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Fuel of fear and force: gasoline's energetic power and its entanglement in composite ethics

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Energy is far more than a resource exploited by states and corporations. Yet, at the level of consumption it is generally thought to be a difficult phenomenon to examine because it is so familiar that we barely notice its role in our lives, or at the very least, its production becomes obscured by this pragmatic daily engagement. The other side to the story – the one in which energy is a provision distributed to and experienced by people in intimate and unanticipated ways - is distinctly perceptible in locales like the Amazon rain forest where conventional energy provisions are absent. This essay explores how everyday encounters with gasoline offer insights into ethical judgements among the Sanema of Venezuelan Amazonia. The fuel is so pervasive that it is increasingly present in numerous facets of daily life, including gold mining, dilemmas of kinship, the animist world of vengeful spirit masters, and ethically infused rumours of disaster. Being a volatile substance – simultaneously vaporous, explosive, narcotic, and caustic – gasoline is also a vital entity that holds a particularly intriguing place in the Sanema's understanding of personhood and ethics. Indeed, its mysterious and unsettling qualities cause it to become entangled within a composite form of ethics that defines Sanema social worlds.

The significance of gasoline in Venezuelan Amazonia struck me profoundly one day during fieldwork. It was a humid afternoon and I was lazily swinging in my hammock while other members of my Sanema host family lay similarly idle nearby. Suddenly we were jolted from our languor by the sound of screaming in the adjacent house, and as was the normal response, we all grabbed our

machetes and ran towards the sound of the commotion. I had expected to see the familiar sight of an inebriated fight, but was alarmed by what I actually did see. A young boy had been tied to a post and his father was repeatedly striking him with the broad side of his machete as the boy squirmed and screeched. His father emitted a bellowing, ‘You must not drink gasoline!’ with each blow, and when he finally desisted with his punishment, he threw down the machete and thundered off. The sobbing and trembling boy was released from his constraints as his weeping female kin inspected the red welts that covered his body. I had never before witnessed such severe castigation among the Sanema, particularly of pre-teens, who are still granted a much-valued autonomy. It was evident that some others present also considered this punishment unduly grave by the fact that the boy’s grandmother sought revenge on his behalf (Sa. *noa kua*), imparting equal injury to the father, although with a rope rather than a machete. Yet, after the incident, many residents suggested that it was to be expected given that the boy had enacted improper behaviour by ‘drinking’, or rather inhaling, gasoline (also known as huffing gasoline). ‘This never happened before’, one woman lamented, ‘this is now’.

The event occurred during a time when gasoline was gaining immense significance in Sanema lives as the material dispensation of Venezuelan petroleum wealth, as an indispensable energy-based substance in daily life, and – through its sale in informal forest gold mines – as a source of potentially limitless wealth. The embodied intimacy between gasoline and humans in this context was striking, creating a visceral encounter that provoked regular contemplation and discussion on the unusual substance. It was handled, inhaled, siphoned, poured, hauled, and spilled several times a day and it had become so intricately interwoven into my hosts’ lives that existence without it was increasingly considered unthinkable. What was most interesting about this new development was that affective narratives (see also High, this volume) emerged over and over again of gasoline’s beguiling performance and its association with ethical assessments in daily life.

The thrashing incident I witnessed, which I shall explore in greater detail later in the essay, was startling in that the perceived pathological effects of gasoline could be so deeply terrifying

for my hosts. They spoke often of how the boy had behaved badly (*Sa. salia bai*) and had ‘let demons inside’ by inhaling gasoline, a statement that alludes to the growing phenomenon of substance abuse that accompanies an encroaching capitalist economy (see Gracey 1998; Taussig 1980). Seen in this light, the proclaimed transgressions surrounding gasoline in this context could be interpreted as a fear of the gradually expanding presence of the Venezuelan petroleum economy. Yet the moral terrain that this oil derivative occupies is far more complex. In this essay, I shall introduce vernacular notions of ethics in order to reveal how gasoline becomes actively entangled in an intricate web of social arrangements; revealing not merely sublimated anxieties about an ethically depraved capitalist economy, but simultaneously deeply rooted ideas about a broad and composite form of ethical action that is expanded to include nonhuman entities.

In what follows, I will show how gasoline emerges in discussions as a volatile substance that impinges on ‘proper thinking’ as an intoxicant, but also as a lively entity that is morally reactive in similar ways to other forest beings. Consequently, it becomes a key player in a sophisticated schema of ethical actions and reflections, rather than being met solely with resistance and underlying apprehension. Exploring unanticipated experiential accounts enables us to overcome the ‘blind spots in our disciplinary understanding’ (High & Smith, this volume) in studies of energy dilemmas and the appropriation of hydrocarbons in everyday life. This is not a story about the global inequalities created through energy production and consumption, but about the wonderment (see Scott 2016) generated at sites of energetic encounter, in this case the Sanema’s perception of gasoline’s lively and vital force.¹

Figure 2. Barrels of gasoline are never far away. (Photo by the author.)

The Sanema are the northernmost branch of the wider Yanomami ethnic group, a customarily semi-nomadic hunting and foraging indigenous people who inhabit the forests of

southern Venezuela and northern Brazil. Over a period of twenty-four months between 2009 and 2011, a time of relative economic stability in Venezuela owing to high oil prices, I conducted multi-sited fieldwork in two forest communities and a Sanema encampment in a frontier town in southern Venezuela.² The abundance of gasoline in this region of Venezuela has coincided with indigenous people's increased participation in state initiatives such as voting in elections and establishing state-funded development initiatives known as communal councils (see Penfield 2018). This process of inclusion emerges out of an indissoluble link between citizenship and the nation's immense petroleum wealth. In Amazonia in particular, the presence of the petroleum economy is materialized as an influx of gasoline-run machinery obtained through political clientelism or as part of the aforementioned state-funded development initiatives. However, as the ethnography will demonstrate, energy's twofold bearing in Sanema lives – both its political and experiential presence – is met with an intricate mix of curiosity, desire, and fear. I shall return to the reasons behind the ubiquity of this energy source in Venezuelan Amazonia in a moment, but first I will reflect on theories of ethics, in order to propose that we think in more detail about the role that personhood and nonhumans play within this field of inquiry.

