THROUGH MYTHICAL EYES:
The Traditional World View of
the Gavião and the Zoró Indians of Brazil.
by
Lars Løvold
Institute of Social Anthropology, Oslo
International Peace Research Institute, Oslo

The main purpose of this lecture is to present a myth which
is told both by the Gavião and the Zoró Indians of the
western Brazilian Amazon, and then to investigate what
information this myth contains concerning the traditional world
view of the Gavião and the Zoró. My basic assumption is that
mythical stories express essential traits of traditional
world view, and I will try to let my cosmological
explanations be guided by this (sometimes hidden, sometimes
explicit) information.

There is, however, a general problem in dealing with
myths. Mythical stories are weird and confusing. They
often appear inconsistent, self-contradictory, or outright
nonsensical. When this is how they may appear to an anthropolo-
gist working with them, I'm afraid the confusion will not be
less pronounced among an audiene who has had no time to get
familiar with the particular mythical universe which concerns us
here.

To prepare the ground, I will therefore begin the
lecture by giving a general presentation of some basic charac-
teristics of the world and of how it was made, according to
Gavião and Zoró mythology.

1. The process of creation

The first thing to note is that the mythology of the
Gavião and the Zoró is actually not very concerned with
creation in itself, with how things came to exist at all. Both
tribes lack a real creation myth of the type: "In the
beginning there was nothing"... or: "in the beginning was
chaos...". Instead their focus is on how various phenomena of
the world came to be like they are today. The focus is on
creation as a process of making distinct, of separating one
phenomenon from the other, giving each thing and each being its
distinctive, unique characteristics. To create is not to give
life to, but rather to give shape to. Creation, in the
indigenous sense, is above all to complete the creative
process: to bestow the worldly phenomena with their definitive
traits.

The focus of actual myths is thus often on details. A long
myth may tell of how the jacú bird acquired its red and sloppy
gorge or why the brazil nut tree rose above all the other
trees. The grand schemes are generally frustratingly absent
from Gavião and Zoró mythology - frustrating at least for the
field worker when he fails to get much sense out of even duly
registered and well translated stories.

But let us take a closer look at how creation comes
about in myth. The jacú bird with its long, red neck and thin

legs is brought into being when the the mythical hero traps a distant relative of his who has played him a trick, and in order to revenge himself pulls his neck, smears it with red body paint and draws out his legs. Forever after the jacú bird is like that. In passing - to be able to catch this bird - the hero transforms himself into various kinds of fruit trees. And forever after these fruit trees are to be found in the jungle.

The mythical stories are full of such incidents - incidents which have lasting consequences. These incidents are caused by the activities of various mythical actors, of which the main figure is Gora' - the cultural hero. His actions - as well as those of other mythical actors - are generally performed in an accidental, rather unintentional manner which contrasts sharply with their lasting consequences.

Accidental or not, these actions share the common trait that they lead to modifications of the environment in which they take place. We might say that all activities recounted in myth take place in an original situation, which is gradually modified to become the actual situation.

In dealing with mythical action, I think we need to have some ideas of the basic characteristics of this original environment. For in a very basic sense all that the tribal mythology does, is to tell of specific modifications of this environment. The contrast between the mythical and the post-mythical - the types of changes having occurred - is what matters. If the Indians care to tell and retell stories of these changes, it is because these specific changes ar felt to be significant.

What then do we know of this original situation? Little is said explicitly in the myths; it does not seem to be their task. But quite a lot is said implicitly. Getting acquainted with a particular mythology is also to be able to see the background for the concrete stories more clearly. This is also what the Indians do. "Didn't you hear?" they would often answer when I questioned certain facts concerning a recently told story. What to them was obvious and explicitly stated, was to me hidden in fog, or appeared clearly inconsistent.

From this implicit information, and also from the explicit explanations of story-tellers, at least the following picture has emerged clearly: The original universe is a universe of one-ness, of non-separation and non-distinction. Animals were like men. They were man-animals, all of them speaking the same language, communicating freely. Animals and men were the same; they had not yet acquired the distinctive characteristics which make them specific animals or men of various tribes.

