CDU 397(81)

THE SHAVANTE ENCOUNTER WITH BRAZILIAN SOCIETY: IS THERE A ROOM FOR *WAMARITEDE'WAS* IN MODERN WORLD?[1]

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The Shavante Encounter with Brazilian Society is yet another story of the clash between Indigenous traditions and the forces of modernization. Methodological frameworks of various levels of the ethnic phenomenon is taken into account to tie together myriad themes and finding from ethnographic works and political rhetoric with studies of the changing roles of Indians, missionaries and government agencies. The result is an informed, multifaceted understanding of a Shavante identity that endures even as it is transformed by Brazilian society. The paper is a call for a sympathetic understanding of Indigenous peoples predicament—and resiliency—in the face of radical changes in their lives.

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[1] This paper is a synopsis of part of my Master thesis: Myths and Dreams in Modern Times: A Study of the Shavante Ethnic Identity and Transformation by the Encounter with the Brazilian Society, written in 1995 at Dartmouth College, New Hampshire. To a certain extent, the method utilized in this study, can be thought of as an extension of the one Aracy Lopes da Silva adopted in a paper presented at the thirteenth meeting of the "Associação Brasileira de Antropologia" held in São Paulo, Brazil, in 1982. While considering her views and methods, I also try to complement the analysis by presenting historical data from other authors who have worked with the Shavante as well as some concepts from studies in ethnicity. I also take into consideration my own observations based on a series of personal interviews realized in 1995 at Museu do Indio and Museu Nacional (Rio de Janeiro), Universidade de São Paulo and Unicamp, Dartmouth College, and Peabody Museum (Harvard University) where I had the opportunity to personally contact David Maybury Lewis (the researcher who first wrote an extensive ethnography on the Shavante people)

I. Shavante History and Identity

> When the morning light dawned, the undergrowth was already rustling as they passed; they were already walking, walking, in single file, the men with their weapons at the ready, the women carrying the baskets and trays, the eyes of each and all fixed on the sun. We haven't lost our way yet. Our determination must have kept us pure. The sun hasn't fallen once and for all; it hasn't stopped falling yet. It goes and it comes back, like the souls of the fortunate. It heats the world. The people of the earth haven't fallen, either. Here we are. I in the middle, you all around me. I talking, you listening. We live, we walk. That is happiness, it seems.[2]

A people "on the move" is the characterization of the Shavante society that Aracy Lopes da Silva made in her article in 1982. Their history, she says, is strikingly marked by the transitory nature of their territory over time. These movements, from one place to another were mostly caused by the incursion of colonization expeditions across their lands, which were aimed at the appropriation of indigenous territories for agriculture and cattle ranching. When official villages, *aldeamentos*, were created to divide Indian people and utilize them as a labor force, two basic processes occurred: some groups accepted, at least temporarily, the association with the whites in the aldeamentos while others avoided them as much as they could[3] (200).

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[2] Extract from Mario Vargas Llosa's national bestseller: "The Storyteller" Penguin Books, 1989:40.

[3] Aracy suggests examining the process of Shavante construction of self by studying their own oral narratives. This is to say that the study of the nature and content of the narratives that reflect the way people elaborate upon their past can reveal the way the Shavante define themselves today.

There are many advantages to such strategy. First, there are not many documented historical sources available on the period of the first Shavante/Brazilian encounters; therefore, the study of Shavante mythological narratives can be useful to fill these gaps and reconstitute this past. Second, and more important, is to consider historical myths as a belief system, a perspective that Aracy herself has undertaken for the Shavante case, and as Warren has also done in her study of ethnicity in a highland Guatemalan community. Warren applies a "historical understanding of ethnic identity" to an interpretive framework that considers mythic narrative as models of representation in the present. In the author's own words: ... history,(like myth) is continually rephrased both to direct and to deal with the changing character of relations within the Indian community and relations between ethnic groups. History as a belief system is filtered through the realities of the present; it has the ideological benefit of hindsight (Warren, 1978: 144).

Internal disagreements among Shavante leader during their first encounters with Brazilian society have produced group divisiveness and ethnic boundaries. The disagreements were centered on the simple dilemma caused by the contact: whether to accept living with the Whites or continue fleeing into isolated areas of the forest to avoid them. This dilemma, symbolically expressed in the mythic narrative[4] of the crossing of Araguaia river—Dzšmor"—split the Shavante "nation" into two major ethnic groups: the Sherentes (those who accept the contact) and the remaining Shavantes who refused the integration into the civilized world.

> The myth called "Dzsmor" [5] corresponds to a time when the Shavante were still living in their homeland in Gois and many whites contacted their villages creating divisions and confusion among the Indians. Eventually some Shavante trusted the Whites and accepted to live close to the White villages—acampamentos. The great majority, however, suspected the apparent White goodwill. As they realized that three of their own chiefs were pleasing and welcoming the Whites, some Shavantes planned to eliminate them in a collective hunt—Dzšmor. One of the chiefs, though, was spared due to the intervention of his sister. Later on, the latter escaped from the Shavante village and told the Whites about the murders. The Whites, then, gathered together in great number and killed all the Shavante, except for two young warriors who escaped

[4]During the 1960's Bartolomeu Giaccaria and Adalberto Heide, both Salesian missionaries, tape recorded the myths/dreams of Jeronimo Tsawe, a respected Wamaritede'wa and chief who lived in the Indian reservation Marechal Rondon and Sangradouro, in the State of Mato Grosso, in Central Brazil. Eventually these narratives were published, first in their original form, which comprised the compilations of Giaccaria and Heide (1975), and later, the same material was analyzed as part of a literary interpretation by Sergio Luiz Rodrigues Medeiros (1991).