Ethics meets dividuality

A Foucauldian approach to the ethical self has been fruitful for scholars seeking to understand reflexive moral judgements, but also as a way to understand how the self comes into existence through power relations (see Faubion 2013). Significantly, Foucault's notion of the 'care of the self' foregrounds agentive self-mastery as an alternative to a Durkheimian normative mode of morality which has led some to regard social theory as a 'science of unfreedom' (Laidlaw 2014). Yet the care of the self is distinctly individualistic. Although there have been discussions regarding Foucault's neglect of 'the social' in his approach to ethics, Laidlaw dismisses this as a misreading, because, he argues, the 'individual' and the 'social' remain inextricably linked in this approach; Foucault 'takes

for granted that [an ethical life] is lived with others, and that relations with others are constitutive of it' (Laidlaw 2014: 116; see also Faubion 2012: 76). It is, he stresses, a deeply relational modality. I will propose in this essay, however, that we instead think about ethics as composite rather than relational. The relational approach presupposes an oppositional juxtaposition between 'self' and 'other', and is hinged on the idea that the former is a bounded and discrete subject engaging in an individual pursuit of ethical self-mastery through relations with other bounded subjects. A composite approach, which I will demonstrate in this essay, is premised on collective personhood in which ethics does not depend on relationality but is prior to it. In other words, ethical principles should be seen not as emerging out of interactions between discrete persons, but rather as a pre-existing moral unity that defines personhood.

The term 'composite personhood' can undoubtedly be attributed to the work of Strathern, whose approach focuses primarily on the body 'imagined as a social microcosm' (1988: 13). Beyond this corporeal dimension, however, dividual personhood also includes nonhuman entities because items exchanged, and the relationships they represent, also comprise detachable parts of the self (1988: 204). In this context, gifts of ceremonial exchange relations – predominantly pigs – are 'multiply authored' (1988: 159), inalienable parts of the pluralized self because they are grown and nurtured by women, using the land and labour of their husbands (both spouses together forming a dyad). Moreover, through acts of care, nurtured things, including crops, children, and pigs, become internal multiplications of the body (although ultimately detachable) (1988: 250), a manifestation of shared labour, and a 'product of the relationship between the conjugal partners' (1988: 160). Nevertheless, the objects of exchange that constitute composite personhood in this context seem to do no more than mediate relationships, rather than perform, behave, or engage in any significant way:

This construction thus produces objects (the person as a 'part' of a person him- or herself or another) which can circulate between persons

and mediate their relationship. As parts, then, these objects create *mediated* relations. They are not, of course, apprehended as standing for persons: that is our construction. They are apprehended as extracted from one and absorbed by another (1988: 178, original emphasis).

These nonhuman components of composite personhood embody relations between persons; they are not themselves persons. In this essay, I similarly explore the role of nonhuman entities in personhood; however, these entities participate actively and morally in this broader sociality. The flipside of this endeavour is to propose a more nuanced approach to the field of ethics by drawing on theories of unbounded personhood, thus suggesting that ethics is not merely a relational arrangement between individuals. Strathern's model of dividuality nevertheless remains useful in this respect as morality is inherent in her relational schema; as she states, 'The criteria that I have been calling aesthetic with regard to form can also be called moral: the self is judged by the way it activates its relationships' (1988: 277; see also Mosko 2015).

This article will demonstrate how composite ethics plays out in the Sanema context, and why the mystifying fuel of gasoline can be encompassed within this moral ethos. We might first ask, however, how one can make sense of nonhuman participation in ethical life. While Foucault explored the relationship between power and materiality in his earlier work (2002*a* [1966]; 2002*b* [1969]), material or nonhuman entities do not appear in his later writings on ethics. Clearly the work of Latour is particularly important when considering the role of nonhuman material entities in social and ethical life. Latour developed his *actor-network-theory* as a way to reconfigure the post-enlightenment separation between subject and object, in which nonhumans were invariably relegated to mere 'hapless bearers of symbolic projection' (2005: 10). His approach pushes us to consider how anything that modifies 'a state of affairs by making a difference' (2005 :71) is an actor, or in his terms, an actant.³ In his earlier work, Latour (1992) asks more specifically where morality is located

in social life, whether solely in humans, or possibly also located in the material world that impels one to act morally. In so doing, he turns our attention to the role of the ‘nonhuman masses’ such as alarmed seatbelts, speed bumps, and automated door closers that either force us to act responsibly or embody moral behaviour *for* humans. This, in turn, demonstrates how ‘we have been able to delegate to nonhumans not only force as we have known it for centuries but also values, duties and ethics’ (1992: 232). Nevertheless, this approach, much like Strathern’s described above, presupposes that nonhuman entities merely mediate ethical intentionality in order to facilitate human meaning-making.

Notwithstanding my earlier scepticism regarding the egocentric stance of Foucauldian ethics and Laidlaw’s claim that it is nonetheless a relational modality, Laidlaw does elsewhere offer a more subtle concession to the emphasis on individual agency in ethical action. Analogous in many ways to Latour’s actant, Laidlaw (2010) grants the material world a role when propounding a notion of responsibility. When it comes to ethical action, he states, authorship of that action can take place through – often nonhuman – mediating entities. This approach similarly asserts that, in enabling a form of ‘third-party’ responsibility for action, these extrinsic entities are mere conduits, ‘responsible’ only in that they ‘act as an agent on our behalf’ (2010: 152). This is made possible by virtue of a capacity for ownership by the ‘agentive’ party, who somehow relocates his or her autonomous (i.e. individual) agency elsewhere. It is not insignificant that most examples offered by Laidlaw stem from legal cases profoundly conditioned by the concept of bounded right-bearing selves (2010: 154). As such, it seems that both Latour’s and Laidlaw’s accounts follow lines of deflected intentionality, rather than dispersed responsibility *per se*.⁴

The question remains, then: could we envisage an ethics that expands the bounds of a human-centred approach, in which nonhumans are something more than inert mediators? Verbeek (2011) attempts this approach by considering ethics as ‘hybrid intentionality’, specifically calling for a broadening of the ‘humanist’ foundation of ethics and moral action in order to further an approach to humanity beyond humanism.⁵ This hybrid moral agency, he argues, is ‘distributed among human

beings and nonhuman entities' (2011: 38) to become a human-thing amalgam. Although his terminology is productive, the extent to which Verbeek's ethics amalgam is truly possible – particularly given his less than persuasive examples of cars, mobile phones, and ultrasound equipment – is certainly questionable (and indeed restates Latour's approach). Yet this does not mean that finding an ethical hybrid, so to speak, is an impossible task, particularly if we take the lead from our research participants, many of whom describe nonhumans as acting and reacting to broader human-nonhuman behaviour.

