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Circulating Shuar *Tsantsa*: Decolonizing Material Culture,
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“[...] let us dream, my soul, let's dream again! But this time we will face full recognition of the fact that we may waken from this sleep at any hour and be brought back.”

(Pedro Calderón de la Barca – *La Vida es Sueño*)

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1. INTRODUCTION

This thesis investigates the transnational circulation of *tsantsa*¹ or “shrunk heads” of the Ecuadorian Shuar. The ethnographic research deals with the decolonization of material culture, indigenous identity and globalization. The investigation focuses on indigenous artifacts, in the field of the tension between indigenous self-perception, their cultural meaning as ritual objects, and the significant shift into commodified Western display objects, and collectibles, which are acquired, trafficked, collected, and are being presented in the public sphere.

I explore the representation of *tsantsa* in museums, auctions and in its indigenous context. Researched will be the individual and institutional dealings regarding the objects, focusing on cultural, political and ethical considerations.

1.1. Problem

In autumn of 2017 two Shuar shrunk heads were offered for sale by the Viennese Dorotheum in an auction for “tribal art” ([URL Dorotheum 1/2](#)).

At the same time Weltmuseum Wien was criticized for displaying a ceremonial (trophy) head of the Brazilian Munduruku in its permanent South America exhibition ([URL Weltmuseum](#)). African “human rights speaker” Faika El-Nagashi and member of the Austrian Green Party castigated in media the auction at Dorotheum as a “transgression of limits” ([URL OTS](#)).

Before the auction at Dorotheum has begun, former Weltmuseum director Steven Engelsman held a talk at the auction house. He talked about the opening of the new Weltmuseum Wien and presented its new concept. Engelsman was amazed by the design of the display case, in which the discussed Munduruku “ceremonial head” is exhibited. The object is positioned in a showcase amidst feathers and arrows at the Weltmuseum’s South America exhibition. In contrast to Engelsman, Viennese social-anthropologist Thomas Fillitz perceived the display of the Munduruku object simply as “unethical” ([URL ORF](#)). Right before the auction has even started, public pressure caused the Dorotheum to withdraw the items from sale ([URL Der Standard](#); [URL Kurier](#)).

Two human and one sloth *tsantsa*, additionally decorated trophy heads of Papua

¹ In the course of this paper I will use the term *tsantsa* in singular and plural, because the hispanic usage of *tsantsas* in the plural form, is traditionally not used by Shuar.

New Guinea are on exhibit at the museum Haus der Natur in Salzburg. The objects were publically not criticized nor noticed, as the objects were in Vienna.

Some voices say that the public presentation of trophy heads and displaying “human remains” would disturb the peace of the dead. Others speak of a “colonial staging” in this context (URL Die Presse).

The two described cases in Vienna provoked a controversy in the public sphere. The incident opened up a discourse about coloniality. The discussion revolved around the topic, whether dead bodies, human remains or so-called “sensible” things and looted artifacts, should be exhibited in museums, and sold on the art market (URL Parliament Austria). Similar cases, as the above described cases also exist internationally, like examples from the United Kingdom (see URL Telegraph) and (URL Cherwell), as well from Spain (URL El Pais) illustrate.

During the past, but also today Shuar have been imagined as the exoticized cultural “Other”. They are represented stereotypically in museums, in catalogues of auction houses, in media, such as on the Internet or in movies, but also in literature. These exoticizing characterizations of the “savage” Amazonian Indians as untamable warrior-like groups, who take the heads of their dead enemies as war trophies, have been imprinted in Western minds as fixed mental images. Described imageries of the Amazonian Indian are still circulating in collective Western imaginations and are projected on indigenous artifacts, like in the case of *tsantsa*.

Cultural appropriation and commodification of indigenous material culture result in a semantic shift, but also in an valuation of former indigenous objects. When integrated into transnational networks, like into the “art-culture system” (Clifford 1988) and as a result being displayed in museums or sold in auction houses, such artifacts are also transformed into different object categories through interpretation within different contexts.

1.2. Objective and Central Questions

The objective of this study is to analyze the various meanings and values, attached to circulating Shuar trophy heads within different cultural, and political contexts. The goal is to understand and to decolonize individual, and institutional dealings regarding indigenous material culture. As part of an international postcolonial

discourse, *tsantsa* are used by Western institutions to “represent” the culture of Shuar as an unsophisticated whole, such as in the case of museums and auction houses, both being part of the “art-culture system” (Clifford 1988). During this appropriation process the objects in discussion are “displaced” and disposed of their original function (Rubenstein 2007). He thinks that the object’s displacement of their former meaning “[...] also effected a reversal of the original economy in which head-hunting occurred. Whereas Shuar subordinated accumulation to circulation, museum collections reflect the capitalist subordination of circulation to accumulation” (Rubenstein 2007:360). In a globalized world it is therefore necessary and also the central goal of this investigation, to discuss the decolonization of indigenous artifacts, and to deconstruct attached stereotypical indigenous identities. Especially the colonially characterized image of the “exotic Amazonian Indian” (Kapferer/Theodossopoulos 2016) and “hyperreal Indian” (Ramos 1994) as naturalized subaltern ‘primitive’ “Other” (Bhaba 1983; Hall 1997), need to be addressed. Therefore the central question in this ethnographic research is the following:

- How can transnationally circulating tsantsa be decolonized, as being part of a global economy?

General questions relating to the international **art world** and **art market** include:

- *How are tsantsa commodified by the art-culture system?*
- *How are they appropriated and recontextualized by the global art worlds and on art markets?*
- *What sorts of values are ascribed to the objects of interest?*

Question, relating to the **auction house** Dorotheum are the following:

- *How are tsantsa represented as authentic “tribal art” works on Dorotheum’s website?*
- *How does the auction house Dorotheum represent Shuar as a cultural group using written text and photographs?*
- *What identity is created/imagined for the Shuar through the presentation of tsantsa?*
- *How can we detect deception and manipulation on the objects?*
- *What criterias are used to increase the creation of value and price?*

- *How should we classify the displayed objects on the website?*

Questions in the context of **museum** Haus der Natur include:

- *How are tsantsa museally performed and represented?*
- *What story is told about the Shuar at museum Haus der Natur?*
- *How should indigenous artifacts be treated, in context of postcolonial demands of repatriation?*

Questions regarding the research in **Ecuador** are the following:

- *How are Shuar identities expressed through material culture in context of self-exoticizing performances?*
- *What role does tsantsa play for Shuar as being part of their cultural patrimony and -memory?*

1.3. Introducing the Fieldsites

This transnational research is multi-sited. Hence, the investigation was carried out on different locations as fieldsites connecting Austria with Ecuador. In Austria the main sites of investigation were (1) the auction house Dorotheum in Vienna and (2) the museum Haus der Natur (HdN) in Salzburg. In Ecuador (3) two Shuar communities were investigated, named *Tawásap* and *Kaapar*. Both sites are located in the southern part of Ecuador. In (chapter 5.) I will give a more detailed description of this investigation's fieldsites.

1.4. Structure of the Study

The first part of this thesis (chapter 1.) provides the reader with an introduction to the topic. Also the problem is defined, the objective, central questions and fieldsites are introduced. In (chapter 2.) the questions are raised: Who are Shuar-speakers and what is *tsantsa*? The next part (chapter 3.) discusses available literature, concerning *tsantsa*. The following part (chapter 4.) presents to the reader the theoretical background of this study. In (chapter 5.) the ethnographic field, methodological approach and used methods are introduced.

The empirical part (chapter 6.) discusses the findings and results of this investigation. The first section of this chapter engages in a general discussion regarding the "art-culture system", within the context of the international "art world" and "art market".

In the first part (section 6.1.) the Viennese auction house Dorotheum is investigated. I focus on the question: How are *tsantsa* presented online? I discuss the construction of the objects as curious artworks of “tribal art” (Dutton 1998) or “primitive art” (Price 1989; Phillips/Steiner 1999:7; Myers 2005), through their ascription of a “selected identity” (Geismar 2001:26). I argue, that the objects are commodified and take part on the international “art market” (Fillitz 2014), and in *financescapes* (Appadurai 1999). Part of the investigation focuses on the possibility of used manipulative strategies (Steiner 1994) or “deceptive intentions” (Dutton 2003) in context of constructing objects as “authentic” (Fillitz 2015), that are intended to raise the price in sale. In (section 6.2.) *tsantsa* are investigated as ethnographica, which are being traced through the museum Haus der Natur (HdN) in Salzburg. I concentrate on the way they are represented museally and exhibited in the form of “ethnographic objects”, by focusing on the concept of theatrical staging (Maure 1995). Exhibiting is looked at, as a cultural practice of performing indigenous artefacts. This is to be understood here, as “showing”, “displaying” or storing objects and “telling” (Grimes 2014) narratives about the cultural Other. I argue that these stories are performed through the objects’ “social agency” (Byrne 2011:6f.) and are also told by curators, to the museum’s visitor. In (section 6.3.) the linkage between emerging new Shuar identities and exoticism is presented, in context of community-based tourism. In an contemporary indigenous context *tsantsa* are studied as markers of Shuar’s cultural identity and -patrimony. Parts (section 6.4. & section 6.5.) present two Shuar communities, located near Puyo and Macas in Ecuador, which are investigated as ethnographic case studies. These two parts discuss how two Shuar communities perform “self-exoticization” (Kapferer/Theodossopoulos 2016:14) within touristic performances. I demonstrate, how the “hyperreal Indian” (Ramos 1994) is consciously reproduced within the process of negotiating indigenous identities. I argue that performing “self-exoticization” practices are used by Shuar stakeholders as a form of self-representation and counter-strategy, in order to fight exoticism, and stereotypical images regarding the Amazonian Indian. The last part (chapter 7.) discusses the findings of this investigation and gives an outlook.

Because this study focuses on material culture, globalization and indigenous identity, it is important to introduce the Shuar as a cultural group. Therefore the following chapter gives an introduction to Shuar culture and *tsantsa* in its indigenous context.

2. SHUAR AND TSANTSA

2.1. Ecuador's Geography and Indigenous Population

Ecuador is a nation-state, located in the northwest of the continent of South America. The border to Colombia is in the north of the country, Peru is in the south and east of Ecuador. The Ecuadorian nation is divided into four regions: (1) *la costa* (costal area), (2) *la sierra* (the Andean highlands), (3) *el oriente* (Amazon region) and (4) Galapagos Islands.

The current president Lenín Moreno was elected in 2017, after the presidency of Rafael Correa. The Ecuadorian constitution of 1998 declared the country as a pluricultural and multiethnic state (Art.1). In the year 2019 the Ecuadorian population consists of 17.285.282 millions Ecuadorians, according to Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Censos – INEC (URL INEC). Ecuador is ethnically very diverse. The largest ethnic group are *mestizos*, with around 71,9%, the indigenous population counts 7%, Afro-Ecuadorians make up around 7% and the white population 12% (see URL Worldpopulation Review).

In a census of 2010 around 6.8% of Ecuador's population self-identified as indigenous. Other non-state organizations, like the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador (CONAIE or La Confederación de Nacionalidades Indígenas del Ecuador) estimate 25% of the population to be indigenous (see URL Refworld). These diverse estimations regarding the indigenous demography leads to the conclusion, that indigenous peoples make up around 7% to 25% of Ecuador's total population.

Ecuador's indigenous ethnicities are designated as *naciones* (see Whitten 2003). There exist 13 different *nacionalidades indígenas* (indigenous nations) in Ecuador, including Tsáchila, Chachi, Epera, Awa, Quichua, Shuar, Achuar, Shiwiar, Cofán, Siona, Secoya, Zápara, Andoa, Waorani and Afro-Ecuadorians (URL INEC). The constitution of Ecuador officially recognizes indigenous languages as being part of the plurinational state (see constitution of Ecuador, Art. 1). Indigenous peoples in Ecuador are legally also awarded with indigenous rights (Larrea 2008:38, cited in Altmann 2014). Although this is theoretically the case, various indigenous groups in Ecuador and elsewhere fight for recognition of indigenous rights, public visibility, cultural sovereignty, and self-determination (see chapter 4.). *Indígenas* in Ecuador are also struggling with the government and fight transnational companies against

exploitation of natural resources on ancestral territories they inhabit, and also cultivate (see chapter 4.6. & section 6.3.1.).

Shuar or *unisuri šuara* (pejorative: *Jívaro* or *Jíbaro*)² are an indigenous group, living on the Andean foothills, also named *montaña*, located in the southeastern part of Ecuador and across the border region of northern Peru (see **FIG 1**).



FIG 1 Map of Ecuador's Administrative Divisions and Provinces **Source:**
<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/resources/cia-maps-publications/Ecuador.html>

² The hispanic label 'Jívaro' is often used pejoratively and is mostly associated with negative cultural traits, such as being 'wild' or 'uncivilized' (see Salazar 1977). Instead the term 'Shuar' is used in this paper, which is the proper indigenous term of self-designation (Salazar 1977:11).

Shuar in Ecuador live in the southern part of the *oriente*, including the provinces of Pastaza, Morona-Santiago and Zamora-Chinchipe. Shuar territory is not enclosed, but rather open due to their traditional nomadic lifestyle. They coexist as settlers with various other indigenous nationalities, who also inhabit above listed provinces.

There exist around 110.000 Shuar, which are divided into 668 communities, who live in Ecuador's and in Peru's rainforest, and who identify themselves in a census of 1998 as Shuar (Chiriap 2012:29; URL CONAIE).

Ethnolinguistically Shuar are part of the Jívaroan- or Chicham-language group, which consists of five "ethno-linguistic dialects" (URL FLASCO). These are divided into (1) Shuar, (2) Achuar, (3) Huambisa, (4) Awajun (Aguaruna) and (5) Mayna (see Harner 1972:14; Chiriap 2012:28). The term "shuar(a)" translates as "man" or "people" (ibid.).

2.2. Traditional Subsistence and Social Organization of Shuar

Shuar traditionally are semi-nomadic horticulturalists (see Karsten 2000 [1935]; Harner 1972), they cultivate fruits, mixed with the subsistence activities of fishing and hunting. Men go out fishing and hunting, they bring wood logs to the fire place, located in the house, and defend their homes from possible enemies. The women cultivate their gardens, rear the children, produce pottery, cook and brew beer (Harner 1972:78f.). The autonomous household is the smallest social unit of Jívaroan societies. Houses are not built to be permanent residences, they are scattered and located within a distance of a few hundred meters from the next ones (see Harner 1972:78). Polygyny is the norm for traditional Shuar and two wives are usually married to one man. Today the polygamous marriage is shifting towards monogamy and exogamy, and Shuar are also marrying interethnically (Chiriap 2012:29).

Shuar society is traditionally very individualistic and egalitarian, thus possessing no formal political authority. The only "specialised roles" (O'Driscoll 2015:81) for Shuar men, holding power are the following: *uunt* (big man or elders), *wea* (ceremonial leader), *kakáram* (strong man), *amik* (traders) and *uwíshin* (shaman) (see Hendricks 1988:219, cited in O'Driscoll 2015:82).

Nowadays many Shuar live in suburban areas due to processes of urbanization (see O'Driscoll 2015). Others have migrated to Quito, Ecuador's capital and to the U.S. or to Europe (Rubenstein 2004).

In order to understand the circulation of *tsantsa* and describing the “creator community” (Byrne 2011:7), the Shuar, it is obligatory to concentrate on the contact history of Jívaroan groups with the Spaniards. Also recent historical events in Ecuador are explained in the following section, which have affected indigenous groups, including Jívaroan groups, such as Shuar and Achuar. I will then focus on Shuar cosmology, spirituality and explain central concepts, regarding *tsantsa*. This contributes to generate a holistic picture, which is presented in the next part of this study.

2.3. Contact History with Europeans and Today’s Shuar

Although there exist no records about the Shuar’s history before the Spanish conquest in Ecuador, Jívaroan groups already inhabited the territories of the *oriente* and had contact with Andean societies, such as with the Inca (Harner 1972:16f.; Salazar 1977:12). The contact history between Shuar and Spanish *conquistadores* goes back to the sixteenth century. The first “[...] white penetration into Shuar territory took place in 1540, and was carried out by Rodrigo Núñez de Bonilla, by order of Francisco Pizarro” (see Salazar 1977:14).

Although Jívaroan groups were never colonized, trade relationships existed between the Spaniards and Shuar during the colonial era in Ecuador (see Karsten 2000 [1935]; Stirling 1938; Harner 1972; Rubenstein 2007). The inaccessible territory and the hostility of Jívaroan groups against foreign influence kept the Spanish *conquista* at bay. In 1599 the “Jívaro uprising” (Harner 1972; Sterling 1938:16f.) took place, because of the Spaniards increasing demand in tribute payments. After the uprising only sparse contact existed between Shuar and the Spaniards, which approximately lasted until 1850. Macas stayed “the only white settlement” on Shuar territory (Harner 1972:27). During the mid of the nineteenth century trading between “Macabeos” (settlers of European descent, living in Macas) and Jívaroan groups increased (Harner 1972:146). This trade-boom also lead to the exchange of *tsantsa* for weapons, like machetes, guns and axes (Karsten 2000 [1935]; Sterling 1938; Münzel 1977; Rubenstein 2007). This historical period, starting from the 1850s is important, because it marks the start of the commercial production and trade of *tsantsa*, which were exchanged between Shuar, *mestizos* and Europeans (see chapter 3. and section 6.1.3.).

In 1902 the establishment of the “first Protestant mission” was installed on the territory of Jívaroan-speakers (Sterling 1938:27). Also in the late nineteenth century the “great rubber boom” emerged (ibid.). During this period Westerners invaded the Amazon basin, including the territory of Jívaros, in order to extract rubber (Sterling 1938:27f.). In the beginning of the twentieth century Catholic Salesians founded missions near río Upano and at the city of Macas. During the 1930s Salesian missionaries “[...] infiltrate the previously unreceptive Shuar population” (O’Driscoll 2015:25). This led to the establishment of boarding schools in Pastaza and in Morona-Santiago. Salesians started to convert Shuar to Catholicism, with the result that polygyny, beliefs in witchcraft and the practice of head-hunting were abandoned (Rubenstein 2007:360). In 1941 the war between Peru and Ecuador took place. This event resulted in the killing of Shuar members by Ecuadorian troops (Harner 1972).

2.4. Shuar’s Socio-Political Organization

During the 1960s indigenous organizations surfaced. The emergence of these organizations intended to socio-politically unite Jívaroan groups and other indigenous peoples.

Other problems such as missionization resulting in acculturation which Jívaroan-speakers face during modern times, is the discovery of crude oil and its extraction. These occurrences lead to disputes between Shuar, Achuar, other indigenous *naciones*, and the Ecuadorian government. Nowadays the maintenance of subsistence practices, like hunting, fishing and gardening become increasingly problematic, because of the influence of neoliberalism, capitalist modes of production, and its inherent values.

2.5. Recent History and the *Caminata* in Ecuador

In 1990, 1991, 1992, 1994, 2000, 2001 and 2006 indigenous uprisings, also known under the term “levantamiento indígena” [indigenous uprising] took place in Ecuador (Whitten/Whitten 2003 [1997]; Becker 2011; Huarcaya 2015). New insurgences occurred in 2019, due to the current president’s austerity politics (see URL Guardian Indigenous Protest). The protests mobilized various indigenous groups (see **FIG 2**), including Canelos, Quichua, Shuar and Achuar, who all demanded cultural, and political autonomy from the Ecuadorian state (Whitten/Whitten 2003 [1997]:186ff.; Becker 2011). These partly nonviolent indigenous uprisings may be viewed as

ideoscapes, in which “counterideologies of movements” (Appadurai 1996:36) target the nation-state. The protesters requested the recognition of cultural sovereignty, self-determination, political rights and to be given a voice, as explained in the last part. The demands of the indigenous groups included claims to be legally recognized as part of the plurinational state of Ecuador and also to save ancestral lands from exploitation, as mentioned above.

Norman and Dorothea Whitten illustrate in their work *Return of the Yumbo: The Indigenous Caminata from Amazonia to Andean Quito* (2003 [1997]) how in the year 1992, a great number of indigenous people, but also other minorities, such as Afro-Ecuadorians, white-*mestizos* and workers joined a peaceful march, known as *caminata*.

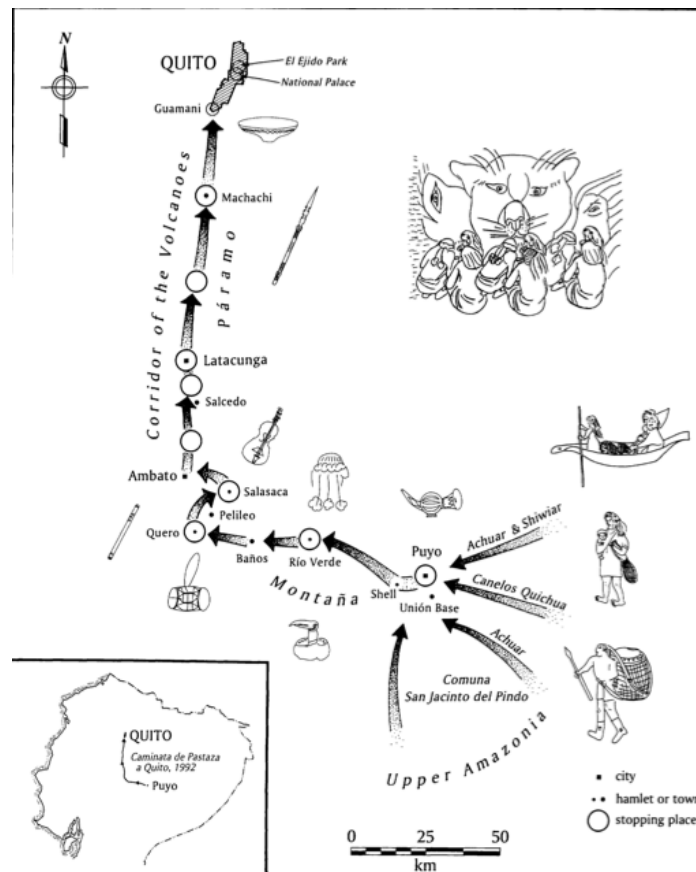


FIG 2 *Caminata* Route from Puyo to Quito **Source:** Alfonso Chango

The objective of the *caminata* was to challenge the nation-state’s oppression against indigenous groups. They demanded autonomy from the state and also wanted to control indigenous territories themselves. The cause was a symbolic insurgency, which also acted as a political instrument, in form of a critique to the “500 years of injustice” (Whitten/Whitten 2003 [1997]:186). But the critique also addressed

“external domination” and “ethnic oppression” of the indigenous population in Ecuador, beginning with the arrival of Christopher Columbus in the Americas in 1492. (ibid.).

The indigenous protest in the form of the *caminata*, reached around 5.000–10.000 protesters (Whitten/Whitten 2003 [1997]; Becker 2011:35). On April 11th, 1992 indigenous communities started the *caminata* in Puyo (see **FIG 2**), in the province of Pastaza. The group marched 180 miles (240 kilometers) on foot towards the Ecuadorian capital of Quito (Becker 2011:35).

As an “ritual drama” the *caminata* involved “ritual objects” of various ethnicities, including indigenous material objects, such as “[...] special headdresses, necklaces, and armbands; carved palm-nut containers for spirit substances; plant dyes for body and face adornment; musical instruments; pottery items; and palm-wood lances” (Whitten/Whitten 2003 [1997]:192). Personifications of “spirit animals” [...] *guerreros* (warriors) and *guardianes* (guardians)” (ibid.:2003 [1997], emphasis in original) were used by the indigenous marchers in performances, along the *caminata*. Also mythical entities, such as the to Shuar and Achuar known monster *iwianch*, were introduced during the performances (Whitten/Whitten 2003 [1997]:194). The authors showed how social and political movements of indigenous protests may have social implications, and reached public recognition on a nation-state level. The marchers reached Quito, where they camped-out in park El Ejido. The park is located between Centro Histórico or old town and the new part of the city, named La Mariscal.

2.6. Cosmology and Religious Beliefs

Being part of the Jívaroan groups, the Shuar’s worldview is animistic, which is based upon the belief that animate and inanimate objects have souls (see Karsten 2000 [1935]; Harner 1972; Descola 1993; Mader 1999). The cosmology of Shuar is embedded within an “animist ontology” (see Descola 2013:38), which is believed to find representation, especially in visions and in dreams (see Harner 1972:134). In this ontology also non-human persons, like plants, animals and spirits are endowed with “human-like intentionality” (Descola 2013:38). In animistic ontologies also non-human actors possess individual *agency* and subjectivity, which normally only humans are endowed with, in the contrasting materialistic ontologies of the Western world. The universe of Shuar cosmology is modeled as a threefold division, including (1) *nunka* (earth), (2) *nayaimp* (sky) and (3) *init* (underground) (Chiriap 2012:38).

These realms are inhabited by humans and are also occupied by various non-human entities, such as spirits, and other “incarnates”, to cite Descola (2013).

The most important non-human actors within Shuar cosmology (see **FIG 3**) are (a) *Núnkui*, who is earth goddess, (b) *Tsunki*, guardian of the water and gardens, (c) *Etsa* personifies the sun, as well as the fight between good and evil, he is also guardian of hunting and animals, and (d) *Shakaim*, a mythological being, who monitors labour, he is also the guardian of trees (Chiriap 2012:35-37; Mader 1999:90).

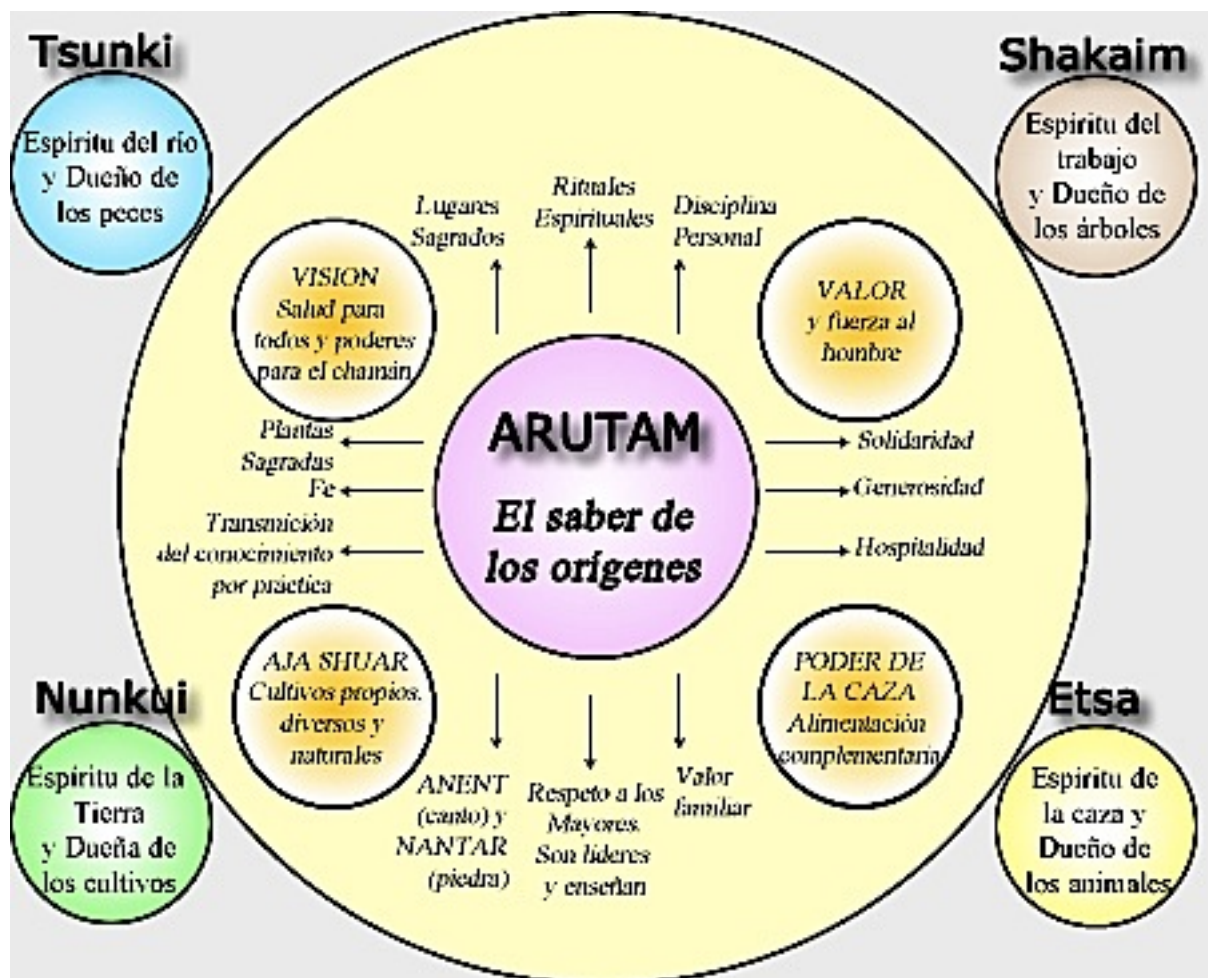


FIG 3 ARÚTAM Cosmos Source:
<https://pueblosoriginarios.com/sur/amazonia/shuar/arutam.html>

There exist many more non-human actors, including various mythological beings, who are part of the Shuar cosmology and are supposed to influence the human world, and with whom Shuar shamans (*uwishin*) are able to interact with (see Karsten 2000 [1935]; Harner 1972; Mader 1999; Descola 2006/2013).

2.7. *Tsantsa* in its Indigenous Context

Based on archaeological evidence taking heads of enemies was already a custom, practiced during pre-Columbian times by many indigenous societies of South America in the past (Chacon 2007). Fritz Up de Graff (1923:61f.), as well as the authors Chacon and Dye state that the practice of head-hunting was a “widespread practice” (2007:5ff.) in the Americas, and elsewhere around the world.

In literature Shuar are famously known for having practiced taking heads of enemies and shrinking them (see **FIG 4**) into so-called *tsantsa* (“shrunk head” or *cabeza reducida/cabeza cortada*). This cultural practice is also known as headshrinking (see Up de Graff 1923; Karsten 2000 [1935]; Stirling 1938; Harner 1972; Münzel 1977; Pellizzaro 1980; Mader 1999; Rubenstein 2004/2007; Chacon 2007; Chiriap 2012).



FIG 4 Shuar Warrior with *Tsantsa* around Neck **Source:** Karsten 2000 [1935]:232

The practice of hunting for heads and shrinking the scalp of dead enemies are integral part of the Shuar’s religious beliefs (see Karsten 2000 [1935]; Stirling 1938; Harner 1972; Pellizzaro 1980; Mader 1999; Rubenstein 2004/2007; Chacon 2007; Houlton/Wilkinson 2016). Headshrinking rendered the Shuar as being “fierce people”, based on their supposed “warlike reputation” (Harner 1972). Head-hunting and producing *tsantsa* rests upon concepts of spiritual power, blood feud and witchcraft accusations (see Harner 1972) which are the central motifs in this context. These

cultural traits also contributed to ethnographically frame Shuar in form of attaching mythical images to them, such as the stereotype of being fierce head-hunters (Münzel 1977).

2.7.1. Preparation of *Tsantsa*

Tsantsa as ceremonially used artifacts are ascribed by Shuar with the soul concept of *arútam* (Karsten 2000 [1935]; Stirling 1938; Harner 1972; Mader 1999; Chacon 2007; Rubenstein 2007). *Tsantsa* are linked to social prestige, spiritual- and political power (Mader 1999; Rubenstein 2007), which a Shuar head-hunter is endowed with, when he attains a head of an enemy *kákaram* (warrior) (Karsten 2000 [1935]; Harner 1972; Rubenstein 2007). For Shuar *tsantsa* are charged with symbolic power or “capital”, which have spiritual and political importance (see chapter 3.). The religious meaning is connected to the concept of “the sacred” (Appadurai 1986) and the political is associated with the individual transformation of the headtaker or *tsánkram*. But how are ceremonial *tsantsa* produced? This will be explained in the following part. In order to prepare a *tsantsa*, first the head of a killed person is disembodied at the neck. In the next step the scalp is cautiously removed with a sharp object, such as a blade, from the skull at the back of the head (see Up de Graff 1923). The next step is washing the removed scalp in the water of a river. The flesh is then removed with a knife, often made out of bamboo. Then the scalp is dried over fire and also cooked. This process is important to achieve the shrinking of the skin (Up de Graff 1923; Harner 1972:187-189; Pellizzaro 1980). Sand is used to fill up and mold the cooked scalp. The next measure is using heated stones, in order to burnish the interior of the trophy and to close the eyelids. Afterwards three red painted spikes, made out of the chonta-palm are used to perforate the lips, which are later sewn up with cotton threads. On top of the head of the *tsantsa* cotton fibres or a *kumaí* bark is mounted from the inside of the object (Harner 1972). The applied fibres serve as lanyard. Toucan feathers are often attached on the earlobes of the head as pendants. Charcoal is rubbed on the outer skin of the head. (Karsten 2000 [1935]:226-228; Harner 1972:187f.). Closing the eyes and the mouth, and coloring the outer skin black with charcoal are all cautionary measures. All these precautions are important steps, in order to prevent the *muisak* (see below) from escaping and keeping it inside the *tsantsa*. The whole process of preparing a *tsantsa* may take up to six days (see Harner 1972:189).

As remarked above, *tsantsa* are related to spiritual concepts of the Shuar. The spiritual components (a) *arútam* soul and (b) *muisak* are of great importance (see chapter 2.), in order to understand *tsantsa* as a complex assemblage of material, and immaterial components. Producing *tsantsa* is a cultural practice and -expression, holding important cultural value for their indigenous identities, which is of pivotal importance for the history of Shuar peoples.

2.7.2. *Tsantsa* and *Arútam*

“The desire of the Jivaro for heads is like the desire of the whites for gold” (Harner 1972:192). This quote compares the hunger of Shuars-speakers for heads with the greed of Westerners for gold. This analogy portrays well the desire for power, which is thought to inhabit material things.

The production of *tsantsa* is associated with the concept of an “venatic-ideology” (Viveiros de Castro 1998:472). The cultural practice of hunting is also linked to the acquisition and transference of *arútam wakán(i)*, as already remarked (see Karsten 2000 [1935]; Stirling 1938; Harner 1972; Mader 1999; Chiriap 2012).

Arútam(a) is described by Rafael Karsten as “almas de los ancestros” [souls of the ancestors] (Karsten 2000 [1935]:326). *Arútam wakán* is referred by Harner (1972) as “ancient specter soul” and by Rubenstein (2007) as “warrior power or soul”, which is acquired by Shuar-speakers through having visions (*arútam*) during initiation ceremonies (see Harner 135ff.; Rubenstein 2007:362; Rubenstein 2012:48). In Shuar culture having visions is strongly linked to the ingestion of psychotropic plant-based substances or “vision-granting plants” (Rubenstein 2012:47), especially *natem* (*banisteriopsis caapi*) and *maikúa* (*brugmansia*). By ingesting these hallucinogenic plants, visions (*arútam*) would manifest (see also section 6.5.3.), produced by the *wakán* (soul, vital soul or vitality) (see Karsten 2000 [1935]; Harner 1972; Mader 1999; Rubenstein 2007/2012). Chiriap also describes *arútam* as “totalidad del ser” [totality of being] or “poder intelectual” [intellectual power], which is associated with myths (Chiriap 2012:38). Steven Lee Rubenstein simply translates the concept *arútam wakán* as acquired “power” (2007:362) or as “power-granting vision” (2012:48), borrowing from Elke Mader’s definition. *Arútam* souls may be acquired, but may also be lost (Harner 1972; Rubenstein 2007/2012). They are not a property, but rather inhabit people, than belonging to them (Rubenstein 2012:49). The author Rubenstein (2004/2007/2012) points out that the power “circulates” and may be

accumulated, but *arútam wakán* can not be owned. Elke Mader associates *arútam* (souls) with the concept of personhood. She defines *arútam* (souls) as “representaciones del poder impersonal” [representations of impersonal power], which may be transformed during visionary states into a source for receiving personal power, and -capacities (1999:314).

Looking at the various definitions regarding *arútam*, it can be concluded that *arútam* (*wakán*) is linked to the concept of (spiritual) power or -force, in the form of personally acquired capacities and competencies by experiencing visionary states (*arútam*). I will therefore relate to Mader’s (1999) and Rubenstein’s (2007) definition of *arútam* (*wakán*), as a source for personal (spiritual/visionary) “power” or competence. The above by Mader defined “capacities” also have impacts within social relationships. They may find expression in individuals, who received *arútam* (souls) in form of following personal qualities: (a) superiority and strength, (b) invulnerability and intangibility, (c) charisma, and popularity (Mader 1999:347). The named personal characteristics, which individuals may acquire through receiving *arútam* (*wakán*), are all concerned with desirable positive male traits of personhood, within Shuar society. The concept of *arútam* also plays, as remarked above, a crucial role in context of *tsantsa*.

Within the cosmology of Jívaroan groups, *arútam wakán* of a murdered victim is believed to be transmitted to the headtaker and is incorporated through ritual activity (see Karsten 2000 [1935]; Stirling 1938; Harner 1972; Pellizzaro 1980; Descola 1993; Mader 1999; Rubenstein 2007). Shuar assume that the transmission of *arútam wakán* to the person who takes the head of an enemy, brings benefits to the individual headtaker (*tsánkram*) and also to his kin-group (see also Mader 1999:201). Richard J. Chacon lists in his work *Seeking the Head-hunter’s Power: The Quest for Arútam Among the Achuar of the Ecuadorian Amazon and the Development of Ranked Societies* (2007) the individual benefits through the acquisition of *arútam* (*wakán*). The presented data of Chacon is strongly influenced and partly based on Harner’s work *The Jívaro: People of the Sacred Waterfall* (1972). Included in Chacon’s list of personal gains are the following: “invincibility in battle”, “long life”, “multiple wives”, “many children” and increasing “economic prosperity” (Chacon 2007:528). These benefits also (1) increase the individual status of headtakers in Shuar society and (2) give rise concerning social prestige, like Elke Mader (1999:201) points out. A collective advantage of the transference of *arútam wakán* to

the kin-group of the headtaker(s), is the increase of economic productivity as a social group (see also Karsten 2000 [1935]; Harner 1972; Rubenstein 2007).

Reviewing the various definitions in anthropological literature concerning the concept of *arútam* (*wakán*), it may be concluded that the term has undergone many interpretations and transformations. This may be due to (a) various local definitions of the term and also due to (b) cultural change, and “historical changes” (see Boster 2003) in Shuar’s religious beliefs, like the infiltration of catholic concepts into their traditional belief system.

Another important spiritual concept besides *arútam* (*wakán*) is named *muiskak*³, which is also closely related to *tsantsa* (Harner 1972; Mader 1999; Chacon 2007; Rubenstein 2007/2012). Rubenstein translates *muiskak* as an “inversion of *arútam wakán*” (Rubenstein 2007:363, emphasis in original).

Harner (1962 and 1972) defines *muiskak* as “avenging soul” (1972:143). He writes:

“Only a person who has had an *arútam* soul is capable of forming a *muiskak*. Furthermore, a *muiskak* comes into existence only when a person who has seen an *arútam* is killed, whether by natural or supernatural means. At the time of death of such a person his avenging soul is created and leaves his corpse through its mouth” (Harner 1972:143).

As quoted, *muiskak* is produced by *arútam wakán* and its function is to “avenge” the killed person (ibid.). The author continues, that this soul is “[...] only called *muiskak* while it is in the corpse, subsequently in the shrunken head trophy (*tsantsa*)” (Harner 1972:144, emphasis in original) of the killed person. When leaving the *tsantsa* a *muiskak* takes on the form of an *iwianch* (monster or demon), who may appear to the killer (ibid. 1972:145). In order to prevent the *muiskak* to leave the head of the murdered person, Shuar sew up the mouth, close the eyes of the processed *tsantsa* and rub the face in dark color with balsa wood charcoal (Harner 1972:145f.; Rubenstein 2007:363). The author Steven Lee Rubenstein understands *muiskak* and *arútam* as “immaterial form(s)” of power (2007:364). Both are interrelated and linked to human existence. *Arútam* is associated with the power of life. In contrast *muiskak* is an expression of death and revenge.