[5]Adapted and translated from Giaccaria and Heide's book: "Jeronimo Xavante Sonha", 1975:28. Lopes da Silva (1982), based on Maybury Lewis (1967) believes that such an event corresponds to the first split of Shavante nation, although she also acknowledges some other authors' interpretations. But whatever interpretation might be the right one, the division is always explained as the result of divergence among Shavante leadership in terms of accepting or not to cooperate with the Whites. Those who crossed the river and refused the contact are the descendants of today's Shavante and the remaining groups correspond to the people known today as Sherente.

> and found shelter in the surrounding forest.
> As time passed, the remaining Indians who were still living in villages close to the White acampamento become increasingly suspicious of them and sent two spies to find out about their plans. When the spy returned with bad news—that the Whites supposedly had gathered an army to eliminate the Indians—they decided to cross the Araguaia river to escape. Eventually, though, part of the group did not cross the river.

Historical sources refer to this episode as a moment when government economic plans emphasized the acquisition of new territories[6] . The political and economic situation in Gois reflected Governmental policies in favor of agriculture along the Araguaia river and ranch cattle in the Tocantins area. Legislation in 1811 facilitated the creation of Bandeiras—private organizations aimed at the "opening of new lands" and displacing and enslaving Indians if need be. The Bandeiras prosecuted wars against Indians in exchange for legal concessions by the Government of lands and Indians who were taken as slaves. To isolate distinct indigenous populations a prison was created in the Araguaia region. The response came soon with the destruction of the prison by the Indians—a coalition of Shavante, Sherente, and Karaja tribes (Lopes da Silva, 1985/86, p. 364).

After this period, according to the same author, the Shavante headed to the North, but were blocked by other Indian peoples. There are no detailed historical data about this period but there seems to be a consensus among researchers that continuous conflicts with Whites led the Shavante to constant migrations to isolate themselves and find peace. This forced migration was followed by the conquest or avoidance of other Indian's territories, such as the Krah, Timbira, Kanakatey, and Boro, who became their enemies.

During the 1840's a second split in the Shavante society took place in the banks of a river called "Rio das Mortes", a tributary of Araguaia river. The reasons were the same as those of the first division.

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[6]The sequential order of Historical facts and its correspondence with oral narratives are based on Silva(1982,1986) and Medeiros(1991).

Those Indians who deliberately avoided the contact with the Whites established a village in the surroundings of the Araguaia river to keep distance from the White acampamentos. With the constant threat of White proximity they decided to found another village at Cristalino river. Later on, however, a new camp of Whites was discovered by Shavante spies. The Indians managed to enter the "acampamento" by pretending to offer a lamb to the White chief so as to spy on the White; indeed the Whites had plans of attacking them.

The Shavante, then, took a good opportunity to escape when a rain storm came at night time and crossed the Rio das Mortes. During the crossing, though, a large bull fish, known as "Boto", scared the Indians who had not yet crossed. This episode is vividly remembered among the Shavante, as the following native narrative indicates.

> When part of our people had already crossed the river, a boto came and forced the others to return. Sons start shouting from one bank of the river while their mothers screamed at the other, like that: Take good care of my sons! They screamed out loud to their relatives, brothers, sisters, uncles, and aunts.... They stand from the bank of the river, trembling and crying.... It separated our people (Medeiros, 1991: p. 81, Lopes da Silva, 1982: p. 209).

On an individual level, the myth of the origin of the white man—Waradzu—reveals the oppositional nature of Shavante ethnic identification at this stage when, in symbolic terms, a decision must be made between two opposing choices: retaining an Indian identity or metamorphosing into whites. The myth of creation of the White man is a "story" of metamorphosis—that of the wapt who became the original White man—the waradzu.[7] The wapt symbolizes a marginal figure in Shavante society. He represents a problem for the community because of his rebellious behavior. The wapts always rise against the customary traditions and instigates prohibited desires. Because of this,

[7]Myths about origin of the White man exists among other societies as well. Roberto Da Matta, for instance, realizes that Apinays, Timbiras, and Kayap—s, developed a myth of the origin of the White man called Vanmekapran where Indians express symbolically some features of their relationship with the White people as well as their perceived position in regard to Brazilian society (Da Matta, 1975: p.41).

they represent a threat to the maintenance of the social order (Medeiros, 1991: p. 50-51). Medeiros also explains that drastic changes in identity—metamorphosis—is a characteristic of these beings who also possess a strong magical power to create things.

Metamorphosis explains symbolically, the logic behind the Shavante perceptions of the whites at the first stages of the interethnic clash between Shavantes and Brazilians. From an Indian perspective, if some Indians were living with and acting as the Whites, the Shavante might have certainly thought, they would no longer be Indians. Indians do not do weird and strange things as Whites do. A magic transformation must be at work. Only wapts, with their super-powers would transform themselves into weird Waradzus.

There are important symbolic meanings and perceptions in this myth where the Shavante classify the White men by naming them Waradzu (the other), and create the sea (a symbolic barrier between the White and Indian world).[8] The myth can be characterized as one of rebellion, desire, magic, desertion and metamorphosis. The following is a summary of the myth as Medeiros describes it,

> During a collective hunting, the Shavante camped in a place where there were many Indai trees [a kind of coconut tree]. The women's work was to open up the coconut and gather the nuts. There was a voracious adolescent [a wapt] who greedily ate all the possible nuts that his mother could get. His brother recommended many times that he save some for the future but without success.
> The mother then got very angry with the son's unscrupulous desire and decided to punish him by including her own clitoris among the next share of nuts. As the young Shavante tasted a different flavor in his mouth and found the clitoris, instead of throwing it out he kept it with him. Since then a strong desire to become a waradzu was born inside of him. With an enormous abdomen, he then slid on the floor while the women bit him for his greedy and selfishness.