When it comes to the theme of energy, ethics, and nonhumans, Howe's contribution to this volume does seek to explore 'other-than-human lives and their intertangement with energy infrastructures' (p. 6) in order to provide 'a broader analytic of ethics, energy, and socioecological environments' (p. 6). Applying Foucault's theory of parrhesia ('free speech' from one in a subaltern position) to her work, she explores the communicative role (a 'being-as-message') of animal life in proposed wind turbines sites in Mexico. This approach shifts the frame from Foucauldian ethics and the care of the self back to a sense of collective moral responsibility, since 'speaking truth to power' assists the progress of the 'greater good'. In this sense, parrhesia may even recover a non-coercive Durkheimian rights-centred view of society.⁶ However, the nonhuman entities that Howe describes 'act' only insofar as their threatened extinction draws attention to – or indexes – broader environmental concerns: '[O]ther-than-human beings appear to "speak" a kind of parrhesia: indexing their imperilled state of being as a message from "below" and enunciating an ethical challenge' (p. 13). Gasoline, by contrast, is seen by the Sanema to *actively* respond to immoral behaviour. Indeed, it is precisely its vitality – which empowers gasoline as a fuel – that also grants it a place alongside human ethical subjects.

Despite some shortcomings, the above theoretical stances demonstrate that numerous scholars have contemplated ethics as a composite phenomenon. But what precisely do we mean when

we say composite, and what form does it take? Welker's approach to corporations (2014) is useful when thinking about an anti-essentialist composite ethics, as she shows 'how corporate identity and interests are distributed and contextual, produced through interactions and temporary associations between humans, animals, and objects in particular places' (2014: 5; see also Mol 2003). Welker demonstrates how the subject – the resulting whole – is an entity made up of both human and nonhuman parts; a 'hanging together' of disparate components. Furthermore, rather than exploring composite entities as co-ordinated and harmonious wholes, Welker shows how they emerge as contested and somewhat incidental manifestations of internal struggles. Though the context she presents is considerably different to the case of gasoline shown in this essay, the resulting arrangement of unbounded personhood is not altogether dissimilar: a combined human and nonhuman phenomenon that is constituted through a degree of tension and conflict.

Returning, then, to my earlier assertion that the study of ethics must move beyond an individual or relational approach, composite ethics – constituted of both human and nonhuman entities – may offer a productive alternative. In what follows, I shall explore in detail how Sanema encounters with the intriguing energy source of gasoline may help conceptualize how their particular view of composite personhood is central to understandings of both energy and ethics, but also to the relationship between the two. First I shall describe the wider backdrop in which the Sanema and their gasoline are situated: the Venezuelan petro-state.

Magical oil and its ubiquitous derivatives

Coronil's analysis of Venezuelan oil wealth in his book *The magical state* (1997) illustrates that, since the birth of its oil industry in 1908, fossil fuels have been central to the country's democracy. The development of Venezuela's public sphere was founded on the relationship between natural resources and the people; or the natural body and the social body, as he described it. This dynamic is upheld by the illusion, performed by state leaders, of oil's power to manufacture 'dazzling development projects

that engender collective fantasies of progress' (1997: 5), a phenomenon Coronil encapsulates with the term 'magical state'. These magical chimeras that oil proffers stem from its apparent supernatural qualities associated with the fiscal abundance that accrues from its natural and miraculous fecundity. In this way, petroleum creates 'hallucinations' that modernity is somehow pulled out of a hat (1997: 68). Yet the magic of oil also stems from its capacity to veil its role – both marvellous and disastrous – in political actions; Coronil describes this as 'the visible embodiments of the invisible powers of oil money' (1997: 2). Importantly, whether conscious or not, national imaginaries and subject formation are intimately and unmistakably bound up with the substance of oil in Venezuela.

But there is something even more unique about Venezuela's position as a petro-state and the public relationship with oil. Not only does the country possess the world's largest oil reserves, but the most pervasive petroleum derivative – gasoline – remains the cheapest in the world owing to a subsidy introduced in the 1940s when Venezuela was emerging as one of the world's main suppliers of oil. During the time of my fieldwork, for instance, the receptacle most often used by indigenous peoples to transport fuel back to their remote communities - the 200-litre oil drum – cost less than £1 to fill with gasoline. As such, it was often gasoline, rather than crude oil, that was the material manifestation of citizens' proclamations of right to petroleum wealth in Venezuela. This powerful privilege came to a head most starkly when attempts were made to raise the price of gasoline during a period of neoliberal reforms in 1989. The public response was to protest, but demonstrations soon spiralled into a period of riots that led to a violent military crackdown and numerous deaths known as *El Caracazo*, or 'The Caracas Smash'.

In Amazonia, citizens' relationship with gasoline is even more intimate because the fuel is interwoven in practical and visceral experiences of daily life. Like solar energy (see Cross, this volume), this 'off-grid' energy source is used to power the increasingly prolific items of machinery – generators, outboard motors, chainsaws, yucca-grating machines, grass trimmers, two-way radios, and water pumps – that have no reliable power source besides gasoline in these remote forest

locations. This fluid has become so inescapable that barrels forever lurk in the background, small jerry cans are often seen stashed in the shadowy corners of houses, and cumbersome rows of oil drums solemnly wait at the river's edge for the next trip with the outboard motor.

This deluge of gasoline-run machinery and its fuel into this region of Venezuelan Amazonia has its roots in a long history of political patronage and the flow of petro-dollars into Venezuelan public life. Oil-powered politics took a new turn after the Revolution in 1998 and the subsequent era of so-called Bolivarianism. This socialist regime, forged by the late Hugo Chávez, was also bolstered by the same illusion of progress that defines oil's power. This time the magic was channelled into grass-roots projects, free education and healthcare, and subsidized food for millions of previously excluded Venezuelans. Indeed, this endeavour weaves the 1930s Venezuelan motto of '*sembrar el petróleo*' (sow the oil) – which describes the use of oil wealth for productive agricultural and industrial investments – with the revolutionary slogan '*Venezuela ahora es de todos*' (now Venezuela belongs to everyone). As far as indigenous people were concerned, the election of Chávez also accelerated their engagement with the state, as he proclaimed his commitment to indigenous peoples and their recognition. In 1999, the Venezuelan Constitution was adapted to reflect the inclusionary socialist political ideology and introduced a new section devoted to native peoples,⁷ with clauses that espouse rights to collective land ownership, native education and health practices, and prior consultation for natural resource extraction in their territory. Notwithstanding this multi-ethnic vision, Chávez simultaneously directed attention to indigenous peoples' history of exclusion and thus promoted their incorporation into broader Venezuelan development initiatives, engagement in party politics, and their equal participation in the grassroots projects of Bolivarianism.

