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Chapter 5. Becoming acquainted with “animal” actors

In the previous chapter the general patterns, most common actors and motifs are identified regarding the 706 Amazonian narratives. This chapter, in combination with Chapters 6 and 7, will shift the focus from the general to the particular. The narratives here serve to create a frame of reference in order to better understand the “animal” Saladoid imagery. The following questions are therefore central: (a) which roles and attributes are ascribed to “animals” in the stories?, (b) with what or whom are they associated?, and (c) which “animals” are the most prominent within the Saladoid archaeological record of the Caribbean?

In all, three chapters are dedicated to the discussion of various “animal” tales. Chapter 5, the first one will address mammals. Chapter 6 discusses feathered creatures and Chapter 7 “others”. All these three chapters have a similar layout and are designed to resemble.

In 5.1 it is established which “animals” are addressed further, which determines the focus of this research. This issue will be decided upon by means of: (a) the identified prominent Saladoid zoomorphic incidents, and (b) prominent actors encountered in the studied narratives, which may not (yet) have been identified within the Saladoid material display. In 5.2 to 5.4 and in Chapters 6 and 7, each “animal” is addressed based on its roles and attributes observed in: (a) the narratives, (b) nature, (c) material culture, depiction and display, and (d) its position within Amerindian cosmologies.
The roles, attributes and contexts of “animal” actors is established in the section under the heading “Animal in the narratives. Here the methodology of narratology has been applied in order to analyse the narratives. The results of this analysis are compared to the general patterns established in Chapter 4, whereby visualising patterns relate to specific “animals”. The complete analysis is provided in Appendix D. Here only the highlights per “animal”-cluster are presented, with references for further reading.

The sections under heading “Animal in nature” describe the physical and behavioural characteristics of each animal. Both indeed seem to inspire the “animal’s” ascribed roles within the narratives as well as its position within Amerindian cosmologies. Any physical characteristics described in the stories are likely the identifiable features regarding their display by other means, too, e.g., adornos, pendants, petroglyphs.

After discussing the “animal’s” role(s) within narratives and nature, the “animal” presence in the archaeological/iconographical records are dealt with (i.e., in sections headed The iconography of “Animal”). The Saladoid zoomorphic imagery is the main focus of the present research. However, as will become clear, it may help us to understand to look beyond ceramics thus assessing other forms or means to depict and display “animals” as zoomorphic symbolic/iconic signs*. Whenever the archaeological record is a rarity, ethnographic accounts are included. They provide us with valuable additions because the archaeological registers merely deliver a glimpse of the once extant material culture.

The cosmological setting is the fourth context to be addressed in these chapters. The “animal’s” position within the Amerindian worldviews, combined with our present knowledge and opinions based on ethnographical studies, contributes to our comprehension as to how Amerindians may have perceived and understood “animals” as signs*. Again historical, as well as ethnographical references, are incorporated here, as these accounts provide insights into the ascribed position of the “animals” within Amerindian worldviews.

Each section addressing a specific “animal” has a concluding paragraph which recapitulates the preceding paragraphs in order to outline not only the Amerindians’ contextualisation but also the conceptualisation of the “animal”. Each conclusion thus unites the narratological, iconographical and cosmological contexts which shape and contextualise zoomorphic signs.

In section 3.1.1 the use of quotation marks around the word “animals” and specific animals was already addressed. The reader is reminded that these are used to stress that the word between inverted commas might be a high order representation, which is a mental construct. From now on “animals” will be capitalised when referring to an actual personage in the stories (e.g., “Jaguar”), but not capitalised when referring to an “animal” as identified zoomorphic motif, or a reference to “animals” from ethnographic reports (e.g., “caiman” adorno). In the
sections called “in nature” no quotation marks will be used since these sections describe the animals in their natural settings from a Western perspective.

5.1 The “animals”
The underlying premise is: the same “animals” act within the narratives as are/were depicted, or displayed, in pottery, rock art (petroglyphs, pictographs), motifs adorning utensils and amulets, etc. (see 2.3 and 3.1). Therefore, this section begins with a comparison of the data dealing with zoomorphic Saladoid *adornos* (as a case study) and the identified “animal” motifs with the narratological data presented here. All “animals” discussed are based on this comparison.

5.1.1 Zoomorphic *adornos* versus “animal” actors
The zoomorphic iconography of the Early Ceramic Age (800/200 BCE-400/600 CE) is introduced in 2.1. The most common zoomorphic *adornos* are identified, too. Especially Waldron’s analysis on Saladoid *adornos* from both Venezuela and the Lesser Antilles (Waldron 2010, 2016) can serve to establish a comparison with the data resulting from the present research. He identified and categorised almost 1,600 zoomorphic *adornos* and, if possible, identified their class, and sometimes to genus/species.

Table 5.1 illustrates the identified zoomorphic *adornos*, categorised according to their derivation: Venezuela, Trinidad and Tobago, the Windward Islands, and the Leeward Islands. Next, they are compared to the identified “animals” (also categorised according to class) as encountered in the (mainland) tales. Comparing Waldron’s data with those provided here results in a simplification. Here, instead of differentiating the numerous islands, they are grouped into the Windward Islands and the Leeward Islands. In Waldron’s research, however, the Leeward Islands include Guadeloupe, Antigua, and Montserrat, whereas the Windward Islands include Grenada, Carriacou, Saint Vincent, Martinique, Barbados, Trinidad, and Tobago.

In addition to the category of the Windward Islands, Trinidad and Tobago are treated as a separate entity because, when considering its flora and fauna, this twin-island nation more closely resembles the mainland than the other Windward Islands. Waldron delivers absolute numbers in his research (and charts). In order to compare these absolutes, they have been replaced by percentages. Table 5.1 forwards absolute numbers in the legend below. The narratological data resulting from the present research are placed in a category entitled “In the narratives”. The various identified “animal” personages have been divided into class categories, too, hereby matching Waldron’s categories.
Table 5.1. Classes of identified zoomorphic *adornos* compared to the identified “animal” actors.

This comparison illustrates Waldron’s observed shift as to the Saladoid zoomorphic depictions between the islands and the mainland. Within a mainland setting, the “mammal” *adornos* dominate, whereas in the islands the “reptiles/amphibians” and “birds” motifs prevail. The narratives utilised in the present research originate from Amazonian/South American peoples. The data largely are in line with the identified zoomorphic iconographical motifs stemming from either Venezuela or Trinidad and Tobago. The focus thus lies on “mammal” actors, followed by the “Reptiles/Amphibians” and “Birds” actors. Unfortunately, the quantity of narratological data encountered on the islands does not suffice to conclude if any observed shift in the zoomorphic *adornos* is also discernible in the stories.

The next step entails zooming in on specific “animals/birds” of which Waldron identifies fourteen examples (see 2.1.2 under the sub-heading *Comparing motifs*). Table 5.2 again delivers a comparison of Waldron’s findings with the accumulated data provided in the present research. However, as many as 165 different “animals” have been identified in the narratives. Waldron lists the animals according to class (Reptiles, Avian, Mammals) in descending order of occurrence (see Tables 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4, pp. 34-36; and see Appendix C, Table C-1 p. 445 for a complete list based on Waldron’s research). The frequency of the identified *adornos* is again compared with the number of the identified “animal” actors encountered in the narratives (see Table 5.2).
Table 5.2. Identified zoomorphic *adornos* compared to “animal” actors.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Animals identified by Waldron</th>
<th>Number counted by Waldron</th>
<th>Number counted in the 706 narratives</th>
<th>Remarks based on data drawn from the 706 narratives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reptiles/Amphibians</td>
<td>Turtles</td>
<td>486</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>incl. tortoises*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frogs</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>incl. toads*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Caimans</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>incl. alligators and crocodiles*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lizards</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Snakes</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>89</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unidentified</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avian</td>
<td>Nocturnal birds: owls, nightjars, oilbirds</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>18 owls, 21 nightjars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Parrots</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>incl. aras, parakeets, macaws</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pelicans</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vultures</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>incl. all scavenger birds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stilts: herons, ibises, egrets</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>incl. all identified shorebirds and waders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ducks</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frigate birds</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unidentified</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>284</td>
<td>The present study contains 81 narratives with (a reference to) a “Bird” actor, hereby excluding 67 specific birds. In 303 narratives, 490 records of birds (incl. “birds” in general) occur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mammals</td>
<td>Dogs</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>22</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bats</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>32</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Anteaters</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Opossums</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Armadillos</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>23</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rodents</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>2 mice, 10 rats, 10 squirrels, 3 guinea pigs, 6 capybaras, 2 “rodents”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Monkeys</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>52</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Manatees</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Procyons: raccoons, coatis</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>coatis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Peccaries</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>29</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Felines</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>127 jaguars, 1 wild cat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unidentified</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>Porcupine [2], dolphin [2], snail [1]</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5 dolphins, 1 snail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discrepancies</td>
<td>Absent in Waldron’s survey, but present in the Top 15 of most recurrent animals personages in the 706 narratives</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>57, 45, 25</td>
<td>Tapir, ant, deer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* These animals have been grouped together because it is difficult to discern differences between the iconographical depictions of a turtle/tortoise, frog/toad, and caiman/alligator/crocodile.
The data (see Table 5.2) should, however, not be studied in absolute terms but in relation to each other, thus by order of occurrence. Interestingly, of the “Top 15” of most documented “animals” in the narratives, 81 percent (n=13) have also been identified by Waldron as iconographical motifs (see 4.2.2 and Table 4.8, p. 103 for the “Top 15” of “animal” personages in the narratives). The common “animal” personages in the narratives, which are **not** identified as a zoomorph motif by Waldron are: deer, tapir and ant. However, various specific birds also remain (as yet) unidentified as Saladoid *adornos* from the insular Caribbean, e.g., woodpecker, hummingbird, and birds of prey.  

When assessing the categories comprising Avian and Reptiles/Amphibians, the numbers Waldron counts apparently correspond to those mentioned in the narratives. Remarkably, in the latter category, “Snake” occupies the No. 1 position here to nevertheless take in the lowest in Waldron’s iconographical data. This may be a result of the fact that “snakes” are depicted more often, but have not (yet) been identified because of an abstract mode of depiction. Another explanation could be: the largest snake species are not omnipresent and thus do not feature in the local iconographical contexts of the islands. Waldron identifies two “snake” *adornos* (see 2.1.2 and Table. 2.3, p. 34) within the Venezuelan assemblage.

As to the avian category, it is interesting to note that “nocturnal birds” have been overrepresented in Waldron’s data when compared to their occurrences in the narratives. The “vulture” category would be underrepresented in his data whenever merely the Island iconography is considered. However, here the mainland specimens have been included. For that reason, “vultures” still occupy the fourth position as most identified avian *adornos*. The absence of the “pelican” as an actor within the (mainland) narratives was, of course, to be expected – its habitat is near the sea. The absence of identified “birds of prey” in iconography cannot be reduced to environmental conditions, as various species both inhabit the mainland as well as the Caribbean archipelago.

The majority of the discrepancies are to be observed in the category of mammals. The “Jaguar” is by far the most common “animal” personage encountered within the narratives. However, its imagery is almost absent not only in the Antilles but also in Venezuela. Most inconsistencies can be explained by the fact that almost 90 percent of all (large) mammals (e.g., monkeys, sloths) native to the islands have been extinct since the Ice Age/Pleistocene (c.2,588,000 to 11,700 years ago). At present, certain mammals such as the common opossum (Didelphis marsipulalis) can be found on Trinidad and Tobago, the Windward Islands and the Grenadines.

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91 Two possible identifications of hummingbird *adornos* have been established, see Waldron 2010: 344-7.  
92 For a discussion on the distribution of the identified avian motifs across the mainland and the islands, see 8.3.3.  
Trinidad and Tobago, as well as Grenada, are home to the nine-banded armadillo (*Dasypus novemcinctus*) (Gardner 2007: 134). The collared peccary (*Pecari tajacu*) is native to Trinidad (Grubb 2005).

In sum, the comparison of data confirms that, within a mainland setting, the emphasis lies more on mammal iconography. In the mainland narratives, too, the most common personages belong to the mammal category. Nevertheless, all the birds and reptiles/amphibians we know from the island iconography are present within the (mainland) narratological context.

5.1.2 Determining the central “animals”
When the identified Saladoid zoomorphic *adornos* are compared to the narratological data, the resemblance of the zoomorphic motifs is striking. Hereby any environmental differences, to be observed between the South American mainland and the Caribbean archipelago, should be taken into consideration. These dissimilarities could (partly) explain the absence of any depictions of predators (e.g., “jaguar”) and large mammals (e.g., “deer”, “tapir”) in the Island iconography. However, the absence, or marginal display, of “ant”, “fish”, “woodpecker”, “hummingbird”, and “birds of prey” cannot be contributed to this environmental variation.

The main aim of this section is to justify which “animals” and therefore which narratives are to be included in the present dissertation. Based on the majority of the identified zoomorphic iconographical *adornos*, the following “animals” will be utilised in order to cluster the narratives. They will be discussed by means of their roles in nature, iconography and indigenous cosmologies, categorised as follows: (a) mammals: “Dogs” and “Bats”, (b) reptiles: “Caiman”94, (c) avian: “Nocturnal birds”, “Vultures”, “Stilt birds”, “Parrots”, and “Ducks”.

*Included anomalies*
In addition to the above-described, several other “animals/birds” are relevant: “Jaguar”, “Birds of prey”, “Woodpecker”, “Hummingbirds”, and “Ants”. The “Jaguar” is by far the most common “animal” personage encountered in the tales, but it does not occur (frequently) in iconography. Its absence in the Island assemblages could be explained by environmental conditions, but its absence in Venezuelan iconography cannot.

Moreover, we do not come across any natural/geographical explanation for the (almost) non-appearance of “ant”, “birds of prey” (e.g., hawk, falcon), “hummingbird” and “woodpecker” as zoomorphic motifs adorning Saladoid pottery. All these creatures are native to the Caribbean islands and South American mainland and will, therefore, be discussed. Could their underrepresentation in identified iconography be because they have not yet been identified.

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94 “Turtle” and “frog” have been omitted here as they are discussed in Paulsen 2007, but more importantly they are thoroughly studied by predecessors also in relation to (South American) narratives (e.g., Arrom 1975, 1988, 1997; Godo 2005; Moravetz 2001, 2005; Petitjean Roget, 1975, 1976b, 1978, 1997, 2008, 2015; Roe 1982, 1993, 1995b, 1997; Steven Arroyo 1988, 2006; Wassén 1934a, b).
as zoomorphic iconographical motifs? Or, are they simply not displayed as for instance *adornos*, but as abstractifications? Were they considered unsuitable or inappropriate for display on ceramics, for practical/aesthetic and or spiritual (i.e., tabooed) reasons? Perhaps studying the narratives can provide us with a better conceptualisation of these “animals” both as a motif and a device with which to identify them, or even with a better understanding of their non-appearance.

The “animals” discussed in this dissertation are clustered in three separate chapters, mainly in order to improve readability. Sections 5.2, 5.3 and 5.4 deal with mammals (i.e., “Dog”, “Bat”, “Jaguar”). Chapter 6 is entitled “Feathered creatures” as it is in line with (most) indigenous Amerindian categorisations of what we refer to as “birds”. Chapter 7 concerns not addressed animals: “Caiman” and “Ants”.

5.2 “Dog”

In this section, the “dog” as a cultural *sign* is broader contextualised. Its role in lore is followed by its role in nature, in iconography and in the cosmologies of the Amerindians. All these contexts shape(d) their conceptualisation.

5.2.1 “Dog” in the narratives

A man is lost in the forest and asks his Dog for directions. The Dog removes its clothes and teaches the man a lesson: “You never listen to me, you treat me badly (i.e., bad food and hitting)”. But then the Dog tells the man which direction to take and the man has learned his lesson. [Story no. 41 (Trio, Cariban); abridged]

The present research includes 24 “Dog” narratives, which having been integrally analysed, are subdivided into several separately studied clusters. The key issues of this analysis are presented in the following sections (see Appendix D, Section C for a full analysis of the narratives).

Of the 24 “Dog” narratives, only two fall beyond the core geographical area: Story nos. 555 and 556; Cayapó-Gorotire (Gê), see Fig. 5.1. The linguistic affiliation of Story no. 71 is as yet unknown. Based on its similarities with the other cases mentioned in the cluster of “Dog as wife and paramour”, it most probably stems from the core area. The two Cayapó-Gorotire (Gê) narratives do not fit into any of the identified clusters. Interestingly, both are part of three narratives which describe the “Dog” as an opponent, in a (near) water setting.

Statistical analysis of the narrative functions has not disclosed any significant variations. However, more stories have informing and a slightly less number validating the world as a function (see Appendix C, Table C-4 for a complete list of all narrative functions of the “Dog”
When zooming in on informing, the “Dog” narratives include the most common subtypes of this category which deal with: (a) what food (not) to eat, (b) how certain things should (not) be done, and (c) hunting techniques, so dominantly related to foodways.

Fig. 5.1. Plot of “Dog” narratives in the study region, i.e., the Caribbean and South America; survey composed by the author.

**Actors, events and settings (“fabula”)**

Quest and rescue are not only overall the most common (see 4.2.1) but also the only two main events documented for “Dog” narratives. Remarkably not a single narrative portrays the “Dog” as a trickster or deceiver. Two major themes, or sub-clusters, have been identified and discussed: (a) “Dog” as wife and paramour, and (b) “Dog” as helper or hunting companion.

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95 $\chi^2(4) = 4.88; p = 0.3$ (not significant). See Appendix D, section C. General remarks for a discussion on narrative functions for “Dog” narratives, and section 4.1.1 for a general discussion.

96 Narratives forming part of the first cluster (n=7) are numbered: 19, 20, 71, 358-9, 478, 710 (3x Cariban, 3x Arawakan, 1x unknown). Tales belonging to the second cluster (n=10) are numbered: 35, 41, 82, 423, 461, 465, 611, 660, 689, 709 (4x Cariban; 3x Guajiboan; 3x Warao). See Appendix D, section C1 and C2.
The “Dog” personage in the narratological context is very closely linked to the Amerindians as a pet, spouse, companion, and helper. This becomes apparent in the (secular) roles ascribed to the “Dog” personage and the dominant village context in which it acts. The prominence of the village context (74 percent; n=17) sharply contrasts with the generally preferred forest context (see 4.2.3). Four records associate the “Dog” with the water realm, one of which also includes the underworld. All in all, land-layer prevails. In two of the three cases in which the “Dog” plays the role of opponent, it acts on the water-layer (see Appendix D, section C. Fabula).

Considering the 24 “Dog” narratives, as many as 74 motifs are directly linked to the “Dog” actor. The most common motifs are: (a) the helpful “Dog”, (b) the “Dog” as a pet, (c) the transformation by removing clothes, and (d) the marriage of an Amerindian to a “Dog” (see Appendix D, section C. Fabula). Compared to the overall distribution of Greimas’ roles set in Chapter 4, “Dogs” show no significant variation regarding roles. However, “Dogs” are more often ascribed the roles of helper and subject/actor, and less often the roles of sender, opponent, and object/goal (see Appendix D, section C).

The “Dog” personage is apparently linked to situations in which the “Dog” assists others. Interestingly, this motif is absent in the “Top 15” list of all motifs (see 4.2.1). The second most frequently encountered motif, “Dog” as a pet, is related. As a “pet”, the “Dog” assists its owner. In four narratives, the “Dog” contributes to hunting trips and is released in order to catch prey (see Story nos. 35, 71, 427, 611; Trio, Yukpa (Cariban); Cuiva (Guajiboan); unknown). The “pet Dog” stays at home (or returns home) to cook dinner and clean the house (see Story nos. 19-20, 358-9, 710; 3x Kaliña/Cariban, 2x Arawakan, see Fig. 5.2). In Story no. 41 (Trio, Cariban), it gives advice/directions.