[8]Waradzu is also the name for everything weird or strange for the Shavante.

> The Shavante then headed off to the village and left him alone and abandoned. Later on, his brothers returned but found him living with two women in a place around a waterfall (he had created the women from the mother's clitoris). By then, he was no longer the same person but rather transformed; he became a civilized man and worked in a garage producing weapons. He was also able to accomplish feats such as making hair grow instantly by pushing the brother's heads in the water. When the men in the village were informed of this news they all came to see him, they themselves wanting long hair. The waradzu then pleased the men. Yet, earning revenge for the suffering he got through when he was an Indian, he decided then to transform one of the men into a frog. At the men's parting the waradzu explained that they would never see him again. Finally, the waradzu , using his unlimited power transformed the river into a sea in order to separate the civilized ones from the Shavante for good. (27-28)

As a result of the changed historical circumstances, characterized by increased contact between Indian and non-Indian societies, a more complex network of relationships emerged. Indian decisions involving the Shavante community as a whole demanded the consideration of a wider set of variables and resulted in a number of strategic mechanisms aimed at the maintenance of the unity of the group. Internal divisions within the original community into new sub-groups, rather than representing an ethnic divisiveness, accounted for the multiplication of the Shavante themselves in order to occupy their territory more effectively and protect it against outside invasions.[9] The splits at this stage represented thus a general strategy aimed at the maintainance of unity and group survival within Brazilian state.

At the individual level, a new scenario marked by dependence and subordination on the relationship between Indians and the

[9]The 1970's were a period when the Shavante's internal factionalism and group cohesiveness gained significance as it was associated with a pragmatic strategy aimed at the defense of their territories. According to the Brazilian anthropologist Aracy L.Silva, in 1976 the Shavante split themselves into sub-groups, forming new tribes according to traditional factional lines. (Lopes da Silva, 1985/86:376).

representatives of tutelary agents changed the nature of the inter-ethnic clash and Shavante ethnic identification. With more communication between the two societies perceptions and self-images shifted away from polar oppositions, symbolically represented by the notion of metamorphosis, to acquire a certain degree of flexibility and mixture in terms of parameters and images in identity.

Today, there seem to be different levels of Indian identification juxtaposed: one is still acquainted with old traits associated with the time the Shavante lived alone in the forest and the other assume a modern character, "vested" with elements of the civilized world. The "civilized Shavante" is then an individual who has adopted certain modern manners and traits but nevertheless, incorporates them into the frame of traditional Shavante patterns of thinking. For example, today, young leaders belong to both Shavante political factions and Brazilian political parties but their actions greatly resemble those of spies and explorers who undertake journeys into the outside territory and bring valuable things to their original tribes[10] . On a group level, Shavantes today continue to perform their traditional naming practices while also accepting Portuguese names through baptism. However, Portuguese names are accommodated into the logic of Shavante naming ideology, they are "welcome" to expand the system but not to take its place.[11]

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10 Spies and explorers are characters present in several Shavante mythic-historical and dream oral narratives. In his analysis of Shavante myths, Medeiros (1991) suggests the following narrative pattern:

> First, a given character leaves the village to visit a mystic place—some area still unknown, mysterious;
> Then, this character returns to the village;
> And finally, the whole group in the village profit from the return of the character since he obtains some secret or valuable information that will enrich the cultural inheritance of the group (62)

Such a sequential model, as the author explains, emerges in the overall scheme of narratives and reflects many different events that occur in the context of day to day life. For instance, before the men go hunting some of them—the explorers—are first sent in to the forest to investigate potential areas of game. Then, upon their return, the explorers relay their findings to the collective hunting expedition, who of course benefit from this information to plan the hunt.

Along the same lines the historical narratives of wars follow a strikingly similar model to that mentioned above , as Medeiros suggests:

> The spies meet the other;
> The spies return and tell people what they realize about the other;
> The group then decides, based on this information, whether to attack or not this other.

11 The ritual of naming has special significance for the Shavante throughout the course of an individual life. In her book "Nomes e amigos: Da prática Xavante a uma reflexo sobre os G", Aracy L. da Silva presents an extensive analysis of the Shavante naming practices.

Likewise, myths and dreams now incorporate symbolic elements of Christianity but continue to reflect Shavante patterns of organization and ontology. There are changes in the content of the narratives, but none in form, structure, and overall purpose of the message. The content of dream narratives are full of Christian symbols and images reflecting the day-to-day contact with Christianity, although not necessarily carrying the same meanings. Jeronimo Tsawe, the wamaritede'wa whose dreams/myths I have refered to throughout this paper, (see notes 4, 18) has himself announced, after the contact with Christianity, that he "was predestined from now on, to communicate no longer with wamari [12] but with a new spiritual entity: Dapotowa [God]" (Medeiros, 1991: p.121).

In his interpretative analysis of Jeronimo's dream narrative Medeiros clearly distinguishes *Dapatowa and wamari* spheres of influence. These characters present in the dreams represent symbols in distinct semantic domains. *Wamari* serves as Jeronimo's spiritual guide in the dreams that correspond to the events before the contact with missionaries, and his messages are mostly concern Shavante actions as warriors, hunters, and spies. *Dapatowa* is the character associated to post-contact narratives and represents the Christian God; the semantic nature of *Dapatowa* discourse includes images of evil and punishment, characteristic of the Christian ideology (118-119).