Nevertheless, it is gasoline – the everyday energy source derived from oil – that encapsulates and materializes indigenous peoples' relations with the state. It is made freely available to them and is guzzled by the outboard motors that transport them to the cities in order to engage in the political processes of Venezuelan citizenship (predominantly activities of clientelism): namely

the procurement of ID cards as a precursor to voter registration, which thereafter leads to the regular bestowal of outboard motors, yucca-grating machines, and chainsaws from local politicians (see Penfield 2016). All of this machinery is run on highly subsidized fuel.

To make this to-ing and fro-ing more intense still, only indigenous communities (i.e. not *criollo*/non-indigenous peoples) are allocated a licence to purchase gasoline in monthly quotas (Sp. *un cupo*) – dispensed into several 200-litre drums – as well as the valuable paperwork that grants the legal transit of fuel within indigenous territory (Sp. *la guía*). This combination of concessions, licences, and forms enables continued use of gasoline-run machinery but also provides indigenous citizens with considerable power over the purchase and movement of gasoline within their territory. As a subtle form of enrolment in the petro-state, the prolific use of gasoline and the appropriation of its accompanying paperwork further impel indigenous peoples to regularly travel to the cities, and in the process expend and procure more gasoline. Even travelling to the city with an outboard motor to obtain gasoline requires gasoline, and so indigenous people find themselves returning to the cities to replenish supplies sooner than they expect. The bountiful presence of this evanescent fluid in Venezuelan Amazonia has thus arisen from the multicultural vision of the new socialist nation, along with indigenous peoples' budding apprenticeship in political patronage and the increased mobility that results.⁸

Notwithstanding this political milieu, I was astonished to see the quantity of gasoline being procured on a daily basis by the native Amazonians of this region, beyond even its pervasive presence in communities. The frontier town where indigenous peoples travel to collect their fuel at the local gas station was strewn with abundant orange-painted oil drums filled with gasoline. This landscape of barrels was evidence of an altogether more distinct purpose: the need for gasoline to run the clandestine gold mines in the hinterlands of the forest. The mining that was taking place in this region of Venezuela was part of the now common practice of illegal small-scale mining in lowland South America, composed of extensive invasions by thousands of independent prospectors seeking

riches. The mine's high consumption of gasoline was due to the reliance on machinery to access the colluvial gold deposits. After the land is deforested, large gasoline-powered hydraulic cannons blast away the topsoil to create cavities of muddy water, which is then passed over a crude carpet-lined sluice box that separates the heavier sediment, the gold being later extracted with the use of mercury.⁹ Reports emerged that there were up to a thousand machines at work at any given time, and while these numbers were difficult to confirm, it was certainly true that the demand for gasoline at the mine site was exceedingly high.

Figure 2. Indigenous Venezuelans speed upriver in their canoe with an outboard motor donated by the regional government. One man wears a jacket with the words: 'Socialist Indigenous Warrior. Charge!' (Photo by the author.)

Many local people, indigenous and non-indigenous alike, were involved in mining in this region. Very few, however, were troubled by the environmental degradation or violent incursions

that preoccupied those inhabiting Yanomami lands further south (Kopenawa 2013: chap. 16; Rocha 1999;). Most Sanema do not mine for gold directly for fear of the evil tutelary spirits that guard the mineral (Sa. *orotil töpö*), as described by one of my Sanema contacts: ‘You can’t get the gold, you can’t work with the gold. You will die like that. That’s what our forefathers warned’. Instead, most spend only brief moments at the mine site, arriving specifically to supply gasoline to the *criollo* (non-indigenous) machine owners (Sp. *dueños*), who pay with gold. In this sense, the gold rush, for the Sanema, can better be understood as a scramble for gasoline, which saw many attempting any means possible to acquire large quantities of the fuel, with some residing permanently in the towns for this purpose. Many Sanema saw the mine as a place to make astronomical riches, and rumours circulated that one could earn tens of thousands of dollars in each trip if enough gasoline could be procured, delivered, and traded.¹⁰

These activities were, on the surface, peripheral to the petro-state because they were deregulated and took place at the edges of state power. However, the influx of highly subsidized free-flowing gasoline into the area – intended for indigenous consumption – inadvertently assisted the smooth running of the mine and its hydraulic machines while at the same time the petro-state’s strategy of co-opting the local indigenous population made them essential actors in mining activities. Native inhabitants have a unique access to the *cupos* (quotas) that allow them to purchase gasoline in vast quantities, and to the paperwork (Sp. *la guía*) that authorizes them to transport it within indigenous territory (see Penfield 2016). *Criollos* travelling in these territories with large volumes of gasoline without the associated paperwork (only granted to indigenous peoples) are likely to have their fuel confiscated at one of the military checkpoints that now line the river as part of an ineffectual government endeavour to eradicate illegal mining.

When it comes to analysing the ethical encounters that emerge from the increasingly indispensable energy source of gasoline, one possible approach is to draw out the social ruptures that are occasioned by the copious dispensation of this remarkable fluid. During the end of my fieldwork

period, people did indeed begin to hoard gasoline and hide their barrels more regularly, and the term ‘stingy’ (Sa. *umi ipō*) – a reviled and even dangerous trait – was used with greater frequency in relation to fuel and its capacity to become a medium of power and control. In spite of these evident concerns, this essay will explore how gasoline becomes interwoven with social life as much as how it disrupts it.