In mythical time the day had not yet been cut up and divided by the night. The day was continous, just like the seasons were uniform. There were no distinctions between wet an dry season, for the seasons had not yet appeared. Just as there were no absolute barriers between heaven and earth. Heaven was above the earth, but those of the earth had free access to the heaven. All that was needed was to climb up the liana that connected the two.

It is this unity which is broken through the actions of the mythical actors. Their creative acts set the world in motion, and separate one phenomenon from the other. The world is made discontinous, and organized into discrete

categories: The night as different from the day; animals as
different from men; the howler monkey, which one doesn't eat,
as distinct from the black monkey which one eats.

There is, however, a fundamental problem of logical and
philosophical character involved here. Mythical stories tell of a
time when all was unity, one-ness, non-separation. It would be
impossible to tell stories of this one-ness without in some sense
anticipating the changes yet to come; without making use of the
known categories and beings of today.

Mythical time is fundamentally different from present time,
yet known categories are employed to describe it. This
inescapable paradox is, I think, one of the main reasons why
mythical stories confuse us. Named actors, like specific birds,
are and are not at the same time. The jacú bird is active in a
story, although it does not yet exist!

Such paradoxes are necessary for the telling of myth, and I
think it would make our minds more open for the full contents of
the stories if we could learn from the Gavião and the Zoró not to
worry about such paradoxes, but take them for granted.

2. The myth

From this general sketch, I will now approach the Gavião and
Zoró traditional world view in the same way as the Indians do: By
telling a myth. Unfortunately my telling will depart from the
original in a few important respects: First, I will not be
able to mimick with my voice the sounds and activities of all
the actors of the story - be they animals or men - so my telling
will be more like reading than actual indigenous story-
telling.

Second, I will shorten down the story a bit, omit some
repetitions, and simplify the listening by carefully noting who
are the actors, who is saying what, aso. Such is not the case
in the field, where the audience knows the plot from before,
and can tell from what is being said who is saying it.

A third difference will probably be that whereas an Indian
audience will repeat the essence of every sentence, comment and
question actively as the story unfolds (even knowing it all by
heart), I will not expect such a behaviour from you.

And now to the myth which tells us how the main actor
in mythical times - Gora' - locked the people into a stone, and
how they came loose again. The myth is called

First he locked them in

and it goes like this, according to the old Zoró Indian who gave
this version:

- Gora' was preparing a party. He chose one to be "Chief of
the party", to arrive at the party before the others. Then
this chosen Chief arrived - just like among the Zoró today - to
drink chicha, the native manioc beer. But then Gora' really
ruined the whole thing. He turned into a child, saying: "I'm
shitting! Mother, I'd like to go shitting." So he said.

"No!" his mother replied. "But I'm not going with you,"
Gora said. "I'm going with her - with the wife of the one we
adopted." "Why with her?" his mother asked. Gora' started to
scream and shout, and then she said to the wife of the adopted

man: "Can you take my son out to shit for me?"

The woman got up - there the man's wife left. She was a young woman. They went outside. "Do it here!" she said to him. "Let's go a bit further over there," he replied. "Let's go there, a bit further," he said to her.

Then he started. "Here it's all right," he said. Then he turned big again, there on the spot. "I'll do like this with you," he said to her. "You may," she said. Then he fucked her. Again and again and again he fucked her. And then finished. Then they stood up. Look! A child already on its feet! The child was already on its feet! "Oh, my child!" she exclaimed.

"Let's go back," Gora said. Then he turned small again, and they went back. Entered the house again. She went in front of him, like she was - with the child. "Hey, look at my child!" she said to her husband. "This is my child!" "Oh, really?" the husband replied. "Yes, it is. The child is mine," she told him. "Was it this father of ours who made it?" he asked. "Yes it was." "You may keep it," he said.