Transformation is overall the most common motif (see 4.2.1) and therefore not surprisingly also one of the most dominant motifs concerning the “Dog” personage. In many cases, the transformation is the result of the “Dog” removing its clothes, which on occasion are then thrown on a fire (Story nos. 19-20, 41, 71, 358-9, 478, 710: Cariban (5x Kaliña, Trio; 2x Arawakan; Warao). In Story no. 611 (Cuiva, Guajiboan), humans turn stones into “Dogs” who then assist them when hunting.

As stated above, the “Dog’s” association with hunting dominates the second cluster. In this role, it is also depicted as a protector and avenger. This relationship between the “Dog” and the Amerindian peoples is based on reciprocity and mutual obligations. The underlying motif or theme “Treat your Dog well” (Story nos. 41, 465, 709; 2x Trio (Cariban), Warao) is perhaps supported by the concept of “Dog” serving as the guardian of the soul (Story no. 423; Yukpa,

97 $\chi^2(5) = 9.26; p = 0.1$ (not significant).
Cariban). Indeed any mistreating of “Dogs” may lead to your soul being excluded from the land beyond (see also 5.2.4).

Stories nos. 555 and 556 (Gê, Cayapó-Gorotire) portray the “Dog” as an enemy in which the “Dogs”, or “Dog”-people, having killed and devoured Amerindians, are slain in revenge. In Story no. 555, an Amerindian who wished to catch one of the (huge) “Dogs” was killed during an attempt to do so. Other Amerindians then utilise meat in order to distract the “Dogs” and then steal two of their pups. In Story no. 556, the “Dog” peoples murder and later devour a small number of Amerindians who had, in spite of being warned, stayed in a campsite near a lake.

Fig. 5.2. “Dog” wife prepares dinner; artist’s impression of Story no. 359 (Arawakan) by L.J.M. Arts (2018).
With whom is the “Dog” associated?

In all narratives containing “Dog” personages, we can observe an interaction between the “Dog” and Amerindian(s). They also interact with other “animal” personages. The “Parrot” and “Jaguar” which both recur in “Dog” narratives are linked to specific clusters.

Within the cluster “Dog as wife and paramour”, the roles of “Parrot” and “Dog” personages are either interchangeable or indeed exactly the same. In Story nos. 19, 358 and 710 (Cariban), the “Dog” and “Parrot” personages interact in a very similar fashion when either performing (or part of) the same events/actions within the same spatial and temporal context. However, these three Cariban stories are presumably versions of one and the same narrative. The fact that Amerindians are known to keep parrots in cages binds these two “animals”, as Amerindian pets.

“Jaguar” is by far the most recurrent “animal” personage within the narratological content of this study. It is, therefore, no surprise that this mammal is also encountered in the “Dog” narratives. In three cases, included in the cluster entitled “Dog as helper or hunting companion”, the “Jaguar” appears, too. All three narratives are Warao, but in this case not versions of the same narrative, as was the case with the “Parrot” and “Dog” stories. In Story nos. 82 and 465, the “Dog” kills and/or devours a devastating “Jaguar” (one who kills Amerindians). In Story no. 461 (Warao), the “Jaguar” kills the “Dogs” that accompany their Amerindian owners. In these three cases, the “Dog” and “Jaguar” are opponents, just as the “Jaguar” opposes the Amerindians within the narrative.

Characterization & duration (“story”)

The mode of characterization of “Dogs” is in line with the general distribution (see 4.3.1). The number of records is, however, too small to conduct a reliable statistical analysis. As much as 83 percent (n=20) of the records consist of indirect characterization, while two analogue descriptions stress the behavioural qualities of “Dogs”. Story no. 63 (Trio, Cariban) deals with the excellent sense of smell of “Dogs”. Interestingly, we read (see Story no. 478; Warao) that Warao are distrustful and flee from fellow humans, as “Dogs” do. The reason provided in the story itself is: Warao are the offspring of an Amerindian with a “Dog” wife.

In Story no. 555 (Cayapó-Gorotire, Gê), “Dogs” are described as being “huge”, equal in size to houses and as dangerous killers. Two pups raised by Amerindians are the ancestors of the larger breed of “Dogs”.

Although a statistical approach could not be conducted due to the small number of records, the duration apparently agrees with the general pattern set in Chapter 4. Twenty-three narratives (96 percent) fall within the short range, taking up between 1 and 5 pages. (compared to 94 percent in general). Only one case falls in the middle range (i.e., covering between 6 and 11 pages). The narrated time also matches the general pattern: with nine (38
percent) narratives with a short narrated time: up to several days. All remaining cases have a narrated time of either weeks (n=4), months (n=6) or years (n=5). For a more elaborate discussion see Appendix D, section C. Story-layer.

To sum up, in general, the “Dog” has a positive connotation in the narratives, acting in close association with Amerindians as helper, guardian and hunting companion. Qualities made explicit here are its excellent hunting skills, an admirable sense of smell and its fearlessness. A “Dog” is also the caretaker and preferable spouse. In its role as a “pet”, it is interrelated to the “Parrot”. As a protector and a “hunting dog”, it is interrelated to “Jaguar”.

5.2.2 Dog in nature
Dogs presumably accompanied the Paleo-Amerindians (i.e., the first peoples who entered the Americas) into North America. Faunal remains suggest these animals were next brought to South America. The two canine species native here are: the bush dog (*Speothos venaticus*, see Fig. 5.3) and the short-eared dog (*Atelocynus microtis*). Both may well have been domesticated during early prehistoric times.

Based on historical and linguistic evidence, it has been concluded that dogs were native to the Guianas and the Orinoco River basin. However, many Amazonian societies apparently lacked dogs until the historic period, others only acquired dogs in the course of the 20th century (Koster 2009: 576; Schwartz 1997). They were apparently the first domesticated animals to be introduced to the Caribbean islands and are thought to have arrived here in c.100 BCE (Plomp 2013; Newsom & Wing 2004).

The bush dog’s presence ranged from Panama and historically may have extended as far north as Costa Rica, through Venezuela, the Guianas, Bolivia, Paraguay, and southern Brazil (DeMatteo et al. 2011; de Mello Beiseigel & Zuercher 2005; Wilson & Reeder 2005: 574).

The short-eared dog is native to the Amazonian basin. This species inhabits the rainforest located in Peru, Bolivia, Brazil, Paraguay, Panama, Colombia, Ecuador, Venezuela, and the Guianas.

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**Physical and behavioural attributes**

Both canine species have (partially) webbed feet, which are utilised when digging up prey. Bush dogs have a head-body length of between 57 and 75 cm. Their tail measures c.13 cm. They have relatively short legs, a short snout and relatively small ears (de Mello Beiseigle & Zuercher 2005). The short-eared dog has short, slender limbs, a bushy tail and a fox-like head with short, rounded ears.

Bush dogs are native to lowland forests, wet savannas and habitats located near rivers. These social animals occupy burrows in extended family groups. They hunt either in pairs or in small groups. Needless to say, the hunting skills and the social behaviour of dogs render them to be perfect “pets”. These traits are reflected in the stories (see 5.2.1).

The short-eared dog prefers a solitary lifestyle and tends to avoid contact with humans. Males can spray a musk when agitated. Its paws are webbed, an adaption to its partly aquatic habitat (Leite-Pitman & Williams 2011; Wilson & Reeder 2005: 582). The narratives reveal a link to this habitat, as the water-realm is the second most common spatial, cosmological setting here (see 4.2.3).

**Human interactions with dogs**

The bush dog and the short-eared dog can both bark. The small barkless dogs Christopher Columbus came across had probably been specially bred for their silence (Columbus in Hume 1992: 66; Waldron 2010: 119). Spaniards, as well as Amerindians, ate these dogs. The latter also kept larger hunting dogs that did not serve as food for humans (Roe 1995a; Veloz Maggiolo 1997).

In the 17th century, Island Carib kept dogs called “chóu-chou”. These medium-sized animals had upright, fox-like ears. Trained to hunt agoutis and lizards, the dogs chase after the agouti, which hides in tree hollows. The dogs catch it when the Carib forces it to abandon its hiding place (Breton et al. 1665: 35 of 50).

The importance of dogs as hunting companions has been described thus: “...they are trained to seize the game and to stay its flight until the huntsman comes up to kill it” (Schomburgk 1848: 48, note 1). Dogs are frequently taught to hunt only one particular animal (e.g., deer, peccary), but certain canines are able to chase after several kinds of creatures indiscriminately. In the latter case, the Amerindians can tell which animal a dog is pursuing by means of its bark. Investing in raising good hunting dogs makes sense as they deliver a high return rate, even higher when compared to firearms (Koster 2009: 575, 585).

Trained dogs were and are a desired trade item for which Amerindians would have travelled from afar to acquire. Warao Amerindians were known to peddle their canoes to Trinidad in
order to trade hunting dogs (Koster 2009: 588-9; Saunders 2005: 96). Even today the Amatopoan (Trio, Cariban) and Waiwai (Cariban) trade hunting dogs (Mans 2012: 114-5).

Strontium isotope analyses of canine teeth also indicate their movements, as the examined prehistoric (not exclusively Saladoid) dogs had been imported from another location than where they were recovered. Canine teeth from burial and domestic sites on Grande-Terre (the eastern island of Guadeloupe), i.e., at Morel, and at Anse à la Gourde include teeth of non-local dogs (Laffoon et al. 2013). These animals could either have been traded or have accompanied their owners when moving to settle on another island.

Dog burials are known throughout the Caribbean. The majority are associated with human burials (Grouard 2001, Grouard et al. 2013; Hofman 1999 et al.; Laffoon et al. 2013; Plomp 2013; Shev 2018; Walker 1985; Watters & Petersen 1995: 137; Wing 1991). In certain cases, the dogs were interred separately and presented with their own burial gifts (Hofman 1999 et al.; Plomp 2013). At La Sorcé (site Vieques, Puerto Rico) no less than 20 dog graves were discovered. The legs of several dogs had been tied together, presumably as part of a ritual (Grouard 2001; Saunders 2005: 159). In a number of human burials, “dog” figurines were encountered, which are interpreted as portraits and replacements of the actual dog itself (Hackenberger 1991: 169; Roe 1995a: 163, see also Wauben 2018).

Dogs were evidently traded between the mainland and islands, and between islands. The widespread occurrence of dog remains suggests the possibility that they have circulated as companions, food, ritual items or social valuables (Laffoon et al. 2013; Plomp 2013; Shev 2018).

**Dogs in relation to other animals/birds**

Hunting dogs are especially helpful when chasing prey animals that seek refuge or assume a defensive posture when attacked. The prey most closely associated with hunting dogs include the agouti, paca, collared peccary, brocket deer, and tapir (Koster 2009: 581-2, Table 1). Jaguars may also chase, or even kill, dogs brought along when hunting. Dogs are sometimes even brought along in order to serve as buffers against jaguars.

Whether dogs are also useful when hunting tapirs or white-lipped peccaries is questionable, because they might scare off these prey animals before the hunter is able to shoot. The large white-lipped peccary moves around in large herds, leaving behind a characteristic trace consisting of disturbed vegetation that hunters can track. Whenever large groups of hunters are formed in order to confine a herd, the dogs may actually scare off the peccaries (Koster 2009: 583).

Jaguars or other feline predators are known to attack hunting dogs. Peccaries, coatis and giant anteaters may attack these dogs, too, which if defending themselves can be fatally wounded.
Dogs can succumb to snake bites and scorpion stings. Fire ants cannot kill hunting dogs but may cause blindness.

5.2.3 The iconography of “dog”

“Dog” iconography has been identified not only on ceramics but also as zoomorphic depictions of for example wood or precious stone. Wooden, canine-shaped benches have been recovered from the Bahamas, Hispaniola, Puerto Rico and Jamaica as have pictographs and petroglyphs (Ostapkowicz et al. 2011: 152; Plomp 2013). Dog burials and canine teeth transformed into pendants have been excavated at various sites in the mainland as well as in the islands. Such pendants hail from the Huecoid and Saladoid contexts of Hope Estate (St. Martin), Sorcé (Vieques), Hacienda Grande and Maisabel (Puerto Rico) (Boomert 2000: 412; Laffoon et al. 2013; Plomp 2013). Hardwood “Dog”-shaped pendants are also encountered in this region: “jaguar” and “dog” hardwood pendants can probably be ascribed to the burial context of the Morel I site on Guadeloupe (Boomert 2000: 414; Hofman et al. 2014a; Petitjean Roget 1995).

Perforated circular cranium fragments of dogs originating from the Huecan deposits of Sorcé, Vieques have been discussed (Boomert 2000: 412; Chanлатte Baik & Narganes Storde 1989). Isolated dog mandibles and/or crania have been encountered at Vivé (Martinique), Sorcé (Vieques) and Hacienda Grande (Puerto Rico). It has been suggested that teeth and workable bone are “curated” to serve as sources of workable material applied when creating bodily adornments (Boomert 2000: 412; Plomp 2013: 100). Pierced, incised, polished canine bones and a fragment of a tube consisting of dog bone were found on Guadeloupe at the Anse à la Gourde site (Grouard 2001; Hofman & Hoogland 2011; Plomp 2013: 97, Fig. 17).

Dog teeth and pendants may have either indicated male prowess or been utilised as a means of protection. It has been suggested that, in the islands, canine teeth replaced jaguar and peccary teeth (Roe 1982, 1995). Isolated crania and mandibles could well be the sources of these teeth and the workable bone material applied when creating bodily adornments (Boomert 2000: 412). Early Saladoid (c.800-200 BCE) modified dental canine elements with perforated or carved roots have been recovered from Puerto Rico and St. Martin. These items, however, also occur in contexts associated with the “Taino”, from the Dominican Republic (Ortega 1978; Plomp 2013: 46; Samson 2010: 103-4, 161, 177, 207, 265).

During the Late Ceramic Age (600/800 CE - 1492 CE), an increase in skeletal and dental remains of dogs, as well as the production of “dog” imagery is evident with regard to the Greater Antilles (Shev 2018). However, this era also witnessed a decrease in dog burials and depictions of “dogs” across the Lesser Antilles (Plomp 2013: 100; compare Figs. 2 and 3 for an overview of sites with dog remains known from the Early Ceramic (800/200 BCE-400/600 CE) and the Late Ceramic Age; Shev 2018).
“Dogs” depicted on ceramics

The “dog” imagery, in the form of *adornos*, observed on mainland, as well as island ceramics, is a common phenomenon in the Saladoid series. In the Saladoid ceramics from the Eastern Caribbean, “dogs” now and again appear on certain islands occasionally and more frequently on others (see Table 5.3a/b). Huecoid ceramics produced in the Leeward Islands hugely enhance the quantity of “dog” images in the Caribbean islands (Chanlatte Baik & Narganes Storde 2005; Waldron 2010: 120).

Table 5.3a. Identified “dog” *adornos* and their dispersal.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Venezuela</th>
<th>Trinidad and Tobago</th>
<th>Windward Islands</th>
<th>Leeward Islands</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unidentified mammals</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Felines</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
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<td>Peccaries</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raccoons/coatis</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monkeys</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manatees</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rodents</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armadillos</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opossums</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anteaters</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>35</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dogs</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

99 See Waldron 2010: 403, 406 and 424-7 for illustrations of Venezuelan canine *adornos*: Figs. 2.13; 2.23-left; 4.25 and 4.29; Saladoid: Figs. 2.33; 4.27, 4.28, 4.29, 4.30; Huecoid: Figs. 4.26, 4.34, and 4.35.
Table 5.3b. The absolute dispersal of identified “dog” adornos across insular Caribbean and Venezuela.

As to Venezuela and the Leeward Islands, more than 40 percent of all Saladoid mammal adornos are identified as “dogs”. On Trinidad and Tobago and the Windward Islands resp. 11 percent and 7.1 percent of the mammal adornos portray a canine. “Dog” features appear in ceramic lugs (Mattioni & Bullen 1974: 163-4) as well as large, free-standing ceramic effigies (Ostapkowicz et al. 2011: 152; Roe 1995a).

Huecoid “dog” adornos occur at sites where almost every other zoomorph follows the Saladoid style. It has been argued that canine adornos display certain levels of “stylistic mélange” (Waldron 2010: 121). The diagnostic elements, which are the same for both the Saladoid and Huecoid ceramics are: a small, round head with a frontal point, as opposed to elongations observed with “opossums” and “anteaters” (see Figs. 5.4 and 5.5, p. 157-157). In the case of the Saladoid/Huecan “dog” adornos not only the face but the entire body of a canine has been modelled, allowing them to be easier identified (Waldron 2010: 121). However, adornos associated with the “Taíno” only display the heads and are identified by a combination of a relatively short and round snout with nostrils (Oudhuis 2008; Wauben 2018).

The Saladoid “canine” adornos are mainly positioned on the handles of the vessels. Dog bodies may even form the handles. A zoomorphic adorno faces either outwards, upwards or inwards protruding from the rim of the pot (Waldron 2010: 125). The Huecoid “canine” adornos are also located on the handles (typically placed on round or oblong vessels). They face inward, peering over the rim into the interior. Several adornos are placed not on the exterior, but on the inside of the vessel. They often possess a series of protuberances on their back. The legs are in a squatting position. On occasion, they tilt their heads and look upwards through ringed eyes (Waldron 2010: 125).
Fig. 5.4. Saladoid “dog” *adorno* from Vivé, Martinique; adapted from Waldron 2016: Fig. 4.15; length c.6.5 cm; drawing courtesy of J. Snoep.

Fig. 5.5. Saladoid “dog” (?) *adorno* from Pearls, Grenada; upper right: width c.6.0 cm and below c.8.1 cm; courtesy of N. and C. Willcox; photographs by C. Hofman and M. Hoogland.
5.2.4 “Dog” in Amerindian cosmologies

Dogs and people have interacted throughout history. The domestication of dogs dates to early prehistory. “Dogs” not only seem innate to an ambiguous trait comprising both familiarity and closeness, a pet and a guard (even in the afterlife) but also show the characteristics of a predator and of a “hunting dog”. These qualities have also been recognised in the narratives: (a) being a helpful companion and wife, (b) being a guardian of the souls of the deceased, and (c) expressing qualities as a hunting companion, with an excellent sense of smell and a killer instinct.

“Dogs” are associated with the land-layer as well as with the water-realm and the underworld. The latter two associate the “dog” with the realm of the dead. Encountered in villages and when hunting in the forest, this “animal” interconnects these two realms; it is both a “pet” (civilised) and predator (wild). As a trade item, “dogs” also create a bridge between villages (Plomp 2013: 61-2).

As a guardian of souls, “dogs” are also part of the underworld. They guard and protect the soul of their owners throughout dangerous travels across dark waters. As described in 5.2.2, we know of numerous dog burials, some of which are associated with human burials, while others are linked to their own burial location. “Dog” figurines have been discovered in human graves (Hackenberger 1991: 169; Hofman 1999 et al.; Laffoon et al. 2013; Plomp 2013; 1995a: 163; Walker 1985; Watters & Petersen 1995: 137; Wing 1991). These finds further support the conceptualisation of “dogs” as guardians of souls.

“Dogs” as pets or as hunting companions

The Amerindian peoples have great respect for their (hunting) dogs which they look after well. They do not share their dwellings with their “dogs” but do provide them with their own platforms so they do not have to sleep on the ground (Ahlbrinck 1956: 46). “Hunting dogs” are given names which among the Warao Amerindians are carefully chosen, inspired by creatures known to be skilled hunters, e.g., ants, bees, wasps, giant anteaters, sharks, etc. (Roth 2011 [1915]: 304 [266]).

“Hunting dogs” undergo the same rituals and ceremonies as the hunter does in order to assure success. For instance, a Roucouyennes (Wayana, Cariban) ritual prevents a “jaguar” from attacking the “dog” or the “dog” from being bitten by blood-sucking ticks. This tradition is observed among the Trio and the Wayana, both Cariban groups (Roth 2011 [1915]: 272 [234]). Throughout the Neotropics, a “broad variety of magic, rituals, and charms to enhance their hunting success is employed” (Koster 2009: 589). Recent ethnographical studies carried out among the Waiwai (Cariban) discuss similar ordeals (Howard 2011; Plomp 2013).