Lively gasoline

In my fieldsite, gasoline was spoken about with an undertone of mystery, and was treated as a substance beyond the ordinary. Its volatile energy was utilized to suffocate the overabundance of cockroaches that scuttle beneath belongings, or to destroy a trail of ants making their way towards a cassava bread stash. Its potency was regularly harnessed for medicinal purposes: to stifle the itch of scabies, to douse feet riddled with jiggers, or even to pour over the hair to rid one of lice. I was also shocked to hear that a young man had drenched a deep machete wound on his wrist with gasoline to, as he said, ‘make it better’ (Sp. *hace que mejora*). In addition, gasoline is thought to possess a kind of liveliness beyond mere chemical potency. The volatility and transformative nature of the fluid was often remarked on, but frequently in terms of some kind of capricious and malicious conduct (Sa. *salia bai*), as though acting with intentional ‘fierceness’ (Sa. *waitili*). Narratives of the substance declared how it expanded, surged, and leaped without warning or when left unattended for long periods, more often than not resulting in abrasions and burns. It was said to have many ‘friends’ (Sa. *nohimo*), the machines to whom it gave a ‘voice’, allowing them to groan away when they are brought to life. This equipment was not said to speak in the oratory sense, but rather to murmur or sing through the feeding of gasoline. As one described it: ‘Gasoline is the friend of the motor. If you always use gasoline, the motor will always go. If water enters the motor, it will no longer sing’.

Like humans, for whom the state of being *tōkō* – ‘alive’ and in good health – is sustained by meat and cassava gruel, and evidenced through the warmth and movement at the centre of the

body, the warmth, movement, and health of machinery depend on the nourishment offered by its special ‘friend’: gasoline. The category of ‘friend’ in Amazonia is highly significant and suggestive of gasoline’s burgeoning role in Sanema worlds. Friendship is necessary to social reproduction (see, e.g., Killick 2009), but not without a degree of apprehension. Moreover, the fact that gasoline nourishes and stimulates – in the process giving life and life-force – is not dissimilar to other reactive substances created from organic forest matter such as tobacco, manioc beer, sorcery poison, and *sakuná* (a hallucinogenic snuff). All such substances have, in one form or another, their own tutelary spirit masters who bestow them with potency and vital properties. One woman even described gasoline as possessing spirits not dissimilar to shaman spirit allies (*hikula*) that appear upon consumption of *sakuná*. She stated that ‘gasoline also has spirits, because when you sniff it you see Sanema men. But they are not men, they are the spirits of gasoline’.

An example of gasoline’s vital potential is its use within a repertoire of ritual substances known as *alawalia*. These are objects and elements prepared for divination rites, most commonly nail or hair clippings taken from a sick person combined with plant cuttings from species ‘known to have spirits’. These fragments of matter are assembled into bundles and hung above the hearth, or stuffed into a hole of a special tree for a number of nights to allow the spirit of the *alawalia* to enter the dreams of the woman conducting the prognosis. *Alawalia* is also the term used for substances and items utilized in assault sorcery such as tiny darts that are propelled into the bodies of unsuspecting victims (see also Walker 2015). These substances can be magically extracted by particularly powerful shamans, who then vomit up the fragments for others to see. Assault sorcery can also take the form of revenge spells that form widespread rituals in response to unexplained fatalities, including the throwing of reactive substances on cremation fires (rock and plant fragments) to bring about the death of unidentified or distant murderers. This is where gasoline joins the array of *alawalia* substances, as it was increasingly used to pour over dead bodies to intensify the cremation fire and accelerate the agonizing, feverish demise of the elusive enemy. What is significant here is that the category of

alawalia includes fragments of sentient persons or animist beings that have been removed and used for their vital capacities, yet still retain the spirit of the ‘distributed’ personhood from which they emerged (Gell 1998: 104). *Alawalia* itself is also a partible composite.

Gasoline is fundamentally recognized as a reactive and, in turn, socially catalytic substance; an agitator rather than an inert conduit. This social dimension of gasoline’s influence was evident in the young boy’s punishment described at the beginning of the essay. The explicit reason given for the whipping he endured was that he had ‘let demons inside’.¹¹ One friend later described the Sanema term for demon – *ai pupo* – as ‘one who is disguised’ (Sp. *disfrazado*), or ‘transformed into a bad person’ (Sp. *transformado en una mala persona*).¹² The implication is that by letting bad things inside, one wilfully transmutes oneself into the unrecognizable ‘other’. Indeed, this phrase – letting demons inside – was often used to describe excessive drunkenness, a state that indexes violent upstream others, and which precipitates unchecked fierceness, capricious behavior, and a general obstruction to community well-being. Many residents of my host community described alcohol consumption as troubling because being drunk – *polemo* (literally meaning ‘to be like a dog’) – causes one to forget one’s kin and act unpredictably. Alcohol consumption triggers one to name the dead, have numerous illicit affairs, act aggressively towards kin, and unwittingly entice evil spirits (Sa. *sai töpö*) and raiders (Sa. *oka töpö*) to the community. The incorporation of harmful essences in this way is also analogous to descriptions of the onset of illness, in which vengeful animal spirits enter the body; although the difference here is that the spirit is intentionally granted entrance – *letting* demons inside – rather than invading against one’s will.

Like alcohol, then, huffing gasoline can cause a solipsism that obstructs the fragile balance of conviviality (see also Santos-Granero 2000: 277). Unlike alcohol, however, gasoline sniffing was once described to me as causing ‘permanent damage to the mind’ (Sp. *daño permanente a la mente*) where ‘proper thinking is’ (Sp. *donde se queda el pensamiento correcta*). Many of my Sanema interlocutors believed that excessive exposure to gasoline could cause serious derangement

because such conduct was personified by a local man from the neighboring Ye'kwana who was famous throughout the region for his regular 'consumption' of the fluid. He was renowned for his inappropriate behaviour, gibberish talk, voluntary isolation, and aggression (see also Vilaça 2011: 251-2). Often described as 'going around without a place, and without people', he would spend weeks at a time wandering the streets of the *criollo* frontier town, and then drifting from community to community with seemingly no awareness of kinship rules, the importance of sharing, and other social interdictions.¹³ As rumour had it, he was abandoned as a child and left on his own, causing him to 'drink' gasoline in solace, which in turn resulted in his madness and the further intensification of his alienated and anomalous behaviour. It is clear, then, that gasoline acts as a physical, social, and occult stimulant, and that its power in Sanema lives is multifaceted and complex. To show how this potency intermingles with human ethics, however, we must next look in detail at Sanema moral personhood.