And then all the others spoke to her also. "Where is it?" they asked. "Let us see! Let us see! Let us see!" "Such a thing!" they exclaimed. "Gora' fucked his wife! Gora' fucked his wife! Gora' fucked his wife!"

"You may all come in!" Gora' then said to them. "Come in!" he said. He turned big again, and asked them all to enter the house. And they all entered. When all had entered, he locked the door - paow! - pulled the door with a stone. Locked them all in. Then they got stuck in there, well locked.

Then they got all disturbed. They started to knock, knock, knock. "Where can I come out?" They were knocking, knocking, knocking. "What shall we do?" they said. And then they learned it where they were. They grew accustomed there. They lived there for a long while. Stayed there, kept on living there.

Then Gora' thought again: "Now what shall I do with them? - I'll do it to them again!"

Then he invited to a communal work-party. "Let's do work-service for me again!" he invited them all. "Let's do work-service?" he invited the parrots. "Yes, let's do work-service!" they answered. With others and others he spoke too. He invited those who have beaks.

Then they went. The big, red Ara-parrots (Ararapiranga; Ara macao) went. "Oi-oi-oi-oi-oi-oi" they came shouting. "Oh, we're coming to work!" they said. "Be welcome!" he answered. Then he directed them. "You may make a hole here," he showed them. And they knocked and hammered, knocked and hammered. But then their axes started to break! They were beating and knocking, beating, beating, beating till all their axes finished. Then they said to Gora: "No, it's impossible. It ruined all our axes!"

"Now I'll try!" the blue Ara-parrot said (Arara-azul; Anodorhynchus hyacinthinus). He knocked and knocked and knocked - till also his axes finished. "Now it's my turn!" the big blue-and-yellow Ara-parrot said (Arara canindé; Ara arauna). Then he was beating, beating, beating. Till there was nothing more to beat with. "Now me!" the true parrot said. Beating, beating, beating - till their axes finished too.

And so the story continues for a while - with other types of smaller parrots getting to work with their axes, and

then several types of canaries. All of them working diligently, and all of them in vain – their axes wearing away before they can get a hole in the stone.

"Now it's your turn!" Gora said to a small bird with a colourful, spotted chest. Now he came – a bird the Indians call pa-tjy-leia, "the one who pierced us". He was beating, beating, beating. Splinters of stone were spreading all over. Broke everything! Beating, beating, beating – this one was really beating! Beating, beating, beating – and then he pierced! Then he pierced them.

"You may open a bit more on this side!" Gora' told him. He was piercing, piercing, piercing. He took his time – making a hole this size! He was making an oblong hole – this size!

"Not yet!" he said. "Let me open it a bit more!" And he kept on opening the hole. Then Gora' called down to them: "Now you may come out!" Then one came out, then another, and another. Djalai – the non-Indians – came out first. Came out one after the other, and as they came out they said: "I'm going to be Djala (non-Indian)." The next one came out saying: "I'm going to be Djala." They came out, came out, came out, one after the other. "I'm going to be Djala, I'm going to be Djala." A lot of people spoke like that. "I'm going to be Djala, I'm going to be Djala." They made up a huge row.

Then came more. "I'm going to be Arara," they said. (The Arara Indians are neighbours to the Gavião and the Zoró.) "I'm going to be Arara, I'm going to be Arara," they kept coming out, saying the same thing over and over again. They were many too.

Then came more. It was Zarũũb – "the red ones". They came out speaking: "I'm going to be Zarũũb, I'm going to be Zarũũb, I'm going to be Zarũũb." Their row was the size of the row ahead.

And then the myth continues repeating itself. One tribe coming out after the other, all saying their tribal name as they emerge. Eight more named tribes appear in the same manner, all of them making up long rows, apart from the Surui-Indians – the arch enemies of the Gavião and the Zoró. They were not that many, and their row was reportedly shorter than those of the other Indians.

"Then after this we came," the old Zoró Indian who tells the story announces, having the Gavião appear first, and then the Zoró with their various sub-groups. "I'm going to be Pageũyn, I'm going to be Pageũyn," they said, (using the auto-denomination of the Zoró.) And then on through several named sub-groups (Pamakageũyn, Djueũi, and the Pageũyn-girei).

