeding to the southern sa-

mine unnecessary -though I think mine was more practical, and had some additional words."

This seems to be a reference to Fr. Bonifacio de Olea who, in 1928, had published in Caracas his *Ensayo Gramatical del Dialecto de los indios Guaraunos*, the first major linguistic work on Warrau. He was resident at the Capuchin mission of San José de Amacuro from October 1928 until February 1933. Amongst Mrs. Myers' papers is her own manuscript entitled: "*Warrau: A working vocabulary collected in the N.W.D. British Guiana, June 1930. P. Jacinto main informant.*" (33 pages).

⁵⁹ Mrs. Myers related how, on one occasion, a boat overturned, pinning her husband underneath on the river-bed. He was saved by a member of the crew diving into the water and releasing him. "Drowning accidents were quite frequent; I am indebted to Canon J. Holden, formerly Anglican priest at Eupukari, for confirmation of this." [I.H.M.]

⁶⁰ Balata is a wild rubber, collected from the *Manilkara bidentata*, a forest tree. This industry was of considerable importance in British Guiana. Kurupukari is now an important, mainly Amerindian settlement, from which is operated a ferry which conveys vehicles on the Georgetown - Lethem road across the Essequibo.

⁶¹ Although the boundary between British Guiana and Brazil had been decided by international arbitration ending in the Award of 1904, there remained the surveying and demarcation of a very long frontier which, on the West, extended from Mount Roraima, down the Ireng and up the Takutu to its source. At the time of Mrs. Myers' arrival in the Rupununi, this task was being carried out by the Department of Lands and Mines. It was a great problem getting adequate supplies to the surveyors and after several deaths due to beriberi the Royal Engineers took over in 1935 (see Baldwin: 42).

vannah (Wapishana country) continued up the Rupununi River through a gorge of the Canuku Mountains to the ranches there, travellers bound for the British frontier post of Bon Success disembarked at Eupukari,⁶² the Anglican Mission, for a further journey of fifty miles overland, on foot, on horseback or by ox-cart, southwestwards across the northern savannah to the banks of the Takutu River (a tributary of the Rio Branco), which forms the Brazilian border.

The northern Rupununi savannah is bounded by the Canuku Mountains to the South and the Takutu and the Ireng (Mahu) Rivers to the West. To the North lies the massif of the Pacaraimas and to the Northeast and East the forests of Essequibo. It includes Pirara, at that time a prosperous cattle ranch. Situated in an area which is extensively flooded in the wet season, Pirara has been well-known since Raleigh's time as one of the supposed sites of the legendary El Dorado, with the city of Manoa and its phantom Lake Amucu. It had been disputed by Brazil and Britain in the 19th century, finally being confirmed in 1904 as British territory and part of the Rupununi District. Close to the Ireng and only a few miles from the confluence of that river with the Takutu, both of which form the boundary with Brazil, it had the international flavour of border country. With only periodic visits from an itinerant administrator to the British post of Bon Success (see Baldwin: 41) and with the Brazilian authorities some days away down the Rio Branco, it was in 1933, a remote and isolated area.

I was enchanted by this beautiful and mysterious region and its peoples, as my husband had been on a previous visit in 1932 when he had made it the base for his journey to Roraima. My hope was to remain there for a period, to contact and make an anthropological and psychological study of the Makushi Indians, whilst he proceeded down the Rio Branco on his Amazon expedition (1933-35). In the event, partly because of circumstances connected with the possibility and final outbreak of World War II, I lived for thirteen years (1933-1947) on the savannah.

As a base for my work, I was fortunate to be able to acquire the grazing rights of a cattle ranch on the British (right) bank of the Takutu River, which the previous owner had sadly neglected and was relinquishing on account of ill-health, caused by the malignant malaria which had ravaged the district, as mentioned in my article. It became my home for a number of years (1934-1947). São José do Takutu,⁶³ an

⁶² "Eupukari" is now more usually spelt "Yupukari." Situated on the northern bank of the Rupununi River, it acted as a port of entry for travellers entering the Rupununi savannahs from the North and East, via the Essequibo River.

⁶³ Also referred to as San José.

old, formerly Brazilian ranch (see Baldwin: 37) covered an area of 50 square miles of savannah land (later increased by purchase of a neighbouring section to 100 sq. miles), extending from the Takutu River which was the Brazilian - British Guiana frontier, eastwards to the food-hills of the Canuku Mountains.⁶⁴

An academic and city dweller, I was completely ignorant of cattle ranching, but within the ranch area there was a number of Makushi settlements with whose inhabitants I was able to establish friendly relations and mutual interdependence. The old homestead of São José do Takutu was unavailable⁶⁵ and a new one was built for me by an entirely Makushi work-force of expert cattlemen, trained as boys on Brazilian ranches. The ranch had been neglected, but through the skill and competence of my Makushi workers it was rehabilitated in a relatively short time. They moved in with their families accompanying them and set the pattern of daily life. We were in effect, ourselves a Makushi village.

Many of them seemed to have come within fairly recent times from distant areas of the savannah to the Northwest. They called themselves Pemongong and were families belonging to the sub-groups of Iliang and Monoiko, and there was one Taulepang.⁶⁶ They had relatives and trad-

⁶⁴ "San José was one of three properties we owned in the Takutu. It was the main ranch, where we lived, and we had some cattle and planted tobacco there. I don't remember the names of the other two places. The second ranch was located at the foot of the mountain hills and was not far from San José. To reach it we had to travel inwards through open savannah. This was where we planted rice, corn, bananas, sweet potatoes and other land products and where the Indians got most of the forest products we used. The third ranch was further away and close to Stanley Melville's ranch near mountain hills. This was mainly for cattle raising and to reach it we had to cross a small forest river. The place was nearly a day's trip from San José by ox-cart. It was beautiful, with plenty of vegetation and lots of flowery trees which we did not see in San José. The foothills were a distance but we could hear the cry of the howler monkeys and sometimes the roar of a jaguar at night." (Private Communication from Sra. Rima de Billy).

Mrs. Myers stated (in June 1990) that Burru was hers. She had built an outstation there for spending the night in and the Indians used to use it sometimes, when rounding up cattle. It was too far from water for her to make it a permanent dwelling place.)

⁶⁵ Mrs. Myers related, more than once, that when her husband arranged for one of the ranchers, Edward Melville, to purchase São José do Takutu, the latter purchased the grazing rights for the Myers' family and kept the old homestead for himself. Whilst a new ranch house was being built she occupied Parika, which was lent her by Theodor Orella, a rancher deriving from Pamplona, Spain (see Bridges: 149).

⁶⁶ Mrs. Myers asserted that, contrary to a statement by Migliazza (1980: 134), the Iliang were not Ireng River Makushi, and she notes that at the time of writing (1944) a small sub-group of them was living on the lower reaches of the Uraricoera River above São Marcos. Migliazza (1980:134) and Butt Colson (1983-84: 97-99), refer to Makushi (Pemon) sub-groups. Observing the name "Asepang" in these works Mrs. Myers made the following note: "They never referred to themselves as *assepangong*: literally, 'the people prone to revenge', 'the avengers' -ie., 'poisoners', though some of the women informed me of their method of poisoning cassiri [the fermented manioc drink] offered to enemies in dance festivals." Utilizing the Pemon Dictionary of Cesáreo de Armellada and Mariano Guitérrez Salazar (p. 63), Mrs. Myers derived

ing partners in villages over the Brazilian border and were frequently visited by people from the Ireng, Surumu and Uraricoera Rivers. Iliang relatives from Maracá Island occasionally visited, where they told me a few were still living, and one man known to me actually made the considerable journey from the Canukus to the Uraricoera to bring back an Iliang wife.⁶⁷ The men were acculturated and thoroughly versed in the ways of the "civilizado", but the women less so. We communicated in a mixture of Brazilian Portuguese, with its wealth of regional terms, which most men spoke fluently, and in Makushi which was the women's only language. They all had Portuguese baptismal names, as well as their Indian ones.

A mixture of the two cultures -the Indians taught me ranching, but our lives were enriched by added Makushi ideas and customs. I shared their daily life, living it their way, and joined in their everyday activities and festivities, accompanying them often on their communal outings, visiting other groups of Indians. The men were the providers, the women the processors. The men fished and hunted and cut and planted fields for me some miles away in the foothills of the Canuku mountains.⁶⁸ They built houses and corrals. The women foraged for firewood and cooked. They made cassava bread and farinha (*uwi*)⁶⁹ and they introduced me to making cassiri for the men when they had been out hunting and fishing. We lived on a diet of local Brazilian and Makushi

ase-paih-go from *ese-ma*, to pay, to avenge oneself, and *-pañ*, apt to, clever at, capable of, so giving the meaning of the "avengers", "those who take revenge."

⁶⁷ See Koch-Grünberg I: 151 *et seq.*, referring to Makushi settlements on Maracá Island and the Upper Uraricoera in 1911.

⁶⁸ "There seemed to be cycles in the production of cassava. Planting was done in the annual rainy season, the field having been previously prepared. A section of the field would contain fully grown cassava [manioc] in use; another section, half-grown cassava, due to come into use during the year, and a third section, of newly planted cassava, propagated by stem-stock from the first field, would not be ready for another year. A ripe field would often be taken up completely and prepared for replanting, which could be done twice, when it would be abandoned and allowed to go back to bush. I do not think the Indian shares our Western attitudes to reserves of food, but he is very careful to preserve seeds and other propagative stock for planting." [I.H.M. Letter of 19th Aug. 1980].

⁶⁹ A cereal made from toasted manioc flour. Mrs. Myers related that a big complaint of Indians employed on the ranches was that they could not grow their own manioc in order to make the good cassava meal which they liked - the "farinha d'agua", the preparation of which involved fermentation of the manioc in water so that the flour contained vitamin B. Instead, their diet consisted of "farinha seca", dry farine, imported from the South and eaten with the local dried beef. Mrs. Myers however, let her Makushi employees plant gardens on her ranch so that they had a more nutritious diet and one to their liking. She noted [in a letter of 26th August 1980] that the Makushi word for farine, *uwi*, seems to be the same as the Lingua geral word *ui*. *Uwi* or *ui* is similarly used by the Akawalo (Kapon) to the North of the Makushi, and since there are indications that the making of farine is a relatively recent introduction into Guyana, it might seem that this mode of preparation of manioc and the name of the product, together travelled northwards from the Amazon region. (See Butt Colson & Morton 1982: 252-3 & footnote 76.)

foods, prepared for me by women who in some instances had worked in Brazilian households. Some introduced foods, grown outside the house on raised platforms in order to circumvent the leaf-cutting "cushi" ants (*Atta cephalotes*), were not at all to Makushi liking, and Makushi men, when they saw me eating lettuce, told me scornfully that they were not horses to eat grass! Our utensils were many of them Indian, and for pot cleaners we used sand and "caimbé" leaves (of the *Curatella* tree) for sandpaper.