The “hunting dog” can be considered a provider of food, but is not hunted itself as a game animal in any tale. A small “dog” called “aon” consumed by “Taíno” (Arawakan) has
nonetheless been referred to, but the larger hunting dogs are never eaten (Roe 1995a; Shev 2018; Veloz Maggiolo 1997).

It has been argued that “dogs” form a means of mediation between humans and spirit masters (Brightman 2011: 141; Erikson 2000: 17). This view is based on the fact that the relation between spirit masters and their “animals/pets” is similar to the relation humans uphold with their “dogs” (Plomp 2013: 58; see also section below heading “Human-dog relation”).

Interestingly, women take care of the “dogs” (even “suckle them as babies”) and enjoy meals together (Howard 2001; Koster 2009: 589-90; Plomp 2013: 61). Men go out hunting with the “dogs” which are not often explicitly trained, but are rather “brought along” in the hope they will learn by means of imitation (Koster 2009: 589), as is also observed among the Corentine Arawak (Roth 2011 [1915]: 272-3 [234]).

Researchers noted a discrepancy in the way “hunting dogs” are treated. Dogs considered “good” hunters apparently receive better treatment than less successful ones (Koster 2009: 575; Plomp 2013: 62). Moreover, “dogs” survive by scavenging for left-overs and food scraps, even consuming human excrement on a regular basis (Koster 2009: 589-90).

With the Runa (Quichua, Ecuador), humans and “dogs” live in separate worlds. “Dogs” are often ignored and not always fed. On the other hand, the lives of the Runa and “dogs” are interwoven not only within the context of the village but also as a product of their interaction with the “biotic world” of the forest and the socio-political world beyond. We read: “Dogs have penetrated human social worlds in such an extent that they even exceed chimpanzees in human understanding. Becoming ‘human’ … is central to surviving as a dog in Ávila”, i.e., a village of the Runa (Kohn 2009: 9).

**Human-dog relation**

The entanglement of humans and “dogs” as described above could also be conceptualised by means of the scheme of familiarizing predation (Fausto 2008). Familiarizing predation is a mode of relationship in which predatory relations are converted into asymmetric relations of control and protection, which is conceptualised as a form of adoption. When converted, the Owner/Master (i.e., “magnified person”) holds not only control and prestige but also the

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100 Plomp (2013) presents various recent ethnographical studies on the use of pets by contemporary Amerindian communities (Waiwai, Trio, Wayana (Cariban)). As a case study, Howard’s research among the Waiwai, indicates that men train the hunting dogs to be good hunters (Plomp 2013, see also 5.2.2).

101 Koster (2009) based his statements on anthropological research carried out among the Mehinaku (Arawakan, Brazil), Juma/Kagwahiv (Tupi-Guarani, Brazil), Yaruruos (unclassified, Venezuela) Shipibo (Panoan, Peru), Cayapó (Gê, Brazil), and Macushi (Cariban, Guyana) communities.

102 Fausto in his (2008) article “Too many owners” discusses the indigenous Amazonian concept of mastery (owner/master versus adopted/pet/child). See also section 3.4.2 under the sub-heading Mastery or “ownership”.
responsibility to take care of the adopted (Fausto 2008: 330-1). From this point of view, this relation enables the eliciting of attention and generosity. Both the Owner and the adopted must, however, contain their own subjectivity (being merely an “incomplete filiation”). This implies not only that the adopted can never become entirely tamed and domesticated but also that the chance (fear) remains that the adopted might dominate the Owner.

The relations of mastery are “multiple and potentially infinite. Neither are they given once and for all” (Fausto 2008: 339). The Masters, or magnified persons, are constituted by incorporating relations with other “selves” (beings with a conscience and will). Imposing their own perspective, they are at constant risk of losing this viewpoint (Fausto 2008: 341).

This risk of losing one’s perspective also applies to the human-dog relation. Humans are the Masters, who are obliged to care and protect. We also live in fear that the subjectivity of the “dog” (its untamedness) may prevail over us. This could explain the ambiguity of this relationship and result in owners maltreating their “dogs” i.e., leaving the “dogs” to look after themselves. In certain narratives this phenomenon has been contextualised as the dog-woman whose “dog clothing” (i.e., physical attributes, or dogness) needs to be set alight and burned, allowing the protagonist to marry the “Dog” (see 5.2.1).

Presumably contributing to this ambivalence as to the human-dog relationship is the fact that “dogs” also act as the protectors of humans. In a number of cases, the “Dog” actors on occasion even protect or revenge their Masters. This is, in fact, the type of behaviour expressed by the Master/Owner and not the adopted. Moreover, this relation is not fixed, because you can never be sure who is the Master and who the adopted.

Taboos concerning “hunting dogs”
Menstruating women are prohibited to consume the meat of tapirs, turtles and fish, or any prey caught by “hunting dogs”. According to the Lokono (Arawak) who reside near the Pomeroon River (Guyana), pregnant women should not eat large game “animals”, nor any meat obtained by means of “hunting dogs” (Roth 2011 [1915]: 321 [280]). According to the Kaliña (Cariban), pregnant women may cause a “dog” to lose its hunting skills (de Goeje 1943: 30; Roth 2011 [1915]: 321 [280]). In order to ensure success hunters and their “dogs” are subjected to similar ordeals (Descola 1994: 232; Howard 2001: 242; Roth 1924: 178; Schwartz 1997: 47-9). These trials often involve food taboos. A Jibaro (Jivaroan) rite carried out by owners of a “dog” they wished to breed involves not only abstaining from certain kinds of “animals” and/or parts of “animals”, but also not looking at certain “animals” (e.g., “jaguars”, “snakes”). A large feast after which the “dog” is inaugurated as a “hunting dog” concludes this ceremony (Karsten 1935: 70).

As to food taboos for “dogs”: they must never feed on certain kinds of “animals” or they will lose their hunting skills (Ahlbrinck 1956: 46; Karsten 1935: 165; Roth 2011 [1915]: 292 [251]).
If any beaks of the *kinoros* bird (*Ara Canga*) are thrown into the river, “dogs” could be poisoned. The wings and the breast bones of specific “birds”, and other animals including those of *labba* and *acouri* are hung high above the ground in order to prevent “dogs” from eating them. If they do, “dogs” will never kill that particular animal again (Roth 2011 [1915]: 292).

“Dogs” are fed cassava* stuffed with a certain kind of ant (in Arawakan: *kudu-kudu-barilya*) which is roasted in order to turn them into excellent hunters (Roth 2011 [1915]: 275 [236]). For the Runa (Quichua, Ecuador), the soul of each “animal” is located in specific body parts and is transferable via the ingestion of these parts. “Dogs” are for instance fed the bile or sternum of an “agouti” in order to increase their awareness of the “agouti”, that is to enhance their ability to detect prey (Kohn 2007: 8). It is an Arawakan practice to tie a lazy “dog” near a nest of wasps or poisonous ants (de Goeje 1943: 58).

**Guardian of the soul**

The “dog” as guardian of the (underworld) realm of the dead is a theme encountered in stories across the globe and is thus also common to Amerindian narratives, especially in the region stretching from Mexico to Peru (Berezkin 2005; Schwartz 1997). Therefore, the fact that this theme rarely appears in the corpus of the present research is perhaps a surprise. For, only in Story no. 423 (Yukpa, Cariban) do we come across this theme and adjacent motifs. However, a reference does occur concerning a “Taíno” myth, which mentions a “canine” ancestral spirit (zemí) called Opiyel Guobirán: the guardian spirit of the dead (Keegan 2007: 38-9; Oliver 1998: 137-8; Shev 2018; Stevens-Arroyo 2006: 232, 237; Waldron 2010: 122). The absence of the “dog” as guardian of the soul in the Amazonian narratives has been described as a discrepancy (Benson 1991).

With regard to the “dog” as guardian of the souls, this animal was killed and buried along with its owner in order to protect him, not only to keep an eye on those who had killed him, but also to supply the deceased with food by hunting for them in the afterlife (Boomert 2000: 396; Cárdenas-Ruiz 1981; de la Borde 1886: 252; Plomp 2013; Roth 2011 [1915]: 95 [76]). The “dog” also serves as a guardian of the Path of the Souls (Ahlbrinck 1931: 206-8). Various Cariban indigenous groups believe that whenever an individual passes away, he or she is waited for by spirits. The Kaliñá refer to them as pero-tamula (lit.: “grandfather-dog”), the Taulipang as aimalága-pódole (lit.: “dog-chief”) and the Lokono (Arawakan) as pero-o yo (lit.: “mother-dog”) (de Goeje 1943: 12, see also note 14).

According to a Taulipang (Cariban) belief, the souls of the dead travel along the Seelenwege leading to the East (Koch-Grüngberg 1923: 173-4) where the Aimalága-pódole, the “Father of Dogs” (or pero-o yo, lit.: “mother-dog”), who owns many “dogs” resides (de Goeje 1943: 11, note 12; Koch-Grüngberg 1923: 173-4). Whenever a “dog” on Earth is mistreated and dies, its soul complains to the “Father of Dogs”. After the abuser has passed away and his soul travels on, the “Father of Dogs”, knowing what had transpired, orders other “dogs” to grab and kill
this soul. Whenever the soul of a good person appears, they let it through enabling it to enter a large house inhabited by many other canines (Koch-Grünberg 1923: 173-4). Analogous beliefs (including a “dog” as guardian of the Path of the Souls) have been encountered among the Rama, Chibchan speakers of Costa Rica (Koch-Grünberg 1923: 173, note 3).

The soul has to confess its evil deeds, is urged to meditate on its life on Earth and is assisted in order to purify itself (de Goeje 1943: 12, note 14). When passing by its “dog”-spirit, the soul is asked whether it ever has harmed a “dog”, man’s friend. If it has been good to a “dog”, the spirit wags its tail. Next, the mother-dog provides the deceased’s spirit with for instance cassiri*. Did it indeed ever harm a “dog”, the spirit of that canine will bring a charge against it. If the mother-dog founds it guilty, the spirit will receive nothing (de Goeje 1943: 11, note 12).

According to Kaliña (Cariban) beliefs, the deceased visits the “toad”-grandfather to confess whether it has killed any “toads” (i.e., has harmed anyone). After looking up the grandfather-dog in order to disclose whether he has killed “dogs” (i.e., had engaged in faithlessness, seduction, treachery, perfidy), the soul can travel further (de Goeje 1943: 84).

This reference to the “dog” as a guardian of the deceased does fit in well with the theme observed within the analysed narratives which refer to “Dogs” being treated well. To the Amerindian audience, it may even be clear that this theme is related to this particular role played by “dogs”.

**Shift in display and connotation between the South American mainland and the Lesser and Greater Antilles**

It has been argued that the increase of modifications of dog teeth during the Late Ceramic Age (600/800 CE-1492 CE) indicates a change in perception as well as an enhancing significance of these teeth as social valuables (Plomp 2013: 120, 128). The mobility of dogs may have decreased as has the mobility of individuals during this era. Any “dog” depictions or related forms of display, such as teeth, may well have now grown in importance (Plomp 2013: 130).

The Huecan “dog” ceramic imagery is considered the link between a contrasting discussion on canine images created in the earlier eastern and later northern culture. Waldron’s main argument for this conclusion is: the position of the Huecan “dog” adorno. He describes that Huecan adorno placement on the vessel is a deviation (from its Saladoid counterpart), because the Huecan “… canine bodies almost all double-back to peer over the pot rim into its interior”. Or the Huecan adornos are placed on the inside, just below the rim and therefore “… do not constitute the usual Antillean (i.e., Saladoid and Barancoid) nexus between the practical handle and the symbolic adorno” (Waldron 2010: 215). It is therefore concluded that Huecan “dog” adornos “… enter into a closer relation with the vessel contents: presumably water and
other liquids; and the meanings of those liquids”, and are thus more associated with water and the underworld (Waldron 2010: 125-6).

5.2.5 Concluding remarks
Dogs accompanied Paleo-Indians into the Americas but dogs were apparently not present within many Amazonian societies until the historic period. However, the imagery of “dogs” and burials have been identified as dating from the Early Ceramic Age in the Lower Orinoco, Guianas and the Caribbean islands.

Certain indications reveal that native dogs are less suited to hunt when compared with European dogs. Early signs of domestication have been reported. These local dog species are quite capable of digging up prey. They also could have assisted when hunting smaller prey (e.g., amphibians, birds, small mammals). In particular, references to “non-barking” dogs inhabiting the islands could indicate their significance as hunters. The hunting dog is one of the main sub-clusters identified in the “Dog” narratives (see 5.2.1). Historic sources, as well as archaeological evidence, confirm that canines were mobile, kept as pets and presumably traded.

Various “dog” portraits, worked teeth and crania and “dog” burials found on a number of islands demonstrate their significance to the Amerindians, which is also associated with the Saladoid style. Ethnographic accounts and the many narratives which include “Dog” personage(s) further support their relevance.

In addition to assisting when hunting, dogs were probably taken along on journeys as a means of protection. Although larger predators were absent in the islands, the “dogs” may have served as a safeguard during journeys to other islands, war, raids and possible encounters with significant other-than-human-persons* with whom the Amerindians share their place in the world. In addition, it has been mentioned that the “dog” acts as a keeper of the deceased, by leading and/or protecting its Master’s soul.

The Amerindians as Masters/Owners of “dogs” conceptualise a dualistic relation between peoples and their dogs in which both are entangled in familiarizing predation that could evolve in two directions. This relation involves prestige as well as the responsibility to take care of the adopted, whereby, however, only an incomplete affiliation is possible: “the adopted” is never completely tamed and/or domesticated, but has its own subjectivity. In the narratives, this ambiguity is presumably related to the various taboos entangled with “dogs” in order to maintain mastery/ownership.

As a guardian of the deceased, a “dog” is also linked to the realm of the underworld and to crossing water in order to reach this realm. Various “dog” burials support this association which has not been identified as a motif in the mainland narratives investigated during this
research. Motifs related to treating a “dog” properly could, however, indirectly refer to its role as guardian in the afterlife.

The conceptualisation of “dogs” may have shifted between the Early and Late Ceramic Age, for instance, when considering: (a) an increase in iconographical occurrences, and (b) a decreasing number of burial sites which could indicate that the “dog” display gained in importance. The quantity of “dog” adornos increased when communities during the Ceramic Age (Early 800/200 BCE-400/600 CE to Late 600/800 CE-1492 CE) migrated to the islands. The “dog” was primarily displayed on ceramics. On the other hand, the “Taíno” of the Greater Antilles portrayed “dogs” on precious stones, shells and wood to perhaps serve as items of worship.

Canine bone material and teeth may have been another means through which “dog” is displayed. Pendants made of dog teeth have been recovered from the mainland and from islands as were pendants consisting of other materials. Worked bone material also occurs. These teeth were probably worn to either protect or to serve as signals of male prowess and hunting skill.

Saladoid imagery and adornos were common, too. Especially the Huecoid ceramics greatly enhanced the quantity of identified “dog” iconography. The most recognisable features comprise a short, round head. The majority of the adornos even display entire bodies rendering them even more straightforward to identify. Positioned on the vessels, their bodies form the handle and tend to face outwards, upwards or inwards. In general, the Huecoid specimens face inwards.

“Dogs” were part of exchange networks not only within the insular Caribbean and beyond, but also with mainland regions. Portraits of “dogs” as well as “dogs” themselves may have been social valuables (Plomp 2013: 128-30, 133). The decline of the number of dog burial sites and adornos in spite of an increase in other forms of display (e.g., dog (teeth) pendants) could suggest their rise in status as a social asset. Moreover, these depictions may well have surpassed the importance of the (physical) “dogs” themselves.

The present research was launched in order to create a frame of reference to better interpret and understand the zoomorphic Saladoid imagery. How the Amerindians interpreted (or actually interrelated with) a specific bowl, amulet or archaeological find cannot be entirely established. The inherent dualism of the “dog” as a domestic animal and a predator presumably shaped how Amerindians interrelate with canines. “Dogs” are predators, hunters, food providers as well as guardians of the living and of the deceased. A dog’s bark informs the Amerindians, leads them to prey, and through life and afterlife. Pet “dogs” are faithful, but also ambiguous companions. The entire corpus of “Dog” narratives, imagery and the everyday interaction with canines may well reflect this interrelatedness.
As a frame of reference arising from the South American mainland, spreading throughout the Lesser and the Greater Antilles, from the Early to the Late Ceramic Age, the “dog” has ostensibly been a predator i.e., a hunter, a provider of food, a friend/pet, and a guide for souls.

5.3 “Bat”

The “bat” as a cultural sign* will now receive a broader contextualisation. Firstly its role in the narratives, then inatural behaviour and physical characteristics are described. Next, the focus will rest on “bat” imagery and on other occurrences in the Caribbean (and Venezuelan) archaeological records. Further information on the position of the “bat” in indigenous cosmologies, including ethnographic and ethnohistoric accounts, has been added (see 5.3.4).

5.3.1 “Bat” in the narratives

A man, a Trio takes shelter for the night in a house in an abandoned village. In that house, he finds graves and dead bodies. He couldn’t sleep. Spirits came, they were Bats. The Bats entered the house and went to the graves. The Trio blew on a piece of wood and threw it into the grave where all the Bats were. The Bats disappeared. The next day he went to another place, but that night the Bats attacked again. They followed the Trio but then he stabbed them, the spirits were dead and the Trio went home to tell about his ordeal. [Story no. 369 (Trio, Cariban); abridged with a shortened introduction]

“Bat” is indeed a common actor (or motif) in narratives. The present research includes 33 examples of these tales (see Appendix D, section D). They have been recorded for all the most prominent language families encountered in and outside the core area: Cariban, Gê, Guajiboan, Panoan, Tacanan, Ticuna, Tupian, and Warao (see Fig. 5.6).

The identified narrative functions of these stories are in line with the general pattern.103 The three most common functions are entitled: (a) validating the world, (b) informing, and (c) ensuring knowledge (see Appendix C, Table C-5 for a list of all narrative functions of the “Bat” narratives). The Amerindian audience is for instance reminded not go about at night. And, if you must stay out at night, at least build a suitable hiding place. Moreover, you are enjoined not to interact with, or to behave in a “Bat”-like manner, or else you will transform into one.

Overall the image of “Bat” as a sign*, when presented in the narratives, is very homogenous. The reason for this is: they display similar motifs as well as a spatial and temporal setting for the “Bat” personage.

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103 $\chi^2(4) = 7.07; \rho = 0.13$ (not significant). See Appendix D, section D. General remarks for a more elaborate discussion on narrative functions.
About actors, events and settings ("fabula")

The most prominent frame set for "Bats" comprises a malevolent "animal" (opponent) often explicitly described as a spirit, associated with the nocturnal hours. Within this category, the following sub-clusters have been established: (a) Devastating "Bat" (n=20), (b) "Bat" as a creature of the night and darkness (n=6), and (c) "Bat" and laughter (n=5). The sub-cluster (a) includes three related major themes: the evil "Bat" (n=10), the bloodsucking "Bat" (n=4) and the "Bat" as a spirit (n=8, see Appendix D, section D1).

Roles played by the "Bat"-actor demonstrate a significant variation. A "Bat" is more often ascribed the role of an opponent and object/goal, not so much that of a helper and sender. The other parts played are in line with the general pattern. Often the opponent, the "Bat" frequently becomes an object for people to hunt and kill in response. For instance, the "Bat" (spirits) is destroyed by flames when either its/their hiding places (e.g., a tree hollow) or habitat (cave) is set alight.

104 $\chi^2(5) = 13.78; p = 0.02$ (significant). See Appendix D, section D. Fabula for more detailed information on ascribed roles.
The dominant motifs are reflected in the sub-clusters. Their “Top 5” comprises: (a) the devastating “Bat” (n=20), (b) various transformations (n=8), (c) night/darkness (n=6), (d) the “animal’s” haunt (n=6), and (e) the bloodsucking “animal” (n=5) (see Appendix D, section D. Fabula).