Then came more. "I'm going to be Za-beab, I'm going to be Za-beab, I'm going to be Za-beab, I'm going to be Za-beab, they said as they came out. (The Za-beab is another sub-group of the Zoró.) "I'm going out!" the pregnant woman came. She went out – almost came out. But got stuck! Then she got stuck there! Got locked up! The ones behind got crazy about coming out, beating, beating, beating, pushing, and pushing. They were pushing her and beating her.

"Oh, there you did it!" Gora' said to them. "Then let it be like that! Wê will call you Za-beab!" he said. (Za-beab means the bit or the part of a thing.) "You are going to be Za-

beavei," ("the partial ones") he said.

That pregnant woman turned into arapuá-honey. And then it finished. Still there were lots of people there, inside the house. But what could they do? The pregnant woman was closing the door. Those are living inside the stone till this very day.

---

3. The analysis

Several points might deserve some initial comments, but since time is short, and I will concentrate on the major message of the myth, I will immediately go on to the main analysis. To simplify the analysis – as well as the presentation – the myth (already a bit shortened) may be broken down into its minimal action elements and recapitulated in the following table. Thus resumed, it also becomes quite clear that the myth falls neatly into four different chrono- logical sequences (see Table 1).

I	II	III	IV
1 Gora having party	9 Gora inviting people to enter	13 Gora resol- ving "to do it to them again"	18 Pregnant woman getting stuck
2 Turning into child	10 Locking them in	14 Inviting birds for work- party	19 People behind agitated
3 Wanting to defecate	11 People agi- tated/desperate	15 Parrots and canaries work- ing in vain	20 Woman turning into honey
4 Intercourse w/ wife of adopted man	12 Gradually growing accustomed	16 Small bird opening hole	21 People living inside stone till today
5 Having child immediately		17 People emer- ging, socially distinct	
6 Woman ac- cepting child			
7 Husband ac- cepting child			
8 Social agitation			

First sequence

Taking a closer look at both the columns and their individual elements, we rapidly notice a remarkable dynamic in the first column. It starts out with a party, per se the most social of situations: an occasion for unification. But the moment the party is about to unfold – when the "Chief of the party" has arrived – the protagonist turns into a child, a socially unresponsible person who rapidly (action-element 3) gives evidence of his pre-social status by openly displaying childish, asocial behaviour.

Situations 1-3 then present a development from a <u>social</u>
situation via a <u>pre-social</u> being into <u>asocial</u> behaviour. If
mythical stories were logical constructions, we might thus
expect the next situation to be <u>anti-social</u>. And what we meet
in situation 4 is Gora's intercourse with the wife of the adopted
man, an act we might in fact easily call anti-social.

The Gavião and the Zoró, however, do not exactly share our
moral norms. Their attitude towards adultery is far more relaxed
than ours. The fact that children will not restrict the term
father to their social father and his classificatory brothers,
but also call their mother's lover at the time they were
conceived for father - and this man's other children for
brothers - may be an indication of this. Adultery is
widespread, and although nobody really likes it when their
spouses are involved, blame falls upon those who display
jealousy or make any fuzz about it - and not on the ones who are
involved in the extra-marital affair! It is consequently too
simple just to call the adultery an anti-social act, without
any further qualifications.

On the other hand, although adultery is both widespread
and socially cemented through the reckoning of co-parenthood,
it is not for that reason acceptable public behaviour. Since
marriage is, among other things, a regulation of sexual
behaviour, adultery means to encroach upon the privileges
of your neighbour. It represents a provocation against the
deceived husband or wife; and apart from that: even a Gavião or a
Zoró may become jealous.

Love affairs, then, are not only private, but also
secret. The deceived part is not supposed to know, and although
things can hardly be kept a secret in these societies, the
deceived part will have to continue behaving <u>as if</u> he didn't
know.