However, the *wamaritede'was* role as official dreamer of the tribe and the overall purpose and meaning of his mystic experience remains the same: to guide the Shavante toward the right path. The essence of Jeronimo's mystic experience, made visible through dreams, has not changed due to the contact with Christianity and its meanings have not been replaced by Christian ones. Rather, the examining of dream narratives reveals that Christian symbols are incorporated into the narratives to expand an Indian mystic experience.

The message that Dapatowa delivers to Jeronimo in the following dream narrative is a good example of how Christian symbology is assimilated and recreated to benefit the Shavante community: [13]

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[12] Wamari is the spiritual entity who traditionally "visit" Jeronimo in dreams and give him guidance.

[13] The original and complete form of this narrative can be found on pages 227-229 of Giaccaria and Heide's "Jeronimo Xavante Sonha".

> He [Jesus] came and said..., I want that you perform the Buriti[14] race.
> [Jesus-] Are you going to acquiesce with it?
> [Jeronimo-] Yes, I will acquiesce on behalf of them.
> I am the one who is supposed to direct them to do so. The Buriti race is so beautiful. I accept your request.
> [Jesus-] You have to continue realizing your festivities.... Your traditions cannot end, they are yours, you can not stop performing them, must persevere.... Only the waradzu do not participate. They have different festivities. It is very beautiful to watch your race. It is lovely and beauteous the way you paint yourselves and wear those wooden plugs in the earlobes, it is very pleasing to watch you. Do you hear me? Now I want to teach you a song. You must sing this song during the festivity of Buriti race.... [the music is recited] You can not live without the festivities. They are yours, your joyousness and happiness. The waradzu have nothing. They only play soccer. You are beautiful during the Buriti feast, sharing joy among yourselves.... Go and teach them the Buriti song. You must obey otherwise I won't visit you again.
>
> He came and talked to me like that. I abide by his bidding. Then, I urged the men to pile the buriti.

It is clear then that Christian symbols and images are used to Shavante own advantages, since the Christians would not be interested, of course, in the preservation of Indian traditions. Jesus, the son of Dapatowa, reinforces Indian customs while denigrating White ones. He guides the Shavante to not abandon their traditions, just like wamari used to do in the past. In a pragmatic sense, God and Jesus become new characters in dream/myth narratives, yet their roles have not changed: they continue to guide the Shavante on the right path into the future.

However, the future does not fit so easily into the framework of Shavante adaptive responses and persistence as a distinctive group.

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[14]Buriti is a kind of palm tree. The Shavante run with stumps of buriti as part of the festivity called "corrida de buriti" (the buriti race).

Their future as an ethnic group within Brazilian society will depend not only on their internal cultural dynamism but largely on external factors as well. In order to suggest some scenarios, I will examine these two internal and external factors separately.

From an internal perspective, the process of Shavante ethnic transformation and maintenance can be thought of as a dynamic equilibrium in the interaction between factional and unifying forces. This is related to what David Maybury Lewis explains as "... a delicate balance of power and of interests"(213). Similarly, Graham (1993) refers to this as "....a tension between individualism and factional identity" (725).

This tension is due to the Shavante political system which is characterized by strong factionalism, a strong cultural mark present in Shavante life that splits the community into clans, lineages, and factions. In Maybury Lewis's words, "Shavante regard fellow clansmen as somehow "my people", as opposed to non-clansmen, who are 'others'." Clans, lineages, and factions display distinct characteristics and functions, each holds its own norms of interaction within the community. In few words,

> A faction consists of a lineage and its supporters, who may be other lineages of the same
> clan, other individuals, or even lineages of another clan. The dominant faction is of course the chief's faction and it may be referred to in conversation by the name of the chief's lineage. (Maybury Lewis, 1967: p.169)

Factionalism seems to be part of all matters in Shavante life, Maybury Lewis says, and it lies behind men's struggle for prestige, power, and authority. It is part of the scheme of things, in terms of which people regulate their behavior and order their conceptual categories. The factions are in perpetual competition for power and prestige and the ultimate prize of the chieftaincy (190).

In fact chieftaincy, faction, prestige, and power are states and terms that are closely interrelated. "A chief is recognized as such so long as he is the head of a strong faction." (190). Chieftaincy requires prestige, the latter can only be pursued in practical terms if the candidate

belongs to a strong faction. Shavante factionalism, writes Maybury Lewis, "... can thus be seen as competition for leadership, with the position of he'a [chief] as the prize. It is a competition in which all the adult men are involved whether they like it or not" (213).The power of a chief is the power of his faction, and prestige is the necessary condition for him to gain recognized authority (198).

Yet, Shavante authority is not an easy term to grasp. It would be closely associated, when compared to our western political system, to one of charismatic authority—a type of authority based on the unique and remarkable qualities of the leader (Robertson, 1987:656).

For the Shavante these qualities, according to Maybury Lewis, are: "... self-assertiveness, oratorical skills, athletic prowess and ceremonial expertise"(198). These are qualities that by and large go together and are the prerequisites for prestige. A Shavante chief is in a sense an individual who, once he has achieved prestige, is more likely to influence public opinion than to issue orders. "A man cannot aspire to the chieftance unless he has prestige and once he has achieved that status he can only function as a chief through the exercise of prestige" (198).