A forest setting dominates the spatial setting in which the “Bat” is framed. Cave (i.e., part of the axis mundi, see 4.2.3) is the prevailing cosmic layer, followed by sky, land (specifically: mountain) and underworld. It is noteworthy that (hollow) trees are frequently mentioned as places where “Bat” hides. Both caves and (hollow) trees are indeed natural habitats for this nocturnal species. These spatial contexts are thus to be expected. Moreover, “Bat” repeatedly acts as an opponent in the sky setting, whereas generally speaking the sky world has a positive connotation.

As to the temporal setting, “Bat” is generally active at night. Only a single reference is found concerning a dusk setting. As bats become active when the sun sets, one would expect more references to that temporal context (see Appendix D, section D. Fabula for more details on the setting).

Devastating “Bat”
As a (malevolent) spirit or “animal”, “Bat” is portrayed as an opponent that injures, abducts (Story nos. 371, 410, 558; 2x Cariban, Gê) and kills (Story nos. 53, 145, 371, 505, 558: 2x Cariban, Tupian, Warao, Gê) Amerindians during the night. Other narratives depict “Bat” as a vicious bloodsucker against which you should protect yourself by means of adequate shelter. Bloodsucking is associated with the “Bat”, and even serves as an analogy: sucking blood is indeed being a “Bat”. Or, “Bat” as a malevolent nocturnal spirit causes diseases and death. In other cases, “Bat” is linked to death, as “Bat” spirits visit burial grounds in order to feed on corpses. In Story no. 369 (Trio, Cariban), “Bat” wears human fingers as adornments attached to its wrist.105

In eight narratives, “Bats” are directly related to spirits and are indeed described as spirits (Story nos. 9, 53, 145, 204, 369-70, 374, 505; Island Carib of Dominica (Arawakan), 4x Trio (Cariban), Munduruku (Tupian), Gê, and Warao). An analogy between fruit-eating bats and ancestral spirits occurs in “Taíno” myths written down by Fr. Pané during his travels with Columbus (Pané 1999 [1498]; see 5.3.4). In certain instances, “Bat” is associated with other “animal” spirits. Interesting is the hierarchy among these (“animal”) spirits as dealt with in a Trio narrative (Story no. 370; Cariban); “Bat” (matitikiri, Trio Cariban) officiates as the

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105 All narratives in this sub-cluster are numbered: 9, 53, 145, 155, 204, 210-11, 369-72, 374, 410, 435, 450, 505, 558, 612, and 703 (Arawakan (i.e., Lokono, Island Carib), Cariban (i.e., Trio, Makushi, Yukpa), Gê (i.e., Apinayé, Cayapó-Kubenkranken, Cayapó-Gorotire), Guajiboan (i.e., Cuiva), Panoan (i.e., Cashinahua), Tupian (i.e., Munduruku), and Warao).
President of Spirits and gives orders to “Nightjar” (*mirokoko*), who is a minister (see also under the heading *With whom is “Bat” associated*).

“Bat” as a creature of night and darkness

Narratives featuring “Bat” as a nocturnal creature attest the interrelatedness between “Bat” and the night and darkness. This fact has already become apparent through the predominance of the night-time as a temporal setting for all “Bat” narratives. This sub-cluster also encompasses motifs concerning “the origin of the night” and “primeval darkness” (see Story nos. 116, 146, 158; Bakairí (Cariban), Tembé, Munduruku (Tupian)), as well as motifs linking the night to behavioural aspects of “Bats” (e.g., “Bat” heralds the night; “Bat” is only active at night; Story nos. 158 and 212: Tembé (Tupian), Tacanan). As these creatures are nocturnal and become active at dusk, this association is rooted in natural behaviour (see Appendix D, section D2 and 5.3.2).

It should be noted that all stories included in the sub-cluster entitled “Bat as a creature of the night and darkness” stem from outside the core area. However, these motifs likely have been familiar to the Amerindians residing in the core area, because these motifs are so widely spread, and because of the natural behaviour of this species, “bat” is likely to be associated with the night. This assumption is strengthened by the fact that in the core area, too, the “Bat” is linked to the night by means of its temporal setting. Interestingly, in the cluster “Bat as a creature of night and darkness”, its ascribed roles are not dominated by an opponent, but indeed attributed to the role of helper: once as an advisor (i.e., disclosing where the protagonists could sleep) and once as a guide to lead others out of the impenetrable darkness.

“Bat” and laughter

Yet another recurrent motif in the corpus of “Bat” narratives is “laughter” (see Story nos. 211, 212, 374, 559; 2x Cayapó-Gorotire (Gê), Tacana (Tacanan), Trio (Cariban)). “Bat” is laughed at (with a negative outcome for the Amerindians), “Bat” laughs (with a negative result for itself), and “Bat” causes the Amerindians to laugh (with negative results for both). Laughing (often considered taboo) is a frequent motif in Amerindian narratives. Uncontrolled laughter is considered effeminate (Lévi-Strauss 1983: 122). Remarkably it is repeatedly encountered in “Bat” narratives. This association could be rooted in natural behaviour (i.e., the cackling sound a larger species produces, see 5.3.2). Again, in this cluster, “Bat” is not portrayed as a dangerous opponent although the subsequent laughter does have a negative outcome. Story no. 211 (Cayapó-Gorotire, Gê) explicitly states that “Bat” means no harm when caressing the Amerindian. This cluster also reveals a discrepancy in spatial setting. For, in 75 percent of the cases “Bat” (also) acts within a village setting, whereas overall the forest setting dominates in the “Bat” stories (see also Appendix D, section D3).

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106 All narratives with “Bat” as a nocturnal creature are numbered: 116, 146, 158, 212, 516, 558 (Cariban (i.e., Bakairi), Tupian (i.e., Munduruku, Tembé), Tacanan (i.e., Tacana); Gê (i.e., unspecified, Apinayé)).
Cultivated plants/tobacco

The “fruit-eating bat” has been identified in “Taino” folklore (see 5.3.4), whereas associations with “Bats” and plants or with fruits appear to be rare in mainland narratives. However, the ecological role of bats in fertilising plants and dispersing seeds could also have been witnessed by mainland Amerindians. Nevertheless, only four narratives interrelate “Bats” with certain plants (see Story nos. 9, 181, 204, 452; Island Carib (Arawakan), Cashinahua (Panoan), Bororo, (Gê) and Warao.

In Story no. 452 (Warao), “Bat” and cultivated plants are the result of a single transformation whereby the ashes of the “Howler monkey’s” wife and a paralysed servant transform into (presumably nocturnal) “Black birds”, “Bats”, “Lizards” and cultivated plants. In Story no. 181, an elderly rat decides to transmute into a “Bat” because it, too, wishes to live at night and eat ripe bananas or papayas. However, it is also explained that these “Bats” bite us humans.

In Story nos. 9 and 204 (Arawakan, Gê), an association between “Bat”(-spirits) and tobacco is established. In Story no. 204 (Bororo, Gê), the (spirit) Master of Tobacco appears in the form of a “vampire” to teach Amerindians how to smoke tobacco correctly. In Story no. 9 (Island Carib, Arawakan), a woman visits the cave home to a zombie to collect a charm. If one comes across this zombie somebody will die soon. She wishes to apply this charm in order to give commands to her husband, who mistreats her. When visiting this place you should take with you a white rooster or at least some powdered tobacco to present to the “Spirit of the Rock”. This narrative apparently refers to a “Bat”-spirit. However, as tobacco is in general considered the food of spirits, this supposed association is very weak.

On the basis of the four stories just mentioned, any suggested link between “Bats” and cultivated plants/tobacco is not very strong, because these stories (Story nos. 9, 181, 204, 452) are not very consistent. However, at least three of the four cases directly interconnect “Bat” to respectively cultivated plants and tobacco and they stem from various (regionally dispersed) language families (see also 5.3.4).

With whom is “Bat” associated?

When looking into the issue with whom is “Bat” associated in the studied corpus, the following “animals” occur in multiple narratives: “Birds” (in general), “Lizards”, and “Vultures”. Other “animals” (in this case “Owl” and “Fish”) are also of interest as they interact directly, or are directly associated, with “Bats” (see also Appendix D, section D1. Fabula).

“Birds”

In Story no. 146 (Munduruku, Tupian), humans originated from the underworld. The unattractive, lethargic humans turned into “Birds”, “Bats”, “Pigs” and “Butterflies”. In Story no. 452 (Warao), the ashes of a “Howler monkey’s” wife and of a paralysed servant transformed into “Black birds”, “Bats”, “Lizards” and cultivated plants. In Story no. 9 (Island
Carib, Arawakan), a husband changes into a “Bird” to leave behind his wife who no longer needed him. Prior hereto his wife had visited the (“Bat”) spirit in order to gain control over her husband who mistreated her.

In two instances “Birds” and “Bats” (indirectly) oppose each other. In Story no. 145 (Munduruku, Tupian), “Birds” inform the protagonist how to escape from the “Bloodsucking bat”. In Story no. 158 (Tembé, Tupian), “Birds” asked “Bat” to help them to raise the sky, but “Bat” refuses, resulting in it having to sleep upside down. Although “Bats” and “Birds” co-occur on seven occasions, they apparently do not interact directly. “Bird” is, in general, a recurrent zoomorphic actor, or motif, within narratives (see 6.1).

“Vulture”

“Bat” and “Vulture” feature together in four narratives. In Story no. 612 (Cuiva, Guajiboan), “Bat” and “Vulture” play the same role: they attack the returning protagonist, who had visited the upper world. Following “Heron’s” advice, the protagonist paints his face and is thus protected against his attackers. In Story no. 116 (Bakairi, Cariban), the Twin Heroes take the Sun from “Vulture” and subsequently had difficulties sleeping. A “Bat”-wife suggested to them to fetch sleep from “Lizard”. Story no. 115 (Arawakan) consists of two episodes: one concerns the dangers of a “Bloodsucking bat” and the other a “Vulture” that teaches Amerindians how to paddle. Forming completely separate episodes, there does not seem to be any direct relatedness between the two.

Story no. 171 (Cashinahua, Panoan) concerns a chopped-off head stuck onto a stick. This head mentions it could transform into “Scorpion”/“Bat” that would bite, so that people would have to kill it. At first, people try to carry the head by putting it in a basket, but it keeps falling out. As this is regarded as a bad omen, they leave the head behind. Having set off in pursuit, it persuades the people to give it a strand of yarn. Heavenly “Vultures” next help this head by taking the yarn and travelling with it to Heaven where the “Vulture” ties the yarn to the head, then puts the other end in its mouth to become the Moon.

In sum, the narratives differ greatly. The “Bat” and “Vulture” interact directly in only one case. The sky world ostensibly links “Bats” and “Vultures” which both interact or feature within this particular context.

“Lizard”

Story nos. 116, 452, 505, 653 feature “Bat” and “Lizard”. Two of them are related to transformations of which Story no. 452 (Warao) is mentioned above. In Story no. 505 (Warao) a girl “escapes” from evil spirits by turning into a “Lizard”. Later on in this tale, the malevolent spirits turn into “Vampire bats”.

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In Story no. 116 (Bakairí, Cariban), a “Bat” wife advises Twin protagonists to fetch sleep from “Lizard” after they had taken the Sun from “Vulture”. In Story no. 653 (Sikuani, Guajiboan), both “Lizard” and “Bat” play a role whereby “animals” try to cut down the magic, fruit-bearing tree. When “Lizard” crawls into the anus of the Master of Axes, this results in retrieving the axes and other tools. After death and disease had arrived on Earth, “animals” wish to enter the upper world. A “Vampire bat” prevents other “animals” from doing so.

The only direct association here is: (a) they are the outcome of the same transformation, and (b) a “Bat” wife directs the protagonist towards “Lizard” in order to fetch sleep. Due to a lack of coherence, it is not clear if “Bats” and “Lizards” are truly interrelated motifs in the narratological context.

“Owl” and “Fish”
As to the analysis of the clusters, two others are worthy of mentioning: the “Owl” (see Story nos. 158 and 372), and “(Cat)Fish” (see Story nos. 115, 703, 204). The fact both fly at night links “Owl” and “Bat”. In Story no. 372 (Warao), they are explicitly related (as brothers-in-law). Together they set off at night in order to scare people at which “Owl” is more successful. He warns “Bat” not to try to scare people by itself. Having ignored this warning, “Bat” is killed by the Amerindians after which “Owl” brings “Bat” back to life. In Story no. 158 (Tembé, Tupian), the sounds of “Bats” and “Owls” among other creatures audible from inside a pot inform the protagonist it contains the night. Various authors have written extensively on this shared connotation as being embodied spirits (e.g., García Arévalo 1988; Roth 2011; Waldron 2010). See also 8.3.3 (under the sub-heading Embodied identities) for a discussion on their shared attributes and association.

“Bat” co-occurs with “Fish” in three cases, but only in one are “Fish” and “Bat” related. In the Story nos. 115 and 703 (Arawakan), Amerindians set off on a “quest” travelling to various places. In a certain episode, they visit “Fish” nation and, in another instance, the Land of “Bats”. More interestingly, in Story no. 204, Amerindians find tobacco in the stomach of a “Catfish”. They first smoke it incorrectly. Next, the spirit of tobacco appears to them in the form of a Vampire and teaches them how to smoke.

Fellow spirits
Certain “animals” are evidently interchangeable with the “Bat”. They, too, are malevolent (nocturnal) spirits. This phenomenon may concern the “Nightjar” (see Story no. 370; Trio, Cariban) and the “Opossum” (see Story no. 53; Trio, Cariban), bearing in mind the discrepancy whereby both “Nightjar” and “Bat” are described as “night spirits” and act as companions, side by side (as is the case with the aforementioned interaction between “Owl” and “Bat”). Here the “Bat” (officiating as president) instructs all spirits not to harm the elder woman. “Opossum” is merely mentioned thus: “Everywhere he [the Amerindian protagonist] went he found the same situation ... sick people, sick people everywhere. And also all sorts of spirits,
opossums, bats. He burnt them all to death” (Cited from Story no. 53; Trio, Cariban). In Story no. 505 (Warao), malevolent “Bat” spirits hide inside a hollow tree in an attempt to fool pursuers by stating they are a “Grandfather of Howler monkeys”.

The “Bat” personage is apparently first and foremost associated with “animals” that share its connotations as a nocturnal creature and as an embodiment of spirits such as “Owl”, “Opossum” and “Nightjar”. As a “flying opponent”, the “Bat”-personage also co-acts with “Vulture”. Only a single narrative links tobacco to both “Fish” and “Bat”.

**Characterization and duration (“Story”)**

Although “Bat” is frequently indirectly characterized, a number of specific details, both physical as behavioural, concerning “Bat” have been described directly. These explicit attributes are therefore highly likely also to be present in other forms of display of “Bat” as a sign*. For the aspects encountered in the various narratives, see Table 5.4.

Interestingly, a direct description in Story no. 369 (Trio; Cariban) mentions that “Bat” wears human fingers as a wrist adornment (see Appendix D, section D. Story-layer for more details on characterization).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physical</th>
<th>Behaviour</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Bat) wings</td>
<td>Sucks on clothes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feet</td>
<td>Only flies by night</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long pointing nails</td>
<td>Active at night; eats fresh bananas and papayas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nose patches</td>
<td>Sleeps upside down (see Fig. 5.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enormous ears (vampire bat)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long snout for sucking blood</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The “Bat” narratives number 26 records on duration which is in line with the general pattern set in Chapter 4.\textsuperscript{107} Story nos. 53 and 171 are considered as being in the middle range and cover between 6 and 11 pages. Story no. 65 covers 14 pages. All the remaining narratives (88 percent) are short. Studying the narrated time, nine (n=16; 62 percent) cases are short (continuing for up to several days) whereas all the others have a narrated time of either weeks (n=1), months (n=4) or years (n=5).

5.3.2 Bat in nature
During the Pleistocene, bat species populate the islands after departing from Central and South America. Since then they have evolved to become truly occupants of the Caribbean inhabiting specific niches (Rodrígues-Dorán & Kunz 2001: 355-9).

\textsuperscript{107} \chi^2(2) = 3.92; \rho = 0.14 (not significant). As a result of the low quantity of records, one of the expected values is below 5, rendering this test less accurate. Nevertheless, 14 percent is far from the critical 5 percent required when establishing any significance.
Caribbean bats mainly feed on pollen, nectar and fruit. In addition to these nectarivorous and/or frugivorous species, others are omnivorous, eating either animals and fruit or insects and fruit, in varied nightly or seasonal combinations.

Bloodsucking (sanguivorous, see Fig. 5.8) bats are native to the mainland and are almost absent in the islands. The three species comprise: the common vampire bat (*Desmodus rotundus*), the white-winged vampire bat (*Diaemus youngi*) and the hairy-legged vampire bat (*Diphylla ecaudata*). The first two species are also native to Trinidad (Barquez et al. 2015a). The fossil remains of a bloodsucking bat have been discovered on Cuba. The extinction of this species (*Desmodus puntajudensis*) is thought to have taken place during the Holocene (c.11,700 BCE) (Suárez 2005: 766). New evidence has revealed the extinction of the latter species occurred far more recently, as it was an inhabitant of post-Columbian Cuba, between 1950 and 1990 CE (Orihuela 2010).

The habitat of bat family Noctilionidae (aka bulldog bats or fisherman bats) is found near bodies of water, situated between Mexico and Argentina, in the Caribbean islands in both the Lesser and the Greater Antilles. The lesser bulldog bat (*Noctilio albiventris*) is mainly insectivorous. The greater bulldog bat (*Noctilio leporinus*) also feeds on fish (Barquez et al. 2015b; Hood & Jones 1984). When searching for prey, these bats will fly high in the air in circles and may also hunt by dragging their feet across the surface of the water.

**Physical and behavioural attributes**

Bats are mammals that can fly by flapping their spread-out digits, which are covered with a membrane (patagium). Their wings are much thinner and consist of more bones when compared with the wings of birds, allowing more accurate manoeuvres as well as a flight with more lift and less drag. These delicate wing membranes tear easily. However, the tissue of this membrane skin can regenerate, enabling small injuries to heal quickly. The Amerindians may well have observed this rejuvenating ability.

Further “typical” physical bat traits are of course species specific. The body and on occasion the heads of bats are covered with fur, most commonly coloured brownish orange. Accommodated with legs, certain species can stand upright. All bats have a thumb, which sits along the propatagium: the leading edge of the patagium. Their agile fingers are suited for climbing, food handling and fighting.

Several physical features are potentially ideal for identifying certain species. For instance: large, round or pointed ears and an up-turned nose leaf which enables the *adornos* to be
recognised as the fruit-eating bat (*Phyllostomidae* sp.) (Petitjean Roget 1978: 45). Several species have no (external) tail, presenting yet another means of identification.

Bats perform a crucial role in maintaining a healthy ecology, as they not only pollinate flowers but also disperse seeds contained within fruits. Bats prefer fleshy, sweet fruits which they remove from trees with their teeth. They take a piece of fruit elsewhere before consuming it, then suck out the juice and drop the seeds and pulp on the ground, hereby contributing to the dispersal of seeds. Bats also feed on insect pests. As the bloodsucking species are not native to the Caribbean islands where the fruit-eating species dominate, their specific ecological role has presumably become more relevant. It may be added here that more than 150 plant species depend on bats to reproduce.

Bats sleep during the daytime hanging upside down in (hollow) trees, caves and houses. These locations are the most prominent spatial settings to be associated with the bats encountered in narratives. These spaces are mainly inhabited in groups, but certain species are more solitary. Bats appear at dusk in order to hunt during the night, navigating by echolocation. They rarely fly when it rains, as their echolocation is now interfered rendering the finding of their food impossible. Turning up at sunset they are true herald of the night, a dominant link within the narratives, too.