Adultery is thus a complex phenomenon, and it is dealt with
in a contradictory way by the Indians. The core of the problem, I
think, is that adulterous behaviour confuses social
distinctions. The wife of another man becomes yours too, her
child becomes your child as well as that of her husband.
Adultery creates a form of <u>unity</u> which <u>overrides</u> the distinctive
organization of family units created by marriage. Sexual,
psychological, and other aspects apart, adultery is
problematic because it is a private behaviour which partly
contradicts the public social organization, and partly goes
with it and extends beyond it.

When Gora' copulates with the woman, the act is then anti-
social only in the sense that it represents a blurring
of social distinctions, a degree of unity which is not in
accord with the public social organization. It can be viewed
as a negative act since it involves possible conflict, but it
also has positive aspects since it creates closer ties between
persons: offspring become brothers and sisters instead of
whatever other more distant relationship they might have had.

Basically ambiguous in nature, the adulterous intercourse
is significant because it concerns the question of how to
regulate behaviour towards specific social categories (like
Other's wife). And as we remember: Creation of distict social
groups is the explicit theme of the myth.

This concern with social categories is further stressed when
the myth states that the woman is the wife of an adopted man.

This point is made quite explicit when Gora' says (in Zoró language) that he is going out with maan-dja-vur's wife. Maan-dja-vur means "the one we raised or adopted" and is a common way to refer to someone in this category. The adultery is thus committed against a man who is not native to the tribe, but who is none the less a full member, having been adopted and also given a wife.

To adopt children of other tribes was common practice for all the tribes in the area. Such children were often the outcome of raids - they were robbed while their parents were killed. But in times of peace, children could also be in a sense "exchanged" between groups as a sign of peaceful co-existence. Orphans within the tribe would normally live with some close relative, and would generally not have been referred to in the same manner.

Adopted children should ideally be treated as any other tribal member, but their situation was not without ambiguity. In case of conflict, for instance, everybody would know they were born different. The maan-dja-vur designation would stick, and even after their death, people would remember that their children were in part of a different origin.

The adopted man, then, is another challenge to the definitions of social categories. Is he own people or other people? The adopted marks the border line: insider, yet foreign; outsider, yet member. Ambiguously incorporating two opposing categories, the adopted one is profoundly equivoval: A challenge to the basic dichotomy between us and them.

Involving both adultery and adoption - two ways of transcending social distinctions - action-element 4 is central to the whole myth. It presages what is to come.

The immediate birth and instantaneous growth of the child has the obvious consequence that it makes the affair public, undeniable. This, I think, is also one reason why the second part, the rapid growth, is included. In a culture where infanticide is practiced on a regular basis, a newborn child is not considered fully human, and, consequently, killing it is not really killing. Thus the newborn child could have been buried immediately, and the secret affair been kept a secret.

A child who walks, on the other hand, is a real child, a social being who is given a name and reckoned with. Killing it would be unthinkable, which is also shown by the mother's behaviour: "Oh, my child!" she exclaims acceptingly. No other behaviour is possible from a mother towards a child that age.

That the father also accepts the child, is more surprising for us, but in line with Gavião and Zoró behaviour. He just enquires to make sure it is Gora - whom he calls "our father" in accordance with normal pactice among the Zoró - who is the procreator, and then states that his wife may keep the child - in other words: that he accepts for himself the social obligations of raising the child, hunting for it, aso.

"Then all the others spoke to her too", as the myth tells. The first column ends in a situation of generalized confusion. Everybody speaking excitedly at the same time, crowding together in curiosity to see the child, and repeating over and over again the scandalous fact: "Gora' fucked his wife! Gora' fucked his wife!"

The first column, then, as a sort of prelude to the main events of the myth, gives us a dense description of social

disintegration. From an eminently social situation the story
rapidly develops into agitated confusion, using elements like
pre-social behaviour, adulterous intercourse, blurred social
categories, and immediate birth to tell the story. It may be
worth noting in this conection that all this take place within
Gora's own residential group, since we are told that he "ruins
it" the moment the first visitor, the selected "chief of the
party", arrives.