Sanema moral personhood

Each Sanema person has multiple components, both internal and external, to the self. Besides the corporeal form, the Sanema has a shadow soul (Sa. *nonoshia*) which is a discrete animal alter ego living its distinct but lateral life far away in another part of the forest. They also have a core soul (Sa. *oshitö*) that manifests as gentle movement at the centre of the body (the heartbeat), and a spirit of vengeance (Sa. *okola*) which moves beyond the body in order to avenge illusory sorcerers (Colchester 1982: 449; see also Vilaça 2005: 453). Personhood is also constituent of one's kin network. The term *aitö* – which is used to refer to kin – literally means 'other', although in the sense of 'similar' rather than strictly 'other'. When a Sanema person talks of 'my similars' (Sa. *ipa aitö*, 'my family'), it is inferred that their kin are versions or parts of themselves, and that together they form a whole. Gow observes a similar logic among the Piro, who consider both humanity and kinship as multiplicities, and that selfhood constitutes a 'multiplication of identical entities' (2001: 49; see also Kohn 2013: 64-8; Strathern 1988: 14).¹⁴ This is a relationship not between individual discrete units, but between

parts of a whole – a composite. This form of personhood plays out most significantly with behaviour, which can critically affect the well-being of kin.

This notion is made most salient when actions towards or between kin are considered equivalent, as when women breastfeed their sisters' infants, when taboo breaking can seriously harm the transgressor's children, and when vengeance is carried out against the brothers of a murderer. Perhaps one of the best ways to demonstrate this notion is through the case of *onihamo* among the Sanema. As my host brother described it, *onihamo* is the unwitting or uncontrolled desire to amass possessions, or a voracity in hunting that causes illness among family members. Although no historical data have been published on this concept, discussions on the topic suggest that it is tightly bound up with transforming notions of ethics and personhood, particularly as they relate to Sanema ideas of ethnic difference and shifting economic activities. Like myth, this transformational concept serves to make sense of the dynamic lived world that the Sanema inhabit (see also Gow 2001). Once a term used to describe the dangers of hunting large numbers of game animals in one trip, and the cosmic counter-response to such actions, now it also refers to the uncertainties of contemporary economic activities such as procuring all available gasoline portage work to the mine, or obtaining more gold than anyone else (see also High 2017). When I asked my host brother the meaning of the term, he responded with a blended description of its transforming economic significance, both in hunting and in gold mining:

If six men go to the mine and five of them only make 4 grams of gold and you make 20 grams, you are *onihamo*: someone in your family will die. It is the same with hunting. A hunter can't help himself and will continue to kill until he has lots because he needs meat for his family. He doesn't avoid it; he thinks only of killing. He doesn't think it's bad at the time, but others will say behind his back that he is *onihamo*.

He went on to explain that he had unintentionally caused the death of his young niece after greedily grabbing all the fish during a barbasco fishing trip when all the other participants came away with nothing.¹⁵ This phenomenon, then, relates to transforming ideas of auspicious circumstances when one fails to maintain social relationships through generosity and compassion. Most importantly, excessive procurement or consumption by a single person threatens the health of any member of the kin group as a whole. This case shows how ethics must be seen as a collective phenomenon, as one's behaviour determines the health and well-being of one's kin. Indeed, it is somewhat telling that other community members describe inward-looking people as *onijamo* 'behind their backs', as though the individuals themselves fail to notice both the gossip and their tragic fate, so wrapped up are they in their solipsistic desires.

A parallel case of a young trainee shaman, Eudin, illustrates well how ethics in this case concerns not merely care for the self, but also care for one's similars. I noticed that Eudin, who was around 15 at the time of fieldwork, occasionally acted in a very peculiar and erratic manner. Most days he would be quietly sitting with his family eating or fishing, but on others he ran around the community shrieking with arms outstretched, or entered my household to imitate animals in front of my ageing host father. One evening I found Eudin telling an awe-struck audience how he had flown over the forests one night in search of the mine site. I suspected he must be a shaman in training, so asked my friend Teo if this was the case. It was true, he had been on the way to becoming a very special shaman, I was told. 'Eudin was born with the umbilical cord wrapped around his neck so they knew he was going to be a powerful shaman with mighty spirit allies to accompany him', Teo began. 'He was the sort who could vomit up lumps of *alawalia* [harmful sorcery substances] that he had extracted from sick people. He knew about everything and flew all over the place at night'. But then the story took a sinister turn. Eudin had started to fall in love with women, and it was at this point that his spirits allies left him, 'They wanted to get as far away from him as possible because they

don't like the smell of women. Eudin abused their trust'. On his return home after shamanizing on day he was choking and unable to breathe. Teo recounted the episode with a burdened expression. 'It was as though they had grabbed his neck and were suffocating him. The next day his sister's newborn baby died. It was the spirits gaining revenge'. Stories like this were common, and demonstrate how ethical action is not merely a means for self-improvement, even if achieved through relationality. Ethics can be a composite form of responsibility, with all entities forming an integrated whole. Moreover, not only does the behaviour of one person affect the well-being of another, but in fact any being in the cosmos can respond to conduct. In the final section that follows, I will bring together the ideas of energy and ethics explored thus far to consider how gasoline becomes interwoven into Sanema composite ethics.

Energy and composite ethics

My Sanema friend Wilfredo sat at the hearth looking extremely irritated. He had just returned from a two-month trip trading gasoline at the gold mines upstream, and evidently not all had gone to plan. 'There are a lot of problems if we can't sell gasoline', Wilfredo snapped at his brother Cesar who was sitting opposite him at the hearth. 'You sit here in the community waiting for your gold, behaving badly. But I cannot sell this gasoline if you behave badly'. This snippet from a tense exchange that I had unwittingly encountered while passing by the family hearth stuck in my mind for a while afterwards. It had certainly seemed that Wilfredo was suggesting that the sale of gasoline was contingent on kin behaviour. But what piqued my interest further was that in the days following Wilfredo's return, numerous rumours circulated as to why the sale of his gasoline had failed, all of which led back to the question of kin moral behaviour; depraved or deceptive acts that had somehow impeded his success.