Considered cosmological gateways to other cosmic layers, caves are laden with connotations (see 5.3.4). Bats are also known to form colonies in the hollow culturally significant silk-cotton tree (*Ceiba pentandra*). Bats are frequently observed at or near burial sites, and also enter the domestic sphere when hanging upside down inside houses.

In several tales, the bat is associated with laughter, presumably, the result of the (natural) sounds they produce: a chattering sound in flight and a cackling sound when hanging in trees or in caves. They can also produce high-pitched, squeaking sounds when in distress. Studies have shown that bats can identify fellow individuals by means of signatures of communication (Melendez & Feng 2010).

In sum, the various behavioural and physical characteristics of bats contribute to their being considered a “symbolic” sign*. As a flying, but non-feathered animal (or “bird”), residing in caves and (hollow) trees, appearing at sunset and hunting during the night, they follow a wide range of feeding habits ranging from fructivorous, insectivorous, carnivorous and even to bloodsucking.

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108 For more information on the importance of the Silk cotton tree (*Ceiba pentandra*) with regard to the Amerindian cosmovision as a true spirit tree, see Boomert 2000: 446 and Saunders 2005: 229, 289.
The bat in relation to other animals/birds

Carnivorous bats hunt for insects, fish, frogs, small birds, small mammals (including other bat species), amphibians and reptiles. The common bloodsucking bat (*Desmodus rotundus*) feeds on the blood of mammals, whereas the hairy-legged vampire bat (*Diphylla ecaudata*) and the white-winged vampire bat (*Diaemus youngi*) feed on the blood of birds. The bulldog bat or fisherman bat (Noctilionidae) preys on small fish.

Bats are in turn predated on by hawks, falcons, owls and even spiders. Predatory, as well as nocturnal birds, are known to hunt and feed on bats. The fact that birds are both prey and predator to bats may have contributed to their co-occurring in a number of tales.

The bat is also related to nocturnal birds, in particular, the owl and the nightjar. Although bats and nocturnal birds share a temporal habitat as night creatures, in the analysed narratives they are also repeatedly correlated by means of the sounds they produce (see 5.3.1). Although bats, according to Western taxonomy, are classified as mammals, various indigenous groups across the globe place bats into a category of winged animals that includes birds (Forth 2009). For the Amerindians of the study region, bats are apparently categorised together with nocturnal birds, especially owls and oilbirds. Bats are deemed “anti-birds” inhabiting the reversed, nocturnal world (García Arévalo 1997; Waldron 2010: 68, 162-6).

5.3.3 The iconography of “bat”

In addition to the numerous “bat”-shaped adornos encountered on (Saladoid) ceramics, “bat” imagery also occurs among zoomorphic pendants found in the islands. Saladoid “bat” pendants have been recovered from Huecan deposits located at the important archaeological site named Sorcé located on the south side of Vieques near the town of Esparanza, Puerto Rico (Boomert 2000). These pendants were made of mother-of-pearl and wood, perhaps even fossil wood. Also, at Sorcé, a Saladoid locus, two “bat”-shaped pendants were found (Boomert 2000: 414, note 45).

The basketry designs of the Yekuana (Carib) also include stylised “bat” designs, called Dede (Guss 1989: 116). The bodies and heads of “bats” are depicted in the form of two diamonds with the wings spread out resembling a V. De Goeje identified similar designs as “swallows, bats or dancer” (Guss 1989: 116).

“Bat” adornos

The “bat” imagery is a “pan-Saladoid phenomenon” which has been discovered on sites located at the Lower Orinoco up to the Leeward Islands. It originates from Early to Late
Saladoid contexts (Waldron 2010: 71), but is also known from Late Ceramic Age contexts. We read: “... bat heads [that] were featured as adornos on the rims of various containers. Their wings also were rendered on vessel walls and their bodies were sometimes incorporated into the bodies of pedestals, bowls and dishes with the handles of the vessels often resolving into the head of the animal” (see Figs. 5.9-5.11, pp. 178-180; Waldron 2010: 71, 416).

As Table 5.5a/b indicates, the majority of the identified Saladoid “bat” adornos hail from the Windward Islands. Waldron identifies them as relatively the most dominant depicted mammals (2010, 2016). As to the Venezuelan mammal adornos, 9.1 percent has been identified as “bat”, see Table 5.5a.

“Bat” adornos appear in various forms and styles, from the naturalistic to the more stylised. Many anthropomorphized “bats” have been identified. An increase of these “were-bat” depictions dating from the Palo Seco (Saladoid) Phase (on Trinidad) results in the conclusion that this “might well have marked the emergence of an ancestral bat cult in Saladoid religion” (Waldron 2010: 92). This “were-bat” could also portray the goeiza, the former human soul of the ancestors, at the very moment of transformation into the mutable afterlife opia (Waldron 2010: 79-80).

Table 5.5a. Identified “bat” adornos and their dispersal.
The identifiable traits of “bat” imagery comprise its (usually round) head, its nose and slit (turned-up) snout, its ears either pinched to a point or otherwise modelled, often in a more anthropomorphized fashion. Its wings may be abstractified resulting in more geometrical motifs, see Figs. 5.9 and 5.10 in which these features are marked and compared to the leaf-nosed bat, family Chiroptera (Gijtenbeek 2009; Oudhuis 2008: 52-3, 65, 81-2; Waldron 2010: 70-4). The abstractification of bat wings was further geometricized into triple triangular or zigzag shapes as encountered on the “Taíno” pottery of the Greater Antilles (García Arévalo 1997: 115; Waldron 2010: 72). The identifiable features are also the physical attributes described in the narratives (see 5.3.1 under the sub-heading Characterization).

Fig. 5.9. Two Saladoid “bat” adornos from Pearls, Grenada; left: width c.7.3 cm and middle c.9.1 cm; courtesy of N. and C. Willcox; photographs by C. Hofman and M. Hoogland.

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110 See Waldron 2010: 72-3 for a more elaborate discussion on bat wing “symbolism” and on how the “Taíno” V-shaped (wing) motifs have been traced back to the Saladoid and Barrancoid assemblages.
Numerous “Táinó” narratives first recorded by Fr. Pané (1999 [1498]) were used to conceptualise the (zoomorphic) images and have served identifying and examining the “bat” and “(tree) frog” (Petitjean Roget 1975, 1976a, 1976b, 1978, 1997). In the primeval world, as encountered in narratives, women were “frogs” and men were “bats”. The depicted “frog” is, in reality, Atabeira (Táinó, Arawak), the primeval mother of humankind. The “bat” depicts “the hero who brings to mankind the cultural goods” (Petitjean Roget 1997: 105, 108). Therefore, the “frog” is always positioned above the “bat” and portrayed by means of button-on-bar motifs.

In addition to an analysis of the distribution, identification and alteration through time, the potential ritual contexts and functions of any “bat”-adorned pottery has been addressed (Waldron 2010: 87-90). Its shape, size and apparent utilisation vary but its function (or what it had contained) is difficult, if not impossible to prove.

These vessels, decorated with “bat” motifs, could have contained (tobacco or cassava*) water and served a ritual purpose (e.g., cleaning zemis*, or as a bridge between behique* and spirits). Both fresh and salt (sea) water are associated with the ancestral world (perhaps reflecting the Realm of the Dead). Certain “bat” vessels have been found in funerary contexts as well as in relation to ancestral gifts and offerings. It has been suggested they may have contained fruit (e.g., fresh guava, papaya or even ripe hog-plums (Spondias mombin)).

We read: “...it [pottery adorned with “Bat”-adornos] would be suitable as: a funerary offering for its evocation of the dead; a part of a ritual specialist’s kit used to contain shamanic potions or other infusions used to commune with the spirit realm; or a rarely used heirloom commemorating an ancestor in remembrance rituals” (Waldron 2010: 89).
Fig. 5.11. Three Saladoid “bat” adornos from Pearls, Grenada; left: width c.5.2 cm, middle c.6.2 cm and right c.6.9 cm. Courtesy of N. and C. Willcox; photographs by C. Hofman and M. Hoogland; left: first published in Keegan & Hofman 2017: 60, Fig. 3.3.

5.3.4 “Bat” in Amerindian cosmologies

“Bat” is depicted either as a devastating spirit or a demon, associated with the night and with laughter in a number of narratives included in the present study. The “Bat” personage is also associated with motifs of transformation and to the souls of the deceased as well as to cultivated plants and in particular to tobacco. The allocation of “Bat” in Amerindian cosmologies is further explored below.

“Bats” take in a varied liminal position, making them a likely natural symbol* of cultural and spiritual significance. “Bats” are for instance related to the axis mundi, the connection between the Sky and the Earth, as they inhabit caves and hollow trees, and frequent burial grounds. Moreover, “Bats” are associated with the night and twilight, the times they are active. Equally relevant is the fact that bats can be spotted hanging down from the roofs of houses, and as a “wild animal”, thus walk around in the village and not in the forest (Forth 2009: 153).

The fact that bats are furry, winged and flying “animals” has perhaps caused them to be placed in, or between, categories comprising flying, feathered birds and furry land animals. The feeding habits of bats may well have puzzled the Amerindian observers, too. An order rarely includes carnivorous, sanguivorous, insectivorous, nectarivorous and frugivorous species. One may assume that Amerindians would have not only identified but also differentiated between these species. Even in the islands, one must have observed that, in addition to feeding on plants and insects, certain bats patrol the waters in order to catch fish (see 5.3.2).

As bats live in caves and hollow trees, they apparently travel between various cosmic layers hereby perhaps contributing to their qualification as the embodiment of ancestral spirits. Based on “Taino” lore, we know that caves are considered a sacred place associated with the origin of humankind (Arrom & García Arévalo 1988; García Arévalo 1997; Pané 1999 [1498]: 6; Waldron 2010: 73-4). In addition to being ancestral spirits, “bats” are also presumably powerful spirit/shaman assistants, considering this same quality of being capable of transcending into different worlds.
As inhabitants of the *axis mundi*, “bats” may well also act as protectors of the various realms. For instance, in Story no. 653 (Guajiboan, Sikuani) a “Vampire bat” prevents others from entering the upper world. In Story no. 53 (Cariban, Trio), “Bat” spirits reside in a village built beyond the location where the river enters the mountains. The entrance of this village consists of a pool which thus functions as a gateway (see Appendix D, section D1).

Various narratives contain warnings not to go out at night or else a malevolent spirit (“bat”) might cause harm. Amerindians should hunt only during the daytime because “Bats” and other nocturnal creatures (including the significant other-than-human persons*) do so at night. The “becoming prey” of nocturnal hunters must be avoided (see 3.4.2).

**Devastating “bat”**

The association of a “bat” being devastating is presumably linked to the carnivorous and bloodsucking species, which are primarily native to the South American mainland. When migrating from the mainland to the islands, the peoples of the Ceramic Age took their traditions with them. These bat species were/are present in Trinidad and Tobago, and perhaps in Cuba, too. The “bat” as a malevolent bloodsucker, kidnapper and/or killer may have persisted a certain period of time, perhaps fuelled by the presence of fish-eating bats in these islands.

A 19th-century Guyanese Arawak belief considers observing bat droppings on your path as an evil omen (Waldron 2010: 323). Although in the 706 narratives, motifs of “bat” as evil omens have not been identified, the majority of encounters with “bat”/“bat”-spirits involve ill-fated events such as abduction or death. Therefore, coming across a “bat” can be indeed quite ominous (see 5.3.1 under the heading **Devastating “Bat”**). Especially the sounds “Nocturnal birds” and “Bats” repeatedly produce serve as a catalyst in the stories as unfortunate events unfold after the protagonist hears these sounds (e.g., death, disease, danger).

Thanks to “Taíno” myths and historical observations supported by information which the Island Carib of Dominica present, we know that the connotations as to “bats” did transmute through time into a more profound association not only with the Afterlife and ancestral spirits but also with fertility and/or cultivated plants and tobacco (Boomert 2000; García Arévalo 1997; Waldron 2010). As associations with tobacco, cultivated plants, spirits, death, and the deceased are also present in the mainland lore, I consider this to be a more gradual transformation and not an abrupt break in tradition and conceptualisation, but a significant transmutation nonetheless.

**“Bat” as an ancestor spirit**

One “Taíno” myth does not explicitly mention “bats”, but it has been argued that in fact the term *opías* (meaning souls) could be translated as “bats” (García Arévalo 1988: 51). Apparently a description of the fruit-eating bat (*Artibeus jamaicensis*), we read: “They say that during the day they hide away, and at night they go out to walk about, and they eat a certain
fruit that is called guayaba, which has the flavour of [quince]...” (Pané 1999 [1498]: 18). The “Taino” peoples believe that the souls of the dead could take an “animal” or human form and go out at night. In this “Taino” myth, the opías* transform into “bats”, after crossing the darkening waters in order to enter the world of the living (Garcia 1997: 112; Pané 1999 [1498]: 18; Waldron 2010: 73-4).

Interestingly, “bats” and opías* both feed on fruits during the nocturnal hours. They are therefore considered mythically and visually synonymous (Garcia 1997: 115; Waldron 2010: 75). It has been stated that: “We can assume that the feeding habits of endemic fruit bats such as Antillean and Jamaican fruit bats (Brachyphylla cavernarum and Artibeus jamaicensis, respectively) were the inspiration for the dietary preference of the opía in the legend” (García 1997: 115).

Ethnographical accounts from the mainland could indeed shed light on the related association between ancestors, “bats” and tobacco. It is suggested that “bats” and tobacco are intertwined because tobacco plants grow well on abandoned house sites and burial grounds frequented by bats (Wilbert 1987: 151). In Guyana, the Carib and Arawak believe that the tobacco plant was once obtained from ancestral graves (Wilbert 1987: 121). However, as it is not (often) explicitly mentioned in the narratives, this “bat”-tobacco(-spirit) association could also have been transmitted implicitly not only because it was common knowledge but also simply because tobacco and “bats” are interrelated in the ancestral/spiritual realm.

Another reference to “bat”-spirits includes a description of an Island Carib (Arawak) belief that: (a) “bats”, referred to as boulliri, which flutter around their homes at night, are spirits (zemí/zemeens*), (b) they protect people, and (c) those who kill these spirits will fall ill (de la Borde 1992: 147).

The numerous anthropomorphised “bat” adornos yet further indicate a link between “bats”, humans and the spiritual world (Waldron 2010: 73-8, 78-80). Their anthropomorphised depiction underlines this tripartite entanglement.

5.3.5 Concluding remarks

Various species of insectivorous and fish-eating bats populate the mainland of South America as well as the Caribbean islands. The sanguivorous (bloodsucking) and carnivorous bats are dominantly absent in the islands.

The majority of Caribbean bat species feed on pollen, nectar and fruit hereby playing an important role in local ecologies, when pollinating flowers or dispersing seeds and fruits. This fact may well have contributed to obtaining more positive connotations as their bloodsucking (life-taking, predatory) “cousin” was absent. Bats often inhabit and take refuge in caves and/or natural hollows. These gateways probably link “bats” to being guardians of as well as travellers to other realms. Frequently spotted on and near burial sites, the “bat” as an embodiment of
souls and/or as spirits presumably further trigger their profound connotations and status in Amerindian cosmologies.

Several behavioural and physical traits support these connotations. The most prominent is: as it sleeps upside down and is active at night, a “bat” is considered an inverted mirror of a human being. Other noteworthy qualities are: its furry but winged appearance and the remarkable sounds it produces when chattering in flight. Its cackle when hanging is in certain tales possibly reflected in the laughing motifs. All these qualities result in “bats” becoming anti-birds inhabitants of a reversed (upside-down) world.

In various narratives which refer to “Bats” and “Nocturnal birds”, the “Owl” and “Nightjar” are related as partners in crime. “Owl” and “Bat” appear at night in order to scare humans by means of ominous screeches. The “Owl” is, however, often portrayed as being more successful, when warning “Bat” not to go out on its own. As discussed in 5.3.1, “Nightjar” takes in a lower hierarchical position officiating as a Minister, whereas “Bat” serves as President. This difference between “Owl” and “Nightjar” could result from the fact (certain) owls prey on bats, whereas nightjars do not.

As described in 5.3.4, the “Bat” takes in a liminal position both physically and behaviourally rendering it a likely natural symbol* of cultural as well as spiritual significance. With the migration to new habitats, however, as Amerindians moved from the mainland to the islands, the “Bat’s” connotations transformed, too. This phenomenon is probably the outcome of the disappearance of bloodsucking and carnivorous bat species across the insular Caribbean. The “Bat” was thus deprived of its most negative association: being a bloodsucking killer. It therefore apparently now acquired a more positive conceptualisation. Nevertheless, it remained entangled with spirits and death, indeed less like a killer, but more as the embodiment of souls and of ancestry.

In the mainland narratives, a more positive association of the “Bat” with the origin of tobacco and cultivated plants is seldom encountered. It is presumed that, within the island context and its dominance of fruit-eating and pollinating species, the above mentioned association became further entangled with a “bat’s” attributes pertaining to associations regarding the “bat”, hereby contributing to its conceptualisation as a tutelary spirit, and not a malevolent nocturnal spirit. This observation presents us with a perfect example of an “animal” as an expression of culture which: (a) is always contextualised within a broad context, and (b) encompasses natural, cultural as well as cosmological qualities. If any of these contexts transform, this may well impact the ascribed attributes, qualities and associations concerning the “animal”, too. For an in-depth discussion on this subject, see 8.3.

“Bat” adornos are yet further indications of the conceptualisation of the “bat”. Often anthropomorphized, they ostensibly depict the metamorphosis of humans/shamans (human
souls) into “bats”. “Bat” imagery is a cross-Caribbean phenomenon encountered as *adornos* on pottery as well as on pendants. “Bat” iconography occurs also along the Lower Orinoco River up to the Leeward Islands, and dates from the Early to the Late Saladoid. It is also identified, even as being most common, in the “Taino” iconography originating from the Greater Antilles (Oudhuis 2008; Wauben 2018).

Although “bat” imagery appears in many forms and styles, the head and wings are among the overall identifiable features. “Bat” heads are usually round, with a turned-up nose and a slit snout. Its ears and wings are often depicted, now and again in a very stylised fashion.

5.4 “Jaguar”

The “Jaguar” (*Panthera onca*), the most common “animal” protagonist encountered in the 706 stories, is of course included in the present research. As the largest land predators native to the South American mainland, jaguars have repeatedly been identified as the most powerful agent active in the Amerindian cosmovation. Considering the Caribbean Islands, Trinidad is the only home to a native feline species: the ocelot (*Panthera pardalis*). This relatively small wild cat is larger than most dogs. Inspired by the absence of the jaguar in these islands, discussions have risen on which “animal” (or “animals”) has (or have) substituted this major mainland symbol within the island context.

How “jaguars” behave in nature is discussed below, based on their presence in the archaeological record and on their status within Amerindian cosmologies. Their roles and any ascribed attributes if identified in the analysed narratives are dealt with below, too.

5.4.1 “Jaguar” in the narratives

... Sun left his wife and she swore to find him. Her unborn gave her directions. But a Wasp stung her and as she tried to hit it, she hit herself. The unborn Twin thought she hit them on purpose and wouldn’t give her directions any longer. She got lost and found the house of Toad (or Rain Frog). Toad took care of her and the unborn. Jaguar, son of Toad killed the woman, but her sons lived and were raised by Toad. One of the sons killed Jaguar and resurrected his mother from the bones. The children saw Toad making fire without wood spitting it out and licking it up and saw how she used what flowed out of a spot in her neck (milky substance) to make starch and they killed her: they burned her. One of the sons swallowed hot coals. Crane taught them how to make fire. [Story no. 1096 (Macushi, Cariban); abridged]

This study includes 127 “Jaguar” narratives, thereby creating the largest category. The “Jaguar” is thus the most documented actor (see Appendix D, section E). Of these 127 narratives, as many as 83 (63 percent) originate from the core area. “Jaguar” narratives are encountered in thirteen language families (see Fig. 5.12). Compared with the overall linguistic
distribution, these narratives reveal a significant variation as to their distribution pattern.\textsuperscript{111} They are overrepresented when considering the Warao and Tupian narratives and occur less frequently in Guajiboan and Arawakan tales.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{jaguar_narratives_map.png}
\caption{Plot of “Jaguar” narratives in the study region, i.e., the Caribbean and South America; survey composed by the author.}
\end{figure}

The narrative functions follow the general pattern.\textsuperscript{112} The most dominant elements hereby are: the function validating the world, followed by encoding social behaviour and informing. The narratives tend to explain why things are as they are and deal with certain aspects of morality. They also provide further practical information on how to hunt and which food is (in)appropriate (see Appendix C, Table C-6 for a list of all narrative functions of the “Jaguar” narratives).