Second sequence

The second sequence again starts with an invitation by
Gora', an invitation to enter the house. We must understand
this invitation to be directed at the guests, whom we can
imagine to be arriving in flocks, now that the "Chief of the
party" has arrived. And they all follow the request - "every
one of them", as we are told. This is obviously just a trap,
for Gora' immediately pulls the door and locks them all in,
thus performing the crucial act which we were warned already
in the first sentence of the myth ("first he locked them in")
that he was going to perform.

The significance of this "locking them in" can hardly be
over-estimated. We must remember that those who were locked
in were everybody. It was the whole of humanity which was
trapped in the stone, or in other words: removed from the
surface of the earth! No wonder they got agitated, knocking in
desperation trying to come out. But to no avail. And gradually
"they learned it there where they were", i.e. gradually they
accustomed to their new condition away from the surface of the
earth.

Third sequence

In the third sequence we meet Gora' pondering over "what
to do with them". It is as if he is getting bored: humanity
is trapped, nothing is happening! In other words, with
humanity blocked from the surface of the earth, there is no
dynamism, no development. So Gora', "our father" as the
Indians call him, resolves "to do it to them again", that is:
put life back in motion.

And so he does, by calling for a communal work-party,
inviting all the birds. Or spelled out in interpretative
language: He makes use of the integrative, socially constructive
institution of a work-party in order to fulfill his aim. And
the birds co-operate willingly, arriving one group after the
other, full of ardour.

There is a small puzzle here: Gora' invites "those who
have beaks", but they work with their axes, wearing them down one
after the other. As I mentioned in the introduction, this kind
of ambiguous duality is very typical of myths. The main point
to keep in mind is that the stories take place in mythical
time, before the creative acts which turned the things of the
world into distinct and separate entities had occurred. The
birds have not yet really become the birds which their names
suppose. They are man/birds, or living entities destined to
become specific birds.

This dual or double character of mythical actors did not
worry the Gavião and the Zoró. "In those days animals were like
men," they would explain, as a matter of fact to be accepted at
face value. I will just add to this that if original unity is to

be expressed in concrete terms, then to endow other mythical beings with human characteristics is both a natural solution (the unity becomes self-evident for man), and very convenient for the construction of mythical stories.

But then, why did he call the birds - and not the monkeys, or the fishes, or whatever? Well, I am not going to claim that the question is essential for understanding the myth. The main point is that humanity was liberated from its sealed confinement, and that other living beings joined forces to make it happen. But if others might possibly have done the job, the birds seem to be particularly well suited. "Those with beaks" are particularly apt for piercing a hole.

In Lèvi-Straussian manner we might also add that the birds - the beings of the air, of the extreme high - are naturally privileged (fitting the subconscious requirements of the story-tellers' minds) to rescue the ones trapped in the stone. In structuralist language: Humanity is blocked beneath the earth, in an extremely low position. The unification of those of the extreme high position with those trapped in the extreme low position, brings them up in the intermediate position, that is: restores the balance, and life is set in motion again.

As to the birds themselves, they represent a wide selection of parrots and canaries - so much so that the full story appears almost as an inventory of all known birds of these families. But why the parrot-family, and not, for instance, the hawks or the gallinaceous birds? We may seek the answer on two different levels:

One approach might be to try to establish which characteristics must be present if a mythical actor is to assume a certain role or function. In line with such reasoning we might say that the birds of prey are not well suited to convey the image of peaceful co-operation typical of a work-party, while the large variety of gallinaceous birds generally keep very low, spending most of their time on the surface of the earth. The unification of opposite extremes to produce the intermediate, beneficial position, would then not be possible. In favour of the parrots speak the facts that they fly high in the air, do not kill, and often appear in groups. That they are admired for their beautiful plumage and are not eaten, should not make them less suited for the role as saviours.