Some time after his return from the mine, I was finally able to ask Wilfredo directly what had happened. He told me that he always worked hard for his kin and this was why he went to

sell gasoline in the mine. But, he added bitterly, he had failed because of to his family's waywardness. He described the numerous attempts he had made to transport gasoline to the mine, each time failing to pass the military checkpoints owing to lack of the requisite paperwork. Finally, he and his brothers had managed to buy the documentation from a Ye'kwana contact, and this time he sailed up the river with ease, optimistically reaching the mine with his several barrels to sell to the non-indigenous owners of the hydraulic machines. When he arrived, he noticed that other traders had arrived directly before him, exchanged their barrels, and blissfully walked off with their gold. Wilfredo delivered his gasoline, but the machine bosses did not pay. Then some other fuel traders arrived after him, passed over their gasoline, and again happily departed with their riches. Wilfredo waited for his payment but received nothing, slowly suspecting that something unusual was occurring.¹⁶ In that moment, he realized what was going on. 'Aha!' he said to himself, 'My brother, or my wife's younger sister, they are behaving badly. That is why the miners aren't paying quickly'. I later confirmed this with another research participant, who expounded as follows:

People are like that. Wilfredo goes to sell gasoline in the mine. He sells it but they don't pay well, or don't pay quickly. 'When are you going to pay?' you ask and they say 'the day after tomorrow', but this day passes and again you ask, and they say 'tomorrow' and again the day passes. This is because your family is misbehaving.

He elucidated further by describing how immoral behaviour (*Sa. salia bai*) can result in misfortune. For example, he explained, if a man goes fishing and his family are misbehaving, then he will catch no fish.¹⁷ While it was not explicitly stated that the gasoline and the fish were 'resisting' exchange, both were becoming entangled in human social and moral relationships rather than mere practical acts of procurement and exchange, or as mediators in purely human ethics. Just as fish and peccaries

are believed to be deliberately evasive in cunning ways as intentional beings who are active players in composite ethics, so too can gasoline – already viewed as highly unusual – become drawn into these webs of ethical action.

Beyond this apparent resistance to being traded, the volatile fuel was often portrayed as intentionally carrying out malicious or predatory acts in response to conduct, taking centre stage in many accounts of disaster and fascination. Large heavy barrels of fuel appear in many Sanema narratives as wicked travel companions. One man, Mario, lost his wife and three children when a heavy drum of gasoline had caused the canoe they were travelling in to topple over when passing through some strong rapids. The ‘gasoline had dragged them under’, as one person described it. The story was also accompanied by hushed suggestions that the incident had been the result of their *salia bai*, their bad behavior. Both Mario and his wife, I was told, had been engaging in extra-marital affairs at the time. In another story, a Ye’kwana man who had been transporting many barrels of gasoline to the mine had arrived above a series of large waterfalls and eagerly boarded his canoe with the huge drums, despite the water threateningly licking the rim of the boat. The motor did not have sufficient power for such weight, and so had choked and failed. As the story goes, the Ye’kwana man had desperately pulled the starter cord over and over to no avail as his canoe slowly drifted towards the precipice. His hefty gasoline pulled him over the waterfall and down to his death. Talk of the incident was accompanied by the suggestion that he perished owing to his stinginess and that gasoline was somehow responding to his depraved conduct. His downfall was not merely an indication of his greed, but also a broader social and cosmic reaction to it. Other cases regularly emerged in which gasoline sat at the centre of horrific narratives of *salia bai* and the inevitable doomed consequences.

When considering these assessments of gasoline and its placement within the cosmos of intentional beings, it is important to keep in mind that the Sanema have no notion that death comes about through natural or accidental causes. Fatalities are the result of the agency of harmful forces and the will of vengeful beings (see similar cases in Storrie 2006: 229; A.C. Taylor 1996: 202;

Whitehead & Wright 2004). Indeed, as argued by Howell in the Malaysian context, the entire cosmos is a web of ‘cosmo-rules’ in which the agency of nonhuman beings is ‘activated in the wake of a human transgression’ (2012: 136). The inauspicious repercussions brought about by both *onihamo* and evasive game animals are testament to this morally reactionary cosmos. Recall that gasoline is also an *alawalia* substance, utilized for sorcery and divination specifically because it has both fiery qualities and potent faculties like other intentional beings. It possesses a ‘personhood’ that can be distributed but with regard to which one must also be vigilant. In many of these cases, one might argue that the active moral capacity of humans is what impinges upon a mute material world, or that nonhuman entities happen to be conduits through which human morality is realized. This would be different from suggesting that the material world itself acts. Yet precisely because gasoline exhibits unusual ‘energetic’ properties – the Sanema perceive that it has a lively and vital force – it is seen to be something more than an inert material.

Conclusion

Given the political context of contemporary Venezuela, where gasoline is heavily subsidized and increasingly widespread, the Sanema experience the petro-state in this tangible energy-based form. In scholarly literature, everyday ethical encounters within oil economies invariably result in societal breakdown resulting from increased individualism and greed, what Kirsch has described as ‘the microeconomics of the resource curse’ (2014: 33). The same could be said for the Sanema context, as they are engaging in the magical state for material – petro-funded – ends. There is a temptation to draw parallels between the Sanema’s belief that gasoline ‘lets demons inside’ with Taussig’s (1980) association between capitalist modes of production and demonic metaphors among peasants in the Cauca Valley of Colombia, a juxtaposition that creates a ‘stunningly apt symbol of alienation’ (1980: xi; see also Gamburd 2004; High 2013: 677; Kirsch 2006: 108; Shipton 1989; Walker 2012). In such cases, the capitalist economy and resource wealth are viewed as morally contaminating; a dystopia

entirely divergent from the ‘solar humanitarianism’ of *renewable* off-grid energy (Cross, this volume). In some ways, the Sanema find they must negotiate the moral ambivalence of what emerges from the powerful petroleum economy on a daily basis, and anxieties clearly fringe the general threat of dangerous excess thought to exist as part of this economy – much like the unwitting overhunting that causes *onihamo*. In an analogous way, the act of supplying the illegal gold mines upstream with huge quantities of gasoline carries with it the opportunity for gratuitous riches, with yet again the potential for lurking, and highly ominous, individual desires. Nevertheless, attention to gasoline reveals that Sanema ideas of right or wrong that surround this energy source are not entirely correlated with a perceived immorality of the encroaching market economy, but are also associated with notions of personhood, sociality, and the cosmic order.

I have argued that current theorizations of ethics rely excessively on individualist models of the self. I furthermore suggested that ethical principles should not be seen as premised merely on intersubjectivity (which implies relationality) nor as deflected responsibility (which suggests possession over supposedly extrinsic agents). Composite ethics, by contrast, is an intentionality that cannot automatically be separated out from other associated parties. My critique of works such as those of Latour and Laidlaw above stems from the idea that – in animist societies in particular – ethical intentionality is not *deflected* through nonhuman entities merely for the purpose of serving human societies. Rather, moral arrangements encompass entities whose intentionality forms part of a broader (both human and nonhuman) composite ethics, rather than *facilitating* human individual ethics. In other words, nonhuman entities do not just act ‘for us as our proxy’ (Laidlaw 2010: 148) because, in certain contexts, they can form part of a broader ethical ‘human-thing amalgam’ (Verbeek 2011).