Factionalism and prestige are expressed in the context of one of the Shavante strongest traditions—the *War*, a political gathering of the men, which is held everyday at the center of the village. Laura Graham, another anthropologist who worked with Shavante groups, describes extensively the Shavante construction of discourse in the context of the*War*. During the ceremony each participant articulates "his" views in a collective manner, paraphrasing other interlocutor's ideas who preceded his talk. In Graham words,

> Much of what an orator says is explicitly that of another speaking self; War discourse is formally represented so as *not* to be construed as the product of individually ratiocinating speakers. In fact, rather than conforming to a Western speech act teleology of discourse, a perspective that posits a one-to-one set of correspondences between an *individual* speaker and discourse, war discursive practice represents discourse as a collage of multiple articulating voices. It pragmatically illustrates the emergent

> intersubjectivity inherent in any discursive interaction. In the Shavante model, truth is not a universal standard against which individual statements can be measured; truth can be contested, as it is constructed from many voices (719)

By comparing Western thinking in terms of political theory and democracy with the Shavante political activities, Graham explores issues such as individuality, group behavior, and sense of self. These concepts are interrelated to the discussion on the relationship between dialogical pattern of discourse and identity.

The Shavante's sense of self in the context of War meetings is not one of a personalized self aimed at competing with others's personalized selves as in a western oriented decision making process; rather, decisions are outcomes of multiple articulating voices, a sort of collective self production. As Graham put it,

> The Xavante organize discourse to be the product of multiple selves in the form of multiple voices. Rather than representing discourse as inherently bound to individual subjectivities and individual processes of rational thought,... Xavante represent discourse as an extra-individual phenomenon, a collective production of multiple voices (717).

We may better grasp the Shavante discursive practices and behavior by examining a number of socio-linguistic concepts such as *language function, language use*, and *communicative competence*. In a few words: "When you learn to use a language, you learn how to use it in order to do certain things that people do with that language"(Wardhaugh,1988: p. 241).

In the context of the War discoursive practices, then, language use assumes an interrelational/dialogical perspective, as we have already seen. In symbolic terms, as Graham synthesizes, "Language lies on the border between oneself and the other. The word in language is half someone else's" (in Graham, 1993:719). But when we consider language use, along with communicative competence and the different

functions of language, we are forced to elaborate discursive practices and behavior from a perspective that extends to the Shavante social organization at a large.

The concept of communicative competence varies, but for the purpose of our discussion it is enough to understand that communicative competence is more than simply mastering a language repertoire of roles—linguistic competence. In Gumperz words:

> Whereas linguistic competence covers the speakers's ability to produce grammatically correct sentences, communicative competence describes his ability to select, from the totality of grammatically correct expressions available to him, forms which appropriately reflect the social norms governing behavior in specific encounters (in Wardhaugh: p. 241)

At War meetings the social norms that govern speakers' performance are mainly associated with the role to serve as a "representative of a group rather than of his individual rationalizing self.... Thus, when a man addresses the men's council [War] his *factional identity* takes priority over his individual self" (Graham, 1993:726-725, the italic is mine). But between the Shavante factional identity and individual self lie a number of motivations and reasons for the men to demonstrate communicative competence in this particular way. These are associated, as seen earlier, with men gaining power, authority, and prestige, which involves self-assertiveness and oratorical skills.

Factionalism as a driving social force finds its expression in the context of other important Shavante events outside of the War meeting—an event restricted to the mature men. To have a say at the men's council a Shavante has to mature first, and to achieve his maturity the young Shavante has to perform an extensive ritual in which the whole tribe participates in some way—including the women. Part of the ceremony may be thought of as a form of hostility to women in the form of rape. Rape symbolizes the power relationship between Shavante men and women as an ultimate expressions of factionalism. Ceremonial rape is then part of an extensive men's initialization rite

called Wai'a, in David Maybury Lewis words: "A communication of power to the initiated men"(Maybury Lewis, 1967: p. 266).

The *Wai'*a is the most important event in the Shavante ceremonial life. For the young Shavante it is a time when he become a mature man, assumes new duties and gains some privileges as well. The ceremonial rape of women, Maybury Lewis says, is a necessary step for the young Shavante to gain power and to achieve his manhood. *Bellicosity* is the most important symbolic element in the ritual, as an expression of manhood (265). Given the constant threat from outsiders, he continues, the men need to control women in order to communicate these female powers toward themselves and gain bellicosity. The author associates bellicosity with Shavante factionalism and hostility toward outsiders. He notes that there is a strong correlation between ceremonial hostility towards women and strong factionalism. Among societies with severe factionalism, he says, "the Kaiapo have a ceremonial rape similar to the Shavante rite and the Sherente men's societies would ritually threaten the women's society and mime the killing of a woman"(306).

The author also noted that this ritual expression of aggression towards women is not confined to the ritual context. It applies to all the possible divisions in the community. In Maybury Lewis words, [It is]...the characteristic mode of relationship between men of a community and outsiders not of the same community. It seems also to be the characteristic mode of relationship between men of each faction within a community and those of other factions(307).

Overall, gender relations and political factionalism are expressions of *dualism,* a strong cultural characteristic manifested in all G- societies. [15] Dualism is pervasive in Shavante thought and behavior. Dual forces are manifested in the form of group factionalism, whether by gender, moiety pairs, or political factions.

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[15] It is important to say that although gender issues were presented here mainly with the purpose of complementing the analysis concerning factionalism, it would be more effective if we could integrate them into the overall discussion of this paper. As probative questions, for example: what role do the women play in Shavante cultural/social life that we could draw from the study of dreams, myths and discursive patterns of narrative and discourse. Do they also have dreams that are important for the community? Can we regard the fact that Shavante woman have no direct voice in the Shavante "public sphere", as a form of gender domination as well as a rupture with egalitarian mode of think? Unfortunately, much of the material for this paper are from a time when women's studies were incipient (as it is still) to influence other fields of academic research. As a consequence, the gaps in this dissertation may leave the reader with the impression that we only know half of the "story"—which I agree is true.