As described, both *muiskak* and *arútam* (soul) are closely related spiritual concepts in Shuar ontology. They are the most important spiritual elements in order to

³ Another local designation for the term *muiskak* [avenging soul] is *emésak*, described by Elke Mader as “fuerza espiritual del difunto” [spiritual force of a deceased] (compare Mader 1999:181) or “fuerza negativa” [negative force] (see Mader 1999:199).

understand the idea of producing *tsantsa*. Karsten (2000 [1935]) relates *tsantsa* to its 'supernatural' properties, which manifest in the described benefits.

Rather than understanding *tsantsa* as war-trophies, as Up de Graff (1923) does, Karsten describes them as “un objeto cargado con poder sobrenatural” [an object loaded with supernatural power] (Karsten 2000 [1935]:227). Rubenstein translates these 'supernatural' objects as “fetishes” (2007:364), based on Karsten's (2000 [1935]) understanding. I think Rubenstein's translation of *tsantsa* as “fetish” is useful here, in the sense that *tsantsa* are (a) containers, holding *muiskak*, and (b) material assemblages or “composites” (Santos-Granero 2009:22), which are comprised of various natural components, like fetishes in general are. *Tsantsa* consist not only of human skin and hair, but also of feathers of birds, wings from beetles, plant based materials, like seed shells, and vines.

In the 1950s the Peruvian- and during the 1960s the Ecuadorian government banned the practice of producing shrinking heads of enemies, both for commercial purposes, as well as for ceremonial usage (Mader 1999:38/201; Steel 1999; Houlton/Wilkinson 2016:2). Nowadays *tsantsa* are circulating on transnational art markets, offered by auction houses and can be found on the Internet. Also many objects are on display in museum and in galleries.

This brings me to the next part, in which the current state of research on *tsantsa* will be looked at.

3. CURRENT STATE OF RESEARCH ON *TSANTSA*

Researching scientific literature, the Internet and following conversations with experts on the topic, it became apparent that the debate about decolonization of indigenous cultural artifacts is of current interest, which is an on-going process. Several publications focusing on *tsantsa* can be categorized as scientific literature and others are of non-scientific nature.

Fritz W. Up de Graff, an US-American adventurer, writes in his travel report *Head Hunters of the Amazon: Seven Years of Exploration and Adventure* (1923) about a Aguaruna head-hunting raid, he experienced as eyewitness. In the detailed account he observes the killing of several Huambizas by Aguaruna and the following *tsantsa* production procedure. Although the book is non-scientific, the text by Up de Graff holds valuable information about how head-hunting raids took place in the past and how *tsantsa* are prepared. The author also mentions fake *tsantsa*, which are produced for export by non-Shuar individuals and are also made out of dead non-Jívaroans.

Rafael Karsten was a Finnish ethnographer and anthropologist. In his monograph *La Vida y la Cultura de los Shuar* (2000 [1935]) Karsten investigates Shuar material culture, social life, warfare, festival culture, religion, art, science, myths and language. He also reports that sloths (*uyúshi*), which are perceived by Shuar as mythological beings, are also transformed into shrunken heads (Karsten 2000 [1935]:227f.) The author points to the beginnings of the commercial trade of human *tsantsa*, emerging in the mid of the nineteenth century. During this time period, shrunken heads were traded for rifles and machetes between Shuar and Europeans. Karsten remarks that many *tsantsa*, nowadays exhibited globally in ethnographic museums, were specifically produced with the intention of being sold in an emerging international market (2000 [1935]:80). Karsten's ethnography features various photographic illustrations, depicting diverse aspects of Shuar culture. The book also includes the preparation and presentation of *tsantsa*, as well as the *tsantsa* ceremonies held by Shuar speakers.

Matthew Williams Stirling presents in his book *Historical and Ethnographical Material on the Jivaro Indians* (1938) historical and ethnographical insights into Shuar life. Besides outlining the history of Shuar, he also describes political organization,

war practices, housing, shamanism and mythology. Stirling also writes about archaeological evidences, relating to the existence of *tsantsa* in pre-Columbian times, as well as on the production process, purpose and the emergence of counterfeit objects.

Julius Staub describes in this work *Kopfhauttrophäe ("Tsantsa") aus Südamerika* (1939) that the production of *tsantsa* is surrounded by a cult of secrecy. The author discusses meticulously the preparation process of *tsantsa* and also about the commercial trade with Europeans. Many *tsantsa* were exported as "souvenirs de voyage" [travel souvenirs] and sold to Whites (Staub 1939:31). Due to the high demand for *tsantsa* from Westerners, also innocent individuals, including indigenous peoples, as well as Whites were manufactured into shrunken heads. He remarks that there exist local variations in producing *tsantsa*. The work of Staub also features photographic representations of *tsantsa*, together with descriptions of the objects.

Michael Harner writes in *The Jivaro: People of the Sacred Waterfalls* (1972) about head-hunting expeditions, spiritual concepts, the ceremonial life of Shuar and the preparation of *tsantsa*. In his view *tsantsa* is linked to social aspects, like the headtakers increase in prestige, as well as the establishment of kinship relationships by celebrating the *tsantsa*-feast (Harner 1972:191f.). He argues that by celebrating the *tsantsa*-feast with other Shuar groups, also solidarity and group identity is strengthened between different groups.

Mark Münzel, a German-born anthropologist, criticizes in his book *Schrumpfkopf-Macher?: Jivaro-Indianer in Südamerika* (1977) the Western produced stereotypical image of Shuar as head-hunters. He argues that this form of exoticization should be reconsidered. Münzel also discusses traditional life, cultural change within Shuar culture and the concept of progress. Within this framework of traditional and modern life, he investigates social, economic, and cultural implications, produced by Western colonization. Many black and white photographs illustrate the preparation process of *tsantsa*, as well as showing visual representations of Shuar in pulp-literature, and presenting counterfeit shrunken heads.

Siro Pellizzaro shows in his work *Tsantsa: La Celebracion de la Cabeza Cortada* (1980) how the preparation of *tsantsa* is linked to mythological dimensions of Shuar belief. He illustrates the production process and describes the whole ceremonial complex that is built around *tsantsa*. The text is accompanied by many drawings

portraying head-hunting raids, the preparation of *tsantsa* and the festival where shrunken heads are presented publically.

Philippe Descola describes *tsantsa* from a post-structuralist perspective, focusing on the construction of alterity and identity. Descola shows in his book *The Spears of Twilight* (1993) that *tsantsa* is a “formal representation of one human existence” (Descola 1993:275). The identity of a killed enemy is being depersonalized and through ritual activity the murdered person is transformed into an relative, by symbolic affiliation, bringing fertility to the community of the headtakers. Philippe Descola describes that newly produced *tsantsa* are socialized, similar to living persons. The french author understands *tsantsa* as “emblems of otherness” (1993:277), which are ceremonially adopted by the group of the head-hunters.

Anne Christine Taylor focuses in her article *Remembering to Forget: Identity, Mourning and Memonry among the Jivaro* (1993) on the dealings with the deceased and the construction of personhood, in context of the practice of head-hunting.

Elke Mader writes in her ethnography *Metamorfosis del Poder: Persona, Mito y Visión en la Sociedad de Shuar y Achuar (Ecuador/Perú)* (1999) about cosmovision, mythology, concepts of identitiy and personhood. She investigates what effects visions (*arútam*) have on Shuar and how visionary experiences are related to the production of *tsantsa*, as well as to the acquisition of personal power and competencies. Mader locates *tsantsa* between political, militaristic and spiritual spheres in Shuar and Achuar life. She also shows, how the *tsantsa* ceremonies contribute to the increase in prestige of the group, who acquires heads of enemies (Mader 1999:201).

Daniel Steel argues in his essay *Trade Goods and Jívaro Warfare: The Shuar 1850-1957, and the Achuar, 1940-1978* (1999) how historical changes in Jívaro warfare occured due to the access of “manufactured goods”, such as machetes and firearms. The author thinks that Jívaro warfare underwent “three major changes in patterns and intensity” (Steel 1999:745). The first change was an “[...] intensification of head-hunting raids made by the Shuar against their neighbors, especially the Achuar [...]” (ibid.). The second change between “1910 and 1920” was linked to “the decline of head-hunting raids”, which increased as “internal feuding among the Shuar” (Steel 1999). The third shift occured in the period from 1940-1970, which was marked by “[...] internal warfare among the Achuar and the decline, although not cessation, of

this feuding from 1970-1978” (Steel 1999:745). Daniel Steel thinks that above mentioned manufactured tools lead to an increase of Shuar head-hunting. The author bases his argument on Ferguson’s thought (1995) on Yanomami warfare and the idea, that “material interests” played a crucial role in waging wars (Steel 1999:747). Besides witchcraft accusations, which also lead to revenge killings among Jívaro-speakers, like Harner (1972) presents in his work, it was newly imported technology in form of machetes and rifles, which Steel emphasizes in his argument as the most important aspect, that lead to an increase in head-hunting.

Steven Lee Rubenstein discusses in his article *Shuar Migrants and Shrunken Heads Face to Face in a New York Museum* (2004) how *tsantsa* and Shuar culture are “detransnationalized” and become “globalized” in *ethnoscapes* through their movement (2004:14). He focuses in context of globalization on the core-periphery problem and concludes that “[...] the heads now serve as markers of their own past – in short they are the most material and visible means they have for identifying themselves as people with history” (Rubenstein 2004:18), who now live in the presence of a globalized world.

In the article *Circulation, Accumulation, and the Power of Shuar Shrunken Heads* (2007) Rubenstein shows, how Shuar and *tsantsa* are connected globally through social networks, composed of various transnational actors, including indigenous groups, dealers, curators, scientists, and also “political regimes” (2007:359). These indigenous objects circulate transnationally from Shuar who traded or sold them to *mestizo*-dealers, who resold them to European or American collectors. They arrived in international museums, ethnographic collections and in private homes, where they are then publically presented or privately stored. Through trading activities of Shuar with Europeans during the 1850s, *tsantsa* were moving between different contexts (Western and indigenous), resulting also in a change of meaning. Shuar and shrunken heads were incorporated into a “global economy”, transforming *tsantsa* into “commodities” (Rubenstein 2007:359). The author shows this change in meaning of *tsantsa*, when passing through a political-economic process, which he describes from an historical point of view.

He views *tsantsa* as a representation of distance. Rubenstein writes, “I locate the meanings of tsantsas within shifting notions of power and sociality in the context of the contemporary Ecuadorian state and transnational economic networks” (2007:358). He locates *tsantsa* between Shuar’s “distant past” and the contemporary

state of Ecuador. Western museums, so Rubenstein, attach *tsantsa* with “mythologies of the primitive” (Rubenstein 2007). The author also views the “relationship between Shuar and the Federation” as “asymmetrical and ambivalent”, because the Federation itself is “hybrid” (ibid.). The Shuar Federation is perceived as a representation of the Ecuadorian state to the Shuar, which is an “instrument of state policies”, whereby the leaders are elected by Shuar themselves (see Rubenstein 2007:380). He concludes that *tsantsa* in museums represent accumulation of symbolic capital, whereas in the hands of the Federation, they are valued for “the accumulation of political authority” (ibid.).

In his work *On the Importance of Visions among the Amazonian Shuar* (2012) Rubenstein writes about the relationship of “power-granting visions” and plants with hallucinogenic properties. His analysis engages in psychoanalytic theory and is based on Jacques Lacan’s concepts of the “Real” and the “Symbolic”.

Richard J. Chacon describes in his article *Seeking the Head-hunter’s Power: The Quest for Arútam Among the Achuar of the Ecuadorian Amazon and the Development of Ranked Societies* (2007) how *tsantsa* and the “supernatural force”, produced by *arútam* are linked together. He discusses a variety of benefits individuals with *arútam* are endowed with, as already presented in (section 2.7.2.).

Tobias M. R. Houlton and Caroline M. Wilkinson investigate in their work *Recently Identified Features that Help to Distinguish Ceremonial Tsantsa from Commercial Shrunk Heads* (2016) ceremonial *tsantsa* and commercially produced human shrunk heads. The authors analyzed 65 objects (6 ceremonial, 35 commercial and 23 ambiguous) using forensic methods, including “[...] manual inspection, multi-detector computerised tomography, infrared reflectography, ultraviolet fluorescence and microscopic hair analysis” (Houlton/Wilkinson 2016:1).

Houlton and Wilkinson offer in their analysis a table consisting of 16 useful visual cues, in order to discriminate between authentic ceremonial *tsantsa* and commercially produced human shrunk heads. Besides, they provide a good historical overview on the beginning of the curio-trade and the exchange of commercially manufactured shrunk heads in Ecuador. Houlton and Wilkinson also give insights on methods used, that are intended to produce fake shrunk heads.

Up to now, publications in cultural- and social anthropology mainly focused on indigenous material culture, including the practice of *tsantsa* production, but also on

the beginnings of the international commercial trade with Westerners. Some works analyze historical dimensions (Sterling 1938; Steel 1999), in relation of the production and transnational curio-trade of shrunken heads, but also the socio-cultural meanings (Karsten 2000 [1935]; Staub 1939; Harner 1972; Houlton/Wilkinson 2016) concerning *tsantsa*. Literature focusing on *tsantsa*, in context of constructing indigenous identity and political aspects, include the works of the following authors: Harner 1972; Münzel 1977; Descola 1993, Taylor 1993; Mader 1999 and Chacon 2007. Aspects of decolonization are addressed by Münzel 1977 and Rubenstein 2004/2007/2012. Reviewing existing literature on *tsantsa*, it may be stated that there are still many open questions to be answered.

In order to understand the postcolonial discourse surrounding the international circulation of *tsantsa* and the curio-trade, it is necessary to define the concepts of material culture, in relation to indigenous identity and -politics. This will be the focus of the following theoretical chapter.

4. THEORY: MATERIAL CULTURE, GLOBALIZATION AND INDIGENOUS IDENTITY

Circulation and Representation of Indigenous Artifacts

This study involves theoretical considerations from various fields within the social sciences, with the focus on *agency*, practice and materiality. The interdisciplinary investigation concentrates on cultural artifacts of indigenous peoples and their global circulation, looked at from the theoretical framework of “New Materialism”. I have chosen different approaches, in order to understand the international movement of discussed objects. Included are theoretical reflections on anthropology of art, cultural studies, visual anthropology, performance- and museum studies, but also from the field of media studies.

The following (section 4.1. & section 4.2.) focus on the embeddedness of material culture in a globalized world. I present a historical outline on the study of material culture and its current developments. In (section 4.3.) theoretical approaches on material culture are discussed, regarding the circulation of objects. Later, in (section 4.4.) the concept of representation, regarding indigenous artefacts within an transnational⁴ context are discussed. Concepts of identity and *agency* are looked at in (section 4.5.). In the final (section 4.6.) I focus theoretically on the decolonization of indigenous peoples and objects.

4.1. Globalization, Imagination and Material Culture

The age of “globalization” (Glick Schiller 2007 [2004]:449) is informed by the capitalist system of production, distribution and communication. The global circulation and representation of indigenous artifacts, such as *tsantsa* of the Shuar peoples in Amazonian Ecuador, are closely linked to material-, media- and visual culture. Especially Arjun Appadurai’s concept of “cultural flows” (Appadurai 1996) is of importance, in order to understand the transnational movement of indigenous artifacts and the way they are “represented” (Hall 1997) by different actors, such as by cultural institutions, like museums or on the transnational art market, including auction houses, and on the Internet. Cultural flows are linked to a theoretical

⁴ Nina Glick Schiller understands “transnationalism” as the “[...] ongoing interconnection of flow of people, ideas, objects, and capital across the borders of nation-states, in contexts in which the state shapes but does not contain such linkages and movements” (Glick Schiller 2007 [2004]:449).

framework in Appadurai's transnational anthropology, in which a new global economy is at play.

Author Appadurai suggests five so called "scapes", in order to describe breaks between current economy, culture and politics. The dimensions of "global cultural flows" include (1) *ethnoscapes*, (2) *mediascapes*, (3) *technoscapes*, (4) *financescapes* and (5) *ideoscapes* (Appadurai 1996:33). These so-called "scapes" shape the various "imagined worlds", in which indigenous objects circulate within a globalized sphere.

Especially *ethnoscapes*, *mediascapes* and *ideoscapes* are important for this study. These "landscapes" are associated with globalization, deterritorialization and with the individual, and the collective "work of imagination" (Appadurai 1996:49f.). *Mediascapes* are "image-centered", they refer to the distribution and production of information through "[...] newspaper, magazines, television stations and film-production studios" (ibid). But also worlds created by these images through media are named *mediascapes*. *Ideoscap*es on the other hand, are associated with ideologies and counterideologies, consisting of ideas or images, like "[...] freedom, welfare, rights, sovereignty, representation and democracy" (Appadurai 1996:3). Quoted ideologies also include the cultural practice of decolonization and the representation of indigenous objects as images and ideas, both in their virtual and material forms. But also "transnational processes" connect humans transnationally with each other and in the form of objects, and ideas through *ethnoscapes* (see Appadurai 1996).

As an example for the "work of imagination", I will illustrate that the colonially produced "mental images" (Mitchell 1984:505) of the 'primitive' cultural Other, are Western fantasies, dreams or phantasms. This form of cultural representation will be described in this study, through the stereotypical image of the exotic Amazonian Indian (section 6.4.). Especially ethnocentric imaginations and ideas about identity, and alterity are circulating in *ideoscapes*, but also in *mediascapes*. They are (re)produced, distributed and consumed through the work of representations of Otherness.

This study is interested in the problem, how the representation of material culture is linked to constructed indigenous identities, which are based on Western imaginations. Another aspect of interest is the question, how indigenous identities are globally commodified during the process of recontextualization? Practices of

imagining and interpreting the cultural Other as various “stereotyped images” (Hall 1997), but also the transnational political-economic discourse surrounding circulating objects, are central here.

4.2. Studying Material Culture and the Anthropology of Art

In the following part I explain how the movements and representations of indigenous artifacts are to be understood theoretically. Beforehand, I will outline historical dimensions in studying material culture and the anthropology of art. Afterwards, the next section describes concepts of “New Materialism” and shifting ontologies. I will then focus on the question, how indigenous identities, -politics and material culture are linked together with each other.

Historical Dimension: Studying Material Culture and Anthropology of Art

During the last years cultural- and social anthropology has shifted its attention towards material culture, which is also known under the umbrella term “material turn” (see Prown 1982). But also a shift in direction of ontological ideas, known as “ontological turn” (Descola 1995; Viveiros de Castro 1998; LaTour 1999), has taken place.

Viewed from an historical context, the early academic studies on material culture circled around “materialist and evolutionary approaches” on one end, and on the other side the focus was on “style, form, and technique” (Myers 1995:5). British anthropologist Alfred Cort Haddon (1894) was one of the scientists, who focused on “formal analyses” (see Morphy/Perkins 2006:5). Other works later emphasized “exchange theory”, which were built on the workings of Emile Durkheim, Marcel Mauss and Bronislaw Malinowski (Myers 1995).

Howard Morphy and Morgan Perkins describe in their work *The Anthropology of Art* (2006) how the emergence of anthropology as an academic discipline, is closely linked to curiosity chambers, antiquarianism and to the Age of Enlightenment (Morphy/Perkins 2006:3). The focus of anthropology was to investigate the “exoticism of Otherness” (ibid. 2006). This interest in the exotic was located in the area of the tension between a “comparative perspective” and an evolutionary “tendency”, which saw itself as “[...] developing out of a progressive formation of earlier societies” (Morphy/Perkins 2006:3). The Pitt-Rivers Museum in Oxford for example ordered things, but also classified societies within an evolutionary model, in the way as described before. Art was also included in the “evolutionary schema”, which was

developed by anthropologists Pitt-Rivers, Tylor and Frazer (ibid. 2006).

During the late nineteenth and at the beginning of the twentieth century, anthropology and museums were close associates. Many anthropologists during these times were also museologists and engaged in studying material culture, for example Franz Boas or Augustus Henry Lane-Fox Pitt-Rivers, after whom a museum in London is named (Morphy/Perkins 2006:5). British anthropologists, like Haddon (1894) and Balfour (1899) used formal analyses as method, in order to proof evolutionistic theories, based on temporal sequences, and on models, showing the development from “simple to complex, or from figurative to abstract” (Morphy/Perkins 2006:5). In the United States of America, anthropologist Franz Boas also concentrated on formalist studies, who tried to reveal historical patterns. In 1927 Franz Boas wrote his work *Primitive Art*.

In the beginning twentieth century evolutionary theories were criticized strongly and a “shift away from museum based studies” (ibid. 2006) began to manifest, which distanced itself from studying the “[...] inventories of customs, produced by missionaries, traders and government officials” (ibid. 2006). The field research as a anthropological practice for gathering ethnographic data, including material objects became a scientific standard in Britain. This development also resulted in a “[...] theoretical shift in anthropology towards the structural-functionalism” (Morphy/Perkins 2006). Studying material culture and art “became separated” (ibid.) in British anthropology.

In American anthropology the four-field approach was developed by Franz Boas and is composed of the subfields of cultural anthropology, biological- or physical anthropology, archaeology and linguistics. This approach “[...] allowed material culture studies to continue” (Morphy/Perkins 2006:6), which was located between archaeology and socio-cultural anthropology. In American anthropology, the students of Boas such as Kroeber, Sapir and Benedict also moved theoretically into the direction of researching concepts of “patterns”, and “style” in culture (Marcus/Myers 1995:12).

A disconnection took place in museum anthropology, which distanced itself from anthropological concerns and the concept of art was expelled from the field of ethnographic museums. This rupture was also related to the “[...] entanglement of indigenous art with the art market” (Morphy/Perkins 2006). Often so called objects of indigenous art were evaluated through Western criterias and thus culturally

recontextualized. Such objects were designated as “primitive art”, in opposition to the category of the “art traditions of Western civilization” (ibid. 2006). Some former indigenous objects were categorized through the lens of Western art historians. Objects of indigenous peoples were interpreted as “[...] ritual objects, functional artifacts, prestige items or markers of status and placed them on a pedestal for aesthetic contemplation” (Morphy/Perkins 2006:8). In short, indigenous objects were transformed from the category of artifacts into the works of art.

Exceptional studies, such as those of Raymond Firth (1979), Melville Herskovits (1934/1938/1959/1966) and Robert Redfield (1959) held a “holistic vision of anthropology”, in which art played also a crucial part (Morphy/Perkins 2006:8).

Until the 1960s anthropologists viewed art outside of Europe as a category nonexistent, only with a few exceptions. Raymond Firth, Melville Herskovits and Robert Redfield “[...] maintained a holistic vision of anthropology in which art was an integral component” (Morphy/Perkins 2006:9).

Often anthropologists until the 1960 have argued that art is as an “artificial category” (ibid. 2006). This is because objects like “[...] ritual objects, functional artifacts, prestige items or markers of status” were placed into aesthetic contexts (Morphy/Perkins 2006:8), thus being appropriated by the art world.

During the 1960s a new interest grew in art, which anthropologists focused on. In Britain the interest moved away from studying social relations and analyzing social structure, but instead shifting towards the study of myth, religion, and ritual. During this period also a new interest in visual anthropology occurred. (Morphy/Perkins 2006:9). Theoretical interest grew in the areas of symbolism and exchange. Symbolic anthropology concentrated on symbolism and also on the semantics of symbolism within ritual contexts, addressing the link between the intention of rituals, and performance. (Morphy/Perkins 2006:10). For example Mary Douglas and Victor Turner are representatives of this research stream.

Other currents of interest concentrated on exchange theory, which is also linked to studies of symbolism. Morphy and Perkins stress that material objects “[...] gain value through processes of exchange” (ibid. 2006). Therefore the production of value was understood, as being closely linked to value creation within systems of exchange.

The period of the 1970s emphasized topics of emotions, gender, body, space and time (Morphy/Perkins 2006:10). During this time material culture was “no longer

regarded as passive”, but was perceived as performative, thus “reproducing social relations” (ibid.). Material objects were now viewed as intermediators between man and the world in which he/she lives, material possessions became “markers of status”, as well as of “gender relations” (Morphy/Perkins 2006).

Current Developments in Studying Material Culture

Stuart Plattner writes that recent studies of “third-world art” are interested in how local and national culture are expressed through art (see Plattner 2003). These investigations concentrate on the production of local and national identities through the medium of art.

Other studies engage in studying the “[...] interaction of capitalist societies with local art worlds, in context of tourism or Western commodification and distribution through a gallery-museum system” (Plattner 2003:16). Such studies include the effects generated through studying social categories of class, gender and race. Often these works address the inequality of such effects and portray how the rich get richer, and the “poor get poorer” (Plattner 2003:17). This stream is concerned with the aspect of a political economy of non-Western art and its relationship with capitalist markets.

Another current concentrates on concepts of globalization theory, like Steiner’s work *African Art in Transit* (1994), who showed how African artists and -vendors facilitate sales between continents. In this case African dealers make an income in trading and translating art objects between Africa, and Europe (see Plattner 2003:17).

Other studies discuss Western art worlds and focus on the problem “[...] how art as commodity and means of self-expression” may fit into modern capitalist society. Some studies of this direction concentrate on the “personal meaning” of art to people, who collect art (Plattner 2003:17). Stuart Plattner addresses the future of anthropology of art and its “challenges” (ibid.). One of those “challenges” is to uncover the “[...] mystery of value attribution in art sales” (Plattner 2003). He asks: “How personal relations between dealers and collectors work to legitimize prices?” (ibid.). Another topic is studying the globalization of art (Plattner 2003:18).

Having outlined historical trajectories in studying material culture and how local art worlds are connected to global capitalist markets, I now try to define anthropology of art and also introduce how art worlds are to be understood. This is followed by elaborating on material culture theories and I also introduce new materialist approaches in studying material things.

Anthropology of Art

The authors Morphy and Perkins link the term “anthropology of art” to three criterias: (1) the term was recognized nearly globally, (2) art is linked to creativity and innovation through thoughts, and practices, in producing “expressive culture”, and (3) anthropology of art includes the history of this model, in a cross-cultural perspective (Morphy/Perkins 2006:13). These criterias were developed as a universalizing category, linking creativity to the expressive output of a society, within a cross-cultural dimension.

Franz Boas in his work *Primitive Art* articulates art, as producing “esthetic pleasure”, which is linked to the concepts of beauty, form and the attainment of a “certain standard of excellence” within a creative process (Boas 1927:10). Included in his concept of art are song, dance, painting and sculpture.

Alfred Gell views “[...] art as a system of action, intended to change the world rather than encode symbolic propositions about it” (Gell 1998:6). With this said, art is for Gell an action-centered, expressive and a transformative act. Gell’s concept is connected to concepts like “agency, intention, causation, result, and transformation” (ibid. 1998:6, emphasis in original). His definition of art as a “system of action” (ibid. 1998) is an human expressive practice, in which the transformation of the world is central.

The two definitions emphasize both different criterias in defining art. Morphy and Perkins (2006) emphasize in defining art, the creative process and practice, through which culture is expressed. Gell (1998) in contrast, views art as action-centered and results-oriented practice, with the intention to alter the world. As a fusion of those two approaches, we may conclude that art is both, a creative output in expressing culture and also a transformational process, that is intended through the artist’s actions, to change the world. Alfred Gell understands an art object or artifact as the result of an artist’s creative action and its physical outcome, or product. Myers stresses that art “[...] objects participate in systems of taste, or distinction built around the market, connoisseurship, and hierarchies of value” (Myers 2001:55).

The authors Morphy and Perkins argue that art has to be understood in terms of the producing society, and not through the members of the society which consumes it (see Morphy/Perkins 2006). This means that we need to look at the producer-society, in order to understand the meaning of indigenous works of art have within the consuming Western societies.

To analyze a work of art semantic criterias, aesthetic effect and historic importance/value (Morphy/Perkins 2006:15ff) need to be addressed. To realize the “multidimensionality of art” (ibid.), it is of great importance to include dimensions of the semantic, aesthetic, affective and purposive.

“Art Worlds” and the “Art-Culture System”

This brings me to the aspect of studying anthropology of art and how globalization, and social change are to be understood as impacting processes of trade, and exchange, including the cultural boundaries, which for example Fred Myers (1995) has researched. Fred Myers stresses that the term “art” has been conveyed by Western societies to indigenous societies or so-called “tribal-” or “primitive societies” around the world (see Myers 2005).

Becker defines the “art world“ from a sociological perspective. He compares the art world(s) and their actors with a film crew, who are working as a group, all holding different positions within this meshwork. Within postcolonial contexts these networks are often constituted asymmetrically.

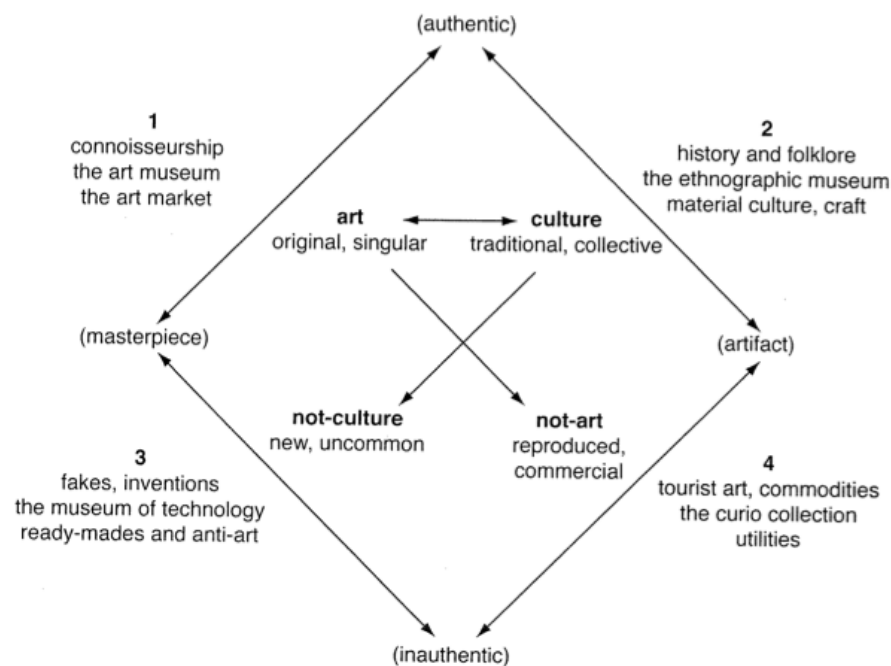


FIG 5 The “Art-Culture System” **Source:** Clifford 1988

In the process of recontextualization of non-Western objects, they are circulating, as stated by Arjun Appadurai, through different “regimes of value” (Appadurai 1986:4). As moving artifacts they enter and exit different contexts, being part of the “**art-culture system**” (Clifford 1988:224). Within this process also their identities change.

The art-culture system (see **FIG 5**) is the “ideological and institutional system” (ibid.), which categorizes non-Western exotic objects and assigns value to them.

By the West appropriated objects may be split into two broad categories by the “art-culture system”, since the beginning of the twentieth century: (1) “(scientific) cultural artifacts” or (2) “(aesthetic) works of art” objects (Clifford 1988:222). The art-culture system also “assigns value” to them (ibid.). Fred Myers understands the art-culture system as a “cultural machinery” (Myers 2001:10).

As the author James Clifford (1988:223) suggests, the art-culture system is split into four “semantic zones”: (1) the zone of authentic masterpieces, (2) the zone of authentic artifacts, (3) the zone of inauthentic masterpieces and (4) the zone of inauthentic artifacts. Clifford stresses that this system “[...] establishes the “contexts” in which they properly belong and between which they circulate” (Clifford 1988:223).

In this investigation the “art-culture system” consists of museums and auction houses, as “distinct institutions” (Myers 2001:11) who classify circulating non-Western or “tribal art” objects in discussion, and assign different values to them. These “things” are given a new “meaning” by “members of society” (Hall 1997:2f.). Within a process of appropriation, they are recontextualized and reinterpreted through presentation and representation. These objects are “represented” differently within distinct contexts, by the use of language, through which their meaning is finally produced, and also their identities are negotiated, in the sense of Stuart Hall (1997). The objects are then labelled as exotic ethnographic artifacts in museums (see section 6.2.). In auction houses (section 6.1.) they are described and offered for sale in the form of commodified curious objects of “tribal art” or “primitive art”.

Material Culture and New Materialist Approaches

To describe material culture and indigenous objects, but also persons in context of a “symmetric anthropology”, borrowing from LaTour (1993), I will use the theoretical perspective of “New Materialism” (see e.g. Appadurai 1986; LaTour 1993/1996/2005; Coole/Frost 2010).

Jules David Prown defines “material culture” in her work *Mind in Matter: An Introduction to Material Culture Theory and Method* (1982) in the following way: “Material culture is the study of culture through artifacts of the beliefs—values, ideas, attitudes and assumptions—of a particular community or society at a given time” (Prown 1982:1). In short “material culture” is defined by the author Prown, as “the object-based aspect of the study of culture” (ibid. 1982:5). The focus on material

“things” (Miller 2010) of a society’s cultural repertoire are central in studying material culture. Material culture is located between the disciplines of cultural history and cultural anthropology. Its main objective is to study culture through “artifacts”, which are understood by Prown as objects, which are “man-made” or are “modified by man” (ibid. 1982). Excluded are so-called natural objects. Included on the opposite are diverse categories, which range from “decorative” (aesthetic) to “utilitarian” objects (Prown 1982:3):

1. Art (paintings, drawings, prints, sculpture, photography)
2. Diversions (books, toys, games, meals, theatrical performances)
3. Adornment (jewelry, clothing, hairstyles, cosmetics, tattooing, other alterations of the body)
4. Modifications of the landscape (architecture, town planning, agriculture, mining)
5. Applied arts (furniture, furnishings, receptacles)
6. Devices (machines, vehicles, scientific instruments, musical instruments, implements)

With this definition of Prown’s, it is clear that all human produced objects, including land modifications, tools and body alterations are subjects of interest in studying material culture.

To summarize, material culture attempts to develop cultural beliefs and patterns of cultural groups through the study of artifacts, and their assigned values. Materialist approaches allow, as Miller (2010) argues, to understand culture through “things”.

In “New Materialist” paradigm, the natural world is looked at through a new dimension, in opposition to older concepts of Cartesian and Newtonian materialist understanding. This ‘new’ materialist ontological approach allows to explore material “things” (Miller 2010) as being not fixed, but as “[...] constantly forming and reforming in unexpected ways” (Coole/Frost 2010:10). Objects are embedded within “relational fields” and “subjectivities are being constituted”. This means that there is no clear boundary between “material and spiritual phenomena” (ibid.).

The anthropocentric approach of older materialist models is no longer privileged, in which only humans possess *agency*. In New Materialism also “commodities, like persons, have social lives” (Appadurai 1986:3). Hence there is “no separation of subjects and objects” (Miller 2010:60). This is dialectically reflected in the “idea that objects make us” and “we make them” (ibid.).

In “New Materialism” also bodies of animals or mechanical objects, like machines are attributed with *agency*, as Bruno LaTour (1999/2005) underlines in his Actor-Network-Theory (ANT). LaTour thinks that actors or “actants” are integrated within a socio-technical network, in which so-called “communicative subjects” interact with each other as agents (ibid.). The Cartesian “subject-object dualism” is obsolete, because modernity produces hybrid objects or “quasi-objects” (LaTour 2005:238) or “things” (Miller 2010). LaTour does not differentiate between different ontologies, instead he emphasizes the interactive dimension between subjects and objects, without embedding them into various ontologies.

In contrast to Bruno LaTour, french anthropologist Philippe Descola (2013) presents another ontological model, through which material culture can be studied. Descola distinguishes between different ontologies: (a) animism, (b) totemism, (c) naturalism and (d) analogism. Important in this ontological model, is the differentiation between material- and animistic ontologies. The latter are used by indigenous groups, living in the Amazon region, like the Shuar and Achuar. Descola opposes the ontology of animism to naturalism. Naturalism represents the modern Western world and materialism, in which only humans possess *agency*, and subjectivity. In the former model, Descola includes animals, plants and spirits, as possessing *agency*, and intentionality (see Descola 1996/2003/2013).

4.3. Circulation and “The Social Life of Things”

Using the theoretical perspective of “circulation” helps to trace the movement of indigenous artifacts, here *tsantsa*, in the sense of Arjun Appadurai’s concept of “the social life of things” (Appadurai 1986). Following Appadurai’s theory of circulation, the authors Marcus and Myers point out in *Traffic in Culture: Refiguring Art and Anthropology* (1995), that the concept of “circulation” is understood as simply “putting objects and their identities in motion” (Marcus/Myers 1995:34). This quote already underlines the identity shift of circulating objects, which are ascribed with changing meaning through movement. Also Steven Lee Rubenstein remarks in his articles *Shuar Migrants and Shrunken Heads Face to Face in a New York Museum* (2004) and in *Circulation, Accumulation, and the Power of Shuar Shrunken Heads* (2007), how Shuar speakers and *tsantsa* are connected globally (see chapter 3.) through different transnational actors and -arenas. Within this context, also objects are linked transnationally through different geographical sites, which may link Austria with

Ecuador. This will be elaborated in the empirical part of this study (chapter 6.).

The “social life” of certain things, viewed as commodities, is often tied to the “cultural biography” or biographical history of objects, thinks Igor Kopytoff (1986:64ff.). The biographical approach helps to understand, how things are moved and are exchanged within different cultural contexts. Igor Kopytoff remarks that certain “[...] things are seen as moving in and out of the commodity state” (1986:64) and have their own “biography”. Often they are “singularized” or sacralized (ibid.). This idea underlines the transformational character of material objects, when they enter or exit different spheres and “regimes of value” (Appadurai 1986) within different cultural contexts, in which they find representation.

4.4. Cultural Representation and Stereotypes

The concept of “representation” is in general linked to culture and language. Culture is associated by Stuart Hall with the “[...] production and exchange of meaning [...] between members of a society or group” (1997:2).

Hall sees language as a “representational system”, through which “meaning is produced and exchanged” by the use of culture-specific shared “signs and symbols” (see Hall 1997:1). These signs and symbols are moving through the process of encoding and decoding, in order to be understood by people. Included in Hall’s definition of representation are not only spoken words, but also “[...] sounds, written words, electronically produced images, musical notes, even objects [...]” (ibid.). For Stuart Hall “representation” is a process of meaning-making and also a conceptual model, in which “shared meanings” (1997:2) are constructed. Meaning is produced through the use of language and signs, which need to be interpreted.

For Hall, language is a “signifying practice” (ibid. 1997:5). The exhibition of a museum for example may be understood as kind of text, which may be read like written language. This is because objects on display are used to produce meanings about the subject of the exhibition (ibid.). Through the practice of signifying, meaning is finally produced (see Hall 1997:5).

Within the work of representation two approaches exist: (1) semiotic approach and (2) discursive approach. The former studies signs and their meanings. The latter is concerned with the ways one refers or constructs knowledge about a a topic. The semiotic approach follows the question: How does language produce meaning? This approach is also called “poetics”. The discursive approach or “politics” in contrast, is

concerned with the “effects and consequences” of representation (ibid.). Politics of representation asks, how knowledge is connected to power and how it “constructs identities and subjectivities” (Hall 1997:6). Both approaches, the “semiotic” and the “discursive”, are useful analytical tools for this study. They are both used in order to analyze the production of meaning, especially those of objects and images.

There exist two representational systems, which link “meaning and language to culture” (ibid.:15). These “systems of representations” consist of (1) “mental representations” and (2) language, as the second system. The former, “mental representations” are understood by Hall, as “[...] concepts and images formed in our thoughts, which can stand for [...]” something we think of, when relating to things and people in the world (1997:17). Without a “conceptual map” (ibid.) we are not able to interpret things in the world and don’t understand their meaning. For this reason a “map” is also culture-specific. A shared conceptual model or -map is required to interpret and give meaning to something within a specific cultural context. With the second system or language, we are able to share concepts, exchange and construct meaning. These concepts, including words, sounds or images, so Hall, need to be “translated into a common language” in the form of signs, which carry meaning (ibid. 1997:18). The described signs stand for the concepts which we relate to and therefore they are standing in a relationship with each other. Stuart Hall writes about “representation”:

“At the heart of the meaning process in culture [...] are two related ‘systems of representation’” (ibid.). The first system enables us to give meaning to the world by constructing a set of correspondences or chain of equivalences between things - people, objects, events, abstract ideas, etc. - and our system of concepts, our conceptual maps. The second depends on constructing a set of correspondences between our conceptual maps and a set of signs, arranged or organized into various languages which stand for or represent those concepts. The relation between ‘things’, concepts and signs lies at the heart of the production of meaning in language. The process which links these three elements together is what we call ‘representation’” (1997:19).