As has been shown, because gasoline is so intimately intertwined with Sanema social life, it might be viewed as a key player in this composite form of ethics, reacting in mysterious and at times frightful ways. Its energy-based qualities make it something other than inert material, and

like other animist agents with generative and energetic capacities, it participates in ethical action together with humans. As such, gasoline, for the Sanema, is indeed something extraordinary, not merely a substance for the use in and ‘symbolic projection’ of Sanema worlds, but something that has vital power in its own right, and thus perhaps also ethical intentionality.¹⁸ An approach to ethics that points to composite action in this way enables us to better appreciate the intense fear of inhaling gasoline, as well as Wilfredo’s problem with selling it at the mine, because as a generative substance, this unique fuel becomes entangled in – and in turn responds to – a broader ethical action. Because my Sanema research associates viewed gasoline as socially potent in this way, we are forced to see ethics not as an exclusively individual human action, but as composite and nonhuman too. Even beyond the Sanema context, an unconventional approach such as this draws attention to our preoccupation with individual ethics and agency that obscures alternative forms of ethical action both in our fieldsites and closer to home.

NOTES

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¹ The Sanema’s experiences with energy are the inverse of other encounters outlined in this volume. Gasoline is not routinely experienced as an opaque energy source such as the ‘invisibilities produced by the vast electricity infrastructure’ (Smith, this volume, p. 8). Neither is it completely understood,

unlike the charcoal produced by the Malagasy (Walsh, this volume). It is an extraordinary foreign fluid that, for the Sanema, is shrouded in mystery and thus received in diverse ways.

² The current economic crisis in Venezuela will certainly have changed the context, particularly in terms of access to gasoline. Telephone conversations I have had with my research associates in recent years have confirmed that the volatility of the economy is paralleled by volatility in gasoline supplies. In this way, boom-and-bust mineral cycles are evident in the snapshots we observe when doing fieldwork.

³ Latour's theory has been criticized, specifically with regard to his use of the category of nonhumans, which constitute a broad range of living and non-living entities. Ingold (2011), for instance, takes issue with the disregard for a nuanced understanding of life in descriptions of actants. While I agree with this critique, the intriguing thing about gasoline is the fact that it does seem to have a unique form of liveliness and unpredictability that other inert objects lack.

⁴ Laidlaw's notion of responsibility parallels Gell's (1998) theory of 'distributed personhood', in which the agency of the primary agent (i.e. artist) is distributed through secondary agents (i.e. artefacts and art works). Most of the authors outlined here, including Verbeek and Welker, do not make a clear distinction between ideas of collective, unbounded, distributed, and composite, often using the terms interchangeably. This is in part because the difference is subtle and variable depending on the argument advanced. The main point I wish to make here is that ethics is not an individual phenomenon, but also that nonhuman entities are more than mere conduits of human capacities. The Sanema case highlights how, in some cases, nonhuman entities are themselves seen to be key players in ethical action.

⁵ Verbeek refers to the 'humanist' or 'modernist' approach to ethics as one that divides the world into human subjects on one side and everything else on the other, denying in the process any form of moral significance to nonhumans.

⁶ Although perhaps these ideas might be analogous to a ‘morality of choice’ rather than a ‘morality of reproduction’ (Robbins 2007).

⁷ Capitulo VIII: De los derechos de los pueblos indígenas.

⁸ In many ways, this scenario is not dissimilar to the automobile-enabled lifestyles and associated dependence on fuel in the 1930s and 1940s United States, outlined by Huber (2013). This, too, was a political project – predominantly on the part of petrochemical and automobile industries – in which an ‘addiction to oil’ became intimately tied up with American values of freedom, status, contentment, and even ‘life’ itself.

⁹ In Venezuela, a different term is used for gold panning (*minería artesanal*), which is permitted. Mining with high-pressure water hoses (*minería ilegal/informal*) is illegal as it is far more destructive to the environment.

¹⁰ When my interlocutors managed to transport and trade gasoline, however, it was rather infrequent, and normally only consisted of a few barrels of gasoline traded for about 50 grams of gold each. I was told that 50 grams could be traded for approximately 16,300BF, which at the exchange rate at time was US\$2,037.

¹¹ Note that these terms are different to those that refer to Christian devil, for which they use *satana* in Spanish and *sai ton* in Sanema.

¹² Kenneth Taylor (1979: 213) describes the Sanema term for transformation as *išwanižo*, which refers to illness and the primordial transformation from humanoid bodies to animals, normally as a consequence of improper behaviour.

¹³ Although this abnormality might be indicative of his closeness to the spirit world (see Pedersen 2011), there was no mention of this man being a shaman. Most saw him as damaged by gasoline.

¹⁴ A similar definition is evident in the Yanomami word *mashi*, meaning brothers and parallel cousins of the same sex, but also ‘to be of the same class or species, or one side of an object’ (Lizot 2004: 206).

¹⁵ Barbasco fishing, which is normally undertaken in groups, involves pounding the bark from a poisonous tree into a pulp. The fluid from the mashed bark is then added to a stream, temporarily stunning fish, which float to the surface, at which point people grab as many as they can.

¹⁶ Although Wilfredo describes the machine owners as not paying, anxiety seems to revolve around the refusal to pay directly or miscommunication and confusion concerning *criollo* trading practices.

¹⁷ This phenomenon seems in some ways to be the inverse of *onihamo*: instead of reacting to overhunting and stinginess, here game animals refuse to be caught. In both cases, however, animist beings are reacting to immoral behaviour.

¹⁸ This idea follows Howell's (2012) notion of 'cosmo-rules', in which causality is tightly interlaced with cosmology. Forest beings, in this context, respond maliciously to immoral behaviour in humans (such as a disastrous thunderstorm described by Howell). Whether this implies that beings with intentionality act on impulse or sentiment (i.e. actively contemplating right and wrong) is not explored by Howell, nor by others who describe similar cases (e.g. Cruikshank 2012). My Sanema research associates rarely explained disastrous phenomena as meticulous responses by animist beings; rather they viewed them as a series of spontaneous and somewhat perplexing events. In other words, there is no indication that these 'responding' entities ponder ethics and responsibility, even though they act according to them.

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