We were very isolated and needed to be self-supporting. In the dry season the rivers of the district were unnavigable and in the wet season the savannahs were largely impassable owing to extensive flooding. Thus we were completely cut off from the rest of British Guiana by the rains and were isolated from Manaus (at the mouth of the Rio Negro), during the dry season. Boa Vista, on the Rio Branco, then a small administrative and trading town, was several days away from São José do Takutu by land or river, but as we were able to travel by river to Manaus during the wet season,⁷⁰ it was there that essential supplies such as salt, cloth, implements etc., were obtained. Imports also valued by Makushi in trade included coffee, cachaça,⁷¹ white flour, fowls, soap, matches, shoes, guns, shot, powder and gun caps.

In the North savannah some very old muzzle-loading guns were still in use and bags of shot, caps and flasks of powder were necessary articles of trade, especially if one were sending up the Ireng (Mahu) River for *urari* (the famous arrow poison curare). I imagine - but now do not know for sure, that these old guns may have come from the Brazilian side and were transferred by inheritance or trade amongst the Makushi themselves.⁷² In the upper Ireng, red turkey twill cloth, packets of gunpowder and bags of salt were especially sought. In their trade

⁷⁰ It was in Manaus that Mrs. Myers' children had their early schooling. The ranchers customarily sent their cattle down to the city by boat and supplies were brought up the Rio Negro and Rio Branco on the return journey. The cattle boats also took passengers. Mrs. Myers recalled that on one occasion her boat stopped at Vista Alegre, on the middle reaches of the Rio Branco, where Theodor Koch-Grünberg had died of malaria in October of 1924 and had been buried. She disembarked, intending to visit his grave and pay her respects to the ethnographer whose works she much admired, but was told that "Kochy" had recently been dug up and taken to Manaus for transport to Europe.

She enquired of anthropological acquaintances in Manaus as to the fate of his remains, and was taken to the cemetery of São João Batista, then out of town, where in the chapel she saw a large Brazilian trunk with a long thigh bone protruding from it. There, she was told, was Koch-Grünberg! His remains had been dug up in 1938 but lay forgotten in the Port of Manaus until rediscovered in 1944. Burial in the cemetery of São João Batista occurred in 1953 when Alfred Métraux arrived leading a UNESCO mission to Manaus. [Private Communication to Mrs. Myers from Miss Dorothee Ninck, granddaughter of Theodor Koch-Grünberg].

⁷¹ The popular name of "aguardente" (fire-water), a distilled and strong alcoholic drink made from sugar cane.

⁷² See Butt Colson & Morton 1982: footnote 81.

with us the Makushi followed their traditional set prices; for example, two baskets of farine equalled two 5 gallon tins of kerosene.

Apart from the Makushi villages within the boundaries of São José do Takutu, there were loose groupings of Makushi households within the boundaries of other Rupununi ranches, stretching eastwards along the northern slopes of the Canuku Mountains, along the streams and near to their fields in the foothills. These were family groupings, seemingly of the kin-affine pattern, though this was confused by the heavy death toll in a recent epidemic, and the loss of many heads of families and mothers of young children, as well as of traditional marriage partners. In the eastern and northeastern savannah were villages of English-speaking Makushi, under the influence of the Anglican Mission based at Eupukari. These seemed to have little contact with the Portuguese-speaking Makushi of the Takutu River where, several miles up stream from Bon Success (Lethem) was the Jesuit Mission of San Ignatius, zealous in its pursuit of the Makushi who grudgingly came to accept Christian baptism. The affiliations of the Takutu River Makushi were mostly with the groups living in the Brazilian *Rio Branco* area, extending over the Ireng to the Uraricoera in the Northwest of the savannah. As I have described, those I was in daily contact with were these Brazilianized Makushi. We were extremely rarely visited by those from the Essequibo basin -which was extraordinary, I have now realized!⁷³

Large cattle ranches were established on both sides of the frontier, and in the Makushi villages, which were scattered along the rivers and streams within these ranch lands, the Indians lived their own life and spoke their own language. There was a curious intermingling of the two different cultures -each profoundly modifying the other.⁷⁴ The border Makushi had incorporated various Brazilian elements into an Indian whole: the Brazilians of the area had incorporated Indian elements into a Portuguese whole. The few ranchers on the British side were them-

⁷³ A linguistic disjunction between these two groups has also been remarked on by Migliazza (1980: 138) who refers to an eastern dialect spoken to the East of the Ireng River, in Guyana, and a western one spoken in Brazil in the Surumu, Cotingo and Uraricoera River areas. There are indications in the historical records that this is a traditional, territorial division between those Pemon living in the Essequibo basin and those in the *Rio Branco*. The impingement of two different incoming peoples, the Dutch and British to the East and the Portuguese Brazilian to the West, and the movements of Amerindian populations which these caused, have added a colonial factor to the indigenous ones. [A.B.C.]

⁷⁴ In her notes Mrs. Myers listed major items which the Makushi had adopted with respect to the cattle economy. In particular these comprise the use of pack bullocks and bullock carts, the practice of riding bullocks as well as horses, and she refers to the equipment and management relating to these introduced animals and the food they provide. With respect to tools she notes that Makushi men were using carpentry tools such as files, saws, planes and chisels and the women used sewing equipment, including sewing machines. Additionally, there were some gramophones, bicycles and outboard motors which the men were very good at managing and maintaining. During her residence the aeroplane became part of Makushi daily experience.

selves of Indian descent or married to wives of Indian descent, and so had Indian relatives. All had ties of kinship or affinity with the ranchers on the Brazilian side, with many social and trading relationships. Portuguese was the language in general use, and the life-style was typical of that in the haciendas and fazendas of Venezuela and Brazil with their landowners and work force (*mão-de-obra*). On the British side the life style was also Latin American in pattern and outlook. All this tended to facilitate the ranchers' contacts with the Indians, some of whom lived in the ranch houses as servants, while group labour was arranged usually in the traditional Indian way, through the chiefs (*tuchauas*), and notched pieces of wood were used as tally sticks to calculate the working days for which payment was due.

The Makushi were perfectly aware of the frontiers and of the distinction between Brazilian and British authority. They continually crossed and re-crossed, for they considered this an entirely artificial division of their ancestral lands, for which they have great affection. This deep attachment was noted by Richard Schomburgk (II: 190) who speaks of the love of the Arecuna for Mt. Roraima: "All their festive songs have Roraima for subject matter", and on leaving Schomburgk after a visit they "would always add the words, 'Matti Roraima-tau, Roraima-tau' (There, look at *our* Roraima)." Similarly when Makushi bearers accompanied my late husband to Roraima, they returned in a very black mood, surly and dejected from enemy Arecuna country which they had been most reluctant to enter, but when they saw the Canuku range in the distance, they cried out joyfully "Iramekepang! Iramekepang! (The peak Ilaimkepang.)"⁷⁵ Their mood changed, their whole bearing altered -and there were no more difficulties. It must be stressed that though they like to travel in groups over long distances to visit other villages ("malocas") for celebrations, or to fish in drying ponds⁷⁶ (a group activity in which men, women and children take part) or to feast on wild fruit in season, they are not nomads and, as I stress in my article, it must not be assumed that they can be moved around to suit our convenience without suffering the serious traumata of uprooting.

Though in contact with "brancos" since the 17th century they still considered us as interlopers, and occasionally told us so. They were well used to seeing our ways and how to deal with us. They addressed the ranchers as "patrão": "Master" (I was "patrôa": "Mistress"), and ex-

⁷⁵ This mountain appears on some maps as "Iramaikipang" and 2844' in height. Richard Schomburgk (I: 344-348) refers to it as Ilamikipang, the highest point of the mountain [Canaku] range. He climbed it early in 1842 during the course of being shown one of the species of *Strychnos* growing there, used by the Makushi to make their curare arrow poison.

⁷⁶ Mrs. Myers left a note under the heading of "Fishing in drying pools", which said that the "fish were often killed with a bite at the back of the head."

changed goods and services with them. There was always a strong ambivalence in their attitude to the Brazilian settlers stemming from a deep-seated folk memory of the earlier slave raids. On the approach of Brazilian travellers at my ranch there was a whispered warning "Caraiwa" and an immediate "on guard" attitude. We, the British, were on the contrary "Paranagheri."⁷⁷

Many of the customs observed by previous travellers were still existing in 1933. Within living memory (1934) the Canuku Makushi had adopted clothes, but some of the older men still wore the red lap under their trousers of khaki or pano grosso, and many older women wore the bead apron (*motza*) under their print dresses. Who knows if the old people did not still use the Makushi dress at home. Evelyn Waugh thinks so (Waugh: 123).⁷⁸ The women also had the lower lip perforated for the insertion of pins and a few had pointed, filed teeth, which several men still knew how to file, and which they jokingly referred to as "piranha teeth" (see Barrington Brown: 146).⁷⁹ If sick they painted the red dye (*roucou*) on the cheeks. I was very touched by a Makushi mother who came one day with her little girl's face painted with *roucou*, to protect against the danger of a stranger -myself!

Men were still busy making and caring for bows and arrows, cleaning guns, and making a sandal called *p'shaza* from the leaf base of the ite palm (*Mauritia flexuosa*), used for very rough walking. The women

⁷⁷ "Caraiwa" is the term in general use to refer to a white Brazilian. It has the meaning of astuteness and cleverness and the term was also applied to shamans. "Paranagheri" has the meaning of Coastal, or Sea, People and is in general use to refer to white people coming from the Guyanese coastlands (previously Dutch, then British). (See Williams: 152).

⁷⁸ From 2nd January to 5th April 1933, Evelyn Waugh made a journey from Georgetown to the Rupununi savannahs and across to Boa Vista on the Rio Branco. He met Mrs. Myers on his way back to England, when he spent Easter at Mount St. Benedict in Trinidad and shared a table with her. His reference to involvement in "acrimonious arguments about Indian character" with "a lady anthropologist" (Waugh: 169) was also recalled by Mrs. Myers, who had been equally disenchanted with her fellow guest! Mrs. Myers was highly indignant at any mention of Indians having been pressurized to adopt clothes. She considered that since they made no association between sin and nakedness, they had no need to cover themselves with unnecessary garments. However, she noted that during her residence in the Rupununi, Makushi women were very able at copying (European-style) dresses, cutting them out, sewing them and using sewing machines where these were available. She additionally remarked that they took to wearing brassieres. They were also clever at copying the latest hair styles.