So called “codes” (Hall 1997:21) fix the constructed meaning in our conceptual system. For example the color red, in context of a traffic light, means to stop and the color green is associated with the activity of moving. Thus the colors in traffic lights are codes, which we associate culture-specifically with different conceptual meanings (ibid.). Meaning for Hall, is never fixed, but continuously constructed.

In conclusion it can be stated that “representation” is concerned with producing

meaning through the use of language (Hall 1997:28). Meaning is also associated with the concept of identity and “stereotypes”. By using stereotypes, humans self-identify as individuals or as groups and demarcate themselves from others through ascribing “differences” to other cultural groups (Hall 1997).

The concept of representation is used in this work in order to describe the process of stereotypical identification and demarcation of cultural groups as others, through the use of material objects.

Hall thinks that the practice of “stereotyping” uses characterizations of persons which “exaggerate and simplify them, and fix them [...] *stereotyping reduces, essentializes, naturalizes and fixes ‘differences’*” (1997:258, emphasis in original). Another characteristic of stereotyping is to divide between the norm and that which deviates from it. Hall writes, “Stereotyping in other words is part of the maintenance of social and symbolic order” (ibid.). It sets the rules of what is accepted within a society. To simplify this concept, “stereotyping” may be understood as a signifying practice to discriminate between Us vs. Them. Another point which Hall makes in identifying the mechanisms of “stereotyping”, is the usage of power, to label groups as superior or subordinate. This form of *othering* is often linked to ethnocentrism and the representation of the cultural Other. In Stuart Hall terms, borrowing from Foucault:

“Power, it seems, has to be understood here, not only in terms of economic exploitation and physical coercion, but also in broader cultural or symbolic terms, including the power to represent someone or something in a certain way- within a certain 'regime of representation. It includes the exercise of symbolic power through representational practices. Stereotyping is a key element in this exercise of symbolic violence” (Hall 1997:259).

This quote highlights the linking of the concept of representation of the cultural Other as stereotyped subordinate, through symbolically exercising power. With this said, also the label of the ethnic Other may be portrayed by using stereotypes, in form of the subordinate “savage”. In context of this thesis, the subordination and exerted hegemony, to borrow from Antonio Gramsci, over the stereotyped “tribal” or “primitive” Other, is executed through symbolic means. I will show how exercising symbolic power over others is realized by using material objects (things), in order to represent the Amazonian Indian as the “naturalized” subaltern Other. The connection between imagination, colonialism and stereotypical representation of “exoticized” (Kapferer/Theodossopolous 2016) Indians of the Amazon will be discussed in the empirical part (chapter 6.), in more depth. This paper also uses theoretical concepts

from the interdisciplinary field of Richard Schechner's and Victor Turner's performance studies.

Presenting and exhibiting objects are understood in this research as a form of "cultural performance" (Lewis 2013). This approach allows to describe performances of presenting and exhibiting, as a form of cultural practice of representing "things" (Miller 2010) or objects (physical and mental) within various contexts. Therefore the terms of presentation-performance and "exhibition-performance" (Geismar 2001:44) are used. Indigenous objects are described as "performing bodies" (Mitchell 2006:385).

Exhibiting and presenting are used here as "enacted" performances, which are framed (Goffman 1986 [1974]) through different contexts (e.g. aesthetic or economic). The cultural practices through which "things" are framed, are here understood as "cultural performance", they are also "enacted cultural life worlds" (Lewis 2013:4). In these performances practices of "showing" or "displaying" objects and "telling" (Grimes 2014) are at play, thus telling stories about the cultural Other(s). Another theoretical framework is important for this study, in order to understand the movement of things in material and virtual form. Using Appadurai's concept of *mediascapes* helps to explore the cultural production and consumption of circulating images as "mental representations" (see Hall 1997), but also its dissemination via electronic media, here the Internet.

The following part of this investigation is concerned with explaining general concepts of identity and ethnicity. Afterwards the concept of indigenous identity as a theoretical concept is discussed. The focus will be the problem, how "indigeneity" and the label "indigenous peoples" are negotiated globally, and also within Ecuador's local context. This will be discussed in relation to the concept of "decolonization", the colonial generated imaginations in relation to indigenous peoples and material culture.

4.5. Identity, Ethnicity and Indigeneity

Identifying Self and others or to discriminate between the dichotomy of Us vs. Them is resting upon cultural, ethnical and social categories or biological differences, like sex or race, which are attributed to indigenous individuals or groups. As Barth outlines in his work *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Culture Difference* (1969), humans tend to classify other ethnic groups through attributing differences to members of out-groups. He argues that "ethnic distinctions"

(Barth 1969:11) are based upon cultural self-identification, membership with a group and the discrimination between social groups or us/them. What the author understands as “boundaries” in context of ethnicity, are based on cultural differences, expressed by the values and behaviours of societies (ibid.). These cultural distinctions of associating members of a group through “social processes of exclusion and incorporation” (Barth 1969:10) are based on language or customs. Barth thinks that ethnic groups and their identifications are not primordialist, but they are rather an on-going process of negotiation (ibid. 1969). What this means in context of this study is, how representation as a form of signifying practice (language) and meaning-making is used to classify the cultural Other through identification. Conceptually “indigeneity” is related to the question: How do indigenous people identify themselves as a group?

Indigeneity may be best described as a global concept of ethnic identity, which emerged during the Cold War era (Graham/Penny 2014:12; Trigger/Dailey 2010:48). The United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Populations provides a definition, which includes four criterias, such as (1) self-definition, (2) a specific territory, (3) a form of “cultural distinctiveness”, including “[...] aspects of language, social organisation, religion and spiritual values, modes of production, laws and institutions [...]”, but also (4) “[...] an experience of subjugation, marginalization, dispossession, exclusion or discrimination” (see Stavenhage 2013:83).

The given definitions and listed categories for identifying indigenous populations exist theoretically on a legal juridical level. But in practice these criterias are often violated and not enforced, nor respected by non-indigenous actors, such as national governments, who implement laws. The concept of indigeneity is quite a problematic one, because it is “negotiated differently around the globe” (Trigger/Dailey 2010:57). Often the term indigeneity is used interchangeably with concepts like “aboriginal”, “native”, “original”, “first nations” or “tribal” (Stavenhage 2013:81). These notions are understood differently and often have locally distinct meanings. Ecuador for example ensures minorities, including Ecuador’s indigenous population or *naciones*, Afro-Ecuadorian people and the back-country people (*monitubos*) of the costal region, several rights in theory. They are listed as 21 points in article 57 of Ecuador’s Constitution, which was implemented in 2008 (URL Constitution of Ecuador). Included are factors to ensure, as well as to strengthen indigenous identity and traditions.

In contrast to Stavenhage (2013), the author Eriksen draws attention to the criterias in defining indigenous peoples, through their status as “non-state people”. In his work *Ethnicity and Nationalism: Anthropological Perspectives* (1994) Eriksen focuses on the mode of production, which is “non-industrial” (Eriksen 1994:152). Eriksen’s definition of indigenous peoples is concerned with economic modalities of productions and with the aspect of socio-political organization.

Although many indigenous communities share common traits, based on the definitions above, also differences are to be found among various groups on a global scale. This means that a clear statement about who is “indigenous” and how people locally understand the concept of indigeneity, is diverse (see Graham/Penny 2014). This is also due to existing discrepancies of non-indigenous actors, who identify indigenous groups differently, often in contrast to the tendency of indigenous self-identification.

The authors Trigger and Dailey (2010) point to the idea that indigeneity is a relational category, rather than being essentialistic. Also Graham and Penny argue that “indigeneity” is dialogical and should be understood as a “process of emergence”, that is connected to demands for cultural “recognition”, “self-determination”, and “cultural sovereignty” (2014:10). This means that indigeneity needs to be understood through the relationships, which are negotiated between social groups, and which is therefore an ongoing process of today.

Philipp Altmann describes “Indigene” [indigenous peoples] in context of the Americas, as “[...] those people, who have already lived in America before European conquest” (2014:11). Altmann associates the category of indigenous peoples with the European conquest and with groups who were colonized, as a result of the contact history in Latin America between Amerindians, Spaniards, and the Portuguese. The author Altmann views the concept of identity as processual, rather than essentialistic (Altmann 2014), similar to Graham and Penny’s definition, who argue that indigeneity is to be understood as negotiated within a (post)“colonial discourse” (see Bhaba 1983). Without European expansion into the American continent and the colonization of its peoples, and lands, the concept of “indigenous peoples” wouldn’t exist.

In Latin America and in Ecuador indigenous populations are generally summed up under the umbrella-term *indígenas*. The designation *indígenas*, in opposition to non-*indígenas*, is also used by indigenous communities in Ecuador in order to self-identify

themselves as a collective (Huarcaya 2015). The term *indígenas* also replaced the pejorative and colonial stereotypical label “indiano” or “indio” (Huarcaya 2015:807).

Having described “indigeneity” as a global concept, which associates indigenous populations with characteristics, such as (a) having minority statuses within nation-states, and whose (b) mode of production is non-industrial. Indigeneity is, as outlined (c) relational, (d) processual, not essentialistic and it is (d) negotiated steadily. Indigenous identities are closely related to desires of (f) cultural sovereignty and (g) self-determination globally. As described, indigeneity should not be understood in primordial terms. Rather, it depends on self-identification opposed to the cultural Other, who is attributed with traits of the *not-self*.

In the next section the problems of coloniality and decolonization of indigenous peoples, and their knowledges, including the relationship of the natural environment are discussed. How the situation of indigenous populations and material culture is negotiated within Latin America and in Ecuador will be the topic of the next section.

4.6. Decolonizing Material Culture and Indigenous Peoples

As theoretical critical macro-perspective I use Arturo Escobar’s model of “political ecology” (Escobar 1999), in order to understand the relationship between material culture and indigenous identity, and -politics from a postcolonial angle. This is intended to understand power relations between various local actors, national and transnational groups, with focusing on the triad of “coloniality, capitalism, and conservation” (Acker et al. 2016:6). Especially the relationship between nation-states and indigenous peoples, as “primitives”, with regard to “colonial fantasies” (Bhaba 1983:35) are here of interest. I argue that these imaginations are informed by the asymmetrical relationship between colonizers and the subordinated colonized.

Concepts like territoriality, environmental issues, in the context of postcoloniality (Altmann 2014) are included, when talking about indigeneity and indigenous peoples in Latin America, and elsewhere. But also questions about cultural diversity, difference and interculturality, repatriation, and decolonization of indigenous artifacts, affect indigenous cultures of today. These claims of indigenous populations also have influence on today’s Shuar culture and lifestyle. The global discourse on decolonization also includes ecological questions, based on human-nature relationships, and differing bodies of knowledge or epistemologies. Often these

relations, in an American context, include the “violation of the ontologies” (Acker et al. 2016:9). The concept of “political ontology” (Escobar 2016:19) assumes fights for the defense of territories. Often Amerindians perceive the ‘natural’ world differently than the Western world with its inherent materialistic oriented ontology and capitalist ideology. Acker writes, “What one group considers game, an export item or an energy resource can be a sacred being [...] for others” (Acker et al. 2016:9). This uneven relationship needs to be understood in historical terms and in context of colonial imaginations. Europeans who arrived in the Americas perceived indigenous lands purely as a resource, which needs to be exploited, in opposition to Indian populations, who view their territory as alive (see Escobar 2016).

Since the 1970s indigenous groups have started to strategically appropriate Western constructed images, in order to self-exoticize and label themselves as environmentalists (see Acker et al. 2016). This strategy was adopted by native peoples of America, in order to be better understood in their own terms by the Western world. The intention behind this practice, is to point to problems, such as to exploitive and extractive activities on indigenous lands. This needs to be understood in reference to local, nation-state and geopolitical meanings (see Escobar/Mignolo 2010), including ecological, and politico-economic entanglements. Indigenous peoples demand for local self-determination, state recognition of ancestral territories, but also indigenous epistemologies, may be better described with the help of a “relational ontology” (Escobar 2006:17f.).

Competing ontologies also involve different knowledge systems. These relate to indigenous worldviews, such as to the ontology of “animism” and on the other side to “naturalism” (see Descola 2014) or Western materialism, which is located within the global capitalist system with its “eurocentric knowledge” (Escobar 2016:13). Arturo Escobar proposes the concept of a “pluriverse”, that accepts different realities simultaneously, rather than the single “one-world-world” globalization (Escobar 2016: 22), in which different cultures and perspectives are framed by a singular world. On the other hand, the concept of “pluriverse” recognizes various cosmovisions that are based on a relative understanding of life (ibid.).

The democratic model of a “relational ontology” (Escobar 2006) also includes various living beings, such as animals, plants, insects and spirits, who are supposed of living together, and being intertwined within a “dense network of interrelations” (Escobar 2006:18). Indigenous communities in Latin America, like the Jívaroan-speaking

groups in Ecuador and Peru, defend their territories against neoliberal influences from nation states, who are trying to profit from their forests. As Escobar states, the struggle of indigenous peoples are not only territorial, but they are also political and expressed through “*ontological struggles*” (Escobar 2016:20, emphasis in original). The Amazon region, understood as the “lungs of the world”, contributes to the global climate. Various indigenous peoples in Latin America, but also worldwide are resisting and protesting against the exploitation of resources on ancestral lands. They try to defend their territories against what Mignolo understands as “colonial matrix of power” (Mignolo 2010:3). This power matrix includes the control of economic domains, such as land appropriations, labor exploitation, controlling natural resources, the deployment of the army, but also the control of gender and of epistemologies, and education (Mignolo 2010). The protest of indigenous peoples is directed to fight practices such as contamination of the land, water and air, land grabbing, privatization of common lands, the destruction of forests or the sell-out of natural habitats. Although Ecuador’s constitution (see URL Constitution of Ecuador) guarantees certain rights to nature theoretically, in practice they are often violated. Granting non-human actors rights constitutionally, is unique in a global context. Indigenous ontological concepts are closely related to ecological perspectives on nature. Their struggle against the state and transnational companies in regards to ancestral lands will be addressed, and further elaborated in (section 6.3.). Within this framework, indigenous objects, and -identities are located and disputed, in relation to postcolonialism, and the Anthropocene.

Concluding the Theory

Arjun Appadurai remarks that commodities have a “social life” (Appadurai 1986). They are connected through their embeddedness in transnational social networks, consisting of the art world and art market. As “social collections” (see Byrne et al. 2011:4) these networks consist of various actors. They include objects, other artifacts on display in museums and in auction houses, but also subjects, reaching from indigenous producers or “creator communities” (Byrne et al. 2011:7) to dealers, curators, collectors, auctioneers, or museum visitors. They are all embedded within “complex networks of *agency*” (Byrne et al. 2011, emphasis in original). Exotic material objects fascinate and unsettle the public, at the same time.

Formerly indigenous objects (*tsantsa*) are appropriated by the global “art-culture system” (Clifford 1988:224) of the Western modern world. Through “circulation”

(Appadurai 1986) such artifacts are recontextualized in form of “exotic objects” (MacClancy 1997; Phillips/Steiner 1999) and move through different “regimes of value” (Appadurai 1986). During this process *tsantsa* are “commodified” (Appadurai 1986; Phillips/Steiner 1999). They are represented in the form of “artifacts” (ethnographic objects) and as ‘primitive’ or ‘tribal’ “works of art” (Steiner 2006:267) by the art world, and art market. *Tsantsa* are fetishized as “display objects” (Price 1999:83), that are exhibited, collected and venerated. By exhibiting *tsantsa*, the indigenous producer communities, here Shuar, are “exoticized” (Kapferer 2016) too. They are ethnocentrically imagined as representations of the cultural Other, in form of “racialized stereotypical” images (Hall 1997:250).

Recontextualized, these objects are semantically converted into display objects, that are then part of a global economy (see Appadurai 1996). Cultural appropriation and commodification of indigenous material culture results in a shift in meaning, and in the valuation of these objects. When integrated into transnational networks, composed of a global art world and -market, and displayed in museums or sold in auction houses, the objects transform into different categories.

As imagined Amazonian Indians, Shuar are demonized and glorified at the same time. They are represented through the “savage slot” (Trouillot 2003), which builds on the dualism of Self and Other. Through ambivalent roles of the objects within different societies and contexts, they reflect the asymmetrical relationship between Western modernity, and an imagined timeless primitive world of the cultural Other. Because Amerindian ontologies, such as animism are closely related to ecological perceptions of the natural environment, also objects associated with indigenous peoples in Latin America, need to be understood as active agents, who participate within a social network, consisting of humans and non-human actors.

As a counter strategy, indigenous peoples contrast the concept of “invention of traditions” (Hobsbawm/Ranger 1983), in context of national identities. They re-invent themselves in order to adapt consciously to the exotic notions, produced by Western stereotypical imaginations.

Indígenas utilize “self-exoticization” (Kapferer/Theodossopoulos 2016) in performances for tourists and in photographs, that are used and published on social media platforms (see section 6.5.). This strategy is used in order to decolonize and at the same moment to counter colonially produced notions of exoticization. They present themselves in a globalized world with the help of newly created hybrid

indigenous identities.

After introducing the theoretical framework in the last chapter, the next part (chapter 5.) presents the ethnographic field in more depth and discusses methodology of this study, and applied methods.

5. RESEARCHING THE FIELD

This part (chapter 5.) explains how the research was conducted methodologically, how I approached the field ethnographically and explains which methods were applied, in order to gather relevant data. Furthermore the fieldsites are introduced in more depth, where I have conducted the time period of my research. Additionally, steps of data analysis and ethical considerations are described as the central guiding principles of this investigation.

5.1. Approaching the Field

My interest in South American indigenous cultures, especially in Amazonian Indians has attracted my attention quite for a long time. I have visited Iquitos, an Amazonian jungle-city in the department of Loreto/Peru some years ago. The visit was intended to produce a video-documentary about *ayahuasca*-culture and its commercialization, in context of adventure-, and shamanic-tourism. I would often hear from the *mestizo* population in Iquitos, that there exist no 'real' Indians 'anymore' in the rainforests. So I started to research on the topic of Amazonian indigenous peoples. In the first place I was interested in the human-environment relationship, concerning religion and spirituality of indigenous peoples.

Later I started to become interested in material culture and Krampus-masks. The Krampus is an character in Alpine folklore, which has become an Austrian pop-icon during the last decades. I was really attracted by the stylistic variety of the masks and by the diversity of expressive features in so-called Krampus-masks. In 2013 I have produced another documentary film, focusing on Krampus-culture in Salzburg. I portrayed the culture surrounding the horned, hairy and trickster-like character of Krampus. The video film interpreted Krampus-culture as a spectacularized popular phenomenon for the young and old, re-"inventing" (Hobsbawm/Ranger 1983) national traditions, and revitalizing regional customs, and pagan traditions in the Alps. The figure of Krampus is worshipped by fans, who are fascinated by the material features of costume and gear. They are especially attracted by the fictional worlds of horror- and fantasy movies, which find expression in costumes and in Krampus-performances. These templates of the fantastic are worked into the wooden objects, and at the same time they are expressed by the masks itself. During the period of researching Krampus-masks in museums, -fairs, in exhibitions and in parades, I have

met a lot of young adults, who passionately collected Krampus-masks. Many collectors I have interviewed, explained to me that they perceived the masks as venerated works of art. These “Krampus-fanatics”, as they would often label themselves, highlight the creativity and the skill in craftsmanship of some mask carvers. Also the historical importance attributed to some masks, which some objects embody in their view, is appreciated by fans and mask collectors. This road brought me back to theoretical studies on material culture of indigenous people.

Reading the newspaper in autumn of 2017 about the public controversy surrounding *tsantsa*, I started to re-think the topic I wanted to write about in my master’s thesis. After reflecting about the public imaginations, especially about the “colonial fantasies” (compare Bhaba 1983) attached to *tsantsa*, my interest grew. I began to research on the topic of indigenous material culture, especially of Shuar and *tsantsa*. As a result I discovered the aspects of liminality and hybridity the objects are associated with, which seem to swing between various dichotomies. Being dead/alive, human/non-human, commodified art-/ethnographic object, Western curiosity/indigenous fetish, authentic/inauthentic, makes them an interesting subject to investigate. All these various attached meanings and facets of *tsantsa* started to gain my interest in writing this thesis and to enter the field of my research.

5.2. Introducing the Field Sites and Phases in Research

As laid out in (section 1.4.) the ethnographic field of this transnational study is composed of different locations in Austria and in Ecuador, and additionally on the Internet. The first of these locations is the auction house Dorotheum in Vienna, the second is the museum Haus der Natur (HdN) in Salzburg. The third site is composed of two Shuar communities, named (1) *Tawásap* and (2) *Kaapar*. Both communities are located between the cities of Puyo and Macas, in the *oriente* of Ecuador.

I have split the investigation into three phases: (I.) **explorative**, (II.) **data collection** and (III.) **data analysis**, which benefited in gaining an better overview for the research process.

During the (I.) **explorative phase** I have started to enter the ethnographic field of circulating *tsantsa*, by researching the Internet, reviewing and collecting existing literature on the topic. I have talked to experts, regarding the postcolonial discourse in which the researched objects are embedded in. I produced a work plan, giving the

opportunity to organize the objectives and working steps in a time line. This helped enormously to plan visits to relevant institutions, observe social processes and to interview informants. Qualitative approaches were used for gathering data.

In Austria the majority of the time during the phase of (II.) **data collecting**, was spent in Salzburg and in Vienna.

In Vienna I have visited the auction house Dorotheum (section 6.1.), located in the inner city of Vienna, supplementary to the Weltmuseum Wien, where I attended a workshop on dead bodies politics (see section 6.2.4.).

In Salzburg I have conducted research in the museum Haus der Natur (section 6.2.), a museum for natural history. My main informant in Salzburg was the co-director and curator Dr. Robert Lindner, at the museum HdN (Haus der Natur), whom I have interviewed. Additionally I talked to museum visitors, reviewed internal documents of the museum, and also had an expert talk with anthropologist Elke Mader.

In Ecuador I have spent a few days in the capital of Quito. There I visited the ethnographic museum, named *museo Amazonico Abya Yala* (section 6.3.) and the *museo Etnohistorico de Artesanias del Ecuador*. At *museo Amazonico Abya Yala* I had an expert talk with the museum's director and curator Nataly Orbe.

The main period of my research in Ecuador's *oriente*, I have spent between the two cities of Puyo and Macas. The former is located in the province of Pastaza and Macas is situated in the province of Morona-Santiago. I conducted interviews with a member of a Shuar community, named *Tawásap* (section 6.4.). This community lives near the city of Palora, located in the province of Morona-Santiago. At *Tawásap* I interviewed Nanki Tzamarenda. Situated between the two Amazonian cities of Puyo and Macas I have visited and talked to another community, named *Kapaar* (section 6.5.). At *Kapaar* I interviewed and spent time with the family Wampankit, who runs a family-run eco-tourist enterprise. In Puyo I spent time in an ethnobotanic park, named *Omaere*. I interviewed the owner Chris Canaday, who works there with his Shuar wife, Teresa Shiki and also young members of Shuar, and Achuar who work there as botanical guides.

5.3. Methodological Approaches

The following part meditates on the methodological approaches and methods, which were used in this research. For this investigation I have chosen a mix of different

ethnographic approaches, including (a) “multi-sited” ethnography (Marcus 1995), (b) “auto-ethnography” (Ellis/Bochner 2000) and (c) “virtual ethnography” (see Hine 2008, cited in Given 2008:924). Using various approaches gave me the opportunity as researcher, to frame the field from different angles.

(a) Multi-Sited Ethnography

In the framework of this transnational investigation, it was necessary to engage in a multi-sited ethnography, because the researcher in a transnational study is positioned between various contexts, cross-cutting the local and global, as well as to be able to switch from subjective “lifeworlds” to a “worldsystem” (Marcus 1995:98). This means that multi-sited ethnography enables the investigator to enter social micro- and macro-narratives of cultures, while carrying out research. For example, Appadurai’s idea of “scapes” allows researchers to enter different lifeworlds at once. George Marcus points out:

“Multi-sited research is designed around chains, paths, threads, conjunctions, or juxtapositions of locations in which the ethnographer establishes some form of literal, physical presence, with an explicit, posited logic of association or connection among sites that defines the argument of the ethnography” (Marcus 1995:105).

Several “different modes or techniques” are used by ethnographers, in order to “define their objects of study”, including: “*follow the people*”, “*follow the thing*”, “*follow the metaphor*”, “*follow the plot, story, or allegory*” or “*follow the life or biography*” and “*follow the conflict*” (Marcus 1995:106-110, emphasis in original). They are all methods to construct “different settings” (ibid.) within a project of research.

In this multi-sited approach, I trace the objects of interest with the strategy of “*follow the thing*” (Marcus 1995:106ff., emphasis in original). This includes “[...] tracing the circulation through different contexts of a manifestly material object of study [...], such as commodities, gifts, money, works of art, and intellectual property” (Marcus 1995:106f.). It also helps to “[...] examine the circulation of cultural meanings, objects and identities in diffuse time-space” (ibid.).

Appadurai’s (1986) approach of tracing a thing and its “social life”, allows researchers to look at different individual and institutional contexts, through which an object circulates. With this mode the investigator is able for example, to trace *tsantsa*, from preparation by Shuar producers to the spheres of exchange and consumption by European collectors, museums, auction houses or on the Internet.

The second mode used, is “following the biography” of objects. With this mode, it’s possible to track a thing through its life history or biography, like Kopytoff (1986) suggests in his approach. Narratives of “individual experiences” are being revealed, by using this strategy, in order to map the territory and track objects through landscapes within an ethnographic research.

(b) Autoethnography and Anthropology at Home

As a second research approach, I am using “autoethnography” (Ellis/Bochner 2000). This method is an autobiographical genre of writing and researching, displaying multiple layers of consciousness, which links the personal to the cultural (Ellis/Bochner 2000:739). The approach is situated between anthropology and literature studies. Chang understands the genre of “autoethnography” as a combination of “cultural analysis and interpretation with narrative details” (Chang 2008:46). The researcher studies and analyzes his/her own culture. Ellis and Bochner (2000) include labels like the following, among others: “autobiographical ethnography”, “auto-observation”, “ethnobiography”, “first-person accounts”, “ethnographic poetics”, “lived experience”, “narrative ethnography”, “personal ethnography” or “personal writing” (Ellis/Bochner 2000:739ff.). The postmodern approach of “autoethnography” promotes self reflection and narrating about personal worlds, in the sense of biographical episodes. It involves emic and etical stances in research, through which the anthropologist, his view both as cultural ‘insider’ and ‘outsider’ are investigated at the same time. The multiple roles researchers take on during the time in the field, may frame him/her as ethnographer, art-enthusiast, museum visitor or as tourist. With this said, the researcher is both, cultural producer and consumer at once, depending on the role one takes on within the investigated field. I took on the several outlined roles in order to switch between outsider and insider perspective at once. This stance helped me to reflect critically on the various roles I have as researcher, within the data gathering and -analysis process. To keep a professional distance and not to fall into the trap of *going native* was an important strategy for collecting relevant data inside my chosen field(s). It also was a great benefit to switch between my role as researcher, being an representative of the Western world, but also trying to gain an emic understanding of the researched groups and individuals I have spent time with.

(c) Virtual Research and Studying Virtual Worlds

As for the application in virtual worlds, such as studying social media, the use of a multi-sited research program is essential, in form of a “virtual ethnography” (see Given 2008:924). This approach gives the opportunity to analyze “social interactions” (ibid.) on the Internet and also to investigate experiences of virtual communities.

The Internet, as part of the *mediascape*, is understood in this study as a social sphere, from which information can be extracted from. The Internet is a “platform which enables to create technologies” (Miller 2010:110), rather than being a technology. Through this platform that produces technology, information is constructed, distributed and consumed. Daniel Miller points out that the Internet may also be studied through the lense of material culture. He emphasizes in his work *The Internet: An Ethnographic Approach* (2001) the following: “We would also affirm the Internet as an actant” (LaTour 1999, cited in Miller 2001:8). As “actant” (2005:54), the Internet possess *agency* and is part of a social network, what Bruno LaTour defined as Actor-Network-Theory (ANT). The Internet as agentive actor may therefore have effects on users as well. In the empirical part (section 6.5.), I will explain in more detail, how the Internet is used for “self-presentation” (see Goffman 1956) purposes. This contributes to understand, how performances are used in order to construct individual, and collective identities through the work of imagination.

One type of “virtual research” is concerned with analyzing “personal documents”, such as online “autobiographies, journals, or diaries” (Given 2008:927). Public posts on websites or on social media platforms are also included in the category of personal documents. But also “visual data”, like “iconic signs”, for example “[...] drawings, paintings, maps and other images” (Given 2008:929), including photographs, can be studied in an virtual environment. Photographs or other formats, such as textual descriptions, in form of visual material may be studied as “statements”, in which societies express beliefs (ibid. 2008:930), that may reflect their values. Included in the category of photographs are also screenshots of images, posted on the Internet. This approach gives the possibility to look at virtual worlds, especially on data related- and personal outputs of individuals, and groups.

5.4. Qualitative Research Methods

This investigation employs qualitative research methods, in order to gather relevant data sets, which were later analyzed and interpreted.

Qualitative research allows to gather data, concerning “words, images or behaviors”, with the purpose of generating and validating hypotheses (Namey/Trotter 2015:444). These data categories are researched by applying qualitative methods, with the intention of gathering relevant data. The main qualitative methods I have used in this investigation, can be summed up by the following three categories: (1) observation, (2) interviewing and (3) documentation (Namey/Trotter 2015:448f.).

(1) Observation

Using “participant observation” (see Malinowski 2001 [1922]:24ff.) was partly applied in my research in the form of overt and covert observations. Generally observed can be following categories:

“Physical environment (Structural and geographical features), Appearance of people (Demographics of individuals in the area, such as gender, estimated age and ethnicity and any noteworthy physical appearance), Verbal behaviour and interactions (Who speaks to whom and for how long, who initiates interaction; languages, or dialects spoken), Activities (Activities that occur in the area/venue; which people are engaged in which activities; duration of activities; temporal dimensions of activities), Movement (Who enters and exits the area, and how many; time individuals spend in the area [...])” (Namey and Trotter 2015:452).

All these observable factors contribute to gather relevant data, in order to construct a holistic picture of the investigated subject. They give the opportunity to complete other methods used, such as interviewing or documenting events or actions in the field. Observed were virtual performances on the website of the auction house Dorotheum (6.1.), museum performances at Hdn (6.3.) and touristic performances of a Shuar community (see 6.5.), that may be summed up as “cultural performances” (Lewis 2013).

(2) Interviewing

The *SAGE Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research* mentions that “interviewing” may be looked at as a “[...] conversational practice where knowledge is produced through an interviewer and interviewee” (Given 2008:470). This involves “speech acts”, in the sense of J. L. Austin, by which the communicating actors interact with each other through spoken language.

I applied both “structured-” and “unstructured” interviews as methodological instruments. Also “expert interviews” (Atteslander 2008:131) and informal talks are conducted, besides methods of observing and documenting.

(3) Documentation

In order to document interviews, as well as to map the visual sphere in research, I employed audio- and visual methods of documentation. Recording audio in interview situations was a necessary step during this investigation. The audio recordings were used to transcribe and establish codes later in the phase of analyzing collected primary data. Visually documenting and deploying methods from the field of visual anthropology were also central to this investigation. One reason was, because the ethnographic focus of this research is on material objects.

In visual anthropology, especially two sources of data are of great importance. Banks and Morphy point out that these “two main bodies of data” are “visual recordings” and “material products of culture” (Banks/Morphy 1997:14). The first category, namely “visual recordings”, consists of photographs, drawings, illustrations, including graphics. For the second category, the authors Banks and Morphy (1997) name for example “material products of culture”, including artifacts. But also photographs fall into this category, which are also treated as material products.

Photography and Visual Documentation

From an theoretical point of view, photography is used as a tool, used to document the research process visually. Using visual methods is central to this research. Visual-anthropologist Sarah Pink (2001) presents the idea, that photography has already been used for quite a long time in ethnographic research. She remarks that the camera has been a “[...] mandatory element of the ‘tool kit’ for research for several generations of ethnographers” (see Pink 2001:49). In the twenty-first century it is nearly ‘standard’ that anthropologists utilize cameras in research. Nowadays electronic devices, such as digital cameras or mobile phones with built-in cameras are widely available and cheap. Mobile phones have already become instruments, which nearly any scientist uses in the field. These multi-functional devices may be used as photo- or video cameras, but also as audio recorders.

In the nineteenth century Alfred Cort Haddon has used photography and film during the Torres-Straits-Expedition in 1898/1899. Also Margaret Mead and Gregory Bateson used photography as a “method of recording and representing” (ibid. 2003) the cultural Other. In the case of Mead and Bateson, it was Balinese culture, that the two researchers have investigated ethnographically, supported by the use of visual methods. They showed, how photographs linked with textual comments may help to “deepen ethnographic understanding” (Ball/Smith 1992:14). Therefore two sources of

data are available to ethnographic researchers, (a) visual data and (b) written texts, which both may be used by ethnographers to investigate their subjects.

Banks and Morphy (1997) think that photography and film allow the researcher to “[...] make a permanent record of events and objects observed, to retain them for subsequent analysis, or use them in the further elicitation of information” (ibid.). Recording events or/and objects visually allows ethnographers to later restudy, and reanalyze collected data.

Photography is used in this research to visually document social interactions of people, as well as with objects, such as focusing on the interaction of people with artifacts. But also physical places, like landscapes, streets, parks or buildings were recorded photographically. I mainly used two devices for the steps described above, the first being a mobile phone, the second a DSLR (digital single-lens reflex) photo camera. Using a DSLR camera gives the opportunity to use raw data format (RAW). This helped me to magnify photographs and to study their content meticulously on a computer screen.

Another method of visual documentation was used, besides photography. Taking screenshots of online texts, maps, drawings, photographs and graphics as “personal documents” (Given 2008), were all necessary steps in order to collect other visual material on the Internet, including social media sites, as secondary data source.

Audio Documentation

Besides taking photographs and screenshots, also recording audio was an essential part for this investigation, in order to record interviews or talks with interlocutors. Interviews were conducted in German, English and in Spanish language. Sometimes I used my mobile phone, on other occasions I recorded audio with a professional audio recorder.

Drawing and Fieldnotes

I also used drawing as a data gathering method. I drew a draft of an exhibition at Haus der Natur/Salzburg (see **FIG 8**), which helped me to later restudy the internal organization of the exhibiton and also to look at the placement of the objects within the museum space. During the whole research process fieldnotes were taken and a field diary was used. Both were later transcribed and stored on my computer. The textualisation helped to organize gathered data, to reflect on problems, but also to express emotions, thoughts and ideas in a textual form.

5.5. Data Analysis and Interpretation

The last phase, the (III.) **data analysis** stage, including interpretation, was mainly spent in Austria, after visiting Ecuador in January and February 2019. Already while being in the field, I tried to immediately file and review gathered data and to assess continuously produced results, and findings.

Used for this research were various sources of data, including primary- and secondary data, as well as literature, including gray literature. For the category of primary data I have included interview transcripts of audio recordings, memory minutes, artifacts (physical and virtual), exhibition plans, texts, in the form of panels used in exhibitions, but also drawings and photographs used in exhibitions, but also photographs of museum exhibitions, as well as observation protocols. Secondary data consisted of website screenshots, including photographs, graphics and texts, catalogues, as well as institutional statements or -reports.

The analysis stage of collected qualitative data is concerned with the “systematic analysis of qualitative data” (Namey/Trotter 2015:468). The questions *what*, *how*, *who*, *when* and *where* were all of great importance during this stage of research. Included in data analysis of this research, were the following steps (see Namey/Trotter 2015:468): (1) reading/reviewing data, (2) identifying key concepts and ideas, (3) coding data, (4) summarizing coded data in order to look for patterns and relationships among themes, the frequency of themes, as well as reducing collected data into categories.

Textual analysis included to decode “[...] common codes, terms, ideologies, discourses and individuals that come to dominate cultural outputs” (Pickering 2008:56). This translates as, asking the questions who is the producer of cultural products? Who is represented how, in the context of institutional representation of material objects? The focus was to look at changing meanings of the discussed objects, within different contexts.

Semiotics as Method for Analyzing Data

Generally speaking, “semiotics”, as part of linguistics, is the analytical method for studying signs, systems or processes of communication (Nöth in Margolis et al. 2011:298). In order to analyze visual content, like pictures, e.g. photographs or graphics, I applied “visual semiotics” (Nöth in Margolis et al. 2011:299), as a mean to “read” pictures as semiotic signs. Visual semiotics helped me as researcher to

interpret or read the exhibited objects as signs, or as forms of representation. For this reason I used “poetics- and politics of exhibiting” (Lidchi 1997). In visual semiotics, “images” are understood as “visual signs”, which refer to “something else” (Margolis et al. 2011:590). These signs are interpreted to decode their symbolic content and inherent narrative.

Meanings of photographs are never fixed. They always depend on the viewer, who interprets them. For this reason they are arbitrary. With this bearing in mind, the photos I have taken are not exclusively “ethnographic”. But to paraphrase Pink, they are photographs with “ethnographic interest” (Pink 2001:51). For my fieldwork, the photographs I shot were meaningful to document social lifeworlds.

Data Interpretation

Analytical tools used in this study were the approaches *grounded theory* and *qualitative content analysis*.

Grounded Theory

I used *grounded theory* (see Glaser/Strauss 1967) as an “inductive methodology” (Cho/Lee 2014:2), with the intention to obtain and conceptualize data in my research. This included collecting, coding data and building a theory. Charmaz and Bryant point out, that “Grounded theorists engage in data collection and analysis simultaneously” (Charmaz/Bryant 2010:292). *Grounded theory* is a process of comparing data with codes and trying to analyze collected material. It is a “[...] constant movement between data, coding and theory” (Silverman 2014:123). Breaking down, identifying and labelling categories from multiple sources, and selecting samples during research is central to this procedure. The process of breaking down collected data into categories and grouping concepts is an important step for interpretation.

Qualitative Content Analysis

In order to bring written and oral data into categories, I have used *qualitative content analysis* (Mayring 2014) as a method for analyzing collected data. This strategy allows to interpret “[...] the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns” (Cho/Lee 2014:3). I identified recurring themes in the texts I have collected, then summarized and reduced data, put information into relevant categories, and subcategories. I established general codes for the analyzed data categories, in order to attribute those codes to other data

content, which were then analyzed. The intention behind this step is to detect patterns of finalized categories in other materials and to assign them with the same codes. Included were written texts, like interviews, texts in museum exhibitions or posts on social media platforms. I coded and identified themes in the texts I have analyzed before. I looked for recurring themes in collected data, reduced and coded relevant content of textual data.

Narrative Analysis

I applied the analytical tool of *narrative analysis* (see Silverman 2014) in order to see what narratives are told through discussed artifacts, visual- and textual data. In museums or in auction houses, one could ask: Which stories are told by the narrator (curator or auctioneer) to the visitors or bidders? How are characters or actors and objects placed in a museum, in relation to other objects?

This process helped me to look at the internal structure (form and function) of the stories and segments of the exhibition *Tiere & Lebensräume*, told by the museum Haus der Natur (see section 6.2.7.). Also analyzed were photographs and the information, provided by interview partners, because they also contain narratives.