\textsuperscript{111} \chi^2(7) = 19.87; \rho = 0.0059 \text{ (significant). See Appendix D, section E. General remarks for a more detailed discussion.}

\textsuperscript{112} \chi^2(4) = 2.99; \rho = 0.56 \text{ (not significant). See Appendix D, section E. General remarks.}
In general, the “Jaguar” is portrayed as a potentially dangerous, powerful “animal”, an excellent hunter (and thus a food provider), but also as a (culture) giver, protector and rescuer. “Jaguars” frequent the realm of the forest (i.e., a land setting) and can take on a human form by removing their “clothes”. However, (malevolent) spirits, demons, as well as shamans, can also transform into a “Jaguar”, instilling it with ambiguous qualities.

**Actors, events and settings ("fabula")**

The “Jaguar” is ascribed various roles which differ significantly from the general pattern.113 “Jaguar” is more likely to be an opponent and subject/actor and less likely to be a helper and slightly less likely to be an object/goal. In its role as an object/goal, “Jaguar” is not only often the object of desire as a spouse, but also sought after in an act of vengeance which frequently leads to its death. “Jaguar” is also the object of trickery and deception. In addition, the role of sender is often ascribed to “Jaguar”, for instance when it gives information or presents goods resulting in further events. As an opponent, “Jaguar” is either a dangerous killer or an abductor of humans. However, it is also ascribed the role of helper hereby protecting, rescuing and providing shelter as well as goods.

In addition, a shaman or spirit is explicitly stated to be able to transform into “Jaguar”, or to look like a “Jaguar” (n=10; Cariban, Guajiboan, Ticuna, Warao). It is explicitly described as a transformed shaman (see Story nos. 55, 330, 616, 618; Trio (Cariban), Ticuna, 2x Cuiva (Guajiboan)). In Story no. 55 (Trio, Cariban), the family of a murdered woman calls upon the shaman for help, referring to him as a “Jaguar” man. In Story no. 616 (Cuiva, Guajiboan), a shaman and his wife came across a “Caiman” during a march. The shaman who wishes to kill the “Caiman”, prepares himself with yopo* and then transforms into a “Jaguar”. The “Jaguar”-personage displays shamanic qualities (see Story nos. 16, 81, 89, 583, 671, 672; 3x Warao; 2x Sikuani, Cuiva (Guajiboan). This is the outcome when for instance a “Jaguar” man/woman performs remarkable tasks, prepares remedies and enchants objects.

In a number of narratives, “Jaguar” is referred to as a spirit (see Story no. 707) or described as a spirit taking the form of a “Jaguar” (see Story nos. 156, 461, 472, 689, 707; Tembê (Tupian), 2x Warao, Sikuani (Guajiboan), Cariban). For instance, the sound of “Jaguar” and other nocturnal creatures is a clear proof of a malevolent spirit (see 5.4.4).

Resulting from the large quantity of data concerning “Jaguar” narratives, various recurrent motifs have been established, leading to a “Top 7” (see Appendix D, sections E. Fabula and E5a to c). Most common are motifs as to the origin of things (n=25) and “animal” traits and habits (n=85), followed by motifs as to a malevolent “Jaguar” (n=63) and the related motifs as to punishments (n=44) and tasks/quests (n=39). Motifs linked to transformations were recorded in 39 cases. Also common are motifs concerning deceptions and foolishness (n=31). In accordance with these most common motifs, the following sub-clusters were identified to

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113 $\chi^2(5) = 34.02; \rho = 2.4E-6$ (significant), see Appendix D section *E. Fabula*.
be analysed separately: (a) “Jaguar” and the origin of fire; n=16, (b) the devastating “Jaguar”; n=63, (c) the gullible “Jaguar”; n=31, and (d) the helpful “Jaguar”; n=25 (see Appendix D, section E1 to 4).

The dominant setting in which the “Jaguar” acts, comprises a forest (83 percent) and a night (62 percent) setting (e.g., a temporary hunting site, abandoned villages). Although the land-layer dominates as a setting, “Jaguar” is also set in the water realm (12 percent; n=9), underworld (8 percent; n=6), and the sky (3 percent; n=2). In relation to the overall common settings as established in Chapter 4, “Jaguar” is even more linked to the forest and night settings, albeit significantly less positioned in the water and especially the sky setting (see Appendix D, section E. Fabula).

Having investigated if roles and settings are interrelated, it is shown that, within a village setting significantly more records of the role of helper are present. Moreover, the role of object/goal is more frequently ascribed to “Jaguar” within a village setting (see Appendix D, section E. Fabula).

Each of the identified sub-clusters (a-d) will now shortly be addressed in order to identify patterns and significant variations among the “Jaguar” narratives. Each cluster is hereby fully analysed according to the set methodology, see Appendix D, sections E1 to E4.

Jaguar and the origin of fire

Within the first sub-cluster “Jaguar and the origin of fire”, two major themes have been identified: (a) “Jaguar” as the Master/Owner of Fire (n=12), and (b) the Twin narratives (n=5), in which the “Jaguar’s” mother is often portrayed as a provider of fire. Common motifs encountered in this sub-cluster are related to thievery and thefts (n=8). This is the outcome of others who attempt (often successfully) to steal the fire from “Jaguar”, leaving him without. This explains not only why he (now) eats his meat raw but also why motifs regarding the origin of fire and cooked meat are intertwined.

The tales featuring Twins are even more elaborate as they contain numerous other motifs in addition to those dealing with the origin of fire (see Story nos. 2, 99, 148, 498, 1096; Wayana, Macushi, Bakairí (Cariban), 2x Warao). These narratives inform on the birth and lives of the culture Twin heroes in which “Jaguar’s” mother is often the helpful protector and provider of fire, whereas “Jaguar” kills and devours the mother of the Twins. They, in turn, avenge their mother’s death by killing “Jaguar” and its mother. Fire is a result of this act of revenge.

114 All narratives featuring “Jaguar” as an owner of fire are numbered: 191-4, 218-9, 221, 226, 236, 246, 691, and 707; Gê (2x Apinayé; Cayapó-Gorotire; 2x Cayapó-Kubenkranken; Timbira; Bororo; Opayé; Sherente), Chibchan (Cuna): Cariban; Tupian (Apapocuva/Kaiwa)). Narratives associated with Twin myths are numbered: 2, 148, 498, 1096 (2x Wayana; Macushi; Bakairí (Cariban); Warao). See Appendix D, section E1 for an integral discussion on this sub-cluster.
Devastating “Jaguar”

The second sub-cluster consists of 63 narratives which include motifs concerning a devastating “Jaguar”. They have not been further categorised and are thus treated as a whole (see Appendix D, section E2). A number of these stories lack a “Jaguar”-personage but include references to the “Jaguar” as a (potential) threat. For instance, merely the sound of its roar terrifies humans. Or, “Jaguar” is the suspect when an Amerindian/protagonist goes missing (see Story nos. 44, 63, 101, 111, 154, 156; 2x Trio (Cariban), 2x Cariban, 2x Tembé (Tupian)).

In the majority of cases (n=21), however, “Jaguar” is portrayed as a man-killer who will devour you (often in response to an ignored warning or a breached taboo). In Story nos. 110, 331 and 504 (2x Warao, Ticuna), “Jaguar” carries out abductions. Therefore its role here is that of an avenger and restorer of order. Motifs concerning breached taboos and punishments are indeed very common in this sub-cluster.

Again, the most dominant setting in this sub-cluster is forest (86 percent; n=54). Nine records of a village context were encountered. However, in seven cases, both a forest, and a village setting, are documented. In two narratives only a village setting occurs (see Story nos. 351, 643; Cariban, Guajiboan (Sikuani)). In story no. 351 a young boy was told by his mother to visit his uncle “Jaguar”. Having met Jaguar’s/uncle’s daughter, she hides him from her father. In Story no. 643, “Jaguar” visits a woman who suffers from a terrible itch, and lives together with her grandson. He cures the woman, but the following day “Jaguar” goes hunting and kills this grandson.

Gullible “Jaguar”

The third sub-cluster contains cases dealing with the gullible “Jaguar”. They have been further categorised into: (a) “Jaguar” who loses his eye(s); n=7, (b) “Jaguar” bodily parts wanted as tool, toy or instrument; n=9, (c) “Jaguar” lured into entering a contest; n=13, and (d) other narratives with a gullible “Jaguar”; n=6.115 The binding factor here is: “Jaguar” either portrayed as a trickster and/or tricked himself when meeting its adversary in the form of a “harmless” counterpart e.g., “Tortoise”, “Turtle”, “Anteater” or “Deer” whereby its prey is more clever. Motifs related to friendship and betrayal are common elements of these tales.

Helpful “Jaguar”

The fourth and last sub-cluster consists of narratives about a helpful “Jaguar” (n=25).116 Here “Jaguar” is often portrayed as an excellent spouse, who provides food as well as protection. “Jaguar” is also the protector and rescuer of the protagonist.

115 Their number is too large to list all. The language families mentioned in this sub-cluster are: Cariban, Gê, Guajiboan, Tupian, and Warao (see Appendix D, sections E3a to d, which also provides specific languages).

116 Their number is too large to list all. The language families mentioned in this sub-cluster are: Arawakan, Cariban, Gê, Guajiboan, Jivaroan, Ticuna Tupian, Warao, and Yuracare (see Appendix D, sections E4 and E5b).
The setting of this particular sub-cluster reveals discrepancies when looking into the overall settings concerning cases which feature “Jaguar”. Of the 22 records, 32 percent (also) include a village setting (compared to 17 percent village settings for all “Jaguar” cases). In five narratives, “Jaguar” is staged in a forest as well as in a village setting (see Story nos. 89, 298, 352, 504, 672; various). Studying settings in relation to the ascribed role(s), it becomes clear that “Jaguar” is often an object/goal within a village setting (n=5), as is explained by the Amerindian protagonist marrying (and having offspring with) “Jaguar”. In Story no. 643 (Sikuani, Guajiboan), “Jaguar” acts as an opponent and a helper. It enters a round house in which a woman suffering from itches hides her grandchild. “Jaguar” cures her ailment only to then find, kill and devour the child.

Other motifs highlighted

The most common motifs have already been discussed above (see Jaguar and the origin of fire and Helpful/Devastating/Gullible “Jaguar”). Two further motifs: transformation and laughter are dealt with below (see Appendix D, section E. Fabula).

In 30 (24 percent) cases, the motifs on transformation are directly linked to the “Jaguar”-personage. Dominant here are the metamorphoses from man/woman to “Jaguar” (n=11), and from “Jaguar” to man (n=8). These events are often described as putting on clothes or skin (n=6; see 3.4.2). Transmuting from man/woman to “Jaguar” is by far the most common motif (see in addition Appendix D, section E5c).

For example, in Story no. 152 (Karajá, Gê), a woman is warned not to eat any “Jaguar” fat. After nevertheless having done so, she transforms into a “Jaguar”. In other instances, “acting like” a jaguar means becoming one. In Story no. 227 (Opayé, Gê), for instance, a woman wishes “Jaguar” to be her husband, who is an excellent provider of meat. After marrying “Jaguar”, she becomes an outstanding hunter herself. Having grown claws and fangs, she transmutes into a “Jaguar”. In Story no. 199 (Matacoan), a woman eats “parrots” thrown down from a tree by her husband (see Fig. 5.13). She then devours her husband and children before turning into a “Jaguar” herself. In Story no. 524 (Crenyé, Gê), the culture hero, who had supernaturally grown into a large boy within 3 days, plays “Jaguar” with other children. He now transforms into a real “Jaguar” and everyone flees in terror.
Amerindians mimic a “Jaguar’s” appearance to then turn into this creature. In Story no. 330 (Ticuna), men shoot at the trunk of a *tururu* tree. After painting pieces of its bark with black spots, and wearing them, these men become “Jaguars”. In Story no. 66 (Trio Cariban), two boys weave “Jaguar” motifs which come to life. In Story no. 39 (Trio Cariban), a boy weaves baskets adding “Jaguar” motifs which also come to life. In Story no. 373 (Trio), a “Frog” transforms into a “Jaguar”. This tale explains not only that “Frogs” claws resemble those of “Jaguar” but also that “Frogs” catch prey in a similar way as “Jaguars” do. In Story no. 557 (Cayapó-Gorotire; Gê), men belonging to a cannibalistic tribe of frogs, re-enforced their fingers with “Jaguar”-claws.\(^{117}\)

Shamans metamorphosize into “Jaguars”. Shamanic rituals may be performed to a similar effect. In Story no. 443 (Warao), a man teaches his brother how to transmute into a “Jaguar” by smoking a magic cigar. In Story no. 616 (Cuiva, Guajiboan), a couple comes across a reposing “Caiman”. The man wishing to kill it prepares himself by means of *yopo* and then transforms into a “Jaguar”. In Story no. 687 (Sikuani, Guajiboan), a boy who feels ashamed of being in a secret incestuous relation with his mother, intoxicates himself by means of *yucuta* and *yopo*, to then roar and become a “Jaguar”.

\(^{117}\) Two references occur as to frogs transmuting into jaguars. The Tupi (Tupian) believe that a tree frog can transform into a jaguar, “yawarété-cunawáru” (Lévi-Strauss 1973: 215). According to a similar expression of belief encountered among the Wayana (Cariban), a grandfather Toad (“Kunawaru”, a tree frog) can take the shape of a tiger. This toad serves to improve hunting abilities when rubbed on wounds (de Goeje 1943: 48-9).
The reverse process has also been recorded. For instance, a “Jaguar” wishes to find out how a man hunts a peccary. To do so, it then transforms into a beautiful woman (Story no. 73; Arawakan). Or, “Jaguar” disguises himself as an elderly woman in order to abduct children (Story nos. 89 and 504; Warao).

Motifs related to “laughter” have been encountered in six cases (Story nos. 1, 147, 207-8, 213, 350; 2x Cariban, Gê, Guaicuruan, 2x Tupian). As to Story nos. 207 and 350, motifs are recorded regarding the results of laughter, either positive or negative. In Story no. 207 (Toba-Pilaga, Guaicuruan), the demiuurge* tests Amerindians by tickling them. The laughers now become “animals”. Those who maintain self-control either turn into “Jaguars” or into men chasing “Jaguars”. In Story no. 350 (Cariban), a hunter ends up in “Jaguar’s” house. Here it inspects the man’s arrows and asks him questions. His answers make “Jaguar” laugh for two hours allowing the hunter to escape.

In Story no. 208 (Munduruku, Tupian), “Jaguar’s” wife warned her (“Deer”-) husband not to laugh as her parents were tickling it. In Story no. 213 (Bororo, Gê), an Amerindian marries a “Jaguar” husband and conceives. Although warned not to laugh, once provoked she smiles after which acute pains cause her demise. In two narratives, the Trickster makes fun of “Jaguar”, the object of its deception. In Story no. 1 (Munduruku, Tupian), “Tortoise” laughs, claps its hands as it allows itself to fall onto “Jaguar’s” head, crushing its skull. Later “Tortoise” again laughs as it locks up “Alligator”. In another trickster narrative (Story no. 147; Bakairí, Cariban), “Jaguar” laughs at “Anteater” for stating it will kill “Jaguar”.

With whom is the “Jaguar” associated?
The interrelatedness between “Jaguar” and other “animals/birds” is treated as part of each sub-cluster. The present paragraph provides not only a brief summary of any recurrent or remarkable connections but also associations between the “Jaguar”-personage and others.

The most common “animals/birds” other than “Jaguar” are:
1. “Ara” and “Turtle” (in thirteen narratives). “Tortoise” is recorded in five cases.
2. “Birds” (general), “Deer”, “Tapir” and “Anaconda/Snake”, recorded in ten cases,
3. “Frog” and “Monkey”, recorded in nine cases,
4. “Ant” and “Toad”, recorded in eight cases,
5. “Anteater” and “Alligator/Caiman”, recorded in seven cases.

The “Jaguar” in relation to the “Birds” and “Parrot-like birds”
“Birds” are portrayed as truth tellers and as helpers. More often they assist the Amerindian protagonist and not the “Jaguar”-actor. The following interrelatedness between “Jaguar” and “Birds” has been established:
• Hunting “birds/macaw” as a catalyst: various “Jaguar” narratives start with a hunt for “Birds” (or their eggs). The protagonist is abandoned and rescued by “Jaguar”.
• Stealing fire, “Birds” as an opponent and a “bird” that (tries to) steal “Jaguar’s” fire, resulting in their falling victim to its vengeance.
• “Birds” as helper, the provider of new eyes. Certain specific “birds” create a new pair of eyes for “Jaguar”, or recover the eyes it had lost.

“Jaguar” and “Turtle/Tortoise”
The “Turtle” and “Tortoise” are dominantly associated with “Jaguar” in the trickster tales in which “Turtle/Tortoise” misleads, and often kills, “Jaguar”. In other stories events results in “Jaguars” chasing the trickster whereby:
• Contest of endurance comprising a challenge takes place to determine who can survive the longest without any food, water and on occasion even without air.
• “Jaguar” tries to lure either a “Turtle” or “Tortoise” down from a tree. However, this reptile then deceives “Jaguar” and kills it by throwing itself, or pieces of fruit, on “Jaguar’s” head.
• “Jaguar’s” necklace which the Turtle desires is therefore challenged. A necklace consisting of jaguar teeth may be referred to here. Such adornment is not only a talisman but also a sign* of prowess.

In a Twin narrative (Story no. 2; Wayana, Cariban), “Tortoise” is the mother of the culture hero. The Twins are born from her eggs. In this case, “Jaguar” kills “Tortoise”. In the majority of Twin narratives either “Toad” or “Frog” fulfil the role of mother of “Jaguar”, she who raises the Twins.

“Jaguar” with “Deer”, “Tapir”, “Anteater” and “Peccary”
The two (main) sub-clusters in which “Jaguar” is related to “Deer”, “Tapir”, “Anteater” and “Peccary” concern: (a) the origin of fire, and (b) the gullible “Jaguar” whereby:
• These “animals” as carriers of fire, visit Jaguar’s house in order to fetch or steal fire. “Tapir” takes on a special role in which “Jaguar” and the others deem him suited or strong enough to carry off the burning tree/trunk.
• “Deer” and “Tapir” are both preyed upon by “Jaguar”. In trickster narratives, “Jaguar” is often attracted by the (dead) meat of “Deer” or “Tapir”.118

In addition to “Deer” and “Tapir”, “Peccary” is repeatedly featured as “Jaguar” food. In Story no. 216 (Ticuna), “Peccary” is even explicitly described as the highly seasoned and very peppery food of “Jaguar”.

118 “Jaguar” is a carnivore, whereas “Tapir” (and “Deer”) eat leaves. This aspect is also themed in Story no. 151 (Kaingáng) in which various animals are first introduced, “Jaguar” is informed to eat human beings and/or animals of the forest. “Tapir” who did not understand this assignment therefore eats leaves and fruit.
“Jaguar” and “Anaconda/Snake”

“Jaguar” and “Snake” either take the stage or are referred to together in ten narratives.\textsuperscript{119} Here an aquatic context seems to be the case. “Jaguar” travels around in the land-realm, whereas “Anaconda” is the Master of the Water realm. They share a large number of their ascribed attributes and qualities here, as they are dangerous and powerful “animals”, even potential man-eaters. Moreover, both “Jaguars”, as well as “Anacondas”, wandered around on the face of the earth long before humans did (Story no. 360; Warao).