⁷⁹ The pirai or piranha, referred to as the cannibal fish, is a well-known predatory fish which attacks every kind of living creature in the water. Its extremely sharp, triangular teeth can cut even through metal fish hooks. Mrs. Myers notes that it was sometimes said that the practice of filing the teeth was to stop decay. However, one might also speculate as to whether the joke she records does not refer to a *vagina dentata* motif which appears in the mythology of some of the Guiana Indians. For example, there is the account of the Waiwai culture hero whose anaconda wife had tiny pirai fish in her vagina (see Fock: 42 & 44) [A.B.C.].

were very industrious too, spinning cotton for making hammocks and the very practical baby sling (*wainné*), in which babies and very young children were carried, and when there was nothing else to do, delousing each other's hair. I noted a number of actions characteristic of Makushi girls, such as their frequently picking up things from the ground using their toes; the habit of pointing with their lips to indicate something at a distance, and whispering by inhaling the breath instead of exhaling as we do. I recall jokes circulated about free-living girls, and it was said that they gummed up the orifice to the vagina using a latex made from the milky juice of a plant, so as to give an impression of virginity! Contraception was practised by drinking a plant infusion and "blowing."⁸⁰ The older women were depositories of knowledge, although occasionally an elderly grandmother could be seen suckling a grandchild or great grandchild. However, care of children was shared by both parents. At child-birth a man would put his leather belt around his wife's waist and tighten it "to stop the child from going upwards." There were new couvade practices -for example, the cattlemen on one occasion refused to slaughter animals affected by foot and mouth disease on the grounds that it would harm their young babies. There were instances of children eating clay, a practice which proved very difficult to deal with. An attempted cure was for the parents to put very hot pepper juice on the area of clay the child was eating.⁸¹

Fire by percussion was made using a flint and piece of cotton for igniting. Long-smouldering wood of the "caimbé" (*Curatella* tree) formed embers which were carried in a little pot, on trek in the savannah, to save striking a light -but matches were already a trade article. Setting fire to the savannah grass to create a smoke signal to announce the pending arrival of travellers, or the return of a hunting party, was still a frequent practice. To indicate time and distance in days of travel, the men extended one arm and traced a half circle which indicated the sun's path from dawn to dusk, whilst they beat their chest with the flat of the other hand. They were able to identify people by their footprints and could tell when people were approaching by listening through the ground. They retained the habit of sprucing themselves up, bathing and washing in a convenient stream, before arriving at a settlement - and even "civilised" (European-clothed) Indians did so. There was still a very formal etiquette for receiving visitors -I think because these are rather tricky situations, which could explode if not handled very carefully. Knowing how near their aggression is to the surface, and how

⁸⁰ "Blowing" is a form of ritual invocation in which a person repeatedly exhales breath and recites a spell -a special word formula to affect the situation in question. [A.B.C.].

⁸¹ The conceptual basis for this cure may lie in the classification of clay as "cold", while the use of pepper juice, which is very "hot", is a contrary. Apart from actual taste, this would neutralize the quality of the clay. (See Butt Colson 1976).

easily anger becomes murderous, I think the folk wisdom had evolved this kid-glove approach to the "other."

Amongst both men and women there was an awareness and a special love of animals, mammals, birds and fish, but not snakes, and their pets included bush peccaries, deer, savannah foxes, trumpet birds, the golden oriole (*Icterus* sp.), and even baby howler monkeys. With respect to snakes, I think there is possibly some foundation in material fact for the widespread Indian fear of the anaconda.⁸² In my time at São José, a child disappeared at the waterside, ten minutes from my house, said to have been taken by an anaconda. In Boa Vista I talked to a man who had been attacked and wounded in the leg, by one in the Uraricoera; we were told also of a woman who encountered one in the Surumu. Perhaps I was just being infected with their fears! However, on one occasion I was being paddled down the Takutu from São José to visit Frs. Mather and Keary at the Jesuit Mission, when suddenly, at the edge of the fringing forest about two miles down river at the mouth of the Burru River, we saw an enormous anaconda, swollen with food, asleep on a branch overhanging the river. The Makushi were galvanised into activity and took up their guns to shoot it. I asked them to spare it. They replied emphatically: "No, Senhora! We come hunting here all the time, and we are not leaving it to make a meal of one of us!" They promptly shot it. It awoke with a start and dived into the water. When we returned up river the next day, we passed it, swollen, dead and floating underside upwards, its prey, a deer the Makushi said, clearly outlined in its middle. There are also superstitions and legends attached to the anaconda.⁸³ I felt rather sorry for it really had been having such a lovely sleep!

There were round houses (*tucuchpang*) on the savannah, and at Maracanata, on the route between Eupukari and Pirara, a headman came out of one to greet us as we passed.⁸⁴ Co-existing with the family household units there were three *tuchauas* (headmen)⁸⁵ along the Canuku foothills. Hereditary in the male line counted through several generations, and virilocal, a *tuchaua* and his brothers continue to live in the headman's village, not going to the wife's father's village on marriage. Thus Carlos, his brother Henrico, and his sisters and their husbands, lived in Nappi, the settlement founded by Carlos' father and predecessor, the noted *tuchaua* Magalhães. Felix, *tuchaua* of Makushi Vil-

⁸² *Eunectes murinus*. A constricting snake. It is commonly referred to as the water camudi, or water boa, in Guyana.

⁸³ Mrs. Myers was prompted to recall this incident when she read of the Taruma and Waiwai fear of anacondas (see Butt Colson & Morton 1982: footnote 112).

⁸⁴ Dr. and Mrs. Myers passed through this village when travelling towards the Takutu River.

⁸⁵ Tuchao, tuchau, tushaua, tuchaua, a term deriving from the *Lingua geral* of the Brazilian Amazon and its tributaries. It is in general use in the Rupununi savannahs for an Amerindian recognized as a leader or "Captain."

lage (Shulinab), inherited the office from his father and continued there with his brothers and their families. The *tuchauas* seemed to be independent of the household heads and their family system, but were complementary and had a sphere of influence that was territorial. They had a politico-economic role, organising hunting, fishing and group activities, including dance festivals. The men in work-gangs were "brothers-in-law", classificatory or actual, (see Mentore: 204-210 for the Waiwai). The *tuchauas* seemed also to have moral authority, and the power to reprimand for infringement of the group mores. There was the case of the Makushi who hanged himself from a "caimbe" tree after Tuchaua Felix had admonished him for propositioning another man's wife (I do not know whether she was in the marriageable class or not).⁸⁶ There also seemed to be the rudiments of a class consciousness. For example, a relative of *Tuchaua* Carlos, when I told him of a minor misdemeanor, by a Makushi, apologised for him by saying: "He is just an ordinary Makushi. We relatives of the *tuchaua* would never act like that." Two of the *tuchauas*, Carlos and Felix, were actually living in the district. The third, the son of Bruno, and been offended by the Jesuit Fathers, who on account of his youth objected to his succeeding on his father's death. He had gone North to Tepequen to work in the mines⁸⁷ -only returning at intervals to visit his wife and children, and his office was allowed to lapse. The Makushi of the region told me that the assumption of the hereditary leadership had come to wait on confirmation by the Jesuit Mission at St. Ignatius, and that the major remaining function of the *tuchaua* was to bring his people to assist at the religious festivals.⁸⁸

⁸⁶ In a note dated June 1949 (written during her return to the Rupununi from Columbia University), Mrs. Myers refers to the shaman (*piazan*) Eremegildo who, having been arrested, committed suicide by hanging himself in his cell at Lethem Police Station. She does not relate the circumstances of the case. However Canon Jack Holden, then resident priest at the Anglican mission of Yupukari, recalls that Eremegildo had been sentenced to a flogging for cattle stealing (Private Communication). It would seem that shame was a primary factor in both suicides -in the one case caused by a public adminishment from an important leader and the other by the demeaning sentence to a flogging by police. The fate of Eremegildo was one in a series of events which led to friction between the Rupununi residents and the police force from the Coastlands.

⁸⁷ Tepequen, perhaps a reference to the mountain of Tepequen (or Tepequem), North of Maracá Island and where there were diamonds.)

⁸⁸ On this important subject Mrs. Myers remarked (in a letter of 19th August 1980) that: "There was some indication when I was there, that the Canuku Makushi regarded the headmanship as in some degree hereditary. It had been Government policy apparently, to appoint a headman with whom to negotiate, (a famous one was John Bull, mentioned by James Williams, pp. 13 & 123), but this had lapsed. Though we had several prestigious headmen in our area, very highly respected by the Makushi, at one period during my stay the Fathers at St. Ignatius were said to have named another one of their own choosing. The Makushi were very annoyed about this, and murmured among themselves, and to me, that he was not of the chief's family and was not eligible. They seemed to look on it as a kind of [bad] joke." [I.H.M.].

A very isolated region in 1933, it is not to be wondered at that the savannah was largely neglected by the coastal authorities. Nevertheless, things were stirring in the outside world and there was an increasing interest in the area on the part of the British authorities. With the growth of air transport and of radio communication it became easy to reach the interior of the colony. Major Art Williams, Guyana's first and most famous pilot, could fly from Georgetown to Manari ranch in the North Rupununi savannah in less than three hours. By boat it took approximately 21 - 30 arduous days with accompanying danger in traversing falls and rapids. The Central Government in London was embarking on a policy of colonial development, and from 1935, when the first aeroplane appeared in the northern savannah⁸⁹ (bringing my husband at the start of his expedition across the southern savannah to the Waiwai Indians and down the New River), we were visited by an increasing number of officials and advisers. It was obvious that some plans were afoot for they were looking into the possibilities of development: of replacing subsistence agriculture by cash crops: responding to the age-long lure of gold which has been active since the beginning of the El Dorado myth, by investigating mineral resources -which led to gold mining in the South savannah. On the Government Station of Bon Success (an old Brazilian ranch house whose original name was Bom Successo and whose name was now changed to Lethem); a Government Store for the use of Indians was opened and the construction of a small township began. When I saw the Governor, Sir Gordon Lethem, in 1944 to speak of the question of Indian health and to plead for the medical service the Indians were demanding, he suddenly rounded on me and said he could not allow the anthropologists to dictate his policy for the development of the interior and that he would not allow the Indians to be treated as "Museum pieces"! He did, however, later sanction the appointment of a doctor and two Makushi medical rangers, who were sent to the Hospital in Georgetown for training. When I returned to the area in 1949, after an absence of two years abroad, I noted the changes which had taken place.⁹⁰ The Makushi, whom I had found at a low level in 1933, had noticeably improved in health and prosperity for by that

⁸⁹ The Ireland, flown by Art Williams, landed John Myers on the Takutu on 16th September 1935. In a tape recording, Mrs. Myres describes how the Indian girls, who had been washing clothes at the waterside, came running up the path from the river, very agitated. "They came to me and threw themselves into my arms, and said in frightened tones: "Patrôa, Patrôa, there is a big wasp in the sky". They used the word *kamaiwa*, which is the Indian name for the big hunting wasp. Immediately a small plane came into view overhead and descended, behind the line of trees of the fringing forest, into the river in the direction of our landing. The engine was cut off. In ten minutes my husband walked into the house."