Artifact Analysis

Additionally an “artefact analysis” (Given 2008:23) was applied, in order to identify the authenticity of *tsantsa*. I inspected the material “features” (Houlton/Wilkinson 2016) of shrunken heads. This step was important to compare visual features of ceremonial *tsantsa* and commercial shrunken heads. Therefore I applied Houlton’s and Wilkinson’s model (2016). The analysis procedure, used for *tsantsa* and commercial shrunken heads by Houlton and Wilkinson (2016) consists of 16 points, corresponding to material features of the objects, which determine their authenticity. The results are presented in the empirical part (see section 6.2.5.).

5.6. Ethical Considerations in Ethnographic Research

In order to ensure correct ethical conduct towards informants within my ethnographic investigation, I tried to act professionally and seriously.

For this reason I followed the ethical guidelines of the American Anthropological Association (AAA). Especially correct ethical codes of behaviour towards investigated individuals and groups, but also regarding obtained results, the scientific community, my sponsors and towards governments, were of great importance in the context of

this research. I weighed out not to bring stakeholders into harmful positions or situations, which could affect them negatively (compare URL Ethics AAA). Towards my informants and interviewees I always tried to be transparent and honest. I would inform interlocutors verbally about my objectives and explained the goals of the research. I have also tried to brief interviewees before audio recording interviews or shooting photographs. Additionally I showed my informants questionnaires prior to interviewing. I also informed them what will happen with the collected data and asked for their consent.

To be honest and transparent with informants also bears the problem, that some persons will deny to be interviewed. This was often the case, when trying to interview tribal art collectors online. I also tried to respect biases and political standpoints of stakeholders, and to withhold from critique, even if positions were contrasting my personal points of view. This involved for example, talking with *mestizos* or with members of the white population in Ecuador about indigenous peoples and politics.

The following (chapter 6.) is the empirical part of this thesis. It will provide the reader with information, regarding my ethnographic research in Austria, Ecuador and on the Internet.

6. EMPIRICAL PART: TRANSNATIONAL CIRCULATING TSANTSA

The first section of this empirical part (chapter 6.) engages in a general theoretical discussion about appropriation of non-Western objects by the art world and art market. The second part discusses the findings and results of the investigation. In (section 6.1.) auction house Dorotheum in Vienna is investigated. The next part (section 6.2.) focuses on the museum Haus der Natur in Salzburg and the following parts concentrate on two case studies, involving Shuar communities in Ecuador, (a) *Tawásap* (section 6.4.) and (b) *Kaapar* (section 6.5.).

Transnational processes within a globalized world are characterized by following central aspects: acceleration, dissolution of boundaries and fragmentation (see Hannerz 1996). These unbounded and fragmented worlds are framed through ontological dimensions, of which they are part of. Circulating indigenous objects, images and identities are “extracted” (Comaroff/Comaroff 2009:29), they are culturally appropriated by the modern “Western inscription of commodity production”, as an aspect of the Western colonial enterprise (see Price 1989; Phillips/Steiner 1999:4).

General questions concerning the **international art world** and **art market** include:

- ***How can transnationally circulating tsantsa be decolonized, as being part of a global economy?***
- *How are tsantsa commodified by the art-culture system?*
- *How are they appropriated and recontextualized by the global art worlds and on art markets?*
- *What different categories of value are ascribed to the objects?*

Question, relating to the **auction house** Dorotheum discuss:

- *How are tsantsa represented as authentic “tribal art” works on Dorotheum’s website?*
- *How does the auction house Dorotheum represent Shuar as a cultural group using written text and photographs?*
- *What identity is created/imagined for the Shuar through the presentation of tsantsa?*
- *How can we detect deception and manipulation on the objects?*

- *What criterias are used to increase the creation of value and price?*
- *How should we classify the displayed objects on the website?*

Questions in the context of **museum** Haus der Natur include:

- *How are tsantsa museally performed and represented?*
- *What story is told about the Shuar at museum Haus der Natur?*
- *How should indigenous artifacts be treated, in context of postcolonial demands of repatriation?*

Questions regarding the research in **Ecuador** are the following:

- *How are Shuar identities expressed through material culture in context of self-exoticizing performances?*
- *What role does tsantsa play for Shuar as being part of their cultural patrimony and -memory?*

As explained in the theoretical part (chapter 4.), when embedding indigenous artifacts, here *tsantsa*, into global “art worlds” (Becker 1982; Marcus/Myers 1995:57) and on the transnational “art market”⁵ (Fillitz 2014), such objects are recontextualized by the “art-culture system” (see Clifford 1988).

Howard S. Becker understands the “art world” as a social “[...] network of people whose cooperative activity, organized via their joint knowledge of conventional means of doing things, produces the kind of art works that art world is noted for” (Becker 1982:x). These networks consist of human actors, holding different “tasks” (ibid.) in the production and consumption of works of art. These “cooperative networks” involve individuals (artists, curators, gallerists and collectors), who make up the “art world” (Becker 1982:1), which is to be understood through the social relations, of which it is comprised of. In this investigation these networks consist of Shuar as the creator community, who produces the artwork and auction houses and museums who appropriate, distribute, and present former indigenous objects to consumers, the public.

The following (section 6.1.) investigates the online presentation of *tsantsa* as authenticated “tribal art” on the website of the auction house Dorotheum in Vienna.

⁵ Social-anthropologist Thomas Fillitz remarks that the “global art market” (or transnational art market) consists of “three economic fields”, (a) auction houses, (b) art fairs and (c) galleries (Fillitz 2014:84).

6.1. DOROTHEUM VIENNA: Art Market, *Tsantsa* and “Tribal Art”

“As everyone knows, publishing or exhibiting an object [...] raises its value” (Schildkrout 2001).

As remarked in the introduction, on October 31st 2017, the Viennese Dorotheum organized the *Auction Tribal Arts and Curiosity Sale*. In total 122 artifacts were offered for sale, including two Shuar *tsantsa*, lot nr. 207, EUR 25.000 (starting price EUR 20.000) (URL Dorotheum 1) and lot nr. 284, EUR 32.500 (estimated value EUR 6.000 – 7.000) (URL Dorotheum 2).

This introduction brings me to the first part of this section, which reflects on the production of “tribal art” works, in the context of the auction house, as being part of the international art world and -market.

Theory, Analytical Focus and Argument

When *tsantsa* enter auction houses, as part of the secondary “art market”, they have already been exchanged by many individuals, including the indigenous producer in the “creator community” (Byrne 2011:7), dealer, curator, private collector (see Karsten 2000 [1935]; Staub 1939; Harner 1972; Rubenstein 2007).

Often these objects were private collectibles before entering auctions. Many times collectors resell such objects and in many cases they arrive in museums as donations (see section 6.2.). They are often resold and are being offered in auction houses or on the Internet.

This part meditates on two *tsantsa*, displayed on the website of the Viennese auction house Dorotheum. I discuss how the objects are offered for sale as commodified “tribal art” works. They are selectively “defined” (Geismar 2001:26) through “certification” and by “singularization” (Fillitz 2015:12-14).

I engage in a multimodal website analysis as a form of a “social and cultural statement” (Pauwels 2012). I (1) look at the presentation (visual/textual), and at the meaning attached, by investigating (2) what story is being told through displaying the objects in form of photographs with textual descriptions. *Tsantsa* as indigenous objects are researched as participating in the field of the global “art market”, which is part of the “art world”, set within a postcolonial context.

I discuss how the objects are appropriated and how they are intentionally recontextualized by the Western “art-culture system” in form of commercially produced shrunken heads and then offered as “ceremonially” used *tsantsa*. The part

shows how certain criterias are highlighted through online presentation. Within this process an “[...] identity selected from its various cultural histories” (Geismar 2001:26) is created. I use the concept of “authenticity” of material culture (Fillitz 2015), in order to show how the objects on display are offered and represented.

Furthermore I concentrate on how “deceptive intentions” (Dutton 2003 n.p.) and manipulative strategies (Steiner 1994) might be used as a form of “certification” (Warnier 1994:20ff, cited in Fillitz 2015:14). I argue, that alterations on offered objects may be applied with the goal to increase a “speculative” price (Fillitz 2014), as being part of the “logic of gambling” (ibid.) in auctions.

Criteria included in the multimodal framework for analyzing the website (Pauwels 2011) are the following:

- First impression: categorizing ‘look and feel’ at glance
- Features/topics used in text
- Content: visual and written signifiers; layout and design
- Points of view (voice) and audience: analyzing goals/purposes

To link these ideas to the concept of authenticity of the objects in discussion, it is important to look at the form of representation, used by the auction house. Therefore the following questions need to be addressed:

- *How are tsantsa represented on Dorotheum’s website as authentic “tribal art” works?*
- *How does the auction house Dorotheum represent Shuar as a cultural group using written text and photographs?*
- *What identity is created/imagined for the Shuar through the presentation of tsantsa?*
- *How can we detect deception and manipulation on the objects?*
- *What criterias are used to increase the creation of value and price?*
- *How should we classify the displayed objects on the website?*

The online presentation is viewed as a virtual performance. The auction house presents itself as an “theater of the exotic”, where curious objects are offered for sale. *Tsantsa* are acting as performing actors, the auctioneer is the director, who tells a story to the audience, the potential bidders. The presented textual description is the script, and the website is framed as stage, where the story is taking place.

History of Auction House Dorotheum in Vienna

The modern auction houses have developed during the seventeenth century in northern Europe (Geismar 2001:30).

The Dorotheum in Vienna was established in **1707** by Austrian Emperor Joseph I. and is “today the largest auction house in German-speaking Europe” (see URL Dorotheum History). The auction house Dorotheum is located in the Dorotheergasse, situated in the capital of Austria. The company is privately owned since **2001** (ibid.).

Auction houses are portrayed by Schildkrout as being a “[...] novel mixture of sacred art museum and profane luxury boutique that lend the environment its charge” (URL Schildkrout). In this sense, auction houses may be viewed as places, where indigenous objects are venerated and sold as luxurious commodified art pieces. Also Fillitz (2014) describes auction houses as being defined by their exclusivity. These exclusive sites are composed of a specific category of individuals, the art collectors or connoisseurs, which the author understands as “UHNW (ultra high net worth) collectors, in other words, multimillionaires” (Fillitz 2014:87). Art collectors are defined by their economic power and therefore not everyone may participate in what Appadurai understands as “tournaments of value” (Appadurai 1986). Fillitz adds, that auction houses are “[...] characterized by the market from gambling”, but they are also “spectacle” and “lifestyle” (ibid. 2014).

6.1.1. *Tsantsa* as Works of “Tribal Art”

The term “tribal” has been used as a synonym for “primitive” (URL Tribal Art). Since the 1970s the designation of “primitive art” has been displaced, in favour of the categories “nonwestern art”, “tribal art”, “the art of small-scale societies” (see Myers 2005) or “ethnographic art” (Dutton 1998). Although the term “tribal art” and “primitive art” are sometimes still used. Both are very problematic designations, because they are built upon colonial representations of the cultural Other. This relationship between “tribal” or “primitive” cultures on one side and modern societies on the other end, is based upon an asymmetrical model of racial categorization and cultural evolutionism. The former category is imagined as inferior or as the colonized indigenous groups and the latter as superior societies, the European colonizers. At the very heart of this problem lies the universalist model of Western “inscription” (Phillips/Steiner 2009) and of a global hegemony, from which the concept of cultural appropriation and consumption of other cultures derives from.

Yates stresses, that the trade and market in “antiquities”, including objects of the category “tribal art”, are “neocolonial” (Yates 2016:3). Redefining indigenous cultural objects can be viewed as a neocolonial practice, because in most cases the source group is not actively involved within the process of the objects’ redefinition. Generally speaking, indigenous objects are extracted from their original cultural context and are then recontextualized. Often this happens without the consent of the source communities and is realized by non-indigenous actors, involving auctioneers.

6.1.2. Discussing Authenticity

To begin discussing the theoretical concept of authenticity in relation to *tsantsa*, as commodified “tribal art” works, it is necessary to look at different definitions, regarding the terms of authenticity. I will then proceed on analyzing the website of Dorotheum and studying the presentation of the two pieces offered by the auction house.

Thomas Fillitz describes in his work *Debating Authenticity* (2015) the concept of authenticity as the following: “[...] the work of art has been used in a traditional way” (2015:12). This statement refers authenticity to the source community, who (a) produces objects in a specific style, which is typical for a “specific” cultural group, and (b) uses the objects in a traditional manner.

Another helpful definition of authenticity in context of “tribal art” is used by Denis Dutton (2003). He discriminates between two different strands of authenticity:

(a) “nominal authenticity” and (b) “expressive authenticity” (Dutton 2003).

Nominal authenticity refers to “[...] the correct identification of the origins, authorship or provenance of an object [...]” (Dutton 2003). This is to be understood, in the sense of how the object was used in the first place and the original meaning attached to the object by the “creator community” (Byrne 2011). *Expressive authenticity* is associated with “[...] an object’s character as a true expression of an individual’s society’s values and beliefs” (Dutton 2003 n.p.). This second category attributes authenticity to the culture’s worldview and its values, and beliefs.

Warnier links authenticity to objects which are “inalienable” (Warnier 1994, cited in Fillitz 2015:11). This association makes objects authentic, when they were produced for a specific purpose of use within a society and not for purely commercial exchange. The cited authors altogether link authenticity to a specific way, in which the objects are used within the creator group and are not produced for export. They also point to the attached meaning objects have within this context.

But as for the point, that objects are produced for local use, Thomas Fillitz thinks that authenticity may also be attributed to commodities as well, which are produced for exchange. He argues, based on Kopytoff's idea (1986), that the criteria of "[...] singularization is the process within the exchange situation, by which traders, marketing agencies, other specialists and specialized institutions create the authentic quality of the commodity" (Fillitz 2015:12). The auction house is one of such "specialized institutions", who singularizes and produces commodities as, and then exchanges them. Singularized objects are often associated with the "[...] symbolic inventory of a society: public lands, monuments, state art collection [...] chiefly insignia, ritual objects, and so on" (Kopytoff 1986:73). Such ritual objects are ceremonially produced *tsantsa*, which are commoditized by the "art-culture system", here by the auction house Dorotheum. Those are then offered to bidders, who are willingly to purchase such items.

Another criteria in assessing authenticity for commodities, is "certification". This refers to the nominality of the objects, the ascribed "[...] place of origin, the singular materiality used, the particular production process, the local people involved" (Warnier 1994:20ff, cited in Fillitz 2015:14). These criterias, thinks Geismar (2001) are all playing part in constructing economic value and determining the price on the art market economy.

As we have seen, "singularization" refers to an attributed uniqueness of an object. This may be associated with the character of an object, here *tsantsa*, their specific use in the culture of Shuar or by the way it was produced by an Shuar headshrinker.

To conclude, referring authenticity to material objects in the context of works of "tribal art", following points are included so far: (1) an traditional purpose of use, (2) a distinct region, (3) the use of regional material, and (4) being produced by a local producer, in a (5) specific way, or style, typical for a region and are (6) used by Shuar in rituals. In this context inauthenticity would mean the opposite or the missing of elaborated features on material objects. All those authenticity criterias are in general attributed to all works of "primitive art" or "tribal art".

***Tsantsa* on Dorotheum's Website**

Contemplating on the above described criterias, *tsantsa* are then only authentic in their indigenous context, when they are (1) produced as ceremonial objects for ceremonial purposes, (2) made out of an member of an Jívaroan individual (4)

created by an Shuar artist, and (5) made in a specific way, and are (6) only used inside Shuar culture.

In the Shuar context *tsantsa* are religious objects (see chapter 2.), associated with spiritual *agency* (see Karsten 2000 [1935]; Harner 1972; Mader 1999; Chacon 2007; Rubenstein 2007). This contrasts the Western aesthetic attribution to the objects when appropriated as art objects. Being recontextualized through traffic, the objects are recreated as commodified “tribal” or “primitive” artworks and they are also described in the same moment as ethnographic artifacts. At the auction house Dorotheum, as being part of the art market system, the auctioneer classifies and certifies non-Western objects as authentic, by “singularization”. Auctioneers use certain criterias to authenticate the objects, for example highlighting the aspects of use in their original habitat. They attribute certain associations to the object, like that of being used in an traditional way by the creator community or that the objects in discussion are made out of a certain material. These attributions are used in order to create a new identity for the object and to designate them as authentic, within the context of an global art market.

As we have seen until now, the concept of authenticity is ambiguous and multivocal, in the sense that the meaning, and the attribution of authenticity depends on the cultural context, in which objects are valued. I have also described that authenticity is a socioculturally constructed category.

Looking at the website of Dorotheum (URL Dorotheum 1/2), the first impression of the “look and feel” (Pauwels 2011:577f.) is neutral. The homepage is held simple in its layout and design. Used are only the colors white for the background, black and red are used for the letters. Photographs are added (see **FIG 6** & **FIG 7**) in order to illustrate the items visually to the potential bidder. The pieces are mounted on poles and are shown from the angles of front- and side profile. The elements of the text are describing the items formally, including the lot nr., date and place of the auction, contact information, time of inspection, but also prices are listed. Additionally the cultural context of the creator community’s production and usage is described textually.

Shuar are presented and introduced as a “tribal group”, who are portrayed as the only ones “[...] who once traditionally produced shrunken heads” (see URL Dorotheum 1/2). The indigenous religious meaning and spiritual concepts, associated with the objects are described too, followed by the production process, as explained

above. Then the historical context, in which the beginning of the commercial trade of *tsantsa* is discussed and the fact is explained, that most pieces offered by the art market are counterfeit. At the end of the textual description the provenance of the object is listed too. Two photographs, which can be magnified in high resolution, are added on the website. Both offered artifacts are described as pieces of “tribal art” on the website directory.

The designation “tribal art” has a flavor of timelessness, which fetishizes the ethnic Shuar peoples as “tribes” and as they would be living in the past.

For Marcus and Myers, the economic function of “primitive art” is highlighted via “circulation, exhibition and consumption” of artifacts, which includes “colonial relations” (see Marcus/Myers 1995). Transforming non-Western artifacts into works of art and into commodities is part of the recontextualization of “exotic objects” (MacClancy 1997). MacClancy writes in his article *A Natural Curiosity: The British Market in Primitive Art* (1997), that “Most objects are not thought to express a personal vision but the occult forces of a native region” (MacClancy 1997:33). In context of this quote, the presented objects become mystified, by imagining the place of their origin as “occult” and therefore as exotic. It reminds of Joseph Conrad’s novel *Heart of Darkness* (1899) and the gloomy atmosphere in his description of the colonial Congo, during the reign of King Leopold II. Also Sally Price thinks, that the image and portrayal of native regions and indigenous societies and their supposed ‘primitiveness’, produced by the Western modernity, is many times associated with “[...] fear, darkness, pagan spirits, and eroticism” (Price 1989:37). The fascination with “primitive art” is dual, thinks the author Price. It is based upon repulsion and attraction at once, as the guiding principles (ibid.). Death and sexuality are here the prime aspects of the perceived exoticized image of the cultural Other, which is based on *othering*, especially using a *colonial gaze*. In this context, the loss of a fictionalized primal world springs from the repressed “primitive drives” (Price 1989) in Western civilization, paired with the feeling of nostalgia, in the age of modernity. Western longing on returning to a primal state, is here psychologically projected on non-Western artifacts and on whole ‘uncivilized’ societies. The intention behind this practice is possibly to fill the gap of the ‘lost’ imagined past of the exotic others, who are believed as the antithesis of a modern world. Especially Shuar are imagined by the Western world as the exotic others, who are mystified and perceived as ethnically essentialized fierce, and warlike groups, who engage in head-hunting raids,

witchcraft practices, and in ritual killings (see Karsten 2000 [1935]; Harner 1972; Münzel 1977).



FIG 6 *Tsantsa #1* Dorotheum (lot nr. 207) **Source:** Dorotheum (Screenshot)

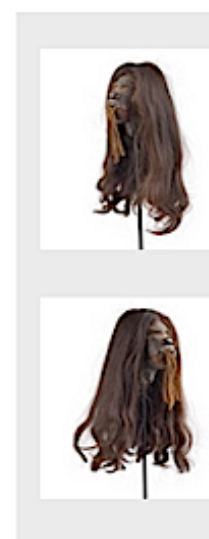


FIG 7 *Tsantsa #2* Dorotheum (lot nr. 284) **Source:** Dorotheum (Screenshot)

To acquire a work of “tribal art” is a way to possess a material object, which may fill

this longing, in order to symbolically take part within an imagined primitive past of other cultures.

The first item, lot nr. 207 is offered by the auction house Dorotheum, as “zeremonieller Schrumpfkopf” [ceremonial shrunken head]. In the English version of the website, the heading labels the object as ‘ceremonial’ shrunken head. The second object, lot nr. 284 is characterized on the website’s heading, simply as “a shrunken head”, without labelling the item as ‘ceremonial’. Both *tsantsa* are described in the textual as “echt” [genuine] (see URL Dorotheum 1/2).

It is now important to trace the biographies and to ask how these objects found their way into the auction house. On the website of the auction house Dorotheum, which offers the “shrunken heads”, the texts of both items state, that the items are part of private collections.

Melchardt’s description also includes the discussion of the production process of ceremonial *tsantsa* (also see chapter 2.). Therefore the auctioneer uses the aspect, that the objects were produced and used in a certain “traditional way”. This step is a form of certification and raises the authentic character, which is created by the auctioneer. Visible markers giving, such as visual cues, which hold reference to the respective ethnic identity and domestic use of the objects as ritual artifacts, are the mounted decorative elements. These cues include attached colored toucan feathers, beetle wings on the object, lot nr. 207 and the sewed up mouths, wooden pegs in the lips, long hair, closed eyes, and blackened skin. These decorative elements render additionally the offered *tsantsa* as “genuine”.

6.1.3. Counterfeit *Tsantsa* and the Criteria of Rareness

“A forgery is defined as a work of art whose history of production is misrepresented by someone (not necessarily the artist) to an audience (possibly to a potential buyer of the work), normally for financial gain”
(Dutton 2003).

The sale of *tsantsa* is known since approximately the 1850s (compare chapter 2. & chapter 3.). During this period they have already been incorporated into a global economy (Karsten 2000 [1935]; Staub 1939; Harner 1972; Rubenstein 2007; Houlton/Wilkinson 2016). Especially travellers, ethnographers, adventurers, missionaries or art enthusiasts acquired *tsantsa* of Shuar peoples, during this historical period. Often *tsantsa* were traded by the “Jívaros” (Shuar) with *mestizos*

and Westerners in exchange for utility items, such as machetes, iron axes or guns, which also lead to an increase in producing *tsantsa* (Sterling 1938; Münzel 1977:248ff.; Steel 1999; Rubenstein 2007:365ff.). During this historical period also the Western request for *tsantsa* soared. Also the steep enquiry lead to the scenario, that Shuar produced imitations, commercialized forms of *tsantsa* or “commercial shrunken heads” (see Houlton/Wilkinson 2016), only to meet the demands of Westerners. The objects were locally manufactured by Shuar or other non-Shuar (see Up de Graff 1923; Stirling 1938). Many times these items were produced out of non-Shuar individuals and exported as commodities, exclusively intended for sale on transnational markets (ibid.). US-American and European collectors, including ethnographers bought *tsantsa* imitations in the form of touristic souvenirs, and collected them as ethnographic specimen. *Tsantsa* arrived in European and North American museums, auction houses, and in homes as exotic works of “tribal art”.

As already noted above (see also chapter 3.), *tsantsa* were traded by Shuar with *mestizos* and Whites (Stirling 1938:76), which Steel describes as “heads-for-guns trade” (Steel 1999:754ff.). One of the first references of produced counterfeit *tsantsa* is the year 1872 (see Philippi 1872:343 in Stirling 1938:76).

The demand of Europeans and US-Americans for *tsantsa* grew. On the other hand the Shuar’s demand for rifles and machetes culminated in a “boom” of trading weapons for heads. Shuar produced more *tsantsa* than before. They waged wars and murdered innocents, in order to satisfy the growing demand of curious Western collectors on one hand (compare Stirling 1938:76; Steel 1999:755f.). On the other hand, killing became easier, because of the availability of new imported weapons (compare Steel 1999).

Made out of non-indigenous individuals, goatskin, monkeys or sloths, counterfeit *tsantsa* were produced during the end of the nineteenth and at the beginning of the twentieth century (see Up de Graff 1923; Stirling 1938; Münzel 1977; Houlton/Wilkinson 2016). Through “Western inscription” (see Price 1989; Phillips/Steiner 1999:4), also counterfeit *tsantsa* were evaluated by art markets as authentic pieces of “tribal art” or as what John and Jean Comaroff describe as “ethno commodities” (see Comaroff/Comaroff 2009). The boundaries became blurred between the categories authentic and inauthentic, including the rise of imitations, fakes, and of genuine *tsantsa*, which arrived in the United States and in Europe.

The objects on Dorotheum’s website are represented as commodified “tribal art”

objects and as ethnographic artifacts at the same time, due to their textual description. Both of these categories are defined by different forms of value. The former is associated with scientific- or cultural value, the latter with the aesthetic.

The form of the object's online presentation explains to potential bidders, similar to ethnographic museums, the supposed cultural use of *tsantsa*. Through written means and photographic representation, the discussed objects become tangible, but also attractive to interested individuals. A visual point of reference is created, so that the objects may be better marketed. The expertise of the curator in the accompanying text highlights the material features of the offered "authentic" ceremonial items, intended to lure possible bidders into bidding. Similar to Steiner's example of African middlemen, who act as "cultural brokers" (1994:130f.), the auctioneer may be described as a "mediator" (ibid.), who facilitates cultural knowledge about the offered objects to potential bidders. He uses the same strategies as Steiner (1994) describes in his African ethnographic case, such as (1) presenting, (2) describing and (3) altering artifacts, in order to appeal rare, and attractive to Western collectors.

A selective presentation of the offered objects is created, through representing Shuar peoples stereotypically. The "creator community" (Byrne 2011:7) is rendered through selective cultural traits, such as engaging in war and head-hunting. Both imaginations reproduce negative stereotypical images of the Amazonian Indian.

The textual description of the object with lot nr. 284 states, that the head trophy is "A 'Tsantsa' shrunken head, with long hair, tied up mouth, ear ornaments and carrying strap. 19th century. Very rare!" (URL Dorotheum 2)

As remarked in the methodological part (section 5.5.), Tobias Houlton and Caroline Wilkinson (2016) designed a model for comparing and discriminating between "ceremonial *tsantsa*" and "commercial shrunken heads" (see Houlton/Wilkinson 2016:2). The authors estimate that around "[...] 80% of existing shrunken heads currently residing in museums and private collections, are commercially produced counterfeits" (Houlton/Wilkinson 2016:2). This quote implies that auction houses are also affected by this statement, because most items were in possession of private collectors or part of museum collections, before entering auction houses.

What is missing in Houlton's and Wilkinson's analysis, is the point that even when a Shuar producer would have manufactured intentionally a commercial shrunken head in the same procedure, as he would produce a ceremonial object, the product would be authentic, but only as a copy. But the commercial shrunken head would still be

regarded as counterfeit, in terms of a ceremonial *tsantsa*, when looked through the criterias of authenticity, which were discussed in the beginning of this investigation.

The factor of *nominal authenticity*, described by Dutton as “[...] the correct identification of the origins, authorship or provenance of an object [...]” (Dutton 2003), which attributes authenticity to its traditional ‘ceremonial’ usage. This point is also missing in the analysis of Houlton and Wilkinson. Nobody knows, whether one of Houlton’s and Wilkinson’s analyzed *tsantsa* was produced intentionally as a ceremonial object or if it was used in a traditional way, meaning ceremonially produced and used by members of Shuar.

Another factor, stated by auctioneer Melchardt in the textual description of Dorotheum’s website, is that Shuar have ended producing *tsantsa* “[...] towards the end of the 19th century” (URL Dorotheum 1). Melchardt’s statement contradicts both Daniel Steel’s (1999) and Steven Rubenstein’s (2007) positions. Steel (1999:753ff.) argues that Shuar culture experienced between 1850-1915 an “[...] intensification of Shuar head-hunting raids”, due to the availability of steel machetes and firearms (see also chapter 3.). Rubenstein writes, that nobody knows when and if Shuar have stopped producing *tsantsa* (compare Rubenstein 2007). Also Mark Münzel supports the argument of Rubenstein, by stating that “Jívaros” practiced head-hunting until the mid of the twentieth century (Münzel 1977:228).

The argument of Melchardt also implies that ceremonially used *tsantsa*, would only be authentic, when the objects were produced before the twentieth century. Professor Erwin Melchardt explains:

“Towards the end of the 19th century the Shuar abandoned head-hunting and with it the production of shrunken heads. At the same time, ‘Tsantsa’ became much sought-after collectors’ items, especially in North America. Authentic ceremonial ‘Tsantsa’ such as this one are today extremely rare” (see URL Dorotheum 1/2).

The above examples of *tsantsa* (see **FIG 6 & FIG 7**), offered by the Viennese Dorotheum, are also labelled as “very rare”, old and as being used in ceremony. Hence, they are described as being unique and antique. Houlton and Wilkinson think that *tsantsa* are desired collectibles, because of the existing “rarity of ceremonial *tsantsa*” (2016:2, emphasis in original).

The first and second point of Melchardt’s description, “rareness” and estimated “age” convey the impression of “limited” market availability, Price (1989) writes about. She thinks, that “[...] collectors and dealers are operating in a system strongly

characterized by the image of limited goods” (Price 1989:101). This mechanism of limitedness is well observable in the textual description of Melchardt and also in the construction of the discussed objects, as rare items. The objects are presented in Kopytoff’s terms as “singularized” (1986:75) and individualized. Although in auction houses objects are perceived as commodities, they may also be viewed at the same time as ‘sacred’ or unique items, through singularizing them. The two objects in discussion are such cases. They are uplifted through a selective presentation as individualized *top exhibits* (Rein 2012). The cultural factor as ceremonial artifacts, but also rarity and limitedness of both *tsantsa* are highlighted in the accompanying text, in order to present them as genuinely produced and being used by Shuar.

6.1.4. Provenance and Deception

“The concept of forgery necessarily involves *deceptive intentions* on the part of the forger or the seller of the work: this distinguishes forgeries from innocent copies or merely erroneous attributions” (Dutton 2003, emphasis in original).

Yates states that “false provenances” are often used in the transit of antiquities. This practice is described by the author as “cleansing” (2016:7), before entering the market sphere. The author thinks that anonymity and discretion are both important elements within this field. She writes: “Even in the case of so-called “public” auctions, the identity of both sellers and buyers are rarely disclosed” (Yates 2016:7). Both buyers and bidders are disguised through their anonymity. Donna Yates continues, “Buyers’ identities are made public only by their own choice, if they apply for permits to export the pieces they bought (in jurisdictions where that is relevant), or if the auction house or dealer is served with a court order” (ibid.).

In Melchardt’s textual description of the item (lot nr. 207), the above quoted mechanism is at work:

“Pursuant to information supplied by the consigner, the present item has been owned by a German family of physicians since the late 19th/early 20th century and passed down within the family by inheritance; currently: Belgian private collection” (see URL Dorotheum 1).

The provenance of the two offered *tsantsa* are based upon the information of an anonymous “consigner”, who sent the piece to the auction house Dorotheum. Concealing, both the identity of consigners and bidders, as well as listing an incomplete provenance is, as Yates remarks, the “core component” of the art market, which is characterized by “opaque dealings” (ibid.:2016).

Fillitz also stresses that it's "nearly impossible" to get full information about the provenance for non-Western objects (2015:13). Yates supports this notion, because nobody is able to track down all individuals who have owned or exchanged the objects until they arrive at the final destination, the auction house.

The above auctioneer's description seems on the first glance to be a serious certificate. But, when one thinks about the question, how provided information about provenance could have been forged, the certificate becomes porous. Let's imagine, if the trader of *tsantsa*, who acquired an object from an Shuar headshrinker, was present during the time of killing the victim, decapitation and production process of a *tsantsa*, the witness would not be alive today. The same goes for the headshrinker. If our fictional trader observed the whole *tsantsa* ceremony, he could have written his impressions down, still no trace of proof of their "authenticity", in terms of ceremonial use is at hand, because he could have made up the story as well. This inducts, that he could have only told another person, that he was witnessing the *tsantsa* production, from first hand experience. But still no physical proof exists, like a photograph nor a film recording, that would give evidence on his physical presence during a *tsantsa* ceremony.

In the case of the two *tsantsa*, offered by the Viennese Dorotheum, nobody knows, if these artifacts are authentic ceremonially used objects or were intentionally forged as counterfeit pieces. The only references are the visual cues, the auctioneer's description and the offered objects' provenances.

After all, how do we know that both discussed items are not forgeries, that were produced for economic gain only? Bidders have to trust the auctioneer's expertise and words, and we don't know whether the Shuar 'artist', the maker of the object or intermediaries, involving the auctioneer, have used "deceptive intentions" (Dutton 2003 n.p.) in producing the objects. All individuals, who are part of the transnational network in the production and distribution of *tsantsa*, may have been manipulative agents. This inducts that it's nearly impossible to validate the "nominal authenticity" (see Dutton 2003), because nobody knows the producer. Also the given information about the provenances, provided by Dorotheum seem to be unclear.

6.1.5. Pedigree and Age

Two further criterias, used by auction houses in order to increase the price of an object, are referring to its pedigree and estimated age. Sally Price informs us, in the

context of “primitive Art”, that the “pedigree” is like a “new passport”, which is issued after an “[...] artifact has been removed from the field (whether by sale, theft, or some other variant of transfer to Western ownership)” (Price 1989:102). The “pedigree” is only valid through the “Western hands through which the object has passed” (ibid.). Here the aspect of authenticity is, as already noted above, a “construction” or invention, of those who ascribe objects with value. In this case, cultural and economic value are created, because an object is measured through “Western inscription” (see Price 1989; Phillips/Steiner 1999:4). Being “transferred” out of its original habitat and then being recontextualized into aesthetic, and economic contexts, they are provided with a new identity. In the case of Dorotheum, the “pedigree” of the second *tsantsa* is as cited, deriving from an purchase at Ketterer art auctions in Munich in 1991, December 14th. Now the object is in possession of an anonymous German private collector, who consigned the *tsantsa* to the auction (see URL Dorotheum 2).

Sally Price thinks regarding the “pedigree” for a “primitive” work of art “[...] constitutes an authenticated line of descent, providing for the potential buyer a guarantee of the value of the purchase” (Price 1989:102). This implies, that a piece of paper certifies the “authenticity” of *tsantsa* through the hands of the Western owners, who have possessed such objects. The “pedigree” is a physical proof for discriminating between “authentic” or “inauthentic” pieces of art. This means, that the “authenticity” of non-Western objects on international art markets is only measured by issued certification papers, the “pedigree”. Other criterias, such as being produced and used traditionally are in this context not the defining markers.

The items in discussion are also associated with an “estimated age” and “periodicity” (see Steiner 1994:100). The criterias of age and historical period of production render the objects as antique or old, because they are associated with the time period in which ceremonial *tsantsa* were replaced by commercial shrunken heads (see chapter 3). Also age is often misrepresented as Dutton (2003) informs us. This means that the age of an object doesn’t necessarily correspond to its authentic status within the original indigenous use. An object may be produced in a later time period, but still having used traditionally by Shuar, although they do not correspond to a specific periodicity of production. Concerning provenance and the pedigree of the offered objects, these criterias are also legitimized by ascribing rareness, limitedness, the anonymity of former owners and an constructed estimated age to them.

After reflecting in the previous section, on authenticity and its construction, as well as having shown how authenticity is influenced by the criterias “limitedness”, “rarity” and the “pedigree”, and estimated “age” of an artwork, the last chapter of this paper concentrates on value and prices, in context of “tribal art” works. For this reason this part describes various forms of value and price construction within art markets.

6.1.6. Value and *Tsantsa*

I discuss briefly how *tsantsa* are constructed as “primitive art” objects and are being economically recontextualized by Western worlds, as a form of a postcolonial practice of “value-producing activity” (Marcus/Myers 1995:4).

Sally Price writes:

“The continuum from ethnographic artifact to objet d’art is clearly associated in peoples’ minds with a scale of increasing monetary value and a shift from function (broadly defined) to aesthetics as an evaluatory basis” (Price 1989:84).

This quote implies, that the transformation from ethnographic object into an artwork and commodity, is lead by the intention of generating economic profit, by increasing its “monetary value”.

Transferring an artifact into an new aesthetic context, the object is embedded into another cultural sphere, the transnational art market. Here the practical- or use value, which is associated with objectivized “cultural capital”, to cite Bourdieu, has been converted into exchange value and therefore into “economic capital”.

In the case of the two discussed *tsantsa*, former ritual objects have been transformed through appropriation into “commodity fetishes”, in Marx’s terms. Thus they hold monetary value within the new context. The items in discussion were transferred from its local and original source Ecuador to Europe, and into a new sphere of valuation. Through this movement into another commercial and aesthetic context, the “art-culture system” (Clifford 1988), such exotic objects are then monetized, marketed, and consumed as “economic investments” (Steiner 1994:163) or they may be described as “investment commodities” (MacClancy 1997:43).

The production and reproduction of “economic value” is as noted, linked to the authenticity of objects, which is also measured through the “pedigree” of an artifact, as Price (1989) thinks. In this light, cultural and economic value are also socially constructed through Western valuation, and certification. Based on physical

perceivable features of objects, value also depends on criterias, such as the specifically used material, estimated age, rarity, limitedness, the textual and photographic representation of objects, and on their biography, which is measured by its “pedigree”.

For Bourdieu the logics behind artworks are twofold in relation to forms of capital. On one side resides art, which is “pure art” and is produced for unselfish reasons. Pure art corresponds to “symbolic capital” (see Bourdieu 1986). On the other side is art, that is produced purely for commercial reasons and is associated with “economic capital” (ibid.). Both forms of art can be objectified in the form of “cultural goods”, they can be exchanged and are also convertible into economic capital, in the form of commodities (Bourdieu 1986). Under the first category of non-Western art fall artifacts, that are manufactured for religious purposes, such as the discussed objects. They hold spiritual attributes and are associated with cultural value for a specific society. The second category corresponds to the label “tourist art”, such as touristic “souvenirs” (see Steiner 1994:12) or copies, that are produced for commercial reasons only. These objects correspond to exchange value within the sphere of markets. Both of these object categories can be summarized as commodities, because of their incorporation and circulation in capitalist markets, the international art market.

6.1.7. Prices for *Tsantsa*

Embedded within art markets, *tsantsa* have a price. In the form of “luxury goods” or as “investments” (see Fillitz 2014), such objects are exchanged and consumed as (a) ethnographic artifacts, and as (b) “primitive” works of art. Both mentioned object categories in discussion are situated and valued within different “regimes of value” (Appadurai 1986), such as by the art market.

But how are prices developed, in relation to “tribal” or “primitive” artworks on the transnational art market?

Jeremy MacClancy thinks, that the “value of an object” does not “determine its price” (MacClancy 1997:40), but is dependent on other criterias. They include “authenticity, prestige of one’s tribe, fashion, antiquity or provenance” (see MacClancy 1997:15). This means, that “value” and “price” are not corresponding directly, but they depend on above mentioned “other criterias”, to cite MacClancy.

The two *tsantsa* on the website dorotheum.com are priced for Euro 25.000 and Euro

32.500. The Dutch taxidermy company De Museum Winkel ([URL De MuseumWinkel](#)) prices a shrunken head for sale with Euro 49.000 (see [URL De MuseumWinkel](#)). The item in discussion is from “+/-1860” and was produced out of the scalp of a “German missionary”, Erwin van Zölen the owner of the shop informed me in an email. This specimen is nearly the double price of the objects, offered by the Viennese Dorotheum. Although the shrunken head of the missionary may be produced by Shuar, the head is from a non-indigenous individual, a white and bearded German missionary, taxidermist van Zölen told me. This points to the fact that it was never used ceremonially. Shuar think, that non-indigenous peoples have no soul. Why then, is the price difference of the shrunken heads in discussion so different? On which criterias are the prices based on? We can only guess and speculate.

As we have seen above, the economic value of non-Western artworks depends on criterias, such as authenticity, “a tribe’s prestige”, “fashion”, “age” or “provenance”, as already discussed. But who makes the prices?