Another approach, however, might be to say - as I imagine the Indians would have said: "Don't you see their rounded beaks? Can't you see they were worn down?"

Anyway, the sequence describing how the birds were working to pierce a hole takes up a good part of the story. But the number of words used is not alway in proportion to the significance of those words, neither in life nor in myth. The whole sequence is generally the same situation over and over again, and the only thing noteworthy is that the birds go to work in hierarchical order, starting out with the biggest and most beautiful of the Ara parrots, going down the line to the smallest and most insignificant of the canaries. All in vain.

Till Gora' himself calls upon one of the small canaries (too humble, maybe, to present himself assumingly like the others?), and asks him to go to work. Humble and small as he

may be, the bird works admirably, succeeding where the others had failed.

Unfortunately I was unable to identify this heroic bird in the field - nobody knew its portuguese name, and no picture of it could be found in our various books. So we will have to be satisfied with the assertion that it is a small canary, not to be distinguished from many others, if it had not been for a particularly colourful breast. If we want, we may find here an Indian version of the universal theme of "the last shall be the first".

Action-element 17 is central. People are re-emerging, coming back up on the surface of the earth, and as they emerge, they give themselves names. Those who share the same name, group together, and all of them make up long rows. What is at stake, then, is the creation of named, socially distinct tribal groups. It is the creation of the actual social organization of humanity that is taking place in this manner! What then could be more appropriate than to give this birth of distinct social groups the unmistakable form of physiological birth? The groups appear from the dark, hollow stone through a narrow, oblong hole in the same way as a child appears from its dark confinement.

The long sequence recounting the birth of social groups, contains valuable ethnographic information concerning which groups of Indians the Zoró knew of and reckoned with. We will not go into this here, however, but only note that djalai, the non-Indians, came out ahead of the others - a detail certainly not to have been there from times immemorial. And they made up a huge row!

After all known surrounding groups have emerged, then comes "us", the Zoró and the Gavião. First emerges a group of Gavião Indians, and then the Zoró themselves. The first of the Zoró to appear proudly present themselves as "people" or "the real ones", later specifying their name to be Pageüyn, which is the auto-denomination of the Zoró.

Then follow the various Zoró sub-groups one after the other, till the Za-beab were so dramatically split by the pregnant woman. One part of them emerged to become the ancestors of today's members of the Za-beab sub-group; the other part was forever blocked in the stone.

The event is tragic for the Zoró, as their group was split in two, and consequently did not emerge as numerous as it potentially could have been. As the audience in the long-house comments spontaneously as this event is recounted: "Why couldn't she have waited! We would have been many still to come!"

Fourth sequence

Yet we must see in this event a phenomenon of wider importance. What happens with the pregnant woman (introducing the fourth sequence of the table) is the repetition on a smaller scale of the drama or catastrophy of the second sequence: the blocking of humanity's access to the earth. No wonder the ones behind got crazy about coming out, beating and pushing. But again to no avail.

And then the woman turns into arapuá, a specific type of honey or beeswax. (Arapuá is actually the name of a kind of bee, and the designation covers both the honey and the beeswax

made by this bee.) That the pregnant woman turns into honey or beeswax could certainly become the object of lengthy excursions into symbolism - knowing the rich symbolic value of honey in the South American lowland - but we will restrict ourselves to consider the fact from a more limited angle. The beeswax is used by the Gavião and the Zoró as a sort of glue or putty. Although initially soft and plastic, it gradually hardens to a solid mass - so much so that the beeswax was traditionally used to secure the axe-head to the handle.

To me then, the significance of the woman turning into arapuá, is to state that she turned into a hindrance of a permanent nature: forever blocking the access of the ones behind.

So once again those who were locked in had to resign themselves to their confinement, and accept conditions as they were away from the earth. And "those are living inside the stone till this very day", as the last sentence of the myth goes.

4. Concluding treatment

Having worked our way through the details of the myth, time has come to draw some more general conclusions. To help ourselves, we might organize the content of the myth in another table, this time restricting ourselves to the action-elements we consider most important for the story (see Table 2).