⁹⁰ Ref. footnote 5. See also Swan: 127-129 referring to the changes taking place in the Rupununi under the Governorship of Sir Gordon Lethem.

time the Government had responded to pressure to provide medical services. The health programme, with its mass treatment of malaria and verminosis, had paid off. The region was no longer so isolated. The cattle which had formerly been sent to the Coast in convoys down the cattle trail -an arduous journey of many days, with frequent losses, were now slaughtered in an abattoir at the airfield and the meat sent out on a monthly transport plane to supply Georgetown with beef. This afforded employment for the Makushi men and provided them with money to spend on necessities and luxuries at the Government Trade Store. On the day of arrival of the plane there was an air of excitement and optimism. The men were busy, the women in their best print dresses, with their children -all converged from the villages and everyone looked well and happy.

But there were disturbing signs of developments looming on the horizon which gave thought to the observer, and some people were feeling rather sore at the way the place was being invaded by Coastal Creoles. At Lethem there was a resident District Commissioner with his family and an energetic, supporting Creole police force under a corporal. For the first time in the history of the "Rupununi District" there was a Commissioner, a Creole, whose whole aim was to open up the area to coastal-type development, and this must have been Government policy since ample funds seemed to be at his disposal to this end. A policy of "creolization" was in being, under the assumption that "our way is better."

The Creole constabulary imported from Georgetown made their presence increasingly felt, with growing resentment by the native population, who for historical reasons had a traditional antagonism to them -and being a proud people, objected to being "pushed around" by people of another race: (*Eu não vou ser mandado de branco* etc.). The case of the suicide of the shaman Eremegildo (see footnote 86), had aroused a lot of feeling against the police. There were complaints about police snooping -for example, when a rancher brought up a bicycle from Georgetown he was closely questioned by the police in Lethem as to its purpose and destination. Brazilians going down to Georgetown were questioned on the amount of money they carried. A complaint was also made to the District Commissioner concerning the behavior of the meat inspector, a Coastal Creole, at the abattoir, who shouted in English at the Indians killing the cattle, and then got angry because they did not understand him. The Makushi employees were getting fed up and wanted to leave -but their employment was especially valuable to them as they received all the entrails for food.

There were complaints from the ranchers that the price of cattle was too low and some of them had to plant tobacco and other crops "to help out" the ranching economy. Leonard D'Aguiar, to whom I had sold

my ranch, was full of information about prices. He was not satisfied with the 9 cents per lb. received at the abattoir and declared that he wanted 15 cents, but would take 14.5 cents (the rate when a plane was chartered to bring up goods and would also take down meat). He felt that there was getting to be too much Government control on free enterprise and considered that the Government Trade Store should not hold a monopoly in trading and that he himself should not be denied a trading licence. He also noted that Brazilians bought freely at the canteen, with an exchange done secretly on the side -but there were no complaints from the police about these transactions.

The township of Lethem was well under way. A hotel was projected. In an effort to have Indian labour readily available the Makushi were being persuaded to leave their "malocas" and to vacate their lands in the Canuku foothills, and to this end a street of small, corrugated roofed dwellings was being built, a shanty town in embryo, in fact. It was rumoured that Creole settlers from the Coast were to be allotted agricultural land at the head of the Mucu-mucu River in the Canuku foothills -a traditional Makushi village and plantation area, and the process had begun of re-organizing the native Indian social structure for administrative purposes, into coastal-type villages with elected headmen and a system of patrilineality. And so the undermining of the Indian society and economy and the conversion of the Makushi into "mão de obra" began. However, this attempt to peonize the Makushi could not, and did not, succeed.

Up river, a half hour from Lethem, the Catholic Mission of St. Ignatius was buzzing with activity as a fresh attempt at "aldeiamento" was being made, with many new Indian houses under construction and Indian families virtually camping out under the roofs whilst completing them. It seemed that the Jesuit Fathers had also persuaded the Makushi to leave their homes in the Canukus, to settle round the Mission -no doubt with the aim of consolidating and teaching them, and of protecting them from the influence of the growing border town of Lethem. Most of the children were now attending the Mission school. The Arawak teacher Bernard Price, with a number of bright-eyed little Makushies and Wapishanas, neatly dressed and in school, said there were 50 on the rolls. However, there was the greatest dilapidation round the Mission. Termites everywhere -even inside the church, which had been up only a few years, a few termite houses were springing up. There was a dreadful smell of bats and of sheep urine inside. The priests were away ill, in town, and the Mission uninhabited.

Noticeably, there was an increased traffic of Brazilian visitors. They journeyed up from Boa Vista and distant parts of the Rio Branco and were flying down to Georgetown -largely for medical treatment, so that Lethem was becoming an international airport, necessitating a hospice of some sort, with its attendant risks to the indigenous population.

Meanwhile, in Brazil, increasing attention was being given to the Rio Branco by the Government. When I first arrived, Boa Vista was a small border town, a trading and administrative post. The Território do Rio Branco was created in 1943, with Boa Vista as its capital.⁹¹ A large influx of officials followed, and a great increase in administrative activity was taking place. When I visited it for the last time, in July 1949, the town was developing fast. Many of the streets contained ditches, dug ready for putting in a drainage system, and all of them were in upheaval whilst awaiting either money or material for completion. As it was the rainy season, they were very slippery at night. There was a handsome cement fence along the river front (but hiding the view), and a plan to make a good road there. There was a fine block of modern bungalows near the airport -but in the back streets great poverty, and "taipa" (wattle and daub) houses, many with palm thatch. The small, thin people sitting outside, or in windows, looked undernourished: the children, most of them, small and wizened. The girls have a delicate prettiness when adolescent, which is usually short-lived because of the life of privation. Yet Boa Vista was much better than when I first knew it. There were very few mosquitoes and the sanitary service was active, using DDT. One morning I saw a man with a bucket of oil, throwing it on pools in the streets. The Public Health Department had been very active and the Director, Dr. Barnabé Martinez, was said to be highly qualified and to have done wonders. Certainly the sanitation and the mosquito control of the township was 100% better and there was much less sickness.

Education was going ahead, and I was told that there were 77 teachers in the territory, a large proportion of them in the interior where they were putting in rural schools at focal points. Parents were obliged to send their children to the nearest school, under penalty of fines, but it was very difficult sometimes, especially in the rainy season. Two children nearly drowned in a swollen creek in the Mahu (Ireng) valley, and the father refused to send them again until the dry season. Children sometimes had to walk over an hour each way and, as one informant said: "To walk that distance to be drowned is not good enough!" An average school had about fifteen students. The doctors, engineers and the lawyers of the Territorial services were the lecturers and the standard was said to be high.

I went to lunch with the eminent rancher Adolfo Brasil.⁹² Coronel Valois from Rio, on electioneering business, was the guest of honour.

⁹¹ A classic description of Boa Vista in 1933 is given by Evelyn Waugh in Chapter 5 of his book *Ninety-Two Days*. The Territory's name was changed to Território Federal de Roraima in 1962 and it was given statehood in the Federal Republic in 1988.

⁹² A notorious character in the Rio Branco area, Swan (p. 140) describes Adolfo Brasil as "once the most powerful bandit of the Rio Branco territory, and now the owner of vast ranches and a small plateau mountain composed, it seems, largely of diamonds."

He had been the second Governor of the Federal Territory of the Rio Branco and much criticised because of his administration, but he told me his hands had been tied then, and that now he was free and could do more. I told Valois that the principal wealth of Rio Branco lay in agriculture and cattle. Adolfo Brasil was listening, and spoke heatedly about the situation of the big ranchers. He said he owned six fazendas, and could not raise a penny, nor find a buyer for even one. The ranchers felt that the authorities were letting the cattle disappear. On July 9th I had lunch with Antônio Martins⁹³ and he told me he had spoken very strongly in Rio about the neglect of the cattle industry, and that he was going to make another speech in the Chamber of Deputies on the subject this year. In five years, he thought, there would be few cattle left in Rio Branco. The Brazilian ranchers were feeling very discontented and ill-used because, they also said, there was favouritism and the money available was being spent on the city, Boa Vista.

The electoral campaign was on. Valois made a speech from an upper window in the principal street. The populace gathered in the street below - some had carried out the tables and chairs from Bar Jackson and were sitting drinking beer and "guaraná" and listening.⁹⁴ Most of us were standing. I was with Edna Martins. Valois threw out several not very veiled criticisms of Martins - while saying what great friends they were. His party was the "Partido Social Progressista", of the Governor of São Paulo who was being pushed for the Presidency. After about an hour of very eloquent discourse, the rain came on, and Valois terminated hastily. A large number of us rushed for the Bar - and we sat there drinking "guaraná."

Boa Vista has today become a planned city - the capital of the Território Federal de Roraima. There are roads and bridges built all over the area. One bridge, across the Rio Branco at Boa Vista, has enabled bus services to the frontier area near Lethem to be established. There are schools in numerous settlements and there are medical services. There are also big mining enterprises in progress - and one fears that assimilation is to be the fate of the Indians (see Diniz: 119-131).

Big changes in the political scene have also occurred in the Rupununi since my residence there. British Guiana achieved independence in 1966, to become the Socialist Republic of Guyana. In 1969 there was a revolt of Rupununi ranchers and a few Indians against the new Government of Forbes Burnham. This was ruthlessly put down; leading ranchers and their families fled to Brazil and Venezuela and many Indians were taken as prisoners to Gerogetown where they were threatened with lynching by a hostile Creole populace (see Ridgwell:

⁹³ See bibliography under Martins, Antônio, 1947.

⁹⁴ "Guaraná" is a popular Brazilian drink, made from the seeds of the guaraná tree (*Paullinia cupana*).

221-230). The Rupununi District was declared a restricted area, and for many years little information was attainable as to the developments taking place there, but what is evident is that a big migration of the indigenous peoples to the savannahs and forest areas of Venezuelan Guayana had followed.

These incidents and the publicity they received in the British Press, as well as a dramatic exposure in the *Sunday Times* of abuses in the Amazon region of Brazil,⁹⁵ led to the formation of the "Primitive Peoples' Fund", now "Survival International", and a worldwide growth of concern and effort for the rights of tribal peoples.⁹⁶

There have been many developments in anthropology since the publication of my article on the border Makushi as I observed them during the period 1933-44. Many detailed, systematic studies have since been made of the Carib groups -notably in the field of kinship patterns and in problems of social and political organization. Many of my tentative suggestions have been clarified; for example, Carib kinship clearly does not fit into the dichotomy of patrilineal - matrilineal which, as a student of Malinowski and Seligmen, at the London School of Economics in 1928-29, I then accepted -but many questions remain to be answered and much still remains to be done. Extremely valuable as these recent studies have been, enlarging and putting on record what we know of fast disappearing languages and cultures of the Carib peoples, unfortunately the aims and methods of some of them have not conformed to the strict criteria of scientific investigation -a willingness to follow the argument wherever it leads, and to submit hypotheses to the text of reality. So often the facts seem to be, no doubt unconsciously, manipulated to fit the classificatory framework fashionable at the moment, and the significance of them is missed.