Economist Olav Velthuis (2003) writes about the construction of value in contemporary art, from a sociological perspective, which could be a helpful link to answer the above questions. The economic base of Velthuis work helps to understand the general economic theory behind price construction on art markets, such as on the secondary market, like auction houses are, who are specialized in selling “primitive” or “tribal” artworks. Velthuis writes, that “In economic theory prices are interpreted as an expression of people’s willingness to pay for a specific good” (Velthuis 2003:185). The “willingness” to pay a price for an item depends on the economic value, which collectors ascribe to objects or are ascribed to them by individual dealers, auctioneers and gallerists. From this perspective, the above cited criterias for evaluating non-Western objects of art, seem to be secondary in the construction of prices on the transnational market. The prices for the two *tsantsa* at Dorotheum and at the taxidermy shop seem arbitrary, as well as randomly constructed. Also Olav Velthuis reminds us, that “[...] economic value of an artwork does not reside in the work itself, but is produced and constantly reproduced by the artist, intermediaries, and the audience” (Velthuis 2003:184). This means, that valuation is an continuous, ongoing and dynamic social process of negotiation.

To conclude the discussion on the creation of prices, Thomas Fillitz thinks in his essay *The Booming Global Market of Contemporary Art* (2014), that prices in the economic field of auction houses are purely “speculative” and the “logic of gambling”

is at play (see Fillitz 2014). This quote expresses the paradox of price creation in the field of auction houses, in relation to “primitive” or “tribal art”.

The logic behind the mechanisms of price creation in art markets seems to be mysterious and signifies the “speculative” nature of markets of “tribal art”, in which persons, such as auctioneers, and collectors determine value, and prices individually. As we have seen the prices for “primitive or “tribal” artworks in auction houses are also socially constructed. Likewise is the category of “primitive art” or “tribal art” a Western manufactured representation of the cultural Other.

In the way the objects are on display, they resemble the practice museums would exhibit art objects (Schildkrout 2001). The auction house also constructs or represents them as authentic and renders the objects as rare items. This might be understood as using “deceptive intentions” (Dutton 2003 n.p.), because the named criterias might be intentionally attributed to the objects by the auctioneer. The objects are mystified through their presentation and offered as unique items, which raises their price. These misrepresentations of authenticity also lifts them off from the class of tourist-art commodities, like commercially produced shrunken heads are.

Based on a longing for the authentic in the past and a fascination for the imagined exotic, the items are textually and visually presented in a custom-made manner by the auction house Dorotheum, intended to meet the taste of potential bidders.

Authenticity is amplified and also the economic “value of an object” (MacClancy 1997:40). Therefore the price increases, by certification of the objects and attributing criterias such as provenance (ibid. 1997:35), and pedigree (Price 1989) or highlighting the items’ quality, and the “prestige of one’s tribe” (MacClancy 1997:15). The institution’s online presence and the objects presentation increase the price as singularized “luxury goods” (Fillitz 2014). As possible forged ‘authentic’ *masterpieces* (Clifford 1988; Moser 2012:26) of “tribal art” they are meant to be purchased by an exclusive circle of interested people, which Fillitz summarizes as “UHNW (ultra high net worth) collectors” or “multi-millionaires” (2014:87), including bidders, and collectors who are liquid.

Conclusion

I discussed the topic of construction and representation of “tribal” or “primitive” art, and how “exotic objects” are appropriated through incorporation into the art market. I explained through an ethnographic example, how the two reviewed *tsantsa* are recontextualized and ‘de-spirited’ through their placement into capitalist markets. I

also showed how they are mystified through their photographic and textual descriptions. They were removed from their original domestic use and transported into aesthetic, and economic contexts or were purely produced for external markets. On capitalist markets the objects are again 'spirited' with "economic value" and fetishized by their new individual owners as commoditized (a) "cultural goods", in the form of "luxury goods" or as (b) "investments", by Western "primitive art" collectors. The part also showed, that not only "primitive art" objects, but also indigenous groups are going through the process of "commodification of culture", to cite Jean and John Comaroff (2009). In this process, non-Western collectives and their ethnic identities are also fictionalized and marketed within transnational art markets as "brands", and sold as "ethno commodities" (Comaroff/Comaroff 2009).

From a postcolonial position, the term "primitive art" reflects the notion of Westerners and the ambiguous relationship towards the politicized cultural Other, based upon the division between "us" and "them". Unequal power relations in a postcolonial world are at play. Western art worlds are extracting, exoticizing and formulating aesthetic criteria for exotic objects. They evaluate prices for non-Western cultures and indigenous cultural artifacts. But is this relationship appropriate in an interconnected, transnational world?

The Western fascination for "primitive" or "tribal" artworks and imagined 'dying' cultures of non-Western worlds highlights this ambiguity, which is based on the principles of repulsion and attraction. The Western demand to experience the imagined past of vanishing "primitive" societies through consumption of "tribal art", is also semiotic. It signifies the glorification and aestheticization of the liminality of life, death, and resurrection. This may be best described as an existential longing for primal worlds, in which technization is non-existent and the life of the others is imagined as simple, and exemplified by the merged image of Rousseau's noble savage, and Hobbes' cannibalistic pagan. Both images are incarnated through 'primitive' artworks, in the material representation of *tsantsa*. Both commodities in discussion are representing 'primitive' ethnic identities of their respective imagined Shuar source community. But they also reflect a changing postmodern world. Here, local worlds are juxtaposed with the global flow of indigenous artifacts. Non-western artworks are 'magically' loaded as material representations of commodified ethnic identities, which are circulating and are "interconnected" on the transnational art market. The discussed "exotic" objects are then physical representations of the

imagined, exoticized cultural Other. Their liminal statuses as 'primitive' cultural artifacts, works of art and commodities are re-imagined and re-evaluated. In the end their changing positions on art markets are continuously (re)negotiated. But also the objects are authenticated through the authority of the auctioneer and by the auction house's institutional *agency*.

As so-called "exotic objects" (Phillips/Steiner 1999; MacClancy 1997), they are shrouded in darkness. Through this practice of an fragmentary presentation, these objects are offering "[...] a mystery that Westerners attribute to these objects" (MacClancy 1997:33). The fascination for the objects springs from the imagination perceiving "tribal" societies as skilled artists, who are admired for their craftsmanship and creativity.

The auction house is "producing a colonial desire" (Harrison 2011:55) with the way the objects are presented online. They are mystically framed by an opaque art market and its actors. The offered *tsantsa* are fashioned textually and also visually, in order to create a desire to possess them.

At the end we don't know, whether the exhibited objects were ceremonially used *tsantsa* or are just commercially produced touristic shrunken heads.

I think to present them as "authentic ceremonial *tsantsa*", as they are labeled by Dorotheum, is just a wrong and 'deceptive' denomination. Classifying the offered items as "authentic touristic commercial shrunken heads" or as "authentic imitations/replicas of ceremonial *tsantsa*", would be maybe a better designation. At the end the objects are represented by the auction house as certified macabre luxury items of the cultural Other, that are offered to an exclusive clientele.

The next part (section 6.2.) discusses the museal representation of two exhibited shrunken heads at Salzburg's museum Haus der Natur.

6.2. HAUS DER NATUR SALZBURG: “Shrunken Heads” on Display

“Whereas Shuar subordinated accumulation to circulation, museum collections reflect the capitalist subordination of circulation to accumulation” (Rubenstein 2007:360).

Displayed cultural groups in auctions, museums or in ethnographic collections are many times represented as exoticized others. In this manner these “primitive” societies are positioned, as they would be the antithesis of the Western civilization. The colonial myth of the ‘savage’ Amazonian Indian is thereby often reproduced by museal representations, which are displaying (former) indigenous objects in exhibitions.

In this part the paper engages in investigating the museal representation of two supposed Shuar *tsantsa*, displayed at the museum Haus der Natur (HdN) in Salzburg.

6.2.1. Ethnographic Museums as Part of the “Art-Culture System”

Museums are also part of the “art-culture system”. They collect, exhibit, store and represent indigenous artifacts. The International Council of Museums (ICOM) defines “museums” as following:

“A museum is a non-profit, permanent institution in the service of society and its development, open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates, and exhibits the tangible, and intangible heritage of humanity, and its environment for the purposes of education, study, and enjoyment” (URL ICOM).

The central practices or performances of museums is to conserve, exhibit and communicate human’s material, and immaterial cultural heritage, as cited above.

In historical terms, museums originated and may be traced back to private curiosity cabinets of the aristocracy during the age of Renaissance. These “early museums” and collections were intended to collect, store and exhibit “fanciful artefacts” (Macdonald 1998:5). Included were objects like “unicorns’ horns” or “remains of dragons” (ibid.). Such artifacts may be regarded as representations of fantastic worlds and as remains of curiosity cabinets, where such objects were displayed in the past. The natural world was collected and systematized in terms of ordering knowledge through the principle of “similitude” and “resemblance” (Macdonald 1998:6). The author Macdonald points to a change “[...] in conceptions of knowledge

and museums” between the sixteenth and eighteenth century (ibid.:8). Scientific ideas, such as objectivity of looking at things and classifying objects accordingly came up during this period (Macdonald 1998). During the eighteenth century museums also were “opening up”, which made it easier for a wider public to visit these institutions (ibid.). With the rise of nation-states during the nineteenth century, a big number of museums came into being. Anthropological collections were included in museums, such as in the cases of the Smithsonian’s Museum of Natural History or the Dutch Museum of Natural History. The Pitt-Rivers Museum (1885) was one of the first ethnographic museums (see Macdonald 1998:9).

Anette Rein remarks, in context of the genesis of ethnographic collections and natural history museums, that in the nineteenth century “primitive people were regarded institutionally as being part of nature, comparable to flora and fauna” (Rein 2012:197). This is to be understood in regards of the prevailing doctrine of evolutionism of this time and its perspective on non-Western cultures as “primitive peoples”.

Ethnographic museums are “[...] institutions or exhibitions which feature objects as ‘material culture’ of peoples” (Lidchi 1997:161). They “[...] produce certain kinds of representations [...] framed by anthropological theory and ethnographic research” (ibid.). Ethnographic museums are interested in material culture of indigenous groups in the form of exhibiting, conserving and researching non-Western objects for scientific reasons.

6.2.2. Museal Representation and Exhibiting as Performance

The objects on display are viewed as “performing bodies” (Mitchell 20123), “relics” or “idols” (Gell 1998). The museum Haus der Natur (HdN) in Salzburg is described here as a theatrical stage, where ethnographic objects are performing and are being performed, by representing them as extensions of the cultural Other. The museum is perceived in this investigation as a “cultural producer” (Rein 2012) and also as a “performance space” (Gaines 2006), in which the cultural Other is represented. Here Shuar and other indigenous Amazonian societies are produced as the stereotyped “image” (Bhaba 1983; Hall 1997:272) of the Amazonian Indian, that is physically and symbolically represented through the museum’s collection and by the objects on display.

When commodities enter museums they are stripped off their commodity state and

are demonetized, as part of their biographical life. In museums indigenous objects are “musealized” (Rein 2012) and presented as ethnographic artifacts.

Museums are looked at through describing these institutions as “material assemblages” and as “social collections (Byrne 2011:4). Included are “the people who staff and run them”, but also persons who collect them and visitors who “encounter the objects” (ibid.). This group may also be described as the “museum’s human community” (Rein 2012:205). I also include the museum’s “non-human community”, which is understood here as the objects on display, reaching from artifacts to stuffed animals. The former group includes director, curator and visitors of the museum. The latter consists of the exhibition’s displayed artifacts. They are all involved within the process of meaning-making, in the context of exhibited objects. Museal representations of the cultural Other are looked at through the lens of “poetics-” and “politics of exhibiting” (Lidchi 1997).

The overall research question(s) of this part can be defined as following:

- *How are displayed tsantsa represented in the ethnographic museum collection of Haus der Natur Salzburg?*
- *How are indigenous societies presented in the museum Haus der Natur through the stagings of musealized objects?*
- *How can exhibitions at Haus der Natur be described as stages of cultural performances, where aesthetic and political negotiations are taking place?*
- *What stories about the cultural Other are told by the museum to the visitors?*

Theory, Focus Group, Central Concepts and Argument

Visiting a museum is never a neutral event, but ruled by an “intensification of awareness” (Lewis 2013:5). Visitors of museums expect to experience a personal transformation, when visiting a museum. When entering a museum, visitors are presented with an stimulating “extra-ordinary experience” (ibid.). This might be best described as a nearly religious experience.

Marc Maure describes in his work *The Exhibition as Theatre: On the Staging of Museum Objects* (Maure 1995):

“The visitor goes up the steps through the entrance door, crosses the threshold, goes past the reception area towards the exhibits where the scene is set. This is a transitory phase. The visitor leaves the profane everyday life behind him and enters a closed and sacrosanct world of strange significance where the usual rules no longer apply. What is seen, said and done here must not be understood

literally but rather within the inner logic of the museum: «*This is a museum, not the real world*» (Maure 1995:165, emphasis in original).

When visitors enter a museum they leave the “everyday world behind”, in order to encounter different worlds, which are theatrically “staged” (Maure 1995) or represented by the museum’s human community. To represent (see chapter 4.) is understood here as “meaning-making” (see Hall 1997). Representation is in the context of museums “[...] the manner in which the objects work in conjunction with contexts and texts to produce meaning” (Dubé 1995:4, cited in Lidchi 1997:174).

The author Marc Maure adds in his paper *Exhibition as Theatre - on the Staging of Museum Objects* (1995), that a museum is a “closed, sacred and exclusive world” (Maure 1995:165). The exhibition is compared by Maure as a theatrical “stage where the viewer meets the object” (ibid.).

Exhibiting is being viewed as a “cultural performance” (Lewis 2013), a practice of representing the cultural Other within a museal setting. In Lewis’ words cultural performances are “enacted cultural life-worlds” (Lewis 2013:15). They are framed through “dramatizing” ordinary awareness (ibid.).

Exhibiting as a cultural practice of performing indigenous artefacts, is understood here as “showing”, “displaying” or storing objects and “telling” (Grimes 2014) stories about the cultural others, told by curators, but also by the objects on display. The space of the museum is understood as “performed space” (Mitchell 2006). In this space indigenous identities and represented cultures are looked at, as negotiated performances. The museum practices of collecting, storing and exhibiting may be understood as acts of a “sacralization of profane space” (Mitchell 2006). The shared public space of the museum is transformed into a sort of a “religioscape” (Hayden/Walker 2013), in which former indigenous objects are performed.

In this non-ordinary ‘holy’ environment visitors look at the exhibited ‘sacred’ objects of the museum, which communicate or “tell” messages to them.

In the case of HdN the physical profane, “neutral space” of the museum and museum’s exhibitions are transformed into a “symbolically and politically charged space of performance” (Mitchell 2006:394). The HdN exhibitions stage ethnographic objects, which don’t belong to the “profane” life of the visitor’s everyday life. These objects are given significance and they are often alien or strange to museum visitors. Hence they are situated outside the visitor’s normal everyday life.

Mitchell (2006) stresses that artifacts are also active subjects, embedded within a

network of relationships between person and things, as “things in themselves”, rather than being a semiotic understanding of materiality and its meaning. Instead artifacts should be viewed as actants, borrowing from Bruno Latour. The author concentrates on Gell’s *Art and Agency* (1998) and his theory on artefacts and *agency*.

Mitchell’s article on *Performance* (2006) is used in order to describe the transformation of “performing bodies”, “-spaces” and “-objects”. *Tsantsa* or “Schrumpfköpfe” [shrunk heads] are described here as “performing bodies” (Mitchell 2006:385) and also as objects/subjects with *agency*, who are embedded within a social network. Artifacts as social agents hold intentionality and may be perceived as social person.

During the process of “musealization” (Rein 2012), indigenous ritual objects are transformed into exhibited ethnographic artifacts, loaded with cultural value. They are displayed as art objects holding aesthetic value, but also as curiosities with cultural value. As commodities they are (economically) loaded with exchange value and they become Western cultural goods (Rein 2012:195f.). In the form of commodities, they are offered on the international art markets, such as in auction houses (see 6.2.) or on the Internet.

The exoticized image of the Amazonian Indian has produced stereotypes since cultural contact of Europe with indigenous peoples of Amazonia (see Ellingson 2001; Graham/Penny 2014). The stereotyped images, the ‘good’ vs. the ‘bad’ Indian, are linked to exotic and romantic imaginations of the cultural Other. On one side of this historical Western constructed representation of Indian stereotypes (see section 6.3.1.), stands the dichotomy of the (1) “charismatic Indigene” (Graham/Penny 2014) and its counterpart, (2) the Indian as cannibalistic “savage” (Ellingson 2001:11ff.).

Tsantsa or Shuar shrunk heads are understood here as “liminal” artifacts. They are situated within colonial histories and are attached to Western fantasies, which are also to be found in museums of today. Many times the form of how they are “framed” or arranged with other objects by museums, defines them as ethnographic objects or as curious art objects.

As described, museums may be viewed as temples, who transform, collect and hold certain knowledge. Museums have authority or “institutional power” (Lidchi 1997:183) over the knowledge which they are representing. The politics of museums include the museum’s practices of “classification and juxtaposition of artefacts in an exhibition” (Lidchi 1997). Museums exercise authorship of the texts and knowledge they are

producing. Sharon Macdonald writes in her book *The Politics of Display: Museums, Science, Culture* (1998) that “[...] the production, distribution and consumption of knowledge are always political” (Macdonald 1998:3). This implies that power and knowledge, in Foucault’s sense are at play in museums. Museums produce and distribute knowledge as “facts and truths” (Lidchi 1997) to the consumers, the museum visitors. With this in mind, it is important to ask: *Who is represented in which way by exhibiting artifacts?* But also the question about exclusion has to be addressed within this representational process. *Whose voices are excluded in this process?* These questions are closely related to the concept of power and “politics of exhibiting”, which are part of museum’s agendas.

Before presenting the findings of this part, I will briefly give a review on the history, and mission statement of the museum. The museum Haus der Natur in Salzburg describes itself in the mission statement as “Universal Museum of the Natural Sciences” (URL HdN Mission). Around 900.000 objects are housed currently in the museum’s collections.

History of Haus der Natur (HdN)

1924 the museum was founded by zoologist Eduard Paul Tratz (1888-1977) as “New Natural History Museum” (see URL HdN Museum). Its original location was the Hofstallkaserne, which is today the Salzburg Festival Hall.

1936 the museum was renamed to “Haus der Natur” (Hoffmann 2008). The museum was originally planned as “Schaumuseum”, rather than being a museum of natural history (Hoffmann 2008:156).

1938-1949 In 1938 the museum was annexed by the SS research organization “Ahnenerbe” [Ancestral Heritage]. Director Tratz stayed as the museum’s director. Tratz was professing nationalsocialist.

1949-1976 Tratz was again “reappointed director” of the museum in 1949. He kept his position until 1976. Under Tratz’s administration, the museum was relocated to the former Ursulinenkloster in 1959. This is also the current location of HdN.

1976-2009 Eberhard Stüber became the new director of the museum and under his administration the space of the museum expanded its exhibition space (URL HdN history).

2009-today Norbert Winding is the museum’s director and Robert Lindner co-director.

Interpretation and Discussion of Results

I analyze the internal arrangement and look at the narratives of the HdN exhibition *Tiere & Lebensräume*, by reading the displays semiotically, in context of “poetics- and politics of exhibiting” (Lidchi 1997). I concentrate on describing the America collection and look at the two Shuar *tsantsa* on display and at the manner they are staged. Furthermore, I will contextualize the object with a diorama, depicting a Shuar family. The “poetics of exhibiting” (Lidchi 1997; Crang 2003) includes the internal arrangement and design of setting. How are elements arranged internally? What and how is the story told? This means, the use of “[...] certain representational strategies to claim authenticity and mimic reality” (Macdonald 2006:20). With this in mind “poetics of exhibiting” is telling a narrative about “reality” and how it is represented in museums through various strategies, like the use of various elements of an exhibition. The “politics of exhibiting” (Lidchi 1997; Crang 2003; Macdonald 2006) is described as discourse, consisting of power relations between museum and represented cultural others. What kind of story does the exhibition tell? Who tells whose story to whom? This includes “the role of exhibitions/museums in the production of social knowledge” (Lidchi 1997:185).

6.2.3. Frame and Internal Arrangement of the Exhibition *Tiere & Lebensräume*

After giving a short historical outline of HdN, the following part discusses the findings of this research. I will contextualize the findings with relevant literature. I describe, (1) how the museum HdN may be viewed as a “sacred place”, which performs the Amazonian Indian as the cultural Other and how (2) exhibited shrunken heads are framed by the internal arrangement of the exhibition *Tiere & Lebensräume*, and by the ethnographic collections of the Americas (see **FIG 8**).

The “frame” (Maure 1995) in context of the museum is a space, that surrounds what is inside and outside. One frame is physical and the other symbolic. The “physical frame” is understood by Maure as the “material surroundings” in a physical room, which set the “stage of the exhibition” (Maure 1995:163). Indigenous societies are represented and their life is dramatized in the collection through the physical frame. The symbolic “frame”, so Maure “emphasizes the picture” and “creates a message”, and “[...] gives an idea of how we should understand the framed message” (Maure 1995:163f.). Hereby the exhibition shows what is within the frame and what is outside. It gives clues about what message or narrative is communicated to the

visitor. This will be elaborated in the following part. The “exhibition stage”, where the museum's performance takes place. It is constituted through the physical room or setting and by the displays of the museum, consisting of lights, objects on display, pictures, text panels and -labels. In Henrietta Lidchi's terms the “poetics of exhibiting” is “[...] the production of meaning through internal ordering and conjugation of the separate but related components on an exhibition” (Lidchi 1997:185).

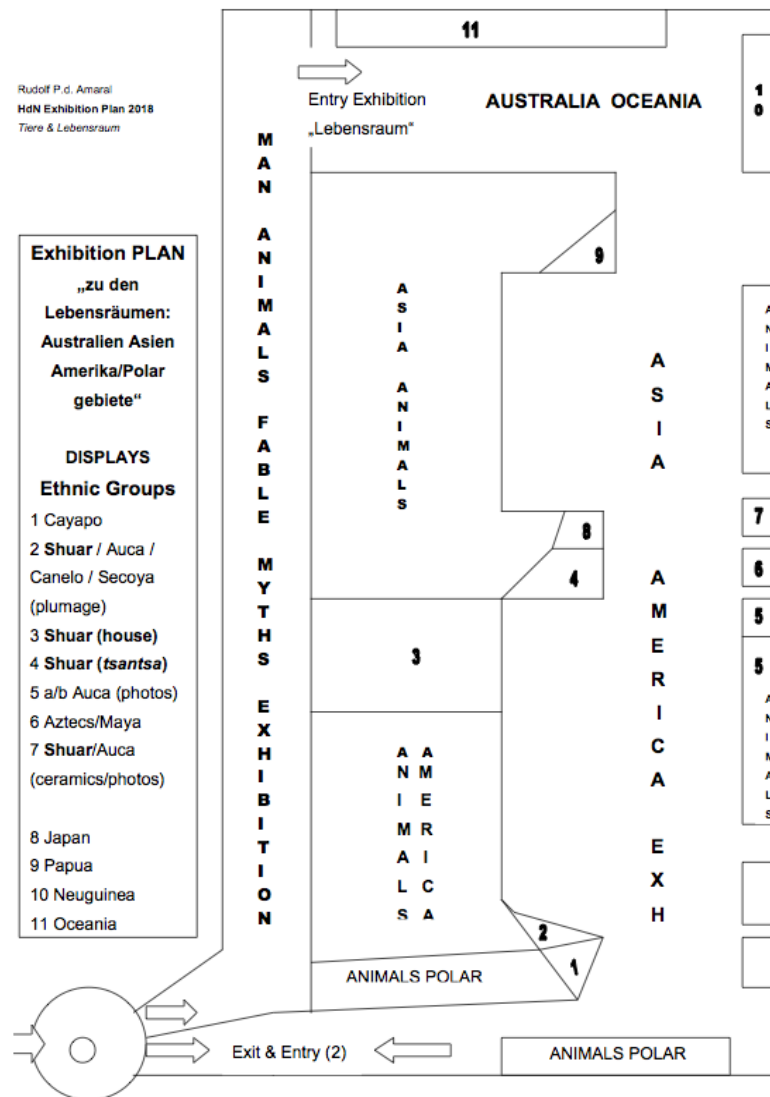


FIG 8 Drawing HdN Exhibition Plan *Tiere & Lebensräume* **Source:** Pinto do Amaral

The internal arrangement, “poetics of exhibiting” (Lidchi 1997) or “layout” (Moser 2012:27) of an exhibition can be understood in the manner of “[...] generating meanings about the topic or subject being represented” (Moser 2012:27). It's the internal structure of a museum's exhibition, that includes the components and objects presented on, and how they are arranged with each other. The structure is

concerned with the questions: How are objects arranged and positioned with each other? Are they connected? And if, how?

In the exhibiton *Tiere & Lebensräume* these are “separate but related components”, to cite Lidchi (1997), which form the exhibition. They include exhibited animals, representations of humans, such as human body parts, a human mannequin, photographs and drawings of indigenous groups, as well as ethnographic artifacts. These material objects are the central components of the exhibition. This brings me to the question: How are displayed cultural groups and animals “framed” within the exhibition *Tiere & Lebensräume*?

The Exhibition *Tiere & Lebensräume*

Taxidermied animals, but also weapons are juxtaposed with feather crowns and -plumages in the permanent exhibiton *Tiere & Lebensräume Australien, Ozeanien, Asien, Amerika und die Polargebiete*. The exhibition is located on the third floor of the museum Haus der Natur. Wildmen, such as the Himalayan Yeti, Sasquatch and Perchten, but also figures of European folklore, such as witches or the Bavarian Wolpertinger are all part of the exhibition *Man and Animal in Fables and Myth*.

This exhibition is connected to the ethnographic collections of the themed exhibition *Tiere und Lebensräume Australien, Ozeanien, Asien, Amerika und die Polargebiete* (see **FIG 9**).

The “physical frame” of the exhibition is constructed by the physical presence of stuffed animals in display cases, which are juxtaposed with material objects of exhibited indigenous societies. The physical room or the setting of the exhibition *Tiere & Lebensräume* is dimly yellowish lit. The walls are brown and the floor is made out of brown and orange synthetic tiles. The exhibiton *Tiere und Lebensräume Australien, Asien, Amerika und die Polargebiete* is as the name suggests linked to the concept of “Lebensraum” [habitat]. The term “Lebensraum” was first used by Johann Gottfried Herder (URL Lebensraum). Later, the concept of *Lebensraum* is linked to European colonialism and was also used by zoologist, and anthropogeographer Friedrich Ratzel. Ratzel wrote a book, named *Lebensraum* (1901). He was member of *Alldeutscher Verband*. This organization was ideologically propagating social Darwinism and Lamarckism (survival of the fittest). The society *Alldeutscher Verband* also supported the idea of German colonialism and imperialism. The concept of *Lebensraum* was from its beginning on tied to the idea of German imperial expansion. Later the notion *Lebensraum* was used by the National

Socialists, through which they tried to legitimate NS-expansion (URL Ratzel). Ratzel wrote on the concept of societies and used the analogy of an organism, in order to describe society, which is on the quest for exploiting life and space. The expansion of culture through space, a diffusionist idea, is central to Ratzel's anthrogeographical concept of *Lebensraum*.



FIG 9 Entry Area to Exhibition “zu den Lebensräumen” **Source:** Pinto do Amaral

He thought that the land moulds the people and their culture, who are living on it. This concept is a cultural deterministic idea. The term “Lebensraum” is also used in the exhibition’s textual descriptions, such as in the text label *Der Regenwald - Lebensraum der Waldindianer*. Geographical museum representations are displaying and arranging indigenous cultures, based on their supposed geographical origins and habitats, named “cultural areas”⁶. At the exhibition *Tiere & Lebensräume* the concept of classifying zoological species and putting animals with human cultures side by side is apparent. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett remarks, that at exhibitions of the past humans were often juxtaposed alongside with animals in their natural environment:

⁶ The concept of “culture areas” is a ethno-geographic model, developed by the founder of American cultural anthropology, Franz Boas, as well as by Clark Wissler and Alfred Kroeber. Cultural areas were “defined as geographical/cultural region whose population and groups share important common identifiable cultural traits, such as language, tools and material culture, kinship, social organization, and cultural history” (URL Culture Area). The model of culture areas classifies different ethnic groups through systematizing and organizing societies in context of geographical regions.

“[...] specimen to landforms, climate, and local flora and fauna offered an alternative principle for arranging exhibitions of animals and peoples and encouraged environmental displays that showed the interrelation of elements in a habitat” (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1991:42).

At HdN's exhibition *Tiere & Lebensräume* cultural groups are theatrically displayed and accentuated, as being closer to 'nature'. Therefore they are portrayed to be closer to the world of animals, which amplifies the assumption of the imagined 'ferocity' of so called “Naturvölker” [primitive peoples].



FIG 10 “Der Quetzal: Juwel des Urwaldes” (left side) Poster Auca-Indians (middle) Animals of South America (right side) **Source:** Pinto do Amaral

The internal arrangement of displayed animals, together with exhibited ethnographic objects is at the moment a bit “debatable”, Dr. Lindner submitted. The museum is right now “not really satisfied” with the ordering of the displayed objects, he adds. Lindner told me, that many objects are “dragged along” at the exhibition *Tiere & Lebensräume* (INTERVIEW Dr. Lindner).

Mr. Lindner remarked: “[...] that opposing an peacock with a San-bushman makes no sense” for the museum HdN. Also to exhibit various ethnic cultures separately without “intermingling” them with animals, is right at the moment not possible for the museum. It would take time to “clean up” or adjust the “blending of animals alongside with human cultures” (INTERVIEW Dr. Lindner). As curator Dr. Linder explains, the

current state of the exhibition is nearly forty years old and hasn't been altered since the 1980s. He realizes, that the internal arrangement of the exhibition is problematic, especially the fact that animals and humans are put side by side in display cases, without being commented on critically.



FIG 11 Display “Faultier Schrumpfkopf” [Sloth Shrunken Head] (left), Japan Collection (middle) and Animals of Asia (right) **Source:** Pinto do Amaral

Having shown that physically “framing” and juxtaposing animals with humans in display cases is a problematic issue, which is apparent throughout the whole exhibition *Tiere & Lebensräume*. This is because the presented indigenous groups are represented as being supposed to live in a lower evolutionary stage, compared to societies of the Western world, who represents them. Another problem is the term “Lebensraum” itself, which is used throughout the exhibition *Tiere & Lebensräume*. This concept contains prejudicial connotations and is also an old-fashioned term, therefore it is not used anymore. Also curator Dr. Lindner admitted that the museum will soon “clean up” its current format of the exhibition, especially the blending of stuffed animals along with humans (INTERVIEW Dr. Lindner).

6.2.4. Ethnographic Collections of the Americas

The America collection includes indigenous groups of Middle- and Southamerica, such as Mayas and Aztecs, the “Jivaro” (Shuar), Auca (Wao-Rani), Secoya, Caiyapo

or Tapirapos. Besides stuffed animals, also ceramics, feather adornments and other decorative objects of Amazonian Indians are on display (see **FIG 13**).



FIG 12 Corridor America Collection **Source:** Pinto do Amaral

The Shuar Collection of HdN

The Shuar collection, as part of the America collection and of the permanent exhibition, consists of various indigenous Amazonian artifacts. Also weapons such as a Shuar lance and a blowgun are on display.

Two other visitor attractions of the America collection are a diorama, displaying a Shuar house and a display box exhibiting three *tsantsa*, two human specimen and one made out of a sloth head.

In Shuar culture *tsantsa* had an important role in the past, but they also have importance for today's Shuar cultural identity (see section 6.5.).

When a ceremonial *tsantsa* is produced out of the scalp of a dead human being, the body part is ritually transformed into a 'magical object' or a "fetish" (Rubenstein 2007), as already remarked earlier (see chapter 2.), which also holds talismanic functions. Another transformation takes place, when these talismans are musealized. Steven Lee Rubenstein thinks that:

"[...] museum displays today transform the meaning tsantsas just as much as Shuar ceremonies once did in the past. By collecting and hoarding tsantsas, museums transform them from signs of loss into signs of accumulation" (Rubenstein 2007:373).

This quote underlines that *tsantsa* are being displaced by museums from their original contexts and put into a new system of meaning.



FIG 13 Feather Adornment and Taxidermied Birds **Source:** Pinto do Amaral

When musealized, being collected and stored by the museum, the objects are then material representations of Shuar culture as a whole, when put on display. This means that museums are cultural producers and also places of consumption at the same moment. When *tsantsa* is being moved (Rein 2012) into an exhibition, the trophy head is being “reintegrated” by curators, designers and museum staff into a new social community, the “museum’s human community” (Rein 2012:205).

Through the musealization process, *tsantsa* are again transformed, into public displayed ethnographic objects and also into consumable commodified art pieces.

Display Box as Shrine: Exhibiting “Shrunkened Heads” as Sacred Objects

The following passage investigates the “shrunkened heads” display box as a form of a shrine. I will look at the accompanying text panels, labels and additionally at a Shuar diorama, positioned within reach of the *tsantsa* display box.

A display box in the America collection shows two human *tsantsa* and one sloth “Schrumpfkopf” [shrunkened head]. The three objects are situated between the text panel *Der Regenwald: Lebensraum der Waldindianer* and the Japan (Asia) collection (see **FIG 8**). Marc Maure (1995) writes:

“The glass case has an enshrining effect. It makes the object remote, vulnerable, frightening, magical, valuable. The glass case is the museum in condensed form. It removes it from its original context, isolates it from everyday life, protects it and accentuates it, places it in a timeless state and creates a special aura around it” (Maure 1995:165).

The display box with its “enshring effect” has various functions. It emphasizes the value of the artifact, which is staged in the box to attract and enthrall or to catch the attention of the visitor. But the display box also recontextualizes the object and moves it into another context. The case also has a protective and rendering function. It generates a special atmosphere around the displayed pieces or reinforces the object’s *agency*.

Each of the two enshrined human *tsantsa* are placed on metal pedestals. The sloth *tsantsa* hangs on a metal pin, which is attached to a wall of the display box. All three objects are presented in a minimalist manner, as curious eye catchers asking for the visitor’s attention.

They are given new meanings. Their liminal statuses are disputed through the biases and interpretations of visitors. Depending on the angle and position in the room one occupies, the meanings of the enshrined objects are transformed continuously. This is because the stage scenery or background, in which the objects are placed changes, when one moves around inside the room. The glass box enables the visitor to look at the displayed *tsantsa* from various spatial positions. The display box used as a shrine, presents the exhibited objects as they would be tangible to the visitor. At the same moment, the glass of the vitrine creates the illusion to touch the objects behind the glass, which is impossible in this case. Maure writes, that “The object is so close one can almost touch it. But at the same time it is remote” (Maure 1995:165). Touching the objects in the glass display is omitted, but their physical presence is perceivable. They may only be looked at by visitors and be venerated as staged objects or relics, or as dead “performing bodies” (Mitchell 2016:385).

The staging of the displayed objects expresses a mix of physical proximity and displacement at the same moment. This combination of closeness and distance may also be read as musealized *tsantsa* would have no original religious function anymore in the museum. They have lost their concreteness in the sense of their original intended meaning as indigenous ritual artifacts. Through the museum they are musealized ethnographic objects, which have no religious use for the source community. They are only displayed in order to be stared at or consumed by the visitor.

Current HdN curator and co-director Lindner compared displayed ethnographic objects with art objects. This position is a problematic one, because original

indigenous ritual objects, such as *tsantsa* are supposed to be embedded within religious ceremonies.

FIG 14 Display Case “Schrumpfköpfe”
Source: Pinto do Amaral

When musealized, their original cultural function and meaning changes through the process of cultural appropriation. Banks and Morphy elaborate that “The Western concept of art and the Western tendency to appropriate ritual products as permanently preserved objects may give them a false concreteness” (Banks/Morphy 1997:18). Ritual objects are appropriated and transformed by museums, being part of the “art-culture system”, into other object categories, through musealizing them. The displayed shrunken heads



are presented as visitor attractions. They are part of a conglomeration of curious objects, which mixes various material things together, like cabinets of wonder do.

As former indigenous ritual objects they are given new identities, as curious ethnographic pieces in museums. A document of HdN lists new acquisitions of the museum in 1982:

“Besondere Anziehungspunkte für die Besucher sind weiter der prächtige Federschmuck der Waldindianer in Beziehung zu den Vogelformen des Amazonasgebietes, die ausgestellten Schrumpfköpfe der Waldindianer sowie die Objekte der Auca-Indianer aus dem oberen Amazonasgebiet”⁷ (Appendix Neuanschaffungen HdN).

The above description and form of presentation opens up a strange atmosphere of

⁷ Translation: “Special attractions for the visitors are the magnificent plumages of the forest Indians in relation to the bird shapes of the Amazon, the exhibited shrunken heads of the forest Indians as well as the objects of the Auca Indians from the upper Amazon.”

the imagined Amazonian “forest Indians”. The geographical region of the Amazon, home to “forest Indians” is presented through new acquired material objects of the museum collection of HdN.

Especially artifacts “that resemble the body” (see Mitchell 2006) hold *agency*. Such artifacts or idols are effective, because they invoke a projection of mind through an iconicity of internality/externality (ibid.). Idols with openings (orifices) and particularly eyes, and idols contained in boxes, caskets or temples are viewed by Gell as “particularly agentive”, writes Mitchell (2006:391). They may be described as receptacles, containing power. Such as fetishes hold spiritual powers, also idols do. In the case of the HdN’s exhibited shrunken heads, they are not fetishes, holding *muisak*. But in form of venerated idols, they are effective and agentive, because curators, and museum visitors imagine them as objects, holding certain powers, which attract and repel spectators.

Lindner told me, that the museum right at the moment has “no position” regarding the two *tsantsa* on display. They are part of the Shuar collection and they haven’t been touched since the 1980s. This is the time frame when the objects were put on display by the previous curator Dr. Stüber. The current curator Dr. Lindner also told me, that one *tsantsa* was stolen from the museum.

The curator thinks that small museums, like Haus der Natur is, are “[...] often hit in an unexpected way” and they have then to justify themselves for objects, like in the case of the two human *tsantsa*, which others who are already dead, have acquired or have put on exhibit during the past (INTERVIEW Dr. Lindner). He uses the analogy of a “tanker [boat] and not a speed boat”, to describe the museum’s response time, when making decisions. To “maneuver” a big boat, such as museums are, is complicated, he remarks. In this context Dr. Lindner used the term being “overrun” (INTERVIEW Dr. Lindner). This means, the less a museum is prepared, the more likely the reaction would be, to hide objects from the public eye. A position or reaction of museums would be to ban the *tsantsa* from public display. But another position could be, Lindner added, is keeping the objects on exhibit. This also includes the exhibited shrunken heads.

As remarked in the introductory part of this paper (chapter 1.), the museum Haus der Natur was not mentioned in the public dispute about dead bodies in 2017. Publically accused were the Viennese auction house Dorotheum and Weltmuseum Wien for selling or exhibiting dead body parts. In this context a workshop at Weltmuseum

Wien, named *Tote Körper zwischen Nutzen und öffentlichem Ärger: Ethische, Politische und Kulturelle Überlegungen zum Umgang mit Menschlichen Überresten* took place on November 7th and November 8th, 2017. Claudia Augustat, curator of the South America collection at Weltmuseum Wien and Igor Eberhard, lecturer at the Viennese institute for cultural- and social anthropology, organized the event.

The workshop intended to discuss, how to deal with human remains and dead body parts in ethnographic collections of universities, and in museums.

Augustat criticized the commercialization aspect of trophy heads and human remains in general. She discussed also illegal practices of grave plunderings and lootings (see also Sterling 1938). Curator Augustat also commented critically on the killing of indigenous women in Ecuador. Often they are murdered in order to make out of their dead bodies *tsantsa* and intended for sale on the international black market. Augustat relativized the public critique, concerning the Mundurucu head trophy, from her position as the museum's curator. She pointed to the transcultural practice of exhibiting dead bodies in today's world as a common practice, which doesn't receive much critique from the public.