To a certain degree “Jaguars” are also associated with bodies of water. Story no. 151 (Kaingáng, Gê) explains why “Jaguars” roam both land and water. In Story no. 550 (Apinayé, Gê), “Jaguar” is portrayed as the Master of a Lake and, in Story no. 16 (Warao), as the Owner of a Pool. In Story no. 649 (Sikuani, Guajiboan), the “Jaguar” emerges from the water, jumping out to turn into a human being.

“Jaguar” and “Toad/Frog”

“Jaguar” and “Toad/Frog” either interact or are interrelated, in multiple contexts as well as in combination with the following motifs:

- As a trickster whereby “Toad/Frog” deceives “Jaguar”.
- Both featuring as “owners of fire” and thus related to the origin of fire.
- In Twin narratives: “Frog/Toad” as the Mother/Owner of “Jaguar”, while “Jaguar” eats the culture mother and “Frog/Toad” protects the Twin heroes. “Jaguar” and “Frog/Toad” often fall victim to the Twin’s vengeance.
- “Jaguar” as a hunter \textit{pur sang}. The “Tree frog” assists protagonists in order to acquire hunting skills or free “Jaguar” of poor hunting skills.
- References to the belief that “(tree) Frogs” possess claws resembling those of “Jaguar” and can even transform into “Jaguar”.

“Monkey”

Although nine stories feature both “Jaguar” and “Monkey”, they are hardly ever interrelated within the narratological context.\textsuperscript{120} “Monkey” appears to serve as the catalyst here. A man chasing after “Monkey” is caught and then killed by “Jaguar” (see Story no. 185; Yuracare). “Monkey” helps “Turtle” up a tree, where “Jaguar” finds it (see Story nos. 164, 398, 541; unknown, Tupian, Gê). “Monkey” himself is a trickster and deceives the gullible “Jaguar” in Story nos. 218, 541, and 550 (Gê).

\textsuperscript{119} Story nos. 23, 44, 63, 148, 185, 334, 360, 489, 798, and 707; 5x Cariban, Tupian, 3x Warao, Yuracare.

\textsuperscript{120} Story nos. 151, 164, 185, 218, 334, 398, 541, 550, and 562; 5x Gê, 2x Tupian, Yuracare, unknown.
“Jaguar” and “Ant”

“Jaguar” and “Ants” are related in eight cases. In Story no. 185 (Yuracare), we read that poisonous “Ants” live on “Jaguar’s” head. In Story no. 147 (Bakairi, Cariban), “Jaguar” calls upon “Ants” to help in removing the trickster from a tree. In Story nos. 154, and 301-2 (Tupian), ant hills form the gateway to the underworld and “Jaguar’s” village. “Jaguars” dwell in the underworld, where they engage in a Honey Festival. The protagonist, having transformed into an “Ant”, enters the underworld through a hole the size of an “Ant’s” nest.

“Jaguar” and “Caiman/alligator”

Their interrelatedness ostensibly mirrors that of “Jaguar” and (water) “Snake”, whereby the former officiates as the Master of Land and the latter as the Master of Water. Both creatures are (potentially) dangerous as well as powerful opponents and at the same time the bringers of culture.

- “Jaguar” and “Caiman” are both portrayed as rulers of bodies of water (e.g., lake, pool).
- Opponent vs. helper: the protagonist has many adventures and is opposed as well as assisted during his journey by “Jaguar” and “Caiman”.
- “Caiman” is, as is “Jaguar”, a victim of trickery.

“Jaguar” and “Anteater”

“Jaguar” and “Anteater” are mainly intertwined in trickster narratives, whereby “Anteater” entices “Jaguar” into comparing excrements in order to discern who the better huntsman is. In a large number of these cases, “Jaguar” loses one or two eyes.

Characterization and duration (“Story”)

Although by and large the personage “Jaguar” (and on occasion “Tiger”) has not been further specified, in certain instances this has indeed occurred (see also Appendix D, section E. Story). Specific aspects recorded repetitively for the “Jaguar” are: “Black Jaguar” (n=4; Story nos. 81, 82, 110, 298: 3x Warao, Jivararoan), or the “Spotted Jaguar” (n=3; Story nos. 191, 298, 672: Cayapó-Gorotire (Gê), Jivararoan, Sikuani (Guajiboan)). Other recurrent descriptions concern an enormous/gigantic “Jaguar” (n=3; Story nos. 82, 350, 407: Warao, 2x Cariban), as well as a multi-headed “Jaguar” (n=3; Story nos. 407, 465, 486; Cariban, 2x Warao).

Having been explicated in the narratives, various physical features are therefore likely to be portrayed in other forms of display, such as iconography:

- Claws: described as curved (his “knives”), also used as a toy (e.g., Story nos. 186, 200, 368, 389, 399; Cariban, Guaicuruan, Tupian).
- Teeth: toy, talisman (e.g., Story no. 389; Cariban).
- Eyes: with which you can see at night; luminous, fiery (e.g., Story nos. 643, 645; Sikuani, Guajiboan).

121 Story nos. 34, 147, 154, 185, 301-2, 328, and 343; 2x Cariban, Tacanan, 4x Tupian, Yuracare.
• Head: two- and three-headed “Jaguars” (e.g., Story nos. 465, 486, 504; Warao).
• Skin: spotted, striped, and referred to as “coat” (e.g., Story nos. 218, 649; Gê, Guajiboan).

In addition, “jaguar” bone serves to make flutes and a jaguar bone tip lance is applied when hunting (Story nos. 1, 164, 541; Munduruku (Tupian), unknown Amazonia, Apinayé (Gê)). Several references support the fact that jaguar teeth are valued for their protective, talismanic power. A necklace consisting of jaguar teeth adorning a hunter’s neck, or a jaguar skin covering his shoulders, is also a sign* of strength and prowess (see 5.4.4).

Motifs regarding the “Jaguar’s” thunder-like voice have been recorded. In Story no. 81 (Warao), a “Black tiger” attacks and kills members of a hunting party. This “animal” cannot be injured by lances or arrows and, when it advances, a noise is heard similar to approaching thunder. Story no. 110 (Warao) also refers to a “Black tiger” that produces a thunder-like sound.

Other more behavioural qualities recurrently encountered in narratives are: the “Black tiger’s” strength, agility, expertise (i.e., when hunting, climbing, tracking (see Story nos. 133, 298, 351, 504; Cariban, Jivaroan, 2x Warao) and, on the other hand, stupidity. In Story no. 298 (Jivaroan), various species of felines are described in short. The strongest creatures here are the “Black tiger” and the “Yambinga” (species unknown). “Leopard” is described as being the most agile, being the only one to escape from a collapsing bridge.

As to the “Jaguar”-narratives, 129 (unique) records on duration (see 3.3.1 under the sub-heading Narratological data) illustrate no significant variation when compared with the set general pattern. Therefore, 93 percent (n=120) fall within the short range and nine in the middle range (covering between 6-10 pages). Although the narrated time indicates a high level of variation, it is in line with 47 percent (n=61) of the records which cover a short narrated time whereas 40 percent (n=52) covers a narrated time of either months or years and 12 percent (n=16) a narrated time of weeks.

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122 Real time: $\chi^2(2) = 2.95; \rho = 0.23$ (not significant). Narrated time: $\chi^2(2) = 0.51; \rho = 0.78$ (not significant). See Appendix D, section E. Story for a more elaborate discussion.
5.4.2 Jaguar in nature

The jaguar is the largest cat (even the largest carnivorous animal) native to Central and South America, and indeed the only living example of the genus Panthera found in the New World (see Fig. 5.14). Despite various attempts, specific subspecies have yet to be identified. Jaguars are encountered from Central America into South America.\(^{123}\) They are nevertheless mentioned on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species as “Near threatened” (Caso et al. 2008). Numerous studies have been conducted on their status in Honduras, Costa Rica, Amazonia as well as in other parts of South America in order to study the most appropriate manner to preserve this cat in its natural habitat (de la Torre et al. 2017; Medellín et al. 2016; Mora et al. 2016; Porfirio et al. 2016; Silveira et al. 2009; Verissimo 2012).

Physical and behavioural attributes

The jaguar, an impressive land mammal, has a robust head, powerful jaws, large fangs and claws. Its length from nose to the base of its tail varies between 1.57 and 2.41 m. It mainly feeds on mammals weighing more than 1 kg but is also known to devour smaller mammals, reptiles, amphibians and birds. A jaguar can even take on wild animals weighing up to 300 kg (Nowak 1999: 831; Seymour 1989: 4).

Jaguars have the largest eyes of all carnivores relative to head size. The round pupils and irises range in colour from golden to a reddish yellow, whereas young jaguar cubs have blue eyes (Seymour 1989: 4). These cats have an excellent night vision. Their eyes seem illuminous as they reflect light at night. The Waiwai (Cariban) associate jaguar eyes with light and the Shipibo (Panoan) with fire and the Sun (Roe 1995a: 176); see also 5.4.1 under the sub-heading Characterization and duration (“Story”).

Generally spotted in a tawny yellow hue, the colour of the fur ranges between reddish-brown and black (Seymour 1989: 2) creating a camouflage in the forest habitat, ideal for an ambush attack. With black jaguars, this colour is the result of colour morphism and is observed in c.6 percent of the population. The 706 studied narratives include many references to the colour, and especially to the spots. Remarkably the “Black Tiger” is referred to as the most powerful of all, perhaps because it is such a rare sight. Indigenous peoples probably consider it a

\(^{123}\) According to the IUCN, jaguars currently inhabit Argentina, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, French Guiana, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Suriname, and Venezuela (Caso et al. 2008).
separate species (Hudson 1910: 389-91; see also 5.4.1 under the sub-heading Characterization and duration (“Story”)).

Jaguars can emit roaring sounds in order to warn any competitors. These roars resemble a repetitive cough. They can also vocalise mews and grunts. In certain instances, the sound of the jaguar is compared to thunder, but this creature is also said to “sing” (5.4.1 under the sub-heading Characterization and duration (“Story”)).

Jaguars prefer life in the dense rainforest, swamps and wooded regions, but also frequent open terrains, shrublands and deserts (de la Torre et al. 2017). They are strongly associated with the presence of water and are known to enjoy swimming as is also reflected in the narratological setting, which illustrates that the water realm is second to a land/forest setting (see 5.4.1).

The jaguar is the largest, solitary, opportunistic, stalk-and-ambush (land) predator positioned at the top of the food chain. It thus plays a key role in maintaining the ecosystem of its habitat, limiting the number of herbivores and thereby reducing the pressure exerted on plants (Miller et al. 2001).

**The jaguar in relation to other species**

As mainland predators, jaguars hunt and feed on a wide variety of species. These nocturnal animals, with peak activity around dawn and dusk, may hunt during the day, too (Nowak 1999: 831). Opportunistic hunters, jaguars virtually eat everything that crosses their path, taking on any terrestrial and/or riparian vertebrate found in Central to South America, including adult caimans, large mammals (e.g., deer) and on occasion even anacondas as well as smaller prey such as birds, fish and turtles (Seymour 1989: 4; Veríssimo et al. 2016). Having dragged their catch to a secluded or protected location, they devour its skin, bones, organs, hoofs and claws but not the intestines.

Jaguars walk around slowly, listen, stalk and then ambush their prey. An ambush may include leaping into water or following prey up a tree. Jaguars can patiently wait for a fish to come near enough to then catch it with their claws. They have been observed when deliberately using their tails to attract fish. Although very capable of attacking humans, they rarely do so (Seymour 1989: 5). This stalk-and-ambush strategy has presumably contributed to framing a “Jaguar” as a dangerous killer because it is able to strike before its presence could be noticed.
Mankind hunts jaguars. Young jaguars are reported to be preyed upon by other jaguars, crocodilians, and large snakes. An adult jaguar is rarely the victim of any other species, but can accidentally fall victim to anacondas, venomous snakes or a herd of peccaries (Seymour 1989: 4).

Although the territories of jaguars and for instance pumas may overlap, there are not many records of any direct interaction between these two species. However, in a Story no. 298 (Jivaroan) various species of felines do interact. When mutually compared, the black “Tiger” and the “Yambinga” are described as the strongest, and “leopard” as the most agile (see 5.4.1).

5.4.3 The iconography of “jaguar”
Feline zoomorphic depictions are rarely encountered on Saladoid ceramics originating from the islands or from the Orinoco region of the mainland (Waldron 2010: 134). In case of the island iconography, the absence of any “natural” feline species has presumably attributed to the loss of the importance of “jaguar” in indigenous cosmologies, and in its depiction. From the Amazonian mainland, however, other ways of displaying “jaguar” have been encountered, but there are also a number of indications regarding the insular Caribbean. Therefore other ways of displaying “jaguars” as well as their portraits on ceramics are discussed here.

Although “jaguar” imagery on ceramics is indeed rare, it is not completely absent as is the case with such imagery on other materials. “Jaguar”-shaped benches have been documented for various Amerindian groups (Roe 1998; Roth 2011: 289). A feline (presumably “jaguar”)-shaped bench has also been recovered from the Pitch Lake (southwest Trinidad) which resembles benches known from the mainland (see Fig. 5.16 (below); Saunders 2005: 222, 294).

Fig. 5.16. Ceramic Age “feline” (jaguar?)-shaped bench made of fustic wood from Pitch Lake, Trinidad; length 59 cm; width 25.5 cm; after Ostapkowicz et al. 2017 (curated at the Peabody Museum of Natural History); drawings courtesy of J. Snoep.
In addition, various historic and ethnographic sources mention that jaguar skins were worn and traded, as were jaguar claws which served as powerful talismans and as proof of (male) prowess (see 5.4.4). To my knowledge, the only recovered perforated jaguar teeth originating from the islands to date comprise the pair found at the site of Punta Candelero (Puerto Rico), one at Pearls (Grenada), and another one at the La Hueca-Sorcé site on the island of Vieques (Keegan 1996; Laffoon et al. 2014: 226, 229). The “Jaguar” motif referred to as mado fedi (lit.: “Jaguar face”) is encountered in basketry designs among the Yekuana (Carib of Venezuela) (Guss 1989: 110-11). Basketry embellished with “jaguar” motifs are mentioned in narratives, too (see 5.4.1).

Although jaguar claws and skin are perishable, written sources inform us that both items were utilised and worn, at least on Trinidad and Tobago. The Island Carib of Dominica wore skins too (Boomert 2000; Breton et al. 1665). A number of 16th-century warrior chiefs of the Carinepagoto people (northwestern Trinidad) and allied groups were clad in jaguar skins with the “animal’s” mouth placed over their heads. Male warriors of the Kaliña and Kalinago groups donned jaguar claws and ear pendants adorned with pieces of jaguar skin (Boomert 2000: 404; Roth 1924: 122-4, 574).

Along with a Saladoid associated series, pendants (“amulets”) made of semi-precious materials (e.g., stone, shell, mother-of-pearl) and hardwood were recovered in the Caribbean islands, including several “jaguar” examples (Boomert 2000: 414, 431). For instance, a wooden Huecoid “jaguar” head amulet from the Morel site, Guadeloupe (Petitjean Roget 1995).

**Feline adornos**

Feline zoomorphic imagery has rarely been identified on pottery originating from the Lower Orinoco River region (n=2) or from Trinidad and Tobago, n=3 (see Table 5.6, p. 200). As to the Orinoco area, two “feline” adornos of which one a ceramic claw have been encountered (see Fig. 5.17). It has been suggested that the abovementioned specimens found on Trinidad and Tobago may have been trade items hailing from the Lower Orinoco River region which date to between the 4th and 6th centuries CE (Waldron 2010: 134-5).

As so few examples of “feline” adornos have been recovered, any stylistic comparison between the mainland and island specimens is impossible (see Table 5.6, p. 200). Moreover, as a mainland origin of the found specimens has been suggested, it would not make any sense to stylistically compare them (Waldron 2010: 134-5).

An explanation for the rare identifications of “jaguar” adornos could be: the “jaguar” is depicted in a more abstract form. The Shipibo (Panoan) refer to the jaguar’s spots as its specific “cross-shaped design” which they adopted to decorate pottery with. The Waiwai (Cariban) are known to paint their bodies with “jaguar” motifs (Roe 1998: 186). Numerous stories explicitly refer to the jaguar’s spots (see 5.4.1 under the sub-heading Characterization and duration (“Story”)). Perhaps the “jaguar” was portrayed by means of specific patterning,
reproducing its spots as iconic signs* rather than physical traits. Its claws and eyes are often directly characterized, too, and could also have served as iconic signs* perhaps even in an abstract form.

*Fig. 5.17. Two Saladoid “feline” adorno fragments; a “jaguar” claw from Barrancas, Venezuela (left) and a “grimacing jaguar” from Mount Irvine, Tobago (right); adapted from (left) Waldron 2010: Fig. 217, height 15.24 cm and (right) from Waldron 2016: Fig. 4.29, right, length 4 cm; drawings courtesy of J. Snoep.

Of interest in this respect are two spotted Saladoid adornos recovered from Pearls, Grenada (see Figs. 5.18 and 5.19). The former, Fig. 5.18, is anthropomorphic, the other zoomorphic which stylistically resembles identified “armadillo” adornos. These spots then could refer to a “jaguar”-like quality (“jaguarness”), e.g., presenting us with a Master of its Kind, and/or a “jaguar” to others.

*Fig. 5.18. “Jaguar”-like shaman (?), spotted anthropomorphic Saladoid adorno from Pearls, Grenada; width c.13.1 cm; courtesy of N. and C. Willcox; photograph by C. Hofman and M. Hoogland; first published in Keegan & Hofman 2017: 60, Fig. 3.3.

*Fig. 5.19. “Jaguar”-like “Armadillo” (?), spotted zoomorphic Saladoid adorno from Pearls, Grenada; width c. 4.3 cm; courtesy of N. and C. Willcox; photograph by C. Hofman and M. Hoogland; first published in Keegan & Hofman 2017: 60, Fig. 3.3.

124 See 3.1.1 for more information on the various signs* and their definitions as introduced in the present study, or the Glossary.
Table 5.6. Identified “feline” *adornos* and their dispersal (above); the absolute dispersal of identified “feline” *adornos* across insular Caribbean and Venezuela (below).

The “physical” absence of the “jaguars” in the Caribbean islands could account for a decrease, or even absence, of any “jaguar” depictions. However, many examples confirm the exchange of goods and beliefs between the mainland and these islands especially during the Early Ceramic Age (800/200 BCE-400/600 CE; see 1.1). The teeth of mainland jaguars encountered here are just one example. Isotopic research on the archaeological finds of jaguar, tapir and peccary teeth indicates they hail from very diverse, distinct regions (Laffoon et al. 2014). A jaguar tooth from Punta Candelero (late Ceramic Age, 600/800 CE-1492 CE, Puerto Rico), most probably stems from the Guiana Highlands, whereas the jaguar tooth from La Hueca-Sorcé
(Vieques) context may well originate from a region stretching across the Southern Lowlands of Meso-America (Belize, Guatemala) towards northern Venezuela. Albeit difficult to pinpoint exactly, it is clear that both jaguar teeth have very distinct, distant origins (Laffoon et al. 2014: 227, 229).

This isotopic research confirms that goods (and thus presumably also ideas and beliefs) were exchanged or transported over enormous distances from North, Central and South America across the Caribbean. Although “feline/jaguar” adornos are rare, as are other “jaguar” (related) artefacts, the jaguar teeth encountered had travelled from afar. Their presence indicates that “jaguar” as a cultural sign* was not completely lost. Apparently, other means of depicting and/or displaying “jaguar”, were preferred above ceramics.

5.4.4 “Jaguar” in Amerindian cosmologies

“Jaguar” travels through worldly realms, as it roams across land, water and the sky (by climbing trees). They are dominantly associated with the sky world, and therefore with elements such as the masculine principle, culture, order, the Sun, and fire (Boomert 2000; Roe 1982, 1998), all of which are also linked to the “Jaguar” protagonist in the narratives. Moreover, being the major predator of the rainforest, “Jaguar” is ranked at the top of the food chain. Its cosmological dominance apparently mirrors this “natural” authority as will be addressed in this section.