The process of acculturation both in the Brazilian territory of Roraima and in the Rupununi District of Guyana has now been speeded up, to the point where the Amerindian societies will have been so modified to our pattern that the younger generation will have lost contact with their roots and it is important to gather material on their alternative methods of coping with the human condition and the environment, in so many ways superior to our own, before it disappears and is lost. We must now, urgently, while there are still living older people who were formed by their culture, go beyond interpreting their beliefs and customs in terms of our own Western conceptual systems. Fieldwork is needed to endeavour to see through their eyes, to make a psychoanalytically based study for instance. We must now go beyond

⁹⁵ This is a reference to the article by Norman Lewis on "Genocide in Brazil", published in the *Sunday Times* in 1969, which led to a world reaction as regards treatment of Amerindians in South America.

⁹⁶ Mrs. Myers was a founder member of the PPF and took a keen interest in its continuance as "Survival International" right up to the time of her death.

form to content -to a post-structural approach. A most fertile field would probably be a post-structural, psychologically oriented analysis of the Carib languages -while they are still spoken as living languages, and before their meanings are forgotten, or are changed by accelerated acculturation and assimilation. What do their terms mean to the speakers, what world outlook (*Weltanschauung*) do they spring from? One needs to study the signified (*Le signifié*) in depth, and its relation to the signifier (*Le signifiant*). Kinship for example, is a vital living system, not just a structural scheme. Kinship terms are not merely kinship terms, they are emotionally charged instruments in social cohesion and are used as symbolic pawns in a game of social encounter. Thus, a man calls both mother's brother's daughter and brother's wife *wiriji*. Makushi men told me that this term is not used in ordinary encounters. There seems to be an emotionally charged aspect to it. It may be used to address unrelated young girls by teasing young men, like our whistle bait -jokingly, but a man would feel some reserve in using it to address an actual mother's brother's daughter and brother's wife. As a rule, the general term *wiri*, woman, is used instead. The *-ji* suffix seems to have some intensifying function.⁹⁷ The woman calls her male cross cousin and her husband's brother simply *warado* -man. It seems as if society is structured round the sexual polarity.

Then there are the innate physiological and psychological basic differences between maleness and femaleness. The study of women in these groups has been largely neglected. Makushi women seemed happy and independent. They prized their men highly, as those who "bring home the bacon." When preparing porridge for morning breakfast they made lumps in it especially, because the men said they "liked something to chew on."⁹⁸ They plied them with drinks and washed their clothes and hammocks quite cheerfully. In fact, the washing of a man's clothes and hammock was an act which sealed a marital union. Men, reclining in their hammocks whilst the women worked, might seem to us to be lazy, but will probably have been out all night fishing, or for days on a hunting expedition with very little or no food. The division of labour is geared to the preservation of the species. Men as hunters and protectors always go in front in single file and, with weapons in hand, must be unencumbered by luggage when traveling, so that women are the carriers. The women must bear and rear the children, taking account of the fragility of neonates in the cold savannah nights, but the men share in nurturing through the provisions of the *couvade* and other prohibitions which operate when they have newborn babies. Makushi society does not appear to be activated by power motives, and

⁹⁷ In Pemon dialects *-chí*, *-shí*, *-jí* conveys the meaning of "belonging to." In the case of *wiri-jí* the connotation is of a woman who is a potential wife or sexual partner (such as a female cross cousin or a woman who could be so classified), and therefore marriageable. [A.B.C.].

⁹⁸ "The women made these by slightly moistening some of the meal, squeezing it into hard lumps and putting them into the mixture already in the pot." [I.H.M.]

the idea of women as political and economic currency, suggested by observers of the Barama Caribs and others, and by earlier Western observers (male dominated), is open to question. The system of their society seems rather to be oriented towards survival in a difficult environment, and ecological factors should be taken into account.

The Makushi have been affected by the worldwide political climate since World War II: the movements towards independence and self-government, the decline of colonialism and now by the frenetic development of the multinational fortune-seekers. It is an illusion to think that our problems will be solved by getting more and more minerals out of the soil, by obtaining more arable land by cutting down forests, more energy by inundating large areas and that peoples can safely be pushed around like pawns on a chessboard. These are illusions fostered by International Conferences. In a world climate of "development", environment and society are being wiped out in the mistaken notion that "greater productivity" is the solution to all problems. The future of the Makushi is very problematical. What is it to be? There have been quite deliberate plans to integrate them into the work-force and a policy of creolization has been followed, with administrators and school teachers sent in from the Coast. They seem destined to be "integrated" to swell the army of the dispossessed work-slave, and although as "bugre", "caboc" or "buck" they managed to survive through three centuries of contact,⁹⁹ now, with increasing facilities for change, they appear to be doomed as a people -on both sides of the frontier I fear.¹⁰⁰

However, our own mystique is changing meanwhile, from the optimistic faith in "progress" to the ethic of "survival." In the blind pursuit of the former we have deliberately destroyed a much more viable way of life than our "Western" one with its present day hysterical emphasis on G.N.P. (Gross National Product) and productivity, and many of our young, the heralds of future developments, are turning back to a non-materialistic, subsistence economy. We now have to go back to our American Indian sources to re-discover how to live without destroying the planet -to learn from a people who did not destroy their environment and to discover what reality looks like to them.

⁹⁹ 'Bugre,' a derogatory term, deriving from the French "bougre." It is used to refer to any Indian and has the meaning of "coarse" or "savage" person, or a treacherous one. Mrs. Myers uses the term "caboc" on more than one occasion in her notes. [The usual word is "caboclo", meaning either a civilised Brazilian Indian or a half-breed of White and Indian. Private Communication from Sr. Rima de Billy.]

¹⁰⁰ Although extremely depressed at the prospects which the future seemed to hold for the Makushi, and for Amerindians in general, Mrs. Myers thought that higher education might be a means to higher status, a greater influence in society at large and a greater independence. Hearing of a plan for education grants to be awarded to Third World students, she wrote: "It would be desirable if outstanding Amerindian young people could be included in this scheme, and if some scholarships or grants for secondary and even university education were given, with the aim of training up responsible Amerindian leaders for the future." [I.H.M.]

Editorial note

From 1947, when she left São José for Columbia University, New York, Mrs. Myers had no permanent home. She sold her ranch and during her brief return in 1949, on the way to research in Amazonia, she completed details concerning the transfer of stock. On account of her travels she left her Rupununi materials with friends in Georgetown, and did not take steps to retrieve them until after she had established herself in London, but because her friends had moved meanwhile, she enlisted the help of Vincent Roth, then Curator of the Georgetown Museum, in order to locate her property. A letter from Roth dated 14th June 1955, informed her that he had managed to find it, but he also conveyed the tragic news that the three wooden boxes in which it had been stored contained little more than pulp, owing to damp penetration. A trunk with Amerindian artifacts had survived (these are now in the Pitt Rivers Collection, Oxford University), and her husband's notebooks were found in passably good condition, having been stored in the steel cannister with which he had travelled.

The detailed record of her own field research during 13 years of residence amongst the Makushi was effectively destroyed, the loss including her card index records and photographic negatives. Her Warrau vocabulary had survived and she had retained in her possession her Makushi kinship manuscript and the notes and photographs she had taken during her brief 1949 visit to the Rupununi, including the set of Rohrschach tests she had then also conducted. In this present publication, plates 2, 13 and 19 derive from a few surviving pre-1949 negatives which appear to have been in her husband's possession, being preserved with his notebooks in an envelope on which he himself had written: "poor films, not printed but possible."

Loss of notebooks is the worst scenario for a field researcher, and Mrs. Myers had to come to terms with the bitter fact that her intention to publish her fieldwork could never be carried out. Her original *Timehri* articles immediately assumed a special importance, being the major remaining testimony to her long residence amongst the Makushi. They have a unique value for us. They are, so far as I can discover, the only professional record of the Makushi for the 1930s and 40s, on either side of the Rio Branco divide. There are numerous travel accounts referring to the Makushi, mostly dating from the famous explorations of the Schomburgk brothers (1831-44), and later those of Barrington Brown (1876), im Thurn (1883) and, during the first decades of the present century, a cluster of useful ethnographic accounts, of which the work of Koch-Grünberg (1916-28), Farabee (1924) and W.E. Roth (1924) are the most outstanding. Finally, came the important work on Makushi Grammar and Language, of the Rev. James Williams (resident