In short, the analysis above on Shavante factionalism showed us the strong relationship between individual subjectivity and sense of collectivity. As Laura Graham puts it, While the men's council [War] offers a forum for the open discussion of conflicting viewpoints, the speech conventions themselves pull the members of different factions together" (725)

Conversely, if the Shavante make use of language in a *depersonalized* speech fashion—which surely serves to hold the community together—he is also compelled to do so in such a way (communicative competence) so as to gain a position for himself in the community—which is certainly a personal matter.

Speech conventions and political patterns of public discourse at war are important cultural markers that create unity in Shavante villages; yet, they are not the only markers. The importance for the Shavante, that individual construction of personhood be expressed in such a way as to promote group cohesiveness, becomes more apparent with aging and maturity.

As noted before, in early political life all the young men strive for leadership with the position of chieftaincy as the prize. The factional identity of the young Shavante, in their desire to obtain prestige and status, takes priority over all other forms of group identification. However, once a leader has become a chief, his loyalty and behavior shift away from inter-faction hostilities to function as a representative of the community at a large. Talking about the position of the chief, Maybury Lewis writes:

> Normally the chief, so far from acting simply as the leader of a dominant faction... functions as a focus for the entire community. [The chief] is its mouthpiece, and he tries, in his summings-up in the men's council, to put the general consensus of opinion rather than the views of any particular group. He is the representative of the community (Maybury Lewis, 1967: p.201)

The chief is then a mature man, who acts on behalf of the community as a whole and officiates at daily tasks of both political and ceremonial life. Regarding this shift in behavior, it is interesting to

contrast the previously described qualities associated with leadership with those of chieftaincy. "Self-assertiveness, oratorical skills, athletic prowess and ceremonial expertise" are the virtues expected for the young Shavante leader (198). For a good chief the qualities are: "Capacity to show tolerance and wisdom, to act as peacemaker and to drown discord in a flood of oratory" (203-204). Maybury Lewis completes: "[The chief] should speak well, i.e., give good advice, which means advice to which people will listen" (ibid.).

Moreover, these changes in the nature of political behavior, which can be associated with the individual process of maturation and aging, have direct implications in the structure of Shavante political organization and the integrity of the group as a whole. Full exercise of chieftaincy would not be attained without the charisma and assistance of the elders. As Maybury Lewis explains, all the elders "... advise [the chief] on the details of any ceremony he has to perform even while he is actually performing it"(201). The relationship between elders and chiefs play an important role in terms of the integrity of the community at a large since the "...[chief] most important ceremonial functions are those in which he acts as the embodiment of his community" (ibid.).

On an individual level some elders have a further special duty. Those are the *wamaritede'wa:* the dream owner. The special prestige that *Wamaritede'wa* have as official dreamer, visionary, and storyteller, play a great role in the formation and maintenance of Shavante ethnic identity since they are the ones who influence what memories are worth preserving and sharing in the community. As seen earlier, mythic narrative as a belief system stands as a model for ethnic representation and maintenance. Myths, as Warren (1978) observed, are continually rephrased through the realities of the present. *Wamaritede'was* thus plays a role in the formation and reformulation of one's Shavante self-representation by perpetuating relevant images from the past and recreating them into the present through mythic discourse.

Furthermore, as the Brazilian anthropologist Cláudia Menezes observed, *Wamaritede'wa* also plays a role in ceremonial leadership functioning as a conciliator in the village' conflict-resolution process. Their duty, she says, is to unify the village. Contrasting the *wamaritede'wa's* role as ceremonial leader with those of political leaders, Menezes explains, Since it is their role to unify the village,

wamaritede'wa's qualities correspond to an ideal of harmony and peace in contrast with those of political leadership based on bellicosity and courage, typical of the warrior nature (Menezes, 1984:388). In addition, the author continues, wamaritede'wa "... must pursue good oratorical skills so as to persuade litigants to conform with the rules and traditions" (389). It is unnecessary to say that wamaritede'was have active participation and "voice" at the war political gathering.

Here we see how dualistic expressions from different levels of Shavante culture and social organization fit together in maintaining the dynamic of Shavante ethnicity and group cohesiveness. Whereas factional forces (in gender, moiety pairs, or political behavior) and young leadership confer dynamism, patterns of public discourse, chieftaincy, elder leadership, and ceremonial and mystic life counteract factionalism to maintain unity. The continuity of the Shavante society as an ethnic group depends on maintaining this balance between these two integrative parts. The strengthening of one part at the expense of the other can be conducive to internal instability with disruptive effects to the group. Such instability is likely to occur in different levels.

At the group level, if factional behavior goes beyond acceptable limits, the community may be struck by continual splits. This problem was raised by the Brazilian anthropologist Aracy L. da Silva while explaining the possible disruptive effects of successive proliferation of new villages during the 1970's. At that time, a surge of new subgroups emerged from original communities in parallel to the launching of new young leaders into the political life; each new village was aligned to the political faction of the leader. The author says,

> The rapid increase in the number of villages into small agglomerates with not enough population to maintain some social activities can lead to a rupture of the basic organizational principle, typicall of G societies like the Shavante (Lopes da Silva, 1986: p.378).

The rupture of this basic principle, which is centered on the notion that the "village contains the universe", corresponds, in another word, to the rupture of the unity of the community at a large (ibid.).

Conversely, if the Shavante societies lack the political dynamism

of their young, much will be lost in terms of the community's self-defense as an ethnic group, with similar disruptive consequences for the group. As outlined earlier, under the impact of Brazilian society, the Shavante have been able to reorganize and reconstitute themselves as a people by using a number of mechanisms where the young play central role. They are sent from their villages to the cities to learn valuable knowledge such as the language, methods, and the culture of the Brazilians. Such knowledge provides Shavante groups with the basis for effective participation in Brazilian national institutions helping them to defend their interests. This dynamic nature in Shavante culture is indeed what is needed if we are to encourage Indigenous groups to participate and play their roles in modern society.