The “jaguar” as a liminal being and a shamanic traverser of realms

“Jaguars” can be considered ambiguous beings not only because they traverse the land, water and sky but also because they are most active at dusk and dawn, despite being primarily nocturnal. These spatial and temporal ambiguous qualities in combination with its predatory attributes probably fuelled the conceptualisation of the “jaguar” as a powerful shaman. In the worldview of various Amerindians, the “jaguar” has been identified as the protector of cosmological balance (i.e., “yellow jaguar”), the fierce avenger (“black jaguar”), rendering “jaguar” a giver and a taker (Roe 1982: 208-30). “Jaguars” can, therefore, be either powerful assistants or the enemies of shamans, as will be discussed below.

The Shipibo (Panoan) distinguish two “jaguars”. The first one is light-skinned and has no negative connotations. Nor is there a great deal of awe (i.e., Ino). The second “jaguar” is gigantic and fierce; its name is only spoken in “hush tones” (i.e., Huiso inon: Yanapuma in Quechua, see Roe 1982: 213). The latter is said to kill humans, both by means of physical strength and “witchcraft”.

The “jaguar” is the antithesis of kinship according to the Piro (Maipurean speakers of Peru). This is exactly the reason why it is so dangerous (Gow 2001: 106; Viveiros de Castro 2012: 38). We read: “To avoid being devoured by the “jaguar”, one needs to know how to assume its point of view as the point of view of the Self. And here is the crux of the problem: how to let yourself be invested with alterity without becoming a seed of transcendence...” (Viveiros de
Although losing your own perspective, your own point of view, is always a risk when engaging with (= entering the perspective of) the other, which is particularly dangerous regarding the powerful “jaguar” (see also 3.4.2).

Franklin Loveland suggests another perspective when considering “jaguar” as metaphor for power, authority and social control. The “jaguar” is the source of power or omniscience of Rama turmali (i.e., shamans; Chibchan of Nicaragua). When in trance, the turmali can talk to “jaguars” and then found out about the future to then be able to exert social control (Loveland 1986: 233-4). We read: ... “jaguar is a source of knowledge which legitimates the authority and social control which the turmali exert” (Loveland 1986: 237). In the Rama’s view, the “jaguar” thus stands for social control in a political as well as a moral sense.

Throughout the Amazonian region, shamans are thought to be capable of changing into “jaguars” (Boomert 2000; Roe 1998; 1982; Roth 2011; Wilbert 1987). The shamans possess jaguar skins which they don in order to become “jaguars”. Certain South American indigenous groups believe that all shamans transform into “jaguars” after death. For instance, the Roucouyennes (Wayana, Cariban) opine that a “jaguar”-shaman protects the corpse of a shaman (Roe 1982: 207; Roth 2011: 98 [79]; Wilbert 1987: 191-7).

In the course of a fruit-ripening ritual, Cubeo (Tucanoan) shamans transform, by means of hallucinogens, into “jaguars” and then, through the emanations of “Jaguar’s” fertility, cause the fruit to ripen (Roe 1982: 209). The Héta (Tupian) uphold a similar association. When harvesting the “guaviroa” (palm tree) fruit, jaguar skins are utilised (Roe 1982: 209). In a Héta healing ritual, a jaguar skin plays an essential role, too, forming an essential part of several cures (e.g., in the case of abdominal pains, snake bites). In addition, (burned) jaguar skin can cool the patient (Roe 1982: 208).

Other references to shamans transforming into “jaguar” mention that the Amerindians residing on the banks of the Uaupés River (a tributary of the Rio Negro) believe that if the wife of a shaman (piai) bears him a child, she, in turn, may bear him a “jaguar” into which he himself may be transformed at death (Roth 2011 [1915]: 351). The spirits (iguanchi) of the (Jivaro) shaman can be very dangerous especially the “jaguars” and the smaller felines. Moreover, the souls of medicine men reincarnate into “jaguars” in order to kill enemies (Karsten 1935: 374).

Various accounts concern “jaguar”-shaped benches on which the shaman is seated (Roth 2011: 334 [228], 336, Fig. A). Roth (2011: 311 [273]) describes how a “jaguar”- or “crocodile”- shaped bench plays a role in an Arawak puberty rite which concludes with a feast. A middle-aged man brings out a girl from a closed room125 to then position her on such a bench, specially

125 The seclusion of young girls can be part of puberty rites after being isolated from water, fire, cooking and cooking apparatus. We read: “in ‘old days’ of the Pomeroon Arawak, the girl would remain with
made for this occasion. The “Jaguar” tales researched in the present study include references to “jaguar”-shaped stools. In Story no. 416 (Cariban), it was explicitly stated that the narrator sat on a “jaguar”-shaped bench.

As to parallels between the shamans and “jaguars”: both stalk their prey preferably at night and both are provided with keen eyesight, night vision and the ability of foresight. They are either protector or aggressor and will defend their territorial boundaries (Boomert 2000: 452; Roe 1982: 206-8; Wilbert 1987: 195-6). Moreover, “Jaguar” is not only the manifestation in which a Master can present himself to the shaman but also the form the shaman takes in order to reveal himself to others, as he is Master of his People (see 3.4.2 under the subheading Mastery or “ownership”).

Shamans can also call upon the “jaguar”, or a “jaguar”-spirit, in order to evoke its strength and power. A Cariban ceremonial dance has been described which aims at calling upon the “jaguar”-spirit (kaikoetji juma). Amerindians mimic the “jaguar” by roaring, hissing and mimicking its claws (as to catch prey). In this manner, they will become a “jaguar”, acquiring its strength and power, too. Nevertheless, as a “jaguar” could still be ambushed, you would also call upon the spirit of the “caiman”, “anaconda”, etc. (van Capelle 1926: 43-5; see also Story no. 707; Cariban).

“Jaguar” kanaima or avenger
“Jaguar” has been described as (malevolent) spirit or avenger, or as Roe’s black jaguar/panther (Roe 1998, 1982). The “jaguar” as an avenger, spirit or embodiment (i.e., a sign*) of strength is referred to as kanaima* in the Guiana Highlands (Roe 1982: 213, 227). The term kanaima* is presumably Akawaio, but is also familiar to other Cariban speakers (Macushi, Arekuna), Arawak (Wapishana), and Warao (Roth 2011 [1915]: 369-70). It has been suggested (Roth 2011 [1915] 369 [320]) that this term originates from a tree, the sap of which has remarkable qualities. A man, having rubbed his body with this substance, can lose his mind before transforming into a “snake” or a “jaguar”. The specific “animal” can be identified by means of the traits the kanaima* has assumed. It is a “jaguar” if it delivers a blow in order to knock its victim to the ground. Should it wrestle and place its arms around the neck, it is an anaconda (Roth 2011 [1915]: 371).

The Kaliña (Cariban) consider the “jaguar” to be a divine avenger, a pure assassin. The “Guaranis” is the “blue tiger” (i.e., jaguar) that will devour humans. According to the Guarani-Tupia, the moon grows red (moon eclipse) whenever “tiger” pursues or feeds on it (de Goeje 1943: 41). As to Acawoio (Akawaio, Cariban) stories, a kanaima* takes on the manifestation of a “jaguar” donning a feathered crown. The bright red spots covering its skin indicate that

her mother in a separate logie, or in a specially constructed compartment of the house” (Roth 2011: 310 [272]).
during the night it moves around in the form of a “jaguar” (Boomert 2000: 452, note 11; Brett 1880: 153-4; Roth 2011: 373).

The Warao distinguish a murderous “jaguar”, too, linking it to thunder which is considered the roar of this mythical “black jaguar”, referred to as “tiger” (de Goeje 1943: 41; see also 5.4.1). A “black jaguar” is extremely vindictive, but will only injure someone if it has full right to do so and is called upon to assist when all others are powerless (de Goeje 1943: 49). Thunder in relation to “jaguar” has also been recorded among Amerindian peoples, e.g., the Desana (Tucano) and Sirionó (Tupí-Guaraní; Roe 1982: 209).126

Not only *kanaimas* and shamans can take on the physical form of a “jaguar”, (malevolent) spirits can do so, too. According to the Kaliña (Cariban), the tobacco spirit could appear as “jaguar” and also as a “bird”, “dog” and “snake” (de Goeje 1943: 44). The Canelos (Quechua) regard “jaguar” as a most dangerous and formidable demon, that can take the shape of any member of the feline family (Karsten 1935: 386). The Yukpa (Cariban) believe that malevolent spirits introduced “jaguars” in order to fight people and that this is presently still the case (Wilbert 1974: 139). In addition, white people are thought to be endowed with supernatural powers and are supposed to be able to control “jaguars” and “boas” (Karsten 1935: 58-9).

“Jaguar” is thus the embodiment (natural symbol) of ultimate power and strength, in a positive as well as a lethal sense. This implies that “jaguar” is the physical manifestation in which all that (potentially) prey upon us reveals themselves to us e.g., masters, spirits, shamans. In the narratives concerning “Jaguar” and morphism, the transformation is entangled in various contexts (see 5.4.1). People, “things” and other “animals” (e.g., “Frog”) transform into “jaguar” because they either behave like it (i.e., become predators) or resemble it (e.g., by being spotted and/or with claws).

“Becoming” through adornment

The use of jaguar teeth, claws and skin was recognised in the tales and is also shortly discussed in 5.4.1 and 5.4.3. Ethnographical research and historic accounts inform us that jaguar skins, claws and teeth served as adornments, as will be dealt with here. This fact is of special interest considering the previous connotation that mimicking, or resembling, a jaguar implies becoming a “jaguar”, which could imply that wearing body parts of jaguar functions as means to transmute into “jaguar”.

A jaguar’s body parts utilised as instruments or war tools have been documented for the Shipibo (Panoan), Cashinahua (Panoan), Waiwai (Cariban), and the Guiana tribes in general (Roe 1998: 175). For instance, ear adornments including jaguar teeth have been observed among Carib who reside along the Cuyuni River (Guyana). The Cubeo (Tucanoan) beautify their

126 The Desana (Tukano) and the Sirionó (Tupí-Guaraní) associate the jaguar with rain and thunder (Roe 1982: 209).
belts with jaguar teeth. The Tucano, Carib of Guyana, Yagua (Peba-Yaguan, Peru), Shipibo and Cashinahua (both Panoan) donned them as necklaces (Roe 1998: 184).

The body parts of a jaguar could have signalled male prowess, strength, protection and was (is) applied in order to impress, or even scare off. Their use is therefore related to male-associated activities such as warfare and hunting (Breton et al. 1665: 11, 44 and 48 of 50; Du Tertre et al. 1667: 28 of 43; Roe 1998). During the 17th century, the Island Carib (Arawakan) adorned themselves with pieces of jaguar skin and placed jaguar teeth around their necks (Breton et al. 1665: 11, 44 and 48 of 50; Du Tertre et al. 1667: 28 of 43). Furthermore, the Warao necklaces consisting of jaguar, otter or alligator teeth may well have been considered to bring good luck to huntsmen (Harris 2005: 493; Roe 1998: 175, 177-8, 184). A similar practice is observed among the Wajarikoelé (Cariban; see Ahlbrinck 1956: 166).

However, further associations and indications concern the reason why the body parts of a jaguar serve to decorate. Among the Arawak people, small children were adorned with a necklace which included a jaguar tooth (Ahlbrinck 1931: 188-90; Roth 2011: 280 [240]), aimed at providing them with this animal’s strength. The Carib donned jaguar teeth in order not to come across such a feline (Ahlbrinck 1931: 188-90). Among Amerindians (unspecified) residing along the Uaupés River, jaguar, as well as bush-hog teeth, were thought to protect growing children against attacks by wild animals. Macushi (Cariban) women and children wore jaguar teeth as talismans (Roth 2011: 280-1 [240]).

Men probably utilise jaguar teeth not only to attract women but also to impress other males and enemies as a public display of power (Roe 1998: 175) which is also of importance to shamans when making themselves “attractive” to spirits.

Although jaguar claws are repeatedly mentioned in the 706 stories, any direct references to their application are rare. Its teeth and hide are linked to the “yellow” beneficial “jaguar”, and its claws to the “black” maleficent “jaguar” (Roe 1982; Roe 1998: 185). The claws are hypothesized to be associated with poison, presumably because wounds that claws inflict may cause infections (Roe 1998: 185). Carib warriors covered in black war-paint smeared their arms as well as their clubs with a healing powder or ointment made of worms appearing from jaguar claws buried in the ground (Roth 1924: 580).

Jaguar claws hanging in a shaman’s hut indicate he is able to transform into a devastating “jaguar” (Brett 1880: 154, referring to the Akawaio). Yet another reference deals with the Toba-Pilaga (Guaiçuruan, Argentina) who produced dog collars made of jaguar claws (Lévi-Strauss 1969: 100). Jaguar claws found their way up to Trinidad and Tobago (Boomert 2000: 425). On a Venezuelan ceramic vessel, a jaguar claw may have been identified, too (Waldron 2010: 134; see also Fig. 5.17 (left), p. 200).
The Jivaroan tradition of creating trophies utilising not only jaguar skins, teeth and claws, but also the heads of enemies, on occasion even jaguar heads, has been reported (Karsten 1935: 298-9). Skull trophy cults are also known to exist in the Caribbean (Roe 1998: 178). In addition to skulls, bones could have also been applied. In Story no. 573 (Gê), a jaguar bone served as an arrow tip, which may refer to actual practice. Carib flutes were created from bamboo or the bones of jaguars, deer and crabs (Ahlbrinck 1956: 53).

The above illustrates that when wearing the body parts of a jaguar, men can become (like-) a “jaguar”. A necklace made of jaguar teeth transmutes a hunter into a successful predator. Thanks to a jaguar’s claws/teeth, men turn into fierce warriors and supreme fighters. Shamans, when wearing a jaguar skin and acting like a “jaguar”, equal other (enemy) shamans, spirits or masters which in turn are “(like-) a jaguar” i.e., potentially hunt down Amerindians, causing disease or death.

5.4.5 Concluding remarks
This part of Chapter 5 set out to better understand how (and why) the “jaguar” was and is conceptualised, through its role in narratives, nature, iconography and indigenous cosmologies. Its importance as the dominant predator positioned at the top of the food chain is mirrored in a cosmological status as a very powerful being, as a potential helper as well as a foe. As an agent, it can cross worldly boundaries as well as “natural” ones when traversing not only the land but also the water and sky worlds while being most active at dusk and at dawn. The jaguar’s methods for hunting, as a stalk-and-ambush predator, reflect its demeanour as a (potential) malevolent spirit and a kanaima* while travelling in the forest and attacking humans. However, the fact the jaguar was never native to the Caribbean islands, probably impacted its status within the cosmologies of their Amerindian inhabitants.

“Jaguar” being the embodiment of the ultimate predator therefore also concerns the manner in which shamans, spirits, masters present themselves to others. To be “jaguar”-like is not only to be an assassin, a disrupter but also to serve as the ultimate protector (i.e., Master). For instance, a hostile shaman, or malevolent spirits, who slay Amerindians, are thus “jaguar”-like. However, a huntsman only becomes “jaguar”-like to the “animal” he is chasing. Being an excellent hunter implies being “jaguar”-like to many forms of prey. The village shaman is the protector, even the Master of his People. While consequently being a potential predator to others, he is also “jaguar”-like. A shaman transmutes into a “jaguar” through rituals, hereby acting and dressing like a “jaguar”. This transformation is also potentially dangerous. The shaman must never cross any ontological boundaries or else he would truly “become” “jaguar” i.e., a danger to his own people (see 3.4.2 under the sub-heading Mastery or “ownership”).

The importance of the “jaguar” is not reflected in the Saladoid ceramic archaeological record. The reason for this is the fact that the dominance of the “jaguar” within the 706 narratives
significantly surpasses its imagery on ceramics. In Waldron’s comprehensive comparable research only a few feline Saladoid adornos have been identified in the islands. However, perhaps even more surprisingly, a small number of Saladoid “jaguar” adornos have also been encountered in the Venezuela.

This discrepancy as to any “jaguar” occurrences in narratives and on ceramics (even including archaeological records in general) can partly be explained by the fact that the claws and fur of the jaguar are perishable. We know from anthropological reports that hunters and shamans donned body parts as tokens of male prowess, talismanic power, protection or display of (shamanic) skills and supremacy. They are now absent from the archaeological corpus because they have not been preserved as is the case with ceramics, sea shells and numerous other sustainable materials.

However, this observation does not address the issue: why is “jaguar” not prominent when compared with the (especially mainland) Saladoid iconography, especially adornos. Numerous explanations could be suggested here, e.g., perhaps “jaguar” has not (yet) been identified as a result of an abstractification concerning its spots, claws, fangs or eyes. As demonstrated (see 5.4.3), “jaguar”-like qualities could for instance also be communicated by more abstract means. For, instance the two spotted adornos (Figs. 5.18 and 5.19, p. 200) could depict a “jaguar”-like human or “animal” (i.e., a shaman). Moreover, a spotted “animal” could refer to “jaguar”-like qualities, and be associated with a Master, or perceived as a “jaguar” by others (e.g., “otter” is a “jaguar” to fish).

Another possible explanation could be: “jaguar” is not portrayed on ceramics because it is displayed by other means (e.g., stories, rituals, songs, (teeth) pendants, etc.). The preferred way to depict “jaguar” as sign* (iconic or symbolic) was perhaps as a corporal adornment consisting of raw material such as teeth, hides and claws. Corporal displays are ascribed the following functions: (a) aesthetic, (b) emulative, (c) performative, (d) protective/talismanic, and (e) demonstrative or “corroborative” (Roe 1998: 177). Moreover, historic as well as anthropological accounts report how the body parts of “jaguars” have been utilised for all these functions. Nevertheless, section 8.3 will further elaborate on potential explanations as to why certain “animals” are prominently displayed as Saladoid adornos whereas others are not.

Absence on islands
The faunal record of the insular Caribbean being deprived of large feline species has probably impacted the status of the jaguar within the cosmologies of the Amerindian islanders. On the other hand, jaguar teeth have been recovered from various islands (Laffoon et al. 2014). Even though their numbers are low, these teeth illustrate an extensive exchange network by means of which they have travelled across a large area of land and through a long time span. Historic records support this fact by describing the usage and/or distribution of jaguar skins and claws via Trinidad up to Dominica (see 5.4.4, under the sub-heading Becoming through adornment).
What could have been the impact of the loss of this major land predator on the Amerindian worldview of the Amerindians living in the islands and on “jaguar” as a cultural sign*? I do not agree with the opinion that “jaguar” as a sign* was substituted by, for instance, “dogs” (Rodríguez 1992; Roe 1982, 1995). A similarly powerful (carnivorous, spatial and temporal liminal) terrestrial “animal” was simply not native to the Caribbean Islands. Nevertheless, the Amerindian world was and remained inhabited by humans and non-humans i.e., with significant other-than-human-persons*. Therefore a world in which other beings caused disease and death still existed. Connotations and associations regarding parts of the “jaguar” were indeed presumably substituted. In my opinion, this is not the case with the “jaguar” as a composed sign* (see also 8.3).

The Amerindian pantheon of zoomorphic and anthropomorphic signs* is as yet quite sufficient to comprehend the world and to create new worlds based on those at hand, just as Amerindians have always done. Even without the powerful “jaguar”, the world was (and is) a place, that requires constant negotiation as well as reciprocal relations between humans and the significant other-than-human-persons*. These relations, interactions and negotiations would have been possible even without the “jaguar” or any other mainland predators. Its qualities are depicted as the two spotted adornos from Pearls (Granada) may indicate. Hereby “jaguar” itself is not displayed, but “humans” or “animals” with for instance jaguar spots linked to “jaguarness” (i.e., like-“jaguar”) in order to indicate they are “jaguar” to someone (e.g., a shaman Master).