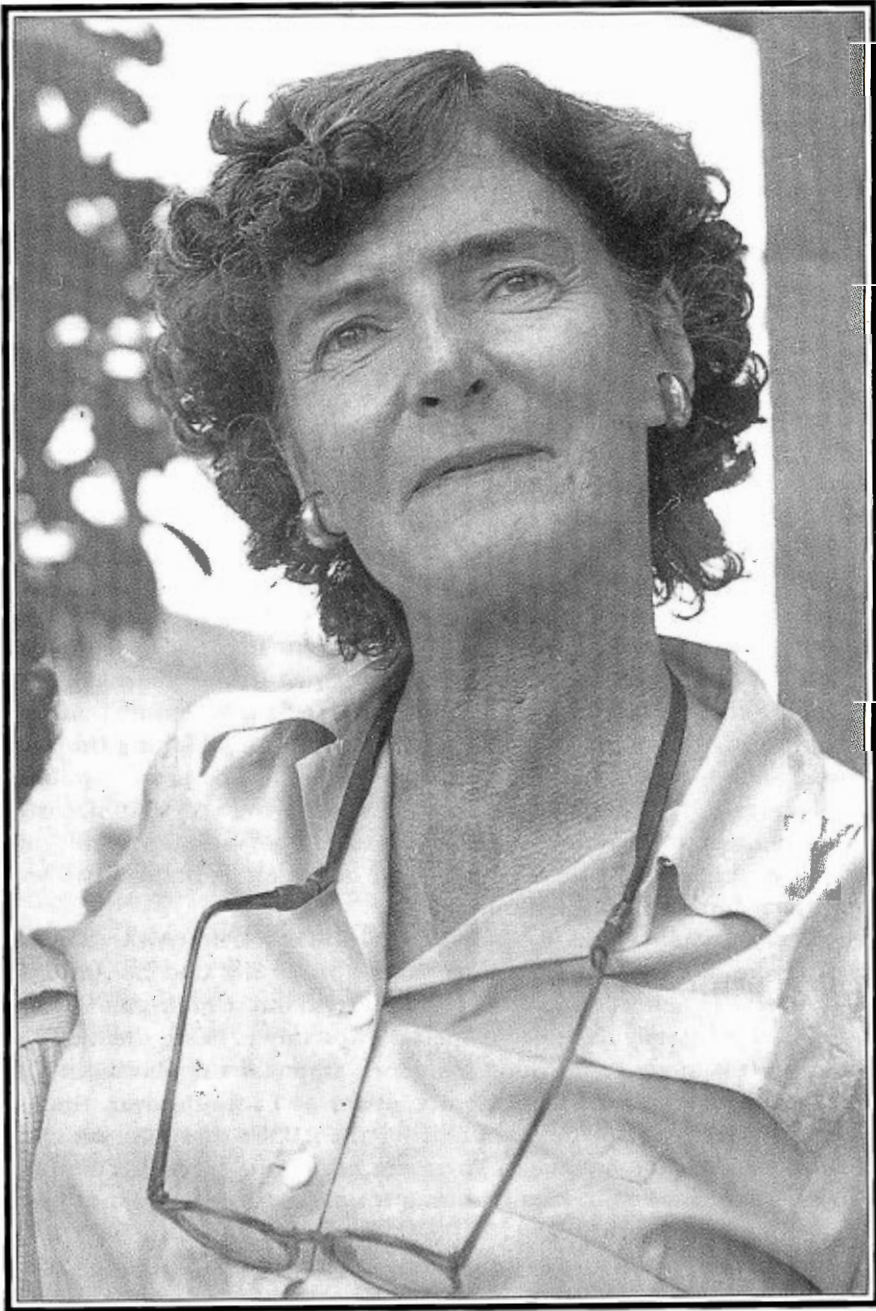


PLATE 1
THE AUTHOR, MRS. I. H. MYERS, IN GURUPA

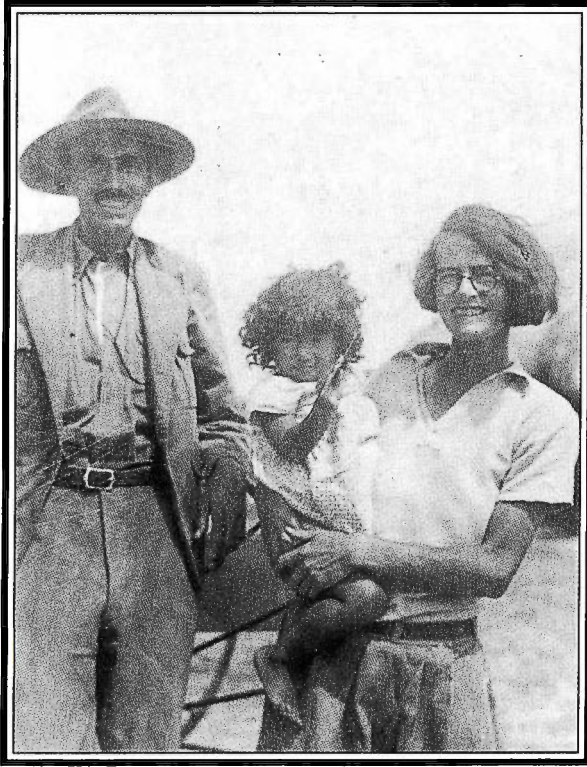


PLATE 2

J.G. MYERS AND IRIS MYERS HOLDING RIMA

missionary at Eupukari), published in 1932. Mrs. Myers' acquaintance with the Makushi began of the following year, in 1933, and her work effectively fills the period to 1950. A later succession of visitors and officials left some recorded material on the Makushi and their Wapishana neighbours, for example, see Swan (1958). Particularly noteworthy is the basic information on Makushi villages recorded by the Amerindian Lands Commission in their 1969 Report, with their recommendations for community land entitlements as it had been agreed would be granted to all Guyanese Amerindians under the terms of the 1965 *Report of the British Guiana Independence Conference* (Cmnd. 2849, Annex C). However, after the Rupununi revolt in 1969 against the Forbes Burnham Government, access to the District was strictly controlled and only now, (1993) are studies of present-day Makushi society and culture beginning again. Meanwhile, in the Rio Branco area, modern ethnohistorical and ethnographic research began in the 1980s, notably



PLATE 3
MRS. MYERS WITH OLD WOMAN AND
GRANDDAUGHTER INFRONT OF A CHURCH

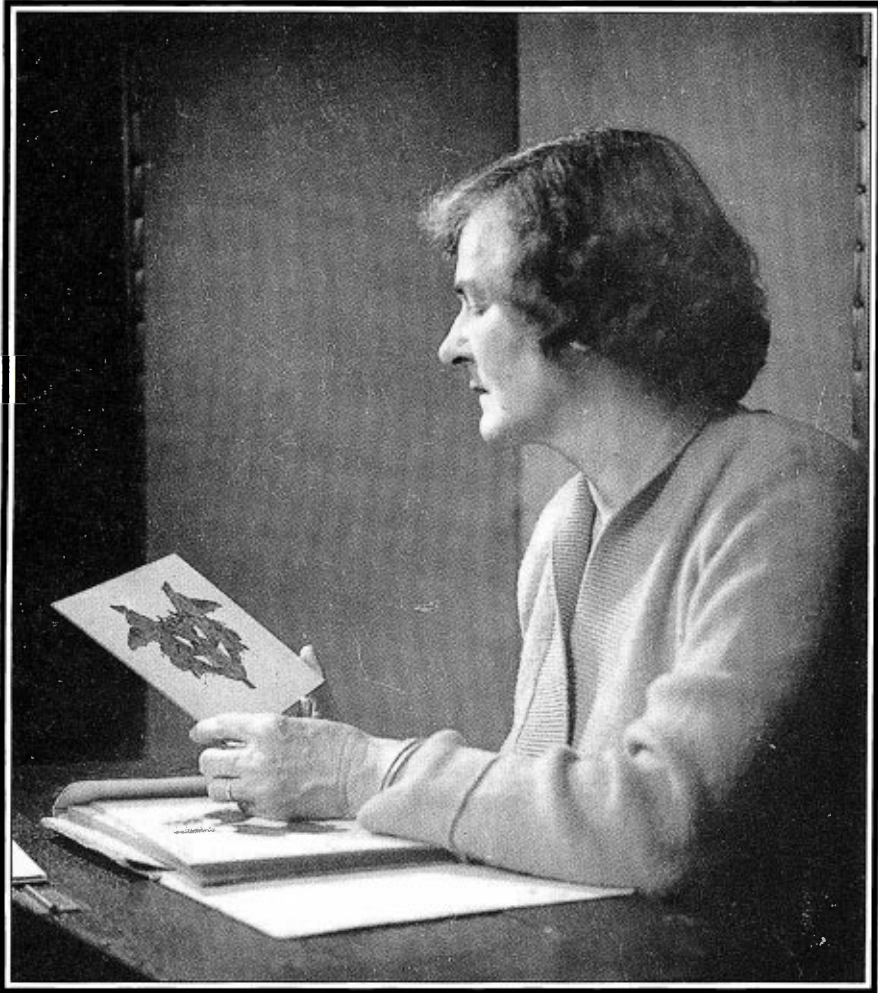


PLATE 4
MRS. MYERS EVALUATING RORSACHK TEST

by Nádía Farage and Paulo Santilli of the Universidade Estadual de Campinas, São Paulo.¹

¹ For example there are the following works: *Nádía Farage: As Muralhas dos Sertões: os povos indígenas no rio Branco e a colonização*. Rio de Janeiro; Paz e Terra; ANPOCS, 1991. *Paulo Santilli: Os Macuxi: Historia e Política no Seculo XX*. Masters Dissertation presented to the Department of Social Science, Instituto de Filosofia e Ciências Humanas da Universidade Estadual de Campinas, 1989.

PLATE 5
ST. IGNATIUS,
DECEMBER 1949
MAKUSHI FAMILY
GROUP: MOTHER
BAKING, FAHTER
MAKING ARROWS





PLATE 6
MAKUSHI WOMEN AND GIRLS

It is not generally known that "Makushi"² is a name which today embraces a number of regional groups, including the Monoiko and Iliang referred to by Mrs. Myers, as well as other "tribes." The autodenomination used by these groups is *Pemon* (plural: *Pemon-gong*), and this fact immediately relates them to the regional groups to their North, the Taurepang, Arekuna and Kamarakoto of the Gran Sabana, lower Paragua River and upper Cuyuni basin in Venezuela, who also denote themselves *Pemon*. Mrs. Myers' study therefore has great rel-

² Coudreau refers to the term "Macuchis" as meaning "fils de Macous, aborigènes" - offspring of the Macous, Aborigines. (Coudreau: II, 378). The name needs to be further investigated.



PLATE 7
ST. IGNATIUS, DECEMBER 1949
MAKUSHI MOTHER WITH FIRST BORN BABY

evance for all those who have researched among *Pemon* in Venezuela, and there is no doubt that by language and culture the *Pemon* in the three nation states of Brazil, Guyana and Venezuela form a unity which must be distinguished from those to their East who call themselves *Kapon*, who comprise the regional groups better known as the *Akawaio* and *Patamona*.