Disequilibrium between factional and unifying forces, as a potential factor in group instability can also be analysed from an individual level perspective. This is the case when excessive pride in individual factional leadership leads the young Shavante to further involvement into the country's political life. The results can be the abandoning of an Indian tribal commitment due to his increasing association with Brazilian political parties. This seems to be the case of the Shavante leader Mário Juruna.[16] As the first Indian ever elected federal deputy, Juruna soon become famous not only in Brazil but in the world over. However, Juruna's increasing projection in the country's political arena has made him vulnerable to manipulation and unfavorable influences. In fact, as time passed by, he wound up being absorbed by the Brazilian politics, being discredited even by his own tribal fellowmen.[17] This is then an example of when internal characteristics of Shavante political behavior, under the influence of western based political formulae, can be conducive to group disintegration. If situations like that continue to occur, involving an increasing number of young Shavantes, this will certainly generate internal instability to the entire community.

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[16]Mário Juruna, ran for Federal deputy for the second time after being successfully elected in 1982 under PDT. Juruna became the first Indian who ever entered the Brazilian congress as federal deputy (CEDI Report 1985/86:16-18).

[17]The arguments that I used to explain Juruna's behavior cannot be categorically affirmed, though. These are my suggestions in character speculative. Definitive conclusions would demand further investigation.

To counter-act such a threat born from individualistic pride, no other individual in Shavante society may be more important than the wamaritede'wa, the "dream owner". As mentioned earlier, the wamaritede'wa plays a pivotal role in the community by reviving to the youth the group past and origin, as well as reinforcing through dream and mythic narratives certain lessons of the Shavante mystic relationship with their history, nature, and cosmos. [18]

II. A Common Future: Inter-Cultural Dialogue?

> We, the autochthonous peoples of this continent, call ourselves "INDIANS" because for centuries we were subjugated under this name and it is with this name that we will liberate ourselves. TO BE INDIAN is our pride and INDIANISM protects the Indian as author and protagonist of his own destiny. For this reason it is our flag of struggle and our slogan of continental liberation. [19]

To further suggest possible scenarios and complete my analysis I now turn to some considerations from a perspective external to Shavante culture. I want to start by considering the turning point in the politics which brought worldwide changes in the treatment of Indigenous issues.

With the growing number of international forums and conventions aimed at supporting Indigenous peoples around the world, *Indigenous identity* become an important issue. Indians, with the help of international non-governmental organizations(NGOÕs) that provide them with expertise, began to seek understanding of human rights standards to fully participate in the creation of official documents and to assert Indian identity accordingly to the new indigenous rights

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[18] As Aracy (1982) notes, only the important events of the Shavante past are manifested in the form of myths and perpetuated over generations through the voices of their elders. As a storyteller, the Wamaritede'wa alternate myths and dreams in his narratives. This is because the Shavante make no distinction between myths, legends, tales, or dreams. The dreams of Wamaritede'wa also carry many myths and his myths are full of dreams as well. (Giaccaria and Heide, 1975: 8 ; Medeiros, 1991:13, see note 2).

[19] Statement made at the "First Congress of Indian Movements of South America", March, 1980.

legislation. The United Nations Draft Declaration on the rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDD) is a case in point[20] . Among its goals, the declaration deals with the scope and meaning of terms and words such as Indigenous peoples, lands and territory, as well as their implications for collective and individual rights (*Technical Review* UNDD, 1994: p. 04).[21] However, despite the distinctive efforts made at reviewing the UNDD, as Robert T. Coulter noted in his evaluation of the draft, problems may arise in the establishment of a Convention on Indigenous rights based upon the declaration (Counter, 1994: p.37). Such a Convention—a sort of provision for implementation and enforcement—should stand in accordance with the Draft's basic principles. Part of the problem, Coulter says, is that, Ò... What the declaration really says and what it will mean in practice are not well understood, even by many of those actively involved in developing it (37-38).

As far as identity is concerned, the draft declaration, to avoid problems of discrimination against Indians, has adopted no official definition of Indigenous peoples. Instead, according to the official text, this concept "... shall be regarded as in continuing process of evolution and refinement"(*Technical Review* UNDD, 1994:p. 07). Indeed, "Indigenous people" as a widely accepted category can unite different groups and generate indigenous consciousness but such a large category is too broad or weak as a self-identification of each of these ethnic local groups. Each Indian community has a particular way of conceiving themselves, each has unique historical experiences and traditions that exist and are maintained by means of distinct classification systems. In other words, each displays its own set of characteristics and must be

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20 Other conventions include: Vienna's Program of Actions Declaration, Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention (Convention 169 of the International Labor Organization), and the European Parliament resolutions, aimed at the elaboration and implementation of international laws concerning the environment and the rights of Indigenous peoples. The United Nations, recognizing the distinctive contributions made at these Forums and calling attention to the need to elaborate strategies to implement the provisions and resolutions established there, decided in General Assembly of February, 1994, to proclaim the " International Decade of the Indigenous Populations", to begin by December 12, 1994. Among its goals, the Decade statement focuses on the need to establish practical programs associated with Indigenous communities and the importance of promoting International awareness and knowledge about the difficulties and struggles facing Indigenous peoples around the world.

