

Abstract

This dissertation applies anthropology analysis to study a specie of a tree frog, living in the northern Amazonia, called Kambo. The wax-like substance, which the frog releases upon irritation, is used for its healing potential around the world. A basic conceptual framework is used to analyse the frog from the perspective of modernity, globalisation, and diffusion of cultural dimensions. The dissertation anticipates their influences on multiple parties. The geographical scope of the dissertation is limited on Amazonia and the Czech Republic. Kambo is a host of numerous biochemical interactions; in addition, it is used in socio-material context; in rituals; for gaining, or circulation of experience; or it is part of various techniques of understanding oneself, as described in later works of Michel Foucault. Due to Kambo's alleged participation on creation of human's subjective thinking, the dissertation answers the question on the extent to which Kambo could be responsible, through ethnographic lens. The results show that for those respondents who were experienced Kambo users; using the substance as a potion for treating physiological and mental issues and who were subsequently influenced by New Age movement; Kambo stands as a milestone in their life trajectories.

Through the ethnographic research, the popularised usage of Kambo is compared vis-à-vis the traditional, non-ceremonial usage of the frog's substance by indigenous people of Matsigenka for hunting purposes. Using anthropology of rituals, the dissertation concludes a negative relationship between the distance from epicentre of Kambo's habitat and the type of ceremonies for which Kambo is used, creating a bricolage of ceremonies. In other words, the further from the epicentre, the more Kambo is used for technology of oneself, ritual practices which include artefacts from other cultures, thus diffusing cultural dimensions. The usage of Kambo's substance is usually ritualized, it requires physical and mental preparation, and results in liminal situations. In today's globalised world, connected through information technology, it is possible to observe an extensive amount of different rituals, practices, cultures, and techniques of cultivation of oneself which ultimately have little resemblance to the traditional usage of Kambo.