As she repeatedly stressed, in her conversations as well as in her writings, Mrs. Myers encountered the Makushi when they were at a particularly low ebb, in both population numbers and morale, because of the impact of a series of deadly epidemics which, as Richard Shomburgk had forecast on the arrival of smallpox in the Rupununi in 1842, seemed to render them and the other indigenous Guianese,

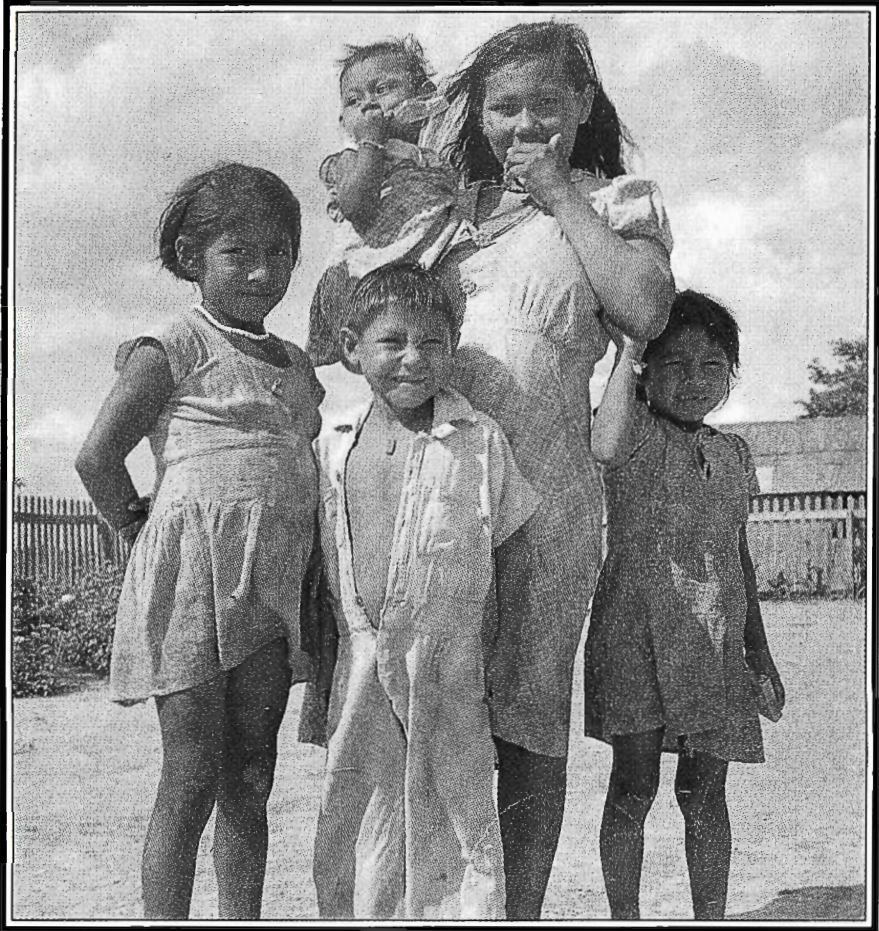


PLATE 8

MAKUSHI MOTHER WITH (OWN) CHILDREN AND SISTER'S CHILDREN

doomed people (Richard Schomburgk II: 546, 622). However, when she saw them for the last time in 1949, they had begun to flourish due, as she notes, to the introduction of modern health measures (notably the anti-malaria campaign which was being pursued simultaneously in Brazil, British Guiana and Venezuela), and also to the application of Western medicine to counter Western diseases imported by the Old World peoples with such devastating consequences.

Her work also has an additional importance in that, in her Post-script in particular, she describes the accommodation which had developed between the ranchers (on both the British and the Brazilian sides of the frontier) and the indigenous Makushi, and the consequent formation of a new kind of culture which, in many respects, owed its charac-

PLATE 9
MANARI, DECEMBER 1949
MAKUSHI GRANDMOTHER
MAKING A HAMMOCK IN THE
COMPANY OF CHILDREN



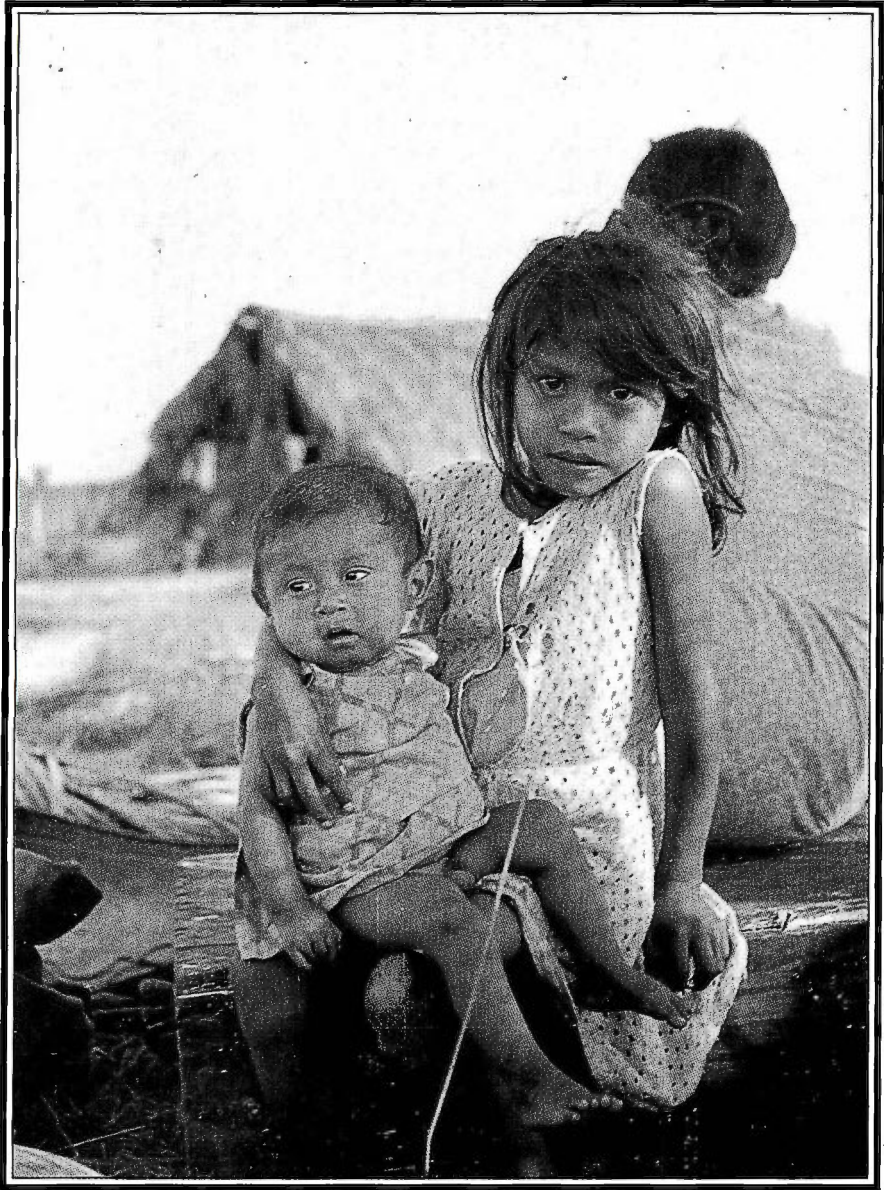


PLATE 10
ST. IGNATEUS, DECEMBER 1949
MAKUSHI CHILDREN NEAR MOTHER

PLATE 11
NORTHERN SAVANNAH, 1949
UNFINISHED MAKUSHI HOUSE
(Note thatching palm in
foreground)





PLATE 12
LETHEM, 1949
MAKUSHI INDIANS AND WHITE BOY

ter to processes of both adoption and adaptation. A systematic history of the ranchers and their life-style has yet to be written, but when it is, the insights into this recently formed culture presented by Mrs. Myers will provide a fascinating chapter.³

³ In her 1949 notebook Mrs. Myers has some interesting descriptions of the ranches she spent the night in, their owners and way of life, during her journey down the Takutu and Río Branco to Boa Vista. She also left a three page manuscript and photographs of a well-known "curandeira" (healer) D. Machica, whose life and curing techniques she deals with in some detail. All this material merits separate treatment. I have not included it in the postscript since it would have overbalanced a work which she intended should concentrate on the Makushi.)

PLATE 13
PARISHARA DANCERS





PLATE 14
LETHEM, DECEMBER 1949
MAKUSHI FAMILY
FATHER (MEDICAL RANGER), WIFE, DAUGHTER AND SON

It is fortunate for us that, despite advancing age, Mrs. Myers consented to make a thorough revision of her *Timehri* articles. What is printed in this number of *Antropológica*, is her corrected and carefully checked final edition, every section having been meticulously reviewed and discussed and the relatively few additions carefully distinguished. She dearly wished to take her publication forward into the present (the 1980s) and together we canvassed this possibility. With a lack of published data, and her own diminution of energy, she wisely decided against it. The great value of her original work lies in its authenticity, as a unique record compiled by a psychologist - anthropologist, trained

PLATE 15
1949
WOMAN
HOLDING
A GIANT CAT
FISH



PLATE 16
1949
MAKUSHI
CHILDREN
AT SCHOOL

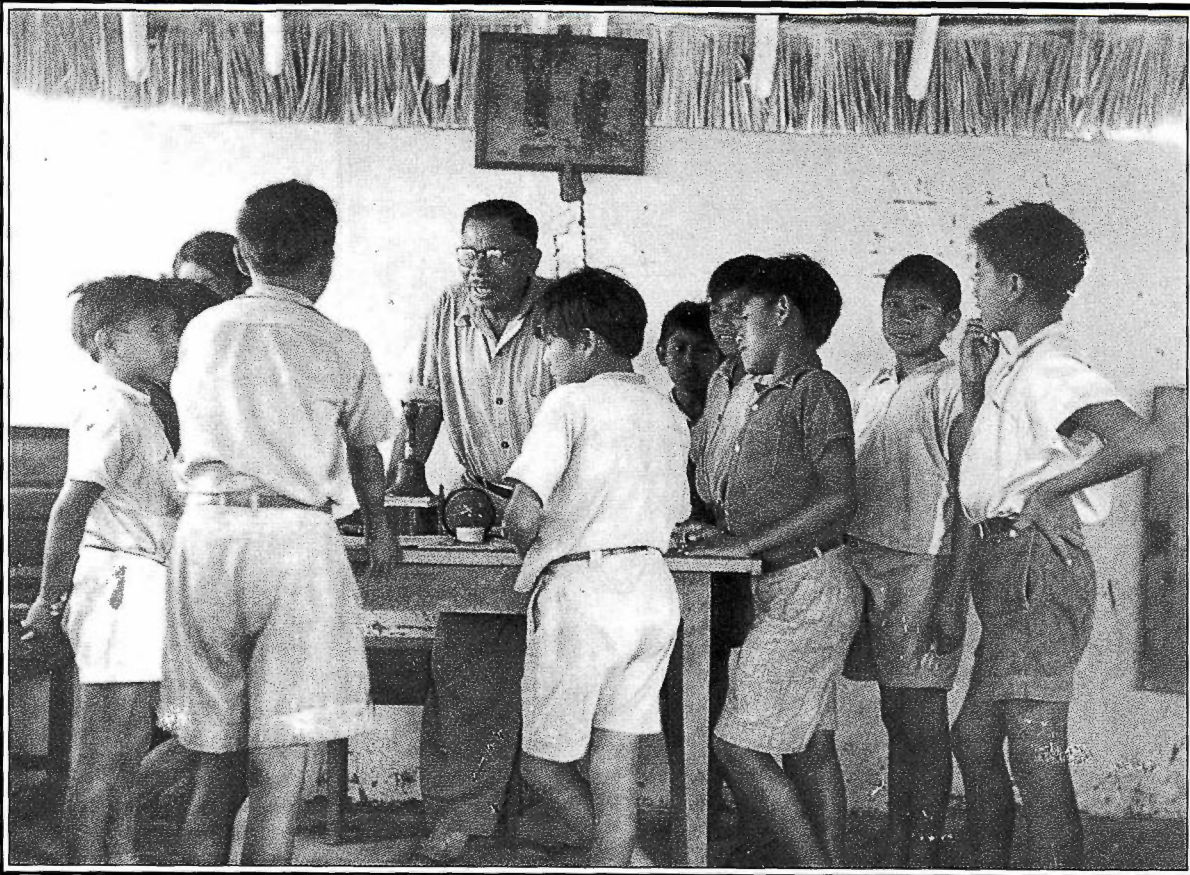




PLATE 17
ST. IGNATIUS, 1949
A YOUNG MAKUSHI FAMILY

in particular schools of thought, both in Britain and in the United States. It treats of a particular situation in its historical context, which can never be repeated but which, for students of the present and future of the Makushi Indians of the Rupununi and Río Branco savannahs, has an inestimable value.