21 Information obtained via electronic computer network, INTERNET(see bibliography)

studied separately. The identity of "Indian" that distinguishes the native individual from the "white" rests upon the regional, ethnic identity, defined in terms of his or her group of origin and the particular historical context of contact with the "whites". It is only when the distinct historical and cultural heritage of a given group is taken into account that Indigenous identity and claims can serve as viable basis for the implementation of any sort of Indigenous rights.

Moreover, we may be aware that international conventions and forums alone will not guarantee effective governmental actions in defense of Indian peoples. The struggle faced by Shavante groups due to the contact with Brazilian society can be largely associated with wide set of economic interests. Indigenous policies and ideologies reflect the economic expansion of the country and its diplomatic relations. Thus, provisions and rights in support of Indian peoples will be hardly implemented without changes in the Brazilian overall economy and politics. For instance, violence over land-related issues is likely to continue unless drastic changes in land distribution and serious commitments are made to implement agrarian reforms. Recent statistics show that 70% of Brazilian farmers are landless and 81% of the farmland is held by only 4.5% of the population (Moran, 1993). These numbers themselves explain why violence is the usual outcome of a process of access to resources.

The future of Indians such as the Shavante as ethnic groups in Brazilian society requires a great deal of responsibility and political will on the part of "Whites" to change this overall picture. Considering the different population rates between the two societies, the responsibility of Brazilians shall be regarded as proportionally big as their population, greatly outnumbering that of Indians. It is certainly our responsibility to provide the means through which Indians would redefine their realities and truly play their roles in modern world according to their own values and beliefs.

We may perhaps accept the fact that a progressive world can move forward without the Indian input into the process; yet, it is only auspicious that progress can be a joint undertaking. If institutional support and Indigenist policies pay enough attention to the cultural dimension of the interethnic contact between Indians and Whites they would be able to recognize the richness and complexities of culture

such as that of the Shavante; this would greatly benefit both groups in terms of promoting a genuine exchange of values, meanings and knowledge. Part of this knowledge shall be the recognition that we—whites—have much to learn from each particular Indian society. It is not a surprise to learn that Maybury Lewis, an Englishman, after a lifelong relationship with the Shavante (which resulted in the first extensive ethnographic knowledge about this people), has categorically affirmed that: ... all the peoples of the world can learn from one another, that there are other ways of living, and they have a dignity and integrity of their own." (in Los Angeles Times, May 7, 1992) [22]

Dignity and integrity are indeed the strongest markers in Shavante identity. These markers, as if charting their movements, responses, and manifestations, have been present throughout their history. It is not without reason that Shavantes have been depicted as proud Indians with a strong personality, a personality that, for many researchers whom I have interviewed, is characterized by enduring qualities of discipline, courage, aggressiveness, friendship, generosity, and loyalty. The words of Ana Maria da Paixão (Ana Paixão), a researcher at Museu do Indio, Brazil, are perhaps those which best portray these personality traits of the Shavante. At the end of our conversation, she said:

> I am now living in Rio and working in this Museum, and haven't had much opportunities to contact them again. But the experiences I had, in closeness with their actions and words are still alive in my memories. These remembrances are now part of the past but it comes to life when I just pronounce their names, as I talk now. If you get to know them you will see that Shavantes will never forget you, as well as your words. They remember everything I ever promised to them. And in fact they strive and fight with me for the little things I once promised to them and couldn't accomplish. They are just like that, as deep to love as they are to fight. I greatly enjoyed the time I spent with them. I just can't forget them, and the impressions they have caused in my soul.[23]

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[22]Information obtained via electronic computer network, INTERNET.(see bibliography)

[23]Personal interview realized in Jan 1995 at Museu do Indio, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

It is providential to say that the recollections of Ana Paixão carry much of the dynamic of the wamaritede'wa Jeronimo words in mythic oral narratives, especially when digressions[24] occur, as to remind the Brazilians (waradzu) not to disregard the Shavante again. I will let Jeronimo tell about himself and the Shavante:

> Don't say to the Shavante they are bad people. We fought for our grand-parents and grand-mothers, we did not start destruction but the waradzu did. Now we start liking you. We start enjoying being with you, wanting good things for you for we have gone into your environment now. Be glad with us. When you see us along the roads, stop and give us a lift. If you don't, I'll destroy the car, crack it into two pieces right away.[25]

It seems that these polar emotional expressions evoked in the wamaritede'wa narrative reflect much of the Indian historical resentment against the Whites, and yet their willingness to understand and accept the waradzu and be accepted by them as well. If our western modern thought is to adopt progressive models such as the idea of a pluralistic multi-ethnic society, there will be much hope that individuals such as the wamaritede'wa would have not only the chance to tell their "stories" but to continue to exist and find "their place" in an civilized world. This place should be one of dignity and respect so that westerners and Indians would cross cultural boundaries learning about each other's "stories."

I have come to believe, after this study, that it is certainly important for the Shavante to know other people's "stories" as well as to keep their own "stories" alive. Keeping their stories alive means recounting oral narratives to future potential storytellers, the wamaritede'was. By retelling myths and dreams, Shavantes remake their own history and identity, linking time and place to the sacred. I will let Jeronimo Tsawe complete my words:

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24 Digression characterizes the non-linearity of an Indian narrative; it also indicates certain traits in Indian identity that are "brought" from their historical memory into the contemporary context. (In consultation with Rodolfo Franconi, one of my thesis advisor).

25 Adapted and translated from Giaccaria and Heide's book: "Jeronimo Xavante Sonha", 1975:52-53.

I am Jer™nimo, the one who is now speaking.
I am speaking to you these words. You should listen....
I am Jer™nimo, I do not live reclusively. I live everywhere, in every part of this world.
And also in the heaven with the Father, I meet with Him. You must remember my words.[26]

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[26] Id., Ibid.,:53-54

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