Eberhard talked about his research as manager of the ethnographic collection at the institute for cultural- and social anthropology in Vienna. He discussed some objects, which the anthropology institute holds in its ethnographic collection. Eberhard asked the question, whether they were extracted legally, meaning in trade or robbed and looted? This question lead him to organize the workshop at Weltmuseum Wien. He mentioned a specific trophy head of Sepik in Papua New Guinea, which the cultural- and social anthropology institute of Vienna owns. He reflected on the problem, how the object should be treated. Should it be exhibited or put away? Eberhard remarked, maybe the head should be treated as subject and to bring the head to recount a story. The story of many indigenous artifacts are waiting to be discovered and should be told, he added. But how can we trace the biographies of 'object/subjects', which were looted or extracted during colonial times? And how should we treat such artifacts of unclear provenance today?

At Haus der Natur in Salzburg many dead human body parts, like the trophy heads and ancestor heads of Papua New Guinea or the *tsantsa* are of unclear provenance. How should they be treated? Should they be exhibited or locked away from the public? This question brings me back to HdN in Salzburg.

"For everything a position can be established", Dr. Lindner remarks diplomatically

(INTERVIEW Dr. Lindner), while he reflects on the displayed *tsantsa*. But he then adds, that the objects will most likely be stored in the museum's depot, in the near future. To put objects into storage rooms, again transforms them into "resting" objects (Dudley 2004), like as they were sleeping. Dudley compares museum objects with actors, who are relaxing "between jobs" (ibid.). In storage rooms the objects are being preserved or stored. They are therefore absent in exhibitions until they are 'reawoken' and perform again. But to put museum objects into storage rooms or hide them, does not solve the existence of the objects. Still museums, like Hdn are the owners of such problematic artifacts with unclear provenances. To lock them away in museum depots is similar to the tactics of denying their existence, one could argue. This thought brings me back to the treatment of the displayed *tsantsa* at Hdn.

Text Panels, Labels and Graphics of the "Schrumpfköpfe" Display

All texts at HdN are written in German. A text panel hovering over the display case reads "Schrumpfköpfe". Two text labels in German language describe the three items and their original cultural function in "Jívaro" (Shuar) culture. The text labels are supported by two graphics, in which the supposed manner of carrying *tsantsa* is explained. This graphic and the accompanying text describes *tsantsa* as also existing in Guatemala, which is a wrong misleading information. Because *tsantsa* were exclusively produced by Shuar (see Chacon 2007).

The textual description of the sloth *tsantsa* also reads and additionally illustrates graphically, that *tsantsa* are to be found in Costa Rica too, which is also inaccurate. Besides these improper facts, the text of the second label outlines the origin of sloth *tsantsa*. It describes the connection of the objects to myths and that sloths are perceived by the "Jívaros" as their ancestors.

The term "Jívaro" is nowadays not used anymore (see chapter 2.), not in museal settings nor in scientific literature. Also *tsantsa* are designated as "Schrumpfköpfe" in the text panels and on the labels. The objects are in the first place, not described in native Shuar terminology, but as "Schrumpfköpfe". Today ethnographic exhibitions often use indigenous terms, because "[...] partly to acknowledge the insufficiency of translation" (Lidchi 1997:175) and also in order to feature the voices of the represented cultures on exhibit. In the HdN exhibition *Tiere & Lebensräume* this is not the case, as I have described. These incorrect designations amplify a exoticizing view on indigenous cultures in general and here especially on Shuar.

6.2.5. The Space of the Living Dead

Maure compares museum exhibitions with “near-religious spectacles”, because they are “set apart from everyday life” (Maure 2012:167). As already remarked, museums may be viewed as sacralized places, which are situated on the opposite of the profane, the outside world of the museum. Some visitors may be perceived as devotees or pilgrims, who visit the museum as a sort of a sacred site. Visitors engage with former indigenous ritual objects on display in a similar manner, like they would contemplate on works of art in art museums.

On one occasion I have observed a woman, who studied the text labels of displayed *tsantsa* with keen interest. The way she showed interest and contemplated on the objects, reminded me of a nearly religious service or of a “near-religious spectacle”, similar to meditating or worshipping an enshrined idol, or an venerated devotional article.

On another museum visit I have interviewed a group of male teenagers, who described the exhibited shrunken heads as “savage”. One elaborated that the treatment of “[...] the natives who decapitate other human beings is savage” (Memory Minute Teenagers). They seemed to be terrorized by the presence of the exhibited shrunken heads and by the stuffed animals. They left the exhibiton instantly.

Visitors of the exhibition *Tiere & Lebensräume* are facing dead species, especially by encountering the performed dead cultural Other. Dead taxidermied animals and human bodies (parts) are on display, mimicking as if they were alive. Michael Taussig writes about the “space of death” (Taussig 1984), which the author compares with that of a “liminal” space. He understands the space of death as a threshold or zone of oppositions, which is created through the practice of *othering*. It is a space, where the culture of the conquerer is meeting that of the conquered. It could also be argued that the exhibition *Tiere & Lebensräume* is a cultural performance, which transforms the museum into a space of the living dead, in which colonial history becomes alive. *Tsantsa* are perceived by Shuar as alive, due to *arútam* and *muisak* (see chapter 2.). For museum visitors the *tsantsa* may be interpreted as sacralized dead objects of the cultural others, who are exhibited by the museum.

To summarize the staging of displayed *tsantsa* at the museum exhibition *Tiere &*

Lebensräume of HdN, they may be interpreted as being placed between the gruesome, and the curious. The objects are attracting and repulsing visitors at once. The way they are presented, is rendering the sacredness of objects in the display case. The text panel describes the displayed *tsantsa* as “Schrumpfköpfe”, which enhances the notion of interpreting the Shuar as “savage” head-hunting forest Indians.

Tsantsa are perceived aesthetically by some visitors as desacralized “savage” dead body parts. On the other side, they are being venerated as artfully handcrafted curious objects. The exhibited *tsantsa* are liminal, in the sense that they are oscillating in the museal setting, between being *naturalia* and *artificialia* at once. *Naturalia*, because the objects were in their biographies once human subjects and this translates as Mitchell writes “[...] transformed from raw materials” (Mitchell 2006:393). Humans as “raw material”, to cite Mitchell (2006) were transmuted after their deaths by human agents into *artificialia*. Similar to a museum preparator, who prepares animal species in order to conserve them, Shuar process human scalps and produce *tsantsa*.

Maybe the best term to describe the objects on display, is as worshipped and sacred “liminal” objects of the cultural others. Through this description the exotic and strange seeming presence of the objects within the exhibition is enhanced. Also the text panels and -labels used, alter *tsantsa* into changing object categories. Especially using poor translation of indigenous terms and due to the wrong graphical illustrations used in the display box, enhance the objects on display, as exotic objects or *exotica*.

Unclear Authenticity of Two *Tsantsa*

It is now important to discuss the authenticity of the two human *tsantsa* on display (see **FIG 15 & FIG 16**). There exists no inventory list, where the provenance of the objects are listed and could be studied. Regarding the authenticity of the objects, the curator and co-director Dr. Lindner has also no clues, whether they are authentic ceremonial *tsantsa* or not. The two *tsantsa* at HdN were donations from private collectors, as Dr. Lindner informed me. For this reason it was necessary to conduct an artifact analysis of the two objects’ physical features, based on Houlton’s and Wilkinson’s model (2016) for analyzing *tsantsa* (see also section 5.5.). In order to inspect the material features of displayed objects and to evaluate the authenticity of the objects, I compared in total 16 visual facial features of ceremonial *tsantsa*, and

commercial shrunken heads, as presented by the authors Houlton and Wilkinson (2016:2). No information is provided by HdN museum, whether the objects on display are genuine and were used ceremonially by Shuar or if they were produced intentionally as replicas, or as counterfeits. Only a textual description of the indigenous use and production process is provided by the museum, but no information is given on the provenance of the objects.



FIG 15 Shrunken Head #1 (left) **Source:** Pinto do Amaral
FIG 16 Shrunken Head #2 (right) **Source:** Pinto do Amaral

Besides analyzing the visual features of the *tsantsa* on display, additionally I have compared the objects with other *tsantsa* found on the Internet (compare URL Instagram # Tsantsa). The *tsantsa* analysis procedure by Houlton and Wilkinson (2016) consists of 16 points, corresponding to material features of the objects, which determine their authenticity (see Appendix Evaluation *Tsantsa* Authenticity).

Results of *Tsantsa* Analysis: Out of 16 points in total, only 3,5 points correspond to features of ceremonial *tsantsa*. Nearly all characteristics are missing, that would determine the authenticity of the two inspected *tsantsa*. Additionally to the missing facial features of the objects, there exist no records, whether on the provenance, nor on the pedigree of both artifacts. The objects at display show some features of ceremonial objects, but important features of authentic *tsantsa* are missing. Specimen #1 seems to be a female person and specimen #2 looks like a male,

based on the objects' facial features. Ceremonial *tsantsa* are exclusively produced from male victims (see Karsten 2000 [1935] and Harner 1972).

It may be assumed that both pieces at HdN are “commerical shrunken heads” and are therefore inauthentic. They are with high probability counterfeit pieces or replicas of ceremonial *tsantsa*.



FIG 17 Visitor looking at Display Case **Source:** Pinto do Amaral

On display and not being labelled as inauthentic, the manner of putting them into a display box, describing the objects textually and also exhibiting them alongside with authentic objects, such as with authentic feather adornment, ceramics, and the authentic sloth *tsantsa*, creates an illusion, as the two objects would also be authentic. But the shrunken heads are also “liminal”, in terms of being of unclear authenticity and provenance. I have already examined and meditated in (section 6.1.) on the concept of *tsantsa* authenticity, from an different analytical angle.

In conclusion, it can be stated that both specimen displayed at HdN are fakes and they may be read as actor-doubles, who are put on stage in order to perform the roles of authentic characters, here ceremonial *tsantsa*. An illusion is produced, created ‘behind the scenes’ of the museum, who theatrically stage the objects in display boxes.

I discussed the exhibiton in the last section, as a place where dead body parts are performed as being alive and where the dead meet the living, and analyzed the

shrunk heads of HdN in relation to their authenticity statuses. I will now concentrate on the diorama, presenting a Shuar household.

6.2.6. Dramatizing Shuar Everyday Life in a Diorama

The central questions here are concerned with, how the diorama is structured and what scenes are reenacted? But also, how the diorama helps to reinforce the staged authenticity of displayed *tsantsa*, is addressed in this section.

The diorama of the exhibition displays a lifesize wax figure of a male Shuar. Donna Haraway thinks that dioramas can perform as windows or “peepholes into the jungle” (1989:37). This means they are to be understood as theatrical stages, in which the everyday life of indigenous peoples are “shown” and stories are “told” (Grimes 2014:206f.) or physically represented. Dioramas encourage voyeurism, which allows spectators to look into other lifeworlds.

Dioramas are triggering a “colonial gaze” thinks Bachmann (2017:8). Haraway thinks that “A diorama is eminently a story, a part of natural history. The story is told in the pages of nature, read by the naked eye” (Haraway 1989:37).

In dioramas fictional worlds are staged within a realistically looking reproduced natural setting. The painted background of a diorama, as Donna Haraway puts it, looks like a “reminiscent of Hollywood movie set art curve” (ibid.).

In the HdN diorama of the Shuar household, the portrayed scene is part of enacted “cultural life worlds” (Lewis 2013), where the life of cultural others are mediated through theatrical means.

The diorama of the Shuar house (see **FIG 18**) in the HdN exhibition *Tiere & Lebensräume* reminds me on the staging of so called ‘primitive’ cultures in human zoos, attracting the *colonial gaze* of visitors. Such spectacles were popular attractions during the nineteenth century and at the beginning of the twentieth century in Europe, and in the United States of America. During this period human individuals, as well as -groups were exhibited as zoological species, like animals in zoos. In many cases indigenous “actors” reenacted their supposed everyday life activities on stage, in recreated villages and in artificially emulated natural habitats.

What is interesting about the staging of displayed Shuar people in the diorama, is the fact that the painted scene, including a female “nursing a baby” in the background, is engaged in a “drama of the quotidian” (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1991:45). A boy is also present as a painted figure, who is collecting palm leaves and the sculpted adult

male wax mannequin is looking out of the display glass, facing the visitors. The illustrated scene may be interpreted as the adult Shuar male would plan to go on a hunting expedition. This notion is amplified, because he holds a prop, a machete in his hand. But also a blowgun, and arrows are positioned within his reach. This reading is only working, when contextualizing the diorama's content in relation to the *tsantsa* in the next display case. The provided text label only lists the items on display, which are exhibited in the diorama.



FIG 18 Diorama: Shuar Male with Machete **Source:** Pinto do Amaral

The “cultural performance” (Lewis 2013) of hunting for heads, as a kind of a “special event” (ibid.), is not portrayed physically, but symbolically indicated through the male, whose face is decorated with red paint and is wearing a *tawásap* (feather headdress). This connotation is also amplified by the Shuar male mannequin, because he is holding a machete in his left hand and a blowgun, and arrows are positioned close to him. The machete may be interpreted here as a metonym for a murder to take place, when reading the object as a semiotic sign and combined with the red paint in the Shuar's face, and the weapons which are within his reach. But it may also connote the interaction between modern technology (iron) and traditional Shuar hunting practice. The indicated practice of hunting for heads of enemies by the male, is maybe unintentionally signified in the diorama, as a typical Shuar activity of the Shuar's past. This notion is described by the text labels of the displayed *tsantsa*.

Because HdN designates itself as “Schaumuseum” [watch museum], it may be assumed, that it is no coincidence, that the diorama is positioned close to the three *tsantsa*.

By the staging of the “quotidian” (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1991), Shuar private life is publically exhibited inside the diorama. Thereby the ordinary social life is dramatized, in the sense of Erwin Goffman’s dramaturgical approach and the concept of a theatrical framing (see Goffman 1986:124f.). The reconstructed Shuar house amplifies the authenticity of imagined Shuar everyday life, which is presented here by the indicated activities of the present actors. The woman in the background is nurturing a baby, a young male is collecting palm leaves and the “lifelike” (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1991:23) male wax figure, is facing the visitors directly, as he would be alive, and addresss the visitor. But also the displayed material items of Shuar culture, used here as props, indicate the authenticity of the enacted scene. Included are ceramics, weapons, such as blowgun and spear, the body decoration of red face paint, jaguar teeth collar and the feather crown or *tawásap* the male is wearing, and also a signal drum (*tundui*). Some of the material objects found in the diorama are also exhibited inside other display cases of the America collection, where they are labelled and described textually. These props render the objects inside the diorama as authentic and also amplifies the reconstructed ‘realness’ of Shuar everyday life, which is presented.

I have discussed the museum as a sacralized place, *tsantsa* as displayed “liminal” objects, the dramatization of the quotidian in Shuar culture, presented inside the diorama and the internal arrangement of the exhibition *Tiere & Lebensräume*, as well as the museum as place of exhibiting power over the cultural Other.

I will now elaborate in the following section, how the museum “tells” a story of exoticized and stereotyped Indians.

6.2.7. Telling the Story of Exoticized and Stereotyped Indians

Kapferer and Theodossopoulos stress that “the exotic” is a relational category (2016:1). It is connected to the concept of the “primitive” Other, as described in (section 6.1.). Connotations of the term exotic are often associated with “barbarism” and linked to “forms of life at the edge of civilization” (ibid.).

This brings me to the questions: What stereotypes are American Indians associated with in the discussed exhibition? What character traits are attributed to Indians? How

are they constructed? What can be said about the relationship between the represented group and the group or institution, who represents? How does this connect to the story, which is told by the museum?

Indigenous societies are often represented by the Western world as cannibalistic, war-like Hobbsian 'savages' and as in nature harmoniously living "noble savages", to cite Rousseau.

The mission statement of HdN understands human culture, as being part of nature: "Der Mensch und seine Kultur werden als Teil der Natur verstanden – in vielfältiger Abhängigkeit und Wechselwirkung mit dieser"⁸ (see Appendix Museumsleitbild). The binary nature/culture dichotomy of Claude Lévi Strauss is here promoted by HdN.

In the exhibition *Tiere & Lebensräume*, American Indians are explicitly labelled as being "not primitive" (see Appendix Der Regenwald - Lebensraum der Waldindianer). But symbolically speaking, they are being represented contrarily, as uncivilized. Especially topics such as cannibalism and warfare are told throughout the whole ethnographic collections, and through the framed objects on display in the exhibition *Tiere & Lebensräume*. Indigenous societies are textually and physically presented as "Naturvölker" [primitive peoples], adapting 'naturally' to the environment, in which they are believed to live. This notion is also reinforced by the diorama, which is positioned next to the text label *Der Regenwald - Lebensraum der Waldindianer* [The Rainforest - Living Space of the Forest Indians]. The museum's co-director and curator Dr. Robert Lindner is supporting this assumption. He defends the perspective of "fremder Blick" [stranger's perspective] by exhibiting foreign cultures, such as Amerindians, in the form of the cultural Other, and through displaying material culture of other, mainly indigenous societies (INTERVIEW Dr. Lindner). This "stranger's perspective" also includes the *tsantsa* on display and the diorama, in which the enacted life scenes of a Shuar family is represented.

Amazonian Indians are perceived as two opposing sides of the same stereotypical image. When interpreting the exhibition in respect of stereotypes, two are especially apparent in the museum Haus der Natur. On one hand the Amazonian Indian, here Shuar, are represented as "savage" (Ellingson 2001:11ff.) head-hunters, as presented through the three displayed *tsantsa*. On the other spectrum, Amazonian Indians are staged as "wise forest managers" (Nugent 2016:74), living in harmony

⁸ Translation: "Man and his culture are understood as part of nature - in multiple dependence and interaction with it."

with nature (Appendix Der Regenwald - Lebensraum der Waldindianer). In (section 6.3.) this dual image of the Amazonian Indian will be further elaborated. The former representation, the Amazonian Indian as head-hunter, is associated with concepts, including violence and practices like cannibalism, murder, rape, and having bad character traits in general. In opposition to the violent image, stands the 'noble' forest Indian, who is supposed to be civilized, spiritual, brave and peaceful. Both imaginations of the Amazonian Indian emanate from colonial fantasies.

Often these narratives depict indigenous groups as "people without history" (Wolf 1982), living in a homogenous temporality and who are thought to be "frozen in history" (Fausto 2007). This mode of representation positions indigenous groups of the Amazonian rainforest closer to nature, like the other exhibited various taxidermied animal species, that are presented. Displayed indigenous societies are represented within a social-evolutionistic hierarchization model, which presents them as subordinates, in contrast to Western superior, modern civilizations. In this way also groups, such as Amazonian Indians are given a naturalized taste, such as the term "forest Indians" suggests.

Former HdN director Dr. Erwin Stüber labels the Shuar as "Jívaro-Kopfjäger" in the expedition report *Die Amazonasexpedition 1978* (see Appendix HdN Amazonas Expedition Report 1978). He also mentions in the report that the expedition group met a band of "kämpferische Indianergruppe" [warlike group of Indians] near the city of Puyo, in the *oriente* of Ecuador. This group, who lived at the Shuar-settlement *Ipeiac*, are also labelled as "einsame Waldindianer" [solitary forest Indians]. In the report and also in the exhibition *Tiere & Lebensräume*, the two discussed Amazonian Indian stereotypes are at play. In context of postcolonial ideology, the Amazonian Indian is being represented as the naturalized subaltern native, an ambiguous stereotyped "savage", who is glorified and demonized at the same time. The narrative or discourse of HdN, in context of the "politics of exhibiting" (Lidchi 1997) recounts the story of the uncivilized Indian savage, who stands in opposition to the Western civilized Self. Through the imagined Indian of the past we can see our present-day presence in the modern world, as part of the performed natural history, which the museum HdN presents to its visitors. A natural order of Western domination and indigenous submission is suggested through the museum's representation of exhibited Indians, containing at once the dichotomic role of the bogeyman and the virtuous "bon sauvage". Such popular beliefs of the cultural Other

in context of the historically stereotyped Indian, are associated with the dichotomy of romanticization and exoticization of others in general. A story of an unbalanced relationship is enacted by the museum, which does the representing. The manner of the museum, which is exhibiting other cultural artifacts, constructs indigenous groups, partly as naturalized “savage” groups from the past, who engage in tabooed activities, like in cannibalism or head-hunting.



FIG 19 Ceramics and Photograph of a “Jívaro” Male with Bowl and *Tawásap*
Source: Pinto do Amaral

On the other end stands the rational, modern scientifically thinking and civilized man, who is presented as being located on the top position in human evolution.

Conclusion

I have shown, that the objects in discussion are represented through the internal arrangement and the frame of cultural areas. I described, how by juxtaposing animals and humans through the physical and symbolic frame, the presented cultures are represented as exoticized and naturalized cultural Others. The displayed objects in discussion perform and are being performed within a “sacred place”.

By representing former ritual objects of Amazonian Indians, they are also “liminal”, as already remarked. They are dead “performing bodies”, which are presented to the public. The discussed objects are lifted to the category of *artificialia*, artful objects of wonder and fascination, which are displayed, and adored. On the other side the

objects are perceived as exhibited sacralized morbid *curiosa naturalia*.

As for the two positions, the two *tsantsa* at HdN tell us about this dichotomy of being dead and alive at the same moment. The narrative of civilized humans as crown of evolution is told here and is also reinforced throughout the exhibition *Tiere & Lebensräume*.

Museums and art galleries are nowadays contesting stereotyped images of the past (Morphy/Perkins 2006). International political debates about repatriation, material cultural property, and cultural heritage have increased, and allows the increase of intercultural collaboration (see Morphy/Perkins 2006:21) with indigenous peoples.

Most museums of today try to find solutions for the hoarded objects they own, which were often acquired in the past in dubious ways. To put such objects into museum depots and trying to hide them, doesn't solve the problem of their existence in museum collections.

In a modern globalized world, it would be more important to look at musealized indigenous objects from the perspective of a "shared heritage" and to engage in provenance research (Wonisch 2018:48). To "re-read" ethnographic collections gives a possibility to break with wrong object designations and outdated categories in museums, which are often connected to colonial history (ibid.:49).

Also the question has to be re-evaluated, how indigenous peoples may be integrated into the process of representing themselves, and their material culture within Western knowledge systems, such as in ethnographic museums or in museum exhibitons.

After discussing exhibited *tsantsa* in museums and the stereotypical representations of exoticized Amazonian Indians, in the next part (section 6.3.) the investigation focuses on the question: Who are the Shuar of today, working in the tourism sector?

6.3. ECUADOR: Performing New Shuar Identities, Tourism and *Tsantsa*

“For the colonial perspective of yesterday and the tourist perspective of today, exotic is often synonymous with wild (in the enduring fantasy sense of being untouched by civilization)” (Davidov 2013:23).

The following section discusses my visit to Ecuador and asks the question, who are the Shuar of today, working in the tourist industry? I will now continue to describe my empirical findings and results of the conducted investigation in Puyo and Macas.

I look at how two Shuar communities use “self-exoticization” in order to counter Western manufactured exotic fantasies about the head-hunting Amazonian Indian (Kapferer/Theodossopoulos 2016:41). I argue that a special form of tourism, namely “community-managed ecotourism” (see Davidov 2013) constitutes a special aspect of being indigenous and Shuar within a modern world.

The focus is on how material culture is used, in order to enact different social roles in (a) photographs, put on social media platforms and (b) in real-life performances, such as in live story-telling, as well as in dance, and song performances.

Collecting data involves taking screenshots of the communities’ self-presentation. User comments are not analyzed, because I focus on self-presentation, rather than on online interaction. Only data aimed for the public is used for capturing screenshots. Furthermore I limit the assortment of screenshots on collecting only photographs of the genre selfies and “groupies”, selfies in which more than one persons appear (see Miller 2016:82). I select photographs and look at the performativity they express. The presentation of Self is researched, in context of two enacted stock characters of (a) nature conservationist and (b) warrior. Included in the observation will be the (1) “setting” and (2) “front” of the performers, with focus on “clothing” (Goffman 1956:14), which are used in the performances. The (1) setting includes locations, such as sceneries framing the performances. The (2) front of the performers consists here of costumes, including clothes, decorative elements, such as adornment and body paint, but also the props used in the performances. This focus contributes in understanding how cultural identities are produced within a setting of a changing postcolonial world.

Quito and Park El Ejido

When walking through the park El Ejido (**FIG 20**) in a morning of January 2019, no

more *indigenas* were camping out here (compare chapter 2.). The only campers I encounter are homeless people, asking bypassers for small amounts of money. Families sit in the grass having picnic, others are jogging, doing exercises or are just resting on benches and being engaged in conversations with each other. The only thing reminding me on the *caminata* of 1992, are some articles sold by souvenir shops. They offer tourist-art products, like bracelets, necklaces and wooden masks, manufactured by the various indigenous groups, who were part of the peaceful *caminata* twenty-seven years ago.



FIG 20 Entry to Park El Ejido (left) **Source:** Pinto do Amaral

FIG 21 Souvenir Shop: Masks and *Tsantsa* Replica (right) **Source:** Pinto do Amaral

I discover a few wooden *tsantsa*-replica for sale (see **FIG 21**), offered by the kiosks, which I will encounter again at the Amazonian museum *Abya Yala* and at the museo *Mindale*. Both museums are located in the nearby district of Mariscal.

6.3.1. Amazonia: Enchanted Nature and the Exotic Other

Europeans associate the Amazonian rainforest or *la selva*, how the jungle is often named in South America, with myths (see Mader 2004:204ff.) and imagined exotic shapes of otherness. Alterity manifests in the form of fauna and flora, but also as the ethnic Other. This stereotyped cultural Other is the Amazonian “forest Indian”, who is in Western imaginaries believed to live in the forest, as we have encountered in the

museum's description of HdN (see section 6.2.). Often these exotic imaginations of the Amazon region are symbolically loaded negatively and positively. They are often associated with "value-laden connotations" (Kapferer/Theodossopoulos 2016:1). Negative associations are often projected, as an anthropological discourse, on the ethnic 'savage' others and on the ecosystem they inhabit. Positive stereotypes express through the narrative of the "ecological idyll", in which humans and animals live together in harmony (see Mader 2004:205).

The Amazon region (compare section 6.2.) is often portrayed as wild and as counter-image of the civilized world, and of the modern Self (Kapferer/Theodossopoulos 2016).

Visiting Museo Abya Yala (Quito)

After walking around park El Ejido, my next stop in Quito is *museo Amazonico Abya Yala*, an ethnographic museum, located in the Mariscal district. Here I talk to Nataly Orbe, the curator of the museum.



FIG 22 Nacionalidad Achuar y Shuar at Museo Abya Yala **Source:** Pinto do Amaral

The museum exhibits various material objects, but also photographs of diverse Amazonian indigenous groups, including Achuar and Shuar (see **FIG 22**) are on display. *Museo Amazonico Abya Yala* also presents in its permanent exhibition, contemporary problematic issues indigenous are facing today. Some of the photographs at the exhibition depict ecological implications resulting from

neoextractive practices, including oil drillings and deforestation on indigenous ancestral territory (see **FIG 23**).



FIG 23 Oil Fields in Cuyabeno (1990) **Source:** Judith Kimerline

The museum houses various material objects of Amazonian groups, including feather adornment, musical instruments, paintings of indigenous peoples, weapons and pottery (see **FIG 24** & **FIG 25**).

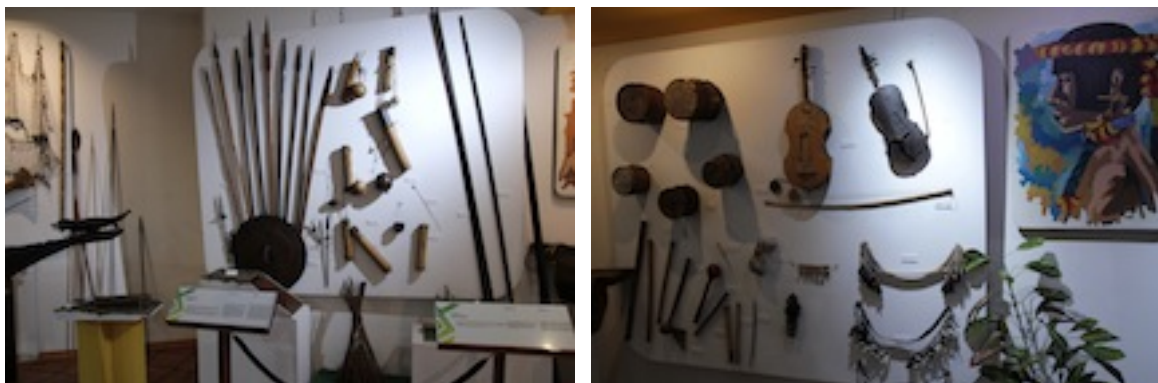


FIG 24 Musical Instruments (right) **Source:** Pinto do Amaral (both)
FIG 25 Chonta Palm Spears at Museo Amazonico Abya Yala (left)

The museum's curator Nataly Orbe has comprehensive knowledge about history, culture and current political situation of Amazonian Indians, which she shares with interested visitors, like me. She informs me that the museum housed four *tsantsa*, which were exhibited. Because of the international discourse on dead bodies and

also for other ethical considerations, the museum has decided to remove the shrunken heads from public display. Instead the museum replaced the authentic objects with *tsantsa* replicas (see **FIG 26**). Also two other *tsantsa* made out of sloths are on display (see **FIG 27**) at the museum's exhibition.

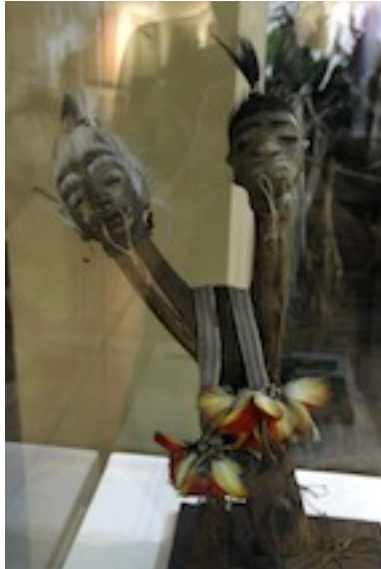


FIG 26 *Tsantsa* Replicas (left) at Museo Amazonico Abya Yala/Quito
FIG 27 Sloth *Tsantsa* (right) **Source:** Pinto do Amaral (both)

From Quito to Puyo

Leaving Mariscal district by taxi, I head for *Terminal Terrestre*, Quito's main bus station. I take a bus in the early morning, my destination is Puyo, a town located in the southern part of Ecuador, named *oriente* (see **FIG 1**).

The city of Puyo is the Amazonian capital of the province Pastaza. During the bus ride I pass through the biodiverse landscape of the country. As the bus descends from the highlands of Ecuador's *sierra* down to the *oriente*, the climate changes too. The dry air and moderate temperature of the highlands change into hot humid air. Getting closer to Puyo, the vegetation also becomes lush green and tropical.

The city of Puyo was established in 1899 and is located close to the Pastaza River. Puyo is very rich in its ethnic make-up and various indigenous groups are living in the city and in its vicinity. In the Pastaza province dwell seven indigenous cultural groups or *naciones* (see **FIG 28**) including Shuar, Achuar, Shiwiar, Canelos Quichua, Záparo, Andwa and the Waorani (Whitten/Whitten 2008:93).

After four hours of bus ride I finally arrive in the afternoon at the bus station of Puyo. I use the city of Puyo as my permanent hub, from which I conduct my investigations.

Indian Stereotypes and the “Savage Slot”

Trouillot thinks that the West and its symbolic ascription to the cultural Other is constructed through what he calls the “savage slot” (Trouillot 2003). The author locates the symbolic model based on order, utopian ideas and the stereotype of the savage (ibid. 2003:23).



FIG 28 Seven Nationalities of Pastaza **Source:** Puyo Somos Turismo

These fantasies about the savage Indian and utopian ideas have their origins in the dichotomy of cultural otherness, with both positive and negative connotations. Trouillot argues “It has often been said that the Savage or the primitive was the alter ego the West constructed for itself” (2003:18). This construction is closely tied to European colonialism and its fictional narratives about cultural otherness and the jungle, especially to be found within anthropological literature. The model of the author associates “the West” with “Order”, “Justice” and “Reason” (Trouillot 2003:23). In opposition “the Rest” is related to the “Savage” and “Utopia” (ibid.) as its mirror image. The “Savage” is linked to traits of nobleness, barbarianism, wisdom and evil, utopia, paradise, communism, innocence, and the illusory (ibid. 2003:23).

The fantasy about the savage’s alterity contains the following two constructed historical Western representations of Indian stereotypes: the (1) “charismatic Indigene” (Graham/Penny 2014) and its counterpart, (2) the Indian as cannibalistic “savage” (Ellingson 2001:11ff.). The latter representation of the Indian is associated with violence and practices like cannibalism, murder, rape, and with ‘bad’ character traits in general. In opposition to the violent image, stands the ‘noble’ Indian, who is supposed to be civilized, spiritual, brave and peaceful, as presented in the portrayal of Karl May’s literary character Winnetou. Both stereotypical and contrasting images of the ‘good’ vs. the ‘bad’ Indian are historically rooted in the philosophical era of Romanticism. As in Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s stock character “le bon sauvage” or

“noble savage”, a universalizing romanticized image of the civilized and tame savage is constructed, in which the Indian lives in balance with his natural surrounding.

The term of the “noble savage” was first used by John Dryden in his play *The Conquest of Granada* (1672) (see Ellingson 2001:1ff.). Both imaginings may be seen as reflections of the stereotyped Indian, who is simultaneously the exotic glorified and demonized Other. The ambiguity in imagining Indians, are also to be found in the Amazon region, as remarked (see section 6.1. & section 6.2.).

Another contemporary representation of Amazonian Indians is presented by Alcida Rita Ramos, which she names the “hyperreal indian” (Ramos 1994). This concept is concerned with imaginations of the Indian as the cultural Other, who is characterized as a simulation, similar to the concept of Baudrillard’s “simulacrum”. The “hyperreal indian” is associated with the fabricated images of the authentic and ideal. In this case, the Indian is imagined as static and indigenous peoples in general are perceived as one undifferentiated group without personal histories. This characterization misses the diversity of indigenous peoples cultures and their ways of life, but also the fact, that for example “Runa and Jivaro have their own regime of historicity and memory” (Fausto 2007:xiii). These indigenous historicities, which are based on a model of myths, hold different perceptions of time and those are often omitted by a colonial narrative.

Environmental Struggles and Decolonizing Nature

Concepts like territoriality, environmental issues, in the context of postcoloniality (Altmann 2014) are included, when talking about indigeneity or indigenous peoples in Latin America and elsewhere. But also questions about cultural diversity, difference, interculturality, repatriation and decolonization of indigenous artifacts, affect indigenous cultures of today. Claims from indigenous populations, regarding ecological, political, social and cultural demands also have influence on today’s Shuar culture and lifestyle. The global discourse on decolonization also includes ecological questions, based upon human-nature relationships and differing bodies of knowledge. Often these relations, in an American context, include the “violation of the ontologies” (Acker et al. 2016:9) in context of indigenous peoples. The concept of “political ontology” (Escobar 2016:13) assumes a fighting for the defense of territories. Often Amerindians perceive ‘nature’ differently than the Western world and capitalist ideology. This uneven relationship needs to be understood in historical terms and in context of colonial imaginations of Westerners, who perceive American

lands only as a resource, which needs to be exploited. Since the 1970s indigenous groups have started to strategically appropriate Western constructed images, in order to self-exoticize and label themselves as environmentalists (see Acker et al. 2016). This strategy was adopted by native peoples of the Americas, intended to be better understood by the Western world, in their own terms. The intention behind this practice, is to address exploitive and extractive activities on indigenous lands.



FIG 29 Pastaza River (2019) **Source:** Pinto do Amaral

This is to be understood in reference to local, nation-state, as well as geopolitical meanings (see Escobar/Mignolo 2010), which are linked to ecological and politico-economic entanglements. Indigenous peoples demands for local self-determination, state recognition of ancestral territories and also of indigenous epistemologies, may be better understood with the help of the concept of “relational worlds” (Escobar 2016:20). Competing ontologies also involve different knowledge systems. These relate to indigenous worldviews, such as to the ontology of “animism” and on the other side, to “naturalism” (see Descola 2013) or Western materialism. The latter is located within the global capitalist system, with its “eurocentric knowledge” (Escobar 2016:13). Arturo Escobar proposes the concept of a “pluriverse”, that accepts

different realities simultaneously, rather than the single “one-world-world” globalization (Escobar 2016: 22), in which different cultures and perspectives are framed by one world (see Escobar 2012/2016). On the other hand, the concept “pluriverse” recognizes various cosmovisions, that are based on a relative understanding of life.

The democratic model of a “relational ontology”, presented by the author Arturo Escobar, also includes various living beings (animals, plants, insects and spirits), who are supposed to live together, intertwined in a “dense network of interrelations” (Escobar 2016:18). Indigenous communities in Latin America, like the Jívaroan-speaking groups of Ecuador and Peru, defend their territories from neoliberal influences by the state, who are trying to profit from their forests. The Amazon region as the “lungs of the world”, contributes to the global climate. Various indigenous peoples in Latin America, but also worldwide are resisting and protesting against the exploitation of resources on ancestral lands. One recent example is the mining-project “Mirador”, in the province of Zamora-Chinchipe. The area is also home to Shuar communities, who are forced to leave the land, which their ancestors inhabited in the past. Up to now, the copper mine Mirador is the largest in Ecuador’s history and is financially backed by Chinese investments ([URL Mirador](#)).

As Escobar states, the struggle of indigenous peoples are not only territorial, but they are also political and “*ontological struggles*” (Escobar 2016:20, emphasis in original). Indigenous peoples try to “[...] defend their worlds even at the price of their lives” (Escobar 2016:19) against what Mignolo understands as “colonial matrix of power” (Mignolo 2010:3). This power matrix includes the control of economic domains, such as land appropriations, labor exploitation, controlling natural resources, as well as the army. But also the control of gender, epistemology and controlling education are part of this matrix (ibid.). Shuar and other indigenous peoples of Amazonia protest against neoliberal notions, which perceive nature simply as a consumable material resource, which needs to be exploited. The protest is directed to fight practices such as mining, contamination of the land, water and air, land grabbing, privatization of common lands, the destruction of forests or the sell-out of their natural habitats, they inhabit.

For this reasons, it is important to discuss the decolonization of indigenous peoples, knowleges and to rethink the capitalist relationship in regards to the natural environment. Indigenous groups of today participate transnationally as environmentalists and activists in order to fight global climate change. Its not only

human worlds, which indigenous peoples try to defend, but also that of non-humans, including that of plants, animals and other beings, which may be best summed up with the term of the “pluriverse” (see Escobar 2016:22). Author Escobar contrasts this concept with that of what he calls “one-world World”, in which everything, including nature is reduced to consumable resources (ibid.). With the democratic model of the “pluriverse”, also non-human entities, as the indigenous concept of Pachamama portrays, is given importance and is endowed with rights. The recent shift in South America towards the concept of *buen vivir* is the concretization of this ontological idea. *Buen vivir* emphasizes the rights of nature, as essential for the “wellbeing according to culturally-appropriate ways” (Escobar 2016:25). The term *buen vivir* was introduced by Monica Chuji, an Quichua activist (see Mignolo 2011:360). The important relational concept of *buen vivir* (*Sumak Kawsay*), grants rights to nature, such as to *Pachamama*, the indigenous model of Mother Earth/-Nature (see Acosta 2009; Escobar 2010; Mignolo 2011). The “pluriverse” concept also incorporates the respect towards nature and persons, including non-humans as “fully agentive subjects” (Escobar 2010:396). The model is intended to increase a “living together” in diversity and it propagates a harmonious relationship between the named subjects (Acosta 2009). Arturo Escobar views *buen vivir* in relation of giving rights to nature and as a global development, which he defines as follows:

“Buen Vivir and the rights of nature, resonates with broader challenges to the ‘civilizational model’ of globalized development. The crisis of the Western modelo civilizatorio is invoked by many movements as the underlying cause of the current crisis of climate, energy, poverty, and meaning. This emphasis is strongest among ethnic movements, yet it is also found, for instance, in peasant networks for which only a shift toward agroecological food production systems can lead us out of the climate and food crises (e.g., Via Campesina). Closely related is the ‘transitions to post-extractivism’ framework” (Escobar 2016:16).

