# Warfare and Shamanism in Amazonia

*Warfare and Shamanism in Amazonia* is an ethnographic study of the Parakanã, a little-known indigenous people of Amazonia, who inhabit the Xingu-Tocantins interfluvial region in the state of Pará, Brazil. This book analyzes the relationship between warfare and shamanism in Parakanã society from the late nineteenth century until the end of the twentieth century. Based on the author's extensive fieldwork, the book presents first-hand ethnographic data collected among a generation still deeply involved in conflicts. The result is an innovative work with a broad thematic and comparative scope.

Carlos Fausto is Associate Professor of Anthropology at the Museu Nacional, Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro. Fausto has been conducting fieldwork among Amazonian indigenous peoples since 1988. His articles have appeared in the *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute, Current Anthropology, American Ethnologist, Religion and Society, Science, Mana, L'Homme, Gradhiva*, and *Journal de la Société des Américanistes*. He co-edited *Time and Memory in Indigenous Amazonia* (2007) with Michael Heckenberger. He directed a number of documentary films in collaboration with the Kuikuro people, including the feature film *The Hyper Women*.

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CARLOS FAUSTO

*Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro*

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*to my father and my mother*
*to Iatora, Arakytá e Pi'awa.*
*eipo pejawareté*
*here's your true jaguar*


Location of indigenous peoples

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# Foreword to the English Edition

Published originally in Portuguese in 2001, this book was awarded the José Honório Rodrigues Prize for the best book in Social Sciences of that year, a distinction conferred by the Brazilian Association of Graduate Programs in Social Sciences (ANPOCS). Since then it has followed its natural course as an autonomous object. And so have I. Over the years I further elaborated some of the ideas contained in the book and also moved into new areas of research. When I finally decided it was time to stop, rewrite, shorten, and translate the text, choices had to be made. I opted to preserve as much ethnographic data as possible and drop the lengthier comparative and theoretical digressions. I tried to ensure that all my claims were entwined with the data, not only because this is my idea of what anthropology is about, but also because I feel that, twenty years after my first arrival at a Parakanã village, the data I gathered amounts to invaluable oral testimonies given to me by old, and now dead, people. I talked to and interviewed the last Parakanã generation deeply involved in indigenous warfare. I heard their histories, shared some of their feelings, and walked with them in the forest. This book is a part of what they told me, one that I struggled for years to understand both anthropologically and humanly.

Although primarily focused on warfare and shamanism, the book's argument is constructed within the general framework of Parakanã social life and history. Its historical period spans from the end of the nineteenth century until the end of the twentieth century, and its ethnographic period is from 1988 to 1999. I intended this book to be quite innovative, both in theoretical terms and within the context of Amazonian ethnology. My aim was to integrate a historical approach with a structural one. Being formed in a structuralist school and informed by a family academic background in history, I rapidly plunged myself into the intellectual climate of the 1980s and 1990s. My ethnography of the Parakanã clearly spells these issues out through its own mode of presentation, especially in the way historical data is enmeshed with long-term sociocultural forms. Through a detailed analysis of particular events sensible both to the hazards of experience and the resilience of culture, I intended to intervene in what we all saw at the time

as an overly simplified dichotomy between structure and social action – a topic to which I came back in subsequent publications (Fausto 2002a; 2002b, Fausto 2007b; Fausto & Heckenberger 2007).

I also wanted to intervene in two issues important for Amazonian anthropology at the time. The first was the opposition between materialistic and symbolic approaches to culture, the former mainly represented by ecofunctionalism, and the latter by both French structuralism and American culturalism. The second issue was the different emphasis given to the inside and outside by ethnographers describing Amerindian social life. This dichotomy was closely interconnected with a number of others, such as consanguinity versus affinity, production versus exchange, sharing versus reciprocity, conviviality versus predation, and so on. In the book, I intended to surpass these oppositions through a model of how external and internal relations were articulated in shamanism and warfare. In rethinking these dualisms, I proposed a general model for understanding both Amazonian warfare and shamanism, based on the idea of a conversion of predation into familiarization – a central point of this work to which I also returned later at various times (Fausto 2004, 2007a, 2008, in press).

I treated Parakanã and other Amazonian warfare rituals as the apex of this conversion of a predatory relationship into a productive one, as the most public and collective moment for the production of persons and peoples. In the book, the analysis of rituals served the ends of the model, but it also contained data that has recently assisted me in thinking about ritual in its own right, particularly through the investigation of its form and pragmatics among the Kuikuro of the Upper Xingu, where I have now been working for more than ten years (Fausto 2011a, Fausto, Franchetto and Montagnani 2011, Fausto and Penoni in press).

The book did not focus on the transformations in course during those voracious years of the end of the twentieth century. In the space of a decade, the Parakanã and I watched 500 years of Brazilian history reenacted in front of our hearts and minds, as the region passed from isolation to lumbering and gold mining, from cattle ranches to colonization, from migration to urban expansion. I left before the advent of the brave new world of technology, a world in which I would deeply immerse myself in another setting (Fausto 2011b).

A final note on the English version: I restricted the bibliography to the texts I had actually handled during the writing of the original book. Some of the theses to which I refer here were later published in a modified form, but I have kept the earlier reference.

Last, but not least, let me acknowledge two friends without whom this book would never have come to life. I would have become lost in translation had it not been for David Rodgers, a fellow anthropologist who, as a translator, has both a fine sense of what a style means for an author,

and a deep understanding of the dilemmas involved in the translation of concepts that are already translations of others' concepts. I would also have become lost (in different ways) had it not been for Herb Klein, who since I met him many years ago in his self-inflicted exile in Washington DC, has given me more advice than I shall ever be able to reciprocate.