After completing the revision of her *Timehri* articles, Mrs. Myers began to write an introductory note and postscript. We both felt that readers would like to know something of her credentials, how she came to live among the Makushi, her daily life with them and her thoughts in the longer perspective on the profound changes to which they had been subjected since her departure from the Rupununi. Although by now in her nineties and suffering from ill-health, she began to read the latest



PLATE 18
LETHEM, 1949
GOVERNMENT SHOP AND POST OFFICE

publications on the Carib peoples of the Guyanas, but when she wanted to investigate modern data on Makushi health, education, the local economy and non-Amerindian settlement, she found that either it did not exist or was not accessible in Britain. Although therefore, she was unable to make a modern, literary study she nevertheless was able to write up much of what she wanted to say, in a series of notes, observations and jottings, and she left these together with a list of topics and a request to me to put them together as best I could.

My task has been to assemble her writings in a consistent and inter-connected narrative and to add some explanatory notes and complete her references. Mrs. Myers was insistent on the use of a particular spelling of Amerindian words, so I have kept to these throughout - for



PLATE 19
ST. IGNATIUS
MAKUSHI WOMEN AND CHILDREN

example, Warrau is used instead of the more modern Warao for this particular Amerindian people, and Eupukari for this Anglican mission village, instead of the more usual Yupukari of today. I have however, in her Introductory Note and Postscript, changed Manaus to the standard Manaus.

I have prepared a simplified version of the basic map of British Guiana, on which she superimposed the extent of Makushi territory. I have added a second map, of the savannah region, to show the principal geographical locations to which she refers.

The photographs were mostly selected by Mrs. Myers herself and they derive from those negatives found with her husband's notebooks, as mentioned above, and from those photographs taken on her return visit of 1949. That, after all this lapse of time, they have reproduced so well, is a tribute to modern printing techniques and the great skill with which her son Mr. John Myers, has employed them.

Acknowledgements

I thank Sra. Rima de Billy and Mr. John Myers for their helpful comments, confirmations and additional information on the Introductory Note and Postscript, and I am especially grateful to Mrs. Philippa Wilson for biographical details on her aunt's early academic career, as also to colleagues who worked in the Rupununi and whose private communications have added to the text. They are acknowledged within the text and in footnotes.

Finally I thank Mr. and Mrs. Gordon Forte, Demerara Publishers Ltd., Georgetown, Guyana, for their confirmation that there is no breach of a *Timehri* copyright and also for generously giving a warm welcome to this revised publication.

Audrey Butt Colson

Iris Helena Myers: A Biography

Mrs. Myers was born 26th December 1897, in Wellington, New Zealand, to Mr. and Mrs. Edwin Walter Woodhouse. She was educated at Wellington Girl's College and from there entered the Faculty of Mental and Moral Philosophy, Victoria College, University of New Zealand. In 1919 she obtained a B.A. Hons. degree in Mental and Moral Philosophy (specializing in Psychology). She was Assistant to the Professor, lecturing in Psychology at Victoria College and in charge of the Psychology Laboratory, when she met John Golding Myers on his return from the war in Europe. They married in August 1922. John Myers graduated with a B.Sc. Hons. in Zoology in 1923 and Iris, having completed two years at the Wellington Training College for Teachers, received her Trained Teacher's Certificate in June of 1924. Both had their Masters degree before leaving.

J.G. Myers had been awarded the Exhibition Science Research Scholarship by the University of New Zealand and decided to go to Harvard University. Whilst he was obtaining his D.Sc., there, which he achieved in two years (1924-25 and 1925-26) instead of the customary three, Iris was engaged in postgraduate studies under William McDougall. She studied Abnormal Psychology, Comparative Psychology and Social Psychology, and also Clinical Psychology under Frederick Lyman Wells at the Boston Psychopathic Hospital.

John Myers began his career as an entomologist working in the South Kensington Museum, London, and then accepted an assignment in Australia. Iris Myers entered the Sorbonne, Paris, in 1927, and at the Collège de France studied Comparative Religion and Comparative Psychology. She attended the Conférences du Midi of Pierre Janet (the

Sorbonne). At the Institut Linguistique she studied Phonetics in preparation for fieldwork on "the psychology of primitive peoples." She also did some translation work for Cambridge University Press.

In London 1928-29, she enrolled as a Ph.D. student at the London School of Economics and Political Science, studying Cultural Anthropology under C.G. Seligman and B. Malinowski. She described the latter as "very active as the leader of the functionalist group." Her special interest was the psycho-analytical aspects of individual psychology in differing cultures. "It was noticed, for example, that in matrilineal societies studied by Malinowski, and by Margaret Mead in the South Seas, the Freudian Oedipus complex did not seem to be operative, and that attitudes to sex and to aggression varied in differing communities."

In 1928 John Myers, working for the Imperial Bureau of Entomology (later the Commonwealth Institute of Entomology), was seconded to the Empire Marketing Board. He took a research assignment to the West Indies and the hinterland of South America "...to investigate the possibilities of biological control of insect pests of sugar-cane in the West Indies and Guiana. This was envisaged as involving an intensive ecological survey of tropical New World Gramineae in their various habitats, riparian, paludal and grassland, of their associated insects, and of allied genera and similar patterns in the tropical forests of the area. He accordingly decided to make Trinidad his base, and was given a laboratory at the Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture." He and his wife travelled extensively in the Caribbean in 1929. In 1930 they visited Surinam and Venezuela and worked in the area of the Orinoco Delta and the North West District of British Guiana (now Guyana). There, Mrs. Myers carried out a short field study of the Warrau Indians of the Amacura River, and she has left an unpublished manuscript entitled: *Warrau: a working vocabulary collected in the N.W.D. British Guiana, June 1930. P. Jacinto main informant. (33 pages).*

In 1932 Mrs. Myers was back in London, where she gave birth to her first daughter (Pauline Rima Woodhouse Myers). Meanwhile, John Myers was in the Rupununi, having gone up to the Amazon from Pará and thence up the Rio Negro and Rio Branco. From the Rupununi he made the journey northwards to Mount Roraima, in the same year. In May 1933, as she describes at the beginning of her Postscript, the Myers family travelled up the Essequibo River, from Georgetown, and crossed the North Rupununi Savanna to the Takutu River. Mrs. Myers lived in Parika ranch whilst arrangements were made to purchase the ranch São José do Takutu. Meanwhile, her husband embarked on an expedition down the Rio Branco into Amazonia (1933-35). Residing at São José, Mrs. Myers ran the ranch with Makushi Indian employees and began her study of the Makushi of the British Guiana - Brazilian frontier region. In 1935 John Myers arrived in the Rupununi, a passen-

ger in the first aeroplane to land there. In October that year he explored the Canuku Mountains in the area of the Nappi River, and then set out on a difficult and dangerous journey which took him to the headwaters of the Essequibo River, to Waiwai country, then across to the New River and down the Courantyne to the coastlands. Benita, Mrs. Myers' second daughter, was born in Manaus at this time - as, later, was her son John.

In 1936 John Myers returned to England for treatment for malaria and undiagnosed tropical illness. During the Second World War he was in the Southern Sudan, and died tragically in a motor car accident 3rd February 1942. His widow continued at São José, making brief visits to Manaus, where her children were at school. In Nov. 1944 the Historical Section of her article *The Makushi of British Guiana; A Study of Culture Contact*, was published in *Timehri*, No. 26. In July 1946, the second part was published: *The Makushi of British Guiana: Culture Contact in the Present*, in *Timehri*, No. 27.

In 1947 Mrs. Myers left the field and she records: "Leaving the Rio Branco in 1947, I went to New York at the invitation of Dr. Ruth Benedict to work on my material at Columbia University. On Ruth Benedict's death, I was assigned to study under Dr. Margaret Mead and Dr. Chas. Wagley (well known for his Brazilian studies)." In common with most of Margaret Mead's postgraduate students she undertook a Jungian analysis. "The emphasis at this time was on the individual in society (see Abram. Kardiner's *The Individual and His Society*, 1939) and it was assumed that a personal analysis equipped the student better to interpret other cultures. My analyst was Dr. Violet de Laslo, a pupil of C.G. Jung in Zurich, settled and practising in New York, and a leading member of the Jungian group in the States. At the same time I joined the newly formed Post-Graduate Centre for Psychotherapy, of which I was a founder member. This is a Freudian-based organisation, where I attended seminars in psychosomatic medicine, and took further training in projective methods, including Rohrschach, Szonde and Thematic apperception tests."

During the long vacation of 1949, Mrs. Myers went to Brazil to make a psychological study of a cross section of the population in the municipio in the lower Amazon being studied by Dr. Wagley and his team (see *Amazon Town: A Study of Man in the Tropics*, 1953, C. Wagley). During this visit to Brazil, she returned briefly to the Rupununi. She flew from the Coast to Lethem on 3rd June, and stayed at Manari ranch whilst she completed details of the sale of the stock of São José. From 2nd - 7th July she travelled down the Takutu and Rio Branco by launch to Boa Vista. At the end of the month she flew to Manaus and on 28th July visited the Instituto Geográfico e Histórico. There she received great praise for her Makushi articles and gave per-

mission for them to be translated into Portuguese. Her manuscript: *The Psychodynamics of Makushi Kinship*, a paper written specifically for the XXIX Congress of Americanists, New York 1949, dates from this period. However, she never submitted it and was unable to attend the Congress.

After her stay in Brazil, Mrs. Myers decided to continue her analytical work. She went to London and from there to the recently founded C.G. Jung Institut in Zurich, where she continued analysis under the Director, Dr. C.A. Meier, attending lecture courses and seminars. In 1951 she finally settled in London and began analytical practice, which she continued during the following thirty years and during the course of which she treated a number of Brazilian subjects and directed their study of the Jungian philosophy. In 1951 she was received into the Third Order of St. Francis.

From 1981 she was engaged in revising her *Timehri* articles on the Makushi. Thereafter, sporadically, she made notes and discussed the form and contents of a Postscript to be published with her work, and she selected photographs for illustration. She died in London, 12th February 1991, aged 93 (See obituary in *Anthropology Today*: Vol. 7, No.3, June 1991.)

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