This quotation illustrates the connection with the natural environment, in context of the process of globalization and civilization, in which the author Escobar highlights problematic trends, such as various crises (climate, energy and poverty).

The concept of *buen vivir* also implies goals in the criteria of ecology, which include human dignity and social justice (Escobar 2016:26) for minorities or excluded groups.

6.3.2. Self Exoticization and Branding Shuar Ethnicity

Indigenous peoples perform colonially ascribed roles through strategically using “self exoticization” practices, involving “self-distantiation”, by “the repackaging of cultural

products and practices” (Kapferer/Theodossopoulos 2016:16). Shuar are thereby impersonating or enacting roles of the cannibalistic “savage” (Ellingson 2001:11ff.) and of the “charismatic indigene” (Graham/Penny 2014), in order to inspire “the re-articulation of local histories” (see Kapferer/Theodossopoulos 2016:16). The authors Kapferer and Theodossopoulos think that self-exoticization “[...] provides opportunities for local actors to reflect upon and redefine their identification” with the local and the “wider world” (2016:16). With this bearing in mind, the practice of “self-exoticization” allows actors to define themselves through the use of *agency*.

With the theoretical approach of an “enacted cultural life world” (Lewis 2013:4) I show in this section, how indigeneity is embedded within a transnational framework of imagined identities in *media*- and *ideoscapes* (Appadurai 1999). Producing new hybrid multiple cultural identities are used consciously by Shuar. The intention behind this strategy is, that Western reception is able to relate to native concepts of essentialized indigenous fantasies, in order to fit into the “indigenous slot” (Trouillot 2003). Indigenous identities are “relational”, they are to be understood as a “process of becoming” and not as a “fixed state of being” (Trigger/Dalley 2010:49). Therefore they are continuously negotiated.

To “de-exoticize” (Kapferer/Theodossopoulos 2016) and to distance themselves from colonially ascribed roles and from imaginaries, that are based on the primitive Amazonian Indians, who are imagined as “contemporary ancestors” (Fausto 2007), various tactics are used. Miguel Huarcaya writes that “Supposed authentic indians have to embody exoticism and primitiveness, in the eyes of non-*indigenas*. Through cultural performances *indigenas* position themselves through self-identification” (Huarcaya 2015:820, emphasis in original). By doing so, they articulate that indigenous peoples are not “representatives of a distant past” (Fausto 2007:1), who live in the eternal past, as often imagined by the Western world.

Western fabricated colonial imaginations, based on Amazonian Indians as ethnic others, include the ascription of an intimate connection to nature. This supposed closeness to nature is used by indigenous peoples, which includes recounting myths and taking on following stereotypical roles, attributed to the Amazonian Indian: (a) nature conservationist, and (b) warrior. Through such practices, they are able to renegotiate and reshape their own local historicities within modernity. This is accomplished by “self-exoticization” (Kapferer/Theodossopoulos 2016) within cultural real-life performances and also by using social media outputs, like Facebook.

I show how “self-presentation” (Goffman 1956) is used as a bottom-up approach, in order to represent themselves performatively and to consciously re-design themselves within “cultural performances” (Lewis 2013) for tourists, and to promote newly self-depicted hybrid identities, as “ethnic brand” (Comaroff/Comaroff 2009). This practice is used in order to contrast the “invention of tradition” (Hobsbawm/Ranger 1983), as used by national constructions. I will finally show how Shuar take part in a globalized economy, shifting between traditional life and modern life-worlds.

But who are the Shuar of today, working in the tourist industry? And how do they see themselves? How do they present themselves to the world? What does *tsantsa* mean to Shuar in a globalized world? These question will be answered in the next part of this investigation.

Following empirical parts are intended to decolonize Western fantasies concerning the stereotyped imagined exotic Amazonian Indian with charisma and the savage cannibal.

6.4. CASE Study (A): Eco-Tourism and Reforestation Programs at *Tawásap*

“Ecuadorian ecoturismo is an institution that emerged in a specific national and regional context. It is productively, although at times ambivalently entangled with indigenous struggles for economic and environmental sovereignty”
(Davidov 2013:61).

Arriving at the community *Tawásap* in the morning with Patricio, a tourist travel operator and jungle guide, only two barking dogs welcome us. Besides these two dogs nobody seems to be around on this cloudy morning. The *mestizo* tour operator is married to a Waorani woman and owns a travel agency named *Native Jungle Tours* in Puyo. His company offers ecological and alternative tourist packages, such as tours to Yasuní National Park, but also individual programs to various indigenous groups, living around Puyo, including the Waorani, the Kichwas, Shuar, and Achuar (URL Native Jungle Tours).

The day before, Patricio made an appointment for this morning with the leader Estalin Tzamarenda of the Shuar community *Tawásap*. After one hour of car ride we arrive at the community, situated near the city of Palora in the province of Morona Santiago. The community *Tawásap* consists of around sixty families.

We park near a house, which seems to be quite modern. Two motocross machines are parked in front of the house, satellite dishes are mounted on the iron roof and a blue water tank is located in close vicinity to the house. Also a information sign is placed in front of the house. It reads: “No fuma, no usuario de palabras malas!” [No smoking, no usage of bad words!]. Patricio honks the horn of his van. A young man exits the house and welcomes us with a smile and two dogs. As we get out of the car, the young Shuar introduces himself to me as Nanki. I remark that the Shuar word “Nanki” means “lance” in English. He seemed to have heard this wise insight from tourists quite many times. Nanki replies relaxed and a bit bored: “Sí!” He tells that his father Estalin Tzamarenda is not able to make it this morning. Nanki Tzamarenda explains that his father is right now having a meeting in Palora. He is very busy with his political campaign, because elections are running right now. Nanki continues to tell me, that his father Tzama is a local candidate for the indigenous party, named *Pachakutik*. He tries to be elected for a local political office in Palora.

The back of the house is covered with murals, depicting a tropical landscape with a cascade flowing into a lagoon and mountains in the background. A life-size Shuar

warrior is also present in the foreground of the wall painting, wearing a *tawásap*, holding a *tsantsa* in his left hand and a chonta-duro lance in his right hand (see **FIG 30**). On the other end of the mural is a Shuar warrior with face painting, also wearing a *tawásap* on his head. I ask Nanki about Shuar traditions of today and his position. The young man replies, that his community locates itself between trying to preserve traditional life, its values, rituals, and ceremonies as much as possible. But it also tries to cope with the modern world's aspects (INTERVIEW Nanki).



FIG 30 Mural at Back of Tzamarenda's House **Source:** Pinto do Amaral

He is not trying to conceal the aspects of modernity in today's indigenous life. Nanki tells me that we all wear clothes, like nylon shoes and shirts, which are all made out of crude oil. But he also thinks, that it is important to keep these aspects to a minimum (INTERVIEW Nanki). The young man tells me that the most important things, in order to be in balance with nature is: (1) good air (2) clean water and (3) good earth. He concludes, that those aspects make up a triad for a 'good life' (*buen vivir*). The community *Tawásap* also engages in reforestation programs, Nanki informs me. The community's goal with this program is to plant "[...] 2 million trees between [the years] 2000 and 2020", intended to fight "climate change [...], to contribute to food security, strengthening the culture and to promote the bio-

economy” (see URL Tawasap Reforestation).

He adds that I would be warmly welcomed as guest and tourist, whenever I wanted to return. Nanki tells me that his community provides different programs for tourists, which could be arranged individually, accordingly to one’s personal needs. The community’s tourist programs range from survival workshops in the jungle to workshops, which teach about shamanism, including knowledge about healing plants and participating in *ayahuasca*-ceremonies. They also offer reforestation programs for volunteers, as remarked above. But also learning about Shuar cultural traditions and language courses are offered (see URL Turismo Tawasap).

Nanki’s descriptions about the tourist programs the community offers, reminds me on the concept of “ecoprimitivism” (Davidov 2013:58). The author Davidov understands under this term “[...] the Western perception of small-scale, forest-dwelling, preindustrial communities being so essentially tied to nature that their ecology is inseparable from their culture” (ibid.). This Western constructed fantasy about the Amazonian Indian as “forest Indians” is how the museum Haus der Natur (section 6.2.) describes Shuar and other groups, living in the rainforests of Amazonia. This essentialistic notions of the entanglement of Shuar with nature, is also strongly present in the words of Nanki, who presents himself as nature conservationist in the described stereotypical way.

Nugent writes in the book *Against Exoticism: Toward the Transcendence of Relativism and Universalism* (2016), that

“A contemporary portrayal of Amazonian Indians that meshes particularly well with the vigorous exoticization of nature is represented in the formulation of the “wise forest manager” (Nugent 2016:74).

Nature in ecotourism is a form of “cultural capital” for indigenous groups in Ecuador thinks Davidov (2013), which may be consumed by tourists. The author emphasizes that “Western mythohistorical imaginary of the indigenous population of South America constructs them as intuitive stewards of their natural habitat [...]” (Davidov 2013:58).

Although the young Shuar is using this nature narrative to attract tourists, in order to stay at the community, he also admits that he is passionate about riding his motocross and entering contests with it. This ambivalence seems to counter Western fabricated ethnocentric images about the ‘primitive’ Amazonian Indian, who only

dwells in the forest, goes hunting, fishing and gathers fruits. But what Nanki tells about himself and his “multiple identities” (Eriksen 2016) in being Shuar within today’s globalized world, contradicts this image. Nanki’s statement seems to me more revealing, in context of describing indigenous life of today, than other representations, like those of HdN or on the auction house Dorotheum’s website. In contrast to Nanki’s narrative, the named institutions seem only to emphasize one side of the coin, regarding how Shuar and other indigenous groups are imagined as exotic Indians.

The modern house of the family Tzamarenda portrays allegorically the dichotomy of Shuar’s dual and hybrid identities within today’s world. In the front of the building park motorcross machines and on the back of the house is a mural, depicting a head-hunting Shuar male, who is holding a *tsantsa* and a wooden lance or *nanki*.

I shoot some photographs, we exchange Facebook addresses and then I leave again with Patricio. Back in Puyo I get out on calle Atahualpa, where I have lunch at a local restaurant, named Europa.

6.5. CASE Study (B): Visiting *Kaapar*, Material Culture and Cultural Heritage

6.5.1. Billboards and Meeting a Shuar “Poster Boy”

Walking along calle Atahualpa, I come across a glossy billboard. The lifesize advertisement poster depicts a young Shuar, who is surrounded by jungle ambiente (see **FIG 31** & **FIG 32**). His face is partly covered with red colored designs, named *usúmramu*, produced out of the achiote plant. The young man on the poster holds a chonta-duro lance (*nanki*) in his hands, wears a blue-striped *itip* (traditional kilt), a black-red collar made out of seeds and a jaguar tooth, an *etsemat* (headband), and he carries a tiger patterned bag on the right side.



FIG 31 Billboard on Calle Atahualpa/Puyo **Source:** Pinto do Amaral



FIG 32 Billboard “Turismo Comunitario” **Source:** Pinto do Amaral

The heading and subheading of the poster reads “TURISMO COMUNITARIO: Pastaza Patrimonio Cultural de las Siete Nacionalidades Indígenas”⁹. The lower half of the poster shows a map of Puyo with descriptions of places to visit in the urban center of the city. The billboard is a state-sponsored advertisement which builds upon the imagined exotic Amazonian Indian as nature conservationist, who lives in

⁹ Translation: “Community Tourism: Pastaza Cultural Patrimony of the seven indigenous nationalities”.

balance with his natural habitat, the jungle. The depicted image promotes community-based tourism in this region and advertizes Ecuador's plurinational variance of indigenous peoples, who live in the province of Pastaza.

By accident I get to know this young Shuar later via Facebook. His name is Naichap Wampankit and he lives between Puyo and Macas. His family has established a community-based tourist business, named *Kaapar*. On Facebook Naichap, the Shuar "poster boy", describes to me what his community offers for tourists. Via email I arrange to meet up with Naichap the upcoming days. He tells me, that right now he is on a surfing vacation in Montañita, a small coastal town on the Pacific coast. The city is a popular destination, especially for young international and national party enthusiasts, but also a hotspot for surfers. Naichap's self-description contrasts the exoticizing image suggested by the billboard, I have encountered on the streets of Puyo. The represented image of the "wise forest manager" (Nugent 2016:74) counters the cliché of the fierce head-hunting Shuar. On the billboard the imagery of Shuar as nature conservationists is highlighted in this state-sponsored advertisement, which may be interpreted as a "top-down" representation of the Shuar, in order to re-"invent", borrowing from Hobsbawm/Ranger (1983), the nation of Ecuador.



FIG 33 Francisco Ecuador **Source:** Instagram (Screenshot)
FIG 34 Francisco Ecuador YouTube Video - *Shuwar Shuwar*
Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Inm4DL9eYpE>

Still other representations of Shuar, especially as head-hunters, are widely present in *mediascapes*, particularly on the Internet. Non-Shuar actors, like the entertainer Francisco Ecuador (see **FIG 33** & **FIG 34**) contribute to promote Shuar in exoticizing

stereotypical ways. Examples include the folkloristic and iridescent performances of Francisco Ecuador in his YouTube videos (see URL Francisco Ecuador).

Many pieces of Shuar material culture I have researched at museum HdN in Salzburg, I have seen again at Quito's *museo Abya Yala* and later on the billboard on calle Atahualpa in Puyo, as well as in the YouTube videos of Francisco Ecuador. Especially the lances or *nanki* I encountered in many forms at the Amazonian museum *Abya Yala*, in the Mariscal district of Quito. The wooden lances of Shuar are native to the Amazon region. They are produced out of chonta peach palm hardwood, named uwí or chonta-duro. Traditionally hardwood lances were used by Shuar as weapons for hunting and in war expeditions (see Karsten 2000 [1935]). Nowadays these lances are often representing semiotic extensions of Shuar culture. They are many times used as props in touristic performances, and in other public events. Francisco Ecuador uses various objects of Shuar and of other Amazonian Indian's material culture repertoire, which are deployed as props in his video performances. Besides *tawásap* and chonta-duro lances, also *tsantsa* replicas are to be found in the hyper-exoticizing video performances of Francisco Ecuador. Often the used props are accompanied by seminude dancing women and girls, who act as supporting actresses.

6.5.2. Self-Exoticizing Performances and Hybrid Shuar Identities

In this section I discuss, how stereotypical imaginations of Amazonian Indians in "cultural performances" (Lewis 2013) are used consciously by Shuar members.

Performances for tourists are used strategically by the Shuar community *Kaapar*, in order to construct and re-design themselves. This is done by producing changing 'new' cultural identities, by using the image of the "hyperreal Indian" (Ramos 1994), especially as nature conservationist and tourist guide. And at the same time "self-exoticizing" (Kapferer/Theodossopoulos 2016) practices through role enactment and the use of material culture as props in touristic performances, are applied to break with Western fabricated images of the "primitive" Amazonian Indian. Lewis thinks that "performances" are "sites of persuasion" (Howard and Morphy 2006). By performing prescribed indigenous roles, enacting them as authentic and genuine, they might persuade potential clients of their authenticity as Shuar, and as indigenous peoples.

I want to emphasize how performing "self-exoticization" (Kapferer/Theodossopoulos 2016) in role enactments, as well as using Shuar material culture as props in touristic

performances and in media outputs (Facebook), is a way to take part within a modern transnational world. I show that indigenous peoples are not “representatives of a distant past” world (Fausto 2007:1), who live in the eternal past, as often imagined by the Western world. I argue that these mentioned strategies are ways to represent the cultural distinctiveness of Shuar’s cultural heritage. For this reason, it is important to ask the following question: How do Shuar of the community *Kaapar* represent themselves through material culture, in context of self-exoticizing touristic performances?

The *UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, Article 31 states the following about indigenous cultural heritage:

1. Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their cultural heritage, traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions, as well as the manifestations of their sciences, technologies and cultures, including human and genetic resources, seeds, medicines, knowledge of the properties of fauna and flora, oral traditions, literatures, designs, sports and traditional games and visual and performing arts. They also have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their intellectual property over such cultural heritage, traditional knowledge, and traditional cultural expressions (URL UN Declaration Indigenous Rights).

As the declaration states, indigenous rights include the maintenance and protection of cultural heritage, cultural expressions, such as knowledge about plants and animals, oral traditions, designs, as well as the performance of the visual, and the artistic.

6.5.3. Walks into *La Selva*

“For us the jungle is a very important part of our life, it’s like our home” (INTERVIEW Elias/Yankuam Kaapar).

As the quote above states, the jungle is of great importance for the family Wampankit. The upcoming section describes how the family Wampankit relates to this place and also presents the manner how the group presents itself to foreigners in touristic performances, by slipping into the roles of jungle guides and botanists.

I plan to visit *Kaapar Comunidad Shuar Ancestral* (see **FIG 35**) the next days as a tourist. The community is located between Puyo and Macas. The family consists of thirteen individuals, including six sons and five daughters. Most of the members live at the compound in three separate wooden shacks. They own 500 hectares of land, where they grow different sorts of vegetables and fruits, like yuca, camote, bananas,

guavas, naranjillas, but also medicinal plants. Three horses and also chickens are roaming around the compound of the family. The three wooden houses have electricity and running water. In the first house live the sisters and in the middle the parents. The house on the left side is reserved for the two bachelors Yankuam and Nanki. The eldest son Naichap is already married and has a son, also named Nanki. He lives close to the family together with his wife and son. In the front of the houses is a courtyard with roof and a sitting bench. In the centre of the courtyard is a fire place. Here most of the family's social life takes place.

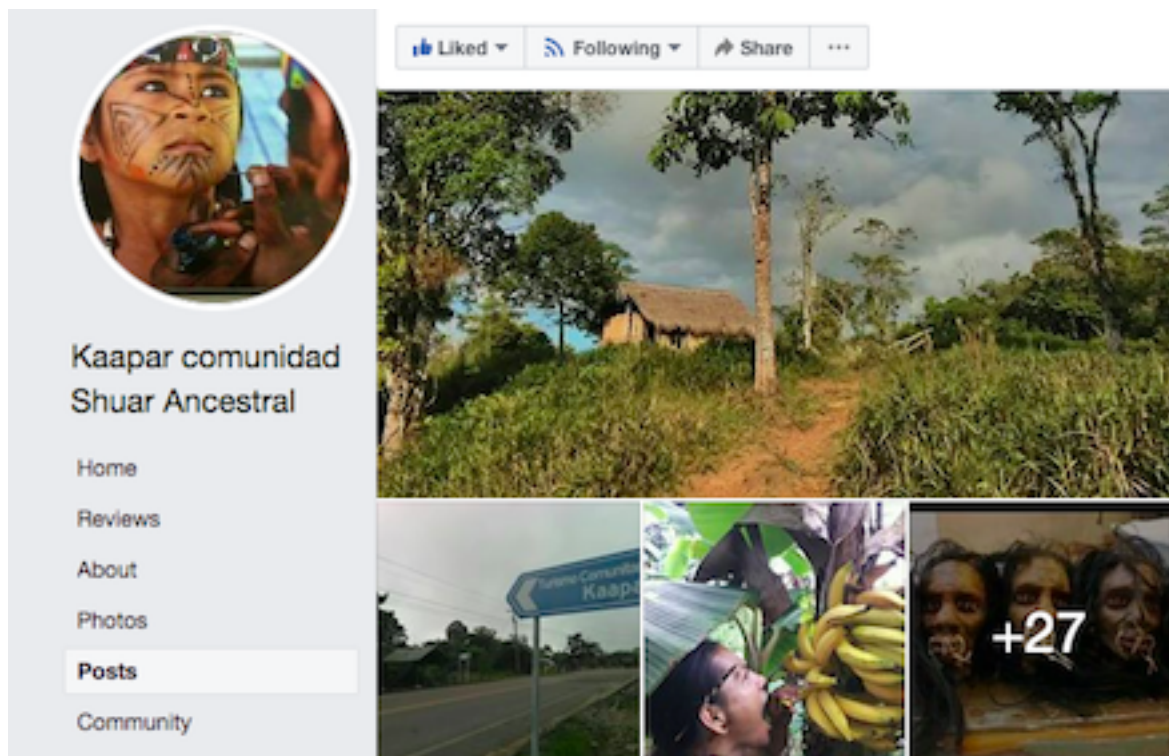


FIG 35 *Kaapar* Comunidad Shuar Ancestral **Source:** Facebook *Kaapar* (Screenshot)

The family gathers around the fire and everyone performs his/her work activities or just hangs around. The community *Kaapar* operates a Facebook page, where they introduce themselves (URL Facebook *Kaapar*). *Kaapar* offers three programs for interested tourists, Naichap told me: (1) a tourist program, (2) a program for volunteers, (3) visiting the community as a friend.

The first program costs U\$ 45 for a day. The service for tourists includes:

- Chicha Welcome Drink
- *Anemat (Enéma)* - Ceremonial Greeting with Spear
- Face Paint with Red Paint of Achiote
- Jungle Walk: Visiting Cascades, including *Tsaank* (Tobacco infusion)
- Lunchbreak: Soup with Chicken Feet, Platano (Plantains) and Yuca

- Dance/Song/Music Performance
- Photos: Selfies, Group Photos

I am warmly welcomed by the family Wampankit and immediately served chicha de yuca. I take some sips of the warm traditional drink, chatting with Elias and his son Yankuam, who both brief me about the upcoming jungle walk.



FIG 36 Yankuam paints Elias Face with Red Color (right) **Source:** Pinto do Amaral

FIG 37 Yankuam texting (left) **Source:** Pinto do Amaral

Before the excursion into the rainforest starts, I am offered a banana drink, a mix of smashed bananas and water. My face is painted partly red with achioté seeds, as are Yankuam's and Elias'. After getting the facial 'make-up' with red paint from achioté seeds (*bixa orellana*), Yankuam explains to me in a serious tone, that this procedure is necessary for "protective reasons".



FIG 38 Family Wampankit and Researcher **Source:** Pinto do Amaral

We then leave the compound, equipped with rain boots. The young Shuar is carrying a lance. Yankuam is dressed with a tiger patterned skirt, a headband made out of

anaconda skin, a collar made out of boa skeleton with an attached jaguar tooth, white football socks and wears gum boots. He nearly looks like a hunter, ready to go hunting. His father Elias just wears pants, a Diesel brand T-shirt, rain boots and carries a machete. Before we head into the woods Elias and Yankuam stop. They collect tobacco leaves and pack them into a bag, presenting their botanical knowledge to me.

6.5.4. Sacred Waterfalls, Storytelling and Cosmic Hunters

We then head into *la selva*. The ground is hilly, rugged, wet, muddy and slippery. There seems to be no path in my perception, for me everything looks green and brown. Many times I am close of getting stuck and losing my boots in the muddy ground. With a machete in his hand Elias guides our group through the undergrowth. After approximately forty minutes heading into the jungle, Elias stops at a small cave (see **FIG 39**). He points to the walls and talks with his son in Shuar-Chicham.



FIG 39 Elias Wampankit looking at Cave **Source:** Pinto do Amaral

As father and son examine the scratch marks on the walls of the cave, they seem to be very excited. Both point to the marks and educate me that a jaguar must have been here not long ago. In the animistic worldview of Shuar peoples and by Amerindians in general predators, like anacondas and jaguars are treated with big respect. As Kaj Århem puts it: “Jaguars, anacondas and raptors are natural

manifestations of the predatory spirits, and shamans are their human counterparts. They are all ‘cosmic hunters’ in different guises [...]” (Århem 1996:190). These apex predators are as quoted, also associated with shamanism and shamans or *uwishin*. Descola also writes that these predatory hunters are perceived as “zealous helpers of shamans” (1996:112). Jaguars, anacondas and raptors are embodiments of the activity of hunting. They are important within the relationship between humans and animals. These hunters are all perceived by Shuar as non-human persons, possessing subjectivity, “conscious intentionality and agency” (Viveiros de Castro 1998:476). They are able to transform themselves and take on a “point of view”, thus taking on different perspectives, as laid out by Viveiros de Castro (ibid.).

We continue to hike further into the woods along a stream. I climb over rocks and wedge crouched through logs, which are growing over the stream. I need to stop for a few minutes, Yankuam does too. Elias is already a few meters ahead and not visible anymore in this dense tropical vegetation. As I make a few steps, the young Shuar tells me to stop and not to move hasty. He points with his spear to a log at the stream, where a small black, grey and red colored snake is resting camouflaged. Yankuam instructs me that this snake is very poisonous, although it is very small. I take this advice seriously and make a snapshot from a safe distance. We continue to walk and with every step we make the jungle seems to become more dense. At this point I have already lost my orientation completely and just follow the two Shuar. After another thirty minutes of walk, we finally arrive at a waterfall.

Judith Butler writes that “Indigenous communities represent a special case study of place in the tourism context because their very being is intrinsically related to place” (Butler 2017:14). For Shuar cascades are “sacred”, they are important locations, where young Shuar seek for *arútam* (see Harner 1972:136). Acquiring *arútam* is an important practice for young Shuar, which is associated with making “[...] a pilgrimage to the sacred waterfall in his neighborhood” (ibid.). Harner continues in his description: “Here they fast, drink tobacco water (made by steeping green tobacco leaves in cold water), and await the appearance of an *arutam*” (1972:136).

Also Yankuam tells me about the importance of “las cascadas” [cascades] for Shuar culture. The young Shuar talks about the power of *arútam* (see chapter 2.) and how spiritual visions are related to landscape and place, especially to the jungle and cascades. Michael Harner remarks that *arútam* visions may be perceived as jaguars

or anacondas, when boys are initiated into manhood by seeking visionary states¹⁰ in the rainforest (1972:138).

As stated in the *UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (see above), indigenous cultural immaterial heritage also includes:

- traditional sciences
- knowledge about fauna and flora
- oral traditions

Yankuam comments on the importance of the jungle for Shuar, which they try to preserve and about the knowledge, they are eager to share with foreign tourists: “[...] we will go and teach our wisdom, knowledge, crafts, dances, music, stories, myths, *arútam*, cascades [...]” (INTERVIEW Elias/Yankuam Kaapar).

The young Shuar continues to narrate that the rainforest is a resource for hunting animals and also a source for gathering medicinal plants:

“Our objective is to maintain our culture, take care of the jungle, showing other people to take part [...]. We also learn from them and they learn from us. Then we are also working little by little that some day this jungle has been well taken care of. Because there are many times that the jungle is exploited, cutting down trees, overhunting and then they leave nothing. For this reason we think about the future” (INTERVIEW Elias/Yankuam Kaapar).

This quote emphasizes the Shuar’s self-ascription in the roles as preservers of the jungle, which is linked to subsistence and to spiritual concepts, as well. Hunting and fishing are for the family Wampankit not the primary sources of their subsistence today. Because they are not hunters and gatherers primarily, like their ancestors were, but have become peasants, who sell their grown products on a market. Nonetheless, the jungle still is the place which they are relating to culturally, as Shuar and as indigenous peoples of Amazonia, in the sense of belonging to a certain territory.

Comparing the enacted scene of the diorama at the museum Haus der Natur (compare section 6.2.6.) with the real-life of a Shuar family, shows the cultural change many indigenous groups have experienced during the last decades. The represented traditional lifestyle of Shuar as “solitary forest Indians”, which is

¹⁰ “The particular animals forms can vary considerably, but some of the most common *arutam* include a pair of giant jaguars fighting one another as they roll over and over towards the vision seeker, or two anacondas doing the same” (Harner 1972:138).

promoted by the museum's diorama at HdN, is in many regards very different to the everyday life I have experienced with the family Wampankit. On one hand, the self-exoticizing representation as stewards of the forest by my Shuar guides, is intended to match the expectation of Western tourists. On the other hand, the jungle is part of the family's existence, but also a place of cultural identification.

We rest at a cascade and our group takes a cooling bath in the water. Yankuam gets the stored tobacco leaves out of his hip bag, mashes them in his hands and forms a ball, which he then mixes with water of the stream. He then inhales the ready-made concoction. Yankuam offers me also tobacco leaves. I emulate the process of preparation, Yankuam shows me. As soon as I inhale the mix and the juice enters the nostrils, my eyes start to produce cascades of tears. The mix of tobacco and water burns heavily in my nose. After one minute the pain decreases and I have to cough. Yankuam reminds me that the tobacco will give me "buen energias" [good energies]. Elias then continues with the same procedure. It seems, as it would be a normal routine for him. Both tell me that I will have strong dreams this night, due to the power of *tsaank* (*nicotiana rustica*). Besides *natem* or *ayahuasca* (*banisteriopsis caapi*) and *maikiua* (*brugmansia*), *tsaank* is a very important shamanic plant in the ethnobotanical repertoire of the Shuar peoples (see Karsten 2000 [1935]; Harner 1972; Thym 2016). As we rest at the waterfall, Yankuam begins to narrate a story about Nunkui, the guardian of the earth (see chapter 2.).

Pellizzaro (1990) points out that Shuar mythology is closely related to the concept of *arútam*, because every myth expresses its power (see also Mader 1999; Chiriap 2012). *Arútam* is an analogy for life and it is embodied by the flow of water, especially by that of cascades, which are believed to be as a source of life (Pellizzaro 1990:10). Therefore Shuar myths are expressing the concept of life for Shuar peoples. Through telling myths, they also express their spiritual relatedness with the natural world, which is filled with ontological meaning. This intimate connection or "dense network of interrelations" with nature and non-human beings, who inhabit these worlds, is best expressed in form of an "relational ontology" (Escobar 2016:17f.). Shuar storytelling is also an expression of worshipping the natural world and treating it with respect, which is also linked to the concept of *buen vivir*.

After the performance of telling a myth about Nunkui, we slowly head back to the house.

Nugent thinks that "self-exoticization" is used by indigenous peoples as a counter

exoticization strategy (Kapferer/Theodossopoulos 2016) in the “work of imagination” (Appadurai 1996). The Shuar community *Kaapar* uses loosely scripted and partly improvised performances, like in the described jungle excursion, as an act of presenting and imagining themselves. Enacting roles as tourist guides, storytellers and botanists are intended to creatively re-fashion the community as indigenous peoples, and also in order to “become known” (Huarcaya 2015:13) to the outside world. They might want to demonstrate and emphasize their cultural uniqueness by sharing specific knowledge with outsiders. Hence, self-exoticizing performances are used consciously as cultural expressions. It is as a form of revitalization of Shuar’s intangible and tangible cultural heritage.

6.5.5. Clothes as a Matter of ‘Perspective’

After we arrive back at the compound, our group is soaked and dripping from sweat, and from the heavy tropical rain, which has caught us on the way back. We have lunch, consisting of cooked chicken legs, yuca and plantains, served on a palm leaf.



FIG 40 Music and Dance Performance for Tourists **Source:** Pinto do Amaral

I am served another bowl of chicha de yuca, a fermented alcoholic drink made out of insalivated yuca. Yankuam informs me that the next point of the upcoming program will include traditional songs and a few dances. A part of the family dresses up in ‘traditional’ attire and wears no shoes (**FIG 40**). The two brothers Yankuam and Nanki wear tiger-patterned kilts. They paint their faces red in order to look like warriors and wear collars made out of seeds, another made out of a snake skeleton.

The younger sisters and their mother dress up in blue dresses, named *karachi*. Theodossopoulos argues that “[...] clothes can be seen as enabling perspectives, a point that beautifully links the discussion on indigenous clothes with Viveiros de Castro’s (1998) influential ‘perspectivist’ approach” (2016:12).

The author thinks that dressing in “hybrid clothes” (Theodossopoulos 2016:11) is a strategy to relate to Western attributed Indian identities and to embody them through the costumes they wear, in the sense of Viveiros de Castro’s (1998) model of perspectivism. In this sense clothing possesses *agency*, which has certain capabilities, making “[...] it easier to operate in the social world of those who produce and wear these clothes” (Ewart 2007:44-45, cited in Theodossopoulos 2016:11).

Yankum and Nanki perform the traditional Shuar welcome performance, called *anemat* (see **FIG 41**). In this formalized greeting each of the Shuar males holds traditionally a chonta-duro lance, in their right hands. They interact verbally and make a gesture of making a step forward with the lance. While they are holding their left hand before their mouths, they face and talk to each other. After this traditional Shuar greeting performance the brothers play flute and drum. The three younger sisters join in and dance motivated, the mother sings. The two elder sisters of Yankuam don’t join the staged performances at all, neither does Elias, their father. Like me, they were sitting dressed in Western clothes on the wooden benches as spectators. The eldest sister of Yankuam and Nanki, Antsa Nua, sits offside on the bench and surfs a bit bored on her smartphone. At one point I am invited to join the dancing, which I do. I get decorated with a collar made out of snake vertebrae and also with a wooden chonta-duro lance, which Yankuam passes to me.

“Many Indigenous claims to cultural property function as a necessary mechanism for political recognition within and beyond the state whilst at the same time offer a refusal of state control and its varied attempts at legitimization”
(Anderson/Geismar 2017:7).

As Viveiros de Castro views the body, both as “integrator” and as “differentiator” (1998:479), this concept may also be transferred to clothes. Clothes may be used as “instruments” (ibid.), in order to connect with other worlds, social groups or species. Viveiros de Castro thinks, that bodies are used to acquire new capabilities, likewise clothes may be viewed as “envelopes”, concealing the soul (Viveiros de Castro 1998:471). Clothes are understood here as bodies, like the examples of “space suits” or “diving equipment” illustrate and which the author uses as analogy (ibid.

1998:482). They might also be utilized to demarcate distinctiveness in social situations. In the case of the staged performance, the performers are dressed in different clothes, than the spectators. This fact relates to the idea that the performers are connecting different worlds with each other through the 'costumes' they wear. The traditional 'savage' animistic and the modern 'civilized' naturalistic world are symbolically represented through different types of vestments.

After the performances I ask Yankuam, why the two brothers used tiger-patterned skirts (see **FIG 40** & **FIG 41**), because no tigers exist in Ecuador? He replies, that these fabrics would be available here and the patterns on the skirts resemble those of jaguars. He remarks that both feline predators are big cats, and they are powerful too. This is the reason why the two young Shuar use tiger-patterned fabrics in touristic performances.

During the performances the performers do not transform through the clothes they wear into other species, like into jaguars, but into performing Shuar bodies. As this example exemplifies, the family uses 'traditional' attire and 'modern' Western produced clothes for practical utilitarian reasons. It is a refashioning of traditional attire, combined with modern fabrics.



FIG 41 Yankuam performing *Anemat* **Source:** Pinto do Amaral

This hybridity in the dress code, may be read as an attempt to relate to past traditions of dressing as Shuar, as imagined by Western tourists. But it is also an endeavor to remind themselves in being Shuar. But at the same time, using imported industrially manufactured materials may relate to the idea of utilizing clothing as "instruments"

(Viveiros de Castro 1998). This may also be viewed at, as a matter of looking at the world from a different perspective, blending together tradition and modernity. Material culture items are used by the *Kaapar* community as props in “self-exoticizing” (Kapferer/Theodossopoulos 2016) staged performances and in self-presentation practices on the community’s social media site Facebook. But they are also “cultural instruments” (Viveiros de Castro 1998:470), intended to take on the perspective of being Shuar within the modern world.

Presenting fake *tsantsa* representations on Facebook and presenting themselves in body decoration, such as using facial paint as decorative aesthetic elements of their distinctive attire, are used to relate, and at the same time to break with exoticized fabricated imaginations about the naked “primitive” Amazonian Indian. These Western fantasies are based on a “romanticising nostalgia” (Theodossopoulos 2016:2) and on primordialist notions, regarding the exotic cultural Other.

After the song and dance performance are over, the performers change clothes again. They ask me, how I liked the experience and they offer to take group selfies with a smart phone. The youngsters then concentrate on their mobile phones, chat and load up photos on their Facebook accounts. I feel the strains of the day and return to Puyo by bus.

6.5.6. And What about *Tsantsa*? Festivals and Celebration

Another time I visit the family as a ‘friend’, in order to take photographs of the community. Elias was busy with roofing the fire place with palm leaves. He welcomes me warmly and his wife offers me a bowl of chicha de yuka. I brought fish and vegetables for the family. I ask Elias and his son Yankuam about the most important festivals in Shuar culture. Both, father and son reply that the fiesta de “chonta” (fiesta del uwí) is very special and the most important celebration of the year (see INTERVIEW Elias/Yankuam Kaapar). This is because in Shuar culture, the year ends in May. The festival is similar to Western New Year’s celebrations in some aspects.

The chonta palm has mythical connotations too. Karsten writes that the Uwí tree has a “[...] alma o wakáni [...] demonio malo o iguánchi” (Karsten 2000 [1935]:284). This means that the chonta palm holds a ‘demonic’ soul, which is symbolically killed with lances during the chonta festival. This symbolic action serves to bring good luck to the community for the next year. I was not able to participate in the chonta festival, due to its date in May. The same palm, chonta-duro, also plays also a role in the

preparation of *tsantsa*. Three little red colored pegs are traditionally pierced through the lips of the *tsantsa* (Karsten 2000 [1935]:207), in order to keep the *emésak* from leaving (see Mader 2017). After both explain, and elucidate about the chonta festival, I ask if there are other important festivals in Shuar culture. “*Tsantsa!*”, Elias replies. “Fiesta de la *tsantsa!*” [*Tsantsa* Festival], Yankuam responds too. Both seem to be very excited and eager to tell me about this festival. I ask what this festival is about. Yankuam proceeds: “Long time ago our ancestors celebrated the festival of *tsantsa*, in a very intimate, secret, private manner, which was very special to the people” (INTERVIEW Elias/Yankuam Kaapar). The festival consists traditionally of music and dancing, they explain to me. Sacred or “religious” songs, called *anent* (see Napolitano 1988) are sung during the *tsantsa* ceremony. In opposition to *anent*, also profane songs exist in Shuar culture, named *nampet* (ibid.). *Anent* are sung for various purposes, including when Shuar are working, during hunting expeditions or in order to defend themselves against the dead (see Napolitano 1988:2). They are linked to Shuar myths and to the transmission of knowledge from the older generation to the next. Napolitano stresses that “[...] la importancia del Anent en la cultura shuar tradicional: se trata de un elemento de transmisión cultural que da orientaciones vinuladas con la manera de vivir [...]” (ibid. 1988:16). [In Shuar culture *anent* are a form of orientation help in life and they are used to transmit important cultural lessons via singing]. I ask, if the festival is still celebrated nowadays? Both negate. Yankuam replies, that in the past those festivals existed in plenty. He adds that many things in Shuar life have changed (INTERVIEW Elias/Yankuam Kaapar). Elias remarks that his father told him about *tsantsa* ceremonies. His father, Elias’ grandfather was an “guerrero” [warrior] and he knew about how to prepare *tsantsa*. During the past, *tsantsa* ceremonies contained various rituals (see Karsten 2000 [1935]; Harner 1972; Mader 1999). These ceremonies include two parts: (1) *numpenk* (ceremony of blood) and (2) *amíamu* (final ceremony). The latter was held a year after the former (Pellizzaro 1980; Mader 1999:199). When a war expedition group arrives back home, a feast of *tsantsa* is held (Karsten 2000 [1935]; Harner 1972:146/187; Pellizzaro 1980; Mader 1999; Rubenstein 2007:364).

Michael Harner describes how *tsantsa* ceremonies were held during times in the past and what meaning they had for the Shuar. He thinks that the most important purpose of “*tsantsa* feast” is to “[...] acquire prestige, friendship, and obligations through being recognized as an accomplished warrior [...]” (Harner 1972:191f.). Here the social

component is highlighted by the author. Harner thinks that the ceremonies surrounding *tsantsa*, serve as pacification gestures. And they are celebrated in order to “reaffirm their common identity and unity” (ibid. 1972). This explanation may be very reasonable in a highly hostile social environment, where witchcraft accusations against each other are part of everyday life.