Table 2. "First he locked them in" re-organized.

I	II	III	IV
1 Gora having party	2 Turning into child		
	3 Wanting to defecate		
	4 Intercourse w/ wife of adopted man	5 Having child immediately	
	6 Social agitation		
7 Gora inviting people to enter			8 Locking them in
9 Inviting birds to work-party			
10 Birds working		11 People emerging, socially distinct	12 Pregnant woman stuck
			13 Woman turning into arapuá

What unites the action-elements of each column, I think is the following: The first column concerns organized collective social activity, or in short: what is socially integrative; the second concerns what is pre-social, socially irregular, or socially confused - in short: the socially disintegrative; the third concerns the immediate birth or the free access to the earth of mythical time; and the fourth the negation of that access.

Summing up in this manner the themes dealt with in the myth present themselves immediately: The myth treats the relations between the socially integrative and its disintegrative opposite, and relates these themes to those of access to the earth and the blocking of that access.

But how does it deal with these themes? To answer this question, we will have to take another look at the core elements of the myth, this time restricting the number even further.

Table 3. "First he locked them in". Main events.

	I	II	III	IV
A	1 Intercourse w/ wife of adopted man	2 Immediate birth	3 Locking them all in	4 Collective confinement
B	5 Piercing collectively	6 Emerging socialy	7 Pregnant woman stuck	8 Woman turning into permanent hindrance

This table brings out the relationship between the story's individual action-elements in a quite fascinating way. We see that the mythical narrative has structured the elements in two chronological sequences, here marked as horizontal rows A and B, and that a strictly analogical relation exists between the two.

The adulterous intercourse of AI leads to immediate individual birth, just like the collective piercing of the birds in BI opens the way for collective social birth. The mythical immediateness exemplified in the instantaneous birth and growth of AII is forever canceled when Gora' blocks humanity's access to the earth in AIII, just as the continous emergence of social groups in BII is forever blocked by the pregnant woman. And AIII leads to a situation of non-access to the earth which is echoed by the woman turning into a hindrance of permanent nature.

We also see that the two action-elements of each vertical column are united by one common term, and that this term is given a different aspect by each of the rows A and B. Thus column I concerns a form of unity which overrides social distinctions. This overriding of social distinctions is given an individual expression of a possibly negative character in IA where relations within the social group are at stake, and a collective and purely positive expression in IB.

There is also an obvious analogy between Gora's persistent sexual activity in A, and the repeated attempts by the parrots to pierce the hole, so that people may emerge in B.

Column II treats birth in its individual (A) and social

aspects (B). Column III deals with restricting access to the earth. It is given global expression in A where all of humanity is blocked, and partial expression in B, where humanity becomes divided. The concluding column treats the time-aspect of the situation of non-access. The non-access is global, but only of temporary character in A, whereas it is partial, but made permanent in IV B.

5. Conclusion

"First he locks them in" is thus a myth which develops in the tension field between two extremes: social life on earth and the extinction or negation of that life. Between these two extremes - life and blocked life - the dynamism of social life and the dialectics between social disintegration and its integrative counterpart is at play.

The myth starts out with a social occasion, leads via the blocking of humanity from the earth to the emergence of distinct social groups. And the beautiful paradox of the story is that this whole process of social birth is blocked by the woman about to give birth.

The pregnant woman thus separates humanity, divides it into two distinct groups: those socially born on earth, and those blocked by her. No way is possible, except through the pregnant woman. No wonder then that pregnancy is equalled to the honey which used to close or cement things!

The unique position of the pregnant woman is to be on the border-line between this-sidedness and that-sidedness. Her cosmic role is that of a channel between life as it exists on a level which is not of this earth, and the socially organized, distinct form of life as it here exists.

Her role is ambiguous: she blocks the potential human beings from emerging on earth, yet all human life has to come through her. At the same time giving and restricting life, her role is divinely paradoxical - and admirably well depicted in the mythical description of the pregnant woman blocking the only way out from the stone.