Ceremonial *tsantsa* are perceived in their indigenous context as “markers” of cultural identity, holding indigenous *agency*. They are viewed as a part of the cultural heritage of the Shuar, the supposed “creator communities” (Byrne 2011:7f.) of the objects, which are exhibited in museums and sold in auctions.

6.5.7. “Un Gran Secreto del Hombre Shuar”

On another visit to *Kaapar* community, I come again as a ‘friend’. The young Shuar informant Yankuam asks, if I would be ok with taking photographs for their Facebook page *Kaapar Comunidad Shuar Ancestral*. I agree.



FIG 42 *Tsantsa* Drawing Yankuam
Source: Facebook Yankuam (Screenshot)

The young man tells me a personal story. He told his mother, that he wants his head to be manufactured into a *tsantsa* after he would die. I ask him: “Why?” He replies, that he wants to be remembered after his death, by the people he knows! This statement may be interpreted, as a sign for how far Shuar of today have distanced themselves from the past custom of taking heads from their former enemies, as Rubenstein (2007) remarks. Another interpretation may take this statement as reminiscence for the Shuar’s warrior past life, a way of identifying themselves with historical continuity. Later that day the young informant posts a photograph of a drawing on his personal Facebook page. The sketch (see FIG 42) depicts a *tsantsa*. Yankuam tells me that “Eso [*tsantsa*] es un gran secreto del hombre Shuar. Lo mantiene” [It is a big secret of the Shuar. It is preserved] (INTERVIEW Elias/Yankuam Kaapar). What the young Shuar is expressing, may be read as a collective remembrance of a common identity of Jívaroan-speakers in today’s world.

He adds that it is “[...] a special and very important memory for Shuar” of today (ibid.).

Comparing the museal representation of the “forest Indians” at HdN with the self-representation of modern real-life Shuar in Ecuador, big differences can be identified. The museum presents the exhibited *tsantsha* as they would still be the central cultural trait of Shuar culture. In opposition to this stance, members of today’s Shuar I have met, perceive *tsantsha* as a custom of the past, a cultural heritage which is remembered with pride.

6.5.8. Branding Shuar Culture: Warriors and Guardians

To market consumable Shuar ethnic identities as “ethnic brand”, a form of “ethno-commodification” (Comaroff/Comaroff 2009:36) is used in touristic performances and in social media outputs.

Especially the roles of the warrior and eco-guardian are enacted. On the Facebook site of the community, they present themselves in the following way:

“Kaapar Ancestral Community Shuar are working on their territory with their project of an ecological path, as a form of our jungle and ancestral knowledge, where we live as sons and grandchildren of guardians and warriors” (URL Facebook Kaapar).

This presentation is intended to offer tourists ‘authentic’ experiences of Shuar culture. These consumable experiences include the discussed programs, such as jungle walks, recounting myths, song-dance performances, and the use of material culture in cultural performances to express Shuar’s “cultural property” (Anderson/Geismar 2017). Folkloristic elements are consciously used in “low-key” performances (Perley 2011, cited in Graham/Penny 2014:16) by the Shuar community creatively, in order to fulfill tourist expectations. Author Susan Carson writes:

“Many Indigenous communities are searching for a way to present their locations and their cultural heritage to interested visitors without incurring environmental or cultural damage. They are also attempting to educate visitors about their culture” (Carson 2017:2).

This quote highlights the mentioned negotiation process within modern worlds, in which indigenous peoples, such as the Shuar are trying to represent themselves to the wider world, as what they are today. They shift between different social roles, ontologies and move swiftly in-between worlds, and perspectives. As media

producers and -consumers, like the mentioned story above illustrates, and as tourist guides at the same time, they are part of *mediascapes* and *ideoscapes*.

They are able to market Shuar identities as cultural capital by publishing photographs of imagined hybrid identities on social media sites, as a type of “ethnic branding” (Comaroff/Comaroff 2009). Advertising techniques are applied, such as promoting the Facebook page of the community. This practice serves as a platform for presentational and representational purposes in “the digital age”, which are intended to lure tourists into visiting the community.

The described performances of the community *Kaapar* are not only intended for entertainment purposes. They also express a narrative about the close relatedness of Shuar’s cultural identity with ancestral territory. This attitude may also contribute to the survival of the forest, which the community tries to preserve, as described. As Yankuam remarks, *la selva* is part of their life and also home of the Shuar as indigenous peoples. He adds emotionally moved:

“[...] in the future where are my kids going, if the jungle doesn’t exist anymore, if there are no more animals, if there is no food left? Where? For this reason we think about the future, in order to have a good life [...]. Because of this we continue developing and try to find better opportunities” (INTERVIEW Elias/Yankuam Kaapar).

Nowadays Shuar and other indigenous peoples of the Amazon jungle are fighting against (see chapter 2., chapter 4. and section 6.1.) state-sponsored, and transnational extractivist activities on indigenous territory. By creating “multiple identities” (Eriksen 2016) indigenous peoples nowadays shift between local and global identities. Shuar are often educated bilingually and live in-between different worlds, between traditional Shuar life, and the modern globalized world. They are enacting the roles of tourist guides, stewards of the jungle, warriors, entertainers and that of storytellers.

As described, parts of Shuar’s material culture are used in touristic performances as costumes and props. Also the performance of recounting myths and singing songs for tourists are used as cultural expressions of Shuar oral traditions, as well as a form of cultural revitalization of Shuar’s tangible cultural heritage, which they want to share with others. Shuar identity is commodified as “ethnic brand” (Comaroff/Comaroff 2009) and as a modern form of self-representation of ‘Shuar-ness’ in order to reach a wider audience nationally and internationally. To market Shuar culture may be

understood as a form of surviving in a neoliberal world (Comaroff/Comaroff 2009), but also as a self-empowering strategy.



FIG 43 Kids playing at *Kaapar* **Source:** Pinto do Amaral

My visit to *Kaapar* confronted me with the desires, but also with the dreams my hosts have for themselves and for their offspring. I also experienced how indigenous peoples use their *agency* and creativity, in order to cope with problems modernity brings. For example money is needed, Elias points out, as means for participating within a modern, fast-changing world. Clothes, alimentary products and medicines have to be bought, because they can't be planted or are not growing on the compound. But also transportation costs, like bus tickets need to be purchased (Interview Elias/Yankuam Kaapar), so that the youngsters are able to attend school.

7. CONCLUSION AND OUTLOOK

In the course of this paper I have discussed how transnational circulating indigenous objects are extracted, appropriated and commodified by the “art-culture system” (Clifford 1988:222) by the “work of imagination” (Appadurai 1996). During this process *tsantsa* have been recontextualized and the “producer community” (Byrne 2011) is represented as the exotic stereotyped cultural Other. *Tsantsa* are collected, exhibited and sold in the form of curiosities, ethnographic artifacts, but also as commodified works of “tribal art” or “primitive art”.

The **central findings** of this thesis can be summed up in following points:

- In auction houses *tsantsa* are offered as authenticized constructed luxurious items, embodying colonial fantasies and longings about Shuar
- Investigating the authenticity of *tsantsa* at Dorotheum and Haus der Natur supports Houlton’s and Wilkinson’s estimation that most objects in museums are fake or counterfeit
- Repatriating *tsantsa* to source communities is problematic and too complex to make generalizations
- Many museums are storing *tsantsa* in depots, often because of ethical considerations about publically exhibiting dead bodies and human remains
- Shuar of today are continuously re-inventing themselves through shifting identities, as tourist-guides, warriors, eco-guardians and mediaproducers

I showed how *tsantsa* are authenticized by singularization and certification, using “deceptive intentions” (Dutton 2003) in order to sell the objects for highly speculative prices in auctions. They are offered as commoditized and fetishized unique curious high-end products, and luxurious tribal art pieces, which are shrouded by secrecy.

Tsantsa are icons, embodying purchasable fetishistic colonial desires. It is a longing to buy and own a unique ‘authentic’ item of Shuar culture. This is also a desire to experience as consumer something special within a world, where everything is instantly available for money.

I also described, how by juxtaposing animals and humans through the physical, and symbolic frame of the museum Haus der Natur, the presented cultures are constructed as stereotyped, and essentialized Indians. The objects on display at the museum are lifted up as artful objects of wonder and fascination, displayed, and

adored for the craftsmanship they impersonate. On the other side the exhibited shrunken heads are perceived as exhibited dead, profane macabre curiosities. The myth of the head-hunting Shuar is reproduced by the way the objects are museally represented.

The portrayal of Shuar contemporary life and the cultural practice of producing *tsantsa* is officially not practiced anymore by Shuar, whether in Ecuador, nor in Peru. The only places where authentic and fake *tsantsa* nowadays are to be found are auctions, museums with ethnographic collections, private collections or on the Internet. It is also a political message to exhibit objects of other cultures, which manifests in an uneven power relationship. Cultural hegemony over exhibited cultures is thereby exercised by the art-culture system.

Visiting Ecuador and talking to members of different Shuar communities showed me how indigenous people perceive, and re-define themselves today. It also made me aware about the problems, Shuar and other indigenous groups are facing within postcolonial worlds.

Reflecting on my visit to Shuar communities, it showed me that today's Shuar have found ways to cope with problems modernity brings to traditional societies. To market ethnic identities and to use them in tourism is a path to live in-between different worlds. The communities I have visited in Ecuador also made me understand that ecological issues are more important for them, than the repatriation of *tsantsa*, as it is discussed internationally in public discourses about dead bodies or human remains, which I have outlined in the beginning of this paper.

The fascination for indigenous objects, like *tsantsa* are, is still closely related to popular Western fabricated colonial exoticizations in regard to indigenous identities, that are embedded within a "colonial discourse", to cite Bhaba (1983).

To decolonize material culture and stereotyped role attributions of indigenous peoples as imagined "savages", and surrounding exotic fictions about the racialized "primitive" Indian, it is also vital to recognize the Western world as producer of such images. Moreover, it is necessary to acknowledge the hegemonial structures on which they are based on. Thereby it is imperative to globally respect territorial claims of indigenous peoples and to recognize local indigenous knowledge systems. This includes ecological knowledge and cosmologies.

But it is also an important factor to support planet Earth, in terms of addressing

issues like geopolitical struggles against ecological pollution, climate change and destructive tendencies as part of the Western colonial heritage in South America, and generally in the Global South.

Arturo Escobar states “[...] we are in dire need of a New Story that might enable us to reunite the sacred and the universe, the human and the non-human” (Escobar 2015:27). As humans and as world citizens, today we live politically, economically and ecologically interconnected in a globalized world. Therefore, it is now time to act and react in order to live a ‘good life’. This may be accomplished by sensing and attuning with the Earth, as being part of it, and not to fight against it. Because the latter option only leads to annihilation of our habitat and of our species. This leads to the scenario that the next generations to come, then are left with nothing to “thinking-feeling with”.

My opinion regarding the international discourse surrounding sensible objects of indigenous peoples, exhibited and sold, is that hiding or storing *tsantza* is not a solution. As Rubenstein remarks, *tsantza* are viewed by Shuar themselves as objects embodying memories of their past. The meaning of *tsantza* for today’s Shuar is to remember themselves as descendants of warriors, which they express as protesters or as soldiers in the special forces of the Ecuadorian military.

Shuar of today exist as cosmopolitans and not as primitives, who eternally live in temporal stasis. As citizens of the nation of Ecuador and at the same time as indigenous peoples within the Ecuadorian society, they are world citizens of a modern world, who have their own dreams about life in the present age.

There are more ethical considerations to be addressed in order to come to a conclusion, if and how *tsantza* or similar objects may be presented to the public in the future. The problem needs to be re-evaluated, how indigenous peoples may be integrated into the process of representing themselves, such as in ethnographic museums or in museum collections.

The global circulation of indigenous objects is also the movement of images. This flow of mental images consists of fantasies and dreams, and of representations of the cultural Other within various places, imaginary, and physical, which constitute the base for moving material objects, that shift between different worlds, and ontologies within a globalized world. Many questions are still open-ended and have to be addressed in a future research.

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APPENDIX

Appendix Evaluation *Tsantsa*

Compare also table (Houlton/Wilkinson 2016:2): *Established Standards for Ceremonial Tsantsa and Commercial Shrunken Heads*

Specimen # 1 (female subject - left) **Specimen # 2** (male subject - right)

RESULTS OF THE EVALUATION (in steps) are the following:

#	FEATURES	CEREMONIAL TSANTSA	POINTS	COMMERCIAL SHRUNKEN HEAD	POINTS	COMMENTS
1	Size	Clenched fist Specimens #1 & #2	1	Variable	0	Both sizes are similar
2	Incision	Posterior median incision #1 & #2	1	Variable locations	0	
3	Suture	Sutures uneven	0	Sutures precise #1 & #2	1	
4	Vine	Vine present	0	No vine #1 & #2	1	No vine is attached to the neck, nor traces are detectable on both specimen
5	Eyelids	Tightly drawn	0	Upper eyelids are positioned over lower #1 & #2	1	
6	Perforations	(a) Perforations #1 & #2 (b) Chonta pins	0,5	No perforations No chonta pins on #1 & #2	0,5	Perforations are present, but poorly sewn together with a string, #1 has only one lip perforation
7	String tassels	Woven string tassels	0	No woven string tassels #1 & #2	1	
8	Skin color	Skin browned	0	Skin grey/yellow #1 & #2	1	Color is grey/black #2
9	Facial down	Facial down removed	0	Facial down maintained #1 & #2	1	Specimen #1 seems to be a woman, due to facial characteristics
10	Skin polish	Polished	0	Dull/rough structure #1 & #2	1	Not polished nor blackened

11	Head form	(a) Narrow head (b) Pinched temples #1 & #2	0,5	Natural proportions #1 & #2 Not pinched	0,5	
12	Face distortion	Forced distortion	0	No distortion #1 & #2	1	
13	Hair scalp Hair facial	(a) Long hair (b) No facial hair	0	Various hair length #1 & #2 Facial hair present #1 & #2	1	
14	Crown perforation	(a) Perforation on crown (b) Fibre string	0	No perforation #1 & #2 No fibre string #1 & #2	1	
15	Earlobes piercing	(a) Toucan feathers (b) Wooden tubes #2	0	Headband/necklaces/ ornamentation #1 No wooden tubes #1	1	Headband, necklaces of beads, seeds and feathers in hair of #1
16	Skin density	Dense skin	0	Thin skin #1 & #2	1	Skin seems to be thin an fragile and not dense on
	RESULTS: Corresponding Features/categories in (points) Total		3		13	POINTS IN TOTAL (of 16 features/categories in total) 13 points correspond to Commercial shrunk heads 3 points correspond to Ceremonial tsantsa

Appendix HdN Amazonas Expedition Stüber (1978)

In: Stüber E. (Hrsg.) 1978: Berichte aus dem Haus der Natur VIII. Folge, 1977, 1978.
Haus der Natur, Salzburg

Eberhard Stüber

Die Amazonasexpedition 1978

Durch eine Einladung des an der Katholischen Universität in Quito – Ecuador wirkenden österreichischen Ethnologen, Dr. Fritz TRUPP, nach den letzten noch intakten Waldindianergruppen im Urwaldgebiet von Ecuador zu suchen, entschlossen wir uns verhältnismäßig rasch zu einer gemeinsamen Expedition. Unsere Südamerikaabteilung verfügt zwar über eine Reihe von Tierpräparaten aus Zoos und interessanten Gegenständen der Jivaro-Indianer, doch ist die Schau noch recht unzusammenhängend und lückenhaft. Die Expedition war daher eine ideale Gelegenheit, diesen tropischen Regenwald im oberen Amazonasbereich einmal in seiner ganzen Mannigfaltigkeit einschließlich der mit diesem Ökosystem noch sehr verwobenen Menschen kennenzulernen und unsere Sammlung etwas zu ergänzen.

Wir wählten die regenarmen Monate im November und Dezember und engagierten ins Expeditionsteam auch zwei Damen, Ilse Trupp aus Quito und Inge Illich vom Haus der Natur, die der Expedition den Indianern gegenüber die Etikette eines harmlosen, nicht aggressiven Unternehmens verleihen mußten.

Unser erstes Ziel war das Gebiet der Jivaro-Kopffäger im Grenzgebiet zwischen Ecuador und Peru. Da es sich dabei um ein militärisches Sperrgebiet handelt, ist es sehr schwierig dort hin zu gelangen. Dank der Vermittlung des Österreichischen Außenministers Dr. Willibald PAHR erhielten wir jedoch vom obersten Verteidigungsrat der ecuadorianischen Regierung eine Sondergenehmigung zum Betreten dieses Urwaldgebietes. Es erging an die „Brigada de Selva“ – Urwaldtruppe sogar noch die Weisung, uns dabei tatkräftig zu unterstützen. Dafür sind wir dem Verteidigungsministerium von Ecuador zu größtem Dank verpflichtet.

Nach einer langen Fahrt von Quito (2800 m) über die Östliche Cordillere in die „Oriente“ nach Puyo am Ostfuß der Anden flogen wir mit unserem riesigen Expeditionsgepäck zu dem weit im Urwald gelegenen Militärstützpunkt Montalvo. Dieser ist nur mit Flugzeug erreichbar. Die Militärs liehen uns für die gesamte Expedition einen großen Einbaum und gaben uns zwei Indianer als Begleiter mit, welche sowohl spanisch als auch die Sprachen jener Indianerstämme beherrschten, die Ziel unserer Expedition waren.

Mit dem Einbaum ging es dann den Rio Bobonaza abwärts und den Rio Pastaza bzw. Rio Ishpingo aufwärts immer durch dichtesten Urwald. Im Gebiet der Jivaro-Indianer besuchten wir mehrere an den Flüssen lebende Familien, in langen Fußmärschen aber auch entlegene Gruppen. Teilweise sind diese Gruppen bereits missioniert und in ihrer ursprünglichen Lebensweise und Kultur oft zu ihrem Nachteil verändert. Eine der interessantesten Gruppen trafen wir weitab von den großen Strömen mitten im dichtesten Urwald. Es war die Jivarosiedlung Ipeiac. Dort lebt eine kulturell noch intakte, kämpferische Indianergruppe, die erst vor kurzem erstmalig durch Missionare kontaktiert wurde. Die rot bemalten Männer waren uns gegenüber zunächst sehr reserviert und mißtrauisch und wollten uns gleich ausweisen. Wir haben aber dann zu ihnen guten Kontakt bekommen und erhielten zum Abschied sogar das Prädikat, daß wir auch ein anderes Mal willkommen seien. Hier erhielten wir sehr gute Einblicke in das Leben dieser einsamen Waldindianer. Es gelang uns schließlich, sowohl von den

In: Stüber E. (Hrsg.) 1978: **Berichte aus dem Haus der Natur VIII. Folge**, 1977, 1978.
Haus der Natur, Salzburg

Menschen wie von ihrem Lebensraum interessante Film- und Tonbandaufnahmen zu erstellen.

Ein weiteres Ziel war der Besuch bei den Auca-Indianern am Rio Cononaco. Es handelt sich bei diesen noch um eine sehr isolierte Waldindianergruppe, von denen etwa 100 noch nicht kontaktiert leben und jeden Eindringling mit ihren Holzspeeren töten. Zwei kleine Gruppen haben sich abgesondert, eine davon ist in die Nähe einer ehemaligen Erdölpiste gezogen, die tief im Urwald liegt. Mit einem Führer, der die Aucasprache beherrscht, war es möglich, diese Gruppe zu besuchen. Die Aucas sind zwar an gelegentliche Besucher gewöhnt, leben aber noch als reine Sammler und Jäger, unbekleidet, die Männer mit hochgebundenem Penis. Sie schlafen in Hängematten, jagen mit vergifteten Pfeilen, die sie durch ein Blasrohr abschießen und sind vollendete Beherrscher des tropischen Regenwaldes.



Dr. E. Stüber begegnet zwei Jägern der Auca-Indianer im Amazonasurwald Ecuadors. (Foto: Illich)

In: Stüber E. (Hrsg.) 1978: Berichte aus dem Haus der Natur VIII. Folge, 1977, 1978.

Haus der Natur Salzburg: Wir haben uns angefreundet und ihr Leben kennengelernt. Beim Anblick dieser Menschen drängt sich uns immer wieder die Frage auf „hat die sogenannte Zivilisation“ die Menschen glücklicher gemacht?



Aucafamilie in den Hängematten ihrer Hütte. (Foto: Stüber)

Von jedem Stützpunkt unternahmen wir Streifzüge in den Urwald, bei Tag und bei Nacht, um möglichst viel im Bild und auf Tonband festzuhalten. Es fiel uns oft schwer trotz der interessanten Eindrücke durchzuhalten, wenn wir uns schweißtriefend, schwer mit Foto- und Filmausrüstung bepackt, von Milben befallen, gepeinigt einen Weg durch sumpfigen Urwald bahnen mußten. Die Strapazen sind jedoch wie bei allen ähnlichen Unternehmungen bald vergessen und man freut sich zuhause als Museumsdirektor, wieder wesentlich zur Bereicherung seines Hauses zur Freude aller naturliebenden Menschen beigetragen zu haben.

Zum Schluß sei noch dem ehemaligen holländischen Konsul in Salzburg und derzeitigen Leiter der KLM in Quito, Walter ZAISBERGER, für seine mannigfaltige Hilfe herzlich gedankt.

Appendix HdN Museumsleitbild



Haus der Natur – Museum für Natur und Technik

MUSEUMSLEITBILD

Das Haus der Natur ist ein Universalmuseum der Naturwissenschaften mit regionaler und internationaler Ausrichtung sowie ein Naturkompetenzzentrum für Stadt und Land Salzburg.

Als Schaumuseum ...

präsentiert und vermittelt es vielfältige Facetten der belebten und unbelebten Natur. Hierzu zählen neben der Biologie, Ökologie, Erdwissenschaften und Astronomie auch die Grundlagenwissenschaften über die Naturgesetze bis hin zu ihrer Anwendung in der Technik. Der Mensch und seine Kultur werden als Teil der Natur verstanden – in vielfältiger Abhängigkeit und Wechselwirkung mit dieser.

In der Ausstellung und Vermittlung versteht sich das Haus der Natur als Dreispartenmuseum mit dem klassischen Naturmuseum, dem Vivarium (Aquarium und Reptilienzoo) und einem naturwissenschaftlichen Experimentarium (Science Center). Der lebendigen Präsentation und Gestaltung der unterschiedlichsten Ausstellungsbereiche wird große Bedeutung zugemessen. Damit sollen vielfältige Zugänge zu den Themen ermöglicht und sowohl dem puren Staunen als auch dem kognitiven und emotionalen Erfahren und Lernen Raum gegeben werden. Als bedeutender Teil des Bildungsauftrages wird die direkte Vermittlung durch die Abteilung für Museumspädagogik gesehen.

Als Natur-Kompetenzzentrum ...

widmet sich das Museum der wissenschaftlichen Dokumentation und Erforschung der Natur von Stadt und Land Salzburg sowie des Nationalparks Hohe Tauern. Basis hierfür sind die wissenschaftlichen Sammlungen und die damit verbundenen Datenbanken. Darüber hinaus sind die Datenbanken auch eine wichtige Grundlage für den Natur- und Umweltschutz in Stadt und Land Salzburg. Ergebnisse aus der Dokumentation und Forschung fließen sowohl in die Ausstellungen als auch in Publikationen ein.

Wichtige Beiträge zur Erforschung der Natur Salzburgs leisten auch die ehrenamtlichen naturwissenschaftlichen Arbeitsgemeinschaften am Haus der Natur. Mit Exkursionen, Workshops und anderen Veranstaltungen soll auf möglichst breiter Basis das Interesse an der Natur und ihrer Erforschung gefördert werden.

Aus Kenntnis der Natur und deren laufender Veränderung durch den Menschen leitet das Museum eine besondere Verantwortung für den Schutz der Natur ab. Daraus resultieren ein Engagement in allen Handlungsebenen des Museums und ein entsprechender Einsatz der Erfahrung und des Wissens für die Gesellschaft. Seit Anfang 2015 besteht zudem eine Partnerschaftsvereinbarung in den Bereichen Klimaschutz und Energie mit dem Land Salzburg. Das Museum Haus der Natur bekennt sich darin zu den Zielen der Klima- und Energiestrategie SALZBURG 2050 und unterstützt diese im Rahmen seiner Möglichkeiten.

Appendix Der Regenwald – Lebensraum der Waldindianer

Der Regenwald - Lebensraum der Waldindianer

Die WALDINDIANER sind kein primitives Volk, sondern fügen sich mit ihrer Kultur harmonisch in die Natur des Regenwaldes ein.

- Mit ihrer ganzen Denkweise, den mythischen und religiösen Vorstellungen fühlen sich die Indianer als Teil des Kosmos. Diese Einstellung spiegelt sich in ihrer Lebensweise wieder, von der Architektur ihrer Gemeinschaftshäuser über die Jagd- und Festbräuche bis zur rituellen Drogeneinnahme, wodurch sie mit Geistern in Verbindung treten.

- Alles was die Indianer zum Leben brauche, nehmen sie aus dem Urwald, Hölzer, Palmwedel und Pflanzfasern für ihre Häuser, das Flechtmaterial für Hängematten und Vorratsbehälter, Ton für Gefäße, Werkzeuge und Schmuck. Bei dieser Wirtschaftsweise entsteht kein Müll.

- Der kleinflächige ANBAU VON NAHRUNGSPFLANZEN beeinträchtigt den Urwald nicht. Wegen der geringen Fruchtbarkeit der Urwaldböden legen die Indianer alle paar Jahre neue Felder an. Die alten kleinen Rodungsflächen werden bald wieder vom Urwald überwuchert.

- Neben verschiedenen Feld- und Urwaldfrüchten, Jagd und Fischfang ist MANIOK die wichtigste Nahrungsquelle. Die reifen Knollen werden gerieben und der blausäurehaltige Saft in einem elastisch geflochtenen Schlauch zurückgespuckt. Die Ferment eim Speichel zerlegen die Stärke in Zucker, der dann vergoren wird.

- Mit BLASROHR und GIFTPEIL die Beutetiere werden dabei lautlos getötet, ohne daß alle anderen Tiere in der Umgebung die Flucht ergreifen (im Gegensatz zur Jagd mit Gewehr).

Das Vordringen der ZIVILISATION bringt für die Indianer eine Reihe von Nachteilen mit sich:

Verschlechterung der Wohnverhältnisse: Traiditonelles Jvaro Haus. Temperatur im Haus bei Tag kühler als im Freien. Schlafplatz in der Nähe der Feuerstelle. Wärme bei Nacht und Moskitoschutz durch Rauch und Luftzug. Neues Jvaro Haus: ungünstige Temperaturverhältnisse. Modernes Jvaro Haus mit Wellblechdach: tagsüber erheblich heißer, Küche und Schlafraum getrennt: nachts kalt und kein Moskitoschutz.

- Neue KRANKHEITEN durch Kontakt mit Weißen: Tuberkulose, Masern, Pocken und Kinderlähmung, da die Indianer keine Abwehrkräfte dagegen haben.

- Das Tragen von KLEIDERN führt in diesem Klima zu Hautkrankheiten und Ungezieferbefall.

- ABHÄNGIGKEIT von INDUSTRIEGÜTERN: Die Indianer müssen sich als Lohnarbeiter verdingen oder Sozialhilfe empfangen, um sich Dinge kaufen zu können, die sie im Urwald umsonst bekommen oder gar nicht gebraucht haben.

- KULTURELLE ENTWURZELUNG: Während die Waldindianer einst Drogen nur bei bestimmten Kulthandlungen einnahmen, degeneriert der Rauschmittelkonsum bei den "Zivilisierten" zu reiner Genußsucht. Fragwürdige "BEFRIEDIGUNG": Die Rachefeldzüge wegen Stammesfeuden haben nie das Ausmaß and Gewalttätigkeit erreicht, das in den Slums der Großstädte alltäglich ist.

DER REGENWALD Regenwälder gibt es nur in den tropischen Zonen der Erde.

- Rascher Stoffkreislauf: abgestorbene Tiere und Pflanzen werden bei hoher Temperatur und Luftfeuchtigkeit sehr schnell zersetzt und die Stoffe von den Pflanzen aufgenommen. Daher bildet sich in den lehmigen Urwaldböden trotz üppigen Pflanzenwuchses keine Humusschicht.

- Epiphyten: Da kaum Licht zum Boden dringt, wachsen viele Pflanzen auf anderen Pflanzen (z.B.: manche Bromelien, Baumfarnen, viele Orchideen: Vanille!).

- Hohe Artenzahl hochspezialisierter Tiere und Pflanzen.

- Zahlreiche Anpassungen, um auf diesem dicht besiedelten Raum überleben zu können (z.B.: Greifschwanz, Tarnung, Blütenbestäubung durch Insekten, Fledermäuse, Kolibris).

- typischer Stockwerkbau

GEFÄHRDUNG DES REGENWALDES Allein 1985 wurden 150 Millionen Festmeter Urwald vernichtet. Davon wurden 1 Million Festmeter Holz genutzt!

Ursachen der Urwaldvernichtung:

- BRANDROHDUNG für Ackerbau und Viehzucht. Die meisten landwirtschaftlichen Produkte werden dann in die Industrieländer exportiert (z.B.: Kaffee, Baumwolle, Rindfleisch). Die Urwaldböden sind nach wenigen Jahren ausgelaugt und liefern keinen Ertrag mehr. Großflächige Urwaldvernichtung.

- Bau von STRASSEN und PIPELINES: breite Schneisen führen ebenfalls zu großflächiger Urwaldvernichtung

- Bau von STAUDÄMMEN und Wasserkraftwerken. Große Gebiete werden von riesigen Stauseen überschwemmt. Dabei ruiniert das Harz der Bäume die Kraftwerksturbinen in wenigen Jahren.

In jeder Minute werden 20 ha Urwald vernichtet!

FOLGE:

- Einengung und Vernichtung des Lebensraumes der letzten Urwaldvölker.
- Bedrohung und Ausrottung zahlloser Tier- und Pflanzenarten.
- Bei weiterer Urwaldvernichtung: Störung des Wasserhaushaltes, Verminderung des Sauerstoffgehaltes der Luft und weitreichende Klimänderungen auf der Erde.

Appendix HdN Neuanschaffungen (1982)

© Haus der Natur, Salzburg, download unter www.biologiezentrum.at



Bundespräsident Dr. Rudolf Kirchschläger besucht anlässlich des 60jährigen Jubiläums das Haus der Natur.

Neu gestaltete Abteilungen

Die neue Eiszeitschau

Besonders beeindruckend ist in dieser Abteilung ein von Adrian LEITL geschaffenes Kleindiorama mit Szenen aus dem Leben des altsteinzeitlichen Menschen während der letzten Eiszeit vor 25.000 Jahren, sowie ein Gemälde unseres Salzburger Beckens heute und vor 15.000 Jahren während des Rückzuges des Salzachgletschers.

Einen Blickfang bietet auch das Modell eines freistehenden Wollhaarnashorns, das die Kinder auch angreifen können. Die weiteren ausgestellten Objekte und Schautafeln geben einen guten Überblick über das letzte Eiszeitalter mit seinem Einfluß auf die Morphologie unserer Landschaft sowie auf ihre Fauna und Flora.

Für die wissenschaftliche Beratung danken wir im besonderen den Universitätsprofessoren Dr. Gottfried TICHY, Dr. Heinz SLUPETZKY und Dr. Robert KRISAL.

Die neuen Schauräume Amerika, Asien, Australien und Polargebiete

Diese Schauräume im dritten Stock wurden in faszinierender Weise und nach neuen museumsdidaktischen Gesichtspunkten sehr abwechslungsreich neu gestaltet. Dadurch haben die Abteilungen nicht nur an Ästhetik gewonnen, sie bieten vielmehr auch eine Fülle an hochinteressanten Informationen über Mensch und Tier dieser Erdteile. In den Schauräumen werden fast alle für diese Kontinente typischen und besonders interessanten Tierformen mit entsprechenden Beschreibungen gezeigt. Darunter befinden sich viele seltene Präparate, die sich bereits seit langem im Haus der Natur befinden und aus zoologischen Gärten stammen, wie die 1914



Die Indianer-Uriwaldhütte (Anfertigung einschließlich Hintergrundgestaltung: Adrian Leitl) mit der lebensgroßen Figur eines Jivaro-Indianers (angefertigt von Renate Hochmayer) ist der Mittelpunkt der neugestalteten Amerika-Abteilung.



Blick in die neugestaltete Abteilung Amerika – Asien – Australien.

ausgerottete Wandertaube aus Nordamerika, der Hoatzin aus Südamerika, dessen Junge Finger mit Krallen haben, eine Kolibri-Sammlung, prächtige Paradiesvögel, ein Affenadler, eine Brückenechse u. v. a. Auf diese Weise kann der Besucher im Gegensatz zu einem zoologischen Garten die Vielfalt an landschaftsgebundenen Tierformen auf engem Raum bewundern. Zwischen den zoologischen Darstellungen eingestreut sind völkerkundliche Kostbarkeiten, besonders aus Neuguinea und dem Amazonasgebiet. So ist in dieser Abteilung ein von Adrian LEITL aufgebautes Haus der Jivaro-Indianer mit vielen, von Dr. STÜBER mitgebrachten Originalgegenständen ein besonderer Anziehungspunkt für die Besucher.

Besondere Anziehungspunkte für die Besucher sind weiter der prächtige Federschmuck der Waldindianer in Beziehung zu den Vogelformen des Amazonasgebietes, die ausgestellten Schrumpfköpfe der Waldindianer sowie die Objekte der Auca-Indianer aus dem oberen Amazonasgebiet.

Neugestaltung der Pilzschau

Im letzten Jahr wurde auch unsere Abteilung „Einheimische Pilze“ völlig neu gestaltet. Die sehr sorgfältig ausgeführten Gips- und Kunststoffmodelle kommen jetzt wesentlich besser zur Geltung. Der Besucher erhält wichtige Informationen über die Unterscheidung von Speise- und Giftpilzen, die Giftwirkungen, die wichtige Rolle der Pilze im Naturhaushalt und ihre verblüffende Formenvielfalt und Bedeutung für den Menschen.

Ergänzungen in vielen Schauräumen

Da viele unserer Darstellungen aus den dreißiger und vierziger Jahren stammen, sind noch eine Reihe von Abteilungen völlig neu zu gestalten. Dies ist jedoch aufgrund der hohen Kosten und unseres kleinen Mitarbeiterteams nur allmählich möglich. Trotzdem bemühen wir uns ständig, Verbesserungen und Ergänzungen durchzuführen.

Diese erfolgten besonders in unserer ornithologischen Abteilung sowie in den Schauräumen für allgemeine Biologie, Humanbiologie und Marinbiologie.

List of Interviews and Personal Talks

#	SURNAME	NAME	ROLE/INSTITUTION	TOPICS	DATE
1	van Zölen	Erwin	Taxidermist/ Netherlands	Price/Provenance Shrunken Head	2018, May 8
2	Mader	Elke	Institute Dean at Culture- and Social Anthropology Institute Vienna	<i>Tsantsa</i> at Collection of Culture- and Social Anthropology Institute Vienna	2018, October
3	Lindner	Martin	Co-Director and Curator HdN/Salzburg	Shrunken Heads at Museum Haus der Natur (HdN)	2018, October
4	Fillitz	Thomas	Professor at Culture- and Social Anthropology Institute Vienna	Price Theory Art Markets	2018, June
5	Orbe	Nataly	Curator Museo Abya Yala/Quito	International Dead Bodies Discourse	2019, January
6	Garcia	Patricio	Selva Tours Tour Operator/Puyo	Tourism Industry	2019, January
7	Mariut	Marius	Hotel Manager/Puyo	Tourism Indian Identity	2019, January
8	Canaday	Chris	Owner Ethnobotanical Center/Puyo	Shuar/Waorani Identity/Material Culture	2019, January
9	Tzamarenda	Nanki	Tawasap- Community Palora	Shuar Environmentalism and Tourism	2019, January
10	Wampankit	Elias	Kaapar Community/ Macas	Shuar Identity, Material Culture, Tourism, Environmental Issues	2019, February
11	Wampankit	Yankuam	Kaapar Community/ Macas	Shuar Identity, Material Culture, Myths	2019, February
12	Wampankit	Naichap	Kaapar Community/ Macas	Tourism and Shuar	2019, February
13		Dan	Tribal Art Collector and Gallerist/USA	Collecting Tribal Art	2019, June 28

Glossar

anent - magical song
arútam - visionary power
arútama - ancestor
emesak - avenging soul
itip - skirt worn by men
iwianch - demonic being
kakaram - warrior (killer)
maikiua - thorn apple (*datura*)
muisak - avenging soul
nanki - lance
natem - psychoactive drink (*banisteriopsis kaapi*)
nunkui - mother earth
pangi - mythical snake
uunt - big man
uwíshin - shaman
tarach - blue dress worn by women
tawásap - feather headdress
tsaank - nicotiana sp.
tsantsa - shrunken head
tsankaram - head taker (head hunter)
tsentsak - pathogene projectile (magical dart)
tsunki - water spirit
wea – ritual leader
wakán – soul

ABSTRACT (English)

This thesis investigates the transnational circulation of *tsantsa* or “shrunk heads” of the Ecuadorian Shuar. The ethnographic research deals with the decolonization of material culture, indigenous identity and globalization.

The focus of the investigation is on indigenous artifacts, in the field of the tension between indigenous self-perception, their cultural meaning as ritual objects, and the significant shift into commodified Western display objects, and collectibles, which are acquired, trafficked, collected, and are being exhibited in the public sphere.

The central question of this research is: How can transnationally circulating Shuar *tsantsa* be decolonized, as being part of a global economy?

Since the 1850s shrunk heads of the Shuar in Ecuador are circulating transnationally, as being part of a global economy. In this commodification process a shift of meaning of indigenous material culture takes place.

The research discusses the individual and institutional dealings of the objects, concerning cultural, political, and ethical considerations.

The work demonstrates how *tsantsa* are extracted and appropriated by the “art-culture system”, as well as being represented by the power of human imagination.

Based on my ethnographic research I investigate the appropriation and representation of *tsantsa* in museums, the auction house Dorotheum, and on the Internet, as well as visiting two local Shuar communities in Ecuador’s *oriente*.

By redefining Shuar identities within a modern globalized world, the exotic colonial image of the Amazonian Indian is deconstructed and demystified.

ABSTRACT (Deutsch)

Diese Arbeit untersucht die transnationale Zirkulation von *tsantsa* oder „Schrumpfköpfe“ der in Ecuador lebenden Shuar. Die ethnographische Forschung beschäftigt sich mit der Dekolonisierung materieller Kultur, indigener Identität und Globalisierung.

Der Fokus der Untersuchung liegt auf indigenen Artefakten, im Spannungsfeld zwischen indigener Selbstwahrnehmung, ihre Bedeutung als Ritualobjekte, sowie der Bedeutungsverschiebung zu westlichen Schau- und Sammlerobjekten, die akquiriert, gehandelt und in der Öffentlichkeit ausgestellt werden. Die zentrale Frage der Untersuchung lautet: Wie können transnational zirkulierende Shuar *Tsantsa*, als Teil einer globalen Ökonomie dekolonisiert werden?

Seit 1850 zirkulieren *Tsantsa* der Shuar transnational, als Teil einer globalen Ökonomie. In diesem Prozess der Kommodifizierung kommt es zu einem Wandlungsprozess von indigener materieller Kultur. Die Forschung diskutiert den individuellen und den institutionellen Umgang mit den Objekten, mit Bezugnahme auf kulturelle, politische, und ethische Überlegungen.

Die Arbeit demonstriert wie *Tsantsa* extrahiert und durch das „Kunst-Kultur System“ angeeignet werden, sowie durch menschliche Vorstellungskraft repräsentiert werden. Auf Grundlage meiner ethnografischen Forschung untersucht diese Arbeit die Vereinnahmung und Repräsentation von *Tsantsa* in Museen, dem Auktionshaus Dorotheum, und im Internet, sowie durch einen Besuch von zwei Shuar-Gemeinden in Ecuador's *oriente*.

Durch die Redefinierung von Shuar Identitäten in einer globalisierten Welt soll das exotische koloniale Bild des Amazonas-Indianer dekonstruiert und entmystifiziert werden.